

Winter 2015

INTERACTION

CELEBRATING NEW COOPERATION CIRCLES



Sun Devils Are Better Together (SunDABT), a new Cooperation Circle for URI North America, is an interfaith student organization at Arizona State University that encourages discussion and respect between students of different faiths and traditions.

Meet a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints



URI'S 2015 COOPERATION CIRCLE APPROVAL COMMITTEE

Dear Friends,

Every second Wednesday of the month, members of the URI Cooperation Circle (CC) Approval Committee meet in a conference call to review applications. This Committee is formed by one Trustee of each global region, and the individual wisdom of the members is collected in a rich conversation always directed to ensure a healthy and steady growth for URI.

In a world that is suffering nonsensical violence which creates fear and hatred among its people, it is encouraging to share that URI has had 32% growth since 2014. In 12 months, 91 organizations and groups have been approved to belong to URI. This is the largest number of CCs incorporated in a year since URI's inception. Another curious note is that most of this growth took place in Africa, Asia and Middle East and North Africa, where the challenge of violence is impacting lives heavily. In 2015, URI has also grown a presence in eight new countries, bringing the total number of countries in which we work from 85 to 93.

URI is a global grassroots interfaith network that cultivates peace and justice by engaging people to bridge religious and cultural differences and work together for the good of their communities and the world. The fact that existing organizations and groups have decided to join this network speaks to the need to strengthen the interconnectedness and interdependence among those cultivating peace and justice and addressing conflict drivers, such as poverty and lack of education, around the world. This time calls for a strategy and collaboration among forces of good, and URI is offering the platform for this to happen.

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change CC, based in Sydney, was approved as a member in November. They give a clear answer when asked why the organization chose to apply: "It's hard to get momentum without critical mass which leads to energy."

URI envisions a world at peace, sustained by engaged and interconnected communities committed to respect for diversity, nonviolent resolution of conflict and social, political, economic and environmental justice. May this vision bring life and light to our world today!

Maria Crespo
Director of Cooperation Circle Support
United Religions Initiative (URI)

Join URI's Global Giving Circle

Join our Global Giving Circle now and make a difference this December – and every month thereafter!

The Global Giving Circle is a group of individuals who help sustain the work of URI with an ongoing monthly donation. Their financial commitment is an investment in URI's global community of Cooperation Circles, who work to create a world free of religious violence where people of different religious or spiritual traditions work together to improve their communities.



Starting at \$10 a month, support from the Global Giving Circle helps provide ongoing, reliable funding to ensure the future sustainability of URI.

At URI, we believe that a new world is possible. Each day, all around the world, we are creating it together. With your investment, you help to create that world.

Please join us with a monthly gift to URI. URI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which relies on individual contributions to further our work.

Support our work at uri.org/get_involved/give

SAVE THE DATE

circles
of light

URI's Annual Gala

16 April 2016



Members of *Hidden Seeds: Global Indigenous Network*, share a happy moment at their inaugural gathering. This new Multi-Region CC was created to bring indigenous voices into interfaith discussions; they are one of the 91 new Cooperation Circles who joined URI this year.

URI Welcomes 91 New Cooperation Circles for 2015

Last year, URI welcomed 69 new Cooperation Circles to the family. This year, we are proud to welcome an impressive 91 new Cooperation Circles, including members from eight new countries. This is a 32 percent increase over last year; what an incredible gift for us all to share!

Cooperation Circles (CCs) are the heart of URI. Each circle, comprised of at least seven members from at least three faiths or traditions, is a self-organized group working to improve the world. Members from different cultures and belief traditions collaborate to tackle shared problems as they banish harmful stereotypes forever. “[We] believe that labels of religion, caste and creed along with greed for money have divided the society to such an extent that there is lack of unity, brotherhood, knowledge and most importantly love,” writes CC leaders from *Atman: The Samuhaa*, a URI Asia Cooperation Circle that joined URI in September. “To address this situation of negativity and chaos, [we] have gathered to join URI!”

What’s especially wonderful is that each Cooperation Circle accomplishes this goal in a different way. Our new Cooperation Circles tackle a number of key social issues such as healing multi-generational feuds between Christians and Muslims in Ghana, battling climate change through restoring indigenous practices worldwide, assisting the homeless and hungry in cities that don’t have sufficient human services funding, treating and comforting victims of cancer and AIDS in Malawi, and managing sacred music festivals to honor diversity in Australia. That’s what makes our organization so remarkable. Working together, we find strength in our diversity – which is, appropriately, the same message we broadcast to the world.

The most impressive part of independent groups working around the globe on so many peacebuilding projects is

the way each Cooperation Circle amplifies its companions’ efforts. Our network allows us to comfort and heal each other in times of need, and to help each other reach greater heights in times of success. Together, we link arms in an embrace that circles the world.

“[We] believe that labels of religion, caste and creed along with greed for money have divided the society to such an extent that there is lack of unity, brotherhood, knowledge and most importantly love. To address this situation of negativity and chaos, [we] have gathered to join URI!”

- Leaders of *Atman: The Samuhaa*, a URI Asia Cooperation Circle

There are many humanitarian groups and many interfaith groups, but Cooperation Circles are unique because of their “dual strategy” approach. Not only do URI groups focus on building bridges between faith traditions, but they cement those bridges through shared work in each community. Once people with different worldviews learn how to work together, and how to forge friendships based in common goals, everyone reaps the rewards together. Each Cooperation Circle serves as a shining example to the world that peace is actually possible.

This is why we’re so proud of the record number of new Cooperation Circles to join URI this year. With so many enthusiastic and dedicated bridge builders working together, the road to peace looks shorter and brighter than ever before.

Welcome to the newest members of the URI global interfaith family!

april

Shalom Ghana (Ghana, Africa)
Paz Mozambique (Mozambique, Africa)
Blossom CC (India - South Zone, Asia)

Hidden Seeds: Global Indigenous Network (Multi-Region)
The GIFTED Mission (California, U.S.A., North America)

may

Undugu Family Hope Kibera (Kibera, Kenya, Africa)
Mangochi Central West (Mangochi, Malawi, Africa)
Cosmopolitan CC (Raniganj, Burdwan, West Bengal, India – East Zone, Asia)

Palki Peace Circle (Kolkata State, West Bengal, India – East Zone, Asia)
Interfaith Peace Building on Natural Resources Management (Phnom Penh, Cambodia, SEAPac)

june

Soweto East Initiative (Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya, Africa)
Lalitamba (New York City, U.S.A., North America)
Golden Women Vision in Uganda (Gulu, Uganda, Africa)

University of Johannesburg Humanitarian Movement (UJHM) (Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa, Africa)
Confederation of Voluntary Organization (CVO) (Sullurpeta Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, India, South Zone, Asia)

july

Religion Pour La Paix – Benin (Porto Novo, Benin, URI Africa)
Society for Poverty Alleviation and Community Empowerment (SPACE) (Andhra Pradesh, India - South Zone, URI Asia)

Entrepreneurship Initiative for African Youth (Enugu, Nigeria, URI Africa)
WEDO GLOBAL CC (Based in Chai Wan, Hong Kong, HKSAR China, URI Multi-Region)

august

Faces of Peace Kenya (Nairobi, Kenya, Africa)
World Kindness Liberia (Monrovia, Liberia, Africa)
Gilvah (Cape Town, South Africa, Africa)
Deeplaid Religion Society (DRS) of Bangladesh (Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asia)
Strive for Better Civilization (SBC) CC (Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asia)
Youth Empowerment CC (Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asia)
Chaitanya Service Society (Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh, India - South Zone, Asia)

Grama Jyothi Society CC (Andhra Pradesh, India - South Zone, Asia)
HEENA Rural Women Development CC (Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, India - South Zone)
National Environment and Education Development (NEED) (Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh, India- South Zone, Asia)
Red Nacional De Educadores Agrarios Del Paraguay (Luque, Paraguay, Latin America & the Caribbean)
Sun Devils Are Better Together (SunDABT) (Mesa, Arizona, U.S.A., North America)
Eurynome (Victoria, Australia, SEAPac)



Australia Religious Response to Climate Change



Golden Women Vision in Uganda

The CCs on this list include those that have joined our worldwide interfaith network since our last InterAction update on April 2015

“[URI] takes it a step further because we are able to say, we are part of a global network. This is not only giving us skills to engage with interfaith here at ASU but also a global platform.”

- Sun Devils Are Better Together (SunDABT), Arizona, URI North America



WEDO Global CC

New CCs are our “gifts!” No matter what holidays we celebrate, we celebrate CCs and their work.

Our CCs work in areas like education, health, environment, youth leadership and women's issues



World Play Movement

“URI has been helpful to us in terms of networking, and so we have come to know different groups and people that have been quite helpful to us.”

- Undugu Family Hope Kibera, Nairobi, URI Africa

Visit uri.org/cooperation_circles/new_cooperation_circles to learn more about our new CCs' work



Deepaid Religion Society of Bangladesh



Strive for Better Civilization CC



..... september

United For Peace Against Conflicts International (ONG-UFPACI) (Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire-Ivory Coast, Africa)
De Mujeres Indígenas del AbyaYala de la URI MCC (Latin America & the Caribbean)
Mzuzu CC (Mzuzu, Malawi, Africa)
Nkhata Bay (Nkhata Bay, Malawi, Africa)
United For Action (Mzuzu, Malawi, Africa)
Youth Alliance in Social and Economic Development (YASED) (Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa)
Science Poetry Bangladesh (SPB) (Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asia)
Atman: the Samuhaa (Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India – North Zone, Asia)

Kasinje (Lilongwe, Malawi, Africa)
The Reach Foundation CC (Islamabad, Pakistan, Asia)
Youth for the Future (Libya, Middle East & North Africa)
Makers of Hope (MOH) (Libya, Middle East & North Africa)
We Are Some (Tevragh Zeina, Nouakchott, Mauritania, Middle East & North Africa)
Moroccan Youth Forum for Cultural Exchange and Scientific Research (Marrakech, Morocco, Middle East & North Africa)
World Organization for Reconciliation Link and Development (WORLD) (Suva, Fiji, SEAPac)

..... october

Alor Jatri - Vanguard of Light (Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asia)
Dishari, Bangladesh CC (Khulna, Bangladesh, Asia)
Global Peace Tourism (Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asia)
Satsang Research Center (Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asia)
TOLART (Tunis, Tunisia, Middle East & North Africa)

Sacred Currents (Sydney, Australia, SEAPac)
Action For Royalaseema Rural Integrated Development Seva Niketan, Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh (Andhra Pradesh, India - South Zone, Asia)
Sombor Educational Centre (SEC) (Sombor, Serbia, Europe)
Los Descendientes de Guatemaya (Solola, Guatemala, Latin America & the Caribbean)

..... november

Eibela dot Com (Dhaka, Bangladesh, Asia)
Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, SEAPac)

World Play Movement (Beaconsfield, Victoria, Australia, SEAPac)
URI Youth Aotearoa (Wellington, New Zeland, SEAPac)

..... december

Maso Amudzi (Community Watch) (Nsusa Village, Blantyre, Malawi, Southern Africa, Africa)
One Belief Trust (OBT) (New Delhi, India – North Zone, Asia)
Peace Social Welfare Organization (Kurnoor, Andhra Pradesh, India – South Zone, Asia)
Kuxkatan (Santa Tecla, La Libertad, El Salvador, Latin America & the Caribbean)

Missoula Interfaith Collaborative (Missoula, Montana, U.S.A., North America)
United for Humanity and the Spirit of The Earth CC (New Westminster, BC, Canada, North America)
Revivers of Indigenous Spirituality and Ecosystems (The RISE Circle) (Multi-Region)



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Tune in on Thursday, December 24 to your local CBS station at 11:35pm ET/PT (10:35pm CT) or online at uri.org/cbs for "MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH: A URI Interfaith Christmas Special."



URI relies on the generous contributions of our individual supporters to further our important work. Please help support URI with a year-end donation at www.uri.org