

The
Faith
& Belief
Forum



YOUTH
COUNCIL

2023 **YOUTH
INTERFAITH
SUMMIT**

**MONDAY,
FEBRUARY 6TH**

LSE, NEW ACADEMIC BUILDING

WELCOME

A message from our Youth Council Chair

The Youth Council are delighted to be relaunching our Youth Interfaith Summit for the first time since 2019. Coinciding with the UN World Interfaith Harmony Week, we want to use this space to bring people from different backgrounds, religions and cultures together so that we can learn and grow. We are passionate about interfaith harmony and social cohesion, and consider climate change to be one of the defining challenges of this century.

When thinking about climate change, I have sometimes felt a wave of hopelessness. I'm therefore less inclined to take action, because 'what's the point?'. What I'd love for people to find today, through this Interfaith Summit, is some hope. And more than just a sense of hope, a community spirit to take with you even once the event is over, to know that there are other people who are dealing with these issues, and that there are so many people who do really want to make this world a better place. I think that's what binds all of us together. We want to leave our positive stamp on the world.

Hopefully, this alone should inspire us to take action in our own lives. We owe it to each other and we can also take energy from the knowledge that we are pulling together to make this happen. I hope that everyone here will take something new with them, whether that's some information, a contact, a new way of influencing politics at any level. Hopefully you'll meet someone from a different background to yourself too that you may not have encountered from. And even if you have, taking that time to actually ask what it means to be of a different background as we navigate the world and the climate around us. What is it that informs our own values and relationship to the environment? Hopefully coming to an interfaith environment, where we are actively encouraging you to ask these questions of each other, we'll take away an enriched understanding of those we share space with.

I strongly encourage everyone who is coming to the Summit to go and talk to someone they don't know. Everyone has something to offer, whether they're an expert in their field or have just experienced the world in a different way to you; it's vital to keep learning and understanding the experiences of others around us. Ask someone where they're from, how they heard about this event, why they're interested in interfaith work or the climate, or what their biggest hope from the evening is. Start a conversation and see where it leads to truly make the most of tonight.

Tonight's event wouldn't have been possible without the help of many colleagues and volunteers working hard to make it happen. Thank you so much to Lauryn Duncan-Rouse, Alejandra Andrade, Rachel Cohen, Jessica Hazrati and Philip Ybring from F&BF. Also thank you to the volunteers who comprise the Youth Council: Mashiyath Qurashy, Adhish Wali, Tom Blake, Ivy Gardner, Propa Anwar, Maria Naveed and Sumon Limbu for your commitment to the Youth Council and giving up your free time to help make this happen.

I hope you have a fantastic time at the Youth Interfaith Summit 2023, enjoy learning, meeting new people, reflecting on your own identity, eating pizza and all the other great things on offer tonight!

Matthew Gold

**Programmes Officer at the Faith & Belief Forum,
Chair of F&BF's London Youth Council, University of
Manchester ParliaMentor 2018-19**



MESSAGE OF SUPPORT

A message from our F&BF Director

In the early 1990s I was working for the World Wide Fund for Nature UK (WWF UK). That was 30 years ago. It was a time when the phrase sustainable development was less familiar than it is today. Indeed, it was only a few years earlier in 1987 when a report was published called: Our Common Future (also known as the Brundtland Report). This report was released by the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development and set out the concept of sustainable development for the first time along with its guiding principles.

30+ years later the argument for sustainable development via the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is sharper and more urgent. Evidence of environmental degradation, the erosion of biodiversity, and the ways in which this is inextricably linked to how we as human beings live our lives has crystallised.

It is also crystal clear that our environmental crisis carries with it the issue of power, which we cannot duck. 'Climate justice', a 'just transition'. These phrases remind us that sustainable development and tackling climate change are not only about how we engage with nature, but are also about how we treat each other as human beings.

The environment and justice are key themes of this year's youth summit on climate change organised by F&BF's youth council. They lie at the heart of faith traditions, and it is apt, therefore, that the timing of this event is during interfaith harmony week. This summit is an important contribution to the great work already being done by different faith and belief communities. It is youth inspired, youth led, and youth delivered.

It focuses on the issue that will define this decade more strongly than it did the 1990s when I first began to engage with the idea of sustainable development. There has been some progress on climate change since then, with the Paris Agreement of 2015 marking a palpable shift in gear. But there is so much more to do. So how will this summit help?

Over the past three decades it has become clearer to me that what we need most to tackle climate change effectively is global solidarity towards the needs of different people. Coming together across different faiths and beliefs this Monday is an important contribution to building this solidarity. The event will not solve the problem of climate change. But it will demonstrate to all of us how young people of different faith and belief identities, with different ideas and perspectives, with different skills and experiences, can connect and collaborate on something that affects us all. I only wish there had been something like it back in 1990!

Phil Champain

Director of The Faith & Belief Forum





PROGRAMME

faith Summit Schedule

REGISTRATION & NETWORKING

Join us for some veggie and vegan pizza, networking opportunities and to explore stalls from different climate related groups.

18:15– 18:45

WELCOME & PERFORMANCES

18:45– 19:15

Breakout Rooms

FAITH AND CLIMATE ACTION PANEL

Auditorium

We will hear from members of different faith groups about the work they are already doing to mitigate climate change and raise awareness, inspired by being part of faith groups and communities. Our speakers will share personal reflections on why their faith motivates them to act, as well as the concrete steps that groups are taking, from right at home all the way through to establishing faith working groups at the UN.

SESSION 1

19:20– 20:10

USING YOUR INFLUENCE – SKILLS WORKSHOP

NAB 1.07

The first in a two-part skills series will focus on practical steps that young people can take to fight against climate change within their own communities.

Facilitator Lucy Plummer will share practical ways that she was able to have influence within UN policymaking spheres.

SESSION 2

20:20– 21:10

IDENTITY AND ENVIRONMENT – DISCUSSION

NAB 1.09

Led by the Faith & Belief Forum's Green Team; this session will allow participants to continue to reflect on a personal level about their identity and personal relationship with the environment.

INEQUALITY AND CLIMATE JUSTICE PANEL

Auditorium

We know that climate change doesn't affect everyone equally. This panel will hear from those working within climate justice networks on how climate change impacts us all in varied ways. Why do some groups, whether that be race, faith or geographically separated, end up treated differently. What can young people do to help, which are the key areas that young people can focus on, and are there causes for optimism that climate work is successful?

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM –

SKILLS WORKSHOP NAB 1.07

Our second skills training session will be an entry into climate and environmental activism. How can young people get involved in practical ways in activities that will make a difference in their own communities and lives? This will encourage individuals to think about where they are right now, who they can influence, what actions you can ask of those around you and how to do that. In the workplace – how can someone help call for and design an environmental policy if there isn't one already?

CONCLUDING REMARKS & ACTIONS

21:10– 21:25



SPEAKERS

FAITH & CLIMATE ACTION

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Our Panelists



Shantanu Mandal

Shantanu Mandal is passionate about connecting values and their application to the field of Education, Awareness, Well-being and Youth. His main area of work has taken a benevolent and holistic approach to activism based on a shift in consciousness. As the rapporteur for the COY Paris, he helped develop the Youth Manifesto. He mentored and organised the LCOYs in India in 2019- 2022. Since 2019 he's represented the Brahma Kumaris Youth in the UNEP, UNFCCC & UNCCD. He's attended 4 COPs and is involved in the UN Food Systems Summit. He facilitates the Environment and Faith in Steering Committee of the United Nations Environment Program Major Group for Children and Youth (UNEP MGCY).



Kevin Shang

Kevin Shang is a trustee of Operation Noah, an ecumenical Christian charity based in the UK, that campaigns on climate change. He completed the ParliaMentors programme in 2017/18, and won 21 for 21 interfaith award in 2018, a joint project between the Church Times, Jewish News, British Muslim TV and Coexist House. He works as a senior analyst in Wood Mackenzie's global energy storage team and his research and analysis on battery industry and market is often featured in the press.



Gurvinder Uppal

Gurvinder Uppal studied Geography at the University of Portsmouth, taking an interest in environmental and climate justice. Her thesis was inspired by her connection to her background and faith. She holds a masters degree in International Relations, focusing on the politics behind climate change denial. Gurvinder has interned at Greenpeace UK and at Climate Strategies. She works at Greenpeace as Fundraising Executive. Visiting the gurdwara and seeing opportunities of how we can make our places of worship more environmentally friendly as well as wanting to engage minority groups in climate activism are her motivations for volunteering with EcoSikh UK.

INEQUALITY & CLIMATE JUSTICE

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Our Panelists



Alexa Waud

Alexa Waud is an experienced social researcher with international experience, an eye for detail, and the capacity for big picture thinking. She is interested in climate justice, questions of reach, and finding synergies between health, social, and environmental policies to lesson social inequalities.



Bel Jacobs

Bel Jacobs is a former fashion editor turned speaker and activist for climate justice, animal rights and alternative ways in which to view clothing and culture in the light of the climate emergency. She is co-founder of Fashion Act Now, a campaign seeking to embed ideas of degrowth into fashion systems; founder of The Empathy Project, which aims to reframe relationships between humans and animals towards greater compassion and respect; and co-founder of the Islington Climate Centre.



Dalia Gebrial

Dalia is an ESRC funded PhD candidate, working on race and gender in the platform economy. She completed her MSc in LSE Geography, after studying English Literature at Warwick and Oxford Universities. She's worked at the grassroots NGO, People & Planet and is on the board of Historical Materialism journal. She has published work in *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* as well as making occasional appearances on outlets including Sky News, BBC and LBC. Dalia is involved in campaigning work around issues such as immigrant rights, workers' rights and climate justice. She has also recently contributed to and co-edited a volume on *Decolonising the University* with Gurminder Bhambra and Kerem Nisancioglu.

SKILLS WORKSHOPS

How can you be a positive influence?

A two-part skills series which will focus on practical steps that young people can take to fight against climate change within their own communities. Facilitator Lucy Plummer will share practical ways that she was able to have influence within UN policymaking spheres.

the second session will be an entry into climate and environmental activism. How can young people get involved in practical ways in activities that will make a difference in their own communities and lives? This will encourage individuals to think about where they are right now, who they can influence, what actions you can ask of those around you and how to do that. In the workplace – how can someone help call for and design an environmental policy if there isn't one already?



Lucy Plummer

Lucy is a Youth Worker, an international youth participation specialist, and an Honorary Research Fellow with the Centre for Applied Buddhism. Lucy has been engaged in various interfaith initiatives, including the Religions for Peace UK Interfaith Youth Network and the UNEP UK Youth Faith Council, and has collaborated with global young people of faith to co-organise interfaith youth events at several international climate and environmental conferences, including COP26, COP27, and UNEA 5.2.

IDENTITY & ENVIRONMENT

A conversation with our Green Team

Led by the Faith & Belief Forum's Green Team; this session will allow participants to continue to reflect on a personal level about their identity and personal relationship with the environment.

Join Laura Roper and Siobhán Anderson, Programmes Coordinators at F&BF, for an interactive session exploring perspectives on nature and the environment, and how our beliefs and traditions inspire us to take action. Everyone who attends will be invited to reflect, share, and discuss in small groups.



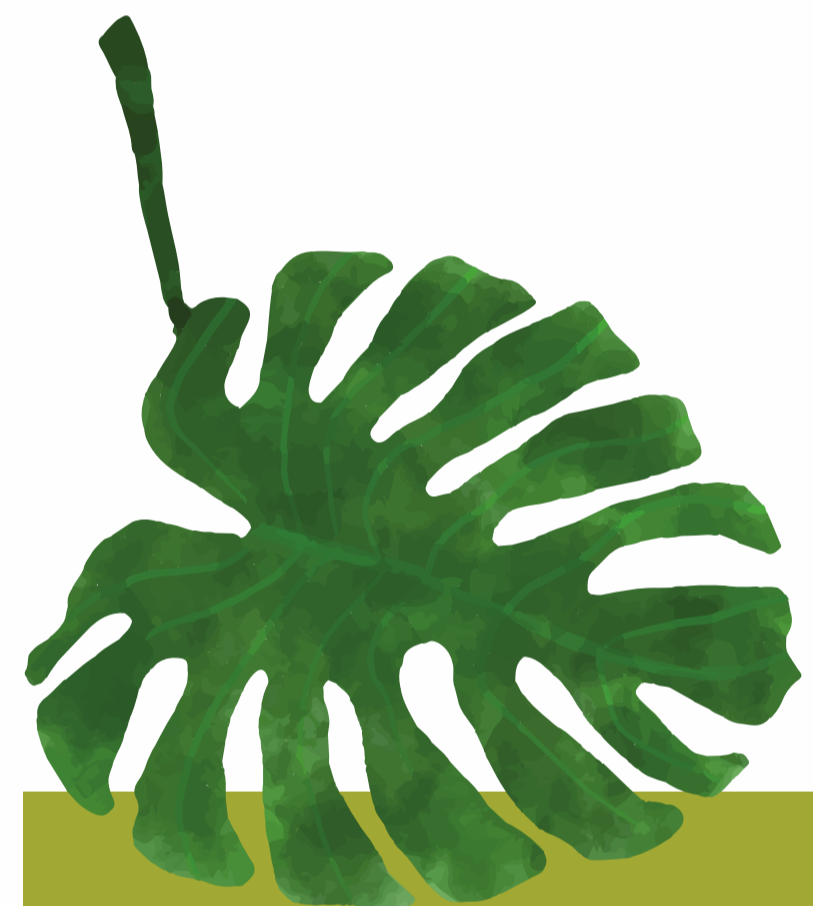
Siobhán Anderson

Siobhán coordinates various community and workplace projects in F&BF's Movement Building team. Siobhán holds an MA Religion in Contemporary Society from King's College London and BA Theology with Philosophy from the University of Exeter. She is an experienced facilitator and enjoys working with participants ages 8 to 80+. Siobhán is a vegan and animal lover and has previously worked in the Volunteering Department at Battersea Dogs & Cats Home.



Laura Roper

Laura works as programmes coordinator in our Education & Learning team. Whilst at university, she first became involved with F&BF as part of the ParliaMentors programme, identifying a lot with our mission and values. She has undergraduate degree in Wildlife Conservation from the University of Salford and a Master's in Human Rights and Environmental Law from Lancaster University. She has volunteered helping teach English lessons for refugees and is passionate about creating universal equality and a tolerant society. In her spare time she enjoys reading, politics, foraging and walking her pet beagle.



The Faith & Belief Forum's Green Team works to grow climate justice awareness and action internally and among our organisation's networks, as well as to highlight the important work happening to protect the environment across faith and belief communities.



BLOGS

WHY IS A YOUTH INTERFAITH SUMMIT NECESSARY?

Climate change & Community

In contemporary society, people often believe it is often said that community no longer exists. Individualism is rising globally, as family units are smaller, communal spaces are closing, and isolation and loneliness are on the rise. Simultaneously, life is busier than ever. The pressures of being a young person today mean many of us have experienced feelings of burnout before our 25th birthday.

On top of the pressures of 'hustle' culture and trying to survive neoliberalism, young people seem to bear the most responsibility of global warming by being urged to prioritize sustainability in everything we do – from what we wear, what we eat, and where we shop. I cringe every time my paper straw turns to mush and ask myself, "how will my one paper straw save the turtles?" I cringe at the ever-rising price of oat milk but remind myself that it is for the planet. As awful as it is to say, sometimes I feel resentment for being 'socially aware.' I am jealous of those who seem to live in blissful ignorance that the earth is dying.

It seems no matter the number of changes I make in my life, climate change is inevitable. I read the other day that 100 companies are responsible for over 70% of global emissions. Mainstream climate narratives tell us that it is either up to the individual to make the change, or for the large affluent companies to make the change. And so far we have not had any luck with the latter. So, do I even blame those who have given up? Or never even tried in the first place?

*How can young people tackle the frustration of bearing the responsibility for solving climate change?
How can we tackle climate anxiety?*

We can do this by reframing how we think about 'responsibility'. To do this we need to tether the term responsibility with *community*.

The Youth Interfaith Summit will bring hundreds of young people together from many different faith and belief groups from all over London. Through dance, song, and dialogue, the Summit directly confronts the individualism that has taken over modern life and the climate agenda. We will learn how different groups use their community to organize sustainable initiatives, and how different group practices can unite to create large-scale change. The Summit will bring together smaller community units to create a new larger community.

As a result, challenging climate change through a Summit moves the conversation away from individual action to collective action. Climate change becomes less about small personal sacrifices and more about a commitment to each person in the room. Climate action brings out the best in one another through mutual understanding and learning of how climate change affects us all in unique aspects. It becomes less about a future impact we may never see or people we will never know, and more about how precious current life is, and how interconnected we all are despite our differences.

The Youth Interfaith summit highlights how climate change is not an interfaith burden, but a vehicle for interfaith action.

So, in the moments that the small sacrifices seem like they don't make an impact, I advise you to look around you and find the community value of Climate Change.

And if you are struggling to look, attend our Interfaith Youth Summit, on February 6th at LSE!

Mashiyath Qurashy – Youth Council Member, Queen Mary University ParliaMentor 2020-21

**The
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& Belief
Forum**



WHO ARE WE?

The Faith & Belief Forum has worked for 25 years to build good relations between people of all faiths and beliefs, and to create a society where difference is celebrated.

We create spaces in schools, universities, workplaces, and the wider community where people can engage with questions of belief and identity and meet people different from themselves.

We were founded in 1997 as the Three Faiths Forum. Over the years our work expanded to include people of all faiths and beliefs, both religious and non-religious. In 2018, we changed our name to the Faith & Belief Forum to better reflect this ethos.

Our inclusive approach welcomes everyone, and our programmes are open to people of all beliefs and identities. The Faith & Belief Forum believes that intolerance has no place in our communities and that diversity adds value to society. Only by working together can we create the change we need.

LEARN MORE



ParliaMentors



A UN award-winning leadership programme for university students from different faith and belief backgrounds



Visit our website to

Register now!

faithbeliefforum.org/parliamentors



Applications
open in
MARCH

**MP
Mentoring**

**Social
Change**

**Leadership
Skills**

**Build
Networks**





EXPLORE
What you
will do!

MP Mentoring

- Constituency
- Parliament
- Events
- Shadowing

Expert Training

- Careers
- Politics
- Campaigning
- Publicity

Social Action

Establish meaningful
social action in your
local community

Alumni Network

Join our 500-strong
global alumni
network

Volunteer for The Faith & Belief Forum Schools Workshops

The Faith & Belief Forum are the UK's leading provider of interfaith workshops.

Our Encountering Faith and Belief workshop models interfaith dialogue to students, with the help of volunteer speakers from different faith and belief backgrounds, to improve young people's skills of empathy and religious literacy. This workshop is offered to primary and secondary students in Greater Manchester for FREE.

We have expanded our work to the area of Greater Manchester and are recruiting Volunteer Speakers to participate in our Encountering Faith & Belief Workshops.

What you will do:

Volunteers will share their beliefs and experiences in the form of a short story to the classroom. They will then participate in a Q&A panel with students.

This opportunity is ideal for people interested in education, youth work and/or interfaith dialogue, as well as those interested in developing skills in public speaking. The commitment is a minimum of three (one hour) workshops per year which fits around your schedule. Workshops are delivered face-to-face in schools and online via Zoom and are set by an experienced F&BF facilitator who will lead the activities.

This opportunity offers:

- Full training to learn about interfaith tools and our methodology
- Experience in working with young people
- Mentoring & support
- Access to the F&BF network, opportunities and events
- Reimbursement of travel expenses for face-to-face workshops

Become a Volunteer Speaker today

Apply now- <https://faithbeliefforum.org/about/careers/volunteer-speaker-programme/>

Email: laura.roper@faithbeliefforum.org
if you have any further questions.

LEARN MORE



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The Faith & Belief Forum

Formerly 3FF
(Three Faiths)



Faith Inclusion Training & Consultancy for Workplaces

Religion, faith and belief can be integral to identity, how we see the world, and what is important to us. Knowledgeable and inclusive workplaces, which understand lived experiences and are able to meet employees' needs, are essential to enabling individuals, teams, and organisations to thrive

The Faith & Belief Forum supports organisations to build key skills and learn practical tools for sensitive and effective engagement with colleagues and clients of different faiths, beliefs, and backgrounds

Our programmes are available online, in person, and through hybrid approaches

Encountering Faiths and Beliefs webinar

A panel of speakers from different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds share their personal stories, including experiences in the workplace, and model interfaith dialogue. Participants will meet inspiring individuals from different backgrounds, deepen their knowledge of different traditions, and ask questions about topics they are curious about. This session works well for large numbers, and can be tailored for special celebrations and heritage months

Faith Inclusion Skills Training: webinar, Half Day or Full Day Training

This interactive training day provides a strong foundation for inclusive ways of working with people of different faiths, beliefs, and backgrounds. Participants will explore key principles, including: understanding identity; the power of language; understanding potential barriers to participation; and responding to challenging scenarios. All participants will apply learned strategies through creating a unique action plan, and will take away a handout of practical tips and tools

Hosting Interfaith Dialogue: Half Day or Full Day Training

This immersive training day builds specialist skills for staff network leads and DEI practitioners. Participants will explore key context to interfaith work in the UK, learn how to design and deliver effective programmes for building relationships and understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs, and sharpen their hosting and facilitation skills for sensitive and controversial topics



LEARN MORE



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NEXT STEPS

TAKE ACTION!

Realistic Actions You Can Take...

Our goal as a council is to build an interfaith community in London that takes action on the issues that affect us all as young people. It is our hope that attendees will leave the summit feeling inspired, well connected, and empowered to effectively work in diverse coalitions to inspire positive change in their communities.

We want to hear from all of you how you plan to take forward what you have learned from tonight's summit. This could be a key message or principle. Or, it could be an action that you'll personally commit to or try to bring to your community.

Speaker suggestions

"Please take a look at your pension scheme/investment; divest from fossil fuel companies and invest in clean alternatives."
Dr. Kevin Shang

We have made a form so we can compile all the actions you have suggested and publish them to share the group's learning and help everyone remember the night.

Add your contribution here

"Go vegan. By eliminating animal bodies from what we eat and wear, we simultaneously take a stand against the multinational corporations that drive the meat industry; against criminal levels of greenhouse gas emissions, ecological destruction and industrial land use - and against the brutish treatment and slaughter of billions of animals. It's so easy once you understand what's at stake."

Bel Jacobs



"Talk and pray about the climate and creation emergency by using one of our small group courses. Either find out how you and your church can help to create a fairer, greener world with Joy in Enough's Plenty! course, or provide pastoral support through climate grief and eco-anxiety, with Borrowed Time's Deep Waters."

Green Christian

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!

The Faith & Belief Forum London Interfaith Youth Council aims to build an active and connected network of young people of different faith and belief backgrounds. Its members are those who have been inspired by the work of F&BF and believe in the importance of young people of all beliefs coming together to make a difference in society. We work together to learn about each other's faiths, we do research so that we can use our voices to influence policy, and we organize events like this event tonight to bring amazing people like you together to learn, build skills, and make plans to build a movement of young activists.

**If tonight's event has inspired you and you want to find out more about how to get involved with the Council.
Email Lauryn to express your interest!**

Email

lauryn.duncan-rouse@faithbeliefforum.org

