

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
Future Education: Philosophical Perspectives & Programs
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ABSTRACTS

**Neohumanist Education for a Sustainable Society
Dr. Sid Jordan (Prama Institute, Asheville, USA)**

Neohumanist education supports an integral education at the physical, psychic and spiritual levels that is both knowledge and experience based. It is a “subjective approach to an objective adjustment” that engenders a love of all of creation manifest as the proper utilization of all of our inner and outer resources beyond geo-sentiments and groupism. Embracing this continuum of inner and outer ecology supports the needed shift in consciousness from a “materialist” modern worldview to a “pragmatic universalist” postmodern perspective.

We must call on benevolent writers, artists and educators to use all available means to spread this new wave of Neohumanist love of all of creation in ever increasing circles to touch and awaken the conscience of the collective mind steering society towards coordinated cooperation. For philosopher, seer & sage Shri P. R. Sarkar “awakened conscience” is consummated in the discernment of what is best for the general welfare. Neohumanist and like-minded educators represent a vanguard of pioneers that are vibrating to the same anthem of “One Universal Mind”. It is the development of this new wave of consciousness in future education that promises a just and sustainable future for all.

**On Future Education
Dr. Dada Shambhushivananda**

Our materialist culture has reduced education to a commodity, which can now be bought and sold in the market place. The more expensive the stores (schools or universities) and more fancy the package, the greater the demand & price of the ‘packaged education’. This brings us back to the eternal question of: What education is for? Why do we have schools, colleges and universities? And why it is so essential to reflect on the meaningfulness & limitations of our educational systems? How is our society changing and how must our educational systems reflect or react to the evolution of nation-states & human society, in general?

These questions are constantly being addressed by one and all – educationists, policy makers, entrepreneurs, social-scientists, activists and the like.

In my opinion, we cannot lose sight of three essential dimensions of education:

1. First, Education must serve us to ensure the sustainability of the human race and future generations. It is an existential issue. That is why, the focus on preserving the flora and fauna and proper harnessing of the natural wealth of the planet is the first priority of the future approach to education. The current paradigms and educational approaches will fail to achieve this objective unless and until we adopt a new paradigm of sustainability. This requires much dialogue and debate. We are at the crossroads. We must re-evaluate our life styles and decide what is acceptable and what is not. Clashes and cohesions are inevitable in this discussion. Yet, we must boldly face the global reality of ‘peak-of-everything’ scenarios.
2. Second, we must realize that human beings are more mental than physical and they are not satisfied with only food, shelter and minimum requirements. Humans embody a complex galaxy of emotions and propensities that

make them the most intriguing creature on the planet. They also create a society, which is equally complex and colorful. To understand individual and collective needs of humans is a herculean task and social scientists remain busy unraveling the mysteries of evolving systems. Education, therefore, needs to keep pace with the challenges of human and societal growth. The fundamental objective underlying this endeavor remains the peace, prosperity & fulfillment of all beings on this planet earth. The dualities of love & hate; war & peace; conflicts & resolutions; ugliness & beauty; affluence & poverty-these constantly remind of the great challenge of education (faculties of knowledge or mental training) to abridge the gaps of disparities while retaining the diversities of complex systems.

3. Third, education like all faculties of knowledge is present in humans for a greater purpose. TO KNOW THYSELF. TO MANIFEST THE PERFECTION THAT IS ALREADY WITH IN US. KNOWING ONESELF IS THE REAL KNOWLEDGE. Hence, Knowledge that is devoid of the spiritual dimension will always be incomplete and fall short of its true purpose. Educational systems of the future must therefore cater to the balanced pursuit of “Inner & Outer Ecological Harmony”.

I hope that this conference/seminar can begin to address these challenges in future education.

Practical Alternative Solutions for Building Sustainable Habitats

Khun Krisada Kampanatsanyakorn

President, Thai Gypsum & Chairman Cellennium (Thailand)

The educational challenge today is to envision, design and build a new and more proper approach to human habitat development in cooperation and in synergy with the natural environment.

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

Some innovative technologies being applied to the Cellennium (Thailand) ‘s demonstration projects are:

Vanadium redox- flow electrical storage and power conversion system; Energy-saving design and simulation process for house construction; Prefabricated, insulated, panelized and dry construction; Solar PV systems; Solar thermal systems; Thermal storage; Biomass energy conversion – biogas, wood-gas, charcoal to electricity; Vertical algae bioreactor for sequestering carbon and maximizing biomass production; Aerobic, microbial water purification system.

The houses in the Eco Villages are designed for energy efficiency and comfort. Solutions have been created to remedy normal practices that result in poorly insulated building shells and excess electricity usage for domestic cooling, lighting & appliances and hot water heating. There is maximum use of energy-saving architectural features, the right choice of materials for insulating the building shell, and the prudent integration of renewable energy and energy storage technologies.

Associated costs and benefits: Sustainability can be reached by making the use of renewable energies an everyday reality and by adhering to the principles of complete recycling of all waste streams - solid, liquid and gas. The

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

FUTURE EDUCATION – INNER AND OUTER ECOLOGY

Dr, Marta Antunes, MD

Nowadays the success of one's education has more to do with the number of degrees one collects (bachelor, master, PhD, etc.), with the number of zeros in one's bank account, with the fame of the companies one worked for...and so on. But easily we understand that this is nothing but a very superficial success.

In the words of the sages "Real education is that which leads to liberation." (Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiiji) or "Education is the manifestation of perfection that is already in man (Swami Vivekananda). In the realm of macro-psychic conotation, human existence has three levels: physical, intellectual and spiritual. Liberation of permanent nature is only possible on the spiritual level; on the other two levels liberation is of temporary nature since liberation of permanent nature is not possible due to different bondages. Taking these in consideration we understand that proper education is that which deals with spirituality, is that which brings an inner balance that shines out in the world providing adequate help for those who need.

A solid system of education is able to spot the hidden talent of the individual, is able to train it to perfection and, last but not least, enables the individual to serve the universe through the utilization of the perfected talent. Real education begins inwards and culminates in the betterment of society.

So, a truly successful educated individual is Happy and has the capacity to make others Happy. A truly successful individual is balanced in its own self (inner ecology) and creates resources for others to achieve this same balance (outer ecology). Utilizing the science of bio-psychology, we can now understand that the prevention of physical and psychic disorders must be achieved through a sentient life style and that must be nurtured through our educational system. Furthermore, the knowledge which cultures ego is a liability. Hence, education must culture the spirit of service and social upliftment (inner ecology) and invite abundance through total alignment with nature (outer ecology).

Futures of Education in a Globalising World: Strategic Dimensions in Educational Renewal

Dr. Marcus Bussey

Speed and compression are defining elements of the global educational context in which market forces and national interest define the logic and focus of institutional education. The future will certainly see intensification in these areas but there are emergent trends that indicate that new issues are entering the educational arena. Strategic leadership in education can benefit from early proactive planning in terms of the following five emergent trends. Firstly, there is the role of technology in shaping a new educational space in which students are no longer dependent on physical institutions to supply education in a global market place. Secondly, there is a growing desire for a sustainability focused education to respond to the context of a world on the brink of environmental decline. Thirdly, education is becoming a tool for distributive justice where learning enables the entrepreneurial spirit rather than replicating existing social conditioning. Fourthly, there is a need for resilience in education to foster cultural creativity in response to the challenges of the 21st century. Finally, education in a global age can engage with deep civilisational stories in a critically conscious way that allows for questions of identity and spirituality to be explored as a balance to the secularism which has fostered the materialist and consumerist mindset that is damaging our ecological and cultural fabric worldwide.

These five trends focuses educational rethinking around the three key areas of time, identity and the local-global interface. This talk will suggest a constructive rethinking of these issues in which educational systems might be rescued from the industrial model of learning that we have out grown. Cultural renewal requires imagination, commitment and trust so that we can collectively co-create an education system worthy of human possibility in the 21st Century.

Renovating the architecture of the universe

Henk de Weijer

At present three main ontological models get more or less wide support, two forms of monism and dualism. Monism knows two extremes, materialism and idealism. Materialism considers energy to be the only essential element, with consciousness as an emerging property of energy. Energy has qualities like temperature, which is the result of bouncing atoms and molecules. Idealism considers consciousness to be the only fundamental element of the universe. Mystics share this view. Both Indian and Western dualism do not completely reject a potential relation between Energy and Consciousness -or body and mind-but the form of such relation has not yet been deeply investigated. But a fourth option is possible. It is the idea that consciousness is not subordinate to energy but, on the contrary, is its equivalent and in all occurring situations and forms is closely linked with it. The combined expression of both cannot be more than one hundred percent. If consciousness can be expressed for one hundred percent, the expression of energy must be zero and vice versa. Intermediate values are not only possible, but probably will fill up the majority of occurrences.

Mirror symmetry between particles and antiparticles exists; each particle has its antiparticle. If particles and antiparticles meet, annihilation of both follows. As long as such a collision does not occur, particles expose their properties under different conditions; properties like temperature, weight, pressure, luminance and so many more. Particles of energy are a combination of one hundred percent expressed energy and consequently, zero percent consciousness. If particles and antiparticles exist, also complementary particles must exist; particles with a high level of expressed consciousness and a very low amount of consciousness. If these conscious particles meet with energy particles, not annihilation will follow, but its opposite, cooperation. Just like energy, also consciousness has qualities, like observational quality or awareness, knowledge and creativity, but also happiness and joy. Particles of consciousness will expose those qualities, so we can say they are intelligent and creative. Shri P.R. Sarkar gave a name to such creative, intelligent particles: microvita.

At lower temperatures intelligence rules less intelligence and blind forces, which lack consciousness or intelligence, in other words: are forms of energy. At some point in the course of evolution these microvita must start exerting their influence. If they have such influence indeed, there is a need to start investigating them. If they join atoms, molecules, viruses, cells, tissues, organs, organisms and mind, we will ask: what is their basic and specific structure? Not only that, if in the universe a polarity between consciousness and energy exists, what is the influence of both poles on microvita? Different denominations of microvita must exist, negative microvita that catalyze towards matter and materialism, and positive microvita that catalyze towards an increase of consciousness and its intelligence, creativity and observational quality.

This new ontological approach will be the basis for a new paradigm. Evolution, physics, cosmology, biology in general and microbiology in particular, medicine, evolution, cognitive science and philosophy will find new doors to their objects of research. Science will get a new field: the science of microvita. If this approach will be accepted as a field of research, it will have a deep influence on all levels of applied sciences, art, education and social care. It is even not impossible that the age-old gap between physics and metaphysics, between science and spirituality will be bridged.
Henk de Weijer International Seminar on Future Education: Philosophical Perspectives

Dr. Andal Dharani , Director- NERI, Sydney, Australia

Training teachers for the Schools of the Future

A well-trained teacher is a confident teacher. Various skills like classroom management, and tailoring the lessons to achieve the best knowledge transfer have to be imparted to the future teachers. The work of great thinkers and researchers involved in teaching and education have to be utilised. Skinner's positive reinforcement, and stimulus-response theories, Robert Glaser's 'instructional design', Robert Gagne's the 'different levels of learning' and Blooms

taxonomy have changed teaching methods all over the world. An effort is also made to correlate the different Kosas with different levels of learning. Serendipity, accidental discoveries are achieved due to the intuition from the higher kosas.

Bi Ma' Anden (Sweden) Cosmo-holistic Education

Cosmo-holistic Education embraces a complete and inclusive life approach; it addresses the conscious life that out of the very nature of Cosmos is a dormant potential within every human being. Cosmo-holism is a natural way of describing, living, expanding and sharing a Cosmic Conscious life approach.

By our very existence, we human beings cannot leave or deny the Cosmos in which we all by the very nature of Cosmos itself are wholly included. We are inevitably in intimate relationship with all and everything within the Cosmos. Even if we do not consider this in our day-to-day life, our day-to-day life is proceeding within the Cosmos. What is our true relationship to all and everything we are a part of, by living on Earth in the Cosmic Universe? Taking these reflections into sincere consideration in education, politics, enterprising and in day-to-day life - continuously - would most likely mould our lives as humanity very different than today. To the extent that this conscious reflection is not awake, we are sleeping. It has to awake if we want a consciously reflecting and co-creative humankind.

Rabindranath Tagore on Practice Based Knowledge: Journey in to the Past, Present and Future-ABSTRACT Dr. Asha Mukherjee

Tagore a well known writer, painter, composer a Nobel prize winner in literature for his famous work Gitanjali in 1913 is also well known for his experiment in education at his ashram Santiniketan which is now a central university called Visva-Bharati. In this presentation, I would concentrate on the philosophical foundations of Tagore's education program and show how he works out, remaining within his own advaitic framework, Sriniketan program which is an integral part of education- 'practice based knowledge'. Further, it can and has been helping us in over coming many of the problems we face world over and can help in future planning of education. If we look at his distinction between society and state which he tried to draw in his various writings, we notice that he very carefully tried to balance between the two. Society and social concern for him are of utmost and prime importance but state concern many times lead to 'greed'. He distinguished between society and state in Indian context. Society is based on cooperation and the spirit of reconciliation between different opposing forces to form a harmonious whole. Where as state, on the other hand, is expression of greed and aggression and lust for power. Two conditions, delineated for social institutions are: to regulate our passion and appetites for the harmonious development of Man and to help him to cultivate disinterested love for fellow-creatures and this can be done only through education. Therefore, whole life he tried to workout a model where this is possible through various extension programs based on creativity.

Professor, Department of Philosophy and Religion
And Director, Women's Studies Centre, Visva-Bharati

Neohumanist Education – Introduction of its Philosophy, Principles and Practices Avadhutika Ananda Rama

Neohumanist Education has been designed for the purpose of newly addressing the aim and objectives of education by Indian philosopher and social thinker Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar. He highlighted the educational content with his definition of the ever-new human being or neohumanist, who recognizes the devotional heart as the highest treasure and source of inspiration for all worldly actions.

The philosophical foundations for Neohumanist Education we find in all the writings of Shrii P. R. Sarkar. This includes a clear concept of ontology or the blissful Supreme Consciousness as the essence and goal of life, metaphysics, ethics, and inner and outer knowledge. His unique additions to these philosophical building blocks of education are his expanded idea of psychology or bio-psychology and practices of astaunga yoga. With his book Liberation of Intellect – Neohumanism, he further more included a sweet blending touch: Neohumanism as the ‘practice of love for all, including the animate and non-animate environment.’

These firm philosophical foundations supply the perennial inspiration for the principles and practices of a holistic approach of personal development of the child, a life-long learning process on the physical, mental and spiritual level. The moral principles (Yama and Niyama) are infused in all subjects. They help building the personal and social harmony which is the character-building and self-mastery, the backbone of the education. The science subjects take the place and spirit of ways to serve the world in a better way.

Through the lens of philosophy and principles we look at the learner as a universal being with great potential that needs to be awakened and guided to full expression. The teacher plays a central role model for the deep learning process of Neohumanist Education. It is the teacher who brings the ideals alive in her or his interaction with the students, the staff, the parents and the greater school community. The teacher is a continuous learner and practitioner of the core values of Neohumanist Education.

With the help of the philosophy and principles the teachers design the curricula in every locality considering the social and cultural needs of the community and environment. The methodology is flexible keeping in mind to awaken the thirst for knowledge, develop concentration and how to avoid distractions and any dogmatic influences. The teacher as a Neohumanist is entrusted with great scope in the methodology to use all creative means such as stories, games, the arts and crafts, music, drama and technology to have the children learn on the current of joy and not under pressure or fear. It is imperative for teachers to have a good salary so that their minds are free from economic hardships and they can carry out their work with innovations and great love for their profession. Neohumanist Education is practiced in over 1000 schools from kindergarten to colleges in over 50 countries. “Education which leads to the acquisition of knowledge plus morality makes for a peaceful society.” – P.R. Sarkar

Learning the Art of Wholeness: Challenges for Education and Human Development Dr. Anant Kumar Giri Madras Institute of Development Studies

Our educational systems are in a crisis now. This is evident in all levels of education- from the primary to the higher. A major part of the problem lies in our education lacking a soul dimension and striving for realization of wholeness as pedagogical methods lack a relation of love, mutuality, care among the partners and fellow travelers and educational objectives lacking the goal of integral development of individuals and societies. Our conventional educational systems reflect the fragmentation of modern subjectivity and society and it is mainly confined to rudimentary aspects of skill-training and mental education and it does not touch all the dimensions of life and society.

Education for wholeness nonetheless has been a yearning of humanity from its very dawn. The Greek root for education means to evolve and this does embody a process of evolutionary realization of wholeness. Education for wholeness is a perpetual journey; it is not a linear one but nonetheless despite complex turns and cycles and circles of learning it does embody certain learning of insights which is preserved as evolutionary knowledge and wisdom. Education for wholeness is not a holistic education in a literal, conventional, superficial, apriori, and determined sense as it realizes that wholeness is a journey of self and social transformation—it is a perennial journey from fullness to a different fullness realizing on the way the integral emptiness. Education for wholeness realizes that wholes to be realized are made of up many holes but these holes are neither dark nights of the soul nor dark spaces but spaces of energy and light. These holes and different fragments of life do embody an integral yearning for connectedness and being part of a garland of togetherness, a symphony of wholeness. Education for wholeness

strives to go beyond varieties of dualisms of life and society such as individual and society, body and mind, mind and soul, technical and artistic, utilitarian and spiritual and, head and heart.

Education as learning the art of wholeness also interrogates the available understanding and organization of education as a top-down activity. It challenges us to realize that education is first of all an activity of learning in which all the engaged participants are learners. Education is an activity and process of learning and co-learning in which the so-called students and teachers are first of all learners and co-learners. This is at the core of Sri Aurobindo's vision of integral education as he says that nothing can be taught and the teacher is an aid in the process of learning. Similar attitude also permeates other initiatives in learning the art of wholeness presented in this study, for example, the Bifrost school in Denmark, where teachers are not called teachers.

The EcoVillage at Horseshoe Point

During the past ten years, the Horseshoe Point resort and country club property has established dynamic and uniquely successful development projects. To further advance its premier standing, and with the initiatives of Khun Chaikiri Srifuengfung, Horseshoe Point has recently taken a bold step in a project named the "EcoVillage": to design and build a new and more proper approach to human habitat development in cooperation and in synergy with the natural environment.

The EcoVillage is a pioneering example for property developers to create a truly sustainable way of life, while enhancing both the environment and our chosen lifestyles. It has already been shown time and time again that a normal business model, based only on financial profit and loss, falls short in securing for man a sustainable way of life. Man must rather, and more importantly, assume his own role as local problem solver and steward over his own biosphere. Such sustainability can only be reached by making the use of renewable energies an everyday reality and by adhering to the principles of complete recycling of all waste streams -solid, liquid and gas. Renewable energy technologies such as solar, biomass, and electricity storage, among others, are all tangibly applied in the Eco Village to generate excess supply of electricity for the occupants to sell back to the grid. Water in the Eco Village is captured, cleaned, used, treated and recycled. Fertilizer, char and carbon dioxide, for example, which are derived from solid waste generation and from biomass-to-power processes, are captured to enhance the further growth of new biomass. All of these, taken together, create powerful regenerative forces that can sustain and enhance our biosphere. This is the gist of the EcoVillage.

Houses in the Eco Village are designed for energy efficiency and comfort. The energy consumption of the average Thai household is high when compared to developed nations, due to poorly insulated building shells and non-optimized solutions for domestic cooling, lighting & appliances and hot water heating. The problem of high energy consumption has been remedied for the demonstration housing units within the EcoVillage through the optimization of design and building system. There is maximum use of energy-saving architectural features, the right choice of materials for insulating the building shell, and the prudent integration of renewable energy technologies. Compared to conventional Thai houses with the same interior space, the houses of the Eco Village consume only one-half of the electricity, but surprisingly have higher degree of thermal comfort for the occupants.