



COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

Ahl-e-Aman Society CC (AASSCC)

Faiths /Traditions Represented: Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity

Location of CC: Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

Key Areas of Focus: Health, Governance, and Interfaith Dialogue

Summary

Ahle Aman CC is located in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. They promote national and international initiatives that cultivate peace and harmony among diverse religious groups. Ahle Aman programs draw upon the CC's connections with social activists and non-governmental organizations to host workshops and seminars focused on educating community members on topics such as governance, peace building, and also raising awareness about issues like water sanitation.

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

In Bhopal, the most populous city in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, the communal situation is very fragile. Since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came into political power, the relation between Hindus and Muslims has become very tense. The threat of communal riots erupting is always present in different cities throughout Madhya Pradesh. Fundamentalist Hindu organizations are emboldened and have been more active since the BJP came to power. Through their activities, they are manipulating the minds of Hindus against Muslims and other minorities. Earlier these groups would target Muslims, but now they have started targeting Christians as well. They have started misinformation campaigns against Christian. We have communal tensions, and some communal riots between Hindus and Muslims have taken place a well. Intercommunity relations in Madhya Pradesh are very fragile and need to be restored to earlier times of deep bonding.

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

As mentioned earlier, the situation in Madhya Pradesh and Bhopal is communally super charged. The fundamentalist Hindu organizations are campaigning against Muslims and Christians on a regular basis. The state looks the other way when organizations belonging to RSS commit a crime. This further makes the inter-community relations and



COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

situation worse. In this context it becomes important to work for intercultural bridge building projects in different religious communities.

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

We are going to visit schools and colleges and provide lectures on governance and communalism in the society. In educational institutions we try to remove the biases and prejudices of students about different religious communities. We are also going to organize health camps where we will distribute fliers about URI's missions and objectives. We are organizing functions inviting religious leaders of different religious faiths to participate in interfaith dialogues

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

We are building bridges among Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Since the situation in Madhya Pradesh is very volatile, it is necessary to work for peace and improved inter community relations in Bhopal and Madhya Pradesh.

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.

We conduct lectures in different educational institutions. Through these lectures we provide leadership and guidance to students on effective governance and being responsive to the needs of people in our country. We share the value of inter community cooperation and living. In the lectures on governance we remove the doubts and biases that exist between different religious communities about each other. We are also organizing health camps, interfaith meetings, and intercultural get-togethers. It is through these means that we are trying to facilitate cooperation among people belonging to different faiths.

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

We want to achieve a riot free Madhya Pradesh so that people belonging to all religions prosper equally.

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

As mentioned earlier through our programmes and various activities among persons of different faiths in society we hope to improve the cooperation among them.



COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

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

Our activities and programmes on inter-community living and interfaith dialogue are aimed at preventing violence in society. We are also giving lectures at various educational institutions on governance, in which we place an emphasis on demolishing the myths Hindu groups have spread about different minorities in Madhya Pradesh. We hope these efforts will help mitigate the religiously inspired violence in society.

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?

The educational institutions in which we provide our classes on governance have been successful in removing the doubts of Hindu students about minorities in Madhya Pradesh, the students have become very aware of RSS propaganda and now they are not as easily influenced. The students have voiced that they have become informed of the false propaganda of RSS, and will no longer fall prey to their misguided facts and figures about minorities in Madhya Pradesh and India.

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?

In Bhopal there are many Muslims and Hindus, women and men, who were not aware of the URI's programmes and its mission. After participating in our programmes on interfaith they come to us and praise the effectiveness of interfaith work and how they have changed their perceptions of seeing people belonging to other religions. Secondly they also say that they will not be misguided by any communal and fundamentalist organizations.

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

As mentioned earlier we are building bridges among people of different faiths through our programmes and activities that involve people from all communities.

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?

The cooperation among the members is strong, and members are also aware of the issues that could arise from interfaith interactions. Members cooperate with each other, but to say that they have become totally bias-free is difficult to prove.



COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

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

URI's networks, resources, and infrastructures are helping us in achieving the goals of interfaith dialogues and cooperation among different religious communities.

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

URI through its resources can help us achieve its goals.