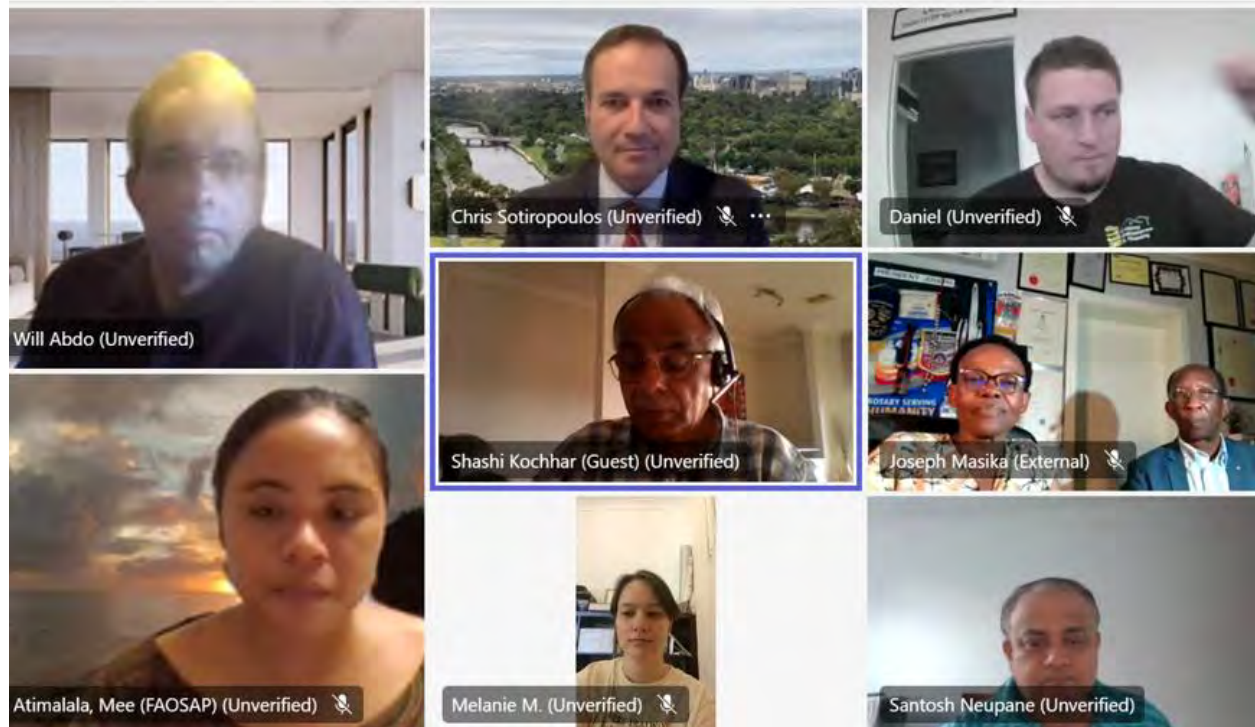


## UPF Australia: Oceania Peace Ambassadors Mentor Young Leaders

John Bellavance

March 7, 2024



**Melbourne, Australia** – On March 7, 2024, UPF-Australia hosted a very productive online meeting between UPF leaders and ambassadors for peace and leaders of Youth and Students for Peace (YSP) in the Oceania region.

**Dr. John Bellavance**, vice president of UPF-Australia, moderated the meeting. **Ms. Meehwa Atimalala**, leader of YSP-Oceania, and **Ms. Melanie Moreau**, leader of YSP-Australia, represented their respective youth groups. More than a dozen UPF leaders and peace ambassadors took part.

Among them was **Mr. Shashi Kochhar**, founder of the Australian Friends of the Children Foundation, a not-for-profit assisting children's hospitals. He also runs a Bread Brigade, distributing leftover bread to vulnerable communities. Another participant was **Dr. Chris Sotiropoulos**, president of the Melbourne Rotary Club.

These two peace ambassadors shared their experience as mentors providing feedback to youth during a YSP Peace Designer Workshop on March 2. At that event, young people all across the Pacific presented their projects online.

The two men were very impressed by the quality of the projects, but most of all by the enthusiasm of the young people. The projects addressed hunger, waste management and other issues. Mr. Kochhar said he felt that the youth needed a little bit of guidance, but were on the right track. Dr. Sotiropoulos commented that the youth in YSP will be the future leaders of their nations. Ms. Atimalala, one of the organizers of the Peace Designer Workshop, thanked the two for their feedback.

Going forward, several projects were proposed and agreed upon during the online meeting. UPF-Australia and YSP-Oceania committed to working together on the following outcomes:

1. UPF-Australia peace ambassadors will mentor YSP-Oceania members in Australia and other nations in the region. The peace ambassadors will be paired with YSP youth, and their mentorship will take the form of personal, academic and professional development, as well as support for any projects undertaken and led by YSP in Oceania.
2. UPF will award youth ambassadors for peace in Oceania identified by YSP and UPF.
3. Peace ambassadors and YSP leaders and youth will explore and propose humanitarian, social, sport or cultural projects and programs that can be implemented in the Pacific Islands.
4. YSP-Oceania will explore possible community service projects in Samoa and other Pacific Islands. **Mr. Santosh Neupane**, president of UPF-Fiji, and Ms. Meehwa Atimalala, based in Samoa, agreed to come up with some proposals.
5. Ms. Atimalala agreed to be part of the writing group for the Six Pillars Framework for Wellbeing, Positive Relationships, and a Sustainable Future Values Education Project. This is a project of UPF and IAAP-Oceania. Joining this initiative will give members of YSP-Oceania the opportunity to work with a professional group of writers on a project where their voice is important, with respect to values education and the future of society.