



COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

Associació UNESCO per al Diàleg Interreligiós - AUDIR CC

Faiths /Traditions Represented: Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox, Protestants, Sikh, Evangelist and so on.

Location of CC: Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain

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Key Areas of Focus: Promote knowledge, dialogue and attitudes of mutual understanding and cooperation between people belonging to different religions and believes; to build space of freedom for believes and expression; to bring together experts from various religious and cultural traditions; to research about religious and believes pluralism and its impact in our society.

Key Languages:

Approval: June 2000

Summary:

Associació UNESCO per al Diàleg Interreligiós (AUDIR) is located in Barcelona, Spain. The CC brings together approximately one hundred people from more than ten different religious traditions through activities that promote knowledge, dialogue, and cooperation among the various religious groups in Catalunya. They organize exhibitions, gatherings, conferences, workshops and trainings about different aspects of pluralism and interfaith dialogue. Associació UNESCO per al Diàleg Interreligiós (AUDIR) works for peace, justice and healing, and is building important bridges in the community and beyond.



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

Catalonia is an autonomous community of Spain, designated a "nationality" by a Statute of Autonomy. Catalonia is comprised of four provinces: Barcelona, Girona, Lleida, and Tarragona. The capital and largest city is Barcelona, the second largest city in Spain, and the centre of one of the largest metropolitan areas in Europe. The area comprises most of the territory of the former Principality of Catalonia with the remainder now a part of France. Catalonia is bordered by France and Andorra to the north, the Mediterranean Sea to the east, the Spanish regions of Aragon and the Valencia to the west and south respectively. The official languages are Spanish, Catalan, and Aranese (an Occitan dialect).

Catalonia covers an area of 32,114 km² with an official population of 7,354,411 (2008), of which non-Spanish immigrants represent about 19%. About 66% of the population defines itself as Roman Catholic (45% non-practicing, 18% practicing), 7% as Muslim, and 29% as atheist or agnostic. There are also smaller representations from more than twelve religions and spiritual traditions.

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

We believe interfaith/intercultural bridge-building is needed because Barcelona and Catalonia are areas that have conflict, terrorist activities, and other issues. Also, due to the fact that Catalonia shares a border with France and Andorra, there are a lot of immigrants from other countries in the region. We believe it is important to build bridges among all these cultures, traditions and religions in order to work on mediation processes that overcome current political issues and transform conflict.

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

We are a non-confessional association which brings together people from more than twelve different religious traditions through research, action, promoting knowledge, dialogue and cooperation among the various religious confessions and beliefs in Catalonia; this network of partners includes official representatives, experts, and qualified members.

Our current activities include the support of interfaith dialogue groups, the Interreligious Choir for Peace: a publication of an interreligious calendar in Catalan and Spanish (since 1999), publication (since 2002) of "Dialogal", a quarterly magazine about



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religion and interfaith dialogue, and support for the 19 member groups of the Catalan Network of Interreligious Dialogue Associations. Our CC organizes exhibitions, gatherings, conferences, workshops and trainings about different aspects of pluralism and interfaith dialogue. Also, we work on publications and materials for people in the terminal phase of diseases such as cancer and AIDS, providing them different religious perspectives on death, and helping them to find their own peace. In addition, we work with police officers and civil society to raise awareness on human rights. Recently, we have also focused on education for young people who plan to continue in this kind of work to become leaders in their communities.

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

We are trying to build bridges between Catholic, Muslim, Orthodox, Protestant, Sikh, Evangelist and other religious and spiritual traditions. We are also building bridges between civil society and diverse interfaith groups.

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

We bring people together through different activities and work in local communities. We organize exhibitions, gatherings, conferences, workshops and trainings about different aspects of pluralism and interfaith dialogue.

We also publish several publications and materials covering interfaith dialogue and the importance of civil society and human rights. The publications incorporate police officers and citizens.

6. Given the current context you described, what does the CC hope to achieve (goals)?

We want to impact Barcelona in a positive way by creating meeting places in Barcelona and Catalonia for people of all different faiths and traditions to serve as a positive example for the rest of the world.

We also want to involve young people by providing them with resources, knowledge and a platform to share their experience, so that they can become leaders for positive change.



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

Communities where we conduct activities are becoming more open minded, with less stereotypes, and prejudices. We also build bridges between the elderly and youth, in addition to religious communities and civil society. Overall, we have seen communities becoming more open and liberal with fewer conflicts.

8. How is the work of your CC helping to prevent religiously inspired violence or transforming conflict? (Ask in areas with open conflict.)

(This is not area with open conflict)

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

We have seen people become more open and communities become more liberal. Members are accepting of others that are different from them. Although the community is a predominantly Catholic society with a lot of political issues, members are learning how to live together, listening to each other, and working together for positive changes in their communities.

10. How is your CC's work helping to achieve the mission of URI?

All of our work is in line with the principles and the mission of URI. We utilize the URI Charter often and consider it a useful tool in our everyday work. We think that we benefit more from URI's work than we can give URI. Our CCs primary goal is to bring harmony between people from different religions and traditions to make positive changes in local communities.