

# WCC Magazine

- 1) Tell us about yourself.
  - a. Arun Fernandez is the Founder – Director of Blink Foundation, India. Blink Foundation is a unique platform, bringing together the knowledge seekers and renowned scholars from all over the world. Arun Fernandez received his B. Com, MA (Social work) MBA in Social Entrepreneurship & Marketing from LIBA, Chennai. He was a Professor of Personality Development at Loyola College, Chennai. In due course he presented a paper on ‘Transcending Difference’ at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana – United States, which served as the first step towards the birth of Blink Foundation. He is also the recipient of the Sadguru Gnanananda Fellowship from Manava Seva Dharma Samvardhani Trust to felicitate young social entrepreneurs.
  
- 2) Who came up with the idea of Blink? Who is the Mastermind behind it? And why was THIS kind of website targeted?
  - a. Blink was evolved from what started as Peace Rangers a youth movement started by Arun Fernandez in his 2<sup>nd</sup> year in Loyola College as a student, in the theme to promote peace and harmony amongst the youth.
  - b. Blink Foundation started as a section 8 company on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014, as a nonprofit social startup in IDCR, Loyola College.
  - c. Blink Foundation is a not for profit organization which aims to nurture a society that celebrates the dignity of differences. In partnership with the Institute of Dialogue with Culture and Religions (IDCR) at Loyola College, Blink tries to eliminate social prejudices and help people understand and accept differences around them.
  
- 3) Can you walk us through the creation and launch of this entire project? (Milestones)
  - a. The Web portal [Blink.org.in](http://Blink.org.in) was Launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> June in Loyola College, quadrangle with an esteemed panel of Social Activist Abdul Ganni, Crea Shakthi Chairman Barnabas Tiburtius, media personality Apsara Reddy, founder of School of Success Deepa Athreya, CEO of New Generation Media Corporation Shyam Kumar, and ‘Man of the millennium’ Palam Kalayanasundaram.
  - b. Blink hopes to connect young minds through its Web portal with experts from various realms so that questions and apprehensions in young minds can be addressed immediately and qualitatively, without giving room for accumulation of stereotyped perceptions. The main idea is not just to

eradicate the idea of differences but rather help young minds respect and connect with them, to be able to create an inclusive society. It endeavors to promote holistic thinking among the students and thus, the public at large.

- c. July 6<sup>th</sup> marks the start of the Blink revolution, two schools St. Britto's Academy CBSE and Matriculation Hr Sec School have embarked on the journey to Nurture a society that celebrates the dignity of difference.
  - d. Blink was the organizing Partners for IYONS-International Youth NGO's Summit a 3 day conference held to discuss the social issues faced globally. Where Mr. Arun Fernandez was also a speaker talking on
- 4) How is the competition? Are there similar websites with this kind of idea in mind?
- a. It isn't competition, we are all being a part of the change we wish to bring. Blink Foundation is an education based section-8 company (NPO), to name a few along the same lines; teach for India, Becoming an I foundation, Schools of Equality, Bhumi, Asha for education, etc.
  - b. Quora, Yahoo, Google are some examples of the question and answer website model similar to Blink. But, how we differ from these websites is we have Experts (Thinkers) from different areas answering question based on the age and perception of the questioner (Blinkers) and having a holistic conversation to understand and accept. We believe there are no right or wrong answers, only perspectives. In short, we are the link between the Blinker and Thinkers, Blink - Be the Link.
- 5) How has the website done after its launch so far?
- a. We are currently in the Beta version with over 25 registered Knowledge Patrons, 5 Governing Council members, 3 Social Impact Icons, and over 100 registered users. The school students will register once the website is up and running.
  - b. On an average we get asked 20 questions a day from people all over.
- 6) What are your future projects?
- a. Change Class project is to indulge into the minds of students at the grassroots level to bring about an attitudinal change. Wherein, only 10 years down the line can we reap the benefits of the seeds we sow today
  - b. Outbound- Blink organises Outdoor Adventure Programs for corporate clients, college and school students. Children from marginalised communities are provided the same program on scholarships. The aim of the program is to provide team building activities, endurance training, yoga

and meditation for physical and mental wellbeing, space for silence and contemplation.

- c. The third arena in the Blink Value Educational Eco System is to create space for expression. Through Blink College Cell program Blink is integrated in to college curriculum to promote intellectual and experiential activities for cohorts to connect, converse, and contribute on issues of common concerns.
- d. An escalated version of Blink – Change Class –Change Agent initiative is Blink-HUB. One of the activity of this hub is to facilitate exchange of thoughts on ‘celebrating dignity of difference ‘. To facilitate such intellectual and expressive endeavours a COFFEE SHOP model is envisaged with dedicated space for photography, theatre, storytelling, art and debate. In due course, over a period of time, Blink will have a vast number of young professionals under its fold; among them could be many promising entrepreneurs with brilliant ideas.
- e. IRAP – Inter Religious Awareness and Practise, young people should be provided with a platform to think and learn new ways of thinking and acting, based on interfaith dialogue and encounter, to foster mutual respect and shared responsibility towards the other. Blink also believes that differences cannot be celebrated without inter-religious dialogue and awareness. To this end Blink organises an annual event titled IRAP a week long youth event focusing on this theme.