

## KOLKATA REGIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE REPORT

India is the country with the highest youth population in the world with half of its population under the age of 25 years. Youth today, have a big role to play in bringing about change in the society and developing the country.

The need to empower youth for a better tomorrow, prompted Young Horizons School to participate in the LMAD Youth Program.

Shourabh Mukerji – the founder and chairman of Young Horizon School visited Asia Plateau to witness the 20th LMAD Conference. He felt that there was a need for having a regional program in Kolkata in order for other students to hear the message.

200 students participated in the program and 21 volunteers helped organize this program. Of the 21 volunteers, 7 volunteers came from different parts of India. The conference aimed at taking the participants on a journey inwards wherein they introspect and develop a better understanding of themselves; thus, in this way, helping them to initiate change in their lives to make a difference.

The Kolkata Regional Youth Conference took place from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

### **DAY 1**

All the participants were instructed to assemble at the school premises early in the morning. The entire volunteering team reached the school premises at 8:15am to give few instructions to the participants. After the group divisions was done, the participants boarded a bus to drop the volunteers and participants to the Eastern Metropolitan Club – the venue of the conference.

The honorable guests for the evening were Dr Kunal Sarkar, Mr and Mrs Mukerji and their daughter, along with the Principal and vice principal of Young Horizon School.

The conference convener expressed his gratitude to the school for providing the LMAD team with the opportunity to come and conduct a regional program in the city of Joy – Kolkata. Tapolina Banerjee – the person who took the initiative of sharing the idea of LMAD with the students, spoke about her experience of attending the LMAD Youth Conference and later how she encouraged other students of the school to attend it.

The Principal also said that for the past two years she is sending students from the school to participate in the YC and she feels that she has taken a wise decision because she began to see the changes within them.

The Principal then introduced everyone to the renowned Cardiologist Dr. Kunal Sarkar, who was very pleased to know about the entire concept of Let's Make a Difference. Dr. Sarkar through his speech, spoke about the human race and the different skills of human beings. He also shared the adverse effects that technology had on human beings. He spoke about the journey of emotion, and the importance of establishing a relationship with someone you never met.

After the address by the principal and the guests, the lamp lighting ceremony took place. The song "Chaliye Na" was also performed by the volunteering team. Later, the convener also explained that this year was a landmark year and that LMAD was celebrating 25 years of its existence. Bikramjit Das also shared his creative vision behind the logo that he created to commemorate the silver jubilee.



**The volunteer team singing a song**

The first session of the program started with the topic of the four pillars of IofC – Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love. For the very first time the participants were introduced to the concept of Diary, silence, inner listening and writing.

The students were asked to sit quietly and introspect within themselves and later share their experience of their first ever quiet time.

After this session, a power-point presentation was made on the ABC of MRA. After that the volunteers shared their thoughts on the 4 values and how the values have helped them in their lives.

One volunteer shared that due to her dishonesty, her relationship with her mother was affected. Another shared his story of how his relationship with his mother and brother revolved around purity and unselfishness.

After this session, the participants sat with their respective volunteers for their first ever Group Discussion.

## **Day 2**

The day started with a silent prayer in the Auditorium. The participants were shown an exercise that revolved around purity and why it was important to look within and cleanse ourselves of the contamination that we have allowed to grow. The contamination can be negative attitude and feelings, in addition to negative actions and thoughts. This contamination of our soul can affect our relationship with people and also other areas of your life.

The best way to cleanse one self would be through Quiet Time and taking corrective action towards rectifying our mistakes and repairing relationships.

A common challenge faced by every school student and youngster of India is “Concentration.” We all tend to lose our concentration and are unable to focus on a task with full energy. This leads to bad performances in exams and other tasks that we take up. For school students, this is the key to success in examinations and learning. This would be helpful owing to the board examinations that were to take place less than four months from now. A session on concentration was conducted for the participants for them to understand and grasp the concept of focus.



**The Participants listening intently during a session**

Another important session of the day was Family. Family is one of life's best creations. And yet, many of us are divided in our family. In today's time, we are more close to our friends and love interests than our family. It takes courage to build bridges and bring a family together. A family will always stand by you no matter what you do.

Many participants cried and poured their hearts out when they shared about their family. Some of them had lost their loved ones, some of them had not apologized for the wrong that they did to their family members and some of them had chosen not to speak to their family at all.

Later, many participants called their families to seek forgiveness and also apologize for all their wrong deeds. This helped bring them close to their families. This exercise made many of them feel lighter and free; like as if a big rock was lifted off their shoulders.

After the family session, the participants were later introduced to two important exercise: One was the exercise of writing "a letter to self" and the other was writing a positive commitment that they were going to follow once the conference got over.



Many participants shared that the family day session that was conducted the previous day; was really helpful and many of them took the first step towards building a better relationship with their family. The participants later proceeded for their Group Discussions.



**Participants engaged in a Group Discussion with a Volunteer**

Post lunch, an important session on goals was shown to the participants. The participants were young and many of them were about to finish school and enter the world of college. This session on goals taught them about building a roadmap that would help them achieve their ambitions and also balance other areas of their life such as relationships, hobbies, etc.

Later, each participant was given a piece of paper to write down any negative thought, experience or memory that they would like to remove from their system. After all of them wrote it, this paper was burnt away.

As the conference was nearing its end, the floor was kept open for more questions and answers. The participants also got a bookmark wherein they wrote their key take away(s) from this conference.

Two participants shared as follows:

*"I didn't have any idea about this conference. But I knew something positive was going to take place in those 3 days. The very first day when I did the quiet time, I was finally happy because for many months I wanted some time to myself. And quiet time had gifted me that. Quiet time not only allows me to realize what is right and wrong but also allows me to rectify those mistakes that I've done in the past.*

*Second day when Viral Sir talked about ego; I realized how much ego I'm carrying with me. And this is destroying my relationships with others. I realized that family so important in one's life. It taught me to mend my broken relationships with my family members and near ones. That day we written some positive commitments which we will follow in future. It is hard to do those things but I'm still trying to fulfill those things.*

*The final day when we burned down the negativity it made me feel burdened free. But one thing I realized after attending this conference is that I can survive without my phone. As I'm a phone addict in the first day it was really difficult to stay without my phone but gradually it didn't affect me in the next two days. And to be honest I was happier without my phone. And I enjoyed the company of others around me." – A Class XI Student*

*"When I heard about this conference I was really excited as I thought there will be lots of activities (physical) but then the first day as we went there; for the first two hours I was literally sleeping (maybe because I didn't sleep the whole night) . After all the guests finished with their speeches and when Viral Sir took over, believe me I really don't remember what he spoke in the first day. What was going on in my mind was that I wanted to go home immediately. The next day I came really reluctantly but then the seminar started and I started finding it interesting. The quiet time we had on the second day was something I really needed. Maybe it was after ages that I asked myself who am I?. After our lunch the scenario was totally different. We all were discussing about family that it made many of us so emotional that we couldn't stop ourselves from stepping on the stage and speaking our heart out. That day when I went back home I texted everyone whom I wasn't talking to or had a fight with. The next day I was very excited about "what's going to be the topic today". We started and that was the day when I went on the stage and spoke things which I never thought I could. I can't thank Viral Sir and his entire team enough for organizing the whole thing. It made me a stronger version of myself and now I try to be more real with everyone around than before. I am seeing so many of my friends who once were in a fight with someone or weren't talking with each other now having tiffin together, laughing and cracking jokes." – a Class XI student*





