



International Interfaith Peace Conference – 7 and 8 December 2018



Plenary I: From Inclusive Growth to Inclusive Society - Challenges and Opportunities



Plenary II: Promoting Social Harmony in a Diverse Community



Plenary III: The Journey of Peace - A Faith Perspective



Q&A Conversation with the Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group



Plenary IV: The Next Steps - A Youth Initiative

A Participant's Reflections

Professionally, I work as a Programme Manager with OnePeople.sg, an NGO that promotes racial harmony in Singapore. It was through colleagues that I got to know of this interesting workshop, and I was excited to be there to learn about best practises to religious harmony around the world to apply in my work. It was a really short time that I could spare to be there, but I did not regret making that first trip to Australia to learn.

The workshop was effectively a focus group discussion led by Professor Michael Cuthill to discuss about best practices of Community Capacity Building for Peace & Harmony. We were divided into small groups to do a discussion and share some case studies and discuss about learning points.

Through the group discussions, all the participants realised that there were many similarities of what is going on within the different communities with regards to peace and harmony. Personally, I have learnt most importantly to take a step back from all the activities that we have been putting forward to assess how receptive people are to the approach and see if there are any alternative ways to bring the same message across, without people feeling repulsive about it.



Practical Actions to Build Community Capacity for Peace and Harmony 6 Dec 2018

The conference was held the next two days, and there were many perspectives that were put across to us, from academic views to practitioner views. The most impactful section of the conference was the sharing from the youths. In my own scope of work, it is rare even for one individual youth to come forward and make a difference to create awareness for the cause of peace and harmony and it was really heartening to see a group of youths coming together to advocate for what they believe in. It was really impactful for all participants, and I think that it opened up my perspectives to how youths may look at things and how they want to be empowered in order to feel motivated and supported to advocate for a cause. It was refreshing to hear their views as to how organisations can step forward and help them to spread the word rather than having a conference where you raise awareness amongst youths one time and would not know at the end of the day if they actually registered what they have learnt for the long term. I sincerely applaud this group of youths and wish them all the best in their journey.



Dialogue Circles: In Conversation with the Toowoomba Youth Peace Group on how the youth can promote peace and harmony in the Community

The trip was concluded with a Christmas party that was held at the Pure Land Learning College Association. It was such an eye opener, seeing people from all walks of life, regardless of race or religion, coming together to celebrate a Christian dominant festival. The celebration was so large in scale that it can be observed that people are just standing around chatting just to join in the spirit of Christmas. It really reflected on the message brought across during the conference and the spirit of giving in the name of Peace and Harmony.

Overall, it was a really fruitful trip to Toowoomba and an experience I would never have thought I could have, and I would definitely recommend others to attend. I would like to thank Captain Haniff, Meiling, the Pure Land Learning College Association and the Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group for their warm hospitality during the trip and for organising the event. Congratulations on the successful event and all the best in the journey of Peace and Harmony.

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Celebrating Christmas with the community at the Pure Land Learning College Association

Check out more photos on [f mmc.toowoomba](https://www.facebook.com/mmc.toowoomba) - For upcoming activities and programs, please visit www.interfaith-harmony.org - call us at +617 4659 8054, or email us mfmcc.pllc@gmail.com