

International Conference on Cohesive Societies and Young Leaders

Programme – 18-21 June 2019



Group Photo of the Young Leaders Programme's Participant with Singapore President Halimah Yacob

My time in Singapore has been incredible, with four days of meeting people; making friends from various faiths, cultures and countries; listening to amazing speakers who shared their stories, experiences and honest opinions; and getting inspired by amazing youths in their passion to make a difference in our world! A truly wonderful and unforgettable experience!

The Young Leaders Programme (18–19 June) was attended by around 100 youths from different parts of the world. It took the “Unconference” format, which basically gave us the opportunity to suggest topics that we are passionate about, which led to sharing sessions, where we could contribute our thoughts and ideas. And as a group, we decided that we would work on: Advocacy, Broadcasting, Capacity Building and Database as our next steps in moving forward.



A Visual Summary of our Sharing Sessions

Check out more photos on  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



Unconference format of the Young Leaders Programme

Following this was the main conference (20–21 June) with the theme 'Many Communities, One Shared Future'. It was attended by around 1,000 delegates from forty countries. King Abdullah II of Jordan and Karen Armstrong were among the invited esteemed speakers. The three plenary sessions of 'What We Believe (Faith)', 'Who We Are (Identity)' and 'How We Come Together (Cohesion)' offered a platform for generating conversations on developing new ideas to foster greater harmony in societies.

Here I quote from three speakers that really sums up on what it takes to build cohesive societies:

- *"Make a place for the others" – Karen Armstrong*
- *"The way people think is the problem, not the different religion" - Christian Picciolini*
- *"A cohesive society starts at home, such as having conversations around the dinner table about respecting other faiths and culture" - President Halimah Yacob*



Ultimately our aim is not to become agents of peace, but rather **Agents of Sustainable Peace** to bring about a cohesive society where all people regardless of identities could live in peace and harmony. In our ever-changing world, we will definitely encounter problems that didn't exist in the past. However I believe that instead of focusing our energies on combating the problems or trying to predict future problems, we should instead work on ourselves, in terms of being more open-minded, compassionate, accepting and to uphold our moral values and conduct. These are simple things that could be implemented into our lives and taught to future generations. We may find that we won't need to combat problems after all!

Meiling Chow

Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre, PLLCA