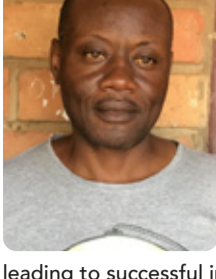




Speakers



Alexander Gwanvalla

National Coordinator of Global Network of Religions For Children

Alexander Gwanvalla is a respected and inspirational team leader known for his passion for children and the environment. He has achieved recognition through community collaboration and consultation,

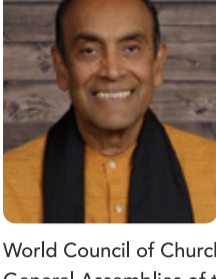
leading to successful initiatives such as planting bee-friendly and fruit trees, promoting organic farming, and climate education. His impactful phrases include "Restore the environment and improve lives" and "Community of practice."



Ms. Andrea Kaufmann

Director of Faith and External Engagement - World Vision

Andrea Kaufmann is World Vision's Director of Faith and External Engagement. She has worked in international development, humanitarian and advocacy work for two decades—serving in programme management, technical leadership, communications and relationship building roles. She is passionate about the evidence-based role of faith and faith actors in development and humanitarian work and works to build cross-sector relationships to drive positive impact for children.



Prof. Anantanand Rambachan

Emeritus Professor of Religion - Saint Olaf College

Prof. Rambachan has been involved in interreligious relations and dialogue for over 40 years as a Hindu contributor and analyst. He is active in the dialogue programs of the

World Council of Churches and was a Hindu guest and presenter in four General Assemblies of the World Council of Churches. He is also involved in the consultations of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican and currently participates as a Hindu theologian in the Ethics in Action dialogues at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. He also serves as the President of the Board of Arigatou International NY



Dr. Benyam Dawit Mezmur

Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and member of the Pontifical Commission on the Protection of Minors

Benjamin is Professor of Child Rights Law, and Coordinator of the Children's Rights Project at the Dullah Omar Institute for Constitutional Law, Governance, and Human Rights, Faculty of Law, at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in South Africa. Since early 2018 he also serves as Deputy Dean for Research and Post-Graduate Studies of the Faculty. He is a member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child and served as its Chairperson from 2015-2017.



Chimmayan

Child Representative - Shanti Ashram

Chinmayan is an eleven-year-old 6th grader in Chennai, is passionate about literature, fine arts, and community engagement. Despite attending multiple schools due to his father's government

service, he finds value in the diverse experiences. Aspiring to be a published author, he excels in theatre and draws inspiration from a visit to Shanthi Ashram and the Mahatma Gandhi Museum. Today, he eagerly discusses "Peace and a Violence-Free Society" with the audience.



Ms. Dana Huamid

Chief Executive - Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities

Dana works with the UAE's Ministry of Interior, where she is responsible for driving the Ministry's international collaboration agenda. Dana is a passionate advocate for ensuring the safety and security of vulnerable sections of our communities. Through her interactions with different stakeholders from civil society, she realized the untapped potential of faith leaders, given their relevance and reach in their communities.



Debbie Edirisinghe

CEO & Founder director-Child Action Lanka

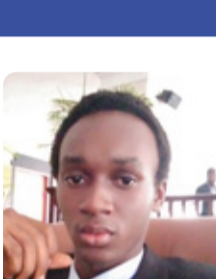
Debbie is a humanitarian worker who is an effective, result-driven leader and problem-solver with expertise in project management, thriving on challenging new opportunities for expanding development work. She is the founder director of Child Action Lanka, Asia-Director of Epiphany Trust, Chairperson (Social Work) – All Ladies League and, plays a leading role in the Circle of Wise Women group and an ambassador for "GLOBAL GOODWILL AMBASSADORS."



Ellyanne

Africa's Youngest Climate Finance & Biodiversity Champion

Ellyanne is 13 years old and she is Africa's Youngest Climate Finance & Biodiversity Champion. Her activism started when she was 4 years old, and since then, she has engaged in and led many initiatives, from planting trees to leading children's task forces, advocating for green spaces and climate finance, to publishing books. She utilizes opportunities to influence policymakers and lawmakers for children's rights, from the United Nations Environment Assembly in 2017 to this year's New Global Financial Pact Summit in Paris, France.



Foday

National Vice President of Children's Forum Network

Foday is 18 years old and he's from the Republic of Sierra Leone in West Africa. He is serving as the outgoing National Vice President of Children's Forum Network which is the umbrella child-led advocacy organization in Sierra Leone, also, he is a climate and Environmental Champion, focusing more on inclusion in co-creating the climate solutions our planet and our people needs.



Franciso Vera

Latin America and the Caribbean Youth Advocate

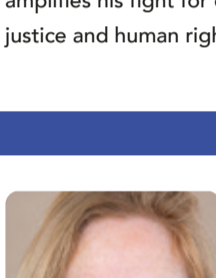
Franciso is a 14-year-old activist and defender of the right to a healthy environment and has dedicated himself to education for years through the group "Guardians for Life". Thanks to his presence on social media and engagement with a virtual environmental activism programme and a network of schools, Franciso amplifies his fight for climate action, children's rights, climate justice and human rights.



Rev. Fred Nyabera

Director, Arigatou International — End child Poverty

is a Social Scientist and a trained Theologian whose interest is in development work. He has extensive experience in faith-based peacebuilding and advancement of the Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB), at the local, regional, and global levels. He is a recipient of the, 2019 "Spirit of the United Nations." The award is presented to members of the UN community including ambassadors, UN Staff, NGOs, and youth representatives for upholding the founding spirit of the United Nations.



Ms. Frederique Seidel

Programme Executive for Child Rights and Manager of WCC-UNICEF Partnership - World Council of Churches

Frederique Seidel is the lead author of Cooler Earth - Higher Benefits: Actions by those who care about children, climate and finance and initiated the appeal Save Children's Lives: Climate-Responsible Banking Survival Guide. Seidel has worked in various countries for UNICEF, as a Deputy Representative, Child Rights Education Programme Manager, Communication Specialist and Head of Field Office. Earlier she served as a spokesperson for the UN and the OSCE in the post-war Balkans and as a journalist for Deutsche Welle TV in Germany.



Mr. Hironari Miyamoto

Secretary General, Myochikai / Representative, Arigatou International

Mr. Miyamoto has been appointed as Secretary General of Myochikai since 2020. He often represents at international conferences on behalf of Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, Leader of Myochikai and President of Arigatou International. As a young leader of the Shinshuren Youth Committee, Mr. Miyamoto organizes Memorial Ceremony for the War Victims and Prayer for Peace on August 14 (8.14 Ceremony), which is held every year, and leads interfaith prayer for peace, renewing a pledge never again to go to war.



Rev. Keishi Miyamoto

President - Arigatou International / Convener - GRNC

Rev. Keishi Miyamoto, the convener of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), is a strong advocate of interfaith cooperation for the well-being of children worldwide. He directs the work of Arigatou International inheriting the spiritual lineage of his father, the late Rev. Takeyasu Miyamoto. He served as the 5th Secretary General of WCRP Japan, and is currently Executive Board Member of the Federation of New Religious Organizations of Japan (Shinshuren), Council Member of the Japanese Association of Religious Organizations (Nishuren) and Advisor of Religions for Peace Japan.



Dr. Kezevino Aram

President - Shanti Ashram

Dr. Kezevino Aram has served as President of Shanti Ashram since 2014. In 2017, she founded the International Center for Child and Public Health (ICPH) on the 30th anniversary of Shanti Ashram. She was awarded the 2021 Leadership Award in Public Health Practice by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health - making her the first Indian to receive the award. She is deeply committed to the Gandhian spirit and convenes many initiatives that focus on community cohesion and active peace building.



Rev. Lauren Van Ham

Interfaith minister - United Religions Initiative

Lauren is an ordained interfaith minister. She has served as a chaplain in healthcare settings, academia and in the corporate world where she custom-designed employee engagement programs for companies committed to carbon reduction and culture change. Her passion for spirituality, art and Earth's teachings support her focus in eco-ministry and Earth restoration. Lauren is a spiritual director and serves as guest faculty for several schools in the San Francisco Bay Area (USA). Lauren serves as Climate Action Coordinator for URI (the United Religions



Laura Molnar

President of Education for Change

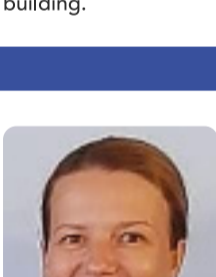
Laura Molnar began collaborating with Arigatou International in 2010 as the GNRC Romania coordinator and LTLT trainer. She conducted workshops for teachers, youth, and specialists in various countries. Laura has since focused on implementing educational programs in Romanian schools, resulting in reduced discrimination and violence among children. Her efforts empower students to positively engage with diverse backgrounds, fostering proactive agents of change in their schools and communities.



Master Alleyne Eirik La

Founder - Heart4Earth

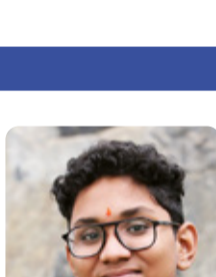
My name is Master Alleyne Eirik Lal, I'm 12 years old and I am an environmentalist and child author from Kerala, India. I started my work when I was 8 years old, with my first initiative: planting 1000 banyan trees. I am the founder of an environmental organization named Heart4Earth Foundation, which aims to create a fleet of inspiring youth and children as the "Global Warriors who will be the Guardians of Future". I have also started campaigns such as the Greenation. I work for a world where there is no threat for existence, I advocate for people to create a culture of conservation instead of destruction.



Melany Santacruz

Director - Youth Human Rights Network

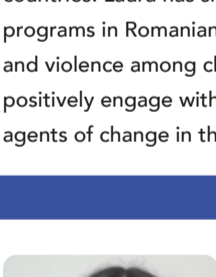
Melany is a 23-year-old Colombian native hailing from the picturesque Nariño region bordering Ecuador, has dedicated her life to advocating for social and environmental justice. Melany's journey began at Mariana University, where she honed her skills as a Social Worker, preparing herself for a life of activism. In a significant turning point in her career, for the last three years, Melany has steered the ship as the Director of the Youth Human Rights Network, where she leads a new generation of change-makers



Muskaan Bateja

Volunteer - Shanti Ashram

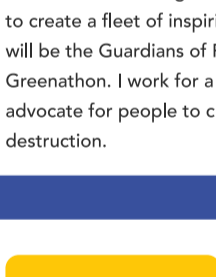
Muskaan is a 12th grader at Yuvabharathi Public School in Coimbatore, is passionate about singing and dancing. Inspired by Ted Talks, she values social interactions and motivation. As a volunteer at Shanti Ashram and a member of EVAC LAB, Muskaan actively participates in service outreach programs. She aspires to become a motivational speaker, drawing strength from spiritual texts and shaping her path toward positive change. Grateful for her experiences at Shanti Ashram, Muskaan considers it an invaluable source that has shaped her journey.



Dr. Mustafa Ali

Secretary General GNRC

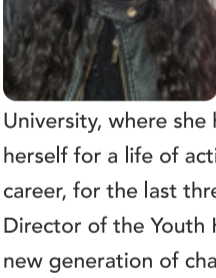
Dr. Mustafa Yusuf Ali is the Secretary General of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) and Director of Arigatou International – Nairobi. He previously worked as Africa Representative for Religions for Peace Africa, and as Secretary General of the African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL). He has been involved in sustainable conflict resolution, prevention of violent extremism and interfaith dialogue. He holds a Ph.D in Sociology and International Relations from the University of Portsmouth, UK.



Dr. Najat Maalla

Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children

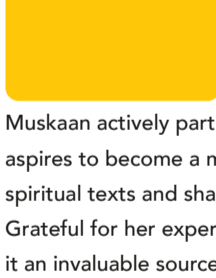
Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid was appointed as Special Representative on Violence against Children in 2019. Dr. M'jid, a medical doctor in pediatrics, has over the last three decades devoted her life to the promotion and protection of children's rights. She was Head of the Paediatric Department and Director of the Hay Hassani Mother-Child hospital in Casablanca. She is the recipient of numerous awards and honours for her strong commitment to protecting the rights of the child.



Mrs. Patricia Furtado

Sports Manager - Bombay Scottish School

Patricia Furtado, a seasoned hockey player from Central Railway, Mumbai, later served as the Sports Manager at Bombay Scottish School, Mahim. With a background in education as a Trustee for St. Catherine of Siena School and Orphanage, and for Divya Darshan, she advocates for sports, emphasizing teamwork and joy in playing, particularly among students. Patricia's commitment extends to environmental causes, leading eco drives at St. Catherine's and inspiring youth to contribute to saving the Earth and its seas.



Ms. Rebeca Rios-Kohn

Director - Arigatou International, New York

Rebeca has over 30 years of experience working for the United Nations in the areas of human rights, women's and children's rights and held senior level positions with UNICEF and United Nations Development Programme where she advocated for human rights reaching out to policymakers, government officials, parliamentarians, judges, and academic leaders.. Ms. Rios-Kohn authored a number of articles and academic papers for law journals, developed studies and training materials on a wide range of subjects, and co-authored Protecting the World's Children, a UNICEF publication (2007).



Sandrine Valentin

Echo-School leader

Sandrine is an Eco-School Leader at Mont Fleuri Secondary in Seychelles, and is founding Eco-School leader, passionately educates youth about nature and conservation through holiday camp programs. Her efforts have led to notable achievements, including winning the Eco-School Award and being named the best regional leader. Committed to promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), her school secured the top spot in Seychelles for the Eco-School Award 2022.



Sharon M. Frederic

Teacher - Ministry of Education

With 24 years in the Ministry of Education, Miss Sharon, originally a nurse, excelled as a counselor on, Anise Boileau Primary School. Progressing to roles at Belonie Secondary School, including Head of Year, she holds an advanced diploma in educational leadership and international education in Know about Business and Ethics Education. A celebrated Seychellois teacher, she actively contributes to local and international educational initiatives through committee involvement.



Yael

Environmental activist - Dominican Republic

My name is Yael, I am 18 years old, and I am from the Dominican Republic. Ever since my teenage years I have been interested in environmental issues, I have participated in campaigns and activities in favor of mitigating the environmental crisis and the problems it has caused. In November 2022, I participated in the first regional consultation in LAC where I was able to make my voice known as a young teenager in climate justice in correlation with the rights of children and adolescents. I am very interested in being able to raise my voice and make people hear about how climate change affects the most vulnerable communities, communities like mine.