



# GURUKULA NETWORK

Newsletter of Neo-Humanist Schools and Research Institutes  
affiliated with Ananda Marga Gurukula

Issue 28

May 2009

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### Newsletter and Journal of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes

Two yearly issues, published November and May, serve as a means of communication for Neohumanist projects around the world.

**Gurukula Network is published by the  
AMGK Global Liaison Office and is  
open to any and all NHE related  
projects**

Please send news of your schools and projects, reports on research and publication efforts, articles on Neohumanist Education, stories, pictures, ETC notes, classroom activities, etc. by **October 1st for the November 2009 issue**

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**Donations** are welcome for AMGK Endowment Fund and Gurukula Network as well as schools and projects.  
Please make checks payable to  
Ananda Marga Gurukula  
and send to AMGK Liaison Office address above.

## VISION OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

The Sanskrit word "Gurukula" (pronounced gurukul) has the following etymology: Gu: darkness; ru: dispeller; kula: an institution. Gurukula is an institution which helps students dispel the darkness of the mind and leads to total emancipation of the individual and society at large. Ananda Marga Gurukula is engaged in creating an international network of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes to hasten the advent of a society in which there is love, peace, understanding, inspiration, justice and health for all beings.

## OBJECTIVES OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

- To serve humanity with neohumanist spirit and to acquire knowledge for that purpose.
- To establish a strong base in Anandanagar and around the world in order to carry on the legacy of its founder for the benefit of future generations.
- To provide a sound and conducive environment for students for their physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual well-being.
- To promote ethical values in individuals and implement these values in the management of projects, schools and institutions.
- To establish and maintain schools and special academic institutions around the world as well as a cyber-university.
- To initiate teacher education programs to improve and upgrade the quality of education on all academic levels.
- To promote Tantra, Neohumanism and PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) as the foundation for building a universal society.
- To initiate intellectual dialogues and research for all-round renaissance of society.
- To facilitate the placement of volunteers across cultures to help build meaningful relationships and to support community and social change projects.
- To support the building of a global eco-village network (Master Units)
- To encourage the development of micro-enterprises for sustainability of social service projects.

**Chancellor of Ananda Marga Gurukula**  
Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt., Kulapati  
<kulapati@gurukul.edu>

**Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar** inspired the establishment of Ananda Marga Schools in 1963 out of which grew an international network of schools and the Neohumanist Education system. In 1990 he founded the Ananda Marga Gurukula University. Ananda Marga Gurukula also serves as the Board of Education for Neohumanist Schools and Institutes around the world. These Neohumanist Schools and projects, some of which are featured in Gurukula Network, are managed by the Education Relief and Welfare Section and Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga.

## NEOHUMANIST EDUCATION

Universal Love and Values  
Holistic Development  
Astaunga Yoga  
Ecological and Social Consciousness  
Academic, Practical and Personal Skills  
Knowledge of Self and World Applied for Universal Welfare  
Joyful Learning through the Arts  
Culturally Sensitive Approach  
Integrated Curriculum  
Exemplary Role of the Educators



# ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA GLOBAL LIAISON OFFICE ONGOING PROGRAMMES, UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Neohumanist Education

Ananda Marga Gurukula

<[www.gurukul.edu](http://www.gurukul.edu)>

[amgk.glo@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.glo@gurukul.edu)

CNS – Centres for Neohumanist Studies

Croatia - [cns.hr@gurukul.edu](mailto:cns.hr@gurukul.edu), <[www.cns.hr](http://www.cns.hr)>

Sweden – [cns.se@gurukul.edu](mailto:cns.se@gurukul.edu), <[www.cns-se.org](http://www.cns-se.org)>

USA – [cns.us@gurukul.edu](mailto:cns.us@gurukul.edu) <[www.pramainstitute.org](http://www.pramainstitute.org)>

Taiwan – [amgk.tw@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.tw@gurukul.edu)

Music College at Uma Nivas

<<http://www.gurukul.edu/~unmc>>

Acupunture Institute at Ananda Nagar

<<http://acuindia.org/>>

AMGK Taiwan

<[www.gurukula-tw.org](http://www.gurukula-tw.org)>

Neohumanist Education

<[www.nhe.gurukul.edu](http://www.nhe.gurukul.edu)>

AMAYE – Ananda Marga Association of Yoga  
Educators <[www.amaye.org](http://www.amaye.org)>

NHE Forum

NHE Forum is an on-line discussion group for those interested in or working in NHE schools and projects. To join, please write to <[amgk.glo@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.glo@gurukul.edu)>

Standards Available

Ananda Marga Gurukula Standards for kindergarten and primary schools are available. You may write to <[amgk.glo@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.glo@gurukul.edu)> for a copy.

Volunteers for Projects

Ananda Marga Gurukula offers a service to bring volunteers in contact with NHE schools and community projects that are highlighted on the AMGK website. More info at the Gurukula website: [www.gurukul.edu](http://www.gurukul.edu) under the tab <helping us>

Gurukula Network On Line

Current and past issues available on line at  
[www.gurukul.edu](http://www.gurukul.edu)

## *Visit ! NHE Resources*

NHE Resources is a set of web-based resources for those working in NHE schools. It contains articles, manuals, lesson plans, powerpoints, etc. New material has been recently added. If are working in an NHE school and would like to access these pages, please visit

**[www.nhe.gurukul.edu/resources.htm](http://www.nhe.gurukul.edu/resources.htm),**

and sign up for a login name and password.

Schools are also requested to share their wealth and send digital materials and articles for posting into the new database to: **[amgk.liaison@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.liaison@gurukul.edu)**

## *Global NHE Book Contest !*

Ananda Marga Gurukula is sponsoring a story book contest for students in AMGK affiliated\* NHE primary and high Schools and Children Centres. The contest is on writing and illustrating an original picture book on the neohumanist theme: **“Expanding My Circle of Love.”** Look for details in *this* issue of Gurukula Network (page 7).

## *Share a Virtue Book!*

Want to do a good deed that will spread the message of Neohumanism all over the world and that will benefit many generations to come? Then share a virtue book. Look for details in *this* issue of Gurukula Network (page 48).



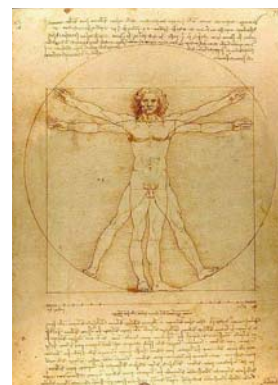
# Humanism and Neohumanism: Towards a New Renaissance

*Presented at the NHE Global Conference in Australia*

By Dr. Marcus Bussey

Humanism was a European intellectual movement that emerged in Italy in the middle of the 14th Century. A number of cities became centres of great intellectual activity – these included Florence, Bologna, Milan, Rome, Ravenna, Pisa and Sienna. The thrust of this movement was a growing confidence in the human ability to understand the world around them. Many thought that this was achieved by going back to the ancient achievements of Rome and Greece but in fact it rested more on the ability to account for what we observed: i.e. a scientific mind was emerging. This mind was bent on improving the lot of humanity. It did not differentiate between improvements in science, mechanics and engineering and improvements in art, music and poetry. What was key was a new aesthetic capacity and also a rationality that was bent on reason and logic. The humanism of Italy rapidly spread throughout Europe and is now associated with the Renaissance. It made it hard to maintain church related dogmas and ultimately lead to the Reformation.

The movement was initially Christian in tone, even though the Catholic Church viewed it with suspicion. At times the church even threatened humanists with burning at the stake. Ultimately it was a force that soundly counteracted the dogmas of faith-without-reason. It did keep at its heart a desire to overcome socio and geo-sentiment and saw humanity as one and as ‘the measure of all things’ – best captured in Leonardo da Vinci’s Vitruvian Man pictured here. There are a number of idle examples of Humanism from this time. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/9 – 1536) is one example as is Thomas More (1478-1535) who invented the idea of utopia. Miguel Cervantes (1547-1616) who wrote Don Quixote is another. One of my favourites is Sebastien Castellio (1515-1563) who took Humanist thinking to a new level by arguing that though the human mind can reason well enough it does not have the capacity to determine absolute Truth. For him truth was relative and there was always room for doubt; similarly he argued if we had a just and loving God it seemed illogical to suppose that people who had never heard His message should be sent to Hell by default – this is an astonishing insight for the 16th Century!



The Reformation was in many ways the child of Humanism. It led to some terrible wars lasting over the next 150 years. By the time this was over intellectuals saw the woes of humanity as premised on Christian intolerance. The way forward was a secular humanism which ultimately resulted in both the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. The former was atheistic in tendency while the latter though Christian internalised the religious spirit in the private domain. Both in their own way led to a materialist understanding of reality.

Humanism and the Renaissance are intimately entwined in European history and laid the foundation for the kind of intellectual work that lead to the amazing energy of the last two centuries.

Neohumanism is a reinterpretation of Humanism proposed by P. R. Sarkar (Liberation of Intellect; 1982). It takes the universal aspiration of Humanism, to reach beyond the limitation of humanity and strive for unity at the social level, and suggests a universalism that includes all animate and inanimate existence. Humanity is thus part of a great whole and our job is to increase the radius of our heart’s love. Furthermore, this whole is taken to be conscious, thus human isolation is broken down. We are never alone, as Sarkar insists. Rather we are bound together in an infinite network of relationships that spans material, intellectual and spiritual realities. Sarkar has argued that we will have/are having a new Renaissance as a result of this significant shift in consciousness. The new Renaissance heralds a new dawn in the evolution in consciousness.

This new Renaissance is found in the works of those pushing the boundaries of the knowable, trying to out think thinking, and challenge the ability of any system to be comprehensive, save in its omission of comprehension. As indigenous American pedagogue Sandy Grande argues, “no theory can, or should be, everything to all peoples— difference in the material domain necessitates difference in discursive fields” (2004, p. 166).

Both Renaissances developed new modes of educating. The European Renaissance had the seven ‘liberal arts’ of grammar, rhetoric, logic, geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy; Neohumanism has the seven ‘liberating



rationalities' of empiricism, service, character development, universalism, ethics, aesthetic science, and spiritual practice. The seven liberal arts are idealist in nature whereas the seven liberating rationalities are pragmatist in nature. This meant that humanism remains an intellectual movement that approaches human social process theoretically and seeks to rearrange the social order politically. Neohumanism on the other hand is a pragmatic movement that constructs reality through physical, intellectual and spiritual activity. This constructive approach Sarkar called 'cult' – the root of words such as culture and cultivated.

This rethinking of education pushes us away from a unified worldview to one which is multiple and layered (i.e. deals with the physical, the mental and the spiritual). In this recognition of the layered nature of reality in which 'diverse movements of the infinite' generate hybrid formulations, new educational possibilities appear. This new Renaissance also reinvigorates the humanism of the European Renaissance which challenged humanity to see itself as one family rather than as tribal units. Sarkar developed Neohumanism to extend this task of humanism to the entire universe. Neohumanism is one of the voices of the emergent Renaissance of critical consciousness in which human identity expands from tribal allegiance to species, i.e. the humanist project, to a universalist recognition of self as participant and co-creator in the universe of forms.

*Dr. Marcus Bussey is a Research Fellow in Regional Futures in the Sustainability Research Centre and a Lecturer in World History and Sustainable Futures at the University of the Sunshine Coast and an Associate at Prout College. His recently completed thesis on educational futures can be found at: <http://research.usc.edu.au/vital/access/manager/Repository/usc:4521>*

## Our Mission in Society and The Role of Ananda Marga Gurukula University by Ac. Dhanjoo N. Ghista



### **I. Our Mission in Society is far-reaching and includes:**

1. Provision of social-economic-living security,
2. Third World development and alleviation of poverty, starvation and disease, through implementation of Prout framework,
3. Bringing relief to marginalised, persecuted, refugee communities (such as in Sudan),
4. Development of grassroots people-centred socio-economic-political system, constitutional and governance forums,
5. Providing neohumanist education and universal healthcare,
6. Making spirituality available to all, as an inalienable human right,
7. Delineation of a comprehensive charter of constitutional human rights and social justice,
8. Inter-ethnic disputes resolution (such as in Sri Lanka & Palestine) and bringing refugee communities into societal main stream,
9. Development of a neohumanist civilization,
10. Establishing a template for sustainable local, regional and global peace.

These roles are implicit in our Ananda Marga Gurukula vision and mission statements.

### **II. The Roles of Ananda Marga Gurukula University, in Ananda Marga and Society, include academic support in:**

1. Providing Neohumanist Education in all disciplines (ranging from spiritual science & humanities to medicine & law);
2. Conducting research on Prout, Microvita, Master Units, Prabhat Samgiita, Sadhana and Intuition Science;
3. Laying the foundation of a neohumanist global society, free from narrow sentiments;
4. Formulating a grassroots economic-democratic system (without political parties);
5. Developing a mechanism for preventing inter-ethnic strife and marginalised communities;
6. Eliminating poverty and destitution, and providing dignified living for all the people of the world;
7. Developing a charter of constitutional human rights and social justice;
8. Developing a mechanism for providing living and spiritual security for all the people of the world,
9. Setting up functionally sustainable communities and regional self-reliant unions (like the European Union),
10. Formulating the structure of world government parliament and constitution

*Professor Dhanjoo N Ghista (PhD, Stanford University) is a world authority in Biomedical engineering-physics, Healthcare engineering-management, and Community-development science. Additionally, he has pioneered the fields of Sustainable Community development, Neohumanistic Politicization and Equitable Globalization.*

# CNS Asheville Prama Institute

North Carolina, USA  
Update Spring 2009



Beginning its third year of operation the Prama Institute has scheduled over 30 programs for 2009 with the addition of more of its own seminars focused on Ananda Marga philosophy and practices.

**The Neuroscience of Spiritual Experience: Spirituality and Clinical Practice** was held on January 31, 2009, led by Sid Jordan, Ph.D. and Laurie Hamilton, Ph.D. The purpose of workshop was to explore what is currently known about the neuro-biological basis of spiritual experience, the belief systems that arise to explain such experiences, and the application to clinical practice in discerning "abnormal" from "normal" experiences (or healthy from unhealthy). An area of interest is the effect of "religious/spiritual trauma" when non-congruent belief systems are imposed or a leader in the belief system behaves badly.



## **Climate Change Workshop: March 27th - Sunday, March 29th**

This year's first **Headwaters Gathering** was held at Warren Wilson College, one of the greenest campuses in America. Hosted by Warren Wilson, The Wilderness Society and Orion magazine, and sponsored by the Prama Institute and other businesses and organizations, Headwaters Gathering spoke to the challenges climate change poses for life in Southern Appalachia and created a call for action. Keynote speaker Herman Daly, along with Majora Carter, Winona LaDuke, retired coal miner Chuck Nelson of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, David Orr (NOAA's National Climatic Data Center scientist and a lead author on the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report), Dr. Thomas Peterson, Janisse Ray, The New York Times DOT EARTH's

Andrew Revkin, and National Wildlife Federation President and CEO Larry Schweiger, engaged us in working across divides, galvanizing our concerns, and strategizing for change. Included was a town meeting convened by a panel of experts, compelling whole-group sessions, and a writers' intensive. A follow-up of the Headwaters Gathering will be held at the Prama Institute on June 13 entitled **Creating a Sustainable Western North Carolina: Charting a New Path in a Changing Climate**.

Other programs for the spring and summer included an open house on March 21 for the Prama Institute which served as a fund raiser for the Greater Asheville Yoga Association entitled **A Day of Healing and Yoga** that attracted 130 participants for a day of yoga classes, massage, acupuncture, sweat lodge, hikes and an evening of kiirtan music.

On April 24 - 26 the **Ananda Marga Atlanta Regional Retreat** was held at the dome. On May 7 - 21 we are sponsoring a three week program entitled **Poetry and Rhythm** which will include four poetry workshops with three local poets and readings by teachers and students accompanied by live music in the evening. On July 17 - 19 we will have the second year of the **Asheville Yoga Festival** that features yoga classes, lectures, booths and music. Last year we had over 300 attendees; 120 of whom camped on the MU. Also the last two weeks of July and the first week in August we will have, for the third straight year, our **Ananda Marga Yoga Teacher Training**. Later in the year we are planning a series of yoga retreats that will feature fasting, raw foods, silence and meditation.

A number of yoga groups from the region including **Lighten Up Yoga, Asheville Yoga Center, Moving Mantra, and Barefoot Yoga** are returning each year to the Prama Institute with their students.

In spite of or due to the difficult times through which we are passing the



community seems to be continuing to support the programs sponsored by the Prama Institute that focus on building a more sustainable spiritual community.

A new road was built to access the Didis' MU and the intentional community for margiis which is adjacent to the Didis' MU. As soon as the surveying and deeding of these two projects is completed, integrated planning for development of both the Didis' MU and the intentional community will proceed under the guidance of the Coordinating Council.

For more details on their exciting programs, visit their website:  
[www.pramainstitute.org](http://www.pramainstitute.org)



## CNS Book Contests

### Croatia

The book contest, "Moja prva knjiga", is in its 5th year in Croatia. This year 500 children's books were received from all over Croatia. About 50 workshops were carried out by six student volunteers in schools in various places. Now the jury is reading the books to establish the winners. Pictured here are the volunteers and jury going through the books and marvelling at the amazing art and stories that children come up with. A dozen books were selected by the jury to be the best.



### Bali

The book contest in Bali called "Buku pertamaku" in its first year resulted in 67 books received. The staff is reading the books and looking for funds to print the winning books.

## Global NHE Book Contest

Ananda Marga Gurukula is sponsoring a story book contest for students in AMGK-affiliated\* NHE primary and high Schools and Children Centres.

- The contest is on writing and illustrating an original picture book on the neohumanistic theme "Expanding My Circle of Love."
- The final date for submission is March 31, 2010
- The winning book will be published by AMGK and the winner receives copies of the book as a prize.
- Books can be submitted by individual children or the book can be a group work.
- The book should be suitable for children ages 4 to 10 years.
- The book should be size A4 and laid out on 16 or 24 pages plus the cover.
- Page number 1 is the inner title page and on the last page there is only the biography, bio-data and school of the author(s).
- The text needs to be typed in Comic Sans 14 and stapled onto the space left on the illustrated pages.
- If the illustration is spread over two A4 pages care must be taken that there is no important illustration in the middle fold.
- All around the edges of 1.5 cm on the paper there can be illustration but no important images since the edges will be cut during binding.
- For any inquiries and where to send your book please contact [book.contest@gurukul.edu](mailto:book.contest@gurukul.edu)

\* If your school is not affiliated with AMGK please ask [amgk.glo@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgk.glo@gurukul.edu) for a provisional application form.



# CNS Sweden 2009

**January 1st** New Years program

**February 6th** Chiara Mariotti gave a presentation on Yoga Anatomy and Practice.

## Ongoing Programs from January to June

- A Course on "Swedish for Trainees" by Brother Tapasvii
- 50th Anniversary of PROUT "World in Transition" - Monthly Seminars
- Yoga, Bio-Psychology and Intuition Science Workshops
- NHE Workshops

**March 7th** Dada Karunamaya gave a presentation on Eco Villages (Master Units).

**April 4<sup>th</sup>**

CNS Sweden offered a special audience to the students of Smoland Kisa Medical Centre and a school from Tranås sent their students to explore the spiritual and social philosophy being taught at CNS Sweden.



**April 9-12**

## Easter Seminar

During the Easter seminar, Dr. Sauli Siekkinen spoke on Yogic Science; Dada Shambhushivananda spoke on "Our Future", Ravi and Acharya Annapurna Brcii. spoke on "Relevance of

PROUT in the current crisis". On the occasion of 50th anniversary of PROUT, 40 participants had deep discussions on issues related to the spiritual and social transformation of the planet. Kris Dekan (USA) and Prabhakar (India) entertained everyone with their wonderful music.

## Upcoming Programs

**July 14-19** Third Annual Yoga Educators Conference

**July 25-27** Furthering Insights into Shrii P.R. Sarkar's Visions

## In other news

A Montréal film maker, Sylvie Van Brabant of Rapide Blanc Productions, has prepared a half hour DVD on the philosophy of CNS Sweden and the life of students at Ydrefors.

**YOGA EDUCATORS  
CONFERENCE 2009**

14 - 19 July 2009  
@Sweeden Training Centre



ASANA LAB  
MEDITATION LAB  
YOGA THERAPY  
ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY LAB  
TANTRA PHILOSOPHY & HISTORY  
AND MORE...

Registration:  
tcsweden@gmail.com

Fees: Euro 95

We are following up on previous years success.  
With new and innovative ideas for AM yoga teachers and margiis  
that like to enhance their knowledge on Yoga and Tantra.

another project by Ananada Marga Gurukula





# Fourth Annual International Microvita Seminar

Berlin, Germany - May, 2009



The 4th Annual Microvita seminar was held again at Wannsee Forum, a beautiful building on the edge of Wannsee Lake near Berlin, Germany, on May 1st to May 3rd 2009. A soft breeze blew through the spring flowers and tall trees, in the natural setting; it was the perfect environment to dive deeply into the subtle science of Microvita. 22 participants came and joined from 12 different countries on three continents for this purpose.

The subjects discussed ranged from Biology, Psychology, Quantum Physics, Metaphysics, Cosmology, Mathematics and how they are all related and overlapping. Our minds were expanded

and stretched in order to understand how Microvita relate to and fit into these vast array of subjects.

The speakers and topics included: "Microvita -- The Mysterious Emanations" (Ac. Vimalananda Avt.), "Divinity in Action" (Dr. Brigunath Ragbourn), "On the Nature of Particles" (Dr. John Williamson), "Microvita and the Origins of Matter" (Ciranjiva Tatsuyama-Kurk), "Non Locality in Quantum Physics" (Mukti Drensko), "Microvita Cosmology" (Ac. Vimalananda Avt.), "The 4 - Chambered Universe - a New Grammar" (Ciranjiva Tatsuyama-Kurk), "Microvita and Biopsychology" (Ac. Vimalananda Avt.), "Microvita in Music" (Manojit Hackenberger), "Microvita and Sadhana" II (Ac. Vimalananda Avt.), "Microvita and Biopsychology" II (Dr. Manohar Rudolph)



Overall it was quite a wide range of subject matter. Participants learned about the nature of microtubules, the relationship between Microvita, glands and psychology, and Microvita in different creation models and cosmology. Dr. John Williamson, a physicist from Scotland was a wonderful unexpected guest who enlightened us to understanding the universe through a new model of Quantum Physics and complex mathematics.

In the final discussion it was agreed that we should not only keep deepening the research of microvita but something concrete has to be done as well, namely, to create a new scientific system that can explain, understand, quantify and utilize Microvita as well as tie together all types of sciences and systems.



Microvita Research e.V., a registered trust in Germany, organized this annual event. Its offices are located at Am Kesselpfuhl 13, 13437 Berlin (Germany). The trust has initiated its international membership drive in order to accelerate the work of Microvita Study & Research in the world. More information is available from [mri@microvita.org](mailto:mri@microvita.org)

MRI (Microvita Research Institute) is one of the cooperative institutions of Ananda Marga Gurukula.

## News from Ananda Marga Degree College

Ananda Nagar, India

Last year the Ananda Nagar degree college received permission from Vardhaman University to start an honors course in Bengali for 25 students. This has attracted many students from all around Ananda Nagar. Since then there has been constant demand for honors courses in more subjects. Two more rooms have been added to the college for honors courses. History will be offered in the upcoming session, after summer vacation, for 25 students. This is expected to attract more students from far and near. These recent developments have brought lots of enthusiasm and hope among the teachers and people surrounding Ananda Nagar. Needless to say, hundreds of students from many poor families who had no future have graduated from the college over the years and have been placed in various jobs and are earning a good livelihood. Appreciation goes to all those who have contributed to the new construction including the boundary wall around the college which has added to the beauty and security of the college.

# Deep Sustainability

## A Vision for the Global Villager in Us All

By Roar Bjonnes

It's shopping day at your local natural foods market. You are looking for yogurt as usual. But today is different. You are not only shopping for health and taste. You are shopping for quality. Deeper qualities. You want to know which brand is better for the cows and the earth. Which brand is the most sustainable? If you live in the United States, you have at least 3 choices. Should you buy Horizon, Stonyfield or Nancy's?

If you talk to marketing representatives from each company, they will likely claim that their farming methods are very sustainable. But, in reality, one is prone to be more sustainable than the others. Which brand? And why?

Horizon, a \$127 million public corporation from Colorado, recently bought Organic Cow from Vermont and specializes in "ultra-pasteurized" milk. This process—which "kills the milk," destroying its enzymes and many of its vitamins—is applied so that they can sell milk over long distances. Horizon, I am told, is known for its factory farms. Thousands of cows that never encounter a blade of grass spend their lives confined to a fenced dry lot. Horizon controls 70 percent of the organic milk retail market in the United States, thus writer Michael Pollan calls the company "the Microsoft of organic milk." Does it sound sustainable to you?

What about Stonyfield Farms? The New Hampshire-based yogurt maker claims that when you buy a cup of their organic yogurt, you're helping save family farms, prevent ecological degradation, and improve human health. All in one tasteful cup! While all of that may be true, you may not live in New Hampshire, but rather in Oregon. So, why support the shipping of that yogurt container across a whole continent of gas-guzzling highways?

Indeed, one of the most important sustainability criteria, and one that is often overlooked, is that products should be locally produced. The closer to home the better. Thus Nancy's yogurt starts to look like a favorite for someone living in Oregon. Because Nancy's organic milk products fits all of these criteria, and more. Famed for its delicious yogurt and kefir products, Nancy's is produced in Springfield, Oregon. Moreover, if you read the label carefully, Nancy's organic yogurt is made from milk produced by the family farm members of Organic Valley Cooperative. Sounds like a winner to me.

Cascadian Farm—started in 1971 by Gene Kahn as a food collective—is a sustainable company, right? Maybe not. Now owned and operated by General Mills, and with Kahn as a controversial millionaire, many organic farmers and activists believe Cascadian Farm is a symbol of a disturbing trend: the gradual takeover of the sustainability movement by corporate agribusiness. What a confusing world we live in. You buy a jar of Cascadian Farm organic strawberry jam at the local coop, visualizing you are supporting Kahn's original dream. In reality you are buying a corporate showcase.

You may recently have noticed that your local supermarket is selling organic Dole bananas, and you may think the world has changed overnight. But has it? Dole is still a \$5.1 billion company, and the world's largest producer and marketer of conventional fruit and vegetables. Just imagine how many tons of pesticides and chemical fertilizers this company consumes every year! But if you talk to Sharon Hayes, director of environmental affairs for Dole Food Co, she will simply tell you that Dole has a "commitment to environmental leadership and consumer choice." So, is Dole going completely pastoral, or is it just marketing and business as usual? Confusing times indeed.

When shopping for sustainability, we must therefore look beyond the wholesome brands and the organic labels. We must ask deeper questions. We must distinguish between shallow sustainability and deep sustainability. So, how can we better support a sustainable economy, culture, and worldview? How can we cultivate sustainability in our own lives? Below are some suggestions:

### Sustainable vision

What should the underlying values of a sustainable economy be based upon? Author David C. Korten claims that "a sustainable society needs a spiritual foundation." Why? Because spirituality, not materialism, is the ultimate foundation of life. The late British economist E. F. Schumacher concurs. "No system or machinery or economic doctrine or theory," Schumacher wrote, "stands on its own two feet: it is variably built on a metaphysical foundation, that is to say, upon our basic outlook on life, its meaning and its purpose."

**What can we do?** Open our inner vision through study of both spirituality and science. Learn how the world of matter and spirit complement each other. Embrace the alchemical truth: As above, so below.

## **Sustainable spiritual practice**

Philosopher Ken Wilber believes that we cannot achieve a sustainable society without leaders and activists rooted in sustainable spiritual practice. Our mutual agreement on how to solve our environmental and economic problems, he says, “depends absolutely upon individuals who can transcend their egoic and selfish perspectives and rise to a more world-centric, global consciousness.” And the best way to achieve this, he thinks, is through an inner process of spiritual transformation. To truly be able to understand and serve Gaia, we must also understand and serve our higher Self.

**What can we do?** Start a daily meditation practice. Combine that with a more body-oriented practice such as hatha yoga and tai chi. As within, so without.

## **Local economics**

From sustainable development theorists to environmental activists, from bio-regionalists to natural capitalists, from Thomas Jefferson to Indian sage-philosopher P. R. Sarkar, economic decentralization is seen as the only panacea for the economic exploitation caused by centralized economies. Paul Hawken’s natural capitalism speaks of the need to “replace nationally and internationally produced items with products created locally and regionally.”

**What can we do?** Vote with our dollars by supporting local enterprises, especially small businesses, artisans, cooperatives, and their products. The more local, the better. Boycott multinational franchises such as Wal-Mart, McDonald’s, etc.

## **Production for consumption, not profit**

A consumption economy is an integral aspect of a decentralized economy and should not be confused with a profit-oriented consumer economy. A consumption economy is an economy where goods are produced as per people’s needs. A consumer economy is an economy where goods are produced and sold solely for profit. Since the consumption economy’s main goal is to satisfy basic human needs, it also provides the economic security needed for people’s non-material sources of fulfillment—family, community, culture, and spirituality.

**What can we do?** Reduce our material consumption. Support local businesses that produce basic human needs, such as bakeries, farms, agricultural coops, community gardens, farmer’s markets, etc.

## **Cooperative enterprises**

The Darwinian notion that competition promoted the evolutionary survival of the fittest individual is outdated. New research reveals that evolutionary success had more to do with the survival of the fittest community through interwoven cooperation. Thus cooperation, not competition, must be the cornerstone of a more equitable and sustainable economy.

**What can we do?** Support local food coop, farmer’s coop, etc. Purchase products made by coops rather than corporations.

## **Small-scale private enterprises**

Proponents of today’s free market capitalism seem to have forgotten that their mentor, Adam Smith, proposed a market structure in which there were no corporate businesses with monopolistic powers. Similarly, P.R. Sarkar claims that excessive inequities can best be avoided if private enterprise consists mainly of small businesses such as restaurants, stores, artisan shops, service and cottage industries with only a few employees. Small-scale, private capitalism stimulates the entrepreneurial spirit and purchasing power of individuals and families, yet avoids the gross disparity and poverty so often caused by unbridled concentration of wealth in the hands of corporate monopolies. Large corporations can in turn be transformed into cooperatives.

**What can we do?** Support your local bookstore, clothing store, artisan, and other local merchants. If possible, boycott large corporations.

## **Eco-villages**

While most eco-villages are located in the affluent countries of the North, some also focus on helping poor, rural communities in the South achieve self-sufficiency. One such project is the Future Vision Ecological Park in the interior of Sao Paulo state, Brazil. According to its founder, Didi Anandamitra, the goal of this project is “to provide a practical model for social and economic life that can be replicated in communities, especially rural communities, anywhere.”

**What can we do?** Start an eco-village, a co-housing project, a community garden, or simply visit such a project for learning and inspiration. Create community by starting or joining a discussion group.

## **Economic democracy**

Concentration of wealth and economic power corrupts the political process. In Third World countries, especially, money buys votes outright, and the moguls of capital maintain the ultimate veto power of capital flight. Money must not be allowed to rule politics, and power must be extended beyond the political sphere and into the economic sphere.

**What can we do?** Support Living Wage initiatives as well as measures that redistribute wealth from the top down. Support a maximum wage!

# Sustainable Living Initiatives

Florianopolis, Brazil - By Manfred Molz

For the past three years, my wife Karla Scherer and I have been organizing, maintaining and gradually developing an informal consumers cooperative. Currently we use a room in the university, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), to help us receive, store, and distribute products (mainly food - grains, flour, brown sugar and other "non-perishable" food). We are still looking for a proper place that could function as a permanent, commercial shop, backed by some project / funding. We are doing this distribution just once a month and are trying, with other people beginning to take part, to create an ampler and stronger group that can function as a kind of organizing nucleus for the consumer's cooperative.

The same process is underway in the local market. We are still helping to organize, maintain, and slowly develop a small, local market - mainly for organic farmers, artisans, and food producers (we belong to this last activity). This market happens once a day weekly right in central plaza of UFSC.

We also decided this year to start a "local economy web" - that is, get contacts of "alternative" local producers, and service providers, and organize all these contacts in a way that the public can have access to the list, so that there could be an increase in economic (and also social) interaction, or even incentive, for these small producers and service providers.

Also, the consumer's cooperative and the small market deal mostly with food of organic or agro-ecological type. This means that we are trying to be careful not only about the "form" but also with the "content", so to speak. For more than 2 years, our only provider for the consumer's cooperative was another cooperative of agro ecological familiar agriculturists, located on the other side of Santa Catarina state. (We like this because it is like PROUT's idea of a web of cooperatives, though on a very small scale.) It was only in the 2nd semester of 2008 that we began to gradually include other producers in our list.



*Local Economy Web and Consumers Cooperative Meeting*

## Self-sufficient, regional economies

People can best collaborate in social and economic development if they work together within regional socio-economic units that are defined on the basis of common economic potentials, common economic problems, similar geographic features, ethnic similarity, and common sentimental legacy. Regional economies need to control their resources and capital and be totally free from any kind of domination by outside economic forces.

**What can we do?** Seek out and support local, organic farmers and other businesses that utilize local resources. Support Native American causes. Boycott "foreign companies" that exploit local resources and labor.

## Deep ecological ethic

The ultimate solution to all environmental problems lies in a deep spiritual understanding of what nature is and how it operates. From this deep understanding of human psychology and spirituality, on the one hand, and the natural world, on the other, humanity can develop a genuine environmental ethics. In other words, develop a balanced socio-economic philosophy based on the dynamic interrelationship between the fields of ecology, economy and spirituality. At this point in history, this is one of humanity's most urgent tasks.

**What can we do?** Meditate and study. Learn from science, from nature, from local elders, and from indigenous cultures.

## Free and fair trade

The giant globalization efforts by the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank is promoting "free trade" and "free markets" as a panacea for creating prosperity and sustainability. Yet, today's so-called free trade between rich and poor nations, between the North and the South, is neither free nor fair. It favors large corporations over small scale enterprises, it has widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and it has increased environmental degradation.

**What can we do?** Shop locally, think globally. If you can't shop locally, support "fair trade" businesses.



## Cultural vitality

The irony of material development is that it has created what Paul Wactel calls “the poverty of affluence.” While consumerism has enticed people in the Western world into gorging on material things, it has failed to provide a sense of inner fulfillment. Restoring a community’s non-material treasures and cultural roots is an integral part of overcoming the inner poverty of affluence.

**What can we do?** Support local music, arts, poetry, theater and crafts.

## Sustainable globalism

Decentralization, self-sufficiency, and smaller scale industries does not mean neglecting a global agenda. We need a global movement with at least three separate, yet integrated, goals. 1) A strengthening of the global polity through the UN, combined with a gradual movement toward a global federation, or world government that can safeguard the needs and rights of people and the environment. 2) The formation of self-sufficient, socio-economic regions of free and fair trade zones—that is, a global grid of sustainable and self-sufficient trading partners. 3) The development of a global movement rooted in a life-affirming vision of spirituality and oneness with all of creation.

**What can we do?** Protest against the current globalization efforts by the IMF and the World Bank. Donate money or your labor to activist groups. Cultivate a global, sustainable vision of oneness with Spirit and of cooperation with Gaia.

*Roar Bjonnes is a freelance writer, columnist, contributing editor of New Renaissance magazine (www.ru.org), and co-founder of the Prama Institute. www.pramainstitute.org*

## For Third World Development: Socio-Economic-Political Restructuring to End Inequalities and Subjugation

by Ac. Dhanjoo N. Ghista

In this paper, we are providing guidelines for Third World development, as well as solutions to global and regional socio-economic inequalities and subjugation, in terms of : (i) a neo socio-economic democratic electoral governance system, for civilian democratic governance; (ii) a grassroots cooperative economic development, for economic stability; (iii) a neo-global order (comprising of self-reliant economic zones, regional federations, and world government), for political equilibrium (devoid of hegemonism) and based on parity among nations. In order to address these requirements, we need to develop the charter and constitution role of functionally sustainable communities for grassroots economic democracy, within the benevolent political framework of a human-rights implementing World government.

**For People’s Empowerment**, we are introducing the following concepts:

1. Natural resources to be harnessed primarily by the people-of-the-soil;
2. Co-operative economic development along with Economic democracy, to constitute the basis of grassroots democracy;
3. The issues and needs of the community can be best addressed by having its legislative assembly comprised of elected competent representatives of the various sectors of the community (such as the educational, healthcare, judicial, industrial & community-services), and not by political parties having self-serving interests and agendas;
4. Functionally Sustainable Communities (FSCs, based on the above principles) offer the best mechanism for addressing local needs, poverty eradication, collective generation and distribution of capital, local peoples empowerment and their dignified living;
5. World trade and globalization can be locally, regionally and globally beneficial, based on (i) indigenous industrial development, (ii) imports to be only for items unavailable or for better-performing items, (iii) parity in remuneration for equivalent works and jobs across the globe.

**Towards Equitable Globalization**, we are proposing a new global order, in which a Functionally Sustainable Community (FSC) operates at the grassroots level; a number of compatible FSCs in a geographical zone can then form a Self-reliant Economic Zone (SEZ), wherein all the FSCs of that particular zone would have representation in the SEZ parliament. The SEZs of a region or a continent can then constitute a Regional Federation (or Union, akin to the European Union); the Regional Federations (RFDs) would then have representations in a benevolent world government, whose legislative members would be elected from among the members of the parliaments of SEZs. In this neo-global political structuring, all the legislative members of the World Government would be elected representatives of the grassroots FSCs. This new global structuring, comprising of FSCs, SEZs, RFDs, under the aegis of the World Government, will ensure (i) the implementation of the most comprehensive charter of human rights, (ii) grassroots economy and political governance, (iii) prevent domination of global affairs by a few nations, and (iv) and serve the individual and collective interests of all the communities of the world.

# NHE Seminar and Conference

Ananda Marga River School, Maleny, Australia

Report by Didi Anandarama

## Pre-Conference Programme



Arriving from Laos, Thailand and Egypt on seemingly endless flights, seven of us were met by Prabha and Giita from the Ananda Marga River School and literally dipped into the cool refreshing ocean waves at the Sunshine Coast before reaching the rolling green hills of Maleny and the piece of paradise where the Ananda Marga River School is located.

The school is situated on 25 lush green acres of the Ananda Kamala community where several families occupy another 25 acres as a PROUT cooperative. We were accommodated with the families in the midst of vibrant nature, organic vegetable gardens, wild bush turkeys, grazing cows and the humming overgrown rainforest with its exotic sounding birds.

The school has grown organically over the past 15 years starting in one building with a dozen children. Over time additional rooms were added and five more buildings donated and acquired to serve as classrooms for the now 200 children in 7 grades as well as three early childhood classrooms. The school has a sports ground, a kitchen, sheds for the buses, an Art Center where the art teacher teaches classes, and a shed for Fred who does the regular maintenance of the school facilities. The school has a good reputation in the community and is regularly favorably featured in local newspapers. Recently the Australian Government graciously has approved an over two million dollar grant for the school's expansion for a new administration building, library and auditorium facilities.

Although far from home the visiting teachers felt welcomed with kind hospitality and care for all their needs. This event was partly on the initiative of River School's support for the Baan Unrak School in Thailand. Four visitors were sponsored by River School.

## Observations at River School

We started our observations on a Monday at the collective Morning Circle time where the whole school gathers every week. Children light candles, say a blessing for the week, sing songs and draw a virtue card that will be emphasized by the whole school for two weeks.



Throughout the following week with lots of excitement to see a Neohumanist School in action the visiting guests mingled in all the classrooms, took pictures and video, talked to the teachers, helped in classrooms, studied the lesson plans of different grades and followed classes to the river when they went for a swim, or went on a hike with them to the vegetable gardens, observed their arts and crafts activities in the Art Center, tasted their fundraising snacks and watched their fundraising movie one evening. The Lao and Thai teachers shared about their countries and taught their folk dances during lunch break. Every day the visiting guests met, shared their observations, pictures, notes and interesting things that they could possibly apply in their own classrooms.





## Visit to Ananda Marga Vistara Primary School in Lismore

An older primary school that was started 22 years ago, about three hours away, has been run by Didi Ananda Vitandra and Rukmini almost from its inception. The school has a family feeling of neohumanist love and care for the 60 children up to grade 7. It is similarly situated in the lush green nature of the countryside. The school is actively supported by the parents and community. Its outstanding standard and yearly spectacular drama performances are well known in the town of Lismore. The highlight of the school is the whole school celebration of Baba's\* Birthday in May attended by parents. Just after the first day of observing it was very clear that observation of a school in action is extremely valuable, along side NHE theory and seminars.

\*Shrii P. R. Sarkar the founder of NHE is addressed as 'Baba' which means 'father.'



### *Impressions and Thank You's from Didi Ananda Anuraga*

*Almost a year ago Prabha gave us at Baan Unrak School in Thailand the amazing news: Ananda Marga River School of Maleny, Australia would sponsor me and some teachers from our school to visit and observe their school. On 19th March 2009 myself, teacher Janaki and Kindy helper Waranya left from Bangkok for Australia. We stayed at the Master Unit with the margii families who had bought the land 15-20 years ago. We heard about the hardships of the early days when the first few children were enrolled. They had only one building, the ground was all mud and there was no money. One can't notice any of that history now. The school has 6 buildings spread over a big, hilly area covered with lush green grass. As one comes into the school grounds one crosses the bridge over the river where students study eco-systems, create musical compositions and swim and play daily. It is absolutely beautiful. 200 students are enrolled there now.*

*We spent nearly one month in Australia. We observed the classes at River School daily for 2 full weeks. The classes impressed me with the manifold choices the children had to explore, create and share and pursue their own interests. The children create the themes and plans with their teacher. There is daily story telling with students creating their own stories. As a result the students are very creative. They show responsibility and respect for each other. There is a strong feeling of unity and caring among all.*

*Easter holidays came and we went to see the countryside to see kangaroos and visit other Master Units. One was Ananda Pali, the first Master Unit outside India. We were lucky to visit Vistara Kindy and Primary School too in Lismore. We stayed at the school for a day observing the classes. It was striking to see how morality and values were interwoven into everything done and learnt. I read a beautiful article written by a grade 5 student on human rights and child slavery. It was very touching.*

*Finally we had a 4 days conference. For that Manoranjana took part, and Arun came all the way from New York. Australia was all about meeting amazing people and learning amazing things. We got lots of new wisdom and ideas on how to improve our school here in Thailand. So many bits and pieces of my dream on education came together. I got all the strength and confidence I need to continue the development of Baan Unrak School. Well back here we are having a seminar, sharing the new wisdom with all our teachers who could not get this opportunity to see River School and Vistara School and the kangaroos and the beauty of the people and the country.*

*I would like to thank all the wonderful people we came to meet and stay with. Thank you Kamala and Giita for housing us and taking such good care of us. Thank you Prabha and Dada who made this possible by sponsoring our journey and stay. Prabha is like a tree filled with love, always there for all of us. Thank you to Katy for the wonderful vegetables. Thank you to all the teachers and students for having us around and being so willing to share and explain. Thank you to Lokesh for his mind expanding DVD's and thank you to Manoranjan and to Arun sharing his wisdom so easily and clearly. Thank you to Didi Ananda Rama for always being a support. And thank you to all the others too, you were all wonderful.*

*Seeing the education of Ananda Marga so beautifully expressed and meeting all these people I can clearly see how Ananda Marga quietly is growing strong like a giant. With love to all, Didi Ananda Anuraga*



# Administrators Workshop

## Facilitated by Prabha Demasson

Prabha Demasson, Deputy Principal of the River School, has been managing the school for 15 years and has gained much valuable experience along the way that she shared in this pre-conference workshop. Mother of 5 children and 8 grandchildren, she lives with her husband on the PROUT cooperative land where she also takes care of 5 cows. She oversees the whole school on many levels from writing proposals to reviewing the teachers' weekly lesson plans.



### How to administer in a most efficient way?

#### How do ideas manifest?

#### What are the elements for a project to be successful?

To start a school you need at least one of three things - **people, money or buildings** in addition to yourself, the person who wants to start the school and to have it be successful. Any one of these three things will draw in the other two.

Then you start with the **WHY**. You need to be clear about the philosophy and the reason you want a school. The philosophy will be your closest guiding force. The philosophy will shape the **WHO**, yourself and your close staff who will work there. It will influence what you are looking for when you hire teachers. It has to be very clear in your mind what you want your project to be like. You need to have thought about every detail and prepare for its manifestation. It is important that you think about everything so that you are able to tell the **WHAT**. For example in the beginning of the year all the teachers sat together and wrote on a big piece of paper all the things that we wanted for that year and everything that we wanted came about.

### Family Feeling at School

Then you look at the **HOW**. This is like making a lasagna, Prabha said confidently: You do everything purposefully keeping the ideas/the **WHAT** in mind and as you meet people you gather a pool of resources so that when you need to, you know whom to call on. You need to have the ability to bring people in and make them feel part of the family of the school. For example, we saved the life of a man who was an alcoholic by giving him a maintenance job at the school and eventually he got a shed with tools and 'Fred in the Shed' stayed on permanently as part of the school family.

Prabha shared that she goes to each classroom with her laptop doing her work and at the same time observing. She helps to improve the content to bring in the Neohumanist philosophy and suggests where to make changes in the methodology in the classroom. You communicate honestly and openly and do not push things to conflict. Children respond to the teacher who cares for

them. Your role as an administrator is similar – you care for the happiness of the entire school family.

### Financial flow at school

As an administrator you pay the bills on time so that people trust you and then you can depend on them. The months of the school are busy and it is important to reward the staff financially for extra work. Make them happy. In this way you can deal with things as they come up.

### How to deal with negativity

Identify 10 thinking patterns that are negative and communicate with all the staff about them. Give more attention to those who are positive, be it staff, kids and parents as a rule. Involve them in the flow of the school and in this way you add to the breeding of positive culture in the school. You can involve positive teachers and parents to help you do your job. For example give a parent facilitator the job of reading the suggestions in the anonymous box.

### Tantric element

Watch yourself and write down everything you do in a day to check how you spend time in the school so that you can evaluate which things you can delegate and which you will maintain doing. Understand your own pattern of tasks. You need to be clear yourself about your duties and responsibilities. As an administrator you are a juggler of many things; parents come to you, children etc. All the resources you need are in the community of the school and you need to stay open and be in control. Do not keep any grey area; give people opportunity to be involved. You need to know when to 'fire' someone but make sure you gave them care to develop first. But show your courage to follow through if someone is not fulfilling the expectations. If they do not work out, they need to go and they will be fine. It is clarity of what you represent that is important. An example: a parent complained about the disallowance of her child's T-shirt with the writing "my sister is a monster" saying, 'I thought Neohumanism stands for freedom of expression'. I said, 'it stands for subtlety of expression and not freedom of expression'.



# Weaving a Neohumanist Tapestry

## NHE Conference – April 11-14, 2009

The global NHE Conference was sponsored by Ananda Marga Gurukula and hosted by the Ananda Marga River School on the Sunshine Coast of Australia. Many thanks go to the local hosting school with a special thank you to Prabha, Kamala and Manorainjana. The focus of the conference was Primary School Education.

**Special Guests** included: Eric Jacobson, Director of the Progressive School of



Long Island in the USA, Didi Ananda Vitandra and Rukmini, Principal and Administrator of Vistara School in Lismore, Australia, Dada Ratnadevananda and Prabha, Principal and Deputy Principal of River School in Australia, Didi Ananda Gaorii, Director of Sunshine School in Laos, Didi Ananda Anuraga, Director of Baan Unrak School in Thailand, Didi Anandarama, an NHE coordinator, and Dr. Marcus Bussey, NHE teacher trainer, and author of many books and articles on NHE.



Every day started with a **Morning Circle**, each one led by a different school: first day, River School, second Day PSOLI, third day Vistara School, fourth day, Sunshine School. For a detailed description of the

morning circle from Vistara Primary School, please see the YES section of this newsletter.

### Evening Programmes

The evening programmes were relaxed and stimulating watching the different schools present their videos, slides and even the Lao and Thai teachers performed their folk dances, and led a collective celebration of Thai New Year. It was a time to enjoy the incredible spirit that is hidden in the powerful effects Neohumanist schools are having on the children and the community they are in.

Baan Unrak Primary School in Thailand was presented by Didi Ananda Anuraga and Janaki. The school is in its 4th year and has 260 children with 2/3 coming from orphanages and the rest from the local community. They are well known for their high standard of English. One girl from our home won the entrance to a prestigious boarding high school. The school has a yearly environmental cleanup programme that other schools join. And they have a dog sanctuary with 20 dogs where they are taking care of abandoned dogs in Sangklaburi town.

'House of Love' Kindergarten in Venezuela told its almost endless struggle to get registered but now it is running well with 70 children. Didi Ananda Amegha has put in a bid for hosting next year's NHE conference in Venezuela. Sunshine Primary School in Laos has 320 children and Didi Ananda Gaorii showed slides of the school's theme of local native cultural events. Didi Anandarama showed slides of the STUVOL programme in Syria and the yoga for children programme in Cairo Egypt.

Rukmini presented the story of Vistara School and showed films of its spectacular yearly school drama at the Lismore City's theatre. Progressive School of Long Island showed slides and film made by a parent who just walked in one day and took scenes of the day's school flow. It was a very interesting glimpse into the various classes. Finally Ananda Marga River School presented a video of the school history from the very beginning 15 years ago.



A Summary of the four day program follows:

## DAY ONE

The conference was opened by Dada Ratnadevananda and Prabha, welcoming the over 50 participants who came from Mongolia, Venezuela, USA, Egypt, Laos, Thailand, Mexico and from local places like Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Lismore. Dr. Marcus Bussey, professor at University of the Sunshine Coast and Associate of Prout College, was the facilitator of the conference.



### Foundations of a Neohumanist Curriculum: Curriculum in Abundance

Dr. Marcus Bussey gave the opening presentation. A summary of his talk prepared by Didi Anandarama. Follows below.

**Consciousness – Longing:** Neohumanist Education is a story of creation – the story of emergent consciousness. “Love is the starting point... Love is the last point.” It is the story of a Divine Spirit who felt lonely and in need of relationship and thus started the creation to populate the emptiness and bring about matter and substance, joy and happiness.

**Diversity – The World of Forms:** Divine Consciousness transformed into more and more diverse forms, and over millions of years, human beings came into being and developed language to communicate ideas and awareness.

**Self-awareness:** Consciousness deepened, world culture developed and we began to live in a conscious story. We developed maps (stories of meaning, myths, ideologies) and pathways.

**Relationships:** We created us, a collective mind where we share and connect together and where we exist in relationships as a result. There are webs of meaning, social webs, family webs.

**Acceleration:** Today we experience intensification on various levels, yet as human beings we are clever and can make choices. Do we see crisis or opportunity? It is a time when fear is either confining us to our ‘kitchen’ where we are in control, or it is an opportunity where we can have a human, a planetary consciousness.

**Creating a New Wave in the Collective Mind:** Through self-knowledge, collective learning and flexibility in various contexts we link personal transformation with global transformation. A spiritual revolution is going on in so many micro-worlds. There is a dynamic longing for healing relationships. In our weaving a new form of language.

### NHE Curriculum in Abundance

As NHE educators we are part of this spiritual revolution. Many groups and schools work at the level of social reconstruction that hinges on consciousness. In NHE schools, we educate the human and we have a different map of what it is to be human. Each NHE school is unique but each shares the aspiration to make a difference. In this conference we are sharing our trying to make it happen; as we share our experiences we are making the map. We are learning collectively to make a difference. NHE gives us the tools but the process needs to be grounded in spiritual practice which makes us truly human. Love is the central force, love binds us together; it is the dynamics, and it is the reason and the goal.

Neohumanist comes from *neo* – new which is a Greek word and *humanitas* is a Latin word chosen by Shrii P.R. Sarkar who hails from the East thus bringing East and West together. We are tied together in subtle ways. With our many schools we share local and global wisdom. We are a very rich community group as we represent this Neohumanism as a form of shared experience.

Curriculum is about community, knowledge, family related ideas, how we deal with them, how we process them. We embody a different understanding of an abundant curriculum. Abundance is what we are about. We are becoming transitional beings having to negotiate the immense pressures ... especially in the west ...or in a very impoverished area... but we are all becoming Neohumanists.

## Designing an NHE Curriculum

Eric Jacobson, director of the Progressive School of Long Island told the story of developing the curriculum at PSOLI. At the beginning he researched the best curricula from the best schools available in America. He got curriculum material for each grade with specific objectives. Then he mapped out Sarkar's philosophy as an outline of many different points and saw what in the available curriculum material needed to be erased, added to, or changed.



Why – Goal –Philosophy  
Who – People – (Teachers and Students)  
What – Plan –Curriculum  
How – Method –Lessons  
Where – Place –Community

In the course of two decades he developed every subject at PSOLI in this way and finally wrote his findings in a Teacher's Handbook. (available from AMGK for \$10).

Eric emphasized that philosophy is the essential leading constant in NHE that percolates down to the teachers and children, into the curriculum content, then methodology and into the environment and community of the school. Philosophy is the outer nest in which all the other layers of what makes a school find common shelter. The nest of Neohumanism is the same for all our schools around the world. It can be evaluated and understood by answering any of the three following questions: "What is Neohumanism? Why are we creating Neohumanist schools? What is our goal for a graduate of a Neohumanist school. We must be 100% consistent on what this Neohumanist philosophy is. On this foremost outer layer there is not now, and should never be, any difference amongst our schools, though its description may vary. For example, some may describe it as *expanding our circle of love, while others may describe it as the movement from crude towards subtle.*

The next layer is the "WHO" that is, the children who will be in our school and the teachers who will be teaching. Philosophy helps to guide us to be clear on what qualities we are looking for in teachers. They need to be neohumanists as far as possible. Some variation in personnel will occur around the world. As we move away from the pure philosophical outer layer, this variation is natural and acceptable. It allows each school to have a unique footprint, and enables our schools to respond to the ever changing elements of time, place and person.

Then we come to the plan or the "WHAT" that has to be taught which is the curriculum, the main focus of this conference. The content that we add in the curriculum is inspired by the philosophy, the WHY. Here the subjective philosophy is objectively adjusted to the students or the WHO.

Once these priorities are clear we come to the methodology or the "HOW" best to teach and formulate the specific lesson plans, and how they will be carried out.

Finally we come to the "WHERE" or the specific circumstances of the school's locale.

Once again, as we move away from the philosophy, and apply it to the personnel, curriculum, methods and facility, the variations from school to school will gradually increase. The beauty of this system is that the same universal love is evident in all we do, yet it promotes an abundance of creativity and freedom in learning how to apply that love through all the layers of the institution. Best practices can be shared, but not compelled in a uniform way.





# The Language Tree: Building Neohumanist Literacy

Eric Jacobson introduced the discussion on Language Arts in an inner circle into which others could step and share their perspectives. The Neohumanist philosophical starting point in Language Arts could be thought of as how can we attempt to increase the circle of our love.

What is the value or purpose of reading and writing? In general language curricula have the following priorities:

1. acquisition of skills to pass tests with high grade
2. habitual reading, regardless of content
3. good content if at all possible

In NHE, however, the most important question is what is the effect of the literature on the reader. Guided by our philosophy of the importance of imparting cardinal moral values, we have reversed the list and gave foremost importance to content:

1. Content must be meaningful, soul-touching, neohumanistic, and allow for deep thought that can lead to related lesson activities
2. Great content, and application of lessons learned inspires the child to develop a reading habit
3. Habitual reader will gain skills at an accelerated rate

At PSOLI, they kept to these reverse priorities in comparison to outside curricula and have proven successful in the course of 25 years. They are outperforming public schools' students because they changed the focus from short term to long term learning. It is a difference of getting someone ready for tests and getting someone ready for life. Eric then shared many personal stories from his school demonstrating this success.

The qualities we seek in selected literature are:

- 1) moral content
- 2) expansion of the mental horizon
- 3) stories that encourage the reader to re-evaluate what they believe
- 4) allow the reader a glimpse of the world from a new perspective
- 5) inspiration to dream great dreams

Our schools need to have a collection of books that have cardinal human values and neohumanist values that expose children to different religions and cultures. For example at age 10 children may struggle with lying. We have several books on lying with Christian, Buddhist and other cultural backgrounds. There are many genius authors who help you in this. Your job as an educator is to find good books and to continuously add to it.

Another example that was discussed in some detail was the use of biographies of great personalities.

## Discussion and Followup Plans

Teachers shared their favorite literature and lesson extensions. Didi Ananda Gaorii, the principal of Sunshine School in Laos, described lack of suitable literature in Laos. She suggested that we set up an exchange of good example of books and



circulate them in our schools along with suggested extended activities that worked well with the students. (see page 48 for details) An extensive book list provided by Vistara Primary School is on the NHE Resources and you are free to add your books to this list.  
[www.nhe.gurukul.edu/resources.htm](http://www.nhe.gurukul.edu/resources.htm)



## DAY TWO

### Subjective Approach and Objective Adjustment: Neohumanist approaches to all round personal development

Dr. Marcus Bussey introduced this session: There is me (WHO) the person on a neohumanist journey in alignment with philosophy (WHY) and life's activities (WHAT). The HOW – the doing is the cultivating our life field. On this conscious journey the Subjective Approach opens up the heart – it is the 'Cult' – the practice is a process of alignment of inner and outer. Therefore as you open the door when you enter a school such as Vistara School or Sunrise School you encounter a positive microvita energy.

When I wanted to get my PhD in Neohumanism I was asked “What is Neohumanism?” I couldn't reply in any concise way and so my personal story started. I went to the university, worked patiently, and chanted and meditated to align. We need to cultivate a devotional sentiment in life if we choose to be aligned with principles. As you apply philosophy you start shifting the collective mind. Resonating the alignment is a subjective internalization process. In this blend of inner and outer, Neohumanism in one's life becomes a mission. With a sense of mission it is hard to feel depressed. As I teach kids “I never let my heart fall into darkness.” Neohumanism is infectiously happy. Mission helps maintain a balance in the midst of the day to day struggle of a school, or any other project.



#### **The discussion that followed included:**

Teachers need more clarity on philosophical points to be able to use them. There is a need for Neohumanist teachers training for personal development and to get a good grounding in the philosophy.

Parents and teachers need to be educated in philosophy.

There needs to be inclusiveness and exchange between schools.

STUVOL activities that support personal development are needed.

### Aesthetics in Neohumanist Education

This session began with a surprise musical performance on the flute of a piece from Bach by Bhaktaviarya and Shivani. Marcus Bussey started the discussion by saying that children from the moment of conception are open to music. Music opens up the minds of children. He shared a personal story as a teacher when he began to teach guitar and flute to a few of his students. Before long, 80% of the students in the school became interested and learned how to play. They were always playing. What he learned from this was that children loved the sound of the pure notes of the guitar and flute and that music broke down barriers. The children also became more engaged in their whole school learning. Eric Jacobson added that the artist through art practices can go beyond the mundane world, beautifying and enhancing the space we live in. The most important person in school is the music teacher. Second important is the art and drama teacher. They set the aesthetic tone of the school.

Marcus continued to elaborate that Neohumanism is loving stamina and all will be achieved in good time. What is the energy behind it? Joy. Cultural practices bring that subtlety with them. We are dancing to a universal rhythm. Each school radiates energy. The entire aesthetics is the only charming thing in life. It is about synthesis, expanding the circle, our relationship with the subtle. That subtle take us on a journey. Our identities are threatened when we take on something revolutionary. We are a practicing cult all the time. Aesthetics science is at the heart of all knowledge.

For example Eric's song “What if life were a circle...” can be used for curriculum practices. Take some aspect of this song – how can we use this as a lead into a lesson? What kind of product can you draw from this? How do you bring that subtle energy into the school or cultivate aesthetic science into the school or home? A group discussion followed.

What if life were a circle...  
To hold every one we love?

Keep them safe...  
And so happy...  
Would I be inside your circle?

Can you grow it?  
Is your heart big enough?  
Let more in it—

Tell me ...  
What of the creatures?  
the flowers, the trees...  
Or the fragrance on the breeze?  
Can you tell me, would I be inside  
your circle?

What if God... Drew a circle...  
To hold everyone He loves?

Just how big would He make it...  
Could it go around the world?

Or even greater?  
Could the whole universe  
fit inside His cosmic circle?

What if we could...  
Draw a circle like that...  
Could we know the heart of God?  
Can you tell me, could we know the  
heart of God?

## DAY 3

### Discovering the World: Neohumanist Sciences and Mathematics

*(the focus here was on curriculum, not methodology)*

Eric Jacobsen opened this discussion by pointing out that math and science are integral unto themselves so to talk about them neohumanistically is to link them to other aspects of the school that brings neohumanist meaning to an understanding of math and science – i.e. math and science as service (running a neohumanist business project in school) or using scientific learning to increase the school's sustainability profile and reduce its environmental footprint. Both math and science should also inspire awe, wonder and curiosity. Looking for patterns in math such as the Fibonacci series or studying Pythagoras' Theorem and Sacred Geometry, or enjoying the night sky with students, will expand them beyond their current sense of self and introduce the wonder of the cosmos. These are also neohumanist applications of math and science.



He explained that math is a relatively pure science and compared to other curricular areas, will have little variation around the world in what is taught. At present the only change in math curriculum in Neohumanist schools is the addition of sacred math, Fibonacci, or the math of nature into the curriculum. The NHE methodology of math is quite unique however, in that it values application over knowledge, moral intent over fact. Examples were given of math projects that benefit the community. He also told stories of young people who he would not even teach math to until they had corrected their character, explaining that we cannot equip an immoralist with all the power they need to exploit others. First comes character, then you can add the power of knowledge to it.

In the sphere of science curriculum, he explained that science curriculum should be limited to 4 topics per 10 month school year to allow deep exploration of each topic as it relates to everything else around it. Once again the theme of long-term learning taking precedence over short-term memorization came up in the discussion of yearly curriculum plans. Other specific ways Neohumanism is applied to science are through the emphasis on deep ecology, and through teaching about the universe as a set of systems nested within each other, each operating in compliance with certain natural laws.

Teachers shared stories of neohumanist adventures in science and math.

### Neohumanist Pragmatics: Developing Social and Practical Learning Contexts



Then the rest of the day was devoted to an Open Space meeting, introduced by Dr. Marcus Bussey. Participants formed interest groups and developed curriculum themed lesson plans. This was a lively sharing and brought a shift in the conference as now creativity was turned on and the teachers were

seeing possibilities of how to incorporate philosophy as the first step into the process of developing curriculum. Philosophy organizes, identifies and brings cohesion and breadth to our thinking. The practical and creative responds to the philosophy and can always be reinvented, with many different possibilities; frame and re-frame.

#### *The Structure for Open Space Day*

##### **Building from the Philosophy Growing Structure**

**Philosophical Principle:** Choose an aspect of philosophy to explore

**Who:** Teacher; students; others

**What (Topic):** Can be general or specific e.g.: "Great Artists" or "Art for Service and Blessedness"

**General Statement:** Map context; outline how the principle aligns with the topic; acknowledged contextual possibilities and limitations

**Goals:** What do you want to achieve in the realm of personal and collective development (qualitative); what do you want to achieve in terms of concrete outcomes (quantitative)

**Mind Map:**  
intercurricula/transdisciplinary/institutional web:  
Demonstrate awareness of how this unit of work sits within the overall context of school curriculum and community

**Resources:** What do you need to pull this work together

**Outline Time Frame:** Develop a time line with key achievements marked out

**Unit/Topic:** Attach the document

**Assessment:** How will you assess this work?



## DAY 4

### Telling the Story: Neohumanist Assessment and Student Enrichment

Eric Jacobson led this session which was a very focussed discussion on how NH philosophy applies to assessment and student enrichment. With assessment, there was a consensus that it becomes very important in NHE to pay attention to Sarkar's statement "Educated are those who have learnt much, remembered much and made use of their learning in practical life." While current practice of evaluation is heavy on the first third of the statement, much more development needs to take place to value long-term memory and use of knowledge. To that end, some suggested techniques are observations, portfolios and project sharing. He also suggested that moral development should always keep pace with academic development. PSOLI uses a simple check, check plus and check minus system on four basic standards of behaviour: Interpersonal (good relationships), Intrapersonal (introspect and correct errors), Respect (rules, consistency outside of classroom, respect to adults), Silence (meditation, concentration, attention)



Eric stated that student enrichment was the single most important tool he has found for helping young people achieve the PSOLI stated goals for an individual graduate of NHE: "To discover the gifts given by God, to develop those gifts, and to overcome all obstacles in offering them to the world as a life mission." In order for students to achieve these ends, there must be time allotted in the week for personal exploration, discovery and sharing. He suggested about 10-15% of the week be devoted to this, and that other less important lessons be scrapped if necessary. The learning that takes place from the sharing of each student's interests is worth much more than the few lessons that may need to be sacrificed. The genius of the teacher is to not only help a student find and develop innate talents and interests, but also to connect these to needs around them, so that they begin to see their life as a service.

In both Student Assessment and Enrichment, there is a common element: Multiple Intelligences. Howard Gardner's theory is in keeping with NHE philosophy. It is very useful in evaluation in that it values intelligence not typically rewarded in school age children. Schools tend to reward only linguistic and mathematical intelligence, leaving many to feel worthless and lost as they then attempt to discover their niche later in life. Also, a multiple intelligence classroom will allow for more diverse enrichment. Recently, naturalist and existential intelligence were added to the list, making nine in total.



Eric also pointed out that student enrichment was the great weapon in dealing with pseudo-culture. If children's lives are filled with positive experiences in the arts, sciences and community, then their self esteem is high and they are less interested in destructive behaviour. Therefore Eric asserted that the Music teacher was the most important teacher in his school – followed by the art teacher. These teachers are central in developing cultural programmes that capture children's attention, are fun and enriching, have strong moral and ethical implications (not necessarily didactic) and also tie in with themes running through the schools academic programme.

The following discussion focused on anecdotes relating how pseudo-culture was kept at bay with positive culture and also on issues relating to how to structure time in the classroom for extension work that allows students to follow their passions. Eric notes that the time allocated to core curricula – math, language arts, etc., was less than that mandated by the state but the extra time spent on student enrichment clearly correlated with higher academic performance and stronger character development in Progressive School students.



## The Neohumanist Tapestry: Harnessing Abundance

Dr. Marcus Bussey offered an overview of humanism and neohumanism in historical and philosophical context. This was important as many administrators, teachers and parents are often asked 'why neohumanism?' and 'what has it to do with humanism?' His summary (see article elsewhere in this newsletter) led into an overview of outcomes from the four days together.

There were many positive outcomes of this four day conference summarized here below:

- Yearly global NHE Conference in different parts of the globe hosted by an existing NHE school, with additional NHE seminars offered along with an opportunity for observing at the host school. Schools may apply as hosts to [nhe@gurukul.edu](mailto:nhe@gurukul.edu)
- NHE Guidebook for schools and teachers with examples of school processes from various schools – by Didi Anandarama, Didi Ananda Gaorii and Arati.
- Book Circle - share good literature books between our schools. (see page 48)
- Book on NHE – in which philosophical principles of NHE will be illustrated through stories of real life experience and real anecdotes from the schools around the world. The stories in the book will be a very powerful tool for underwriting what is NHE in action - By Dr. Marcus Bussey with Gurukula staff. Please send in your stories to [nhe@gurukul.edu](mailto:nhe@gurukul.edu)
- Informational and educational audio-visualized presentation of PSOLI for the benefit of teachers, directors and new schools - by Eric Jacobson.
- CD of songs from Quiet Time at PSOLI - by Eric Jacobson.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> CD of Joyful Things – by Kamala Alister
- High School in planning at Ananda Marga River School – by school board and parents' community.
- Adding to NHE resources by teachers from River School and Vistara School.
- AMGK Global NHE Book Contest (details in this newsletter page 7))
- Ten day seminar at Baan Unrak school with Didi Ananda Anuraga, Janaki and Varanya with the rest of the teachers at Baan Unrak in Thailand. (see page 28)



### ***Impressions from Didi Ananda Shubhada***

*I am working in Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur. I just started a children's project and was at the conference and would like to say it was a great opportunity that I had come to the conference. It gave me a better understanding about the philosophy of neohumanism and in a better perspective, too.*

*It is also important for me to know how to use the ideas in the classroom so with a lot of discussion among the educators at the conference, I gained more confidence in how to work with the children. Not only that, but by observing the classrooms it gave me practical training, which I love also. I feel I learn faster by this method. I feel I have a better understanding of what a neohumanist school should be like.*

*I was so inspired by the presentations in the different projects around the world and they gave me strength and energy to bring back to Malaysia to improve and expand the small project here. I really enjoyed the company there, too. It was a blessing for me being there.*

*Personal thanks to Gurukula for organizing this activity and especially to River School for hosting the program and last but not least to the organizer who put a lot of effort to make the program successful. Thanks again.*





# Neohumanist Education Summit

## Accra, West Africa March 21

Dada Pramananda, Convener

The first NHE Summit in West Africa was held in Accra on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Ten members of Ananda Marga and Acaryas attended the program. Presentations and discussions were held on the basic principles of NHE and the strengths and weaknesses of the current education system. A board was formed and a national coordinator appointed (brother Krsnacaetanya from Tamale). The board will meet again on 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

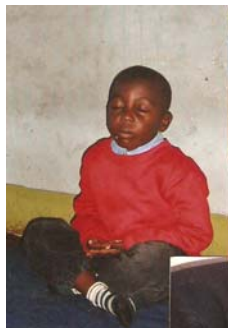
Participants and board members included: Dada Shiveshvarananda, Dada Pramananda (convener), Didi Ananda Shanta, Papa Shankar, Jayaliila, Muktilal, Krsnacaetanya, Iishvara (Togo), Shiva and Pamkaj.

We have an established AMSAI school (KG through Junior High) in Ejura, Ghana, a KG and Primary school in Lome, Togo and two small AMJAS KGs in Accra. Didi Ananda Liilamaya manages a highly regarded KG and Primary in Abidjan (Ivory Coast)

A good number of members of Ananda Marga in Ghana and neighboring countries are or have previously been (now retired) teachers, administrators and school inspectors. Few of them however are aware of the significant work done by Gurukula and the global NHE network. None are trained in the materials and methodologies that have recently been developed throughout the world (some are familiar with the Circle of Love).

The summit was convened to begin the process of:

- training members of Ananda Marga and Acaryas in the abundant wealth of NHE materials and methodologies,
- assisting our schools to implement NHE in practice
- establishing a local structure to ensure this work is taken up and continues



## NHE Seminar

### May 22 - May 31

### Croatia

In the picturesque city of Malinska on the island Krk in Croatia, we are organizing our first family education holiday retreat. Children, parents, teachers and educators are all invited to share their experiences and deepen their understanding of the richness of the Neohumanist approach to parenting and teaching.

What is Education in The Light of Neohumanism?

Enlargement of Mind  
DESMEP (Discipline, Etiquette, Smartness, Memory, English, Pronunciation)  
Universal Outlook  
Character  
Active Habits  
Trustworthiness  
Ideation of the Great  
Omniscient Grace  
Nice Temperament



Each day one of the letters will be explored in detail and then summarized on the last day to form a complete picture. Topics will be accompanied with practical workshops. Daily yoga asana classes will be held on the beach. Collective and individual meditation by the sea, chants in the pine forest, stories and games under the starry sky, songs by candle light and guitar. All this and more will provide for a deep cultural and spiritual exchange and simply allow us to enjoy each other's profound company.

For more information  
contact Tapasii at  
[tapasii@hispeed.ch](mailto:tapasii@hispeed.ch)



# Reflections on Neohumanist Teacher Training at Vistara and Sunrise Schools, Australia

By Marcus Bussey

The challenge that faces most neohumanist schools is in finding staff who are in alignment with the core values of Neohumanism. If we assume that a neohumanist is someone who meditates, the solution is simply to teach the new staff member meditation. However, the internalising of neohumanist culture is a much more complex and subtle matter than this. I am sure we all know wonderfully neohumanistic people who do not meditate and who eat meat. This paradox is what prompted me to approach two invitations to run neohumanist teacher training sessions as an experiment in building bridges between our ideals and the realities we inhabit as school principals, teacher trainers and teachers.



In doing this I chose to focus on practice and slowly bring in theory.

Inspiration comes from doing things that improve our current capacity. Neohumanism is all about what we do, not what we know - though the two are undoubtedly linked. Thus Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar states: "They are 'educated' who have learned much, remembered much and made use of their knowledge in everyday life. Their virtues I will call education".

## In-service presentation at Sunrise School, Melbourne

With this practical advice in mind we began our sessions by acknowledging what pressures teachers face today. These pressures include the national and state level surveillance system of legislation and testing, the school level expectations, the needs and demands of parents and students and their own inner benchmarks for quality teaching. We considered the important question "whose story am I living?" This was worked on through two 'voice games' [see below] that allowed the group to role-play the particular demands, external and internal, that frame teachers' experiences. Role playing expectations was both revealing and also a lot of fun.

We then sought to reframe these expectations through thinking about education as an art form. In this reframing the teacher is understood as a unique and creative being in the classroom and neohumanist education becomes a process not a goal. The vibrational intent of the teacher establishes the microvital context for the classroom. Certainly good sadhana improves this but it is only one feature and teachers were affirmed in the 'this is where I am at now' and given clarity about how to build on their context in the present. This process is touched on in Slide 1 (Teaching is an Art).

### [Teaching is an *Art*



- Each teacher is unique
- You cannot teach like someone else
- Process not Goal
- See beyond the mundane by finding the sacred in the every day
- An artist's eye discovers the unique in the ordinary



*Drawing mandalas – quiet, still and present!*

Maximum love needs to be given to our teachers along with clear guidelines for behaviour. The neohumanist context is a challenge for us all, and we are on a continuum with the goals (the ideal) always before us and beyond reach. Teachers need to be challenged by the school in their human qualities but this challenge works best when the context itself presents the challenges as opposed to authoritarian dictates from school principals. It is inspiring to see how in both Vistara School and Sunrise School the staff feel honoured and cherished and see neohumanism as a plus in their teaching and lives, yet they do hold themselves accountable to a broader set of neohumanist guidelines. These staff identified with their context and saw that they were involved in an educational mission that reached far beyond academic development. There was a sense of service and sacrifice in them all. Thus Sarkar's maxim for teachers had clearly been applied in their selection for work in the schools.

*“Teachers must possess such qualities as personal integrity, strength of character, righteousness, a feeling for social service, unselfishness, an inspiring personality and leadership ability. They are **samaja** gurus and for this reason it is not possible to accept just anyone as a teacher. Because teachers have an extremely important role to play, their professional standards must be very high.” Sarkar*

## Teaching and Meaning

- Why do we teach?
- How much do we identify with our work in the world?
- What stories do we tell about our job and our life?
- What is the relationship between what we do and the planet?

This identification with their work is important and the in-services seek to develop this<sup>1</sup>. To begin with a series of questions are asked to get staff to reflect on their relationship with their work. These are captured in Slide 2 (Teaching and Meaning).

These questions lead to open discussion and time is taken for staff to share stories that illustrate the layers at work here. The personal story is so important as it frames how each of us creates our own meaning context. The turning towards deeper neohumanist practice cannot be brought about through any other medium than the growing desire of the aspirant – and whether staff know it or not, each of them is on a spiritual journey of self discovery. To help flesh this context out we then turn to a

simple outline of neohumanism and look at how we can enhance our alignment with the processes identified in this overview.

The neohumanist outline is presented in Slide 3 (Neohumanism)

How staff operationalize these processes is key to their emergent neohumanist teaching style. Confidence is very important as well as a rational and conscious understanding of what each of these categories means and a sense of how they might give each expression in their own lives and the lives of others. Of course, they must begin with the personal sphere. All staff seem open to this though often they also seem unaware of the implications. Neohumanist teacher training needs to focus on this growing alignment between a set of principles and the cultivation of these in life: Then they can imbue classroom practice with the deep hum of neohumanist intent.

## Neohumanism

### Integrated Learning:

- **Intrapersonal** (personal story, reflection, self awareness and self analysis, contemplation, meditation)
- **Interpersonal** (ethics, communication, cooperation)
- **Suprapersonal** (relationship, belonging, love, awe, joy, bliss)
- **Social** expectation (regional variation – what we need for a job, for social relevance, shared culture and values, personal relevance)
- **Skills** (various literacies, physical and intellectual capacity, stamina, love)
- **Rationality/rationalities** (analysis and synthesis, paradox)

The teacher is their message. This is the idea at the heart of alignment. To reach this point teachers need tools for reflecting on their own lives both as individuals and also as professionals. They need to be able to understand that they often compromise their own teaching lives by living other people’s stories. This is deep work and takes years as we have so often identified with others’ stories that ours is relegated to the basement of our being. Yet it is still there and all work in neohumanist schools is an invitation to descend to the basement and release our true potential. As Sarkar puts it: *“The real meaning of education is trilateral development – simultaneous development in the physical, mental and spiritual realms of human existence. This development should enhance the integration of the human personality. By this, dormant human potential will be awakened and be properly utilised.”*

## Learning and Identity

- The message and the messenger are ONE
- Whose story are you living?
- Be a new story!

These insights are captured in Slide 4 (Learning and Identity)

To draw the workshops to a close *mandalas* were introduced and some time was spent silently integrating the day’s experiences. I use *mandalas* with children as they draw in energy and charge the classroom with positive microvita – they are ‘wheels’ of circles of colour, shape and form; they work just as well with adults who love them as they are safe forms of creative expressions (and much more at the psycho-spiritual level). Traditionally they come from the Tibetan Buddhist tradition but today a lovely circle design often gets called a “*mandala*”. All staff loved being given the opportunity to move

from left brain analysis to right brain synthesis. A deep hush descended on the room and the concluding ‘exhibition’ was a treat.

<sup>1</sup> So far three in-services have been given in Vistara School, and one in Sunrise School.





## NHE Seminar

Baan Unrak School, Thailand, April 27-May 7, 2009

By Didi Ananda Anuraga

Every year we have 2 ETCs (Education Training Camps) at Baan Unrak School. Sometimes we conduct them ourselves and sometimes we have people from outside conduct them. Three times we had Gurukula seminars here led by Didi Ananda Rama. This time we decided that those who went to visit the River School in Australia would be the ones to give the seminar. The seminar was held from 27th April to 7th May.

The first day we had a review of last year; what we had achieved of our personal goals as teachers and our goals for the school. It started with each teacher's self assessment. After that we divided into smaller groups and each group chose one of the fields assessed and created new ideas and strategies. These will be used in our action plan for the next term.

In the afternoon we had an open space activity that we actually learned to do at the Sweden conference. Each teacher chose an interest and putting them all together we again grouped according to similarities of interests. Out of this came the idea to set up the weekly teacher meetings in such a way that there would be time to develop one's interests. Some of the interests were computer, music, drawing, understanding the child and horoscopes. The second day started with showing slides of the River School that I had prepared from Kindy 1 to grade 3. Then a kindy class was demonstrated for us all by Waranya. In the afternoon I demonstrated an English class with story telling, using NHE principles and station learning. Stations was something much used at the River School. Our demonstration classes were using ideas we had brought with us from Vistara and River School. The last hour of this day we did an art activity we got from grade 6, River School.

The 4 next days Janaki did various activities we had brought back from Australia, from classroom observations there and from the Gurukula Conference. First she showed slides from Grade 4 to 7. There was great joy among us to see the teacher and students of grade 6 at the River School in a class that was given by Janaki making kratongs (part of a Thai culture Festival). In the Gurukula Conference in Australia we worked in groups creating lesson plans. The same we did again here. We have created a curriculum for Baan Unrak School already. So we worked in groups creating lesson plans on a curriculum theme from the grade each of us teach. As in the conference in Australia we had to first determine what is Neohumanism and include it as a goal in every subject we teach. Later we had a workshop on Gardner and reviewed our lesson plans to see if Gardner's Multiple Intelligences were included in our planning. Finally each group had to also work on the lesson plan they had created as if they were the students now having to learn about the theme. Each group then presented their work to us all. There were lots of great ideas and we had much fun.

Another activity was to brainstorm all the values we could think of and see where each value could fit into the Yamas and Niyamas; then finally we created a set of values to be posted in each class and to be worked on by teacher and students through out the school year. This was again an activity created from ideas we got in Australia. Janaki also shared with us how she has taught the Ramayana and Mahabharata to grade 5 last year, integrating the morals in the story into other activities and projects done with the grade 5 students during the year. We also looked at clips from a Mahabharata film to understand the deep morals taught in the epic.

Each day of our seminar started with 20 minutes of yoga and a 20 minute circle of songs, kiirtan and meditation. Each day two teachers signed up to lead the yoga using what they had learned in our earlier seminars. We sang many songs together during the week, more than ever.

A perceived obstacle at the beginning of the seminar was that the Thai government donated some money to all schools this year supposedly wanting to give every child a free education. With the money we were supposed to buy the government curriculum text and exercise books. This would absolutely kill our own curriculum. Luckily we were able to sort this out and for the last few days before the students arrived for the new term we used the time to create lesson plans around our own curriculum themes pursuing NHE goals, and then we will be using the money for buying books and other materials related to our own curriculum themes. All by Grace.







# Foreign Language Acquisition in Early Childhood

## Sunshine Holistic Program for Multilingual Education

Sunshine Preschool in Stäfa, Switzerland  
by Tatjana Drapsin Popov

Among all forms of symbolization and expression, language is one of the most popular. That is why teaching of a language has become synonymous with education. Just as the potentiality of a tree lies latent in a tiny seed, the capacity of expression lies dormant in each and every human being. The duty of proper education is to inspire, nurture and guide the process of expression and make us understand how to enjoy its gifts individually and collectively.

Neohumanist Education recognizes the importance of all forms of symbolization and expression in uplifting human culture. Local dialects, mother tongues, common lingua franca, classical languages, scripts and literature are all equal factors in personal language development. While it is desirable to use the natural tongue in early childhood education, we understand that the role of common lingua franca for the entire world is paramount in building one human society. For this reason Neohumanist playgroups, kindergartens and schools have accepted English, beside mother tongue, as one of the mediums of instruction in the present age.

But Neohumanist education is more than just learning languages. It is a holistic education that integrates all aspects of the child's being: body, senses, intellect, emotions, imagination, intuition and spirit. It is a harmonious synthesis of rationality and creativity, freedom and responsibility, idealism and practicality, self-reliance and interdependence.

Children feel a full and unconditional acceptance of themselves as unique and precious beings. Values we are projecting include friendliness, compassion, dignity, justice, tolerance, respect, helpfulness, trust, and unity. Looking at all creation we see it is a complete and harmonious system where the sky, the clouds, the earth, plants and animals all help each other. We are all part of this united earth. No one is insignificant. We are much more than just a little body, we are complete beings. Let us experience this at our homes and in our schools!

Our learning of languages starts at this point of deep love and words are the tools of expressing it. We can truly say that our main method is love. We utilize the subtle curriculum called "Circle of Love" where the topics about seasons, festivals, plant and animal world, everyday life and oneself are combined with a variety of activities such as movement, music, arts, crafts, storytelling, acting, fun, sports, quiet time, guided visualizations etc. No wonder we pay big attention to the constant improvement of our teachers so that such lofty ideals get established in practice. Since autumn 2001, several tiny kids are enjoying this magical way of learning English, German and/or Spanish in Sunshine Preschool in Stäfa. We would like to give more children opportunity for such an experience.



## Key factors in raising Multilingual Children

### 1. Timing and the Windows of Opportunity

What is the best age to start learning another language? If you have a bilingual situation in the family the answer is very easy: right from the beginning. If you have just one language in the family you may consider the Windows of Opportunity. In any case it's good to know what they are and how they influence the child's language

development. For every skill the child has to acquire, there is a neurological predisposition in the brain, and at certain time it is fully open (like the window). This openness indicates that it is the best time to practice the skill. For learning languages there are 3 such windows.

1. between 6-9 month
2. age 4.
3. age 7

The best thing to do with your 6-9 month old child is to expose him/her to the sounds of different languages. Each language carries a combination of particular sounds but none has all of them. As we speak one language the child's brain starts to select these sounds and neglect others and this is how, in time, the knowledge of one language comes. When we are babies we all have potential of learning any language in the world. By exposing the child to a variety of sounds we stimulate the brain to select more and neglect fewer sounds. At that phase we can't speak yet about "learning languages" in the terms of the child being acquainted with particular words, rather, it is like preparing the soil for future seeds. After the age of 9 months the child's brain is preoccupied with physical development: crawling, standing, walking, running, climbing etc.

For most of the children at age 2 it is normal to talk. At that age the vocabulary starts to develop.

Age 4, also known as the age of curiosity, opens the 2nd window. Children who were, prior to this window, exposed to another language, can suddenly start using it. For others, due to curiosity, an interest in another language can appear. The reasons and methods of learning can change now.

Age 7 coincides with starting of school life. The child becomes more social and due to prestige wants to show him/her self as somebody worthy. Knowledge of another language becomes a tool of establishing social status. Again the methods of learning can change.

Windows of Opportunity are neurological. How they express depends on variety of other factors. And here they follow.

## 2. Strategy

The child identifies language with a person, space and/or time. These 3 relative factors are part of the strategy.

**Example of personal factor:** one person speaks language A, another person speaks language B. For the child it is very clear with whom to use which language.

**Example of space strategy:** In our house we use language A, at school we use language B

**Example of time strategy:** every Monday afternoon we use language A, otherwise we use language B

Needless to say, most of the attempts are of combined strategies. Strategy is important because it gives a child clear division. It is not advisable to change the strategies since it can lead to confusion in the child's mind. Therefore, before choosing a strategy think carefully how persistent can you be, and what suits your family situation. Artificial choices are not very successful.



## 3. Consistency

There are several aspects of consistency

- How often (every day exposure will bring faster results in language acquisition than if it is just once a week)
- For how long (length of the exposure will depend on the age of a student, generally longer exposure is better than shorter, but too long exposure may negatively affect motivation)
- How regular (even just once a week, but regularly will make a difference)

Regular kindergarten, school or playgroup classes or various courses are therefore a good opportunity for learning languages. Moving to another country, where we are naturally exposed to a new language, most of the time will make us learn faster (except if we are forced due to circumstances or having culture shock). When I worked in a kindergarten in Oslo all the children were coming every day, only some for a full day and others for half of a day. Still after 3-4 months they all spoke English with me. On the contrary, working in Switzerland with one group of 3 year olds just once a week for 2-3 hours, I could achieve that everybody understood me by the end of the school year (if I would use simple words) but most of the children found it difficult to talk to me in this new language.

In the home situation parents may decide to talk to a child in a particular language on a particular day, in a particular situation, for a particular amount of time and thus create consistency for a child.

## 4. Motivation

This is a very important point, since without motivation we can't really do anything in the life. Some children have more natural motivation than others. In the science and art of pedagogy various methods have been developed to support and even create motivation in children. Success is an important ingredient for motivation. When the child feels "I can do it, I am good at it" the motivation increases. Some modern specialized courses in "how to teach children languages" have developed motivational methods such as awarding children with stickers, praises and even sweets. In NH we strive to see the child holistically, so the way we motivate the children should be more profound. This doesn't mean that we will never use some of the "superficial" methods, rather that we will be aware of their limitations and side effects and therefore use them carefully and rarely.

From personal experience I would like to share an example about motivation. A 5 year old girl, already having 2 languages in the family, started attending my program for learning English. She started a friendship

with a native English speaking girl who only knew English and had a very profound vocabulary but wasn't eager to learn other languages. Since both girls were very motivated to cherish their relationship, first one learned English within 4 months (coming to the classes only 3 times a week for 6 hours). She would use full sentences and developed the same high standard of English that the second girl had. After some time I started motivating the second girl to learn some German words from her friend in exchange. This was a bit slower (proving that those who have 2 languages since birth are faster in learning the 3rd one, while those starting later need the time to build neurological structures and that the second language comes) but eventually the second girl learned her second language and is now a successful student in a regular school in German language.



### **5. Aptitude**

It can also be called "predisposition". It has been discovered that in every population there is certain percentage of the population, about 10%, that can learn any language easier than other people and are able to learn it accent free even at a later age. So far, this quality is independent from other factors (like social status).

### **6. Opportunity and Support**

If we don't have any opportunities for learning languages we may not learn them even if we possess other qualities. Some opportunities are due to circumstances (e.g. My grandfather lived in the north of Serbia, close to Romanian border and in an area with many national minorities. Due to this natural circumstance he learned Romanian, Hungarian and some German, beside his mother tongue Serbian). In modern societies we are offering organized opportunities. Even if opportunities are there but no support comes, the opportunity will be of no use. Due to lack of proper knowledge and interest, and the dominance of complexes, many parents don't support their child, and in some cases even forbid or discourage the child in the learning process. A simple and inexpensive way is usually neighbor exchange. My child may go to a neighbor's every Monday afternoon and be exposed to one language, and the neighbor's child may come to me and practice another language on another day. Such situations are usually very supportive for both parents and children.

### **7. Linguistic Relationships**

The closer the linguistic relationship between two languages, the easier and faster it is to learn that language. Those who know Spanish are faster at learning other Latin languages like Portuguese, French and Italian. Even if languages are not learned the feeling of understanding most of what another person says makes

us feel comfortable. I, having a Slavic language as my mother tongue, can understand other Slavic languages to some extent, although I don't really speak them. Those that are closer I understand better (like Ukrainian, Macedonian, Bulgarian and Polish). Study of classical languages can help us to understand the roots of the words and thus increases the understanding of all

the languages that have root connections. In Gymnasium I've studied Latin. I didn't find it fascinating at that time. When, later on, I found myself in India and took some Sanskrit classes, there was a lady professor of Latin studying Sanskrit too, and she was explaining to me the similarities of the two. Suddenly a new door opened to me and I felt the connectedness of all "Indo-European" languages.

### **8. Siblings**

Younger children can profit from older ones. It has been proven that having siblings who learn another language increases the chances of other children in the family learning. The reason is very simple. Children like to share their knowledge. At home they often play teachers, and act out everything that is happening to them. Single children are teaching their toys.

### **9. Gender**

Generally girls are more gifted in languages than the boys. So called verbal intelligence is higher in the female gender; males have better spatial intelligence. Probably this has roots in our genetic inheritance. However, do not give up if you have a boy. Genetic code can be overcome. I have a boy too. He prefers mathematics to languages but currently, at the age 8, he speaks Croatian, Serbian, German and English.

### **10. Hand Use**

Left-handed individuals are generally more gifted for languages than right-handed ones. The reason lies in the brain hemispheres. Centers for verbal expression are in the right side of the brain which also regulates the left hand. Flexible fingers of both hands can support language development. That's why we use mudras in NH schools and kindergartens.

### **11. Personality**

The child's own personality is the crown factor. Therefore the study of psychology is necessary to be a successful teacher, even if you only want to teach languages. Every personality is unique. Language is the natural companion of the child's personality development. The language of our inner self, which is foreign to some but actually most natural of all the languages, is the ultimate tool of education. Whatever language we teach we should never forget that our goal is holistic development of a child.



# Challenging Stereotypes in Neohumanist Diversity Curriculum

By Didi Ananda Devapriya (pictures from Gradinita Rasarit Mihai Bravu and Gradinita Rasarit Bucuresti Noi Schools, Romania)



*Iulia with the children dressed in Roma costumes*

Small children are spontaneous scientists, gathering information, making hypotheses, testing them, and drawing conclusions that eventually crystallize into a belief system that then embeds itself deep in the unconscious mind. When these beliefs remain unchallenged, and are confirmed by repeated experience, they harden and set like plaster, and become difficult to reshape in later life. Consciously seeking opportunities to introduce themes that address human diversity in an inclusive way is a key feature of successful Neohumanist early childhood education. When diversity curriculum is appropriately designed, it can help to correct and prevent the solidification of stereotypes and blind prejudices in the formative mind of the child.

Infants are born into a state of undifferentiated subjective consciousness. In that state, others do not exist as separate entities but rather as an extension of the self. The baby

literally experiences an attentive mother as a continuation of its own mind and body, responding directly to her thoughts and desires without any effort to communicate to an outside entity. An infant's cry is not a form of intentional communication but rather a pure subjective expression. As the layers of the mind develop, the objective mind begins to form, and to sense others as distinct, separate entities, not controlled by the desires and needs of the subjective self. At this developmental stage, "stranger anxiety" normally forms, in which the child perceives others as alien, unknown, and potentially dangerous. The mother or other important attachment figure becomes a safe anchoring point from which the child explores the environment and other people, continually checking and measuring the mother's reactions before determining the safety of a new situation. Imagine then the messages a child indirectly receives when he feels his mother's anxiety as she draw him closer to her in the bus whenever someone from a minority group passes by, how she laughs nervously and in embarrassment if he points out their different skin color, hushing him to be polite, and how the child begins to notice similar consistent reactions in other trusted adults as well. Even though nothing "racist" was said verbally, the child quickly deduces consistent patterns and forms a hypothesis that "others" are not safe or to be trusted. In this way "us" and "them" thinking forms not only develop as recognition of difference but those differences are assigned values and become the basis for the transmission of socio-sentiments. When other experiences and information continue to confirm this hypothesis, it calcifies into a belief, and the child grows up into an adult who without a conscious reason may feel a vague nervousness, embarrassment and unease whenever faced with the "other".

However, as these beliefs are still in formation, if the child comes into contact with other experiences that do not fit the hypothesis, the whole hypothesis may be discarded and a fresh one formed based on the new information. The challenge of NHE diversity curriculum is to create situations in which stereotypes and other limiting beliefs can surface and be questioned and discussed openly without embarrassment or fear.

As always, the example of the teacher is fundamental. Diversity curriculum is not about just teaching children to be "polite" in order to mask an underlying fearful feeling of discomfort and separateness. Children will see straight through the politeness and sense the real attitude it hides, and form their conclusions accordingly. In order to effectively teach diversity curriculum, Neohumanist teachers must consciously challenge their own socio-sentiments. One of the best ways to do so is to actively seek to form close personal bonds of friendship with people from other social groups. It is difficult to continue to generalize or stereotype a whole group once one has cultivated a warm, loving friendship. In order for such friendships to break down our unconscious stereotypes and limitations, it is important not to assume that respect means to minimize differences, and see the other as an exception to the rule— "you are not like them, you are one of us". Rather, it is important to acknowledge differences and listen with interest and respect to the other person's own experience of those differences. I once became close friends with a Russian woman my age, and realized that I actually knew nothing about Russia – growing up in Cold-war America, Russia and Communism was just a synonym for something dangerous and evil, and conjured up grey, monotonous images of sturdy robot-like people. We had great fun discussing the stereotypes we had both learned about each other and finding out what life had really been like growing up in our different countries. This then gives great insight and empathy for the actual human experience, and is much more real than the distorted information received from stereotypes.

After the developmental stage of realizing the existence of a separate, and thus unknown objective world follows the social stage of realizing that "others feel as I do" which makes others knowable and familiar again through the bridge of empathy. This basic truth that others have the same feelings as I do resonates deeply with the child's innate sense of dharma, and when empathy is well modeled by sensitive adults, the child easily expands its empathy and love. However, children also encounter callousness, fear, shame or other barriers to empathy when observing the interactions of the adults close to them with people from other social groups. This creates an internal dissonance with the child's emerging moral sense of rightness but often, in





*Eating traditional Roma food by a "campfire" after a imaginary journey from India towards Romania*

time, the child will tend to surrender their own intuition, overpowered by the confusing and contradictory information from the stronger adult world. In NHE diversity curriculum, that natural emerging moral sense must be supported, strengthened and nurtured through discussions that validate the child's intuitive understanding, by asking them questions that get them to reflect if the messages they have absorbed really make sense to their hearts. For example, in Romania, one of the stereotypes of Gypsies is that they all steal, and this immediately surfaced in the discussion, when I brought a Roma friend to the circle time. They already knew Iulia very well, and loved her and played with her freely, but when she introduced herself as a "Gypsy" then several stereotyped reactions immediately appeared. "Yucky!" said one girl, and "All Gypsies are thieves" declared another, and almost all of the children chimed in unison that it was true – as all of them had heard this repeated hundreds of times by adults. I then asked, "Do you really think that all Gypsies

steal?" "Yes, I saw it on TV, so it is true" and they began narrating different recent news stories. "OK, do you think that in Germany there are some people that steal?" "Yes" "Do you think that all Germans steal then?" "No" "So if you think that in Germany there are some people who do bad things and some people who are good, do you think it might be the same with Romanians? and with Americans? And with Gypsies?" The discussion continued, with Iulia then sharing pictures from her childhood. The children discovered that her favorite color was red, she enjoyed the same games and songs they did. They also felt sad when they heard how some children had hurt her feelings when they didn't want to play with her because she was Roma. They even acted out a role play of a similar situation in which they all helped to defend the Roma child.

In NHE diversity curriculum one of the goals is to expand the child's natural state of oneness and empathy that it shares with those in its "us" category also to the "other". NHE does not seek to minimize, gloss over or ignore human differences, nor does it seek to place too great a value on the exotic. In contrast, "multicultural curriculum" that emphasizes the exotic, folkloric aspects of a culture can actually end up unwittingly reinforcing the superficial stereotypes rather than increasing an appreciation for diversity. One way to avoid this pitfall, is to avoid approaching a culture as a tourist, an outsider bringing the children to visit monuments, museums and restaurants – but rather to have the culture introduced by a native who is inviting the children into their own world. In the past few years, in our Romanian schools we often do a multicultural unit on the native country of one of our children. When we had children with a Greek father, we chose Greece, when we had a French girl, we chose France etc. This gives an opportunity for the child to feel the uniqueness of her own family history and traditions valued and appreciated rather than remaining invisible within the mainstream culture. The children become experts who can share special things from their family to the class, and sometimes their parents also come to share food, dance, music or pictures from their native culture. I recently attended a conference, in which a Roma rights leader mentioned that many teachers will proudly claim that they do not treat Roma children differently than other children, and that was their mistake, because they are different, and those differences should be acknowledged and addressed rather than swept aside and made invisible. However, even in more heterogeneous situations, this principle can be applied. For example, when we chose Africa and did not have any African children, we invited a man named Victor from Ghana to come and teach drumming to the children over a 2 week period, so that the children would have a chance to get to know him as a friend. Besides learning drumming, they got to hear Victor tell about growing up in Ghana, see pictures of his family and hear music from his country. In all of these cases, humanizing a culture by getting to know a friend was an important element to help nurture the awareness that behind apparent differences, we have the same feelings and human heart.



*Practicing the grapevine step with the father of Ianis who is from Greece*



*O experientia multiculturala africana*

However, the most challenging socio-sentiments are usually towards the socio-economically disadvantaged ethnic minorities within one's own country. That is why in Romania we have also been doing diversity projects about the Roma people (or "Gypsies") as they are the most socially marginalized and stigmatized minority in the country. Children are programmed from an early age to fear, distrust and hate the Roma to such a widespread extent that it is not difficult to find even quite liberal and enlightened adults who will say that they are not racist but Roma are really genetically criminal, promiscuous, etc. It is a

# Neohumanist Educational Projects in Brazil

Translated by Shanti from documents prepared by Sudama and Dharmamitra

**AMURT-AMURTEL** in Brasil has been developing many social projects over the years. The first project was in the area of child education and was started officially in 1986. The main objective in all projects is to "*promote the individual, the child, the family and the community in all dimensions based in the universal ideals of Neohumanism*". Through the years they have been running several projects related to child education, familial and social support, social education, environmental education as well as projects that intend to arouse consciousness for social service and training volunteers. The projects are located in Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Brasília, Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul.

There are a total of **12 Neohumanist Schools in Brazil** located in different areas. In Porto Alegre there are several projects running in areas of low income some of which will be mentioned in this article. In Porto Alegre there are five kindergartens with 290 students and a primary school with around 300 children. The ages of the children in these schools ranges from 2 to 12 years of age.

One of the schools is the **Neohumanist School of Child Education of Ananda Marga in Belém Novo**. The land where the school is was donated by a member of Ananda Marga and started with a nursery in 1984 as a social program of the Ananda Marga Association. Later in 1988 the nursery became a kindergarten under the "**Fundação da Associação Beneficente AMURT-AMURTEL**" (Foundation of the Beneficent Association AMURT-AMURTEL) according to the need of such a structure for that region. In the same year an agreement with the Secretary of Education allowed improvements on the physical structure, pedagogical materials and qualified staff. In 1999 the school was once again improved and upgraded; the kitchen was expanded, 2 more classrooms and another toilet were added and more qualified professionals were brought in to work in the school.

In the same year on the same land a **Program of Family Support and Protection** was initiated. The school got stronger through this program since there was a social assistant there to support the children and their families. The program serves families with children from 0 to 17 years old that are in situations of social vulnerability such as those having disabilities, domestic violence, neglect, child work, school drop out or pregnancy in adolescence, among others. A social worker gives counselling according to the needs of each case. Fifty families are involved in the program. With this project the school became professional and integrated into the educational and social assistance network in the region. The journey of this school was only possible by the hard work of acaryas and margiis as well as dedicated staff committed to promoting good learning spaces, methods and experiences of the children.

Nowadays this school is divided into 3 classes: a nursery from 2 years and 11 months to 3 years and eleven months with a total of 20 children, the kindergarten classes with one class from 4 years to 4 years and 11 months with total of 25 children, and another class with students from 5 years to 5 years and 11 months also with 25 children.

The pedagogical foundation of the school reflects the philosophy of Neohumanism: "*The objective of the Schools of Ananda Marga is the development of all potentialities of children, where they will not be only prepared for the competitive world; they will be prepared for life. The child recognizes herself full of potentialities, discovering, caring and preserving the environment where we live; developing as a person, a citizen and as part of the natural world that embraces her. The schools strengthen values and encourage sensitivity to others as legitimate and worthy and an understanding of our role in the guarantee of the rights of all.*" The ten principles of Neohumanism engaged in the proposal are: Awakening the thirst for knowledge and the development of all human personality, education based on ethics, awakening of spiritual consciousness, integrated learning, cultivation of aesthetics in all disciplines, support of local culture and respect for other cultures and places, a new environmental consciousness, the educator as an example, the spirit of service and the expansion of consciousness and the spirit of justice.

Due to the socio-economical conditions of certain areas in the region of Porto Alegre a group of projects was created for communities that live in those poor areas and suffer from different social and economical issues. In 1999 a project was developed in the area of Education Work youth employment through a program whose objective is to allow young people from 12 to 18 years of age access to the job market through education and professional training. The project is called "**Curtindo a Adolescência sem Grilos**" and it places young people in the job market through the partnerships created during the project. It also emphasizes the importance of preservation of the local environment and disseminates educational information related to citizenship, family, generation of peace, sexuality, self-esteem, preparation for the job market world, sexual diseases, AIDS and the use of drugs. The project promotes an awakening of consciousness of citizenship through the use of knowledge and experiences related to the daily life of teenagers. On the practical level this

awakening is done through group dynamics that work on self-esteem, reflections, debates about the subjects announced or others proposed by the teenagers and by the creation of friendly social spaces. There are twenty-two teenagers involved in the program. There are 4 hours of classes 3 times a week in the theory and practise of gardening, cultivation of organic medicine and aromatic plants and also introduction to landscape architecture. The teenagers can learn here all the different phases of cultivation, production and storing of these plants. The project has different phases and they are evaluated collectively with all the participants; the teenagers, the families, technicians, educators and the community.

In 2003 a **program** for children from seven to fourteen years old was initiated that develops their self confidence and esteem through activities that encourage **socialization** in a stimulating, sound and loving environment. Forty five children and teenagers are a part of the program.

In 2006 the project of Social Consortium of Youth was started in partnership with the Ministry of Work in a program called "**Primeiro Emprego**" (first job). The second session finished with the placement of 40% of the class of 25 young people in the job market. In the same year in partnership with 6 municipal schools the project "**Gestão Ambiental na Zona Sul: Educando para a Sustentabilidade Planetária**" (environmental management of south area: educating for planetary sustainability) was initiated. This program created 40 environmental monitors who trained teachers all over this region.

In March 2007 the program **Street Action** was initiated with a multidisciplinary team: a social assistant, one psychologist, four social educators and a coordinator who built multiple strategies to face the situations of street children and teenagers. Also this team does a systematic follow up with their families. Around one hundred and twenty children and teenagers have already benefited and around two hundred people are involved in the program. Already in the second year there's a project called "**Brincar e Viver**" (Play and Live) with the main objective of promoting self esteem, emancipation and human development for teenagers that have suffered abuses as well as for their families. This is an innovative project that utilizes a group of educational and sensitive activities that stimulate affectionate bonds between teenagers and their families. The activities are based on sound pedagogy that utilizes traditional play, storytelling and circle songs, among other methods. Through the experiences and exchanges we look for encouraging actions that promote the potential of these families and teenagers in their quest for the basic rights of citizenship.

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Continued from Page 33

### Challenging Stereotypes in Neohumanist Diversity Curriculum

vicious cycle because people, both individually and collectively, respond to our expectations about them whether positive or negative and such beliefs create self-fulfilling prophecies that further reinforce the stereotype with concrete examples that "prove" it is true. Again our approach was to invite a friend, in this case Iulia who has been working with AMURTEL as our project coordinator. Already, by her role and work in AMURTEL she had provided a positive model that contrasted with the usual stereotypes, and the teachers had a warm and respectful relationship with her. Before we began the diversity project, she attended several staff meetings and shared some of her personal experiences of being discriminated as a Roma, and this helped increase the insight of the staff and from those discussions the teachers were able to invent quite realistic, interesting stories for circle time. The teachers took care to present the Roma characters not only in stereotypical victim roles, but rather as heros and in powerful situations – though in several instances the characters experienced discrimination and then the children became part of a problem-solving discussion. For example, one of the stories "Ballerina Caterina" was about a Roma girl who goes to the city to look for work, and after watching a ballerina perform, dances alone on the stage, dreaming of becoming a great dancer. The director of the ballet sees her and then invites her to perform in the ballet. At one point in the story, a watch is stolen and she is wrongly accused – and just because she is Roma everyone believes she did it. But later the true thief is discovered, and she becomes a great ballerina. The children very much empathized with Caterina, and on the final day of the project when the children acted out the story as a performance, the girl who had originally said "Yucky" to Iulia, acted in the role of Caterina. This is the wonderful advantage of doing diversity curriculum in early childhood, when prejudices are not yet subtly masked and hidden, but rather jump right to the surface where they can be openly discussed and re-evaluated. The children are not yet rigidly entrenched in their beliefs and can quite easily change them when given information that resonates with their heart.



Strong personalities trust their own thinking and listen to their hearts. One of the aims of NHE is to create a new generation that can lead humanity towards an era of cooperation, respect and ecological balance. To achieve such a lofty goal, teachers must carefully and consciously nurture, strengthen and validate the inborn sense of justice and empathy that all children have and protect it from being overpowered by the entrenched divisive tendencies that have been passed automatically from generation to generation.



# Awakening the Joy of Learning at the Fountain of Hope After School Center Panatau, Romania

By Didi Ananda Devapriya

In September 2007, in partnership with Cooperating Netherlands Foundation and the Community of Panatau, AMURTEL opened an after-school center “Fountain of Hope”. The center is in its second school year of functioning. It is serving 30 of the most economically disadvantaged schoolchildren with a free hot meal, homework support, access to computers, and extracurricular games, activities and crafts.



In the rural villages of Romania, the dropout rate in primary school is very high, as parents also did not complete their education and put more value on having help with farm work than education. Some of the children frequenting the center come from families that have no monetary income except the meager monthly “children’s allowance” from the state – amounting to approximately 5 euros per month. Often they do not receive balanced nutrition at home, and come to school hungry, walking up to an hour on unpaved roads, making concentration difficult. This project plays an important role in offering a better future to these children by encouraging them to continue their studies and thus break the vicious cycle of poverty. Since the first year of functioning, none of the beneficiaries have dropped out of school, or repeated the school year – and all of them have drastically improved their school attendance, only missing in the case of sickness.

Although Fountain of Hope only offers a few hours of extra-curricular support to these children, and cannot undo all of the damage of years within such a school setting, it does present a valuable opportunity to awaken the joy of learning through positive, creative, multi-disciplinary experiences. Didi A. Cetana volunteered several weeks at the Fountain of Hope, focusing in particular on developing a program for awakening a love of learning in the Fountain of Hope children. Most of these children have become habituated to sitting in classes for long hours without understanding anything, terrified of being asked a question that would expose their lack of comprehension. As their own parents themselves often did not complete primary school, they do not have someone to guide them at home. The formal curriculum and textbooks in Romania progress at an extremely rapid pace, but are not thoroughly explained, or broken down into steps, let alone presented in ways to appeal to multiple intelligences besides verbal and mathematical thinking. The teaching style is very authoritarian and intimidating, with an emphasis on rote learning and memorization rather than critical thinking skills and children shy to ask questions quickly fall hopelessly behind. The whole school experience becomes a stressful chore, reinforcing a feeling of incompetence and hopelessness. It is only the exceptional child gifted in memorization or with a great deal of extra-curricular tutoring that manages to succeed scholastically.

Didi’s challenge was to find fun, attractive games and activities, that would help solidify very basic fundamental mathematical concepts often poorly understood without appearing too condescendingly childish. She created several games focused on practical skills such as shopping, and games with multiplication, addition and subtraction.

She also experimented with a “project-based” approach – selecting a project that would attract the interest of all of the children and within that context provide an opportunity to learn and exercise a variety of skills in a practical and interesting way. Together with Cristina and the staff, Didi developed a “Mother’s Day” project over a 2 week period. The children were involved in planning the event, making invitation cards for their parents, making crafts and gifts, making a shopping list, preparing a cake, and creating a theater based on the “Giant Radish” story. The children were delighted and very involved and enthusiastic, and especially proud when their grandmothers and mothers came to see all of their efforts.



We look forward to Didi returning again to help us continue to develop more activities, and also to including other volunteers who would like to share their skills.

# AMSAI

## Las Pinas, Maharlika

This year AMSAI La Pinas opened with 18 children. The children are aged from 3-6 and they are divided into 2 sessions (ages 3-4 in the morning and ages 4-6 in the afternoon). The school is being managed by the new DSL Didi Karunamayii. The school is fortunate to have two volunteers: Malati selflessly volunteered full time to teach the children since last year, even staying very late at night to make visual aids and prepare her lessons and for late meetings when they are called. Sadhana also volunteered part time in the mornings.



In the beginning of the school year, some of the children were “difficult” but through our weekly meetings, we evaluate each child and brainstorm on how to help them develop and improve. After few months, improvement of the children’s behavior has been noticed even by their parents and it makes it easier for the teachers too.

Before the opening of the school, we called a parents meeting and gave an orientation to explain the school’s philosophy especially the importance of vegetarian food as we strictly imposed a vegetarian diet which is prepared by school volunteers. This was not easy as the school’s limited staff has to prepare and serve the food and the children were looking for the meat in their spaghetti in the beginning. But we experimented with about 30 healthy different vegetarian dishes and with a little encouragement the children learned to like our menus. Now the children are already used to eating vegetarian food and sometimes they even request what they like especially fried rice full of veggies and boiled sticky rice with locally produced chocolate and we also prepared yoghurt which is not popular with Maharlikans but our children liked it. Parents really appreciate the healthy food which they also sample when we have school programs.



on SMART CHILD (Multiple Intelligence) which the parents appreciated. Feedback that we got back from the parents includes improvement of their understanding of their children and realizing that their child is not only an intelligent child but a child with unique intelligences which also need to be developed.

Last Christmas, the school in cooperation with the parents organized a public show dubbed as The AMSAI Musical. The show highlighted the children’s talents. It was held last Dec. 13 in a covered court and was attended by about 100 people. The children presented and entertained their parents and guests with local dance, action songs, and yoga postures. The program was different as the presentations were all local and native dances and songs plus yoga postures which the children easily performed to the delight of the parents. The program was successful due to the cooperation of the parents, support from sympathizers and by Grace.





# The Rising Sun School, Brazil

*Excerpted from an article published in the Sunday magazine, O GLOBO, one of the largest newspapers of Brazil*  
*Translated by Avinash*

A few miles from Belmiro Braga, a town close to the state border of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, in the 1980s a small squatter settlement began called Vila Sao Francisco. The place began because a new law was introduced giving rights of ownership to landless people who had lived for a few years in any cabin. So large landholders evicted all their tenant laborers. With no other place to go, the farm workers settled on a stretch of land that belonged to nobody, devoid of any planning or infrastructure, and with a multitude of social problems - among them, lack of a school for children. To study, children had to walk at least 6 miles on dusty roads.



The story changed with the arrival of a group people following the philosophy of Shrii PR Sarkar, founder of a Center for Yoga and Meditation called Ananda Marga. In Rio de Janeiro, the office of Ananda Marga is in Copacabana. In 1990 the group bought a farm neighboring Villa de San Francisco and opened the Rising Sun school, which gave poor children, with no hope and no future, a model education until then exclusive to well-born children. This Neohumanist Education school



prioritizes the emotional, intuitive, creative and spiritual development of the children. According to NHE philosophy, it is not enough to only learn Portuguese, math, etc. The challenge is to develop nice people. We work with the ethical and moral foundations of human beings. The idea is that the children will grow up healthy in all ways and be creative, whole, and happy - says the pedagogue Sandra Brys, a founder of the Rising Sun. A farm was bought by 30 people, who donated one hundred hectares for social projects. The Rising Sun school is one of the projects. Trivenii has been the director of the school for the last year and half.

The building of the school is built with gardens, playgrounds and classrooms equipped with all sorts of pedagogical toys. Maintained with donations from godparents, people from Ananda Marga in Rio, the Rising Sun School has been developing over the past 18 years. In the beginning it functioned in an old house with no structure at all, relying on the goodwill of volunteer teachers. Four years ago the new building was finally inaugurated, though it had no electricity at the time. The point was to introduce a new philosophy of education for children. "At first they had no toys or furniture and ate in little plates over pieces of wood", says Dhiira Gomes, Aunt Dhiira, a mother resident in the village who decided to roll up her sleeves and work with the project. "Everything people would offer us, we would accept. We use to go into the photocopy shops asking for waste paper. My 3 children studied here."

The kids' routine is really special. At 7 am the students begin the day with the "Circle of Love". They sing mantras and practice yoga and meditation. Then comes breakfast, educational games, and also the conventional disciplines. At 11 hours, lunch. All the food is vegetarian from organic crops harvested in the school garden, planted by the children. According to educationist Sandra Brys, yoga and meditation are keys to increasing the concentration of children in the Neohumanist Education model. And the vegetarian food aids to develop ecological awareness and respect for life. Nobody complains of not having meat. Estefany, one of the students, 4 years old, says she does not like to eat "dead animals". She prefers the vegetarian dishes prepared by the school cook, Aunt Preta. Even at home she does not eat meat any more.

The activities of the Rising Sun are not confined to the school. According to Aunt Dhiira, very often the teachers will knock on the door of the parents, encouraging them to be involved in the new world





# Sports Day

## Accra, Ghana

By Maddy McAllister, Lotus Volunteer (from USA)

Cosmic Academy School recently held a 'sports day'; a friendly competition between the students of Lotus Nursery School and Cosmic Academy School, both from Accra, Ghana. The idea came about from a fellow volunteer from England. The Cosmic Academy school grounds were cleaned, a sand pit was installed, parents were invited and balloons lined the school for the special occasion. We (Lotus Nursery School) arrived at Cosmic Academy around 9:00 am. The competitions started immediately! First, were the musical chairs, followed by the sack race, skipping-rope race, 'lime in spoon' race, and finally ending with the 3-legged race (a personal favourite to watch!). The older children also competed in more serious activities including the long jump matches, and running races. The competitions were taken very seriously by all ages, boys and girls!

The festivities came to an end around mid-day with the prize ceremony. A speech was first given by Jayaliila of Cosmic Academy, followed by the much anticipated prize ceremony. The children were extremely proud to receive the prizes and medals generously donated by the English volunteer.

Athletics and sports are terms often disregarded in school academics. However there are students that find they excel in physical education and sports and they usually go unrecognized. Sports day was a day to congratulate and recognize these children and embrace their talents! It was an amazing day full of glowing children, teachers and proud parents. Hopefully it will stay a tradition between the schools for many years to come.



*Musical Chairs*



*On your marks, get set*



*Lime-in-Spoon Race*

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### Continued from Page 38

of the children. They might help prepare snacks or cover the books. One of the main focuses of the work outside the classrooms, however, is environmental education. In San Francisco Village, clean water has become a daily challenge. There is no sewage system. So learning to keep the taps closed and not pollute the local river, and plant near the springs, is crucial for the survival of the village. In general, our public schools do not foster the value of love of nature. The children come from problem families, sometimes with alcoholic fathers and mothers who are victims of domestic violence. Neohumanism is valuable and indispensable in a context of poverty. I can say with the Rising Sun, the children began to educate parents. Aunt Dhiira says, "Mothers tell us that the children come home and say they want everything the same as they have in the school."

This project helped me a lot personally. When my kids started to study here, I did not know anything. I learned how to relate to the environment and to other people seeing my kids learn. The managers of the Rising Sun have ambitious plans for the New Year. In 2009 they will begin a Centre for Neohumanist Education in Vila Sao Francisco, with the aim to train educators. Also next year the school will implement a teaching technique called "brain gym". Sandra Brys attended a course at the University of California and wants to replicate this technique whose goal is to enhance intelligence through movement. Brain gym is nowadays top-line in the children's learning process. In southern Brazil, for example, it is already widespread. I passed by California and I am one of the instructors accredited in Brazil: "Now you just think: with brain gym and yoga / meditation, these children will go far", Sandra bets.

# Report from a Volunteer in Sangklaburi, Thailand

Susan Kamal, from Egypt, (22 years old)

In February 2009, I was very fortunate to have had the chance to volunteer at Baan Unrak's Children project in Sangklaburi, Thailand. The project is actually two simultaneous projects running hand in hand by Didi Ananda Devamala and Didi Ananda Anuraga. The first one is a children's home or an orphanage for abandoned children of the area and the neighboring areas. There is also room for single mothers who escape the tyranny of their husbands' marriage or whatever hard environment they had to leave to find shelter for themselves and their little children at Baan Unrak's. The home provides shelter for nearly 150 children of different ages. They are well fed and looked after by a group of capable dedicated volunteers from different parts of the world in addition to Didi of course who leads the morning and evening daily meditation followed by a short evaluation of the children's performances at different assigned tasks. It was really astonishing how independent the children were. And how they all managed to go to school and also be responsible for some extracurricular activities for example yoga. There is a weekly yoga show performance that is attended by a lot of people who happen to be visiting Sangklaburi for holiday or other reasons. Along with that there is a weaving project for single mothers and some talented teenage girls and you can find the high quality weaving products for sale at a couple of outlets in the area and that brings back some income for the workers and the project.



Then comes the other part of the project which is the school, run by Didi Ananda Anuraga. The school provides primary education for free for the children of the area, the majority of who of course stay at the home as well. The school is very organized and well run, and the teachers are either Thai, Burmese or foreign volunteers. During my stay there was a girl from Portugal and another from the States volunteering to teach English, along with me. I also taught bead making for the children and together we made beautiful necklaces and bracelets. I was surprised by their speed of capturing the information and instructions and also by their creativity. Didi also takes care of a disabled little child whom I was fortunate to teach some English and Math. Her will was miraculous to me; I was amazed by the potential and capabilities of this small disabled child.

The area of Sangklaburi is on the Thai-Burmese border; that's why it has a lot of refugees, including children. The area needs a lot of attention and I had the chance to meet up with people working for 2 other projects namely Children of the Forest and Whispering Seeds. The second is not as well established as the first, but they are both working their best in the area along with Baan Unrak (the oldest project in Sangklaburi).

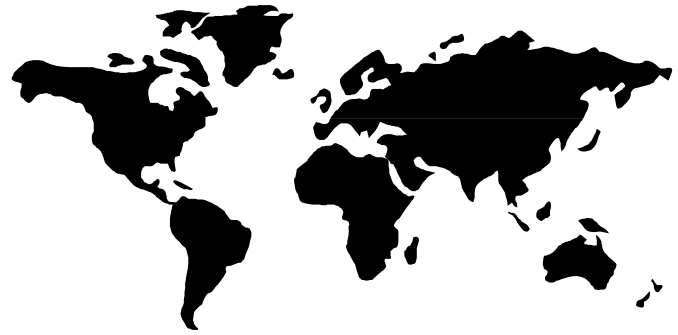
What I learned from my stay there was priceless. I saw how by a lot of determination and effort you can run such a huge project solely on donations and volunteering efforts. But most importantly I saw how one person's little effort can make a huge difference in the world. I now know for sure that the world has a place for everyone, that there still exists people who are willing to go the extra mile and fight for the good and welfare of others.

I matter. You do too. If you happen to be reading this and you can donate your money or your effort or both, don't hesitate to contact Didi at: [baanunrakschool@gmail.com](mailto:baanunrakschool@gmail.com). Thank you!



More

# Global NHE News



## Suva Sector

### Maleny, Australia

The River School ended last year with a challenge, as five of our primary teachers decided not to come back. In typical River School fashion, none of them left for other teaching jobs, but went off to do service in India,



travel Europe, take up a new career, etc. Fortunately we found a new inspiring group of teachers, and were lucky to have Dada Shambhushivananda visiting, who gave an inspiring talk on NHE to 30 staff members

before the school year began. Dada also attended the Ananda Mela festival and Ananda Marga summer retreat, where his lectures were well received.

Over the holidays, we were able to expand and improve several of our classrooms, which are now looking so lovely and are great for the kids.

The school now has vegetarian, whole foods Tuck Shop (canteen) two days a week, where the children can order healthy, sentient lunches. We are planning to expand this, adding gardens where the children will help out, and extra days. Already, year 7 students are offering a third day of tuck shop each week to raise money for their school trip later in the year.

Also, in typical River School fashion, the school held a swimming carnival at the local pool, with a variety of races. Last year 10 of our children went on to the higher level of competition (district) and the school won the "Small School Trophy" at the competition (our first time to enter). This year 21 children went on to the district competition, and we won the small schools trophy again. Three children have gone on to the regional competition.

### River School to Receive Over \$2 million in grants

The River School was successful in the first round of Building our Education Revolution government grant applications, and was allocated the full amount available for a school of our size. The funds will go towards two projects. One is a multi-purpose centre, which will have space for indoor sports, drama activities, music room, tuck shop and serving areas. The details are still being

finalised with the input of local designers and builders. The second project is a "21st Century Library" which will also have administration space. This new building will be tucked into a new site on the oval, giving a beautiful outlook and administrative heart to the school. Both projects need to begin immediately and be completed by the end of the school year.

The school was also successful in a school pride grant of \$125,000. Work started on this project during April holidays, and the children came back to school in some shock as their sports oval was alive with earth moving machines and workers. This grant money is being used to flatten our big sports oval, pave the formerly dirt circular road around the school and add new parking areas to avoid car traffic near the children. Over the last fifteen years, the children played sports on a rather steeply pitted oval, meaning they had to kick up into both of the soccer goals. We thought this was perhaps why the River School children were always outstanding at soccer!, but they'll adjust to a flat oval as well!

All of these new grant applications have kept school administrators Prabha Demasson and Dada Ratnadevananda very busy, but they were thrilled when their grant was accepted in the first round.

For all of us, it's an amazing expansion for our small school, challenging us to guard the natural beauty and sense of intimacy that we currently have, while we are excited about the new opportunities all this will bring for our students' educational experience.



Associates of the Prout College met with Ac. Shambhushivananda in Maleny River School on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in a very relaxed environment to explore new collaborations for globalizing Prout

College and for enhancing its capabilities for research and on-line education.



## Nairobi Sector

### Zambia

**By Ac. Pavanananda**

Our School is continuing to grow. From the 35 children we had when I arrived more than a year ago now we have 120 children. I managed to trace a former Pre-School child at our school and this is what she said: "My name is Mary Kabuyi Liyambo. I am 30 years old. I live in Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. The main aim of writing this to you is to inform that Ananda Marga Nursery and Pre School was a very good school and we need it to expand for our community. It helped a lot of people. It made some of us to be what we are now. As I am writing this I am working for the High Court of Zambia. I am not the only one who was at this school in my family but 4 brothers and 2 sisters. I was at this school from 1983 to 1985 (two years). We need this school to expand and continue to grow so that our children could also benefit from it. This will make me so grateful.



### VOLUNTEER PRINCIPAL OF SCHOOL NEEDED.

Must have knowledge of Neo humanist Education and should be able to work here for a good period of time. Should be able to maintain himself / herself and be able to raise funds for the school.



### Lome, Togo

#### Ecole Privee Neo-Humaniste

The AMSAI School at our master unit in Lome, Togo has dynamically expanded. In the past eight months Dada Tanmaya has arranged and supervised construction of four more classrooms, toilets and a water storage tank (to catch



and hold rainwater). Approximately 130 children are attending.

The school requires further development. Existing classrooms are yet to be plastered and painted; ceilings and electrical wiring are not yet installed. Books and materials are lacking, most teachers have only one text book for their classroom. An office room and store room needs to be built; a signboard is needed.

Support for the school has come from AMURT Italy, Foundation Emanuele Antola and from a donor in the USA. The Emmanuele Antola Foundation just granted \$1,000 for desks and furniture.

With support from a Togolese woman now in France, brother Murari arranged construction of a traditional village-style hut with thatched roof. The space was built to hold classes twice weekly on traditional dance, music and culture, especially for the school children.

## Manila Sector

### Bangkok, Thailand

House of Awakening to be called "Baan Sang Suk" was inaugurated in Bangkok on Jan 18th, 2009. This newly constructed Centre is located adjacent to Jayadhiira's new house and will be used as a

Centre for Neohumanist Foundation activities in Bangkok. The ceremony was led by Ac. Shambhushivananda in the presence of all devoted members of Neohumanist Foundation in Thailand.



### Lampang, Thailand

Shambhushivananda spoke at Lampang Rajabhat University where neohumanist Yoga is being taught as part of University Curriculum by Ms. Nuntaka Taweepkul for the past few years now. Over 200 students participate in the three hour weekly course on "Yoga for the Brain"



### Bali, Indonesia

In the Bali State Yoga Competition our children got the 1st prize, and also an award as the Most Favored Yoga Group. The public chose our children for this award. The children came back with two trophies. Our kids got

interviewed by press. Four newspapers and 2 TV channels covered this news. There were a total of 12 groups and among them we got the first. (Bali Children's Home has 40 children now from 11 months to 18 years, managed by Didis).

## Kahira Sector

### **Bormla, Malta Centru Tbexbix by Leandros Calleja (athletics coach)**

For the past year, a number of children from Centru Tbexbix,



Bormla have been attending weekly athletic training sessions at Matthew Micallef St John Stadium in Marsa.

The aim of this program was to introduce the various athletic disciplines and their components and to practice each event in its elementary form. The 7 to 13 year age bracket is the Golden Age for learning different skills. Therefore, as with the main intentions of this athletics program, the more variety of skills employed the more skillful and coordinated these children get. In fact, most of the children that attended have shown an improvement in movement, coordination, posture and other basic skills. Some have also shown significant improvement in specific events, although this was not the main intention of this program. Additionally, the children developed a positive attitude towards running, jumping and throwing both individually and as a group. They also learned to show respect for one another especially when one of them is leading the group as for example during stretching. Some of these new athletes have shown interest and in fact competed in organized athletic activities. The plan for the coming sessions is to continue practicing through repetition with the goal of rectifying the skills obtained and to start taking part in the KIDS Athletics meetings and Aggregate meetings organized by the Malta Amateur Athletic Association. However, the latter will be an additional target but it will not replace our primary aim. Learning to run, jump and throw will still remain our main focus, at least for the time being, until these children have achieved a skill level high enough to become competitive youth athletes.

*The Athletics programme is sponsored by Woman2000 (www.woman2000.net)*



### **Athletics events**

This month our young athletes participated in two events, one on the 7th March at Floriana stadium and the other on the 31st at Corradino Sports Complex. The first was organised by the MAAA, while the second one was a charity event organised by the Malta Association of Physiotherapists in order to promote physical exercise and well-being, while raising funds for a children's home and an animal sanctuary. For 1.5 hours the children tried their skills in a number of fun athletic games, together with children from other sports schools and football nurseries.

### **Confidence building**

At Centru Tbexbix we strive to build and boost our children's self-confidence, to help them deal with their insecurities and become active participants in our programmes and later on in their community. It is wonderful to notice a positive transformation happening at various levels and with varying speed in all our children. All of them without exception are now engaging in drama, singing and other performances, (photo) in contrast to their shyness of some months before.



## Georgetown Sector

### **Florianopolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil**

Yoga and meditation classes are being conducted again in the university, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), this semester (they began the first semester of 2007), but this time, for the first time, the classes are full of people; there is even lack of space. Most are young students. Mahesh and his wife are giving the classes together. They are also helping to create another group, which will be conducted by a new Tantra Yoga teacher.





## Berlin Sector

### Romanian Schools By Didi Ananda Devapriya

As reported in the last issue of Gurukula Network, after a very long and difficult process, the kindergartens at last obtained authorization from the Ministry of Education. The authorization represents an exciting turning point for Neohumanist Education in Romania and will allow us to gain more professional recognition for NHE and the ability to share our approach with other educators in the field. Both kindergartens will obtain authorization, but the smaller one still needs more investments and modifications in order to meet new health inspection requirements, and will get the authorization after the completion of those changes in the summer.



We have a new website with news and pictures from our recent events in the kindergartens: [www.rasarit.amurtel.net](http://www.rasarit.amurtel.net) From the website, please come and see the video clips from our Diversity Day programs - it was an opportunity to overcome the stereotypes and prejudices already forming in children, by giving them positive experiences of Roma culture, through stories and discussion to awaken empathy, and through dialogue with Diipani. In Bucuresti Noi there was also a special program about Greece - the children dressed as mythological gods and goddesses and acted out the story of Prometheus. In Mihai Bravu, the multicultural program focused on Turkey - with stories about Aladdin performed for parents, making of baklava and dancing.

This year, during the Christmas season, we had heard from our project manager Cristina that many of the children at the Fountain of Hope after school program have never had their own toys, as their families cannot afford them. One day, when the children in the after-school center were decorating for Christmas, one little boy, attending the Fountain of Hope after school center told Cristina, the project director "You know, I don't like Santa." Surprised, Cristina asked "But why? All children like Santa!" and he replied "He never comes to visit my house..." She said "Well, maybe he is busy and he has to visit to some children that are very poor..." and he replied "Yes, but my family is also very poor, but still he never visits. That is why I don't like Santa."

So in the week before Christmas, a letter was sent out to the parents of the Gradinita Rasarit kindergartens in Bucharest, which received a warm and generous

response - and 2 big duffle bags and 4 boxes of toys, food, and clothing were sent to Panatau to the Fountain of Hope After School Center just in time for the last day of school before the holidays. Cristina's eyes brimmed with tears when she saw how many things had been collected. The next morning, she arranged a Christmas party for them after their last session of school before the vacation. Each child was delighted to receive a special bag full of gifts and food selected according to the needs of their family situation.

Then, on Christmas day, Santa Claus himself, a Santa straight from Finland with a real white beard (Dada Rasatmakanda), came to visit a few of the especially poor families in the village, walking up the unpaved roads to the houses made of mud and plaster. Santa was careful to go exactly to the house of the same little boy that had never had a visit from Santa before. He arrived with an umbrella as there was no snow for his sleigh and mesmerized the children with magic tricks and storytelling, creating a unique and unforgettable experience for these children.



## Delhi Sector

### Himmatnagar, Gujrat (India) Annual Function of Ananda Marga School Ac Shubhagatananda Avt, Principal

The annual function of Ananda Marga School, Himmatnagar, Gujrat was organized in Town hall on 1st of March 2009. Little children of the School participated in a colourful cultural



Santhali, Punjabi etc. The programme was based on Prabhat Samgiita and was very inspiring for all. It

programme in different decorated dresses for each song. Songs and dances were in many languages i.e. Gujrati, Hindi, English, Bengali, Oriya,





started at 2.00 PM and continued till 6.00 PM. Guardians along with their family and friends filled the Town Hall (700 in numbers) and blessed and inspired all the children. A few dignitaries from the town also graced the occasion. A city channel telecast the programme and news and the local news paper highlighted the programme. Ac Madhuvratananda Avt and Ac Abhiramananda Avt were also kind enough to be present as chief guests of the programme. They spoke about the spirit of ERAWS and its activities around the globe.

### New Schools in Bihar

A new school has just started in **Sacrecha** in Pun Pun railway station, about 20 kilometers from Patna. The opening took place on January 26th. Already 79 students have started and enrollment is likely to increase to 300 as the new session opens in May - June '09. These children will be coming from the eight villages in the vicinity. This school building is owned by Ananda Marga. There is a nearby master unit land which has remained unutilized. We are also planning to build this master unit starting June '09. It is proposed to have an AMURT regional office and store, training center, jagrti, nursery, dairy farm and high school. This project is expected to be completed in two years time. There are three LFTs working here and two of them are trained.

Another school is starting in Bali, Shrinagar Panchayat, Madhepura by April-May '09. We already have our own building. It has been repaired with some additional construction of three toilets and two manual water pumps. This school is expected to have 600 children from the surrounding villages. It will also house a regional emergency AMURT store. There are four LFTs working here and all are trained. The total land registered in our name is 40,000 sq.ft. There is a possibility of this place getting transformed into a master unit soon.

A women managed primary school for girls is proposed to be started this session in Hardi Panchayat in Madhepura. This land is also owned by us. There are five large size halls in pucca shades steel construction. They were constructed by Tatas during the recent Kosi floods on our land. Some peripheral work like boundary construction and clearing the debris and landscaping work is needed to be done before opening the school. This facility has the potential to develop as a residential school with a children's home and AMURTEL relief center and store.

We are planning to have a 15 day program starting in Hardi for training this summer for the teachers and for the local population. This will include apart from other activities, Yoga training for the locals, Yaogika Cikitsa

for locals and LFT training. Local members of Ananda Marga have already started planning this event.

### Haridwar

The annual function of the Ananda Marga School in Haridwar, India was held on 26th of January 2009. More than 1500 people attended the programme. The principal is Acarya Shubhashisa Brahmachari. Here are some photos from the event.



# Morning Circle at Vistara School, Australia

From a Demonstration at the NHE Global Conference

## Kiirtan

The circle starts with kiirtan (singing a universal mantra). First and foremost, it is important for the leader to ideate. While playing kiirtan, remind yourself that the center of the universe shifts into the hearts of those who sing kiirtan. Remember that the Divine is here in all of the children. There are several different styles that can be used for singing kiirtan: circle sitting, circle standing, rows standing, 6 direction kiirtan, or walking kiirtan. Children are asked who would like to be leaders, and children are chosen. Children are invited to use selected instruments which may include: drums, tambourines, clap sticks, maracas, tone blocks and bells.

For new children or whenever you feel like reminding children, explain that the dance they do for kiirtan was created over 7500 years ago by a great yogi and spiritualist, Parvati. Show the steps. Explain that when the big toe touches the ground, it should be very gentle, like a feather to the earth. This point on the big toe stimulates or activates a centre in the middle of your brain to prepare it for meditation. Then show the steps and get everyone to follow. Next explain where the hands can be; at the heart chakra or centre of the chest or raised up high when someone feels joy in their heart or clapping in rhythm.

## Meditation

Sitting with the younger and middle primary children begin with singing out loud, then singing softer, then no voice and eyes close, then the guitar strums the tune for a few rounds, then the guitar stops strumming. Then meditation begins.

For younger children there is a visualisation which has been used, taking the child's imagination from being tiny to being part of vastness.



**Visualisation:** Imagine you are a cloud, sitting way up high in the sky. You can see so many things, as far as the eye can see. (pause) Look all around you, what do you see? (pause) You notice a beautiful blue colour below you. I wonder what it is? You have the desire to know what it is. You have a desire to be more than what you are, so with this thought you use your courage and you take a big leap out of the cloud. (pause) You feel so free, flying through the air. Look around you. Can you see the trees in the forest, can you see the mountains? Feel the breeze move around you. Can you see the beautiful blue colour? It is the ocean. You wonder what it is like to be you gently come closer to the ocean you see your reflection for a second and you plunge into the ocean. You are no longer a tiny little rain drop. You are wide as the ocean. See how it feels to be as vast and wide and free as the explore what it is like to be the ocean for 3 – 5 minutes (depending on how day, you choose the length of time). After 3 minutes quietly say Namaskar visualisation.

**Suggestion:** You could gently begin playing kiirtan to end the session or to encourage the mantra during the journey.

Children generally like to share what it was like to fly, be free or be the ocean. You may wish to offer paper and pencils, pastels so children can draw their experience.

For middle and upper grades, our meditation tends to be sitting in silence, relaxing the body, keeping the spine straight, singing the mantra quietly in their mind or hearing their inner voice say Baba Nam Kevalam, Love is all there is.

We talk about our biological clock and how everything is systematic. We can train our mind to sit



the ocean. As then...Splash.. now as vast and ocean. Let's they are that and end the



## YES Yoga Education in Schools

for meditation for as long as we wish to. We begin to experiment with 2 minutes. Ask the children to open their eyes and sit quietly when they feel that 2 minutes are up. Eventually we practice for 5 minutes and longer.

Kiirtan and Meditation with older grades can be gradually built up from 5 minutes to 10 minutes to 15 minutes and on Baba's birthday it is 30 minutes.

### **How to help children who find sitting quietly with themselves a challenge:**

When the children have danced kiirtan and sit quietly for meditation, we ask the child to take their mind to the sound in the distance. Then after a pause, we ask them to go beyond that sound to the next and further until they can hear the farthest sound. After another long pause, we use the same process to bring their mind to the nearest sound, then to the sound of their breathing, then to the sound of their heart beating. Then finally listening to their mind saying Baba Nam Kevalam, Love is all there is. Let the child practice the mantra with their breath.

## Kaoshiki

Children are introduced to the Kaoshiki dance and it is explained that Baba, PR Sarkar, created Kaoshiki. We talk about its benefits, as well as the strength it provides the body and mind. Children are taught what areas of the feet should touch the floor and what they are called e.g. Din or Ta. The dance begins with the call "Dancers ready". Children begin and end with Namaskar.

Kaoshiki is taught throughout the year. We start off with one minute per day for one week, then two minutes for a week and so on until children are doing Kaoshiki for 10 minutes per day per week. We hold a Kaoshiki competition at the end of the year and children are invited to participate. There are medals for every participant, certificates for the ones who chose not to compete but have been practicing throughout the year and trophies for the best in each classroom. Sometimes the standard is very high, so we have to award 2 trophies per classroom.



## Asanas (yoga postures)

For the young children we sometimes tell stories, and through the journey of the story, animals are introduced. For example, we are walking through the forest and along the way you hear a lion (child assume the lion pose). Make the story up as you like introducing various animals.

To prepare the children to do the 'difficult tortoise' pose, we tell a story to stretch the body and muscles. E.g. you are in a room and you hear a baby cry. Pick up the baby, be gentle with it and rock it back and forth. (Hands on knee and leg below the knee is caressed as if holding a baby rocking back and forth)

The baby has settled and gently place them back into their cot. Suddenly there is another cry from a baby. A second baby is crying, you must pick this baby up and gently rock them back and forth, comforting the baby. While you are holding the baby, the phone rings. Oh, no, place the baby down and pick up the phone. (Children take foot to their ear and talk into their foot)

My goodness, the other phone starts ringing, (here sometimes children like to talk to both feet, other children place one foot down and answer the other) Oh no, the phones are very busy today. You must not hang up (both feet are place on the shoulders and rested.) With time the children's muscles stretch and they can cross both legs behind the head and hold their posture doing namaskar. The children love this routine. There are a lot of laughs.





# Share a Virtue Book

By Didi Ananda Gaorii

During the last NHE Global Conference in Maleny an idea came up for a kind of book exchange or book donation programme. These should not be just any books but books which illustrate virtues such as courage, honesty, generosity, humility, etc. We thought that it would be a simple yet valuable service project for people in those countries where there are resources and also funds available for acquiring such books to pass on new or second-hand virtues books to our schools in countries where these kinds of books might not be available or might be too expensive to buy. This could be done either individually (by maybe kids in our schools or parents or anyone who'd like to participate in this programme) or collectively (e.g. it could be a class project).

As the teaching of moral principles and character building are essential aspects of our NHE system, the rational distribution of books containing 'virtues' stories would be a wonderful maximum utilisation of such types of books. They would provide invaluable teaching aids in those places where it's difficult to get such books and also such a scheme provides a meaningful service opportunity for anyone to contribute to the spread of good virtues or values in the world. The programme could also work with a kind of 'pay it forward' feeling to it i.e. you've had something good done for you or you've realized something new so 'pay it forward' and 'share a virtue book'.

As postage is sometimes expensive, especially if there is a heavy package containing a stack of books, it is important that this 'share a virtue book' idea is spread around to as many people as possible. It is not so expensive for a person to post one book. Or maybe people who want to be part of this programme but who do not know which book to send could offer to pay the postage for sharing a virtue book; this would need to be organized on a local level though. For the programme to be successful and to grow from maybe just our projects to reach out into the community it'll require some PR from the sponsoring school or unit. Again this could possibly be done as a project by some of the older kids at our schools.

The Ananda Marga Global Liaison Office will coordinate this project and keep a list of recommended books and also try to keep track of which of our projects already got which books or which of our schools need what kind of book, so if you are mailing a book, please also inform the Liaison Office <amgk.liason@gurukul.edu> .

At the conference there was a sharing of the names of such great books. A few of these are included below with more posted on our NHE Resources site.

## TRIAL RUN – SEND A VIRTUE BOOK TO LAOS

It was suggested that as a trial run we could ask our young and older brothers and sisters who are connected with our schools in English speaking countries to share a virtue book with the Laos school. There are not many children's books available in Laos and the school in Laos already has a system of pasting a Lao translation into English language children's books; sometimes other languages as well if we can find translators. As a result of the ideas that were shared at the conference, the Laos school has a plan to assign books illustrating certain values to each class next year as part of the morality and English language study approach of the school. So we will really need some good books to get this important development in our school underway.

WANT TO DO A GOOD DEED  
THAT WILL SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF  
NEOHUMANISM ALL OVER THE  
WORLD AND THAT WILL BENEFIT  
MANY GENERATIONS TO COME?  
THEN SHARE A VIRTUE BOOK.

IT'S SIMPLE.

JUST POST YOUR FAVOURITE STORY  
BOOK WHICH TELLS ABOUT A GREAT  
VIRTUE SUCH AS COURAGE OR  
HONESTY OR HUMILITY TO AN  
ANANDA MARGA SCHOOL WHERE  
THE CHILDREN CANNOT GET SUCH  
GREAT BOOKS. YOU'LL BE HELPING  
TO CHANGE THE COURSE OF THE  
WORLD.

As English is a (very) second language in Laos, where the main language is Lao, we need quite simple books with less text and more illustrations around the level for kids from kindergarten to grade 3 in an English speaking country.

If anyone would like to post a book and would like more information about our school or would like to discuss what kind of book to send or if the kids/parents or anyone connected to your school/unit wants information in order to advertise or get involved in the 'share a virtue book' programme, feel free to write to me:

Didi Ananda Gaorii: [sunshinelaos@gmail.com](mailto:sunshinelaos@gmail.com)

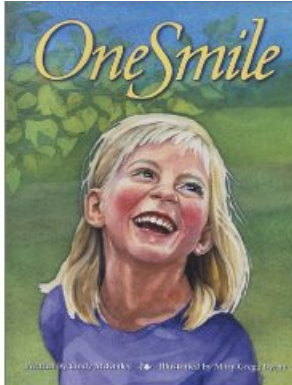
Our postal address is:

Sunshine School , PO Box 7411, Vientiane, Lao PDR

**A Story Book List has been prepared by  
Didi Anandavitandra and Rukminii from the  
Vistara Primary School, Australia**

Here are some books from that list

The complete list can be found on  
NHE Resources  
[www.nhe.gurukul.edu/reources.htm](http://www.nhe.gurukul.edu/reources.htm)



**One Smile  
by Cindy McKinley**

This book shows that a simple act of kindness, smiling to another person, even it is someone you don't know, has a profound impact on society. This act of kindness started to change the world. This child's smile has a

positive ripple effect on the society and world. This book is part of the Pay It Forward foundation.

**Activity:** Give the children an assignment where they smile to other people and ask them to record the difference in the energy between each other, the interactions they have for the rest of the day. You may also wish to continue this activity for a week. Make a

chart. This activity promotes the awareness of positive microvita.

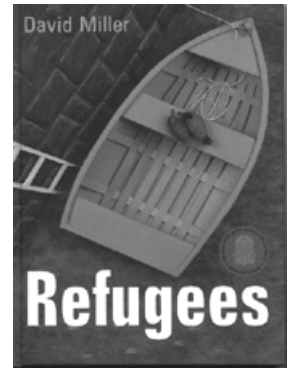
**Refugees  
by David Miller**

*Refugees* relates the adventures of pair of wild blue-billed ducks whose home is destroyed when their swamp is dug up and they have to find a safe place to live.

The difficult and dangerous journey they undertake seems doomed to failure as they try unsuccessfully to settle in different environments, including an ocean, a busy river port and a swamp where duck shooting is allowed. They are close to exhaustion when the intervention of an unknown person changes their fate.

-This is a human rights story. Australia like other countries around the world, attracts thousands of refugees each year and their journey and experience is often a traumatic one. This story is to open up the awareness of refugees. This story can lead in many different directions, Socio Sentiment, Geo Sentiment, Universalism etc.

**Activity to follow story:** Write to a children or an adult in a detention centre, collect small gifts, colour pencils, paper, soft toys for the children in the detention centres.



## STUVOL Accelerated Learning Courses in Syria

From the activities of the Ananda Marga Yoga Association in Syria naturally a group of young people gathered children of friends and neighbors and started teaching them yoga for children. Gradually extended activities were connected to the yoga. In this way the STUVOL Student Volunteers programme of NHE evolved and took on a more organized shape. The Shining Stars STUVOL clubs guides meet regularly and share working on lesson plans for different age-groups of children. Among the extended activities were helping out at a children's home, garbage collection and cultural programme.



An outline of STUVOL in Syria is on the NHE resource pages.

### Accelerated Learning Courses

Another group of young people under the guidance of Dada Krsnasevananda worked out a programme of teaching learning methods to high school students to acquire skills in inner and outer ecology for better learning. The courses were welcomed by the trainers and the students. Part of the course was concentration exercises, yoga and meditation.

## NHE Publications

**New Books!** <amgkpublications@gurukul.edu> Bulk orders encouraged. Inquire for prices.

### Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea - by P. R. Sarkar

72 pages with full colour illustrations by Bhaskar

*The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea*, by Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, is a masterpiece of responsible modern children's literature. In every sentence of this fairy tale there is a wonderful attractive power – a crystalline simplicity and an open-heartedness. Through the storyline the author conveys to the child how life should be lived with purity and straight-forwardness.



*The Golden Lotus of the Blue Sea* sets a refreshing new standard in children's literature conveying the essence of Neohumanist philosophy which Shrii P.R. Sarkar defined in short as 'the practice of love for all created beings.'

The fairy tale is child-focused from start to finish. The story itself starts with the children's keen sensitivity to nature alerting them that something was not right. The wise king has the ability to listen and respond to the children's grievances with decisive steps and thus the children are empowered and given due respect. Throughout the story the human children, along with the animal children, remain loyal to the noble hero.

The role of simple poor people is given prominence by attributing magical powers to them that are used in the service of a good cause. The story introduces the real world of exploitative rulers and the peoples' uprising in response, all the time maintaining the charm and fascination of the fairy tale.

The female role in the story is portrayed by the fairy who is magical, virtuous, innocent and spiritual in her unique lifestyle in her own realm. Her lapse is mended with the help of the hero and without guilt she asserts her inner strength and thus becomes part of the happy ending of the story.

**Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar** (1921- 1990) is a celebrated author of voluminous writings on a wide range of topics including some examples of good children's literature. His writings are revolutionary and refreshingly dynamic, setting a new trend of benevolent thought and psychology in all realms of human cultural life from the crude to the subtle and spiritually beautiful.

### Honey Bee and Red Lotus

a story book for small children

Retold by Ananda Rama and Illustrated by Ananda Carushila

"This touching, beautifully illustrated tale of Honey Bee's search for a special gift will appeal to a young child's innate love of nature and depthful generosity to others."

-- Ruai Gregory, MA, instructor, Early Childhood Education.

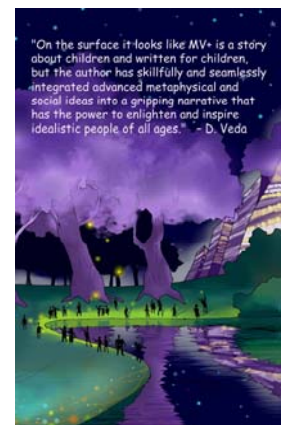
Inquire at <amgkpublications@gurukul.edu> for bulk orders.



### MV+ and the Golden Chamber – by Jesse Seanach

An adventure –mystery book for children and youth introducing the concept of microvita. Now available in paperback. Inquire at <amgkpublications@gurukul.edu> for bulk orders.

*"On the surface it looks like MV+ is a story about children and written for children, but the author has skilfully and seamlessly integrated advanced metaphysical and social ideas into a gripping narrative that has power to enlighten and inspire idealistic people of all ages."* -- Dada Vedaprajananda





## A Song in My Heart- Song Book and Music CDs!

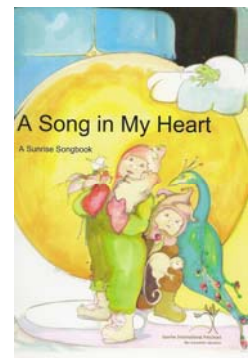
From Sunrise International Preschool in Copenhagen

A beautiful collection of Neohumanist songs for circle time... and any time!

The package includes one booklet and 2 CDs.

The book contains 55 songs, including "sunny songs", "classic kids songs", "sharing songs" and "love grows" songs. It comes with guitar chords too so that you can enjoy playing and singing along together!

Contact Didi Ananda Ragamaya: [info@sunrisepreschool.dk](mailto:info@sunrisepreschool.dk)

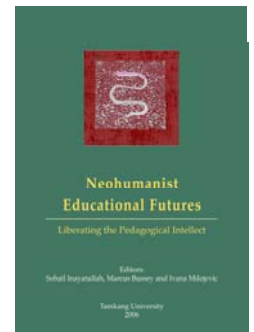


## Neohumanist Educational Futures

Edited by Dr. Sohail Inayatullah, Marcus Bussey and Dr. Ivana Milojevic

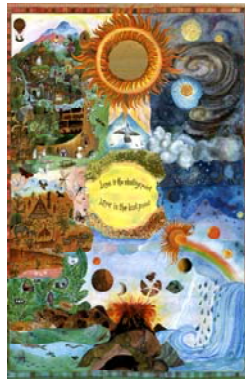
*Neohumanist Educational Futures* breaks new ground by linking neohumanism with pedagogy and futures thinking. Inayatullah, Bussey and Milojevic, all educators, theorize the ethics of inclusion and exclusion; situate neohumanism in Tantric and transcultural futures; map out issues in neohumanist pedagogy (including education for world futures; from information to wisdom; social cohesion in South Africa; speciesism and vegetarian pedagogy in Sweden; alternative indicators for neohumanism; integrated intelligence, peace and non-violence, partnership education; and the politics of historiography) and provide case studies of neohumanist educational practice.

ORDERING: Copies can be ordered from <[books.tw@gurukul.edu](mailto:books.tw@gurukul.edu)> 730 NT \$ per copy plus postage or <[amgkpublications@gurukul.edu](mailto:amgkpublications@gurukul.edu)> \$15 US per copy plus postage.



## Circle of Love Poster

This beautiful full color poster measures approx 20 X 30 inches. Cost is \$10 US plus shipping for developed countries and \$5 US plus shipping for developing countries. Order

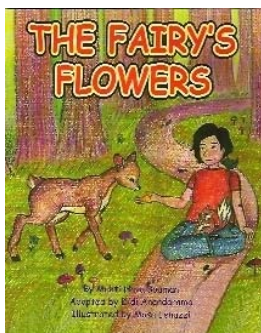


## Kid's Yoga Posters

Arunima in Taipei has printed the sequel to Yoga Kids Poster and she is working on the third one. She is also hoping to make "animals in meditation" poster to inspire kids. These brightly coloured posters are made in Taiwan. Each one measures approximately 20 x 30 inches. To order write to: [books.tw@gurukul.edu](mailto:books.tw@gurukul.edu)

## The Fairy's Flowers

A Neohumanist Children's Book



The Fairy's Flowers is inspired by the ten moral principles of Yama and Niyama as elaborated by Shrii P. R Sarkar in his book Guide to Human Conduct. Each concept is delightfully interwoven into the adventure of Jonathan who sets out to meet the fairy in the forest. The Fairy's Flowers is a 32 page full colour glossy book with soft cover printed in India. It costs \$7 US plus \$ 3 for postage.

[www.nhe-press.com](http://www.nhe-press.com)

## The Fairy's Flowers – CD

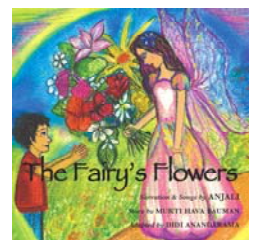
A Neohumanist Story and Songs CD

This subtle work is based on a blending of storytelling and song. The Fairy's Flowers story is simply narrated. Phrases are sung throughout using the lyre, Indian bells, guitar, harmonies and counter voices. 14 celestial songs satisfy the young child's need for repetition.

Narration and songs produced and performed by Anjali (Angela Silva-Natarajan)  
Story by Mukti Hava Bauman, Adapted by Didi Anandarama

Published by AMGK : Cost: \$15US per CD

[www.nhe-press.com](http://www.nhe-press.com)



For more AMGK/NHE publications, please visit: [http://www.gurukul.edu/gknetwork/Issue25/nhe\\_publications.htm](http://www.gurukul.edu/gknetwork/Issue25/nhe_publications.htm)

# Neohumanist Education



Neo-Humanist Education



*Children from Mihai Bravu, Romania*

## **Renaissance**

*The real meaning of the word “renaissance” is reawakening. That is, humanity was sleeping, and now it must wake up from that cimmerian slumber and do something in all the spheres of life, in all the strata of existence.*

## **Universalism**

*Just as my life is dear to me, so the lives of created beings are also equally dear to them. It is the birthright of human beings to live in this world, and it is the birthright of the animal world and plant world also to remain on this earth. To recognize this right, and to get it recognized by the entire human society, the Renaissance movement will have to do something concrete.*

## **Neohumanism**

*In the mobility of the psychic world, there are certain defective thoughts prevailing – that we humans are destined to rule this earth, and the creatures are destined to be ruled by us. You will have to fight against this type of psychology with the help of your strong weapon. What is that weapon? Neohumanism. All have the equal right to live here: this universe is for all. It is not the patrimony of human beings only. This is also the duty of Renaissance people.*

*From A Few Problems Solved Part 7: Shrii PR Sarkar*

Gurukula Network  
146 Honness Lane  
Ithaca, New York 14850