



# LIVING VALUES

an educational program

Values Education for Children and Young Adults

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## Living Values e-News

Living Values: An Educational Program Newsletter

**July 1999**

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by Lynn Henshall

In a world which seems to encourage selfishness, consumerism and competition at the expense of co-operation, tolerance, honesty and

### Coming Events

**Barcelona, Spain**  
**July 22-25, 1999**

FORUM EUROPEO:  
Living our Values

The Spirit of Education  
in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Coordination:

E-Mail:

[vpvpe@bcn.servicom.es](mailto:vpvpe@bcn.servicom.es)

respect, and where human rights are being violated somewhere every day, our grandparents' lament that "things are not as they used to be" can no longer be ignored. For how long can society continue to accept the steady decline in moral standards whilst blindly repeating that, "it's just the exaggeration of the media – life has always been like this and always will be"?

The need for a reassessment of our system of values was brought home to a teacher recently during a science lesson. She wanted to illustrate the principle of heat insulation in a way that would interest a class of 16-year-olds who are not always easily motivated. She dictated the following scenario, "Imagine it is January 1<sup>st</sup> in the year 2000 and the millennium bug has struck. The power supply to your neighbourhood has failed, but luckily you had planned ahead and invested in a Primus stove. You are able to heat up a large pan of soup, which you can then share amongst your family and neighbours. Using beakers and different insulating materials, investigate which material would be best for keeping a beaker of soup warm." Before she had got to the last word, the class dissolved into heated debate among themselves. "*I* wouldn't give *my* soup to any neighbours, they should have got their *own* cooker", "*I*'m not wasting *my* time on *them*" and "*We* thought we're supposed to always think of *number one* first". Deciding against challenging them with a feeble, "How would you feel if later on you needed to ask your neighbours for some fuel or water?", she resigned herself to keeping quiet and listening to their views, trying not to impose any judgement based on her own personal values. Abandoning hope of any scientific discussion developing in what remained of her lesson, she decided she would try a different approach to the practical session the next day! However, that evening the lesson-plan was put aside as she pondered on her role as a teacher. "Will I have really succeeded if my students achieve their pass-grade in science but have no desire to share a cup of soup with their neighbour? What values can we help them to develop, in order to create the sort of world we would all like to live in?"

Fax: 0034-934877638

### More Information

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**Oxford, UK,  
July 28 - August 4,  
1999**

International Train-the-Trainer 99: Living Values: An Educational Program

Coordination:  
E-Mail: [lv@bkwsu.com](mailto:lv@bkwsu.com)  
Fax: 1 (212) 504 2798

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**Nairobi, Kenya  
August 15-22, 1999**

Train-the-Trainer: Living Values: An Educational Program

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**New York, USA  
August 26-29, 1999**

USA Educators' Retreat

Coordination:  
E-Mail: [lv@bkwsu.com](mailto:lv@bkwsu.com)  
Fax: 1 (212) 504 2798

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**Mexico City, Mexico  
November 16-20, 1999**

## Birth of the Program

Questions like these are currently being addressed by a group of global educators, who have been working with values for many years. Under the initiative of Cyril Dalais, a consultant to the Education Cluster of UNICEF (New York), educators from Barbados, France, Malaysia, Mexico, Spain, Tanzania, UK and USA met in New York in July 1996 to discuss how the ideals of values education could be promoted. Since then they have been compiling a set of materials known as the Educators' Kit, as part of what is now the international project, **Living Values: an Educational Program (LVEP)**.

The Program is a partnership among educators from around the world; supported by UNESCO; sponsored by the National Committee of UNICEF (Spain), Planet Society (UNESCO) and the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University; in consultation with the Education Cluster of UNICEF (New York). The Program seeks to provide guiding principles and tools for development of the whole person, whilst recognising that the individual is comprised of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

## The aims of the Program 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 Educators' Kit

The Educators' Kit has been available for use since March 1997 and includes the following items:

- **Convention on the Rights of the Child** - adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1989.
- **Living Values: A Guidebook** - a publication of the Brahma Kumaris in honour of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Nations. Sixty nations listed those values they felt would be present in a better world and the guidebook provides the essence of the 12 most commonly mentioned values: co-operation, freedom, happiness, honesty, humility, love, peace, respect, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance, and unity. Many educators have been experimenting with values activities from the Classrooms section of the guidebook

since 1995.

- **Educators' Manual** - developed and written by an experienced primary school educator with support from the National Committee of UNICEF in Spain, the Educators' Manual provides ideas, proposals, and experiences to promote working with values within the educational community. The content includes cross-cultural experiences in both formal and non-formal learning settings.
- **Blueprint** - a section on how to introduce a values based education into an education environment, written by a head teacher on the basis of his experience in a values based school.
- **Values Activities** - there are three sections according to different age groups: 2-7, 8-14 and 15-18. Values are explained, points are given for reflection, and opportunities are provided to experience values through activities such as visualisations, songs, stories, plays, games, dance, music, drama, art, craft, discussion and writing. Specific suggestions are given to integrate values within the different subject areas of the existing curricula. The activities, which have all been used successfully by educators, are designed to draw out the innate good qualities of each child and to foster the development of peaceful, co-operative social skills, involving the children cognitively, socially and artistically. It is emphasised that they are examples and educators are encouraged to be creative, using their own ideas and other resources.
- **Parents/Caregivers Module** - these facilitated sessions are designed for parents and caregivers to develop the understanding and skills needed to encourage and actively develop positive values in children. The section includes group sessions which help parents/caregivers 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 value-related social and emotional skills at home. Common parenting concerns are addressed, as are particular skills to deal with those concerns. The section also includes needs of children from ages 0 to 2.
- **Children-at-Risk and Refugees Module** - this section includes issues of grieving and survival as well as addressing dislocated families and communities and those in refugee camps. A variety of exercises from the Values Activities sections are adapted for these situations.
- **Train-the-Trainers** – an important guide for educators. Wherever possible educators are recommended to attend Living Values courses that enable them to experience the activities in the Kit for themselves. This helps them to understand more deeply the role values play in their own life and to get in touch with their own unique qualities. Suggestions are given for workshops and programmes that can be run to introduce Living Values to other educators.
- **Evaluations** – the Program is sustained through feedback and the process of evaluation, by educators and participants. This enables the materials to be expanded and developed so that they are increasingly appropriate and user-friendly to educators.
- **Living Values Card Pack** - 48 colourful cards are designed as a tool for teachers and students to explore inner values – through reflection, discussion, an activity, and practice. They were designed by Casa Productions.
- **Living Values Poster** - banner-sized to display the 12 values. It was also designed by Casa Productions.

**Who is using the kit?**

In less than two years, the number of countries using the Living Values Program has increased to over seventy and including many different cultures and faiths. It has been adopted by the education departments of several countries including Bolivia, India, Mauritius, Mexico, and Spain.

In the UK Living Values has been presented to numerous conferences and meetings. Living Values: A Guidebook is listed in QCA's Directory of Resources for the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the Minister of Education has received an Educators' Kit.

In support of the Program, educators from the UK have assisted at training sessions in Mauritius and Kenya. Residential seminars have been kindly hosted by the Brahma Kumaris at their Global Retreat Centre, near Oxford, on topics such as **Values in my School, Coping Skills for Teachers, and SMSC Made Easy!** The Centre has also hosted international and European training sessions for educators from over forty countries together with members of UNESCO, UNICEF and the Brahma Kumaris.

### Discovering my own values

When one teacher was asked what she felt made the project special for her, she replied, "Living Values is a project for our time - it's holistic and organic!" She went on to explain, "It has helped me to revive that initial enthusiasm that I had for teaching when I first started, that I lost as I steadily became bogged down in the nuts and bolts of coping with paperwork, new curricula, discipline problems, low morale of colleagues, etc. Using Living Values has made me look within myself to rediscover my own values. At first this was a challenge as I realised it meant that I would have to "walk my talk", but it soon helped me to become more positive about myself and my students, so that teaching has become a joy again. The emphasis on the activities is on actually *experiencing* the values, not just talking about them and, because of this, real personal change is possible at a deeper level.

I also like the way that values can be integrated within every subject so that values are not just associated with 'circle-time' or the PSHE lesson, but become linked with all aspects of life. It's not just for school children either. There are guidelines and activities for parents, toddlers, children-at-risk, refugees, and importantly it acknowledges and empowers teachers in their special role in the overall development of the child.

Finally I love the idea of a project that's continuously evolving, embracing and building upon the ideas and experiences of groups and individual groups from all over the world. I recently attend an international Living Values seminar in Oxford and left with a feeling of motivation and purpose that continues to be a driving force in my daily life in the classroom."

### The future

In July 1999, Living our Values, a European Forum, is to be held in Barcelona, where educators will have the opportunity to meet and share with others who are involved in values education and to promote co-operation between educators and educational organisations in Europe. The European community will be presented with a new perspective for the development of a culture

of peace through values education.

In November 1999 the fourth annual seminar for educators is to be held at Global Retreat Centre, Oxford.

Not to be underestimated is the fact that the best resources of all are the personality and wealth of personal experience of the educators themselves. We are most happy to hear your ideas and suggestions to help us develop this Program further. If you would like to take part or receive more information, please contact:

**Living Values, c/o Global Co-operation House, 65 Pound Lane, London, NW10 2HH,**

*tel: 01242-512716, fax: 01242-524536, e-mail: [lvep@cyberphile.co.uk](mailto:lvep@cyberphile.co.uk)*

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## **United Kingdom**

West Kidlington Primary School in Oxfordshire began Living Values classroom activities in 1995. The head teacher, Mr. Neil Hawkes, reports remarkable changes. In this working class neighbourhood school, students learn to be responsible for their behaviour. They enjoy peaceful, respectful, co-operative relationships with their peers and teachers. The school enables the students to think carefully about values and to reflect them 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.

At a one day seminar for teachers and caregivers in Jersey, participants came away realising the power of visualisation as a tool to transform delicate situations and the importance of intuition in understanding others without prejudice. In South London, Living Values has been put into action in nursery schools and several schools in Derbyshire are carrying out Living Values sessions with children. A teacher at a primary school in Gloucester noted that there had been no miscreants standing outside the head teacher's office while Living Values team spent four days demonstrating values activities in the school!

The Program is linked with projects, for example Aberdeen City Council's "**Zero Tolerance**" campaign against violence towards women is reviewing the materials; the "**Learning Potential**" Project involved a Living Values day at a secondary school in Swindon with one key outcome that the self-esteem of all pupils, but particularly of disaffected students, increased; and **UNESCO** has included the Activities for Children, Ages 8-14, in its "**Guidance and Counselling for Girls in Africa**" in 1998.

## **China**



Mr. Peter Williams worked with 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 visualisation 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." In the typical Chinese one-child family, the child is often under great pressure to achieve and Ms. Ao 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 is 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, they are better organised 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.

## **Zimbabwe**

In Zimbabwe, Ms. Natasha Ncube used Living Values 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, co-operation, patience and tolerance in students. She comments, "Discipline has improved. I noticed the development of self-confidence in many students, appreciation, 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 developed more conscientiousness, "They believed in themselves." Before, some did their work because of fear of academic detention or corporal punishment.

Ms. Natasha 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. I can solve all the problems peacefully with my boys."

## **Bolivia**

In La Paz, Bolivia, 3000 students from 3 to 18 years engaged in Living Values activities at the German School. Cecilia Levy noted that discriminatory behaviour has dramatically decreased in school, where children are part of a class conscious society, 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. An unexpected result was more understanding and co-operation between parents and teachers.

## **India, Guyana and Reunion Island**

Here are some more statements from teachers: "The children have become more cheerful. They

have more interest and enthusiasm." (India); "Some pupils can now tell others when they were not behaving - in an acceptable manner!" (Guyana); and "It was a wonderful initiative that enabled us to understand and teach the children in quite a different manner." (Reunion Island).

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Hard copies of text and/or images may also be sent to the Living Values Office in New York:

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866 UN Plaza, Suite 436, New York, NY 10017 USA  
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