

BLOSSOM CC

FAITHS AND TRADITIONS REPRESENTED IN CC: Hindu/Muslim/Christian

LOCATION OF CC: Kotagiri, The Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu

KEY AREAS OF FOCUS: Tribal Education, Health, Safe guarding tribal Cultural & Indigenous traditions and Awareness on Tribal Right

Key Languages: Tamil/Baduga/Tribal Language /English

QUESTIONS:

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

Nilgiri is a remote tribal area in Tamil Nadu. Various tribes live in this hilly region and our CC is coordinating programs relating to their life and works.

Apart from the mix of Hindu, Muslim and Christian, the tribes maintain /follow their own tradition in worshipping the God and maintain their own cultural activities.

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

People from tribal ethnic communities, in addition to Hindus, Muslims and Christians communities are living in Nilgiris. There are quite a lot of floating tourist population also. Hence there is a need for safe guarding communal harmony and maintaining the indigenous traditions of various tribal communities.

3. Please briefly describe the main activities or programs your CC is carrying out this year?

Health Camps/Tribal Education/Cultural events /Skill Training, Awareness on interfaith religions, Environmental cleanliness, Personal hygiene, health seeking behavior, family planning etc are some of the major activities.



Yoga Therapy Training by Dr. Ganeshkumar, Chennai



URI Meeting / Discussion



Self motivation and Group



Regular Yoga sessions

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

We try to build rapport between tribal communities and other main stream population.



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.

Celebrating Festivals of all religions, organizing Health Camp and Yoga practices which provide a common platform for all to meet, irrespective of any religion.



PONGAL DAY CELEBRATION at SCHOOL



**Honouring X-Std. students for First Rank
– Deputy Collector Participated.**



School Sports Day Function



Smart Classes



Sponsor Celebration Special Home



Supporting the Disabilities through Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for The Hearing Handicapped Institute, Mumbai.

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

Our goals are communal Harmony, protection of the environment (one of the UNESCO World Heritage Biodiversity sites). Presentation of indigenous traditions of various tribes and Peaceful coexistence.

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

Since it's in a beginning stage, we see some positive response and trust from the target groups which we consider as most important to carry forward our activities in reaching the goals.

8. How is the work of your CC helping to prevent religiously inspired violence or transforming conflict? (NOTE: This question is relevant only in areas with violence/open conflict.)

NA

9. 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?

Spontaneous participation of the people from all religions in meetings and other activities and their interaction and involvement in our activities.

10. Please share a specific short story about your CC's work that might teach a lesson about interfaith or inspire other CCs.

We are in the process of building relationship with different groups, particularly the Tribes which we hope will help to reach the goal.

About 4 months ago, one of the tribal boys aged 8 years in Kotagiri, was having urinary tract problem, not able to urinate properly and his condition kept worsening. The doctor advised that he should be operated to remove the foreskin (Phinmosis). But the Tribal parents were very poor and daily wage earners and did not have any money to cover the cost of the surgery and hospital expenses. They approached one of the CC members and a sum of Rs. 45,000 was raised among the members and the same was handed over to the hospital. The surgery was performed successfully and now the boy is able to pass urine freely. He is able to attend school regularly.

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

Creating Awareness on Peace Building and in maintaining the indigenous traditions and ethnic identity through education.

12. Within your CC, you have members from several different faiths and cultural traditions. How would you describe cooperation among your CC's members? What are the challenges?

Among the CC members, none think about religion but think and treat and consider all as fellow human beings and interact with each other spontaneously.

So far we have not faced any challenges

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

We are new circle and as such we are Learning whenever we get opportunities to attend URI meetings, interaction /sharing with members from other CCs during such meetings and also from the recently held training on TPA (September 2016 at Kottarkara in Kerala, India)

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

Through volunteers from URI who can come and teach our children and their interaction with the community and support the CC in Peace building, in maintaining their culture, traditions, Environmental education, personal hygiene etc. will go a long way in reaching the Goals.