

REVIVE

a journal of the learning network

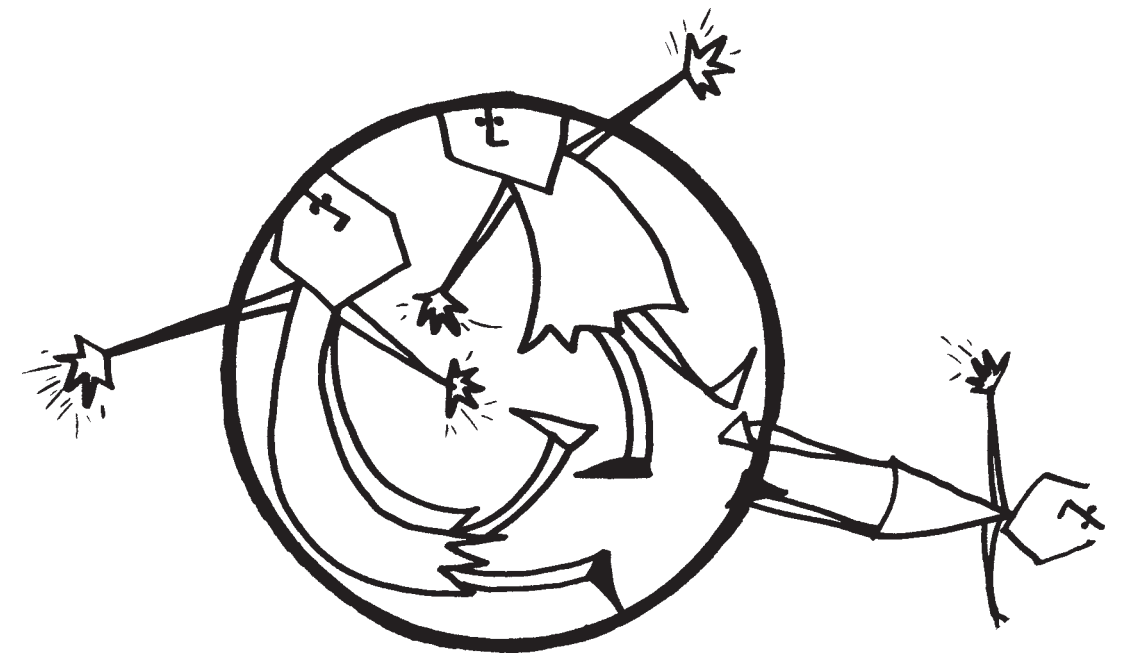
5TH LEARNING NETWORK CONFERENCE



20-22 JULY 2007

revivo

a journal of the learning network



July 20- 22, 2007
Deenabandhu Trust, Chamrajanagara, Karnataka

acknowledgements

cover design and illustrations on inside pages Niveditha Subramaniam
a kite, a paper boat, the moon . . . things big and small that children fill with dreams at play.

back cover poem *Our Dreams of the World* are the dreams of Annika, Cicely, Niamh, David, Mali, Jasmine, Natalie, Manasa, John, Halima, Rahul, Makiah, Kevin, Oscar, Kobe, Zach and Sam, children of the K-EI class in Montessori Children's House, Seattle, WA, USA. The children came up with this after a wonderful reading/discussion time on Martin Luther King Jr. and non-violence. Thanks to their class teacher Ms. Nicole.

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The Learning Network

The Learning Network explores various approaches towards holistic learning, offers opportunities to learn about new perspectives and strengthen existing efforts. It was conceived in Bangalore in January 2003 as a resource for interested groups, individuals, educators and parents seeking meaningful approaches to education.

Many thinkers of education and practitioners have long wondered about some issues on education:

- Can education be defined as learning for life and through life experiences to create a spirit of enquiry into human problems?
- How can education play a role in creating a peaceful society?
- What are the linkages between education and local communities?
- Can education become person and ecology-centred instead of just economy-centred?
- Can we enrich the experience of disadvantaged children in conventional schools?

Through its activities, the network hopes to provide a forum to come together, participate and search for answers to these and other pertinent questions.

This is a volunteer driven network and has several participating individuals and groups. The main activities of the network include an annual conference, workshops on special topics, topic-driven mini-conferences, newsletters and an annual conference magazine.

Happenings 2006 and 2007

4th Annual Conference (Jan 27-29, 2006, Ahmedabad)

The fourth annual conference for the Learning Network was organized at Ahmedabad from January 27-29, 2006. Over 100 participants from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Pondicherry, New Delhi, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan attended the conference. The keynote address was given by Shri Jyotibhai Desai, who was instrumental in developing a B.Ed course based on Nai Talim during the 1960s.

There were intense discussions and sharing between the participants on several topics like – mathematics education using simple materials, role of videotaping for teacher development, cognitive development of children from 0-5 years, environmental education in schools, developing low cost science experiment kits, project based learning, encouraging creative expression through craft and theatre, pedagogy of science teaching and home schooling. People participated in several workshops and practical sessions such as doing science experiments; creating bowls, hats etc out of newspapers! These sessions proved to be an exciting learning experience for everyone.

Summary of the conference sessions is available at <http://www.learningnet-india.org/lni/data/activities/conferences/>

Mathematics Workshop by Jodo Gyan (Feb 2006 – Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai)

In February 2006, Jodo Gyan conducted a series of 2-day workshops in three cities – Bangalore, Hyderabad and Chennai, with a total of 110 participants. The workshops used educational materials designed by Jodo Gyan based on latest mathematical research and their experiences of teaching learning processes, to demonstrate new ways of teaching mathematical concepts. Through interactive and hands-on activities using the materials developed by Jodo Gyan, participants learnt ways of explaining concepts related to Measurement, spatial sense and Geometry, Numbers & Number Operations, Place value, Algebra and Fractions. At Ahmedabad, participants also observed children of middle school using these materials during the workshop. The workshops in Bangalore, Chennai, and Hyderabad were bi-lingual and translation between English and the local language was provided.

Publications

Electronic versions of all publications are available at <http://www.learningnet-india.org/lni/data/publications/index.php>.

Revive - Annual Magazine

The fourth volume of “*Revive*” - the annual magazine was released at the conference in Ahmedabad. Revive was published by Goodbooks Teachers Centre with editing and layout support provided by Tulika Publishers. Revive continues to be an informative and useful resource containing articles contributed by Learning Network members, and profiles and contacts of member groups and individuals.

Revive is currently circulated to over 500 members. We have received very encouraging responses regarding the usefulness of the content, quality of articles, layout and ease of readability.

Chiguru Newsletters

Two issues of “*Chiguru*” the Learning Network newsletter (Sept 2006 and Mar 2007) were circulated to over 500 groups and individuals. We have been encouraged by everyone’s response to contribute articles to the newsletter and share experiences. *Chiguru* contained profiles of new network members, details of various network activities, announcements of events being organized, articles, discussions and opinions on current topics.

Virtual Resource – Learning Network Website

The website <http://www.learningnet-india.org> is a free online resource that provides information on events organized by the Learning Network, organizational profiles, articles, newsletters and various resources for learning available from groups and individuals in India. The content of the website is continuously updated with inputs from members. We need your contributions via articles, activities, news, reports, analyses, experiences, etc., to update the website with all relevant information. Please write to info@learningnet-india.org.

Learning Network Volunteer Team for 2006-2007 consists of Ravi Aluganti, Anju Anand, Anita Balasubramanian, Meenakshi Balasubramanian, Chandresh, Jayashree Janardhan, Reshma Madhusudan, Sriranjani Ranganathan and Swati Sircar.

5th Annual Conference - July 2007

The annual conference is an opportunity for educators, parents and teachers to come together for mutual learning once a year. It is an ideal ground for people who want to explore different aspects of education to meet with one another and get to know different approaches and perspectives. Each year, we host the conference in different geographical locations for better outreach, dissemination and to help uncover efforts all over India. Our experience has also shown that each region brings along with it, a unique local flavor to the conference. This year, Deenabandhu Trust has generously offered their venue and hospitality for the 2007 conference. We would like to express our gratitude to the staff, teachers and most importantly the children of Deenabandhu for the same.

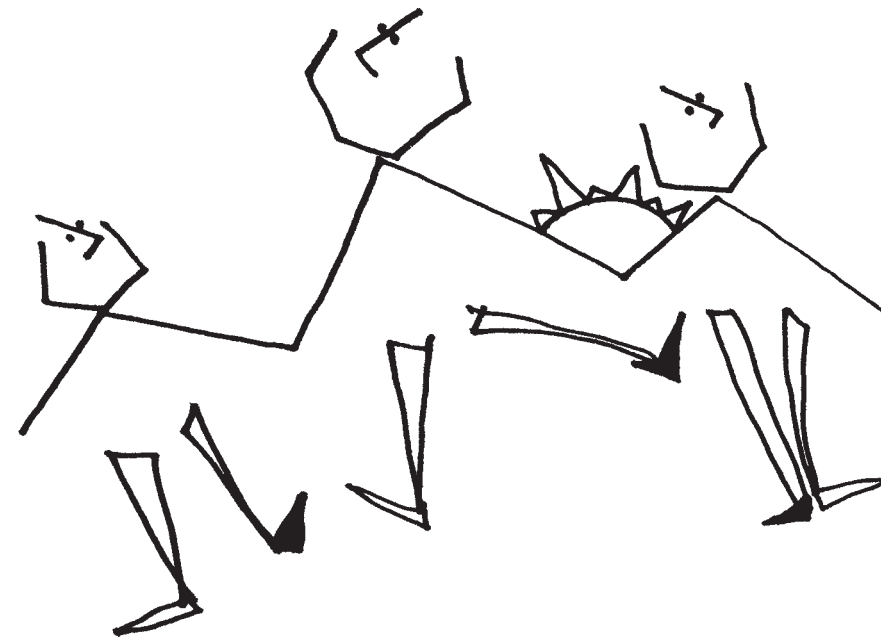
The Deenabandhu Trust

Deenabandhu is a voluntary organization committed to the welfare of orphaned, abandoned or destitute children of all castes, creed or religion. It was founded in 1992 at Chamarajanagar.

The main objective behind Deenabandhu is to provide a stress-free homely atmosphere that ensures each child develops to his or her full potential. They strive to provide basic education until 10th standard and equip them with life-oriented vocational training. Technical or college education is provided for those with aptitude. The education is imparted with the view of children playing their part in mainstream society with an emphasis on value based education. An exclusive home was founded for the girls in 2005.

Deenbandhu primary school was founded in 1998 to provide high quality free education for children of poor farmers. The central ideas behind the school, are respect for individual child's personality and aptitude and parental and community involvement in their education. There is also an educational research centre to provide teacher support activities for government primary school teachers. Some government schools are adopted and their teachers are trained at workshops to use locally available materials as teaching aids. Resource persons also provide sustained support to the teachers at the classroom level.

In addition to these above education initiatives Deenbandhu is also involved in rural development programs through self help groups. Workshops are conducted in a cluster of villages and their agricultural and economic needs are addressed. The workshops include a variety of topics including budgeting, bookkeeping, dealing with banks, health and sanitation and effective farming techniques.



articles

What an institution lives by

by S. S. Lakshmi and N. Sreekumar

This is a tribute to Smt. Janaki Iyer, the spirit behind Ananda Bharathi. She passed away in September 2006. The title of this article is inspired by the title of a short story by Leo Tolstoy "What men live by". S. S. Lakshmi is an engineering graduate working in software industry and has been associated with Ananda Bharathi since 1992. N. Sreekumar is a Post Graduate in Electrical Engineering. He currently works for Prayas, a voluntary organisation engaged in Policy Analysis and Advocacy in the Energy sector. He has been associated with Ananda Bharathi since 1990 and is the Treasurer. They can be contacted by writing to srissl@sol.net.in

Friends of the learning network would know about Ananda Bharathi. The school was founded in 1989 in a veranda of the Y.M.C.A, Tarnaka, Secunderabad. The aim was to reach out to girls aged 5 to 15 years who had been denied the access to schooling; teach them the three R's; give them knowledge of health, nutrition and vocational skills; instil awareness of their rights, and sensitise them to care for their environment in a holistic way. After a door-to-door survey of the hutments in and around Tarnaka, the prospective girl students were identified and a beginning was made with six girls. The effort grew and over the years the school has an average strength of 40 girl children and a team of 10 teachers.

It was Janaki Iyer and Bhagyalakshmi who started Ananda Bharathi in 1989. Smt Iyer (Janaki Akka for the school and Ja to most friends), the senior teacher and the person who led this effort, passed away in September 2006.

It is over six months since Ja passed away. The institution continues on, taking inspiration from the path she has set. As we look back, many thoughts come to the mind on what an institution lives by.

Spirit of ownership

When we think of Ja, the qualities that come to the mind are ownership of the institution with all its strengths and weaknesses. She had a very high capacity to absorb surprises

and disappointments that this kind of social intervention brings to the fore. The capability to maintain a positive outlook coupled with an earnestness to empathise (and not sympathise) with the underprivileged, was her hallmark.

Anything that she came across was instantly considered from the perspective of the school. She could create a similar urge in so many of us. Thus Ja introduced many of us to the world of children who had never boarded a city bus, never seen a train and never seen a post office. She never made us feel as though the school belonged to her and she should have the last word on everything.

She actively promoted a sense of **collective ownership**. She was not aggressive nor did she dominate discussions. She was a democrat to the core and would consult every one before taking any major decision. It is a credit to Ja's openness that we were able to discuss even the issue of succession with her, as early as 2003.

Bringing people together

Ja was an extraordinary personality, who, to us remained an accessible, ordinary person. Depth of knowledge in the field of education and her ever ready attitude to learn brought her close to her colleagues and friends – and they all shared a sense of affection and regard for her. She talked and wrote extensively in the area of education, including a text book on Indian History and numerous articles.

Ja's relationship with people went beyond the needs of daily work; it included understanding of personalities, an ease of interaction that would potentially bring out the best in each. Her breadth of interests, (Kural to Gita to education theory to history to music to literature to politics) modesty and humility made it easy for all to interact with her. Her association with each one was unique and on that person's plane. Even when she was past 70, she was young at heart and an excellent listener.

What an institution needs

Voluntary work often faces this dilemma – is it to be structured towards increasing productivity or is it to be flexible towards promoting creativity? Ja shared this dilemma too and, with support from friends, she was able to evolve systems and framework where essential. She promoted the idea of having a very high value for people's time and acknowledging every small help. She was very clear that the commitment of the school is first and foremost to the children, and not to donors, friends or teachers. This clarity of thought helped us resolve many questions.

What does an institution need most? Money? Resources? Good will? Yes, all these – however the most important seems to be a well-knit team with common values, sharing a common concern. This takes years to build and continuous efforts to sustain. Ja and her family made *NEEDA* (name of their house which in Telugu means 'shade') an open home where we all would naturally go. Not just to discuss school issues or school accounts. Reading a new book, buying a new toy, seeing a new film, a new song, new poem or story, arrival of a new friend, birthdays, anniversaries, frustrations, heart burns ... for many of us, no event was complete until shared at *NEEDA*. Thus many people met many people many times at her home, talked and argued on many issues.

In September, we had sent out a special newsletter with the information that Ja is no more. In our characteristic spirit of optimism, we had concluded it with these words: *"Today when we write to you, we are aware of the great responsibility in continuing this effort that Janaki Akka has started. On 18th September at her home NEEDA, most of our students-old and new- along with their parents and so many friends from different walks of life, came to bid her farewell. We draw our confidence from the support network that she has helped in building; we draw our inspiration from our girls and their families who have shown that they value the space that Ananda Bharathi gives them. We are also aware that there are many more in the neighbourhood looking at us with hope. Keeping this commitment is the best tribute that we can*

pay to Janaki Akka'.

In the past six months, we have faced many questions from people. Is the school still there? Who is running the school? Are you able to manage? What are the problems? How long will you be able run the school?

It is credit to Ja that Ananda Bharathi, a school which many called as Janaki's school, continues to function quite well. Two key teachers have taken up all day to day operations of the school. All teachers continue with the same sense of commitment. Committee members and friends share the activities outside the class room – like correspondence, account keeping, planning etc. In fact, students, teachers and well-wishers may not even sense any major difference in the way Ananda Bharathi is operating. In the short term, there seem to be no problems for the institution.

What we miss is someone who has an untiring, enthusiastic sense of institutional ownership. Someone who puts the school interests first and keeps thinking of the school all the time, on issues of today or years to come. We miss someone who was the central node of communication, bridging communication gaps and sorting out differences.

We remember Ja always telling us that all of this was possible because of 'us' and not 'me'! There is a message here for all of 'us'. Portraying Ja as the focal point and conferring on her mere idolatry will only distance her further from us. We should understand how to carry on with the same untiring spirit; we need to acknowledge within ourselves the power of a group that could be drawn together to sustain such an effort started by an ordinary person with an extraordinary personality.

We understand that as a team, we at Ananda Bharathi should strive to keep the same spirit alive. The fact that we had it in us to be part of such a team would surely inspire all such efforts towards finding the continuity of purpose.

If we value independence, if we are disturbed by the growing conformity of knowledge, of values, of attitudes, which our present system induces, then we may wish to set up conditions of learning which make for uniqueness, for self-direction, and for self-initiated learning. — Carl Rogers

Generation Next walks the talk in instant action

by Usha Saxena and Gaurav Gogoi

This article is written by Usha Saxena and Gaurav Gogoi, of the Adolescent Intervention Team at Pravah, a Delhi based organization that works with adolescents and youth in schools and colleges, facilitating the journey from self awareness to social awareness, social responsibility and citizenship action. They can be contacted at mail@pravah.org

During the course of our interactions with school students, we often faced the question of how to make citizenship action ‘cool’ for teenagers - young people who tend to reject, rebel against or appear least concerned about anything other than their own peer group interests!

All our interventions, at Pravah, focus on a young person’s journey from self-awareness to knowing others – their friends, family members, neighbours, fellow citizens and the world. We also believe that this self-awareness and social consciousness means little, if new sensibilities are not translated into some kind of positive action that benefits the larger community, the outcome we call ‘citizenship action’.

In one of our intervention efforts, we focused on environmental awareness among teenagers. We describe here two groups of students, from two very different schools – both separately working on the same campaign – ‘Trees for Delhi’. These students differ from each other in many ways – in terms of socio-economic background, geographical origin, etc. Yet they are all the same in one way - they are all teenagers!

One group was from the Modern School, Vasant Vihar, and the other from the Kerala Education Society School, Central Delhi.

Citizenship Action: Environmental Awareness

The group from Modern School, Vasant Vihar, consisted of members of their Heritage Club. The students described their heritage walks to historical monuments, the cultural

programs to showcase national heritage etc. When asked if they had perhaps missed out one aspect of heritage, the students were quite confused. They were asked to observe their immediate surroundings and identify the oldest living thing they saw. There were many wise-cracks about ancient teachers and even the Principal or Mr. S in the canteen! It was after many guesses that they identified trees as their heritage as well! They were also very surprised when they were told that their school building was located on one of the world’s oldest mountain ranges – the Aravallis!

In earlier workshops, we had observed that many of these students, coming from affluent homes, had little or no awareness of many of the social and economic ills that plague so many of our fellow human beings. They also seemed completely unaware of how their own lifestyle choices - their preference for MNC-branded goods, their ‘hanging-out’ at malls and multiplexes - adversely impacted the lives of so many.

The other group of students from Kerala School readily talked about their love for the scenic greenery of Kerala, their home state. They vehemently declared that Kerala would be nothing without its coconut trees, banana trees and jack-fruit trees. However, Kerala was seen as a brief, vacation stop-over at a beloved grand-parent’s house, and they felt that Kerala wasn’t modern enough. These youngsters, too, were quite in-tune with the concrete, flyover-rich scenery in Delhi! They identified this Delhi as the face of urban development. Their own aspirations were also directed towards driving a big car, enjoying the life in a thriving metropolis.

Our interventions with both groups of students focused on sawing through the thick layers of peer pressure, and adolescent insecurity about conforming or having to measure up to others. Like most of the school students we engage with, these young people initially showed a very cursory interest in the ‘big picture’ of social issues

and causes that form the basis of our interventions. However, as they learned to relax with themselves, their friends/classmates and teachers and Pravah facilitators, we began to see a glimmer of that dedication and concern that we so firmly believe exists in every young person, anywhere in the world! As the workshop progressed, our faith in the positive power of young people – that power to make a difference in this world – was strengthened hundredfold.

As a natural culmination of our intervention with adolescents, the students come together to put into action a project with the potential to bring about a happy change in society. Be it a street play on communal violence, or an awareness campaign on alcoholism or an action campaign on keeping their surroundings green and clean – these student-led action projects are all winners, all the way!

The Action Project: Modern School

The sight at the Priya Cinema complex in Vasant Vihar on the afternoon of the 20th of March was a heart-warming one. A group of 18 enthusiastic, bubbly and determined young people from Modern School, Vasant Vihar were dashing around, animatedly talking and urging people to sign up for a very necessary campaign – Trees For Delhi! The students were participating in a 2-day residential camp conducted by Pravah.

The busy Josip Broz Tito Marg up to Chirag Dilli Flyover is lined with tall, majestic old trees- those sentinels of all of South Delhi’s oxygen supply – with inexplicable yellow-painted numbers on them, 236, 237, 468, 469, 470 and so on. These numbers indicated the order in which these 3000 trees, on this 14 km stretch from Ambedkar Stadium to Ambedkar Nagar, would be cut down, to make way for a shiny, new road, for big, shiny new high capacity buses, shiny new cars and our own shiny Commonwealth Games! Over 25,000 trees have already been felled for various flyover and road-widening projects all over the city.

Students of Modern School stopped to enquire about these kindly, peaceful senior citizens of Delhi who are unceremoniously being dispatched to that Great Big Hole in the Ozone Layer in the Sky! These students along with Pravah facilitators, also visited the mall construction sites on the Ridge areas, interacted with workers there, getting to know them better and getting a peek into their hard lives. The students also took an eye-opening stroll through

the Aravalli Bio-diversity Park and the surrounding Ridge areas. They experienced how this peaceful, ancient mountain range has been ravaged by short-sighted city planners and so-called ‘land developers’.

The youngsters made presentations to clarify their understanding of their experiences through comic strips, posters and wrote poems and slogans about these experiences at the construction sites and the Ridge. They used these posters, comic strips and slogans at their campaign at Priya Cinema Complex.

The students’ campaign action at the Priya Cinema complex was aimed at raising people’s awareness about the stand of Delhi’s young citizens. The slogans read ‘Say NO to more malls!’, ‘NO malls over mountains! Save the Aravallis! Save our Natural Heritage!’ and so on. Approaching strangers and convincing them to sign up for the campaign seemed like a daunting task at first to these students. However, their enthusiasm and the strength of their convictions won over even the busiest, wariest passer-by at Priya complex that day! The young Modern-ites found allies and well-wishers in school and college students, busy shoppers, office-goers on a lunch break and elderly citizens relaxing near the fountain. The students collected over 200 signatures of support from other concerned citizens for an open letter to the Chief Minister of Delhi, protesting against the felling of the trees and the destruction of the Ridge in the name of urban development.

The Action Project : Kerala Education Society Senior Secondary School

23rd March 2007 was a special day for 60 students of Class IX of Kerala School. The students were on the last leg of a series of workshops with Pravah. On this Friday, the students and teachers took a break from their holidays to come to school for a special purpose. They were keen to make a difference on a particular social issue.

The day began with a performance by a theatre group ‘Mandala – The Magic Circle’. The play talked about the issues of peer pressure, self belief and assertiveness amongst adolescents in school. The ensuing discussion drew a parallel between the story of adolescents in the play and the current development projects in the city. They debated on the issue of urban development and reflected on the current trends. Delhi’s natural heritage and pride - its majestic, old trees and its once lavish Ridge forests -

are being sacrificed so that Delhi bears a resemblance to other international mega cities. The discussed how such trends may not be in the best interests of the city and its diverse inhabitants. One student cited the example of the Commonwealth Games which has led to severe displacement of people and deforestation. The students also took up other examples such as High Capacity Bus Project and the tunnel being made under Sunder Nagar Nursery which will result in felling of 5000 trees.

Empowered by this enlightening debate, the students conceptualized a public awareness campaign for the same day. After all, Generation Next believes in walking the talk and backing their words with instant action! The group of students and teachers from the school, along with Pravah facilitators, took a walk out of the school premises to a nearby traffic intersection where the next 30 minutes were pure magic. The students hollered slogans for trees at the top of their voices and displayed the charts that they had made about the importance of trees. The slogans were created on the spot by the students. 'We Want, We Want, More Trees!' and 'If You Want to Breathe Free, Then Save a Tree!' were heard. The students also collected signatures from passers-by on a petition to send to the Chief Minister of Delhi. The petition requests the Chief Minister to halt the felling of trees and instead focus on

alternatives like reducing the number of cars in Delhi.

Looking at the energy and passion of students at that moment, one could almost mistake the scene to be that of a carnival or a school farewell party. On that day the students of Kerala School surely showed that raising awareness on a social issue is absolutely important, fun and definitely 'kewl'.

Action forward

In keeping with our values at Pravah, students from both schools also made an 'action forward' plan. Many students from both schools have pledged to continue raising awareness on the issues amongst their family and friends at home. Some students have made a plan to write an open letter to the President of India asking him to intervene on behalf of Delhi's leafy denizens and ancient mountain range. Many students from Modern School have vowed never to visit the new malls coming up on the Southern Ridge and to continue the effort to save the natural heritage of their city. Some students of Kerala School have promised to continue their efforts to achieve the Delhi of their dreams – a clean, green Delhi. A glimmer of hope from these young citizens – a glimmer that we believe will turn into a glow that will light up the country and the future!

Effective Mangement of Schools

by Sundaram Subbharatnam

After working for seventeen years in the corporate sector, Sundaram Subbharatnam worked for five years in the Rishi Valley School as the Bursar and in several schools as Principal. He learnt Primary Mathematics under the (Late) P.K.Srinivasan and has conducted several workshops on teaching Mathematics at the Primary School. He is currently the Principal of Atul Vidyalaya, Atul, and can be reached at sundaram48@yahoo.com

Providing quality school education to all children is one of the most important challenges facing India today. Quality school education is a basic requirement for us to realize our true potential as a nation. A necessary condition for providing quality education is effective management of schools.

This article explores the issues involved in the effective management of a school. It is based on my experiences as a Principal of schools with managements that gave me the flexibility and freedom to try various experiments and my interactions with innumerable friends and well wishers interested in school level education. These discussions are only relevant for private schools: government schools and aided-schools have a completely different set of problems.

Objectives of a School

Clarity about vision and long term objectives is a primary requirement for effective management. In schools, this presents considerable difficulties. The objectives are deeply rooted in philosophy and have been the subject of debates in all societies at the least for the last 3000 years. There are no easy answers.

What is the objective of a school? Is it to ensure good results in the public examinations, which could be manipulated by adoption of unfair means? Is it the good in-school behaviour of students under the watchful eyes of the teachers or is it the inculcation of self discipline? Is

it to provide the kind of education which parents want, which may be based only on textbooks, homework and examinations? Is it to propagate a particular religious philosophy and practices? Or is it to ensure that a student becomes a contributing member of the society, several years after leaving school?

Schools normally choose an objective in keeping with their private agendas which may not be explicitly stated. Some may do it as a commercial venture, some as a public relations exercise, some as a part of their social responsibilities and some for making a difference to children. There can be a variety of reasons; many may even be educationally incorrect.

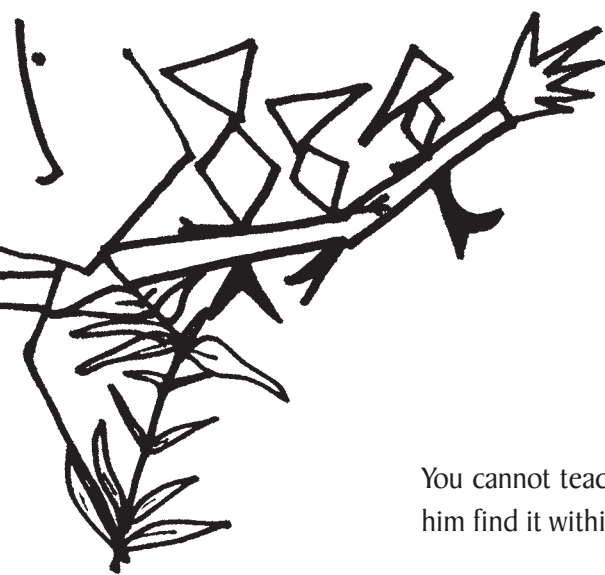
At Atul Vidyalaya, we have chosen as our objective, to provide students with the necessary competencies and character traits necessary for them to be effective and productive citizens of the knowledge economy.

Having defined the objectives, the school must focus on the teaching-learning processes to achieve these objectives.

Teaching-Learning (T-L) processes

At its core, the Teaching-Learning process is a personal experience & relationship between the teacher and the student. This relation is strongest in the earlier stages of school. It is also impacted by many family & socio-economic issues which are beyond the control of the school. Learning can be facilitated by good interpersonal relations. Human relations, however, are not definable by an input-output equation. Therefore, what works as an effective teaching-learning process with one student may not work with others. Educationally appropriate and efficient teaching-learning processes can be designed but not guaranteed to work for all.

Hence it would be difficult to define the objectives of a school in terms of the end results; whether in terms



You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him find it within himself. — Galileo Galilei

of academic performance or behaviour patterns. The best we could do is to define the objectives of a school in terms of the quality of teaching-learning processes themselves.

Effective T-L Processes

The effectiveness of the Teaching-Learning process depends on curriculum, pedagogy and feedback.

The curriculum, namely, what is to be taught and learnt, should be relevant to the objectives of the school and the needs of the students. It should cover knowledge, behaviour, values & character development of a student as all these together determine the effectiveness and empowerment of a future citizen.

Effective pedagogy must take into account the nature of the subject and the learner.

- Children go through several developmental stages as they progress through school. Piaget has shown that their ability to learn abstract concepts increases through several chronological steps. The pedagogy adopted at any class level should be in tune with the abilities of the child. For example, in lower classes, mathematical ideas have to be introduced with concrete materials and experiences that children can relate to. Symbolic manipulation should start only much later.

- Each subject in school is a unique blend of three kinds of knowledge - conceptual, procedural/ skill and factual. For example languages are mostly skill and factual (vocabulary) whereas Mathematics is mostly conceptual & skill. Concepts need understanding. Procedures and skills need practice. Facts need remembering. The pedagogy for teaching each subject effectively should be tailored to the nature of that subject.

The school has not only to evolve a curriculum relevant to the students but also to develop a pedagogy suited to implement the curriculum. The reality in schools is that pedagogy is neither adjusted for the developmental level of the child or to the nature of the subject. All subjects at all classes are basically taught with the same pedagogy-textbook, lecture, dictated notes, memorized content, homework and examinations.

Let us now look at some other issues which affect the implementation of effective teaching-learning processes in schools.

Factors impacting the T-L process

Society

The Caste System has been one of the strongest influences on the education of the majority in Indian society. While a small minority attained dizzying heights of intellectual and philosophical thinking, the majority was kept away from good education. This has encouraged a mindset among the educated elite that the vast majority cannot absorb and benefit from formal education. It has also prevented the majority of the population from thinking deeply about educational issues. Deeper thinking about educational issues has never permeated into the conscience of the society.

Public Examinations

Absence of deeper debates on education encourages thinking of education as an 'administrative' rather than 'developmental' process. It gives rise to assembly-line teaching-learning processes and a bureaucratic examination system. Examinations are seen as the only measure of assessment of learning and teaching-learning processes become straight-jacketed by the public examinations. They also become an excuse for providing sub-standard education.

Parents

While most parents want a good education for their children, they do not think deeply about educational issues. They are captive to the modes of thinking of the society of which they are a part. They are attracted to schools that have an excellent physical infrastructure or those that charge low fees but are indifferent to large class sizes. They do not see that low fees may mean a low quality education or that good infrastructure may not guarantee a good education.

School Structure

Most school managements are not committed to 'quality' education; they are not aware of the requirements of quality education. They apply management practices learnt from managing commercial enterprises to the school situation. They choose the easy way out – offer the parents the education they are familiar with and attract them with low fees. Parents are familiar with strict discipline, rote learning, plenty of homework and examinations. To sustain

the low fees, so attractive to the parents, they adopt several means to cut costs in a school.

- Reducing teacher salaries and/or hiring less competent teachers who are willing to work for lesser salaries.

- Increasing the class size. Many schools routinely have up to 60 students in a class. Class sizes of up to 100 are not unheard of. Compare that to 25 students in a classroom (in several countries internationally), or even the Education Department's suggestion of 40 to 45 students per classroom.

- Reducing the number of teachers required and increasing the teaching load of teachers. Most schools do not provide sufficient time for teachers to plan & prepare for their future classes.

- Neglecting teacher development.

- Cutting down all extra-curricular activities. Parents are also happy since many seem to think of any time spent in co-curricular activities as a 'waste of time'.

Traditionally schools have never had many 'staff' positions as opposed to 'line' positions which are teaching positions. In most schools the Principal is also expected to teach a substantial number of classes. Because of this, schools have a very flat hierarchy as compared to commercial enterprises. A Principal or the Vice Principal will have almost 30 to 40 teachers reporting to her. How is one to do an effective job under these circumstances?

Teaching as a profession

Considering all these factors, is it surprising that competent members of the society do not opt for teaching as a first choice? Teaching is seen as the last resort or a second job in the family. If we still find few teachers who voluntarily opt for a teaching career because they want to make a difference to children, we must thank our cultural heritage for this.

There is limited commitment on the part of most teachers to make a career. There is no motivation to professionally develop one self. Most teachers are unaware of the latest developments in their subject area and pedagogical research. Most do not seek membership of professional organisations.

The need to earn a living wage also gives rise to the tuition culture and blackmailing of students to join tuitions.

Tuitions are truly the revenge of the teachers on society. True learning is compromised in this situation.

Implications for management practices in schools

A school requires a Process Orientation rather than an Outcome Orientation.

The responsibilities of a Principal include daily management and planning for the future. The principal needs to be directly responsible for planning for the future.

But the daily management of a school cannot be handled like in a commercial enterprise, with periodic meetings, reports, etc., because teachers are busy with teaching and there are no staff positions for administrative tasks. The responsibilities of managing a school are enormous because of multiple stakeholders, varying expectations, the complexity of the work of a teacher and the number of teachers to monitor and support.

Hence the Principal has to find time so as not to get drowned in routine work. Prioritizing the work and delegation is critical.

Here are a few suggestions for effective daily management of schools.

- Purposeful daily walks around the school, continuous and informal interactions with teachers and students, scheduled class observations and so as to get continuous & informal feedback on what is happening at the ground level.

- An open door policy for parents to involve them fully in the education of their children.

- Building an atmosphere of trust and support so that feedback can really translate into improvement and not deteriorate into a spy network.

- Developing a strong staff development programmes for improving their competence and involving them in school management.

- Developing a good information system so that administrative, academic & developmental information is easily accessible to all for reference and quick action.

- Being a role-model and providing leadership, support & guidance on the ground on a daily basis.

'Efficient Management' Vs. Effective Teaching— Learning Processes

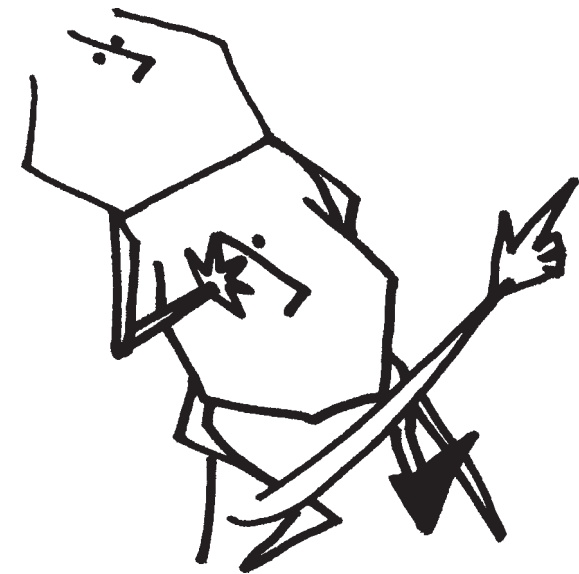
There is a difference between efficiency and effectiveness

in school management. The vision of a school must be focused on effective Teaching–Learning Processes. Educational Leadership is in designing efficient management systems to implement effective Teaching–Learning processes. If the vision is faulty, mere efficiency in management is of no use. Educational Leadership is in having a clear educational vision, even in the face of opposition from all other stakeholders in education. It is

in educating and carrying them along with your vision.

The recently conducted survey by Wipro in the well known schools in the metro cities brought out the point that the quality of education in these schools needed improvement. These schools were obviously managed efficiently. Schools need to think more about effective vision and philosophy rather than efficient management.

The object of education is to give man the unity of truth. Formerly, when life was simple, all the different elements of man were in complete harmony. But when there came the separation of the intellect from the spiritual and the physical, the school education put entire emphasis on intellect and the physical side of man. We devote our sole attention to giving children information, not knowing that by this emphasis we are accentuating a break between the intellectual, physical, and the spiritual life.— Rabindranath Tagore



Personalised Learning Programme

by Kavita, Nirmala, Shankar, Stella and Subash

This article describes the experiences of Isai Ambalam School of Auroville in designing and implementing a separate learning programme for each of its students based on individual learning needs and levels. The authors can be contacted by writing to isaiambalamschool@auroville.org.in

In its efforts to provide quality education to its rural students, Isai Ambalam School is using alternate educational methods for various aspects of their learning. These methods should be used in an integrated manner for achieving the educational objectives of the students for whom they are used.

These alternate educational methods were discovered in educators' efforts to fulfil particular learning needs of students. If such efforts are to succeed with all the students involved, then the ideal solution is that the teachers consider the learning level and needs of each of their students, design separate learning programme for each, persuade each of them to take total responsibility of implementing the programme and help each of them in all possible ways to fulfil that responsibility successfully. Isai Ambalam School is taking efforts in this direction for the last one year.

This article briefly describes these efforts in designing learning programmes at the preschool, primary and middle levels, the difficulties and the successes. It also highlights the efforts made to help students become responsible for their own learning and growth.

The learning programme for any child includes one or more of the following:

1. Essential knowledge content appropriate to that age and to that level.
2. Other knowledge or skill content based on student's aptitude or special talent.
3. Essential psychological life skills.
4. If possible, what further skills the student wants to acquire.

Table 1 provides three examples of the learning programme for one term (3 months), the experiences in designing and implementing them and the outcomes. We also share the impact on our students, teachers and the difficulties we faced in this process.

Difficulties

Stella: Designing activities for fine muscle development and for the sense of smell was challenging and difficult.

Shankar and Nirmala: Designing Science experiment was challenging due to difficulties in comprehending instructions. Also plans for English and Math reinforcement were difficult to design. Writing plans for developing one's special talents could be done only for 9 out of 25 students.

Kavitha: It was difficult to design plans for Math and Science, and activities to for critical and creative thinking skills. Planning of learning in Power Point also proved difficult. Math and science plans were difficult to implement because of the difficulty in English comprehension. Tamil poems also proved to be challenging.

Impact on the student

Stella: Bhargavi was told in the beginning of every week how many Tamil and English words she would be learning. At the end of the week she asked whether she has learnt all the words. Her learning programme was fully implemented and completed by three weeks earlier. The child learnt a lot. She did more creative activities and happy throughout the course of this.

Shankar and Nirmala: Prema did not understand in the beginning the idea of learning programme. Once she understood, she proceeded with it. She was able to implement 70% of the plan. She had not only completed learning the ABL cards for the competences but also the 4th standard government textbook. Apart from the 18 math competencies planned, she acquired 12 more

TABLE 1

Considerations	Preschool	Primary level	Middle school
Teachers	Stella	Shankar and Nirmala	Kavitha
Student	Bhargavi 3-4 yrs, kindergarten	Prema 9 yrs, 4 th grade	Shyamala 11½ yrs, 6 th grade.
Overall Learning Content for each level	8 kinds of development. Physical, Language, Sensory, Motor, Social, Cognitive, Fine muscle Movement and Emotional	700 competencies across Tamil (95), English (236), Math (207), Science (74) and Social Science (108). Problem-solving, organisation, leadership, critical & creative thinking, communication, collaboration curiosity.	Subject knowledge in Tamil, English, Math, Social Science, and Science. Problem-solving, organisation, leadership, critical & creative thinking, communication collaboration, curiosity.
1. Essential knowledge/skill content focus for the 3 month duration	Monthly Health check-up; Listening to 6 stories; Reading 80 Tamil and 100 English words; Singing 10 Tamil and 10 English songs; 25 activities for each of the 5 senses; 12 outdoor and 6 indoor games. Group games thrice a week; use of computer CDs for learning these themes; 6 types of creative activities using seeds, threads, colour powders, colour papers, leaves; Action songs expressing different emotions; emotionally expressing her experiences at home and school once a week	Activities planned for 6 competencies in Tamil, 20 in English, 18 in Maths, 7 in Science and 6 in Social Science.	12 Tamil poems, 6 Tamil lessons, 2 English poems, 6 English lessons, Grammar activities for 80 adjectives, 40 adverbs, 150 verbs, Science 4 lessons, Social Science 7 lessons and Maths 8 units.
2. Aptitude or talent of the student (<i>given in italics</i>)	<i>Quick comprehension in language, and opting for variety in her creative activities.</i> Plan: 50 additional English and Tamil words; simple spoken English; two or three additional creative activities; 4 new games.	<i>Dancing in rhythm, playing games and maintaining orderliness.</i> Plan: Creation of dance movement for a song, directing the end-of-term dance performance; bringing 4 new games and playing them; various classroom related responsibilities, taking leadership roles in classroom activities.	<i>Reading Stories; Reading news and explaining it to others; Drawing .</i> Plan: 120 Tamil Stories, 60 English stories; reading news during the gathering of all the students in the morning for one month; 20 pictures.
3. Essential Psychological Life Skills (<i>given in italics</i>)		<i>Organisation Skill, Decision-making Skill, Leadership Skill.</i> Plan: Maintenance of orderly stacking of all the 4 th level ABL cards; Drawing a list of which student to do which task for the week; Allotting, supervising the various tasks involved in No Waste No Waste project.	<i>Organisation skill; Ownership of learning.</i> Plan: Organising the display of her learning of the topic Force; Regular distribution of Reading Cards to all the students and collecting them back; Planning activities to overcome the difficulties in applying basic Math skills.
4. Further skills the student wants to acquire		Computer typing skills.	Teaching her sister English words; Learning Power Point in the computer. Plan: To teach her sister 500 English words; designing 20 Power Point Pictures.

competencies. She directed the dance movement and sequence for two songs for term-end performance. With respect to her responsibilities in class, all the 4th level ABL cards were in order and the place was maintained clean. In carrying out the No Waste No Waste project under her guidance and supervision all the students learnt the essentials of this topic and followed what they learnt throughout the school year.

Kavitha: Shyamala took ownership of learning by involving herself in planning activities for Tamil, English and Social Science. She was able to take up the total responsibility of implementing the plan and implemented 75% of the plan. She read 100 English stories, 40 more than in the plan. She was only able to draw 15 pictures, but she did it with a perfection which her art teacher appreciated. She was able to conduct her morning news reading activities without the help of the teachers. She was not only able to display her learning of the topic 'Force' but also was able to help others organise their display of their topics. With respect to her classroom responsibilities, all the 90 reading cards were distributed properly and all of them were put back safely without damage at the end of the term. She also taught her sister 350 English words.

Impact on the teacher

Stella: I felt joyous to plan for the child. I acquired the ability to plan in a total manner and to extend it to slow learning children also. I was able to complete the plan and felt confident and happy.

Shankar and Nirmala: We could comprehensively think about the students and saw them in a better light. We felt the importance of their timely acquisition of all the competencies. We could assess clearly the learning pace of each student. The planning has helped us look beyond the Action-Based-Learning cards.

Kavitha: I was able to design the programmes as thoroughly as possible and felt happy about it. I could

select the right resource books for implementing the plan. I acquired the ability to enable the students to write English sentences on their own.

Our Hope

Initially this solution of personalised learning programmes appeared mind-boggling. Hence we decided to attempt such a solution on an experimental basis for a few months with selected students through our "Education by Design" challenge, "You Too Can". This enabled them to design learning plans for one month to three months. When the children completed them successfully, they pursued this approach for several more months, and again they succeeded. Hence we were convinced of the possibilities for successfully attempting such a solution and started working on it from August onwards. At the end of the year there was a sense of confidence and accomplishment in us at having initiated such a process for rural students

The table above gives only a brief idea of this effort and its outcome. In the course of time we hope to include a lot more in these learning programmes, and to implement them with more perfection and success enabling the student to become an all-rounded personality.

Conclusion

Our efforts are just a beginning. In modern times, the efforts to address and fulfil the various needs, specific as well as general, of individuals in a personalized manner and in an easy, natural and perfect way have been resulting in tremendous successes in various fields, particularly in commercial and service sectors.

If such an approach is adopted in the educational field with an attitude of service, that effort can lead to a great success, make all the students accomplishers and give a deep spiritual self-satisfaction to all those who are involved. An inkling of experience of such a satisfaction has been felt by us. We invite more people to join in such efforts and sharing them.

Book Review: Education and the Significance of Life

by Clive Elwell

Clive Elwell home-educated his two children for 15 years. He has also taught a little at Krishnamurti related schools in India, and has helped create various websites around these matters. He can be reached at clive.elwell@gmail.com

I think everyone must realise that the world is in chaos; that it is ever deteriorating. The evidence is all around us, and it is clear that our children are going to face great challenges, great difficulties, wherever they live, whatever their situation in life. There is no escaping the problems, because they exist both in the physical world around us and in the psychological, emotional inner world in which we live also.

If we are at all sensitive, we naturally ask if anything can be done about the myriad problems of living, which seem to be without end. We are concerned for our children, and perhaps for all the children of the world. It seems clear that the sort of education we ourselves received did not equip us to meet the whole complexity of life, even though it may have ensured we got good jobs, some sort of financial security, and status, position in the world. And some people rightly ask if there is a better education for our children; an education that would help them live happily, live a life that is not full of conflict. An education that can encourage the right sort of intelligence in them; an intelligence that could bring about a different sort of world.

“Education is intimately related to the present world crisis, and the educator who sees the causes of this universal chaos should ask himself how to awaken intelligence in the student, thus helping the coming generation not to bring about further conflict and disaster. He must give all his thought, all his care and affection to the creation of right environment and to the development of understanding, so that when the child grows into maturity he will be capable of dealing intelligently with the human problems that confront him”

If we are honest with ourselves, we would have to

say that as parents, as teachers, and simply as human beings, we are confused. We really do not know what to do to meet the challenges that face us. And we try to escape from that confusion, by taking refuge in various beliefs and philosophies; in comforting ideas and ideals. Sometimes our confusion leads us to blindly accept the authority of others who promise us a way out of our difficulties. But do not all the various forms of escape only exacerbate the problems?

“Only right education, and not ideologies, leaders and economic revolutions, can provide a lasting solution for our problems and miseries”

This confusion, of course, manifests in the area of education as it does in politics, religion and economics; in all areas of life. In the conventional, government-led educational arena, new theories, new priorities, emerge with bewildering rapidity. New ideas of teaching throw disdain on the previous ideas, and then are discredited in their turn. Frequently new regulations are introduced to solve the perceived problems, but somehow they only succeed in creating new ones.

“I believe volumes have been written about educational ideals, yet we are in greater confusion than ever before. There is no method by which to educate a child to be integrated and free. As long as we are concerned with principles, ideals and methods, we are not helping the individual to be free from his own self-centred activity with all its fears and conflicts”

People form alternative schools, with the best of motives, and hopefully these alleviate the emotional problems of the children. And yet there are few, if any, who would claim that any school has found the answers; has created a system of education that produces truly different human beings. And all schools, no matter what their philosophy, are still dogged by people being unable to work together, by conflicting ideas. Even with the great dedication shown by some teachers there is often a lack of a real direction, a true understanding that can meet all

the challenges as they arise. And the teachers have their own problems, their own fears, what ever the label they operate under.

“To enclose a child in the framework of an ideal is to encourage him to conform, which breeds fear and produces in him a constant conflict between what he is and what he should be”

What is the answer to these problems? Is it beyond human beings' capacity to bring about a just, ordered society that gives the security we all need, and provides for everyone's physical necessities? Is it so impossible to raise and educate children so they grow up into peaceful, integrated adults, caring for the world and those around them?

Man has a great capacity in the technological world – amazingly so. So why is he apparently unable to educate his children properly, so they grow up whole, sane, intelligent, caring human beings? Is it because at heart he does not really care for the world, or for his children, but is only obsessed with his own material advancement? Is it because teachers are only narrow specialists? Is it because we, as parents and educators, are frightened to face the fact that WE are the real problem? Is it because we can only think in terms of comparing one theory of education with another, can only follow systems and methodologies? Is there something fundamentally wrong in relying on philosophies of education, with accepting an authority as a guide? It may be we can teach mathematics or a language according to a system, but can we educate the whole child in the same way?

So one is asking if there can be an education which is free of the dead weight of tradition and the authority of others, one that will meet the child as he is - directly. One feels that J Krishnamurti pointed the way towards such a possibility.

“If the individual is to grapple with life from moment to moment, if he is to face its intricacies, its miseries and sudden demands, he must be infinitely pliable and therefore free of theories and particular patterns of thought”.

The quotations are from Krishnamurti's book *“Education and the Significance of Life”*. Krishnamurti devoted over 60 years of his life into probing into the fundamental questions of living, founding schools in India and elsewhere (It is not the intention of this article to evaluate those schools). He had an utterly comprehensive perception of education and did not present a

methodology. Rather he pointed out that to follow a method, a system, will only make the mind mechanical and dull. Not being content with easy answers, his questions have the great power of somehow turning us around so we are pointing in the right direction. Or not wasting our time and energy by travelling in the wrong direction.

“Most parents and teachers are afraid of discontent because it is disturbing to all forms of security, and so they encourage the young to overcome it through safe jobs, inheritance, marriage and the consolation of religious dogmas. Elders, knowing only too well the many ways of blunting the mind and the heart, proceed to make the child as dull as they are by impressing upon him the authorities, traditions and beliefs which they themselves have accepted”

The problem of education, according to Krishnamurti, is the educators, both teachers and parents.

“The right kind of education begins with the educator, who must understand himself and be free from established patterns of thought; for what he is, that he imparts. If he has not been rightly educated, what can he teach except the same mechanical knowledge on which he himself has been brought up? The problem, therefore, is not the child, but the parent and the teacher; the problem is to educate the educator.

“What we think, what we do, what we say matters infinitely, because it creates the environment, and the environment either helps or hinders the child”

And for Krishnamurti the only real issue of education is the issue of self – understanding:

“The ignorant man is not the unlearned, but he who does not know himself, and the learned man is stupid when he relies on books, on knowledge and on authority to give him understanding. Understanding comes only through self-knowledge, which is awareness of one's total psychological process. Thus education, in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered”

“If those of us who love our children and see the urgency of this problem will set our minds and hearts to it, then, however few we may be, through right education and an intelligent home environment, we can help to bring about integrated human beings; but if, like so many others, we fill our hearts with the cunning things of the mind, then we shall continue to see our children destroyed in wars, in famines, and by their own psychological conflicts”

I cannot possibly do justice to this book in such a short article. But if a few people are encouraged to study

this book, then this introduction will have been eminently worth while. Every sentence is thought provoking, and can bring about a deep examination of the way one lives – although often there is great resistance in oneself to doing this. As in all his books and talks, Krishnamurti brings us face to face with ourselves, and the realisation that WE are the real problem.

Can we face the implications of the following words?

If parents love their children:

. . . they will not be nationalistic, they will not identify themselves with any country; for the worship of the State brings on war, which kills and maims their children.

. . . they will discover what is right relationship to property; for the possessive instinct has given property an enormous and false significance which is destroying the world.

. . . they will not belong to any organised religion; for dogma

and belief divide people into conflicting groups, creating antagonism.

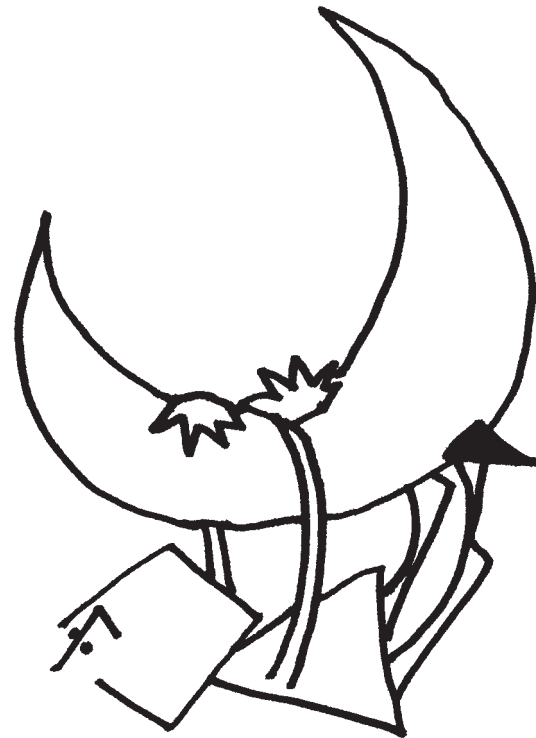
. . . they will do away with envy and strife, and will set about altering fundamentally the structure of present day society.

“For those who wish to listen, this book will have a value beyond words”. That was written many years ago in a newspaper review of Krishnamurti’s book *‘The First and Last Freedom’*. I feel it applies to all his books and none more so than *‘Education and the Significance of Life’*. But that listening must go deeper than the intellect alone - it must be a listening with the heart.

Conclusions have no place in education, or life, and perhaps enquiry is necessary to create anything new. If people wish to discuss questions arising from this article, I suggest we do so through the internet mailing list devoted to alternative education in India at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alt-ed-india/>

The book can be ordered on line from: http://www.kfionline.org/book_store.asp

Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever. — Mahatma Gandhi



Our experiences with Home Schooling

by Anuradha and Krishna

Anuradha and Krishna work with tribal children in Sittilingi in a Learning Centre called Thulir. They have been working with rural youth for the past 18 years, teaching them to build using alternative building technologies. More information about Thulir at www.thulir.org.

Our experiences with school

Inspired by Holt’s books we decided not to send our first son to school. As fate would have it, there was this lovely small school nearby, run by friends, where children were very happy and couldn’t wait for Monday. So by the time he was three and a half, Siddharth wanted to go to School!! Of course, since we also thought we should respect our child’s interests and inclinations, we gave in and he started going to School by age 4. So there went our first homeschooling resolve!

While we did send our son to school, we were keen to create / make use of opportunities for him to learn outside of school. We used travel extensively as a means of exposure. We took children with us when we went for site visits/ business meetings etc., whenever possible. We also prepared our children before on how they should behave and generally they behaved well. Though this is such an unconventional act, in most places we were welcomed.

The school was small and a very happy place. Siddharth’s fellow students were tribal children and he grew up making a lot of friends. His teachers were kind and mostly gentle, so he had no complaints. The school was even supportive of our decision to take him off school for a year when he was 8 years old, when we travelled to different parts of the country, volunteering.

But as years passed, there was a growing feeling within us that he was missing on some things; especially intellectually stimulating work. Siddharth grew up in a home full of books and an atmosphere where there was a lot of reading and predominance of intellectual work.

His access to information and his exposure were shaped by the visitors we had from all over the world and also our own travels. As a result of this environment, he was more inclined towards intellectually challenging tasks and he was not getting that kind of stimulation in his school.

Anu took up teaching at the school so that we could see what best could be done to overcome this limitation. The school had a predominant student profile of first generation learners, most of who were struggling to master basic reading and writing skills that were completely alien to them. This resulted in a mismatch between what the school offered and what Siddharth needed. This resulted in a mismatch between what the school’s environment offered and what Siddharth needed. This is not to say that his needs were in any way superior to other students, merely that they were different.

We do not feel academic rigour is necessarily superior or essential in a school. We would have felt the same way if, for instance, he were particularly interested in “craftwork” or “fine arts”, and the school could not provide the space for serious pursuit in that area. It is not that Vidyodaya (his school) failed him; it only means that the structure of school itself is restrictive.

Firstly, the school took up a lot of a child’s time. Secondly, the nature of schools (even though this was a small alternative school) is such that they do not provide an opportunity to the child to explore any area of study in leisure and in depth. We are very doubtful if even conventional urban schools [that are considered academically brilliant] would have provided this kind of space.

Schools have become places organized for adults’ convenience rather than for the learners to grow freely. The differing periods, curriculum, gradations and evaluations etc. are the evidence for this. One of the first casualties is the creativity and happiness of children.

Our experiences when we moved to Sittilingi

When Siddharth was 11 and Sreyarth was 6, we decided to move to a remote village in Tamil Nadu for various reasons. We started Thulir (meaning, to sprout) as a Learning Centre to help village children discover the joys of learning and have access to learning materials and resource people. We were, for many reasons clear that we do not want to start a “school”. So Thulir is a difficult place to define, and is taking its own shape the past 3 years.

When we moved to Sittilingi to start Thulir, we had to home school them completely. The initial reactions of our children were mixed. They liked the fact that they had a lot more leisure, as typically classes were only for about 3 hours a day. So they were free to play/ read as they pleased. While on the one hand, their interest grew genuinely in certain areas of study and they made rapid and amazing progress, there were problem areas where they were not too keen to study. Language, especially, second language was not a preferred area of study!

There were 2 other children who were also being home schooled and so they had some company. But the three younger ones were in the same age group and Siddharth was much older at 11. He had also been used to school for some years and therefore, he started missing on peers of his age.

The impact on Siddharth and Sreyarth

Siddharth spent 2 years being home-schooled. On the positive side he learnt how to manage his time and to pursue what interests him. He made rapid progress in areas that interested him, computers being one. As a result his ability to be able to do adult work (designing the Thulir website, for example) gave him a lot of confidence and self belief. As parents we were of course worried that he might get addicted to computers. So we had to regulate his time spent in front of the PC and provide him with other interesting tasks. This was always a tough balancing act; when he is deeply involved in a complicated task on the PC you could not (in school fashion ring a bell) and say time is up!!

On the negative side we perhaps could not inspire him to study all the subjects nor had enough skills to be able to show him the fun in learning each of the subjects that a kid of his age would be studying in school.

Siddharth started missing his peer group’s company,

and we realized that at his age that is probably very important. So we tried sending him for periods to his previous school in Gudalur so that he could meet his friends. But eventually he decided, at thirteen, that he wanted to go to a Boarding School where a lot of our friends’ kids had been to. He applied and got admission. He prepared for the entrance exam on his own with only minimal guidance from us. We were worried about how he would take to it; but he managed surprisingly well both in terms of adjusting to living there as well as to academic work. We feel that this could happen because it was his decision to go there, and consequently his motivation level was high.

Sreyarth was 6 years old when we moved and started home schooling, and subsequently he is more settled and is happy continuing to study at home. We did ask him if he would like to go join his brother when he turned nine, but he has decided not to. It has helped that Thulir has also grown and is being used by a lot of local children. He has made friends with them and so does have company. In a strict sense he is not being home schooled in that he goes to Thulir every day. He has about 2 hours of classes a day and for the rest of his time free to explore his interests.

Our thoughts on home-schooling

While we developed a strong interest in alternative ideas on schooling, at no point we felt we need to take a strong ideological stand. Alternative ideas have helped us in understanding and being aware of what is happening around us. This has been a good thing for us [now looking back], as we are not too dissatisfied with the way things have turned up for us, our students and our children. After all if the core philosophy behind our ideal of education is to develop open minds that can take in all ideas and then decide one’s own perspective; how can we be ideologically bound to one world view?

We feel home schooling must provide a lot of time to the children to be by themselves... for fantasies, for reading [stories], for play acting etc. What is definitely achievable is a healthy interest in learning things and discovering the joy in learning. This is no mean achievement and can prove to be an invaluable asset while going and facing the world. Given the space and time to grow, every child can grow into a mature being with an ability to think and decide for oneself.

Home schooling cannot become a “school at home”. This approach, with a strict time table, syllabus and curriculum, can become counter productive and lead to a lot of frustrations. We found with both of our sons, a huge resistance to us taking on the role of teachers with them. They preferred it if we learnt with them rather than ‘teaching’ them.

Once they learnt basic reading and writing, we made sure they had a lot of books they could explore on their own. We just made sure they had the right kind of materials, a lot of free time and freedom to learn by themselves; we also made ourselves available at certain times. If they were really interested in something and came to us for help in that then it really worked. We did insist that they do some Tamil reading everyday because we did want them to pick up their mother tongue. The issue of mother tongue is a tricky one: the truth is that if there is not an environment of a particular language/ culture at home, neighbourhood and school, it is very difficult for a child to acquire skills in that language. Things get especially difficult if both parents are educated and there is a lot of English speaking in the house. I sometimes wonder if it is more important that the local language/ culture is embraced wholeheartedly by the family so that children get to experience and enjoy a language in all its dimensions.

While we feel easier to give our child “off” because a relative/ friend has come visiting or simply because he is not in a mood to do “studies”, this becomes a lot difficult to do with students who come regularly to Thulir to study. There is always a pressure put on oneself to somehow “regulate” students’ time. One reason for this is that work with children does not show immediate results and if there is nothing concrete to show as output, say some written work or a piece of art, one starts to feel as if nothing has been achieved. This is possibly because of our own schooling and resulting conditioning. Our challenge in a sense is whether we could do with Thulir

children, in terms of educating, what we have been able to do with our own children.

In general, once we get out of the feeling that they need to do all subjects and accept their disinterest in some subjects, the children are happy and also apply themselves well in whatever interests them. However, this is extremely difficult especially if parents have been educated through conventional schooling. Parents may often feel – how will the children know?

But one aspect that we are clear about is that both our children have been able to get some basic skills like the ability to decide what interests them at a particular time, plan and set tasks for themselves and diligently go about it. Their language skills are also good and this we could only ascribe to their many hours of reading all kinds of books. Perhaps it is important to read a lot before one gets into writing / expressing well. Unfortunately schooling does not give enough space for this. For Siddharth these two factors have helped a lot when he went to boarding school and so he did not miss not having done “subject” studies while he was at home, and could easily fit into the curriculum based studies.

The most important skill lacking in most adults we come across today is the ability to take decisions for themselves. Granted, we may even be talking here of a spiritually advanced soul! However, it is true that the various societal institutions create “peer groups” and put pressure on individuals to conform to a group. This may not be bad for society as a whole, but our education has taken this aspect to such an extreme that we have succeeded in completely taking away the ability of individuals to think for themselves. Therefore it is important to empower the child by providing opportunities to make decisions. Only if a child practices this and learns by making mistakes, is s/he going to be able to do this when s/ he is an adult.

Language, Learning and Development from Vygotsky's Perspective

by Anita Balasubramanian

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Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist, was born in 1896 in Western Russia and was educated as lawyer and philologist. Post the Russian Revolution in 1917, he began working as a psychologist, until his death in 1934. It was during this time that he worked extensively on ideas about cognitive development, particularly the relationship between language, thought, development of mental concepts and cognitive awareness. He was strongly influenced by Marx's theory of society and his writings emphasized the roles of historical, cultural, and social factors in cognition. This article gives an introduction to some of his key ideas on the relation between language, learning and development.

Main Themes of Vygotsky's Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky proposed that the development of higher psychological functions (thinking, planning etc) occurs in the context of an interaction with another person, text, object or nature etc. And that this process of development and meaning-making is mediated by historical, social and cultural factors. He further suggested that this is assisted by the use of tools, symbols and signs, the most prominent of which are language and speech. The use of the word language here is not limited to oral language, but includes all kinds of languages can be used as signs, tools and symbols (for communication).

Vygotsky argued that using speech as a tool to solve tasks and problems reflects an important moment in the development of the higher order psychological functions. Speech (language) becomes a tool to not just communicate

with the world but also becomes a tool (through the use of inner speech) to regulate activities. Speech not only facilitates the child's effective manipulation of objects, but also serves as a means to direct self-behaviour and action. In other words, speech develops along two lines, the line of social communication and the line of inner speech, by which the child regulates her activity through her thoughts.

We are all familiar with how we talk to ourselves/others while planning for future actions or solving problems. We use language to think about and understand the results of our actions and therefore direct our actions, instead of acting to find out the consequences (as most toddlers would do). Speech becomes the stimuli useful in the solution of tasks and planning future actions. He showed that egocentric speech by children (self-talk) is the transitional state between external speech and inner speech that directs actions. Here, though he describes inner speech as being qualitatively different than normal (external) speech. Although he believed inner speech to develop from external speech via a gradual process of internalization, with younger children only really able to "think out loud", he claimed that in its mature form it would be unintelligible to anyone except the thinker and won't resemble spoken language as we know it.

He also pointed out that learning occurs in a social, historical and cultural context. Knowledge (and meaning-making) does not exist individually, in one's mind but rather exists in the context of an interaction. If I were to be all alone on the moon with nothing and no one, my interactions (and consequently meaning making and knowledge) would be limited to what I have available to interact with. Consequently my cognitive development would then be influenced (and perhaps limited) by what I am interacting with, what my social and cultural contexts are and what my history is. If I was on earth before going

to the moon that history is going to influence the kind of interactions I have with what is available on the moon.

Extending this further, Vygotsky suggested that there exists a *zone of proximal development (ZPD)* in each interaction i.e. each interaction (with peers, capable others, texts) provides an opportunity for development that goes beyond the level of development that is possible through independent problem solving. In other words, while each child is capable of doing certain actions independently (depending on his/her developmental level), he/she can go beyond this level and do more, how much more is characterized by the zone of proximal development. We have all experienced this when working with children – with some help with peers, capable others (teachers/parents), they are able to work on problems that seem challenging individually.

This essentially means that two terms to characterize a child's cognitive development – the actual development level, which signifies what the child can do by himself/herself, and proximal developmental level, which signifies what the child is capable of doing with guidance or collaboration. The *zone of proximal development (ZPD)* provides a way to understand the distance between these two levels. Though the ZPD cannot be clearly defined, for learning to contribute to development, it needs to be oriented towards the ZPD and not towards the developmental levels that the child has already reached.

In summary, Vygotsky redefined the relationship between learning and development. Rather than see it as a one way relationship where learning follows developmental levels, he stated that for cognitive development to occur, learning needs to stay ahead slightly ahead of developmental levels. And that learning and cognitive development share a complex relationship.

Connecting it to teaching and learning

I think there are several implications of his work for teaching/learning. I will mention a few here. Firstly, consider that we (including students) create meaning out of their social cultural contexts. This means that subject-knowledge

is not something that exists by itself (as an 'object') and consequently cannot be transferred from teachers/textbooks to students. Knowledge and meaning-making occurs in the context of interactions with each other and text. And therefore schools and teacher should be able to provide the kind of interactions that allow children to learn and create meaning. We need to consider the child's social and cultural contexts while teaching any subject, because that forms the basis of what and how children learn and understand. Teachers need to pay attention to this. How we teach, what we use to teach, all become important considerations.

Secondly, it is evident from the concept of ZPD that teaching needs to be aimed at those abilities that are developing and that can be manifested with guidance and support from others. Considering what students can do with the assistance of others can provide suggestions to teachers on how to organize instruction. This means that working in groups, in collaboration with another individual or teacher becomes an important part of classroom activities. Yes, there will be times, when students may want to work individually to *internalize* something they are learning. However, since learning and development occurs in a socially mediated process, we need to allow discussions and collaborative work in schools, instead of focusing only on working individually. And since speech is an important tool for learning, we need to allow students to express, talk and share their thinking. Out of such discussions comes deeper understanding and learning.

Finally, we need to acknowledge that cognitive development and learning share a very complex relationship. There is no clear way to define ZPD for every child. But that should not limit us from trying to identify the next steps for the child's growth and development. At the least we need to recognize that this complex relationship exists and let this constantly guide the work with children by providing them thoughtful, challenging and interactive opportunities for their development.

Those who wish to read further will find a good compilation of articles by L.S.Vygotsky in the book "Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes".

Value Based Education A Practical Experience Shared

by G. S. Jayadev

G.S.Jaydev, founder of Deenabandhu, shares his experiments and experiences with value education at Deenabandhu. Located in Chamarajangar, Deenabandhu provides a foster home and a primary school for boys without living parents. They also partner with several government schools under the School Adoption scheme in Karnataka. He can be contacted at gsjaydev@rediffmail.com

Value based education is probably the greatest challenge in education; much has been talked about it. Educators have developed several techniques like games, stories and so on. Yet an objective look at the result shows us that imparting of values is not as simple as imparting knowledge of chemistry or mathematics. It looks as if each child is highly individualistic as far as her imbibing of values is concerned.

The same environment, interpersonal interactions and methodology of teaching can produce predictable results with respect to imparting of technical knowledge. But this is not necessarily true with respect to value education. An intelligent boy always finds reasons to flout laws, brush aside the values and concoct justification for all that he cherishes. The reason is he is not convinced. On the other hand some boys who appear mediocre in academics are very assiduous about values. It appears that material intelligence is not necessarily in par with value intelligence.

Throughout the world we get examples from world teachers who imparted values to their fellow beings. Some of these followers were intelligent; others were not. Nevertheless, the example of these teachers has helped the knowledge come down to several generations, still fresh and vital. These examples and some of our own daily life experience reveal the laws that govern value education.

Understanding value education

By many such observations we are convinced that

imparting value follows a most important law, similar to the one we come across in laws of thermodynamics. It is law of energy. Energy cannot move from lower energy level to higher energy level; it always moves from higher energy level to the lower energy level. If we keep a bag of ice cold water and a bag of hot coffee together it is our observation that coffee gets cold and water becomes warmer than it was. Similarly it is with values. The energy of values comes from ardent practice for a long time. A person who has practiced and nurtured values for a long time collects a lot of 'value energy'. He can transfer a little of it to his subject. Without practice or an example, all the technical knowledge of value is futile.

It is our common observation that all of us nurture a lot of thoughts regarding values. But these thoughts never form a source of our action. They remain in the form of opinions. What, then, is the source of our actions? Among the many thoughts we harbour in our brain, we have developed deep conviction for some thoughts. Our actions come from these convictions. If my conviction is to keep every thing for my own self and not to give anything for others, then I will be a selfish man. I may be selfish so as to not part with the things that are never useful to me. On the other hand if my conviction is to help others, I may do it even with a little sacrifice on my part.

That leads us to the question - how exactly does conviction develop? An untrained mind has a conviction that is centred on self-preservation. But the social life and cultural life brings about a certain degree of altruism and values. Two dimensional (book) learning never brings the conviction. Experiential learning opens up a third dimension and brings about a firm conviction. With regard to value education the third dimension of learning takes place when a value comes with an example, the example

that stands the test of child's observation over a long period of time. An effective example needs to be consistent; inconsistency is confusing. Fortitude and forbearance that one shows with regards to his cherished value matters very much. The man in whom value has stood the test of all vicissitudes would have greater value energy that makes true impact on those around.

With all this in mind, we at Deenabandhu have tried value education for 40 children who live with us. It has been a team endeavour, because, all the staff set an example simply by virtue of their presence. Training the staff with regard to their attitude towards the children has been a major task. Unfortunately, however, in a structure like this a few were found unsuitable though they were useful in many other respects.

Our methods:

Apart from setting a practical example from our own lives, the staff of Deenabandhu has also adopted two methods of value education – story-telling and discussion.

1. **Story telling:** Everyday evening after the prayer, interesting stories from Ramayana, Mahabharatha or Upanishads are narrated to children. Biographical anecdotes from the lives of great people of value are also narrated. Children are encouraged to question or even disagree. They are never forced to accept. Each one is encouraged to have his individual opinion.

2. **Discussion:** During holidays, children are involved in discussion. All the children sit together and are divided into two groups, a group of younger children and a group of elder children. The members of the staff also participate. Younger children are also encouraged to contribute their thoughts. We discuss issues like jealousy, theft, leadership, non-violence etc. The rest of the article describes the outcomes from these discussions.

Discussion on jealousy

Jealousy is one of the mean reactions that all human beings face in their life. A thorough understanding of it will help one to get rid of jealousy. All the children were introduced to what jealousy was through stories and examples from mythological stories. Our introduction was something like this:

Jealousy is a problem with everyone; we come across jealous people in Greek mythology and in many Indian mythological stories. Jealousy has troubled many people in the past and continues to trouble many people in the

present. The world's greatest epic Mahabharatha is based on jealousy. In Ramayana, the poet Valmiki describes a woman by name 'Anasuya' which literally means non-jealous; she was praised and adored by all for her non-jealous quality. Even in the past people realised the importance of getting rid of jealousy. After this introduction we started our discussion on jealousy. Discussion began with a question.

What is jealousy?

All children were silent for a long time. We repeated the question. Finally a small boy of 3rd standard presented an analogy: "If my bicycle is punctured then I will puncture his bicycle also — this is jealousy" Soon after, other children shared several similar examples. If my balloon is punctured I will puncture his balloon etc. Some points emerged:

- First, the children could express what jealousy is and because of this, there was some clarity about jealousy.
- One boy came out with a very mature aspect of jealousy. He said, "Jealousy always happens between friends and never between strangers."
- The third point was "Jealousy happens between persons of equal age and not between an elder and young one".
- The fourth point that emerged was "One gets jealousy because of lack of confidence, if I am confident of achieving what he achieved then I will also achieve rather than being jealous".

We continued the discussion elaborating the last comment because that was an important insight in understanding jealousy. We told them that one couldn't achieve everything. For example I cannot draw a very good picture while Gowthama can draw. Similarly someone is very good in sports while the other may not be. Therefore we concluded that

We should understand and accept our limitations. We all have something good and therefore we can be proud of it. We should learn to appreciate other's talents or qualities instead of being jealous about it.

With this understanding we concluded the discussion.

Discussion on non-violence

It was Gandhi Jayanthi day. We wanted to celebrate Gandhiji's birthday in a special way. So we had a discussion on non-violence which was Gandhiji's pet value. A few children narrated a number of anecdotes from Gandhiji's

life and finally we settled down for a discussion. As usual, the discussion began with the question:

What is non violence?

No answer was available in spite of throwing a lot of hints. Then we changed our question.

What is violence?

There were many answers. A boy from the 4th standard said “If I hit my friend and cause pain that is violence”. Soon there were similar examples, “If I push somebody to hurt” or “If I pierce somebody to hurt” or “teacher in the classroom uses a stick”, etc. When we asked the question whether causing pain to others should be considered as violence, some agreed; but there was one question: “If all pain is violence what about a doctor giving an injection? That also causes pain.” There were other examples like doctor conducting operation, applying iodine tincture to a wound etc. Someone said that the doctor’s intention was only to benefit the patient.

Therefore, we concluded that pain caused with bad intention is to be considered violence. Still the question remained as to what is ‘non-violence’. The answer was now simple. “Not to hurt any body with bad intention is non violence”.

The next question was should you not punish somebody who makes a mistake? That led to a discussion on the relationship between non-violence and forgiveness. Non violence is not possible without an attitude of forgiveness. We explained that true forgiveness has a correcting ability. If we whole-heartedly forgive a man then he may change for better.

Some children questioned whether we should forgive hardened criminals like the forest bandit Veerappan. We explained to them the difference between true forgiveness and the physical punishment. True forgiveness is a quality of the mind; physical punishment one undergoes is an inevitable consequence (of one’s own deeds) in the social structure we have accepted.

Some children said non-violence is not necessarily confined to physical hurt. One can be injurious in words, can cause mental agony to the others and even that should be considered violence. This was also agreed and non-violence we concluded should be both physical and mental.

When a boy extended the idea of non-violence towards animals and plants, the topic changed to environmental

pollution and other such issues of environment. We concluded that it is because of our violence to environment that our environment is getting polluted.

Stealing

Once a few children stole some fruits; these were actually meant for them. We held a discussion on this problem. We discussed as to whom the fruits were meant for, and why steal that which belonged to them.

We enacted the whole act of stealing the fruits. The fruits were placed before everybody. The children who stole the fruits had to enact how they stole the fruits. Some who were sensitive hesitated to show how they stole it. But we made it mandatory and all of them demonstrated as how they did it.

We asked them how they felt when actually they were stealing the fruits. They described that an uncomfortable feeling dominated their minds. At the same time they also revealed that a kind of fear gripped them. We analysed the occurrence of an uncomfortable feeling. They answer: “whenever we do something not correct we feel uncomfortable”. We concluded that most often we know what is right and what is wrong and the mind has a kind of safety valve to prevent us from doing what is wrong. That is the reason why an uncomfortable feeling arises trying to prevent us from doing what is wrong.

We explained that the faculty which rouses this awareness is called conscience. We should be true to our conscience. It works like an alarm clock trying to wake us up. But if we constantly turn it off one day the clock may stop functioning.

Reflections

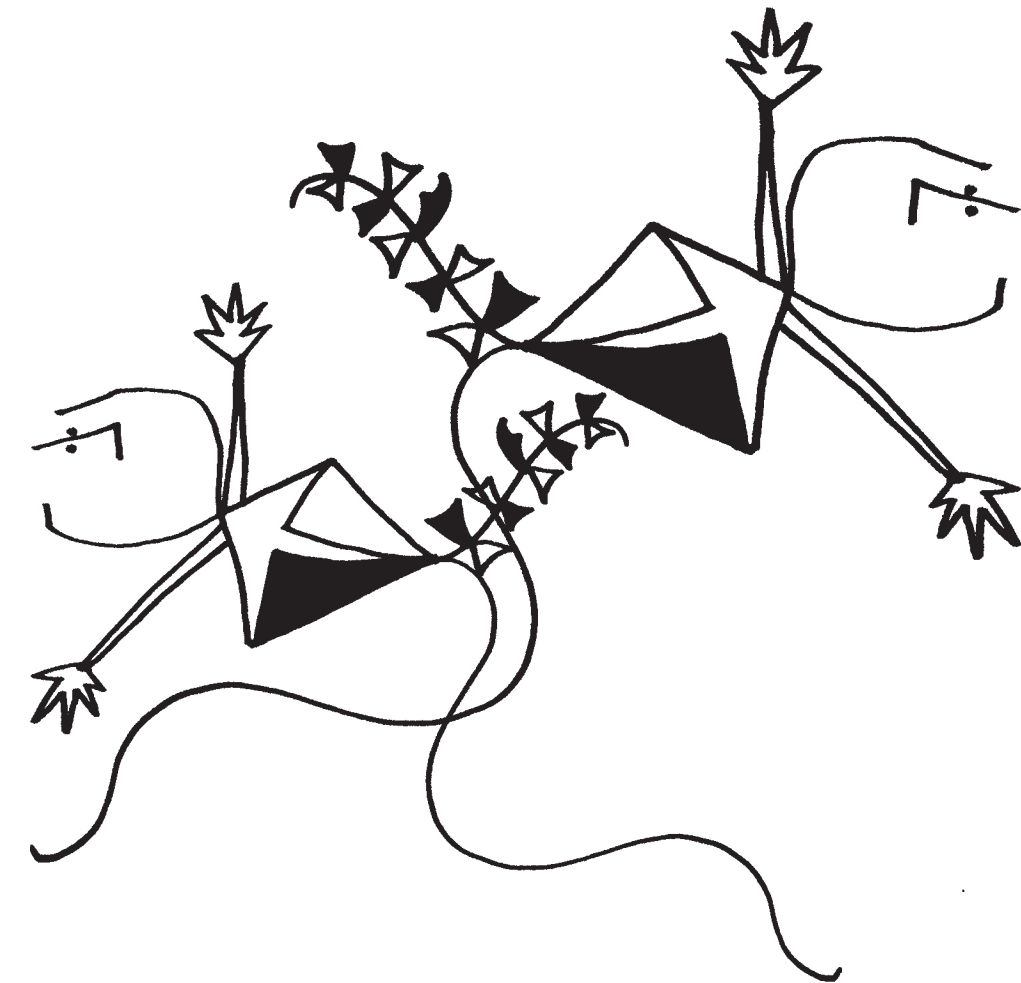
These are only three examples of our discussions. We have discussed many other subjects - truth and lying, communal harmony, Tamil poetry (Thirukkural), leadership, punctuality, kindness, etc. All of our discussions are documented.

Often we make a mistake of assuming that values are qualities confined to historical figures like Gandhiji or Swami Vivekananda etc. If we feed only such examples to children, they conclude that such examples need not be present in the real life context and is not a part of ordinary man’s life. Instead we should make it a point to identify values among everyday people like barber, carpenter, mason etc. We should constantly cite the examples of

individuals around us who have values.

There are advantages of these discussions: children have come out with very deep insights into the problems. Firstly, the children discover for themselves the subtle aspects of the problems. Their ability to think deeply increases. Since they have discovered, these facts themselves, these thoughts form an integral part of their personality and they develop deep conviction. The

conviction forms a source of their action. Instead if we give a readymade model it will only be an alien model with which he cannot relate himself. This may not lead to the same conviction as in the case when they make the discovery. But once he has discovered the values himself he will appreciate the same values being found among great people.



Our Role as Parents

Quality Time through Daily Activities

by Geetha Arvind

Geetha Arvind, a post graduate in Mathematics has worked for 7 years in leading software companies. She has completed the Montessori course and played a key role in organizing the International Conference on Integrated Value Education hosted by The Art of Living in collaboration with UNESCO and INCCU. She is currently working on the learning methodologies in science and math education. She can be contacted at geetha.arvind@gmail.com

Often we hear “Parents need to spend quality time with children”

Most parents react by saying “I feed my children, I put them to sleep, I give them a bath, I sacrifice so much to give time for children...” But the question is: Does this suffice?

Often parents work long hours with the best of intentions and this results in not being able to spend quality time with children. It is very important to realize that activities which we see as routine jobs to be done are often seen as interesting activities by children and also could effect their development.

This article discusses the important aspects of spending quality time with children through daily activities.

How do we define this quality time?

Does it mean we have to spend our time more intellectually or more seriously with them?

The time we claim to spend with them should be a joyous experience for children. It should in turn help their development and learning. How can we make it such an experience? Is it by pampering them or showing our love to them in some form or sitting with them in front of television or feeding them tasty food or buying dolls, they love? Instead, we need to interact with our children, listen to them actively, and talk with them, include them actively in our day to day activities, and also involve ourselves in

their activities.

We need to have patience to listen to them: their dull, uninteresting and silly stories. We need to give them an opportunity to take part in our everyday activities as well as show them respect irrespective of their age. We should not deprive them of any activities assuming that they are not intellectual or developmental.

Parent’s role to involve children in their daily activities

For example, in kitchen work we could make them cut vegetables or give them a role to perform ensuring that they have the freedom to work and at the same time not making them feel that we are there to monitor their work.

Probably the best mother is one from whom children do not get to hear any instructions while they do their work. We need to have lot of will power when we give them some work to do as it is lot easier and peaceful to do it by ourselves. But we need to think of the child’s development and develop patience towards these activities and keep reminding ourselves to be patient till it becomes a natural attitude. It is essential to make him/her feel important and helpful. Creating a set up even in small work we assign will attract children to perform activities. For example in case of cutting vegetables, provide them vegetables in one bowl and give another bowl to put the cut vegetables. It could be made further attractive by giving them two similar shape or colour bowls. The activities could be as simple as bringing the clothes from the drying place, folding them and arranging them in the wardrobes.

We need to help them to develop an inherent interest and we can only do that provided we do the same job with respect, interest and passion. When they watch us doing the same tasks with passion, we send the right signals

to the child indirectly and that helps them to develop interest from within.

Parent’s role in children’s daily activities

Giving them a bath could be made interesting by allowing them to pour water by themselves in the end or making a small paper boat and leaving it in the bucket or let them enjoy the lather that is formed while soaping.

Feeding food could be made a very bonding experience by making them sit and do some activities. All that is required from us is our involvement in what they are doing either physically or through conversation. This is a better alternative than running behind them to try feeding them.

The fact that children are getting overly addicted watching television is becoming a serious problem which most of the parents are facing today. There are some ways we could tackle this problem. When we switch on television, we must sit with them and watch the program together, discuss with them what is being shown on TV. We could make use that as a media that gives means and ways to discuss with our children on relevant topics. By mutually agreeing on the programs to watch and not taking the role of a monitor to dictate the programs they could watch will help them to shoulder their responsibility not to watch excessive TV.

Influencing children through daily activities

Sense of growing plants and caring them is a very good exposure that we can give to children at home. If we do not have a garden at home, we could grow plants in some pots. Children may not be motivated with verbal instructions such as calling them just to watch the plants or to water the plants. We need to go near the pots and watch every plant and enjoy them, water them with care and passion. Children are motivated by observing adults at home doing these activities and they tend to take part automatically. We could jointly colour the pots and give

them a new shape and this whole activity helps to develop many skills.

Bringing order to children cannot be just taught in schools. What is made to practice at home is what lasts for a long time. Arranging their toys in the place available and making it a point to keep back in the same places after using instead of dumping the toys in a big wooden or cardboard box will indirectly help develop order in their minds. Initially they may not do it. We need to do it consistently. Over a period of time they get used to this order. Making it a habit to arrange their toys especially before leaving home and before going to bed creates a great sense of order in every aspect of their life not just in arranging their toys. The best way is to join our hands and be one among them and carry out the tasks.

Summary - Daily activities as a means to nurture child’s attitude

One thumb rule is, the more we try to become authoritative and become decision makers for children to their actions, the more we become responsible which indirectly makes them irresponsible. This will bridge the gap between children and adults at home. The freedom we give, the respect we show to their choice and the discussions we have to resolve their conflicts helps them to shoulder their responsibilities.

Summarizing, it is important for parents to spend quality time with children. Simple techniques, as explained in this article could be used to involve children in everyday activities and indirect methods of developing interest from within to foster active participation must be used. It is also important to treat a child no different from an adult individual by giving respect and making him/her feel important. And all that is required to bring this joyous as well as learning experience to children through our everyday activities is a little change in our attitudes.

Reading and writing, arithmetic and grammar do not constitute education, anymore than a knife, fork and spoon constitute a dinner. — John Lubbock

Nature's Classroom Institute

by Geoffrey E. Bishop

Geoffrey E. Bishop is executive director and founder of Nature's Classroom Institute and Nature's Classroom Montessori School in USA. An environmental educator and a photographer, he believes that students needed more than a typical classroom could offer them. He is the recipient of the 2002 Non-Formal Educator of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education. He can be contacted at Nature's Classroom, P.O. Box 660, Mukwonago, WI 53149, (800) 574-7881, geoffrey@ncim.org

It's Tuesday, during the second week in November, the air is brisk, the sun rays are beaming down, the sky is solid blue, a few clouds drift on by. And this isn't even the best part of the day... There are children ages 3 years to 14 years scattered about in a beautiful pocket in Wisconsin, and they are learning! I don't mean just absorbing what is in a book, or trying to work out what are seven times eight for the hundredth time; or being hypnotized by a computer game. I mean learning to survive as part of a team in the woods, dissecting a pig, writing poetry by the lake, building a Geodome, collecting eggs from the chicken house, building a solar cell, enacting the Underground Railroad or becoming a homeless person and experiencing a day in the life.

D.H. Lawrence once said that "Water is H₂O, hydrogen two parts, oxygen one, but there is also a third thing that makes it water that nobody knows what it is." David Orr described this quote as "It is magic, the kind that can only be found in nature, life and human possibilities once we are open to them. What is captured in the images that follow is the kind of education that takes young people out of the classroom to encounter the mystery of the third thing. This is what Rachel Carson described as 'A sense of wonder'.

This is Nature's Classroom Institute, a small private educational setting on 400 beautiful acres in south-eastern Wisconsin. As you drive down the long driveway you emerge from a pine wood into a beautiful prairie alive

with insects, flowers and yes, deer. As the school opens up you are able to leave the world behind and enter into a space made for children. There are two distinctive programs that operate here, one is the residential environmental program and the other is a Montessori day school, both unique in their mission, targeting different audiences, but sharing the richness of the environment for learning.

The Montessori Day School

Our Montessori school gives students in the local community the opportunity to learn in a rich and socially responsible environment. The vision for this school is based on the idea that real learning comes from the heart, and an innate curiosity, a need to know. Our connection to the environment is the catalyst to the spark the awakening of that need. In using the environment as a jumping post to teach all subjects, we are able to draw out of the student a desire to move ahead, to inspire independence, self discipline and to motivate them to develop to their full potential for success in productive and intelligent lives.

The curriculum follows the seasons. So learning about animal behavior is conducted in the winter when the students can put on winter coats mittens and hats and follow the tracks of the fox as he makes his evening walk around his boundary, or the study of the leaf will be conducted in the fall when so much is happening in the woods with the colours and the falling of leaves. Spring is a great time to study the wetlands as the spring peepers are the first to start the spring chorus, or September when the bees start their frantic race to store food for winter.

All the seasons are used to inspire creative writing or to spend a little time at your "listening point" - that special spot chosen by each student as their own quiet spot to relax and to reflect on the world. Math problems come alive with the use of a compass or the geometry of a geodome when built out of logs. This puts a whole new perspective on Pythagoras theorem.

Friday morning is "coffee and scram" our 100% student run coffee shop. They sell wonderful shade grown coffee, baked goods they made on Thursday and wheat grass shots using the wheat grass they grow at the farm. All this, while learning about money, staff management, and responsibility of product control. Sounds like some one I would like to hire! Wednesday is climbing; a self challenge on an ABBY certified indoor and outdoor climbing wall. Each student has the opportunity to climb at their own skill, but pushing themselves to go higher each time. This builds confidence, self assurance and physical agility all under the umbrella of support and encouragement from their fellow classmates.

Each day various students are at the farm - a fully working and production farm raising chickens for eggs that are used in our commercial dining room and vegetables in the organic and biodynamic garden. The students save scraps from their meals that are added to the droppings. This and the straw from the goat and chicken house provide 100% of the nutritional additive in the compost for our garden. While working on the farm students appreciate the work and love that goes into the production of quality food and have a deeper understanding of the cycles of life.

Problem solving and group initiative team building challenges are part of the daily routine here at Nature's Classroom. Our students are constantly challenged to solve problems; from a disagreement in the Elementary classroom or "how to share", in our Children's House program (ages 3-6 years). Teachers do not solve problems instead they facilitate the students to critically think about the situations that they are in and find solutions that help the community as well as themselves. In constantly reminding our students that they are part of a whole community we are adding a layer of trust and a feeling that our students truly belong. This school is an extension of their home and the teachers are an integral part of a child's life.

The Environmental Education Program

Our Environmental Education (EE) program gives students from all over the Midwest of the United States an opportunity to spend a week immersed in what could only be described as a rich alternative style of education.

In the EE program students are required to sleep over for five days, taking the familiarity of home life and

interjecting a whole new set of social norms. Not the least of which is community living. The students get up on their own each day and take care of personal hygiene, setting the table for meals, preparing themselves to be outside in all weather - winter freezing temperatures or September rains. In doing this, the students are learning the basic skills of independence, respect and gaining the support of their fellow classmates through shared experiences. The students who participate in our EE program for one week out of their school year, still leave with a sense of ownership and pride in a place they call their own. As our students get older and return year after year the challenges of looking after themselves will get harder, with less adult input and more onus and responsibility on the student. The challenges will get harder both physically and emotionally, preparing each child at their own pace to be able to handle the stress and events in their lives that inevitably will come up.

Nature as inspiration

The inspiration for this school came from my own educational experiences, which could be described as archaic with moments of inspiration. I can remember the inspiring teachers: my kindergarten teacher, my dorm master in 8th grade and a history teacher. Each of these people took the time to make me feel that I was able to do anything and that my skills were valuable even though I may have been lacking in many of my academic pursuits. They drew out of me the desire to learn, the hunger for knowledge and the inspiration to do my very best. It was these few people in my many years in formal education that inspired me to give my students this experience for their education. I believe that each person on this planet is the very best at something. Not one of us is ordinary, but unfortunately most people never get the opportunity or allow themselves the opportunity to find what they are good at. They have allowed themselves, society and those around them to limit their world and accept mediocrity as their lot. I do not want that for our children. The more we experience of life the more we are truly able to understand ourselves and the role we play in creating our community.

Our school is eleven years old, young in comparison to many. But what we have been able to achieve in these short years has been remarkable. Our staff is dedicated to the enrichment of our children and the quality of the educational experience. Our classrooms are full of glass

windows drawing the students into the natural world, each and every time they look up, a bird, or a butterfly will emphasize life, and give students a respect and love for the natural world and a responsibility for the part that they play in it. Our teaching staff focuses on an academic curriculum that allows for individual growth, and interests; yet adheres to a strict academic standard and accountability. Each student must find their own inspiration for study and many find it through the natural world.

Nature's Classroom is a living laboratory for education, where students are seen as individuals, decision makers

and an integral part of the whole community. Nature's Classroom is where education is inspired through the outdoor environment, not just through books or media but through real life experiences each and every day of their lives. Our teachers inspire in students a desire to seek knowledge and become an important member of the extended community. Nature's Classroom has taken a dream of a better education and made it a reality by using each day to enrich our student's lives and give them the respect and encouragement in the true Socratic tradition.



The mediocre teacher tells.
The good teacher explains.
The superior teacher demonstrates.
The great teacher inspires.

— William A. Ward

Teaching the Blind Child

by N. Krishnaswamy

N Krishnaswamy, IPS (Retd.), is the Chairman of Vidya Vrikshab, an association of people drawn together by devotion to the free spread of knowledge. The activities of Vidya Vrikshab include building electronic archives and research, development and training primarily through the Centre for Disability Research, Development and Training. The Centre offers training for disabled persons, trainers and volunteers in the use of software that "translates" the use of learning aids into local languages. He can be contacted by writing to nkswamy@vsnl.net

Teaching a blind child is much like teaching any other child except it requires deeper understanding of the learning processes involved and the teaching processes employed by the teacher. As the child's first teacher, the mother's understanding has a depth and sensitivity that springs not only from practical commonsense, but also from the emotional attachment, commitment, concern and deeper instincts that are natural to any mother.

Learning process implies understanding of cognitive potential of the child which in turn implies understanding of all the sensory skills that contribute to this cognitive process. Teachers need to build on the skills that are available and explore and exploit their compensatory role and potential in case some sensory faculties are not available in otherwise able child.

A teacher should be able to have a holistic view of the role and function of each skill and not over emphasize on some and neglect of other skills. The loss of holistic view has divided the education system into mainstream schools and special school with special educators. Integrated school is a movement towards greater integration in training skills of teachers. There is certainly need for specialization but should be applied only to situations where it is not practical or advisable to entrust them with integrated arrangements.

Emphasis is required for in-depth understanding of each sensory skill as well as of inter-relationships of multiple skills. Teachers who teach build children need to have an understanding of not only the sense of touch but also the intimate relationship of the tactile skills to all the other sensory skills. A blind child builds images of the external world from variety of the other sensory inputs. This child develops a sense of time from its cycles of sleep, wakefulness, state of hunger etc, a sense of distance and direction as it walks around, a sense of surroundings from movement of ambient air, from different sounds and from smell of air. Thus the child has all its available senses joining in to give a fairly good integral image of the external world.

Teachers of blind children tend to be largely preoccupied with the primacy of learning by touch often because they do not have sufficient knowledge of how the other senses contribute to the learning process and how much. Attention needs to be paid to combined contribution of tactile activity and other activities to cognitive development. And this need has to be translated into specific teaching methods, where all these activities are fully involved.

There is also a tendency to underestimate the learning process of the child while over emphasizing the role of the teaching process. Natural creativity, curiosity and motivation of the child work as intense whole time learning process while efforts of the teachers are far more limited in terms of time spent and methods employed.

"The Universal Braille Kit"- a set of learning-cum-teaching devices, by Vidya Vrikshah, a Chennai-based NGO, devoted to promoting effective approaches to the teaching of the blind, is an example of one such multi-modal approach of learning and teaching. While use of these devices rests primarily on the sense of touch, their design provides for concurrently exercising a wide variety

of manipulative activities. The devices and their functions are:

- (a) The Vasantha Braille Cube: to form and read Braille letters of the alphabet of any language;
- (b) The Natesan Block: to form and read Braille words;
- (c) The Vikas Block: to form and read Braille sentences;
- (d) The Braille Slate: to learn to write in Braille;
- (e) The Alphabet Plate: to learn normal handwriting in any language;
- (f) The Abacus: to learn to count and calculate;
- (g) The Taylor Frame: to learn mathematics; and
- (h) The Geometry Box: to learn to draw and measure.

Vidya Vrikshah has demonstrated that it is not just the trained teacher, but any literate person can learn and teach Braille and other skills through use of these devices. The very rationale for special teachers and separate schools for teaching the blind is called into question. It makes a strong case for integrated schools and for greater integration of teaching skills in teachers.

These devices make the teaching of blind children possible even at the pre-school stage, by mothers, sighted siblings, relations, neighbours, social workers and volunteers. It opens the doors of literacy to large numbers of blind children who are today excluded from the school system. It provides them a start in reading and writing skills, even before entering the school system.

All these devices have been brought together into a standard and inexpensive package, costing around Rs 450, which Vidya Vrikshah has vigorously projected for official recognition as an obligatory supply to all blind children in the country.

Literacy gained through the Kit has to be sustained by making Braille reading material available. Education has no meaning unless reading material is made available in as much measure to the blind as to the sighted, but in a form suited to each. Cost is the main constraint in printing

Anyone interested in the project “The National Initiative for the Blind” can get more details from the website of Vidya Vrikshah (www.vidyavrikshah.org).

Braille material – text books, magazines etc. Low capacity Braille printers cost around US\$ 5,000 and high volume printers, around US\$ 50,000. This puts them out of the reach of all but large governmental or non-governmental organizations with the necessary resources. The printed Braille page, settles at around 2 rupees a page, mainly because of the special paper that is needed, which accounts for the bulk of this cost. A 10 page Braille magazine would thus cost around Rs 20 while a 200 page Braille text book would cost Rs 400.

High cost level is not the only reason for shortage of Braille reading materials. Creation of Braille content can be a challenging task in itself. Solution proposed by Vidya Vrikshah is to use this unique IT software package, developed and offered free by the Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai. This package, the only one of its kind in the country, received the National award in 2003 as the best IT solution for the disabled. This easy to learn software enables anyone, sighted or blind to create text in any Indian language, that can be produced in spoken, screen, print and Braille versions.

Volunteers in Vidya Vrikshah use this software to produce Dhrushti, a children’s monthly magazine in Tamil Braille, which is being sent to reach children in all the blind schools of Tamil Nadu. A Kannada version is being produced and distributed likewise in Karnataka, and Telugu and Marathi versions are now under way. A simple and proven no-cost methodology for Braille content creation is thus available. All that is now needed is the equipment infrastructure and the funding for the large scale printing of such material.

The points brought together in this article highlight the need of the holistic approach to learning and teaching processes. Emphasis should be on understanding of each sensory skill as well as relationships between these skills. All these components have been brought together in a comprehensive project formulated by Vidya Vrikshah, under the title “The National Initiative for the Blind”.

Education Through Life, for Life A Journey With Nai Talim by Jyotibhai Desai

The 51st lecture of the Foundation Day of the Central Institute of Education of the Delhi University was delivered by Shri Jyotibhai Desai on 19th December 1998. Jyotibhai Desai, founder of Teachers’ Training College at Gandbi Vidyapeeth, Vedchhi, Zilla Surat, Gujarat is also a writer, Gandhian educator and active in environmental movements. In the following excerpt from his lecture he relates his experiences as a socially responsible teacher. He lives with his wife Malini in Vedchhi, a tribal village in Surat District in Gujarat. This excerpt was translated from Hindi to English by Meenakshi Balasubramanian and re-edited by Jyotibhai Desai for accuracy.

I had the privilege to be with the stalwarts of Education like Gijubhai¹, Taraben Modak², Nanabhai and Mulshankerbhai³ and Jugatram Dave⁴. These were the founders of *New Education* and *Nai Talim* in the State of Gujarat. I had ample opportunity to work each one of them except Gijubhai. I learnt of Gijubhai’s efforts closely through a couple who were his best followers and by working with Gijubhai’s son too. I am grateful to all my mentors for providing me a very rewarding life. From Gijubhai I gained a very simple formula of becoming a good teacher. His *mantra* was “Do not threaten or punish children”. Using this talisman I was humbled by a village boy Bhagwat who stood up to his calling and left me a lesson to hold on to for the rest of my life.

I left Bombay (Mumbai, now) the city of my birth, where I had lived till the age of 24, and went to a village in the Ahmedabad District in Gujarat. The children of the 5th grade class of the village school claimed me as their teacher as they did not have one. I was really overjoyed that “they wanted me”! On the very first day I declared in the morning assembly “I believe that to punish a child is not the way to help her learn, and therefore I

you all to know that I will never think of punishing any of you whatever you do”. The head of the school was very upset. “These are wild children,” he said, “and none of your city ways are going to work here. You are a fool to make such a statement here in front of them and us. You will end up creating nothing but trouble”. In less than a week, one of the boys (Bhagwat) managed a way for me to fall in such a manner that I fractured my right hand. I had to go 52 miles away to Ahmedabad for medical treatment and ended up with my arm in a sling.

On my journey home, I got down from the train at a station several ahead of my destination in order to go to Bhagwat’s home, where he had run away after the prank. “Come now, we will go back together and be real friends!” I said. His father heard what had happened and was surprised I had come to take his son back with me. Ten years later I was travelling along the same route and Bhagwat’s father saw me “Oh Jyotibhai how could you go without visiting us?” I changed my plans to be with the family for a day. The father was all enthusiastic, all day long talking about his only son Bhagwat. He repeated “Your son has achieved much. I thought he would never learn anything and would waste his life. Hence I sent him to the Ashram School. Now he is a responsible Police Officer”. Yes, Bhagwat was my son.

Another ten years passed and I was at a meeting of the heads of the education colleges in the state. One of the heads of a well-reputed college of education asked, “Have you heard of the killing of the Police Officer Dodiya, here in Ahmedabad?” “Who is this Dodiya?” I wondered and asked.

“Oh, Jyotibhai, your Bhagwat Dodiya. He was a most responsible and upright police officer. He was responsible for curbing crimes and was a terror to bootleggers. Our entire area has become safe since he came over here for

over two years. He often talked about you and claimed that you were his Guru. He was killed by the bootleggers at the instance of the politicians who joined hands to remove him”.

I rushed out to his father and the family. “Welcome Jyotibhai” exclaimed his father with tears rolling down his face, “I am a happy man! Your son has made our entire clan proud. Our village is talking about nothing but his uprightness and how he made the police force proud. I have nothing to offer you, who made him such a brave and honest man”. I had just fractured my hand but my Bhagwat gave his life.

Taraben Modak who was a lifelong colleague of Gijubhai helped me further to grow in the positive direction when I worked for her for over five years, at Bordi a village near seashore, in Thana District of Maharashtra. Every year we celebrated an Annual Day when people from surrounding villages were invited to understand the work of the centre. For this, we would put up an exhibition and organize a function.

On one such occasion, I had been able to lay a grand decorative display of conches and seashells, along with four trainee teachers, Shyama, Usha, Jethalal and Joshbhai. We worked on it overnight, arranging and rearranging; and finally we were more than happy with our efforts. Next morning whosoever saw the display was amazed at the beauty of the display. Naturally Taraben came to see it and looked at the entire spread of 8x6 feet, moving in front from every angle. “Unbelievably great!” she said and went away. But she came back twice to look again. It was not easy for her, at 84 years old, to come from her residence, about 200 ft. away. And yet, she did not say anything.

After much persuasion from me, she said “This work of art has made me speechless and yet I am... I know you will carry out were I to give my mind, but I am thinking of the four of our students who too are creators of this pattern”. I insisted to know what she had been so apprehensive about. She said very apologetically “Jyotibhai this work is surely absolutely perfect but the spot that it occupies blocks the entrance and when many of the parents and the village folks come to see the exhibition, where will they enter?” She was right. There was no alternative but to rearrange the display. But to do that was hard for all of us, a matter of hurting the pride in us.

She said, “I am very uneasy, let the students decide how to go about this problem. Be open, and do not force your way on them.” When the word got to my four friends they were upset. Strong views flowed from them “Let us destroy it; the elders always know what is best! We have to just do what pleases them; we have no rights here not even to do such creative work”. No end to their anguish. We were constrained by time and finally I said, “Let us consider this, for three visits our old Taraben refused to air her opinion. She and everyone on this campus have fully appreciated the work we have done. We too have had our satisfaction of producing something unusual. It is a matter of our ego perhaps which feels hurt. Can we not do such a thing again?” It was then that Jethalal responded “We can make ten like this one.” Shyama joined him and soon all of them started picking up the conches and seashells. Thus the pattern was rearranged in front of the stage where children were to perform. It could not be as good as before but we had the satisfaction of correcting our mistake.

Taratai rose to the occasion and congratulated the four of them for overcoming their pride. “To remove that masterpiece of arrangement that was created with effort and ingenuity, for the convenience of the visitors, was a greater achievement. This is what all of us would like to learn and imbibe! You deserve the praise of every one of us.”

Here was a person - a colleague of Gijubhai, a person known as Gandhi in the field of child education, founder of this centre - being apologetic to me, who was 40 years younger. She had all the authority, position and power but to her what was important was her commitment not to claim her status and instead act nobly and humbly. This was the treasure I collected whilst with her.

I then shifted to Lok Bharati at village Sansora in Bhavnagar District, as a senior lecturer of the Graduate College founded by Nanabhai Bhatt. There was a theft in the Hostel where I was a warden. I devised an educational experiment to solve the situation. The students of my hostel and I discussed and decided to form a committee from amongst them to find out who was responsible. I then went to our Chief Warden Mulshankerbhai, to tell him how I was involving my group of students in the situation. I was so blindly enthusiastic about that experiment that I was unresponsive to Mulshankerbhai’s attitude. He kept silent, which indeed conveyed a warning

and disapproval. I was in no mood to listen. But he proved more than right. Within 24 hours my experiment created such a crisis that I had lost all control. The students divided into two groups, challenging and threatening each other with knives. I ran to Mulshankerbhai for help.

He neither got upset nor said ‘I told you so’. He took the onus of the deterioration in the atmosphere on himself and took over the responsibility to bring about a salient solution. At the evening prayer where the entire community always came together, he said “Here we are not interested in who went wrong to steal from his trusting colleague, but we have gathered to live and create an atmosphere of total trust, where everyone feel free from the fear of losing anything and feels safe always. Nothing will be tempting although lying unprotected. We will seek always to restore to the owner any loss of her/his.” The lesson of creating an atmosphere of trust in the commune was ingrained in me.

I was then invited to lead the college of education at Vedchhi in Surat District by veteran Gandhian, respected Jugatram Dave. He was the founder of the Vedchhi experiment of Gandhiji’s Nai Talim. With Jugatramji’s guidance about 64 forest labourers’ cooperative societies had been set up to use all the forest produce and care for the forests. Over time, members of the cooperative societies wanted to have a higher education institution for their children. Thus was established Gandhi Vidyapith and the then President of India Dr. Zakir Hussein inaugurated it in 1967. The college of education was one of the institutions of the Vidyapith.

Jugatrambhai was a democrat to the core. I often had disagreements with him. It ultimately reached a trying time for me, so I went to him and said “I think I should leave, I am unhappy about always being in arguments with you.” It was then that he said, “Disagreements are always welcome. But how can we now separate when we are wedded to the cause of Nai Talim? Never ever think of leaving Vedchhi”. So it is that I am living in Vedchhi even now, long after Jugatramji’s death in 1985.

Whenever he felt he was wrong, he would immediately come running to me and say “I have come to apologize. Although you had drawn my attention, I still held on and did not agree, but now I realize that yours was the correct way to go about in the matter. Let us move in that direction.” A man who was 30-35 years older than me, a colleague of Gandhiji since the Sabarmati Ashram, and

who had created the unique Ashram of Vedchhi, never wavered from correcting his ways. He considered everyone and anyone with whom he worked as his nearest friend and colleague.

These were the lessons I tried to live on whilst training teachers for Nai Talim. I have to admit that I do not yet, have the courage to come forth with an apology like Jugatrambhai. But I at least know the goal that I should seek. These stalwarts and of course my dear Bhagwat are my mentors who helped me to organize the experiments I am now going to describe.

Nai Talim Teacher Training Program⁵

The one year teacher education program at Vedchhi started in 1968, admitting 40-50 students each year. Student life on the campus was as per the principles of self-help and self-reliance based on Gandhian philosophy. Students engaged in cooking, cleaning utensils, and washing clothes and in the maintenance of the entire campus as part of their learning activities to be self-reliant.

The main features of the program included learning through participation in activities; self-directed learning followed up by group work and group discussion, independent analysis of a problem by student teachers and the practice of self-motivation learning based on experiences. Subjects were not taught as independent disciplines, but woven into specifically designed activities or projects of 5 to 15 days duration, located in the surrounding rural areas, enabling direct contact with the community.

Student teachers assessed the basic needs of the rural communities residing in the geographical areas. These included the problem of drinking water, personal and community health, cleanliness of the village, problems of landless labourers to issue related to development projects. The community benefited from the interaction with student teachers and engaged in evolving towards resolution of problems. Specific problems of schools and teachers were also identified and community members engaged with the process of finding possible solutions. Often pertinent issues were taken up for discussion, including ideas of Rabindranath Tagore or any national/man-made calamity.

For example the “Tagore Project⁶” was undertaken for a 15-day period in 1977-78. Each faculty member was assigned a group of about ten students. Four groups

were formed and an elected leader of each group with one faculty member attached to each group. For the first five days the students met in small groups of 5-10 and studied the problems of primary education at both local and national level, discussed the principles of educational psychology as emerging from the works of Tagore and developed a day-to-day program of activities to be undertaken with the pupils of the village schools and the people of the community.

In this preparatory stage, the students received guidance from the faculty members and from a couple of people from the adjoining villages who taught the students some songs of the poet. A detailed program was worked out during the five days of preparation. The program included rural health day, village cleanliness and Decoration Day, Tagore Memorial Day, parents' day, community-meetings, games for the children and the adults of the village, and self-study. This program involved groups of students residing in selected villages. During these ten days a number of social workers were invited to participate in the program. Towards the end an educational exhibition on Tagore's educational philosophy was organized. The trainees had collected literature on Tagore and developed charts and models through group work.

Such a program helped in understanding the problems of rural school, educational psychology work in classrooms, the relationship between the school and the society (Social Education) and understanding of the role of education as an instrument of change.

When UN declared 'The Year of the Disabled' we took up the problem of Special Education. We focussed our year long activities on children and people with disabilities. This had some influence on the group of students when they went out to seek work in schools. Kashmiri, did something that is still in our hearts. She had been disappointed at five places when she was looking for a job. At the sixth encounter she was chosen. But, she stood up to say, "Sir, I indeed want the job badly, yet I feel I need to be true to the problems of the disabled that I have understood whilst at Vedchi. I would be happy were you to offer the job to the disabled man whom you have interviewed before me. His need as a breadwinner is much greater than mine."

Learning Child Psychology

UNESCO in its publication, *Preparing Teachers for*

Lifelong Learning gives a description of the Nai Talim teacher training program:

The trainees (students) go to nearby habitations, survey the children in age group 4-6, meet the community leaders and choose a place to start a pre-primary school for a period of three weeks. They select the place, explore the potential of available play kits and prepare an inventory. They discuss with the faculty members the types of activities they can have with children, browse in the library, collect and prepare pictures, play kits etc. Then the groups go to the different habitations and work with the children. Stories are told, number concepts are taught, sandpits are prepared and thus the pre-primary school (Balwadi) is set up.

On the very first day a small plot of 10 sq.metres is prepared. The trainees and the children plough the land with hand implements and quick-growing vegetables are sown. During this period of two weeks, the pre-primary school runs for three hours a day. The trainees prepare their reports and next day discuss the same in a group with the Vidyapith teachers acting as consultants. At the end of two weeks the project is over. There is a meeting of the community people where the experiences are discussed and the community made socially aware of the need for education of the children. Child psychology is learned, not through the reading of books but through observation of children at play and work. Flexibility and freedom, self-study and group work, observations and activities are the salient features of the methodology that promotes actively the integration of theory and practice. (pp 135)

On the whole, the program of teacher training emphasizes continuity, comprehensiveness and integration and is organized on a continuing basis throughout the year. The emphasis is on self-learning and group learning and through activities and practical work. The curriculum is a series of projects. There is no rigidity of timetable. There is no specificity of the space to work. The trainees work in an institution which is not space bound, time bound, nor bound to a rigid curriculum. Students plan projects and activities to be undertaken by the children in the community and in the fields. The link with the community service demands the total involvement of the student teacher. During the period of internship the student teacher is evaluated by himself, the community and the faculty member. (pp 52-53).

Educational Tours

Educational tours were based on real life experiences. We considered it necessary that our future teachers not only be teachers of a particular village or a school, but be concerned about the entire nation. As a result it was in our schedule for the academic year to involve the group in "on the job training to face conflict situations. Hence, educational tours were organized to places to make an effort to solve the problems facing the national community. Be it Assam, or Bangladeshi refugees or Chambal dacoits (bandits), floods or drought, man made disasters like communal violence or formation of Bangladesh, it is our duty to contribute our smallest might. To realize this sense of duty we went wherever possible.

In 1972, 452 dacoits voluntarily surrendered to veteran Gandhian socialist Jayaprakash Narayan. JP's concern was how to help them rejoin society as human beings. So from 1972-1977 for six years – the group of trainee teachers got the opportunity to work for three weeks in prisons (open jails) where the dacoits were held. We attempted to live with them as *Ashramites*.

One of the bandits, Muratsinghji – a Robin Hood like figure in his region – was accused of 200 murders. In Sagar prison, Muratsinghji lived like a prince. We had arranged a common meal in order to bring all the inmates of the prison of different castes together for dinner. One of the members of his group asked Satya, one of our young women trainees: "Dauji (as Muratsingji was addressed) wants you to serve him and ten of us tomorrow at the common meal!" Satya asked "Why me?" The answer was "We have found out that you are a high caste Brahmin, that's why!"

Unhesitatingly she answered, "Dauji, why the farce? I can get our group to drop the idea of the common meal! Were I to accede to your suggestion the spirit of having an inter-caste get-together will be lost." It was then that Muratsinghji rose to the occasion, "Oh you fools! Learn from this young woman! We are now trying to be Gandhians as promised to the respected JP. We cannot continue our old ways!" Next day he sat to have common meals. For three successive years he insisted on having common meals when our group went to live with him in prison!

The prison became a Gandhi Ashram for all of us, simple living, and sharing our lives together, singing and

praying to change us. It helped our trainees gain self-confidence and the ability to communicate directly with individuals and groups who had used violence as a means of livelihood. It also helped those misguided friends of ours to regain their humanity.

Evening Prayers

Our very important session was the meeting after the evening prayer. In that meeting we reviewed the day's activities and all the students and staff took part. We sat together daily discussing - What happened? What should have happened? What to do next? And seeking together the next step. This self-evaluation was a continual process of systematic analysis of the program. Every year the yearly plan was given to the students in advance. It was changed and improved throughout the academic year as the group worked on it

At one time, after having been involved in the training program for over six months, one of the groups started worrying about their annual examinations, conducted by the State Board of Examination, Education Department of the Gujarat Government. Ishwarbhai and Kashmiri, two of the students, declared at the evening meeting "We have been following the plan as envisaged by you for all these days. Now we want to change it and do what is more important from our point of view. We have created a plan and that is to be followed from now on". So they were invited to unfold their plan.

"We have to appear at the Board Examination so now on all projects and programs are to be abandoned. We want lectures in the classrooms. The very first paper Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is an important one of 100 marks. Jyotibhai is supposed to guide us in that. So far he has never talked about that subject in a class. We want him to give lectures on all the topics that are to be covered under that subject."

I intervened "Dear Kashmiri I do not see any need for it. The subject is well covered....". "Please sir, the matter is not for discussion we want you to explain every detail of all the topics mentioned in the syllabus."

Some more girls joined Kashmiri. "Now nothing but class lectures. No other activities, no programs. We want answers to all the questions asked in the annual examination of this very paper. You will lecture for the whole day, and days on, till we are satisfied."

"Well friends", I said, "try to be reasonable, do you

think a person can go on talking all day long? It would be boring in an hour or so. When one wants to learn, how can words spoken by somebody become enough?

“Now Jyotibhai, there is no escape for you. We all are together. We have come to this conclusion and this plan was decided by us working for the last two days amongst us.” said Kashmira. I had to submit. “You all win. But do have mercy and when you feel you all have had enough do relieve me of giving such long talks.”

Next day not a single student was missing and I could see their mischievous happiness written on their faces. “We have cornered you!” They thought they would be learning! So, for two days they tolerated being in classroom. And then Kashmira stood up and said “We have got the message. Indeed there is no need to listen to lectures. Since we joined here whatever opportunities that were offered, every work and every activity we carried out is based on the understanding of Nai Talim. How tacitly clear it is that Education is for life, through life, living sincerely and honestly.”

Indeed ours was an open forum and all dealings were totally transparent. Thus this evening sessions were the springboard to create a democratic community where a consensus was to be arrived at; no one was to enforce her/his views on the group. The experiences gathered whilst implementation of a decision would be investigated by all together. The whole group decided upon any changes and improvements or further steps to be taken. Building up mutual trust and love was the goal for the group. It was absolutely essential that no one had to feel hurt, neglected or being victimized. Utmost care for the weakest was a must. As it happened we had with us young women and men of the age group 20-25 years working and living in a community, where they shared all and every responsibilities together and hence their personal relationships also opened up to problems. I am emboldened to say that we had most healthy experiences and never ever had problems of disciplining anyone individually. The group lived harmoniously to build an invigorating atmosphere.

The basis of such a successful organization of the training course was:

- The existence of a common commitment to the philosophy of the institution
- Recruitment of a sympathetic staff.

- A motivating climate with freedom to experiment
- Community respect
- Reliance on mental and human inputs rather than financial
- Accountability by the schools and community at large

As UNESCO in its publication⁷ notes – “The major factor of the success is the totality of the view and comprehensiveness of innovative practice. A second cause of success of the program is the residential nature of the institution, which provided ample opportunities for continuous interaction. A third factor is the strong linkage with the schools and community in the neighbourhood.” (page 137).

Festival of Admission

As we grew in creating this program we started involving the current trainees to help new incumbents understand the environment of the institution. We called it Festival of Admission – *Praveshotsav*. Why call it a festival of admission? Because all work has to be enjoyable. The Vedchhi tradition has been to involve the entire community in such an event, i.e. admitting a new group of students in Gandhi Vidyapith. The entire faculty and their families, the outgoing batch of the students of the course, and the newcomers, their parents and guardians, enjoyed the fruits of education at Vidyapith.

Should we not have a festive atmosphere when we have a newcomer join us in the community or family? Thus we at Vedchhi, considered this as a ceremony of initiating them in the Ashram ways. We wanted people to choose and decide for themselves rather than being pushed into a situation. We wanted them to “walk out” when they felt “this is not for me”. Freely considering the value of what one is getting into and making a decision of experimenting with what is offered was felt by us an essential part of admitting a candidate. It usually happened that half a dozen of admission seekers did arrive at such a conclusion. It is also a fact that of the 200 or more seeking to join the course, we have had to dissuade quite a number of them to limit intake.

Finally, because of our openness in the procedure, often it has happened that the grades obtained at the university were of little help. We looked for people who would like to open themselves to experiences and who had honest concern to do all one can. We could help

those who did not have A grade. This program has shown that given a chance those who have not been understood by the “mega machines” of universities, do perform wonderfully and have become committed lifelong teachers.

The final point I would like to make is about some dissonance by so called educators, learned ones and intellectuals. Several educators have raised questions about our method and have reservations and doubts. But I have to say that these are our faiths and basic principles. There is concern that we are exploiting and degrading the students. But we differ and hold that handing over certificates by answering a few examination papers is an insult to the youths who need to seek higher goals in life. It is our duty to help them gain self-confidence, to unfold their abilities by taking responsibilities and to devote themselves to society at large. These are the essential ingredients for the growth of our humankind.

Footnotes

¹ Gijubhai Bhadeka's made prominent contributions towards pre primary education for marginalized children in Saurashtra, Western India during the 1930s. He wrote several books in Gujarati on bringing up children and education

² Mumbai based Tara Bhen Modak worked with Gijubhai and followed his thoughts and working method. During 1940's she established several balwadis in the tribal area of Thane District, Maharashtra. She is well known for her early primary materials made with locally available materials.

³ Gijubhai worked with Nanabhai and Mulshanker Bhatt. They established Basic education in Saurashtra area and also conducted teacher's training programs.

⁴ Inspired by Gandhi's ideas during 10th century Jugatram Dave started a forest based co operative organization at Surat Zilla Gujarat by which adivasis established control over forest wealth. It was also decided that cooperative society's part of income will be spent towards educational development, using which, a basic education school opened. With an aim for teacher's training for these schools Gandhi Vidyapeeth was established

⁵ The summary of the Vedchhi's training program is taken from National Focus Group on Teacher Education and Curriculum Renewal, NCERT 2005 page 12.

⁶ Tagore Project – as reported in “Preparing Teachers for life-long education” a study by UNESCO Institute of Education, Hamburg 1984 pages 51, 52.

⁷ Preparing Teachers for Life Long Learning, Edited by H.L.Goad., 204 pages, 1984

These experiences are a result of attempting to use the principle *Education Through Life for Life* envisaged by Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. I recall Gurudev Tagore's poem in this context

**Welcome call for all who have inquisitive mind
and are overflowing with life
Commit yourself here and gain a new life.
If you agree to surrender
you will join the liveliness spread all over the forests
and the hills and the sky,
Welcome call for Oh! The inquisitive and the happy
Your heart will be full of that heavenly song and
what is more
You will be placed right at the beautiful feet's of
the lamp,
Which burns for social good.**



Education for Happiness

by Bonnie Wishne

Bonnie Wishne is the director at The Ancona School, in Chicago, USA. A parent-founded cooperative school, based on the Montessori tradition, Ancona is a co-educational, elementary school enrolling 260 children from a wide range of racial and ethnic backgrounds in Pre-primary (age 3) to Grade 8. The school's diversity is valued as a means of promoting understanding, joyful learning, respect, and social justice.

Early in August, my partner Bob, my cousin Berdine, her husband Bill and I camped for a couple of nights in the Kaniksu National Forest in the Idaho Panhandle just a few miles south of the Canadian border. We backpacked a couple of miles in and set up camp near the kind of crystal clear glacial lake ringed by mountains that we mostly see in geology textbooks. We were blessed with stunningly beautiful weather; the sky was the breathtakingly clear blue, the kind that you can only see when you are up high and hundreds of miles away from the lights and pollution of cities.

We spent our days doing the things you do in such a place: purifying water from the creek, hanging our food bag from the evergreens so as not to attract any bears, checking out the muddy paths around the lake, watching the fish swim about and marvelling at the sunlight dancing on slim reeds and bleached driftwood. On our second afternoon, we returned from a challenging and sweaty climb to a higher lake cradled in a granite cirque and went for a bracing swim in the cold waters of our lake. We were quite happily drying out like lizards on the large flat rocks at the lake's mouth when we noticed a family with two small girls who had hiked in for the day. The parents thought they were on their way to the trail down, but the girls, like most small children having a grand time, had other ideas. The younger one, surely no more than two, giggled gleefully as she hopped and jumped nimbly from rock to rock. I was nervous, but her mother, a disturbing distance away I thought, never flinched. Her older sister,

maybe four or five, waded a few inches into the squishy mud-bottomed lake and stooped close trying to catch one of the tadpoles that was darting about. Her dad soon came over to enthusiastically discuss the frog life cycle. And Berdine, a physician in Spokane, Washington said, "If every child in this country could have an education like that, we wouldn't have the problems that we have."

I thought about that moment this weekend, as I read a book called *Happiness*, left for me on my desk by long-time Ancona parent Debra Hammond, who worked with us as an assistant teacher last year. I much admire Debra, and I would take seriously any book she recommended, yet I have to confess to some scepticism when I first saw the title and felt the newsprint-like paper of the volume. I wondered what sort of feel-good pop psychology Debra had gotten herself into. However, her message said that she thinks Ancona should be organized around the principles in the book, and a closer look revealed it to be written by Richard Layard, a prominent British economist. The book is from the new field of behavioural economics that marries economic analytic tools with psychology to explain why human beings do not necessarily make decisions using the rational cost/benefit analysis assumed by classical free-market economics. Drawing upon philosophy, economics, psychology, pharmacology, brain research, tax policy and religion, the book was obviously serious.

Behavioural economics looks at how people frame economic decisions. Layard gives this example.

Suppose you were asked to choose between living in two imaginary worlds, in which prices were the same:

- In the first world, you get \$50,000 a year, while other people get \$25,000 on average.
- In the second world, you get \$100,000 a year, while other people get \$250,000 on average.

Which would you choose?

When this question was put to a group of Harvard students, the majority chose the *first world*. They were happy to be absolutely poorer as long as their position relative to others improved. According to Layard¹, many other studies confirm that people will accept a fall in actual living standards if they move up relative to other people. And we wonder why middle-schoolers and ever-younger children seem always to be jockeying for position amongst their peers!

Layard's big point is that Western societies have been predicated for some time on the idea that increased economic growth will lead to increased happiness. The research shows, however, that while Western countries are richer than they have ever been, overall happiness has not changed in the past 50 years. There must be factors other than income level that contribute to or detract from happiness.

Now, as an educator who can be exceedingly happy lying on a rock in the sun watching children hunt for tadpoles, I don't find this to be a particularly startling discovery. But Layard is asking why our public policy is predicated on economic growth if it is not, in fact, making us happier. And if you are interested in all of the policy implications of his work, I would highly recommend to you this thought-provoking book.

But today, I want to take up Debra's challenge to ask if there are implications for education and for raising children, because I think that when most of us are asked what we want most for our children, we say that above all, we want them to be happy. Layard's outlook is based on that of the Enlightenment philosopher Jeremy Bentham, who argued that the best society is that where the people are the happiest. It's an egalitarian idea, because everyone's happiness counts equally,² and so, actions are to be judged on whether they produce the most happiness for the most people. So one question we might ask is, is a good classroom one which produces the most happiness for the most children? Might the most learning take place for the most children in the classrooms where they are happiest? What makes a classroom a place of happiness?

Layard presents a good deal of evidence of the negative effects of social comparison. He makes this case in relation to material goods: I may feel very good to get a Mercedes if none of my friends have one. But soon, I adapt to having a Mercedes, and so, it no longer makes me happy. I may even come to believe I *need* the Mercedes.

And as others around me do get Mercedes, I might now ratchet up my comparison to people with even more expensive cars and feel unhappy once again. This is one reason that our increasing wealth, once people are lifted out of poverty, does not appear to lead to increased levels of happiness.

I think we can make an analogy to classroom work, grades and test scores. I might feel happier to get a better grade than my peer, but that happiness doesn't last long. Soon, I adapt to having the higher grade, and the glow of my new status wears off. It hasn't really resulted in a net gain in happiness, because it may have reduced the happiness of my peer and that, potentially, has other negative consequences for the classroom. Secondly, I may now compare myself to a new group at an even higher level, and so I once again feel unhappy. Layard's research shows that people who care the most about money experience the least increase in happiness when they get more. If we think of the most competitive students we have known (some of us may BE the most competitive students we have known), the same is probably true of getting high grades or test scores. In fact, there is a body of research that shows that grades actually depress student motivation. With its Montessori roots, Ancona has always believed that children should learn to work for the satisfaction in the work and in their own progress and not to be better than another; behavioural economics gives us new fuel for that fire.

Layard argues that social comparison is a matter of human nature, if so, we probably can't eliminate it in children, but we might be able to lessen it. This week's *Newsweek* has a cover story entitled, *The New First Grade: Are Kids Getting Pushed Too Fast, Too Soon?* In the story, a principal in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, tells of a father who wanted to know how his son stacked up against his classmates. When the principal said that the school didn't rank kindergartners, the father asked, if they *did* do rankings, would the boy be in the top 10th?³ We have to wonder how happy that father and hence, his son, will ever be with the son's performance. Here I am reminded of my first classroom in Bolingbrook, Illinois. I was sharing the results of our standardized tests with the parents of an exceptionally bright 5th grader. He scored in the 99th percentile in reading and the 95th percentile in math, I told them. "So math is his weak area," replied the father.

Weak? I thought incredulously, when his son performs better than 94% of the population? Shouldn't that father have simply been happy?

At Ancona, we resist this sort of competitive hierarchy in our classrooms in the hope that children will not learn to depend on status for their happiness or their knowledge of their own learning, because in the long run, it won't produce the desired result. It may produce an opposite result. And we do not have to subtract the related unhappiness and possibly anti-social behavior of those who come to feel they do not stack up.

Going back to the idea of a frame, Layard draws upon cognitive psychotherapy to demonstrate that we can control how we think about the events in our lives. What he recommends (and his book is far more complex than I am portraying it) is that we learn, and by extension teach children, to set our goals and make our choices based on the greatest happiness for all and that we learn, as well, to draw happiness from the well-being of others. In a properly educated world, he says, the activities that give more satisfaction include pursuing the happiness of others.⁴ Only by "cultivating respect for those who contribute to the welfare of others [can we] increase the amount of kindness and cooperation in the world"⁵ – or a classroom.

References

^{1,2,4,5,6} Page 42, 5, 119, 156, 56 "*Happiness – Lessons from a New Science*", by Richard Layard

³Newsweek, September 11, 2006, p. 38

Since the status race is unlikely to give our children more happiness in the long-run, what we really want to do is encourage the amount of kindness and cooperation in the world,⁶ and I am happy to say that despite many cultural obstacles – read Layard if you want to think more critically about the role of television in setting those values — we are trying to do this in every Ancona classroom and in our entire community every day.

I want to bring us full circle to that moment in Idaho this summer. What made that moment so perfect that my cousin wished it for every child in America? It was a family spending leisure time together, the number one ingredient of happiness in the studies Layard cites. I don't know whether those parents knew of Montessori, but they knew to follow the interests of the children and to seize the teachable moment. It was a time of discovery, with children finding their own educations in rocks and water — no electronic equipment, no plastic toys, no videos, neither *Baby Einstein* CD's nor workbooks. Everyone was in touch with something bigger than him or herself — the awe and wonder of a mountain lake on a sunny summer day. And nobody's satisfaction depended upon outdoing someone else. It was just happy.



group profiles

The Learning Network website and the past issues of *Revive* have profiled several member groups that are working on the areas of improving the learning framework. In this issue, we are pleased to include profiles of new member groups.

There are two modes of knowledge: through argument and through experience.

Argument brings conclusions and compels us to concede them, but it does not cause certainty nor remove doubts that the mind may rest in truth, unless

this is provided by experience. — Roger Bacon, 1268

Bridging Gaps

Bridging Gaps is an entity, an idea to narrow the gap between the teacher and the taught, the instructor and the audience. It's about addressing issues of hands on – learning vs. textual learning, experiential learning vs. by rote learning and learning for life vs. learning for the moment. It is about hands-on empowerment and learning for life.

After finishing five years design course at NID, Ahmedabad, Ranjan De went into a career in advertising, publishing and printing. He conceptualised and illustrated books for children. Since 2003, he has been facilitating workshops on subjects as diverse as making workable musical instruments out of available urban junk, scientific toys from recycled material, nomadic furniture out of corrugated board and exploring innovative methods in multi-media puppetry as an educational tool.

Work Description

Ranjan believes that our present education system does not empower our teachers and instructors to impart education in a manner that empowers its audience, to think and induce self-learning on a large scale. Consequently, he tries to infuse the hands-on learning by sharing the vocational approach to subjects in both regular school and college curriculum. Schools today do not provide the students with applications training and so they are not market ready or even empowered enough to stand on their own feet, when they finish their respective courses. He hopes that his workshops and training programs will fill this gap.

Ranjan offers several workshops such as

1. *Design Oriented Workshops* on basic scripting for advertisement films, advanced scripting for documentary and short feature films, basic story boarding for advertising films etc
2. *Design and Self Exploratory Workshops* on introduction to elements of form & space, environmental exposure and orientation - emphatic observation skills advanced colour theory in 3-D / colour and optical illusions etc.
3. *Environment and Location based Workshops* on making jewellery and ornaments out of leaves, bark, vines; puppets and dolls out of leaves, bark, vines, gunny bags ; bookbinding and bookmaking with locally available material and waste paper etc

4. *9 Day Workshop on Low-cost Multi-level Puppetry as an Educational Tool*

5. *Matchstick Architecture and Solid Geometry to Basic Furniture design*

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The Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR)

The Centre for Advocacy and Research is a registered public interest group committed to interventions on gender and development issues with a focus on HIV/AIDS, education, women's health, sustainable development, child rights and elimination of violence against women and children.

Work Description

The focus of CFAR has been on monitoring the media and developing expertise to use this knowledge for strategic advocacy through and with the media. In the early 90s, CFAR predicted that since the most influential and essential instrument and organ of communication for advocacy was likely to be the mass media, requisite knowledge and skill to engage with the media needs to be developed.

In keeping with this strategic focus CFAR has been monitoring the media to gauge the influence that popular culture or entertainment and news and information media have in addressing concerns of civil society. National and regional newspapers, English and Hindi, radio programming have been monitored for issues covered by like women's health, nutrition, reservation for women, prohibition, violence against women, child rights, feticide, maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS amongst others.

Major activities include:

- Developing institutional capacity for long-term, sustained media research. Design and conduct Communication Research and audience feedback

studies. Generate a broader, inter-institutional and multi-sector exchange of experiences and perspectives on various concerns through seminars, workshops and symposiums.

- Developing appropriate materials for both policy and public advocacy.
- Assisting organizations in Capacity Building in conducting Media Advocacy.
- Partner with the media towards a more meaningful discourse on development issues.

Resources Available

CFAR has a large collection of print clippings on a variety of subjects related to social and development issues (HIV/AIDS, RCH, Violence against Women, Child Rights, Media, etc..). It also has a resource database to store (electronically) necessary data regarding television programs, news and print media. CFAR has also produced educational materials for media literacy that can be used with students in middle schools.

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Centre for Environment Education (CEE)

Established in 1984, Centre for Environment Education (CEE) is a national institution engaged in developing programmes and material to increase awareness about the environment and sustainable development.

Work Description

CEE's primary objective is improving public awareness and understanding of the environment in order to promote the conservation and sustainable use of nature and natural resources, leading to a better environment and a better quality of life. CEE develops innovative programmes and educational material, and builds capacity in the field of education for sustainable development (ESD). Some of programmes/projects organized by CEE are:

- Develop, coordinate and conduct a number of educational programmes for school children, extend

environmental education programs to college students who are on the threshold of becoming active participants in society, as citizens, decision makers and leaders. Design interpretive programmes to transform the visits to zoos, national parks and other heritage sites, into exciting educational experiences.

- Research and test innovative and creative ways of measurement, monitoring and evaluation of learning, create awareness and involve youth in formal and non-formal environmental improvement action projects. Introduce children and adults to the beauty and harmony of nature, and in the process sensitize them to the need for concern and conservation.

- Work with the industrial sector to facilitate acceptance of the concept of waste minimization as a tool for sustainable growth and profits. Develop programmes for income generation and better utilization of resources, through field programmes designed specifically for rural communities.

Resources Available

- Publications: CEE has developed and produced over 450 educational resources for a variety of target groups, and in more than 20 languages.

- Newsletters: CEE brings out more than a dozen newsletters to spread awareness on environmental and sustainable development issues.

- Audio-Visuals: CEE is one of the Video Resource Centres identified by the Television Trust for the Environment (TVE)

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D.N.Foundation

D.N. Foundation has been started in 2001 by Sr. Jeanne and Clara in a small area of Devarajeevanahalli, Bangalore. This charitable Trust, recognized by the government of Karnataka has developed several educational projects.

Work Description

D.N. Foundation works with children who otherwise would spend most of their time on the street. The centre organizes activities like circus where boys learn to juggle, acrobatic exercises, roof plantation where girls maintain a nursery and drama activities where children perform during events like Diwali, Christmas etc. Small camps (2 days) as well as long camps (10-15 days) are organized for children to motivate them to discover and explore new things.

Boarding facilities are provided for women and children who have no place to go, until they find a house, get a job or have solved their family problems. A vocational training centre is also run by the foundation which manufactures educational games used by various schools. The centre offers jobs to poor women who are unable to find work.

D.N. Foundation hosts a library with about 250 books in English or Kannada arranged per subject: literature, zoology, botany, science, history, geography, dictionaries, math etc. Here children discover that reading can be enjoyable, challenging and constructive.

The Montessori School run by D.N. Foundation has 30 kids of age 2 to 6 years. The mothers of the children get involved in the project through cooking. The children are also supervised by uneducated mothers who have received Montessori training in the centre. Evening classes are held for children who have joined higher grades in regular English medium schools. This after school program continues the Montessori program for these children.

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The Kaigal Education and Environment Programme (KEEP)

The Kaigal centre of the Krishnamurti Foundation India is located in a valley of the Palamner Ghats in Chittoor

District, Andhra Pradesh. The main objectives of KEEP are conserving the forests and its biodiversity, providing better livelihood for local communities, education for the community and their children and providing basic health care.

Work Description

KEEP is actively involved in biodiversity conservation in the reserve forests on the fringes of Kaundinya Wildlife sanctuary. Habitat restoration through afforestation and natural regeneration with community participation are some of its initiatives. By identifying appropriate income generation activities from forest collections, KEEP educated adults of the tribal communities in the processes of 'value addition'. Activities include honey processing, packaging and sale, bee keeping, composting, handicrafts works etc.

It has also initiated several rural education programs for the community and children. Sanctuary schools for children started in June 2004 and a resource facility has also been established. Workshops for teachers from government schools and continuing education for teachers of the sanctuary schools is an integral component of education programs. KEEP also works with youth and children from nearby villages and government schools and provides an interactive learning opportunity for students from city schools.

KEEP also provides nutritious mid-day meals for the children in the Sanctuary Schools, incorporating yoga and exercises in the daily routine of children, stressing on hygiene in the villages and support and intervention for children with physical disabilities.

Resources Available

KEEP provides training in livelihood programs like honey processing and packaging and pickling. It also conducts several teacher workshops and has a resource centre for teachers with a library, teaching aids and a simple laboratory facility.

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Jeevan Tirth

Jeevan Tirth is a voluntary organization based at Juna Koba, Gandhinagar, registered as a trust in 1997 by fulltime social workers. Jivan Tirth believes that life is the most valuable possession of human beings. The objective of Jeevan Tirth is to create citizens who pine for and live life in its true sense.

Work Description

Jeevan Tirth's vision is to make efforts so that every citizen of the future generation dares to think independently and live a meaningful life, and becomes a global citizen by nurturing local culture and heritage and letting down the barriers between individuals. They become healthy, knowledgeable, wise and live with joy, love and understanding.

Jivan Tirth works through a four fold programme including children, adolescents, environment and village development issues. "Anandotsav" programme provides opportunities for growth to children. Friendship with adolescents helps to create global perspective and develop creative approaches. Reverence for life is the foundation for environmental activism. Self governance in villages is enabled through self leadership development of rural youth.

JivanTirth also plays an active role in human rights, social justice and displacement related issues. Trustees and workers of Jivan Tirth consider themselves as life long learners, believing in education through life and education throughout life. They consider Jivan Tirth as "School for life lovers" – "Jivan Premio ki shala" and its mission to spread joy, love and understanding. JivanTirth works in a modest way and generally does not accept government or foreign funds. JivanTirth welcomes support from friends, well-wishers and other trusts.

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Sahaj – Shishu Milap

SAHAJ a society for alternatives in health, development and education was founded in 1984. SAHAJ members

work in diverse areas such as: low-cost medicine production; holistic health and non-drug therapies; reproductive and health rights, training, organizational development and consulting in health care management; environment conservation and agriculture farming; rights of fish workers and Dalits; rituals and practices around birthing; policy advocacy related to reproductive health, gender, pharmaceuticals, children's education, child labour, primary school curricula, etc.

Work Description

Initiated in 1989, Shishu Milap, has been involved with street and working children and children in the poor communities: organizing and facilitating educational and recreational facilities for these children. In addition, Shishu Milap publishes and sells low-priced children's books and toys, advocates policies and procedures for education and welfare of poor children and towards abolition of child labour.

Shishu Milap's educational strategies include recreation and play with children to encourage reading/writing, non-formal education centres, special summer camps for street and working children, advocacy related to enrolment procedures for street/working children, advocacy related to quality and content of education and functioning of school, organising parents' committees to monitor quality of education and facilitating Bal Samiti's (children's committees) in each hamlet.

SAHAJ-Shishu Milap has been active in the state and nationwide campaign against child labour. They believe that children have a right to joyful learning and right to quality education. The Bal Samiti members made a powerful statement for their right to shelter in the face of recent demolitions of their homes. SAHAJ-Shishu Milap has been helping people routinely intervene in the courts, including the Supreme Court of India, against demolitions of homes in the bastis they have been residing.

Resources Available

Shishu Milap publishes and sells children's books and toys and also conducts exhibitions of educational materials.

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Sita School

Sita School is a daytime, alternative school, about 28 kms to the north of Bangalore, started in 1975 by Jane Sahi. Jane Sahi born in England moved to India in 1968 in search of a deeper understanding of Gandhiji's life and values. Gandhiji continues to be to a strong source of inspiration, in particular, his vision and theory of basic education 'which is rooted in the soil both literally and figuratively.'

Forty children aged between 4 and 15 years, come to this school from the surrounding villages of Silvepura, Fatimapura, Thimalapura and Hurulichikanahalli. They are largely from the socially and economically underprivileged sections of the Dalit community; children of migrant workers, children of uprooted and unstable families. Most children take the Karnataka State Board's examination in the Kannada medium as private candidates when they are ready for it.

Work Description

Children at Sita School are encouraged to learn at their own pace without pressure of exams or fear of failure and disapproval. In addition to language study, practical math, social studies and science, children learn clay work, tailoring, needlework, printing, first aid, food, health and home remedies, kitchen gardening. Jane believes that poetry, drama, stories, puppetry, painting, making models involve children in understanding a subject in a way that abstract learning cannot.

Teaching and learning is largely clustered around themes. Children are encouraged to plan, explore, experiment and evaluate topics in a variety of ways that cut across traditional subject boundaries. A theme is usually explored for between one to three months. Cooperation, sharing and respect for the other is consciously fostered. The syllabus which has evolved over the years is built on the child's own experience and knowledge of the immediate environment and

the community. Jane suggests that it is difficult to prescribe a definitive method or a set of methods for alternative education. If education is to be vital and meaningful it has to be organic, and open to change. Each child is so specific and unique that we have to evolve ways to deal with each one of them.

Art is not an additional activity limited to the weekly drawing class, but is the basis, the underlying means of expression of all learning especially at the primary level. Nearly all the children at Sita School draw profusely and spontaneously and without inhibition. Jane believes that a child can sometimes visually express something that would otherwise on a verbal level, remain suppressed.

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Bangalore, Karnataka 560 090

Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre (VASCSC)

VASCSC is a pioneering community science centre which aims to nurture young minds and direct them towards scientific thinking with methods and techniques which make the process of enquiry and learning a fun filled, enjoyable and lasting experience. The core of the centre's philosophy is to take school and college students beyond the rigid framework of science textbooks and encourage them to think, explore and create.

It was way back in 1963 that, one of India's most renowned scientists Dr. Vikram A Sarabhai, founded a centre that would encourage scientific thinking and innovative teaching. After the untimely death of Dr. Sarabhai in 1971, Smt. Indira Gandhi, renamed the Centre the Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre.

Work Description

Regular Programs of VASCSC include open house, Special Chemistry labs, Biology projects, Advanced B.Sc.(Physics) programme, Saturday Science Forum, Science Hands - on, Model Rocketry, Paper-plane making, Hobby workshops, Summer programmes, Science Festivals, Computer training, Maths is fun,

Math Olympiad training programme, Astronomy club, Science mobile exhibitions in rural/urban areas, Popular lecture series of eminent scientist.

The VASCSC also has several programs for schools. The school visit package includes introduction to the Centre's activities & demo sessions in individual labs. The centre also conducts science projects using experiments related to a science topic chosen by the students based on their syllabus or interests. The centre also has laboratory facilities for children to try their hands on ideas and experiments. Students can avail the lab facilities for doing experiments and explore further.

Resources Available

• Workshop - The VASCSC workshop is well equipped to handle most school level projects, model making

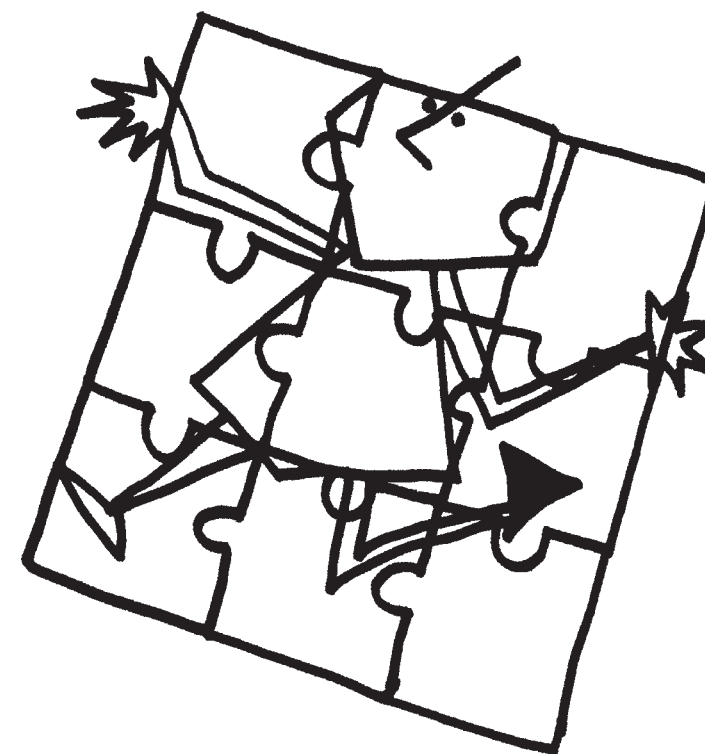
as well as prototype making. This facility is utilized by the Centre to develop educational material which is used for in-house exhibitions and also outsourced.

• Laboratories - VASCSC has well equipped laboratories in Biology, Chemistry, Computers, Mathematics and Physics which can be used by schools.

• Library - VASCSC has well furnished library with more than 12,000 books, scientific journals and special reference section for school/college students.

Contact Information:

Contact person: Dilip Surkar
Opp. Gujarat University
Navrangpura, Ahmedabad 380 009
phone: (079) 26302914, 26302085
email: info@vascsc.org



Contact Information

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Creative Writing

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Tel: (044) 24937596, 24937803
Email: ahalyachari@kfionline.org
<http://www.kfionline.org>
Educationist

Alok Mathur, Chandrika
Center for Teacher Learning
KFI, Bangalore Education Centre
'Haridvanam', Thatguni Post
Kanakpura Road, Bangalore 560 062
Tel: (080) 28435240/241 extn 131
Email: alokchandrika@yahoo.co.in
Teacher Development Resources

Ananda Bharathi
C/o NEEDA, 12-13-1173
Street NO 10, Tarnaka
Secunderabad 500 017
Tel: (040) 27019315, 27017700
Email: srissl@sol.net.in
Alternative School

Anil Bordia
Doosra Dashak
C-113, Shivaji Marg
Vijay Path, Tilak Nagar
Jaipur, Rajasthan 302 004
Tel: (0141) 2624820, 2573141
doosradashak@mantraonline.com
<http://www.doosradashak.org>
Working with Rural Adolescents

Annamalai, E.
1047, Panchamantra Road,
Kuvempunagar, Mysore 570 023
Tel: (0821) 566590
Language Education

Annamalai and Prema
Gandhi Study Centre
58, Venkatnarayana Road
T Nagar, Chennai 600 017
Tel: (044) 24346549, (0) 94441 83198
Email: gandhacentre@dataone.in
Resources related to Gandhi

Anuradha S. and Krishna
Thulir
Sittilingi PO, Theerthamalai HPO
Harur Taluk, Dharmapuri Dt
Tamil Nadu 636 906
Tel: (04346) 258611
Email: thulir@tribalhealth.org
<http://www.thulir.org/>
Educational Resource Center

Aruna Raghavan
Shikshayatan School
II/197, Anugriha
Arasavanangkadu
Tamil Nadu 612 603
Tel: (04366) 269478, (0) 94431 69478
Email: actrust@sancharnet.in
www.absolsoftec.com/netact/index.htm
Early Childhood, Glenn Doman Method

Arvind Gupta
15, Akash Ganga, IUCAA
Pune University, Pune
Tel: (020) 5691414/415/125
Email: arvindguptatoys@hotmail.com
www.arvindguptatoys.com
Science Educations, Toys, Books

Ashok Bhargava, Lata Shah
IDEAL, A 86, Jagannath Puram
Lalbag, Baroda, Gujarat 390 011
Tel: (0) 98251 87755
Email: ideal-india@icenet.net
Health Education, Teacher Training

Basavaraju, E.
BGVS, IISc Campus
Bangalore 560 012
Tel: (080) 22932395, (0) 94482 43496
Email: bgvs_karnataka@yahoo.co.in
Science and Math Education

Bharathi Trust
184/14CA, Illrd Cross Street
Jayanagar, Tiruvallur 602 001
Tel: (04116) 262607, (0) 98840 80048
Email: bharathitrust@yahoo.com
Education for tribal communities

Binay Pattanayak
Technical Support Group (SSA)
10 -B, I. P. Estate
New Delhi - 110 002
Tel: (011) 23379191, 23379196 (O)
Email: binay.pattanayak@gmail.com
Education Consultant

Bodh
AA-1 Anita Colony
Bajaj Nagar, Jaipur 302 015
Tel: (0141) 2554351, 2708460
Email: bodh_ss@rediffmail.com <http://www.bodh.org/>
Community Schools

Bunker Roy and S. Srinivasan
Barefoot College, Tilonia Dist,
Ajmer, Rajasthan 305 816
Tel: (01463) 288233, 288209
Email: barefootvasu@gmail.com
<http://www.barefootcollege.org/>
Bal Panchayat, Community Schooling

Center for Advocacy and Research
C-100/B, 1st Floor Kalkaji
New Delhi 110 019
Tel: (011) 26292787, 26430133
Email: cfarasam@ndf.vsnl.net.in
<http://www.cfaronline.org/>
Media Literacy and Education

Center for Environment Education
Mamata Pandya
Thaltej Tekra, Ahemdabad 380 054
Tel: (079) 26858002
Email: mamata.pandya@ceeindia.org

N. Ramjee
Scientist In-charge, TN State Office
734, Avinashi Road, President's Hall
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu 641 018
Tel: (0422) 2215885, 09443194272
Email: N.Ramjee@ceeindia.org
<http://www.ceeindia.org>
Environmental Education

Chitra Krishnamurthy
100, K. G. S. Layout
Vijayanagar, Bangalore 560 040
Tel: (080) 57636973
Email: chitrakrishnamurthy@gmail.com
Educator, Teacher Trainer

Comet Media
Topiwala Lane School,
Lamington Road, Mumbai - 400 007
Tel: (022) 2386 9052, 23826674
Email: cometmedia@vsnl.net
<http://www.cometmedia.org>
Resource Centre for Educational Materials

Concerned For Working Children
303/2, L. B. Shastri Nagar
Vimanpura PO Bangalore 560 017
Tel: (080) 25234611
Email: cwc@pobox.com
<http://www.workingchild.org/>
Education for working children

D. N. Foundation
#40, Devrarajeevanahalli,
Ambedkar Nagar, B Block
Bangalore 560 045
Tel: (080) 25494525, 25802089
E-mail: pdvindia@yahoo.fr
Montessori Materials, Teacher Training

Devika V. R.
ASEEMA Trust
3, Mangala Murthi, 65, 1st Main Road
Shastrinagar, Chennai - 600 020
Tel: (044) 24465415
Email: vrdevika@yahoo.co.in
<http://www.aseematrust.org/>
Folk Arts and Education

Feruzan Mehta
Seeds Of Peace
Dhun Abad, IInd Floor, 106 Warden Road
Mumbai, Maharashtra
Tel: (0) 98219 29072
Email: feruzan@mehtapost.net
Conflict Resolution, Youths

Dr Gananath
Suvidya
No. 21, Gr Fl, 2nd Cross, 10th Main
Gururaja Layout, Banashankari 3rd Stage
Bangalore 560 085
Tel: (080) 26691495
Email: suvidyaonline@gmail.com
Math Education, Educational Materials

Geetha Arvind
H-702, Hazel, Raheja Residency
Koramangala 3rd block
Bangalore 560 034
Tel: (080) 41500937, (0) 99450 94246
Email: geetha.arvind@gmail.com
Peace Education

Geeta Ramanujam and Lalu Narayanan
Kathalaya
#88, BHBCS layout, 3rd Main
2nd Cross, Banerghatta Road
Bangalore 560 076
Tel: (080) 26689856, (0) 98452 07073
Email: kathalaya@gmail.com
<http://www.kathalaya.org>
Storytelling in Education

Fr Godfrey D'lima
Vishwa Mandal Sewashram
Shirpur Vishwa Mandal Sevasram, Shirpur
Dhule District, Maharashtra 425 405
Tel: (02563) 255561
Email: vishwamandal@sancharnet.in
Education of Adivasi children

Gopalakrishnan and Vijayalekshmi
Sarang
Agali-Chittoor P.O
Palakkad, Kerala 678581
Tel: 04924-209038, 296660
Homeschooling

Gram Mangal
Nilesh Nimkar
Post Aine Tal, Dahanu District
Thane, Maharashtra 401 607
grammangal2006@hotmail.com

Ramesh Panse
Sugandh, 2118, Sadashiv Peth
Pune 411 030
Tel: (020) 24330343
Email: panse_r@hotmail.com
<http://www.grammangal.org>
Resource Center, School, Early Childhood Education

Gurveen Kaur
Center for Learning
C-128, AWHO Ved Vihar
Subhashnagar, Secunderabad 500 015
Tel: (040) 27790457, 27990529
Email: gurveenkaur@rediffmail.com
<http://www.centreforlearning.org>
Educator, Alternative School

Hameed Manjeshwar
VALORED
Media & Advocacy Coord.
St.Joseph Highlands, Lower Berdoor
Mangalore - 575 002
Tel: (0824) 2439895, 2430064
Email: sirimak@rediffmail.com
Gender issues in Education

Hanne De Bruin and Rajagopal
Kattaikuttu School
16/31, Selva Vinayakar Koil Street
Vedasala Nagar, Sevilimedu Post
Kanchipuram 631 502, Tamil Nadu
Tel: (041 12) 237517, 237525
Email: kattaiku@vsnl.com
<http://www.kattaikuttu.org>
Integrating Folk Art in Education

Dr K. M. D. Henry
17/390/2-2-1-3, NVR St. Extn
Nehru Nagar Madanapalle
Andhra Pradesh 517 325
Tel: (08571) 230440
Painting, Drawing, Arts

India Literacy Project
27, 3rd Floor, Narayani Apartments
2nd Cross, Ramakrishnappa Layout
Geddalahalli, Sanjaynagar
Bangalore 560 094
Tel: (080) 23519693
Email: ilpindia@gmail.com
<http://www.ilpnet.org/>
Rural Education Initiatives

Indian Montessori Centre
Hymamshu Jyothi Kala Peetha
74, 4th Main Rd, Malleshwaram
Bangalore 560 055
Tel: (080) 23467993
info@indianmontessoricentre.org <http://www.indianmontessoricentre.org/>
Montessori Training

Indira Vijaysimha
Poorna Learning Centre
B 104, Sterling Park
Sanjeevininagar, Bangalore 560 092
Tel: (080) 23620364, 23438209
Email: indira502@hotmail.com
Alternative Education

Isha Home School
Velliangiri Foothills
Coimbatore 641 114
Tel: (0422) 2615455
Email: homeschool@ishafoundation.org
<http://www.ishafoundation.org/>
Alternative Residential School

Jane Sahi
Sita School
Vishram, Silvapura
Tarabanahalli Bangalore 560 017
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Email: jane_sahi@hotmail.com
Educator, Alternative School

Jayadeva, G. S.
Deenabandhu Trust
Behind Forest Nursery
P.W.D Colony, Chamarajanagar
Karnataka 571 313
Tel: (08226) 222556, 226007
Email: gsjaydev@rediffmail.com, <http://www.deenabandhutrust.org/>
Residential School for children without parental care

Jinan K.B.
Kumbham
Aruvancode, Nilambur
Kerala 679 329
Tel: (04931) 221544, (0) 94471 21544
Email: jhjskodapully@rediffmail.com
<http://www.kumbham.org>
Natural Learning

Jodo Gyan
E-12, 13 Shakurpur, Near Britannia chowk
Above Sanjay Cloth House
New Delhi 110 034
Tel: (011) 27102820, 27100104
Email: jodogyandel@yahoo.com
<http://www.jodogyana.org/>
Resources for Math and Science Education

Jogesh Motwani
34, Gitanjali, Behind Radio Club
Colaba, Mumbai 400 005
Tel: (022) 22840940
jogeshmotwani@hathway.com
Home Schooling

Kala Parasuram
2E Shreyas, Chhedanagar, Mumbai 400 089
Tel: (022) 25298319, (0) 98924 16535
Email: kalaparasuram@hotmail.com
Working with children having Autism

Krishnaswamy, N.
Vidya Vriksha
3, Tiruveedi Amman Street
R.K.Nagar, Chennai 600 028
Tel: (044) 24936358
Email: nkswamy@vsnl.net
<http://www.vidyavrikshah.org/>
Resources for people with visual disability

L. S. Saraswati
Flat B, Prajwal Semantaka
Old no 2/New no3, Pinjala Subramanya St
Chennai 600 017
Tel: (044) 24343250
Educator, Teacher Trainer

Lakshmi Suryanarayanan
Olcott Memorial School
28, Besant Avenue
Besant Nagar, Chennai 600 090
Tel: (044) 24915826, 24918093
Email: surlak@vsnl.net
Educator, Teacher Trainer

Lalit Uniyal
Bhoomi Heen Seva Samith
6A, Pannalal Road, Allahabad
Uttar Pradesh 211 002
Tel: (0532) 601548
Email: ulalit@sancharnet.in
Education for children of landless laborers

Laxman Mohanty
Future Focus Foundation
SONHO, Patia (in front of Mother's Real Estate)
Bhubaneswar 751 031
Tel: (0674) 2742783
Email: laxman_mohanty@yahoo.co.in
<http://www.f2foundation.org/>
Network of professionals supporting education

Madhukar Deshpande
Vidnyan Vahini
701B, Khsitij, Sahakarnagar 2
Pune 411 009
Tel: (020) 24222127, 24281134
Email: madhu36@yahoo.com
Science Education in Rural Schools

Malati
Vikasana
Rural Centre for Education
Doodakallasandra P.O.
Bangalore 560 062
Email: malavikasana@yahoo.co.in
Educator, Alternative School

Mandira
Sutradhar
599, 7 Main, 17 A Cross
Indiranagar Stage 2, off CMH Road
Bangalore 560 038
Tel: (080) 25288545
Email: sutra@vsnl.com
<http://www.sutradhar.com>
Resource Centre for Educational Materials

Meenakshi and Madhavraj
Puvudham Learning Centre
Nagarkoodal Vill Post
Via Indur, Dharmapuri
Tamil Nadu 636 803
Tel: (0) 93456 20626, 93605 17728
Email: puvudham@gmail.com
<http://www.puvudham.net/>
Alternative School

Michael and Swati
Paryavaran Suraksha Samiti
Juna Mozda, Dediapada
Narmada District, Gujarat 393 040
Email: michael@pssindia.net
Tribal Education

Multiworld Network - Taleemnet
G-8, St. Britto's Apartments
Feira Alta Mapusa 403 507
Tel: (0832) 3115883, 2255913
Email: taleem@multiworld.org
<http://www.multiworld.org>
Alternatives to Schooling

Narasimhan, T. M.
Sumavanam Village School
Cheegalabailu, Madanapalli
Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh 517 325
Alternative School

Navnirmithi
Flat No.2, Lake Site, 1st floor
Opp SBI and IIT main gate
Powai, Mumbai 400 076
Tel: (022) 25792628, 25773215
Email: navnirmithi@yahoo.com
Resources for Math and Science Education

Navnirmithi
Swojas, Plot No. 16, Lane No. 2
Sahawas Society, KarveNagar
Pune, Maharashtra 411 052
Email: geeta_uam@yahoo.com
<http://www.navnirmithi.org/>
Resources for Math and Science Education

Nirantar
B 64, Sarvodaya Enclave
IInd floor, New Delhi 110 017
Tel: (011) 26966334
Email: nirantar@vsnl.com
<http://www.nirantar.net>
Gender issues in Education

Padma Sarangapani
National Institute of Advanced Studies
IISC Campus, Bangalore 560 012
Tel: (0) 93425 78853
Email: psarangapani@hotmail.com
<http://www.iisc.ernet.in/nias/>
Teacher Training Institute

Pawan Gupta and Vinish Gupta
Society for Integrated Development of Himalayas (SIDH)
Hazelwood Cottage, P.O. Box 19
Landour Cantt, Mussoorie 248 179, Uttarakhand
Tel: (013760) 224203, (0135) 6455203
Email: gapyearcollege@gmail.com
<http://sidhsri.org>
Holistic Education, Community Development

Prakash Burte
Maitra, Plot 5, Antolikarnagar 3, Hotagi Road
Solapur, Maharashtra 413 003
Tel: (0217) 2607027
Email: burte3@sancharnet.in
Science Education

Pravah
C-24B, 2nd floor, Kalkaji
New Delhi 110 019
Tel: (011) 26213918, 26440619
Email: mail@pravah.org
<http://www.pravah.org/>
Life Skills, Citizenship

Radha Misra
Department of Communication Media SNTD
College of Home Science
Karve Road, Pune 411 038
Email: misra_radha@hotmail.com
Media Education

Rajalakshmi S.
Avvai Home,
M40G United Colony
West Avenue, Chennai 600 041
Tel: (044) 24417091
Educator, Teacher Trainer

Rajesh Khindri
Ekalavya
E-7/453, H.I.G Arera Colony
Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh 462 016
Tel: (0755) 463380
Email: khindiriraj@yahoo.com
Science, Social Science, Math Resources

Raju and Deepti
Jivan Tirth
Juna Koba, Gandhinagar 382 009
Tel: (02712) 76236
Peace Education and Community Work

Dr Ram Puniyani
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Powai, Mumbai 400 076
Tel: (022) 25767763, 25704061
Email: ram.puniyani@gmail.com
History, Conflict Resolution

Rama Narayanan
K 5, Sudharshan Garden
106, Velachery Road, Chennai 600 032
Tel: (044) 22353376
Email: senkamalam1960@yahoo.co.in
Educator

Rama Reddy
Namma Shale
No 179, Hennur-Bagalur Road
Kannur Post, Bangalore 562 149
Tel: (080) 56968621
Email: nammashaale@yahoo.com
Montessori School, Democratic Education

Ramakrishnan K.
Visiting Professor, Dept of Commerce
North Eastern Hill University, Shillong
Tel: (0) 98620 37750
Email: ramkishyam@gmail.com
Educator, Professor

Ranjan De
Bridging Gaps
4D The Peninsula,
778 EVR Salai, Chennai 600 010
Tel: (0) 98410 35296
Email: bridginggaps03@yahoo.com
Teacher Training, Arts and Crafts

RASA (Ramana Sunritya Aalaya)
No. 47, First Main Road
R.K. Nagar, Chennai 600 028
Tel: (044) 24939916, 24997607
Email: rasa_india@yahoo.com
<http://www.rasaindia.org>
Special Needs, Theater in Education

Ravi Aluganti
Akshara
C/o MORE, 5/357B, Appa Rao Thota
Madanapalle 517 325
Tel: (08571) 228197
Email: ravi.aluganti@yahoo.com
Arts & Craft, Math and Science Training

Ravi K. Subramanian
Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE)
Tata Institute of Fundamental Research
V.N. Purav Marg, Mankhurd, Mumbai 400 088
Tel: (022) 25567711, 25554712
Email: subra@hbcse.tifr.res.in
www.hbcse.tifr.res.in/
Science and Math Education Resources

Rohit Dhankar

Digantar
Todi Ramjanipura, Jagatpura, Jaipur 302 017
Tel: (0141) 2750310, 2750230
Email: taru@dil.in, reenadas@dil.in
<http://www.digantar.org>
Educationist, Alternative School

Sagarika and Bijoy
Manavik
Tota Sahi, Master Pada, Phulbani
Kandhamal, Orissa 762 001
Tel: (06842) 253266, (0) 94371 12412
Email: manavik@gmail.com
Teacher Training and Resource Centre

Sambhav
52, Shanti Niketan Colony
Barkat Nagar, Jaipur 302 015
Tel: (0141) 5177914
Email: sambhavsejs@rediffmail.com
Theatre and drama based education

Sandhaan
C-196, Baan Marg
Tilak Nagar, Jaipur 302 004
Tel: (0141) 2624534
Email: sandhaan@datainfosys.net
Resource centre, research, training, advocacy

Sanjeev Kumar Patil
Tarang, # 206/A,
Rani Chennamma Nagar, Dharwad
Tel: (0836) 2472957, 2775204
Email: sanjeevpatil101@yahoo.co.in
Science Education

P. Saraswati
57/5A, Rangachari (Dr.Ranga) Road
Abhiramapuram, Chennai 600 018
Tel: (044) 24992704
Email: saras15@sify.com
Educator, Teacher Trainer

P. V. Satheesh
Deccan Development Society
101, Kishan Residency
Road No. 16, Begumpet
Hyderabad 500 016

Paccha saale
Pastapur Village, Zaheerabad Mandal
Medak District 502 220
Tel: (08451) 288 472, 282785
Email: satheeshperiyapatna@gmail.com
<http://www.ddsindia.com>
Community Development, Schools
Women's Issues, Workshops

Sharmila

Ankur
7/10, Sarvapriya Vihar, New Delhi 110 016
Tel: (011) 26523395, 26523417
Email: ankureducation@vsnl.net
Alternative School, Community Development, Working with youths.

Shashi Rao,
Ananya Trust
233, 6th Main, 4th block Jayanagar
Bangalore 560 011
Tel: (080) 26639414
Email: shashi_ananya@hotmail.com
<http://www.ananyatruster.blogspot.com/>
Alternative Residential School

Sheel Parekh
Teachers Plus, Spark India
'Sudarshan', 3-5-819, Hyderguda
Hyderabad, 500 029
Tel: (040) 23211706
Email: teacherplus01@yahoo.co.in
<http://www.spark-india.biz/>
Resources for Teachers

Shishu Milap
5 Sri Ram society, Behind Natubhai Center
Gotri Road, Race Course, Vadodara, Gujarat
Tel: (0265) 25505553
sahaj_shishumilap@yahoo.com
Health, Education, Development

Shishu Milap
1, Shrihari Apts
Behind Express Hotel
Alkapuri, Vadodara 390 007
Tel: (0265) 2340223, 234 2539
Email: sahajbrc@icenet.co.in
<http://www.sahaj.org.in>
Health, Education, Development

Shivani Taneja
Muskaan
5, Patrakar Nagar
Link Road No 3, Bhopal
Tel: (0755) 5220599, 2749446
Email: shivanit74@yahoo.co.in
Alternative education for children from slum communities

Shweta Damle
Play for Peace
Flat no 910, New Building
Shastri Hall Gate, Nana Chowk
Grant Road West, Mumbai 400 007
Tel: (022) 23883309, (0) 98693 40816
Email: shweta_tambe@hotmail.com
Peace and conflict resolution

Simantini Dhuru
Avehi-Abacus
3rd Floor, K. K. Marg Municipal School
Mahalaxmi, Mumbai 400 011
Tel: (022) 23075231, 23052570
Email: avcab@vsnl.com
<http://www.avehi.org>
Supplementary Sangati Kit for Schools

P. Sivaramakrishnan
SAKTI
305, 1st Block, Janapriya Abodes
New Bakaram, Hyderabad 500 080
Tel: (040) 55614787
Email: saktisrk@yahoo.com
Disaster Management Education

Subash
Auroville Educational Resource Center
SAIIER, Auroville 605 101
Tel: (0413) 2623350, 2622793
Email: isaialambalamschool@auroville.org
<http://www.auroville.org>
Alternative School, Spiritual Methods

Subba Raju
Timbaktu collective
Chennakothapalli Post
Anantapur district 515 101
Andhra Pradesh
Tel: (08559) 240335, 240149, 240337
Email: timbaktu@vsnl.com, <http://www.timbaktu.org>
Alternative School

Sudha Premnath
Kaigal Environment Education Program
Kaigal, Post Thotakanam
Baireddipalli Mandalam, Chittoor
Andhra Pradesh 517 415
Tel: (080) 28435240/41, 57636973
Email: keepkfi@yahoo.com
Environmental Education

Dr P. Sudhakar and Usha Rani
Hariitha Ecological Institute
P.O.Box No 26
Paloncha Khammam District
Andhra Pradesh 507 115
Tel: (08744) 255030, 255060, 311194
Email: sudhakar21@yahoo.com
Science, Math, Environment, Appropriate Technology

Sudhir and Vishnupriya
23/10, 7th Cross St, West Shenoy Nagar
Chennai - 600 030
Tel: (044) 26201567, 26223347
Email: sudhirok@gmail.com
Alternative Education

Sundar Venkatavaradhan
Thekambattu P.O., Karunmandurai A.O.
Attur Taluk, Salem District
Tamil Nadu 636 138
Home Schooling

Sundaram Subbharatnam
Atul Vidyalaya
Atul, Dist. Valsad, Gujarat 396 020
Tel: (02632) 233317, 2233717
Email: sundaram48@yahoo.com
Mathematics Education

Sunita Rao and Sharmila Deo
Kalpavriksh
Apt 5, Shree Dutta Krupa
908, Deccan Gymkhana
Pune 411 004
Tel: (020) 25654239, 25675450
email: shethgutman@satyam.net.in
<http://www.kalpavriksh.org/>
Environmental Education

SVYM
Mamatha M. R
36th A Cross, 18th main
Jayanagar T block, Bangalore
Tel: (080) 22449915
Email: mrmamatha@gmail.com

Malati
Hanchipura Road, Saragur
H. D. Kote taluk, Mysore District 571 121
Tel: (08228) 265412, 269036
Email: hdm_mysore@yahoo.com
<http://www.svym.net>
Health, Education, Community Development

Swati Bedekar
S. M. Graphics
E-15, Vrindavan Estate
Pashabhai Park Race Course
Barod 390 007
Tel: (0265) 2397862, 9824058675
Email: swatibedekar@email.com
Science Kits and Games

TNSF/ AID India
34, Ratheenam Street
Gopalapuram, Chennai 600 086
Tel: (044) 28115058, 28350403
Email: aid.info@gmail.com
Science Education, Literacy

Tara Gopinath
Poorna Pragyna
630, Alanhalli
Siddharta Nagar P.O, Mysore
Email: tara_champu@yahoo.com
Tel: (0821) 571569
Alternative School

Tulika Publishers
13, Prithvi Avenue
Abhiramapuram, Chennai 600 018
Tel: (044) 24981639, 24671117
Email: tulikabooks@vsnl.com
<http://www.tulikabooks.com>
Childrens Book Publisher

Uma Shanker
Centre for Montessorri Training
H II/1, Habib Complex
3, Durgabai Deshmukh Road
R A Puram, Chennai 600 028
Tel: (044) 24614301, 24614329
Email: cmtc@vsnl.net
<http://www.cmtcindia.org/>
Montessori Training

Vasant Palshikar
Laukik Sadan
1st Floor, 322B, Madhali Aali
Wai, Maharashtra 412 803
Educator

VidyaOnline
Type V, No. 5, RIE Campus
Regional Institute of Education, Manasagangotri
Mysore, Karnataka 570 006
Tel: (0821) 2416515
Email: admin@vidyaonline.net
<http://www.vidyaonline.net>
Online Resource

Vidya Patwardhan and Suhas Kolhekar
Akshar Nandan
103, Baherat Rasta,
Baherat Wadim Shivaji Hsg Soc.
Pune 411 016
Tel: (020) 5677513, 5537955
Email: sujit@vsnl.com
Educator, Alternative School

Vikramshila
77, Maharaja Tagore Road
Dhakuria, Calcutta 700 031
Tel: (033) 24149589, 24149810
Email: vers@cal.vsnl.net.in
<http://www.vikramshila.org/>
Teacher Training, Educational Materials

Vishakha
9, Pratap Nagar
Near Glass Factory
Tonk Road, Jaipur
Tel: (0141) 2703725, 5172422
Email: vishakha@datainfosys.net
Community Libraries, Health

Walter Peter
TIE India
Flat 13, Khan Market
New Delhi 110 003
Tel: (0) 93124 57831
Email: walterpeter@indiatimes.com
Theatre in Education

Yogesh Kulkarni
Vigyan Ashram
Pabal District, Pune 412 403
Tel: (02138) 292326
Email: vashram@vsnl.com
<http://www.vigyanashram.com/>
Resources for youth development and vocational training

Zakiya Kurien and Hema Kulkarni
Centre for Learning Resources
8, Deccan College Road
Yerwada, Pune 411 006
Tel: (020) 26692123
Email: clr@vsnl.com
<http://www.clrindia.net>
Early Childhood Education



our dreams for the world

peace on earth

food for everybody

animals have to be free and no guns

no war making

give peace to the world

have warm blankets

i hope the poor people get unpoor forever

hurt no living thing

peace and love

Keep healthy

everybody should be able to go to school

education for all

everybody gets along

take care god and healthy food

worldwide peace

peace to everybody

peace

