

INDIA PEACE CENTRE



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

Summary

2019

February - 2 programs

6 th – 8 th February	Peace Education Training in Muzaffanpur, Bihar
25 th February -5 th April	Building Life affirming Communities – Face to Face Program

April - 1 program

22 nd April	Nature and Women's Health, India Peace centre celebrates Earth Day
------------------------	--

May - 1 program

15 th May	India peace Centre observes Nakba day
----------------------	---------------------------------------

June - 2 programs

6 th June	Capacity Development for Young Peacebuilders in North East India
14 th June	World Blood Donor Day at India Peace Centre

August - 2 programs

24 th August	Global mental health: Youth Responsibility
31 st August	Symposium on draft educational policy 2019 held

September - 1 program

21 st September	Arts for Peace
----------------------------	----------------

October - 2 programs

2 nd October	Celebration of Gandhi Jayanti
10 th -14 th October	Interfaith School of Peace

November- 2 programs

22 nd November	Climate Program
26 th November	IPC celebrates 70 years of Indian Constitution

December - 2 programs

7 th December	IPC 31 st Anniversary
7 th December	7 th Annual Memorial Mathai Zachariah Lecture

2020

January - 3 programs

11 th January	Workshop on Gender Justice and Peace
20 th - 23 rd January	Fellowship Programme
30 th January	India Peace Centre Organises Various Programmes to mark the Death Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

February – 1 program

18 th – 21 st January	Responsible Tourism in Goa
---	----------------------------

Peace Education Training in Muzaffarpur, Bihar

From February 6th to 8th India Peace Centre organized a Peace Education Training in Muzaffarpur in the state of Bihar. The program was realized in cooperation with the Gandhi Research Foundation, Jalgaon and the local partners Prayatna, the Social Research and Development Foundation and Amar Trishala Sewa Aashram. Around 40 participants took part in the program and they came from different places both urban and rural. Most of them were exposed to the topics of communal peace and peace building for the first time and therefore benefitted a lot from the different sessions. Enthusiastic participation could be observed throughout the whole program.

The sessions dealt with subjects like peace and conflict from different perspectives such as caste, gender, religion, age or the international context. The sessions were facilitated by Dr. John Chelladurai (Gandhi Research Foundation), Ashwin Zala (Gandhi Research Foundation), Kasta Dip (India Peace Centre), Surendra Kumar (Prayatna), S C Verma and R K Mishra.

On February 6th the program was inaugurated by a host of dignitaries including religious leaders led by Swami Bhavananda Maharaj, Mrs. Usha Singh, Prof. Vikas Narayan and Prof. Arun Kumar.

India Peace Centre would like to thank all the partners who helped organize this program and all the participants for the productive and open discussions.



Building Life-affirming Communities

Face to Face with the many poor and the many faiths in Asia



On 25th February, India Peace Centre welcomed the twelve participants of the Face to Face program 2019. Face to Face is a six-week long program, which is meant for theology students of the partner churches of the Council for World Mission (CWM). The program was organized by Council for World Mission and hosted by India Peace Centre. “Focus on being ‘face to face’ with engagement spirituality, economic justice, economics of the poor and ecumenism at the grassroots. You will see this aplenty in India” were the challenging words of Rev. Asir Ebenezer, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in India and the Chairperson of India Peace Centre to the participants of Face to Face India 2019 which kickstarted on 25th February 2019 with an inaugural function at India Peace Centre, Nagpur. Rev. Ebenezer delivered the keynote address on the theme ‘Building life affirming communities: Face to Face with the many poor and the many faiths in Asia’ which was also attended by members of civil society, religious and ideological groups in Nagpur.

Dr. Sudipta Singh, Mission Secretary, Research and Capacity Development at Council for World Mission, who was also present on the occasion, outlined the objectives, process and the methodology of the program stating the importance and implication of such training in the context of the empire. He encouraged the participants to face the realities, as they are, and build their perspectives on justice so that they can be resistant to the empire.

Mr. Kasta Dip, Director of India Peace Centre, who was the dean of the program, welcomed the participants and guests, expressing gratefulness to CWM for the partnership in this program. He also exclaimed that doing justice is the way to peace and everyone seeking peace must find it by defending justice anywhere and everywhere. It is a missional challenge –a call!

The participants came from eight different countries: South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Indonesia, Samoa, India, South Korea and Germany. They all came to Nagpur to attend a cross cultural learning experience which included understanding of and getting exposed to Indian cultures, as well as different religions present in the country. On the main Topic: “Building Life-Affirming Communities: Face to Face with the many poor and the many faiths in Asia”, they went through workshops and sessions on different topics. During this program, the group also visited New Delhi and Bangalore to attend workshops there and to see different sides of India to understand its diversity. Therefore, the participants were located in Nagpur for four weeks, in Bangalore for one week and in New Delhi for one week.



During their time in Nagpur, the program covered the topics of Understanding Indian Society, Understanding Caste System, Understanding Poverty, Understanding Hinduism, Understanding Islam, Understanding Buddhism, Religions and Questions of Justice and Peace, Ecological Justice as well as Multiple Religion Belongings. A lot of the sessions were connected to different religions and the program also included visits to different places of worship in Nagpur. Subject experts and scholars came from different parts of India to facilitate sessions and conversations including Dr. Prince Gajendra Babu, an educationist and sociologist from Chennai; Rev. Dr. Vincent Manoharan from the National Council for Dalit Human Rights; Prof. Shrinivas Khandewale, a renowned economist from Nagpur University; Dr. John Menachery, Principal of MSS Social Work College; Prof. Meera Baindur, a Hindu philosopher from Manipal University; Dr. Faizur Rahman, General Secretary of Moderate Islamic Thoughts; Dr. Vikas Jambhulkar from RTM Nagpur University; Rev. Dr. Allan Pallana from United Theological College; Dr. Tejinder Singh Rawal, a renowned environmentalist and chartered accountant; Dr. Yugal Rayalu, a political thinker and Marxist and Mr. Nagamitra Akshobhaya, a Buddhist scholar. In addition, the group was also invited to some homes of the core group members of India Peace Centre who represent different faiths and confessions. By visiting people who belong to different faiths and ideologies, the group was able to experience the different communities in a unique and practical way, rather than just theoretically. As the program came to an end, the participants were asked to present a paper on the topic “Building Life-affirming communities”, using one area they’ve been educated about through Face to Face and connecting it to their own context. It became more visible for everyone how useful the learnings were in every single context.

Face to Face Bangalore

During the six-week long Face to Face program the participants of the program took part in a Bible Study Workshop in Bangalore on the theme “Building Life Affirming Communities”. The workshop was organized by Council for World Mission in partnership with India Peace Centre and the United Theological College. The participants were joined by theological educators and research scholars wherein each participant was given thirty minutes to present his or her bible study they wrote beforehand. The papers mostly dealt with social issues that are currently present in their own countries and showed possible solutions using the Bible. Therefore, the workshop showed abroad spectrum of different issues that are present in the world today. Rev. Dr. Allan Palanna, Rev. Dr. Dexter Maben, Rev. Dr. Rohan Gideon and Rev. Dr. Pearly Walter facilitated the process of preparation, presentation and discussions. They were able to give the participants advice and helped them to develop their Bible Studies.



Furthermore, during the time in Bangalore, the Face to Face group attended lectures held on the struggles of the LGBTIQ community and gender issues. Afterwards, the participants were given time to explore the city of Bangalore. They visited the famous gardens, local markets and some of the partner organizations of India Peace Centre, including Student Christian Movement of India, Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society and the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College.

Face to Face Delhi

One week of the program was spent in Delhi to get a wider impression of the diversity of India. The group also attended a seminar on 'Building Life Affirming Communities: Faiths and Ideologies in Dialogue'. They had one session on the topic of Understanding Sikhism. It included the perspectives of the Dalits, Christians, Muslims, Adivasi and Hindus. It concluded Magsaysay award recipient Wilson Bezwada, a renowned Dalit activist based in New Delhi; Adv. Irfan Engineer, Director of Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai; Rev. Monodeep Daniel, Dean of St. Stephen College and a priest from Church of North India; Prof. Indira Mukherjee, a promoter of Dalit and tribal arts and cultures; Ms. Ashmeet Kaur Bilkhu from Apne Aap Women Worldwide and Sheeba Aslam Fehmi, a scholar from Jawaharlal Nehru University.



During the time in Delhi, the group got a more practical impression of some of the religions they were taught about during their time in Nagpur and Bangalore. As a part of the programme, the participants visited Jama Masjid as well as Bangla Sahib Gurudwara and the Lotus Temple, a house of worship for Bahai faith.

To show them the diverse perspectives of India once more, the group attended another workshop in a more rural area in Faridabad outside New Delhi. The workshop mainly dealt with the theme: “Unbound Disciples of Unbound Christ in an Indian Context” and was held at Dharma Jyoti Vidya Peeth, Faridabad.

All in all, Face to Face India, 2019 ended on 5th April, after six weeks of cross-cultural learning with a valedictory function held in the campus of National Council of Churches in India. The participants were able to get an impression of the Indian culture and its diversity, as well as learn about many different faiths and religions. All the work they have done was leading them to the main topic: “Building Life-Affirming communities, Face to Face with the many faiths and the many poor in Asia”. Therefore, they are now able to connect their learning to their own contexts and build a Life-Affirming community in their home countries. Dr. Sudipta Singh, delivered the valedictory address and Rev. Asir Ebenezer commissioned the participants to be torchbearers of justice and peace in their struggle against empire.

Nature and Women’s Health, India Peace Centre celebrates Earth Day

In honour of the Earth Day on 22nd of April, India Peace Centre and CNI-SSI jointly organized an awareness program on conserving nature and health at Vinoba Bhave Nagar. Therefore, we worked with some of the women of the local self-help groups. India Peace Centre would like to give special thanks to Aradhana Upadhyay, director of CNI-SSI, who made the program possible. Furthermore, we are also thankful to our core group member Dr. Charu Baheti for leading the sessions. Patiently she explained, how the participants are able to improve their health, as well as protect the environment around them. Therefore, she spoke about the issue of how to use sanitary napkins and the right way to wash hands. She also mentioned nature related issues, like the importance of avoiding plastic bags and planting plants to improve the oxygen level in the air. Besides, she also introduced Ezy Spit. Plenty of people that are using chewing tobacco are spitting on the streets. Doing so, they are polluting their surroundings. To avoid that from happening, Ezy Spit is a small bag that they can use to spit in. The inside of the bag is made of an anti-bacterial material. Therefore, it can be used up to 15 times. Another important point is that it is also made from a biodegradable material, not from environmental polluting plastic.

All in all, Dr. Charu Baheti addressed some present topics, everyone is able to relate to. Her presentations led to good discussions and questions with the participants.



India Peace Centre observes Nakba Day

In solidarity with Palestine, India Peace Centre, NCCI-DATA Concerns and NCCI-URM jointly observed the 71st Year of Nakba on 15th May 2019 at India Peace Centre. Nakba is the “Day of Catastrophe” and commemorates the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Nakba is scheduled the day after the Independence Day of Israel on 14th May.

During the observance a short documentary titled “Walls of Shame” was screened to help the participants understand the situations in which Palestinians are living. It underlined the terrible effects the wall between Israel and Palestine has on the people. Afterwards, Dr. Suresh Khairnar, President of Indo-Palestine Solidarity Forum, shared his experiences of being a visitor to Gaza Stripe when he visited Palestine a couple of years back. Mr. Pradip Bansrior drew the similarity between the issues being faced by Palestinians and Dalits in India and urged the participants to stay in solidarity with the marginalised people. Mr. Kasta Dip, Director of India Peace Centre concluded the program with his remarks that understanding, and acceptance of neighbours is the only solutions to such problems. He highlighted how international Christian community is also standing in solidarity with the Palestinians and BDS movements initiated by the churches to isolate and pressurise Israel to restore peace in the region.

Around fifty people, especially from the Christian and Islamic communities, joined the program. India Peace Centre is especially thankful to the members of the Muslim community who participated in the program while still observing the holy month of Ramzan. To accommodate this important time of the year, India Peace Centre provided them with a space for prayer, as well as organizing the Iftar during the program.



Capacity Development for Young Peacebuilders in North East India

A capacity development for young peacebuilders was organised by India Peace Centre in Dimapur on 6th of June 2019 which was attended by 45 students and youth from different colleges in North Eastern States. The program was part of India Peace Centre's regular peace education training aimed at empowering young peacebuilders to be more active in their engagements. Indigenous Research Centre of Sakus Mission College and SCM-NEI (Zone-II) had partnered in this initiative.

During the program, facilitators covered topics like understanding the context of conflicts as well as social issues like gender-and caste-based discrimination. One of the focal points was also to address tribal conflicts, which holds special importance in this region of India. Besides that, the students got some time to think about their own responsibilities and opportunities in peacebuilding. As an impact the participants have decided to join hands with social movements in the region to strengthen peacebuilding efforts.

The team of facilitators included Dr. Akum Longchari, Dr. Akatoli Chishi and Kasta Dip. Other prominent people who encouraged the participants with their presence are Dr. Arenla Aier, Principal of Sakus Mission College, Rev. Dr. Pangernungba Kechu, Professor of Oriental Theological Seminary and Ms. Tolly Yeptho, Program Secretary of SCM for North East region.



World Blood Donor Day at India Peace Centre

A blood donation can save lives. People who had an accident, illness or went through surgery where they lost a significant amount of blood in a short amount of time are depending on blood donations. The World Blood Donor Day is meant to bring awareness to the importance of donating blood and encourages healthy people to become blood donors.

Under the theme "Safe blood for all" India Peace Centre, National Council of Churches in India–Youth concerns and the New Live Charitable Trust, jointly organized a blood donation camp. On 14th of June, the World Blood Donor Day, the camp was held at India Peace Centre. The Medical Team from Government Medical College Nagpur coordinated the camp. More than 60 people from different walks of life participated and blood was donated by more than 40 of them. The donors were provided with a certificate and snacks before they left for their homes. Blood donations are needed every day. Therefore, we are extremely thankful for all the donors that took part in the event.



Global Mental Health: Youth Responsibility

The number of people affected by mental health issues is increasing permanently all over the world. There is a lack of education concerning such serious problems. People suffering often do not know that they are affected and that they could feel better by seeking treatment. That is why India Peace Centre and the Institute of Mental Research & Rehabilitation organised a program on the 24th of August focussing on different mental health problems and their causes.

The discussion was lead by university professors such as Prof. Dr. Dinesh Janbandhu and Prof. Dr. Savita Chivende. There were also psychology students from Germany and Belgium talking about mental health issues in their countries and how people suffering from those problems are treated. In the end there was an open discussion.



Symposium on draft educational policy 2019 held

India Peace Centre and MINDS, jointly organised a symposium on a review of the draft of national education policy, proposed under the aegis of The Ministry of Human Resource Development. The symposium included panellists, who have excelled in their chosen fields and have a keen interest on education directly or indirectly. It was ensured that the panel had adequate representation from all fields and diverse socio cultural backgrounds. Mr.Kasta Dip, Director IPC, opened the proceedings, followed by a detailed statement of facts explaining the finer nuances of the draft policy by renowned CA and educationist Dr.Tejinder Singh Rawal. The panellists then deliberated on the proposed education policy and suggestions were noted which will be forwarded to the concerned governmental authorities. The programme ended with moderators of each discussion panel, summarising their panel's discussion. Premlata Daga conducted the programme and proposed a vote of thanks.

The coordinators for the symposium were Sonia Lamba, Leona Moldenhauer and Leonie Kuehl. The discussion was moderated by Apneet Bedi, Dr Supntha Bhattacharya, Dr. John Menachary and Pawan Sarda.

Prominent among those present included Adv Laxmi Malewar, Asma Banu, Dr. Abheek Ghosh, Dr. Prasad Siwal, Kuldeep Gupta, Adv Mohd. Rafique , Pratishuti Agarwal, Ruta Dharamadhikari, Dr. Vikas Jambulkar, Dr Nirankush Kubhalkar, Roy George, Jammu Anand, Nikunj Agrawal, Anshu Nand, Alefia Master, Romy Gill, and Adv P K Satianathan.



Arts for Peace Competition 2019



Feroz Haidry, Leonie Kühl and Leona Moldenhauer with students of VNGI College

What does peace have to do with climate change? That is what people were wondering about, when they heard about this year's topic of International Day of Peace: Climate Action for Peace. In order to

get answers and in celebration of this important day, India Peace Centre organised an art competition for high school and college students, in which youngsters were asked to share their ideas on the manner in an artwork. The programme was conducted in the school and college campuses, material was provided by India Peace Centre. 231 various answers on what "Climate Action for Peace" means were displayed in the halls of India Peace Centre on 21st of September. In total 6 educational institutions participated in the competition: 2 High Schools and 4 Colleges, in which 3 prizes were given in each category. The artworks were adjudged by well-known artist Lalit Vikashmi. Umair Ansari, Harshita. R. Kawale and Rahul Vinay Shahare could satisfy with their artworks in category high school" whilst Ummekulsum Zaki, Aarohe Tirpude and Sakina Bohra won prizes in the category "college". All in all the exhibition as well as the programme were a great success and gave an amazing idea on why climate action is one of the most important parts of living in a peaceful world.



Celebration of Gandhi Jayanti

In observance of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary on 2nd of October, India Peace Centre organised a panel discussion on "Gandhi and India Today".



Ms. Pratishruti Singh Agrawal, who did her masters in "Gandhian Thoughts" shared her views on Gandhi: Gandhi is a mentality and his values and beliefs are still living on today. Especially his Eco-Criticism and his regards on peace and non- violent protest are still important and current.

Having read all holy books of not only Hindu religion, but also muslim and christian community etc., it was one of Gandhis passions to unite Hinduism and Islam, according to Mrs. Pratishruti.

Modern India is still influenced by Bapu's works and will always be, because even though, Gandhi has passed away, his works are living on.

After Mrs. Pratishruti, Dr. Suresh Khainar shared his thoughts on the topic.



Dr. Yugal Rayalu flagged that society can, most importantly, learn from Gandhi that everybody's life is a meaning. We should try to give it a good meaning by believing in secularism, trying to understand each other's pain and connecting to each other. "Gandhi started with 27 people, and in the end he was followed by thousands", Dr. Yugal Rayalu stated.

In the end, the discussion was opened for the audience as well. All in all, the programme ended successfully and India Peace Centre could give tribute to Gandhi by actualising Gandhiji's thoughts.



Interfaith School of Peace

When one turns on the TV, opens the newspaper or listens to the radio one of the first things you will probably recognize is headings about war, terrorist attacks or hate speech against minorities. India Peace Centre is concerned about keeping the global peace, which is why the IPC organized a Program called “Interfaith School of Peace”. Around 50 students from Orissa were invited to participate in the program, which took place at CYSD in Bhubaneswar, Odisha between the 10th and 14th of October 2019. The program was all about peace, it’s importance in today’s contexts and how to keep it. In a total of three full days of deliberation the participants as well as speakers held discussions on different topics, shared their own experiences and figured out new ways of handling issues, seeming to threaten peace.



The topic peace is so complex, multiple speakers emblazed it from different perspectives. Sudhansu Naik, General Secretary, Bhubaneswar YMCA, talked about the general understanding and context of peace and reiterated that the “Absence of war is not peace”. Furthermore many other speakers shared their inputs. They include Jyotsna Rani Patro, Secretary of Utkal Christian Council, expressed her opinion on the role of gender in context of peace, Angelious Micheal, Coordinator for Partnership Desk at Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church, informed about how the youth is dealing with issues these days and Ajaya Singh, Director of Excellence Academy, talked about different perspectives of peace. In relation to the title “Interfaith” Dhirendra Panda, convener for Civil Society on Human Rights, shared his concerns on dealing with peace between different religions. In between the speeches the participants discussed questions such as: “Is peace present today? “, “What are the factors of peace building? “, “What are the factors of conflicts?”. Kasta Dip, the Director of India Peace Centre, led the program and gave some input himself on the caste system and what we talk about, when we talk about neighbourhood. To give some examples on the power of peace, Leonie Kühl and Leona Moldenhauer, two German volunteers, presented examples on global peace movements.

On the last day the participants got the opportunity to experience their gained knowledge on respecting each other and different religions practically. Exposure Visits made it possible to visit places of historical and religious importance: Dhauli Shanti Stupa, a Buddhist temple followed by a Christian Church and the Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves.



Meanwhile these three days friendships were built, knowledge was gained and mindsets were changed. All the participants got new impressions on peace and took one step further to being a peace maker themselves in their local contexts and situations.

Climate program: "You gave us a lot of hope Today"



"After the presentation and the panel discussion, I am glad that we named today's program climate crisis, because there would not be any name more suitable to describe the current situation Nagpur is facing".

That is how the "Global Shapers" closed the program "Climate Crisis in Nagpur and India", which was jointly organised by India Peace Centre and the Global Shapers, Nagpur hub.

In the first part, Varun Agrawal, gave insight on the scientific factors promoting climate change, such as Co2, which is trapped in the stratosphere, causing the earth to heat up. Sadly, India is on the Top 3 countries ejecting most Co2, therefore takes a huge part in promoting climate change. It could also be proven, that human made climate change is real and can not be ignored anymore:



COPD cases are on the rise in Nagpur, natural catastrophes have been recognised all over India and the temperatures are rising all over the world in a speed that has never been seen before.

In the following part, experts and people who have been trying to fight climate change for a long time, shared their opinions and experiences on the topics: Jayshree Bahre Madame, director of Raison School stated, that children should already be trained on how to protect the environment and what effects their personal behaviour has on the planet, in a young age. She is trying to make school education more eco-friendly and is addressing climate change in her school.



Sharhad Paliwal Sir, founder of Vidarbha chapter of Paryavaran Prena, explained organic farming and the importance of learning how to grow your own food, as it contains no poisonous fertiliser, which is responsible for major health issues, Indian society is facing. He shared his experience in agriculture.



Kasta Dip Sir, director of India Peace Centre, put the topic in another context: He shared how the environment changed, since he was a child and explained that " climate change will mostly be affecting the poor". Climate change can be beared much more effortlessly by the rich, because they are able to afford AC's etc. But climate change will be carried by the poor people. Therefore, climate change is also a major issue in the challenge to live peacefully.

All in all the program was a great success, as the audience and the panellists both agreed, that the evening gave everyone a lot of hope in order to save the planet.

India Peace Centre celebrates 70 years of Indian Constitution

Constitution Day was celebrated with immense fervor and zeal at India Peace Centre, Nagpur. Renowned orators from central India enlightened the audience with their insights.



On the 26th of November, Constitution Day has been celebrated at India Peace Centre. Four orators enlightened the audience observing our constitution from different perspectives, regarding the current political situation and the importance of Dr. Ambedkar. The program was moderated by Leona Moldenhauer and Leonie Kuehl.

At first, Yeshwant Telang, who is a social worker and the national president of Sugat Jaycees, elaborated on the pivotal role of Babasaheb Ambedkar as the chairman of the drafting committee. Telang underlined that every citizen should continue his legacy by working for social causes.

As a renowned lawyer, Prakash Meghe spoke at length about the timeline of the constitution and the amendments it went through. He underlined that the amendments ought to be for the public and not for ruling class alone. The lawyer brought to notice the recent abrogation of article 370 and spoke about the importance of fundamental rights. He very elaborately spoke about the challenges the constitution faces from the Executive.



Meghe's speech has been followed by the orator Vira Sathidar who is editor of the Maharathi Magazine "Vidrohi". He brought to notice that the nation is still in the making and B.R. Ambedkar's dream has not been realized yet. He explained the Preamble of the constitution in brief which is said to be the essence of the Constitution. Babasaheb dreamt of Justice- social, economic, and political and this, according to the speaker, could only be realized by a socialist economy. Sathidar took the audience to time travel at the debated and deliberations of the constituent assembly. His vision and efforts to emancipate the downtrodden were an inspiration for everyone.

"However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a Constitution may be, it may turn out to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot." Dr B R Ambedkar

Finally, Dr, Teijinder Singh Rawal, known C.A. and close associate to India Peace centre drew a parallel between the contemporary political happenings in Maharashtra State and Mr. Ambedkars speech at the constituent assembly in 1950. The speaker emphasized that the constitution needs to be adhered, not only in words but by the spirit which will result in a welfare state.

India Peace Centre: 31 years of Peace and Harmony



Everyone who visited Civil Lines last Saturday, might have seen colourful balloons emblazing the sky. And they may have wondered for what occasion- it was India Peace Centre's 31st anniversary celebrated with a lot of zeal and effort.

India Peace Centre- a place that always showed how to live peace in diversity celebrated 31 years of programs. Starting from peace education trainings over human rights issues to environmental concerns. These achievements towards a peaceful society, were jointly celebrated with more than 160 people on 7th of December.

The program was accompanied by a various entertainment program that included poems, gazal singing and interesting stories and experiences connected to India Peace Centre, shared by the core group members. The audience participated lively by clapping, laughing and enjoying a peaceful get together.



The beauty of the evening was underlined by everyone sharing their ideas of peace with each other. No matter of their personal background, every person could experience a peaceful and safe environment regarding their personal religion, beliefs and values.

Separate from the celebrations, it was also important to address current political issues and to remind of events that are disturbing the idea of peace. Such as the cruel crimes that women are facing all over the country. India Peace Centre and the whole present community lit candles together and stood in a minute of silence, apologizing for men's behaviour and praying for justice with a simple "Amen" that could be shared by every religion.



Cultivating Culture of Peace in Diversity

"A non- violent system of government is clearly an impossibility as long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry million persist... A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is voluntary abdication of riches and power that riches give and sharing them for the common good"-



This excerpt from Dr. Anand Kumar's speech, President of Society of Communal Harmony in Delhi, allows a glimpse into his oration given in context of the 7th annual Mathai Zachariah Memorial lecture on 7th of December at India Peace Centre. The topic given was "Cultivating Culture of Peace in Diversity". Kumar focussed the increasing Relevance of Gandhian Way of Nation Building in the 21st Century in particular. The program was attended by member of civil society, thinkers as well as educationalists.

According to Kumar, Gandhi's way aims at building a humane society based on truth and non- violence. Furthermore, he addressed the urgent need for India to get out of post- colonial- cause illusions of competitive politics, therefore going back to the roots and aiming for promoting a peaceful co-existence for people from diverse castes, classes, genders, languages, religions and regions. The orator introduces seven deficits and seven sins, that are causing a growing anxiety in Indians. (e.g. wealth without work, pleasure without conscience etc.) Following Kumar's opinion, those seven sins are contributing towards dilution of 'we- feeling' and promotion of 'othering' and are finally leading to a road of nowhere. He takes an excursion into history, resuming the damages caused by british colonisation, as well as damages that still could not have been cured until now. Criticizing structural deficits in infrastructure, the increasing chasm between rich and poor, lacking of sanitary public spaces etc., which is making Indians unsatisfied according to the HDI. He emphasises that the current political system declines representation and that this way of leading a country does not show a future that would seemingly improve those issues, therefore Indians personal satisfaction.

He offers solutions, e.g. the decentralization of production, referring to Gandhi, in order to improve village sanitation and general poorness. An important point in his speech, is also education, especially adult education, that he underlines with "adult education means true education". Following Anand Kumar, Women's issues should also be granted special attention.

He summarizes that finding a way of cultivating peace in an enormous diversity is not easy to meet. But the Gandhian approach offers a relatively sustainable approach in the Gandhian legacy. It deserves an updated engagement as it may take us beyond the limits of state-centric and market mediated processes of building peace in an egalitarian democratic setting.

Other than Anand Kumar, Supantha Bhattacharya, an educationist and Apneet Bedi, could enlighten the audience with their views and ideas.

The function was conducted by well known thinker Dr. Tejinder Singh Rawal and Kasta Dip, Director of India Peace Centre.

All in all, the audience profited enormously by the various ideas of how to enable a peaceful society in diversity.



Workshop on Gender Justice and Peace

Women



empowerment and gender justice would have remained a concept for a long time if Savitribai Phule had not intervened and challenged patriarchal oppression of girls and women in Indian society. She reformed the society and championed the cause of gender justice and women empowerment by educating girls and providing shelters to single mothers and widows. As a tribute to her on her 189th birth anniversary India Peace Centre organised a workshop on “Gender Justice and Peace” inviting students and youth from various colleges and universities at Nagpur on 11th January 2020.



The workshop was facilitated by Leona Moldenhauer and Leonie Kuehl from India Peace Centre, who conducted it in various ways, aiming to give the participants knowledge and a critical view on the topic. Opening the workshop Dr. Yugal Rayalu enlightened the participants on the achievements of Savitribai Phule. As the workshop progressed on, the audience had been animated through educational games, a quiz and critical questioning, in order to build an opinion on the topic and express it.

Ms Piyali Kanabar highlighted issues focussing on the term Gender Equality itself, expressing it's meaning, need and the necessity of men stepping up for gender issues influencing their lives too. Throughout the workshop, facilitators emphasized the importance for the participants to come to the conclusion by themselves.

Towards the end of the program, Kasta Dip, the Director of India Peace Centre oriented us on how our preamble takes us to peace and gender equality even without the mention of the words "gender" and "peace" in it because peace or equality is not a commodity but a sense, a feeling which happens when justice, liberty, fraternity cumulatively work together.

All in all, the program was an educative evening spent, a beautiful "take away", that was carried along and reinforced by reading out the preamble and pledging for a better tomorrow. The presence of more than 60 students, lawyers, psychologists and people from major walks of life made the workshop a humongous success.



India Peace Centre Organises Various Programmes to mark the Death Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

India Peace Centre organised various programmes to mark the death anniversary of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi. The function was chaired by the well-known Chartered Accountant Dr. Tejinder Singh Rawal. Dr. Yugal Rayulu and Adv. Prakash Meghe were the main speakers.



Speaking on the occasion, Dr Tejinder Singh Rawal elaborated on the relevance of Gandhi in the present times. He said, “Mahatma Gandhi is revered the world over as one of history’s most transformative and inspirational figures. Throughout his life in South Africa and India, Gandhi was a fearless campaigner for the rights and dignity of all people, whose constant and unwavering promotion of non-violence as a tool to win over hearts and minds has forever left its mark on the world. Mahatma Gandhi inspired the world with his faith in truth and justice for all Mankind. He was a great soul who loved even those who fought against his ideals to bring about peace with non-violence.”

Dr Yugal Rayulu said, “The force of power never wins against the power of love. At this hour of greatest unrest and turmoil in our world, the greatest force to be reckoned with lies within our hearts — a force of love and tolerance for all. Throughout his life, Mahatma Gandhi fought against the power of force during the heyday of British reign over the world. He transformed the minds of millions to fight against injustice with peaceful means and non-violence.”

Adv. Prakash Meghe said, “Gandhi is relevant today. No matter where we live, what religion we practice or what culture we cultivate, at the heart of everything, we are all humans. We all have the same ambitions and aspirations to raise our family and to live life to its fullest. Our cultural, religious and political differences should not provide the backbone to invoke conflicts that can only bring sorrow and destruction to our world.”

Priti Sarvey, Abhishek Yadav, Dr Rajendra Patoria, S A Wahid, Mohd Rafiq and Panchsheel Ingle also spoke on the occasion. Leonie Kuhl proposed a vote of thanks.

The speeches were followed by a Peace Vigil by lighting the candles where many peace-loving citizens participated.

Fellowship Programme

In Partnership with the Student Christian Movement of India, India Peace Centre has organized a Fellowship Programme.

This programme includes students from disadvantaged communities, such as students with a Dalit or Adivasi background. In context of the fellowship program, participants get the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills, helping them to improve their chances for a promising future. On a weekly basis, the Students are able to participate in English classes at IPC. In the current century where English is necessary in international contexts and one of India’s official languages, the language plays a major part in the present, in certain fields it is even mandatory. Equally, many jobs require computer skills, because the work is getting more and more digitalised. That is why the programme includes a computer course as well. The students learn basic skills in programmes like Word, Excel, and Power Point.

Another aim is to improve the students own self confidence and to advance personal development. Therefore a part of the program took place in Bengaluru from the 20th to 23rd of January in form of a National leadership Training. More than 100 students from various organisations gathered and had lectures, group discussions and time for self reflection on their personal beliefs, growth and future plans.



The core idea of the program is to support students from disadvantaged communities, to set a better condition for their life and to prepare them for their upcoming jobs. In general India Peace Centre tries to decrease the disparities when it comes to access to education.

Responsible Tourism

Goa: blue water, golden beaches and a fresh sea breeze is what most people think about, when India's most famous state is mentioned. Some people might also think of beach parties, cheap drinks and good food. All in all: Goa is a place to relax, to let loose from family pressure and give in on one's desires.

Sadly, when coming to Goa these days, the harmonious picture has been changed to a frightening one: litter, water shortage and the loss of local culture are threatening the Indian paradise.

As ecology is one of India Peace Centre's main concerns, it has been decided to organise a peace education program on "responsible tourism" in the capital of Goa, Panjim, that took place from 18th to the 20th of February.



With the purpose of gaining a diversified view on the problems Goan's and the nature are facing, the participants were a group of 5 Indians as well as five Germans: including Leonie Kühl and Leona Moldenhauer, the India Peace Centre volunteers, Paula Haerle and Felicitas Stiegler, two volunteers from the Centre for Sustainable Development, Nagpur and Fee Kristin Pottharst. From the Indian side, Kasta Dip, the director of IPC, Angelious Michael from JELC Orissa, Mona- Lisa Suna, Yugal Rayalu, retired professor of Nagpur university and Samarpita Kar have taken part.

The aim of the program has been to gain a deep understanding of how the development of tourism affects nature and what the problems are that Goan's are facing after the tourist boom of the last years. All of this knowledge is going to be retained in a movie in form of a peace curriculum.

In order to gain an overview, the program started with the presentation of Goa field study by Ranjan Solomon and Anabel da Gama, human rights activists, who have been working on the topic of responsible tourism for a long time.

Both of them gave an insight on the problems that years of intensifying tourism have transformed Goa from a hippie destination for peace loving people, to a place of 5- star resorts and overcrowded beaches full of rubbish.

They were also focussing on the problems that one might not see as a direct consequence of mass tourism, such as the falloff of Goans occupied in agriculture, because locals have been shifting to the tourist industry.



The second day was well spent in North Goa, as the group had the possibility to meet Dona Sienna Fernandez in Baga, who gave the group an insight on the noise pollution she is facing every day caused by the beach parties. She told the group, that government regulations are not being followed and that loud music is playing the whole night through. She could also describe the change Goa made over the past years, as the tourist cottages were allowed to come closer to the beach every single year, displacing the Goans homes. Dona had been facing threats as well, as she is fighting the misbehaviour of local club owners, who mostly came from out of Goa.



After that, the group split and interviewed several people on Baga Beach, Morjim and Ashvem after having recorded the portrait of Dona for the peace curriculum.

In Morjim and Ashvem, the group was able to observe a lot of russian tourists all over the place: signs were not written in hindi or english, but in kyrill, the russian script. There was less crowd and there were a lot less indian tourists.

In the evening, the group went to Calangute beach and was confronted with a massively overcrowded beach. There were mostly indian tourists. One was barely able to walk on the beachside, because of the massive amount of people. Relaxation- as it would normally be part of a beach holiday- was hardly possible, as there was loud music playing all over the place.

The next day, the group went to South Goa, as it is popular for the less crowded, pristine beaches of goa. In Cavelossim, the group got to meet Serafino Cota, who owns an eco friendly hotel. The group gained a lot of really helpful insight on water recycling, waste- management and a sustainable lifestyle. The whole place had been transformed into a little ecosystem, as the hotel staff are growing their own food, recycling their own water and reusing all kind of waste, that is being produced by the guests as well as produced by the hotel and it's staff members. Serafino shared his story and explained to the group, that sustainable tourism is more likely to not be practiced, because it does not get any subventions from the government. Hotels engaged in eco- friendly methods are even more likely to pay more.



After that, the last stop was Palolem- beach, where the group was supposed to gain knowledge about less crowded beaches. But as soon as they arrived, they had to realize, that the overcrowd already began to start on that particular beach as well. Speedboats, a lot of stalls and of course- a lot of tourists.

Having analysed the case study of Goa, the participants are now occupied with the peace curriculum. The movie will be shared on India Peace Centre's social media channels.

All in all the program was a huge success and gave India Peace Centre the opportunity to gain knowledge on a topic, that had not been addressed before. Therefore, there will be the possibility to host such programs at India Peace Centre in the near future.