

WFP Birmingham, UK: Peace Garden Youth Service Project

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The Women's Federation for World Peace was a major support for the UPF Youth Service Project in August, in which twelve young women, and twelve young men, laid the foundations for a Peace Garden in a beautiful EcoPark, in Small Heath, one of the most deprived areas of Birmingham, UK.



The young men cleared out a very overgrown part of the park, which was like a jungle, and began making a new fence around it, together with some benches for people to sit on and enjoy time reflecting in nature.

At the centre of the Peace Garden is a beautiful fig tree.

The young women completed the woodwork, and cleared another area of very tall reeds and grass, putting in new soil to make a large flower bed. Seeds from these flowers will be sent out to other parks and green spaces in Birmingham next year. Most of the young women were daughters of ladies who are part of the Birmingham Women's Peace Group.



Also, each day a home-made lunch was provided by different ladies from the Women's Peace Group - Bangladeshi, Moroccan, Jamaican, Iranian, Pakistani...

Several people came in to speak to the young men and women, including 2 women City Councillors, a Christian Minister and a local Imam working with youth and street gangs, and a young woman who leads the Violence Reduction Unit in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Dr Mike Balcomb also made a special effort to attend for one day, working side-by-side with the young men, and offering words of inspiration at the end of the day!

All were inspired by the efforts of the young people, their teamwork, and the fact that they represented so many races, religions, cultures, and 10 different nationalities. It was so interesting to see the transformation which occurred during their 3 days at the project, particularly in the young women, gaining confidence through public service, creating something of value for the community, and building lasting friendships with the other participants in the process. Wonderful!

At the end, Certificates of Achievement were presented to everyone by the Region's longest serving (35 years) female Police Officer, Rani Gundhu.

We hope that some of the young men and women will be inspired to do follow-up service projects, back in their own community, and then receive a special Youth Award in the UK Parliament, later in the year.

Date of event: 1st-10th August 2022.