

Religions *for* Peace
UNITED KINGDOM

# End-of-year Report 2023

# Mapping the RfPUK Story


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# A word from the Chair

As 2023 progressed and events unfolded, Religions for Peace UK increasingly recognised the importance of our peace-building work. We see the world's challenges and understand we can all benefit from a multi-faith, innovative, and inclusive response.

Being one of nearly 100 national chapters affiliated over 6 regions, RfPUK brings together not only the vast influence and resources of all faith traditions, but also their spiritual commitment to achieve solutions that reverberates across the UK.

During the past year, when we set out to encourage changemakers to work together, many have come to question the definition of "peace" in our fragmented reality since we seem to be tearing apart at accelerated speeds. In seeking for an adequate approach to take that discussion forward, I came across the following quotation:

> **"There is no path to peace. Peace is the path."**
>
> **Mahatma Gandhi** Non-Violence in Peace & War

It dawned on me that no matter how our concept of "peace" may differ, every single step we take counts as a contributing factor: we are not waiting to reach peace, our actions in bringing equality, justice, sustainability and shared security are already the components of peace. We need not ask "when" we will reach our goal, our dialogue into action to reach goals are compiling into concerted efforts. Such was the theme we held in 2023.

RfPUK shares this work with our UK Women of Faith Network and UK Interfaith Youth Network. Progressing towards a balanced programme with RfP global priorities, our events reached out across England, Scotland and Wales in the past year.

We have been going beyond participation to taking charge of our next steps to plan actions with faith and belief communities. Our projects have been gathering momentum, our participants have enriched our experience, resulting in valuable insights and best practice advice, culminating in a toolkit for the UK Women of Faith Network's work, and a Workbook from the UK Interfaith Youth Network's undertaking. As our initiatives address issues that are best tackled across borders, developing our interconnectedness will enable us to share resources, learn from each other, grow our knowledge and reach for "Different faiths, common action".

RfPUK is much indebted to our trustees, staff, volunteers, faith communities as well as regional and international stake-holders. Looking forward, RfPUK will be utilising our resources to further equip individuals and communities towards bringing about a fairer, safer and more sustainable world. We need participation for dialogue to turn into real plans on the ground.

This is a call to action.
Together we are stronger.



**Cinde Lee**
Chair, Religions of Peace UK

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# Our Impact in 2023 →

**Hosted**
**20+**
**webinars**

**Engaged**
**300**
**participants**
from different faith & beliefs

**Social Media Reach**
**6000+**

**Featured**
**27**
**faith actors**

**Involved**
**35**
**volunteers**



# Who we are

**Religions for Peace United Kingdom is a charitable organisation, we are the independent UK Chapter of Religions for Peace International, an entity accredited to the United Nations and a global multi-religious coalition which has been guided by the vision of a world in which religious communities to cooperate effectively for peace since 1970.**

We are participating in the global mission to go beyond dialogue and bears fruit in common action with communities of faith and the society at large. At the moment our work involves nuclear disarmament education, climate change, inner peace exploration and fighting hate speech.

We share this work with our UK Women of Faith Network and UK Interfaith Youth Network. Together we take forward the strategy to build and strengthen representative, sustainable interreligious mechanisms, to link local, national, regional and global multi-religious structures and forge partnerships with other sectors of society.

**The Global Religions for Peace Movement has independent regional councils and national chapters. Please see full list here.**

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# Different faiths, common action

## How we work



### Convene

Religions for Peace UK encourages peacemakers from faith and belief communities to work together



### Catalyse

Our UK interfaith women & youth networks catalyse grassroots innovation to reach common goals



### Collaborate

We identify shared goals among faith and belief communities and encourage programmes for common action

# The Global Religions for Peace Movement's strategic priorities

**At RfPUK, we follow worldwide strategic objectives, as well as aims that we take upon ourselves in a national context. These goals are consistent with our inter-religious vision of peace and many are built upon our past achievements.**

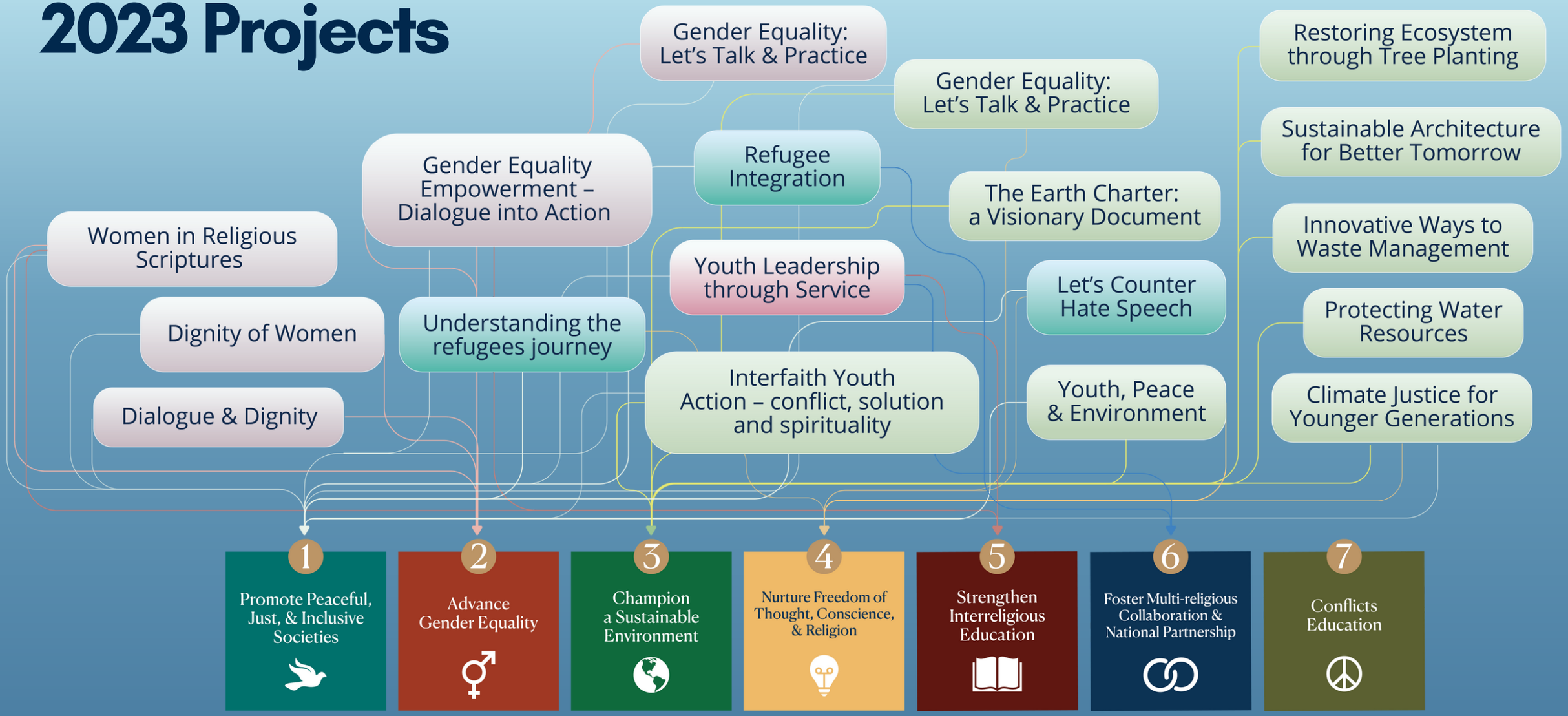
Additionally, each objective is aligned with one or more of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. It is worth mentioning that our strategic goals are interrelated, so progress made towards one goal will positively affect progress towards the others.

1. Promote Peaceful, Just, & Inclusive Societies
2. Advance Gender Equality
3. Champion a Sustainable Environment
4. Nurture Freedom of Thought, Conscience, & Religion
5. Strengthen Interreligious Education
6. Foster Multi-religious Collaboration & National Partnership
7. Conflicts Education

* The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs developed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2016 with the aim of "peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future." The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States, aims to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth while tackling climate change and preserving oceans and forests. It comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and calls for global partnership.
Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

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# 2023 Projects



# UK Women of Faith Network

**The UK Women of Faith Network (UKWFN) brings together diverse women of faith in the UK to work together for peace. The Network further seeks to empower leaders as well as supporters. While leaders hone their practical skills, supporters awaken their drive to become actors.**

Together, they are the substance of any movement. By working together, understanding and appreciating our common interests and concerns, women of faith constitute a formidable force. Taking bold steps to achieve transformation to some of the world's most urgent challenges, promoting religious literacy, overcoming gender-based challenges, we work to showcase leadership of women, the relevance of their spirituality, and how their faith bring positive impact to our society.

## Promoting Religious Literacy

**The Dignity of Women exhibition and discussion sessions** aimed to promote religious literacy across the UK through discussing scriptural excerpts about the dignity of women from 9 faiths. The discussion sessions encouraged participants to take the project into their communities.

Edinburgh, Scotland  Cardiff, Wales  London, England

## Overcoming gender-based challenges by men and women alike

'16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence' Campaign

'Gender Equality Empowerment for All' Symposium

'Visible Advocacy: Interfaith Male Allies in our Midst' campaign

## Showcasing Women in leadership

Women leaders shared their faith stories and discussed how women from their scriptures impact contemporary life

Playlist 1  Playlist 2

Inspirational Women events

Playlist 1

# UK Women of Faith Network






'Gender Equality Empowerment for All' Symposium in London

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Access the toolkit




'Dignity of Women – Scriptural Reflections' in Cardiff



International Women's Day in Edinburgh




Symposium: Male Allies Panel Discussion

# UK Interfaith Youth Network

**UK Interfaith Youth Network (UKIYN) has several main directions in the past year. We continued to showcase interfaith youth serving their communities, and invited project partners to share their work in refugee integration into the UK society.**

We extended invitations to youth to join us through exhibitions civil and academic events, and undertook a full programme addressing the many justice and equity issues related to our eco system and shared security.

## Youth Leadership Through Service

Access all videos by clicking on this link.

EcoSikhs

SRMD London Spiritual Centre (Jain)

Brahma Kumaris UK

Unitarians Gellionnen Chapel

Young Humanists

Hillsong Church UK Community Cafe

## UKIYN EcoPeace Cafe

Climate Change & the Coming Generations

Sustainable Architecture for a Better Tomorrow

The Earth Charter: a Visionary Document

Innovative Ways to Waste Management

Gender Equality: Let's Talk & Practice

Let's Counter Hate Speech

Protecting Water Resources: A Way to Conserve the Ecosystem

Youth, Peace & Environment

Restoring the Ecosystem through Planting Trees

Climate Justice for the Younger Generation: An Intergenerational Dialogue

Access final project report here

## Experience Sharing

Sharing the Refugee Integration journey

Understanding the impact of science & sustainability through climate mobilisation

Be the change! Training on facilitation

Building Community

Mentorship

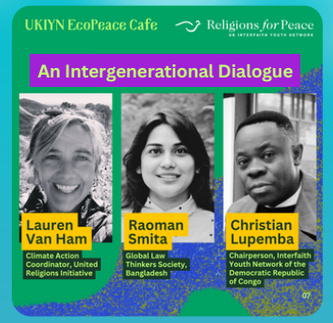
How to implement community-based projects

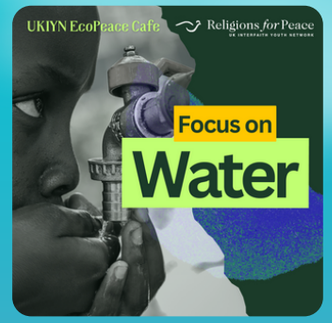
Reflective practices

# UK Interfaith Youth Network



Refugee Integration Summer Camp at Cambers Sands



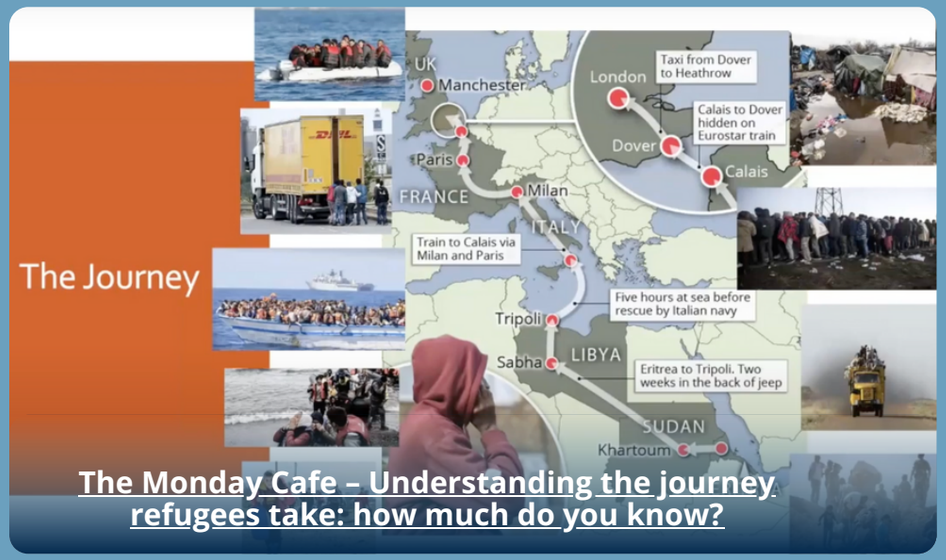













The Monday Cafe – Understanding the journey refugees take: how much do you know?



The Malvern Festival of Ideas




Faith & Belief Forum Interfaith Youth Summit

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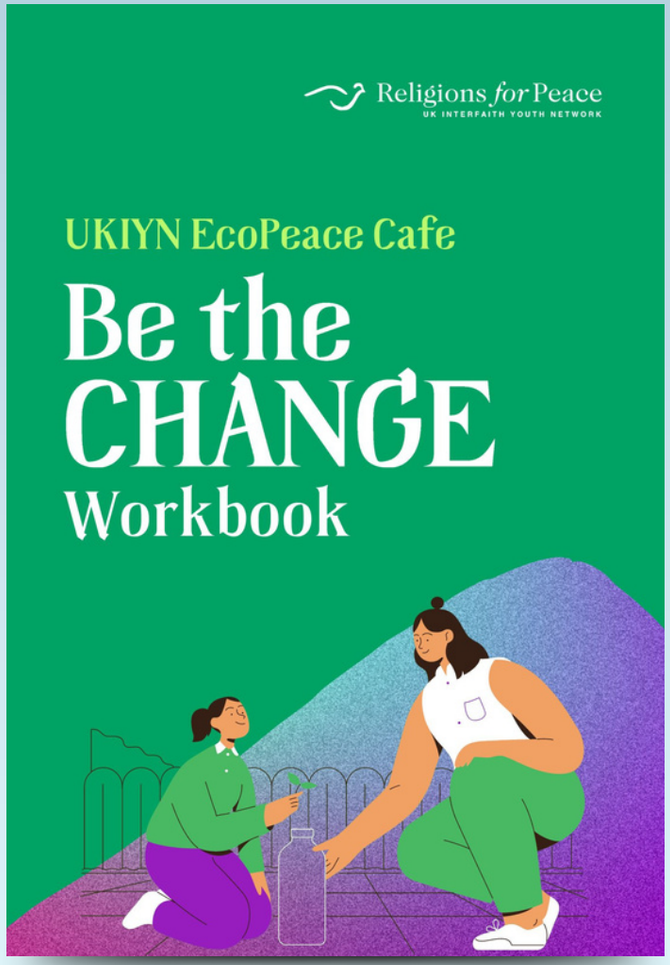
# Action Resource:
## a Toolkit & a Workbook

**In 2023, the RfPUK Team came to realise that the participation of youth, women and people from all walks of life to our events and webinars bring with them their valuable contribution to the important issues we are addressing.**

We started compiling their questions, queries, solutions and comments, as their knowledge and insight enrich each topic and theme they encounter, giving theories, stories and the human touch on the practical level, so we are turning their interjections into a resource to share with all who wish to explore and develop their own action plans for themselves and their communities.

We are like an orchard where people come to plant, contributions to our work in all forms and shapes are our fruits. With the active participation and support we are fellow gardeners, and we hope to offer the collective harvest for all to share.




Access by clicking the covers.

# Conferences, Interfaith Events & Networking

**RfPUK is a part of the worldwide Religions for Peace Movement, we are a constituent member of Religions for Peace Europe on a regional level. We are also an integral part of Religions for Peace International on the global level. Connecting with each other through regular meetings and exchanges to compare efforts, we share results and explore collaboration opportunities. We also work with other interfaith actors within UK and beyond, we are represented in meetings, conferences and participate in talks and events.**



## Faith & Belief Forum Interfaith Youth Summit

UKIYN brought an exhibition to this popular event and introduced youth projects to summit participants.



## Religions for Peace European National Inter-religious Bodies Board meeting in Albania

RfPUK was represented in the ENIB Board meeting, where UK Chair Cinde Lee was appointed Secretary to ENIB. The meeting addressed conflicts in and around Europe, and what actions national chapters are preparing to address the impact in their communities.



## The European Council of Religious Leaders addressed divisions in European communities

RfPUK trustee Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra was part of the Berlin meeting which published the declaration: ***'Spiritual Responses to Contemporary Challenges'***.



## Amazing multi-religious cooperation in Albania

The ENIB Board visited the religions communities and witnessed their extraordinary friendship and collaborations amongst religious leaders as well as their congregations.



## 5th European Policy Dialogue Forum with KAICIID in Rotterdam

The theme for the 2023 Forum was "Young People and Social Inclusion in Cities". We discussed challenges young people face in urban communities. RfPUK will ecourge inter-generational, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogues in the future.



## Environmental issues high on the European agenda

The RfP European Environmental Group met to discuss projects in metropolitan areas in Europe, a collaboration between Italy and Tunisia, and sharing environmental work between national chapters.

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## Acknowledgement of women's work by the Parliament of the World's Religions

UKWFN Chair Ravinder Kaur Nijjar was awarded the Lifetime Service Award for her achievement and dedication to interfaith work and her advocacy for recruiting male allies to support gender equality.



## Religions for Peace International Women's Coordinating Committee

RfPUK undertakes women work on an international level with IWCC, topics discussed in these meetings include: building a better world, working multi-religiously for gender quality issues, etc.



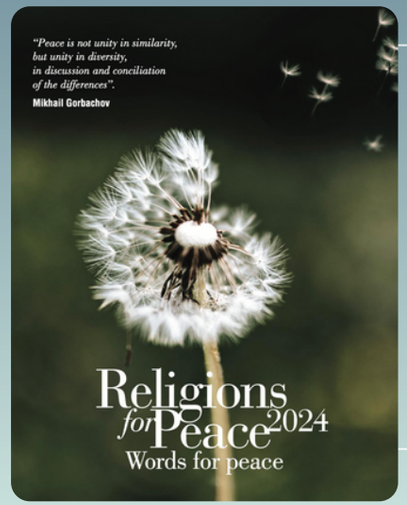

## RfP International Youth Committee 16 days campaign against GBV

UKWFN provided Dignity of Women Exhibition for the campaign posts, Ravinder Kaur Nijjar was a speaker at 'A Fireside Chat'.



## UK Interfaith Youth Network participated in the Malvern Festival of Ideas

UKIYN presented youth ideas for the environment, refugee integration, peace education, youth volunteering, leadership training and other contemplative ideas.







## A meaningful gift from Religions for Peace Italy

RfP Italy shared their 2024 "Words for Peace" calendar with the international Religions for Peace family.

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## Moving forward

# Taking Empowerment into Action

**2023 was a very busy year, and now is a busy time to move ahead. We plan to reach further than event participants and will stay on course to make resources available to the wider public. We will strive to provide more chances for collaboration, and forge a platform for peacemakers to share spiritual stories and professional work. We look forward to stimulating inter-generational cooperation, encouraging youth engagement, bringing awareness to gender equity issues, advocating religious literacy and building bridges with civil and governmental agencies.**

- Capturing project results into the RfPUK Resource Hub
- Extending our media visibility
- Fostering spiritual bridges with interfaith organisations
- Building a Peacemakers Network

# Our team

## Religious Leaders



**Bhai Sahib Dr Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia**
Sikh



**The Venerable B Seelawimala**
Buddhist



**Jehangir Sarosh**
Zoroastrian



**Imam Sayed Razawi**
Muslim



**Dr Pritpal Kaur Ahluwalia**
Sikh

## Trustees & Officers



**Cinde Lee**
Trustee, Chair



**Ravinder Kaur Nijjar**
Trustee, Chair of the UK Women Of Faith Network



**Jehangir Sarosh**
Treasurer



**Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra**
Trustee



**Prof Mark Owen**
Trustee



**Jamie Cresswell**
Trustee

## Team



**Shirley Choi**
Finance Officer



**Jenny Ramsden**
Women's Project Co-ordinator



**Eda Molla Chousein**
Youth Co-ordinator



**Yvine Prete-Venturin**
Administrative Officer



**Natalya Reutova**
Communications Officer

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## Religions for Peace UK

bit.ly/rfpuklinktree

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For further information and getting in touch **OFFICE@RFPUK.ORG**