



AFRICA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

2025



BIENNIAL

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Conference
REPORT

| One New Humanity in Christ:
| Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace in Africa

Hosted by: Institute for the Study of African Realities (ISAR)

Acknowledgements

The success of this comprehensive and ambitious undertaking by the Institute for the Study of African Realities (ISAR), was fundamentally enabled by the unwavering commitment and leadership of Africa International University (AIU) Administration. Thus, special gratitude is extended to the Vice-Chancellor for AIU's institutional commitment and foundational support, and to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs and Research for his guidance from the inception of the Project, in February, when he appointed the Steering Committee comprising all Deans and service departments. Both the VC and DVCAA rendered support by mobilising the entire university toward the crucial cause of the Conference. Their dedicated engagement and participation were invaluable.

Equally important were their supportive gestures and approvals of the requests made by the Conference's Steering Committee. The special roles played by the University Senate and Management Board, together with the acceptance and participation of the Deans and Heads of Departments, added significant strength.

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The participation of faculty, staff, and students of AIU in the Steering Committee and in various volunteer capacities also contributed to the achievements of the conference. This collective effort was essential in facilitating a successful, well-supported, and academically rich event. Ultimately, their backing ensured the Conference achieved its objective of addressing continental challenges through the lens of the Gospel of Peace.

Conference Committee

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Executive Summary

The 2025 Biennial Conference at Africa International University (AIU) was successfully convened from 29th to 31st October 2025. The conference's core purpose was to launch a three-year research project titled “One New Humanity in Christ: Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace in Africa”, in which all schools of AIU and its partners would address the pervasive issues of conflict, violence, and social injustice in the context of widespread Christianity in Africa, from a multi- and inter-disciplinary perspective. The title was inspired by the book *One New Humanity: Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace*, by Kristin Caynor and Werner Mischke. The event aimed to catalyse the crafting of Gospel-informed solutions by both scholars and practitioners, through dialogue, research, seminars, and publications.

The three-day conference was opened by the Vice Chancellor, represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs and Research). It featured plenary speakers and panels, and 15 breakout sessions, all of which grappled with the reality of violence in its diverse forms – state-sponsored, structural, ethnic, religious, gender-based – and the role of Christianity and its institutions in fostering justice and peace, or fermenting divisions and conflict.

In the keynote address, which was entitled “Reinventing Africa's Modernity: Embracing the Gospel of Peace in a Social History of Violence”, Professor Emmanuel argued that seeking Gospel-centered understanding and interventions for justice and peace in Africa’s violent social history, requires, first, a deep understanding of the reality of a postcolonial Africa and why the realities of violence, war, poverty, and corruption appear to be endemic. Second, it is critical to grapple with why, despite its growth, vibrancy, energy, and message of love and peace, Christianity does not seem to offer much relief from violence, not even to provide an imagination of an alternative social order. Referring to the 1994 Rwanda genocide both a metaphor and mirror of this conundrum, he argued that all seeking to make sense of the place of Christianity in Africa’s social imagination, in the light of 1994 Rwanda, we must ponder: What does it mean for Christianity to claim that the Gospel is a Gospel of Peace? But as a watershed event, it also means that after Rwanda 1994, Christian reflection in Africa cannot proceed in the same way, but must squarely face the challenge involved in the question raised by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray to church leaders in Rwanda during the Genocide: “Is the blood of tribalism deeper than waters of baptism?” What role or difference does Christianity make in the face of Africa’s violent postcolonial history? He argued that the more urgent challenge for the Christian faith, rather than seeking a different non-violent foundation for social life in Africa, is to go beyond the usual divide between ‘religion’ and ‘politics’ and to embrace the Gospel in its entirety as a form of politics.

Executive Summary (Continued)

The first respondent, Professor Chammah J. Kaunda, concurred and called for deeper conversations on the possibility that Pentecostal resistance to rigid dogma and its visceral sense of divine immediacy might hold the potential for a new beginning for African Christianity, and that its permeation of every denomination in Africa portends fresh beginnings throughout Africa. The second respondent, Ms Nirina Kiplagat, concurred that in the Keynote address, Katongole offered a compelling vision for a Gospel-shaped agenda for peace in Africa that goes beyond technical fixes and reforms, and seeks to transform the very imagination and values that shape society. Katongole's emphasis on solidarity, dignity, and the "excess of love" as antidotes to violence echoes UNDP's focus on human security, social cohesion, and inclusive governance. Thus, in her view, Katongole's vision converges with the United Nations' *New Agenda for Peace*, launched by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in July 2023.

Papers were presented in 3 break-out sessions and two plenary sessions, in 17 panels of 40 paper presenters, addressing topics from different disciplinary approaches: Theological and Religious Studies; Conflict Studies and Peacebuilding; Social and Political Studies; Cultural Studies and Anthropology; Human Rights Advocacy in Post-Conflict Africa; Development Studies; and Psychology and Mental Health; and Information Technology.

Panels were organised around the following themes: Nexus between Theology, Colonial Legacy, and Law; Church and Reconciliation; Religion, Justice and Peace Building; Justice and Peace-making; Post-Conflict Recovery; Youth, Social Justice and Peace; Violence, Trauma and Healing; Nexus between Violence, Social Justice and Peacebuilding; Christianity, Violence, and Social Justice; Politics, Violence, and Peacebuilding; and Gender, Justice, Violence, and Peace-making. The plenary panels, which hosted paper presentations by faculty of the University, were entitled "Social Justice, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace" and "Social Justice, Violence, and Peace-making: A Conversation on Kenya's Experience.

The closing session focused on the way forward. A plenary discussion on "Emerging Research Themes and Questions" was led by a presentation of a synopsis by Professor Beatrice Warue, which outlined research areas and questions. Dr D Zac Niringiye's presentation on "The Journey and Work Together" drew insights from The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24) and outlined the work as requiring all to utilise what we have, from wherever we are, and do whatever we can, to work towards a more just Africa, as followers of Jesus. He outlined that this would require making the most of our places (institutions and organisations), pulling resources, and creating spaces and platforms together. He urged us to take a cue from Cleopas and his companion, converse about Jesus boldly, confronting our doubts and questions. Ms Kiplagat, in her closing remarks, applauded the Conference for having provided deep reflection on the past – to interrupt its narratives, placing the challenge in the present – to reimagine Africa and society, and calling us to transform the future. The task before us, she asserted, was urgent and would require us to face it together (in partnership), honestly, and with commitment to justice, peace and love.

Core Recommendations for Action

Based on the synthesis of rapporteur reports and plenary discussions, the conference generated several core recommendations intended to guide the future direction of the "One New Humanity in Christ: Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace in Africa" project:

1. Define actionable partner engagement: A clear process is required to collaboratively define concrete next steps with partners to chart a way forward for research and practical applications, fostering collaboration for greater regional impact.
2. Publish an online book of abstracts of papers submitted and presented at the Conference;
3. Pursue publication of selected papers in three publications: Impact: Journal of Transformation, a multidisciplinary international, peer-reviewed journal published by the Institute for the Study of African Realities (ISAR), Africa International University, Nairobi, Kenya; Transformation, a Mission Studies peer-reviewed journal published quarterly by Sage Publications on behalf of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies; and a multi-author volume to be published by Langham Publishing.
4. Conceptualize and research addressing the research questions identified in the following thematic areas:
 - i. Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace in Africa
 - ii. Eco-theological Perspectives on Climate Change and Health
 - iii. Violence and Conflict are Wired within the Imaginary Landscape of Africa
 - iv. Church Leadership and Violence Inside the Church
 - v. Youth Leadership and Peacebuilding in Society
 - vi. Children and Violence in Society
 - vii. Migrant Communities as Recruiting Grounds for Fueling Violence
 - viii. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by Youth for Peacebuilding
 - ix. Nexus Between Scarcity of Resources, Existing Resources, and Violence
5. Convene Seminars, conferences, and other relevant spaces during the next two years, to further the work in recommendations 1-4 above, towards the 2027 Biennial Conference.
6. The Steering Committee, under the aegis of ISAR, will continue to oversee the work outlined in recommendations 1-5 above as outlined in the TOR. All subcommittees whose functions were directly focused on delivering the Biennial Conference will disband, with two created: Research (to focus on recommendation 4) and Editorial (to focus on recommendation 3).
7. Review academic policy with a view to incorporating research students' engagement in research conferences as a requirement for completion of advanced degrees.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Background and context

The Institute for the Study of African Realities (ISAR) was founded at Africa International University (AIU) to catalyse dialogue that would identify, engage with, research, and implement solutions to the most pressing African realities. Thus, in line with this calling, in February 2025, ISAR undertook a 3-year Research Project titled *One New Humanity in Christ: Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace in Africa*, in which all schools of AIU and its partners would interrogate the phenomenon of violence that has bedevilled Africa, despite the breadth and depth of the presence of Christianity, through the avenues of the Biennial Research Conferences, research, and publications.

It is indisputable that Africa South of the Sahara has become a heartland of modern Christianity and is rightly regarded by scholars as potentially representative of 21st-century Christianity. However, it is ironic that the countries with the highest percentages of Christians in their populations are also among the most turbulent. Examples abound of countries with intermittent violent conflicts, with the majority of their populations adhering to Christianity, such as: the Democratic Republic of the Congo (90%), Ethiopia (61%), Kenya (82%), Rwanda (89%), South Sudan (62%), South Africa (75%), and Uganda (85%). The purpose of the Project was to catalyse in-depth, inter- and cross-disciplinary research and dialogue to craft Gospel-shaped possible solutions.

2.2 Conference and Research Agenda

Building on existing scholarship, we envisioned that the Project would create a community of Christian scholars and leaders who would gather for a learning journey to grapple with the implications of Gospel witness for addressing the realities of violent conflicts in Africa. It was agreed that the first gathering would be the AIU International Biennial Conference, scheduled for October 2025.

The key components of the conference and research agenda include:

- a) The reality of violence in Africa, in the context of Christianity in Africa – researching the complexity of the interplay, including consideration of state-sponsored violence, ethnic violence, religious violence, and other forms of violence;
- b) The implications for Gospel witness in the context of violence would inquire into the essence of God’s good news. Dr D Zac Niringiye recommended adapting the title of a book project he was involved in, *One New Humanity: Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace*, by Kristin Caynor and Werner Mischke (published by William Carey Publishing, Littleton, Colorado, April 2025), for the Project title.
- c) In examining glory, violence, and the gospel of peace in Africa, the project’s intent was to grapple with the question “What does it mean to be human, according to the Gospel?” The project envisaged a multidisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and interdisciplinary approach and conversation that honours African contexts. These include Theological and Religious Studies; Conflict Studies and Peacebuilding; Social and Political Studies; Cultural Studies and Anthropology; Human Rights Advocacy in Post-Conflict Africa; Development Studies; and Psychology and Mental Health.
- d) It was proposed that conferencing and research would subsequently lead to publishing in journals, books, and monographs that are accessible to scholars, pastors, and leaders, as well as to local and national governments.
- e) The AIU Biennial Conference, held from 29th to 31st October 2025, launched the Project, and the book *One New Humanity: Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace* was released into the African market.

This report outlines the process, outputs, and outcomes of the 2025 Biennial Research Conference.

3.0 Conference Marketing, Communication, Attendance and Logistics

The Biennial International Research Conference demonstrated exceptional progress in Africa International University's visibility, audience reach, and operational efficiency. This portion of the report highlights the strategic outcomes achieved across marketing, communication, attendance, and logistical dimensions, as informed by recorded data and on-ground observations.



Registration Performance: Expanding Reach Through Strategic Positioning

3.1.1. Registration

The conference recorded a total of 274 registrations (128 Females and 146 males). 192 of the registered were local (Kenya), while 82 were international, representing 21 countries, confirming the event's international appeal hence marking a diverse and well-distributed audience.

3.1.2. Regional Distribution

The distribution of participants by region was as follows:

Kenya - 183, Malawi - 3, Zambia-2, DRC-15, Burundi -1, Cameroon-1, Ethiopia-4, Ireland-1, Mozambique-1, Nigeria-10, Rwanda-3, South Africa-2, Togo-1, Uganda-10, USA-5, Zimbabwe-1, Tanzania-1, Palestine-1, United Kingdom-1, Sudan-1 and South Sudan-2.

3.1.3. Abstracts submission

Research presentation remained a core attraction with 56 abstract submissions. The submission numbers reflect effective pre-event publicity, cross-departmental mobilization, and heightened researcher interest in AIU's academic platforms.



Participant Breakdown: High Engagement and Consistent Attendance

3.2.1. Conference participation

Attendance across the conference days remained both stable and impressive. Day 1 recorded 249 participants (118 Females and 131 males), Day 2 had 226 participants (109 Females and 117 males), and Day 3, 232 participants (112 Females and 120 males), yielding an average attendance of 235 participants per day. This consistency underscores the conference's relevance, session quality, and strong conference alignment with audience expectations.

Conference Marketing, Communication,

3.2.2. Partner Engagement & Collaboration

From the outset of the Conference and Research Project, it was recognized that it was essential to incorporate selected organizations, whose work aligned with the research and conference agenda, into the planning and implementation structures and processes as partners in the project. It was hoped that not only would the conference and research offer opportunities for partner organisations to meet their objectives related to the conference theme, but their logos and weblinks would also be showcased on the AIU website, thereby enhancing visibility within AIU relationships.

Invitations

Partners were invited to collaborate by:

- i. Participating in planning for the Biennial Conference, as part of an extended Steering Committee;
- ii. Publicizing the conference among their members and networks.
- iii. Participating in Sub-Committees of the Steering Committee.
- iv. Actively encouraging their team members and partners to register and participate in the Conference.
- v. Conceptualizing potential research areas coming out of this conference.
- vi. Funding and fundraising for the Research Project and Biennial Conferences.

Since the theme of the Project was inspired by the book project of Mission ONE, Kristin Caynor and Werner Mischke, *One New Humanity: Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace* (Littleton, Colorado: Willian Carey Publishing, 2025), Mission ONE was invited as a special partner to:

- i. Provide financial support to procure copies of the book *One New Humanity: Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace*, as a resource for all paper presenters at the conference, also with the understanding that the book will be launched in the African market at the Biennial Conference.
- ii. Encourage and sponsor some of its partners to attend the conference.

The two authors of the book were also invited to participate in the launch of their book, as well as featured speakers for a special panel on the book.

The following other partners were invited: [African Enterprise](#); American Friends; [Association of Evangelicals for Africa \(AEA\)](#); [CORAT Africa](#); [Great Lakes Initiative Institute \(GLI\)](#); [Langham Publishing](#); Mesa Global; [Peace and Reconciliation Network \(PRN\)](#); [Peace Catalyst International \(PCI\)](#); Tear Fund; [World Renew](#); and, [World Vision](#)

Engagement in collaboration on Planning and Implementation

We engaged with partners in two ways: targeted communication with each partner and consultation meetings, as part of the extended Steering Committee. All the partners were actively involved in the planning and execution processes, in various ways:

- i. Participation in meetings: The first consultation meeting was held on August 5, 2025, and three meetings before the Conference (September 12, October 7 and 21), and one after the conference for review (November 18, 2025).

Conference Marketing, Communication,

- i. Two organizations seconded their members to committees of the Steering Committee: Association of Evangelical of Africa (AEA) – Research and Editorial; and World Renew – Publicity and Marketing.
- ii. Mission ONE donated 100 copies of the book *One New Humanity*;
- iii. Partners contributed resources for the Biennial Conference: financial as well as in-kind, notably AEA, American Friends, Tear Fund and Dr Werner Mischke through Antioch, who made significant financial contributions to the operation cost of the Conference;
- iv. African Enterprise, Association of Evangelicals for Africa (AEA), CORAT Africa, Great Lakes Initiative Institute (GLI), and World Renew contributed money towards student subsidies;
- v. CORAT Africa, Great Lakes Initiative Institute (GLI), Peace and Reconciliation Network (PRN), Peace Catalyst International (PCI), Tear Fund, World Renew, and World Vision sponsored papers, which were presented at the Conference;
- vi. Sixty-five (65) participants were sponsored by partner organizations;
- vii. Langham Publishing provided editorial guidance for paper submissions, for potential publishing; Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) offered one guest-edited issue of their academic journal *Transformation*, in 2026, in which some selected papers presented at the conference would be published.
- viii. Exhibitions: In addition to contributing to planning and participating in the conference, many showcased their work that aligns with the project theme through well-designed exhibition booths

Digital participation

- i. Strategic use of Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, and WhatsApp amplified event awareness and nurtured sustained engagement before, during, and after the conference. These platforms offered cost-effective visibility with measurable impressions and reach.
- ii. The conference had 3 breakout sessions. Each breakout session attracted an average of 40 online participants, who chose various rooms to participate in. These were an addition to the physical participants, offering a parallel engagement space for remote attendees.
- iii. Livestream performance on social media was exceptional, with YouTube garnering 809 views (Day 1), 605 (Day 2), and 369 (Day 3), while Facebook attracted 5,075 livestream views. Conference-related posts received 6,620 views. These interactions date from the day of the livestream of the conference to 20th November 2025 and reflect broad interest in the conference by the online community and increased visibility for AIU's investment in areas of research.

AIU's Participation

Internally, AIU contributed a strong participation of 135 participants, including 58 faculty and staff and 96 students, demonstrating rising internal engagement and ownership. The student numbers were, however, far below the targeted 160, indicating a need for investment in growing a research culture and embedding such requirements in academic course work.



Teamwork was a defining attribute of this year's conference. The marketing and logistics teams of the steering committee leveraged a multi-channel approach supported by strong interdepartmental collaboration.

3.3.1. Venue Preparation & Branding

The Multipurpose Hall and breakout rooms were effectively branded with AIU's brandings as well as the partners banners, creating a visually coherent and professional environment. This reinforced AIU's institutional identity and elevated participants' onsite experience.

3.3.2. ICT & Technical Support

The conference planning team leveraged on AIU's website to provide a single point of reference for all conference information as well as registration. Updates were provided weekly and a countdown timer towards the conference start date kept timelines in view. A proposed area of improvement in the registration process was the integration of registration and payment processes.

During the conference, reliable ICT infrastructure ensured uninterrupted livestreaming, high-quality audio-visual output, and stable connectivity for blended sessions. Photography and videography teams documented the sessions comprehensively, materials that now serve as learning resources and future promotional content with clear adherence to Data Protection act and stipulations as per Kenyan laws.

3.3.4. Coordination & Logistics

Interdepartmental collaboration was largely seamless. Despite minor delays, from late budget approvals and interdependent subcommittee timelines, teams demonstrated resilience, maintaining the conference's flow.

Conference partner organizations contributed significantly as committee members and logistics volunteers, while AIU staff and students served as ushers, faculty acted as session chairs, and postgraduate students as rapporteurs, ensuring a well-coordinated and successful event. This collective effort highlights the power of teamwork and dedication, setting a strong example for future conferences.

3.3.5. Hospitality and Catering

Catering services provided by Kijiji Resort operated smoothly, with timely meal arrangements delivered despite the last-minute change of catering vendors. The resort also successfully hosted seven international presenters, offering a comfortable and convenient stay throughout the conference period.

Additional accommodation arrangements were made for distinguished guests, with seven executive guests, including ISAR leadership, hosted at Homecare Retreat Center; two guests at Subiaco; and twelve guests, including partners and members of the Conference secretariat at Resurrection Garden. Daily evening lockdown schedules at the latter however restricted the flexibility of movement for conference participants.

Given that AIU owns Kijiji Resort and intends to continue hosting major local and international events, the experience highlights a strategic opportunity for institutional investment. Strengthening Kijiji Resort's infrastructure, hospitality capacity, and operational systems will significantly enhance its ability to host high-profile events, reduce external reliance, generate revenue, and position AIU as a comprehensive conference destination.

4.0 PLENARY PRESENTATIONS, PANELS, AND BREAK-OUT SESSIONS.

The three-day conference featured morning plenary presentations and panels, and breakout sessions. Day one plenary featured the keynote speaker and Plenary Presentations, Panels, and Break-Out Sessions, respondents, and the launch of the *One New Humanity* book; day two plenary featured two AIU faculty paper panels; and day three featured two panels of partner organisations and the closing session. The afternoons of days two and three featured breakout sessions in which 40 paper presenters had an average of 40 physical and 40 online delegates. The full conference schedule is available in Appendix 1.

4.1. Keynote Address, Respondents and Panel Discussion

In the Keynote address entitled “Reinventing Africa's Modernity: Embracing the Gospel of Peace in a Social History of Violence”, Prof. Emmanuel Katongole established the conceptual framework for the discourse on the Research and Conference theme. He anchored his ideas in two quotes: “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—what is good, pleasing and perfect.” (Rom 12: 2), and the other by Bishop Kataliko: “The logic of the Gospel is a logic not of power, but of the cross . The only response to the excess of evil is the excess of love.” He indicated that the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda that unfolded in 1994 reshaped and redirected all his scholarly energy, considering it as both a metaphor and mirror—a watershed event exposing the limits of inherited theological, missiological and postcolonial cultural imagination.

He further submitted for all seeking to make sense of the place of Christianity in Africa’s social imagination, in the light of 1994 Rwanda, we must ponder: What does it mean for Christianity to claim that the Gospel is a Gospel of Peace? But as a watershed event, it also means that after Rwanda 1994, Christian reflection in Africa cannot proceed in the same way, but must squarely face the challenge involved in the question raised by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray to church leaders in Rwanda during the Genocide: “Is the blood of tribalism deeper than waters of baptism?” What role or difference does Christianity make in the face of Africa’s violent postcolonial history?

Katongole’s thesis was that Africa’s violent social history requires, first, a deep understanding of the reality of a postcolonial Africa and why the realities of violence, war, poverty, and corruption appear to be endemic.



**Prof. Emmanuel
Katongole**

Professor of Peace Studies,
Keough School of Global Affairs,
Kroc Institute for International
Peace Studies, Department of
Theology, University of Notre
Dame

Keynote Address, Respondents and Panel Discussion (Continued)



Ms. Nirina Kiplagat

Governance and Peacebuilding
Coordinator Regional Service Center for
Africa UN Development Programme



Prof. Chammah Kaunda

Associate Professor and Academic Dean
at Oxford Centre for Mission Studies
(OCMS) Oxford, England.

Second, he emphasized the importance of understanding why, despite its growth, vibrancy, energy, and message of love and peace, Christianity does not seem to offer much relief from violence. Instead, Africa's social context presents two apparently contrasting images of "coffins" and "churches" – two dominant industries across postcolonial Africa, within which the church appears incapable of questioning itself. He argued that the more urgent challenge for the Christian faith, rather than seeking a different non

-violent foundation for social life in Africa, is to go beyond the usual divide between 'religion' and 'politics' and to embrace the Gospel in its entirety as a form of politics. He pointed to Bishop Kataliko's life and work (the Catholic Archbishop of the Metropolitan Ecclesiastical Province of Bukavu in the late 1990s) as an example of what this concretely looks like. He argued that the genius of Kataliko's message and pastoral leadership in the Congo was a quest for a new vision of society, rooted in the story of God's non-violent and reconciling love; not a 'spiritual' message but a full-fledged political vision that structures the material, social, and economic possibilities of our life together.

In his response, entitled "A Pentecostal Hand Up! Conversations with Emmanuel Katongole's Reinventing Africa's Modernity: Embracing the Gospel of Peace in a Social History of Violence", Professor Chammah J. Kaunda commended Katongole's work as compelling, confronting the African theological imagination's captivity to inherited memories of violence; pointing to another story—another history, another Africa, another humanity, and perhaps even another Christ. He argued that Katongole's reflections unmask the Christ of violence, the theological construct which sanctifies domination and excuses failure by transfiguring collective trauma into moral paralysis. He reframed Katongole's repudiation of Christianity's collusion with violence as a rejection of the Christ of violence, not only as a shift to seeing the Gospel as politics, but even more, Christ as politics; not politics of conquest or possession, but rather the politics of peace, born of the cross and sustained by love excessive to every social measure.

However, Kaunda argued that in critiquing Pentecostalism as another form of Christianity that conforms to imaginaries of domination and violence, Katongole was blind to how the permeation of Pentecostal practice across Christian denominations signalled a ray of hope. He pointed to what he termed 'Pentecostal Natality: The Capacity to Begin Again'. That Pentecostal resistance to rigid dogma and its visceral sense of divine immediacy hold the potential to be redirected toward a new beginning for African Christianity, and that its permeation of every denomination in Africa portends the possibility to provide an impetus to see fresh beginnings throughout Africa — in churches, public spaces, culture, and beyond. However, he also pointed out that such renewal demands a radical conversion of imagination: from conquest to compassion, from prosperity to presence, from possession to peace, from violence to excess love. However, to begin again, Kaunda argued, the Church must be interrupted, forcefully yet tenderly, by the Gospel it proclaims.

Keynote Address, Respondents and Panel Discussion (Continued)

The interruption of violence by love, of trauma by forgiveness, and of despair by imagination constitutes the politics of Christ. Pentecostal natality, then, can be harnessed not for spiritual triumphalism but as the ecclesial capacity to enact resurrection, shaping communities whose very existence testifies to the transformative power of the politics of “excess love”.

The second respondent, Ms Nirina Kiplagat, applauded Katongole’s address for providing a compelling vision of a Gospel-inspired agenda for peace in Africa, an approach transcends technical fixes and reforms, aiming instead to transform the underlying imagination and values shaping society. She highlighted its importance in a context where peacebuilding in Africa is hindered by fragmented efforts, limited national ownership in many cases, and an emphasis on short-term results. Dependence on unpredictable external funding, with only 2% of global peacebuilding resources allocated to Africa in 2023, has made achieving positive peace—measured by social cohesion, equitable resource sharing, and inclusive governance—difficult.

She asserted that Katongole’s call for a new imagination, rooted in non-violence, reconciliation, and the transformative power of the Gospel as a political force, resonates deeply with the UNDP’s human development paradigm, which recognizes that sustainable peace and development are inseparable. She cited 2025 HDR and recent UNDP publications, which highlight that development gains are fragile in the face of conflict, exclusion, and weak governance, and that a people-centred, rights-based approach is essential for resilience. The same reports point to correlations between declining trust, rising political polarisation, and a sense of powerlessness. Kiplagat showed that Katongole’s vision converges with the key elements of the United Nations’ New Agenda for Peace, launched by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in July 2023. Further, she asserted that Katongole’s emphasis on solidarity, dignity, and the “excess of love” as antidotes to violence echoes UNDP’s focus on human security, social cohesion, and inclusive governance.

Kiplagat argued that the keynote is a powerful reflection on how Africa’s transformation depends on a radical shift in mindset and values, challenging society to move beyond superficial reforms and embrace the Gospel as providing an alternative political imagination—a vision that can interrupt violence and build a society grounded in justice, love, and reconciliation. She noted that part of the genius of the address was its emphasis that peace is not only a distant goal, but a daily practice. She concluded by pointing to the challenge and opportunity presented to us: to help societies “interrupt” cycles of violence and exclusion, and to co-create new African narratives and systems that enable all people to flourish. This transformation is already underway in many places, but scaling it up requires sustained investment, political will, and a commitment to inclusive, locally led solutions.

The panel that followed delved deeper into the perspectives shared, focusing on the critical need for honest conversation on the crisis that faces Africa and the failure of Christianity to transform our social imaginations.

4.2. Plenary Panels and Break-Out Sessions



Africa International University Faculty Panel during the Biennial International Research Conference 2025.

The conference had a busy schedule, with 3 faculty sessions, 2 partner panels, and 15 breakout rooms arranged in inter- and trans-disciplinary formats. Organization that aimed at ensuring the quality and organization of the conference.

In total, the conference received 56 abstracts, of which 41 presenters were able to make their presentations in person and virtually. Those who did not present had various constraints including connectivity, financial, or personal challenges. By the eve of the first day of presentations, we had received 35 full papers. It was determined that we will combine the different themes and topical areas in the break-out rooms.

4.2.1 First Faculty Plenary Panel

The first faculty plenary, titled "Social Justice, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace: An Interdisciplinary Conversation," was a major draw. It assembled a distinguished and diverse panel from various schools in AIU to tackle these interconnected themes.

The discussion featured contributions from Prof. Eric Aseka, Joshua Mwaka, Dr. Judy Wangombe with Prof. Emily Choge, Prof. Beatrice Warue (joined by Adelaide Lusambili), and Monicah Hinga (with Shija Shilunga). This wide range of voices ensured a rich, multi-faceted exploration of the topic. The session was chaired by Prof. Joash Mutua. The highlights of the session are summarized in the table below.

Plenary Panels and Break-Out

4.2.2 Second Faculty Plenary Session

The second plenary, "Social Justice, Violence, and Peace-making: A Conversation on Kenya's Experience," expertly grounded the core themes within a crucial local context. This highly relevant discussion was graced by the insights of prominent figures, including Dr. Enoch Opuka, Mr. Jared Maraga, Prof. Josephine Mutuku, Prof. Joash Mutua (who presented with Faith Nyakerario), and Dr. Edward Aligula. This was skilfully presented by Dr. Joyce Kedemi. This session was chaired by Prof. James Nkansah. A summary of the panel presentations and the combined faculty panels Question and Answer session are summarised in the table below.

4.2.3 First Partners Panel

The First of the Partners panels was constituted by Martin Kapenda, Peace and Reconciliation Network (PRN); Bernard Ojwang, World Renew; Dr. Esayas Ersabo, Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA); Nyambura Kamau, Langham Literature.



***Partners Panel
Discussion during the
Biennial International
Research Conference
2025.***

4.2.4 Second Partners Panel

The Second Partners panel was made up of Ada Thomas, Mission One; Philip Kakungulu, Peace Catalyst International; Alex Njukia, World Vision; Marion Ndeta, Great Lakes Initiative, and Joy Musyoka, African Enterprise. The summary of the very engaging session with provocative questions and conversations are highlighted under Day 3 in the table below.

4.2.5 Closing Presentations

The closing session focused on the way forward. A plenary discussion on "Emerging Research Themes and Questions" was led by a presentation of a synopsis by Professor Beatrice Warue, which outlined research areas and questions (outlined in Section V. Dr D Zac Niringiye's presentation on "The Journey and Work Together" drew insights from The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24) and outlined the work as requiring all to utilise what we have, from wherever we are, and do whatever we can, to work towards a more just Africa, as followers of Jesus. He outlined that this would require making the most of our places (institutions and organisations), pulling resources, and creating spaces and platforms together. He urged us to take a cue from Cleopas and his companion, converse about Jesus boldly, confronting our doubts and questions with honesty.

Plenary Panels and Break-Out Sessions (Continued)

Nirina Kiplagat, in her closing remarks, highlighted that the theme of the conference wove through all the presentations, looking at the current violent context and the forms of Christianity that shape it, questioning, with an aim to constructively interrupt dominant narratives. There was a reflective perspective that looked back, at the present, and the future in transformation.

On looking back – it includes questioning who we are as individuals or nation states; how we have been defined, terminology/owning of the framing; looking back to see what we are interrupting – at the root of words, why are we accepting to be defined a certain way; relationship between the state and the church; broader world view of how it's defined. These form the foundation of what we aim to interrupt.

On the present, the conversations were about holding a mirror to ourselves or one being held up at us. In this regard, conflict sensitivity is said to go beyond the do no harm approach, to actively contributing towards peacebuilding. The reason why this is important is that as long as an individual is a context, they affect the context. Therefore, conflict sensitivity goes beyond the interventions being carried out, to the individuals within the context. Thus, the provocation, that we are in our contexts must therefore ask - “how are we contributing to the violence?”; “what went wrong and why?”

On the Future - getting to action, transformation, enacting the reimagination highlighted in the keynote. We were challenged to being courageous; to constantly ask questions through self-reflection, have discussions and fellowship with people who may not agree with us or from us and may not be in a usual constituency; to form connections - as we all come from different angles and spaces of influence – different levels and capacities whether as practioners or otherwise, meaning there are many resources in the room. If we look at the big picture there is therefore the need to connect the dots.

Ms. Kiplagat applauded the Conference for having challenged us to be honest with ourselves; reflect, partner better; have that commitment; to act now - there is also a very strong sense of urgency, from Sudan and DRC, and the data shared in all types of violence. It was therefore essential, going forward, to reflect on how to interrupt, and reimagine together – with the key research questions allowing us to reshape and relook at key gaps, to address the questions; and how we transform. Not only interventions, but as communities, as individuals, be seen as striving together – embodying peace and exemplifying love (the emphasis of the keynote address).



Ms. Nirina Kiplagat

Breakout Sessions

Day/Break-Out Session/ Panel	Major insights	Core Recommendations (The 'Way Forward') Interdisciplinary perspectives proposed.	Research Gap	Research Questions
DAY 1: Breakout I				
Panel 1: Nexus between Theology, Co- lonial Legacy, and Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transformation is a newness, and also to speak about justice. There is no reconciliation without truth-telling. Peace nurtures harmony and communal coexistence. Our theology should not be confined to the community but embodied in it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liberation is not a political goal; it should be the goal of our faith. speaking from a Palestinian-Israeli perspective, suggests that we write and speak about the four gospels. Still, no one has spoken or written about the fifth gospel of Palestine. We should move away from sanctifying violence to sanctifying life and sanctifying life, not power. Christianity is not tribal, whether Akamba or Palestinian; it is based on what the Bible says about Jesus, which will define the true justice for humanity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconciliation is both a divine gift and a human response. However, the challenge lies in embodying that divine gospel message within the community, humanity, and hope. Justice is our Christian responsibility; as believers, we are called to it. However, we are not fulfilling our calling. Therefore, how will we address it? In our region, particularly in Africa, there exists a paradox of shame and glory. Our region is deeply wounded, yet the Bible emphasizes the theology of peace. The gap we have is that we place less focus on the practicality of the true peace taught by the gospel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who may use force against whom and why (what purpose)?, Who can use force and who is legitimate for violence in African situations? Have international law and theology shaped and answered the questions of justice in Africa? Biblically, how should the pastors respond to the abuses caused by Christian ministers themselves to their fellow young and older believers?
Panel 2: Church and Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biblical hospitality is a divine boundary - breaking act that models how to heal and include the displaced. Refugee identity reconstruction requires intentional relational hospitality from the church and host communities to transform trauma into belonging From the study, the church has a role to play as the living space of reconciliation through hospitality modelled by Abraham, Jesus and the good Samaritan to break down barriers between strangers and the host. Hospitality becomes a practice of reconciliation resulting to healing the division between hosts and guests, rich and poor, locals and foreigners. 	<p>i. A practical theology of incarnational hospitality, informed by social identity theory, provides a framework for understanding how displaced African families negotiate identity, belonging, and faithful parenting in exile.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality is often treated as charity or philanthropy, not as a reconciliation tool rooted in incarnational theology that restores dignity and heals identity wounds. While some studies have explored the role of African churches in host nations like Kenya, few have examined how these churches can act as mediating spaces of belonging, practicing hospitality not merely as service, but as mutual transformation and reconciliation. While the Church has been active in humanitarian aid, limited research explores its prophetic and pastoral role in restoring identity and belonging among families displaced by conflict. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the experiences of South Sudanese parents in Nairobi? What can the Church do as a response to help the South Sudanese refugee heal and be equipped to administer healthy parenting? How can a theology of incarnational hospitality, informed by social identity theory, shape the Church's prophetic and pastoral response to the parenting challenges faced by South Sudanese families living in exile in Nairobi?

Breakout Sessions

Panel 3: Church and Reconciliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The doctrinal and theological dispute among different church denominations. • The church must play significant role in fighting for justice, peace, and reconciliation. • The church must be an example and set the pace in promoting peace, justice, and reconciliation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Church must use practical theology to integrate doctrinal and theological teaching to reduce their dispute which leads to conflicts in order to bring reconciliation and bring trauma healing. • Create and promote trauma and counselling centers in the church to promote trauma healing. • To have the regulation of church practices through governed policies that can promote peace building, justice, reconciliation and healing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of major policies that govern the church to have unity among all inter-denomination doctrines and church traditions • The idea of not looking for conflicts from within and only focusing of conflicts from without. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What should the Church do differently to become effective as change agent in promoting peace, trauma healing, and reconciliation? • What are the key aspects that will make Christianity and the Church in Africa become the major agent of healing and not the agents of division in pursuit of peace, justice, and reconciliation? • What areas should the church participate in terms of political engagement without compromising the true doctrine, Christian ethics and values?
Panel 4: Religion, Justice, and Peace Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace and Violence Are Deeply intertwined in Africa’s Historical and Religious Narratives. • Jesus’ Model of Peace is Rooted in Truth and Sacrificial Love. • African Worldviews Emphasize Community and Reconciliation as Pathways to Peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Inter-Faith Dialogue Rooted in Local Cultural Wisdom. • Reframe Theological Education to Include Anthropology and Peace Studies. • Mainstream Peace-Making in Discipleship and Pastoral Formation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of comparative studies between African Traditional, Christian and Islamic peace practices. • Limited understanding of youth and gender roles in shaping religious Peace Narratives. • Minimal Documentation of African Churches’ Peace-Making Practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do African Traditional Beliefs, Islam and Christianity Construct and Interpret the Concepts of Peace and Violence Within African Societies? • How does an Exegetical and Theological Analysis of Matthew 5:9 Within the Broader Context of the Sermon on the Mount Contribute to the Christian Concept of Peace-Making? • In What ways does the Sermon on the Mount provide Coherent Theological Framework for the Development of a Biblical Theology of Just Peace-Making?
Panel 5: Justice and Peace-Making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing Hearts Transforming Nations (HHTN) Shifts Peace-building from Political Agreements to Personal and Spiritual Restoration: Lasting peace begins with inner transformation. HHTN illustrates that reconciliation grounded in biblical forgiveness and emotional healing brings about deeper and more enduring restoration than state-driven peace accords. • Faith Leaders as Key Agents of Reconciliation: The moral authority and community credibility of faith leaders position them as vital facilitators of dialogue across divided groups. As ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20), they integrate pastoral care with social leadership, helping to rebuild trust and cohesion within fractured communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith-Based Conflict Transformation and Social Reconstruction: Grounded in Lederach’s theory of conflict transformation and biblical hermeneutics, It views reconciliation not merely as conflict management, but as a profound moral and relational renewal rooted in divine justice and human repentance. • Contextual and Indigenous Integration of Peace Traditions: These blend African indigenous peace traditions such as Ubuntu, elders’ mediation, and communal healing- with Christian theology of forgiveness. This contextual synthesis bridges Western theological paradigms and African cultural frameworks, fostering local ownership, inclusivity of women and youth, and long-term sustainability of peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited Integration between Theological and Policy-Level Peacebuilding Frameworks: While there is an integration of biblical principles of justice and forgiveness at the grassroots level, a significant gap persists in linking faith-based reconciliation efforts with national and regional peacebuilding structures (such as the AU, IGAD, and local governments). This weak connection hinders the scaling up and institutionalization of biblically grounded reconciliation models within wider peace and policy frameworks. • Misunderstanding of Peace within Imperial and Religious Systems • Marginalization of the Vulnerable in Peacemaking Processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the Healing Hearts Transforming Nations (HHTN) model promote sustainable peace and reconciliation in conflict-affected Kenyan communities, particularly within the Turkwel Belt? • How can Matthew 5:9 (“Blessed are the peacemakers”) be reinterpreted in light of African postcolonial and liberation theologies to emphasize active resistance to oppression and solidarity with the vulnerable? • In what ways have colonial and imperial interpretations of the Bible distorted the understanding of peace making, and how can contemporary African theology recover its liberative essence?

Breakout Sessions

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can Christian communities redefine peace and flourishing in contexts dominated by economic inequality, patriarchy, and neocolonial structures, so that the vulnerable become central agents of God's justice and reconciliation?
DAY 1: Breakout II				
Panel 1: Violence, Trauma and Healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The church's role has been overlooked by the community. The true purpose of the church is to offer solutions to the church hurt, but it has been flapped by leaders who only seek sympathy reparations rather than offering practical solutions. There is abuse in the church, and in fact the perpetrators hide or are hidden behind the holy altars while the victims are suppressed with pain of guilt and shame. The church leaders continually underestimate the level of violence the church members are facing, as they are interested in the church's growth as opposed to the individual grieving of the congregants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Churches should be made sanctuaries of protection through prioritizing human dignity and enhancing responses to interpersonal abuse and oppression. Abusers should be challenged both morally and physically considering that the victims deserve justice. The members in the church should act and avoid being manipulated and controlled, we should show genuine human preferences to personal human needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the church leaders truly defined their role in church and beyond church as a central force in restoring human dignity and safety? Is Christianity as a religion condoning so much to a point that the level of violence and abuse in the church sanctuary has increased? Is the church in Africa still suffering from identity crisis? What can be done to restore human dignity and safety preventing abuse on vulnerable people in the society? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can we truly restore dignity and the safety we yearn for if we do not deeply connect with each other? And can Christianity practically help us in doing so? How can victims of abuse and violence in church, apart from reconciliation with the church, be able to heal both emotionally and psychologically outside church and regain wholeness? Are the hierarchies in church, hierarchies of abuse and violence? And are we victims of our own imagination and how does the church portray God today?
Panel 2: Youth, Social Justice and Peace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need gospel identity for youth radicalization. Superiority complex hinders proper engagement. There are appropriate protocols to be used to get things done than violence and key stakeholders have a role in youth engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote contextual theology of justice and reconciliation. Engage theological reflection and community-based research that confronts structural violence linking faith with advocacy for equality. Teaching the right doctrine. Appropriate nurturing should start at home. Handling uniformed generation is to be informed yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited practical models for gospel informed activism. Underexplored intersection of Theology, policy & Psychology. The Cyber awareness of youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can gospel-informed activism be systematic integrated into national and community peace Frameworks? In what ways can reduce to Youth Spirituality and identity formation reduce vulnerability to extremist ideologies. What interdisciplinary models best link faith Policy and social innovation for sustainable peace in African contexts.
Panel 3: Nexus between Violence, Social Justice and Peacebuilding;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations enlighten African communities to the possibility that conflicts can be resolved, and macro changes can be achieved using non-violent alternatives, in keeping with the Gospel of peace that teaches peace, reconciliation, human dignity, and reverence for human life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> African theologians and the church, as custodians of the Gospel of peace, can steadily and innovatively enculturate (using their own language and culture) the Gospel of peace by leveraging technological tools towards building a new consciousness. Africa can borrow a lesson from "The Little Sisters of Jesus." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These did not come out in the presentation, and so I did not capture them. Many times, you hear this when the presenter talks about the limitations of his studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the Generation Z movement in Kenya exemplify a non-violent alternative to Africa's historic violent revolutions in the push for socio-economic and political change? What is the role of social media in the success of such non-violent movements?

Breakout Sessions

Panel 3: Nexus between Violence, Social Justice and Peacebuilding;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is need for African theologians and the church to explore Techno-Theology as a powerful tool for creating a new African consciousness disengaged from violence and fastened in the Gospel of peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africans can become a formidable force that fights off their foes to repossess their position and resources without using violence, but by force, as stated by Jesus, “From the days of John, the Baptist, until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence and the violent take it by force” (Mathew 11:12, n.d.) 		
Panel 4: Youth, Violence and Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconciliation and justice to be rooted in God’s word • When young people are involved in leadership, peace becomes participatory, justice becomes generational, and flourishing becomes visible • The use of practical theology through ecclesial reformation and integrational mentorship in preparing young generation to take leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating pipeline of leadership with cultural practices and Church values to influence leadership. • Strategizing ways of bridging the generational gap between the old and the young in participatory leadership • Integrating biblical and cultural values in empowering young generations for today’s leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gap between the Church and cultural practices in empowering and influencing young people in Justice, reconciliation, and human flourishing • Implementation of the Church and public policies in empowering the young generation towards leadership that promotes justice, reconciliation, and human flourishing. • The integration of biblical foundations of leadership and cultural practices in preparing the young generation in order to bring impact on reconciliation, justice, and human flourishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What strategies should be put in place in order to enable young generation to lead, impact and transform Africa today? • What are the key factors that enables or hinder young people’s empowerment in promoting social justice, reconciliation and human flourishing in Africa today? • What strategies can be employed to effectively empower young people in leadership in order to promote justice, reconciliation, and human flourishing, and what role can their involvement in decision-making process, education, and community and engagement play in fostering positive social change
Panel 5: Post Conflict Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With reference to Matthew 5:38-39; in the presence of conflict we should respond to violence in love. • The cry for peace in Africa is continuous. • Conflict leads to increased vulnerability, loss of life, properties and human dignity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courage is required in order to address the systemic root cause of conflict. • More research needed to address the issue of Christians who have lost faith. • TVET courses offered to the refugees; research and driven programs should be considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is need for more research in the area of reconciliation and nonviolence approach to conflicts in Africa. • Normalization of conflicts and insufficient knowledge about conflict resolution. • Less attention to justice and reconciliation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the applicability of peace to those hurting? • What are the practical ways of reclaiming peace among Christians.

DAY 2

Major insights

Core Recommendations (The 'Way Forward') Interdisciplinary perspectives proposed.

Research Gap

Research Questions

FACULTY PANEL 1: Social Justice, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace: An Interdisciplinary Conversation

- Bringing Pax Africana into focus in the midst of other historical but unjust Paxes with focus on building peace community through the framework of Ubuntu.
- Africa is facing digital violence, paradoxically Christianity is growing in Africa.
- Sharing the suffering of those affected by cyber violence and land conflict.

- Cultivate a new national character by bringing together Gospel Pax Christi and African Ubuntu to create a new paradigm of peacebuilding.
- Connect the taking of land to violence
- If Christ is our peace, then every code we make from technology need to promote the Gospel of peace.

- Need of Afrocentric relaunch to a conscientization for peace building in African society from punishment to restorative justice.
- Christ dismantles the world of violence, and the Church becomes therefore a haven for people’s protection.
- Link between Conference theme and the project on the Impacts of indoor and outdoor heat exposure on maternal and neonatal health in rural Kenya.

- Where do we get the founding narrative to talk about new humanity?
- How can African identity forge a new model for peace?
- How can technology be used to promote the Gospel of peace and overcome violence in our societies?

Breakout Sessions

<p>FACULTY PANEL 2: Social Justice, Violence, and Peace-making: A Conversation on Kenya's Experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land as a Root of Injustice and Conflict: Historical injustices around land ownership in Kenya, dating back to 1698, continue to fuel conflict, with weak legal frameworks and elite capture exacerbating the issue. • Healthcare Inequities as Structural Violence: Kenya's healthcare system reflects structural and distributional violence, especially in cancer care, where late diagnosis and resource disparities are prevalent. • Pastoral leadership is an underutilized but vital resource for peacebuilding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • System Dynamics in Health Policy: Applying systems theory and justice theory to healthcare reform, including performance indices and decentralized diagnostics. • Education, Theology, and Media in Peacebuilding: Leveraging education, interfaith dialogue, and media literacy to foster cultural awareness, critical thinking, and community cohesion. • Restorative Justice and Legal Reform: Combining historical analysis, legal studies, and ethics to advocate for land restitution, public apologies, and compensation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient Integration of Ethics in Education: School curricula lack strong emphasis on ethics, tribalism, and corruption, which are critical to long-term peacebuilding. • Under-recognition of Pastoral Leadership: Religious leaders are often sidelined in national peace processes despite their grassroots influence and potential for mediation. • Lack of Implementation of Land Commission Reports: Despite multiple reports and recommendations, there is little follow-through on land justice and restitution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Christian perspectives on Just War theory in conflict-prone areas like Lamu? • How can pastoral leadership be systematically integrated into national peacebuilding frameworks? • What are effective models for recognizing and compensating historical landowners in Kenya?
<p>Faculty Panels Q& A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a Christian perspective, the blood of Christ is thicker than the tribal ties, but practice is still needed. • Readiness to pay the price of making change happen. • Climate change contributes much to violence in rural areas of Africa. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of integrity are needed in all sociopolitical systems to address issues in truth. • People need to respect cultures as God's cultures for peace to prevail. • Faith with action will lead to the true one humanity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving from describing to analyzing problems in order to find right solutions to Africa's issues. • Link between mainstream media and social media to address Africa's problems. • Moving from "violence" news to "peace" news on media news time like TV to enhance a culture of peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we practically address the issue of tribalism in Africa? • Does the blood of Christ inform our voting patterns in Africa? • How does intellectual work, in an interdisciplinary way, become activism for peace in Africa?
<p>DAY 2: Breakout III</p>				
<p>PANEL 1: Church, State, Violence and Peacemaking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter- and intra-faith solidarity are crucial for peacebuilding and national cohesion in Kenya. The study shows that collaboration between Muslims and Christians strengthens social harmony and helps counter religious extremism and violence. • Faith-based organizations, religious agencies serve as vital agents of social justice, peace and development. Both Christian and Muslim groups have played essential roles in education, healthcare, and poverty reduction, showing that faith cooperation has tangible societal benefits. • Encourage joint socio-economic projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical interdisciplinary perspectives were proposed? • Strengthen structured and intentional interfaith dialogue platforms, especially at individual levels. A strong emphasis on Talk, Talk and Talk. • Integrate interfaith education: Get to know more about each other, would curb stereotyping and enhance tolerance, promote peaceful co-existence. • Inevitably, religious entities must seek to sort out their internal issues in the efforts of collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited empirical data on the outcomes of interfaith peace initiatives in Kenya. • Lack of gender-inclusive approaches in interfaith and intra-faith collaborations. • Insufficient theological engagement and documentation on shared values across religions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can interfaith solidarity be institutionalized in national peace and development frameworks? • What role can women and youth play in strengthening Christian-Muslim collaboration in Kenya? • How can theological education better prepare religious leaders for interfaith engagement

Breakout Sessions

PANEL 2: Christianity, Violence, and Social Justice

- The things we love more, “being Evangelical or being known as a Christian,” is the very same thing that is killing us. Jesus is what we need.
- The redeemed are supposed to be spiritually violent if we are to reach out to the unreached.
- No human efforts can redeem the world. While Christian engagement is like a spoon of water poured into an ocean, let us not give up in engaging the world through education, prayer, and skill sets.

- We need “compromise” [skills or education] if we will become catalyst of peace in this broken world
- Moving forward the Church needs to focus on Jesus than Christianity.
- Truth reconciliation should be both structural and spiritual

- If “Christianity or being evangelical is what is killing us. What does it mean when we say we need Jesus only?”
- Research needs to be done on God. If God is all Powerful and Loving, why does he not act on the violence inflicted on Africa?
- There is still pain in areas where we proclaim Peace had come. Can real healing be achieved?

- Who is this “God” we follow who loves Christians and hates Muslims?
- Looking at the prevailing violence and conflict in Africa. Why is it that Africans don’t learn from history?
- If researchers say that being Evangelical or being Christian is what is killing us. Are we advocating for another religion?

PANEL 3: Politics, Violence, and Peacebuilding

- Poverty and Violence as Relational Breakdowns: Africa’s crises are fundamentally relational rather than purely material or political. Land-based conflicts across Africa stem from a rupture in human and divine relationships, where land, meant to be a divine trust, becomes an idol of identity and exclusion. Poverty is a brokenness in relationships with God, self, others, and creation, noting that unwise aid and dependency only deepen this fracture rather than heal it.
- The Psychological and Spiritual Dimensions of Injustice: Chronic land conflicts erode communal trust and religious solidarity, producing “psychological war zones” even within faith communities. Harmful charity leads to psychological poverty among recipients and a God-complex among donors—thus both sides of the aid equation are spiritually deformed.
- Agency, Stewardship, and the Prophetic Role of the Church: A shift toward Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD), where communities harness their God-given resources, initiative, and creativity instead of waiting for external saviours.

- Integrating Theology and Development Practice: Institutions of faith and learning should embed biblical stewardship, dignity, and peacebuilding within their development programs. Theologians and practitioners must work hand-in-hand to interpret Scripture as a resource for social and economic transformation, not just spiritual piety.
- Operationalizing the “Doing WITH” Methodology in Church Missions: Instead of “doing for” the poor or the displaced, the Church should engage in “doing with” communities—listening, learning, and co-creating solutions.
- Re-theologizing Land and Resource Ownership: The Church should articulate and advocate a theology of land as covenant, not commodity—transforming land from a site of conflict to a symbol of communion. This requires contextual theology, policy dialogue, and community-based land stewardship initiatives.

- The absence of robust frameworks linking biblical theology to socio-economic and land policies across African states.
- The lack of measurable tools to assess the impact of aid or Church interventions on recipients’ dignity, agency, and psychological wellbeing.
- Insufficient theological engagement with indigenous systems of resource sharing and peacebuilding.

- How can the African Church develop measurable models to assess whether its interventions promote dignity and reconciliation rather than dependency and division?
- In what ways can biblical land theology be applied to reform land governance and peace processes in Africa’s conflict zones?
- What new theological-ethical frameworks can equip local churches to resist both aid dependency and militarized politics, embodying instead the “one new humanity” envisioned in Ephesians 2:15?

Breakout Sessions

PANEL 4: Gender, Justice, Violence, and Peace-making.

- The need to reconstruct our understandings of masculinity and femininity
- The need to expose and transform destructive social patterns, through biblically grounded counterstrategies.
- Purpose to make informed choices, discovering purpose, and living faithfully—both individually and communally
- Theologically, empower both boys and girls to build bridges of understanding, participate in holistic ministry, and grow together in spiritual and social maturity

- Advocacy for meaningful participation of every member of the society.
- Rights and Responsibility strengthening to assure every member of the society their fundamental human rights, culturally sensitivity and uphold gender equality and human rights.
- Transformational Development would mean boys empowerment: visible, valued, and given the tools to thrive—their future becomes bright, and by extension, so does ours.
- Empowered boys a significant strategy in reducing violence against women and girls, strengthening social protection, and achieving truly transformative and inclusive development

- To what extent is the protection spirit behind the gospel of peace a factor in how people are educated or convicted to change or adopt new practices need motivation greater than selves.?
- To what extend has Jesus promise not to leave us alone as orphans informed or influenced the protection and participation of boys in their development quest?
- How are our social and other systems supporting boy child empowerment?

- To what extent does the boy child enjoy equally as the girl child, their constitutional rights of the child.
- To what extent should we apply the affirmative action: Should we pursue equitably or equally?
- What needs to be done to our law to amendment it, as it imagines the boy or men are not default victims over girls of household violence?

PANEL 5: Church, Justice, and Peacemaking

- Part of human existence is to experience conflict but how the conflict is resolved matters
- The problem of peace is justice deficit
- Culture of impunity undermines peace building
- Unchecked killings and violence erodes trust and fuel further conflict

- Empowerment of the vigilante groups
- Legislation of land use
- Local peace initiatives
- Victim support

- What are the new ideas that contribute to conflict resolution?
- How is your work addressing concept of sensation of the gospel of peace in Nigeria?
- How is your study address 'practicalization' of conflict resolution as a new profound sense of patriotism?

- In what specific ways has Nigerian criminal justice failed to hold accountable the ethnoreligious conflict perpetrators?
- How is the circle of justice deficit promoting continued violence?
- How do Nigerians perceive the relationship between lack of justice and prospect of genuine peace?

DAY 3

Major insights

Core Recommendations (The 'Way Forward') Interdisciplinary perspectives proposed.

Research Gap

Research Questions

First Partners Panel (PRN, World Renew, AEA, Lang- ham Litera- ture)

- Implementing solutions that are based on data-driven insights to building the Africa God
- Working to strengthen the church as an agent of reconciliation.
- Partnering with AIU to shape generations of leaders
- The role the church can play in catalyzing peace in violence prone regions.
- Bringing young people together to offer insight into peace building.

- Various models of peace building, reconciliation, restoration of communities that can be evaluated on effectiveness based on research.
- Organizations to actively seek partnerships and deepen research and areas on what the church can do to become a reconciling force on the continent.
- Collaboration for editorial support and publication of outputs of the conference and the ongoing research project
- Making the published outputs of conference & research project accessible and affordable

- What is the impact of the programs that the organizations are implementing?
- Research to evaluate and improve the methodology agencies are using in communities.
- The Church is not equipped in reconciliation.
- There is not enough collaboration among organizations.

- How can the church be a reconciling force at the community and continental level?
- Churches are sites of conflict and church leaders are often seen with corrupt politicians – there is need to go back research the narrative of the gospel that's at the ground.
- How can agencies working in peace and reconciliation partner with theological institutions to integrate these into the curricula?
- What is the Church and Christian agencies doing regarding the youth who are rising and suffering

Breakout Sessions

**2nd
PARTNERS
PANEL
(Mission One,
World Vision,
Peace Catalyst
International,
Great Lakes
Initiative)**

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant churches, train local missionaries who are more contextually sensitive through evangelism and economic empowerment while exemplifying humility, integrity, listening, learning • Various tools used in peace building and preventing conflict – context analysis through making sense of turbulent contexts, good enough context analysis for rapid response, Do no harm for faith groups to prevent conflict; global peace index • Empowering children as peace builders so that they don't see violence as a means of solving problems. • Change the narrative by creating spaces for Christian leaders to reimagine a new "we" to embody the Gospel of peace. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biennial conference as a space for learning for partner organizations. • What can Christian organizations do in other-faith dominant regions to promote the gospel of peace that they may never hear through the way Christian agencies work to show the love of Christ. • Need for bare-knuckle honest evaluation of whether they are part of the problem – methodology/funding/tools. (Neo-colonial Agenda) and how they can be part of the solution. • Partnering with AIU and other agencies to do research & apply findings to the work of the partner organizations & to take movement resulting to the grassroots. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness to self-evaluation vis a vis violence & Christianity • Collaboration between NGOs, INGOs, Para-church with a focus to building the capacity of the Church • Blind spots related to working model, funding, area of focus – systems that are already in motion/maintenance of status quo. Or power dynamics to change organization with reference to individual perceived roles. • How can we develop a movement of faith leaders who are determined to make Africa different. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GenZ protests raise need to humbly ask why have national systems not been working in the countries in the region? • What are the notions embedded in the gospel inherited make Christians in Africa part of oppression? • Mining as an issue of interest as violence in many areas is centered on control of mined resources • Whereas the west provides solutions for peace building, yet Christianity is declining/ What is the source of methodology of Christian NGOs/what does the a 360° view reveal- what is the future for Africa? • What are the notions embedded in the gospel inherited make Christians in Africa part of oppression • Does the work of Christian NGOs/INGOs empower or disempower the Church? • |
|---|--|---|---|



5.0 Emerging Research Agenda

This section provides a brief overview of the key research areas from which the emerging research questions were developed based on the discussions on different thematic areas of the conference.

Each area highlights critical intersections between theology, socio-economic realities, culture, and ethics within contemporary African contexts.

For every research theme, three interdisciplinary questions are proposed, ensuring a comprehensive engagement with theological interpretation, social and economic dynamics, and cultural or ethical considerations. The full set of detailed research questions is available on request from ISAR.

5.1. Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace in Africa

The interplay between glory, violence, and the gospel of peace in Africa raises profound theological, sociocultural, and ethical questions about how Christian faith engages with the continent's complex realities of power, conflict, and hope. As African societies navigate histories of colonial violence, political oppression, and ethnic strife, the Christian message of peace and reconciliation must be re-examined through contextual and liberative lenses.

5.2. Eco-theological Perspectives on Climate Change and Health

The convergence of climate change, health crises, and social conflict in Africa invites a renewed theological engagement with the meanings of glory, violence, and peace. Climate-induced violence—manifested through resource conflicts, displacement, food insecurity, and health vulnerabilities—reveals how environmental degradation disrupts the moral and spiritual fabric of African communities. The Gospel of Peace, therefore, must be reimagined not only as reconciliation between people but also as reconciliation between humanity, creation, and God.

Emerging Research Agenda (Continued)

5.3. Violence and Conflict are Wired within the Imaginary Landscape of Africa

Africa's historical, cultural, and socio-political narratives often depict the continent through the lenses of violence, conflict, and struggle - what some scholars term the imaginary landscape of Africa. This imagery, rooted in colonial representations, postcolonial realities, and global media framings, continues to shape perceptions of African identity, governance, and development.

However, beneath these narratives lies a complex interplay of structural inequalities, resource-based tensions, and resilience strategies that define African societies. Understanding violence and conflict in this context demands critical engagement with political, economic, and cultural factors. Thus, consideration should be given to the interplay between governance and violence.

5.4. Church Leadership and Violence Inside the Church

The African Church stands as a powerful moral and spiritual institution, yet it also mirrors the contradictions of the societies it serves. Within the walls of the church—where peace, reconciliation, and love should reign—violence sometimes manifests in subtle and overt forms: spiritual abuse, gender-based violence, power struggles, exclusion, and authoritarian leadership styles. This paradox between the Gospel of Peace and the lived reality of violence within church structures raises critical questions about theology, leadership ethics, and ecclesial accountability.

In many African contexts, church leadership has been intertwined with socio-political hierarchies and patriarchal norms that perpetuate violence—symbolic, structural, and psychological. The theology of glory has at times been misinterpreted to reinforce domination, triumphalism, and unaccountable authority, undermining the gospel's call to humility, service, and peace. To confront this, new theological reflections are needed to reconstruct leadership models grounded in servanthood, justice, healing, and inclusivity.

5.5. Youth Leadership and Peacebuilding in Society

Africa's youthful population represents both the greatest potential for transformation and a critical site of vulnerability in contexts marked by violence, inequality, and moral uncertainty. While many young people in Africa experience marginalization, unemployment, and political exclusion—factors that often fuel social unrest—they also embody creativity, faith, and resilience that can drive peace and reconciliation. Within the framework of Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace, youth leadership becomes a theological and ethical question about how the message of Christ's peace can be translated into lived realities of justice, inclusion, and nonviolence.

The theology of glory—when misinterpreted as triumphalism or self-promotion—can alienate youth from authentic discipleship and service. Conversely, a theology rooted in humility, sacrifice, and community-building offers a counter-cultural model for leadership that heals divisions and restores dignity. Thus, peacebuilding among African youth must draw from faith-based ethics, biblical narratives of reconciliation, and indigenous traditions of communal harmony, positioning young people not merely as recipients of peace but as its active agents.

5.6. Children and Violence in Society

Children in Africa occupy a paradoxical position, they are celebrated as symbols of hope and continuity, yet they often bear the heaviest burdens of violence, poverty, and social instability. From armed conflict and domestic abuse to child labor, neglect, and exploitation, the experience of violence in childhood reveals deep moral and structural fractures in African societies. Within the theological framework of Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace, the question arises: How does the message of Christ's peace speak to the suffering, protection, and empowerment of children in violent contexts?

The notion of glory, often associated with power, success, and adult authority, can obscure children's vulnerability and silence their voices. Reinterpreting glory through the lens of Christ's humility and identification with the least among us (Matthew 18:1–5) calls for a renewed theological vision where children are not passive victims but valued agents of God's kingdom. The Gospel of Peace thus becomes a moral imperative for the Church and society to protect children, heal trauma, and nurture environments that foster justice, safety, and spiritual flourishing.

5.7. Migrant Communities as Recruiting Grounds for Fueling Violence

Migration, whether driven by economic hardship, conflict, persecution, climate change, or search for opportunity, has become a defining feature of contemporary Africa. Migrant communities often find themselves living in fragile social spaces characterized by marginalization, identity uncertainty, economic vulnerability, and limited state protection. These conditions make such communities prime targets for recruitment by violent extremist networks, militias, gangs, and political actors who exploit their desperation, alienation, and search for belonging.

Within the theological framework of Glory, Violence, and the Gospel of Peace, the realities faced by migrant communities raise critical questions about justice, human dignity, and the Church's responsibility to protect and empower vulnerable populations. Violent groups often promise glory, in the form of identity, power, purpose, or liberation, while the Gospel offers a radically different vision rooted in peace, reconciliation, and human flourishing. Exploring this tension is essential for understanding and addressing the dynamics of violence within migrant settings.

5.8. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) by Youth for Peacebuilding

Artificial Intelligence represents a new frontier for expressing the Gospel of Peace, offering innovative platforms through which Christian values and nonviolent principles can be communicated widely. Youth are emerging as digital missionaries, leveraging AI to shape online discourse, promote reconciliation, and foster a culture of ethical engagement rooted in faith. However, this empowerment comes with significant ethical tensions, as the use of AI raises concerns around manipulation, privacy, and algorithmic bias, challenging young digital evangelists to balance technological opportunity with moral responsibility.

Emerging Research Agenda (Continued)

5.9.

Nexus Between Scarcity of Resources, Existing Resources, and Violence

The nexus between scarcity of resources, existing resources, and violence highlights the complex interplay of material limitations, social structures, and human behavior. Resource scarcity, whether of land, water, food, or economic opportunities, creates conditions of competition, stress, and insecurity within communities. When essential needs cannot be met, tensions rise, and the likelihood of violent conflict increases.

Existing resources, such as social networks, cultural institutions, governance mechanisms, and community traditions, can either mitigate or exacerbate these tensions. Strong institutions, effective leadership, and cooperative community practices often serve as buffers against conflict, providing mechanisms for equitable resource distribution, negotiation, and dispute resolution. Conversely, weak institutions or unevenly distributed resources may intensify competition, marginalization, and social unrest.

The interaction between scarcity and existing resources determines the intensity and type of conflict that emerges. Scarcity in the absence of mediating social or institutional resources tends to escalate into violence, while scarcity managed through adaptive, resilient structures can be navigated peacefully. Understanding this nexus is crucial for designing interventions that prevent conflict, promote social cohesion, and leverage both material and social resources for sustainable development.

Conclusion

Conducting research across these areas is vital for understanding and addressing the complex dynamics of violence, leadership, and peacebuilding in African contexts. Exploring the intersections of glory, violence, and the Gospel of Peace sheds light on how moral and spiritual frameworks can mitigate conflict, while eco-theological perspectives on climate change and health reveal the links between environmental stressors and human vulnerability. Examining violence as embedded in Africa's social and cultural imaginaries, alongside issues within church leadership and the experiences of children and youth, highlights both systemic and intergenerational dimensions of conflict. Investigating migrant communities as potential sites for recruitment into violence and the innovative use of AI by youth for peacebuilding underscores the evolving mechanisms through which violence and reconciliation unfold. Finally, analysing the nexus between resource scarcity, existing resources, and violence provides critical insights into structural causes of conflict, enabling the design of targeted interventions. Together, this body of research is crucial for informing policy, shaping ethical leadership, fostering resilient communities, and promoting sustainable peace in Africa.

6.0 RESOURCE

Mobilization & Management

This section highlights financial aspects of the conference. It is worth noting that the 2025 Biennial International Conference, in total, raised KES 3,866,525 against total expenses of KES 3,587,468.

Strong cost control measures were instrumental in achieving this positive outcome, offsetting a significant shortfall in projected revenue. It is presently a going concern for the University.



Revenue Performance

The conference achieved 58.8% of its original revenue target, with actual collections of KES 3,866,525 against a budget of KES 6,574,360.

6.1.1 Key Revenue Highlights

6.1.1.1 Primary Revenue Drivers

- i. Partner Contributions: The largest source of actual revenue was KES 2,004,200.
- ii. ISAR Contribution: The department contributed USD 10,000 towards the conference.

Financial and Strategic Partners as listed, but not limited to those, on the conference and research project webpage (<https://www.aiu.ac.ke/2025-biennial-conference/>) are: African Enterprise; Association of Evangelicals for Africa; American Friends; Antioch Network; CORAT Africa; Grate Lakes Initiative Institute (GLI); Langham Publishing; Mesa Global; Mission One; Parklands Baptist Church; Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (PRN); Peace Catalyst International (PCI); Tear Fund; World Renew; and World Vision.

Conference service providers stepped up their support for the conference by providing discounts in price reduction or additional free services. The conference steering committee is very grateful for the services and generosity of these providers: Adeet, Anix Entertainment Limited, Glorioustec Designs, Homecare Retreat Center, Kiboko Supplies, Kijiji Resort, Madethnic Kenya, Mpeka General Enterprises, Subiaco Retreat Center and Resurrection Gardens.

6.1.1.2 Notable Line-Item Performers:

East African (Non-Student) Delegates led participant-based revenue by generating KES 165,000.

6.1.1.3 Significant Shortfalls

- i. Exhibitors and Alumni: These streams did not generate any revenue against a combined budget of KES 678,160. The exhibitors at the event consisted of partners.
- ii. Churches: Contributed KES 100,000, which was significantly below the KES 1,270,000 budget. The contribution came from Parklands Baptist Church.



EXPENSE ANALYSIS

Expense management was critical. Total actual expenses were **KES 3,587,468**, which is **77.5%** of the total budget (KES 4,630,154).

6.2.1 Key Expense Variances

6.2.1.1 Areas of Overspending

- i. Conference Materials: Slightly over budget by KES 139,446, primarily due to branded items. There were limited instances of suppliers updating their invoices at delivery.
- ii. Accommodation: Exceeded budget by KES 55,532. This was due to emergencies with housing the logistics team facilitating the guests.
- iii. Planning Meeting Meals: Nearly doubled the budget (KES 75,000 actual vs. KES 38,400 budget).

6.2.1.2 Significant Cost Savings:

- i. Program Costs: Drastically under budget by KES 573,768, as costs for facilitators and sponsorships were not incurred. Sponsorship subsidies were removed in the final reporting as they are not an actual expense.
- ii. Secretariat Operations: Saved KES 286,564 against the budget, with notable underspending on transportation and stationery.



BUDGET VARIANCE: FINAL SURPLUS

- i. Projected Surplus: KES 1,944,206
- ii. Final Actual Surplus: KES 279,057

Analysis: The variance from the initial projection is attributable to optimistic revenue forecasts for several income streams. However, the disciplined management of expenditures ensured that the event remained profitable. The event is deemed to be a going concern for the University.



7.0 CONFERENCE Review, Recommendations & Conclusion



REVIEW

7.1 CONFERENCE REVIEW

In addition to the special session convened for the Steering Committee dedicated to reviewing the conference, review and feedback came from an online feedback form and the Partners Consultation meeting, which was convened for this purpose.

7.1.1. Post Conference Partners' Review, Recommendations, and Commitments

Partners shared their feedback on the Biennial Conference, in the Partners' Review meeting of November 18, as well as in conversations with Steering Committee members.

The following were applauded:

- i. Outstanding organization, both in terms of knowledge management and venue – making it overall a successful Conference;
- ii. The high quality of the presentations, both plenary and in break-out panels, and portend good publications;
- iii. All partners acknowledged that the Conference had added value to their work, especially the special panel for all the partners, which provided an opportunity for partners to highlight their work in relation to the focus of the conference;
- iv. The food service and quality was appreciated;

The following were highlighted as key areas for improvement for enhancing effective partner participation:

- i. Planning started rather late, creating a ripple effect on all aspects of partner engagement in planning and contributing effectively towards resourcing of the conference;

Conference Review, Recommendations & Conclusion (Continued)

- i. A communication platform for all partners would have improved communication, sharing information on the Research and Conference, expectations and collaboration;
- ii. The ending of the day program at 6.00 pm may have affected the registration for the conference for commuter participants and low attendance of the later afternoon break-out session. Thus it was recommended to aim at ending the day program at 4.30 pm, to allow for non-residential participants.

In response to the clarification on the way forward, the partners affirmed their continued commitment to a shared journey, on grappling together around the Conference and Research agenda. Partners committed to engage as consulted on the three tracks:

- i. Editorial (editing abstracts and papers for publishing); Langham Publishing is committed to engaging in the Editorial process. An Editorial Subcommittee was being established to lead and coordinate this.
- ii. Research (engaging with the research areas and questions which emerged). AEA, PRN, Tear Fund, World Renew, and World Vision committed to exploring research engagement in the areas and questions related to their work. A Research Subcommittee was being established to lead and coordinate this work, in conjunction with the Office of Registrar for Innovation, and Community Engagement (ORICE).
- iii. Spaces (convenings for discourse and knowledge generation, through seminars and conferences). AEA, Peace Catalyst International, and World Vision committed to engaging on these. ISAR to liaise with relevant University faculties, institutes, Centres, and Departments to lead on this work.

Partners committed to continuing the journey with the Project Steering Committee on areas and questions related to their work in these three tracks. The Partners requested clear communication from ISAR on the way forward and the expectations for continued engagement.

2. POST CONFERENCE ONLINE FEEDBACK

Sixteen responses were received through the feedback form highlighting an overall high level of satisfaction with the conference, its relevance, and the speakers and presenters. The speakers were noted as a the most valuable session in the conference.

Areas noted as needing improvement included the organization of the registration table and volunteers, distribution of conference packages, online connectivity for virtual participants and presenters, transportation from the airport, early planning, more partners including government official, church leaders and students from other universities, preconference communication flow and timelines, and preparation for breakout presentation slide projection.

Meals and facilities received a 50% and 56% rating respectively; sessions, and support staff both received a 62% rating; while hospitality and date and time received 69 and 75% rating.

Majority of delegates, 81% said they had sufficient opportunity to network and while majority respondents are very likely to attend future conferences and to recommend them to their friends and colleagues.



1

Academic

Increase the engagement and exposure of AIU faculty and graduates to research and conferences by:

- i. Adding participation and presentation of academic papers at conferences as an academic requirement for graduation.
- ii. comprehensive training of postgraduate students and faculty for chair and rapporteur duties at the Biennial Research Conferences and student exposure to rapporteuring and conferencing.

2

Marketing, Communication, Registration & Logistics

- i. The online Registration form and payment of fees should have been linked, to ease the registration process;
- ii. The management of the Registration Table (and the volunteer teams) on the Opening Day was rather discordant
- iii. The management of online presenter-participation would have improved if the organizers had engaged in a dry-run prior to the start of the Conference;

3

Budgeting & Fundraising

- i. Realistic Revenue Forecasting: Base future budgets on more conservative and evidence-based projections, particularly for external partners and exhibitors.
- ii. Enhanced Partner Engagement Strategy: Document and formalize the approach that successfully secured partner funding to ensure its repeatability. Approaching key partners, large organizations or churches, earlier will lead to higher financial commitments.
- iii. Financial Planning: Incorporate timely payment requests to the University. Avoiding unilateral promises to suppliers will preserve relationships and prevent friction within departments. Sourcing suppliers with proper internal processes will prevent invoices being updated on delivery. There were multiple instances where invoices on delivery were higher than the quotations.

Recommendations



Recommendations

Partnership

- i. Start planning with partners earlier to allow for their engagement in planning and contributing effectively towards resourcing of the conference;
- ii. A communication platform for all partners to improve communication, sharing information on the Research and Conference, expectations and collaboration;
- iii. The ending of the day program at 6.00 pm may have affected the registration for the conference for commuter participants and low attendance of the later afternoon break-out session. Thus it was recommended to aim at ending the day program at 4.30 pm, to allow for non-residential participants.

Institutional

- i. Challenging the institutional culture of resistance to paying for events but expecting the benefits including participation, conference package, and meals.
- ii. Broader institutional policies on semi-autonomy of ISAR, and other income generating units, with strong accountability and audit frameworks to allow for fundraising and implementation of larger projects with partners without the limitations of longer requisition authorization delays in vendor payment processes necessitated by shared financial accounts, and easier accountability to partners.



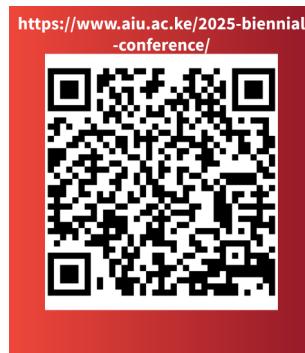
The Biennial International Research Conference stands out as a well-executed, high-impact event that effectively integrated marketing, communication, attendance management, and logistical coordination. The insights gained provide a solid foundation for strengthening ISAR's future conferences and has positioned AIU as a continental hub for academic research and innovation. The conference encountered logistical and financial friction points, primarily relating to institutional review of procurement authorization and approval processes and the sensitive issue of resistance to payment by the AIU community. The report notes that despite the overall operational success, there were "minor delays from late budget approvals and interdependent subcommittee timelines," which directly points to a need for an institutional review to ensure procurement authorization and approval processes are effective and efficient—a key final recommendation. This need for timely budget processes also hampered effective supplier engagement and vendor relationships, as seen with the vendor's late approval for catering services. Furthermore, the report's added insight that participation in the conference was judged by previous conferences that were free and therefore resistance to payment by the AIU community highlights a significant financial and cultural challenge that affected attendance and budgeting. To address future financial and administrative bottlenecks, the report recommends initiating "integration between the registration platform and the payment system to avoid manual processing and delays in conference fee remittances".

Conclusion

The success of the conference, which drew 274 registrations, also needs to be contextualized by the internal and external dissemination of information and the preparation of the staff. Regarding data and reach, the strategic use of social media led to exceptional virtual viewership, but the internal note points out a factor not detailed in the main body: the link shared by delegates who received it to others. This suggests an unofficial, grassroots marketing channel that contributed to the broad reach, complementing the official comparison of data from previous conferences which presumably informed the "effective pre-event publicity" mentioned in the report. Crucially, the internal note on the need for a review of Human Resource capacity for delivery of the conference signals a recognition that while staff teamwork was praised for resilience, the existing personnel structure may not be optimally organized or sufficiently staffed to handle a high-profile, hybrid event of this scale in the future.

Appendices

- i. [Call for Papers](#)
- ii. [Conference website](#)
- iii. [Full Budget](#)
- iv. [Conference Schedule](#)



BIENNIAL

INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Conference

One New Humanity in Christ:
Glory, Violence, and the Gospel
of Peace in Africa

Conference Budget

BUDGET FOR 2025 BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

REVENUE

	RATE	TOTAL IN KES	ACTUALS	+/-
Conference fee (Call for papers)				
International delegates	100	179,200	25,600.00	153,600
East African Delegates	59	150,000	67,500.00	82,500
AIU Faculty	39	50,000	50,000	-
AIU students	20	10,000		10,000
Registration fees				
Online Participation	20	128,000		128,000
International delegates	50	192,000	19,225.00	172,775
East African (Non-students) delegates	39	325,000	165,000.00	160,000
Kenyan students	19	360,000		360,000
Online AIU Students Participation	8	50,000	25,000.00	25,000
AIU students	13	320,000	80,000.00	240,000
Partners	21,500	2,752,000	2,004,200.00	747,800
ISAR Contribution	16,000	1,280,000	1,280,000.00	-
Faculty	39	200,000	50,000.00	150,000
Exhibitors	173	332,160		332,160
Publications	750	96,000		96,000
Presenters from Partners	39	150,000		150,000
Churches	709	1,270,000	100,000	1,170,000
Alumni	39	100,000		100,000
GRAND TOTAL		6,574,360	3,866,525.00	2,707,835
EXPENSES				
VENUE				
Sub total		632,000.00	546,700	
Program				
Sub total		977,500	403,732	
Publicity				
Sub total		748,604.00	512,104	
Secretariat				
Sub total		858,800.00	572,236	
Conference Materials and Food and Drink				
Sub total		1,413,250.00	1,552,696	
TOTAL EXPENSES		4,630,154	3,587,468	-
BUDGET SURPLUS/DEFICIT		1,944,206	279,057	



AFRICA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

BIENNIAL
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH
Conference

Partners



AEA

Association of
Evangelicals in Africa



Langham
PUBLISHING



CORAT AFRICA

Christian Organizations Research and Advisory Trust of Africa



WorldRenew



PRN Peace &
Reconciliation
Network

A commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA)

World Vision



Mesa Global



GLI



**AFRICAN
ENTERPRISE**



**PEACE CATALYST
INTERNATIONAL**

tearfund



MISSIONONE

Hosted by: Institute for the Study of African Realities (ISAR)