

2023 UNA London and South East Region Executive Committee Candidates

Jane Beeley

I have chaired Tunbridge Wells (latterly Tunbridge Wells & Wealden) UNA branch for over thirty years. I am a Chartered Librarian. I worked full-time, firstly as a children's librarian, then as a student administrator for the Open University, where I gained my degree. I was a governor of a primary school for fifteen years. I became site librarian at an H & FE college, and in my last job I ran two hospital libraries and a patients' library service for MTW NHS Trust. After retiring I joined the UNA-LASER Committee in 2014, and in January 2021 I became Secretary.

Andrew Boakes

I am an Architect, managing my own practice. Currently a member of Harpenden, I joined UNA while at school (1975). I have been Secretary or Treasurer and/or Chair of the Hertford and Stevenage Branches and Member of Eastern Regional Council for 40 years. I was a Member of UNA-UK National Executive and Chair of Members Conference at various times over 35 years. I was a school governor for over 38 years (Chair for 10) and retired this year. My interests include International Peace and Security, Human Rights, Sustainable Development and the Environment, Climate and Global-warming, Inclusive Environments and Communities.

Gillian Dare

Gillian is a former diplomat, working in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and South Asia, including in the MENA region during the Arab uprisings. She specialised in conflict-affected countries, focusing on peace-building. She has represented the UK in various multi-lateral platforms and in Brussels to strengthen collaboration with the EU. Her final role was Senior Policy Officer for Women, Peace and Security. She was awarded the OBE for services to diplomacy in Sub-Saharan Africa and is now a trustee of various small NGOs, a member of the UK FORB Forum and on the Executive Board of the FCDO Association.

Ali Hessami

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ali-hessami-84557111/>. Ali is the Director of R&D and Innovation at Vega Systems. He was the Chair of IEEE7000 standard *Addressing Ethical Concerns in System Design* and later appointed as the VC and Architect of the IEEE's global Ethics Certification Programme for AI Systems. Ali is Visiting Professor at London City and at Beijing Jiaotong Universities, a Fellow of Royal Society of Arts (FRSA), Fellow of the Institution of Engineering & Technology (IET). Ali has been a UNICEF supporter for over 30 years, and involved in UNHCR, UNA Enfield and the Barnets and a member of the UNA-LASER Executive Committee.

Salem Mezhoud

I have been involved with UNA since the 1980s. I worked as an academic and journalist (BBC World Service) and Head of Programmes for NGOs (Human Rights Watch, Minority Rights Group), leading on minority, indigenous rights, child rights, women's rights. I worked at the UNOHCHR as Head of Northern Africa, and focal point on the region for all UN bodies. I was Acting Chief of UNOCHA office in Sudan (including South Sudan), engaging in mediation and negotiation of humanitarian ceasefires and OCHA Head of Operations in the Maluku conflict in Indonesia. I undertook several missions for ILO, UNICEF, UNESCO.

Valeria Minisini

Valeria is LASER Campaigns Officer – recently developing campaigns on UK aid cuts, climate change and migration/refugees. She is the chairperson of UNA Canterbury. Her 'day' job involves managing the marketing and communications office at the International Chamber of Commerce United Kingdom, creating content for social media and writing about the organisation's activities. Valeria is particularly interested in gender, peace and security with a geographic specialisation of Sub-Saharan Africa. Valeria holds University of Kent BA (Hons) in Politics and International Relations and MA in International Relations with International Law. She is bilingual – Italian and English – and also speaks French and Spanish.

Titilayo Odukale

Titilayo gained an Introduction to Politics Certificate in 2016. She was International Relations Officer at the ICT University, Abuja. She helped with the LASER UN75 Festival in 2020. She has been a Manager & Legal Advisor for Desmoothway Immigration Advice centre, London, since 2011. Titilayo is of Nigerian heritage and has 3 school-age children. She has co-presented some school assemblies in Streatham about peace and the UN.

Catherine Pluygers

I am a musician and have always had an interest in development issues. I studied for a degree in Development at Birkbeck University. I am Vice-Chair of UNA Wandsworth and a long-standing member of UNA Westminster. I am chair of UNA London Trust and was chair of UNA LASER from 2015 to 2019. I have been on the executive committee of WILPF and have a particular interest in the welfare of women. Over the years I have delivered some very large projects for UNA, WILPF and voices of African Women.

Trisha Rogers

I am an educator and internationalist. I have taught – and written– in the UK, Nigeria, Pakistan and South Korea. I have been Chief Executive of the Council for Education in World Citizenship, the Pestalozzi International Village and Jubilee Debt Campaign (helping to lead the 2005 Make Poverty History campaign). I have been a trustee of Chatham House (Royal Institute of International Affairs), the UNA-UK and the British Humanist Association (now Humanists UK). I have been on the committees of Westminster UNA and Tunbridge Wells UNA (where I started the annual MUNGA with local schools).

Suheil Shahryar

Suheil Shahryar is a scientist and cybersecurity technologist, with a BSc in Astronomy from UCL and a MSc in Geophysics from Newcastle. Suheil was born and grew up in South Asia. He has worked in five continents in roles such as Chief Security Architect, Managing Consultant and Senior Geophysicist. Suheil is interested in science and technology, anthropology, history, sociology and geopolitics. His technical skills include information security and privacy, website design and management and other IT skills. He is a member of Rotary, Probus and U3A. He is currently the Chair of UNA Harpenden.

Hana Shono

Hana is of Japanese/Malaysian-Indian descent from Goto, Nagasaki, Japan. She is a law student at the University of Law, particularly interested in technology and commercial law. Hana is Chair of UNA Scotland and, since 2021, Deputy-Chair of UNA-UK Conference Committee. She is working towards the formation of a UNA Youth Coalition with the UNA Youth Platform and hopes to have their first event by the end of this year. Previously, Hana was the Deputy Executive Director of the International Young Leaders Organization (IYLO), an organisation dedicated to involving young leaders in decision-making processes at the UN and beyond.

Antony Vallyon

Member Westminster UNA, LASER policy committee, and Trustee of UNA LASER Trust, I am also a member of Academic Council for the UN system. I was LASER rep on the International Court for the Environment coalition. After an inspirational time working for the UN University in Tokyo, and at the UN Secretariat New York on peace, development and UN Reform, I was active in UNA-USA and Australia. As President of UNA-New Zealand I worked on Humanitarian Affairs with UN and Government agencies and led delegations to the WFUNA Plenary in Seoul, and UDHR 60th anniversary UN/NGO conference in Paris.

David Wardrop

David Wardrop has been Chair of the Westminster United Nations Association since 2001. He served as Chair of the then UNA London Region for sixteen years and since then has led many UN-related initiatives.

Peter Webster

I am chair of the Region's Policy Committee, and of Streatham & Clapham Branch. Outside UNA, I work in the field of Responsible/Ethical Investment. I have a University degree in Mathematics and an MBA. I believe UNA is an important means: for people to show their support for the UN's principles; for educating people about the UN's work; for campaigning to strengthen it; and for ensuring that our own government acts in line with international law, advances shared global goals and plays a constructive role as a UN member state and permanent member of the Security Council.