

GOODNESS AND KINDNESS PROJECT

Organisations Involved & Contact Details

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The broad-based **Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia** aims to enable people of differing backgrounds to build relationships and understanding through experience, and to provide opportunities and programs for people of various ages to explore interfaith dialogue within Australia's rich multicultural community.

The Together for Humanity Foundation is a genuine interfaith non-profit organisation set up for the sole purpose of bringing people of different backgrounds together in service thereby reducing prejudice and improving the community. It is managed by an independent board of directors comprised of equal representation of members of the participating faiths.

Aims & Target Group

The Goodness and Kindness Program was initiated in NSW in 2002 as a non-profit grassroots initiative by people of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths to:

- Address division in our society
- Promote increased action and cooperation on our common values.

Target Group: To date over 25,000 Australian children have participated in this inspiring program.





Project Description & Components

In this innovative program students engage with Christian, Islamic and Jewish role models of living in harmony as they learn to see past stereotypes to the common humanity and shared values. Children are invited to join a team with people of all cultures and faiths working together for a better world- by doing 40 steps toward one million actions together.

The program is structured across three core domains:

1. **Interpersonal Development Domain**, Learning to work with others by: building positive social relationships, working in teams, and managing conflict and resolution.
2. **Personal Learning Domain** - Encouraging students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and participation by: recognising and enacting appropriate values within and beyond the school context
3. **Civics and Citizenship Domain** - Assisting students to take action as informed, confident members of a diverse and inclusive Australian society by focusing on their identities and roles in the community, and their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Process

There are two primary school programmes - the standard **Goodness and Kindness** programme involving role models of harmony visiting a school and the Sister Schools' programme. Under the Sister Schools' programme a class which lacks diversity (perhaps largely comprised of a single ethnic or religious group or a few backgrounds) is paired with a class which has students from a different ethnic or religious group, or diverse backgrounds.

The Sister Schools' programme encompasses two very effective learning strategies - cultural exchange and community service. The cultural exchange heightens student awareness of the core values shared by people regardless of their background. The community service encourages students from the two schools to design and implement a worthwhile joint project. This hands-on experience enables students to see that their motivations are similar to those of their sister school buddies and that they can work together and in harmony, despite their varied backgrounds.

Workshops, learning activities and experiences

The programmes support the achievement of syllabus outcomes across the states through a range of learning activities, including those listed below.

- Challenging stereotypes and negative assumptions about others.
- Values clarification & role play. (In High School, negotiating competing narratives simulation.)
- Storytelling.
- Problem solving, critical & divergent thinking.
- Discussing the influence of the media in accentuating prejudice or fostering positive relationships, and the need for viewers and readers of the media to critically analyse information.
- Discussing hopes, goals, and an action plan and distribute follow-up worksheets.
- Challenging students to appreciate the difference that their individual positive actions can make, and to understand the wider impact that they can generate when combined with the actions of like-minded people. (Each student is encouraged to be one of 35,000 participants who will complete 40 tasks which express our common values; a combined 1 000 000 actions.)





Outcomes

The program has been praised by teachers, students and principals and featured on TV (ABC's 'Compass', Channel 7's 'Sunrise' and Channel 10'), radio and the print media. It has also displayed a giant patchwork quilt of children's kindness messages on the NSW parliament house. It is a National Program of the Together for Humanity Foundation. It is managed in Victoria by the JCMA, The Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia Inc.

Challenges & Obstacles

Securing constant support from local government and community and devising future projects and ways to keep the community with diverse population in harmony.

Funding

Funded by the Australian Government's *Living in Harmony* initiative.

Images

