

Values Education and life-wide learning

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Living Values: An Educational Programme***

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Exploring New Frontiers in Education

As humanity stands at the threshold of the frontier to a new millennium, one distinguishing feature of the land ahead is that life will be full of many challenges. The world of tomorrow will almost certainly be more demanding than that of today. An information explosion, technology, increased social and environmental problems, new demands for ethical responsibility and accountability, the relentless pace of change, internationalization, demographics and a new global consciousness are all exerting new pressures on the individual and world society as a whole. Remarkable progress has been made in some areas of life for some people but such afflictions as pollution, poverty, injustice, violence and ignorance remain and, in this globalized world, they cannot be ignored by anyone. Increasingly, a fresh concept of learning is being seen as indispensable to our further progress, and indeed survival. Education is being called on not only to provide a nurturing life-line for the self but also to pave the way to overall human development and well-being: to trail-blaze a broad path of learning for all that begins, at the latest, in the cradle and never ends. On this new vision of learning, and consequent new levels of understanding and awareness, we have laid our hopes and aspirations for a world of peace, prosperity and harmony.

For this vision of learning to be translated into action, we must explore new frontiers of education and open rich new seams of understanding. Our understanding must not only extend out to the changing world around us but first of all must reach inwards to the unchanging inner self so that we can develop and grow as whole human beings, with a clear sense of self-identity and integrity, and thus realize our full potential. And if we wish to extend our horizon to encompass an advanced tomorrow we must not overlook the fundamentals; learning is as much about truth and life as knowledge and living. The concept of learning as a life-long process was firmly established by *Learning to Be*, the 1972 report of the Faure Commission, but attention now needs to focus on the width and depth of our education as much as on its length. As *Learning: The Treasure Within*, the 1996 report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century by Jacques Delors et al., states: "Choosing a type of education means choosing a type of society". Thus, narrow and shallow education will only lead to narrow and shallow minds and people; surely our destiny must be more than this.

The quality of life, standards of living and overall well-being of society depend to a large extent on the values it lives by and the quality of choices that are made by the individuals within it. Education must address the whole person, and include the ethical and personal; these dimensions of learning must be seen to be at least as essential as the conventional basic components of education and intellectual development. *The World Declaration on Education for All*, produced at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All at Jomtien, Thailand, defines basic learning needs as comprising "both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive,

to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning.”

Life tomorrow, and indeed today, is thus marked by the need for a tremendous breadth of personal capacity and the ability to make informed and balanced choices: choices we make as individuals in our own right, exercising our freewill, and also as members of society and the world community. The new frontiers that the world is facing demand that education reform itself. It is clear that learning must be a life-long process but it also needs to be life-wide and life-deep: it must address the whole person and give individuals a breadth and depth of personality and personal skills in their preparation for life. The era that we are hurtling into is of a knowledge-based e-world but as everyone becomes an instant intellectual, in one way or another, we must not overlook personal and social maturity. As well as nurturing intellectual development, education must help individuals identify, and adopt, personal and social values that they can call on to guide the decisions they make, their relationships, work and life as a whole. It must help them develop a depth of character and a clear sense of their own identity, integrity and what they believe to be important in life. We must learn, and keep learning, about the rights we have as individuals but also about the responsibilities that go with them and the values that are the building blocks of rights and responsibilities.

As important as the task itself is how we learn about and teach these values. Young minds have energy, drive and curiosity but need guidance and road-markers if their journey towards maturity and wisdom is to be secure and successful. Such guidance should respect and reflect the dignity, individuality and freedom of reflective and critical choice of the learner. Values such as respect, responsibility, love, honesty, tolerance and cooperation must not just be thrown down at youth from on-high but role-modelled and practically experienced if they are to be freely inculcated and become part of the instinctive and spontaneous behaviour of young people. In a suitable environment, youth can learn, acquire and express such values and corresponding attitudes, habits and behaviour. Indeed young minds are often a more fertile ground within which such values may grow and flourish and in preparing the world citizens of the 21st century, education must have human, moral and spiritual principles and values at its heart, and the resulting expression of them as its aim.

Addressing this need, the **Living Values Educational Programme** offers a package of materials containing practical methodologies and tools for use by teachers, and parents, to help children to explore and develop twelve key personal and social values. The twelve values specifically covered in the Programme are:

*Cooperation Freedom Happiness Honesty Humility Love
Peace Respect Responsibility Simplicity Tolerance Unity*

The Programme materials have been developed by educators from around the world, in consultation with UNICEF's Education Cluster, with the support of UNESCO and the sponsorship of the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, UNESCO's Planet Society and an international non-governmental organization, the Brahma Kumaris. The Programme's approach is experiential, participatory and flexible, allowing it to be adapted according to varying cultural, social and other circumstances. It also contains special modules for use by parents and care-givers and for refugees. At these turbulent times, education can no longer limit itself, whether by content, gender bias or age cut-off, but must transcend these frontiers and become an inclusive learning process that embraces the family and community, as well as the classroom, as places of learning. In a world teeming with poverty, deprivation and insecurity

of many kinds, the maximization of all inner personal resources is essential and life-long and life-wide learning means that all within society are engaged in learning, for themselves and others – a true learning society.

The Programme provides a means for educators around the world to collaborate – creating, sharing and dialoguing as they work with a variety of values-based educational experiences. This cooperative partnership has produced positive results in a variety of educational settings, as described in more detail below. The Programme’s contents are varied and include reflections and discussions as well as games and other practical activities for use within school curricula and other educational contexts. The common element among these activities is that all have values at their core. Some then create situations of simultaneous teaching and learning where values become tools for building, sharing and integrating – where learning is an expression of what we believe in and live for. Allowing children and young adults to explore and understand values while immersed in their daily school experience, the Programme is based on the view that each human being has the potential for peaceful and loving attitudes and actions and to grow and learn new life-skills. When educators create open, flexible, creative, and yet orderly, values-based environments, students will naturally move closer to understanding their own values and develop their own way of thinking.

The Programme’s vision is of people living together in a world of inclusion in which there is respect and appreciation for each culture. Its activities aim to help children and young adults learn to perceive, understand and act in ways that promote peace, justice and harmonious coexistence and respect diversity. It is only with values such as these that humanity will be able to comprehend, face and resolve the challenges in today’s world.

The purpose of Living Values is to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person, recognizing that the individual is comprised of physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual dimensions. Its aims are:

- ?? To help individuals think about and reflect on different values and the practical implications of expressing them in relation to themselves, others, the community and the world at large;
- ?? To deepen understanding, motivation and responsibility with regard to making positive personal and social choices;
- ?? To inspire individuals to choose their own personal, social, moral and spiritual values and be aware of practical methods for developing and deepening them; and
- ?? To encourage educators and caregivers to look at education as providing students with a philosophy of living, thereby facilitating their overall growth, development and choices so they may integrate themselves into the community with respect, confidence and purpose.

The initial version of the Living Values materials, the LV *Educators’ Kit*, became available for piloting in March 1997 and by late spring that year was being piloted at 220 sites in over 40 countries. By mid 1999, LVEP was being implemented at over 1,500 sites in 62 countries. Following piloting, the *Educators’ Kit* was divided into separate books and expanded, reflecting comments and including contributions from educators around the world. The five LVEP books currently available are:

Values Activities for Children, Ages 3-7;
Values Activities for Children, Ages 8-14;
Values Activities for Young Adults;
Facilitator’s Guide for Parent Values Groups; and

Values Activities for Refugees and Children-Affected-by-War.

In the **LVEP Values Activities for Children, Ages 3-7, Ages 8-14, and Values Activities for Young Adults**, reflective and visualization activities encourage students to access their own creativity and inner gifts. Communication activities teach students to implement peaceful social skills. Artistic activities, songs, and dance inspire students to express themselves while experiencing the value of focus. Game-like activities are thought-provoking and fun; the discussion time that follows those activities helps students explore effects of different attitudes and behaviour. Other activities stimulate awareness of personal and social responsibility and, in the case of older students, awareness of social justice. The development of self-esteem and tolerance continues throughout the exercises. Educators are encouraged to utilize their own rich heritage, and develop their own activities, while integrating values into everyday activities and the curriculum.

In the **Facilitator's Guide for Parent Values Groups**, facilitated sessions are designed to help parents and caregivers develop the understanding and skills needed to encourage and positively develop values in children. The process includes sessions which help parents reflect on their own values and how they "live" those values. In many group sessions, parents play the games their children will play and learn additional methods to foster values-related social and emotional skills at home. Common parenting concerns are addressed, as are particular skills to deal with those concerns. The Guide can be used as a precursor to the LVEP Values activities or as part of an existing parenting class or programme. Parents are asked to think, create and model the values they would like their children to enjoy. Additionally, methods are presented which show parents how to incorporate values as they nurture their children's development. The process-oriented sessions are designed so parents can:

- ?? Assess which values are most important to them;
- ?? Determine which values they want to impart to the children;
- ?? Build awareness about how children learn about values; and
- ?? Develop understanding and skills they can use in teaching their children about values.

In the **Values Activities for Refugees and Children-Affected-by-War**, fifty daily lessons provide tools to begin a healing process of releasing and dealing with grief while developing positive adaptive social and emotional skills with the values of peace, respect and love. Teachers are encouraged to proceed to the normal values activities after the 50 lessons have been completed.

The last book, now in the final stages of development, is the **LVEP Educator Training Guide**, which covers the various activities within LVEP educator training workshops. Sessions include values awareness, creating a values-based atmosphere and skills for creating such an atmosphere. Sample training agendas are offered for one-, two- and three-day educator training programmes and a five-day train-the-trainer session.

Substantive piloting of the activities in schools began in the spring of 1997, although a few schools had been experimenting since 1995 with the first few Living Values activities. By June 1998, pilot results from schools indicated increased motivation in students, more cooperative and respectful behaviour with both peers and teachers and more ability to focus on their school tasks.

West Kidlington Primary School in Oxford, **England** began Living Values classroom activities in 1995. The Headteacher, Mr. Neil Hawkes, reported remarkable changes. In this working class

neighbourhood school, students learned to be responsible for their behaviour. They enjoy peaceful, respectful, cooperative relationships with their peers and teachers. The school enables the students to think carefully about values and to reflect values in their behaviour and attitudes. School assemblies have become a powerful vehicle for teaching values, raising self-esteem and developing enthusiasm. The school recently won recognition for its outstanding work in the areas of moral, social and cultural education. Parents appreciate the changes and are involved in the values education process as relevant assignments are brought home for discussion. Mr. Hawkes notes that when an entire school focuses on values, the impact on the students is greater and more positive.

Mr. Peter Williams worked with somewhat older students for several months in a middle school in Beijing, **China**. When he asked his Chinese colleague, Ms. Ao Wen Ya, why she thought a peace visualization was successful, she said: "It helped the children to find peace by themselves. It helped the children to feel happy and relaxed. It made them really want to be happy and motivated to build a better world and be kind to each other." She additionally noted: "Sometimes the children can be naughty in class; they don't concentrate. Now they are more engaged in their subjects because they are interested. They are motivated to learn because they are valued as people.... They are now calmer and not as naughty. The quality and standards of work are higher. They are willing to take risks to express themselves well with more confidence." Mr. Williams added: "The lessons really did something. Their attitude is more positive and they are better organized both individually and as a group." An observer from the Chinese Academy of Sciences commented that the motivation of the children had been greatly enhanced, and it transferred to other lessons.

In **Zimbabwe**, Ms. Natasha Ncube used Living Values Educational materials with her class at Prince Edward Boys' High School in Harare. She felt the reflection activities helped improve discipline; the story-telling and discussions allowed her to learn individual opinions of the students and the group work developed unity, cooperation, patience and tolerance in students. She commented: "Discipline has improved. I noticed the development of self-confidence in many students, and appreciation and recognition of values in others, as well as in the self. The students became more open-minded, not only confident, and also fearless in expression of their own opinion." She also noted that many students began doing their work on time because they had become more conscientious: "They believed in themselves." She noted some did their work before because of fear of academic detention or corporal punishment. Ms. Ncube's remarks about the change in her own teaching was interesting. She wrote: "I became more patient and tolerant with my students. I feel our relationships have improved. There is no more urge to send them for corporal punishment to the Head. (It is still popular in Zimbabwe.) I can solve all the problems peacefully with my boys."

In La Paz, **Bolivia**, 3,000 students from 3 to 18 years in age engaged in LVEP values activities at the German School. Cecilia Levy noted that discriminatory behaviour in this class-conscious society has dramatically decreased and unity has grown. She stated: "Students have become more positive in every way - in their tone of voice and manner when they interact with others. The teachers involved have noted changes in their own attitudes and how that affects the atmosphere in the classroom." One hundred and twenty parents took part in the Parent Values Classes. The parents felt the classes were very beneficial. An unexpected result was more understanding and cooperation between parents and teachers.

The same kind of response has been found since early 1999 with the revised materials, amended and expanded following the piloting process. For example, teachers in **Malaysia** consistently noted good results even though the Programme had only been implemented for a short time. One secondary teacher said: "I was surprised that through this Programme my students learned to understand more about their feelings towards others." Mr. Mohdsura noted good growth in motivation, respect toward peers and adults, honesty, responsibility and the ability to cooperate.

Activities in **Hong Kong**, China are also underway and six workshops and training sessions have been offered for a total of some 200 local educators. A presentation has also been made to 1,000 teachers at a recent Tung Wah Group staff development conference. These have led to some values activities being undertaken in schools, including initial trials in one of the Tung Wah Group schools, and, while it is still early days, the response so far has been very encouraging. Other schools have also requested training and it is hoped that this can lay the foundation for a structured piloting and evaluation against the backdrop of the present holistic review and reform of the entire Hong Kong education system.

The practical outcome of using Living Values activities in schools, and an awareness of the changes that can come about, are helping to strengthen appreciation of the benefits, relevance and necessity of values in the classroom. This in turn is highlighting the crucial role to be played by educators, as education must be values-based if it is to provide the indispensable preparation that is needed for life in a challenging world. The demands that are being imposed on front-line teachers and their need for training, materials and support cannot be underestimated. It is hoped that Living Values materials, and a supporting network, can help educationalists in meeting the challenges that they are being looked on to deal with. But policy-makers, public authorities, parents and educators must come together and work together. Only then will it be possible to deliver empowering values-based education, without which formal education may lack purpose and direction and is certainly incomplete. World society is constantly crossing new frontiers and education must take the lead in this regard in order to give direction to the way ahead as we journey forwards in search of a better tomorrow.

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LIVING VALUES

Living Values: An Educational Programme

<http://www.livingvalues.net>

Please check website for details of local coordinators.