

## **UN World Interfaith Harmony Week 2017, Denmark**

Interfaith harmony week has been celebrated in Copenhagen every year since 2011 by our organization Tro i Harmoni/Faiths in Harmony. This year has been an absolute success because, drawing from our experience, the previous years we made a more integrating and a bigger collaboration between the various religious organizations in Copenhagen. It became a very popular and great way of celebrating religious diversity in our city and our activities have attracted people of old ages. People are used to celebrating interfaith harmony week with us every year now and excitedly wait each year this religious festival.

Tro i Harmoni/Faiths in Harmony has once again this year instead of organizing one or more events, invited a number of organizations and congregations to join us in creating collaborative events, sparring with each other and partnering up.

This resulted on one hand in great meetings with people across the religious and interreligious Copenhagen, getting to know each other or know each other better. And on the other hand it resulted in an extensive Interfaith calendar with 12 events during the Interfaith week, taking place all over Copenhagen and involving all kinds of activities, one example being UN World Interfaith Harmony Week Copenhagen 2016 Interfaith has been celebrated in Copenhagen since 2011 and since 2012 by the organization Tro i Harmoni/Faiths in Harmony. Drawing from our experience, this year we wanted to create a more integrating, more collaborating celebration.

So instead of Tro i Harmoni/Faiths in Harmony organizing one or more events, we invited a number of organizations and congregations to join us in creating collaborative events, sparring with each other and partnering up.

This resulted on one hand in great meetings with people across the religious and interreligious Copenhagen, getting to know each other or know each other better. And on the other hand it resulted in an extensive Interfaith calendar with 12 events during the Interfaith week, taking place all over Copenhagen and involving all kinds of activities, one example being Songs of the heart, a concert arranged by Buddhist nun Bishuni Tenzin Drolkar, with meditative music from Buddhist, Sikh, Christian and Jewish traditions, taking place in the hall of a Christian Church.

We wanted to test this approach, because we know from our own experience that being a part is a much more constructive and powerful experience than being a spectator. In this way the organizers became participants and made events that also made people participants – singing together, talking together, eating together, building tables together, lighting candles together etc.

After a busy Interfaith week, we rested in a feeling of – all of us - having joined in true meetings and new friendships.

### **Our role**

As the board of Tro i Harmoni/Faiths in Harmony counts five religions, and as we have made interreligious events since 2011, we have a rather extensive network. Knowing many fine people, we would like to meet one another.

In the late summer we invited everybody we knew to a meeting to tell about our idea and to introduce people to each other. We had a great meeting, eating together, getting to know each other, talking, brainstorming, planning. In the autumn we had another meeting, getting together again and making sure that there were no loose ends, but with the participating organizations as responsible for the events. Apart from this role as coordinator and host, Tro i Harmoni/Faiths in Harmony made PR: Making an event calendar and distributing this together with a press release and footage to relevant media. We took on us these roles in order to make it possible for the participating organizations to concentrate on their own events.

This way of celebrating Interfaith, involving the religious and interreligious communities in Copenhagen has been including and dialogue oriented and a great experience. We plan to continue this approach the following years, hopefully expanding the week, both in number of events, awareness and participants.

### **Wednesday, 1st February**

#### **The Three Monotheistic Religions – Fellowship and Differences 17-18:30**

Ubuntu-huset, Købmagergade 43, 1. sal, København K

Marianne Olsen, lecturer and active with SOS against Racism, hosted a session comparing and contrasting Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The religions have much in common in terms of their understanding of God, human nature, the meaning of life and cosmology. The differences are often the result of the different historical and political context within which each one arose.

The foundation for a truly deep mutual appreciation lies in acknowledging what we do not know, and thereby focusing on doctrines and practice. In that manner, there is a basis for fruitful dialog across faith traditions.

Approximately 20 participants

#### **Fire kvinder, fire spirituelle rejser Four Women and Four Spiritual Journeys 19:30-21:30**

Brahma Kumaris, Vodroffsvej 9B, 1900 Frederiksberg C

Four women shared stories of their spiritual journeys from a place of inner-turbulence towards peace and spiritual awakening. The four women were Fatima Osborne, who is Muslim and imam at the Copenhagen womens mosque, Bhikshuni Tenzin Drolkar, who is a Buddhist nun, Sonja Ohlsson, a member of Brahma Kumaris, and Elisabeth Lidell, a Christian pastor and teacher of Christian spirituality.

Approximately 25 participants

## **Thursday, 2nd February 2017**

### **Dialog Meeting at Mødestedet**

**18:00-21:00**

Mødestedet, Valdemarsgade 14,3, København V

The evening started with a fellowship dinner, followed by a lecture from Nanna Kartrine Fafner, theology student. The lecture dealt with her trip to Lebanon during the summer of 2016, where she participated in a two-week dialog workshop with Christians and Muslims from different countries. She raised different questions, including how we can build bridges in order to learn about each other.

Approximately 25 participants

### **The Heart's Song – A Meditative Concert**

**19:00 – 21:00**

Stefanskirkens menighedshus Karmel, Vedbækgade 12, København N

A meditative concert with spiritual songs and spiritual music from different religious traditions. There are spiritual traditions in each religion that lie behind dogmas and articles of faith, wherein contemplation and experiencing transcendent unity are of the utmost importance. The musical element is based on prayers and mantras that are repeated in order to bring the practitioner into a meditative state that is beyond conventional thought processes.

Approximately 35 participants

## **Friday 3rd February 2017**

### **Open House in Maryam's Mosque**

**19:00-21:00**

Ubuntu-huset, Købmagergade 43, 1. sal, København K

An opportunity for women of different religious traditions to come together an evening of deep conversations, love, empathy and understanding. It is important that there is a space available for believing women to meet without judgement in order to share experiences, joys and sorrows with each other. It was also an opportunity to hear about how the mosque came to be.

Approximately 85 participants

## **Saturday 4th February 2017**

### **Open House at Iman Ali Mosque**

**10:00-14:00**

Vibevej 23, København NV

Imam Ali Mosque is the beautiful and colorful mosque in the Nordvest neighborhood of Copenhagen. Participants received a guided tour and an opportunity to hold discussions with each other.

Approximately 70 participants

## **Sunday 5th February 2017**

### **Dialog-tour based on the theme of hospitality**

**14:00-16:30**

A tour of churches and mosques in the Vesterbro neighborhood of Copenhagen, starting at Elias Church

- 14:00 The Dialog-tour started at Elias Church, where pastor Niels Nymann Eriksen held a lecture on the history of the Church in Vesterbro.
- 14:45 Arrival at the Moroccan Mosque Association, Vesterbrogade 80a, where imam Marwan Sheikh held a lecture about the mosque.
- 15:30 The tour ended at Mødestedet, Valdemarsgade 14,3., where tea and coffee were served. It was here that the theme of hospitality was discussed with a local politician. In addition, Thyra Smidt, director of Mødestedet, gave a short introduction about the institute.

### **Christian service with guests from other religions**

**16:00-17:00**

Church of the Holy Ghost, Niels Hemmingsensgade 5, København K

Copenhagen's Diocese held a service in cooperation with the interreligious association Tro i Harmoni, where representatives from other religious backgrounds brought greetings from their respective traditions. Copenhagen's bishop, Peter Skov-Jakobsen, gave the sermon while the children's choir from Goldschmidt's Academy offered a concert. Tea, coffee and cake were served afterwards.

Approximately 80 participants

### **Torchlight Procession**

**17:15-17:45**

A procession was held, starting at Church of the Holy Spirit on the Strøget and ending at City Hall Square. The interreligious association, Tro i Harmoni, issued a general invitation for everyone to join a process after

the aforementioned church service. It was an opportunity to celebrate that religion can be a basis for meeting, harmony, openness, respect, and dialog between different belief systems.

Approximately 100 participants

**An interreligious evening with focus on light and enlightenment  
19:00-21:00**

Phendeling - Center for Tibetan Buddhism  
Nørregade 7B, København K

Believers from Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism shared the meaning of light and enlightenment in their respective traditions.

Bent Lexner, former rabbi of the Jewish Society  
Mia Rahr Jacobsen, pastor at Saint Jacob's Church  
Aminah Tønnsen, author and Muslim  
Steen Skovhus, Tibetan Buddhist

Approximately 80 participants

**Mandag 6th February 2017**

**Jødisk Chavruta  
17:00-18:30**

Det Jødiske Hus, Krystalgade 12, København K

This was an opportunity to learn and with and from others. The Jewish Society gave an invitation for Chavruta, an ancient Jewish method to learn on one-on-one basis. The theme was light from the point of view of different religious traditions. Everyone was welcome to participate in the Chavruta with a dialog-partner, thereby taking part in a learning process where people can come to know more about each other.

Approximately 20 participants

**Tuesday 7th February 2017**

**A Journey without End – on Raoul Wallenberg  
19:30-21:30**

Sankt Jakobs sognegård, Østerbrogade 59, Østerbro

Storytelling, dialog and readings with author Stig Dalager, actress Ulla Henningsen and Anton Pihl, chairman for the Copehagen's Diocese's interreligious dialog. The evenings focus was Stig Dalager's book, "Joureny without End", which describes how the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg saved thousands of Hungarian Jews during WWII. It was an opportunity to experience an evening of storytelling and reflection on how we can learn from some of history's most painful lessons.

Approximately 50 participants