

# **Values Education and Human Rights:**

## **The Living Values Educational Programme in Asia**

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Each time we look at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it offers us a timely reminder of the fundamental human standards that we all want, and need, to live by. It remains one of the most inspiring documents written in recent times and its simple truths constitute a basic blueprint for daily life, reminding us of our rights and also the responsibilities that we have toward our fellow human beings. Recognition of these rights and responsibilities is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. Yet over 50 years after the Declaration's proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly, and despite its widespread endorsement and actions to uphold it, human rights continue to be violated on an international, social, professional, and interpersonal level.

The vision of what we want to achieve—the universal observance of fundamental rights and freedoms—is clear. The Declaration is a vision that has now been endorsed by governments, championed by organizations, and claimed by individuals worldwide. And yet, notwithstanding its universality, its standards are often relegated to the backseat of social progress, leaving exploitation, violence, and injustice to prevail in one form or another. It is as if the link between aspiration and action, between principle and practice, has been severed, exposing a gap between what we believe and accept as correct and what we actually do.

This raises the question of why we are unable to do that which we want to do: to implement clear and cherished aspirations that make for a better quality of life for all. The aspirations of the Declaration may be high, but are they really beyond our reach? They are certainly neither physically nor financially impossible and they have widespread political acceptance; they embody a way of life, and values, which we all believe in and identify with. So how can we implement the common standards of achievement set out in the Declaration?

Education must undeniably be at the heart of our efforts and, along with other components of such education, there should be a greater focus on the value system that is the framework around which the Declaration has been crafted.

Effective human rights education must help individuals identify and adopt personal and social values that they can call on to guide their decisions, 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.

Given the universality of human values and rights, it follows that education can no longer limit itself, whether by content, gender bias, or age cut-off, but must transcend these frontiers. Education must become an inclusive, universal, lifelong learning process that embraces the family and community, as well as the classroom, as places of learning. In a world where rights are too often abused, leading to poverty, deprivation, and insecurity of many kinds, the maximization of all inner personal

resources is essential. A values-based and rights-based approach to education requires that all within society are engaged in learning, for themselves and others.

We must learn, and keep learning, about the rights we have as individuals but also about the responsibilities that go with them. To do so, we must embrace the values that are the building blocks and the very essence of rights and responsibilities. We cannot truly understand rights and responsibilities without first understanding the values on which they are based.

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 toward responsible citizenship, 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-modeled and practically experienced if they are to be freely inculcated and become part of the instinctive and spontaneous behavior of young people. In a suitable environment, youth can learn, acquire, and express such values and corresponding attitudes, habits, and behavior. 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.

## **<Subhead 1> Living Values**

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 enable children to explore and develop 12 key personal and social values—cooperation, freedom, happiness, honesty, humility, love, peace, respect, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance, and unity.

The program is a nonprofit partnership among educators from around the world. It is endorsed by UNESCO and sponsored by the Spanish National Committee of UNICEF, the Planet Society of UNESCO, and the Brahma Kumaris, an international nongovernmental organization (NGO), in consultation with the Education Cluster of UNICEF (New York).

## **<Subhead 1> Background**

The program grew out of an international project begun in 1995 by the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, an NGO in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and in consultative status with UNICEF, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the UN. Called *Sharing Our Values for a Better World*, the project focused on 12 core values. Its theme—adopted from a tenet of the Preamble of the United Nations' Charter—was “[t]o reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person....” *Living Values: A Guidebook* was published as part of this project. It provided value statements on the 12

core values and included activities and facilitated workshops for creating and sustaining positive change. It also contained a small section on values activities for students in the classroom. That sketchy classroom curriculum became the inspiration and impetus for Living Values: An Educational Initiative.

Living Values was born when 20 educators from around the world gathered at UNICEF headquarters in New York City in August 1996 to discuss children's needs, the participants' experiences of working with values, and how they could integrate values into the process of lifelong learning. The meeting was co-sponsored by the Education Cluster of UNICEF and the Brahma Kumaris. Using the guidebook and the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a framework, the global educators identified and agreed upon the purpose and aims of values-based education worldwide in both developed and developing countries.

The educators were so motivated by this experience that they committed themselves to prepare the Teachers' Education Kit and to pilot it in their schools. As piloting spread to about 70 countries, the consensus was that the kit's contents could be developed into effective training and evaluation processes.

The program 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 Brahma Kumaris. The program'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 caregivers and for refugees.

The program 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 program's contents are varied and include reflections and discussions as well as games and other practical activities for use within school curriculums 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 program is based on the view that each human being has the potential for peaceful and loving attitudes and actions and the right 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, rights, and responsibilities and develop their own way of thinking.

The program's vision is of people living together in a world of inclusion, in which there are 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.

### **<Subhead 1> Purpose and Aims**

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

- ?? 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.
- ?? Deepen understanding, motivation, and responsibility with regard to making positive personal and social choices.
- ?? Inspire individuals to choose their own personal, social, moral, and spiritual values and be aware of practical methods for developing and deepening them.
- ?? 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 objective of the program is to integrate universal core values in existing school curriculums. From this there may be built an enabling environment in which

students can explore their innate values. This, in turn, can lead to the development of an ethos of peace and nonviolence within the classroom and school community. The program offers practical skills and tools to promote these core values and encourages its users to adapt them according to their cultural, religious, social, and other circumstances. The program aims at building an environment in which youth can be assisted in developing their self-identity from early childhood development, pre-, primary-, and secondary-school levels.

### **<Subhead 1> Materials**

The initial version of the materials, the *Educators' Kit*, became available for piloting in March 1997, and by late spring that year it was being piloted at 220 sites in over 40 countries. By mid-1999, it was in use at over 1,500 sites in 62 countries. Following piloting, it was divided into separate books and expanded, reflecting comments and including contributions from educators around the world. The 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.*



The first three books suggest reflective and visualization activities that 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 them helps students explore effects of different attitudes and behavior. 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 that 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 program's activities or as part of an existing parenting class or program. Parents are asked to think, create, and model the values they would like their children to enjoy. Methods are also presented to 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 children about values.

In the *Values Activities for Refugees and Children-Affected-by-War*, 50 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 are completed.

The last book, now in the final stages of development, is the *Educator Training Guide*, which covers the various activities within 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 programs and a five-day train-the-trainer session.

Materials have been translated into many languages. *Values Activities for Refugees and Children-Affected-by-War* has been translated into Serbo-Croatian and Karen. Translation of *Values Activities Books for Children* and *Values Activities for Young Adults* into Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Karen, Malay, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, and Vietnamese is at least partly complete.

## **<Subhead 1> Implementation and Initial Evaluation**

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 behavior with both peers and teachers, and more ability to focus on their school tasks.

## **<Subhead 1> The Asian Experience**

The following pages describe some of the results and outcome of the activities in some Asian and other countries. No formal research program has been undertaken, but all evaluations of the results of using the program materials have been positive. While evaluations have been received from a limited number of sites, Newcastle University in Australia is beginning a more formal evaluation of results at seven schools that recently began implementing the program. Institutions in several other countries are considering independent evaluations.

In **Japan**, a major factor to getting activities off the ground has been to translate the materials into Japanese. The translation of the *Activities Book for 3-7 Year Olds* and the *Activities Book for Young Adults* is now complete, that of the *Activities Book for 8-14 Year Olds* is more than half finished, while work is underway on the *Activities Book for Parents*. A steering committee of 13 educators and other individuals has also been

formed to help initiate workshops with the materials. The first workshop was scheduled for October 2000 in Tokyo, with pre-workshop training taking place in September.

In **Vietnam**, the program is just beginning. *Values Activities for Children, Ages 8-14* has been translated, and training is scheduled for the Ministry of Education in Hanoi for 25 teachers.

In **Korea**, program implementation is underway at Seoul International School, Songnam. In 1999 the administration approved adoption of the program to support existing program outcomes in health and social studies in the elementary school, and the introduction of Living Values at the high-school level through a new 9th-grade life-skills class.

In **Singapore**, several training sessions have been held for teachers.

In **Australia**, a number of training sessions have been held. One, for example, was held in Newcastle, New South Wales, in September 1999, hosted and organized by Sandra Lloyd, district superintendent for the Department of Training and Education, Lake Macquarie District. Principals, selected teachers, and a parent from eight schools attended the training, as did representatives from a Catholic school, a long-stay day care centre, the local Ethnic Communities Council Multicultural Children's Resource Unit, the office of the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Newcastle, and a volunteer refugee worker. Many of the schools said that the program would

complement existing ones and are to adopt it. Some have already reported good results. For example, after piloting the 3-7 Values Activities Peace Unit for just a few weeks with her composite class of grade-two and -three students, Vicki Tweendale of Glendale East Primary School reported: "The children responded well to the exercises, which included visualizations, painting and the 'Star' story." She had the most fun when listening to the children's conversations about peace while they were painting: "The children are so enthusiastic that they want to set up a special values corner and have started talking about making a friendship quilt."

Living Values has also had encouraging results in **Malaysia**. To quote Shahida Abdul Samad, the program's coordinator in Malaysia and the mother of a young family:

<Quotation> On 1 September 1999, 32 moral education teachers from 32 secondary schools gathered at Malaysia's oldest mining town in Ipoh, Perak State, to attend a one-day Living Values Train-the-Educator program. The success of this program was the result of the commitment, teamwork, and planning of Rahimah Sura, a teacher; Hamdan Mohamed, from with the Perak State Department of Education; and the Institut Antarabangsa IQRA', an institution of higher education. The lead facilitator was Rahimah Sura, who had earlier attended the Living Values **Train-The-Trainer** we had conducted in April 1999, which was co-sponsored by the Ministry of Education.

<Quotation> Initially sceptical about the program, Mrs. Rahimah decided to test it out in her classroom. She was so impressed with the positive changes it had on her students that she convinced the state education department to conduct a training

program for moral-education teachers in the District of Kinta. The training was conducted in the Malaysian national language, and some of the activities were translated into Malay for the training program.

<Quotation> There were 13 criteria by reference to which the training was evaluated. All participants rated the program very highly and unanimously agreed that it had met their expectations in terms of content and relevancy to the issues that teachers and students are facing in today's environment. The challenges that some of the teachers faced when implementing Living Values were the following:

- ?? They had difficulty expressing their feelings verbally.
- ?? Values were not consistently role-modeled by parents and other teachers who were not exposed to the program.
- ?? Emphasis within the schools as a whole was more on the upcoming exams, and, as the training took place in the midst of the examination period, most teachers felt that they were unable to implement Living Values immediately.

<Quotation> After two months, feedback forms were given to all 32 teachers, 28 of whom responded. The 32 teachers in turn had shared the material with other moral education teachers and they increased threefold to 97. Almost 3,000 students experienced some of the activities from the program. The majority of the teachers noticed positive changes in the students and in the classroom atmosphere as a whole. What students once regarded as a dreaded subject, they now looked forward to so that they could share their thoughts, feelings, and ideas with others. Many teachers reported that students were more self-confident, more aware of the effect of their actions on others, more respectful of others' feelings, and, overall, happier and more self-assured.

Twenty-five teachers (or 78% of them) responded positively. These were some of their observations:

- ?? Behavior changes positively.
- ?? Student-teacher relations improve.
- ?? Students are more self-confident, focused.
- ?? They are more interested in the moral-education class.
- ?? They have respect for peers.
- ?? The classroom atmosphere is more peaceful. Students are cooperative.
- ?? Students' ability to concentrate is increased.
- ?? Students love the activities and look forward to more.
- ?? They are more creative, have their own ideas, and want to be heard.
- ?? Teachers feel more confident of their grasp of the subject and how to teach it as they experience its value and better understand it.
- ?? Students are proactive.
- ?? They are able to relate to a situation, their behavior, and the value of the subject.
- ?? They know how to handle difficult situations.

<Quotation> Five teachers (16%) felt that time was too short to tell if students' behavior was changing. The remaining two (6%) felt the class was too big to do the activities, that there was no reinforcement of the values from other teachers and parents, and that they were not effective alone. (Classes were held once a week, with each session lasting from 20 to 40 minutes each. The teacher-to-student ratio, on average, was 1:31). <End quote>

Living Values has been underway in **India** in one form or another for a number of years now, and programs held include the following:

- ?? train the trainers;
- ?? teachers' training;
- ?? programs for students;
- ?? programs for young adults; and
- ?? programs for parents and guardians.

All the five main books have been translated into Hindi and some are ready for publication.

In **Thailand**, a group of Karen teachers have been implementing the Children-Affected-by-War program for over a year. In late April and early May 2000, trainers Diane Tillman and Rachel Flower returned to the site of their 1999 training and spent 10 days with a special group of refugees and teachers. Having visited the camp several times during the year to monitor progress, Ms. Flower reported:

<Quotation> They say that landmines are everywhere now. But still Karen people flock into Thailand, using ever-changing routes, and the refugee camps are set to burst. And yet, whilst they lament what has happened to them, they do not let it dampen their spirit and their deep desire to make a difference in the world. At least this is what we had the privilege to observe when we spent 10 days visiting the camp. Our visit was multipurpose:

- ?? Guide a new group of 24 teachers through an experiential training in the use of Children-Affected-by-War materials.



?? Interview as many as possible of the 37 teachers from last year's group who had been using the Living Values material over the school year.

?? Further train nine of the teachers who had chosen to become trainers themselves.

?? Train a small number of teachers to run the Parent Values Groups.

<Quotation> This was not an easy task when new, stricter conditions on NGO work in camps dictated that we could not stay overnight. Instead, we had to spend the best part of four hours each day in transit to and from the nearest town, much of it through extremely rugged terrain. But of course it was worth it. Not only to meet and train a new group of dedicated teachers, but also to reconnect with old friends, share experiences of the year, and enjoy the feeling that something very special is happening. It was truly heartwarming to hear of the positive changes, both in their students, and also in their own lives, and feel the sense of hope that these teachers are engendering in those around them.

<Quotation> "My students are so happy!" said one. "I feel as if my heart is soft now. I used to have such a hard heart." "Now I enjoy the children," said another. "I used to get angry so quickly before. I didn't feel as if I was a good teacher. Now I love to encourage them." Another teacher talked of how her students were now so adept at using the conflict resolution skills they'd been taught that they never fight now. "They used to anger quickly and fight regularly," she said. "And now they do not fight." Her smile stretched from ear to ear. Some Living Values students tell non-Living Values students when they fight: "You don't have to fight, you can solve your problems. Would you like us to help?" They all spoke of how many of the children were so much more confident and happier. They have been able to let go of some of their anger and

grief and move on into a healthier way of being. And they certainly seem to love the Living Values lessons a great deal. One teacher told us that one of his students always used to skip class, but once the Living Values lessons started up this child came every day.

<Quotation> We also heard stories of more peaceful households, where previously a lot of arguing would take place. One man told us about his own children and how, in sharing Living Values activities with them, they became such good examples in their camp section that other parents were constantly asking him what his secret was. This gave rise to an impromptu parents' group. Another told us of how his own children use Living Values to remind him when he is not being a good example himself, and they also model healthy behavior for their siblings who haven't yet been in Living Values classes.

<Quotation> In short, the word is out that Living Values is "cool," and more and more people want some of it for themselves.

<Quotation> The camp leader is so pleased with the results of the program that he organized a meeting with all his section leaders and education coordinators so they could learn more about what Living Values involves. They now want to have a coordinators' training program some time later in the year.

<Quotation> A group of 25 teachers is now ready to train others, and so next year the hope is that they can lead it themselves with minimal (if any) help from us. In this way the training can spread to other camps. The teaching material has been updated and translated into the Karen language, so the teachers are well equipped to

share their treasures with others, with the help of the crayons, paper, pens, card, markers, and so on that we'd bought with some private donations.

<Quotation> It was a joy to be with these people and to share the spirit of their uplifting songs and their strong resolve. It is always a humbling experience and a very special one. Special thanks to Diane for her love and tireless dedication, and to Bharati for her compassion and generosity—she initiated a collection in Singapore and brought boxes of goodies into the camp, including soft toys, bags, hats, books, and much-needed medicines. Milk powder was also bought, which is particularly good for the newcomers, many of whom are very weak when they arrive. <End Quote>

Three hundred schools have implemented the program in **Mauritius**. One teacher, Mrs. Nellapotesawmy, noted, “Pupils are more honest. They share their knowledge with friends in difficulty. Quarrels are less frequent for they are learning to respect and love their friends.” Mr. Borthosow added, “The values do help a lot to give satisfaction to one and all. Frankly, the complaints like ‘Monsieur, he hit me,’ ‘He pushed me,’ ‘He took my cake,’ and ‘He doesn’t allow me to play,’ have diminished a lot.”

Activities in **Hong Kong** are also underway, and eight workshops and training sessions have been offered for a total of over 200 local educators. These have led to some values activities being undertaken in schools and, even this early, the response so far has been encouraging. In early 1999, a draft Chinese translation of the *Values Activities for Children Aged 3-7* was presented to the Education Department for review and some 250 copies were subsequently printed. The first draft of *Values Activities for*

*Children Aged 8-14* in Chinese was also completed not long thereafter. Discussions are underway with the Beijing Institute of Education with regard to the editing, publishing, and use of both these books.

Living Values teacher-trainer Lai Lai-Fong has used program activities in a secondary school within the Tung Wah Group of schools and quickly found that children even in this non-stop city have a natural affinity for peace and readily warmed to activities that helped them develop and express it.

Following a meeting with teachers, piloting of Living Values began in September 2000 at a local primary school, Hsin Tsi Wan, on a whole-school basis. Four lessons a month are dedicated to the program and, in liaison with the Education Department, progress will be monitored and evaluated. Contact is also being maintained with other schools with regard to piloting.

Meanwhile, activities are also set to start at the two kindergartens of Jimmy's Education Institute, following a training conducted there for 20 teachers. The program is also being implemented at Teens Tonic Child Development Centre, whose principal, Karen Ng, reports that the program has helped children and parents to become more aware of the importance of values.

With so many teachers now introduced to the program, a seminar to consider questions of implementation was held in January 2000 at the Education Department's Teachers' Centre for an invited group of teachers, student guidance officers, and three

curriculum experts from the government's Curriculum Development Institute. Led by Derek Sankey, participants were guided into an evaluation of the main practical issues in implementing a locally sensitive values-based educational program. Starting with the premise that the problem with most curriculums is that they leave values out, small group discussions deliberated on whether or not values can find a designated slot within the new curriculum currently being developed for Hong Kong in the context of overcrowded classrooms, the pressure of exams, passive students, and teacher-directed learning. With the program as the focal point for the workshop, the key points that emerged were synthesized by group facilitators. In summary, while some teachers expressed concerns with regard to issues such as classroom seating arrangement, the rigid attitudes of head teachers, school policy, and parents' intolerance to new ideas, it was thought that, with sufficient guidance, the program activities would be applicable to local schools. The materials can be adapted to reflect the local culture and customs. Although some teachers said they would feel comfortable carrying out program activities, others would like more training and support. It was agreed that once teachers have internalized the values themselves, the program can be implemented successfully.

Peter Williams worked with somewhat older students for several months in a middle school in Beijing, **China**. When he asked his Chinese colleague, 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 also 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 that this was transferred to other lessons. Although the program is not formally being implemented at the school, there have also been some follow-up sessions. Meetings have also been held with and presentations made to teachers, other educationists, and various universities, including the Beijing Institute of Education, Peking University, the National Centre for Education Development Research, Capital Normal University, and Beijing Normal University.

### **<Subhead 1> Conclusion**

Recent years have seen an erosion of some of the political and geographical walls behind which human rights have been abused, but in their place we often encounter cultural and ethnic differences that are exploited to justify abuses. Awareness of shared values can help us recognize and respect the universality of human rights. To reaffirm faith in the dignity and worth of the human person, we must first understand why we have such worth and then experience it. Human rights are derived from the worth of the individual and that worth can be seen in the exercise of reason and conscience and the expression by the individual of values such as respect, freedom, and responsibility.

We must bring those human values back into our personal, professional, and societal relationships to reaffirm the worth of the individual. When we do so, human rights will be the unwritten laws that will be upheld and followed naturally by everyone, everywhere, as a way of life. It is only when we have such a values-based or even spiritual perspective that we can be free and equal and can truly act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood as urged by the Declaration.

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 world where, too often, human rights are under attack. 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 educationists in meeting the challenges facing them. But policymakers, public authorities, parents, and educators must come together and work together. Only then will it be possible to deliver empowering values-based and rights-based education, without which formal education is not meeting its aim of equipping youth for the journey toward a better tomorrow.

All of us collectively determine the future of humanity. The more we accept the personal challenge and responsibility of bringing these values back into our daily lives,

the more everyone's rights will be observed and the more certain and secure the future will be. The choice, and the consequences, are ours.