

2018

Religion for Peace,
Nepal

Religions for Peace

Nepal



[A REPORT]

This is a National Chapter report of RFP, Nepal. Updated on April 2018.

Religion for Peace (RFP), Nepal Chapter

INTRODUCTION

RFP, Nepal initially known as RAPAN is a non- profit, voluntary, non-governmental social organization (an NGO) established in Kathmandu in the Year 1990. RFP, Nepal is affiliated to ACRP and Religion for Peace, International (formally known as WCRP). Its aim is to advocate peace, friendship and development within the framework of religious co-existence and inter-religious dialogue.

Nepalese culture, is a synthesis of different religions and ethnic groups, has many languages and traditions. Mutual respect, tolerance, and desire for peace can be the instruments to foster harmony and partnership among individuals, families and communities. All are encouraged towards national development irrespective of caste, creed, faith or language- leaving aside differences and diversities. RFP, Nepal was founded as national organization to catalyze peace by stressing basic human values which are based on love, compassion, service, benevolence, justice and truth.

OBJECTIVES OF RFP, NEPAL

- To advocate, motivate and implement programs in the field of peace, culture, development, environment, conservation, and social welfare.
- To promote education for peace.
- To advocate and promote inter-religious partnership for peace and development.
- To search and identify common ground and commonalities in various religions and to use them for human welfare and service, especially to uplift the poorest.
- To assist in the promotion of world peace and formation of a new international economic order by improving understanding among religions, culture and traditions.
- To organize lectures, seminars, workshops and exhibitions and to bring out publications.

- To design and implement projects for peace in areas such as education, health, environmental protection and social welfare.

ACTIVITIES OF RFP, NEPAL

RFP, Nepal has been here for over two decade now and has been promoting interfaith dialog. We decided to call ourselves Religion for Peace (RFP), Nepal, 2009 onwards. RFP, Nepal has members of different faiths such as Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Bahai, Christian, Jain, Zoroastrian and Sikh. We have participated in various meetings and conferences organized by RFP (International), and ACRP.

RFP, Nepal has also successfully organized an ACRP conference in 1991.



In the year 2009 together with RFP (International), RFP (Nepal) hosted Summit of Religious Leaders on Disarmament for Shared Security, in Kathmandu, Nepal on 10-12 July 2009.



RFP has been busy organizing and participating in various programs of interfaith dialogs thus showing its concerns on bringing various religions together and also to promote harmony and peace in the country.

In the year 2010 on 16th August RFP, Nepal together with RFP, International organized a global youth network on ARMS DOWN! Signature Campaign. Our target was to collect 1 million signatures from Nepal, urging all government to cut their military budget by 10% and reallocate those funds into development. This program was inaugurated by Constitutes Assemble Making President Mr. Subash Newang, on Aug 16, 2010 at Shankar Hotel. Many religious and distinguished leaders participated in the whole day program.



We collected signatures more than 2 lakhs 60 thousand signature of different Religious people for this campaign. We can say that the campaign was a successful one considering the scenario then. RFP, Nepal's aim is to advocate peace, friendship and development within the framework of religious co-existence and inter-religious dialogue.

Another program that RFP, Nepal has conducted was a talk programs on 'Role of Religions and Youth for Peace, Security and Consitutiona Making'. We had this program on 16th May, 2011 just a day before Buddha Purnima (Lord Buddha's Birthday) which made this event a special one.



On November 20, 2012 in Kathmandu, Religion for Peace Nepal (RFP –Nepal) formerly known as RAPAN welcomed members of RFP- Nepal and other Nepalese activists and religious leaders/ representatives from various faiths to the launching ceremony of Religion for Peace- Nepal. In the ceremony, the chief guest Mr. Kul Chandra Gautam (former United Nations Deputy-Secretary General) declared RFP- Nepal as chapter of RFP- International. RFP- Nepal has officially become an organization registered with the government of Nepal.



In mid-July 2013, Religions for Peace – Nepal (RFP- Nepal) successfully organized a two day interfaith summit in Kathmandu by partnering with Nepal’s leading Tribhuvan University and United Kingdom’s University of Winchester. Held in central Kathmandu on June 17 and June 18 the summit titled: **“International Summit on Inter-religious Coexistence, Peace and Development in Nepal”** was specifically and jointly organized by the by Religions for Peace-Nepal, Department of conflict, peace & development studies Tribhuvan University & The University of Winchester-UW, London, UK.



On 2014 RFP Nepal conducted an Interaction Program on 'The role of Religious Leaders in Ending Child Marriage and violence against women and children in Nepal.'



Nepal Earthquake 2015

Thousands of people lost their lives and thousands more were injured in a 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Nepal's capital Kathmandu and its surrounding areas on 25 April 2015.



Religions for Peace Nepal (RfP-Nepal) jointly with Religions for Peace International (RfP) and Religions for Peace Asia (ACRP), responded by bringing diverse religious and ethnic communities together to provide emergency assistance as well as care and support to communities most in need.

RFP International donated some money for the immediate relief for the earthquake victims. RFP Nepal quickly acted on this and utilized the funds on acquiring the relief materials viz. Blankets, floor mats, Bed sheets, pots and pans, buckets, mugs, towel, soaps etc. Started on 1 May 2015, the disaster relief response that had been initiated by *RfP-Nepal* by providing essential support to the Nepalese people, whilst strengthening

RfP-Nepal and equipping it to lead inter-religious dialogues and actions. The project concluded on 30 June 2017.

RFP Nepal visited 3 devastated sites viz. Ichungu, Ramkot and Okhar Pauwa. We distributed the relief material in these places.



In May 2015, *RfP*-Nepal organized the first interfaith prayer service in Kathmandu to commemorate those who perished in the earthquake and to show solidarity with all those that had been affected by the disaster. The service was co-led by the Vice President of *RfP*-Nepal, Mr. Lokmanya Golcha, and a prominent Jain Guru, who had traveled by foot to the disaster area in Kathmandu from India.



In June 2015, *RfP*-Nepal convened an interfaith sharing and discussion program on earthquake relief in Kathmandu to identify areas for cooperation. This event was followed by a visit in July 2015 by ACRP Nepal Earthquake Joint Task Force and comprising of representatives from ACRP and *RfP* China and Japan. The representatives, joined by *RfP* and *RfP*-Nepal visited earthquake affected areas in Kathmandu and nearby villages to assess needs and met with more than 200 villagers in Thanapatti to hear how the *RfP* network of organizations could assist their communities.



In September 2015, a high-level interfaith symposium was held by *RfP*-Nepal at the National Academy to discuss civil societies' contributions towards the country's political development that was also hampering the earthquake relief efforts. It was attended by over 100 participants from different faiths at a time of high political sensitivity, when the national constitution had just been promulgated after years of delays and protests on the streets. *RfP*'s International Trustee, Dr. Kul Chandra Gautam was the keynote speaker. He emphasized the need for interfaith prayers and efforts across Nepal during this difficult time for the country. This event were heavily promoted on local channels. Popular channel, "Image TV" broadcast the symposium on their daily and weekly broadcasts.



In March 2016, ACRP Nepal Earthquake Joint Task Force and *RfP* visited Kathmandu for the second time to assess the project's progress. During the visit, an interfaith Round table discussion on *Multi-Religious Collaboration to Support Earthquake Survivors and Advance Social Cohesion and Resilience* was held. Twenty-five leaders, representing Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Jain, Bah'ai and Brahma Kumari communities as well as faith-based organizations (FBOs) were convened to share information on their respective relief initiatives, including the successes, gaps and challenges, and to discuss ways of scaling up efforts. The discussion resulted in the participants recommending *RfP*-Nepal to regularly convene the diverse religious leaders and FBOs to coordinate relief efforts and to advocate to government, when needed, for efficiency and effectiveness of the relief efforts of the diverse religious communities. The delegates also visited several religious sites of different faiths, spoke with their respective congregations, and explored further venues for interfaith cooperation in Nepal.



In March 2016, *RfP*-Nepal distributed nearly 1,500 high breed saplings of a variety of fruits and nuts as well as three sacks of seeds of 16 different vegetables to Ghusel village in the southern part of Kathmandu. An agronomist was also present to teach villagers how to plant the seeds and grow the plants properly. This was followed by the distribution of another five different types of plants and tea plants in April and June 2016 that are to be planted before the monsoon season. The provision of seeds is only one part of a long-term plan to enable the villagers to be self-reliant. We also donated Zinc Sheets to built houses.

