



LIVING VALUES
E D U C A T I O N



Living Values Education Newsletter

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Australia: 2 – 10 May 2010

Living Values Heart Centre Retreat – Alice Springs to Uluru

Brazil: 19 Mar, 9 April, 7 May, 4 June 2010

LVEP Educator Training – São Paulo

Brazil: 26 March – 30 June 2010

LVEP Educator Training – São Paulo

Brazil: LVE Pre-school Educator Training

26 Mar, 30 Apr, 28 May, 25 Jun, 30 July 2010 – São Paulo

Brazil: 17 April, 8, 22 May, 12, 26 June and 3 July 2010
LVEP Educator Training – São Paulo

USA: 8 – 9 May 2010 – Haines Falls, New York
LVE Workshop

USA: 30 July – 1 August, 2010 – Novato, California
LVE Workshop

USA: 30 July – 2 August, 2010 – Novato, California
LVE TTT Seminar

To Our Readers

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Welcome to the thirty-seventh issue of Living Values e-News, the electronic newsletter of the Association for Living Values Education International.

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News and Success Stories from Around the World

RESEARCH: Evidence of the Impact of Values Education, Based on Research of the University of Newcastle

When I was interviewed by national ABC in Australia, you will hear that I mentioned the excellent values research conducted at Newcastle University. Often, I am asked if there is any research evidence to support the claims of Living Values Education. I am delighted to inform you that there is a growing body of research evidence that supports our positive claims. In Australia, a number of studies have been conducted that show the positive effects of values education on school relationships, ambience, student wellbeing and improved academic diligence. Living Values Education is acknowledged as being one of the inspirational forces behind these studies. (Lovat et al., 2009, p. 18)"

Professor Terry Lovat and his colleagues at Newcastle University, in Australia, have been monitoring and researching the effects of the Australian Government's Values Education Initiative. This year the University published its final report for the Australian Government, which looks at the evidence concerning the impact of introducing and developing Values Education in schools (Lovat, 2009).

The research describes how values-based schools give increasing curriculum and teaching emphasis to Values Education. As a consequence students become more academically diligent, the school assumes a calmer, more peaceful ambience, better student-teacher relationships are forged, student and teacher wellbeing improves and parents are more engaged with the school – all claims made by Living Values too!

Explicit teaching of values provides a common ethical language for talking about interpersonal behaviour. It also provides a mechanism for self-regulated behaviour. An important outcome is a more settled school which enhances quality teaching and enables teachers to raise expectations for student performance.

The effective implementation of Values Education was characterized by a number of common elements.

- Values Education was regarded as a school's "core business", given equal status with other areas and embedded in policies and student welfare practices;
- A 'common language' was developed among staff, students and families to describe values and the school's expectations of student behaviour;
- Staff endeavoured to 'model' and demonstrate the values in everyday interactions with students;
- Values were scaffolded by supportive school-wide practices including teacher facilitation of student reflection and self-regulation of behaviour;
- Values were taught in an explicit way in and out of the classroom and through other media (e.g. assemblies, sport and cooperative games, drama, songs etc.);
- Values education was allied to 'real world learning' involving deep personal learning and imbued both planned and unplanned learning opportunities;
- Values education was reinforced through positive visual media as well as consistent, verbal encouragement and acknowledgement;
- Values education was allied to expressed high standards for overall participation, performance and achievement; and
- Values education was optimally introduced under the guidance of the principal and/or a team of committed staff.
- The research also revealed that Values Education had an impact in the following areas:

a. Student academic diligence was enhanced. Students:

- showed increased attentiveness in class and a greater capacity to work independently;
- assumed more responsibility for their own learning;
- asked questions and worked together more cooperatively;
- took greater care and effort in their schoolwork;
- took more pride in their efforts.

b. The improvements in School ambience included:

- conflict among students decreased or was managed more constructively;
- students demonstrated greater empathy, honesty and integrity;
- more tolerant and cooperative student interactions;
- safer and more harmonious classrooms and playgrounds;
- greater kindness and tolerance among students;
- students actively seeking to include peers without friends;
- students taking greater responsibility with school equipment and routine tasks;
- students treating the school buildings and grounds 'with respect'.

c) The impact on *student-teacher relationships* was evidenced by:

- "more trusting" relationships between staff and students;
- the establishment of more 'democratic' classrooms;
- teachers giving students more 'power' by allowing them choices in learning activities;
- teachers being more conscious of scaffolding students to manage their own behaviour or resolve conflict with others;
- teachers seeking opportunities to acknowledge and reinforce appropriate behaviour;
- teachers 'listening' to students and responding to their concerns and opinions;
- students perceiving that teachers treat them fairly;
- students behaving "more respectfully" towards teachers;
- students showing greater politeness and courtesy to teachers.

d) The positive impacts on *student and teacher wellbeing* included:

- students feeling a greater sense of connectedness and belonging;

- students gaining a greater capacity for self-reflection and self-appraisal;
- students developing a greater capacity for regulating their own and their peers' behaviour;
- teachers receiving collegial support and strong leadership;
- teachers obtaining confidence and knowledge through opportunities for professional development and through staff collaboration;
- teachers re-examining their practices and role;
- the fostering of relational trust among staff and between teachers and families.

Other research evidence:

When Values Education was explicit, a common language was established among students, staff and families. This not only led to greater understanding of the targeted values but also provided a positive focus for redirecting children's inappropriate behaviour. Teachers perceived that explicitly teaching values and developing empathy in students resulted in more responsible, focused and cooperative classrooms and equipped students to strive for better learning and social outcomes. When values are explicitly endorsed, acknowledged and 'valued' within a school culture, it becomes incumbent on schools to ensure that staff, as well as students are both benefactors and recipients in respectful and caring interactions. The common focus draws teachers together to create a collaborative and cohesive school community which supports teachers to do their job more effectively. This has important ramifications for students' academic progress and wellbeing.

Many thanks to Newcastle University's research program which has produced such excellent evidence on the impact of Values Education. I invite you to share it with others so that we can further encourage the development of Living Values Education.

Dr Neil Hawkes
Oxford, UK. 2009

Reference

Lovat, T., Toomey, R., Dally, K. & Clement, N. (2009). Project to test and measure the impact of values education on student effects and school ambience. Final Report for the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) by The University of Newcastle. Canberra: DEEWR. Available at:
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/Project_to_Test_and_Measure_the_Impact_of_Values_Education.pdf

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BRAZIL: Comprehensive Implementation and Research Plan in a Challenging Neighborhood

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The LVE Team at Instituto Viendo Valores in Brazil is just about to implement a large-scale LVE project in one of the most challenging neighborhoods of Sao Paulo with thousands of children and adults, reports Nádia de Castro, the president of IVV. "This our first major two-year project of implementation and research with both LVE Formal Education and LVE for At-Risk Youth.

The project will take place in Jardim Angela, in Sao Paulo, at both local schools and social institutes, particularly with the Santos Martires Society. The project is being partially sponsored by Itau Foundation, and has been approved by Fumcad-Fundo Municipal dos Direitos da Crianca e do Adolescente. There is a multi-pronged approach.

Level A – Implementation of LVE within the Santos Martires Society which works with children and teenagers. This will benefit:

- 60 teenagers under social re-educator orders, with NPPE - Nucleo de Protecao Psicossocial Especial. LVE, values service learning and receive schooling.
- 100 parents and caregivers of teenagers undertaking social re-education, with NPPE - Nucleo de Protecao Psicossocial Especial. They will take LVE workshops;
- 380 children and teenagers from 6 years of age through 17 who live in a socially vulnerable situation within CCAJ-Riviera. Children, teenagers and the young adults will receive the LVE program for street children(children in a situation of risk);
- 100 parents and caregivers of teenagers at-risk who attend the CCAJ-Riviera will also receive LVE workshops with some of the LVE content for children at risk/street children.
- 800 people who receive SSM services and who help children, young adults and teenagers will receive LVE workshops for street children/children at risk;
350 professionals and helpers at the core of Santos Martires Society will be educated about the application of LVE.

B – Application of the regular LVE program with take place in three state schools of the Jardim Angela area: EE Jose Raul Poleto, EE Prof. Flavio La Selva and EE Eudoro Villela. This will benefit:

- 220 teachers and school support staffs. They who will participate in LVE workshops in order to implement LVE.
- 3.000 students from these three schools who will participate in Living Values Education.
- 750 parents and caregivers of the students from the state schools who will participate in LVE Parent Workshops.

C – It is difficult to estimate the number of beneficiaries that will be sent to the job market through the partnership of CIEE. Their inclusion will depend on many other factors, such as participant involvement, motivation and the number of employment opportunities for apprentices.

D – A thorough scientific study on the results of implementing LVE will be done with:

- 60 teenagers under a social re-education orders with NPPE - Núcleo de Proteção Psicossocial Especial;
- 90 children, teenagers and young adults from CCAJ- Riviera; and
- 160 students from state schools that have participated in LVE as part of this project.”

Congratulations to the LVE Team in Brazil and the many dedicated persons and organizations involved in this great endeavor!

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INDONESIA: LVE Provides Strength for Educators and Joy for Students in a Rural Educare Outreach Program

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Bali has many social challenges ranging from abject physical poverty to the more subtle problem of spiritual deprivation. One of the initiatives of the Karuna Bali Foundation in Ubud provides education workshops involving **Hands** (games), **Head** (language instruction), **Heart** (story telling and acting) and **Spirit** (reflection) to educators after which they volunteer in rural elementary schools teaching English and leadership skills on weekends.

Elementary principal, Pak Suarnayasa, requested a training for his staff and was delighted to learn that his school had been chosen as one of the recipients of the Educare program of the Karuna Bali Foundation. In preparation, Suarnayasa and some of his teachers participated in a three-day Living Values Education workshop. Initially, Suarnayasa was a little resistant to attend yet another workshop, as the workshops he participated in were usually seen as just another burden for teachers. But he was happy to discover that this workshop was totally different. It focused on the teachers first; its basic tenet was that teachers' personal values were the main force that would affect students' behavior and values. The workshop emphasized teaching by example, and he learned that a teacher with a lot of emotional burdens could therefore not provide students with a positive example. There was also a process where the teachers had to dig through layers of their own beliefs to recognize what kind of values affected their day-to-day actions. Nothing about the workshop added to the teachers' workloads – in fact, it helped the teachers strengthen themselves.

Patricia is a volunteer donating her time as an English teacher at Campuhan College and visiting rural schools involved in the Educare outreach program. She describes one such visit amongst ten-year-old children, which began with the youngsters brimming with open-hearted enthusiasm as they sang a LVE song, I am a Peaceful Star, I am. This was followed by lessons involving games, language instruction, art and a guided reflection with everyone sitting cross-legged on the floor, "Imagine you are a star in the big, open universe..."

As the session drew to an end, Patricia was visibly moved as she wrote, "It had been a high-energy morning and everyone had so much fun. The Oneness was palpable, the Joy was amazing and the Love incredible and so much...so much gratitude from these children! My admiration was huge for this project and especially for the Campuhan students. They give freely of their time every weekend in order to facilitate a pleasurable learning experience for these children who live in rural, often remote villages, and to give these children a chance to expand their lives. The sense of community service, their creativity and genuine love and care from the hearts of these college students truly is an example to the world."

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INDONESIA: Peace Education Grows through Difference Organizations – LVE Trainers Reflect

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The Karuna Bali Foundation reports that experiences with Living Values Education "has motivated 18 educators and their NGO partner's personnel from several cities in Indonesia to commit to more LVE. To accommodate this, the first LVE Indonesia Train the Trainer Workshop was conducted in November 2009, at Yogyakarta, Central Java. Shahida Abdul Samad, Focal Point for LVE Malaysia led the training in collaboration with Taka Gani, Irma Makarim and Fidelis Waruwu of Indonesia.

The Jesuit Refugee Service will continue implementing LVE throughout their Peace Education Program at schools in Tapaktuan, Aceh. The Asia Foundation has completed a school assessment and will implement LVE in Pesantren (an Islamic Boarding School) in the Java area in 2010, while the Karuna Bali Foundation will continue implementing LVE in their school program in Bali. Other educator participants with professional backgrounds in counseling and lecturing will also support LVE activities in their home city or region.



The November training not only accommodated participants with knowledge and skills to facilitate LVE activities, but also gave them opportunities to share challenges in their roles as LVE Trainers.

Saefuddin Amsa, educator from Central Java who had been working with Muslim Community in Aceh said, *“I think, as a trainer, we need to know how to communicate unfamiliar phrases such as reflection activity, or the new paradigm of not teaching but exploring values. The second is, we also need to contextualize some concepts in LVE within the conditions and traditions of the community. Some concepts may already exist and by contextualizing them, we can help community have better comprehension and acceptance.”*

Besides being culturally sensitive, becoming an LVE Trainer also provides some rewards on a personal level. Clare Harvey, Program Officer from The Asia Foundation stated, “As an LVE trainer, you are encouraged to really emulate the values. However, this is not an easy thing to do. It's a challenge when you get back to your daily routine and are in a rush for a meeting to stay peaceful. ”

Matias Endar, working for the Catechetic Commission in the Bandung Diocese also shared, *“To grow a value within a community means we have to live it first. People are moved not by our words, but by our actions. Only by living the value and sharing it, will change happen in the community.”*

As the sharing continued, the workshop became a melting pot of old and new generations of Indonesia LVE trainers.

Irma Makarim, a senior LVE Trainer in Indonesia shared her experience, *“At first I didn't want to become a Trainer, because the 'burden' was too heavy. But, then I realized the core of this program is all about me. I have to change first, before the world can change. When I come to trainings, I see myself as a blank page. I have no expectations and come with an open heart. And, I think, humility is the key.”*

Taka Gani also emphasized, *“The first time I became a trainer, I was not convinced I was ready to carry the title. As a values trainer, you are expected to be as good as you say. But then I realized, I would grow along with the process and the most important thing is just to be myself.”*

After the workshop, participants, who were mostly personnel from LVE Indonesia's partner organization will start to implement LVE within their program.

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KUWAIT: Fathers Find Their Voice with Active Parenting

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“In Kuwait, we used the standard LVE parenting text for three years then came to a grinding halt,” reported Peter Williams, the principal of the Kuwait American School. “Why? We sensed it was due to the “western orientation” of the text and the facilitators who were “western” in approach. Whilst the content was “fine,” the parents were looking for an Arabic facilitator who knew the living context very well. As an Englishman with my upbringing, it was a joy to see how parents “came to life” when their stories were heard and addressed within their own context through a local person – with a little help from myself!

Kuwait is a proud land where no one should lose face. Families are extended families and in some instances tribal. Family gatherings can be up to 100 at any one time – quite different from the western context. In some instances, the parents were grandparents, uncles, aunts or elder bothers and sisters. Working in a proud land presents its own challenges. I recall during

one of the earliest parent workshops where one father gave me the answers he thought I wished to hear rather than what was in his heart. When asked why he offered his views this way – he said that it was the way he was taught to respond. After the session, he changed his way.

Suggestions for improving the relevancy of the parent book include local stories rather than simply using the parenting book. Lots of stories of situations that mums – especially single mums – over 50% in Kuwait – can relate and add to. Giving a voice is the real secret. In essence – all the LVE components are valid and reliable – yet their effectiveness was delivering within the context.

One of the most fascinating sessions we attended and later led, was the involvement of fathers. Within the Indian community – over one third of Kuwait - mums tend to look after the children and are assumed to fully take on this role. Fathers are particularly loved by the children because when they come home they shower love and affection – and gifts. Imagine a large circle of parents with mums in the front and dads behind. Imagine the children in a crèche or day-care. Imagine the question: “What would you like to see in your child by the age of 10?” Now imagine mums starting to answer the question then giving the floor to fathers. By the end of the evening, the fathers were in the front with the mums taking a well calculated back seat. Clever mums.

The outcome – dads come home earlier for quality time with children each day.

And what was the most popular activity? – Guided meditation or reflection. Parents really needed a feeling of peace and each session now includes this component.

The most effective parts of the LVE book were the 9 Parenting Skills.

In April 2009, the Connecting Classrooms initiative linked classes in the Middle East to the same in the UK. The theme they chose to link in with the UK government cross curricular theme was “Who am I?” Living Values Education was represented at the three-day seminar for all Gulf countries. The overriding call for Peace prevailed, especially from Iraq, as well as co-operation and understanding.

One activity learnt from this event, is to ask parents to draw round a child's body and write or draw all the things they want their child(ren) to receive. Then – parents link up the words or images to either the head or the heart. You can imagine how many lines went to the heart – on average 90% of responses. The outcome was that parents saw that character development is modelled and comes from within – and that academic prowess has only a small part to play in raising children.”

Parent Comments:

- The program was practical and really meant a lot to me. We really felt that we had answers to work with our children.
- Can you arrange more programs on Parenting Skills especially those that encourage dialogue?
- The Active Listening activity was very light hearted and taught us so much about ourselves. I used to tell what to do. Now I listen to my child.

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**NIGERIA: LVE Participates in the ‘Right to Dialogue Forum’ –
Fostering Mutual Respect and Peace, Preventing Extremism and Intolerance**

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The “Right to Dialogue – A Fundamental Right” forum brought together youth leaders, governments, UN agencies, and civil society to discuss how youth, governments and religions can work together to foster mutual respect, understanding and long-term positive relationships between peoples of different cultures and religions to prevent extremism and intolerance and to promote effective dialogue as essential to peace..

The forum drew some 500 delegations from all sectors of the society, reflecting rising concern about the spread of young recruits to radical groups as well as religious intolerance and the need to promote dialogue as a remedy. The objects of the forum were to:

- develop a targeted network among groups employing creative methods for preventing extremism and promoting effective dialogue and action among youth;
- promote tolerance and respect between persons of different cultures and religions as well as religious organizations with differing outlooks on life;
- advance the role of religious leaders in shaping shared security;
- raise the awareness of decision makers regarding the importance of contribution of youth in fostering understanding between people of various backgrounds;
- enhance the capacity of youth to effectively implement initiatives aiming to advance cross-cultural understanding and
- to protect religious freedom and other human rights as pillars for sustainable development.

The event was also an opportunity to meet with decision-makers from various fields, including politics, civil society, the media and religious institutions.

Chairman of the forum, Chief (Elder) Nseabasi J. Akpaeno, said that youth have been at the forefront of major social and political advancements and non-violent movements throughout history and at the same time, as a vulnerable sector of society. They have been associated with violent extremist groups, especially in environments in need of public service, employment, and educational opportunities. Not only are youth the leaders of tomorrow, they are potential leaders of today and need to be heard and their efforts to contribute to the world around them need to be supported.

ANUPIA's President General, Elder God'stime S. T. Ekanem stressed that the pursuit of sustainable development through dialogue be consistent with the three pillars of the United Nations goals, the promotion of peace, development and human dignity with emphasis on human and social values and of upholding the human rights of all people worldwide by calling into focus, the worth of the individual and the dignity and integrity of the human family.

The Hon. Mfonima Ekpo expressed concern that many young people in Atai Ndua Ufat community continue to struggle on the margins of society, unable to change their lives for the better. He identified high unemployment, domestic violence against women and female children, child labour and militancy, failing transportation systems lead to loss of life, especially among children and women. He added that, much as the community appreciate the good intention of the forum sponsors, he appealed to United Nations organisations, NGOs and foundations to support “LVEP/ANUPIA's Right to Dialogue International Youth Forum on Positive Values and Global Understanding” and its aim of fostering mutual respect, understanding and long-term positive relationships between peoples of different cultures and religions.

Elder God'stime Ekanem was of the opinion that the majority of young people are kind and compassionate, but reminded participants that **“we do not come from the sky or from flowers, but from mothers and that we all survive primarily because of the care and compassion of mothers.”** According to Elder God'stime Ekanem, the “Right to Dialogue International Youth Forum on Positive Values & Global Understanding” is composed of youth representatives from virtually every nation, ethnic group, culture and religion, profession, as well as social or economic class that fosters mutual respect, tolerance and friendship among peoples, cultures and religions. This is a strong demonstration of global “Unity in Diversity.”

Speaking further, he said concrete human compassion could be shown both in religious and non-religious ways and that taking care of others is taking care of oneself. He asked everyone to **bring the heart to the mind and to disarm the mind**. He warned against letting hatred, fear and suspicion eat our inner system, which is not good for our well-being, and noted that youth's contribution to understanding the impact of cultural and religious diversity on everyday life as well as on politics is now more crucial than ever. **He also called for creating zones of peace, beginning with ourselves and stretching into our communities and beyond.**

Hon. Nsikak Obot Ekanem explained that the Living Values Education philosophy strives to inculcate moral values in children and young adults and to shape them into persons of strong character and agents of positive values and global understanding. He said dialogue brings respect, values, understanding, tolerance and love, and is very important for us to teach our children and young adults all over the world, from very beginning, the philosophy of oneness, love and affection for each other. He spoke of the importance of youth exchanges as a powerful way to understand the other, to dismantle stereotypes and focus on commonalities among humans.

Hon. Nsikak Ekanem gave a profound but clear message, saying: "Christians are not to become Hindus or Buddhists nor Hindus or Buddhists to become Christians, but each must assimilate the spirit of the other and yet preserve his/her individuality and grow according to his own law of growth". According to Hon. Nsikak Ekanem, compassion is the foundation of all religions and it is necessary to help the sick and the suffering, the weak and the oppressed, wherever they are, so that all live with dignity. He said persistent religious intolerance requires "a fundamental change in the way believers of different faiths relate". **"The remedy for the repeated crises confronting our communities today is to center our efforts on that which we hold in common, rather than that which set us apart"**. He added that the key to mutual respect, understanding and long-term positive relationships between peoples of different backgrounds is to focus on the essential oneness of all religions noting that the basic tenets of all faiths and cultures are fundamentally similar, prescribing indivisible peace, dignity, honesty, equality, harmony, tolerance, co-operation, patience, and fortitude. It is this essential unity across the tremendous diversity of history, culture tradition, philosophy, and practice that should now become our paramount discourse, together with the recognition that there is only one human family.

Ms. Grace Mantey of the Faith Development Dialogue (Ghana) said: "If religions have contributed to the peace of the world, we in Africa have also to recognize that they have been used to create division and hostilities and it is important that in building our civilizations, we enhance inter-cultural and inter-religions co-operations among youths, governments, the United Nations system and the civil society". She added, "I believe dialogue between secular groups, cultures and religions is essential and they have a critical role to play in ending poverty."

Rev. Samuel U. Ekong of Qua Iboe Church, Nigeria, emphasized the important role of civil society in partnering with young leaders from all nationalities, cultures and religions including marginalized youth. Rev. Ekong spoke about the ultimate goal of dialogue as a means of eliminating violence, hatred and bigotry. He concluded: "Our collective hope is for the freedom to live in dignity, (a human right), freedom from want (poverty reduction), and freedom from fear (peace and security).

The forum brought together participants from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines. Speakers focused on the overall need to recognize the importance of intercultural and inter-religious understanding and co-operation for peace as well as open and sustainable mechanisms for meaningful and broad participation of youth to advance cross-cultural understanding, saying, "If you approach another country in a friendly way, with goodwill and generosity, you will be paid back with the same coin, and probably in even larger measure".

Highlights of the events at the forum included cultural displays, empowerment grants to widows, and other rural women, conferment of awards to distinguished leaders and a

reconciliatory football match to reconcile Atai Ndua Ufat community as one after many years of dissension.

Submitted by Hon. Nsikak Ekanem: 2009 LVEP/ANUPIA Inaugural International Youth Forum on Positive Values and Global Understanding held in Afia Nsit Atai, Nsit Ubium Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Jointly organized by Living Values: An Educational Programme (LVEP) - Nigeria and ANUPIA Int'l - Nigeria in Co-Operation with The Voluntary Association "Poetry & Solidarity" – Trieste, Italy.

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PARAGUAY: LVE and the Ministry of Education Partner to Serve Children at Risk

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LVE Paraguay has signed an official agreement of cooperation with the Ministry of Education to work together to conduct LVE workshops for educators of children that are vulnerable and at risk. "This last year LVE Paraguay had a wonderful experience with the Ministry, working with 42 intervention specialists throughout the country. The support from the ministry has been excellent as well as the teacher evaluations," reported Miriam Ginzo, president of LVE Paraguay. "This year we will have a program of a cycle of LVE workshops that last for seven months, one per month, and then we will offer four workshops to monitor the projects that were developed during the seven months. LVE Paraguay has also signed an agreement of cooperation with the Colegio Aula Viva, where the first LVE seminars took place. Educators will be trained at the college and LVE will have an official office on campus. So many educators, children and young people will benefit."

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UNITED KINGDOM: Refugee Parents Break through Misunderstandings Using LVE

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"I've been using the Living Values parenting book in a number of contexts – mainly in the UK, Kuwait and Mauritius," reported Peter Williams. "In the UK, the approaches were warmly welcomed and appreciated by the parents. In one London example, my school had 45 first languages. The program reached all parents. One of the highlights was the creation of dialogue between communities within the community, that had been divided because of a lack of understanding of the meaning of words. The theme was Honesty. Many of the children were refugee children and their families brought different meanings to words according to their original contexts. Circles of parents broke through the misunderstandings created through translations and cultural perceptions. It was clear that a values approach and dialogue helped to build bridges."

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USA: From Scientific Evidence to Personal Experience – A Mother's Testimonial

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USA: From Scientific Evidence to Personal Experience – A Mother's Testimonial

A mother recently wrote to us at LVE, "My name is Daniella Salomon and I am the mother of two boys, 12 and 11 years old respectively, who have attended Aventura City of Excellence School since 2004 in Florida. I have had the pleasure of participating in Living Values Education seminars and workshops for the past two years, always hosted by Elahe, a wonderful lady, mother and person. I have used several of the techniques and suggestions from the seminars and workshops to improve the communication and harmony within my home. However, I decided to share this particular story because it actually was not intended to be "tested at home," but because it had an impressive effect on my family.

Elahe told us a story about an experiment involving rabbits that were given injections every day in order to induce high blood pressure and heart problems. She told us that one group of rabbits did not become ill as expected even though they received the same injections. It was finally discovered that the technician who treated this group of rabbits every day, would caress them and talk to them in a nice, sweet voice before injecting them with those terrible medicines... I cried. I was so amazed by the power of touch, care and love, not only for our emotional but wellbeing but also for that of our physical bodies! Then I realized, maybe this is why our little dog has been alive and healthy for the last 16 years; it's the love!!!

I came home very excited and shared the story with my husband and kids, discussing how interesting it was to find scientific evidence of the importance of love for all creatures, for their happiness, and amazingly, for their health.

Since then, every time we hug each other at home, we smile and say, 'This is so you can live a year longer.' When my kids see me upset or tired, they come to me and hug me several times and tell me, 'Don't be upset, with these kisses and hugs, you are going to live several more years.' We all laugh and the tension breaks.

Yesterday, my 12-year old son and I were having a disagreement en route to his tennis lessons. Afterwards, he tells me, 'Mommi, I am sorry I disappointed you and you got so upset. Can we please hug each other so we get back the years of life we lost by fighting an hour ago?' We hugged each other and laughed and laughed and laughed!

I feel so grateful that we have this LVE program at our school! I appreciate all the people who are involved in it and wish I could attend more sessions and that Living Values could reach more people. This world needs it."

Daniella Salomon, D.D.S.

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