

Report 2012/2013

ISP foundation

by the International Student Chaplaincy (ISC) Delft, Den Haag and Rotterdam

www.iscnetherlands.nl

At the end of the year 2012 we look back to academic year (2012/2013) and forward to the year 2014. We are glad to see that the ISC is a place in Delft where students from the TU Delft and from the UNESCO-IHE and Erasmus university meet outside their academic programme in an inviting and open atmosphere inter-religious and multicultural setting. As the internationalising is on the top agenda of many universities we have a Bachelor students, and more of Master students and a big number of PhD researchers who find their way to ISP activities. We realize a special need amongst the PhD fellows for social contact and exchange of ideas as they often work alone and live away from the families for a long time .

Study trip to Rome and Assisi, Iaverna

(see an enlarged version of the report separately on the website) Our biggest project last academic year was a study and exposure trip to Rome and Assisi Iaverna in July 2013 under the title " spirituality of St. Franciscus a response to economic crisis and environmental crisis". 12 participants joined this unique programme. In all 8 days we had a very rich experience Franciscan spirituality The participants were grateful for this great learning experience in Franciscan spirituality that plays an important role in the global economy and technology.

Global Meeting Point

Once in a month, we bring students together for an international meal cooked by participants of a specific country and a discussion about a relevant topic. The evenings are prepared by a small Steering Committee composed of Master and PhD students. We enjoyed meals from Brazil, Iran, Japan, Indonesia, Pakistan, China, Kenya and the Netherlands. Eating together is an important aspect of community building. The topics had a wide range, just to give some examples: homosexuality, poverty in the Netherlands, conflict and peace, surviving the Netherlands. Eating habits around the world . We had 11 evenings for global meeting attended by 10 to 20 people.

Interfaith Activities

This year we held a series of evenings about forgiveness and reconciliation. This is a theme at the heart of all religions and it plays in many of the countries where the students come from (Rwanda, Kenya, Pakistan etc.). The first evening is dedicated to a general introduction and personal sharing about conflicts and reconciliation in our own lives. The second evening we watched a moving documentary: The imam and

the pastor” about Northern Nigeria. The third evening we had a Japanese professor as speaker about the Dutch – Japanese relations. And the last evening started with a documentary about reconciliation after the post-election violence in Kenya in 2008.

We offered a weekend training in inter-religious dialogue at Rijswijk together with Islam & Dialoog. This was a follow-up of a training programme in October 2012. Besides practical exercises and discussions, we were able to attend a prayer in a mosque and a synagogue, to visit a Hindu Temple and to join a Christian Sunday service. For many participants, it was the first time to pray with other believers and they were deeply impressed. In our chaplaincy work we see the promotion of inter-religious tolerance and understanding remains an important issue in the Netherlands and other parts of the world, and we are glad to be able to contribute a bit in that regard.

Conferences and retreats

In November 2012 students from Delft joined our national Interfaith Conference at the ISS in The Hague organized in cooperation with Islam & Dialog. Not only but also at the TU Delft environmental concerns and sustainability play an important role. In this conference we looked at the spiritual level of our responsibility for the future of our globe, and how the different religious traditions can give us inspiration.

Another national 2 day-retreat attended by students of the TU was held in May in an ecumenical center in Utrecht the brand punt. With the title “Secularisation and faith in a changing modern social perspectives from a Christian view”. We especially reflected about the concept of faith and religion in university campus. The participants enjoyed being close to nature and having time off from their studies.

Spiritual activities

Every Sunday students of all denominations are invited for an English Ecumenical service in the Raamstraat church. Students participate actively in the service and enjoy this ‘home away from home’ as they like to say. The church community becomes for them like a family. A student choir prepares each week the songs for the Sunday.

During festivals like Christmas, the Holy Week and Easter we have many special prayers. This year, for the first time, we held a full prayer night till the next morning in the Holy Week.

At Pentecost, we held a combined service with the Dutch Raamstraat parish and active participation of students. In this way, we can give a valuable contribute to our Dutch host parish.

Counseling

The chaplains were available throughout the year for personal counseling in all kinds of life and faith issues. A lot of time is consumed in personal confidential sharing of the special issues of the students. Confession, marriage preparation course and at times Baptism preparation etc... takes a lot of time along with every Sunday liturgical celebrations. This year there were 24 students who attended our marriage preparation course. There is a growing number children in our community. We hope

to begin some special activities for the family and children in the year 2014 programme.

Peace meditation and hatha yoga

The meditation and hatha yoga classes were continued on a weekly base in the Voorstraat. There is a need for relaxation, stress reducing, concentration and awareness on the physical, emotional and mental level. The course is led by Carmen Lai, member of the ISC and former promovenda from the TU.

Bible Study Evenings Twice a month, Bible study and singing and sharing is conducted. An average of 10 to 17 students attend the Bible study. Every bible study evening begin with a meal to facilitate the community formation and close interaction among the students. At times DVD on Biblical themes are taken up and seen to discuss relevant issues of life and Scripture. In the month of October, there was a special multi language and cultural Rosary evening along with the bible study and sharing. Now being the winter months we hope to conduct the bible study in the respective students hostels to facilitate more active participation. Due to popular demand from the students, the bible study is a regular activity of every Monday as the year is the year of faith. We are happy to see even muslim students attending the open bible study sharing sessions

Chaplaincy Committee All our activities are planned and evaluated by a Chaplaincy Committee composed by Master and PhD students from the TU and the UNESCO-IHE which meets every 2 – 3 months. In this way, the input of students is guaranteed and the activities meet their needs. Without a lot of voluntary contributions of students, we could not achieve all these activities.

For more information and details on our activities and for contact, please visit our website www.iscnetherlands.nl

Avin Kunnekkadan SVD ,

Chaplain of Netherlands