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Living Values e-News
Living Values Education Newsletter

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To Our Readers

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Warmest seasonal greetings and welcome to the twenty-ninth issue of Living Values e-News, the electronic newsletter of the Association for Living Values Education International (ALIVE International)!

It's been an eventful few months since our last newsletter and, as well as many activities in the field, there have been several developments important to Living Values Education internationally. 2006 is the tenth anniversary of the meeting of educators at UNICEF in New York that led to the birth and development of all that Living Values Education is today and this milestone was marked at various celebratory events including in Spain, as described below. Reflecting some of the ways in which we have grown over the years, and following on from last year's successful Conference in Mauritius, we also report below on an international conference on Living Values Education that was held in the UK in July 2006. This was followed just a week later by the 2006 Annual General Assembly of the Association for Living Values Education International that took place in a delightful retreat setting in Switzerland, with the kind help of the Swiss Association for Living Values Education.

Our days in Switzerland were spent productively and enjoyably and drew together a group of about 30 people from the continents of Africa, America, Asia and Europe. As representatives of the work of LVE in our countries we planned, discussed, decided and worked; as educationists we listened to each other's stories, shared and were inspired by all that we heard; and as individuals from around the world in a beautiful and tranquil setting we thought deeply, and got together and had fun!

One of the highlights, apart from the visit to the chocolate factory (!), was a presentation by Professor Bart McGettrick, of Glasgow. A member of ALIVE's International Advisory Committee, Bart reminded us of some of the fundamental purposes of education and a few home truths, such as:

- The main function of education is the flourishing of humanity, including personal and social well-being, attainment and achievement.
- One of the most significant purposes of education is to form people of love, care and compassion, with a deep sense of hope, who appreciate beauty and wonder, and serve the world by their gifts.
- Effective teachers must ensure that schools are places of justice, hope, learning and thinking, and service.
- Educators need to ensure that learners can dream of a world of

humanitarian values where they are safe and their gifts can be put to the service of others. Teachers cannot allow this dream to die. We owe it to future generations to create a future of hope and of justice with compassion.

Amongst the many issues that arose during our meetings, two may be singled out for particular attention. The first was a series of conversations for the shaping of the structure of ALIVE as an association of associations, or network of educators comprised of educational associations that will be members of ALIVE and oversee its promotion and implementation in each country. The second was the adoption of “[The Living Values Education Approach](#)”, a document setting out the vision, principles and practices of LVE. Over a year in the making, starting with a weekend’s initial group dialogue and followed by various rounds of international review, comment and amendment, the LVE Vision Statement and Core Principles draw on the experiences of the past nine years of LVE piloting, practice, research and analysis around the world and attempt to explain what LVE is all about. This is what they say:

Vision Statement

Living Values Education (LVE) is a way of conceptualising education that promotes the development of values-based learning communities and places the search for meaning and purpose at the heart of education. LVE emphasises the worth and integrity of each person involved in the provision of education, in the home, school and community. In fostering quality education, LVE supports the overall development of the individual and a culture of positive values in each society and throughout the world, believing that education is a purposeful activity designed to help humanity flourish.

Core Principles

Living Values Education is based on the following core principles:

On the learning and teaching environment

1. When positive values and the search for meaning and purpose are placed at the heart of learning and teaching, education itself is valued.
2. Learning is especially enhanced when occurring within a values-based learning community, where values are imparted through quality teaching, and learners discern the consequences, for themselves, others and the world at large, of actions that are and are not based on values.
3. In making a values-based learning environment possible, educators not only require appropriate quality teacher education and ongoing professional development, they also need to be valued, nurtured and cared for within the learning community.
4. Within the values-based learning community, positive relationships develop out of the care that all involved have for each other.

On the teaching of values

5. The development of a values-based learning environment is an integral part of values education, not an optional extra.
6. Values education is not only a subject on the curriculum. Primarily it is pedagogy; an educational philosophy and practice that inspires and develops positive values in the classroom. Values-based teaching and guided reflection support the process of learning as a meaning-

making process, contributing to the development of critical thinking, imagination, understanding, self-awareness, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills and consideration of others.

7. Effective values educators are aware of their own thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviour and sensitive to the impact these have on others.
8. A first step in values education is for teachers to develop a clear and accurate perception of their own attitudes, behaviour and emotional literacy as an aid to living their own values. They may then help themselves and encourage others to draw on the best of their own personal, cultural and social qualities, heritage and traditions.

On the nature of persons within the world and the discourse of education

9. Central to the Living Values Education concept of education is a view of persons as thinking, feeling, valuing whole human beings, culturally diverse and yet belonging to one world family. Education must therefore concern itself with the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical well-being of the individual.
10. The discourse of education, of thinking, feeling and valuing, is both analytic and poetic. Establishing a dialogue about values within the context of a values-based learning community facilitates an interpersonal, cross-cultural exchange on the importance and means of imparting values in education.

A statement such as this can never definitively encompass everything and it will remain a living document to be amended and enriched as time goes by; nevertheless, we believe that it helps explain a lot about our approach and thinking and makes some important points of relevance to educationists and other concerned individuals worldwide.

As ever, we would welcome hearing from you on this and all else that we do and, as the year draws to a close, hope that insights such as those above, and the news stories below, can offer some thought and inspiration for the year ahead so that we may embrace its challenges with renewed courage, confidence, goodwill and hope.

With warmest wishes,
The Editor



News and Success Stories From Around the World

 **CANADA Values-based Atmosphere brings about Change in Relationships with Children**

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Judy Johnson, the Canadian LVE Association's coordinator for eastern Canada reported: "I am just back from a wonderful LVEP training this past weekend, the first LVEP Training in Ontario. We had 20 people from Brampton attend; half were parents, the other half teachers. We became children in the early part of the session when we shared our favourite memories of

being a child; this set a wonderful tone for the weekend. Many people felt that they shed the negative parts of their childhood and were in touch again with their own inner brilliance. It was very touching and a true embodiment of a values-based atmosphere. We changed our approach a bit, as we had only two days, and focused on the atmosphere in the classroom/home. Participants created a room in their mind where they felt safe, valued, respected, understood and loved, then they imagined themselves in this room relating with the children in their lives; it was very powerful. The changes were apparent when they came back the next day and reported the ways in which they had responded to their children differently. Here's to LVE growing in Ontario! There is much enthusiasm for another training. We will focus our energies on developing a facilitation team in Ontario. Much love to all of you in our shared task of creating a values-based world!"



GHANA Values in the Classroom Replace the Cane with Dignity and Discipline

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Helen Sayers, the former President of the Swiss Association for LVE, and the person coordinating its activities in Central and West Africa, met Kuma Gavi, a Ghanaian former teacher, in the plane on the way to Ghana. As they talked, and Kuma told her the story of his teaching experiences, Helen thought it was such a good example of conflict resolution and values-based discipline that she invited him to give a talk at the LVE Professional Development Course she was running a few days later. This is what Kuma said:

"I became a professional teacher at the tender age of nineteen in 1985. As a primary school teacher, I was teaching children between the ages of 6 and 12. One day, ten years into my career, while having my usual morning reflection, I found myself faced with the questions: How successful have you been as a teacher? What kind of relationship are you building between you and your pupils? What makes you different from the children you teach? After a candid self appraisal, deep soul-searching and a long sober reflection, I came to the conclusion that I could have done far better than I had done and that my relationship with my pupils had been too authoritative, if not autocratic. In fact my pupils were until this time not able to approach me easily. I was feared as the "Mr. No-nonsense Disciplinarian". I also got enlightened that the only difference between me and my pupils is that I only happened to be older than them and that if we were all to be age mates, considering what some of them were able to do at their age, some of them could have been ahead of me in some aspects of life's achievements.

This was the turning point in my teaching career. I resolved to take each of my pupils as a personal friend, correct their mistakes with love, and treat them with respect as one would treat a colleague. Above all, I resolved firmly never to use the cane to discipline the children. In fact, in Ghana and most countries in Africa, caning is very widespread both in homes and schools. It is the easiest way of control and keeping order in the classroom. But actually the cane only subdues the children in fear. As the children later confided in me, it only creates enmity and anger in the child against whoever is using the cane. A boy told me he even insults the father in his mind (as he dare not do it verbally) whenever he canes him. However, it soon became quite difficult to control the difficult children without resorting to the use of the cane. Especially, I was getting helpless in controlling the aggressive behaviour. A particular problem concerns the boys beating or kicking the girls. Just admonishing and talking to the boys was yielding no results.

Then I decided to use the traditional values of respect and honour to bring a change. In my community it is very uncommon for a man to be asked to kneel down before a woman to apologise to her as the man is considered the head – and my boys know this only too well! One day a girl came to complain to me that one of the boys had kicked her. After thoroughly questioning the boy, it became clear that he was just being a bully. The girl's only offence was

that she had crossed over the part of playing ground where the boys were playing football. I asked the boy whether he agreed with me that his action was unacceptable and therefore punishable. He nodded the head in agreement. By this time a small group of children had gathered around us. I then asked the girl if she would forgive the boy if he should apologise to her. She said yes. Consequently, and contrary to all expectations, I asked the boy if he could kneel down and apologise to the girl by saying: "Please, my lady, I am sorry. I will not kick you again". Just as I expected, he was reluctant to apologise in this manner. However, he mumbled an apology but omitted "my lady". I insisted he made the apology properly. He did. Apparently, the girls were very happy, but not the boys. Their pride was deeply hurt.

A week later, the boys in the class came to discuss the apology issue with me. Their spokesperson was emphatic and candid that they do not like the arrangement and would prefer being caned to kneeling down to the girls. The following day, I organised a class discussion for all parties (the boys, girls and myself) to make our stands clear on the issue. During the discussion, I made it clear to both sides that it was important for all of us to treat each other with respect, love and fairness. I also got the boys to understand that the girls also feel hurt and dehumanised when kicked with the foot (in this community as in most other places it is unacceptable to kick people) just as they also hated kneeling down to the girls. At the end we all came to one agreement; we were able to design a set of rules and regulations that governed conduct both in and out of class.

I must point out that the whole process was not as smooth and easy as it sounds here. At a certain point in time, I started having problems with some of the parents because I would not cane the children whenever the parents came to report their children's bad behaviour at home to me, as I used to. There were also many other instances such that I nearly went back on my word and started using the cane again as it was not easy at all to get the children disciplined through discussions, arguments, arbitration (some of the children could be very litigious) and appealing to their conscience and social morality. But in the end, through patience, the strong will to succeed, and persistence, I was able to establish a disciplined class without using the cane. A wonderful cordial interpersonal relationship was also engendered, thus creating the open climate in the classroom that was needed for effective teaching and learning to take place."



HUNGARY Parents Group Explores Values while Teens Write Poems on Peace

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Sóphia Fried, who coordinates LVE activities in Hungary, reported on how she started a Parents Group in a local library in Budapest in spring 2006 with the support of the Director of the Library, who understood very well how important it is for parents to share their experiences and learn from each other how to be better parents. Two participants spoke of the benefits of the Group meetings as follows.

Horváth Istvánné, the Director of the Library: "Do I need Living Values? It is important to stop, seek and experience our inner values. They strengthen us and give us a base for comparison, especially in our daily life full of tension, expectations and uncertainty. Our Parents Group involved young and older parents, and grandparents and our being together meant a real recharging of ourselves, a rethinking of our opinions and beliefs, the bringing to light of many small ideas and some experiments. I have organized these monthly meetings since April 2006. As I brought up two children in a balanced family, I never thought that I would gain newness from these workshops led by Sóphia Fried. But I have, along with ten other people. We have tried a different way of knowing ourselves. The 'recipe' seemed very simple: from 12 values we chose one and analyzed its meaning. Communicating those values in our everyday life has

been a challenge, but during the workshops we have learned more and more not only about the values and how to use them, but about ourselves and our old habits which could be melted. To think, 'work', listen to soft music and play together has created an atmosphere in which we have been able to feel free and open, while being focused. The real benefit for me was learning from others in the group and enjoying sharing, smiles and kind words as we explored many different ways in which to understand, approach and look at the same value and situation."

Juracsekné Judit, mother of three children: "It has been wonderful to have good company and be amongst people whose priority is the same: their children and themselves, as parents. I have gained accurate ideas about values and how I can convey these to my children. Usually we have some idea about which values are important in life, but it's very important to me to make their meaning clear. To learn methods to convey and communicate these values is also important. It has given me happiness to play with all these things – and see things from the perspective of a child. I go to these meetings with pleasure, although it's not too easy to find free time because of my job and my big family, but I can fill up in such a way from these meetings that I gain energy for my life."

Meanwhile, on 26 October 2006, away from Budapest and in the town of Érd, 26 teachers from different schools participated in a demonstration LVE Peace English lesson conducted by Éva Bartkó, a teacher who has been using LVE methods and skills since 2004. Held in János Bolyai Primary School in the framework of a pedagogical professional day, the aim of the lesson was to show how to create a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere with the help of soft, relaxing music, visualization exercises, brainstorming and mind map techniques. After a short visualization exercise, the students (age 14) wrote poems about their feelings of peace and tried to express their thoughts through the five senses; one student wrote the following:

Peace Poem

Peace is blue like the ocean and it looks like a newborn dove.
It tastes like sweet honey and smells like a freshly opened
flower.
Peace is the sound of twittering birds.
I'm peaceful when I'm with my friends or have a hot bath.



PARAGUAY Second Annual National LVE Conference

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In Paraguay, the second annual national LVE Educator conference was held with the theme of "Comparing Experiences, Evaluating Results." On 22 September 2006, 280 teachers, student teachers, directors and trainers from around the country gathered at Universidad Autónoma de Asunción to share their experiences and results of implementing LVE. Educators in Paraguay have been involved with LVE since 2003 and, under the leadership of Mirian Ginzo, they have developed a team of LVE teacher educators that volunteer their time to offer professional development sessions in both public and private schools and colleges. LVE has spread rapidly with the support of the Ministry of Education and Culture through the Department of Special Education, the National Commission for UNESCO, Diario ABC Color and the Universidad Autónoma de Asunción. More than 5,000 educators have benefited from LVE courses and workshops, with auspicious results for them and their students.



SINGAPORE Students Create “Peace Idol”

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“I never cease to be amazed at what the young can do” reported Kana Gopal, who has been coordinating LVE activities in Singapore for many years. She continued: “The Peace Idol project created by prefects in Elias Park Primary School affirms the framework of Living Values Education: when we create a values-based environment where children feel loved, understood, valued, respected and safe, they blossom and thrive. Many blossomed in Elias Park Primary School with just 9 sessions!

Four female prefects came up with the concept of Peace Idol and saw it through with the help of the Head of Pupil Development and his team of educators. From 30 nominations from Primary 5 students, they narrowed down the field to four potential idols. Those four students campaigned on 22nd September by presenting their projects and personal efforts to the whole school. Only the Primary 5 students voted. The first ‘Peace Idol’, Daniel, won almost half the votes cast. Daniel proposed two projects and both were accepted. The two projects will be implemented from January 2007 for all upper primary students.

The first project is for PE sessions to place the focus on values practised during games and exercise, not on winning or losing; educators will look out for and reinforce value-based practices such as those demonstrating teamwork, co-operation, adaptability and respect. In the second project, each student will be provided with a Values Card; they will then observe themselves on a daily basis in school, home and during other daily activities and record the values they practised. Every week, two students will share their experiences in class. To reward values-based words and actions, one outstanding student from each class will be given a certificate every term.”

Ms. Gopal noted: “This, Daniel told me, will help them to be aware of their thoughts, words and actions and help them to practise their values. It will also inspire them to learn from each other. Daniel was one of the prefects who attended the Values-based Leadership course. When asked how he conceived the projects, he said he thought about how we learn and realised that science, maths and other academic subjects need understanding and practice to learn – and that learning about values was no different: we need to understand and practise values consistently.”



SPAIN Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Living Values Education in Spain

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To celebrate the tenth anniversary of Living Values Education in Spain, the Living Values Education Association of Spain joined with the Brahma Kumaris Association to host a retreat titled “Laboratory of Values.” Anthony Strano, one of the writers who contributed to Living Values: A Guidebook, led the retreat. Sixty educators from several countries met for four days, from 7th to 10th April, at the beautiful Casal La Salle, near Barcelona, to dialogue, learn, reflect and play.

Some reflections from Anthony Strano: “Values are the blueprints of our conduct, interactions and attitudes. Values are absorbed from early childhood through the observation of others and experiencing the intentions of others towards us. However as we mature, we create, replace, modify and/or reconfirm these values according to our personal experiences. Values are built and rebuilt according to a variety of circumstances. Values indicate our character, determine

our choices, define our way of thinking, seeing, feeling, behaving and, finally, living. Values are the treasures of our life, enriching us like good friends who bring happiness and a sense of fulfilment. When values are based on spiritual principles they manifest dignity and purposeful direction in the self, creating a feeling of self-reliance, freedom, respectfulness and generosity towards all life. Values, chosen and cherished by the individual, are a great protection in the face of external, chaotic and harsh negativities that dominate so much of daily life."

A public event entitled "Sharing Together Is Celebrating" was held on 10th April at the Hall of the Municipal Conservatory of Music to conclude the celebrations. The Living Values Education Association of Spain organized the evening with the cooperation of the Culture of Peace Foundation, the Municipal Conservatory of Music, the Brahma Kumaris Association and the Association of Friends of UNESCO.



TOGO Values Education Grows and Hope for Forgiveness and Unity Blossoms

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On 4th October 2006, the provisional LVE organising team in Togo held a follow-up meeting of educators who had attended the LVEP Educator Training in September in Lome. Joseph Adetou reported: "The educators all said they had well and truly begun to put into practice what we learned during the training. Many said that they had now finished using a stick! Their comments included: 'Teachers now say good morning to each other and exchange values like passwords before entering the classroom. In the morning the students each choose a values card and then display it and comment on its meaning each day.' 'The lady principal of my school is very, very enthusiastic at the fact that beating with a stick has now disappeared in her school. Truly, everyone agrees that LVE has come at the right moment!' We are all grateful to the LVE team, Helen, Awa and Beryl, and our great friend René with his tree of values which is now at the headquarters of the National Commission for UNESCO. We would like to become LVE Trainers and make a 2007 calendar of values for the people of Togo to help lead them to find forgiveness and deep unity."



UK ALIVE International Conference on Living Values Education

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ALIVE, the Association for Living Values Education International, held an International Conference on Living Values Education from 21st to 23rd July 2006 at the Global Retreat Centre in Oxfordshire, co-organised with the UK's Living Values Association. As a change from the annual LVE Train-the-Trainer Seminar held for the previous nine years, the Conference was an experiment, and proved to be an enjoyable and successful one, offering more opportunity for reflection, interaction and exchange. As well as listening to presentations, participants were asked to create ideas for their ideal school, creatively play with the art of communication, experiment with LVE activities and learn about the structure and theoretical background of LVE. There was also time for fun, sharing through song and dance, and touching moments. A principal from South Africa dissolved in tears as she shared the plight of many of the children in her school and how the teachers had profoundly changed the atmosphere in the school with LVE. More tears appeared when two educators from the Netherlands responded with an invitation to the Netherlands and an offer of resources for the children and the school.



USA We Can Change the World – One Child, One Family, One School and One Community at a Time

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LVEP, Inc., the national LVE association in the USA, recently started a monthly newsletter. Anne Rarich, the President of LVEP, Inc., wrote in their November newsletter: “I have just driven back from the Character Education Partnership Conference in the D.C. area. The drive home along the east coast was full of late autumn light and colorful displays of leaves from a diverse range of trees. It reminded me of how much beauty is around us in all the diverse species. It is this diversity that makes me think of our value for this month... RESPECT. We tend to think of this value as one about our relationships with other people but I expand the meaning to include having respect for our environment as well.

At the conference, we spent a lot of time sharing our stories of how we are changing our school and community cultures to be more respectful and safe while also demonstrating to each other and the critical world how doing so can improve the overall lives of our students. The focus of this newsletter – and all that we do at LVEP – is to help kids respect and celebrate all cultures, choices and ‘abilities’. We believe that when we do that, our kids get on the bus, go to school and out into the world where they are accepted for the people they are – not for how they look, how they learn, how their family was formed or anything else that makes them ‘different’. We believe that we can change the world – one child, one family, one school and one community at a time.”

Anne commented in a separate communication about other activities in the last few months: “We hosted 20 participants at Peace Village for the Eighth Annual Educators’ Training. Two other trainings took place on site at requesting schools in Colorado and in Canada during August and September. Two educators from a whole school implementing LVE represented the USA at the ALIVE gathering in Switzerland this summer, along with two board members. We also sent a letter to the United Nations supporting quick and firm intervention for peace between Israel and Lebanon. LVEP, Inc. is a member of a national coalition of organizations that share a common goal of building a new generation of caring citizens through the Character Education Partnership.”



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