

IARF- Young Adult

Report on the Young Adults project at Tirunelveli Feb 25th to Mar 2, 2004.

“Things can happen if the young people make it happen; it is up to us, as individuals, how we look at things. It is up to us to think out ways and means to change the situations we are in if they are a problem to our neighbours and us”.

Speaking to young adults at the inaugural function at St. Ignatius Convent at Tirunelveli city, Programme Co-ordinator Ramola Sundram mentioned what had already been achieved in India. Helped by Hiten from Gujarat, she outlined the successful project carried out there - a sensitive area where communal violence had flared up recently. Many young adults had come from different countries to participate in a village jointly building a mosque and a temple.

With youth from Nepal and Sri Lanka participating this time, Ramola said that changing things from the grass-roots level would show that young adults are capable of more than is sometimes expected. She dreams of connecting people, so that one day a Buddhist from Japan can get in touch with a Hindu from India, and have positive and fruitful interaction.

The view of one participant:

“Everyone in the program has to look around, and also towards self, and think about our own practices and beliefs. We have to all sit down and question ourselves, as to what we are, and what do, and want our religion to be towards other religions. This time spent together in Tirunelveli will be a time of showing our mutual respect to each other, knowing more about each other, having dialogue and interaction as much as possible. We have to look at ourselves and our elders; we are all accountable to our elders”.



“ Prayer is essential for any thing everything”, - says Mr. Subramaniam, President IARF.

Prayer is essential for everything irrespective of religion said Mr. Subramaniam in his presidential address. He heaped words of praise on Ramola and was very glad that she was wearing an Indian sari. The president asked all the girls to take lessons from Ramola on personality development. He said words of praise for Mr. Zulfikar and said that thy had been working on the email continuously for months to come to this stage. In the end

he said that Ramola was like his grand daughter because of her similar colouring, personality and looks. At the end he thanked everyone and ended his speech.

“Religion should be like a stabilizer in our life”, says Dr. Mumtaz Ali Khan, Chairman IARF.

Some people misuse religion and become terrorists because they are confused with what is expected of them from their religion and with what they expect from their religion. Religion should be like a stabiliser, which balances an individual's life. Religion is unfortunately dividing us now, where as it should be the one connecting us to other religion. There is fighting because of religion, where as religion should bring us closer to society. Islam says very clearly that we must respect all the other religion. Only if we go closer and interact with individuals we will know what other religion is and what dose it say about our religion. All religions is lacking humanism and that is what we all have to aim for and promote in our faiths. The project at Gujarat earthquake is a wonderful example of how humanism can be at its best. Youth from different religion and back ground coming together as one to build up a temple and a mosque is an amazing thing to happen. This is humanism, which we have to practice in our day-to-day lives. The young adults have to take up the responsibility of the whole nation.



“Young Adults should be given leadership”, says Mr. Zulfikar Akram, coordinator, IARF, SACC.



Young adults should be given leadership and by doing so we will make them more responsible for the future said Mr. Zulfikar. Young adults are the immediate future and hence they have to be trained and helped to choose the right way. The young adults are capable of doing things on their own in a much better way, only they have to be provided with the opportunity. Mr. Zulfikar said that he was very happy that the function was at last happening after months of planning.

He said he was very glad about the foreign participants form Nepal and Sri Lanka, like Ramola he also expressed his sadness for the Bangladesh participants who could not come for this meet. He said that adults all over have more or less the same problems, it is only by bringing them together and providing them common platform that things can happen in a much more better way. Young adults coming together with same problems from different countries will find a solution definitely to all the common problems of religion and faith as well as others.

Mr. Zulfikar then also briefed the people about the program of the young adults, he said that the young adults would be visiting the various schools and colleges around Tenkasi and Kanyakumari.



The Inaugural Function of the Young Adults program...

After spending an hectic day on the 26th the Young Adults left the retreat centre for the city to attend the official inaugural ceremony of their program. Two vans were already ready to take the young adults to St. Ignatius school and college in the Tirunelveli city. We almost left our two most precious young adults (Ruhini and Gayatri from Srilanka) in the excitement. On reaching the venue it was a big surprise for us as the NCC wing of the school gave us the guard of honour.



Drums and school premises, in their beautiful the path way leading to the hall. We were meet by the religious leaders and important personalities and soon we were seated and were watching an wonderful drill display.

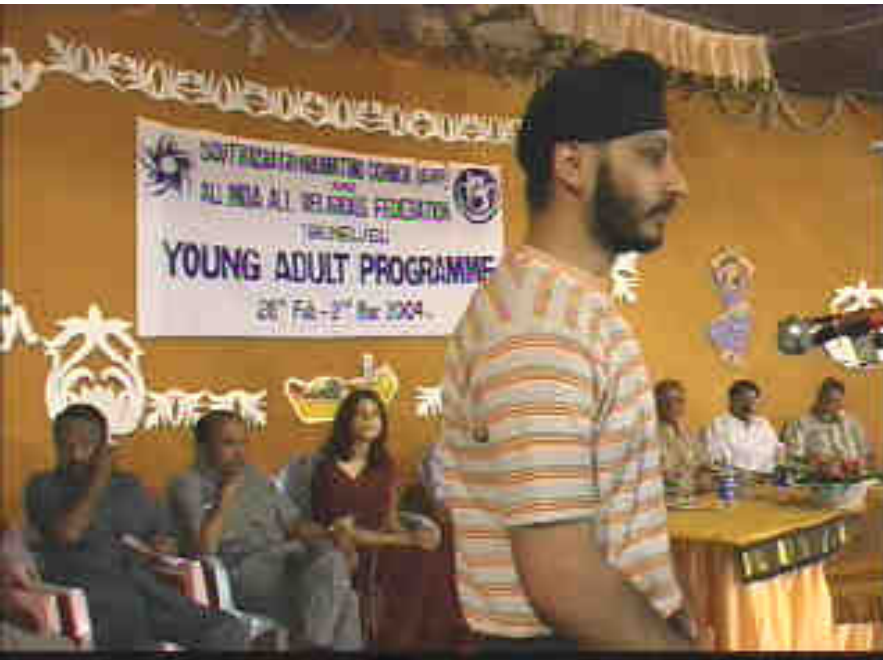
music greeted us on entering the while the teachers trainees dressed yellow sari stood on either side of

the path way leading to the hall. We were meet by the religious leaders and important personalities and soon we were seated and were watching an wonderful drill display.





The young adults had the best view from the second floor while the honoured guests were seated right in the front on the ground floor. After the colourful display were led into a huge hall where on entrance each one was welcomed.



Women got lots of jasmine flowers put together on a string to put in their hair while the men got scent and a small welcome dot on their foreheads. After the prayer, our young adults went up to the stage and prayed their own prayers making the atmosphere an very peaceful one.



After the prayers there was welcoming of the guests by putting shawls around their necks.



Then there were speeches and speeches.

After the speeches the school girls gave a dazzling dance performance known as the Bharatnatyam, the traditional dance of south India.



After the two dances presented by the school girls the young adults got up on stage and showed the gathering what exactly is being done at IARF. The skit depicted how various religious people thought that their religion was the best and how if all think a little bit broadly things can be very different.

At the end of the function the National Anthem was sung and every one left for dinner on the school grounds. The dinner was very tasty and everyone enjoyed it. After group pictures with the Bishop and friends we all returned to Jothi retreat house with more new extra friends.

Expectations of the participants from this program...

- * To know more about the IARF.
- * To make new friends.
- * To have more information about the other faiths.
- * To know how we can help others after we go back to have religious freedom.



Nirmala from Nepal surprises everyone...

Nirmala from Nepal surprised everyone, when she sang two nepalli songs for the group. The group was very happy and many of the young adults could be heard saying that it was very pleasant surprise for Nirmala to sing. So,

please friends do surprise us in the coming days.....

Two girls almost got left out for the inaugural...

Two beautiful girls almost got left out today as the vans started off for the city. Both the vans had almost reached the gates when someone noticed and then the vans were stopped and then someone had to run out to get them. Things go haywire sometimes for us to learn from them and help us teach ourselves so that it helps towards our growth. So please help each other to be on time.

