



COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

Springtide Opus

Faiths /Traditions Represented: Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsi

Location of CC: Mumbai, India

Key Areas of Focus: Street Children, Mentorship, Communal Peace and Harmony

Summary:

Spring Tide Opus is located in Mumbai, India. The CC is focused on mentorship and interfaith bridge-building, and works primarily with the city's disadvantaged youth. They provide access to safe activities and programs to help children engage in constructive social opportunities. The CC hopes to become a thread that binds organizations working at the grassroots level with established organizations. They hope this will help both entities communicate with one voice, provide them with ample support for their sustenance, and educate youth on social issues.

1. Can you please help me understand the current religious/cultural/political contexts in the area where your CC is working?

For fifteen years there has been no fundamental change in the lives of people in Maharashtra. The present government has done very little work to improve and develop the lives of its citizens. After seeing the dismal performance of the state government, we decided to do something for our country. For these reasons, we began working with disadvantaged children by providing education to help them stand on their feet. We decided to embark on this project to prevent future violence and possible drug addiction with our youth.

2. Why is interfaith/intercultural bridge building needed where your CC is working?

We have seen the Mumbai riots of 1993 in which neighbors suddenly became strangers and wanted to harm each other. This incident changed our lives and we decided that we must work for interfaith bridge building.

3. Can you please briefly describe the main activities or programs your CC is doing this year?

This year we are going to organize an activity for International Day of Peace, meeting for interfaith dialogues, as well as a musical treat through which we will deliver messages of peace to members of different religious communities.



COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

4. Between which specific religions or cultures are bridges being built?

We are going to build bridges among members of Hindus, Christians, Muslims, and Parsis.

5. Please explain the method or strategy that your CC uses to bring together people of different cultures and faiths that would otherwise not interact or cooperate with each other.

From the beginning we have worked with music teachers and through music have tried to convey the messages of peace and harmony. Even now we are developing music for URI that can work as its anthem of peace throughout the world.

6. Given the current contexts, you described, what does your CC hope to achieve?

Our objective is to help children develop habits for peaceful living in a community of different religious groups. We want to instill value of respect for all religions and traditions. We would have achieved our goals if we are able to make the above a reality.

7. How do you see your CC's work improving cooperation among people of different traditions?

We have helped develop money-saving habits amongst the children we work with. They are asked to contribute a small percentage of their pocket money to a collective pool to use when shared needs arise to purchase books etc. We have children from different communities participating in this program. When the money from their collective savings is used, it creates a sense of cooperation among children of different religious groups.

8. How is the work of your CC helping to prevent religiously inspired violence or transforming conflicts?

Through our Bachat Gat Program (Self Help Group), we spread messages of love and peaceful coexistence among members of different religious groups using music. This kind of activity leads to the creation of an atmosphere in which it will be difficult for children to participate in religiously motivated violence.

9. What are some indicators /observations you see that relations are improving between people of different faiths/cultures in the area where your CC work?

In our Bachat Gat Program for kids of different religious groups we have seen steady growth in participants since the program's inception. At the initial stage there were 20 participants, and now we have over two hundred participants. Outside of this program, all of our members come to the Church for a meeting. Using readings from the bible and music, we teach them the values of cooperation and interfaith bridge building. The



COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

bible reading is done by members of all religious communities whether one belongs to the Christian faith or not. This is a good indicator of how accepting the children are to other faiths.

10. Do you have a specific short story you can share about your work that might inspire other CCs or teach us a lesson about interfaith?

I came into the field of bridge building through my music teacher. I never thought that this field would be so attractive to me. Secondly, when there was bomb blast in Mumbai in 2007 there were people of all faiths helping the victims. This further pulled me into interfaith work, and the strengths and values of humanity.

11. How is your CC's work helping to achieve the mission of URI? (Interfaith bridge-building)

We want to achieve the mission of URI through music. We feel that music is a great source through which we can bind people together irrespective of their religious denominations. We are preparing music for URI which can become a URI anthem.

12. Within your CC, you have members from several different faiths/cultural traditions. How would you describe cooperation between these members? What are the challenges?

Normally the cooperation among children of different religious faiths is very strong in our organization. They learn a lot from their participation in Bachat Gat, where they give loans to the children who need money irrespective of religious background. Since the children of different religious faiths share their joys, happiness and problems together, they have developed a strong sense of sharing and cooperation among themselves. They are united in their stand, and cooperatively fight the problems that come their way.

13. How is being part of URI helping your CC to achieve its goals?

Our URI members are sharing their happiness, joys and problems together. They respect each other's' faiths and traditions. Even non-Christian members of our organization go to church to read the bible. In this exercise of bible reading, children of all faiths participate and try to learn whatever lessons they can gather. They do not have any problems with reading religious literatures of different religions.

14. How can URI better support your CC in reaching its goals?

URI can support us by sharing its network and its expertise in the field of interfaith bridge building. We expect that it will help in facilitating our objectives of implementing URI's purpose and mission.