

EASTERN LIGHTS

United Religions Initiative EIBN

5th Edition || August 2021

Message from the President's Desk

"It was the worst of times, it was the best of times" (Paraphrased) Needless to say that we all are suffering from the effects of this Pandemic. Our Personal and social structures have been overturned. The very fabric of our daily lives, our surroundings, our social norms and values has been torn apart. We have experienced radical changes; we have and still now are witness to the worst possible situations that we will ever experience in our lifetime.

Amidst the worst possible scenario we have witnessed LOVE, FAITH and HOPE in action. We have bonded together as never before. We have held hands together and built bridges in an impossible situation against all odds. The worst possible times have brought out the best traits in our life. In spite of social distancing, our Cooperation Circles (CC's) observed the "World Interfaith Harmony Week" (1st to 7th February),



Rev. Kalyan Kumar Kisku
Regional President and Global Trustee

Many CC's across Jharkhand, Bengal and Nepal celebrated International Women's Day (8th March). Saplings were planted in jubilation of the World Environment Day (5th June), ofcourse every day in the URI is environment Day, some CCs are very active in saving forests and hundred year old trees. Many of our CCs are distributing sanitization kits, arranging oxygen cylinders food baskets and also cooked food. We unitedly started a program of grocery basket distribution, throughout EIBN. The term "Pearl's of Compassion" was coined by me which has received tremendous response. We have been able to cross barriers of Religion, Caste, Color, Creed and Affiliation. We are still continuing the program. On the 9th of August we are going to celebrate the "International day of the world's indigenous people" which we celebrate every year at the foothills of Susunia (Damin-i-koh) and prior to that event, we will also be observing Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day. These worst of times have brought out the best in us and we have "witnessed LOVE, FAITH and HOPE in action", I thank all of our Staff and CC members across Eastern India, Bangladesh and Nepal for their resilience, patience and goodwill in overcoming all odds to bring about a healing, harmonious and just world. I thank our Regional Coordinator Sri Biswadeb Chakraborty for his leadership. May Peace Prevail on Earth.

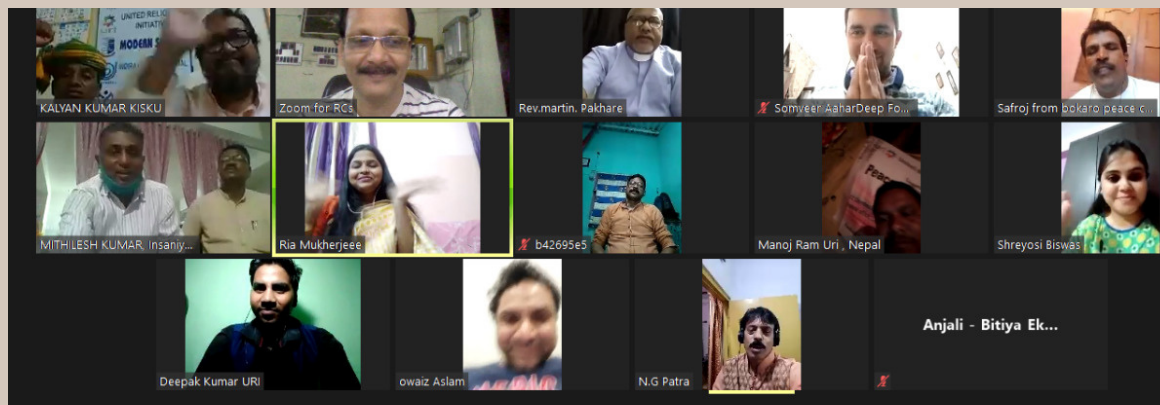
SHANTI !!!

Looking Back at 2020



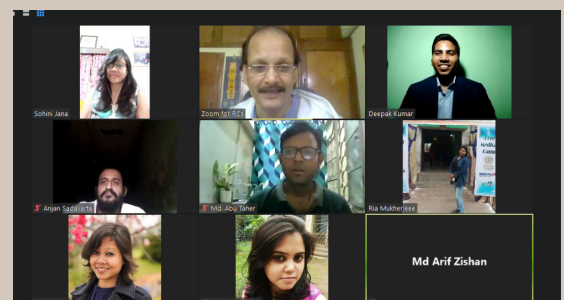
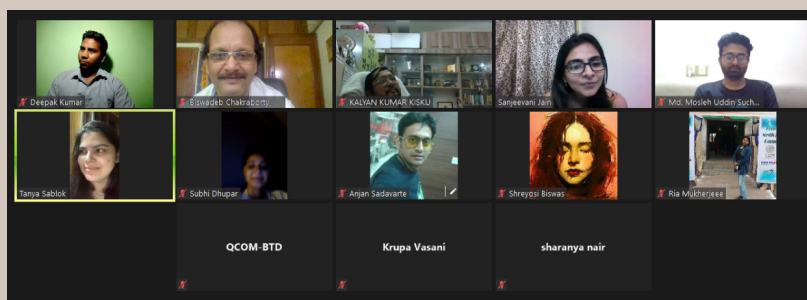
*Tribal Leader - Subhash Tudu
praying for World Peace in Alchiki (A
santhali language)*

URI EIBN celebrated World Indigenous Day 2020, online because of Covid-19. And also commemorated Nagasaki Day.



Snapshot of Online Meeting of World Indigenous Day

The leadership training program aimed to empower our Regional Leaders, so they can help our local groups (CCs) to mobilize, to deal with complex situation and to learn to facilitate small group meetings. They learned to create reports and help RC to strengthen regional work plan. They would learn to work in collective manners of visioning, Strategic Planning, evaluation of techniques. They would learn to communicate with conclusions and understand the benefits of partnerships. The training was conducted by Global staffs, National Staffs and well known people coming from relevant backgrounds. Alice Swett, Director of Global Programs conducted a session on Team Building, followed by reflection by Mr. Biswadeb Chakraborty RC of URI EIBN and National Coordinator. There were more sessions taken by other eminent URI officials.



REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

IMPORTANT DAY CELEBRATION 2021

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK



Organized Drawing Competition among the school children on communal harmony. Distributed certificates and awards and gifts to all children.

Online Celebration featuring the success stories of our CCs . 35 participants including Bangladesh, Nepal took part and 3 stories were shared. 1st Story of **Peace4Dalits CC** in Nepal sharing how they the members are working to end caste based discrimination, and creating opportunities for the children to access institutional education and how interfaith cooperation opening pathways of dialogues.

2nd Story was from **Sarwa Dharm Vichar Manch CC** working to save the river, cleaning up rivers and running awareness campaign during the festivals, Md. Ainul Ansari presented a video on save the water.

3rd Story is from **REO CC** Bangladesh, how they have helped people during the lockdown to provide groceries and food material. Prof. Chandan Kumar Sarkar coordinator of the cc shared their district wise services in Bangladesh and extended reach out

2nd Feb. 2021- 6-30PM IST



Observing World Interfaith Harmony Week

Program : Opening Welcome - 5 min
Introduction (Region) - 10 min
Sharing CC Success Stories (3 Stories) - 30 min
URI International Community- 20 min
Open Discussions - 20 min
Closings by Regional President 5 min


EIBN
East India
Nepal
Bangladesh

<https://uri-org.zoom.us/j/83380438177?pwd=Vml0N1VnV2ppNFZCRk84eEVBOVdMdz09>

Meeting ID: 833 8043 8177
Passcode: 659942





Rural Development Society CC along with **Chetana Charitable Trust** celebrated interfaith harmony through women sports and cultural programs for 5 days held in chitka village of west Bengal, it is most interiors areas that merely get any opportunity of sports and cultural exchange in addition to challenges to access health services and safe drinking water, quality education etc.



WOMEN'S DAY



Organizing women self help group , supporting CCs to provide skill building training as well working with local NGOs to create local market places to sell products made by these self-help groups in 3 different locations and each place having 150 to 200 members in each group. Nearly 600 women are involved. Working with other local organizations to create local opportunities for women to sell their handicrafts. **Smile4Millions CC, Swapno Bastobe CC and Rural Development Society CC**



ENVIRONMENT DAY



Bokaro Peace Circle CC, a URI member group in Bokaro, Jharkhand, India, celebrated World Environment Day 2021 by planting and honoring trees.

PARTNERSHIP WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS



Haat is a general term for a weekly market organized in a local neighbourhood . Finding a central area like on a playground where people from the area can sell their handmade products within their local reach, It is to help income generation of the people by creating a marketplace where buyers meet the sellers directly without paying any additional expense. Events were highly promoted in the local newspapers and engaging live music events to draw maximum crowd including engaging tribal and folk cultures. Started in the month of January with 25 stalls which increased to 35 stalls by the end of March 2021. Selling was recorded more than expectations.



Every Year we start around the Christmas to distribute blankets to the needy ones in partnering with various local organizations, we have distributed more than 300 blankets from December to January during the winter season , this action also bring like minded people and local organizations together.



Covid-19 Activities

Distribution of Masks & Sanitizer

URI EIBN distributed 100litres of Sanitizers and 2000 masks, to CCs and partner Organisations to distribute in the community. If any CC needs them, We still are distributing.



Distribution in the District of Bankura



Rural Developement Society CC have distributed clothes and masks to the tribal community in the tribal village of Harekrishnapur in the district of Bankura, West Bengal.

RDS have adopted the village and won several awards for the best Nirmal (managed) Village.



Food Basket Distribution at Goragacha



Helping Hands CC working in an undocumented slum in Kolkata from many years, During lock down, members of the CC organized food distribution, and needed support from the region in transportation of the materials that they have collected from their donors.



Pearls of Compassion

The gift of giving and receiving across religions and cultural barriers led by the people themselves, would be pearls of compassion.

The rule was that each family receiving a Grocery Basket had to agree to deliver a Basket to another family from a different faith or caste. The Basket was not a donation, from those “with food” to those “without food” but it was an “earning.” Each person participated in giving and receiving. The intent was to use the terrible disruption of the pandemic to feed hungry people and to build a brotherhood and sisterhood where it didn't exist before.

Rural Development Society CC, Helping Hands CC, Insaniyat CC, Ektaan CC, Interfaith Youth Council CC, Swapno Bastobe CC, Nayi Roshni CC, Sarwa Dharam Vichar Manch CC and Smile4Millions CC took part in this project.



Story that begins in Bankura District of West Bengal

Rural Development Society Cooperation Circle of Bankura coordinates the Grocery Basket delivery. Reverend Kalyan Kumar Kisku, a Christian Tribal leader and URI Global Council Trustee delivers a Grocery Basket to a Muslim family, Sheik Munna and his wife Sakina. Due to Covid lockdown Munna lost his job as a daily wage laborer. In addition, three in his family were very sick with Covid.



Raja Mitra to Md. Haider



Haider to Shohid Roy



Shohid to Shabnam



Shabnam's husband Kalim to Rajinder Singh

आन्तर्धर्मीय सम्पर्क गाढ़े तेलार अभिनव उद्योग

विशेष संवाददाता, कलकत्ता :
 ইউনাইটেড রিলাইজন্স ইনিশিয়েটিভ (ইউ.আর.আই.) তাদের পূর্ব ভারতের গোষ্ঠীগুলির মধ্যে একে অপরের পাশে থাকার অঙ্গীকার নিয়ে শুরুর করে “সহানুভূতির মুভো” নামক প্রকল্প। সংগঠনের জাতীয় সমন্বয়ক বিশ্বদেব চক্রবর্তীর উদ্যোগে বাঁকুড়া জেলায় এই প্রকল্পের উদ্বোধন করে এই সংস্থার পূর্ব ভারতের আঞ্চলিক সভাপতি রেভারেন্ড কল্যাণ কুমার কিস্কু প্রথম খাদ্য সামগ্রীর ডালি তুলে দেন ইসলামি পরিবারের হাতে। প্রকল্পের নিয়ম অনুযায়ী ওই পরিবার সংগঠনের সহায়তায় খাদ্য সামগ্রীর একটি ডালি নিয়ে হাজির হন এক হিন্দু পরিবারের কাছে। এইভাবে একে অপরের মধ্যে বার্তালাপের মাধ্যমে জেনে নেন তাঁদের বর্তমান পরিস্থিতি ও কীভাবে পরিবারের লোকেরা এই পরিস্থিতির মোকাবিলা করছেন। ওইসব তথ্য সংগঠনের জাতীয় সমন্বয়কের কাছে ফোন করে তুলে ধরেন। এভাবেই হিন্দু, ইসলামি, খালসা, খ্রিস্টান ও আদিবাসী পরিবার একে অপরকে সহযোগিতা করে তৈরি করে চলেছেন এক আন্তর্ধর্মীয় সম্পর্কের মালা। এই প্রকল্প তাঁদের যৌথ-সংহতি ও সার্বিক-মনোবল সুদৃঢ় করছে। একে দান নয়, সকলের সমান অংশগ্রহণে এক বলিষ্ঠ সমাজ গড়ে তোলার দায়িত্ব পালন, যেখানে প্রতিটি মুহুর্তে তার অনন্যতায় উজ্জ্বল। দেওয়া-নেওয়াতেই তৈরি হয় এক অটুট সৌভ্রাতৃত্ববোধ, তৈরি হয় এক অটুট আন্তর্ধর্মীয় সুদৃঢ় সম্পর্ক, যা সার্বিকভাবে ধর্মীয় ও সাংস্কৃতিক বৈচিত্র্যের সেতুবন্ধনেরই নামান্তর। এই প্রকল্পের মাধ্যমে এখন বাঁকুড়া, আসানসোল, কলকাতা-সহ ঝাড়খণ্ড, বিহারের প্রত্যন্ত জায়গায়, এমনকি প্রতিবেশী দেশ নেপালের পারস্য জেলাতেও দলিত সম্প্রদায় একে অপরের পাশে অটুট ও অচ্ছেদ্য বন্ধনে বাঁধা পড়ছে।



Local Newspaper covering our Project: Pearls of Compassion

यूनाइटेड रिलीजंस इनीसिएटिव के पहल पर मल्टी आर्ट एसोसिएशन द्वारा समाज में शांति फूड बास्केट दिया गया

मैथिली-बंगल (उत्तरांचल बुनिया) :
 यूनाइटेड रिलीजंस इनीसिएटिव (यूआरआई) के पहल पर मल्टी आर्ट एसोसिएशन और इंटरफेथल कौंसिल के द्वारा समाज में शांति और समुदाय को बहाल रखने तथा एक दूसरे के और सहयोगमूलक भाव उत्पन्न करने के उद्देश्य को लेकर आरंभ-आरंभ समुदाय में फूड बास्केट दिया गया। कोरोना संकट के दौर में अभावग्रस्त और जरूरतमंदों को खिलाए कर संस्था के कार्यकर्ताओं ने उन्हें रहने योग्य टी। संस्था की ओर सबसे पहले फूड बास्केट देने के लिए कुमिल्ला कुमारी नामक आदिवासी समुदाय की एक हिली महिला का चयन किया गया जो अकेले ही अपना जीवन चलाव करती है। अभी हाल में महिला का दिलीवरी हुआ है। दिली स्थिति में कुमिल्ला की खाने-पीने में काफी दिक्कत हो रही थी। यूआरआई एवं संस्था का मुहल उद्विग्न है।



युव विंग की कॉर्डिनेटर कुमारी सुजिता और मॉ संस्था के रवि कुमार ने एक महिला को फूड बास्केट देने हुए यूआरआई के उद्देश्य को बहाल किया। जिसके बाद कुमिल्ला के द्वारा सुजिता समुदाय की एक विधवा महिला मेहरान खी की ओर मेहरान द्वारा दूसरी जरूरतमंद दिली महिला मनीषा देवी को फूड बास्केट दिया गया। इस दौरान यूआरआई व मल्टी आर्ट एसोसिएशन के मिथिल्ला कुमार ने कहा कि जतिन-धर्म, उन्ध-नीच का भेदभाव भुलाकर एक दूसरे को सहयोग करने और उनके सुख-दुःख में साथ खड़ा रहने की प्रवृत्ति लोगों में विकसित करने की यूआरआई एवं संस्था का मुहल उद्विग्न है।

CC Activities

Bokaro Peace Circle CC

Bokaro Peace Circle is very active engaging youth in sports, They host a month long tournament every year, due to Covid situation, they had shortage of budget during the event, small financial support was given to buy some sports equipment. RC visited as Chief Guest of the final event.



Suchetana CC

Suchetana CC needed 100 tarpaulins to help flood victim in a village of their working area, but region could only provide 20 pieces to help members to stand for the families. Additional they were able to get 50 more tarpaulins from their known donors.



Sarwa Dharm Vichar Manch CC

Sarwa Dharma Vichar Manch CC work in addressing environmental degradation, in one of their save the river campaign , regional office contributed the transportation of the members in helping them to conduct public awareness program during a major festival .



Interfaith Youth Council CC

Interfaith Youth Council participated in a very debating stage and street play based on Hindu Muslim tension, showing how divisive forces work to separate in the name of religion. Best awareness activity. They needed financial assistance to cover local transportation and purchase some ornaments.



Peace4Dalits CC

Peace4Dalits foundation, a cooperation circle of URI in the Parsha District of Nepal, tirelessly working to promote enduring and interfaith cooperation to end caste based discrimination, providing education to the children and ensures women safety and social justice. With the help of URI East Regional team members of the cooperation Circle providing groceries to nearly 200 Dalit families in the area that are highly affected due to Lockdown situation.



"We unite to heal and build bridges of our religious and cultural difference and creating global opportunity for participation by all people."



Biswadeb Chakraborty
Regional Coordinator

"We unite to Create Interfaith Community, safe places for conflict resolution, protect Environment, healing, reconciliation and provide an Ocean of opportunities to those whose voices are not often heard globally."



Deepak Kumar
Outreach Assistant

"We unite to create a Community and also provide opportunities for the people locally and globally, to face challenges especially in trying times like now ."



Shreyosi Biswas
Administrative Assistant

" We unite to create community and to work for the common good is the greatest creed because no Religion is higher than human service."



Md. Arif Zishan
Special Project Assistant

"We all live in this beautiful world, we should pass on a world as a gift to our next generation. Where there will be no discrimination on the basis of religion, caste, creed or gender."



Ria Mukherjee
CC Support Assistant