

Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee

Report on FEB 2026 Community Conversation

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Members: London McBride, Samia Bano, Rebecca Rona, Carlos

Valverde

The topic for this community conversation is **how people belonging to different faith/religious/spiritual/humanist traditions respond to social injustice/oppression and/or humanitarian crisis, and in so doing highlight shared values and teachings.**

This would include discussion on shared values such as **compassion in action** and shared teachings such as **variations of the golden rule enshrined in various faith/spiritual traditions**, “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” or “don’t do unto others as you would not have done unto you”...

We believe this approach/topic focus for the community conversation will be most helpful and likely to create more compassion, empathy and sense of solidarity among our community members, inspired by our shared values and moral/ethical teachings.

Title for the event:

- **Compassion in Action: An Interfaith Response to Injustice**

Location:

The Garden Room at the Veteran’s Memorial Building

Event Time:

7pm to 10 pm

NOTE: in our previous report the proposed event time was 6pm to 9pm. However, it was brought to our attention that Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting, will be ongoing come Feb 24th. During this month, Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. At sunset, Muslims break fast and also offer ritual prayers. On 2/24/26 sunset will be around 5:45pm. As such, a 6pm event start time will not give Muslim attendees sufficient time to break fast/eat and perform the required

ritual prayers. This will discourage Muslim participation in the event.

Therefore, to better accommodate the needs of the Muslim attendees, we're proposing we start the event at 7pm instead.

Format and timeline for the event:

- * Welcome/Introductions (10-15 mins)
- * Facilitated Q&A/discussion/model conversation among interfaith panelists (1 hour)
- * Small group discussion with "light facilitation" (50 mins)
- * Small groups report back + Q&A/big group discussion (30 mins)
- * Conclusion/resources sharing/next steps (25 mins)

Total event time: 3 hours

Panelists:

We have confirmed 3 panelists so far, and are in the process of confirming others.

The confirmed panelists are:

- Chitra Golestani (Baha'i)
- Rev. Dr. Frances Rosenau (Presbyterian)
- Tahil Sharma (Hindu/Sikh)

We are seeking panelists belonging to diverse faith groups, including Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu/Sikh and Bahai. We will also include a panelist who follows a secular humanist moral/ethical code. We want panelists who are actively engaged with addressing some social justice issue and/or humanitarian crisis, and who are inspired to do so by their religious/spiritual faith tradition or secular humanist moral/ethical code.

As part of the event's "conclusion/resources sharing/next steps" portion, we'd like to **refer event participants to already existing dialogue groups and organizations where event participants can get involved with various social justice or humanitarian crisis response campaigns.**

Event panelists' will be encouraged to share information about such resources and campaigns that they are a part of or that they recommend.

Our **ad hoc subcommittee members will serve as event moderators and hosts**. More specifically, Member Bano will serve as the overall event MC. And Member Valverde will lead the Facilitated Q&A/discussion/model conversation among interfaith panelists.

In leading the Facilitated Q&A/discussion/model conversation among interfaith panelists, Member Valverde may pose some of the **following questions to the panelists**:

- share an experience when you've been involved with a social justice or humanitarian crisis issue --> what's the issue, why is it meaningful to you, how did you get involved, what actions did you take/participate in...
- share a teaching (from your own tradition or a different tradition) that inspires/informs your involvement with social justice or humanitarian crisis issues
- talk about a model or hero/heroine you have, it can be someone from your own tradition or a different tradition --> who are they, what inspires you about them, what is one key lesson you've learned from them...
- when it comes to inspiring others to join you in taking action on causes you're passionate about, what's worked for you? What challenges have you faced?
- reflect on something you've heard a fellow panelist say that you found meaningful/insightful/surprising --> you can add some insight of your own to the thought or ask a clarifying or follow up question.

Participants in small groups can discuss questions similar to the questions posed to the panelists. As such some of the **questions posed during small group discussion** can be:

- share a social justice or humanitarian crisis issue you've been involved with --> why is it meaningful to you, how did you get involved, what actions did you take/participate in...
- talk about a model or hero you have, it can be someone from your own tradition, or a different tradition --> who are they, what inspires you about them...

- when it comes to inspiring others to join you in taking action on causes you're passionate about, what's worked for you? What challenges have you faced?
- reflect on something you've heard a fellow participant or panelist say that you found meaningful/insightful/surprising --> you can add some insight of your own to the thought or ask a clarifying or follow up question.

We request that **all EHRAC members volunteer to serve as small group facilitators** for the event, with the understanding that their role will only entail engaging in **“light facilitation”**, such as ensuring that everyone in the small groups gets a chance to speak and specified time limits for discussion are adhered to.

We may also recruit some community members to serve as back up small group facilitators. These community members would be asked to step into the facilitator role if we have more than 70-80 participants show up and/or if some EHRAC members are absent or otherwise unable to serve as a facilitator. Our goal is to have each small groups have between 6-10 participants.

We will get a **variety of traditional/ethnic foods/snacks/drinks** that are popular among the various religious/faith communities that will be represented on the event panel and audience.

Budget: Up to \$900 for food and drinks.

We welcome suggestions/constructive feedback on all aspects of this report and event plan.