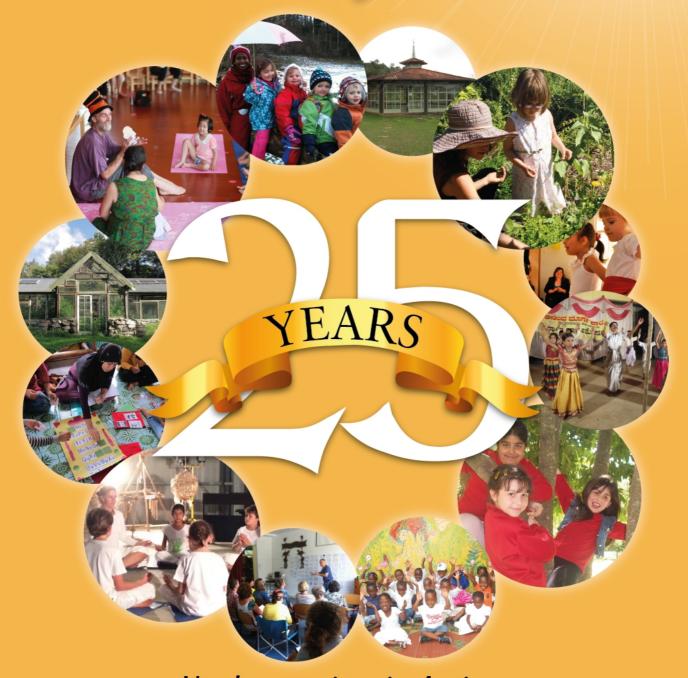
GURUKULA N E T W O R K



Newsletter of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes affiliated with Ananda Marga Gurukula

Issue 39 - January 2015

Ananda Marga Gurukula



Neohumanism in Action:

Educating for Compassionate and Sustainable Futures

Gurukula Network

Newsletter and Journal of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes

Gurukula Network is published by the Ananda Marga Gurukula Global Liaison Office

Two yearly issues, January and June, serve as a means of communication for Neohumanist projects around the world.

It is the spirit of Gurukula Network to encourage a free sharing of ideas and to stimulate discussion on educational and global issues facing our world. All articles express the views of the author, and not necessarily those of AMGK.

Gurukula Network is open to any and all NHE related projects and faculties of AMGK.

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All NHE educators and projects
 are encouraged to join

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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

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 and Inclusive Approach
Integrated Curriculum
Exemplary Role of the Educators

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Today's humanity is in despair; people think too much about their imperfections. They think, "Can I do it?"

But in that supreme, Neohumanistic status, they will say, "Yes, I am a Neohumanistic being and I am destined to do great work. For that purpose I have come onto this earth. So there is no scope for doubt whether I can do it or not." Shrii P.R. Sarkar

Ananda Marga Gurukula 25th

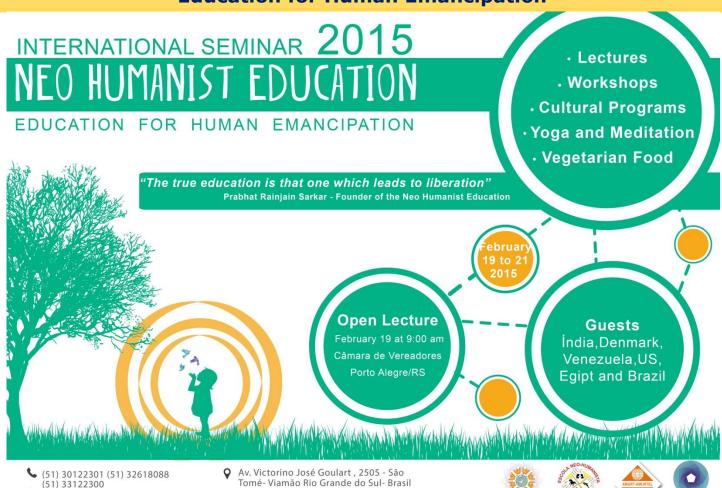
TAIWAN – January 24-25, 2015 Neohumanism in Action: Education for a Compassionate and a Sustainable Future

This Seminar will explore what Neohumanism brings to the practice of education. The focus is on compassion and sustainability and how we can build these effectively into our daily practices and into the lives of schools, their students, families and communities. Contact: Yun-Chin Ko < snehalata.edu@gmail.com>

neohumanista@amurt.org.br



BRAZIL – February 19-21, 2015 Education for Human Emancipation



Ananda Marga Brasil invites you to attend the International Seminar on Neohumanist Education - February 19 to 21, 2015, with the theme: Education for Human Emancipation. The Seminar will be held in the beautiful master unit Ananda Daksina, an area with woods, a native forest and centenary fig trees in the city of Viamão, thirty minutes from the Capital Porto Alegre in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In Porto Alegre AMURT-AMURTEL is serving two thousand children, adolescents and families per day with schools and social programs. Visits will be organized to meet all the activities of Ananda Marga in the Region.

210,00 R\$ (Seminar, Food and accommodation)

We'll be waiting for all in the world to come to exchange their experiences of Neohumanist Education and to enjoy an environment suitable for deep meditations and establish new bonds of solidarity. We will be honored to have the presence of Dada Shambushivananda who coordinates the worldwide Neohumanist Education - Ananda Marga Gurukula, plus guests from Denmark, Venezuela, USA, Egypt and Brazil.

Fraternally, Ananda Marga Brazil

Anniversary Events for 2015



LEBANON – April 10-13, 2015 Educational Activism - Building a Compassionate and Sustainable Future

Neohumanist Education Conference and Spiritual Retreat Al Mahaba School, Kfarnabrakh, Chouf, Lebanon. Cost \$120 for Lebanon; other countries \$80 all inclusive.

Special additional optional programme:

Yoga Detox Camp - Ananda Marga Wellness - April 14 - 19, 2015 Kfarnabrakh, Chouf, Lebanon.

For improvement in your health through fasting, natural clay, water treatment and nature walks in loving and caring company. Contact: <didianandarama@gmail.com>



USA - July 11-16, 2015 - Gurukula Global Conference

Neohumanism in Action:

Educating for Sustainable and Compassionate Futures

Neohumanism in Action:

Educating for Sustainable & Compassionate Futures

July 11 - 16, 2015

25th Aniversary of Ananda Marga Gurukula We invite all educators and Neohumanist activists from around the globe to share in creating the vision of a sustainable and compassionate future and adopting the actions required to expand our Neohumanist institutions and projects.

Place: Prama Institute Price: \$275 US
Asheville USA

Information & www.gurukul.edu
Registration: amgk.glo@gurukul.edu







Ananda Marga Gurukula celebrates its 25th Anniversary with a global meeting in Asheville, North Carolina, USA, July 11-16, 2105. The theme of the celebration is Neohumanism in Action: Educating for a Sustainable and Compassionate Future. We invite all educators and neohumanist activists to share in creating a sustainable and compassionate future and adopting the actions required to expand our Neohumanist institutions and projects. This expansion will include developing the P. R. Sarkar Institute (PRSI), an initiative of Ananda Marga Gurukula (AMGK) in collaboration with the P. R. Sarkar Archives, which will function as an umbrella body for all disciplines of research, development and dissemination of works related to P. R. Sarkar's ideas. (More information: prsi@gurukul.edu.) A Neohumanist College for online courses is also being planned. http://nhcollege.gurukul.edu. Come celebrate and work with us for the expansion of a Neohumanist Education for all, as envisioned by Shrii P. R. Sarkar to create a truly compassionate and sustainable society.

Neohumanism in Action in this issue of Gurukula Network

This month's Gurukula Network features a bright array of Neohumanism in Action ranging from the Edible Forest Garden of Brian Ragbourn in Ireland, comprised of exotic plants from around the world, Master Units in Portugal and Venezuela that offer models for sustainable communities and local economies to Khun Krisada Kampanatsanyakorn's model of economic development utilizing energy efficient habitats and renewable energy that makes use of a vanadium fuel cell. The welcoming spirit of Neohumanist Education in Action shines through at the Sunshine School in Switzerland where Abadit, a Eritrean teacher and refugee from her war-torn country, finds a home and contributes the gifts of her heritage to a NHE school in Switzerland. At our River school in Maleny, Australia the love of our animal friends is attested to when some parents built a chicken coop at our Early Childhood Centre to rescue battery hens that were facing euthanasia at the end of their egg laying life. At the New Day School in Portland, an adjacent .75 acre parking lot has been converted into a luscious garden and Farm to Plate program. In Porto Allgre, Brazil, Projovem, the Rescue Program for abused youth, is saving lives in schools and on the streets. This array of Neohumanism in Action, along with the other articles of this issue, are testaments to the inspiration of Neohumanist philosophy given to us by Shrii P.R. Sarkar.

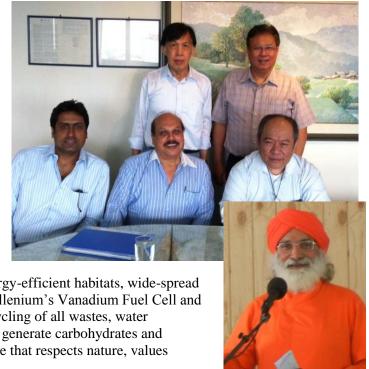
Sacred Activism for a Sustainable Future Gurukula-Cellenium Global Partnership

By Dr. Shambhushivananda

We stand today at the crossroads of a fossil fuel driven age versus the renewable energy age. The former evokes the fears of conflicts and wars, scarcities and a future ridden with competition and mutual fights for survival. The latter opens new horizons for a world of abundant energy, new models of habitats, de-coupling of energy and food security and a paradigm shift towards a self reliant and a sustainable future.

At the crux of this movement towards a sustainable world lies a shift in worldview. Centralized models nurture centralization of economic power while decentralized models aim towards bringing economic democracy with the participation of millions of impoverished mass and their governments. If poverty is to be permanently driven from the face of this earth, we need to

adopt models of economic development which are based on energy-efficient habitats, wide-spread use of renewable energy utilizing energy-storage system like Cellenium's Vanadium Fuel Cell and Cellenium's other ecological smart solutions related to total recycling of all wastes, water purification, fertilizer production, and tapping carbon dioxide to generate carbohydrates and abundant energy. We also need the support of a sentient life-style that respects nature, values compassion, sharing and service.



Ananda Marga Gurukula joins Cellenium's efforts to spread sacred activism through a host of eco-friendly technologies that offer a promise of self-sufficiency in all essentialities especially provision of comfortable habitats, fulfillment of energy needs, food security, availability of drinkable water and regeneration of depleted soils through organic fertilizer.

Human beings need to take control of their biosphere by learning to manage the eco-system to fulfill all their essential needs. Cellennium has engaged in research on these issues for the past twenty years and is now ready to enter the marketplace to help alleviate the pressing economic problems created by the fossil fuel age. Ananda Marga Gurukula has championed the cause of economic self-sufficiency through its neohumanist educational philosophy and hundreds of educational centers in over 70 countries. The Gurukula-Cellennium partnership is a historic initiative to help all developing economies to adopt the shortest path to rooting out poverty, utilizing the most appropriate technological solutions aligned with the abundant potential of nature. The farther we go from nature, the more scarcity we shall have. The closer we align with nature, the greater abundance we shall have. This is the key principle of Gurukula-Cellenium global initiative.

Towards a Renewable Energy Age By Khun Krisada Kampanatsanyakorn

Within the spirit of service to humanity, one must reflect on defining the biggest problem humanity is facing today. After many years of soul searching I have reached a personal view that the gravest danger is to the survival of humanity itself. This century has turned out many events that point to the final limit of our civilization. Super power proxy war is spreading all over



and is escalating along with trade war, currency war, and propaganda war. If this trend continues thermonuclear war will be unavoidable, for the stake of this conflict is the last remaining large oil field and none of the old or new superpowers will allow the other side to win. This whole predicament comes from an entrenched addiction to fossil fuel by our whole civilization, and this precious commodity is finite and dwindling very fast. By following the numbers of annual total oil production one can easily see that we are already past peak oil -- the total production declined several years ago. Our global food production and distribution are totally based on fossil fuel. A spike in its price will cause food prices to rise and social upheaval will follow as happened in 2008.

All in all, the present system is unsustainable. We have reached a limit not only of oil and gas but also our topsoil, fresh water, marine life, and fertilizer. Within the present system the best one can do, without a meaningful new paradigm, is to prolong the time before this breakdown. Change towards a sustainable way of life is needed in our time or civilization will definitely reach its end.

Is meaningful change possible and available? I personally believe so. Renewable energy from solar, wind and biomass is making rapid inroads replacing the fossil fuel domain. With breakthroughs in energy storage, intermittent renewable energy can replace fossil fuel one hundred percent now. Only the will of those communities with sustained will power to change is required to overcome the local fossil fuel mafia and business establishment. The realities of renewable energy negate the old premise that vital resources of energy are finite. It clearly demonstrates that energy can be virtually infinite; if we apply accumulated human knowledge wisely there is more than enough for everybody's needs. Hopefully, there is no need for a third world war.

PROUT's progressive utilization of resources needs to be translated into an action plan that includes: complete recycling of all wastes (solids, liquids, and gases), using bio-mass to generate electricity and organic fertilizers, building habitats utilizing green technologies, and transportation systems that utilize renewable energy sources. Never before have I seen the meaningful role of the spirit of Sadvipras (enlightened leadership) more acutely than today. Grassroots leadership is required to spearhead this meaningful change towards a sustainable way of life. The new generation of leaders needs to take upon themselves an activism toward enhancing bio-diversity, renewable energy, and complete recycling of solid, liquid, and gas in their own habitat.

In this new paradigm, it is not profit as the ultimate goal. It is food security, energy security, and its resiliency that are the goals. With human accumulated knowledge of today one can easily design a system that each household can use to generate surplus energy and food. Only through this foundation can one begin to build a more compassionate society and a real platform for collective spiritual evolution.

My real hope rests with the young minds of the new generation. Education is the key; to reorient and cultivate neohumanist sentiment for the welfare of all sentient beings. I welcome our association with Gurukula. Only through Neohumanist Education do we stand a good chance of achieving success in this meaningful change.



Pioneering a Practical Approach for Sustainable Habitats and Biosphere

Presented by: TG Building Systems Company Limited and Cellennium Thailand Company Limited at the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Concept: The concept of this project is to design and build a new and more proper approach to human habitat development in cooperation and in synergy with the natural environment. The "Eco Village" aims to create communities that generate a surplus of electricity, water, food and fertilizer by use of innovative technologies now commercially available. These capabilities would maximize the degrees of freedom for their inhabitants or communities. By designing for an increasing access to free renewable energy and information, productivity can be enhanced and wealth can be gained. Sustainability can only be reached by making the use of renewable energies an everyday reality and by adhering to the principles of complete recycling of all waste streams - solid, liquid and gas. Renewable energy technologies such as solar, biomass, and electricity storage, among others, are all tangibly applied in the Eco Village and VSPP projects to generate excess supply of electricity for the occupants to sell back to the grid. Water in the Eco Village is captured, cleaned, used, treated and recycled. Fertilizer, char and carbon dioxide, for example, which are derived from solid waste generation and from biomass-to-power processes, are captured to enhance the further growth of new biomass. All of these, taken together, create powerful regenerative forces that can sustain and enhance our biosphere.

Other information: Some innovative technologies being applied to the projects are: Vanadium redox¬flow electrical storage and power conversion system; Energy-saving design and simulation process for house construction; Prefabricated, insulated, panelized and dry construction; Solar PV systems; Solar thermal systems; Thermal storage; Biomass energy conversion – biogas, wood-gas, charcoal to electricity; Vertical algae bioreactor for sequestering carbon and maximizing biomass production; Aerobic, microbial water purification system. The houses in the Eco Village are designed for energy efficiency and comfort. Solutions have been created to remedy normal practices that result in poorly insulated building shells and excess electricity usage for domestic cooling, lighting & appliances and hot water heating. There is maximum use of energy-saving architectural features, the right choice of materials for insulating the building shell, and the prudent integration of renewable energy and energy storage technologies.

Associated costs and benefits: Sustainability can be reached by making the use of renewable energies an everyday reality and by adhering to the principles of complete recycling of all waste streams -solid, liquid and gas. The agricultural sector becomes the one of the major beneficiaries of this distributed resource paradigm (i.e.,

-solid, liquid and gas. The agricultural sector becomes the one of the major beneficiaries of this distributed resource paradigm (i.e., electricity, water and fertilizer). With surplus of resources being generated, the wealth of the community increases.

For more info please contact Dr. Piriyathep Kanchanadul, E-mail: piriyathep@gmail.com

Yoga Education in Schools Taiwan National Conference August 30-31 2014

About 80 people, mostly teachers, attended six different workshops conducted by the leading members of the YES Taiwan movement at our school in Taichung. Many of the attendees were inspired to attend by the presence of Dr. Shambhushivananda, the head of Gurukula. For one hour, each speaker introduced their topic through a power point presentation and hands on activities.





Dr. Shambhushivananda first introduced the general characteristics of Neohumanist Education and the global projects inspired by the NHE vision. He explained that all over the world the NHE vision is applied in different ways, but all have the same goal of fostering universal love.

The second speaker was Rashmii from Hualien a small city at the east coast of Taiwan. She talked about her experience teaching kids meditation. She has been conducting yoga and meditation classes for youngsters for the past 4 to 5 years and has a variety of original teaching methods around a character of "The Little Creator", which she now aims to publish.



The third speaker was Geeta who gave an overview of the history of YES Taiwan: the monthly yoga classes for parents and kids (now called PK yoga), the numerous workshops for teachers (Happy Teachers – Happy Schools), the Peace Mama Program (for parent volunteers giving classes in schools), programs for special kids and classes for adolescents in summer camps. She also mentioned the government support for our activities and publications. The overview was really impressive and showed the tremendous effort of Gurukula volunteers over the years.



The fourth speaker was Dada Caetanyananda, who for 18 years had been in charge of a school project in Medan, where he developed the Ecology of Joy, an educational vision that is basically Neohumanist and specifically trains children in seeing everything as divine. He explained how his "magic school" emphasizes values such as beauty, love and joy to help the children develop cosmic awareness.

The fifth speaker was Karuna, who several years ago stopped her successful career as an editor at a publishing company and now full time works to promote NHE through music (she is associated with several choirs) and developing intuitive art through workshops and training. After several years of struggle, she is now a sought-after speaker in Taiwan as well as in China and gives workshops







for professors and other professionals interested in learning intuitive science. Her, and her students', "heartscapes" (paintings) are fantastic and have been showcased in several exhibitions in Taipei.

The sixth speaker was Caetanya, the founding chairman of the Viira Yoga Association in Taiwan, which organizes yoga related programs for physically handicapped people. He also supports many yoga activities for those with other special needs. He showed us

the evolution of the movement and impressed us with the public and government interest the association has been able to attract. Their general meetings are attended by hundreds of people, often supported by members of parliament and the city council of Taipei. They recently published a DVD about ways of teaching Handicapped Yoga.

This conference was unique as it could attract so many people from the public as well as so many skilled leaders in the NHE movement in Taiwan. All in all the conference showed that with Neohumanism as the inspiration we as individuals can transform others by dedicating oneself to the needs of those around them. In this way, this program was not only touching and inspiring but promising for the future.





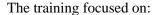




Ananda Marga Yoga Academy, Singapore Kids Yoga Teacher Training

On 22 August Ananda Marga Yoga Academy (Singapore) organized a one day Kids Yoga Teacher Training course by Tang Tamminga from Taiwan. From years of experience with Kids Yoga he has developed his personal and unique style of helping kids with physical and emotional issues.

Asana, as practiced by adults, is not suitable for kids as their organs are still undeveloped. On the other hand, if the child is not developing properly either physically or emotionally, special asana or asana-like exercises can be taught. These are often introduced to the child in the form of play and games and Tang Tamminga was throughout the course eagerly sharing his knowledge with the participants.



- Warm-up games
- Selected and modified asana suitable for children
- How to make a Kids Yoga class alive and interesting
- Songs for Kids yoga class
- Yoga for Kids with special needs



The 1-day course was filled with much laughter and joy and the trainees had an enjoyable time with the trainer. A three days follow up training is planned for 2015.

Advanced Yoga Trainingby Ananda Marga Yoga Academy (Singapore) in Hanoi Vietnam

Vietnam with its 90 million inhabitants is developing a vibrant yoga scene and about 80% of the yoga centers in Hanoi are run by Ananda Marga or Ananda Marga related centers. Needless to say there is a high demand for qualified yoga teachers.



From 1-3 August, Dada Shankarsana'nanda from Ananda Marga Yoga Academy (Singapore) was invited to give advanced training to 150 eager yoga teachers. The 3 days training focused on practical anatomy related to asana and biopsychology. The biopsychology lecture had less of a focus on the traditional endocrine glands and mental propensities, but more of a focus on brain, nerves and the importance of lymph for a balanced yogic development.

Meditation in Public Schools

Toronto, Canada By MahaJyoti Glassman

Well, right when you think you have done it all, someone lights a fire under you and asks you to do something unimaginable. Sound familiar? I was the honored recipient of such an invitation this month when I paid a visit to Pauline Junior Public School in the most multicultural city I have ever been blessed to visit.

My Mission: To provide a Quiet Time Exercise, including meditation, in 13 classes (preschool through sixth grade) + two teacher in-services + one parent evening.

After taking a toolkit inventory to ascertain if I possessed enough mantras for this task, I forged ahead. I found myself inspired by this school that had recognized that of all the practices of yoga, meditation is the one that has been the most clinically researched and evaluated by hospitals and health organizations throughout the world. In the U.S. alone health professionals have prescribed meditation, yoga, or some other mind body therapy to over 6 million Americans, roughly a ratio of 1 to 30.



So how could I say 'no'? I designed a 20 page Quiet Time Exercise program which included:

- 1) A diaphragmatic breathing exercise (the Balloon Belly Breath),
- 2) Simple repetitive yoga based standing poses that can be practiced in any classroom (Moving Meditation),
- 3) A 3-5 Minute Guided Meditation for every class.

Experiences were sequenced in the guidebook from simple to complex to accommodate the incredible age span. Other experiences included in the QTE Booklet include: Student Participation in Leading and Classroom Activity Extensions, Vocalization, Applicability of Breath Awareness in the Lives of Students, and a 2-month Lesson Plan.

To my astonishment the QTE implementation was received enthusiastically in every class by every student. I watched each class with fascination as I facilitated the QTE experience for each grade level, starting with the Belly Balloon Breath. After each practice of 4-6 rounds of a Moving Meditation, students stood in Mountain Pose, breathing in, breathing out, and counting to 10 silently. Three Moving Meditations were presented to each class. (There are 12 in the QTE Toronto Guide). In the classes where we practiced a variation of one of the warrior poses, students would chant "I can do this" and "We can do this"....and they would SMILE! It was rare that any student was able to resist the flow of the Moving Meditation.

And then we moved ahead to the Guided Meditation. These range from 3-6 minutes in duration. One per class was implemented. (There are 10 Guided Meditations in the QTE Toronto Guide). Beginning with the seated Flying Breath to calm the body mind, every student relaxed into the Guided Meditation in a seated position of their choice. Preschoolers, Kindergarteners, and many First Graders preferred lying on the floor. I watched in amazement in each class as I noticed the energy level shift, the waves of calmness ebb in, and the surrender to complete relaxation take them in the end. You could actually see the brain waves change! When asked how they felt, the answers were always the same. "I feel calm. I'm relaxed."

There was one class where the teacher took me aside to tell me that there was a child with disabilities in her class. "He will be disruptive through the whole meditation," she expressed apologetically. How did he respond to the QTE? How disruptive was he? HE WAS A GEM! He LOVED it! Although he was physically unable to engage in the Moving Meditation, he tried his best. He was calm and didn't make a 'peep' through the Guided Meditation. He visibly enjoyed the flow of the experience just as much as his classmates. The teacher was pleasantly amazed.

Before I leaving each class, I would extend a 'wish' to them. "I wish you a happy day". "I wish you a day filled with smiles." "I wish you a blue sky day." Then I would invite each student to turn to someone and extend the wish to a friend. I guess they don't get to send wishes to their friends much...because they couldn't stop..... Ahhh.



Developing a Practical Early Childhood Teacher Training System that is Rapid, Effective, Empowering and Duplicable (REED) in Indonesia Submitted by Kalyanii KL Chew

REED is a practical early childhood teacher training system that is rapid, effective, empowering and duplicable. It was developed in Indonesia over the course of four years on a trial and error basis from AMURT Indonesia's humanitarian response following the September 2009 earthquake in West Sumatra, Indonesia. AMURT's intervention began with the construction of buildings to house existing early childhood learning centers as part of our *Children for a Better World* project. We quickly realized that in order to produce children for a better world, we first needed teachers for a better world, and thus focused increasingly on teacher training. The teachers at these early childhood centers were mostly completely untrained beyond high school. Over the course of four years, AMURT provided training to up to 200 teachers from 100 early childhood centers, eventually focusing on around 140 teachers from 54 schools. Given the setting of a very conservative, rural Muslim society, the teachers were 100% female and generally aimed to produce docile, Godfearing children who would sit quietly in front of the blackboard (or whiteboard) to learn the 3R's and never question, always obey their teachers and elders. Over time, this slowly shifted to a more child-centered approach that recognized that children learn best through play and exploration.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SYSTEM

Through trial and error, AMURT Indonesia eventually developed an early childhood teacher training system with the objective of enabling these untrained teachers to implement lessons on a daily basis according to the Indonesian national early childhood education (ECE) curriculum. The key elements of the system are the Lesson Activity Manual (LAM) and the Cluster School system.

1. The Lesson Activity Manual (LAM)

The LAM is structured around the key development indicators (gross & fine motor, cognitive, language, socio-emotional, aesthetic, moral-values and life skills) that are generally in line with standards universally accepted around the world. It is organized according to the themes of the Indonesian national ECE curriculum, but can be easily adjusted to suit differing thematic approaches that may be used in other countries. In the upgraded LAM version we are currently developing, these activities are arranged around three separate age groups (3-4 years old, 4-5 years old and 5-6 years old). Each activity is divided into 4 sections:

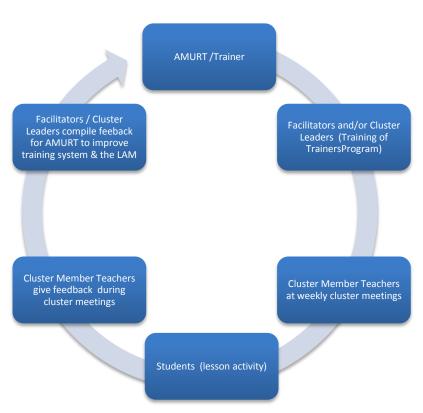
- **a. Objectives:** Three main objectives per activity specific activity objectives linked to developmental indicators selected from the Indonesian government's Standard Early Childhood Developmental Indicators (cognitive, language, gross & fine motoric, socio-emotional and religious-moral values) for the three age groups. Example: coordinate hand and leg movement to dance music, linked to indicator for gross-motor skill "Child able to carry out morning exercise".
- **b. Materials:** Materials to be used in each activity includes visuals, flash cards, readers, etc to be prepared by the teachers
- **c. Methods:** Demonstration, experimentation, discussion, question & answer, games (indoor & outdoor), story-telling, music and movement, art and craft, individual task, group task, drama, webbing, observation
- **d. Instructions:** Detailed step-by-step instructions on how to implement these lesson activities are given to meet the needs of untrained teachers.

In the upgraded version of the LAM that we are currently working on, it was decided that each activity would highlight one desirable character trait / value selected from a list of 36 identified by our LAM team. Our 10-member LAM team includes nine Indonesian members with considerable experience in the Indonesian early childhood field, including

curriculum developers, trainers and teachers. The project is led by Sister Usha YC Chang who has been running her own kindergarten in Malaysia for more than 20 years.

2. The Cluster School System

The schools participating in AMURT's program are grouped into clusters of three to six schools according to convenience of location in order to enable the teachers involved to meet once a week. At this weekly meeting, the teachers work together to prepare the materials for the lesson activities to be covered the following week. Time is also given to review the lesson activities covered in the previous week – the challenges that arose, and accompanying solutions. Cluster leaders are groomed through Training of Trainer programs to guide each group in meeting challenges and also to introduce new teaching materials.



The above system constitutes the 'hardware' portion of an early childhood teacher training system. In addition to the above elements, a well-designed teacher training program should be complemented with a 'software' segment to develop the psycho-spiritual aspects of the teacher – such as that addressed in Ananda Marga's Neohumanist orientation. The development of such a package that can be used around the world with appropriate adjustments as necessary, could be the basis for future joint projects between AMURT/AMURTEL and AMGK/NHE.

We are hopeful that the hardware system described above can be duplicated in less-developed countries (with adjustments as necessary to fit varying local conditions) to quickly produce teachers who can conduct class effectively for the benefit of children who otherwise may not have access to early childhood education.

The LAM we have developed is currently available only in the Indonesian language. The next step would be to translate the LAM into English which can then be made available to the rest of the world.

AMURT Indonesia Team : Didi A. Haripriya, Sister Usha YC Chang, Didi Kiirti, Brother Suman Hartanto, Sister Kalyanii KL Chew

AMURT's ECE Teacher Training System: Flow chart

AMURT INDONESIA EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER TRAINING SYSTEM

(Photos from project implementation in Pariaman, Sumatra, Indonesia 2012-2013)

1. USING THE LESSON ACTIVITY MANUAL (LAM)

a. Weekly Cluster Meeting Teachers

consolidate habit of making daily lesson plans and preparing lesson activity materials. Facilitated by cluster leaders as necessary, teachers run through the following week's lesson activities and prepare the corresponding teaching materials during the weekly cluster meeting.





b. Classroom implementation of LAM activity

The lesson activities are geared to promote the 5 aspects of development – fine and gross motor skills, language, cognitive, socio-emotional skills, religiousmoral values, as well as concentration & patience. Fine and gross motor skills form a big part of the skills to be developed in ECD-age children. Activities combine language, cognitive & aesthetic aspects of development.







Gardening, scooping out seeds from a papaya, making their own vest – all are fun activities to develop ECD children in cognitive, motor, language, aesthetic and life skills.

c. Significantly improved classroom management – significantly reduced disruption in class

With the children fully and happily engaged in fun lesson activities, monitoring data show that disciplinary problems and disruptive behaviour are greatly reduced compared to the pre-LAM days.

2. TEACHER TRAINING through the Training-of-Trainer(ToT) & Cluster System Program

Cluster leaders do the ground-level training and provide continuous practical training. The process begins with a training workshop conducted by the Trainer (either our Education Consultant Ms. Chang Yuen Ching or some other external trainer) for the ToT teachers who are also the cluster leaders. They then transfer their newly-learnt skills to their cluster

member teachers during the weekly cluster meeting. The regular teachers then apply what they have learnt in the classroom with their children. This process is repeated as necessary, at both the level of Trainer-to-ToT and/or ToT-to-Teacher.



a. ABCs

Education Consultant / Trainer Ms. Chang Yuen Ching introduces to the ToT teachers-cum-cluster leaders novel and fun ways to teach ABC. The ToT teachers then pass whatever they have learnt to their cluster members who in turn apply their new skills with their young students.



b. 123 / Math Games

Education Consultant / Trainer Ms.
Chang Yuen Ching introduces to the
ToT teachers new ways to teach
Numbers through games. Above
Centre & Right: The ToT teacherscum-Cluster Leaders then transfer
what they have just learnt to their
cluster members. The teachers then
quickly learn to put their new skills to
work with their young charges in school.





c. Webbing

Education Consultant/Trainer Ms. Chang Yuen Ching shares the concept of Webbing with the ToT teachers- cum-cluster leaders as a technique to draw participation from students when introducing a new lesson topic. After learning Webbing from their cluster leaders, the teachers are ready to apply this new tool with the children (bottom centre right & right).



We all have a story



Using friendship as a tool for overcoming stereotypes and prejudices in building an inclusive society By Didi Ananda Devapriya

Stereotypes and prejudices are already evident in early childhood (4-5 years old). Once fully formed, they become resistant to change and create a solid foundation for racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. Children learn who is "like us" and who is not and fear of "the other" develops. Many of the messages they pick up on are non-verbal, as they observe not only what the important adults around them say – but also how they act, what makes them uncomfortable and indirect messages about who is important and who is not that are reinforced by the popular media.

However, in early childhood, belief systems are not fully formed and are still in a hypothetical phase of testing. This provides a unique opportunity for effective intervention that can have a lasting impact. One of the best antidotes to this fear of

the other, and the barriers it creates is warm, authentic friendships with a diversity of people. As children are carefully observing the behavior of their teachers, a truly effective pro-diversity program must first address the barriers that have been internalized in them – otherwise a diversity curriculum will be superficial.

The project "We all have a story", financed by the NGO Fund (Norway, Lichtenstein and Iceland funding mechanism for Romania) is developing a new methodology for addressing pro-diversity education in early childhood settings. The project is a partnership between AMURTEL/NHE Romania, contributing expertise in the inclusion of children with disabilities, Romanobutiq, sharing expertise in inclusion of Roma children, and the Center for Equal Partnerships (CPE), sharing expertise in educating gender equality. It first aims to help teachers establish human connections and respect for people from different minorities – including ethnic minorities and people with disabilities as well as addressing gender-based stereotyping and oppression. By creating a safe space for sharing personal stories, all of the participants will have the opportunity to appreciate the differences and similarities between their own stories and those of people facing the extra challenges of being in a minority. In a subsequent phase of the project, the friendships made through the project will be extended into the classroom so that children can make positive connections with a diversity of people, using the "Lifestory" method developed within the project.

The following are the objectives of the "We all have a story" project:

- 1. To raise awareness and train 100 kindergarten teachers on the themes of gender, minorities and disabilities
- 2. To train those 100 teachers in applying 3 practical pro-diversity methods with children
- 3. To develop a network of 20 resource people to promote diversity in preschool education (ethnic Roma people, people with disabilities, etc);
- 4. To support 25 kindergartens in implementing thematic projects about diversity
- 5. To pilot a complex pro-diversity educational program in 6 kindergartens
- 6. To initiate advocacy actions to integrate diversity in the primary and preschool educational system

In June 2014, the first phase of the project began with 5 series of 3 days of diversity trainings for a total of 100 kindergarten teachers in Bucharest. Leading up to the training, AMURTEL/NHE's project team, Didi Ananda Devapriya, Magda Zambet and Diipani Halangescu collaborated on writing 60 pages on inclusive practices for integrating children with disabilities for a manual to complement the training. Each organization led a day of the training series. CPE began with raising the awareness of the teachers to both the subtle and overt forms of gender bias existing in Romanian culture, mass media, childrearing practices etc. which translate into unconscious forms of bias in the classroom. Participants were facilitated to see beyond the gender biased expectations they have of girls and boys and to explore the socially constructed nature of gender. They were also encouraged to give children broader opportunities in choosing forms of play that go beyond the restrictions of stereotypical gender expectations, as well as being aware of biased content in stories and toys.

On the second day, the trainers from Romanobutiq presented the history of the Roma people, who have suffered a long history of discrimination and oppression in Europe. Most scholars agree that the Roma originated in India, though they came in several waves of migration and for different motivations – from seeking refuge after devastating wars, to looking

for better opportunities. The phenomenon of the particularly high percentage of Roma settled in Romania as compared to other European countries, has its roots in the phenomenon of "robia" – a type of slavery or serfdom that occurred during the Medieval period.

Romanobutiq also presented Jane Eliot's video "Blue Eyes, Green Eyes: A class divided" which was a remarkable social experiment conducted by a 4th grade teacher in the US, in the wake of Martin Luther King's assassination. The teacher created an artificial division of the children on the innocuous basis of eye color – and then proceeded to give privileges to one group and exclude the other group, a day later switching the roles. Racist behavior quickly surfaced in the children and as adults, all of those that participated in the experiment reported that it had a permanent positive effect in their lives. It sensitized them towards the dynamic of racism and they have remained able to extend empathy, alliance and respect to those that are in situations of discrimination.

The trainers also led an exercise in which participants were each given a role written on a card, from a wide range of possible scenarios. Some of the roles were of children with privileges, enrolled in private education; others were of children with various forms of disadvantages. Then as the trainer talked about different events in life (entering kindergarten, entering school, going on vacation, having a new dress at the beginning of the year etc) – each participant had to decide whether their character would be able to take a step forward, remain in place, or even take a step backwards. This exercise showed often invisible, but very clear impact of privilege and why certain people end up "left behind".







The third day was led by AMURTEL/NHE's team and focused on creating inclusive attitudes towards children and the families of children with disabilities. Unfortunately, in Romania, though the state has legislated that all children should have the right to be included in mainstream education, practical support for this process is almost non-existent. While best practices in inclusion point to the essential role of special education staff within the

classroom – most state kindergartens have a single specialist who comes once or twice a month to supervise up to 200 children. So it is a situation of throwing children into the pool and expecting them to swim, which creates discouraging outcomes both for children and for teachers. A more rational approach is to provide supports to create situations in which all children can succeed and build on their competencies rather than being seen through the lens of their deficits. At the beginning of the session, when

AMURTEL/NHE requested teachers to describe their expectations and hopes for the course session – many were desperate for practical suggestions in how to integrate children, as well as how to deal with parents – both of the typically developing children and of those with special needs.

We were able to share our practical experience from 19 years of including children with disabilities together with typically

developing peers and this was very useful to the teachers. Early in the workshop, we asked the teachers to form small groups – and to discuss a time when something which was easy for others was really hard for you. Enough safety and trust were created that some participants even cried as they revealed their personal and often invisible struggles. It was easy for everyone to see – that indeed, we all pass through moments when we have special needs – and one of the main characteristics of this experience is the isolation that it often creates as our needs may be quite invisible or misunderstood by those around us.

We also shared a few video clips that underlined this message of invisibility. The Swiss organization, "Proinfirmis", which works to "make disabilities disappear", created two very moving publicity spots which we shared in the course of the training. (So as not to take away from the powerful impact of these pieces – I highly recommend watching them – simply google Proinfirmis Teddy Bear and Proinfirmis mannequins.

We also performed a simple exercise to help participants to personally experience the dynamic of exclusion. Everyone stood in a circle and we placed post-it notes on their heads. Most had yellow and a few were green. Then we had everyone circulate in the room and greet each other in a normal way. Next, we told them to ignore anyone who had green, and finally we told them to form a circle only of yellows and to sing and dance a simple song together. No two groups reacted exactly the same to this exercise – but one of the most interesting results was that almost everyone noticed how the

Inner Space Workshop

Exploring
Inner
and
Outer
Ecology



Led by Marcus Bussey and Dada Shambhushivananda Saturday June 21, Zonnelicht School 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands

Director Yolanda Koning is keen on developing the Neohumanist potential of her staff at Zonnelicht School in 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands. She has thirty staff and the school caters to 300 students aged 0-12 years. Yolanda invited Dr. Dada Shambhushivananda and Dr. Marcus Bussey to run a day workshop on the theme of Inner and Outer Ecology. The purpose of the day was to inspire the staff and others who attended to take responsibility for their own inner spiritual lives and to more consciously engage in fostering a Neohumanist ethos in their classrooms and the school.

After considerable discussion with Yolanda it was decided to make this workshop one that introduced the theory of Neohumanism through an embodied workshop based on many of the techniques of Interplay. (InterPlay is an active, creative way to unlock the wisdom of the body. http://www.interplay.org/). Marcus Bussey lead the group through two sessions in the morning aimed at clearing an inner space from which to focus on Neohumanist essentials. Along with the clearing came capacity building. Marcus led the staff on a quest to explore their passions and find out how best they can serve their world. The key to this work was the exploration of the following three questions:

What calls us to be in the world? What kind of future would you like to see? What is your role in realising that future?

To get to the last point he presented, by way of an introductory map for the day, a Neohumanist Tool box that included reflections on how a playing and passionate group generates a relational field in which a shared Microvita – a subtle energy field – brings consciousness a purpose where previously there was individual ego and separation. He told how spirituality was a science that followed the same rules as empirical science – theorise, test, reflect and modify – yet its object of study was more subtle and relational in nature. He pointed out to the staff that the body was a central element in spiritual research – without the body you cannot meditate. So he said the workshop would return to the body regularly to remind participants that body data (sensations) could become body knowledge (awareness) and move on to body wisdom (intuition/holism). He explained that much of the time we live in a Trance. This trance is induced by accepting unreflective culture. When in Trance we react to the world rather than acting. The way out, he said, was meditation that incorporated mantra, presence and breathe so that the mind and body could become focused.

As the audience was nearly all Dutch he reminded them that although he spoke English they should speak Dutch. They should also understand that the body offers us a universal language and that the workshop was to be an exploration of Neohumanist practice. The Inner Space concept is based on the Open Space idea and draws on Interplay forms and as such there were a couple of rules people could turn to if they felt overwhelmed.

Rule 1: You can disengage at any time

Rule 2: Always stay within your physical limits

Marcus also reminded participants that in the world we are the sum of our actions yet *internally we are always much more*.

Following this introduction the workshop began in earnest with participants moving their bodies, grouping with partners to playfully express in a range of ways (including made up languages) ideas, feelings and sensations.

They then moved freely, danced and laughed and invented shapes with their bodies. The goal was to stop at intervals and reflect on how their bodies felt, sensing the energy in the room, exploring stillness.

Participants then moved to explore what was calling them into action in the world. They sat in groups and discussed outer and inner signs that action was required and put these up on a Futures Wall. They were then invited to notice, look for patterns and see what 'stories' could be told. Marcus then introduced the group to the ideas of Warren Ziegler (see his book *When the Spirit Calls*) and invited everyone to be 'Busy Bees' and move around the room to find what he said about the Nine Spiritual archetypes:

Entrepreneurial Spirit
Sustaining Spirit
Loving and Caring Spirit
Mending Spirit
Just Spirit
Organisational Spirit
Enlivening Spirit
Reflective Spirit
Poetic Spirit

Each archetype is a calling. Marcus pointed out that to be able to know which archetypes (usually a group of them) resonated with you was to have a deeper appreciation of one's own spiritual character and capital. This self-knowledge laid the foundation for each of us to honour the calling when it arose within one as a 'Calling to Act'.

At this time Dada Shambhushivananda stepped in and took participants for kiirtana and meditation. The energy in the room was quiet and focused and the attendees found a deep stillness.

The afternoon began with some more body movement and then Dada Shambhushivananda spoke about the importance of meditation, describing the spiritual science – biopsychology – at work within the Neohumanist system. His talk demonstrated that the Neohumanist process was based on a clear experiential knowledge of deep body wisdom.



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The workshop focussed on stepping out of the usual, unconscious, comfort zone and including a more subtle, complementary part of oneself that too often remains unused. One specific beauty I experienced was that in this way, meaningful social contacts developed almost by themselves. Marcus, the trainer of the day, opened a sweet path of welcoming whatever offered itself. This made the atmosphere of the day easy going. Thank you Marcus!

Henk de Weijer

I was very motivated to join the seminar and this day has brought me a lot more than I expected. I was gladly surprised that it was mostly practical and focused on my own process of growing. Quotes and moments which remain with me are:

- Exformation: remove ballast to get more to the essence of things
- Becoming aware of your own creation in relation to microvita: where is my attention and which space do you create here together with others
- The ethos of being able to think and do out of the box
- The letter to thank the people in the future, which made us aware of the tasks we have to accomplish for the world.
- Working together on the signals/care for the world.
- An atmosphere where a group meditation has a place which is self-evident.

What have I discovered?

One month before the seminar I had the idea that I had to do something big for the world. At the seminar I experienced that a positive change for the World is already going on, as long as I'm connected and therefore first of all I'll have to take care of my own inner connection with the universe. It's about a much more subtle level in myself then I was thinking of before...

I'm very grateful for this day.

Ellen van Tuijl.

Every exercise, and therefore every contact with other participants or with my inner self, were filled with surprises, amazement and a sense of love and oneness.

During the day he was able to awaken all the dormant senses and to bring me in touch with my inner longings on a deeper level. Afterwards I was filled with Gratitude.

Warm wishes, Marije Lamers

Once again the group walked, ran, stopped and invented. This playful body work moved into an embodied reflection in which two groups spoke for the past (year 1900) and another two groups for the future (year 2100). This was very powerful and moving for all and came to a climax when each participant moved to the centre and spoke their Calling to the group. To do this they bent and took a flower from a vase that held all the possibilities of the present.

The energy in the room was becoming more subtle so we moved to a special reflective space - a gift to each participant in which they did 5 minutes meditation and then 5 minutes writing. This was repeated four times in all and ended with the writing down of three things they were going to do. This private message was their gift from the day.

The day closed with a circle first holding hands and then in namaskar heart mudra. We played one last time with the deep reflective microvita of presence and then we danced on behalf of our Passion. There was a lot of joy and release in the room. We were all moved by the day which had been a real journey of discovery.





Listening to the advice from the past, hearing the update on where we (the world) stand today followed by the reaction of tomorrows people...all 'played' by a group of workshop-participants was very inspiring because the message was clear and still positive.

At one point we wrote down what is wrong in our world and, what makes us feeling happy...good thing to see the positive is more expanded on the wall (we were putting our pieces of paper on a wall for all to see). Again very reasonable in its message. For me it was good to see so clearly that we can make a change, it isn't too late to make the world an even better place.

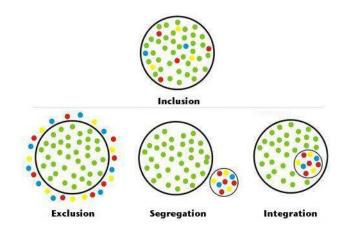
Taking care of my feelings so that I can really be there for someone who needs me without judging, and using the power of emotions in a positive way. The feeling of sharing and inspiring one-another was beautiful and keeps me motivated to be there for us...

Thanks to you, Ilse Pashouwers (teacher at Zonnelicht)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15 WE ALL HAVE A STORY

moment in which exclusion was introduced (they couldn't see their own color, only the colors of those around them), everyone started to feel less safe and wondered if they would also be excluded. In most of the cases those who were excluded, stuck together – which beautifully illustrated how minorities often stick together to feel safe when they are left out.

We talked about how to reframe the "resistance" of parents to "accepting" their child's disability – and to rather question themselves – how can I make this safer for the parent, how can I be an ally? We also talked about creative ways to include volunteers, associations



and parents in order to receive some of the classroom assistance they need. We addressed the importance of language — and why it matters. So many words that refer to disabilities end up becoming put-downs, and so language must continually evolve to find ways to express respect for the person — so we described the concept of "people first" in which the person or child is first mentioned and then "with" a disability, rather than identifying the child and the disability. (For example a child with autism rather than an autistic child).

The experience was truly moving, eye opening and transformative, and tears filled the eyes of the participants several times throughout the training.

Some of the feedback from the participants:

"Before participating in this course I wasn't interested to find out about the situation of those that have special educational needs, but the presentation made me realize that this is a part of society that we must pay much more attention to." "The theme increased my awareness and now I will think twice before I act." "The information we received responded to many of the questions I had about children with special needs." "We talked about problems that we face and we found many practical things to do differently".

Training and Perfecting Neohumanist Didactic Competencies

Teacher Training Romania, Summer 2014 By Magda Zambet, Educational Director

A good Neohumanist pedagog, besides mastering the principles of Neohumanist Education, understanding the methodology and content specific to the Neohumanist system, needs to also have a rich overall general cultural training, in order to be able to respond flexibly and



creatively in different educational interventions. In the month of August 2014, before the beginning of a new school year, our annual teacher training took place for the entire team of "Gradinita Rasarit" (Sunrise Kindergarten.) As it is a personal development workshop which involves also training and perfecting of Neohumanist didactic competencies, the entire staff of Gradinita Rasarit looks forward to it. Everybody knows that Didi Ananda Devapriya will transmit or remind us of special things that will be of great help in the future activities with the children.

The essential objectives of this training were:

- 1. To develop individually and professionally by acquiring new competencies in Neohumanist Education and to reinforce those already transmitted
- 2. To review the layers of the mind and their functions, as well as the domains in which they are applied and the contents associated with each one

The main unique characteristics of Neohumanist Education were reviewed:

- forming an ecological awareness based on universal love and the sentiment of devotion and respect for unity in diversity
- balancing active stimulating moments with sweet relaxing ones
- guiding children to discover peace and quiet within and to self-regulate emotional states
- transmitting values through role plays and discussion, not through imposition
- the role of the self-development of the teacher in the process of teaching and interacting with the child
- respecting culture and cultivating the aesthetic capacities of the mind, avoiding commercial pseudo-culture and games, as well as stories and toys which contain negative stereotypes or form limits that inoculate fear, shame, inferiority or superiority.
- positive and effective communication with the child
- morning circle and its specific stages.

The entire training, took place over 4 days, with one day dedicated to a site visit to a Montessori kindergarten, and one day dedicated to curriculum planning. The training was full of games and interactive activities chosen to help the information be more easily assimilated. There were intense discussions on the layers of the mind and the ways to apply it practically in the classroom. The teachers also enacted various role plays in order to understand more easily ways to communicate positively with children. In the same manner, the teachers also created different role plays about situations they commonly face with the parents, which led to lively discussions.



As we often do – we combined our creative energies and composed several neohumanist songs specifically designed for certain activities and transitional moments of the day. The whole team also united to compose two songs that were combined with yoga movements and verses – one for the smaller children, and one for the older children. The results were beautiful choreographies with exercises that flow gracefully from one to another. They also composed songs for naptime, sharing love and mealtimes. This particular songwriting workshop was a particular success. The teachers continue to use the songs they made every day. The work of our team doesn't stop here – the Neohumanist Education system is a complex one that asks for openness, unconditional love and creative work from those that are putting it into practice.

The training was an important part of our program for personal and professional neohumanist development.

A New Teacher for Sunshine School Switzerland By Tatjana Popov, Director

It was at the request of Martin, one of our forest playgroup teachers at that time, that I agreed to meet Abadit. Abadit was an Eritrean refugee who had been a primary school teacher in her country during the time of war which forced many Eritreans to leave in search for a safer life.

"Can you take her as an apprentice in Sunshine? This will help her to find an apartment since she has to leave the refugee home soon. You know how hard it is here to get a flat if a person doesn't have a job! On the other hand, she can't get a job because she doesn't have a flat. When she gives the refugee home as her address, nobody wants to talk to her."

Martin was right. Abadit was caught in one of those vicious circles that makes you feel like a ping-pong ball and not a human being anymore. You are labeled before anybody even tries to see who you are. On top of everything, you are suppose to be thankful because you managed to survive the journey through the desert and mine fields, over the sea in an overcrowded boat and the terrible conditions of a hostile jail-like camp, and enter one of the most prosperous places in the world: Switzerland!

Guided by the empathy, I agreed to take Abadit on although, as usual, it was less than the ideal moment financially. Basically it meant that I would again have a ridiculously low income as I could only pay her from my own salary. So here I was, bearing the consequences of neohumanist love, stretching my hand out to the thin woman with a beautiful, warm smile who was standing in front of me.

A short month later Abadit was already well adopted by everyone in the preschool. One day she suggested making "mbasha," an Eritrean bread, for our lunch group and we all started learning more about the culture she came from. Spontaneously we came up with the idea of organizing an event where Abadit could prepare a traditional Eritrean coffee while the parents had an opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns and ask questions about our preschool,



our educational philosophy and life at Sunshine. What a perfect way to create a community!

Becoming an NHE Associate Teacher

By the end of the school year Abadit was involved in virtually every group from the indoor playgroup, kindergarten and yoga to the outdoor forest, farm and gardening group. After the summer break a new session of teacher training was starting and I suggested Abadit might like to join the course and try to become an NHE associate teacher for early childhood education. And she joined! I would like to share one of the first assignments she did, definitely one that inspires me most. It is a profound observation on how our external reality is linked to the processes that are happening within our minds and hearts.

Here is Abadit's assignment and story:

I was born in a village along the lush Gash River in the country of Eritrea, east Africa. In my early childhood the village was surrounded by a thick woods and vast grassland where a variety of animals were in abundance. Located fewer than ten kilometers from the village was the heaven of the wild beasts. It was a vacation center for a beautiful variety of birds during their migration from the north to the south of the continent. The Gash River flows throughout the year and its arteries supply the life on the both sides of the banks with water. With six months every year of live flowers and dancing butterflies, the whole scenery of the village takes on a heavenly look. Everything about the village was peaceful and full of life.

In 1984 two disastrous events took place in the area, a drought caused the river to dry up, followed by the eruption of war. The battle that continued for three weeks cost the Ethiopian government a heavy price. They lost many soldiers and their heavy weapons. After that battle the Ethiopians concluded that the main reason they were faced with their worst

embarrassment, failing to take over a small area was the presence of the woods which protected the freedom fighters and kept them out of sight. Consequently, the soldiers came up with the simplest solution: to chop down all the trees and set the grass on fire. They kept doing this for the next three years.

To make matters worse, the following two years rain forgot to put the village on the list of its destinations. We had three years of fire followed by two years of dry weather. The heavenly panorama turned into a barren semi-desert. Life in that area became impossible and as a result many families fled to Sudan.

After Eritrea achieved independence in 1991, my family returned to the village. The habitat on both sides of the river which had been decimated due to the terrible coincidence of war and drought, started to show signs of life again. The trees and grass were reviving slowly. The magnificent birds began returning. However, the wild animals were gone. They had been either killed or they had migrated to another habitat far away from the village.

Eight wonderful years passed. However, in 1999 the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia erupted again. At the same time, again the river dried up. What a coincidence? Do the worst events always follow such ugly situations? I remember my father telling me "to raise cattle you don't need grass and water, all you need is love."

Since then I keep wondering. My mind is full of "what ifs": What if there was no war, would it be only my superstition to imply the river would not dried up? What if we were passionate enough to protect our wild animals and their habitats, would our devotion to the environment change anything? Why the war and who really gained from it? Is there anything war can solve that love can't?

I have lived around war most of my life and have experienced its negative effects. I have seen life vanish in a second and hearts harden like stone. At the same time I have seen people, during the worst moment, sharing their favy possessions to keep their pointher alive. I have observed the contrast of

few possessions to keep their neighbor alive. I have observed the contrast of both the darkest effects and the brightest.

In conclusion I want to sum up by saying: I believe our reflects the choices we make in our daily lives. Every choice in return gives back what we give to the outside. In simple language, we harvest what we sow. If I want love from the world, I have to first provide it to my environment, to the people around me and to myself. Then the positive effect of the love that I radiate to the world will be reflected back to me.

Abadit has not yet completed all the assignments for a Certificate in NHE. But she was the only Sunshine employee who came with me to the Teacher Training program in Holland, organized by NH daycare Zonnelicht. She involved all the teachers in dancing an Eritrean folk dance with her and we all had a lot of fun. In the meantime she also became the mother of a beautiful girl named Rufta. A community of Eritrean families in Switzerland has asked her to start an Eritrean playgroup because they like her warm way of teaching inspired by universal values. Everybody loves Neohumanism. It is a philosophy of the human heart.

Continued from Page 10 Meditation in Public Schools

The teacher in-services went well and there were almost 30 parents at the Parent Evening who braved the pouring rain. The school was kind enough to provide childcare. They were very participatory. I shared an example of Moving Meditation and Guided Seated Meditation with them. We chatted about how breath techniques can calm the mind and bring emotional balance and how meditation contributes to 'emotional and intellectual fitness'.

All in all....a wondrous experience that I shall always treasure. I would like to take a moment to thank Archita, Ravi, and Didi Ananda Hiteshana for their loving support in making this wonderful experience possible!









NHE Teacher Training at Lotus Children Center Soko, Accra, Ghana - August 24-29, 2014 By Didi Gayatri

The NHE Teacher Training in Accra Ghana was attended by six teachers. The program began with a movie on "Ananda Marga: A Journey in Joy" which highlights the different aspects of Ananda Marga philosophy such as PROUT, Neohumanism, vegetarianism, fasting, yoga and meditation as well as various social service projects around the world. The teachers got inspired from the film to learn more about yoga and health.

DAY 2 On the second day, Didi Gayatri gave a workshop on "Expansion and Expression of the Young Child" in which she explained the importance of sensory experiences for the development of the brain of the child. She introduced using fun, playful methods for teaching, and demonstrated how to guide the children in expressing themselves through creative arts, singing, dance, playing, games, sports, etc. The class was very interactive and as Didi introduced different concepts she asked the teachers to think about how they could be applied in the school.

The main idea she conveyed was the importance of preparing the child from early childhood to be receptive to new ideas. The consciousness of the child is longing for expression and expansion. From the time of conception, the 5 layers of mind are motivated by the consciousness to "program" the brain for functional use spiritually, intuitively, creatively, cognitively and physically. Taking good food and doing proper physical exercises helps in physical expression; morality serves as a base for psychic expansion; intuition is developed through fine arts and through meditation, the children pursue the goal of life. Only when the person's desire for the infinite is stronger than other desires can yoga- unification happen, just like a river merging in the ocean.



As part of the workshop, the teachers worked on their curriculum for the year so that they could apply what they learned.

DAY 3 On the third day Didi Ananda Candrasekhara gave a workshop on "*Body – A Biologic Machine*". In Ghana yoga is said to be related with black magic so many people are negative about it. Didi explained what yoga is and described the benefits, including explanations of fasting and health; asanas (yoga postures) and kaosikii (yogic dance).

Each human being needs to be physically fit, mentally strong and spiritually elevated. There are 7 energy centers in the body. There are 50 propensities – emotions that are expressed through those centers. Religion puts fear in the minds of people. Meditation, on the other hand, gives happiness as the mind is filled with vastness.

The teachers requested to meet together for a weekly yoga postures and meditation class which has since then been started.



DAY 4 On the fourth day, Didi Ananda Girija, a Ghanaian Didi who works in 4 schools in Kenya, shared her experiences. She described how she became a missionary of Ananda Marga and told of the responsibilities and sacrifices of a teacher.

To be a teacher is not to get but to give out. To be a teacher one should have a strong desire to impart knowledge. If the person is a teacher only to get economic income there will not be proper teaching. In Ananda Marga schools teachers are members of our family, we embrace them like our own. This is what Neohumanism is. This is the call of love. Nowadays immorality is spread throughout the whole world but children who come in contact with our schools will naturally develop

habits of good moral conduct, they will learn to be respectful and responsible. In Africa most parents leave the house early in the morning to work so they even do not know if their child attended school on that day or not. The teacher should always say the truth and give a good example to their students.

After Didi Girija's class, all of us went on a trip to do social service in a poor stricken village in the Central Region of Ghana (about 250km away from our school in Accra!). Since many of our teachers are mothers they also brought their children and babies with them. It was not compulsory but all of them wanted to come. The roads were very bad and transportation slow. As we arrived about 300 of the local people were very excited to get new clothes, shoes, bags, biscuits and candies so they crowded over and soon everything was beyond our control, but everyone got at least one article. What teachers said:



"... I would like to do more social services because I was very happy to see that the people were all happy to come for the goods we have for them. I would like to do more for the needy one. I wish that one day I can also gather things to distribute to those who are in need." Abigail – KG1 teacher

"It was my first time embarking on such activity, travelling from the city which I have lived all my life to a village just to distribute articles to the needy ones. It was distributed without favoritism in the sense that the toddlers, young and old all had something to take home." Kofi - KG2/Class1 teacher

DAY 5 On the fifth day, we had in-school service day, where we all cleaned up the school.

The last day we had an exam just to see what the teachers understood. In Ghana most of the people don't read books due to economic hardship and struggle for survival. We knew that it would be difficult for the teachers if the classes were given in a complex intellectual way so we made it simple and interactive. By their evaluation I could see that they understood the inner spirit of what we wanted to teach them.

"NHE is about how to create a universal world, where there will be love for all creatures".

"NHE is teaching to love everything in the world and care for them."

"Vegetarianism helps the body to be strong and healthy as well the mind becomes sharp as you can digest well."

"Meditation is to sit to think only about God. It helps the mind to think good things and gives an open mind for the day."

For me the most important and satisfying output of the training is that now the teachers work whole heartedly and are ready to sacrifice more for a better school.







A New Model for a Spiritual Life Principles of Design for Ecovillages and Spiritual Communities - A Seminar by Peter Fleury

A week-long seminar on the design of Master Units was held January 2-6, 2014 at the **Ananda Kiirtana**, **Master Unit**, **Juiz de Fora**, **Belmiro Braga**, **Brasi**l. It was well attended by 45 individuals and led by Peter Fleury. Peter, a professional architect and landscaper, addressed the following areas of community design:

- > indoor and outdoor ecological balance
- > analysis of the site and planning
- community organization of cooperatives in four areas housing, agriculture, medical and education
- > sustainability and self-sufficiency
- ➤ the symbiosis between the spiritual community and the surrounding society
- implementation and long term growth of the community for protecting spiritual heritage for future generations
- ➤ the future of organic agriculture

The week long seminar was divided into five modules:



1. THE VISION

The first module discussed the vision of Master Units. Master Units are referred to in Sanskrit as Cakra Nemi: the hub of the wheel. As such Master Units are designed to be the nerve centers for surrounding societies; the future model of new ways of spiritual lifestyle, new education systems, new energy and farming techniques, new economic structures, new health systems, etc.

Existing Master Units started as a variety of service projects for helping the down trodden rural villages, but grew into models of ecological balance for both outer ecology and the economy, and for inner ecology and psychology. These projects were often founded and run by Acaryas, and adjacent to Ananda Marga communities. Each Master Unit is unique, yet all strive to have some basic projects: school, clinic, agriculture, meditation hall and living quarters.

SITE ANALYSIS CONSIDERATIONS

Location vicinity: Service to neighboring communities, Symbiotic relationship-needsjobs, not too far, not too close

Surface Water availability and Fertile Soil

- On site water patterns
- On site soil maps
- On site vegetation
- On site animal patterns

Wind and solar orientations, seasons

Existing structures, circulation patterns, history

2. SITE ANALYSIS

The second module focused on how to do a site analysis. Using existing maps, aerial photos, and field surveys, participants learned how to observe and analyze the total natural environment including the surrounding local communities, roads and utilities. After this they proceeded to drawing a plan.

3. SITE PLANNING and DESIGN

The third module focused on zoning and collectively designating the best uses of the land including areas for the projects, Acarya living space, family communities, agriculture, preservation, etc. Several drawings and plans with options were made.

SITE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Best areas for agriculture (water, soil)

Areas to be left for preservation, sensitive ecology

Beauty spots for all, introspection, spiritual

Concepts of community for housing:
-Indigenous designs, Mandan, Hopi
-Clustered housing, front porches,
pedestrian
-public or private, courtyard

Community Center, Programs, Commerce Markets, Amphitheater -Public or internal community

PROJECTS – ECONOMY – COOPERATIVES

Education Cooperative:

Neohumanist Schools, Retreat Center for seminars, programs in Yoga Psychology

Wellness Cooperative:

Clinic, healing retreats, diet programs, medicines

Agriculture Cooperative:

Market sales, product sales, labor barter, Internships, fibers and looms, bee keeping, specialty products

4. PROJECT COOPERATIVES

The fourth module was divided into four project cooperatives:

- **a.** The Education Cooperative from kindergarten to retreats to adult education programs to RU seminars
- **b. The Medical Cooperative** from the ambulatory clinic near the local village to the main campus clinic to the Wellness Center up in the mountain valley as well as medicinal gardens and products
- **c.** The Agriculture Cooperative from maintaining native forests and seed collecting to companion planting, permaculture, to soil community microbial inoculations, spiritual farming, tractors and spaders
- **d.** The Housing Cooperative deals with the existing homes, new homes and dormitory development, maintenance, taxes, utilities, rents and payments. This was closely connected to the last module:

5. ADMINISTRATION-ECONOMY-LEGAL STRUCTURES

During the fifth module, it was determined that private ownership was not the best model for a sustainable spiritual lifestyle community. A variety of collective ownership models were explored and a legal-administration cooperative was set up to research how to make that transition (there are some good models - Ananda Cooperative Village in California, USA.)

Those that signed up for this cooperative, will have to discern levels and requirements of community membership, take polls/surveys to determine priorities, coordinate the design department (architects, engineers) with the maintenance and construction depts.

The master plan developed shows the whole-time Acaryas living in the central campus area along with many of the projects that they will help run on the boards, with the 3 communities of 16 homes each in nearby and outlying areas. The members will decide the names of their projects, roads and communities honoring the inspiring Sadvipras (enlightened leaders) who have shown the way.

By the end of the workshop each participant had volunteered to serve on one of the cooperatives. The ever-present higher love and guidance was felt internally and collectively throughout this workshop to make a living model of spiritual life.

ADMINISTRATION – ECONOMY – LEGAL STRUCTURES

Sustainable Spiritual Community for future generations:

Memberships levels, investment levels, dedication

Models: Co-housing, condominium law, Ananda Ghirishuda Land Trust, Ananda Cooperative Village, Church Community, Visao Futura, Cooperative Law

By-Laws, Ordinances, Sattvic Community, Yama, Niyama, Zoning

Housing Cooperative, pool, donations, loans at house value, interest, rents, maintenance, taxes, salaries, insurance, investments, rent credits

Membership, Dedication, Karma Yoga Internship, Yoga Lifestyle Training, how to serve, experience, lessons, LPT, LFT, WT

Village councils, Boards, elections, meetings

Development Timelines and Sites for the community and for individuals.



Ananda Kiirtana, Master Unit, Juiz de Fora, Belmiro Braga, Brasil

Peter Fleury has served on the committee planning the Anandanagar master unit and in addition has helped in the design of master units in India, Russia, Italy California, North Carolina, Brazil New York, Mexico Canada, Guatemala, Pennsylvania, Missouri, Illinois and Oregon. He is the owner and business operator of Oasis Garden Inc., a landscape architecture, construction and design company. http://oasisgardens.com/

Neohumanism In Action in Venezuela By Eugenio Mendoza

A framework to be happy

The educational process is a holistic phenomenon, where external objectivity is transformed into internal subjectivity. It goes beyond the school walls, or the family environment, or any other human relations. It goes even beyond that, straight into our own beings; it involves the universe around us and the way our souls interact with it. It does not depend on a particular school approach either, it simply happens as life does.

The Neohumanist Education framework and its learning methods encompass this holistic vision - physical, mental and spiritual - and aim for the liberation of all from exploitation sentiments (such as geo-sentiment and socio-sentiment) in order to achieve a free human society, in harmony and love within our environment.



We are a small family with lots of work to do. Together with my wife, Krsna, and son, Mahaviir, we want to continue our training in Neohumanist Education and PROUT. We are not the kind of people who can enjoy a meal while our neighbors do not have any; we cannot just ignore these differences and let our lives go by without caring or without doing something about it. We are rational and do not get on well with dogmas.



Shortly after we arrived in Venezuela, we met Dada Maheshvarananda in Caracas. Hosted by his kind hospitality, we worked as PROUT volunteers in his organizationⁱ and learned the basics of Ananda Marga yoga, meditation and PROUT; we met Didi Ananda Sadhana and Dada Atmapranananda at the Centro Madre Master Unitⁱⁱ and took part with other volunteers to develop its projects. We learned about other Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar inspired efforts from many other Acaryas, members of Ananda Marga and volunteers. "Universo Infantil", a school in Caracas in which Didi Ananda Amegha has been working, also made a deep impression on us.

For the next two years our son attended a public elementary school near the PROUT Instituteⁱⁱⁱ and we tried to develop an organization there to promote

PROUT locally. After that we decided to move into a new venture to practice José Martí's saying, "the best way to say something is doing it", and we moved to take part in Didi Ananda Amegha's project in Tartagal, Yaracuy.

PROUT sprouts in a new land, Ananda Yara

We had visited the Ananda Yara Master Unit, in Tartagal, Yaracuy, in the north central part of the country, a few times during these two years. Didi Ananda Amegha has selflessly given tremendous effort there for many years. The rural village of Tartagal is so small you can hardly see it on Google Maps. There, on a 5-acre piece of land, she has been developing a rich variety of trees and plants with a lot of assistance from Pedro, a local farmer who has helped to keep the area free from any chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

Shortly after our arrival, a local family gave us the opportunity to work a 15- acre piece of land they were not interested in anymore. According to national law, land is state-owned and is given for the use of those who want to produce on it. Apart from the land we live on, we now look after this new socialist asset and so far in the last year, we have planted two agricultural cycles, beans and corn. In October we harvested corn and we started to plant 1,000 moringa trees in two acres on it.

Our day-to-day experiences have been so fulfilling thanks to the liberating scope of Neohumanism, including transcendental meditation and yoga for developing our world. We live one day at the time in hope, trying to do our best to develop the ideals of PROUT.

We interact with all progressive efforts to develop production methods that promote health. Students from the local university have volunteered to develop organic fertilizers to turn the Mother Home land into a model of agro-ecology through an interdisciplinary approach. The County Office and its Economic Development office are helping us. INSAI^{iv} is assisting us with green techniques to implement agro-ecological farming. After the results in our cornfield, our neighbors, who have used a chemical approach for many years, now want to do as we do.

At the Mother Home location we started to recycle used tires to turn them into pots for gardening. We found the potential of it and started a project funded by the government to develop an acre field to lay some 500 used tires. We are making arrangements with environmental authorities to recycle more tires and include their use in the county schools as a good alternative for producing food.

Beyond local raw material production, we are making efforts towards its transformation. Together with avocado and coffee producers, we have been organizing events that have brought national attention to this important aspect of PROUT.

In April we had the pleasure of having Dada Shambushivananda here to visit and share with the students in the local school. He visited us and taught our university volunteers some meditation exercises that inspired them greatly. It was refreshing to our family to meet him and listen to his words about education, PROUT, P. R. Sarkar, and life.

Venezuela is a land of hope, where there is a very progressive National Constitution inspired by an inspired leader, President Hugo Chavez. Happiness is its target. The Bolivarian Constitution of Venezuela begins with promoting fulfillment of all basic needs: Nutrition, Housing, Health, Education, Culture and Work. It includes respect for and living in harmony with the environment, minerals, plants and animals. Even our cats have benefitted from its pet rescue program, "Mission Nevado". However, as a process of social change, revolution makes for a very complex society. Social cycle trends have polarized Venezuela in complex ways.

Neohumanist activists

We define ourselves as Neohumanist activists, and for us this means that we cannot sit back in the face of exploitation. In this place and time, not everything is the way we want it to be. We have found corruption in the local schools and we have spoken up about it. We are documenting irregularities and working with those educational authorities who are committed to the liberation of intellect to bring about a new educational model, where Neohumanist Education can be the norm. The Venezuelan school system is a complex one and is not easy to reform. Despite the odds, we feel Venezuela is a fertile ground for Neohumanist Education. We are dedicated to helping develop a liberating educational system that will lead to a happy society.



Moving forward in the future

We would like to interact with more Didis, Dadas, and progressive people engaged in Neohumanist actions. We would like to make more room here to host volunteers from all these wonderful organizations.

"La Parreña", is a twenty family community and the original site for the Didi's Foundation. A 35-acre piece of land in the mountains, it needs lots of work. It has a beautiful landscape with wonderful people who have wonderful memories of the times when Didis would go there more often.

Our vision is to develop Neohumanist awareness in our family soul through PROUTistic work inspired by Shrii P. R. Sarkar's teachings on economics and education. It would be nice to share his ideas across three different locations in the valley, the mountain and the village, within this same economic and social region.

viii http://zcomm.org/znetarticle/bolivarian-education-in-venezuela-by-ken-jones/



i www.prout.org.ve

ii http://centromadre.org/welcome.html

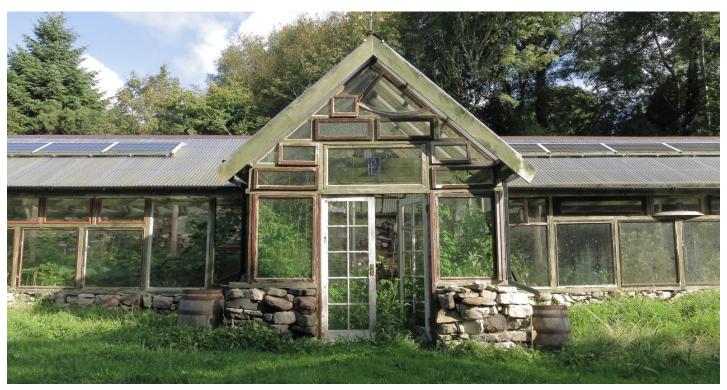
iii http://priven.org/celebration-of-gratitude-for-eugenio-crisal-and-mario/.

iv http://www.insai.gob.ve

v http://www.venezuelaemb.or.kr/english/ConstitutionoftheBolivarianingles.pdf

vi http://priven.org/evaluating-the-legacy-of-president-hugo-chavez-using-the-progressive-utilization-theory-prout- 2/

vii http://misionnevado.blogspot.com/

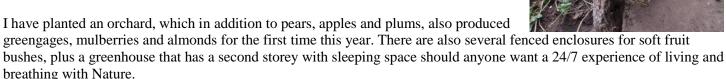


Greenhouse was constructed with local stones and recycled windows and car windscreens

An Edible Forest Garden

Forest Garden Conversion in Ireland By Brian Ragbourn Ph.D

It was not an intention to forego material comforts for a life with no electricity or running water that inspired me to move into a log cabin in Ireland. Rather, there are not many houses near the Irish Master Unit, (Ananda Bharati, Sunrise Farm), and at that time even fewer were for sale. (The situation has changed - there are now several properties in the neighbourhood which are on the market.) The simple lifestyle can be recommended, although courtesy of the sun, wind and rain, the standard mod cons are again becoming part of my life.



My attention is currently focused on planning and planting an edible forest garden, which will comprise trees, shrubs, bushes, plants from around the world that will thrive in this climate zone. Needless to say, the tastiest, most adaptable foreign species were imported long ago. Rhubarb, for instance, was brought to Europe from China via the ancient Silk Road.

Care is needed with selection, however, certain foreign edibles could be a nightmare. Japanese knotweed, the stems of which can be eaten, is so invasive that it could be a full-time job keeping it in check. Better to order single plants, which can then be propagated, from nurseries like the Agroforestry Research Trust (UK) and Fruit and Nut (Ireland) that specialise in exotic cultivars..

Designing a forest garden can either start by planting out trees and shrubs in what is currently a field or meadow. Or alternatively, by clearing an area of trees to establish a glade for planting fruit bushes and other perennials. I am approaching from both ends of the spectrum. I have replaced the gorse on a south-facing slope with an orchard, and have infiltrated a forested area with some shade-tolerant gaultheria shallon and groundcover raspberries. Some damson and apple trees planted in raised beds on a windswept bog land are also thriving well.

Last winter I planted out an elderberry grove consisting of eight different cultivars from Europe and beyond, the Canadian elder will produce flowers throughout the summer due to the absence of an identical tree for pollination. Should this extended supply of elderflowers prove superfluous, it should be straightforward to take a cutting and plant it, as elders are easy to propagate.



The elderberry apparently has a similar vitamin and nutritional content to blueberries, and is considerably easier to grow. This year the blackbirds ate most of the fruit from my blueberry patch, pecking off the berries as they ripened. I would visit early morning only to find that the diminishing supply of green berries never seemed to ripen. Blackbirds also eat some of the raspberries, but as there are plenty enough for all of us it has never troubled me.

The first step in designing a forest garden is to determine which trees and plants can be confidently left to live in harmony with the existing animal and bird population.

My fascination with viewing deer, stoats, hares, red squirrels, pine martens and a wide variety of birds through the windows, and pipistrelle bats fluttering outside at night, tends to encourage a live-and-let-live Hiawatha perspective. Yet cute as they are, deer and hares would gladly strip off the bark and chomp at the branches of some of my newly planted saplings, if given half a chance.

If it is the dharma of a plant species to flower and fruit, then the person who plants it has a certain responsibility, particularly if it is an exotic species in the process of adapting to unfamiliar soil, wind, and rainfall conditions. My fruit saplings are invariably ring-fenced within 4 stakes with mesh wrapped around in the shape of a funnel, to enable the removal of self-seeded flora without undoing the mesh. The wooden stakes rot after some years, by which time the tree trunk and limbs are no longer a delicacy to the deer and hares. Other trees, such as elder, ash and birch may temporarily require simpler protection. Currant bushes, gooseberries, tayberries, groundcover raspberries, gaultheria, elaeagnus etc., can be left unprotected.

When you're smiling the whole world smiles with you

Ring-fencing is time consuming. Where the topsoil is not very deep I sometimes make a dry-stone raised-bed, whereby the process of collecting stones, constructing the four sides of the raised bed, then importing soil, and finally tree planting can take several days, just for one tree. Due to this extensive preparation, the actual planting of the tree is performed with much TLC. (I was surprised to find TLC listed as a word in the dictionary, for those unfamiliar with the expression, it means tender loving care: a useful addition to the vocabulary.)

The TLC which accompanies planting, mulching and pruning strengthens the bond between the planter and the planted. By means of psychogalvanic reflex (PGR) apparatus in conjunction with a polygraph machine it has been possible to monitor subtle variations in plant activity. In 1966 the late Cleve Backster famously sandwiched a leaf of a potted dracaena plant between a pair of electrodes, and recorded a drastic reflex in its electrical resistance which coincided with his intention to burn the leaf with a match. His subsequent research has confirmed that house-plants respond to a wide range of emotional excitements and traumas experienced by their human waterer, even when that person is situated many kilometres away.

This extraordinary biocommunication has been successfully reproduced by numerous researchers, notably, in 1972 by Soviet scientist V.N.Pushkin, and also by Col. John Alexander and staff at the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command headquarters in Washington DC in July 1983.

Most of these laboratory experiments were conducted with potted plants, which typically receive a minute of human attention per day. Imagine what response might occur from a tree that has received an unconditional dose of TLC. I can almost envisage a future scenario in which an orchard behaves like an orchestra in tune with the emotional rhythm and flow of its caretaker?

In addition to potential attunement, mesh protection also provides a cautious level of preparedness should a neighbour's horse roam onto the land, or a herd of cows break through the fence. Whereas in a pasture, horses and ponies can usefully act as eco-lawnmowers, an established low-maintenance forest garden with plenty of perennials requires no grazing. Were there to be a reduction in human meat-eating brought about by circumstance or choice, this could be the blueprint for future farming.

The Global Garden

P.R.Sarkar frequently used the garden metaphor; the colourful flowers in the garden representing one human society. A forest garden reflects this in the realms of internationality and its colourful display. This Autumn's hues of the sugar maples, service tree, and snowberry were particularly pleasing to the eye, and are merely an example of the unfamiliar riot of colour that the forest garden potentially offers. The wide range of fruits ensures a continual stream of different ripening berries throughout the summer, which encourages some interesting combinations in smoothies and jams - a bit like sending the taste buds to another planet.

Ananda Kalyani is a new Master Unit, located in the center of Portugal, south of "Serra da Estrela" Natural Park and aiming to be a model of all-round service and a rural multipurpose development center. In the last two years different volunteer programs took place at the Master Unit, leading to invaluable contributions and positive benefits for the volunteer as well as for the center. The article below is written by a volunteer that worked in Ananda Kalyani for the past year. To read more about the project please visit: www.anandakalyani.org and related Facebook.

Master Units of the Soul

A Journey in Ananda Kalyani Master Unit-Portugal by Miguel Pacheco

How can a person become more him/herself than ever before, finding bliss that never was thought possible? I will tell you how. This is my story, but I'm sure you can all relate in some way or another. This is a story of selfdevelopment and growth, of battles, challenges, of ideals and ideations, of friends and fun. A lot can be said of what happened to me in these last months, since I first had contact with Ananda Marga. Not everything can be put into words, but somehow I believe that you who are reading this will get the message in its fullest form. In the end, it doesn't really matter what I really intend to convey, but how you will make sense of it and the meaning you get from the message. That's the true power of the written word.



It all begins with luck

The calling from an invisible force that draws everything, the desire for more, to make sense of a world that doesn't. The right people are found - the most wonderful group you can ever imagine. Joy, peace and a burning desire for the betterment of the whole planet move them. A united team of people with a dream. I began to learn all I could from them. In the beginning it all seemed so strange, so ambiguous, so out of this world... But that's what really inspired me - kind of a lust for the unknown, for the limitless, an endless road. A path full of obstacles nonetheless. Society doesn't usually admit such an alliance with the infinite, with the uncompromising, with the outermost part of a place without any box. Clearly this was my place.

A family

And now a project. The passion that moved me to find myself and God, was the same that compelled me to share what I have discovered with the world. But how to do it? Once again, luck was to be placed right in front of me on my path. An idea, the will of an inspiring and inspired group to create a place where everyone could have the same opportunities as me, to discover themselves, develop themselves. A wish to live in harmony with the community and nature brought them to the mountains where I was born. Near the biggest natural park in Portugal, close to the thermal waters where childhood games gave birth to the imagination, they wanted to create a



community of self-realized people working towards the happiness of humanity. A Master Unit. Ananda Kalyani.



Evolution

The new-found need to help humanity into a brighter future led me to do my best to help those who already knew how to do it. Though I had very little knowledge and even less understanding, help was to be found wherever and whenever it was needed. The first agricultural project of the Master Unit was my first opportunity to be of service to something that was bigger than me. A student with no previous contact with what it meant to grow your own food, I found myself learning a lot. Not the least of my discoveries was that the harshness of agricultural life is balanced and counterweighted by the thrill of seeing the fruits of your labor in the form of a plentiful bounty to share with everyone. More than two thousand new expressions of life were planted. More to come, but for now let's rest.

The dorms

This building will be used to accommodate the participants of several Master Unit activities, and will provide both private and comfortable rooms as well as larger and simpler dormitories. As all the buildings of the Master Unit....



Electricity and Greywater

Some of the more important infrastructures required for the next steps in the Master Unit are related with electricity and an integrated use of water, based on permaculture and organic design.



Water Well

Having a secure drinkable water source is a main priority for the Master Unit. We need a reliable, clean and scalable source of potable water, to support activities with numerous people, and provide conditions to host...



The Kitchen

At the ground floor of this building you will discover a pleasant eating area, equipped with a big and functional kitchen, an internal and an external dining room and delicious vegetarian food that people are used to...

An idea

A Crowdfunding campaign to help the Ananda Kalyani become a fully established functioning area to help the development of this planet. A new way of gathering a community behind an idea, engaging their dreams and aspirations. With the land bought, several projects developed, and an experienced and eager team ready to work, we only needed that last step that to make it all possible and sustainable. Funds. From a Communications student to a Crowdfunding manager is only a small step, but it felt enormous. For the first time in my life I had the responsibility of creating something that, if it worked, could have a clear impact on society. Fear mixed with cheer, an anxious serenity that troubled a troubled mind... a roller-coaster of mind-states translated into emotions. It is not easy to make a change. With all the help I could ever want, we set this new project, this new aid to our Master Unit, in motion.

ANANDA KALYANI CROWDFUNDING

Exploration

Working on a daily basis for the crowdfunding project with this team made me realize exactly what kind of future I desire. I've learned that it's possible to accomplish goals and have the time of your life doing it. For the first time the preconceptions constantly instilled by the buzzing pressure of an over-heated society were lifted up from my mind a new kind of light-heartedness possessed my heart. A blissful feeling, accompanied by the sensation of accomplishment that came with the job. Clearly this was where I belonged. Not the why or the how, but the who which makes a project like this a great adventure. And I've learned it the easy way. Constant trips to the land where all the effort was made visible flamed my desire to make it blossom and transform the lives of mankind. Like myself, Ananda Kalyani is an always-developing organism. Soon, I trust, others will join and be a part of this joy.



Spiritual warriors

A purpose, a goal, an empowering sentiment. The first Event in Ananda Kalyani. Seems appropriate. In this weekend I have learned what it means to set objectives for yourself, see them through and fight for what you believe. Unleashing your warrior spirit. An opportunity to discover the Master Unit area even further, exploring every bit and corner of it. Learning about its potentials, we really got a glimpse of the future. An environment where everyone can come, explore the inner-most corners of their minds and progress into a new understanding of themselves. A 15 hectare training hub for self-realized individuals.

Constant development

As my inner self gets through the metamorphoses of apparent centuries, the quickening of life is all but certain. A gladiator without an enemy, except for the mirror in front of him and audience that cheers for him. The motions of life feel like waves from a vast ocean that momentarily pull you back in order to push you forward. Gasping for air the cold, icy water gives you a thrill that runs through your spine. Never does a person feel more alive than when he is drowning.

Finishing touches

Like a piece of glass that horizontally rotates my light, projecting it into the sand and gravel of an ever-reborn piece of land, Ananda Kalyani is being revitalized. Every day, new challenges, new missions, new opportunities to express its life path. Like a teenager full of energy, it has bursts of stubbornness, rage and sadness at the same time that gives you the biggest life-filling, spirit-elevating moments. It was a month of conclusions and new plans. For the first time since I can remember I wasn't a student anymore. A new kind of feeling that anything is possible began to surge through my mind and an infinite number of possibilities occurred. Comparison is impossible. Nothing can be similar to standing in an open room, decorated with all the marvelous paintings of life, with no corridor forcing you to walk straight. Just breathing, and enjoying. The first steps of the Master Unit are almost done. With the crowdfunding campaign close to being ready to start, the basic structures to support full-time inhabitants completed, it's a new step that we have climbed. The foundations have been set, time to spread wings.



Present... and future

A new beginning. It's been with a sense of profound accomplishment that this last year has passed. It has represented the first steps towards the future my heart knows is possible. Self-emancipation from old dogmas, while helping to materialize a project aimed to help people do the same. Now, I am starting a new life abroad, with new friends, volunteering in another Master Unit. Fully established, it's a symbol of what these kinds of projects can bring to society. We are working to develop it even further, and I'm here to make sure that will happen!

Engaging in the community and disseminating the same words of love and revolution (a revolution of love) that has allowed me to bloom. That is what motivates me, that is my dream. What's yours? At what do you gaze at night, when sleep struggles to come?

"You are never alone or helpless. The force that guides the stars guides you too" – Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Continued from Page 29 Forest Gardening in Ireland



Last winter the 2kw, Miniwind turbine survived 100mph+ gales



Delays enabled improvements to the bathroom design, thus the hare and tortoise

I recently ordered a dozen cobnut trees, and afterwards wondered whether they should be planted in rows, like the damsons, or dotted randomly around like the fruit orchard and the elder grove? Then a flash of inspiration; why not arrange them in a giant Tree of Life configuration, that would be visible from afar? The idea has since crystalised, and I'm all fired up. Roll on December when the trees get delivered.

Another success has been several ponds that were dug out by a mechanical digger. Water boatmen and dragonflies flit around the surface in summertime, and frogs and tadpoles frequent it during the winter and spring. One pond attracted a couple of ducks. At the end of a physically-demanding summer's day during the pre-running-water era I would often bathe in the stream. Then due to the water being warmer, I later favoured one of the ponds, which had an outlet gully. One visitor thus quipped that whereas some people bought rubber ducks to put in their bathtub, I had real ducks in mine.

Yields from forest gardens are three to four times higher per acre than for standard agricultural land. Unlike fields and meadows, forest gardens make good utilisation of the vertical dimension. As vegetation grows skywards, a greater proportion of the sun's energy becomes reflected, refracted and absorbed via chlorophyll and photosynthesis, which promotes the growth of more produce. While the deeper roots of the trees and perennials nitrogenfix the soil, the foliage and shed wood adds bulk to the soil.

As a farming option, this steady expansion of our planetary surface area would create more space for future generations. So edible forest gardening not only makes maximum utilisation of the Earth's resources, but maximum utilisation of the Sun's resources too. That has got to be PROUTistic!

Anybody interested in some practical forest garden experience will be most welcome, please contact brigunath@yahoo.ie

New Day Ananda Marga School of Portland was featured in a fall issue of a well known magazine "Edible Portland" published by Ecotrust, that supports sustainable farming and local growers. Their garden program has become a model not just for preschools but also for public schools in Portland Metro. Every year neighborhood public school children, along with their master gardener, volunteer in their magical garden of .75 acres of garden space right in the heart of Portland.

Gardening & Farm to Plate Program New Day School, Portland, OR, USA By Suzanne Stone, Head Gardener & Educator

It is a beautiful fall morning at New Day School, a Neohumanist preschool with a strong Gardening & Farm-to-Plate Program, in Portland, Oregon for two-and-a-half thru six year olds. The sun is shining through some clouds gently warming my back, although I feel a cool breeze in the air & hear crunching of colorful autumnal leaves beneath my feet. I am the Head Gardener & Educator at New Day. I feel fall in the air. Myself and my Assistant Gardener, Sheri Love tend to the gardens at New Day School along with the help of the parents of the children here. We are working to create a food forest at New Day School & inspire future stewards & caregivers of our Earth.

As I come to New Day on this fall morning, the outer gardens of spirea, dogwood, vine maple, and rudbeckia welcome me. I notice the school buildings of New Day, colorful on the outside & soft, warm, and inviting in the classrooms on the inside. The first place I walk into is the outside realm of the Sanctuary Garden. Here the green world is as inviting as it was when I first walked up to New Day School. In this Sanctuary Garden, apple and golden plum trees surround me, the beautifully made Ananda Griya cobb building, a living willow & sedum wall, and gentle shade-loving plants remind me of the importance of the quiet of life. The Sanctuary Garden draws me into contemplation and pause before my full day begins.

Quiet contemplation turns into the lively life of the children's play area, as I walk through one of many gates at New Day, this one surrounded by another apple, a red-flowering currant, ferns & poet's jasmine. As I move forward, I pass one of New Day's four rain gardens made by an alumni parent of the school. These four rain gardens collect the rain water from our Kishalay building allowing the water from our rooftops to stay on our land instead of flowing into the Willamette River that runs through Portland, therefore keeping the river healthier. The rain garden is filled with plants such as grasses, echinacea, salal, and currants that can be inundated with water for up to 24 hours, but can also withstand drought conditions.

Passing the rain garden, my eyes are drawn to beautiful wooden raised beds built by Assistant Gardener Sheri Love & a parent to hold flowers & herbs of all colors of the rainbow in the Queen of the Faeries Children's Garden. This is a sensory garden for children to enjoy: observing, feeling, smelling, tasting & listening. Many potions, soups, and fairy homes are made here, as well as first tastes & smells of mint, lemon balm, calendula, borage & oregano. First touches of the softest lamb's ear plant, the rough strawflower, and the wiggly worm, and first sounds of blue jays, crows & chickadees all happen here.

Onward I go, past the young Oregon Oak grounding the school in the middle of the play area, offering shade, companionship & structure. Past the beautifully crafted play structures & finally through another gate of jasmine, rugosa roses, yarrow & blueberries into the Kitchen Garden. This is where the beautiful food garden grows to nourish the children.









This is the gardeners' main realm where we plant, tend, weed, & harvest vegetables, fruits, herbs, and grains for & with the children of New Day School as well as compost all the food scraps & yard debris. Half of the garden has been growing for about ten years now, and the other half was a parking lot four years ago. A group in Portland called Depave assisted New Day School in taking out the asphalt & bringing in new soil for growing. One would not have guessed that once a parking lot existed, as the garden is a budding food forest, full of fruit trees, berry patches, garden beds, an outdoor classroom, and a lovely lavender labyrinth. In the whole kitchen garden, over 1/4 acre, there is a small green house, four cold frames & a few cloches to extend the harvest in this temperate rain forest climate we live in here in Portland. There are over 30 fruit trees, including fig, plum, apple, quince & cherry, more than an alphabet of garden beds, five raspberry patches, three strawberry patches, & almost 30 blueberry bushes. Birds, bees & other insects, worms, and squirrels all call this garden home or visit daily.

As one season rolls into another, spectacular changes take place in this Kitchen Garden. In the spring, the newest green of arugula, swiss chard, spinach, kale, lettuce & peas thrives. In the summer, the garden transforms into a jungle of sunflowers, amaranth, three sister's corn patches (corn, beans & squash), pumpkin mountains, collard greens, carrots & tomatoes. Raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, eleagnus berries, and strawberries all tantalize the taste buds of our young children. The fall brings us the harvest of winter squashes, beans, figs, dry beans, amaranth & quinoa grains. Then into the winter we still have some kale, collards, & lettuces as the garden goes to sleep & shrinks back down into the Earth to rest for the winter. Cover crops of favas, vetch, rye, oats & clover, and blankets of straw nourish & protect the soil from the harsh winter cold.

New Day School is part of the Farm-to-Plate Program movement happening in our world, where schools are beginning to realize the importance of the food we eat, how it is grown, and that love, care and community are important parts of this process. In this Farm-to-Plate movement, children are nourished from the food of a local garden, in this case at New Day School, from the extensive garden that is part of the school & the curriculum itself. New Day children are a part of the whole process from seeding, tending, watering, planting, harvesting, washing, baking, eating & composting. They know and are excited about the fact the plants they are caring for will then care for them. They develop a personal relationship with the plants, the seasons, the sun & rain, the worms, ladybugs & bees without which the garden could not be. With this developing relationship, seeds are planted for our future stewards of the Earth who learn love, respect, thankfulness & nurturing for plants, creatures, land, and all others beyond themselves. "To Earth I come to bring the light, then bring the light to every form. To birds and trees and honey bees, to every plant beneath the sea," as we sing at All School Circle.









All of the food grown in the New Day School garden nourishes the children in their vegan snacks and lunches prepared by our cooks Didi Atandra & Cook Alex. Last year's garden harvest from March to December was ~ 3,000 pounds of vegetables and fruits. A mom at our school tallied all the harvest, and comparing the prices of organic produce at local supermarkets, calculated that this harvest was equal to over \$10,800 of food. The children's taste palates grow trying such new vegetables & fruits as parsnips, golden carrots, amaranth grains, and sweet & sour eleagnus & aronia berries. They ask for collard & kale leaves by name & are often seen munching on one of these dark green leaves as big as their heads in the play area. A mom once told me that she knows children who have attended New Day School because they say soil instead of dirt and can tell the difference between lemon balm and mint. The children here are learning the strong connection between the seed we sow, the plant we tend, and the food we harvest which then nourishes us. They are learning the interconnectedness of life.

Along with the Garden to Plate Program, the children are also engaged in Gardening Classes which immerse them in the seasonal changes of a garden through hands-on activities. In the spring, classes are focused on planting seeds both in newspaper pots & in the soil of the garden as well as learning the life cycle of our native honey bees. In the summer, we







make sun tea with herbs & flowers, make flower presses to bring home, eat sunflower seeds right from the sunflower head, and harvest our potatoes. In the fall, we make leaf rubbings, save seeds, plant bulbs, grind corn into corn meal, make corn husk dolls, seed cover crops in the garden beds & make grape vine wreaths for each classroom. In the winter, we make Kindness Cream (Calendula salve) that is a balm for cuts & bruises which children then ask for when they are hurt, make paper with seeds imbedded in it so they can plant it in their gardens, learn the parts of a plant, and make douglas fir satchels to bring home. Other projects during the year include raking leaves, caring for our worm bin, natural dying of cloth with plants, washing carrots, snapping beans, husking corn, shelling dry beans, harvesting herbs & flowers for drying and all the work that goes into tending a garden.

Parents log volunteer hours in the garden so that they are also involved in the growing process. Whole families come work in the garden modeling to their children the spirit of community, working together for a greater good. The children feel proud of the work their families do in the garden, often pointing out plants they planted or telling me that their parent watered the garden on the weekend. Many families who did not have a garden before their child attended New Day, begin gardens at home with their children, as the enthusiasm of a young one is contagious. As a result, the children then become the teachers for their parents.

A grandmother of some children at our school mentioned to me the other day that her whole life she has been seeking community, as she feels most do, and that New Day is the warmest, most welcoming community she has found. How can it not be when a hummingbird, trees & plants, bees, worms, spiders, squirrels, children & grown ups all are trying find a way to coexist among a blessed green garden. It is a treasure & joy to work as a gardener at the New Day School and witness the children growing stronger each day as they are nourished by the garden they so proudly tend to. As the autumn winds continue to blow in and the harvest continues to pour in, I am thankful for the connection the children of New Day School have with the circle of the seasons on our Earth. One day when I move into the autumn & winter of my own life, and these children have grown into adults, I long to see the gardens they create & the Earth they have learned to care for. As we sing at the beginning of our gardening classes,

"Now it's fall when the leaves change color and dance to the ground,
Then comes winter when the wind gets cold and snow all around,
Then comes spring when the flowers wake up and bees pollinating can be found,
Then comes summer when the sunflowers bloom and dance in a circle round and
round,

The circle of the seasons The circle of the seasons Round and round they go The circle of the seasons."

Many green blessings.







Music, Drama, Dance and Graduation Day in Sunrise Kindergarten, Finland

by Didi Ananda Krpa

Once I was asked by a little boy in our kindergarten during the morning circle, "Didi, can you play guitar like a rock star?" When he asked me this question, he had a big smile on his face and showed so much excitement in his eyes. I laughed and said, "Just a tiny bit", and he looked at me and smiled. I could sense that he was satisfied with my answer and mentioned that he has a pretend guitar at home (Guitar Hero) that he loves so much but it got broken.

Here in Sunrise Kindergarten (Finland), aside from doing creative arts and



academic activities, the children learn and sing lots of songs, do movements and dramatizations, yoga and of course sing kiirtan while I play guitar for them. Many of the children imitate me playing the guitar by strumming their tummy with their fingers as they chant the mantra before the meditation.

As the children love to sing and learn new songs with fingerplays they also love to listen to the guitar playing. I believe that due to this, the children develop love for music. I can see that as soon as I come to the morning circle they compete among themselves who is going to pick up the guitar to hand it to me for the kiirtan and meditation. This has been going on for some years now and finally in March early this year, I decided to teach ukulele to the 5 and 6 year old children. I thought, it resembles a guitar, it is small and light and it would be easy for them to hold it. Besides, it was also the first instrument I learnt to play at the age of seven. I brought this matter to the parents meeting and they were happy to hear about it.

So I bought a ukulele and brought it to the school. The children were so excited when they saw it. They were all eager to hold it. I let them hold and strum it and then after a week I started teaching the children how to strum and use 1-3 finger chords at least 15-30 minutes a day. The children were learning very fast and in 4 weeks time they could already play some of the Circle of Love songs with 3 chords by heart.



I find that music and songs affect children in many ways in their development. Since most of our children come from different ethnicities, they speak different languages. Some of these children learn their first words in English through songs and poems and some through stories depicted in books, drawings or flannel characters. The movements in rhythmic songs also help the children develop their fine and gross motor skills and their sense of rhythm. Shy children also come out of their shells when they hear rhythmic and joyful songs during morning circle time. At first they would just watch while the other children were singing, then slowly each day they would move their little fingers and then their lips to sing the words. Mantra music played after the yoga session while they lie down helps the children to relax and be peaceful while their minds float in the imaginary world during the visualization.

We also do a lot of dramatizations and role plays in the classroom. Just like music, it supports the children in their learning and development. We have a lot of beautiful and colorful props that I sewed for them. The children are proud and happy to wear them. Even months before their summer party, they are already anticipating who or what they going to be in the drama and what costumes they are going to wear. In the many dramatic plays we have, the children express themselves joyously. They get to choose which characters they want to be. They could be anyone or anything. They can be an animal in need and understand the pain animals are undergoing or a child helping the animal while unconsciously learning about the spirit of service. Or they could be a talking tree and experience what it is to be a tree and what a tree thinks. In dramatic plays, the children learn about science, values and the world around them. It also supports children to develop their abstract thinking, literacy, math skills and much more. But most of all, it is fun for them. It is their place where they can be who they want to be where they share their laughter and joy with each other while they learn at the same time.

We also teach dance to the children. Dance, according to P. R. Sarkar, the propounder of Neohumanist Education, should be another part of early childhood education. Dance also supports the children in their learning and development. It helps the children develop rhythm, discipline, memory, flexibility, grace, posture, balance and coordination. Through aboriginal or folk dances, the children are also able to learn about the cultural heritage of a particular tribe or country and in that way learn their history.

In June this year, we ended the school year with a summer party and graduation day. We had songs, dance, drama, ukulele performance and we also had a visitor, Dr. Marcus Bussey, who gave an inspiring talk to the parents and visitors about the essence of Neohumanism. The children performed drama, ukulele and Native American Indian dances to their parents' delight. Everyone was happy and satisfied with the show.

And lastly, I have been meaning to give a talk about Neohumanism to all the parents for many years now, but I never could find time. Hearing Marcus's talk, the parents got inspired about our philosophy and curriculum. Some expressed after the party that they would want to hear more about it without any children around. Marcus also was the

guest to hand-over the preschool diplomas to the graduating children.



MorningStar Preschool, Denver, Colorado, USA By MahaJyoti Glassman, Director

Since its inception in 1988, this 10-hour-a-day preschool has been providing high quality education and enrichment experiences for 2 ½ to 5 year old children. MorningStar is closed for only 9 days every year and four teachers are lovingly interacting with the 29 kiddos Monday through Friday. The children enjoy literacy, math, and science activities as well as socio-emotional coaching, yoga, meditation, and kiirtan and FUN, FUN, FUN!

Relationship building is the essence of yoga and so MorningStar staff strive to also build relationships with every parent. Parent partnership is an integral part of early childhood education. Parents may have one or two children of preschool age in a lifespan whereas our staff has been working with this age group for 57 years! Sharing tools and brainstorming strategies with parents is a crucial part of setting a strong foundation for each child and family. We provide a parenting tips newsletter every month, 8 parent functions every year, and they are encouraged to drop by to volunteer or have lunch with us any time! Teachers send home monthly Progress Reports and are constantly emailing, taking photos, and texting the parents about their children's successful adventures.

As November approaches, the school community will be engaging in at least 3 service projects. These can involve anything from donating school and bedding supplies for homeless girls, to providing personal items and toys for single homeless mothers with children, to donating school supplies for classrooms dedicated to autistic children, to assisting with disaster relief.





Always a joy, MorningStar currently possesses the highest academic rating of 4 stars in the State of Colorado.

Saving Lives in the Schools and Streets of Porto Alegre, Brazil

by Fabricio Pranav Labre, Patrícia Reis and Dada Maheshvarananda



Inspired by the teachings of P.R. Sarkar, in 1982 the members of the Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT/AMURTEL) of Porto Alegre opened a kindergarten in a poor neighborhood. A philanthropic non-profit



association, its objective is "promoting the individual, the child, the family and the community, in all of their dimensions, based on the universal ideas of Neohumanism."

Today, as part of the Gurukula Network, the Neohumanist Educational (NHE) projects in that city include five kindergartens..."in that city include five kindergartens attended by 270 children aged two to six and a primary school with 290 students. The community actively supports these Neohumanist projects; in fact, the city departments of Education and Health support the schools financially and by donating education materials. The city government and other public and private institutions often invite the schools' directors and teachers to give lectures and workshops about the principles of Neohumanism to teachers, university students and parents.

Projovem is a project of AMURT/AMURTEL/NHE in partnership with the Municipal Government of Porto Alegre to address the needs of at risk teenagers from 15 to 18 years old. Their goal is to rescue youth who are abused or sexually exploited, whose ties with their family and community have been broken, and to restore healthy family and community support.



Ana Cristiana Aguiar was just five years old when she first saw then Didi Valaka in her orange uniform at the Ananda Marga kindergarten. Orange became her favorite color and Didi's motherly love made a lasting impression on her. As she grew she developed a keen interest in natural foods and a healthy lifestyle. After she graduated from university, she joined Street Action, a program that confronts the situation in the streets in which the children live with the local community. She says, "When I put on that orange shirt, I know that I'm a member of the Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team." Wearing it, she courageously goes to the worst neighborhoods, talking to people in the community to find out who are the teenagers at risk. Finding them is only the first challenge; persuading them to leave with her is the second. "I never went back to the center without a child.

I know who is always helping me -- the founder of AMURT/AMURTEL, P.R. Sarkar." Now she is the Coordinator of Projovem's Adolescent Program in two regions of the city.

The Projovem social workers found Michelle, then 15, living with her family beside the local dump where they scavenged for things to recycle. When she started to attend the classes and programs, the other girls harassed and mocked her. Now, a year later, she has learned to speak English and French and has been accepted by GOL Airlines in a special training program to prepare teenagers to eventually become flight attendants.

Once neighbors told the workers about a six-year-old boy who was being abused by his paternal grandfather, the leader of a drug gang. Along with police officers who specialize in youth protection, they





confirmed that the reports were true and together removed the child. The workers even received death threats on this and other occasions. But they were able to successfully place the child with his maternal grandmother in another town, where he is now safe to grow and learn.

A teenager, 14, called them and said he was being abused and assaulted in a foster home. With the help of lawyers, the workers were able to remove the boy and place him in a good family. The boy tells everyone he wouldn't be alive today were it not for Projovem.

Beatriz Kulish was the social work coordinator for the Porto Alegre city government for many years. She repeatedly declared publicly that

every project that AMURT/AMURTEL is involved with is invariably excellent, with perfect accounts. Never did she find any irregularities or misappropriation of funds. Her praise in large part goes to Luiz Mincarone, who for 32 years has managed the legal and administrative work, applying for funding and getting it to the hands of the people and programs that need it the most.



Ane Rios is a specialist in educational psychology. She says, "In 2011 I started my professional career working as the General Coordinator of AMURT/AMURTEL in Porto Alegre. I soon became charmed with the philosophy of the Master. I changed my habits, became vegetarian and learned how to

meditate. Each day I learned more about ethical values, quality, discipline and subtlety that I apply in this professional and spiritual journey. I feel honored that my career choice allows me to

dedicate my life on a mission as special as this institution committed to the pursuit of a more just society with less alienation and more liberation."



Patrícia Reis, Coordinator for the social and educational projects of AMURT/AMURTEL and NHE (Neohumanist Education) in Porto Alegre for

the last 15 years, says, "I consider our work to be about human emancipation in all the spheres of life. I always think about my master Sarkar and how he worked so tirelessly for social justice, to guarantee all the basic necessities so that everyone feels they belong and are well cared for. Our social work fighting drug abuse and sexual exploitation is sometimes dangerous, but it is very rewarding."

http://www.amurt .org.br/





News from the Ananda Marga River School

Ananda Kamala Master Unit Maleny, Sunshine Coast, Australia By Kamala Alister

Here in the Southern Hemisphere we are in the final term of our school year for 2014. It's been a great year with so many interesting projects and events that it is hard to remember them all!

Exciting Study

In Term 3 we have had some exciting areas of study such as "Creating Happiness" in grade 6/7, "Sustainable Homes" in grade 4 (part of a Simple Living theme), "The Heavens" in grade 5 (including both astronomy and a

study of the worlds' religions) "Growing Questions" in grade 1 (a science unit). As part of their Creating Happiness teams, grade 6/7 students have chosen a service project to support based on the idea that serving others brings happiness. The students have chosen an excellent collection of projects including service to animals, overseas and local projects.



We enjoyed our second student exchange with the Sunshine School in Laos. This year seven 14-year old students, two Lao teachers and Principal Didi Ananda Gaorii came for one month to visit our school. Each of the students stayed with one of our school families. We organized many interesting excursions for the students. They taught our students dance and organized an authentic Lao dinner and performance evening for our school. Once again an enriching experience for all!

Love for Animals

Early this year, the Early Childhood Centre adopted two baby goats, who the children named Nibbles and Puddles. Older children come each day to take the goats for a walk around the school grounds. There are also four small dogs that come to school with staff each day, which is wonderful for the children. Recently the grade 6 and 7 boys, with the help of some Dads, built a lovely chicken coop for the Early Childhood Centre.



Soon that will be filled with rescued battery hens (chickens that would be killed otherwise as they have come to the end of their egg-laying life.) The Prep class also has guinea pigs in a spacious outdoor cage. Earlier this year an animal rescue organization carefully released two sugar gliders on the school grounds, and we have abundant wallabies, brush turkeys and other native animals and birds who call the school their home. It's wonderful to see Neohumanism in action!



Each week this year a different class does a presentation on one of our ten virtues (loosely based on Yama and Niyama) for the weekly Morning Circle. These have included videos, posters, presentations, songs and more. It's been quite an amazing display of creativity and wonderful to see what the classes have come up with. The large posters they made hang in our school library.

Service

The grade 5 class participated in Students Teaching Students for two full, exciting days. They produced a wonderful

video about the environment which they showed at the conference. They have been asked to show the video again for a local environmental organization.

The school continues to emphasize service at all levels. One of our ongoing projects is to support the weekly free lunch at the Maleny





Neighborhood Centre. Each fortnight the school contributes luscious vegetarian lasagnas, made by students in a cooking elective and fresh salad from our gardens as part of the meal for over 60 people. Three children are chosen from the upper school to serve the meal each time. Our service is greatly appreciated by the Neighborhood Centre who comments on the delicious food and hard working students.

Recently our Principal asked the Neighborhood Centre what other support they needed. They said they needed toilet paper rolls to donate to families in need! In a short time, the school had collected 500 rolls of toilet paper that filled an entire car when the children brought them over to the Centre.



Morning Circle begins with kiirtan and collective meditation with all, nearly 140 primary students and teachers. Included is a candle lighting and blessing ceremony, songs, virtue presentation and announcements. It's so touching that many parents, who are welcome to come any time, are nearly in tears by the end.

Music and Art

We have a specialist music and art teachers. Children can study guitar,

percussion, marimba, keyboard and strings and we have groups for most of these. I loved visiting the grade 6/7 music class recently where the whole class created a band, with children on guitars, bass, percussion, keyboards, marimba and vocals all playing some cool songs together. Each year our students make up a huge percentage of the Musical Excellent Program at the local high school.



Community

We have been holding two "Cafe Nights" each term. Parents, students and friends are invited to the school for a delicious sentient dinner and some kind of performance by the children. This is a good fundraiser for our Parent Committee and builds community at the school.

Sometimes we have an open mic with children and adult performance (although the children rehearse before and we make sure their performances are appropriate.) Other times our music groups or individual classes have performed. We also had a special evening where our past students came back to perform. We had two students who have become big names in music, and they sent in video clips and messages.

We also have a sentient, vegetarian Tuck Shop (canteen) which provides healthy vegetarian lunches and snacks three days a week, run by one coordinator and parent volunteers.

The school inaugurated a new outdoor playground this year, which includes two amazing musical instruments and innovative climbing structures.

In the last few weeks of term three, each class has headed off for school camps - to lovely locations. We ended the third term with our all-school Friendly Olympics, a River School favorite day! (The children get gold, silver or bronze ribbons depending on how much they have improved on their individual times in each event.)

Our annual Spring Festival is this weekend. The entire community is invited and we have exciting stalls (organized by each class), yummy vegetarian food, a big roster of entertainment, a giant water slide, talks and more. It's organized by the Parent Committee as a fundraiser for the school.

Past Students

At our local high school in the last four years, at least one of the students chosen as the year 12 student captains has been a River School student. One of our past students, Lij Gilmour, who is making a big name for himself in music said in an interview:

"Going to the River School gave me the ability to be able to express my feelings and my opinions and have confidence in what I thought," he says. "They also encouraged me to get into music. It was joining the River School choir in grade six that sparked an intense love of music and performance, with a highlight being a performance for 90,0000 people at the Woodford Folk Festival."

Meditation Ideas

from The Ananda Marga River School Australia - by Kamala Alister

Spiritual Heroes

Recently I had a term going into each class at the Ananda Marga River School once a week to meditate with the children. With younger children, I used finger puppets or cute stuffed animals to tell stories, mostly from the lovely book, "Who am I? Spiritual Philosophy for Young Children" from Ananda Marga Publications. With the older children (Grades 3 to 7), I presented some of my Spiritual Heroes. After meditation, I shared a few minutes about the hero of the week, often with some photos on my laptop or from a book. Here are a few, and

there are many more possible. Information about them all is on the internet.

Peace Pilgrim: She was an American woman who traveled across the US on foot for 25 years carrying nothing with her but her clothes. I showed a photo of her and read some of her quotes relating to "Simple Living." (her very inspiring book is available for free. You can find it online.)

Jaques Lusseyran: As a young man he formed a group to fight against the Nazi's occupation of France. The amazing thing is that he was completely blind. But he saw light auras so he could manage as a sighted person. But he couldn't see anything at all if his mind became imbalanced with anger or hatred! (His autobiography is "And then there was light.")

Make A Stand Lemonade: Vivienne Harr, a 9 year old Californian girl has raised \$50,000 to fight child slavery at her home lemonade stand. You can watch her youtube video and there is a film coming out about her, and she is still doing it.

President of Uraguay: He is called the "world's poorest President" because he lives very simply and donates 90% of his salary to charity. I showed photos of him to begin with and asked, "What do you think this man does for a living?"

King of Thailand: He became king unexpectedly when his uncle abdicated and his older brother mysteriously died. At that time he was studying at the university in Europe. He became an active king, instead of staying confined to the Palace as previous generations. He traveled around learning about the problems of the country, creating many new irrigation projects and other progressive farming initiatives that changed the lives of the poor. There is an organic garden at the palace and organic shops around Bangkok that he founded. I read an article from a Buddhist teacher who talked about his use of self-restraint and compassion in dealing with rebel soldiers.

Paul Narada Alister: I read some pages from his book "Bombs, Bliss and Baba" about how when wrongly imprisoned for seven years when he was in his twenties, he decided to dedicate himself to meditation and ended up becoming very blissful and being able to do some service for other prisoners as well. (They all know him as he teaches them meditation.)

Demonstrations of the Benefits of Meditation for Children

A Clear Mind (This one is from our school Acharya, Didi Ananda Devanishta)

Pass around a jar of water and let children put pinches of different colors of glitter and sparkles into the water. These are their "thoughts and feelings" and the jar is their mind! Shake up the jar and see how busy the water has become. Then leave the jar still and let everything settle to the bottom. This is our mind when we meditate! Our mind becomes clear and clean!

Expanded Mind

Lay out a pretty cloth with a large bowl and small glass. After meditation one child gets to drop a pretty stone, first into the large bowl, then into the small glass. Talk about how much the water is disrupted in the glass, versus the bowl, versus, say a small stone dropping into a huge, calm lake. When our minds expand in meditation, they are not disrupted so much by small disturbances and we can remain calm even in the face of upsets and challenges.

Moral Base in Life

Put out a small cushion or pillow and a firm base (a board, a book...) I chose two sets of two children and challenged them to build a tower of blocks on each surface. We laughed, saying, "This isn't a fair competition, is it?" Of course, you can't build a very tall tower on the cushion! We talked about how important it is to have a strong base of morality in your life. I demonstrated on the hard surface with each block: You finish primary school (one block), you start high school (another one on top), you get your first job (another one), first relationship (another one) and so on. If the base isn't firm and you are perhaps telling lies to your parents or teachers, or stealing, or losing touch with simple living or contentment... the whole pile might fall down!

Stories and Games

The Children's Garden - by Didi Anandarama

This is a story on the value of 'initiative' from the 100 stories of the project 'Children for a Better World' by AMURTEL Indonesia and Malaysia in cooperation with NHE/Gurukula. The 100 stories of this project will be illustrated and printed as books for children to be taken home and to be read to them by their parents.

This is a fictional story but based only on a real life news report from Egypt of a girl who actually made a desk from garbage. (http://egyptianstreets.com/2014/05/21/only-an-egyptian-girl-will-struggle-for-an-education-like-this)

Amira was a young girl who lived with her parents, her two brothers and two sisters. Although their home was small and they had no furniture except for a small table, they lived happily together. Amira loved going to school. She loved her teacher and her school mates. But at home Amira had a problem. She could not do her homework peacefully without her younger brother and sister disturbing her. Sometimes Amira would get upset and go outside.

There was a big space between Amira's house and the neighbour's house. In it was a pile of rubbish. One day Amira walked around the rubbish thinking deeply. Suddenly she had an idea. She pulled some boards out of the rubble. Amira made herself a desk to use in her yard. She also found a broken chair and managed to fix it. Happily she went to get her school bag from the house and enjoyed doing her homework at her new desk. Soon other children also made desks for doing their homework.

One day, after finishing her homework, Amira gathered the children. "Let's clean up this place together!" They all agreed. Together they worked for days and weeks. They swept, burned garbage and filled up big garbage containers. They made signs asking people not to litter and planted trees and made flower beds.

One day the mayor passed by and saw the children busy working. He was very impressed. He said, "Who had the idea for this project?" They all pointed to Amira. The mayor shook hands with her, "Thank you, Amira for doing such great work!" He asked the children if they needed anything else. They asked for a playground, drinking water, a shady roof and a small shed for their gardening tools. The mayor happily granted all their needs.

The mayor arranged a big party for the opening of the Children's Garden and gave Amira a special prize of appreciation.

For more information on the 100 stories project please contact Didi Anandarama at <didianandarama@gmail.com>

Namaskar Game – by Dada Maheshvarananda

This next game involves no movement, but is a very powerful non-judgmental reflection about who we are. I have recently done this with children in public schools, but have also done this with prisoners in jail, and they are sometimes moved to tears. Here are the instructions:

"Sit in pairs facing someone you don't know very well. One person of each pair has to close his or her eyes for three minutes. The second person has to watch. Afterwards we will switch. So decide now who will be the first one to close your eyes." [Start quiet Kiirtan or other soft music on a CD player if you have it.]

"I will now give directions to the one with eyes open. Look at the person in front of you. [pause] Imagine that this person is rather like you. [pause] Imagine that he or she has experienced some disappointments in life like you have. [pause] Imagine that he or she has been hurt in life, sometimes physically, sometimes emotionally, just as you have. [pause] Imagine that because of these hurts, he or she has some worries and fears like you do. [pause] Imagine that he or she, like you, has also tried to be kind and to help people when possible. [pause] Imagine that he or she has some hopes and dreams like you have. [pause] Imagine that he or she would like to be a better person, just as you would like to be. [pause] Imagine that he or she has physical, mental and spiritual potential like you. [pause] Imagine that the Supreme Consciousness, God, is also inside this person. [pause] Now put your hands together and touch your forehead and then touch your heart and say, "Namaskar", which means, "I greet the divinity within you with all my mind and all my heart." [Ring a bell]

"Now close your eyes and do meditation, and those who were meditating open your eyes." [repeat instructions]

GLOBAL NEWS

QAHIRA SECTOR

Croatia

Moja Prva Knjiga - My First Book Project in Croatia completed its 10 years anniversary!

This project is a national contest in all public schools for children to write their own original stories and illustrate them. The best stories are published as books. This year 876 books from 220 schools were submitted to the contest and 11 first prizes, 30 second prizes and 200 third prizes given out. This project was started in 2004 by Didi Anandarama at the Center for Neohumanist Studies NGO and from this year it is maintained by Kalibra NGO of Karlovac.

There is an exhibition of over 100 published books at the Ivan Goran Kovacic library in Karlovac.



HONG KONG SECTOR

Tai Chung, Taiwan



Ananda Suruci Master Unit

At the Ananda Suruchi MU, the ongoing permaculture courses have been very successful. A wellness center is also being planned and will be constructed very soon.



Tai Chung will be the site of an NHE Teacher's Training College and closer to town, in the lap of mountains, another land being developed will be



called "Yoga Village" and will serve as a Retreat and Gurukula Seminar Center. The first building is expected to be built within the next 10 months.



NHE Meeting

Following the public program, Yoga Education in Schools, NHE Taiwan had a meeting with 30 participants.

Taipei, Taiwan

CNS Meeting

CNS Taiwan met and chalked out their plans for the following year for developing their website, Gururkula 25th Anniversary celebration seminar, an internal seminar, Teacher Training Seminar, publications, Gurukula Network newsletter translated into Chinese and a Children's Camp.

BERLIN SECTOR



Stockholm, Sweden

Dada speaks at the Bliss Cafe in Stockholm

Copenhagen, Denmark

A Teacher Training Seminar was held at the Sunrise School in August on NHE and the Role of Teachers. 12 teachers attended. Classes were given by Malati and Dada Shambhushivananda.

Iceland Didi Ananda Kaostubha

We extended our school building. Before the size of the house was 240 sqm. Now we have extended the total size of the house to 490 sqm. We had permission to have 39 kids according to the size of the house and now we have applied to get 25 more kids in the house. In our new building we have an extra-big hall where kids can have indoor activities and staff have their separate working area and resting room. All the parents are very happy to see the standard of our building, education, philosophy, care, and love. There is always a huge waiting list.





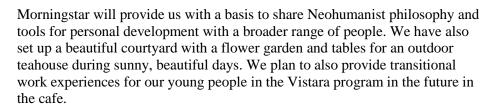
Ananda Rtam Social Garden CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Poieni, Romania

This season began with reconstructing a 500 square meter greenhouse that had been destroyed by heavy snows in the winter. We have had again an average of about 30 clients per week receiving vegetable baskets with a variety of organic seasonal produce. In August, we organized another permaculture workshop with Steve Hart, an experienced designer from Australia who studied with Bill Mollison. The concept of mulching was clearly reinforced and put into practice by our staff and participants. We have also had many volunteers this season who helped us to construct several innovative mandala gardens. Already our local staff are inspired by the designs and implementing them also at home! We have also started to gain clients from the Dutch Embassy - one of our new team members is from Holland - so he has been busy spreading the word!



Morningstar Wellness Center – Newly Opened Bucharest, Romania

In June 2014, a holistic wellness center called Morningstar Center, newly opened in the north of Bucharest. The center offers a variety of courses in yoga, meditation, tai chi, qigong, stress management, vegetarian cooking as well as special programs like drumming circles, detox days, permaculture events and seminars on spiritual topics. In addition, we are collaborating with natural therapists to offer ayurvedic consultations and treatments, homeopathy, bach flowers and massage. The center will create jobs for massage therapists with visual disabilities coming from the school Regina Elisabeta which is specialized in training people with visual disabilities in massage therapy.



In October, we organized a lunch party for a group of Dutch embassy representatives, which included a vegetarian meal largely made with organic ingredients from our CSA garden. We introduced the center, as well as AMURTEL's work, and even led a short meditation experience for some of them.





Delhi Sector - India

Panchkula, near Chandigarh

New AMGK Center Opening



Ananda Nagar

Opening Session of Ananda Marga Gurukula Teachers Training College. Classes began on July 1st 2014 with 100 students.



In October, Dr. Shambhushivananda addressed the students on the theme: "Role of Teachers in Building an Ideal Society" and the talk was very well received. It will be followed by a special series on "Inner Ecology" at the Yoga-Shiksha Kendra (Wellness Center at Anandanagar).

Shimla

Dr. B. D. Sharma

dsharma.iias@gmail.com> is a celebrated author of books on medicinal plants. Here he presents his latest encyclopedia on Himalayan Edible Medicinal Plants to Kulapati of Ananda Marga Gurukula.



Kharar Punjab

Kulapati addressed Rotarians on the theme of Towards a Compassionate and Sustainable India



Anandanagar
Kaoshikii and Gurukul Day Celebrations





Anandapur High School





Nitish Kumar of the 10th Grade received the coveted National Inspired Award.

Kolar



Kulapati spoke to the 200 medical faculty and students of SDU University (Sri Devraj Urs University) on some of the challenges of the medical field and bio-psychological aspects of yoga and meditation. Dr Premnath Kotur, VC welcomed him and remarked that they have been greatly enlightened by this rare visit of Dr. Shambhushivananda, Kulapati of AM Gurukula. He also remarked that Ac. Cinmayananda Avadhuta of Ananda Marga Gurukula has been nominated to the ethics committee of the Medical College and that they desired closer collaboration with AM Gurukula meditation experts.



Dr. P. F. Kotur, Vice Chancellor of Sri Devraj Urs Academy of Higher Education and Research (a deemed to be university) facilitated Dr. Shambhushivananda after the talk to the faculty and staff of the Medical School in Tamaka, Kolar, Karnataka, India.

Ananda Palli High School and Orphanage By Dada Dharmapremananda

Ananda Palli High School is located in a remote part of India. It was started in 1970 with a small piece of land donated by local farmers who dreamt of a better education for their children and others in the neighborhood. It started with KG-1 and expanded up to 10th grade in a few years. It is now offering basic education to hundreds of children on a regular basis.

The surrounding villagers are mostly farmers and can't afford a good education to their children. It currently covers more than 20 villages nearby and fundraising is ongoing for

Kulapati visited the Polytechnic in Kolar



Kithandur, Karnataka Kolar District, School run by Dada Cinmayananda



Jharkhand School



expansion. The school also has a residential facility which houses more than 50 orphaned children who belong to either very economically poor families or are parentless. For more details write to anandapalli@anandapalli.com



Neohumanist Education





Kids Yoga Teacher Training, Singapore. See page 9

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