

URI Global Youth CC

Faiths /Traditions Represented: Buddhism (Nichiren Daishonin), Buddhism (Theravada), Christianity, Christianity (Catholic), Islam, Islam (Sufi), Hinduism, Quaker, Unitarian Universalist

Location of CC: Multi-Region/Virtual

Key Areas of Focus: Youth, Interfaith

Summary:

URI Global Youth CC is a global level virtual CC connecting young leaders and Youth CCs in the URI network.

CC Profile Questionnaire:

1. What is the current religious/cultural/social context in the area where your CC is working?

The CC works globally and looks to further the URI's vision and mission through its engagement with youth leaders and youth CCs. It is comprised of youths with diverse religious backgrounds, cultures. Moreover, it encompasses youths of various ages (from 18-35).

2. Why is interfaith/intercultural bridge building needed in the area where your CC works?

At present, there is much violence and unease happening across the globe and the cry for mediation and peace building is strong. There is a clear need to establish a breed of citizens of the world who do not judge the other as being different, and thus deal with them in a negative manner. Nor do we need to become apathetic to the situation we are currently living in. Something must be done about it and interfaith/intercultural bridge building is strongly needed.

3. Please briefly describe the main activities or programs your CC is carrying out. Please specify the year in which the activity took/is taking place.

Every month, webinars or live chats are scheduled on various subjects such as Religiously Motivated Violence, Social Justice, Faith and the Environment. Moreover, these conversations provide a space for youth to share their opinions on current issues and trends relating to creating cultures of peace in the world at large. Also, the youth

who are part of the CC locally participate in *Sewa Day* activities in their local communities.

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

Since the reach of the organization is global in nature, bridges between multiple religions and a plurality of cultures are built.

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

The CC connects and empowers youth initiatives across regions in URI by supporting communication between young people and facilitating workshops in order to help develop young leaders' skills, capacities and confidence (such as the face-to-face gathering in Mayapur, 2008). Currently, it also is active on social media with a Twitter, Facebook page, and WhatsApp groups where the youth are free to share their ideas and converse with one another across geographical boundaries in order to exchange ideas.

6. Why do the activities your CC is carrying out improve cooperation among people of different traditions in the broader community?

With the world today becoming even more globally interdependent, it is important that there are opportunities where young people can come together to engage, educate, and be empowered in order for us to help each other build a generation of interfaith grassroots leaders for URI. Aside from that, the CC enables the youth to organize in their respective regions to mediate conflict, as well as address social concerns in a way that increases tolerance and cooperation amongst people of different traditions.

7. Within your CC, you have members from several different faiths and cultural traditions. How would you describe cooperation among your CC's members? Have there been any challenges?

As the composition of the CC is of people from various geographic regions, it has been quite tough to coordinate a unified time to have the webinars. Also, due to the differences in the internet speeds across countries some members are not able to join in because of lack of access to internet at certain times.

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

In order to encourage more dialogue and relationship in between our monthly webinars, various members share their experiences in either the Parliament of World Religions, or

UN World Interfaith Harmony week. Moreover, the CC has provided learning opportunities at different levels of involvement in the CC.

9. What does your CC hope to achieve?

The CC hopes to further the mission of URI by creating enduring daily interfaith cooperation and relationship-building between youth and young adults across the globe using digital means and social technology.

10. Aside from funding, what are some specific ways URI can better support your CC in reaching its goals?

We would like to get support of URI to connect young people to the CC, especially those new to URI and lack a home CC or wish to engage internationally.

We would like to discuss possible cooperation between URI and URI Global Youth CC to develop few media resources related youth voice on issues such as violent extremism, refugee crisis and integration issues, elections and divisive politics, and so on. While we have the youth voice, we lack the technical media capacity and other various resources to do so.

We would like to continue to get support from URI to use a virtual meeting platform to host our CC meeting and webinars.

11. As you know, the Purpose of URI is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice, and healing for the Earth and all living beings. In what ways do you feel your CC's work helping to achieve this purpose?

The CC is providing opportunities for youth across the globe to gather & exchange ideas, in order to support communication flowing between young people in order to build a generation of interfaith grassroots leaders for URI.

12. What value or benefits does your CC receive from being a member of URI?

The reach of URI is extensive and as such, being a member of the URI extends the membership base of the CC. Moreover, the values and ideas that URI upholds helps mold the flow of the CC in terms of the activities that it carries out.

13. What value or benefit does your CC currently provide or could potentially provide the URI network?

URI Global Youth CC acts as an incubator for young leaders within the URI network, allowing young leaders and Youth CCs to connect at a global level.

URI Global Youth CC can be a walk in point for young people who may be interested in URI but lack a local CC to connect to or have interest in engaging internationally.

URI Global Youth CC can be part of the Youth Voice of the URI network as it brings together young leaders from various backgrounds and nationalities in one place. URI can leverage this on its global communication and also for developing media resource or articulating responses to specific issues such as violent extremism.

14. Do you communicate or work with other CCs in the URI network? If yes, please share a few examples. If no, please explain why you have been unable/uninterested to connect with other CCs.

The various members of the CC also share their learnings with their local communities and, as such, work very much in connection with the CCs on the ground of the countries where they belong. For example, a member of the CC in the Philippines also acts as the Regional Coordinator there who regularly visits the various CCs and works closely with them. Moreover, our webinars are made possible with the software provided by Ms. Rachel, the Regional Coordinator of the Multiregion.

15. As a CC that works on improving interfaith relations, perhaps you have seen, heard, or experienced something interesting. Please share a very important personal experience or lesson related to interfaith/intercultural relations that changed impacted your beliefs OR a story about something that happened in your community related to interfaith relations.

In 2008, there was a global assembly of the URI with over 200 global interfaith delegates from over 44 different countries. But a week prior to that, there was a gathering of some 100 interfaith youths representing diverse religions, spiritual expressions and indigenous traditions. United in our purpose of being Pilgrims of Peace and Taking the Initiative, this gathering forged many bonds across various geographical regions and empowered the youth gathered through various workshops and sharings. This face to face encountered was a powerful tool that helped strengthen youth leadership and building interfaith relations.