



## COOPERATION CIRCLE PROFILE

### **United Religions of Nairobi CC**

***Faiths /Traditions Represented: Christianity, Bahaism and Sikhism***

***Location of CC: CBD, Nairobi, Kenya***

***Key Areas of Focus: Creating and mentoring new CCs.***

#### **Summary**

*The URI Nairobi CC is a URI pioneer CC and works towards community engagement, bringing new members, and mentoring new CCS. URI Nairobi is composed of multi-faith members and is based in Nairobi with two of its members, namely Rattan Channa serving as a URI global trustee and Nyambura Mundia as the URI Africa office administrator. The CC has witnessed a considerable increase in CC groups in Kenya, their aim is to ensure that a good sense of direction is instilled in the various CCs work and projects in Kenya.*



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

Our CC is composed of three main faith traditions; Christianity, Bahaism and Sikhism and was the pioneer URI CC that set the stage for others. It operates in Nairobi, which is a metropolitan city with the majority faith groups being Islam and Christianity. The city also has significant numbers of adherents of the Baha'i, Sikh and indigenous traditions. Nairobi is the core of the national economy and is home to about forty million people who co-exist side by side peacefully as long as political temperatures remain constant.



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

This is necessary due to the extent of political polarization of the Kenyan society - both culturally and religiously that poses a danger to its fragile peace.

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

Our CC was the pioneer/first to be formed in Nairobi. When the Africa office was established, members of our CC took over administration duties with Nyambura serving as the office administrator and Rattan Channa and Hamed Ehsani both serving on the global council. On the general spectrum, Nairobi CC establishes links between flourishing CCs such as Cepacet or Bloodlife Initiative and links them with upcoming CCs such as Vision Young Mothers and Undugu Society.

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

Christianity, Sikhism and Bahaism.



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- 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.**

Our secret weapon was mobilization power as we started off with a monthly meeting then the group grew bigger and helped members start off their respective CCs in line with the URI purpose.

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

We hope that the CCs will reorganize and be as practical in facilitating not only the multiplication of CCs but to ensure that those that are newly formed are well inducted in the URI system, both locally and in the stream of the larger URI family.

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

By giving them a template in community engagement and interfaith cooperation towards a defined goal. When URI becomes an explicit movement among individual groups, different and respective single faith groups are drawn into self-led initiatives to start their own cooperation circles.

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

By engaging in dialogue with us and other like-minded CCs on the importance of co-existence. This aids in bringing people together.

- 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 number of registered CCs in Kenya doing practical work is an indication of our success.

- 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?**

Interfaith work can be as basic as just being curious about each other. The Nairobi CC grew in a different dimension, such that sometimes people just sat, ate and shared poetry and music, and that is how we managed to convince other



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groups to become our members. It is the simple tolerance and acceptance of others.

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

First of all our own multi-faith composition is complimentary with the purpose of URI. The encouragement we give to new CCs is that they should engage in building bridges for peace since it is needed urgently in Kenya and the first step to this is by becoming curious about other people's ways of life.

**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?***

Since most of us are well conversant with URI and its bridge-building work, we rarely have challenges in terms of relating amongst ourselves.

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

There is definitely more visibility and awareness, and URI also plays as our information source in terms of modeling interfaith best practices.

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

There should be deliberate exchange programs among CCs doing the same activities, so that they can exchange their best practices. Reporting about work from CCs should be encouraged, so that growth can be traceable.