

## UPF International: April as the Month of Service

Tageldin Ibrahim Hamad  
March 29, 2026



As April 2026 begins, the Universal Peace Federation enters the second full month of its 100 Days of Serving Community campaign, running from February 20 to June 1. March was the Month of Partnerships; April is the Month of Service. Partnerships build trust through practical action in society. Service reaches beyond charity: it reduces social isolation, renews shared public spaces, supports vulnerable families, assists those in need, and builds interpersonal trust.

This focus is in line with the [International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development \(IVY 2026\)](#). It also resonates with the [International Day of Sport for Development and Peace](#) on April 6 and [International Mother Earth Day](#) on April 22.

In many societies, spring is the season when homes, streets, schools and common spaces are cleaned, repaired and renewed. Thus, in many regions, April is marked by civic campaigns that connect volunteerism with spring renewal. Groups conducting such campaigns include Points of Light in the United States, Volunteer Canada in Canada, and European Youth Week, which kicks off in Belgium and spreads throughout Europe. Other projects such as the Spring Week of Kindness in Russia and Good Deeds Days in Israel, Italy, Poland and Portugal, inspire a culture of organized volunteerism with local and international acts of service. In Africa, active April networks can be seen in Kenya and South Africa.

UPF founders Dr. Hak Ja Han and the late Rev. Sun Myung Moon taught that lasting peace grows when people serve others through everyday acts of service and when consistent service becomes part of

community life. Initiatives they inspired include the [International Relief Friendship Foundation](#), founded in 1976 to provide humanitarian aid and development support to communities affected by poverty, disasters, and conflict; the [Religious Youth Service](#), founded in 1985 to engage young people of many nations and religions in projects that combine service projects with interfaith exposure and education; and [Youth and Students for Peace](#), founded in 2017 to empower a new generation through social service, peacebuilding and leadership training.

Sports for peace initiatives - including the [Play Soccer, Make Peace](#) tournaments, launched in 2004 as a project of the [World Association of NGOs](#) and developed in partnership with UPF in places such as Gaza, Israel, Jordan, and Nigeria - show how fair play and teamwork can help heal and serve divided communities and make the vision of one family under God visible on the playing field. Aewon, the charity organization founded by Dr. Hak Ja Han in 1994, provided free meals to the poor, supported low-wage earners and the handicapped in South Korea, and extended aid to North Korean people.

The Universal Peace Federation encourages its Ambassadors for Peace, national chapters, partner organizations, and all people of goodwill to dedicate April, the Month of Service, to one or more practical acts of service for the benefit of society, especially in the context of [IVY 2026](#). Through such shared work, April can strengthen neighborhoods, institutions, and the habits of trust on which peace depends, while supporting the transition to May as the Month of Family and the campaign's culmination.

#### **April Volunteer Activities Around the World**

April 1-30 Points of Light [Global Volunteer Month](#) (USA)

April 6 [International Day of Sport for Development and Peace](#)

April 12 [Good Deeds Day](#) (Israel)

April 14-16 [ECOSOC Youth Forum](#)

April 19-25 Points of Light [National Volunteer Week](#) (USA)

April 19-25 Volunteer Canada [National Volunteer Week](#) (Canada)

April 19-27 [Spring Week of Kindness](#) (Russia)

April 21-22 [Humanitarian Congress Berlin](#) (Germany)

April 22 [International Mother Earth Day](#)

April 24 [International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace](#)

April 24-May 1 [European Youth Week 2026](#)

April 27-29 [World Health Summit Regional Meeting in Nairobi](#) (Kenya)



# INTERNATIONAL RELIEF FRIENDSHIP FOUNDATION

3 Ways to Help

Help Now



Any donation will be useful to equip those who have been affected by the storms with the right resources. Please contribute to the cause today—every penny counts! We have partnered with [Christian Disaster Response](#) to ensure funds reach the place of maximum need and optimum service opportunity.

Help Out

You can facilitate the recovery process by volunteering with IRFF! After receiving training, volunteers will go into the affected area to assist those who have incurred damages to their homes as a result of the disaster. The training is approximately a weekend – 2 days – for basic training.

Help Out

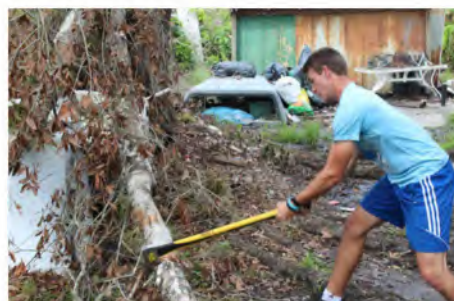
Help meet both the immediate and long-term needs of the people and communities hit hardest by disaster by preparing a recovery kit or "gift of the heart" containing essential items. For more instructions on preparing a recovery kit, click the button below.

Help Out

## OUR STORIES



Japan Disaster Relief



Volunteering in Florida – Day 6



Volunteering in Florida – Day 5

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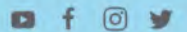
# ABOUT US

In the wake of worldwide catastrophic natural disasters, IRFF is partnering with Christian Disaster Response (CDR) to assist in the recovery process for those who have been affected. We place a special focus on the areas that are often invisible to the civic and governmental agencies and consequently do not get served.

We invite the public to contribute and donate to help those in need during these devastating disasters in one of three ways: financial donations, recovery kits, or volunteering. All donations will go to support those in the affected areas - providing hot meals, clean water, and other essential needs, as well as sending volunteers to directly aid those affected most by these disasters.

Founded in 1976 by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the International Relief Friendship Foundation, Inc. (IRFF) is dedicated to finding practical solutions to the global problems of poverty, suffering, and disease while promoting opportunities for long-term sustainable development for communities in need. Thus, IRFF provides immediate humanitarian relief to individuals and families devastated by poverty, illness, natural disasters, and conflict in addition to paving the path for long-term sustainable development through educational and economic opportunities. IRFF also develops and educates the next generation of socially responsible global leaders through our experiential service learning programs that stress cultural, religious, and racial cooperation.

[Donate](#) | [Volunteer](#) | [Give a Gift](#)



[International Relief Friendship Foundation](#) Copyright © 2017

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*A Global Network of Peacebuilders*

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## RELIGIOUS YOUTH SERVICE PROJECTS

Religious Youth Service



Founded in 1985, the Religious Youth Service is a project devoted to education and peacebuilding among young people of all national, cultural and religious backgrounds. RYS blends substantial work service with cultural and peacebuilding training, in order to equip young people with the tools they need to be positive influences within their communities and in their interaction with other communities.

UPF chapters organize Religious Youth Service projects that offer service-learning opportunities with a special focus on developing personal leadership and peacemaking skills. Through living together and providing altruistic service in a community, participants demonstrate that it is possible for our global human family to come together in peace for our mutual wellbeing.

- [Resource page for organizers](#)
- [RYS Programs and Reports](#)
- [Backgrounder and Purpose of the RYS](#)

### PAST PROJECTS

#### 2023

Aug 17 [UPF-Sri Lanka Commemorates UN International Youth Day](#)

Apr 8 [UPF-Sri Lanka Provides Food Aid to Families](#)

Jan 24 [UPF-Sri Lanka Commemorates UN International Day of Education](#)

#### 2022

Sep 4 [UPF-Sri Lanka Distributes Food Aid to Families](#)

#### 2021

Mar 20 [Religious Youth Service \(RYS\): The Power of Cooperation](#)

#### 2018

Dec 31 [2018: A Year of Accomplishments for UPF in Eastern Europe](#)

Dec 13 [RYS-Sri Lanka Trains Future Leaders](#)

Aug 17 [RYS Island Friendship Project in Sri Lanka](#)

Jan 31 [World Interfaith Harmony Week Observed in Moscow](#)

#### 2017

Aug 18 [RYS Volunteers Build a Bridge in Sri Lanka](#)

[See More Past Projects](#)

## BACKGROUNDER AND PURPOSE OF THE RELIGIOUS YOUTH SERVICE

The Youth Seminar on the World's Religions, the predecessor to RYS, was created based on an idea presented to the Rev. Sun Myung Moon in 1985 at the First Assembly of the World's Religions (sponsored by the International Religious Foundation). The first international project took place the following year in the Philippines. RYS has organized hundreds of interfaith service projects in more than 70 nations, with participants from diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds. Advisors have included Dr. Huston Smith, widely regarded as one of the world's most influential figures in religious studies, the distinguished theologian Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios, who promoted many inter-religious dialogue and cooperation projects, and other interfaith leaders.

As a service learning program, RYS brings together youth from different cultures and religions in order to promote mutual understanding and respect and to develop personal leadership and peacebuilding capacities. Participants serve a community in need, visit religious and historic sites, and learn communication and team-building skills.

### The Three Pillars of RYS's Vision

RYS is a tool for young people to live and work together as a community, deepen their faith, share their best qualities, and leave a legacy of a culture of peace, service, and compassion. Through living and providing altruistic service within a community, RYS demonstrates that it is possible for our global human family to live together in peace and co-prosperity.

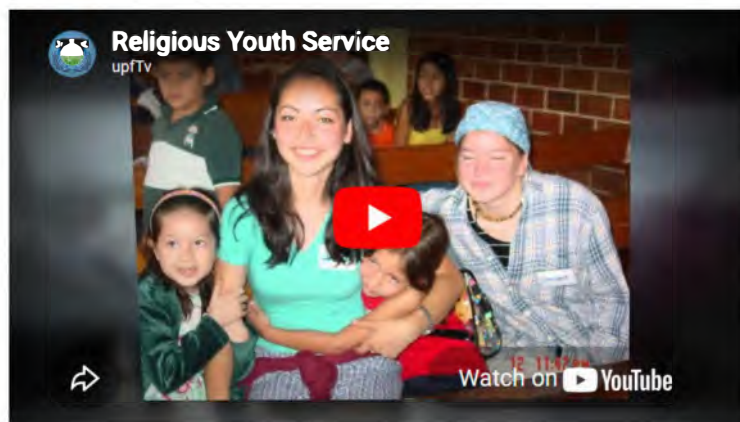
• **Interfaith and Intercultural Education:** Interfaith understanding and cooperation is the

- **Interfaith and Intercultural Education:** Interfaith understanding and cooperation is the foundation for peace. By gaining insight into the principles and values shared by people of diverse religions and cultures, we can learn to respect one another and lend a hand to build a better world. Mother Teresa said, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."
- **Leadership Development:** To invest in young people, who are the future of our society, involves giving them the necessary tools — internal and external — to lead and influence others in the challenging years ahead. Our participants meet with leaders who are role models from all walks of life, to understand people of different cultures, races, and ethnic groups. They practice communication skills, gain team-building experience, learn respect for the universal values taught by all religions, and promote community development.
- **Service to Others:** By serving people in the community, the ideal of compassion becomes a reality. Altruistic service and living for the sake of others is the foundation for a culture of peace.

#### Global Outreach

- **Humanitarian Aid:** In response to natural and man-made disasters, UPF provides donations and volunteers to help with emergency relief. Immediate and long-term projects include clearing the debris from homes after a tsunami struck in Japan and bringing food and water to stranded survivors and scrubbing the walls and floors of an Islamic school after Thailand was struck by floods. Other activities aided people in Haiti, Pakistan, Russia and India.
- **Sports for Peace:** Young people from diverse backgrounds compete as teams in popular sports such as soccer. Coaches focus on respect and sportsmanship to promote personal development and community cohesion.

RYS volunteers — Muslim or Jew, Christian or Hindu, Buddhist or Unificationist or of any other faith — learn there is much to share and much to discover from one another. It is this cooperative inter-faith element that makes RYS distinct from any other social service project. UPF is proud to support the RYS program because young people are the future of our global society, and living for the sake of others is a UPF core principle for good citizenship and lasting peace.



RELIGIOUS YOUTH SERVICE  
A Project of the Universal Peace Federation

View on Slideshare < 1 / 24 >

#### Religious Youth Service Introduction from Universal Peace Federation International

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We are an international and interreligious network of individuals and organizations, including representatives from religion, government, civil society and the private sector dedicated to achieving world peace. UPF supports the work of the United Nations, particularly in the areas of interfaith peacebuilding, peace education, and the strengthening of marriage and family.

**Universal Peace Federation is an NGO in General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. We support and promote the work of the United Nations and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals**

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# About



## Our Founder

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon The founder of International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) is Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, affectionately called Mother Moon. She established IAYSP in February 2017. In 1960 she was blessed in marriage to the Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon (1920 – 2012). Together, with her husband of 52 years, they devoted their lives to laying the foundation for a world of universal peace and prosperity—centered on faith and family.

After decades of supporting, investing in and developing numerous youth-related programs, Mother Moon created IAYSP to raise young people to be the hope of the world. She has travelled the globe, spoken in the halls of congresses around the world, including at the United Nations, and worked together with the heads of state and government, even Nobel laureates. Yet, she still finds some of her greatest hope and joy in being with young people.

## Vision and Mission

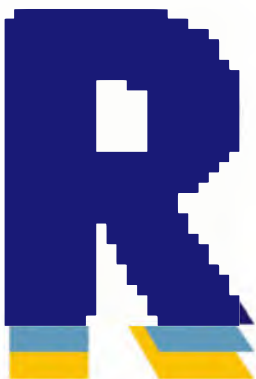
### Vision

A global family of young people building a world of peace with true love.

### Mission

To advance world peace by empowering youth and students to become global citizens through character education and peace projects supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## Four Core Values



### Responsibility

Human beings have a duty to deal with and manage ourselves and our environment to a degree unparalleled in other living being. By fulfilling responsibility we



### Integrity

Defined as "the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles," integrity begins within each of us, by uniting our words and deeds.



### Service

Living for others is the foundation and indispensable principle needed to create good character within us and true love between people.



### Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others as if they were our own. The most natural environment to develop our

By fulfilling responsibility, we find our greatest freedom, highest value and fulfill our noblest ideals.

words and deeds.

between people.

environment to develop our heart to empathize with others is in the family. This heart of familial love is then brought into society and creates a culture of peace.



## Hyojeong - Filial Heart

The lifestyle choices that young people make during their formative years will influence them and society for generations. The most important choice is the way in which they choose to love. Filial piety focuses on the love between children and parents. Hyojeong, a Korean term meaning filial heart, integrates the internal quality of selfless love found in filial piety and expands into public mindedness in individuals, then cultivates good citizens in the community, loyal patriots in the nation, and a responsible peace-loving global citizenry. To remind youth and students of the importance that hyojeong plays in human relationships at every level of society the initials "HJ" are part of the IAYSP logo.



IAYSP - Oceania - Empowering Youth to Become Global Citizens

Registered as an Australian Charity - International Association of Youth and Students for Peace LTD

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## PLAY SOCCER, MAKE PEACE

Sunday, December 09, 2007

Play Football, Make Peace has run pilot programs for young people in Gaza, Israel and Jordan. The power of sports to bring down borders was shown when young people from the separate areas of Gaza had a unique chance to meet each other and compete through a Play Soccer [Football] Make Peace tournament, a joint project conducted by UPF and WANGO, the World Association of NGOs.

The Palestinian Football Association and the Ministry of Sports and Culture helped select the sixteen teams and 300 players. This was the largest soccer tournament in Gaza, and both Fatah and Hamas fielded teams at a time when they were in conflict with each other.

Play Soccer, Make Peace also organized a tournament in northern Israel that brought together Israeli Jewish and Arab youth. "During the tournament, Jewish and Arab youth and coaches had the chance to come into contact with one another and partake in a joint activity," said organizer Mohammad Darawshe. "This is something that does not happen often enough in our country."

At a regional Play Soccer, Make Peace tournament in Jordan, youth from Egypt, Estonia, Gaza, and Yemen traveled to Amman to compete with Jordanian youth, Palestinian refugees, and Iraqis living in Jordan. The Jordanian organizers set the tradition of teams eliminated in one round of competition going to the next game to cheer for the team who had defeated them.

The Palestinians broke the ice with the Estonians, encouraging them to mix with the other players, and the Iraqis requested a special post-tournament friendly match with the Estonians. The Yemenis won the tournament.

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# WANGO

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

## Connecting & Serving NGOs Beyond Borders

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## Advancing Peace & Global Well-Being

The World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO) is an international organization uniting NGOs worldwide in the cause of advancing peace and global well-being. WANGO helps to provide the mechanism and support needed for NGOs to connect, partner and multiply their contributions to solve humanity's basic problems.



### Our Work

WANGO convenes events and provides a wealth of tools and resources that help nonprofits



### Become a Member

We are a worldwide membership organization, with members in over 120 nations. Join our global network



### Get Involved

There are many ways to support WANGO's work: donate to us, nominate an NGO for a WANGO

better accomplish their missions.

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today.

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Award, support the Code of Ethics initiative and more.

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## Members in Over 120 Nations

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### Support the Code of Ethics & SDG 16

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Empowering the NGO Sector



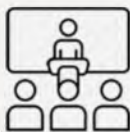
Ethics and Accountability



Advocacy



NGO Excellence and Innovation



Conferences and Events



Humanitarian Response



Sports for Peace

# What NGO leaders say



“

The NGO community has a very important role in helping to mobilize the people, in helping vest them with the recognition that they do have the power and the duty to make a difference.

Daniel Lubetzky  
Founder, PeaceWorks Foundation  
Founder, KIND Snacks



## Our Network in Numbers

120+  
Countries and Territories

44%  
Local and National NGOs

55%  
International NGOs

3700+  
Code of Ethics Supporters

35+  
Awardees

### Our History

#### 25 years of serving NGOs

In 2000, a handful of international NGOs and prominent leaders came together with a vision for an organization that would unite NGOs worldwide in the cause of advancing peace and global wellbeing.

In the more than two decades since, that vision has been embodied in a global network of NGOs, as well as affiliates drawn from the ranks of governmental and intergovernmental bodies, business, and universities, dedicated to solving pressing local and global issues.

© Nikolay Antonov top row second photo from left.

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- Advocacy
- NGO Excellence and Innovation
- Conferences and Events
- Humanitarian Response
- Sports for Peace

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