



## COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

### **Karickam International Public School CC**

***Faiths/Traditions Represented:*** Dalits, Christian, Hindus and Muslims

***Location of CC:*** Kottarakara, India

***Key Areas of Focus:*** Peace Building, Community Development, Celebration of UN related days and other days, Environmental protection, Civil Service Training, Education, Child Development, Environmental Protection Counseling and Holy Books Conference.

#### **Summary:**

*Karickam International Public School (KIPS) CC is located in Kottarakara, India. The CC conducts programs at a school of about 300 students for the promotion of harmony and understanding among different communities. The school's activities include: seminars, International Day of Peace celebrations, and an annual day of service in celebration of Gandhi Jayanthi. Every year, students have the opportunity to attend the URI National and Zonal Assemblies. The CC is also committed to promoting peacebuilding via essay competitions, peacebuilding training workshops, and guest speakers.*



## COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

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

We are situated in a rural area where people are Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Dalits. There are three schools, several Christian churches, and Hindu Temples in the vicinity. There is also a cashew factory, an agricultural university, an ESI Government hospital, and a Hindu ashram in the immediate neighborhood. We have a high density of interfaith relationships among our residents, with a sizable amount of Dalits and working-class people. The community has a large number of migrant workers from Bengal and Orissa that come seeking employment opportunities in the construction sector and other fields. We have approximately 500 students and teachers in our school, who belong to these different religious and cultural categories.

Karickam has become an educational hub in the region. Almost one hundred years ago, the Seventh Day Adventist Missionaries from United States of America came here and started a school. That was a turning point in our history. It opened doors for a revival and it was a window to the West. All the villagers got a chance for better education.

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

We believe peacebuilding should be done in a peaceful atmosphere rather than when there is turmoil. It will be too late to establish peace when communities are fighting. We have to start peacebuilding work with youth, and that is the purpose of our school's CC. The four communities of our region: Hindus, Christians, Muslims, and Dalits, usually live in peace, but due to political manipulations, the relationships have fail on several occasions. The 'other' becomes an enemy. We have to be very vigilant in order to keep the social fabric intact. We have seen youth today lose their moral values where some become criminals or turn to drugs. Our interfaith meetings and youth leadership training are very essential to educate the youth. We promote peace through our Interfaith Students Movement with affiliates in several educational institutions in Kerala.

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

We celebrate interfaith harmony week from February 1<sup>st</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup> of February with the following programs: interschool elocution competition, interschool painting contest, and quizzes for students based on the Holy Books. Several members from our CC attended the URI Zonal Assembly at Bangalore on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2014. Several members of our CC also participated in the URI Youth Camp conducted in May 17, 2014. Our CC performed fundraising events and collected 72000 Rupees (1200 USD) towards Santhwanam Cancer Care and IPRI Fund during the summer vacation. We also organized a skill development training camp for students and teachers in March.

One of our main concerns is the environment, and during the rainy season we distributed 500 packets of seeds to students so that they may grow gardens in their homes. Our CC



## COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

organized a special reception for Mr. Deepak Jacob and Mr. Ajith John Joshuva, who were selected to the Indian Civil Service, followed by a training for our CC members to prepare for examinations in the Civil Service. In addition, our CC is in support of the URI Zonal Assembly, which will be held in our school on 13<sup>th</sup> September. We also plan on celebrating IDP on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2014 with a peace rally and interschool painting contest.

### Photos of Activities:

- (i). Career Guidance Program.
- (ii). Counseling for students.

- (iii). Distributing saplings in connection with Environment Day on June 5<sup>th</sup>.



*Principal Jiji P Mathew distributing seedlings as part of the forestation program.  
(Distribution of saplings & seeds, medicinal garden, and vegetable garden)*

- (iv). Palliative Care



*Students presenting 10,000 rupees to Mr. Shaji, who is in bed for 10 years after a bus accident, 35 KM away from our school. Every year our students and staff collect around 100,000 rupees (2000 dollars approx.) for cancer care. Sometimes there will be a special drive for some patients, especially parents or immediate family members of our community.*



# COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

(v). Conducting leadership training and youth camps



Participants of annual youth camp—second line leaders of URI.

(vi). Celebrating days of National and International relevance.

(vii).Conducting Water Literacy Seminar.



Water Literacy Seminar being inaugurated by V. Prakash, Asst. Director of Water and Irrigation Department of the Govt. of Kerala. (News in Mathrubhoomi Daily).

(viii). International Day of Peace celebration.



*Peace rally in connection with UN International day of Peace. We conduct this program every year, which attracts the attention of large number of people.*

(ix) 5th International Holy Books Conference.



*Participants of the 5th International Holy Books Conference, which was held in our school in 2013.*



## COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

(x). Sri Lankan Gandhi Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne was honored by our CC.



*Magseyse award winner Dr. A. T. Ariaratne (Founder and President of Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka) with our students at KIPS. It was a rare privilege for us to receive this veteran URI leader in our institution.*

(xi). Celebrating UN Interfaith Harmony Week.



*UN Interfaith Harmony Week is celebrated every year in our school with a series of programs. Rev. Victor Kazanjian inaugurated the 2015 Harmony Week celebration by releasing a pigeon into the sky.*



## COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

(xii). Support 'Run Kerala Run'



*We supported the 'Run Kerala Run' program of Kerala Govt. for a better health culture. All our senior students and staff participated in the 2 KM run.*

(xiii). YLP Water Harvester Inauguration



*YLP Water Harvester Inauguration at KIPS by Dr. Victor Kazanjian- a special URI project under Youth Leadership Program supported by the Global Support Office in San Francisco.*

(xiv). Interfaith Exhibition, conducted every other year

(xv). Medical Camp - one of our regular programs. The camps are related to Heart care, Cancer care, etc.



# COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

(xvi). Conducted South India Zonal Assembly



We organized the URI South India Zonal Assembly last year in connection with the visit of Matthew Youde and Krithika Harish.

(xvii). Community Service



Malayala Manorama news about our Community Outreach program—Collection Check for Cancer care being handed over by Dr. J. Parameela Devi (Women’s Commission Member of Kerala) to Thomas P. Malchi, President of Santhvanam Cancer Care Society CC.

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

Our community consists of Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Dalits. We are happy to provide an interfaith orientation through all of our programs, with peace-building as one of our main objectives. We have students specially trained in community development and peace-building.





## COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

- 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 bring people together in one circle through various programs like IDP, IFHW, peace rallies, interfaith exhibitions, meetings, interschool competitions, pain and palliative care, medical camps, community development programs, and interfaith festivals.

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

We hope to cultivate a culture of dialogue and lasting peace in our locality. Environmental protection is also one of our primary objectives, and we have created a medicinal garden in our compound. We feel it is a gift that we can communicate directly with 500 students and staff members who are being motivated through our activities. We hope to create a potential generation of youngsters who can build a new society free of violence. We invest in the youth for a better world. We help them develop into global citizens.

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

We have people of different traditions in our school and it becomes a nucleus of excellent interfaith relations. It is surprising that the knowledge about other religions is very limited among the students. We are trying to cultivate an intercultural and interreligious foundation that provides a new philosophical view for our young members.

- 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?**

It is a great achievement that we have been able to bring together all the residents of Karickam during the Onam festival. This event was the first of its kind to happen in this locality. Large numbers of people assemble irrespective of caste and creed when we have programs like medical camps, IDP Peace procession and so on. Our CC has hundreds of families generously contributing towards our pain and Palliative care program.



## COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

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

Our members recently travelled 40 kms to visit a person who had been in bed-ridden for the past 10 years. He was injured in a bus accident that left him paralyzed. He called our contact person after reading about our programs in the local newspapers. The moment was recognition of our work, it was affirming that a person in need could reach out to us seeking help. We contributed 9000 Rupees towards his medical treatment. It was an unforgettable experience to spend some time with a family and provide them with moral and financial support.

One of our student's' mother was in critical stage due to cancer. The moment we knew about this, all CC members came forward to help the patient. Within two days we collected more than 60,000 rupees (1000 dollars) and gave her the money. After recovering she came to us and expressed her gratitude with tears. It was an unforgettable experience.

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

All our social work helps realize the objectives of URI. URI is in itself a peace building entity, and we are also striving to bridge the gap between religions and cultures.

**11. 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?**

We have four communities on our campus and interfaith worship is sometimes a challenge. Some fundamental Christian groups find it difficult to understand our vocation. But on the whole we are developing a new philosophy of 'one humanity.'

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

Our institution and our CC have gained a lot by becoming part of URI. Our members have been able to grow as world citizens. Every student now feels that he/she is like a youth ambassador of United Nations, because of our UN related activities. Many of them want to study peace-building and conflict transformation courses in the future.

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

- 1) Send international volunteers to work in our school for a few weeks.
- 2) Help us find a partner school in another continent with which we can have exchange programs.