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an educational program

Values Education for Children and Young Adults

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Living Values e-News

Living Values: An Educational Program Newsletter

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Welcome to the tenth issue of Living Values e-News, the electronic newsletter of the Living Values Educational Program.

"People live as long as their moral values remain. If their values go, then they will also go." wrote the famous Arabic poet Ahmad Shawk. Certainly values are essential to our concept of the human person. They are an intrinsic part of what it means to be a thinking, self-aware human being and they affirm human dignity. As such, they should form a crucial part of the overall educational experience of each individual. But while it is easy to state that values are fundamental to life and learning, it is not so simple to state exactly what they are and how they should be conveyed. The depth and breadth of the topic makes it a source of inner richness and growth that is only limited by the extent to which we want to develop and better ourselves and society as we discover, and seek to implement, fresh nuances and refinements of meaning and application. In short, reflections and conversations about values are inevitably on-going and living in nature.

Living Values is proving to be a rich resource in this process both for those in the role of teachers as well as those we might call learners - although in this field true teachers are also learners and learners invariably have much to teach. Much has been found out by many and more is still to be learned.

If values are at the heart of the individual they are also integral to the way we relate to each other, both as individuals in our own right and as members of a group, community or society, and with the world around us. They are abstract but enduring principles, standards, beliefs or convictions which we not only feel but usually also judge, after reflection, to be important, worthwhile and meaningful and which we then consciously use as indicators, yardsticks, touchstones or reference points to guide, govern and assess our thoughts, attitudes and behaviour. They help us to evaluate, sort out and make decisions between different options, possibilities and courses or outcomes of action when we are faced with uncertainty, choice or inner conflict. We may not necessarily reach the destination that they point to but because we not only cherish but also seek and reach for them we can distinguish such values from ideals that we see as the paragon of rightness or desirability but which we place so far above us that we do not strive to implement or achieve them. We can also distinguish them from virtues or qualities that we already possess or are endowed with, or tendencies or predispositions that we have acquired and internalized, as part of our character, and which we instinctively, spontaneously and unreflectingly live by. A person may therefore, for example, have love for immediate family as a quality and love for neighbours and more distant relatives as a value while also thinking that love for a fellow member of the human family who is perceived as an enemy or who is unknown is an ideal that he or she cannot attain.

As values are prescriptive or relate to how things should be they are not the same as descriptive facts of how things actually are. Values tend to be more broad and general than statements of principle that often are an expression of or the foundation for a specific principle or code of conduct. However they are not so vague or imprecise that they cannot usually be supported by reasons as well as feelings. This latter aspect highlights the importance of education in relation to values. Values need to be carefully and empathetically thought about and worked on, having regard to our own worth and rights and those of others, their perspectives and circumstances. We must also take account of the consequences of our actions, for ourselves and others, in the long-term as well as the short-term, and keep our thinking open to critical assessment and

subsequent modification. Values may be cherished but they are not heirlooms to be automatically and unthinkingly passed on to or accepted by others. Tested in the heat of quick-fire change and the pressure of new social and technological circumstances and developments, they will almost certainly need fresh and deeper reasoning and understanding if they are to emerge as true and trusty tools with which we can continue seeking to weld social harmony, justice and progress.

The choice of values is personal to each individual but as members of one human family, notwithstanding our rich diversity and varied contexts, there is often a striking unity within the values we seek to live by. [The twelve values covered by Living Values](#) - and of course there are many others in addition to these - are Cooperation, Freedom, Happiness, Honesty, Humility, Love, Peace, Respect, Responsibility, Simplicity, Tolerance, and Unity. For further reading on these values, please refer to livingvalues.net/values

These thoughts do not pretend to be all there is to say about values but seek to prompt conversation and reflection on the subject. And we love to hear from you with your views! In particular, the [Children Participate](#) section of our website - at livingvalues.net/children - provides a space for students and children of all ages to share their thoughts with LVEP's on-line community around the world.

The LVEP [website](#) - at livingvalues.net - warmly welcomes hearing from educators with one or two success stories (or even not-so-successful stories!) of values activities that they've tried in their classroom. So read on and, as ever, we hope that you'll do more than just read: please also send us your news - and go out and make some news!

With warmest wishes
The Editor



Forthcoming Events

training@livingvalues.net

Mexico

LVEP Educator Training for Educacion Municipal,
Two day - on 2nd and 3rd February,
in the city of Tijuana, Mexico.

For further information, please contact:
content@livingvalues.net

Vietnam

One-day LVEP training,
on 3rd February, in Ho Chi Minh City,

for high school teachers who are interested in working with Living Values.

For further information, please contact:

việtnam@livingvalues.net

Singapore

Three-day LVEP training, from 12th to 14th March.

For further information, please contact:

singapore@livingvalues.net

USA

Educators' Training

from late afternoon Thursday 23rd August to Sunday 26th August 26,
at Peace Village Learning and Retreat Center, Catskills, New York.

For further information, please contact:

usa@livingvalues.net



Worldwide Happenings

▶ Vietnam: LVEP Included in National Civic Education Programme

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Trish Summerfield, Living Values' local coordinator, filed this report:

"Following the training in November 2000 in Hanoi with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry has now included Living Values activities in its National Civic Education Programme and is also using it as part of a rehabilitation programme for juvenile offenders.

In Ho Chi Minh City a group of 20 educators of street children gathered together on the 16th December 2000 for a morning training on teaching Living Values to children aged 8-14 years old. The training was conducted in Vietnamese by Nhu, who had attended the training in Hanoi earlier in the year, and Devi, a visiting trainer from America. The participants appreciated being able to listen directly to Nhu speaking in Vietnamese and very much enjoyed the training. Although the training lasted only 4 hours, many expressed how deeply they were able to understand and experience the values, especially peace. From this training many plans were created for future trainings. Feedback on the activities from the teachers was requested to help in the creation of a future LVEP module for street children.

Mrs. Tuyet, a high school principal and the civic education trainer for a district in Ho Chi Minh

City, is regularly introducing Living Values activities to teachers from 12 different schools in the district and these teachers are in turn using the activities in their respective schools.

On the 10th January we had a one-day LVEP training in Ho Chi Minh City with a group of 32 teachers of street children, children at risk and girls that previously worked in the sex industry. The teachers enjoyed the training and found it very practical, leaving at the end of the day with the enthusiasm to apply it in their current teaching curriculum. The teachers also commented that the Programme is economical in that it only requires one teacher book and this makes it very cost efficient - a key factor for these teachers who are working on small budgets. All participants received copies of the Living Values activities materials in Vietnamese and are looking forward to the modules that are currently being written for street children.

On the 18th January we held a one-day training with a group of UNICEF staff in Hanoi. The staff gave positive feedback on the Programme and have decided to translate the Young Adults activities book into Vietnamese and pilot the activities in a reform school for child offenders in the south of Vietnam."



► **Hong Kong, China: Good Initial Reports from Piloting**

hongkong@livingvalues.net

Living Values e-News received the following news from Karen Ng who came into contact with LV in 1999 and runs Teens Tonic in Hong Kong:

"Teens Tonic is a children's learning centre which promote the whole person development of kids aged 3 to 12 years' old through a variety of arts and performing activities. We have been holding Living Values courses since November 1999, in both Cantonese and English, and see an improvement in the children's social skills and attitudes.

Recently, we started "Value of the Month" in which we promote one value each month in the centre. The value is posted up as a graphic design on our notice board at reception area and we mention this in our bi-monthly newsletter that is distributed to all our members and in response to enquiries. In this way Living Values is not just a particular course that we run but values are everywhere in our centre. Tutors also help to convey the value message in other courses such as arts and crafts, music and dance and different personal growth courses. At present almost 20 children attend our Living Values classes weekly and at one stage we had over 40 kids!"

Meanwhile, Hsin Tsi Wan Primary School in Tai Wai, Hong Kong took up P1 to P6 whole-school piloting of Living Values in September 2000, using a Chinese translation of the Values Activities book for 3-7 year olds. Under the supervision of a cross-curricular coordinator, they experimented with two lessons a week and one double-lesson a week, finding that for each value there were many topics to cover in the time available. The School's Principal, Shum Fu Ming, said that there was a need for local songs but overall reports were that children and teachers liked the Programme. More details will follow; watch this space!

On another level, Living Values has been working closely with the Hong Kong International Institute of Educational Leadership, discussing the necessity for values education and the role that it has within the context of the reforms of the education system currently underway in Hong

Kong. LVEP was invited to give an address at the Institute's Annual General Meeting and, in January this year, was pleased to run two three-hour sessions on values as part of the Institute's course for in-service teachers on Values Education.



► **Cambodia: A Flood of Activity**

cambodia@livingvalues.net

Living Values' coordinator in Vietnam, Trish Summerfield, recently paid another visit to Cambodia and sent the following update:

"In early December we visited Cambodia, which is still very flooded, (we thought we were crossing the sea and finally realised it was flooded land) to finalise arrangements for Living Values Training with UNESCO. UNESCO is translating all of the books and will pilot the Programme for one year in 20 schools. It was also able to introduce Living Values on National Television during a round table discussion which created a lot of interest. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education is finalising agreements to include LVEP in the National Curriculum. We also met with the Minister of Women's Affairs and Veterans who also wants to work with the Programme.

During the visit it rained again and a boat really would have been more appropriate than the small motorbike we were using!"



► **Mexico: Real Changes in Tijuana School**

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In Tijuana, Mexico, much enthusiasm for Living Values was shared at a recent meeting of teachers from Secundaria Municipal No. 2, a high school with 444 students aged 11 to 15 years-old. Since September 2000, following training for teachers, Living Values Activities have been integrated in the school's civics and ethics classes and parents are offered a one hour talk about values every two months. Teachers have been surprised at the response from parents; at the last meeting 90% of the parents attended. Three teachers from the school take up the story.....

Professor Ana Luisa Luna Flores offered the following observations: "The lack of discipline has diminished in classrooms. With respect to the same time period last year, during the months of September and October there has been a 25% reduction in disciplinary reports. This could be interpreted in two ways; it could be that the students have improved in their behaviour in class (and are more responsible) or that the teachers have increased their tolerance of the students' behaviour. Further, the tardiness of the adult staff (teachers and secretaries) has decreased 48% and the days they missed has decreased 17% while the percentage of students failing has diminished by 10%."

"We believe that the training of teachers is important in this stage of implementation as we

simultaneously do the Programme with parents and students. We must not lose sight of the real changes. Teachers are experiencing changes in their personal life with the Programme, and it seems that this will impact the group as it is applied in the future. We are now at the beginning of this path.”

A teacher at the school, Erica Palavicchini, shared her experience of changes with students between September 2000 and January 2001: “My students have improved in their conduct. One example is that they no longer tease other students when they make a mistake in class. They are more responsible in wearing the school uniform and attendance has improved. They are also better at discerning what is “good” and what is not. There is now more respect between student and teacher, student and student, and teacher and teacher. We teachers have also improved in our attendance and planning! Another result is that as teachers we used to look only at our errors and now we are seeing our virtues and qualities.”

Gabriela Ramirez, another teacher at the school, noted: “The students denounce or point out ‘anti-values’ behaviour. For example, they used to accept being called names. Now they discuss what happened in class and resolve the situation with values.”



Kenya: Two Years of Living Values in a Primary School

kenya@livingvalues.net

Michael Owino, the Principal of a primary school in Kenya, reported that he and the teachers in his school have been doing LVEP for two years and wrote:

“This Programme creates an atmosphere of peace and a deep understanding of human worth where everyone matters, regardless of age or position. The Programme has brought about much discipline in the school. It has also generated a lot of enthusiasm in children. Truancy and tardiness have been eradicated. It has created good relationships between teachers and children – there is more love and attachment to school. On the side of the teachers, it has created an atmosphere of mutual understanding resulting in very healthy working conditions. The result of this is higher productivity since no time is wasted in personal conflicts. As the head teacher I find my work has to a very great extent been made easier.

“The Friday assemblies have more activities about values. These activities involve poems, reading a story, a play, sharing experiences or elocution. One day, children lodged a complaint through their teachers asking why I skipped a Living Values lesson. After a convincing explanation and apology, I asked them why they liked the lessons.” These were some of the answers given by a few of the five-year olds:

- ‘Because I enjoy the good songs like I am a peaceful star.’
- ‘I like the sharing talks, things like colours and happiness.’
- ‘You feel like changing into nice people.’
- ‘Because it is teaching us how to be silent and think about others and ourselves’.”

Mrs. Mary Njugana, a teacher of class one with five year-old students, noted:

“The Programme has generated a lot of interest in pupils and has made learning more fun rather than a routine burden on children. Children now take a more active part in the day-to-day running of their affairs all in the name of responsibility. This Programme has one major demand - that the teachers must constantly remain conscious of their responsibility as a role model.”

Mrs. Milly Mjumbe, a teacher of a class with seven year-old students, observed:

“LVEP has really helped children and teachers by changing their attitude. Teachers now understand children more and have a positive attitude toward them. The children really practise the values among themselves.”

Mrs. Joice Karuma reported the following with regard to her pre-primary class of four year-old students:

“The children are now showing more openness toward teachers and fellow children. They have become more responsible and critical in their decisions. They appear to be happier than before. They are better listeners and are ready to resolve conflicts among fellow children. They are now easier to manage and therefore easy to teach.”



► **Singapore: Successful Educators' Training, Again!**

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Kana Gopal, LVEP's Coordinator in Singapore, filed the following report with Living Values e-News on a training for educators held in the city state from 20th to 22nd October 2000:

“Childcare teacher Eng Swee Kiw has a happy story to tell: an aloof child, who was uninvolved in her childcare activities, offered to help her after she put him into the Helpful Star group. She grouped the students a few days earlier into star groups with a value, such as Loveful Star, Happy Star, Peaceful Star etc, and helped them to experience the qualities. It was an idea she got from the Star story at her LVEP Educators' Training session over the weekend.

Yong Yenn Chong, a supervisor at Sembawang Childcare Centre, ironically after spending hours nurturing others' children, used to come home too tired to spend quality time with her six-year-old daughter. But overnight, she experienced a change in the quality of her relationship with her daughter when she started listening actively to the child. Now she hugs her daughter and talks to her in a pleasant tone. They were small but conscious actions she decided to put into practice immediately after her LVEP Educators' Training. And the best testimonial she got was when her daughter told her: "Your face is smiling; and I feel you have changed a lot. Before, when you were angry, I didn't dare to tell you. Now, I dare to tell you my dreams."

Swee Kiw and Yenn Chong were among the 31 educators and life-skill/motivational trainers who attended Singapore's second LVEP Educators' training session.

Most of the trainees were childcare teachers, supervisors and principals from childcare centres run by People's Association, a government body which looks into the community's needs, particularly those from the heartland of Singapore - the middle- and lower middle-class and the small group of needy people in the community. The majority of the trainees came without a clue

as to what to expect. They had been signed on by their supervisor and had the impression that it was a moral education session. Their impression soon changed for the better. When it all ended, many thanked Ms Frida Tan, who was responsible for them being there and for initiating the workshop with the LVEP coordinator in Singapore. Frida admitted that she was impressed by the peaceful demeanour of LVEP's international content coordinator, Diane Tillman, during the programme for educators in May 1999 in Singapore.

The values awareness sessions during Day 1 were a valuable mirror for the self. Most participants admitted that they learned to look at themselves with fresh eyes. They were aware of the "gaps" in their personality; aware that maintaining a peaceful nature took effort; aware that they needed to fix their home situation first. "I would like to try those activities with my daughter during the school holidays," said Jagjit Kaur, a coordinator for Project READ, a self-help group for Indians in Singapore. Premalatha Sadhasivan, a motivational trainer, echoed similar sentiments.

Almost all reported instant successes in personal relationships and with their students. Their voices were more pleasant, especially with loved ones. They were smiling more. Their students' behaviour had improved. Rosie Yap, On Yen Cheoh, Dorothy Ng and Jaycee Koh, who introduced quiet time, noticed that the children were "less rowdy", "happy", "quieter" and "relaxed".

Other long-term practitioners of a values-based life, like Dr Vijayan Loganathan, found that it reinforced "feelings and outlook of how values should be taught in a creative and non-judgmental manner." Or, as in the case of Dana Strietman, who was the only overseas participant, from Bali, it made her realise the need to be the living example of the values she would be promoting.

Alice Soh and Susan Ho, both supervisors of childcare centres, can't wait to be trained as trainer-trainers so that they can help childcare teachers under their charge. Like almost all the others, they have decided to introduce LVEP at their childcare centres and areas of responsibility - not lock, stock and barrel but to enhance their curriculum in 2001. And they have promised to share their successes.

Meanwhile, Shahida (from Malaysia), Rosa (Tham) and I have found out that we make a good, winning LVEP training team. The October training was our first joint training; and there will be more.

Sujatha Sadhasivan, an educator of 20 years, joined us as well after her TTT in Oxford in August 2000, to weave her experiences into the segment on "Transitioning to values-based Discipline."

Our next stop: to create a values-based learning environment for Secondary One and Two students at Singapore's premier girls school, Raffles Girls Secondary School. And to fulfill training commitments that we have already made in Singapore and the region."



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