

धर्म शान्ति - नेपाल

**Religions for Peace** 

Nepal



# NATIONAL REPORT 2022- NEPAL

Prepared by: Pooja Manandhar

Secretary General RfP Nepal

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## FPCC

### **Faith for Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities Initiative (FPCC) Strengthening Multi-religious Collaboration for Children: Regional Faith Engagement Forum in South Asia**

The Faith for Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities (FPCC) Initiative planned a regional Faith Leaders Engagement Forum (The Forum) for South Asia which was held in Kathmandu Nepal. The dates for this forum were 8th to 10th May 2022.



This meeting will brought together partners from UNICEF South Asia, faith-based organizations (FBOs) and Religions for Peace Inter-religious Councils (IRCs), including their Women of Faith Networks and Interfaith Youth Networks, from the

eight countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) that are under the UNICEF Regional Office of South Asia (ROSA).

Religions for Peace in collaboration with Asian Conference of Religions for Peace (ACRP) worked to lay a strong foundation to build and further strengthen the mobilization and engagement of religious leaders, religious institutions and FBOs for the well-being of children and their families. This collaboration created a linkages between faith actors and UNICEF for stronger collaborative efforts and partnership.

Mrs. Indira Manandhar- President of RfP Nepal and Mrs. Pooja Manandhar- Secretary General RfP Nepal participated in the event.

After FPCC, Regional engagement forum for South Asia that took place in Kathmandu, RfP Nepal has been constantly trying strengthen our organization. In the meeting itself. We met many Faith Leaders and people from FBOs. We have collaborated with them.

## Our Social Media Handle:

RfP Nepal has a Facebook page which managed by Secretary General Pooja Manandhar.

Page:

[www.facebook.com/rfpnepal](http://www.facebook.com/rfpnepal)

धर्म शान्ति - नेपाल

**Religions for Peace**   
Nepal

**National Report- Nepal**

Prepared By: Pooja Manandhar, SG- RfP Nepal  
Year 2022

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धर्म शान्ति - नेपाल

**Religions for Peace**   
Nepal

## Strengthening RFP Nepal:

RFP Nepal has many members and friends which help strengthen our organization. We are forever trying to grow.

### **Executive members**

President: Mrs. Indira Manandhar

Vice President: Mr. Lok Manya Golcha

Secretary General: Mrs. Pooja Manandhar

Assistant Secretary: Mr. Ujwal Gautam

Treasurer: Mrs. Indira Malla

Joint Treasurer: Mrs. Sushila Pandey

### **Board Members:**

Sikh- Mr. Rabindra Singh Sethy

Buddhist- Bhikkuni Dr. Anoja Guruma

Muslim- Mr. Nazrul Hasan Falahi

Bahai'- Mr Narendra Pandey

Hindu- Brahma Kumar Ram Singh Ayer

Hindu- Mr. Chintamani Yogi

Christian- Father Bill Robins

**Advisers:**

Hindu- Mr. Achut Raj Regmi

Bahai'- Mr. Bharat Dutta Koirala

**RfP Friends and other Members:**

**Buddhist:**

Rev. Shovit Bhante- Gana Bihar, Bhote Bahal

Rev. Piyadassi- Ihipiso Budha Bihar, Chandragiri

Sajana Manandhar (Youth)- Sulakchan Kirti Bihar

**Muslim:**

Abdul Jabbar- Islami Sangh Nepal

Nazru Hassain- Islami Sangh Nepal

**Jain:**

From Jain Samaj Kendra:

Mr. Dinesh Naulakha

Ms. Shilpi Jain (Women)

Ms. Barpika Jain (Women)

Ms. Sunita Sethia (Women)

Mr. Kaushal Jain (Youth)

**Christian:**

Mr. Thomas Bogaty (Youth)

Paster Rajendra Malla from Nepal Christian Society

Rev. PS Sher A.C- National Churches Fellowship of Nepal

**Bahai':**

Mr. Narendra Pandey's contacts:

- Ms. Jo-Anne Koirala
- Ms. Prabha Chaudhary
- Mr. Prabin Koirala
- Ms. Sunita Rana
- Ms. Janaki Chaudhary

**Sikh:**

Mr. Pritam Singh- Sikh Gurudwara, Lalitpur

Mr. Gurubesh Sing- Sikh Gurudwara, Lalitpur

**Brahma Kumari Rajyog:**

Mr. Hem Sharma Pokharel

Ms. Kusum Khwakhali

Ms. Deepa Thapa

**Hindu:**

Mr. Chinta Mani Yogi

Rev. Damodar Gautam

## National Consultation on: Faith for Positive Change for children and Communities Initiative (FPCC)

A meeting on ZOOM  
On Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022  
Time: 2:30 PM

Consultation Organized By:

धर्म शान्ति - नेपाल

Religions for Peace   
Nepal

Program initiated by:

Religions for Peace 

unicef 



**Topic: Religion for Peace - Consultation on Faith for positive change for children (FPCC)**

**Date of National consultation on Zoom:** 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**Time:** 2:30 pm Nepal Time

Zoom Meeting

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/86878712239?pwd=aGJVtNfBY2w0bGJhTlhkQzR1bTZQdz09>

**Meeting ID:** 868 7871 2239



**Passcode:** L4KV6s

**Organizer of the Consultation:** Religion for Peace Nepal

**Program jointly initiated by:** RfP International, ACRP and UNICEF

**List Participants:**

Brahma Kumari Raj Yog:

1. Ram Singh Ayer
2. Hem Sharma Pokharel
3. Deepa Thapa
4. Brahma Kumari Kusum Khwakhali

Christian

5. Mr Chirendra Satyal
6. Mrs. Rupa Rai
7. Mrs. Jyoti Khanal
8. Sister Lisa Perakkat- Navajyoti- for Menatally Challenged

Hindu

9. Mr. Damodar Gautam
10. Mr. Chinta Mani Yogi (video message)

Jain

11. Mr. Dinesh Naulakha
12. Mr. Kaushal Naulakha
13. Ms. Shilpi Jain
14. Ms. Barpika Jain
15. Ms. Sunita Sethia

Buddhist

16. Dr. Anoja Guruma from Sulakchan Kirti Bihar ( pre-recorded video message)

17. Ms. Sajana Manandhar from Sulakchan Kirri Bihar

Sheikh

18. Mr. Pretax Singh

19. Mr. Giyani Gurubaksh Singh

Bahai'

20. Mr. Narendra Pandey

21. Ms. Jo-Anne Koirala

22. Ms. Prabha Chaudhary

23. Mr. Prabin Koirala

24. Ms. Sunita Rana

25. Ms. Janaki Chaudhary

Muslim

26. Mr. Nazrul Hussain

27. Mr. Khurshid Alam Ansari

28. Mr. Abul Kalam Miyan (will be presenting)

29. Mr. Ali Manzar Barkati

30. Mr. Abdul Jabbar

NGO partner: Tara Namaste Foundation:

31. Mr. Ashesh Khanal

RfP Board and members:

32. President: Mrs. Indira Manandhar

33. Vice President Mr. Lokmanya Golcha (pre-recorded message)

34. Secretary General Mrs. Pooja Manandhar

35. Deputy Secretary General: Mr. Ujwal Gautam

36. Youth: Thomas Bogaty

**Total Participants invited:** 36 people from 7 different faith and out of which 16 were females.

**Program coordinator and Rapporteur:** Mrs. Pooja Manandhar

### Program Details:

- Prayers by various Faiths (alphabetically) (1-2 min each)
  1. Baha'i
  2. Brahma Kumaris
  3. Buddhist
  4. Christian
  5. Jain
  6. Muslim
  7. Sheikh
  
- Opening and Welcome Remarks By RfP president Mrs Indira Manandhar
- Short pre-recorded video by Vice President Mr. Lokmanya Golcha
- Short Brief on Program Background and Meeting Objective By Mrs. Pooja Manandhar
- Recommendation/ Suggestions by various faith regarding Faith for positive change for Children: (max. 8 min each)
  1. Buddhist- Dr. Anoja Guru Ma and Sajana Manandhar
  2. Bahai'- Mr. Narendra Pandey
  3. Brahma Kumaris- Mr. Ram Singh Ayer
  4. Christian- Mr. Chirendra Satyal, Sister Lisa Parrakhat and Ms. Rupa Rai
  5. Hindu- Dr. Chintamani Yogi (video message)
  6. Jain- Mr. Dinesh Naulakha and Sunita Sethia from Jain Samaj Kathmandu
  7. Muslim- Mr. Abul Kalam Miyan from Islami Shangh Nepal
  8. NGO – Mr. Ashesh Khanal from Tara Nepal Foundation

- Discussion on: Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities for Faith Engagement and Collaboration
- Nomination of a select committee/group (5 to 7 members) that will continue to represent the IRC on multi-faith action coordinating committees for children.
- Commitments for further engagement and collaboration.
- Overview of the ROSA Faith Engagement Forum, Objective and representation
- AOB and closing

### **The National Consultation Report:**

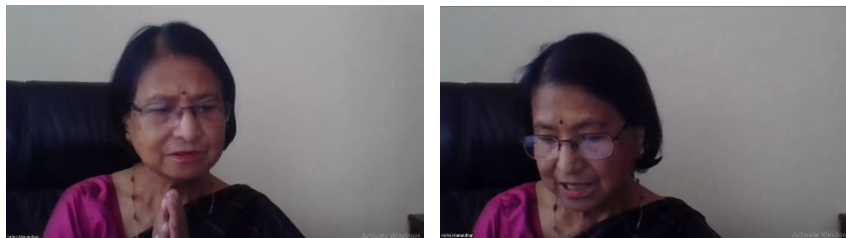
Nepal National consultation program on FBCC was conducted on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022 as planned at 2:30 pm Nepal time on Zoom. We had invited 36 people from various faith based organization and a NGO. We had about 25 people who actively participated in the meeting.

We started the program with the prayers from various faith. Mr. Narendra Panday did the Baha'I prayer. Team of Brahma Kumari Raj yog lead by Brahma Kumar Ram Singh Ayer did the Hindu prayer. Ms. Sajana Manandhar did the Buddhist prayer, Mr. Chirendra Satyal did the Christian prayer, Mr. Dinesh Naulkaha did the Jain prayer and Mr. Abul Kalam Miya did the Muslim prayer.

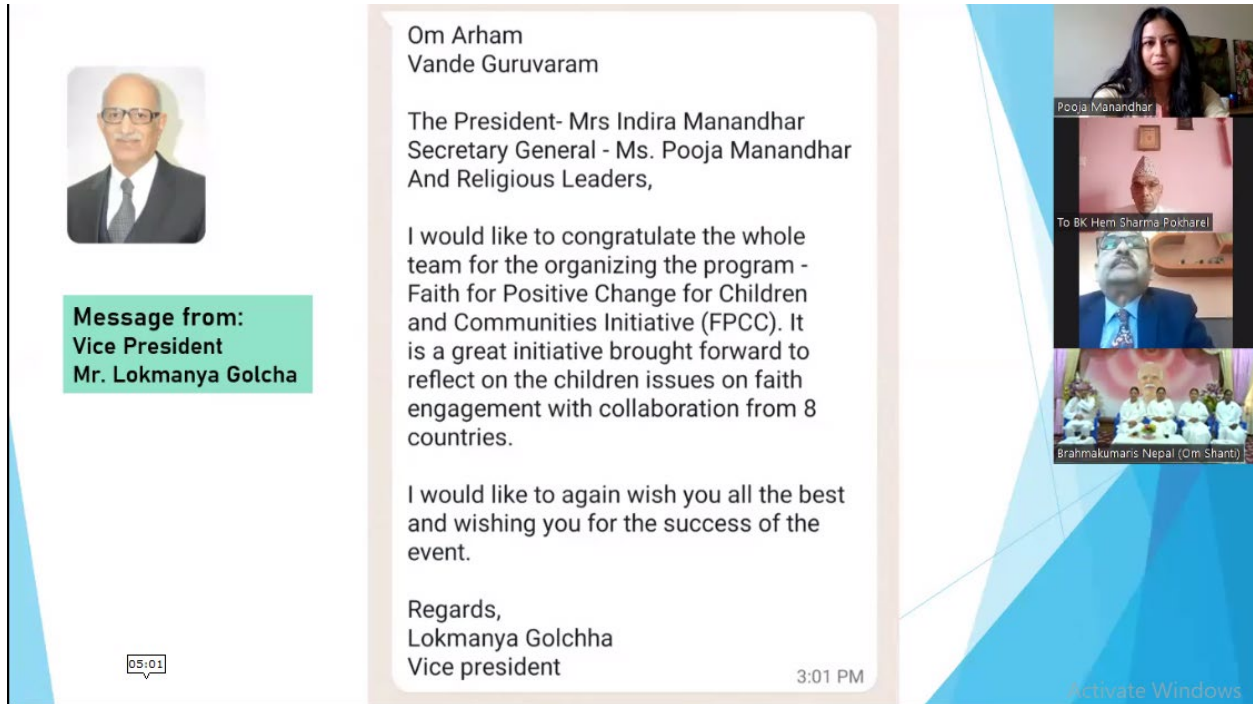




President of RfP Nepal, Mrs. Indira Manandhar welcomed the guests. She mentioned that the agenda was to find ways to help children in need and we as a faith based organization should come together and help them. We also need to strengthen the engagement of FBOs and give continuity to our work together.



Vice president of RfP Nepal Mr. Lokmanya Golcha couldn't attend the meeting due to his prior commitments, he was really busy with his work. But he sent his message.



Om Arham  
Vande Guruvaram

The President- Mrs Indira Manandhar  
Secretary General - Ms. Pooja Manandhar  
And Religious Leaders,

I would like to congratulate the whole team for the organizing the program - Faith for Positive Change for Children and Communities Initiative (FPCC). It is a great initiative brought forward to reflect on the children issues on faith engagement with collaboration from 8 countries.

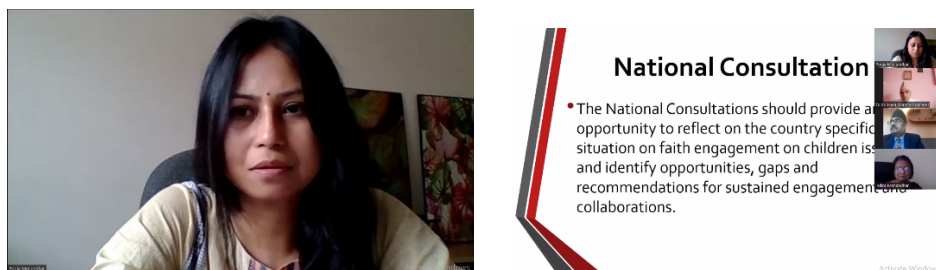
I would like to again wish you all the best and wishing you for the success of the event.

Regards,  
Lokmanya Golchha  
Vice president

Message from:  
Vice President  
Mr. Lokmanya Golcha

05:01 3:01 PM

Secretary General of RfP Nepal, Mrs. Pooja Manandhar presented on the background and objectives of the consultation program.



**National Consultation**

- The National Consultations should provide an opportunity to reflect on the country specific situation on faith engagement on children issues and identify opportunities, gaps and recommendations for sustained engagement and collaborations.

### The Recommendations:

**Speaker 1:** Buddhist: Ms. Anoja Guru Ma from Sulukchan Kirti Bihar

Unfortunately Anoja Guru-ma recently was diagnosed with cancer. Due to her health problem we pre-recorded her presentation.



Anoja Guruma has an orphanage called Helpless Children's Home in Kirtipur, Nepal. She has helped many children in need who come from remote areas like Humla, Jumla and Simikot.



She funds her orphanage from whatever donations that she can get. RfP also has helped her orphanage in the past in various constructions and stationary distributions. If possible we can really help her in future as well.

In her presentation she talked about how people can be discriminate and say things like 'your faith, my faith...' she said ' we need to treat everyone equally no matter what faith or caste they belong to, I never discriminate anyone. I invite anyone need to my orphanage. We should never discriminate. Even the religious leaders should know this and act on it and spread equality. Learn and teach this to all and bring it to action. ' She said, 'we need to teach good values to our children, teach them how to lead a good life'. She also added, 'there is only two kinds religions one is good and other is evil, and we should do good no matter what religion we follow'.

**Speaker 2:** Brahma Kumaris: Mr. Ram Singh Ayer from Brahma Kumaris Nepal



He said that the discussion is in 'beautiful topic of positive change for children and community. Our focus should be to brighten the children's future, we have to create good environment for our children to build good characters. To impart good values in children, we should make sure that the environment of their home should be good. If the parents or the guardians don't have good values, they will also not learn anything good. If the family members fights and always create negative environment then the children will get negative upbringing and this will definitely affect their future. Therefore the parents or the guardians should be responsible. We should also provide value based education in schools. 'Naitik Shikshya' or ethical/ moral education should be mandatory in school level teachings. Religious organizations can also help by organizing small programs in schools where they can teach children about positivity, how to bring peace to your mind and body and teach good values. We have to help children to gain positive energy and build bright future. They are in need of spiritual education too.'

He suggested that we adopt about 50 children. We not only include children but their parents and guardians too in our program. We teach them, how to create good environment at home and teach them to have proper dialogs with the children. He believed that children easily picks up things that's around them, if you are positive they pick up positive things and if there is negativity that's what they'll pick up. He also said we should do these kind of programs and give continuity to it in order to make it impactful.



**Speaker 3:** Baha'i: Mr. Narendra Pandey from Baha'I Center Kathmandu



Mr. Narendra Pandey said that there are two things to focus here, positive change for 1. Children and 2. Community. He believes that religious leaders around the world are popular, they have gentle way of putting things and they can be very effective. 'Religious leaders have roles in human lives from the birth to death and I really respect them. They have impressive ways to change human minds. But sometimes they only limit to certain caste and creed and this should change. Since sustainable development is only possible if we do things together, we therefore need to come together.' He said.

He said, 'there are places where there are people in Nepal who are under privileged (Dalits\ untouchables) and orphans, this is where the religious leaders come in, they should take responsibility to support and help them.'

'Mothers are the first teacher of the children, if the mother is educated then the children will definitely benefit and be educated too. Therefore focus should be to educate the mothers, the parents and also the teachers.'

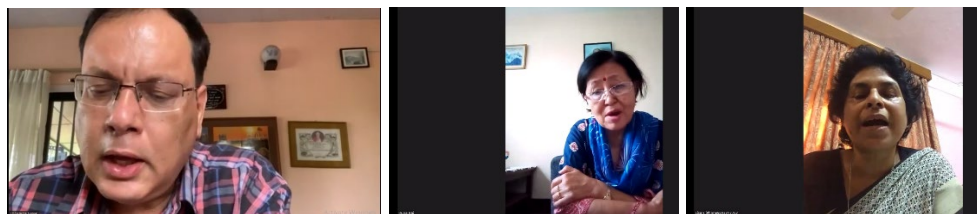
Baha'I Center Kathmandu has been conducting children moral classes, junior youth classes and also the youth moral classes in Biratnagar and south of Nepal-Kailani. We also conduct faith based programs for adults as well. We train class teachers as well. To do this we have also created syllabus for each level.

He said that an individual faith cannot make impact but we all should come together to do something bigger. He said all faith should come together to

create a 'Naitik Shikchya Model (moral education model)'. He suggested we create '**Inter religious intervention model on moral education**'.

He said the time for advocacy is gone. Only faith based organization cannot do it all, we need to get media involved. We need to start '**Inter-religious journalism**' in South Asia.

**Speaker 4:** Christian: Mr. Chrendra Satyal, Ms. Rupa Rai and Sister Lisa Parakhat



Mr. Chirendra Satyal quoted the bible, "If you are not converted and become as *the little children*, you shall never enter into *the kingdom of the heaven*." He said education for the children is very important. Children are innocent, we should not only provide example for them but also take example from them as well.

He said in Muslim community, there is Madrasa (a college for Islamic instruction), Hindus have Vidyapeetha, Christians have catechism (doctrinal manuals of Christian religious teaching) and so on. Many religions have their own things to teach but generally we lack the moral teaching among the students in general. He suggested that the religious leader should go to education ministry and make Naitik Sikchya/ moral teaching compulsory in the school syllabus. He insisted that this is only possible if all the faith leaders did it together and intervene.

Children should be educated about the various religions, they should learn to know and respect all before they start judging without knowledge and gain negative information about them.

He also agreed about how media can be deconstructive. He also talked about negative impacts of social media. He agreed with Mr. Narendra Pandey on the need of 'inter religious journalism'.

He also said he has worked for children and mothers who suffer from Aids and also help run hostels.

He introduced fellow Christians, Ms. Rupa Rai and Sister Lisa Perrakkat. Ms. Rai has done a lot of work on Human trafficking issues in South Asia. Whereas Ms. Lisa is involved in a school called Navajyoti for mentally challenged.

Ms. Rai said that the mothers should be educated first since they are the children's first teacher. It is very important for the parents to be educated so that the children can learn good things from them Ms. Lisa also agreed on what Ms. Rai and Mr. Satyal had to say. She said it is import for us to teach values in children in the name of humanity. All faith has good things to say about doing good things and having good values, therefore all families also should teach that to their children. It all starts from the family. It is the parents' responsibility to teach good values. Yoga and mediations also help children.

**Speaker 5:** Muslim: Mr. Abul Kalam Miyan from Islami Shangh Nepal



Mr. Abul Kalam Miya said 'children are the reason to our happiness'. All parents have duty towards their children to educate them.

We must address the corporal punishments that goes on in schools today. They should stop this, hitting children never helps.

Our villages lack proper schools and modern class rooms. We need to introduce Montessori concepts in remote areas of our country.

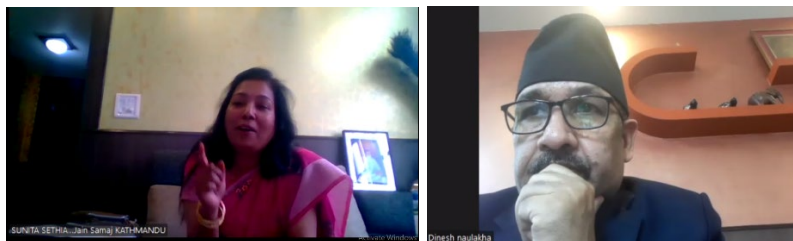
He quoted a popular saying, 'Ladke ho toh Ladte raho' which means if you are a boy, keep fighting. He said this kind of things shouldn't be encouraged to be said, violence is never an answer to anything. We need to improve our environment and make them more child friendly by avoiding violence.

He talked about existence of child labor in our country and how girl child are neglected here. He said we need to create safe environment for girls. He was sort of against co-ed schools and said that there should be proper dress code for girl child so that they feel comfortable and feel respected. He said separate girls schools should be opened for girls. He also talked about importance of 'Naitik Shikshya/ moral education' in school level.

Islamic Sang Nepal has done a lot of children in Nepal, like opened schools for them. They have adopted about 300 orphans and provided them with scholarship and health care. They also do teacher training programs.

He believed that if all the faith based organization come together a lot can be done for our children.

**Speaker 6:** Jain: Ms. Sunita Sethia and Mr. Dinesh Naulakha from Jain Samaj Nepal



Ms. Sunita Sethia said the focus should be on triple 'S's:

S= Shikchya (Education)

S= Surakchya (Protection)

S= Sanskar (Values)

On education she said that we should provide scholarship to those in need. We need to protect our children too. Child violence should come to end. We also

can organize self-defense programs for girls. Also teach children about good touch and bad touch. Jain Samaj has also conducted these programs. Awareness is important for children in order to stop child abuse from happening. Good values can stop future violence so it is important that children get good values and we should make sure of it.

She recited the following poem in hindi:

Manvta ho har seher mein (May humanity be in all cities)

Betitan ghar se na nikle dar mein (May daughters go out of their homes without any fear)

Koi bhuka na rahe kisike ghar mein (May there be no one hungry in their homes)

Navzat sisu na bahe nadi neher mein (May the new born babies never be drowned in the river)

Har balak ko unko haq mile (May every child get their rights)

Bahe who prem aur sikchya ke leher mein (May the children get all the love and education)

Aisa bikash ho hum sab ken azar mein (Let there be this kind of development...)

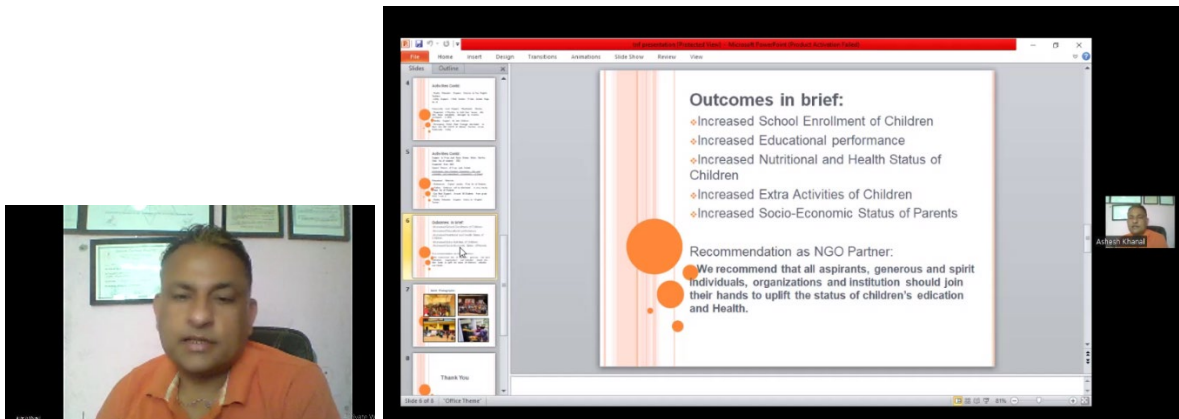
Mr. Dinesh Naulakha also added that poverty is a big problem. People are not getting the basic amenities that they deserve. Food/ nutrition, shelter, clothes are the basic things and sadly there are places in Nepal that they still don't have it.

We need to educate children right from the beginning. Good values must be given to them. We need to teach them to be good human beings. They should know their rights and duty. Jain Samaj (community) Nepal, also have opened schools 'Gyanshala' in few places in Kathmandu where they teach moral education.

Naitik shikchya (moral education) should be included in school syllabus. We hear about violence happening in schools in the developed countries like gun

firing incidents, this is because of the lack of moral education. The children there have privilege but still they end up being violent and criminals. They have the luxury of going to proper schools and have all the facilities but yet they lack moral and faith based education and they also lack values.

**Speaker 7:** NGO Partner: Mr. Ashesh Khannal from Tara Namaste Foundation



Mr. Ashesh Khanal supports a school called Patal Devi Basic school Ghyalchwok in Gorkha. There are about 175 students there. His NGO provides education materials, day meal, monthly supports to this school. Due to this support the child enrollment in the school has increased. The children's educational performance has increased as well. He recommended that all aspirants, generous and spirited individuals, organizations and institutions should join their hands and uplift the status of children's health and education. We can learn a lot from NGOs like his and he can help us to start and manage such programs in future.

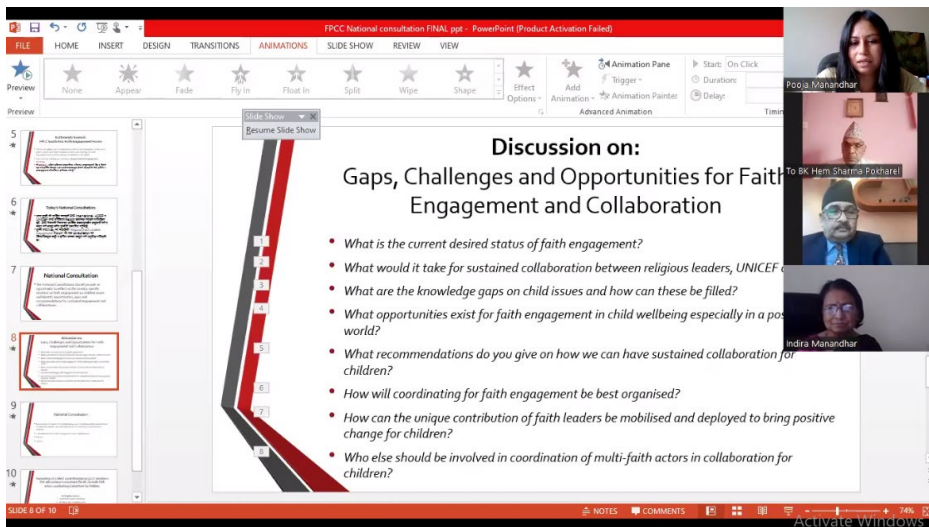
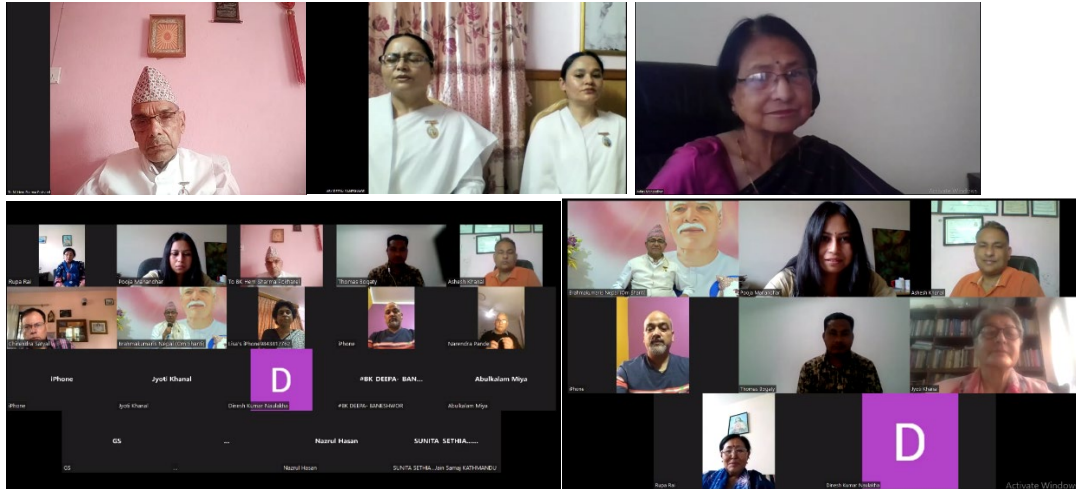
**Speaker 7:** Hindu : Mr. Chintamani Yogi



Mr. Chintamani yogi was leaving for USA so since he was traveling during the time of our consultation, he sent us a video message via Viber few days ahead.

He said, 'religions say that: we should help others, children are just like gods, and there should be peace, love, sympathy, generosity and tolerance in the world. We should all come together to help humanity and save the future of our children. All the Religious leader and FBOs should help children. We must raise our children without fear and exploitation by providing them a good environment to grow up and to be good human beings. Children are children no matter what faith they belong to. Don't try to encroach them or push them or exploit or abuse them. We do so much for children but let's ask them what they want, do they want war? Do they want religious conflict? Do they want discrimination? They don't want any of this. Bache man ke sache (children are innocent) and we need to learn to be like them.' He ended with his best wishes for our program.

**More Photos:**





## **Gaps, Challenges and Opportunities for Faith Engagement and Collaboration**

- *What is the current desired status of faith engagement?*

Answer: Nepal has many FBOs. RfP has links with many FBOs in Kathmandu but we need to explore places that are outside Kathmandu too.

- *What would it take for sustained collaboration between religious leaders, UNICEF and FBOs?*

Answer: For sustained collaboration between religious leaders, UNICEF and FBOs, definitely we need to have frequent meetings and there must be exchange of ideas. We need to know what we are doing to help each other to achieve our goals.

- *What are the knowledge gaps on child issues and how can these be filled?*

Answer: FBOs that are partners with RfP Nepal have their limitations. Most of them have and are engaged in programs that are meant for the wellbeing of our children. UNICEF, as we all know have worked for children for so long and they have experience and tools/skills to do things in better way. We can learn a lot from UNICEF.

- *What opportunities exist for faith engagement in child wellbeing especially in a post-COVID world?*

Answer: Pandemic impact on Nepali families is less dire than in 2020, but they still do need support for children's school, food and medicine. Nepal government is struggling to vaccinate children below 12. No vaccine has been announced yet for those below 12. According to data one out of five Nepali households are suffering from lack of money post COVID.

Now FBOs and religious leaders can come together and ask for help from developed countries to solve the vaccine issues. If there is funds available they can financially help families in need as well.

- What recommendations do you give on how we can have sustained collaboration for children?

Answer: We can focus on small initiatives which are attainable and then jump into bigger ones once we gain experience and confidence.

- How will coordinating for faith engagement be best organised?

Answer: We need to strengthen our relation with existing FBOs in contact and also try to expand. We need to increase the frequency of our collaborations.

- How can the unique contribution of faith leaders be mobilised and deployed to bring positive change for children?

Answer: FBOs and Religious leaders have power to change people's mind. Faith can move mountains they say. We have to understand the strength of religion and also help leaders to impart good teachings to bring about positive change. For example. Child marriage can stop if religious gurus refuse to marry under aged children. Good values can be taught by religious leaders.

- Who else should be involved in coordination of multi-faith actors in collaboration for children?

Answer: We can include media to spread good things that the FBOs are doing. Few members of RfP were in agreement and suggested 'Inter religious journalism'.

### **List of Recommendations from the FBOs and religious leaders on what programs for children that can be pursued by RfP Nepal in future:**

1. Help Dr. Anoja Guruma with her orphanage and her work in helping children and communities from Humla, Jumla and Simikot.
2. Religious Leaders and FBOs can come together and promote Naitik Sikchya (moral education). Also try to make it mandatory in school syllabus.
3. We can adopt 20-50 children and help them financially (health care, scholarship etc) and also provide them and their family moral education by conducting separate programs.
4. We can create 'Inter religious intervention model on moral education'.
5. Include media in our pursuits. Also start inter religious journalism.
6. Try to stop corporal punishments in schools by doing programs.
7. Help modernize schools in remote areas.
8. Teach children about good touch and bad touch by organizing programs to stop child abuse.
9. Start day meal programs for students in remote area to give them incentive to come to school every day.
10. Distribute stationaries and school uniforms to those in need.
11. Normalize menstruation, yes menstruation is considered impure in parts of Nepal. Religious leaders and FBOs can definitely play a part to bring about a change in people's mind set on this.

### **Challenges in the Zoom meeting:**

- We had to conduct zoom meeting since some of us were not available to be physically present.
- We prerecorded some of the presentation as well.
- RfP doesn't have paid zoom account so the meeting couldn't have the unlimited time access. Although we kept rejoining after the time lapsed, which was a challenge.
- Not everyone have good access to computer or are zoom meeting friendly so they had difficulties joining.

- We had a time constraints and the group discussion wasn't possible since it was on zoom. We did talk about the questions and some were answered during the meeting and we also had group Viber chat to finalize the answers.

**Visibility:**

The photos of the consultation was posted on RfP Nepal's facebook page.

[www.facebook.com/rfpnepal](https://www.facebook.com/rfpnepal)

## **South Asia Youth Interfaith Network- Online Campaign on Children Issues Consultation:**

RfP contacted the faith leaders, RfP associates and friends and asked their suggestions regarding the online campaign on Children issues. They gave us their valuable inputs and suggestions. They also agreed to help promote our social media campaign. Following were people and organizations contacted for consultation:

Brahma Kumari Raj Yog

Brahma Kumar Ram Sing Ayer

Suggestion: Impact of Climate change on Children, Child Marriage

Hindu Vidyapeeth

Dr. Chintamani Yogi

Suggestion: Positive Parenting

Sulakchan Kirti Bihar

Miss Sanjana Manandhar

Suggestion: Child Health, Child Marriage

Jain Samaj Kendra

Ms. Sunita Sethia

Suggestion: Menstrual Health for girl Child

National Churches Fellowship of Nepal

Rev. PS Sher

Suggestion: Child Protection

Media Advocacy Forum

Mr. Bidur Adhikari

Suggestion: Social Media Hazards and safety for Children

International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief

Mr. B P Khanal

Suggestion: Child Discrimination

International Buddhist Education Center

Mr. Piya Ratna

Suggestion: Moral Education

## Meeting of RfP members:

### Attendees:

- Mrs. Pooja Manandhar SG RfP Nepal
- Mr. Ujwal Raj Gautam Asst. SG RfP Nepal
- Mr. Thomas Bogaty Youth Coordinator RfP Nepal

We organized a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022. We discussed on the suggestions given by the Faith Leaders and RfP associates regarding the suitable topic to campaign for the children.



## Decision on the topic of Online Campaign:

### ‘Positive Parenting’

It should include following issues:

- Child Marriage
- Moral Education
- Health and Hygiene
- Gender based Discrimination

- Child abuse (domestic abuse)
- Equal share of responsibility between the parents on bringing up the child

Decision: We decided to do the campaign on Child Marriage.



## South Asia Interfaith Youth Online Campaign on: Child Marriage

**#EndChildMarriageNepal**

”

South Asia Interfaith Youth  
Online Campaign on:  
**Child Marriage**

“

Date: **16th December 2022**  
Platform: **Facebook**  
Time: **3:00pm**

We are going **LIVE** on **Facebook**

 [www.facebook.com/rfpnepal](https://www.facebook.com/rfpnepal)

 Religions for Peace

 Asian Conference of Religions for Peace  
Religions for Peace 

 FAITH AND POSITIVE  
**CHANGE**  
FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022, RfP Nepal organized a panel discussion which went Live on our facebook page. It was on 'Child Marriage'.

▪ **Participants were:**

1. Brahma Kumari Kriti (Female)
2. Christian: Thomas Bogaty (Male)
3. Jain: Ms. Sanjana Sethia (Female)
4. Buddhist: Khemananda Bhante (Male)

■ **Moderator:**

- Mrs. Pooja Manandhar- Hindu

Key Questions for Discussion were:

Q.1: How does Child marriage affect children in Nepal?

Q. 2: What should be done to prevent/stop child marriage and by who?

Q. 3: What specific roles can religious leaders place in stopping child marriage and who else can they work with?



*The picture from the Panel Discussion: (Left to Right) Mrs. Pooja Manandhar, Brahma Kumari Kriti, Mr. Thomas Bogaty, Miss. Sanjana Sethia and Khemananda Bhante.*

**The Link to the Facebook LIVE panel discussion:**

[https://fb.watch/j6BG1EoP\\_s/](https://fb.watch/j6BG1EoP_s/)

Religions for Peace Nepal was live.  
Published by Pooja Manandhar · December 16, 2022 ·

बाल विवाह अन्त्यका लागि हाम्रो अभियान!  
Online Campaign on Child Marriage.  
[#EndChildMarriageNepal](#)  
Requesting all to engage on this Campaign!

धर्म शान्ति - नेपाल  
Religions for Peace

**#EndChildMarriageNepal**  
South Asia Interfaith Youth  
Online Campaign on:  
**Child Marriage**

Date: 16th December 2022  
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Time: 3:00pm

Facebook LIVE  
[www.facebook.com/rfpnepal](http://www.facebook.com/rfpnepal)

Religions for Peace  
Near Conference of Religions for Peace  
Religions for Peace

PEOPLE AND PROBLEMS  
**CHANGE**  
Nepal

**Impact through Social Media:**

People reached: 2.2 Thousand  
Reactions/Comments/Shares: 150  
3sec Video Views: 723

0:47 / 41:42

Religions for Peace Nepal was live.  
Published by Pooja Manandhar · December 16, 2022 ·

बाल विवाह अन्त्यका लागि हाम्रो अभियान! Online Campaign on Ch...  
See more  
बाल विवाह अन्त्यका लागि हाम्रो अभियान!...  
See more

47 23 723

2.1K People reached  
150 Reactions, comments, and shares

723 3-Second Video Views  
Retention curve

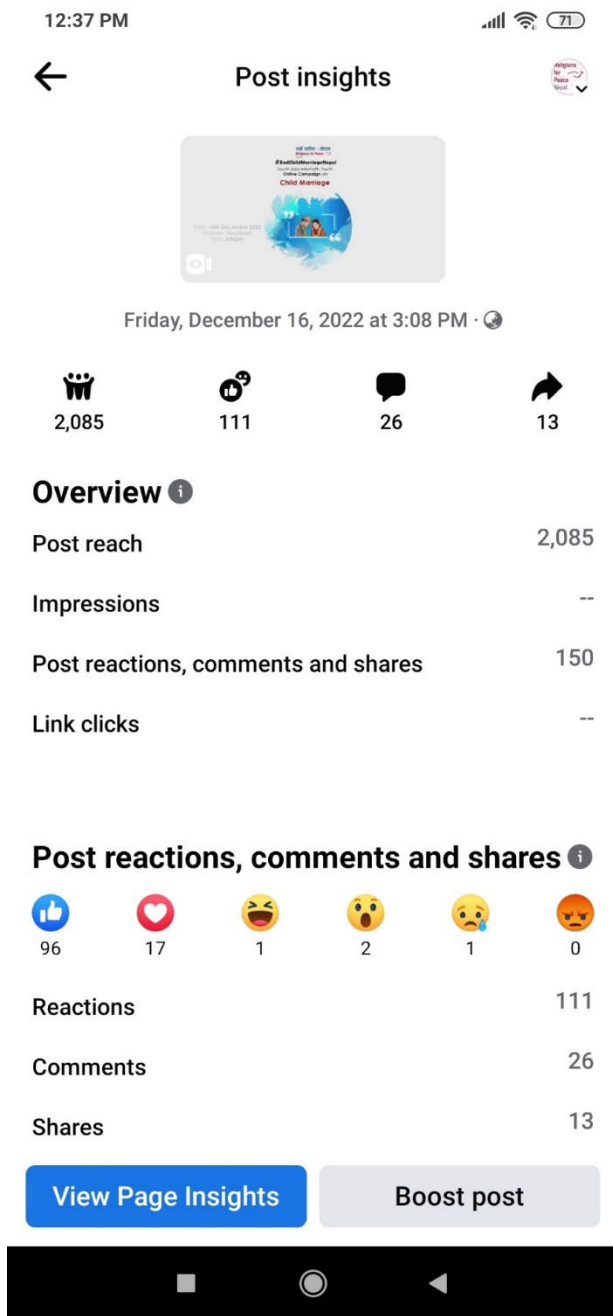
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Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/rfpnepal](http://www.facebook.com/rfpnepal)

## Case Study/ Story Collection:

Religious Leaders, Women of Faith and Youth Interfaith Members of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan were given the following task:

- a. Each country team should prepare a communication objective and strategy for documenting a case study.
- b. Share that separately with Prof Bong and Jimmy for review and discussion before we begin.
- c. As agreed, you can build on existing work that profiles what your *Religions for Peace* Chapter is doing on the issue of children, FPCC or any other similar cross-cutting area e.g. children and climate change.
- d. ACRP via Prof Bong will handle the necessary administrative and logistical aspects and you will be advised. However, we will prefer to issue a contract/MoU once we have seen the Communication Project you are planning to undertake.

## Case Study/Stories by RfP Nepal:

So far RfP Nepal has submitted 3 stories:

1. **Indira Manandhar: An interfaith journey of solidarity, peace and social harmony at *Religions for Peace* Nepal**
2. **Hitting the Streets: Ending Child Marriage in Nepal through Drama**
3. **Vikhu Piyadassi, A Monk's commitment to ending Child Marriage and harmful practices in remote communities in Nepal**

## Story 1:

### **Indira Manandhar: An interfaith journey of solidarity, peace and social harmony at *Religions for Peace* Nepal**

Indira Manandhar has been a part of *Religion for Peace* for over three decades already. She has served as the secretary general in all those years. Currently, even at her advanced age, she continues to serve *Religions for Peace* Nepal as the President. She has nourished and strengthened this organization with her amazing leadership.



“My work at Religions for Peace Nepal was inspired during joint and active collaboration activities with Bihars and Ven. Sumangal Bhante, who introduced me to Dharma Shanti Nepal. Multi-religious engagement inspired me to dedicate my life to pursuing peace and religious harmony.” ~ Indrina during the interview.

With a double Master’s degree in Statistics and Agriculture, and in Ancient History and Culture in Social Anthropology, Ms. Indira has championed intercultural and interreligious dialogue as an approach to building social harmony and peace. Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious, and multi-cultural state, *Religions for Peace* has contributed to building unity amidst this harmony through multi-religious collaboration.





“I have been working with *Religions for Peace* for over four decades now (from 1990). I have always been a promoter of peace and religious harmony. I believe in humanitarian work and helping people in need. I feel proud to be associated with a reputed organization like [Religions for Peace International](#) as well as [Religion for Peace Asia](#). I wish all the success to all the ventures undertaken by Religions for Peace regional as well as international. God bless all.”

*Religions for Peace* Nepal under the leadership of Indra is known for its humanitarian work. In April 2015, Nepal was struck by a 7.8-magnitude earthquake taking thousands of lives and millions of damages to properties. Kathmandu, Nepal’s Capital, and its surrounding provinces were hit hardest. With the assistance of *Religions for Peace* International and *Religions for Peace* Asia, *Religions for Peace* Nepal coordinated quick humanitarian response and mobilized members and partners to support the delivery much-needed relief foods and materials to the victims of the earthquake.



“ A year after the devastating earthquake and being an agriculturist who believes that the humanitarian work should be sustained by supporting the victims to stand on their faith and build their own future, we jointly coordinated within the Religions for Peace family and continued supporting the earthquake



victims. For example, in March 2016, we distributed saplings of a variety of fruits and nuts as well as many sacks of seeds of different vegetables to Ghusel village in the southern part of Kathmandu. Zinc iron sheets were distributed to build shelters for the earthquake victims. Relief material such as Blankets and woolen caps were distributed in Nuwakot, Sankhu, Gol- Dhunga and Godamchaur, Godavari.”



Nepal has been hit by one natural disaster after another. It was Earthquake in 2015 and in 2017, it was the flood. The Terai region of Nepal was most affected by the floods. There was a continuous rise in the water level in various major rivers in the Terai districts caused by nonstop rainfall for many days. Many people have died and thousands were left homeless and displaced. As the focus of relief efforts has been centered on responding to the earthquake, survivors of flooding and landslides outside of Kathmandu Valley did not receive essential support. *Religions for Peace* Nepal identified Saptari as a place in dire need of support. Working in this area will also provide an opportunity to expand its reach outside the Valley and build multi-religious collaboration and District-level Interreligious Committees outside of the capital area.



The unique feature of all these humanitarian work and relief operations is the collaboration of local interfaith leaders. It is the standard approach of *Religions for Peace* Nepal to engage religious leaders in local communities in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the programs. In fact, all the humanitarian work services are opportunities for the various faith communities, including their leaders, to help one another and work together, thus providing an avenue of deepening mutual appreciation and mutual respect for one another.

As an interfaith organization, *Religions for Peace* would always emphasize the religious dimension of all its programs and activities. She would gather the Interreligious Council and various faith leaders for prayer during national emergencies and crises. *Religions for Peace* Nepal would also conduct interfaith prayers to commemorate those who perished in the earthquake and to show solidarity with all those that had been affected by the disaster.



An integral aspect of *Religions for Peace* Nepal activities is the regular conduct of forums and conferences. *Religions for Peace* believed that it is also important for religious leaders to come together to discuss common issues such as child marriages, child labor, environmental issues, and others.

“Religious leaders can play an important role in eliminating the practice of child marriages, child labor, and other practices that are harmful to children and society. Thus, the many forums and conferences organized by Religions for Peace Nepal and partners like UNICEF have strengthened the unity of the various religious communities to engage the local communities and advocate in the government all these important issues to promote a peaceful and harmonious society.”



Indira’s network of friends and faith-based organizations continue to work together. She continues to inspire religious leaders and peace advocates to continue the tradition of doing humanitarian work, advocacy

campaigns, and most of all, organizing interfaith prayers to seek the intervention of the Divine for the betterment of Nepal society.

Link to the YouTube video:

<https://youtu.be/bCw8J8bVn84>



*Religions for Peace* is the world's oldest, largest and most representative multi-religious leadership platform, advancing common action among the world's faith communities. Unlike any other interfaith organisation, Religions for Peace works through legally registered, representative, multi-religious platforms ([Interreligious Councils](#)) in over 95 countries and 6 regions. We convene to catalyse and promote multi-religious collaboration for the common good. In Asia, [Religions for Peace Asia](#) is our regional affiliate founded in 1976. *Religions for Peace* Asia is part of the global *Religions for Peace* movement with a mission to advance common action among religious communities in Asia and the Pacific for peace.

*By Pooja Manandhar, SG, RfP Nepal*

## Story 2:

### Hitting the Streets: Ending Child Marriage in Nepal through Drama

As part of the commitment and efforts of religious leaders in Nepal to intervene on issues affecting children, Religions for Peace Nepal in partnership with Religions for Peace Asia and International organized a street drama in Saptari area.

The contents and script of the drama was done in collaboration with the UNICEF Nepal office through Ms. Sanju Bhattarai. UNICEF Nepal is part of the country offices implementing the [Faith and Positive Change for Children Initiative](#) in coordination with UNICEF South Asia Regional Office.

The video features a Hindu priest and a Muslim Imam who are recorded making citations and references from their respective sacred texts that clearly show that child marriage is indeed contrary to their faith teachings and beliefs.

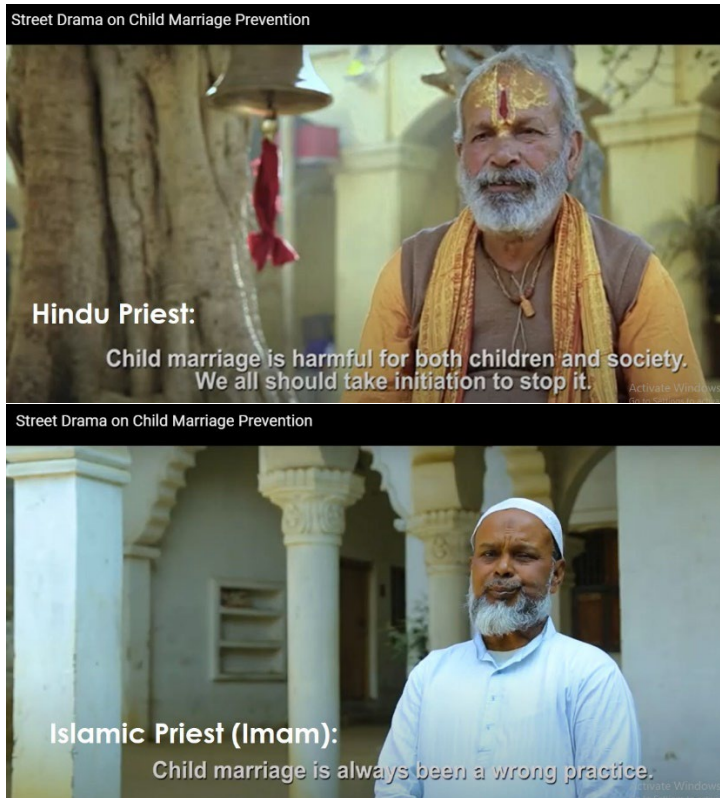
To watch the Street Play on Child Marriage, please go to this link: <https://youtu.be/cF2sCIPBYc8>



#### The Summary of the Street Drama:

The drama starts with a girl giving thanks to her family for letting her study, she finally has found a job as a teacher and got a promotion. The mother is happy that she didn't let her be married early. She is happy that

her daughter is earning. Her father also agrees that it was right decision to let her study and fulfill her dreams. She is the bread winner of the house. Her uncle shows up and says that he was the one who advised the family against early marriage since he had experienced the horrors of it. A priest comes in and gets into the conversation about child marriage, he talks about the traditions but everyone there convince him about the harm that the child marriage can do. They all agree that the practicing child marriage is wrong and we should all stop it.



The Street Drama to End Child Marriage was first shown on the street of Bhediya, Saptari on December 30, 2018, with more than 150 local audiences. A post-drama evaluation was conducted to get the feedback of the viewers. Interestingly, most of the viewers knew what the drama was all about and the majority said that the proper age to marry is around 25 years old.



Religions for Peace Nepal uses innovative activities that reach out to communities and audiences with messaging that helps them reflect and challenge their cultural and social norms. Such efforts contribute to creating awareness while mobilising partnerships and resources to help end harmful cultural practices and norms.

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*By Pooja Manandhar, SG, RfP Nepal*

## Story 3:

### **Vikhu Piyadassi, A Monk's commitment to ending Child Marriage and harmful practices in remote communities in Nepal**

Ven. Vikhu Piyadassi, a well-wisher of *Religions for Peace* Nepal, is a Buddhist monk from Ehipisso Budha Bihar. He has been involved in advocating and campaigning on various social issues. He has worked on programs that focus on the abolition of child marriage.



Ending child marriage is one of the key advocacies of *Religions for Peace* Nepal. Nepal has one of the highest rates of child marriages in Asia for both girls and boys. The legal age for both sexes to enter into marriage is 20, yet more than a third of young women aged 20-24 were married before reaching the age of 18, and just over one in ten by 15 years old. For Nepali boys, one in ten is married before reaching 18 years of age.

“I am committed to ending child marriage as a practice in Nepal, the issue is rampant especially in remote villages which I normally visit to campaign and sensitise communities on the need to end child marriage” shared Vikhu Piyadassi



In collaboration with local religious and community leaders, Ven. Vikhu conducts community meetings to educate the parents regarding the rights of children and the life-long impact of early marriages. He also conducts community and village level workshops and programs with children to raise their awareness about their basic rights and the need to eradicate child marriage practice.



In a community awareness raising program located in the remote area of Bankhandi Gurukul Vidyalaya, Saptari, Vikhu Piyadassi said:

“Our peaceful country Nepal is multi lingual and multi cultured as well. Although many districts of Nepal are suffering from religious mal-practices, it is our duty as religious leaders to minimize such mal-practices. The Nepali government and non-governmental organizations including *Religions for Peace* Nepal have been working on reducing and eliminating such practices and this is a positive thing.”



He has also been encouraging importance of people like Gurus (teachers) and religious leaders to preach against child marriage. He observes:

“In this program (with *Religions for Peace* Nepal), I noted the diverse representation of faith communities in. The religious leaders present in the forum admitted that the religious books never have stated that such mal-practices should be allowed. They even vouched that we should unite and should bring such negative trends to an end.”

Ven. Piyadassi’s campaign, he admitted, springs from his profound religious devotion to the compassionate Buddha. He reiterates that the sacred books do not allow such practice, and that children’s rights must be upheld, including the right to enjoy their youthful years.

The efforts of religious leaders like Vikhu Piyadassi to end child marriage are the continuing programs of *Religions for Peace* Nepal in collaboration with UNICEF to work for the abolition of such a practice. Nepal has the third highest rate of child marriage in Asia, and religious leaders are trying to make a difference to change this scenario. We have started with our small steps and we are hopeful to make a big difference.

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The link to the Child Marriage video:

[https://youtu.be/\\_2NRIN\\_uuR4](https://youtu.be/_2NRIN_uuR4)

*By Pooja Manandhar, SG, RfP Nepal*

**More on the Story collection:**

Rfp Nepal has already submitted 3 stories. We are working on few more stories and we will be submitting them soon in near future.

## UNICEF, Religion for Peace and JLI Partnership:

In pursuing the six strategic goals, Religions for Peace is working in partnership with its regional and national affiliates and striving to enhance their leadership on their respective levels. In collaboration with UNICEF and the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities (JLI), Religions for Peace will support its Regional Interreligious Council in Africa to collaborate with UNICEF Regional and National Offices, Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) and other partners in advocating and taking actions for positive change for children, families and communities. This will be undertaken within The Faith and Positive Change for Children, Families and Communities initiative (FPCC) which is a global effort implemented in partnership with UNICEF and JLI.

### **Multi-Religious Faith-in-Action**

The prolonged Covid-19 pandemic starting in 2020 and continuing into 2022 has resulted in disruption of the delivery of routine essential services, such as maternal and new-born health care including routine immunization, children's education and child protection services. According to a study on the indirect effects of COVID-19 on the pattern of child deaths in 118 countries, it is predicted that over one million additional deaths of children under five is likely to occur, mainly due to reduced routine healthcare and increased child malnutrition. Millions of children are in danger of missing life-saving vaccines against measles, diphtheria and polio due to disruptions in immunization services during the periods of country lock-downs. Polio vaccination campaigns were suspended worldwide, setting back the decades long effort to eliminate the virus. In addition, measles immunization campaigns were delayed in 24 countries.

In terms of COVID vaccine distribution and uptake, vaccine shortages experienced in 2021 are slowly being resolved with greater likelihood of achieving the target of 70% vaccination coverage in 2022. However, the "Red Flag review" monitoring report has indicated low uptake in several countries due

to vaccine hesitancy. Countries in South Asia have reported levels of vaccine hesitancy with specific countries being particularly problematic. Each region has a number of countries that have more significant challenges of low vaccine uptake and demand.

According to mappings of vaccine hesitancy over the past decade (Dube et al, 2014), and WHO/UNICEF Joint Immunization Reporting (2015-2017), religious factors have been the third most frequently cited reason or vaccine hesitancy globally. More recent studies specific to COVID- 19 vaccine (e.g. in Pakistan and Bangladesh 2021) have demonstrated that conceptions, endorsement and actions by religious leaders strongly determine their attitude towards the vaccine and decision to vaccinate.

The above context illustrates the critical need for specific evidence amongst faith communities to ensure more targeted and nuanced strategies in mobilizing faith leaders/actors to support vaccination promotion and delivery that will address identified barriers and drivers for vaccine demand and uptake.

FPCC Initiative aims to strengthen collaboration between faith communities, faith leaders/institutions, FBOs and UNICEF to deliver results for children. The FPCC Global Initiative underlines the need for collaborative and equitable engagement between UNICEF, FBOs and faith leaders and communities. The Initiative highlights that development and faith partners hold complementary skills and that cooperation should engage the mind and heart to achieve social and behavioral change, integrating scientific evidence, religious teachings, and time for reflection. This grant will support Religions for Peace Nepal to conduct the following activity:

## Multi-Country mobile phone survey:

Identification, recruitment and mobilization of 50 participants, which includes youth, women and congregational leaders to participate as respondents to the pre-test of the mobile phone rapid assessment survey tool. Activity includes getting the phone numbers and other information into a directory then

submitting the phone numbers to the survey team whereupon they will be called using an automated voice service.

## RfP Nepal's work on VIAMO automated Phone Survey Task:

RfP Nepal submitted 75 Names with phone numbers and other information to Prof. Pablito Bong on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022. These numbers were for the pre-test for the VIAMO phone survey.

The pre-test was conducted on 23<sup>rd</sup>- 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023. They were trying to get 50 successful survey but they had to stop it in half way because Nepal government needed to be informed to conduct such survey in Nepal. It would take at least 30 working days to get the permission.

RfP Nepal was asked to help for the final survey which would require collection of 2500 phone numbers. The target was to get 1500 successful phone survey.

RfP Nepal has done its best to collect the required numbers.

The date of administration of the survey is 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

We are hopeful to be successful on this task. The complete report for this will be provided in 2023 National Report.

## RfP Nepal's Participation on various RfP Programs:

1. 8<sup>th</sup> March 2022: APOWoFN International Women's Day Event. Attended by Mrs. Indira Manandhar and Mrs. Pooja Manandhar (online).
2. 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> November: AAP/RCCE Training in Sri Lanka organized by UNICEF. Attended by Mrs. Pooja Manandhar and Mr. Ujwal Raj Gautam.  
For Pictures:  
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=rfpnepal&set=a.464407529124934>
3. 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022: Online Seminar hosted by APWoFN- Inspired by faiths and spiritualities to move forward with climate action. Attended by Mrs. Pooja Manandhar (online).  
For Pictures:  
<https://www.facebook.com/media/set?vanity=rfpnepal&set=a.475321948033492>