

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE BANGLADESH CHAPTER REPORT
[MAY 2022 - MAY 2023]

Good morning, esteemed Moderator of ACRP Professor Desmond Cahil, Secretary General Reverend Dr. Yoshinori Shinohara, respected members of the Secretariat, all members of the ACRP family, and distinguished guests. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to the organizers of RfP Philippines and all those who have contributed to making this gathering of Annual ACRP Meeting possible. This event serves as a powerful testament to our shared commitment in promoting peace, mutual understanding, and collaboration among diverse religious communities across Asia.

It is truly an honor for me, representing RfP Bangladesh, to stand before you and present our annual report.

Religions for Peace Bangladesh had an eventful year in 2022(-May 2023), marked by both successes and challenges. The organization focused on promoting peace and interfaith cooperation in the country. It faced internal and external challenges but continued to work towards their mission. Some key highlights from the report include:

1. **Collaboration on Freedom of Religion Exhibition towards inclusive culture:**

RfP Bangladesh partnered with the Freedom of Religion or Belief Leadership Network (FoRBLN) and The Hunger Project Bangladesh to organize a photography competition, its prize-giving ceremony, and an exhibition from 21-31 October 2022 at DRIK Gallery, Dhaka, focusing on religious freedom towards an inclusive culture. The event received support from Dr. Charles Reed (Deputy Director, FoRBLN) and the British High Commissioner in Bangladesh, Mr. Robert Chatterton Dickson.

2. **Online National Consultation:** RfP Bangladesh organized an online consultation to engage faith-based organizations in promoting child rights and well-being in Bangladesh on April 30,2022. Recommendations were sent to UNICEF's Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA).

3. **Participation in Kathmandu Workshop:** Delegates from RfP Bangladesh attended the South Asia Regional Faith Engagement Forum for Strategies for Positive Change for Children, Families, and Communities in Kathmandu from May 8-10, 2022. Prof. Dr.

NHM Abu Bakar (SG, RfPB), Dr. Sucharit Basu Niyogi (Member,EC) and Miss, Nadia Afreen Khan participated in the workshop on behalf of Bangladesh.

4. **Active participation in Annual ACRP Meeting:** Principal Sukomal Barua (President, RfPB) actively participated in the annual ACRP/RfP Asia meeting online on May 10, 2022, making valuable contributions to the discussions and engagements.
5. **Formation of Bangladesh Interfaith Platform:** Prof Dr, NHM Abu Bakar (SG, RfPB) created a WhatsApp group on May 12, 2022 for organizational mapping for FPCC initiative and future endeavors, fostering interfaith collaboration. The group worked successfully during the online questionnaire surveillance and faith-based organizational mapping led by Dave Maurice, the Co-Founder of Nucleus Foundation, Sri Lanka.
6. **Participation in Asia Interfaith Youth Peace Camp:** Ms. Nadia Afreen, Convener of APYIN , Bangladesh Chapter represented RfP Bangladesh at the Asia Interfaith Youth Peace Camp held in the Philippines on February 5-8, 2023.
7. **AGM of APIWoN:** The Chittagong Chapter of the Asia-Pacific Interfaith Women Network (APIWoN) held a Special General Meeting to form a new committee under the initiative of Prof. Dr. Rashida Khanam, Convener, APIWoN Bangladesh Chapter.
8. **Development of RfP Bangladesh Website:** Ms. Nadia Afreen Khan was entrusted early this year with developing the website for RfP Bangladesh, the process of which is currently underway.
9. **Youth Online Campaign:** APIWN Bangladesh Chapter conducted a campaign to raise awareness about marginalized groups such as street children and individuals living in poverty. The campaign aimed to collect stories from these children and compile them into a video, which was supported by the FPCC initiative.

Religions for Peace Bangladesh faced diverse challenges in the previous year, encompassing funding shortages for projects and internal conflicts. Nevertheless, the organization remains optimistic about surmounting these hurdles. To address these challenges, the organization implemented multiple measures, including promoting transparency and open communication, emphasizing financial accountability, and implementing operational enhancements. Additionally, RfPB leaders are actively working on enhancing operational efficiency, reducing costs, streamlining operations, implementing new financial controls and management processes, and fostering collaboration between EC members and ACRP leaders. The wise intervention of Rev.

Dr. Yoshinori Shinohara, Secretary General of ACRP, played a crucial role in overcoming many of these obstacles. Despite the difficulties, Religions for Peace Bangladesh demonstrated resilience and unwavering dedication to its mission, successfully addressing challenges and implementing transformative changes.

Sd/- Dated: 04.05.2017

Dr.NHM Abu Bakar
Secretary General, RfP Bangladesh.