

GURUKULA NETWORK



Newsletter of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes affiliated with Ananda Marga Gurukula

Issue 40 - May 2015

MOVING FORWARD

towards a
SUSTAINABLE
and
COMPASSIONATE
society

Sá vidyá yá vimuktaye - Education is that which liberates

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 May, 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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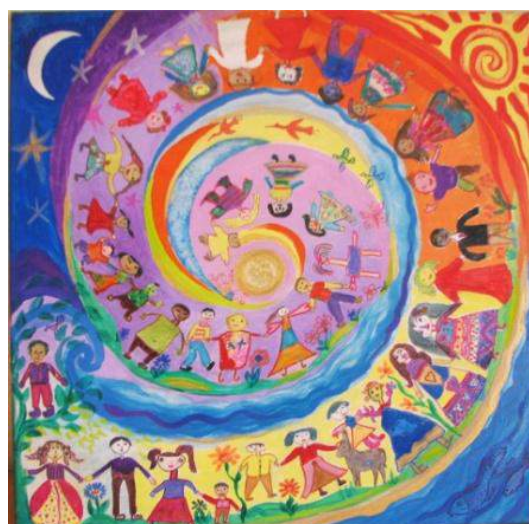
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Moving Forward

By Ac. Shambhushivananda Avadhuta



Time and again, great prophets and sages have come on this earth with a universal message, and mortal humans have polluted that universal teaching with their ego-centered tinge and relegated the message to a mere sectarian call. Human beings tend to be obsessed with lust for power and the élan vital of universal spirit gets clouded by the use of moral and spiritual authority for narrow ends. Still today, the world is steeped in disparities, diseased bodies, misuse of precious treasures of the earth, underutilization of human potentials for greater welfare and we are still far from being connected with the blissful realm of divine consciousness that pervades the entire creation and gives it the power to exist, evolve and reach its fullest manifestation.

Today, we stand at the cross roads. On the one hand lie narrow sentiments protecting the interests of the 'few' and on the other hand, lie the hidden aspirations of the multitudes to create a pathway that will be firmly imbued with universalism, discipline, harmony and magnanimity. Ananda Marga Gurukula has consciously chosen the latter path. We wish that all moral and spiritual aspirants imbued with divine love may join together to build an ideological institution that is rooted in the cosmic spirit and uphold the flaming torch of "one indivisible human society".

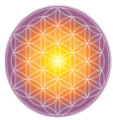
The global neohumanist network sets aside all flimsy differences among all people working to create a universal human society. On the 25th anniversary of the founding of AMGK, we reaffirm our essential purpose: to serve humanity with neohumanist spirit and to acquire knowledge for that purpose. In this endeavour, we are forging alliances with one and all who are inspired with this vision and who are tuned to the vision of its founder Shrii P. R. Sarkar, who devoted his entire life to the formation of a blissful universal family (Ananda Parivar) on this earth.

On this auspicious moment, we have announced several steps forward:

1. Creation of a PR Sarkar Institute in order to support educational communities with information and educational materials that will help raise the consciousness of the world.
2. Formation of an on-line Neohumanist College in order to facilitate the meeting of teachers and the taught who are spread across continents and are keen to learn from one another.
3. Strengthening of the "Global Association of Neohumanist Educators" who are working in over a hundred countries on different continents. Currently, representatives from 54 countries have already signed up as active members and we hope that in the coming year, the rest of the educators will also get actively linked to this global network.
4. We are also pleased to announce the alliance with wellness centers, bio-psychology research group, microvita research institutes and yoga-teacher training programs including kids' yoga initiatives being offered on different continents. Ananda Marga Association of Yoga Educators (AMAYE) is spearheading the integration of all yoga & intuitional science education and alternative therapy programs and we hope to hold a joint event in 2016 to further develop and standardize these trainings.
5. Gurukula has taken special interest in supporting formation and development of Prout Academies, Prout College and the Master Unit Network in the world. These are concrete steps to create an alternative society where there is happiness, freedom, progress, justice and abundance.
6. Finally, Uj tkP0R0Sarkar has left a vast reservoir of knowledge for posterity. We hope that the development of all Ananda Marga Gurukula faculties will enable the transmission of his seminal ideas to the coming generations through the growing neohumanist educational institutional network.

It is my pleasure to announce the inauguration of a new Ananda Marga Gurukula (AMGK) initiative: the P.R. Sarkar Institute (PRSI). Launched on the occasion of Uj tkkP.R. Sarkar's birth anniversary this year (4 May 2015), the institute will function as a central resource library and forum for the research, development and distribution of Uj tkkP.R. Sarkar's teachings and related ideas, existing initially as an online presence but ultimately with a physical library and conference base. This institute will primarily serve the affiliated institutions of AMGK, interested research scholars and students of different faculties of AMGK. PRSI welcomes the participation of learned scholars, artists, IT geeks and those interested in preserving and sharing the knowledge given by Shrii P.R. Sarkar for the benefit of humanity now and on into the future.

*Dada Shambhushivananda
Kulapati (Chancellor) of Ananda Marga Gurukula*



P.R. SARKAR INSTITUTE

Ananda Marga Gurukula has launched a new initiative called the P.R. Sarkar Institute for the research, development and distribution of Uj tkkP.R. Sarkar's teachings and related ideas.

The P.R. Sarkar Institute will be a global institute acting as:

1. A medium for the research, investigation, interpretation, understanding and presentation of Uj tkkP.R. Sarkar's works and seminal concepts. Multiple sections of research and development will be curated by affiliated scholars, researchers and writers in their associated fields of expertise.
2. A medium for the expansion and distribution of Uj tkkP.R. Sarkar's thoughts and related ideas through media such as innovative talks and presentations, books, films, videos, audios, online media, multimedia displays, installations, interactive experiences, music and the arts, concerts, exhibitions, etc.
3. An interface for networking, exchange of ideas and collaboration with experts and professionals in their associated fields. Discussion groups, forums, blogs and other media for facilitating the sharing of ideas will be hosted within each discipline, networking with bodies of genuine shared interest in the mainstream community.
4. A publications distribution point, with eventually a physical and/or online bookshop.
5. A global retreat hub to host its associated scientists, researchers, academic fellows and students for discussions, problem-solving, deep introspection and inspiration.

The P.R. Sarkar Institute will operate through its three main divisions:

- ☀ Resources (Uj tkkP.R. Sarkar's works, related resources and publications)
- ☀ Research and Development (all fields of research and development related to Uj tkkP.R. Sarkar's teachings, plans, programs and philosophies)
- ☀ Distribution (educational materials related to Uj tkkP.R. Sarkar's teachings)

We welcome input, participation and contributions from anyone interested in being involved in the project: researchers, historians, scholars, students, teachers, writers, artists, filmmakers, technicians, etc.

info@prsainstitute.org
www.prsainstitute.org

Ananda Marga Gurukula 25th Anniversary Neohumanism Seminar, Taiwan

Challenges for the Future of Education

Report by Dr Marcus Bussey, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia



Real education leads to a pervasive sense of love and compassion for all creation.
真正的教育乃在引領大眾,培養出對萬事萬物的愛與慈悲。 - P.R. Sarkar

The Taiwan AMGK team did a wonderful job of hosting the first 25th Anniversary Seminar celebrating Sarkar's establishment of the Gurukula movement. The theme for the seminar was 'Challenges for the Future of Education'. It ran from the 25 to the 26th of January and featured Dr. Dada Shambhushivananda, Rutger Tamminga and myself and was chaired by Dr. Diinesh of the Taiwan National Normal University. This was a creative series of talks and walks in which we moved from venue to venue and explored different elements of Gurukula's educational richness. The seminar was attended by a range of local and regional teachers and students interested in facilitating change in schools and communities.

The first session was held at the Taiwan National Normal University and was opened by Dr. Shambhushivananda who spoke of the breadth of the Gurukula movement and what a Gurukula University might look like. He outlined Sarkar's vision for Gurukula and emphasised that although it was clearly an educational call to arms it was not only about Education as a subject – instead it was about creating a forum for all elements of human knowledge and for its possibilities in revitalising human culture.

His talk was followed by myself who expanded on elements of Dr. Shambhushivananda's talk – focusing on the educational challenges for Taiwan and putting them into the context of a global market that focused on the utilitarian goals of education and conformity. I suggested we needed to move from such limited outcomes to a broader sense of education as process and as a re-awakening to relationship. This means that education must be rooted in an appreciation of spiritual culture. This base would make it collaborative, compassionate and meaningful.

Rutger Tamminga then spoke of his work with early childhood education. He emphasised that we need to embrace play at the heart of early childhood teaching. The examples he gave, based on his 25 years of running schools in Taiwan, were of the power of story and song. His presentation had a powerful effect on the audience as he gave examples of this approach singing songs and telling stories to make his points. Key to his approach is enabling children to see their world with four eyes: two that look out and two that look inwards.

The afternoon session relocated to the Prout offices in Taipei where there Dr. Shambhushivananda and I both gave talks on the relationship of Prout to the Neohumanist movement. The focus of the afternoon was on the logic of Prout. The starting point for Prout is Sarkar's concept of universal humanism – or Neohumanism. This logic is based on a growing awareness of relationship with the Cosmos. When one feels a growing connection one behaves differently as connection feeds the desire to serve the people and beings of this planet. Such service in Prout takes many forms:

- Service to the Past.
- Service to the Present.
- Service to the Future.
- Service to the Collective.
- Service to the Whole.
- Service to the Cosmic Principle.

Continuum	Service
Just Relationships	Past
Physical	Present
Building Neohumanist Futures	Future
Interpersonal	Collective
Holistic Systems	Whole
Spiritual	Cosmic Principle

I suggested that such a sense of service underpins curriculum thinking and provides a sense of areas to focus on for the all-round development of society.



The following day the seminar reconvened at the SDM offices of Ananda Marga in Taipei. The morning session consisted of a demonstration of the Touch Yoga program developed by Rutger Tamminga. This is a beautiful approach to yoga asana that involved parents and children in developing the habit and love for yoga postures. The activities are energetic and fun and really grab the attention of young children.



Illustration from the book *Yoga Touch*

The Touch Yoga approach is outlined beautifully in Tamminga's book of the same name. Here he captures through beautiful and clear illustrations the postures and how the parent/guardian of the child can support the asana. He also very carefully includes directions on which Chakra is benefitted by the posture.

The afternoon session involved Dr. Shambhushivananda talking about the role of the glands in shaping human consciousness and on the importance of inner and outer ecology. Balance and a sense of social mission are key to this with the ideal of the Sadvipra (the just person who helps society evolve beyond group sentiments) acting as a lens for thinking about education as a social and spiritual practice.

I concluded by asking the important question: What does Spirituality Bring to Education? For me the answer lies in opening us to the possibility of many futures. This is a rich approach to rethinking the present and how education can fulfil its promise. I

argued that Neohumanism as a spiritual philosophy explores what it means to be connected and also what we need to do to be established in relationship. Spirituality in

Education does not mean changing the curriculum – it means changing how we think about teaching-learning-being. The basic assumption is that we are all related and if so then we need to start with the big picture first. This Big Picture is in the heart-head and is expressed in what we do in the world.

This means that learning itself becomes an act of love because when we love someone or something we want to merge with the object of our love. We do this by knowing this Object, so the logic follows we love the world by learning into the world. This thought brings us, quite appropriately, to the quotation from Sarkar at the opening of this report. The seminar was a great success as an activity of a regional Gurukula team – hopefully it will inspire other local groups to follow suit.



You Tube Video of the Seminar is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llhkljuEPbM>

A Personal Reflection on what NHE can bring to Taiwan's Education System

By - Tzu-Ying Wu

I was very happy to attend the 'Neohumanist Education International Public Welfare Seminar' held in Taipei January 24-25. This was the first time I joined a Gurukula activity and I, as an elementary school teacher working in Taiwan, was happy to discover there is a group of people who have noticed our education needs to change. In the past years, some graduates' parents have come to me to complain that they were tired of forcing their children to study but they felt it was necessary to keep doing the same thing. Graduate students have also told me that there is no reason for them to spend all their time on studying, but they could not tell me what they want to be or what they love to learn. Although I could feel their anxiety and helplessness, I couldn't persuade them to listen to their hearts and find their own way. Education in Taiwan is a series of intensive study sessions which are tightly regulated. This means that people cannot afford to spend much time at school or in life on seeking who they are or what they want. Schools and teachers have to make sure every student is on the track to an ideal university. Under the circumstance, students, parents, and teachers suffer from high pressure.

I was glad to discover at this seminar that Neohumanist Education focuses not only on physical, mental and spiritual training but also cares about the learning process and pleasure. Under the heavy stress of learning in Taiwan, students, parents and teachers focus on quantitative outcomes but forget the most important part of being human beings. Education needs to help students grow consciousness, creativity, feelings, and meanings through a caring and peaceful way instead of a crammed and competitive way. Dr. Marcus Bussey offered specific research about Taiwan's education, and mentioned Taiwan needed to move education from instrumental to sustainable and compassionate futures. Taking education as a machine for producing elites only increases educational anxiety instead education should develop students' skills, minds, relationships, happiness, justice and love. Besides intellectual learning, Taiwan's education needs practical, aesthetic, ecological, ethical and spiritual learning. Those elements of education may help students create sustainable futures. If education in Taiwan could really provide students this learning students would be able to explore the world and the universe in many ways. Understanding the world and the universe makes students understand themselves and their relationship with the world as well. This process will help students to shape their hobbies and goals and develop a rationale for learning and study. They will keep learning their whole life and make their lives more diverse. Teacher Tam shared and showed how stories could capture every listener's attention. Through stories, students can express their emotion, cultivate compassion and enjoy the learning process. To grow consciousness and love is important but hard to teach in the classroom. Teacher Tam also told participants he always tells students that everyone has four eyes, two for watching the outside world and two for seeing one's own inside world. This is a practical method to help students to listen to their hearts and develop their mind and spirit. In my experience, people used to look with their physical eyes, but seldom to use their "inner eyes". If we tell students to close their physical eyes and open their mental and spiritual eyes to see the world, it helps them express their true/deep feeling and establish their relationship to the world. When they grow up, they may create a peaceful world by using their sharp spiritual eyes.

Although the seminar focused on education, the philosophy of Neohumanism offers general principles for everyone. Dr. Dada Shambhushivananda talked about the role of bliss and wisdom in learning and life. Everyone is chasing pleasure all his/her life, material pleasure and power are easily noticed, but the true bliss comes from spirituality which is less easy to perceive. The latter is what people need and can make us feel peaceful and joyful. Dada also explained that wisdom includes intelligence, productivity, and emotion, and the three parts come from rationality, aesthetic dynamicity and spiritual equipoise. This explanation of wisdom is wise and clear for us to follow in education or lifelong learning as well. Intelligence may solve problems, but aesthetic productivity and spiritual balance help us face unknown and new problems and enrich our life.

Education should help students/learners to adapt and create better societies in the future. What we need is diverse, peaceful and sustainable futures. Therefore, Neohumanist Education plays an important role in the education system. Rich curriculum and learning environments are essential for students/learners. I believe teachers should be the first learners to discover and develop new trends in education and feel the learning pleasure. Then they will be able to bring new, different, and happy lessons to their classroom. I was grateful that I learned many new things from this Neohumanist Education seminar and I will try to develop my spirituality through meditation. I hope I can meet the bliss of my life and help students fulfill their lives and create compassionate and sustainable futures.



Academy of Yoga and Intuitional Science - Verona, Italy



Asanas, Vritti and Glands

Ananda Marga Gurukula 25th Anniversary Seminar, March 14 -15, 2015

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of Ananda Marga Gurukula, a seminar was held in Italy on March 14th-15th. It was well attended by 36 participants from all over Italy.

The morning program included a talk on Asanas in the Sadhana of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti by Ac. Shambhushivananda. There were two classes in the afternoon; one on Asana, Glands and Subglands and one on Asanas and Pranarasa by Ac. Kamaleshvara and Dr. Silvia Corti. For the evening program Dada Shambhushivananda gave an inspiring presentation on Ananda Marga Gurukula around the world.

The next morning there was a class on Ananda Marga Asanas and Vrttis by Dada and one on Nadiis and Kumbhaka in Ananda Marga by Ac. Kamaleshvara. The Sunday afternoon workshop was on The Future of Yoga and Intuitive Sciences led by Dada Shambhushivananda and the board of Ananda Marga Association. The weekend included asana demonstrations and practice as well as collective meditations three times each day.



The output of this last workshop was excellent, because it has been collectively decided to start this year with a national Academy of Yoga and Intuitional Science (Yog.i.s). More news will come in the autumn.

Neohumanism in Action:
Educating for Sustainable & Compassionate Futures

July 11 - 16, 2015
25th Anniversary of
Ananda Marga Gurukula

Place: Prama Institute Asheville USA Price: \$285 US Information & Registration: www.gurukul.edu amgk.glo@gurukul.edu

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.



<http://gurukul.edu/gurukula-global-conference>

Education for Human Emancipation: Report of the first International Neohumanist Education Conference in Brazil

by Fabricio Pranav Labre, Patrícia Reis and Dada Maheshvarananda

From February 19 to 21, 2015 in Porto Alegre and Viamão, the Neohumanist Education conference was a landmark in the dawn of a deeper dialogue about Neohumanist Education in Brazil and Latin America.

The goal was to share the experiences and initiatives that already exist, as well as to learn techniques that are being applied in other parts of the world.

The conference began with a public program in the elegant state legislature building auditorium with 200 people present. The local television station channel filmed a 6-minute video report that was broadcast on the evening news.

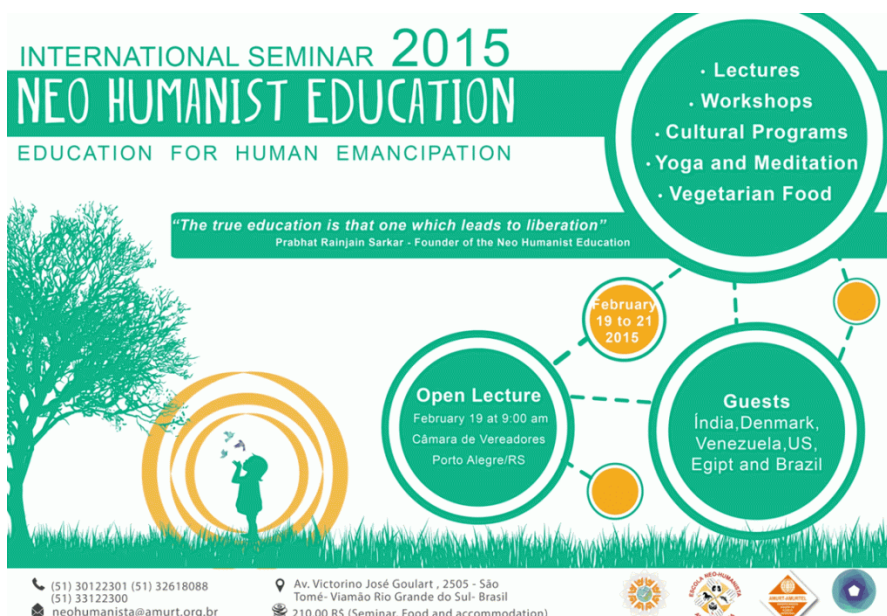
The Popular Institute of Art and Education's Youth Orchestra opened the conference with beautiful classical music performed by talented young musicians from economically impoverished neighborhoods.

Councilwoman Sofia Cavedon spoke on behalf of the municipal government, alongside Luiz Alberto Mincarone, the president of AMURT-AMURTEL and the main supporter of the conference.

The first keynote speech was given by Dada Shambushivananda, Chancellor of the Ananda Marga Gurukula International Network, who gave an introduction about Neohumanist Education and its main fundamental principles.

Ole Brekke, founder and director of the Commedia School in Copenhagen, Denmark, inspired all of the participants with creative, heartwarming movements.

Dada Maheshvarananda, monk and social activist, author of the well-known book *After Capitalism: Economic Democracy in Action*, gave a talk about the transformative and revolutionary role of education.





At midday, two buses brought everyone to the lovely Master Unit in nearby Viamão. Throughout the three-day program, a delicious, healthy and varied menu was served to all of the participants, showing just how diverse lacto-vegetarian cuisine can be.

In the afternoon, Neohumanist Educators from all over Brazil, as well as Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Argentina shared exciting stories about their experiences. The 60 teachers and 70 social workers employed by AMURT-AMURTEL in the Neohumanist Education schools and service projects in Porto Alegre attended.

On the morning of the second day, Dada Shambushivananda deeply explored the concept of Neohumanist Education and the importance of the educator as a leader. He gave a compelling account of many Neohumanist projects all over the world.

In the afternoon Ole Brekke from Denmark inspired the participants with a creative artistic experience, combining the worlds of adventure, imagination and fantasy into a unique and significant experience. *(see next article)*

"Education to Change the World" was the workshop by Dada Maheshvarananda on the third day. He described the contradictions of the current capitalist system, and talked about education as a means to resist injustice and transform society. He also led amazing cooperative games so the participants could experience first-hand the values of Neohumanism.

Simultaneous mini-classes were offered in the afternoon: Musical Creativity in Education with the Gandharvas group, training Neohumanist Educators with Tatjana Popov, Political Pedagogy and Legal Aspects (Sudama e Lucilene), Sensorial Integration Theory with Girija, Childhood Memories in Teacher Training with Anisha, and finally, the Joy of Movement with Ole Brekke.



Every evening there were cultural presentations from different regions of Brazil. Both the traditional Gaucho dancers from Rio Grande do Sul and the Carimbó dancers from North Brazil inspired the audience to get up and dance with their native rhythms. There was also contemporary dance, a theater play by educators from São Paulo, mantras with the Gandharvas group, and circular dancing.

In the closing ceremony many participants expressed profound gratitude and happiness. The Neohumanist Education Conference gave everyone the opportunity to reflect deeply about the revolutionary and loving role of education. A seed has been sown in our minds and hearts.

In the words of the founder of Neohumanist Education, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar: "Educated are those who have learnt much, remembered much and made use of their learning in practical life."



The Joy of Fantasy

Ole Brekke gave a workshop on The Joy of Fantasy as a release into creativity. The workshop began with an exercise to encourage spontaneously leading and following and to get everyone moving physically. It is common for most people to accept a following role and avoid taking leadership. Here is a description of this exercise:



Dancing Sticks

You need a thin stick almost a meter long for every two people in your group. Bamboo works nicely, or any other mostly straight stick, or a wooden dowel, or any other light material. Place one end of the stick against your open palm, and the other end against the palm of your partner. You cannot use your fingers to hold the stick, you have to maintain slight pressure on the stick against your partner to keep it in place. Then as you begin to move with your partner you will notice in order to keep the stick from falling as you move, one person will be leading and the other following. We call this playing "major" and "minor." The major and minor players will change spontaneously. Grand extensions of the body are encouraged as well as using of the floor or ground. Background music is great for this. An important aspect of this play is that participants must cooperatively accept the role of major and minor and make the spontaneous changes from one to the other without speaking.



Fantasy

Then after a few further exercises to shift the minds onto a different level, the level of Fantasy, the participants were given the task of preparing a presentation of a gardening phenomena of plants protecting other plants against the invasion of damaging insects, The Marigolds, The Insects, and The Tomatoes.

The group was made up of preschool teachers and those working with teenagers or adults. The task was to clearly describe this phenomena in two different ways for preschool children and for the older children. When designing such an exercise, to ensure success, it is vital to clearly define the constraints. In groups of 5-6 people, the constraints were:

For the preschool teachers, the text or their presentation must be in rhythmic rhyming couplets. The people doing it must only play/act as Marigolds, Insects, or Tomatoes. The presentation must show the interaction between these.

For those working with teenagers or adults, the text must be done in "rap" style and the presenters must play people involved in the phenomena, for example, the gardener, the pesticide sales person or the neighbour.

Writing a text in these styles was something new to nearly all of the participants but quickly each group was enthusiastically engaged. The result was about 15 wonderful, surprising, witty and creative presentations.

The groups working with preschool age children realized that they could easily write texts for their children to memorize and rhyming couplets are easy for children to remember. Those working with teenagers and adults were encouraged to set a similar task for their groups.



Educational Activism: Building a Compassionate and Sustainable Future Lebanon, April 10-13, 2015

The AMGK Education Conference on the theme of "Educational Activism: Building a Compassionate and Sustainable Future" to commemorate the 25th anniversary of AMGK was held on 10-13th April, 2015 in Al Mahaba School, Kfar Nabrah, Chouf, amidst the beautiful snow-covered mountain ranges of Lebanon.

The program was introduced by the local dignitaries and the keynote speech was given by Acharya Shambhushivananda Avadhuta. He stressed the need to recognise the sacredness of the task of educating the young with an awakened conscience. Utilizing the metaphors from science and spirituality, he further inspired the AMURT workers who have drawn up a plan to establish a Neohumanist school in the vacant facility of Al-Mahaba School where incidentally the conference was being held.



Dr. Nadia gave a very educative and informative workshop on "Using art therapy for children with trauma" and presented many real life case studies of how it had been practiced by the AMURT educational team in Chouf area.



Didi Ananda Uttama from Athens gave a fascinating workshop on "The importance of the primal period - from conception to the first year of life of an infant". Based on the research that she has done for her forthcoming book on the subject, Didi's presentation struck a chord with the mothers attending the workshop.



photo subuddhyananda@gmx.net

Didi Anandarama gave a workshop on "Mandala Art" and the groups prepared four collaborative mandalas. It brought out the positivity and colourful imagination of the participants. It also bound them together in an unimaginable way. The charm of this activity pulled the children who also joined in this aesthetic exercise.

The neohumanist education movement around the world was shared through a powerpoint presentation by Didi Anandarama also. Finally, Ac. Shambhushivananda shared his insights on the challenges facing neohumanist teachers, parents and social activists, and guidelines given by Shrii P R Sarkar on building a new civilization based on inner and outer ecology.

The conference was spiced with traditional Lebanese delicacies, traditional bread made freshly for the

participants and walks to the Cedar nature reserve. About 25 persons participated in almost every session and all the participants including the delegation from Syria also left with a renewed determination to establish neohumanist schools in the middle east.

There was a cultural programs by local musicians and the entire event became a historic landmark in the development of neohumanist education in the Middle East. Special thanks were given to Dada Unmantrananda and Dada Subbuddhyananda who had prepared the logistics for the event with meticulous detail.

Dada, Didi and Maniisha from Syria also visited Radha's SMART Academy. Radha is one of the pioneers of bringing the neohumanist educational movement to Lebanon.



Education Based on Neohumanism and PROUT

Applied in a Local Community School of Learning, Thailand

Jareeporn Naksamrit, Ph.D.
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Should educational administrators and educators apply theory in their schools? Educational administrators and educators must think about what society could be like, and how civilization could develop. They must consider how their schools can contribute to bringing about a new era, and to creating a balance between quality of life for human beings, other living beings, the environment, resources, and universal flow. Theories bring knowledge but they need to be tested in schools.

School is one of the places for socializing children and preparing them for a peaceful society. Schools need theories that suit their needs and that they can apply practically. Neohumanist Education was created, based on neohumanism, so that neohumanism could be applied practically in schools, and to prove that the theory can profit humanity. Now Neohumanist Education is well known and ready to be applied in schools other than those called “neohumanist schools”. In the past 25 years, many neohumanist schools have emerged around the world. Some are run by Didis and Dadas of Ananda Marga, some are run by members of Ananda Marga, and some are private schools run by those interested in Neohumanist Education. There are many reasons why educators choose to apply Neohumanist Education in their schools. Neohumanist school systems have improved processes of teaching and learning, and they train their teachers in the values and ideals of neohumanism, adapted to the context of each culture.

Some schools are already partially neohumanist, using holistic approaches and reconceptualizing what it is to be human. Neohumanism is a process of becoming consciously, self-consciously, human, and neohumanist education follows the idea of neohumanism. Neohumanist schools specifically adopt principles for living based on the ethic of universal love. Neohumanist Education is imbued with spiritual force because it acknowledges and actively promotes spiritual practice which is the foundation for developing universal love. Neohumanist educators explore how to teach holism, how to help old-style teachers reconceptualize what it is to be human. Neohumanist educators work hard at this practice themselves in order to be able to lead students and to relate to people in a neohumanist manner.

Ethics (Yama and Niyama), meditation, yoga, positive thinking etc., are taught in the whole school. The teachers work to create a feeling of universal love in all students from nursery, to primary, secondary and high school, up through higher education, as well as in all people who are part of the school’s community including parents and others.

This allows better practical application of neohumanism to education and allows neohumanists to better bring the idea to the general community. Some schools are good in neohumanist management, but some just apply a concept such as morality, ethics, or a feeling of universal love. They need more guidance in practical neohumanist process.

The Princess Mother Community School of Learning (Satit Chum Chon Kan Rean Roo Som Dej Ya) is a demonstration school in Srinakharinwirot University. In it, there is a pilot protocol school project for educational research. We try to develop, provide, and manage quality education for poor and disadvantaged youth from mountain villages that are far from civilization. The Princess Mother Community School of Learning is a boarding school for students in the secondary level (Mathayom 1-3). Current research is on self-reliance and vocational education. The school does not force students to learn mainstream academics that have little meaning for survival. The school environment is like a big family, where teachers, students and staff are all one group. Students learn by brainstorming, and through real practice as the program is student centered. The school emphasizes self-reliance in combining knowledge out of books with the use of local wisdom of various ethnic people in the northern hill tribe area. After graduation, students can live in the world and survive with simplicity and happiness. The king of Thailand (Rama IX), promotes sufficiency economy and as such could be considered a PROUTist. He said that when you learn you have no need to strictly take knowledge from books, you can just learn by doing. The Princess Mother Community School of Learning, like neohumanism, encourages students to live together peacefully in a moral manner, with a feeling of oneness. Normally the school encourages students to be PROUTist in their small school unit.

What is PROUT? What do we want society to look like?

School settings lead to the formation of communities as small societies. As is explained in PROUT, when humans form a society, they want civilization and peace -- a world without war, without hunger or poverty, with human rights, democracy, environmental protection, peace, and justice. The main problem in the small communities where our children live is that there is no civilization, and the children and their families are hungry and poor. There is no way for them to get quality education if they do not have support. They may have apparent peace in the community but not real peace. Girls and women do not have equal rights with men. They don’t know what democracy is; only that politicians come and give them money to vote, so they call an election democracy. Their environment is destroyed by large-scale monocrop

agriculture. Big companies come and give them seeds, with conditions, and the people in the community accept their offers. In this crisis situation, neither child, nor youth, nor adult knows that the business system is greedy. For these problems, education is the answer, and PROUT could be introduced in school.

PROUT is an acronym for Progressive Utilization Theory, a new socio-economic model based on self-reliance of each region, cooperatives, environmental balance and universal spiritual values. It is a holistic approach with dynamic principles that can be appropriately applied by citizens and leaders to help their region or country to prosper and become self-sufficient in an ecologically sustainable way.

Global capitalism is based on profit, selfishness and greed. The tragic result is that half the population lives, suffers and dies in poverty. Poverty is completely unnecessary, because there is enough food and wealth on the planet for everyone. PROUT's solution to economic inequality is based on the obvious truth that the world's physical resources are limited. If individuals accumulate too much, there will not be enough for everyone. Each country must decide maximum salaries, wealth, and land, and promote the maximum utilization and rational distribution of all natural resources. The right to life is fundamental. Society must guarantee the minimum needs of food, clothing, housing, education and medical care. The hierarchy of needs explained by Abraham Maslow says that "people whose physical needs and safety are guaranteed can more easily develop altruism and the highest potential." The right to decent work is also a fundamental human right, and the minimum wage should be sufficient to purchase basic needs.

PROUT proposes to organize the economy into three levels (these principles can be applied to education on a small scale)

- First level is small private enterprises.
- Second level is cooperatives: industry, agriculture, consumers, banks and services, which are "the businesses of the future." For cooperatives to succeed, they need: honest leaders, a good business plan, strict management, and the wholehearted support of the community. The government should provide: more training and regular inspections.
- Third level is large-scale strategic industries that require very high investments and are difficult to decentralize, should operate as public companies, and should never be privatized.

PROUT has an ecological and spiritual perspective that is lacking in many economic philosophies, but is still present in traditional societies. Indigenous spirituality invariably revolves around nature and the connection to all forms of life. Indigenous peoples did not believe that the land belonged to them, but that they belonged to the land. PROUT's spiritual perspective recognizes that all humans have a thirst for peace and happiness. The purpose of life should be self-realization and service to humanity.

The Princess Mother Community School of learning is practicing PROUT naturally. Educators and teachers are not trained in and do not know neohumanism or PROUT ideology from their formal university, but they can learn by spiritual guidance, and from the social media, so that they can experiment with the application of PROUT in school. In the future Neohumanist Education and PROUT Theory must establish ways for people to bring practical ideas to formal schools, in line with PROUT's goal of making each region self-reliant. This includes food sovereignty I hope that education theory and PROUT will be integrated, for the sustainable future for all living beings. Institutes for teachers must integrate them to make educational change, and to produce a model of education-based Neo-PROUT.

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Human society is one and indivisible. But today, due to superstition, dogmatism narrow-mindedness, separatism and all kinds of "isms" human society is splitting into numerous parts. Against this background, in order to build the human society it is necessary to adopt the path of synthesis, which originates from the psychology of service and welfare. While attempting to build an ideal society, some people rightly adopt the path of synthesis, and other people wrongly adopt the path of analysis, either unknowingly or out of some selfish motive. But it is necessary to mention that although through the path of analysis one's self-interest may be served, and even the group interest may be temporarily served, but the path of analysis cannot be conducive to human welfare on a permanent and comprehensive basis. It should be clearly understood that the path of synthesis is absolutely necessary for the collective welfare of human society. Shrii P. R. Sarkar

Making Finance Fit for a Spiritual Economy

By Prof. Ed McKenna

In *God Talks With Arjuna-The Bhagavad Gita: Royal Science of God-Realization*, Paramahansa Yogananda's commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, Yogananda writes that the Gita's wisdom explains "... how to live a balanced life that includes the actual contact of God...".

As important as balance is for every person, it is just as important for the institutions within which people live and work. While people create institutions, institutions also shape people. Because of the significant amount of time that people spend within institutions, imbalances in institutions will lead to individual imbalances as well.

The economic crisis of 2008, the effects of which are still felt by many in all parts of the world, can be understood as the result of imbalances that developed within the world's financial institutions. Because many of these imbalances still exist, the potential for yet another crisis looms large.

I. The Growth of Financial Institutions

Financial institutions play an important role in society. For example, there will always be differences between the amount that individuals and businesses desire to save and invest. I might wish to purchase a house, the price of which greatly exceeds my present income. If I can borrow now at reasonable rates and with a reasonable expectation of repayment from my future income, then the existence of financial institutions that channel income from savers to borrowers will make it possible for me to purchase a house. Businesses may also find that they need to temporarily borrow to finance their production needs, with the expectation that they will be able to repay when they sell the output they produce with the borrowed funds. Again, financial institutions help to make the production of goods and services possible. So, financial institutions play an important role in enabling the real economy (that part of the economy devoted to the production of goods and services) to meet the needs of society's members.

Financial institutions also enable speculation. In a world of uncertainty, speculation will always occur. No one knows in advance which investments will work out best in meeting the needs and desires of people. Decisions will have to be undertaken as to how to best allocate funds for undertaking these risky investments, and financial institutions play an important role in making these types of decisions. When these decisions are made well, the wealth of society increases and more needs can be met.

But speculation can also amount to little more than gambling. In gambling, there is a winner and a loser, but no overall net gain. Likewise with excessive speculation, some gain when their speculative bets work out, but only at the expense of those who lose. And, when speculation becomes too great, the losses can also lead to adverse outcomes in the real economy, resulting in both the loss of output, and increases in unemployment.

From 1980 to 2006, the financial sector share of gross domestic product (which is a measure of the real output of the economy) grew from 4.9 to 8.6% in the United States, a growth rate of nearly 75%. While we would naturally expect the financial sector to grow as the size of the real economy grows, we would normally expect a rough balance between these two growth rates, resulting in the financial sector share remaining relatively constant. The fact that the share grew by nearly 75% indicates that finance was being undertaken not to enable the growth of the real economy, but to enable the growth of speculation. And this was the source of the first imbalance in the economy.

Most of this speculation took place in housing markets in the United States. Financial institutions believed that they had invented new financial instruments that would enable them to reduce risk, while at the same time making loans to people who previously would not have qualified as good credit risks. The financial institutions making these loans believed that they could calculate with greater certainty the likelihood that the new homeowners would repay their mortgage loans. Believing they could count on these mortgage payments, these financial institutions increased their own level of borrowing, believing that they could repay their loans from the mortgage payments that would be coming in each month. However, in retrospect, we now know that these financial institutions were not quite as certain about their speculation as we might have thought at the time. How do we know this? It turns out that many of the financial institutions that were making these mortgage loans were also purchasing insurance that would protect them in the event that the mortgage payments were not actually made. If financial institutions had really been confident about these new mortgage loans, there would have been no need for such insurance.

But even this level of speculation could perhaps be justified. We might think of it as being equivalent to someone who purchases a new home, but also purchases fire insurance to protect against the possibility of the new home burning down. But this was not the end of the speculative activity. Financial institutions that had not made new mortgage loans, and hence did not have a need to protect themselves in the event that the loans were not repaid, also began buying guarantees

that they would be paid in the event that mortgage loans were not paid. Of course there had to be institutions willing to sell these guarantees. And here we had what amounted to a pure gamble, with both sides betting about the repayment of loans that neither side actually owned. This would be like your neighbors entering into a bet about whether your house would catch on fire! These types of speculative gambles were not made to enhance the capability of the real economy, they were simply bets. These were the types of activities that led to the phenomenal growth in the share of the financial sector.

As things turned out, many of the people receiving new home mortgage loans were, in fact, unable to make their mortgage payments. The fact that they had been given these loans was the result of a lack of oversight, poor decision-making, and outright corruption on the part of financial institutions. When the homeowners failed to make their mortgage payments, those financial institutions that had borrowed intending to repay their own loans from the income they would receive from mortgage payments, were also unable to repay their loans. This then required payment on the part of the insurance companies that had guaranteed to cover any losses from the failure of homeowners to make their mortgage payments. Unfortunately, they did not have the funds to make these payments. The interconnectedness of the financial sector meant that commitments that had been made to pay at a certain point in time could no longer be met. Lenders stopped lending, fearing they would not be repaid. But when lending stops, people cannot purchase new homes, and many businesses are unable to continue production because they rely on loans to make payments (such as wage payment) that occur before the receipt of revenue from the goods they produce. A problem that had begun in the financial sector now spread to the real economy, this was the source of the second great imbalance.

II. Protecting the Real Economy from Financial Sector Imbalances

One of the important lessons learned by economists as a result of the Great Depression is the need to regulate banking. The need arises from the special nature of banks, especially with regards to the importance of confidence (a psychological issue) in maintaining a stable financial system. Psychological factors can be highly unstable, especially when confidence is dependent upon myth. And in the case of banking, the public has long operated on the basis of myth. Most people believe that when they deposit their money in a bank, it just sits in the bank waiting for people to collect it at some future date. Even those who are more sophisticated and understand that banks must make loans if they are to make a profit, and hence believe that money is never sitting idly in bank vaults, misunderstand the true nature of money and banks. In the real world, banks make loans first, and then go out to find the necessary reserves required to meet the daily needs of bank customers for withdrawal of funds from the bank. Banks obtain these reserves either from other banks, or from a country's Central bank, which in modern financial systems always stands ready to lend a bank any reserves that it requires. The amount of these reserves will always be a tiny fraction of the amount that bank customers have deposited in their accounts in the banks. In other words, if a bank's customers were to suddenly descend upon a bank and ask for its deposits to be converted into cash, the bank would not be able to do it based on the amount of cash it is actually holding. Now this would not ordinarily be a problem except for the unusual psychology that prevails among the public with respect to banks. As long as they do not fully comprehend that the bank is not holding the customers "money", everything is fine. But as soon as the public learns that a bank may not be holding a sufficient amount of money to meet its customer's demands, people immediately run to the bank to try to convert their deposits into cash. Hence the existence of bank runs.

To guard against bank runs, a number of practices have developed. Most importantly from the public's perception is the existence of insurance against bank runs. What this means is that even if a bank becomes insolvent, there is a public guarantee that bank depositors will always receive their money. This greatly reduces the likelihood that people will want to the bank to take out their money once they learn that their money is not actually in the bank. But there are other, equally important, regulations that maintain banking stability. For example, banks are required to keep a certain amount of capital (which represents economic wealth made available to the bank by its owners) on hand, which limits the amount of borrowing that can be undertaken by a bank. Also, the types of assets that a bank can purchase are limited to assets that are less risky, and hence whose value will not fluctuate greatly if the bank needs to convert its assets to obtain cash to pay its customers should a run on the bank develop.

These regulations worked well for more than 60 years, maintaining balance and stability in financial markets. However, during this time new types of financial institutions developed that were not subject to the types of regulations imposed upon traditional banks. Most of these new institutions were involved in making loans based on the expectations of receiving mortgage payments that I described above. When mortgage payments stopped, lenders who had deposited money in these new financial institutions became concerned that they would not be able to obtain their money when they required it. Because there was no public guarantee that these depositors would receive their funds even if the financial institutions became insolvent, there occurred a run on these new financial institutions, and this is what set off the financial crisis.

Thus, a lack of proper regulation lies at the root of current crises in financial institutions. But why is there a lack of proper regulation? This leads us towards a discussion of the third in balance in financial markets, and imbalance of economic and political power.

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Center for Neohumanist Studies Ydrefors, Sweden

Yoga Weekend

The idea for the Yoga Weekend was created after the very beautiful New Year's celebration at the Ananda Marga Training Center in Ydrefors 2014/2015. The idea was to bring people to the Training Center to have them experience the blissful atmosphere and learn Yoga and Meditation practices. In collaboration with Gurukula the weekend event was created and eleven people attended together with Dada Shambushivananda, Didi Ananda Bhadra. Linus Liiladeva Lundkvist coordinated the weekend together with Mikael Madhava; Bhuvanesh and the other trainees from the Training Center kindly served a great part in hosting the event.



We had a very comprehensive program from early Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon, where we practiced; meditation, yoga postures (asanas) and yoga dances (kiirtan kaoshiki, tandava) as well as relaxation and self massage led by Madhav. We also had a psycho-spiritual communication workshop, where people practiced listening to each other with focused attention and heart connection while taking turns expressing their deepest and dearest intentions, emotions and visions.



The very appreciated opening workshop was held by Liiladeva. Dada Shambushivananda gave a very mind expanding lecture about the Science and Philosophy of Yoga. The atmosphere was great and people were really happy. The program finished off on Saturday with a very cozy gathering on a mountain close by the Training Center, where we made a fire, danced and chanted. We continued the program on Sunday with yoga practices. Didi Ananda Bhadra held an inspiring presentation of a project by Heart for Africa. The program too quickly was coming to an end when we held a sharing, where the participants expressed their experience which was overall incredibly positive. The program closed with a long kiirtan and meditation.

The Yoga Weekend was a very loving and inspiring weekend created by all its participants in the spirit of deepening our connections with ourselves and each other. That said, there surely will be more Yoga Weekends in the future.

Other CNS Sweden News

During Easter seminar at CNS-Sweden in Ydrefors, Trond Overland gave a fascinating workshop on Mind and Meditation Dynamics called, **"Think Big -- Creating Inner Space for Personal and Common Development"**. Our earthly life is surrounded by enormous space. By generating a similar volume of inner space, we construct ample room for personal and common evolution and transformation. Intuition science provides us with numerous activating techniques towards this end. A main key to creating an inner atmosphere of inspiration and personal workshop spirit is spiritual ideation: The Inherent Greatness and Fundamental Being of Oneness of All. Feeling great inside generates a cycle of increasing greatness within and without! Participation in the workshop required basic capacity to sit still for a few minutes and be with yourself, plus there was some personal sharing one-on-one and group interaction.



Shantanu Pyne, based in Stockholm, led the [Prabhat Samgiita Workshop](#) on New Years Eve at Ydrefors. On behalf of Prabhat Samgiita Academy, he has also offered to provide regular Prabhat Samgiita singing lessons during the year in Ydrefors and Stockholm.

Katja Krsnapriya Kinnunen has now joined the CNS-Stockholm team to offer yoga education for interested persons. Katja completed the Yoga Teachers Training held in Iceland last year and has been deepening her knowledge through personal practise and guidance of senior teachers



Spiritual Lifestyle Training

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of Sweden TC, CNS- Sweden is planning a special three weeks Spiritual Life Style Training and Monastic Reunion of alumni of Prashiksana Matha from June 20th - July 15th, 2016. This will be conducted by Dada Shambhushivananda and Didi Ananda Bhadra. The program will kick off with an Introductory Yoga Weekend on June 18-19th, 2016 catered to a broader audience in Sweden. CNS Sweden (Ydrefors) continues to be a favourite destination for spiritual seekers from around the world.

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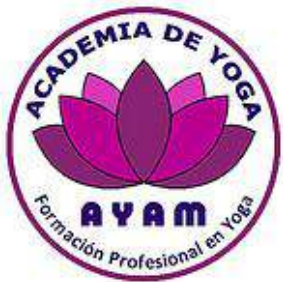
Making Finance Fit for a Spiritual Economy - By Prof. Ed McKenna

We might well ask why, if the riskiness of financial institutions is well understood, new regulations have not been passed to deal with the new types of assets and financial institutions. There are many reasons, however the following two ideas would be part of any story. Since 1980, the belief that unregulated markets can solve any economic problem has gained increasing dominance among elites. The former Chair of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, famously pronounced that the self-interest of those in charge of financial institutions would guarantee that they would not undertake excessively risky actions, and hence government intervention was not required (a view he came to reject after the 2008 financial crisis). Even more important has been the increasing concentration of income and wealth in the top 1% of the population. Increasing wealth not only enables the wealthy to disproportionately influence elections, but also enables the wealthy to shape what type of legislation will be passed by government. What this has meant in practice is that legislation is often passed that furthers the interest of the very financial elite whose risky actions require the passage of legislation in the first place.

An excellent example concerns the passage of the Volcker rule, which was an attempt by the Congress of the United States to limit the types of investment that financial institutions could take with deposits backed by government assurances, such as FDIC insurance in the event of bank failure. The law was passed in 2010, but has still not been fully implemented. Recently, reporting has revealed an attempt by large banks to modify the legislation in ways that would favor large financial institutions, including postponing until 2019 the actual implementation of some of the rule's requirements. The great wealth possessed by these institutions enables them to influence and shape legislation even after it has already been passed by the government.

Here is another example that people may find difficult to believe, but nevertheless is true. Part of the Dodd-Frank Bill, passed in 2010, attempted to provide government with a tool that would enable them to take over large, failing banks during financial crises. The Government of the United States already possessed such power with respect to smaller banks, but the large size and complexity made such an undertaking difficult when it came to the largest financial institutions. The intent of the tool is to rein in excessive risk-taking on the part of the owners of financial institutions by facing them with the threat of loss of ownership of the investments they have made in financial institutions. Because these institutions are so complex, part of the legislation requires these financial institutions to provide a blueprint (referred to euphemistically as a "living will") that would enable the government to know how to proceed with a takeover in the event of the institution's failure. In other words, the institutions are being asked to provide a manual that will enable the government to take them over! You might think that the large financial institutions would be reluctant to provide such a blueprint, and you would be correct. As the Federal Reserve recently noted, the 'living wills' that have so far been presented by the large financial institutions are totally inadequate to enable the government to carry out the legislative ends envisioned by the Dodd-Frank Bill. But is a reflection of the size and power of these large financial institutions that even a government as large and powerful as that of the United States feels itself inadequate to implement democratically passed legislation.

These examples pose a problem that spiritually-based economists will have to face. Prout has identified certain industries that are so important to the well-being of society that they must be regulated in the interest of society. These are referred to as "key" industries. Finance certainly qualifies as a key industry. But how shall this industry be regulated? Will we allow financial institutions to grow to unlimited size, as we do today, and then hope to pass rules that will limit their power? Or, do we need to break up large financial institutions to prevent the accumulation of power in the first place? Asking the question of which approach is more likely to bring about balance may provide insight as to how to proceed.



2015 Intensive Yoga Teacher Training AYAM Yoga Academy Córdoba, Argentina By José Luis Ferrero, General Coordinator/Teacher

With great joy and satisfaction we completed the 2015 Intensive Yoga Teacher Training on February 22nd at the Master Unit Ananda Maya Diipa, in the Córdoba hills. Seventeen new yoga teachers received their certificates after fifteen days of full dedication to hard theoretical and practical study. The magnificent natural surroundings of the mountains was an appropriate framework for the occasion. The weather was very kind and helped us to create a perfect environment for the activity.

The students did an excellent job throughout the training, sharing moments of study, practice and recreation in an atmosphere of deep commitment, camaraderie and friendship. Every day we shared meditation at five o'clock as the starting point of the day of study and work, as well as moments of rest and warm conversation.

All students passed the theoretical examinations on cosmology, yoga psychology, vegetarian food, bio psychology, history of yoga, social philosophy, personal sadhana and the sixteen points. On the practice examination they demonstrated their knowledge of body conditioning, asanas, kaoshikii, tandava and surya namaskar.

As it is every year saying goodbye to the new teachers was very emotional, with the certainty that all of them will carry to their places the message of the sublime ideology of Shrii Prabhat Sarkar and Neohumanist ideals. We hope these new yoga teachers will join their effort and knowledge with all who struggle and work for a better world that is more enlightened and spiritual.



To summarize, we share here the kind and moving words of Marina Buschiazzi, one of the new yoga teachers:

*"Love turned around... Baba Nam Kevalam.
In 17 days there were good relations, fellowship all together, beautiful people.
Healthy and healing practices, intense emotions. Well guided, conscious and inclusive ásanās. Inclusion makes the unification, and unification is YOGA.
Physical, mental, spiritual being.
Wellbeing, with intense studies ... anyway, energetic live".*

Cooperating with Others

**Zonnelicht Teacher Training
Den Bosch, Holland
Feb 19-21, 2015**

The theme of this year's annual teacher training was "Cooperating with Others". Specifically, the program was aimed to encourage greater cooperation between teachers and parents. The Zonnelicht school has continued to grow and flourish, and approximately 40 teachers attended the training. This year, Dada Madhuvidyananda was invited as a special guest speaker and Didi Ananda Devapriya and Yolande Koning also gave talks on Neohumanist Education. Esther Landa was invited to give a class on development of emphatic qualities in communication through subtle language and expression. Anja Reinhardt did a workshop on communication through dance and movements. Many of the teaching staff were also involved in giving classes and preparing active workshops, including Jacqueline, Barbara, Rob, Ellen and Lisette.



Dada's talks covered leadership, benevolent communication and biopsychology –with a focus on asanas in particular. The teachers appreciated his clear, concise style which was easy to follow and full of practical examples.

Yolande and Didi led an interactive workshop in which the teachers constructed a "tree" on the floor using branches and colorful cut out leaves on which they had written what they considered to be essential components of Neohumanist education. The group then arranged the leaves on the branches, grouping them together and deciding which ones were part of the trunk, or the roots or leading to the fruits of Neohumanist education. They then went on to build their own trees individually to reflect on what they already knew, but also what they wanted to learn during the training.

Every day included a relaxing asana class with Didi and in the evenings there was an expressive dance class and a film night where the group watched and discussed a very inspiring documentary done in Japan in which the teacher paid special attention to teaching the children how to express their feelings.

Building on Dada's workshop on leadership and benevolent communication, Didi led interactive discussions about how to apply these ideas in the school: applying teacher leadership in the relationship with parents, applying benevolent communication in the classroom.

Barbara led a class on creative expression which then led to a role playing exercise. Rob and Ellen created a challenging obstacle course and other outdoor cooperative games and challenges which helped everyone to laugh, play and move.

It was an inspiring, diverse and enriching training overall. In the evaluation the teachers expressed that they would like to have a training to go deeper into the topics that were presented more often.



Neohumanist Education Training

Child Friendly Spaces in Lebanon

In less than a year, the AMURT/NHE Lebanon Child Friendly Space (CFS) project for refugee children from the Syrian civil war has progressed considerably. Though it started out in a space that used to be a warehouse that was renovated above the original headquarters of AMURT, it has since shifted to AlMahaba School a large school building owned by the Catholic Church in KfrNabrakh, with a spacious and well equipped sports field.



There has also been turnover in both teachers and children. Since the program began in April 2014, 310 children have benefitted from the CFS program. Currently, there are 50 new children integrating into the program. There are now 10 CFS facilitators, as well as an educational consultant and two psychologists involved in the psycho-social support program. Besides the CFS program, AMURT Lebanon also runs a Back to School support program which has given financial support to a total of 650 Syrian and Lebanese vulnerable students to cover school fees, transportation and educational materials. In February, they organized a Neohumanist Education training led by Didi Ananda Devapriya to offer holistic education tools to the new staff.

The training focused mostly on understanding how traumatic stress affects children and their behavior, as well as practical methods for assisting the children in integrating into the child friendly space. The CFS is conceived of as a temporary, intermediate step to help children that have either never been in, or have been excluded from the mainstream educational system because of their refugee status. It helps children “normalize” after so many experiences of disruption, stress and instability. It also gives them a safe space to learn how to express themselves, to receive emotional support and coaching, as well as to gain practical skills for school readiness. One of the most important elements of the CFS, however, is to have fun and play!



It was chilling to see the drawings on the walls of the therapy room made by some of the children. There were so many vivid drawings of soldiers with guns, bullets, blood and dead bodies. These children have seen unspeakable things. And yet, they are still children and need the same opportunities all children need to grow and develop and heal.

Didi Ananda Devapriya introduced yoga for children as a way to ground and learn to trigger relaxation responses to turn off the hyper vigilant stress system that traumatic situations leave constantly on alert. She also introduced story-massage, therapeutic story telling, persona dolls and lots of



games. The group was particularly creative and invented many songs in Arabic, based on classic Neohumanist songs to use during quiet time, transitions, etc.

Since the training, the facilitators have introduced a morning "Circle of Love", and use the songs that they created for the activities. They use story telling extensively and have already created several arabic persona dolls, which they plan to use to address sensitive issues around bullying and discrimination.



Here is a therapeutic story that Didi Ananda Devapriya wrote for the training and reflects, through metaphor, the experience of these children:

Uprooted

A tiny tomato seed was planted in the warm, dark earth inside of a safe greenhouse. Soon, a tiny green shoot had sprouted through the earth, and began reaching up towards the sunlight. It grew, and grew... And then one day, a shovel came, and roughly dug into the earth next to her and in one sudden lurching movement, the tomato seedling was dizzily free of its familiar bed of earth. A small chunk of earth clung to her tiny hair like roots. Several of the roots stung as they had been severed when the seedling had been torn from the ground.

The seedling was crowded into a tray with many other little plants. They could barely breathe. And then a motor hummed, and suddenly the earth was moving underneath then and rumbling and jostling. They fell over onto one another, some of their fragile leaves snapped off.

A long time passed, and the little seedling just waited, huddled together. Most mornings they received a brief shower of water from above. But a long time days passed without water... they were so thirsty. The little plants couldn't keep growing towards the sun. They began to wilt... some of the leaves were turning yellow. They cried out for water - they wanted to grow again.

At last their cries were heard. A concerned voice "Oh - these plants need to get into the ground!!! Who left them here?"

The little seedling again found herself flying through the air, and then she was settled into a carefully prepared hole, already soaked with water. The half covered roots were then snugly covered up with earth. The little seedling was happy - but so exhausted that she just slumped over onto the earth. She didn't even have the strength to stand up straight - especially with the rays of sun beating down as the sun rose high into the sky.

There were other tomato plants nearby - strong and tall. They seemed to be laughing at the sadly wilted newcomers. Already they had yellow flowers brightly decorating their branches - that would turn into red tomatoes in a few more weeks.

That night when the hot sun set behind the stony mountains, a cool moon rose in the sky and gently shone its healing light on the little tomato seedling. The moon told the seedling - you are safe now and can let your roots stretch into the ground again. I will send morning dew for you to drink and grow strong, and soon you will catch up with the other plants and you too will have beautiful yellow flowers and lovely juicy tomatoes!"

The next morning, it wasn't easy and the little seedling had to struggle, but already she was standing up a bit straighter. The farmer came and planted a strong pole next to her and gently tied bits of string to her stems to support her to grow nice and tall. Though she was smaller than the others and had to work hard to grow, day by day the little plant was climbing higher and higher thanks to the pole. The farmer took extra care to give her steady showers of rain and a little bit of extra fertile black manure so she could catch up. Soon the tomato plant was doing what tomato plants do - stretching her leaves up to the sun and growing, growing, growing.

Before long - yellow buds unfurled on its branches. In a few more weeks, when the flowers had dried up, they left behind small, round, green knobs that began to swell every day. The green tomatoes warmed in the summer sunshine, and began blushing into red. The little tomato seedling had grown into a tall, strong tomato plant just like the other plants, and offered its juicy, sweet, red tomatoes to the farmer.

NHE Teacher's Training in Lebanon, April, 2015

By Didi Anandarama



We had a two day teacher's training at the Child Friendly Space project of AMURT in Chouf, Lebanon. Fifteen participants learned about storytelling that included elements of stories for different ages, writing your own story and helping children write their stories. We discussed applicable useful art activities that help to transform the learning environment into a creative and

inspiring place. This includes landscaping around the school, making gardens, creating beauty spots, making art that can be used in the child's home. We also discussed about how to illustrate children's stories. The 15 participants received certificates.





Center for Innovative Continuing Education

An Integrated Approach to Teacher Training in Haiti

By Sara Wolf and Demeter Russafov

Misterline, age 8, sits in her classroom with her head down, shoulders hunched over and tears in the corners of her eyes. As Darline, a trainer and coach, approaches the girl and sits down beside her on the wooden bench, she notices that Misterline's tattered notebook page has scant writing. A discouraging red line covers the page with the words "Pa bon" [Not good] scribbled on top. Viola, the 3rd grade teacher, looks over toward Darline, shaking her head in dismay, disapprovingly, that Misterline yet again did not complete her lesson.

Viola, having taught 9 years in three different primary schools, complains at the first training, "My students just don't want to study; they don't do their lessons at home." Sitting in the circle with 23 teachers, the negative sentiment is pervasive and other teachers chime in that they already know how to teach. She sits back down in the circle, pouting and throwing her hands up that she really does not have time to take training.

After 12 months of intensive training and coaching, Viola pleads with the trainers to be selected as one of the speakers at the Graduation Ceremony. A highlight from her speech: "After one year of training, I have learned more than I could imagine. I thought it would be like all other trainings... very short, not practical and boring. But after we finished the first module, I saw that this was going to be very different. We worked together as teaching partners, sang together, shared ideas and questions together. At times I was skeptical about the new methods, but slowly over time I gained confidence and now I am ready for much more."

Haiti ranks 168th out of 187 countries worldwide in the United Nations 2014 Human Development Index. Educational statistics reveal an alarming reason for the socio-economic stagnation of the country – just below half of Haitians are illiterate, and an estimated 70% of current primary school teachers have no formal teacher training. Less than 35% of students reach 6th grade, only 20% of eligible-age children go to high school, and 12 in every 1,000 go on to university.

The staggering "quality crisis" of Haiti's educational system is a perennial challenge that has been receiving a growing attention, yet most efforts to tackle the numerous challenges at hand have failed to initiate a much needed transformation. Many efforts have been criticized for their scattered and ineffective coordination rather than focused and systemic change.

Immediately following the earthquake in January 2010, AMURT/NHE-Haiti conducted a 2-year long emergency program for 3,000 children living in some of Port-au-Prince's most densely populated camps. The program focused on restoring a sense of normalcy in children's lives by improving their overall wellbeing through informal educational and psychosocial activities infused with art, theater, music, yoga, dance and sports. The program evaluation revealed that a surprisingly high percentage of participating children reached the top of their classes when they enrolled in school the following year, and staff reported that they finally felt that they were truly educating children in a way that felt meaningful for the first time in their careers. These informative evaluations of this successful humanitarian education initiative gave birth to the idea of seeking to develop an innovative training program for educators grounded firmly in culturally relevant pedagogy.



Focus on Partnerships

In 2013, AMURT/NHE-Haiti began searching for sustainable strategies to professionally develop educators so that more teachers and students could experience transformational educational opportunities. After many long meetings and debates among staff and the larger community both in Haiti and abroad, we decided that rather than creating a training program from scratch we would instead seek to build the capacity of an established and recognized Haitian institution sharing a parallel strategy. The partnership with Université Quisqueya (UniQ), Haiti's leading non-profit private university, developed naturally and over a period of several years, greatly boosting our efforts by providing legitimacy and access to a growing network of local and international partners. By partnering with UniQ, the scope of our original vision greatly expanded.

The numerous consultations with Haitian educational leaders gave birth to the vision of a national center for continuing professional studies for educators. The idea of the Center for Innovative Continuing Education (CICE) was conceived as a close partnership between a private University, a non-traditional NGO, and the Ministry of Education. Recognizing the strength of this collaboration and the systemic and innovative approach of its vision, funders such as the W.K.Kellogg Foundation and the German Foreign Aid Ministry agreed to commit much needed resources, allowing us to raise so far more than 2 Million USD for its infrastructure and operational plan. Construction of the 18,000 square foot facility has been ongoing for the past 18 months, and its inauguration is scheduled for August 2015. The building's multi-purpose training spaces, apartments, conference hall and a rooftop restaurant have already begun hosting students and sessions, and will become the physical nucleus of the CICE.

Taking AMURT/NHE's lessons from the field over the last 8 years managing teacher training programs for hundreds of teachers and dozens of schools in the capital and the Northwest of the country into careful consideration, CICE's vision developed a national hub-and-spoke model encouraging replication of student-centered training modules. Several components have become crucial pillars for this model, such as the development of an appropriate and progressive pedagogical methodology, a systematic approach of training trainers and spreading the scope nationally. The onsite modeling and demonstration will be carried out through a network of community learning centers serving as mini-hubs, nurturing networks of progressive learning.

Professional Development Modules

Over the last 5 years, AMURT/NHE's curriculum development team has worked to create a culturally-relevant and innovative pedagogical approach specifically designed for Haiti. Our goal is to champion a new holistic model of teaching and learning adapted to the challenges of a fast-changing world by connecting the dynamism of Haitian culture with the timeless and broad Neohumanist principles. The series of professional development modules is called Edikasyon Vivan (translated into English as The Vibrant Education), an integrated approach that uses dynamic, learner-centered methodologies. The 12 Vivan modules created so far have focused on inclusive education, positive discipline, collaborative learning, problem-solving and project-based curriculum. Constructivist in its approach, Edikasyon Vivan combines key aspects of progressive education, building on the theories of innovators such as Friedrich Fröebel's Play-based Learning, Jacques Delors' Learning by Doing, Paolo Freire's Popular Education, Oscar Mogollón's Rural Education and, of course most importantly, P.R. Sarkar's Neohumanism.



Lekol Vivan (Vibrant School) Networks

Our strategy has been to work closely with various networks of schools on the community level, continuously building the capacities of teachers and developing and adapting the training modules. AMURT/NHE's fruitful partnership with Sean Penn's JP/HRO organization has resulted in a 3-year program of training 220 teachers and directors and 30 schools in one of the capital's toughest and poorest urban areas. This experience provided valuable lessons in terms of how to best train teachers who have various levels of experience, education and motivation. Challenges are compounded when the majority of teachers rarely receive their paltry salaries on time, students may not have eaten all day, and classrooms are crowded, dark and in disrepair. Regardless of the numerous constraints, our trainers have managed to create a close rapport with the participating teachers, seeking to create a sense of professional partnership. Even if teachers are not highly regarded in the larger society, one of the goals of the program is to provide continual support, space and stimulation to prevent burnout and despair.

At the same time as working on the grassroots level, the strategy for CICE is to also work with actors on a national level, specifically directors in the MoE, regional deputies, school inspectors, staff at teacher colleges and university faculty. CICE has begun identifying branch campuses in the various Haitian provinces to provide professional development modules for educators. By using a train-the-trainer operational model, CICE's 5-year strategy beginning at the end of 2015 will first target 5,000 PreK-6th grade teachers in four provinces and then expand to subsequent provinces and additional grade levels each year. By 2025, the goal is to train a total of 14,000 educators in the Edikasyon Vivan approach.

Model Learning Labs

An integral part and parcel of CICE's hub-and-spoke model relates to the need of educators to see and experience tangible examples of innovative learner-centered education process in action. One example of such a model of educational experimentation is La Felicite Learning Center, which AMURT/NHE founded immediately after the earthquake in one of Port-au-Prince's most densely populated camps. Evolving from a temporary Child-Friendly Space into a recognized national model learning laboratory, the school infrastructure was destroyed last year by a private developer and is currently in the midst of preparation for construction of a new 8,000 square foot campus in a central area of the capital. This Lekol Vivan seeks to showcase innovative Neohumanist approaches adapted to the challenges of the Haitian reality. Its students learn from each other as much as from the teachers, visiting project stations, working in the environmental outdoor lab, and connecting to a common theme each month through games, projects, art activities, yoga, dance and theatre. As the MoE inspector for the area commented, "La Felicite is a rare oasis, creating integrated young leaders for a new Haiti". Rather than remaining an isolated oasis, however, this community center is poised to become CICE's first but not last mini-hub, connecting to multiple spokes reaching far and wide in the surrounding community, and drawing educators coming for training, observation and internships.

The lessons from the last few years since the devastating earthquake hit Haiti in 2010 have clearly shown that no obstacles are too great and no idea is too small once we open ourselves to working in diverse teams with partners who bring on board different strengths and perspectives. The process of continuously adapting and improving our educational approach to match the incredible challenges in the field has increased the resilience of our strategies and their potential scope for expansion. It has also prepared us to model and spread Neohumanist values and ideas more efficiently through a systematic approach that seeks to draw participation and replication. We will work hard to ensure that the Center of Innovative Continuing Education ushers in a new wind of change helping turn dark classrooms into bright and cheerful labs of discovery, infused with the joy of learning.



The Center for Innovative Continuing Education and La Felicite Learning Lab are currently inviting interested educators to apply for one of our volunteer positions. For more information, please contact info@amurthaiti.org.

Ananda Marga Gurukula Teacher Training College, Anandanagar, India

By Ac Svarupananda Avt

The Ananda Marga Gurukula Teachers training College was started in the year 2014, offering a Bachelors of Education degree. The classes started from July 01, 2014 with 100 students. At this stage all theory classes have concluded and the students have also covered practice teaching sessions in over ten secondary schools. Their final teaching exams were also completed on April 29, 2015. Now they will take final exams in theory papers from June 01, 2015. All the students have fared well in co-curricular subjects.

Starting with the 2015-2016 session, the Bachelors of Education program will be of two years duration. Until now it was for one year only. So now for the coming sessions there would be 200 students in our campus.



There is fierce competition to enter into the institution and only highly deserving candidates are being accepted as per NCTE – National Council for Teacher Education, and University regulations. The institution welcomes donations and contributions of appropriate educational materials for upgrading its library collection.

Education Training Camp (ETC)

Anandanagar, India

By Ac Priyaksnananda Avt

The winter session of the Education Training Camp was organized in Ananda Nagar. Over 300 teachers and Principals of Ananda Marga Schools from various parts of India participated in this five-day-long training.

Classes were conducted by experienced trainers on various aspects of Neohumanist Education (NHE) such as Specialties of NHE, Teaching English, Rhymes and Rhythms, School Management, School Accounts, First Aid in School, Foundations of NHE, Creative Games, Lesson Plan, Classroom Management, Imaginative Play, and Yoga for Kids etc. There was also a Rhymes and Moral Story Telling Competition where all participated with great enthusiasm expressing their talents and creativity. Didi Ananda Madhupurna came from Australia and Didi Ananda Gunamaya from Jamaica to train the teachers with practical techniques of play-way methods.

There was a colorful and very impressive cultural program one evening. Girls from Rarh Hostel, Umanivas, presented a dance drama “Vanshi” which was spectacular and heart touching to see the talents of the small kids. The teachers also presented several creative items.

In the evaluation session all appreciated the ETC, and the disciplined life and spiritual ambience created by collective kiirtan and meditation.

Overall it was highly educative, practical and aimed at total development of the teacher and taught.



The last issue of Gurukula Network featured an article introducing the project “We all have a story”, which is developing a new methodology for addressing pro-diversity education in early childhood settings. The project is a partnership between AMURTEL/NHE Romania, sharing 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. This second article offers some personal tools for all.



Friendship: The Key to Overcoming Prejudices

By Didi Ananda Devapriya

Who me, a racist?

Virginia Blackburn was a powerful and beautiful black African American woman working as a social worker at a women’s centre in a poor inner-city neighbourhood in the Midwest. She was a close friend and wise mentor for me in my early twenties. She invited me to different workshops on themes such as overcoming racism, classism, sexism and other types of isms. I was shocked to discover how these barriers had limited my ability to feel close and connected to others. I considered myself a liberal, open minded person. I had grown up in a multi-ethnic high school and most of my best friends were non-whites - Korean, Chinese, Indian. I had even gone to a formal dance with a black friend as my date, and had to cringingly endure the loud and embarrassing comments of my somewhat deaf French-Canadian grandfather like “Oh he is good looking for a black guy!” I was a good person and I was dedicated to principles of equality for all. I certainly didn’t see myself as a racist and would never consciously participate in hurting anyone because of their identity.

And yet, in the workshops I discovered the extent to which I had still internalised racism and other isms. Though it wasn’t expressing itself in the open forms of hatred and discrimination that we most often associate with the ugly word racism - it was present in the isolation and fears I felt around connecting to my African American brothers and sisters. I admired them, and yet felt distant. I wanted to connect, yet felt awkward and clumsy and feared ridicule and rejection.

Close enough to ask

My relationship with Virginia was one of the first in which I felt close and comfortable enough to find out about her experiences of how the double burdens of racism and sexism had hurt her, as well as to explore and overcome these barriers formed by my own timidity and ungrounded fears. It was such an enormous relief to be able to discuss these things openly - and to find out what she really thought and felt. It turned out to be extremely easy to feel close and connected to Virginia, and that relationship gave me confidence to reach out to more minority people and become a better friend and ally. Up until that point, though most of my best friends were from Asian minorities, they were already well integrated into the suburban intellectual elites that I was a part of, whereas the African American kids were not only a different ethnicity - but often part of a different socio-economic class which doubled the distance.

First step - recognizing and accepting

Virginia taught me some fundamental truths for overcoming the barriers that racism and classism form unconsciously between people. First of all, to recognise and accept that all over the world, the patterns that create barriers between human beings are recorded very early in life, and so we have all been influenced by racism and other isms in their many forms. It is not our fault. We were little and growing up in a racist, classist, sexist world. Our innate sense of humanity resisted the best we could - but in the face of the powerful influences of the adult world, we internalised messages about who is important and who is not, who is like me and who is not. As children, our natural, spontaneous connection to everyone around us was limited by different forms of fear.

Fear creates distance

The good news is that we are more than these patterns, and we can work to become aware of them and overcome their hold on us. But in the meantime, until we are completely free of those patterns - how should we act? How should we approach people who are different than us? How to act with people with disabilities, from other ethnicities, other social classes, other religions? Maybe we will say the wrong things, maybe we will accidentally insult them, maybe they will reject our awkward attempts, maybe they will laugh at us... Maybe. These fears are all direct results of the conditioning that holds these very isms in place by keeping us distant from each other.

Virginia’s advice was disarmingly simple: “If you are busy being loving, you won’t have time to be racist.”

Get busy being loving

Authentic human relationships are a vital key to overcoming barriers. There is no replacement for friendships. We may even be activists, work for human rights or think of ourselves as fair and balanced people. But until we have close, warm, open friendships - we are probably still unconsciously allowing those barriers to continue to operate.

When we really care about another human being, we may make mistakes, we may say the wrong things, but we can talk about it. We can talk about our fears, our clumsiness - we can ask for help, we can find out what the other person really thinks, what their experience is like. We don't have to guess anymore. We don't have to try and pretend that we don't have barriers and fears - but we can be determined to go beyond them, together. This becomes a shared journey, an exploration, a discovery that is always unique, human and enriching.

Is racism an American thing?

Perhaps some of you may be thinking that my story is an interesting one, but that it only applies to Americans. Often the very word racism has become associated with the terrible things that we white Americans have done to African Americans throughout history - the slavery, the hate crimes and terrible persecution.

However, the insights that Virginia shared with me - and the closeness that was created in our relationship is something that helped me to feel closer to people across all sorts of cultural divides. I think it is why I can claim Romania as my home, and why I feel honoured to have close relationships with people from so many different cultural backgrounds - whether Romanian, Roma, Hungarian, Indian, Finnish or Dutch.

Grim Communist Russian meets Fat American Capitalist

I remember many years ago, applying this principle when meeting a Russian sister who I instantly connected with - her warm sense of humour made me feel as if I had known her for years within the first days that I met her. We had both grown up during the Cold War period - and soon we were close enough to be able to share and laugh about the different demonised stereotypes we had grown up with - me imagining all Communist Russians as wearing grey and looking grim and serious, she imagining all Capitalist Americans to be fat, irresponsible, overindulgent and greedy. At the same time, it was fascinating to explore what was actually beyond those stereotypes - our authentic stories of our childhood memories.

Encountering Antiziganism in Romania

Naturally, different forms of isms creep into every culture - whether as a dominant culture or an oppressed culture and are transmitted in early childhood. Of course, the ways that this happens, and the culture background is unique in each country or subculture. Yet, many elements of oppressions and isms are remarkably similar. When I first came to Romania and became aware of the Roma population - it was something completely new for me, as I had never realised that words "Gypsy" referred to a real ethnicity - I naively thought it was just referring to a particular type of free lifestyle. Yet soon, I recognised many of the same characteristics of any oppressed group. The internalised sense of hopelessness and marginalisation - expressing itself in so many familiar forms and behaviours.

I was so surprised to find that even people I considered to be well-educated, liberal and open minded, made statements about how socially deviant behaviours such as stealing, trickery (schmekeria) or begging are "genetic" in the Roma. Or similar comments referring to their "genetic" increased sexual drive and consequent fears of Roma overpopulation.

Having the advantage of having not been raised in a culture that had any particular stereotypes or assumptions about the Roma - it was relatively easy for me to see past these expressions of racism and to form a close relationship with the Roma woman I had hired into the organisation. Listening to her personal experience of the racism she had endured confirmed my observation, that indeed, the patterns were very similar to those Virginia and other minority friends experienced.

Stepping out of the comfort zone

We may feel overwhelmed and guilty when we first become aware of the extent to which racism is affecting our whole culture. Yet reaching out across barriers, and having the courage to step outside of your own comfort zone, is an essential step. Fears will certainly come up "But how should I talk with "them"? "What if they tell me I should get out of their neighbourhood?" etc. Like any fear, the minute that you challenge it, it often dissipates, just as darkness disappears when we switch on the light.

In reality, the moment in which we manage to overcome artificially constructed barriers and create a human connection - most people will be delighted and readily reciprocate our extension of friendship, attention, respect and caring. If we do meet with suspicion, distrust or coolness then we shouldn't be surprised and it is important to be able to continue to stay relaxed, flexible and empathetic.

We shouldn't expect that all members of any group that has been historically oppressed for generations by our ancestors to be without some scars from this experience. But if we are committed enough to being loving - to overcoming such barriers - we won't get confused - we can expect that and not take it personally.

So what does it mean to “get busy being loving”?

First of all - question yourself honestly - do you have any close friends that are from a minority? Not just superficial working acquaintances - but real, equal, open relationships where you feel close and connected. If not - find some! A relationship starts to get deeper when we show genuine interest in listening to a person's story. Invite them to tell you about their life.

To “get busy being loving” means to challenge all of those barriers that keep us on just the surface level - anything that gets in the way of us feeling 100% comfortable and knowing that our friend feels 100% comfortable with us. It means to have the courage to talk about it - you are not being racist because you expose the racist conditioning that you have. It doesn't go away or look less obvious only because we are not talking about it. If a person talks about the way racism has hurt them - they are not accusing you. Rather - bringing these issues into the open helps to demonstrate that your honesty and integrity makes you more trustworthy. It gives space in the relationship for your friend to be able to safely express what it is like trying all the time to adjust to a dominant culture and be accepted on the dominant culture's terms. Any time that we give supportive, unconditional positive listening - we are helping that person and ourselves to be able to think more clearly, more rationally. It doesn't mean that our whole relationship is about the fact that the person is part of a minority. Naturally, you will see your friend as a human being, not as a representative of a category. That is positive! But it is important also not to try to erase differences that make us feel uncomfortable. Real friends shouldn't have to feel that they have to act, talk and think “like us” to be able to be close. Friendship shouldn't be on “our terms” even in unconscious ways. Allowing those differences to exist and recognising them, being curious about them in respectful, interested ways, on the other hand enrich our experience.

Be an ally

Getting busy being loving also means to commit to being an ally to all minority people. Remaining quiet when they have to endure racist comments means we are colluding with the racism ourselves. Even if we get misinterpreted as over-reactive or if others ridicule us etc - it is more important that our friends know we are not going to abandon them to face racism alone. It is better to be known as being intolerant of racism than to risk accidentally participating in it. It makes our friends feel safe with us. We also can invite them to share with us how they felt and what we can do better in the future to support them.

Another aspect of being an ally, once you know more about what it is like on the inside for someone you are close to to feel isolated or vulnerable, you can be more confident in assuming that others probably feel similarly. Takes steps to notice when you are in a social group - whether at a meeting or in the workplace - are there any minorities that are isolating themselves either in a smaller group or all alone? Go and socialise with them and ensure that they are included. Be proactive.

As Neohumanist teachers, we want to be able to transmit a healthy acceptance of diversity to the children we work with. We know that Neohumanist education is based on teaching through personal example. So we must start with our own personal experiences and connections to a diversity of people. Authentic friendships are the best way to break down barriers. Be curious and interested to find out more about the human beings in your world, especially those in minority situations. Once those relationships are in place, it will become easier and more intuitive to know the “right ways” to act so that we are not reinforcing, but rather undoing the bondages of isms. We become more and more free, fearless and loving as a result and thus able to transmit the same to the children that we work with.

All people will feel united by the ties of universal love and friendship, which will ultimately pave the way for a universal society.

Wherever there is a common point among people it should be encouraged, while the points of difference have to be discouraged and eliminated. For fostering unity and enhancing the prosperity of the people, this must be the fundamental approach.

**We should always remember:
There is only one race in the entire world,
And the name of that race is the human race.
We are bound together with the same breast milk of mother Earth,
And the same sun and moon are our common companions.**

Shrii P.R. Sarkar

Helping Children to Manage their Feelings Constructively

By Magda Zambet, Educational Director

Gradinita Rasarit kindergarten in Bucharest, Romania

No matter how loving and safe of an environment we try to create for children, as parents and teachers we need to be aware that, at some point, they will have to face painful situations that we are powerless to prevent.

It can be very hard to watch children going through emotions. It is so hard to listen to a child cry or have an intense, outraged temper tantrum. We can easily identify with their pain, which can be very uncomfortable and lead us to just want to make them stop. However, children need to express their feelings. It is important to learn to accept their feelings as perfectly normal. If their sentiments are allowed to be expressed, then they cannot turn into frustration. It is so important that children learn to understand their feelings. That way they will know what they want and they will know how to make choices and deal with limits.

We know how pure, wonderful and wise our children are, and that they need freedom. However, they are still dependent on adults and they also need us to keep them safe. When adults do not have clear boundaries and are too permissive or inconsistent, then the children's behavior will reflect this.

Children rightly deserve and need our attention. Because of this, if they cannot get enough attention at home, they may develop behaviors to attract attention in any way that works. The need for attention varies from child to child. If you suspect that a child's behavior is demonstrating a need for attention, then do make time for them. An unconditional loving presence will nourish the child's needs.

When you see a child overwhelmed with intense feelings of sadness, disappointment and anger control your urge to "fix" the situation, or to become overprotective in order to prevent such situations from reoccurring. Rather try to sing, to hug him and to breathe deeply in a confident, relaxed way together with him. Depending on the child's preferences, you may also try to give him a gentle massage, and snuggle up together whispering a little spontaneously made-up story. Singing cleanses the whole vibrational field of the child, breathing calms distress and hugs heal the hurts by helping the child to feel that they are not alone.

When adults find their inner balance and are able to create safety by feeling confident and in charge of the situation, then it is much more easy to interact with the child because their own inner being will directly transmit reassurance, calm and safety.

Using Persona Dolls to foster Pro-Diversity

The "We all have a story" project has just completed the second phase of the trainings – in which we shared the "persona dolls" technique with the 100 Bucharest kindergarten teachers participating in the project. The dolls were handmade in a social enterprise creating jobs for single, homeless mothers and are designed to represent different types of diversity – special needs, minority ethnicities, etc. The dolls are not meant to be another toy for the children to play with, rather they have a very specific role in the classroom and are one of the teacher's didactic tools. The most important feature of the dolls, is not their physical appearance – but rather a detailed, realistic, elaborate biography that the teacher constructs, taking care to accurately represent diversity and avoid stereotypes.

The doll is then introduced to the group as a friend, visiting from another kindergarten. He or she whispers into the teacher's ear, and the teacher transmit their messages to the children. The teacher spends a few sessions introducing the doll, and once the dolls persona is well established and the children remember and bond with the doll, then the doll comes to the circle time to share different problems and obstacles she or he is facing, and asks the children's advice. The children learn quickly to recognize and identify feelings, experience empathy and become good problem solvers.

The teachers were quite receptive to the technique and we thank Sunanda from England that sponsored buying a DVD produced by Persona Dolls Training in England "Storytelling to make a difference" available on the website: <http://www.persona-doll-training.org/ukresources.html>

The next step will involve helping the teachers to integrate the dolls into their kindergartens. In the meantime – we are now preparing the third training sessions in which we will introduce real people with different types of special needs, or minority group status to the teachers and lead them through a session designed to help all of the participants know each other better through sharing their personal experiences and stories.

Gender Equity in Education

By Dada Maheshvarananda and Mirra Price

The mass media and advertising bombard us from a very young age that the value of women depends on how beautiful, thin and sexy they look; that buying the right clothes and beauty products is a key to success in life. A Harvard University study shows that 8 out of 10 U.S. women are unhappy with their physical appearance, and that only five percent are even capable of reaching the current ideal shape (Fox, 1997). The result of this mass hypnosis is eating disorders, low self-esteem and depression that plague many women who are unable to achieve that elusive commercial image of beauty.

The youngest person ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize was Malala Yousafzai at age 17 in 2014 for her courageous campaign for girls' education. According to a 2012 UNICEF study, an estimated 31 million girls of primary school age and 34 million girls of lower secondary school age were not enrolled in school in 2011, with Sub-Saharan Africa having the lowest percentage of gender parity (UNICEF, 2012).

Barriers to girls' education in economically impoverished countries include school fees, strong cultural norms favoring boys' education when a family has limited resources, lack of private separate bathrooms, negative classroom environments where girls may face violence, exploitation or corporal punishment. Additionally, schools in the so-called Third World often lack sufficient numbers of female teachers because men are given preference in awarding salaried teaching jobs. (UNICEF, 2012). Improving girls' access to education helps end the poverty cycle, creating a ripple effect, which will influence coming generations.

In Western countries, girls' access to education is roughly on a par with boys. However, social conditions persist which may negatively impact the educational climate in classrooms. In a 1992 American Association of University Women study, "How Schools Shortchange Girls", findings included that in the United States, girls received less attention than boys in classrooms and were less represented in math than boys. There has been a decided rise in bullying and violence, which often prevents girls from full participation in their education. Social issues such as teen pregnancy, one-parent households, having to help care for siblings, ever-increasing alcohol and drug use, and health problems, are all significant factors which may severely lessen the quality of education for girls, especially in public schools, which have limited resources and are sometimes in crime-ridden urban neighborhoods (AAUW, 1992).

In a landmark longitudinal study, Harvard psychology professors Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan followed the stories of 100 adolescent girls for five years. They found that when young girls in the United States reach adolescence, they start to receive contradictory expectations from parents, teachers, peers, the media, and themselves. Girls struggle with these conflicting messages, trying to figure out how to act, when to speak up, and who to please in their everyday lives. There are strong pressures from society for them to be beautiful, likable, passive and self-sacrificing. Many adolescents respond by falling into silence and disconnection from society (Brown, 1992).

Adolescent girls feel enormous pressure to attain unrealistic standards of beauty. Girls who do not fit this artificial standard of beauty face more obstacles than those who come closer to attaining it. Studies demonstrate that attractive people have distinct advantages in our society:

- Attractive applicants have a better chance of getting jobs, and of receiving higher salaries.
- Taller men earn on average \$600 more per inch (2.5 centimeters) in the United States than shorter executives.
- Judges find attractive people guilty of crimes less often, and if guilty, they receive shorter sentences.
- Attractive kids are more popular in school with their classmates.
- Teachers give higher grades to the work of attractive students and have higher expectations of them, which in turn improves their performance.

Understanding this tendency, which scientists point out is part of our evolutionary history, is crucial for overcoming bias.

- Teaching women how to care for and strengthen their bodies, their minds and their spirits.
- Learning the hidden history of women's great contributions to every aspect of society.
- Seeing through the imposed veils of superstition and dogmas.
- Valuing diversity and viewing gender, racial and cultural differences among people as enhancements of our human family.

- Leadership training to achieve the necessary self-confidence and will to apply their talents and knowledge for the benefit of society.

In the Neohumanist Education Conference in Porto Alegre, over 100 teachers brainstormed in small groups how we can help girls feel good about themselves. Suggestions included:

- Using physical activities to relearn and appreciate one's body.
- Teaching dancing, singing and art.
- Leading activities that deconstruct the social gender paradigm.
- Explaining the theory of multiple intelligences (musical–rhythmic, visual–spatial, verbal–linguistic, logical–mathematical, bodily–kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential, etc.) to show that each person possesses a unique blend of all of them; therefore we should respect and encourage each person's different abilities and development.
- Deconstructing the appeals of the media through reflection and questioning. For example, bring examples of very old advertisements to compare with current ads.
- Encouraging each one to manifest their innate talent for their own self-esteem and to inspire others as well.
- Dialoging in order to understand why one is not well, and helping to find a solution.
- Practicing yoga and meditation.
- Encouraging healthy eating.
- Telling stories with positive images of girls and women.
- Realizing that all people are beautiful inside.
- Leading reflection on feminine stereotypes and women as objects in the media.
- Laughing!
- Valuing the different strengths and abilities of each person, remembering that no one is equal.
- Valuing inner beauty, kindness and compassion.
- Realizing that our culture is our strength, making each person proud of who they are.
- Comparing society's unrealistic image of female beauty (extensive makeup, plastic surgery, Photoshop, excessively thin) vs. the real beauty inside each person.
- Respecting diversity.

As long as girls and women remain second class citizens, their education will continue to be second class. Therefore, the struggle to end women's social and political oppression and inequality must go hand-in-hand with efforts to insure gender equity in education.

Dada Maheshvarananda is a monk, activist and writer of *After Capitalism: Economic Democracy in Action*, he is director of the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela. He may be contacted at maheshvarananda@prout.org.

Mirra Price, a retired English teacher, currently is a writer, editor and copyeditor. An activist and Proutist, she has worked in cooperatives, for many social justice causes, and has advocated for gender equality since the 1960s.

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Even today women are slaves to the male-dominated social order. This is not only bad but deplorable. We should decry such domination of women and their psycho-economic exploitation through the evil design of dogmas. To abolish dogma and liberate women from psychic exploitation, there should be:

Free education for all women in all countries of the world.

No discrimination in the social, educational and religious realms.

The provision of economic and social security to all women.

We stand to create a powerful, dynamic and upsurging social consciousness, especially among women, so that they are inspired to rise, abolish dogma and annihilate all symbols of slavery, and usher in a new era of coordinated cooperation and glorious achievement. Let women be the vanguard of a new revolution which humanity must achieve for a glorious tomorrow.

Shrii P. R. Sarkar

Neohumanist Education for the Personality Development of Children

By Sunandita Bhowmik

Asst. Prof., Pragati College of Education, Siliguri, Darjeeling, India



Personality is the sum total of different processes and activities of the individual. It is the integrative organization of all physical, intellectual, psychosocial and affective characteristics of an individual. All these determine a person's unique adjustment to his environment. Allport's suggestion is that 'personality is what a man really is.' Now the question is what is man really? Is he simply a physical being? Or a psychic being? Or more than that? Neohumanist Education clearly states the real existence of a being. NHE focuses on the development of three unique dimensions of a child. Human beings are more psychic than physical and more spiritual than psychic. There is a continuous focus on physical, mental and spiritual development in NHE curricula.

Neohumanist Education supports Adler's individual psychology. Both of them considered the individual as unique and aware of the why of his actions. A child is capable of consciously planning and guiding his actions towards self actualizations. According to Adler, the actions of individuals are rooted in fictional ideas which Adler considered are not reality and termed as "fictional finalism". But here in NHE, actions are rooted in ideas which are not fictional but rather rooted in ultimate reality, the ideation of the Great. NHE fosters among children future goals and moral principles. The future goals of individuals affect their present behavior.

NHE does not believe in the behaviorist approach to personality development which is mechanical. Higher spiritual forces within the individual reflect on a person's behavior. They control instinctive desires and impulses. This can be called the super ego according to Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Children are taught spirituality as a practice and spirituality as an essence. This inner force liberates the mind from mundane objects and helps in the development of progressive thinking devoid of dogma. This elevated thinking process translates into noble actions and thus helps in development of the personality.

Role of Neohumanist Education (NHE) in Developing Moral Reasoning

When people confront moral dilemmas, it is reasoning that is important. Kohlberg theorized that people progress through three levels as they develop abilities of moral reasoning; pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. According to him, the post-conventional, that consists of two stages, namely, the social contract orientation and the universal ethical principle orientation, is the highest level of moral development.

NHE focuses on the development of moral judgment by regular observation of ten universal moral principles. NHE teaches five principles of harmony with others and five principles of harmony with self. So children define their own values in terms of ethical principles. NHE fosters the rationalistic mind, the mind that decides what is wrong or right rather than the rules set down by the adults. This is the highest form of moral reasoning. What is right is defined by the decision of the conscience. There is a regular attempt to develop rational mind and awakened conscience in Neohumanist curricula.

Developing Rationalistic Mentality

The curriculum of NHE is framed in such a way that the noble aspects of a child are explored. The child realizes that animals also experience pleasure and pain. Even inanimate things have minds that are in a dormant stage. Children start realizing that there is a fine linking thread among all creatures -- living and non-living. Rationalistic mentality applied in NHE helps the children to realize the sense of duty and higher level of understanding that they should be sympathetic to all living beings. Rather than teaching children to do what they think is good, NHE cultivates moral judgment in such a way that before executing any action they should think whether it is conducive to human welfare, whether it is for the benefit and happiness of all beings.



Regular Practice of Meditation - the unique feature of NHE curriculum

By regular practice of meditation, the subtle nerve cells of the brain start functioning. The collective mind of those subtle cells exerts pressure on the pineal gland which controls the secretion of other glands and thus helps maintain emotional balance. Children become self disciplined and feel inner joy. Meditation brings changes in the attached nerve cells and nerve fibres of different glands and sub-glands which regulate the secretion. Thus, their thought processes also change and actions are controlled in a systematic way. Hence, total biological transformation needs spiritual practice.

Center for Neohumanist Creativity (CNHC) Caracas, Venezuela By Didi Ananda Amegha

The Center for Neohumanist Creativity opened on April 6th in Caracas, Venezuela in the former preschool building which has now been extensively renovated. It operates under the auspices of the Women's Welfare Development Foundation and was inaugurated on Women's Day, March 8th. Didi Ananda Sadhana gave a talk on the importance of education for women and girls and the importance of coordinated cooperation between men and women in order to create a progressive and well functioning human society.



Didi Ananda Amegha speaking at the Inauguration Day

administrative staff receive ongoing training in Neohumanist Education, Biopsychology, Meditation and Yoga.

During the NHE Conference which was held in Caracas in 2014 Dada Shambhushivananda gave a talk at the International School of Caracas, and since then they have continued to invite us to give talks and yoga classes to their students and teachers. Dada Maheshvarananda has gone there several times to give talks about spirituality and has also taught a yoga class for the teachers. Tracey, one of the teachers at the International School of Caracas, together with the coordinators of the social service programs of the school, organized a one day visit of the senior students of the school to help with the renovations on the CNHC building. They and some of their teachers helped us paint a lot of the rooms and the outside murals and they promised to come again to help us paint the iron fence surrounding the building. Sarvajiit and Diipanii are coordinating the repair work and many other local members of Ananda Marga are assisting. We changed the windows, fixed the electrical installation, and are redoing the garden, etc.

There is still a lot of work to be done to make the Neohumanist Center for Creativity a successful project. We are charging very low fees in order to attract as many children and families as possible. We need long term volunteers with educational and administrative background preferably with knowledge of the Spanish language who can help to coordinate the project.

For several years now Venezuela is passing through a lot of changes and lately also through many hardships on the economic level. But it is undoubtedly a country with immense potential, both because of its climate and natural resources and especially because of its human potential. There is a huge number of young people who need a progressive, benevolent education system based on neohumanistic values in order to bring out the best in them.

The center has a capacity to serve over 150 children aged between 3 and 12 years. Programs are offered for women as well as for the whole family. These programs include an afterschool program, classes in yoga, music, dance, art, origami and language instruction in English and Portuguese. Some workshops will be especially designed for women and girls to strengthen their knowledge and appreciation of the female gender and to help create self-esteem.

We already have teachers for the afterschool program and for the yoga classes for children. There are several teachers for music and dance classes, also an art teacher and an origami teacher who is doing spectacular pieces made of recycled paper. We also have two language teachers for English and Portuguese language. All teaching and



Student Volunteers who helped paint the classroom and murals.

Neohumanist Education presented at International Democratic Education Conference

By Kate Ericksen

From April 9-12, Nelson (New Zealand) was host to IDEC 2015. IDEC stands for International Democratic Education Conference. It was first held 23 years ago at the initiative of Yaakov Hecht, an Israeli educator who founded the Democratic School movement in Israel. It is a conference for those interested in alternative education models to share their work and ideas. Every year the conference is held in a different country. We organised a small delegation of 5 volunteers to assist with the catering at the conference as well as to present an overview of Neohumanist Education in the early childhood sector. Over 300 people attended, the majority being both alternative and mainstream education practitioners in NZ, but with delegations sent from alternative schools in Taiwan, Nepal, Puerto Rico, Mexico and the US.

Throughout the conference we had many thoughtful discussions amongst ourselves as we grappled with some of the ideas presented at the conference, especially around learner responsibility, values education and self management. The keynote presentations were given by Dr. Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere and Yaakov Hecht.



Dr. Rose Pere is a respected Maori elder and holder of spiritual wisdom, who has been involved in education, community development and language revitalization for the past 40 years. Rose has been strongly influenced by teachings that go back over 12,000 years. Her book "Te Wheke - A Celebration Of Infinite Wisdom," is an introduction to these teachings. It covers the traditional modes of learning for the Maori and is used as a training model of education by all Government agencies in New Zealand. It is also used in the USA, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Europe, Japan, and has been translated into Japanese and German. The central message in Rose's talk was that we are all children of the divine, find your passion and make a positive change in the world around you with the energy you gain from being in-line with your passion.

Yaakov Hecht founded the Democratic School in Hadera, Israel, in 1987, where each schoolchild builds his own personal study program and determines what to learn, how, when, where and with whom. Over time, Yaakov has also been involved in the foundation of similar schools both in Israel and worldwide and has launched the development of the Education Cities model, whose goal it is to transform the entire city into one big school by developing municipal collaborations between public institutions and private organizations that are active in the city, in order to expand the unique development routes that are available for each schoolchild. In his talk, Yaakov identified the need to evolve from a traditional pyramid structure hierarchy to that of a network hierarchy. He anticipates a massive change in the delivery of education in the next 5 years due to MOOCs (Massive Online Open Courses). Teachers will no longer be the fount of knowledge, but instead will have to hone their skills in how to teach research skills, facilitation and organise students into network learning circles.



During the conference, Didi A. Madhupurna presented a talk about the way that she teaches Neohumanistic values in her school in Melbourne. Part of her talk is included here:

Neohumanist Education at the Melbourne Australia School

The basic philosophy of Ananda Marga schools is Neohumanism. The idea behind this philosophy is expanding the mind from a narrow sentiment to a broad sentiment. How do we teach these values to children of a young age? We teach values through games. We want the children to learn with joy, not fear.

We choose songs and stories to deliver the basic values to impart these. We also teach yoga and meditation. How do we relate the practise that we need to love the animals and plants? One example is that we ask the children for names of animals that they love, and then integrate them into the songs. The words of the songs are about not hurting those animals and that we are all in the same Oneness.



We find that with a vegetarian philosophy we have challenges. We are funded by the government but they respect our school. As long as the community is happy with it, then they respect it. They asked for sufficient evidence to prove to the department that the children are not being disadvantaged by being vegetarian, so we had to do lots of research to make a compelling argument for our stance. Many of our families are not vegetarian, but they respect our philosophy. Every morning a parent brings fruit and it is cut and shared to the children. They have pride in sharing the food from their house. The kids provide their own lunch, which is also required to be vegetarian on our premises. We brief the parents about why

we require vegetarian food and the benefits of that. We give them a recipe book that was written by the parents and do a lot of cooking classes with the children and the staff, but we ask the parents to share the recipes from their home. We publish a cooking book every year. We promote a healthy lifestyle in this way. The families have a sense of belonging and appreciation.

We teach yoga to the children – it's a fun time. I trained all our staff as yoga teachers for children. They sing as they do the postures and integrate the breathing into the technique. If you try to give yoga with a structure, as adults do - then they get bored. We also teach them with the stories that I make up on the spot. I make up a story like, "I went to the zoo and there I saw a snake (do snake posture) and then I saw ...". Sometimes the children create postures that I never saw in a book. So, it is all about creativity and imagination being expanded. Our goal for the exercises is to create relaxation and creativity with the postures. Their glandular system is not yet developed enough to do the full techniques. We also use it also to teach slower breathing and for the children to learn to hold their breath through the postures.

Meditation and visualisation are delivered through the program. This is an important part of the curriculum for us. We teach them that when you breathe in, you are receiving love from your parents, family and friends and when you breathe out, you are giving it back to them.

We do gardening with the children, harvest and cook the foods. Every day we have a "walkabout" to the surrounding four parks in our area. And there we do some of our program. It is delivered in the park. The children learn road safety. We have developed a tradition now that on one day, the children and staff will go door to door in pajamas to raise money to buy books for the children who have no money to buy books. These are delivered to the Salvation Army.

One day last year, the council wanted to cut a tree down to make a pedestrian crossing. The children were very upset when they heard this, and gave their reasons as to why the tree should not be cut down. The children wrote all the reasons why on some paper and we stuck it on the tree, whilst on our walkabout. It said, "Sunrise children don't want that the tree should be cut down because... it is home to the birds, gives us cool shade, etc." The council then decided that the tree should not be cut down. The children were very happy and realised their power to help make change in this world.

A New NHE Music CD

Earth's Heart Calling
A collection of NHE based songs with
kiirtans
by Vistara Primary School, Lismore,
Australia

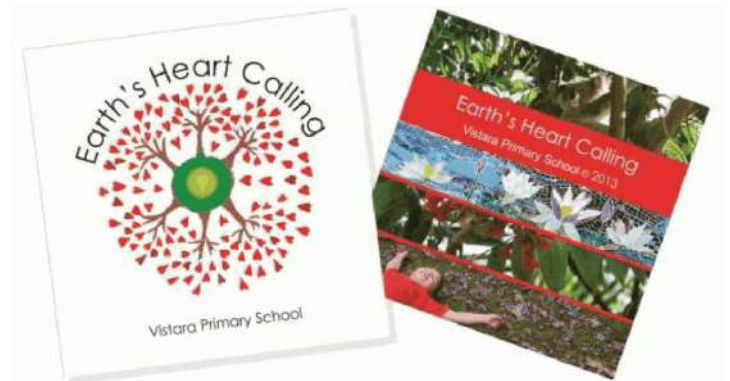
<http://www.earthsheartcalling.com/>

The children at Vistara Primary School worked on this wonderful new CD with Jyoshna La Trobe and created their own songs. Their voices are beautiful and the CD is selling in shops in town and Byron Bay. There is also a song by Tom Avery (Blackboi) an Australian Aboriginal Artist from the Bundjalung Nation. Tom is a school parent and the children are singing with him. This song reached the finals in the 2014 NCEIA Dolphin Music awards.

There are 13 tracks. The songs are: Jingi Wallah (Welcome Song), Unicorn, Side by Side, Save the Whales, Tiny Green Island, Love is Above Me, Do All The Good You Can, My Eyes are Open, Earth's Heart Calling, Calypso Kiirtan, Loved Ones Kiirtan, Rockin Kiirtan, Relaxation (crystal singing bowls and chimes).

Vistara Primary School thanks all who made it possible and particularly those who made it happen behind the scenes – the work that went into the making of this CD was truly service."

The CD is selling at \$25 Aus plus postage and handling and can be purchased through:
www.earthsheartcalling.com and www.earthsheartcalling.com.au



GLOBAL NEWS



NEW YORK SECTOR

USA, Boston

With the loving efforts of Denis M Leary, Executive Director of Veterans Inc. and Mrs. Sue Sullivan, a great event was held on January 17, 2015 at Independence Hall in Shrewsbury, MA. Dada Shambhushivananda showed the relevance of ancient spiritual wisdoms in solving the manifold crises facing humanity today. The participants greatly appreciated revisiting spiritual truths through the rich personal experiences of globe-trotting Dadaji.



Nicaragua

Centro Educativo Ananda Marga

The Ananda Marga School in Nicaragua run by Dada Visnupremananda celebrated its 15th year in February of this year. It has 100 students from grade Kindergarten to grade 6. There are 7 teachers. The children have daily meditation and yoga classes. The school has a feeding program and a first aid program. The celebration included food distribution and a dance performance by the 6 grade children.



MANILA SECTOR

Indonesia

100 Story Books for Children for a Better World is a project of AMURT/EL in cooperation with AMGK for Indonesia. This project of 100 stories is underway with illustrations for the first 40 stories. Here is a picture from the story 'Sunny' who is a boy given a test by the king of the land to protect geraniums that he gave to him. Sunny masters all the tests and becomes the future ruler of the kingdom.



Batu Gajah, Malaysia

Ac. Kripamayananda Avt gave a program for Students on Yoga, Mind and Memory. More than 45 students and parents joined in program.



Hweymalay, Thailand

Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt approved the 5 rai site for the Baan Unrak Animal Sanctuary & Educational Project which will be located within the 25 acres of the Ananda Viina Master Unit owned by AMGK in Hweymalay, Thailand..

QAHIRA SECTOR

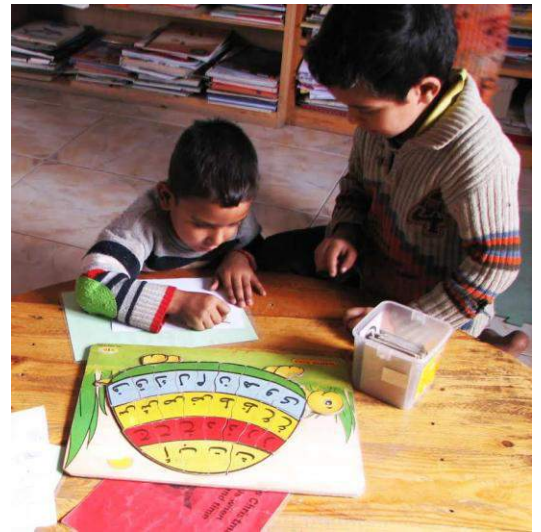
Cairo, Egypt Children Teaching Children at Nile River School

Children are the earliest risers in the village. Fresh from bed before breakfast the first ones come to school. They usually bring smaller ones along and start teaching! We have now about eight children who have enjoyed being responsible for the learning environment and about six of



them help in teaching. They help to reinforce the rules of the school, introduce newcomers to how the school is run and have learned some teaching skills. They are assistants to our teachers and attend teacher's training sessions.

The youngest is 5 years old, loves to clean, knows the place of all things, is best in inventing new plays and of course knows the alphabet and understand simple English.



GEORGETOWN SECTOR



AnandaYara Master Unit Update

The Master Unit continues to develop as a sustainable living model offering classes to the local community. They are preparing products they can sell such as bread, cleaning products, healthy food,



Laying river pebbles for a path to the meditation area at Ananda Yara

Workshop at local High School for making alternative products from raw materials

moringa, beans, green fertilizers and green pesticides. Their outreach work is increasing and they have been offering yoga activities, workshops on rational use of water, organic gardening, as well as RRR (reduce, reuse, recycle). There is an increasing interest in activities oriented towards the development of a neohumanist economy that encourages utilization of raw materials to transform into finished products.

Volunteers from the global community are invited to take part in this growing neohumanist project. You can contact info@prout.org.ve



Giving a class on Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



Planting Trees at Ananda Yara

SUVA SECTOR

Music News, Auckland New Zealand By Jyoshna La Trobe

Samgiita's Concert and Workshop Saturday January 16th, 2015

We were so blessed to have Samgiita (Cecilia Valentim), Mohan and Anna Luiz visiting us from Sao Paulo, Brazil. Samgiita is a brilliant singer and leader of sacred songs workshops with a depth of musical experience to share. Samgiita's workshop was delightful and very interesting as she taught us many indigenous Brazilian songs and dances as well as discussing the historical background of Brazilian music with their African, European and various influences. We learned a great deal first hand so it was a real privilege to have her share her musical knowledge and experiences with us.



The evening concert, was very special. Samgiita carried everyone away with her exuberance and joyful expression, as we sang and danced indigenous Brazilian chants and kiirtans. As the evening developed the ambience flowed into songs that spoke of deep devotion and social rejuvenation. Many people attended, some attracted to spiritual/indigenous music and some connected to us through our service projects in the area. After the concert, we had a delicious vegetarian meal so people stayed afterwards and enjoyed the beautiful atmosphere.

VOSE Festival -February 27-March 1st, 2015 Singing the Name of the Supreme

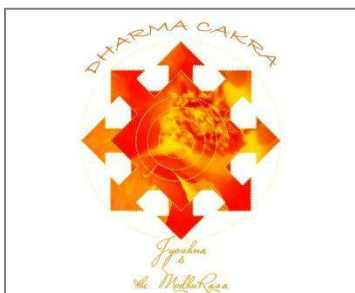
The Voices of Sacred Earth Festival (VoSE) held at Kawai Purapura on Feb 27- March 1st, was very successful on many levels. From the perspective of someone who organised the kiirtan stage and concert it was wonderful to have eight different spiritual groups come together to participate in the multi-faith Akhanda Kiirtan. We went for 9 hours each day, so 18 hours in all; one group following the other in a seamless flow of singing the names of the Supreme in many styles and sounds. There were Amma bhajans, Sahaja Yoga, Hare Krishna, Sikh Kiirtan, Shakti Sacred music, Shrii Chinmoy and of course Ananda Marga kiirtan groups. Sitting there throughout Saturday I experienced the rasa through every kiirtan, when a deep a surge of love and bliss would come flooding over the kiirtanias as one could see on their faces, in their smiles, their eyes and movements and this was felt by the audience, filling us up with inexpressible bliss. Some people were crying saying they had never had such a powerful kiirtan experience before. Our Ananda Marga kiirtan group was made up of a diverse group of ten people, and many great contributions were made those days. We performed Rarhii kiirtans and various other kiirtan melodies as well. I am grateful to have been graced to initiate this festival which now is in its 3rd year and very well established. As far as I know there is no other festival in NZ where so many indigenous people from all over the world come together in one place to connect, share their love, music-culture and spiritual knowledge. The kiirtan sustains those at the festival and draws together all the veins of our global heart.



Ananda Marga Kiirtan Choir

"Dharma Cakra" Album Launch

The evening performance of "Dharma Cakra", at the VoSE Festival was the most challenging performance I have ever done. It's a 70 minute long performance with a 25 minute piece called Creation Cycle inspired by Ananda Sutram. It has two Prabhat Samgiita songs, 2 kiirtans, Samgaccadvam, Forest Meditation, Akhanda Mandala and then The Creation Cycle. Our little



orchestra consisted of flute, violin, 2 cellos, taonga puoro (traditional Maori instruments), tabla, khol drum and percussion players, an opera singer and me, so eleven of us on stage. All I can say is that we did it by Grace. It was very special to look around and see people in the audience, even confirmed atheists, singing Baba Nam Kevalam and being blissed out by Ananda Sutram. My hope is that we will perform it next time in some classical halls of the world. If you don't already have the album it is available through my website (www.jyoshna.com) and through Innersong.



BERLIN SECTOR

Denmark

In December, Dada Krsnasevananda led a meeting on establishing Prout college in Denmark.



Sweden

Members of Gurukula Sweden held a planning meeting in January.

Netherlands

In December, NERI Netherlands met to plan the Teacher Training Institute in Den Bosch.



Iceland Sælukot, Kindergarten from a parent at the school



I want to tell you about an incident that occurred last fall. One evening my son did not at all want to go to sleep and refused to be put into bed. Having tried all my usual tactics, I suddenly asked him gracefully: "Should we speak with the Supreme Being?" My son instantly went silent, looked deep into my eyes and whispered "yes". I lay him in his bed, kneeled by it putting palms together in front of my heart and said, Supreme Being, thank you for life. Thank you for our existence." My son repeated with deep honesty, "thank you". Then he began singing softly "Baba Nam Kevalam", still with hands in the prayer position and fell asleep. Right there I understood how life at (Ananda Marga School) Sælukot has developed my child's understanding of higher consciousness. Before this I did not pray on a regular basis and had never interacted with my son in this way. It was like he had been waiting for it. He joined (Ananda Marga School) Sælukot in August last year and had only been there for a few months at that time. One cannot help to think with reverence of the children and their most certain connection to the Supreme Being. I am deeply grateful to all the staff of at Sælukot and just want to point out that this development is invaluable, where as a mind without a concept of something higher than itself, is a mind lost in the world. This kind of teaching is unique to Sælukot kindergarten, thank you. - Warm wishes, Kristjanklausen



HONG KONG SECTOR

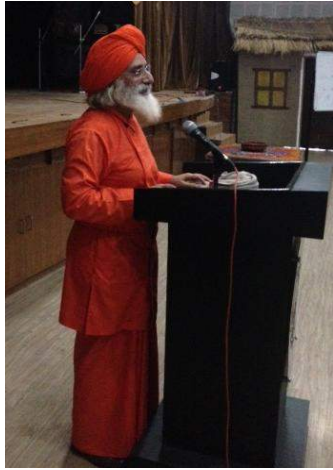
Taipei, Taiwan

Dr. Chen joined the Gurukula staff in Taipei to review the progress and plans of the NHE movement in Taiwan. Bhaswati also offered to work for AMGK in Taiwan to help start a neohumanist school in Taiwan. Meanwhile, Snehalata, Geeta,



Karuna, Shantimaya, Amrta, Rudramohan and a host of other neohumanist educators are meeting regularly to further the cause of neohumanism in Taiwan and China. A regular study group has been meeting every week for more than a year now to deepen their knowledge of NHE. Dada Shiilabhadrananda also offered to assist the group to establish and strengthen the Gurukula Association in Taiwan.

DELHI SECTOR



Chandigarh, India

Dr. Shambhushivananda spoke on "Mind, Meditation and Concentration" to hundreds of students of the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan in Panchkula (near Chandigarh) in February, 2015. Between



April 28-June 4, 2015, Dada gave a series of talks in Patiala (Punjab), Panchkula (Haryana) and Chandigarh. He addressed hundreds of persons including the District Bar Association in Patiala and received a series of invitations to share the yogic/spiritual/neohumanist worldview on contemporary problems facing the country.

Mumbai, India

Eleven people met in Mumbai in November and formed a team to actualize the work of Gurukula and NHE. Plans include the establishment of NERI (Neohumanist Education Research Institute) in the Mumbai area. "Inner Ecology and Outer Ecology" programs will be developed and materials for teacher training will be published. Shubhendu Prabhu is the coordinator.



Noida, India

Dr. Shambhushivananda also visited the neohumanist school in Noida and inspired the teachers to delve more deeply into the essence of neohumanist educational philosophy and practices. The Noida school has an impressive facility and also supports 80 children in an open facility in the community where no fees are charged from the students.



The school is under the directorship of Mrs. Tishya Mathur who built this institution.

NAIROBI SECTOR

Lome, Togo

With the generous support of AMURT Italy, and many others from around the world, the boundary wall of the Togo Master Unit, is nearing completion, and providing protection to the educational project on the MU. More than 300 children are enrolled in the school which is located within the MU compound. This land is located right in the heart of Lome, Togo and has the potential to become the most prestigious project of West Africa. Your generous support is much needed. Please contact: padmeshananda@gmail.com





Neohumanist College

Distance Learning

<http://nhcollege.gurukul.edu/>

The newly formed Neohumanist College is an online learning platform for fostering the vision of Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar. It will provide an environment for sharing knowledge that cultivates neohumanist values and fosters work towards creating sustainable futures for all.

To begin with, individual courses will be offered across an array of subjects including: Personal Development, Neohumanist Education, Yoga and Intuition Science, Music, Bio-Psychology, Microvita, PROUT Economics, Leadership Training, Sustainable Communities, Women's Studies, and Integrated Medicine. Courses successfully completed will earn credits at Ananda Marga Gurukula that may, if aligned to future study programs, be applied towards a diploma or degree once these become available.

NHEV-101 Whispering to Wild Horses - EVS Romania 2014

The first course being offered at NH College is in conjunction with the Association of Neohumanist Education of Romania (AEN). The course is being taught by Didi Ananda Devapriya and is underway with 12 students. This course is designed to help volunteers assisting in Neohumanist Education projects to learn to design, implement and evaluate non-formal educational projects that utilize the holistic approach and reflect the values of the Neohumanist Education system. Volunteers will participate in seminars and do online coursework designed to help them to reflect and improve upon the practical experiences they are having directly with the children they are working with. It is a course which is therefore centered around the practical, hands-on experience of volunteering in a NHE program. Volunteers who complete the coursework will be awarded a certificate from the Association of Neohumanist Education of Romania (AEN) for "Neohumanist Holistic Education Assistant" as well as a recommendation letter that summarizes the specific accomplishments and competencies gained in Neohumanist Education.



Global Association of Neohumanist Educators

The Global Association of Neohumanist Educators (GANE)

GANE is a membership association for the professional development of Neohumanist educators worldwide, strengthening our global network of schools and teachers and coordinating and promoting Neohumanist Education on the regional and international level. All NHE educators and projects are encouraged to join.

To join or to view a directory of member institutions, please visit: gane-educators.org

Benefits to Members

Schools, Institutes, Projects and Individuals

- Professional Development
- Collaboration and Networking
- Global Network newsletter twice a year
- Participation in Discussion Forums
- Public Directory for Schools, Institutes and Projects
- Members Only Directory for Individuals
- NHE Training Opportunities
- Continuing Education
- Webinars
- Regional and Global Conferences
- Scholarships for Conferences and Courses
- Access to Resources
- Publications Exchange



Haiti, see article page 24

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