



Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle
Different Races • Many Beliefs • One Nation



Newsletter

A quarterly publication of the
Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle



In this issue

Simply interactive!

**Quarterly calendar of courses
for IRCC members**

Watsup IRCCs?



Dear Readers

The National Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle (IRCC) Workshop was recently held on Sep 28 at the Marina Mandarin Hotel ballroom with the theme of “Resilience in the face of adversity”. You would never have guessed from the theme what most participants would say if they were asked to use only one word to describe the entire event. It was simply “Interactive”. Did the word cross your mind?

As I listened with interest to the opening speech by Permanent Secretary of MCCY, Ms Yeoh Chee Yan, I noticed that many familiar faces in the audience had begun texting on their smartphones. I soon realised that they were posting their expectations of the workshop on the **Pigeonhole interactive system**. Their comments attracted several ‘Likes’ by others in the audience. In her opening speech, Ms Yeoh observed that IRCCs have held more than 250 events and activities

since the beginning of the year and that the deep mutual understanding between members of all communities translated into a deep reservoir of trust that can be mobilized during a crisis.

The current of electronic bonding was more palpable as the speech continued: many people in the ballroom were talking to one another noiselessly at the same time.

Besides the Pigeonhole interactive messaging which many participants liked, the **Forum Theatre** titled “Bind or Blind?” was a hit as well. The audience laughed appreciatively when the actors wrestled verbally with each other. The scenarios acted out were not unfamiliar to many IRCC members, but the presentation was novel. IRCC members were **reminded of their important roles as leaders and mediators in the community**.

Acting Minister for Culture, Community and Youth, Mr Lawrence Wong concluded the Workshop by highlighting the important roles IRCCs play in **maintaining social resilience during peacetime and rebuilding social cohesion after a crisis**. Mr Wong urged IRCC members who know the ground well to help devise new solutions and ways to manage the various scenarios which can give rise to racial and religious friction. He also praised **efforts made by youths to promote racial harmony** and expressed the hope that every IRCC would have more youth members and that they would receive encouragement and support to do more for the community.

On this note, the Editorial Committee wishes all IRCC Newsletter readers celebrating Deepavali a happy holiday. Send us your thoughts or articles for the upcoming issue. We would be delighted to share them.

**IRCC Newsletter
Editorial Committee**

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Simply interactive!



"The forum theatre was a very fresh and new idea. Like!"



"The first scene of the Forum Theatre was very well played and realistic! From some of the resolutions offered by the audience, it has definitely happened before!"



"The Workshop provided a good opportunity for IRCC members across Singapore to share their views on racial and religious issues, as well as learn from one another"

"The commitment of IRCC Chairpersons in leading the IRCCs towards its mission is deeply appreciated. As IRCC members, we should keep the IRCC objectives in mind constantly and continue to involve our younger generation in IRCC work."



QUARTERLY CALENDAR OF COURSES FOR IRCC MEMBERS

What > Ground Sensing Workshop
Where > OnePeople.sg
When > 1.30pm to 5pm

SATURDAY

**26
OCT**

The Ground Sensing Workshop equips participants with skills of ground sensing and techniques of mediating a conflict of a racial or religious nature within the constituency.

What > Cross-Cultural Communication (Indian Culture)
Where > OnePeople.sg
When > 1.30pm to 5pm

SATURDAY

**16
NOV**

The workshop will equip participants with a deeper knowledge and understanding of the four ethnic cultures of Singapore, so as to instil the value of appreciation and sensitivity towards one another's cultures, traditions and practices in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious environment. Topics include origin of the Indians, the Indian world, births, death, greetings, clothing, festivals, social relations and practices.

What > Basic Counselling Workshop
Where > OnePeople.sg
When > 9am to 5pm

SATURDAY

**30
NOV**

The workshop enhances the ability of the participants to exercise and convey empathy in possible scenarios that they might encounter in their role in working with the ground and having to mediate between different parties. The workshop further highlights the importance of having the ability to empathise and relate to the emotional nuances of the people that they deal with.

**BACK BY
POPULAR
DEMAND**

What > Regardless of race (Film Screening + panel discussion)
Where > OnePeople.sg
When > 9am to 5pm

SATURDAY

**14
DEC**

The event includes a screening and discussion on the theme of racial stereotypes and the future of multiculturalism in Singapore, with Gwyneth Teo (filmmaker of "Regardless of Race"), Dr Suriani Suratman (National University of Singapore) and Saravanakannan Ganapathy (The Reading Group). The video will last about 10 minutes and presents interviews with people on their impressions and thoughts on racial stereotypes in Singapore.

NEW

WHY YOU SHOULD NOT MISS THE NEXT SOCIAL MEDIA SKILLS WORKSHOP



Reason #1

Facebook (FB) is everybody's favourite social media. Perhaps not literally but just ask around and you will realize just how many people are using FB. In fact, many would say they can't imagine going through the day without posting updates or reading about what their friends are doing. This workshop will teach you how to create your own IRCC Facebook page so you can share news, events related to IRCC with your committee members as well as any one interested in IRCC activities.

Reason #2

It's free, absolutely nothing to pay for 3 hours of hands-on and not only that, you have your own laptop at no cost. Those of us who attended the last workshop didn't expect to have a computer to ourselves so it was a pleasant surprise. It's the ideal workshop and there was also tea, kueh-kueh and sandwiches during the break. Sounds too good to be true, right?

Reason #3

You will learn from a facilitator who is a pro at new media and story-telling. I mean it as a compliment. I have attended new media seminars and retained next to nothing in my middle-aged and computer illiterate mind. Justin, our facilitator, was not merely a great teacher but a source of amusing stories about his own experiences as media consultant and FB user. You should not miss the next workshop, really.





Hitting the Food Trail on Banana Leaf

A total of 17 IRCC members and readers of the IRCC Newsletter embarked on a taste-bud hunt during the inaugural IRCC Newsletter Food Trail which took place on 14 September 2013.

The first stop was at Niqui's The Cheese Prata Shop. The banana leaf curry rice set here consisted of two kinds of rice; yellow and white, with chicken curry, pappadam, fish curry, dahl, radish curry, fish mustard curry. No time was lost, everyone promptly tucked into their banana leaf curry rice sets - happy to report that the food was still served on real banana leaves to keep the experience authentic. "I opted for the chicken curry on our rice, and it was really good", said a participant, Mdm Latifah from Bishan, who ended up having extra helpings.



The next stop at Telok Blangah Drive Food Centre, Omar's Stall, was indeed quite a refreshing change. The stall specialised in Mee Goreng (fried noodles) and Nasi Goreng (fried rice), both quintessential Singaporean cuisines and they were served literally red hot. Mr Ryo Yamamoto, a reader from Ang Mo Kio puts it succinctly "Simplicity is sophistication. Though the dishes were spicy, they brought a warm sensation to our hearts".

Moving on to the third and final location of the Food Trail - Curry Village Banana Leaf Restaurant, participants were greeted by a full spread of colourful dishes. A must-try here is the juicy mutton meat drenched in heavy, spicy sauce, laced with chilli oil. The mutton varuvel seemed spicy, but it was actually very mild, with a hint of tanginess. A



participant exclaimed, "What an interesting explosion of flavours in every bite!"

It was a nice experience for all who participated in the inaugural IRCC Newsletter Food Trail, coming from different racial and religious communities around Singapore. The event also provided a good opportunity for participants to make new friends. Everyone was keen to join the next instalment of the IRCC Newsletter Food Trail. **Yummy!**



IRCC Cares @ Radin Mas

In the spirit of **IRCC Cares**, Radin Mas IRCC organised a community project "Ramadan Home Makeover 2013" on 20 July 2013 to **help the needy families** in Radin Mas during the Ramadhan Month. **150 youth volunteers and representatives** from Al-Amin Mosque, Baha'i Community of Singapore, Central Sikh Temple, Church of St Teresa, Sri Ruthra Kaliyaman Temple and Zhen Ren Gong Temple delivered essential items such as mattresses, rice cookers and food necessities to the beneficiaries.

The volunteers also cleaned and washed the homes, to give the families a clean and comfortable environment. Such gestures may seem small and simple, but it meant a lot to the recipients.



Contributed by
Radin Mas IRCC

Mr Sam Tan, Senior Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, and Adviser to Radin Mas IRCC and GROs also presented food packs to the recipients, before the event ended with a mass Iftar at Al-Amin Mosque in the evening.

This meaningful event began by bringing together strangers in the beginning, and ended with pleasant **memories and experiences** among the new found friends. This not only exemplified the spirit of **IRCC Cares**, but also taught



the volunteers especially the youths the importance of **giving back to the community and treasuring what they have**.

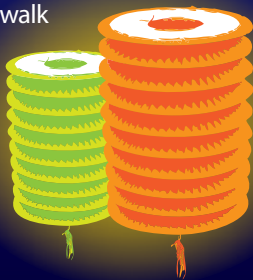


Mid-Autumn Festival 中秋节 at 5, 15, 30 and 60

Contributed by IRCCs in Sembawang GRC

Mid-Autumn Festival falls on the 15th day of the 8th Month in the Chinese Lunar Calendar. There are many legends associated with it - why the Chinese mark this day by eating mooncakes and how celebrations differ from place to place. Here is a different take on what the Mid-Autumn Festival means to the average Singaporean at different phases of life.

At 5, the Mid-Autumn Festival is really about **carrying colourful lanterns** and walking around the estate at night with lots of other children. If you have a paper lantern, you try your best to make sure the candle lasts the length of time you take to walk one round at the basketball court or wherever the Resident Committee's event may be held.



At 15, the Mid-Autumn Festival is a Chinese textbook story about how a beautiful maiden **sacrificed herself by swallowing an elixir** (a pill for eternal life) which was intended for the cruel emperor. By this brave act, she ended the emperor's hopes to continue his reign of terror and was rewarded by the Celestial Emperor with a palace in the moon and an adorable rabbit that sits around with her till today.

At 30, the Mid-Autumn Festival is a **shopping campaign**. What type of mooncakes to buy, traditional (baked brown skin) or ping-pi (colourful soft skins made of rice flour), how many boxes, what flavours and fillings, what brands and what type of packaging to suit which family member, relative, colleague became important considerations.

At 60, you tell your children the Mid-Autumn Festival is **family reunion time**. All must come home for a sumptuous dinner or eat out at a reasonably attractive restaurant to avoid washing up at home. You make sure there are plenty of food, tea and pomelo available.

Like many friends who celebrate this Festival, what I love most is the eating of mooncakes. However, as I gain in years and kilos, I now take a more prudent approach by eating the mixed nuts mooncake rather than the salted-egg-lotus-paste variety which is the local favourite. The grapevine has it that one of next year's IRCC Food Trails may be centred on mooncakes so watch out for this Newsletter in 2014.



West Coast IRCC Visit to Harmony Centre

Contributed by
West Coast IRCC

The Harmony Centre@ An-Nahdhah was officially opened by Prime Minister, Mr Lee Hsien Loong, on 7th October 2006. The centre represents one of the key initiatives of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) **to bring about greater understanding of Islam in our multi-racial and multi-religious society**.

The centre is in fact a culmination and consolidation of many years of effort by MUIS to help Singaporeans understand about Islam, through programmes such as mosque visits and collaborative initiatives between mosques and various community organisations. The centre also serves as an **integrated hub for the promotion of greater understanding and engagement of people of all faiths**. This is made possible through the centre's many inter-faith programmes.

On 31 August 2013, West Coast IRCC organised a visit to the Harmony Centre in Bishan. For many IRCC members, it was their very first visit to the centre. The IRCC members were impressed



by the hospitality and knowledge of the centre volunteers. The centre **houses a well-curated permanent exhibition** on Islam and exhibits to introduce the various religions in Singapore to its visitors. During the guided tour, IRCC members gained greater awareness of Islam.

It was an enjoyable visit for all.





Ramadhan & Iftar

Contributed by IRCCs in Tampines GRC

Ramadhan is the **ninth month in the Islamic calendar**. It is considered by many as a holy month, where Muslims worldwide observe fasting. The act of fasting teaches Muslims about persistence and abstinence, as they **refrain from eating, drinking and smoking**, among others, from sunrise to sunset.

Ramadhan also teaches Muslims about **sacrifice and empathy for the less fortunate**. Muslims are encouraged to be generous and to share their wealth with the needy. One way is by paying tithes (zakat) within the month of Ramadhan. Monies collected through zakat will be disbursed to the needy.

Iftar is one of the **religious observances of Ramadhan** and commonly known as *berbuka puasa* in Malay, which literally means **"to break fast"**. This normally happens after the call of sunset prayers (*maghrib*), where family members break their fast together. Dates are traditionally consumed, emulating the Prophet Muhammad, who broke his fast in this way. Dates also help to build up one's energy after abstaining from food during the day.

Ramadhan is a very crucial month for all Muslims around the world. Every Muslim will celebrate the Ramadhan with an open heart, as part of the fourth pillar of Islam. Mosques and Muslim organisations in Singapore will continue their efforts in **promoting understanding of the significance behind Ramadhan** by extending invitations to the community to partake in Iftars.



IBX for IRCCs in Marine Parade GRC & Mountbatten SMC

Contributed by IRCCs in Marina Parade GRC & Mountbatten SMC

An Inject-based exercise (IBX) was organised for members and stakeholders of the IRCCs in Marine Parade GRC and Mountbatten SMC on 31 August 2013. The objective of the IBX was **to sharpen their responses in a simulated crisis environment**. Prior to the exercise, a briefing was conducted to refresh IRCC members on their roles and responsibilities during a crisis and what was expected of them during the exercise.



The turn-out at the venue, Zhonghua Secondary School, was overwhelming with all the IRCCs well represented. Selected student leaders from Zhonghua Secondary School also attended the exercise as observers and contributed their views. The exercise was **well planned** and the scenarios were **realistically simulated**. All participants were very **constructive** and **focused** in their roles and views.

The exercise ended with a simulated media interview, where selected IRCC members had a chance to **utilise the knowledge and skills learnt in media spokesperson courses** to handle media queries and give interviews to the media.

Adviser to MacPherson IRCC and GROs, Ms Tin Pei Ling, attended the exercise and was delighted to meet the participants. She also **chaired a briefing session** with the IRCC chairpersons on the crisis situation update and follow-up on post recovery plans.





Chats (1)

Michael - IRCC
Harmony Fund



Watsup
IRCCs?

Hi Michael, have you heard
about the Harmony Fund? 😊

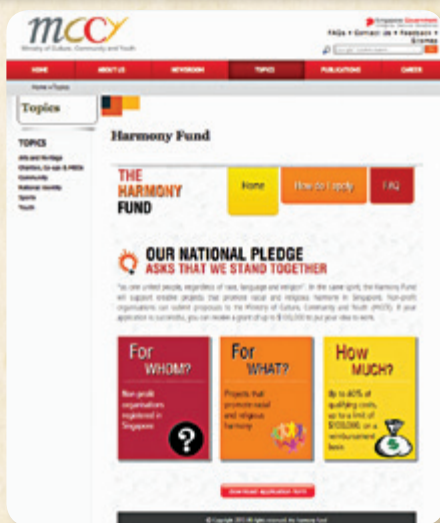
Hi May! Gd to hear from you again!
Nope, have not heard abt the
Harmony Fund. Tell me more 🤔

The Harmony Fund supports creative projects which
promote racial and religious harmony in Singapore...

Non-profit organisations registered in
Singapore can submit their project proposals to
MCCY... If the application is successful, a grant
of up to \$100K can help to fund the project

So where can I find more info on the
Harmony Fund 🤔

You may visit the Harmony Fund website at
www.mccy.gov.sg/harmonyfund/



I have friends at a non-profit organisation who
are looking for funding support... 😊

Pls spread the good news!
Thanks for your help 😊

IRCC QUIZ #4

1. Answer both questions.
2. Submit your answers together with your particulars to our correspondence details located at the bottom of this page.

It's that simple! 5 sets of shopping vouchers worth \$10 each up for grabs! :)

All entries (limited to 1 entry per person) must reach us before **Fri 20 Dec 2013**. Incomplete and/or incorrect entries will be disqualified.

Q1 What is the theme of National IRCC Workshop 2013?

Q2 What is the title of the Forum Theatre in the National IRCC Workshop 2013?

Full name:

Identification card no:

Address:

Contact Number:

ANSWERS TO IRCC QUIZ #3

Thank you for participating in our IRCC Quiz #3!
Here are the answers.

- Q1 In which constituency was the first IRCC formed? **Joo Chiat**
- Q2 When (month & date) is Racial Harmony Day commemorated every year? **21 July**

Congratulations to the following lucky winners of IRCC QUIZ #3

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Chua Yik Choo | SXXXX303G |
| 2. E. Parasuraman | SXXXX482Z |
| 3. Jagdev Singh s/o Satwant S. | SXXXX141B |
| 4. Muhd Abdullah Bin A. Pillai | SXXXX304B |
| 5. Teo Shao Wei | SXXXX411C |

Winners will be notified via post

Contact Us



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Like to share your views / feedback
with us? Write in to the IRCC
Newsletter Editorial Committee!