

COVA-led initiative empowers students on elder care

Students trained under the Compassionate Citizenship Programme have proposed actionable solutions to improve elder care and address climate concerns. Backed by faith leaders, the initiative will now be expanded to 3,000 schools through a State government–COVA MoU

By [Telangana Today](#)

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Hyderabad: Students from various schools in Hyderabad and districts, as part of Compassionate Citizenship Programme, a collaborative initiative between Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA) and State Education Department, have proposed specific ‘actionable points’ to address growing needs of senior citizens and escalating climate crisis.

The students underwent rigorous training in social science research and advocacy, which enabled them to come up with the suggestions to improve the quality of life of the elderly. Their work included field studies and direct interactions with stakeholders to move beyond theory and into practical community service.

Students Lead Faith-Based Call for Care of Elders and Climate Action in Telangana

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Hyderabad: Students participating in the *Compassionate Citizenship Program*, implemented by **COVA (Confederation of Voluntary Associations)** in collaboration with the **Education Department of the Government of Telangana**, have emerged as powerful advocates for social responsibility by identifying *12 actionable points* on



Care of Elders and Climate Change—and taking them directly to faith leaders for propagation through weekly sermons across religions.

As part of Value Education, students from participating schools underwent an intensive learning process that included expert lectures, social science–based field studies, stakeholder interactions, and training in social advocacy. Through this structured engagement, students examined real-world challenges, identified practical solutions, and learned how to seek redress by engaging officials, elected representatives, and faith leaders.

The students' proposal for elder care focuses on dignity and social integration, advocating for quality time, fulfilment of essential needs, and creation of senior citizen groups in community hubs.

To ensure these points reach the heart of the community, students presented their representations to prominent faith leaders from Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities.

The leaders including Archbishop Antony Prince Panengadan and representatives from the Arya Samaj and Jamait e Ulema E Hind, committed to propagating the twelve points during their weekly sermons in masjids, churches, and satsangs.

The State government has now signed an MoU with COVA to scale this programme to 3,000 schools across the State, integrating it into the formal Value Education curriculum, said Mazher Hussain, Executive Director, COVA Peace Network.



Students giving Representations to Hindu, Muslim & Christian Faith Leaders

12 Actionable Points Proposed by Students Care of Elders – 5 Key Actions

1. Spending quality time with elders
2. Ensuring respect and dignity for elders
3. Fulfilling elders' physical and emotional needs
4. Supporting elders living alone
5. Formation of senior citizens' groups in community centres and places of worship for regular social interaction



Climate Crisis – 7 Key Actions

1. Say no to plastics
2. Planting and protecting trees
3. Avoiding wastage of water
- 4.
5. Saving energy
6. Promoting public transport, cycling, and carpooling to reduce air pollution
7. Offering drinking water to gig workers and delivery personnel
8. Spreading awareness through posters, rallies, and video messages



Faith Leaders Join Hands for Awareness Campaign

Students prepared formal representations on these 12 Actionable Points and presented them to prominent faith leaders, including **Archbishop Antony Prince Panengadan**, **Mr. Vithal Rao Arya** of Arya Samaj, **Maulana Mohammed Amer** of Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Hind, **Rev. Dr. T. Bhasker** of CSI Wesley Church, and **Mr. Mohammed Azheruddin** of Jamaat-e-Islami.



The students requested that these points be shared with priests, imams, and preachers for dissemination through weekly sermons in **Satsangs, Masjids, and Churches**. All faith leaders appreciated the student-led initiative and agreed to circulate the messages through their respective faith networks, potentially reaching hundreds of congregations across Telangana.

Plastic-Free School: Students Turn Advocacy into Action

Inspired by the “No to Plastic” action point, students of **Sharada Vidyalaya, Falaknuma**, approached their school principal with a proposal to declare the campus a *Plastic-Free Zone*. Accepting the students’ request, the principal issued a circular banning plastic bottles, bags, and wrapping materials within the school premises—demonstrating how student advocacy can lead to immediate institutional change.



Scaling Up Across Telangana

Recognising the transformative potential of the Compassionate Citizenship Program, the Education Department of the Government of Telangana has formally integrated it into the school curriculum as part of Value Education. Through an MoU with COVA, the program is set to be scaled up to 3,000 schools across the state.

A total of 28 schools from Hyderabad participated in the Annual Project Works Display Program, where students showcased their research and advocacy efforts and were awarded prizes for outstanding presentations.

Tribute to COVA Peace Network Leaders

The Annual Project Works Display Program was dedicated to the memory of **Mr. Egbert Samraj**, **Dr. Anand Raj Varma**, **Mr. Omim Maneckshaw Debara**, **Ms. Naheed Banu**, and **Sardar Nanak Singh Nishtar**—former Presidents of the **COVA Peace Network**, whose leadership over the past three decades helped shape COVA into a beacon of peace, pluralism, and social engagement.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.covanetwork.org/in-school-curriculum>

Students' 12-point action plan on elders, climate change to feature in sermons across faiths

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Resource Persons: Arunya Jyothi and Ruchit Asha Kamal

HYDERABAD: Students participating in the Compassionate Citizenship Program have drawn up 12 actionable points on care of elders and climate change, which will be propagated through weekly sermons across religions after faith leaders agreed to take the campaign forward.

Students frame solutions after field studies

The students, drawn from schools implementing the Compassionate Citizenship Program run by COVA Peace Network in collaboration with the Education Department of Government of Telangana, worked on the two themes as part of value education.

They attended lectures, conducted field studies using social science methods, interacted with stakeholders and received training in social advocacy to identify problems and propose solutions.

Five points on elders, seven on climate

For care of elders, the students identified five action points: spending quality time with elders, ensuring respect and dignity, fulfilling elders' needs, helping elders living alone, and forming senior citizens' groups in community centres and places of worship for regular interaction.

On climate change, seven points were proposed: saying no to plastics, planting and protecting trees, avoiding wastage of water, saving energy, using public transport, cycling and carpooling, offering drinking water to gig workers and delivery personnel, and spreading awareness through posters, rallies and video messages.



Faith leaders back weekly sermon outreach

Students submitted representations on the 12 points to faith leaders, including Archbishop Antony Prince Panengadan, Vithal Rao Arya of Arya Samaj, Maulana Mohammed Amer of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, Rev. Dr. T. Bhasker of CSI Wesley Church and Mohammed Azheruddin of Jamaat-e-Islami.

They requested the leaders to share the action points with priests and preachers for dissemination during weekly congregations in satsangs, masjids and churches. All the leaders appreciated the initiative and agreed to circulate the material within their faith networks.

Plastic-free school initiative

At Sharada Vidyalaya, Falaknuma, students inspired by the 'no to plastic' action point approached the principal seeking to declare the campus a plastic-free zone. The school agreed and issued a circular banning plastic bottles, bags and wrapping material on campus.

The Education Department has recognised the programme's potential and included it as part of value education through a memorandum of understanding with COVA to scale it up to 3,000 schools across Telangana.

Twenty-eight schools from Hyderabad participated in the annual project works display, where students were awarded prizes for their presentations.

The event was dedicated to the memory of former COVA Peace Network presidents Egbert Samraj, Anand Raj Varma, Omim Maneckshaw Debara, Naheed Banu and Sardar Nanak Singh Nishtar.



Guests of Honour who presented prizes to students, mementos to schools and Resource Persons and addressed the gathering were Mr. Asadullah Pervez formerly of Emirates Airlines, Mr. Peter H Jayakar, Mr. Abdus Salam, Ms. Asma Fatima, Mr. Syed Jaffer Hussain Quadri, Ms. Meghana Narsimha, Ms. Noorjahan Siddiqui, Dr. Aparna Adhikari, Treasurer of COVA and Dr. Shobha Perindevi, Board Member of COVA presided over the Inaugural and Valedictory Programs respectively.

Judges for the Event were Ruchit Asha Kamal, Ms Arunya Jyothi, for Climate Crises and Dr. Shobha Perindevi and Dr. Aparna Adhikari for Care of Elders.

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