

NOMINATION FORM: Global Business & Interfaith Peace Awards

Note: Nominations are open to CEOs (present or past) of companies who have championed interfaith understanding and peace.

Nominee Contact Information

1. Nominee Full Name: Brittany Underwood [Click here to enter text.](#)
2. Corporate Title: AKOLA PROJECT, CEP [Click here to enter text.](#)
3. Company Name: AKOLA [Click here to enter text.](#)
4. Company Headquarters Location (Country) Dallas, Texas, USA: [Click here to enter text.](#)
5. Engagement with the UN Global Compact and/or the Religions Freedom & Business Foundation*
 - Company is a signatory of the UN Global Compact
 - Company has joined Business for Peace
 - Company has signed the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation's pledge to protect freedom of religion
 - Company intends to join one or more of the initiatives listed above in the next six months, please specify [Click here to enter text.](#)

* Nominees are invited to:

1. join the [UN Global Compact](#) and its [Business for Peace](#) platform and,
2. make the Religious Freedom & Business Foundation's [corporate pledge to protect freedom of religion or belief](#) (FoRB)

Nominator Contact Information

1. Nominator Full Name: Shirin Taber [Click here to enter text.](#)
2. Corporate Title: Middle East Women's Leadership Network, Director [Click here to enter text.](#)
3. Company Name: Middle East Women's Leadership Network [Click here to enter text.](#)
4. Email Address: Shirintaber@gmail.com [Click here to enter text.](#)
5. Phone Number: 949.235.5148 [Click here to enter text.](#)
6. Relationship to the Nominee: We both served as Mentors for the George W Bash Women's Initiative. [Click here to enter text.](#)

Please submit a Biography of the Nominee (max 200 words)

In 2004, Brittany Underwood was moved to compassion as a sophomore in college after meeting a Ugandan woman named Sarah who cared for 24 street children in her home. Compassion escalated to

action as Brittany founded a non-profit to construct an orphanage home to house children who slept on Sarah's floor. In 2006, upon graduating college, Brittany moved to Uganda to begin the construction of the orphanage and the drilling of over 20 water wells throughout the country. As the team traveled to different villages, they were amazed by women who cared for 10+ children in their homes. Like Sarah, they had a hope and vision for their families; they simply did not have the income or confidence to embrace their calling. After completing the orphanage, Brittany discovered that by training and employing women and guaranteeing them a monthly income we could care for thousands of children, without the construction of an orphanage home

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Information about the policy, programme or initiative

1. Please describe a policy, programme or initiative that the Nominee has launched or spearheaded to advance the company's efforts to champion interfaith understanding and peace (max 300 words)

In 2007, Brittany launched a new sustainable model to uplift women and children. The women named it "Akola", which means "to work" in their local dialect. After 5 years in the field, she worked with the best development practitioners in the country to develop a sustainable impact model for women. The work paid off. Over the last seven years, the Akola Project has blossomed into a thriving social-business that empowers women across the globe. Their merchandise is sold in 500 major department stores around the nation. The hope of Akola is to encourage new thinking about international development and to inspired the next generation of social innovators to to deliver the highest level of impact in disadvantaged communities. Link: AkolaProject.org

2. Which category or categories does the policy, programme or initiative fall into:

- Core business
- Social investment & philanthropy
- Advocacy and public policy engagement
- Partnership and collective action

3. Does the policy, programme or initiative address any of the following related to Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB)¹:

- Promote sustainable and innovative business through protecting Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB)
- Non-discrimination and/or non-harassment on the basis of religion or belief
- Religious accommodation and inclusion
- Protecting and promoting freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) in the community
- Other (describe below, max. 25 words)

¹ Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

Brittany is a SMU and Fuller Theological Seminary graduate. Her faith informs her social and business decisions she makes on behalf of the women she serves. Her work promotes gender equality, human rights and religious freedom by providing women a pathway to financial peace and a better quality of life. When women thrive the whole community thrives. Mothers can focus on their children education and teach them to respect all peoples.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

4. Please describe the objective of the policy, programme or initiative and the need, goal or gap that it was designed to address. (max 200 words)

Brittany discovered that by training and employing women and guaranteeing them a monthly income we could care for thousands of children, without the construction of an orphanage home. By ensuring children safety and care at home, communities can focus more on development than conflict and societal pressures that challenge basic freedoms.

5. How was the policy, programme or initiative implemented? What role did the Nominee play? (max 200 words) . In 2007, Brittany launched a new sustainable model to uplift women and children. The women named it “Akola”, which means “to work” in their local dialect. After 5 years in the field, she worked with the best development practitioners in the country to develop a sustainable impact model for women. The work paid off. Over the last seven years, the Akola Project has blossomed into a thriving social-business that empowers women across the globe. Their merchandise is sold in 500 major department stores around the nation. The hope of Akola is to encourage new thinking about international development and to inspired the next generation of social innovators to to deliver the highest level of impact in disadvantaged communities.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

6. What were/are the most persistent challenges in implementing the policy, programme or initiative? How were they/are they being overcome and what was the role of the Nominee? (max 200 words)

Brittany discovered that by training and employing women and guaranteeing them a monthly income we could care for thousands of children, without the construction of an orphanage home.

7. What are the key lessons learned from launching the policy, programme or initiative? (max 200 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Impact and Reporting on Progress

1. How do you monitor and evaluate progress on the policy, programme or initiative? If relevant, what indicators and metrics are used? (max 200 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

2. What outcomes or impact have been reached to date? Please be as specific as possible and supply available data. (max 200 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

3. Is the Nominee's company reporting on its practices, policies, programmes and/or initiatives to champion interfaith understanding and peace? If so, please provide relevant weblink(s) for posting on the Awards' website. If integrated into the company's corporate sustainability report, Global Compact COP or GRI Report, please indicate relevant pages and/or sections. (max 200 words)

Link: Akolaproject.org

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Additional Information:

1. Are there additional actions the Nominee has taken on an individual level to support interfaith understanding and peace within the organization? If so, please specify. (max 200 words)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

2. How has the Nominee taken action to support and promote the UN Global Compact's Ten Principles? If so, please specify. (max 200 words)
Brittany's faith and commitment to women and children's welfare and thriving social business shows she upholds the UN principles for human rights and religious freedom.

Please provide any additional information to be considered. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Nominations team nominations@religiousfreedomandbusiness.org

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Brittany was named the 'Best Person in the World' by Yahoo in 2014 and was honored by clothing manufacturer Levi as one of 50 women around the globe who have changed the political, cultural, and spiritual shape of the future. She was awarded the Emerging Leader Award from SMU in 2013, received the Young Leader Award from the Dallas Women's Foundation in 2014, and was the 2014 'My Michelle Moment' recipient for Michelle Watches. Brittany has been featured on the likes of the Katie Couric Show, CNN's Young People who Rock, Christianity Today, and Modern Luxury. In 2014, she was asked to join the elite mentoring class for the Laura Bush Women's Initiative. Brittany joined the faculty of Southern Methodist University in 2015 where she teaches a new course on Social Innovation