Gurukula Network

Newsletter and Journal of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes

Gurukula Network is published by the Ananda Marga Gurukula
Global Liaison Office

Two yearly issues, published November and May, serve as a means of communication for Neohumanist projects around the world.

It is the spirit of Gurukula Network to encourage a free sharing of ideas and to stimulate discussion on educational and global issues facing our world. All articles express the views of the author, and not necessarily those of AMGK.

Gurukula Network is open to any and all NHE related projects and faculties of AMGK.

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VISION OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

The Sanskrit word "Gurukula" (pronounced gurukul) has the following etymology: Gu: darkness; ru: dispeller; kula: an institution. Gurukula is an institution which helps students dispel the darkness of the mind and leads to total emancipation of the individual and society at large. Ananda Marga Gurukula is engaged in creating an international network of Neohumanist Schools and Institutes to hasten the advent of a society in which there is love, peace, understanding, inspiration, justice and health for all beings.

OBJECTIVES OF ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

- To serve humanity with neohumanist spirit and to acquire knowledge for that purpose.
- To establish a strong base in Anandanagar and around the world in order to carry on the legacy of its founder for the benefit of future generations.
- To provide a sound and conducive environment for students for their physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual well-being.
- To promote ethical values in individuals and implement these values in the management of projects, schools and institutions.
- To establish and maintain schools and special academic institutions around the world as well as a cyber-university.
- To initiate teacher education programs to improve and upgrade the quality of education on all academic levels.
- To promote Tantra, Neohumanism and PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) as the foundation for building a universal society.
- To initiate intellectual dialogues and research for all-round renaissance of society.
- To facilitate the placement of volunteers across cultures to help build meaningful relationships and to support community and social change projects.
- To support the building of a global eco-village network (Master Units)
- To encourage the development of micro-enterprises for sustainability of social service projects.

Chancellor of Ananda Marga Gurukula
Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt., Kulapati

Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar inspired the establishment of Ananda Marga Schools in 1963 out of which grew an international network of schools and the Neohumanist Education system. In 1990 he founded the Ananda Marga Gurukula University. Ananda Marga Gurukula also serves as the Board of Education for Neohumanist Schools and Institutes around the world. These Neohumanist Schools and projects, some of which are featured in Gurukula Network, are managed by the Education Relief and Welfare Section and Women's Welfare Department of Ananda Marga.

NEOHUMANIST EDUCATION

Universal Love and Values
Holistic Development
Astaunga Yoga
Ecological and Social Consciousness
Academic, Practical and Personal Skills
Knowledge of Self and World Applied for Universal Welfare
Joyful Learning through the Arts
Culturally Sensitive and Inclusive Approach
Integrated Curriculum
Exemplary Role of the Educators
“Sā vidyā yā vimuktaye - “Education is that which liberates.””

The real meaning of education is trilateral development – simultaneous development in the physical, mental and spiritual realms of human existence. This development should enhance the integration of the human personality. By this, dormant human potentialities will be awakened and put to proper use. Educated are those who have learnt much, remembered much and made use of their learning in practical life.

Emphasis should be given to moral education and the inculcation of idealism – not only philosophy and traditions. The practice of morality should be the most important subject in the syllabus at all levels.

The sense of universalism should also be awakened in the child. Etiquette and refined behaviour are not enough. Real education leads to a pervasive sense of love and compassion for all creation.

Shrii PR Sarkar
Neohumanist Education for Peace

Keynote address at the international NHE Conference
Caracas, Venezuela, April 2014

Dr. Shambhushivananda, Chancellor, AMGK University

Looking back, about 8000 million years ago (mya), this Earth was only a blazing ball of fire; 4000 mya, it consisted of molten lava and volcanoes; 340 mya life existed only in water; 223 mya land appeared as Gondwanaland; 70 mya birds and mammals appeared; one mya human beings appeared on the scene. We should not assume that we have come to the end of this evolutionary ladder. Through physical metamorphosis and psychic transmutations, we seem to continue to move on.

The last 15,000 years have seen the emergence of human civilization. Numerous thought currents have marked our history. It has been an impressive history both punctuated by great discoveries and inventions and marred by ugly wars and bloodshed. In just the past 500 hundred years, we saw the Copernican Revolution that established that Earth was not at the center of this solar system; 150 years ago came the Darwinian Revolution that told us that we are not angels but hairless apes; 100 years ago we had the Freudian Revolution that brought our preoccupation with the unconscious; and among others, in the last twenty years, neuro-scientists claim that we are in the midst of another frontier of knowledge about greater understanding of our own brain, the organ that may have caused the earlier revolutions to occur, and which also gave birth to all ideas including colonialism, imperialism, war, etc. And we continue our journey to explore other stars in search of extra-terrestrial life. Yet despite all advancements, we are a fractured society. We are bound in fear, hatred, violence and disparities, rooted in selfishness and goaded by vested interests.

Educators are faced with the challenge of helping to build a peaceful society. However, not long ago, Shri Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, a philosopher-seer of the 20th century living in a far-off Indian village, launched another revolution in thought that might well be called the ‘Sarkar-ian Revolution’. He proclaimed that our collective attainments and existence itself are on the brink of perishing if we fail to create ‘one universal human society’ on the strong moral fundaments of spiritual humanism and the practical guidelines of PROUT (the Progressive Utilization Theory), Neohumanism and Tantra-Yoga. During his brief visit to Caracas in 1979, he reminded us of the urgency to build an “exploitation-free peaceful society”.

Towards this end, he also propounded a pragmatic educational philosophy that will “empower good over evil, rationality over dogma, culture and dialogue over brute force and violence, truth over falsehood, and spirit over matter.” This system of education is called Neohumanist Education. Its primary goal is to nurture harmony (co-existence; live and let live), abundance (prosperity through alignment with nature and the use of green technologies), social and economic justice (minimizing disparities and preserving diversities), freedom (protecting individual and collective liberty; replacing vulnerabilities with resilient approaches), and sentient peace (balance of inner and outer ecology through sentient lifestyles).

PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory), in a nutshell, is a new socio-economic-political philosophy that calls for all-round changes in our attitudes, lifestyles, socio-economic structures, public policies, leadership and education systems. Neohumanism is a philosophy and attitude of life based on universal love that helps us transcend narrow sentiments and embrace all animate and so-called inanimate forms of life as varied manifestations of Divine Spirit.

1. Neohumanist education (NHE) is about expanding our awareness in order to free us from ill health and a stressful life; and moving towards a blissful life through a sentient life-style. It is more about reflecting upon our attitudes, living habits and world-view than striving towards mere political and economic power grabbing. This training needs to start with young children and be cultivated throughout one's life.

2. NHE is about a journey from scarcity to abundance for one and all including other species. It involves alignment with nature, using green technologies and using creativity to find solutions that utilize existing resources in most optimum ways for the good and happiness of all.

3. NHE is about educating for creating enlightened leadership; liberation of human intellect and freedom from dogmas. It is about exposing the dogmas of science, rigidities of social systems and irrational world-views.

4. NHE is about replacing local vulnerabilities with greater resilience in all walks of life. The discourse of PROUT-based education enhances the economic power of local communities and promotes regional self-reliance.

5. NHE is about tackling the challenge of historical social injustices, recognizing and eliminating the wide disparities in all walks of life, and urgently moving towards minimizing inequalities especially in economic affairs. Diversity is healthy but disparities increase social tensions and inhibit the optimum utilization of human potentials and collective wealth of humanity.
Human existence is an ideological flow. It is a movement from crudity to subtlety, from imperfection towards perfection, from limited to unlimited, from unit to cosmic, from animality to divinity. An endeavor to control our instinctual tendencies and goad our mental faculties through reason, intellect and intuition towards universal welfare is the path of divinity.

In this long spiritual journey from human-minimitis to human-maximitis we may encounter many challenges or difficult choices that are called moral dilemmas. Moral dilemmas abound in our personal and collective social lives, irrespective of our area of work or profession. All of us, as parents, businesswomen, community leaders or whatever roles we are in, are faced with common daily decisions that have some moral component. Should I do it or shouldn't I? Should I lie or tell the truth? Should I act now or wait? Should I support or oppose? We all face such questions in our minds. Some of our conscious choices affect just our near ones or ourselves while others may affect a million others. The gravity of a moral decision varies with the nature of the impact of the decision and where we stand on the evolutionary ladder. For a cat, to catch a mouse is an instinctual behavior and not a moral choice, but for a human, to raise and kill animals for meat may involve a moral choice. In these days of epidemic viruses and ecological disasters, the invisible link and interconnectedness of all life is becoming more and more obvious. Yet ignorance and fear make a mockery of human attainments. Ignorance and fear are the twin companions of violence-ridden troubled societies. Through dialogue based on facts and reason, genuine love and compassionate outlook, cosmic sentiment and applied rationality, we could transform the atmosphere of hatred and break the deadlock of aggression and frustration. Without compassionate dialogue, a display of ugly manifestations of human ego and vested interests will remain. Educationists can sow the seeds of this transformation. Learning must be for positive change and it must be rooted in love. This is the challenge for educators.

When we begin to make decisions based on the intrinsic impact of our decisions on 'our' and 'other's' physical, mental and spiritual well being, it may be surmised that we have begun to tread the path of benevolence. The path of dharma is the path of righteousness and if we choose to recognize and follow it, the 'immediate' reward is likely to be transcendence into an evolutionary elevated mental status, and the ultimate reward, at the least, is an untainted experience of life divine, endowed with all its perks like deep inner peace and enjoyment of goodwill and friendship of all fellow creatures who are benefited by our 'wise choices'. The Message of Spiritual Humanism as enunciated by Shrii P.R. Sarkar is thus loud and clear:

- we need to return to connectedness with our common spiritual roots which will drive away the menace of group or religious intolerance;
- we need to take our inner and outer ecology seriously so that we may continue to protect and preserve all biodiversity of the planet;
- we need to reverse the trends of pseudo-culture and profit maximization that fuel consumerism, violence, addiction and apathy to our own welfare;
- we need to choose our leadership so that we may establish the primacy of service over self-interest, whether in politics, economy, religion, education, culture, science or the arts;
- we need to spread the call to remold the socio-economic-political framework so that sustainability initiatives can begin to bear fruits and multiply.

In a nutshell, we need to make a collective moral choice to accept those ideals which will nourish the interest of all rather than a select few. This alone is the cornerstone from which we can solve the moral dilemmas of modern times. Are we ready to confront our own greed, our own drive for power and control, our own jealousies and temptations, our ignorance and doubts? This moral dilemma is all-pervasive and speaks not only to the leaders of society but to each one of us who willingly or unwillingly 'choose' our lifestyles and our leaders. The call of our consciousness is to reflect and act with a "refined moral conscience" in mind. If we succeed in doing so, we may be laying the foundation of a new world. This gathering in a glorious setting in Venezuela seems an august beginning in this endeavor. It appears to me that our task is three fold:

1. Choose, follow and propagate ideas that are in harmony with our divine nature.
2. Continue to empower individuals who wish to follow these ideas in their personal life.
3. Build institutions that are open to making moral strategic alliances for establishing and nurturing a progressive "one human society" based on prema (universal love) and prama (balanced development/dynamic collective equipoise).

Finally, towards these ends, we need to bridge the widening knowledge gap among people of all countries and continue to “strive for excellence” in order to hasten the creation of a world of abundance for all species; foster greater understanding and harmony among all beings; and ensure justice, freedom and peace for all.
Education for Peace
Widening our circle of love in all directions
International NHE Conference
Caracas, Venezuela        April 14-18, 2014

The first Global Conference on Neohumanist Education to be held in Caracas, Venezuela concluded with much inspiration and positive interactions among educators, social activists and project coordinators from South and North America and Europe. It was co-sponsored by the PROUT Institute in Caracas and Ananda Marga Gurukula. On Monday, April 14, more than 180 participants came to the science faculty auditorium at the largest and oldest educational institute in the country, the Universidad Central de Venezuela, for an all day program, to hear dynamic speakers from around the world. Presentations included cutting edge holistic educational initiatives that are taking place in Brazil, Colombia, Denmark, India, Venezuela and the United States. Professor Iraida Sulbaran of UCV and Dada Shambhushivananda, Chancellor of Ananda Marga Gurukula, gave the welcoming remarks. At the end of the program - beautiful printed certificates of attendance were given to all participants. Following this all day public event, interested educators attended a three day NHE seminar which was was held at the beautiful PROUT Institute in Caracas which is located near the Avila Mountains with a view of the whole city of Caracas.

The first day’s speakers were as follows:

1. Introduction to Neohumanist Education by Eric Jacobson, Director Progressive School of Long Island, NY, USA
2. Education in the Barrios (Sao Paolo, Brasil) - by Didi Ananda Jaya
3. Puppets in Education by Nora Manrique, Lecturer of Culture in Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela
4. Neohumanist School, Caracas by Didi Ananda Amegha
5. Project Peru - by Didi Ananda Muktivrata
6. Project Porto Alegre by Edeliane Rios, and Fabricio L. Viana
7. Ecological and Community Education in Bogota, Colombia by Jorge Sanchez
8. The Transformative Power of Neohumanist Education by Dada Maheshvarananda, director of the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela
9. Plasticine in Education by Ricardo Saavedra
10. Ananda Marga Gurukula by Dada Shambhushivananda
11. Centro Madre Community Project in Barlovento, Venezuela by Didi Ananda Sadhana
12. Theater in the Classroom by Ole Brekke
13. Organic Agriculture Education in Venezuela by IUTY
14. Kaoshikii Dance by Didi Ananda Amegha
15. Meditation for Teachers by Mary Jane Glassman, director of Morning Star Neohumanist Preschool, Denver, Colorado, USA
16. Circular Dances by Dayse Do Santos
NHE Seminar

Following this one day program, fifty-two people attended the 3 day intensive seminar held at the Prout Institute. Seven Brazilian Neohumanist Schools in Sao Paulo and Porto Alegre sent representatives to this meeting, plus the preschool in Lima, Peru and of course the preschool in Caracas, Venezuela. The conference presented a unique opportunity for them all to meet and share their experiences. Presenters of workshops were Dada Shamshivananda, Eric Jacobson, Mary Jane Glassman, Ole Brekke, Jorge Sanchez, Dada Maheshvarananda, Niliima, and Edelaine y Fabricio.

Dada Shamshivananda’s introduction to Ananda Marga Gurukula was followed by a group envisioning of the future of Ananda Marga Gurukula through a “Grammar of Fantasy” workshop given by Ole Brekke. During this workshop pairs expanded their imaginations and using fantasy explored possible futures of Gurukula 500 years in the future, then 100 years in the future and then finally focused on the present exploring the possibilities for the global network of Gurukula today. Much fun and inspiration were enjoyed by all.

Presentations given during the week by Dada Shamshivananda, Dada Maheshvarananda, Eric Jacobson, Ole Brekke and Mary Jane Glassman are included in this issue of Gurukula Network as separate articles.

Evening programs included presentations of the projects of Didi Ananda Jaya, Didi Ananda Muktivrata, Didi Ananda Sadhana and Didi Ananda Amegha.

Much inspiration was shared during the closing ceremony. Here are two of the comments:

“One month before the conference I had a dream in which many people were dancing in an auditorium with the colors of the rainbow. When I saw the poster for this conference with the colors of the rainbow, I was very happy. And when at the end of the conference in the university auditorium we did circular dancing on the stage and then together sang the song, “Venezuela”, I realized that my dream had come true.”

“I am very grateful for the organizing staff, the support, the rich learning in the lectures, the wonderful food, the kiirtan, meditation and to meet everyone. I leave with great affection and memories of all.”

Complementary programs during week included a trip on April 7th with 70 people to the local Botanical Gardens where Shrii PR Sarkar had visited. Dada Shamshivananda gave a public talk to 70 students and teachers at the International School, and to 50 students and professors at the Pedagogical Institute. A bus trip to visit Centro Madre Master Unit on Friday, April 18 had 30 participants. Ole Brekke gave a one-day clown workshop to 41 very enthusiastic participants on Saturday, April 19. Four radio interviews took place before the event, two on Venezuelan National Radio.
The Transformative Power of Neohumanist Education in Social Change
Presented at the Neohumanist Education Conference in Caracas, Venezuela
by Dada Maheshvarananda

1. Why a revolutionary monk?
I am a yogic monk who teaches meditation – and I am also a revolutionary. This may sound paradoxical to you, but actually it is the deep peace and love that I experience in meditation every day that compels me to work for social change. The orange uniform I wear means that my life is dedicated to serve humanity. Because injustice, exploitation and poverty cause so much unnecessary suffering, I am committed to the struggle for a better world.

The global capitalist economy works very well for some people, but not for everyone.

I wrote a book called After Capitalism: Economic Democracy in Action because I believe that global capitalism contains the seeds of its own destruction, because it is based on profit, selfishness and greed. The excesses of globalization have caused untold human suffering and environmental degradation. The tremendous concentration of wealth in the hands of a few means that capitalism excludes more people than it benefits. The tragic result is that today nearly half the world’s population lives, suffers and dies in poverty. A poverty that is completely unnecessary.

For example, look at how capitalism in the richest country, the United States, is affecting higher education. University fees there are the highest in the world and climbing, while state and national government financial support is shrinking. Nearly 20 million Americans attend college each year, and close to 12 million – or 60% - borrow annually to help cover costs. In October 2011, the total amount of money owed in student loan debt exceeded $1 trillion. – students have $20,000 or $50,000 or even more than $100,000 loans. This is an inhuman load, exploiting young people and their families when education is a human right to be available to all.

Injustice and exploitation are why when I was a university student I hung a poster in my room with these words by Che Guevara: “At the risk of sounding ridiculous, I would say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love.” I thought, That's what I want to be, a revolutionary guided by love.' Later I learned yoga and meditation and started feeling more love and happiness than I ever dreamed possible. So I went to India and became a monk, inspired by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar and the Progressive Utilization Theory (Prout). Prout is the acronym for Progressive Utilization Theory; a new socio-economic model based on self-reliance of each region, cooperatives, environmental balance and universal spiritual values.

So when you find injustice, exploitation, racism or sexism, how can you respond? There are basically three ways. The first one is silence. You can think, I'm not going to speak out because I'm afraid, or because I'm afraid of losing my privilege. The second possible response is reform. You think I want to change it gradually. The “gradually” is my only problem with this one. I don't want everyone on the planet who I want to help to be dead by the time we finally get the reforms. So a third possible way of acting in the world is revolution, to courageously struggle to end exploitation and save lives as fast as possible. That's me. That's also Sarkar. “The most powerful weapon on earth is the human soul on fire.”

2. Consumerism = Psycho-economic exploitation
When colonialism gradually collapsed during the twentieth century, capitalists developed clever techniques to continue their exploitation of the newly independent countries. They tried to capture the minds of the people and paralyze their collective outlook to prepare them for economic exploitation. Consumer culture, with its appeal to material pleasures, portray a life that is seemingly more pleasurable than one’s real life. “Look honey, I bought something.” “Oh darling, I'm so proud of you!” What did he buy? It doesn't matter, it could be a car, shoes or a coca-cola. But look at their faces – happiness forever! I think it's a lie. Happiness doesn't come from things. Such ads make people want to be rich and white, like all the actors and models they see. Most Venezuelan children see their parents struggling, living with much less income and fewer material goods, and so start to develop a low self-image and inferiority complex.

The goal of education, according to Sarkar, should be liberation, to free people from mental bondages and limitations and to promote solidarity. He said that teaching is one of the most important professions. “The salaries of teachers in every country should be on par with, if not higher than, the salaries of public servants in the judiciary and the executive.” Education, both formal and informal, should be society’s highest priority, available to all free of charge. Whereas the government should fund education, schools and universities should be administered by educators, free from political control.
Neohumanist education opens peoples’ minds to see the lies of convenience and hypocrisy of those in power. Paulo Freire was a very great educator from Brazil who emphasized that education should free people from dogmas and inferiority. I interviewed him in 1997, one month before he passed away. He said, “What is generally emphasized in Brazilian schools is the transfer of a mechanical knowledge of biology, geography, history and mathematics that minimizes one’s presence in the world. My growth does not end with the technical training of superficial knowledge. Yet this is neo-liberal education, what they call pragmatism. For me, no, education is the learning experience, in both teachers and students, what you call the capacity to meditate and the feeling of transcendence. It is an experience of critical reflection about our presence in the world.”

3. Transformative ethics to teach and live by
According to a 1995 study published by the American Association of Psychiatry, the most common factor amongst criminals is the tendency to lie. Strangely, this same defect is also common among some very rich and powerful people. Throughout history, powerful classes have created moral rules and laws to maintain their power. Hiding their ugly nature through hypocrisy and clever lies, they have imposed dogmas, fear and inferiority complex in simple-minded people. For example, in various parts of the world some religious leaders have taught, without any evidence, that in some mysterious way men are spiritually superior to women. What nonsense!

Cardinal human values are principles that could be taught in all schools from kindergarten to post-graduate level, and in the whole society. For example, honesty, courage, mercy, humility, self-restraint and compassion. To protect the weak, avoid harming others and overcoming selfishness. What do you think? Are these the types of values we want our children to follow?

Teaching cardinal human values is very important, awakening in the students a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others. Our education should begin with mutual respect for different outlooks and ideas, and strive to increase awareness and awaken consciousness. Prout believes that leadership is important, because the world needs leaders with moral force, spiritual vision and courage to fight injustice and exploitation. Anyone can become an ideal leader by setting a personal example. I think of some of the people in the landless people's movement in Brazil who I met who were illiterate, or who had very low levels of formal education, and who were some of the wisest, courageous, most outstanding and inspiring speakers I’ve ever met in my life. They were really revolutionaries. Two examples are Rigoberto Menchú from Guatemala, an indigenous woman who received the Nobel Peace Prize and Marina Silva, a rubber tapper’s daughter in the Amazon, who was illiterate until the age of 11 who is a powerful leader and who became minister of the environment.

Paulo Freire said, “One of the major struggles in every individual is to diminish the difference between what one says and does, between the discourse and the practice. Ethics really is fighting to decrease the distance. I think that in politicians one will encounter the maximum distance between the two, after being elected his or her actions do not look at all like the discourse.” A North American activist, Bill Ayers, said, “We must figure out how to become the people we have been waiting for.”

To make a peaceful world, we need a more cooperative world. One technique of popular experiential education that I find personally fulfilling, is leading workshops of cooperative games. These activities promote kindness, honesty, trust and teamwork. In this game, everyone is giving a back massage to the person in front – it feels great!

Do you remember the children's game, musical chairs? When the music stops, everyone tries to sit down, but there are fewer chairs than players, so those without are eliminated until you end up with one winner. But you can play the same game cooperatively, so that 26 kids and adults are all sitting on only one chair! You can also levitate people together, and you can even fly with a little help from your friends! It takes an hour to train the group step-by-step, but it is very exhilarating to jump off and be caught by your friends.

4. Transformative ecological and spiritual perspective
Prout has an ecological and spiritual perspective that is lacking in many economic philosophies, but is still present in traditional societies. Indigenous spirituality invariably revolves around nature and the connection to all forms of life. Indigenous peoples did not believe that the land belonged to them, but that they belonged to the land.

I would like to clarify the major differences between dogma and spirituality. Fundamentalism is closed minded, blind obedience and instills fear. Dogmas divide people into believers and nonbelievers, "us” against "them.” In contrast, the mystical quest for the truth is open-minded, asks questions and promotes love. Spirituality sees everyone as a human family, and is universal.

Prout's spiritual perspective recognizes that all humans have a thirst for peace and happiness. We need to journey inside to find true peace and happiness, to find the connection, meaning and purpose of life, which is self-realization and service to humanity. One of the most inspiring quotes of P. R. Sarkar is the words in the dedication of his book, The Liberation of Intellect: Neohumanism. They exemplify humility, magnanimity, and compassion:

“To those who think for all...
Who offer others seats of honor and respect...
To them I dedicate this book with humble esteem and deepest salutations.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
What is Neohumanism, and What is Neohumanist Education?
By Eric Jacobson
Presented at the NHE Conference, Caracas, Venezuela

What is Neohumanism?
If you can imagine two ideas and respond to eight questions, then the answer will become obvious. Shall we try it? These two imaginations and eight questions come from a children’s song that I wrote to help students clearly understand the meaning of Neohumanism. If they are capable of understanding it, you certainly can too! Ready?

1) Imagine that your life is a circle that holds everyone you love, and keeps them safe, and keeps them happy … Would I be inside your circle?
Can you grow it?
Is your heart big enough to let more in?
What of the creatures, the flowers and the trees, and the fragrance on the breeze?

2) Imagine that God drew a circle to hold everyone He loves
Just how big would He make it?
Would it go around the world?
Or even greater… would the whole Universe fit inside that cosmic circle?
What if we could draw a circle like that, would we finally know the heart the God?

Upon hearing this song, the meaning of Neohumanism becomes apparent. **Neohumanism is an ever increasing circle of love, and love in action.** The understanding that we are all interconnected goes beyond humanity, and includes the animals, plants, and the inanimate (represented in the song with the words “and the fragrance on the breeze.”) And where does this love come from. How can we develop it? When we see that we have a consciousness hidden deep within, a consciousness that bears witness to all our thoughts … when we realize that our very existence depends upon that consciousness, and when we learn to identify with that consciousness, then we find that the exact same consciousness is in everything! We don’t just feel love for all, we are all. It is both an internal realization, and an external practice.

Now we all understand. Correct? The word most similar to Neohumanism in English is Universalism, because we are bringing the entire universe within our concept of family. Universalism does not accept distinctions between the created beings. Don’t you think that a place like this, which is called a “University,” ought to practice “Universalism?”

Okay, maybe we now understand Neohumanism. Although we understand it, we are still left with the question, “What is Neohumanist education?” The bad news is that the author of Neohumanism himself never fully explained it. The good news is that we have logic on our side! Therefore, Neohumanist education is the application of Neohumanism to the practice of education.

Just how is it applied? It is applied to the whole person. This means that our students should be trained to experience and practice the essence of Neohumanism, and this training should be of three types: physical, mental, and spiritual.

Physical training means correct diet, exercises, yoga postures, breath control, dance, and other health practices. Mental training means cultivating rationality. With rationality one may overcome all narrow-minded sentiments. Such limited sentiments create obstacles to the expansion we seek through Neohumanism. This mental training also means studying all academic subjects, philosophy, another language, aesthetic training in the arts, public speaking, logic, etc. Spiritual training means learning meditation, utilizing practices that calm the mind and help it to find its very origin, receiving inspiration from the example of great souls, and offering service to those in need.

This, in a nutshell, is the meaning of Neohumanist education.

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The Transformative Power of Neohumanist Education in Social Change by Dada Maheshvarananda

5. Conclusion
I leave you with two thoughts about the transformative power of Neohumanist Education: we need to awaken students and everyone about injustice and exploitation, and in that process we need to inspire them to build a better, cooperative world together – we need a revolution that is based on love.

Finally we need to help students and everyone to discover their inner happiness, and, in the words of Joseph Campbell, to follow their bliss. Because with love, everything is possible.

Dada Maheshvarananda is a yogic monk, activist and writer. He is the founder and director of the Prout Research Institute of Venezuela (www.priven.org). He can be contacted at maheshvarananda@prout.org.ve
The Application of Neohumanism to the Layers of a School
Workshop Presented by Eric Jacobson in Caracas, Venezuela

In making a better world, it is easier to build correctly from the outset, rather than tear down and rebuild—hence proper education of our young is the surest path towards realizing a brighter future.

We begin with a cosmic ideal, and then we apply it to the local situation. In the application of Neohumanism there will be some variations. Variety is the law of nature. Variations arise due to changes of time, place and person. If I were to go to Peru for this conference, it would be a different place, with different people, and upon my arrival it would also be a different day. Our Neohumanist schools reflect, and should continue reflecting these natural variations. The variations are good and should be encouraged. For example, if I were to open a school in Caracas, it would not look like my school in New York. It would have a different appearance and a new name. There would be different curriculum elements, revised methods, and a new staff, but the spirit behind it would be the same.

A school consists of five main aspects: Why, Who, What, How and Where. Each one of these could be the theme of a week-long seminar. I listed them in order of their flexibility. Why—no flexibility, Who—a little flexibility, What—more flexibility, How—a lot of flexibility, Where—maximum flexibility

First—Why. Why open a school in the first place? Our philosophy is the Why. The philosophy is the same in all our Neohumanist schools in the world. That is why we began this conference with an exercise to help us understand the philosophy. Why open a school? Because we want to include everyone in our circle of love, we want everyone to realize that they are not a drop, rather they are the ocean. We want the new generation to grow beyond their current limitations for the well-being of the entire creation of which we are all a part. There will be no variation in the philosophy from place to place, person to person, country to country. It is immutable.

Second—Who. Who are the teachers and educators who will implement the philosophy? There should be a minimum of variation in the type of people who work in our schools. They should be as close as possible to the experience and practice of Neohumanism.

Third—What. What will we teach? What will be the curriculum? There will be some variations in this area, such as the inclusion of the local language, local stories, and local history. A global curriculum is not desirable.

Fourth—How. How will we impart information to our students? This is the methodology of teaching. Preferred methodologies exist in Neohumanism: learning through play, art, stories, service, self-discipline, collective and individual projects, and real-world applications. But we must remain flexible in this arena to allow new and better methods of teaching to arise. Human brains are always changing, as is our understanding of how the brain works. Other than the physical facility, there will be the most variation in the methods we employ.

Fifth—Where. Where will all this exciting learning take place? In general, the answer is a building. Buildings differ greatly from the city to the country, in relation to finances, according to the ages and numbers of students, and other factors. The school building continues to be important, and it still reflects our philosophy, but it is not the essence of our mission.

Although at each level there is increased flexibility in the application of Neohumanism to the staff, curriculum, methodology, and building, all these aspects of a school center around the objectives and ideals of Neohumanism. They revolve around the immutable realization of Universal Oneness, just as the planets revolve around the sun. And like the sun, the light of Neohumanism illuminates all our decisions and practices.
Theater in Education
by Ole Brekke
Presented at the NHE Conference
Caracas, Venezuela

I am director of The Commedia School in Copenhagen Denmark, a two-year professional level theater school. I also teach classes in TIE (Theatre In Education) at teacher training institutions, universities and at the graduate level. I also lead workshops with teachers in many countries. I have spent some years as a classroom teacher and with children with special needs.

When classroom teachers, drama teachers, or any workshop teachers think of using theater in regular teaching situations, it is usually because they feel a need to make the education process more exciting, more alive, or more fun. So why not make a play or use some theater? This will be a much-needed diversion from the regular routine.

I would like to propose, let’s make theater the regular routine! Let me tell you why. We can put educational objectives in five categories:

1. Knowledge
2. Inquiry and problem solving skills
3. Social skills
4. Psycho-motor skills (physical education)
5. Values

Normally educational activities focus on only one of these objectives at a time. By using theater as a method of study, all the objectives can be achieved at the same time.

For example, let us try to understand the interaction of cabbages, marigold flowers, and insects in a garden. The students need to present these phenomena theatrically. They can only play as insects, flowers, or cabbage, giving voices to each.

**Objective 1** – Knowledge: To make the presentation, they need to know about the symbiotic interaction of the three. And everyone in the play must know the story.

That insures 100% successful knowledge learning for all the students.

**Objective 2** – Inquiry and problem solving skills: Where do they get that knowledge? Maybe from the gardener living on the same street, or from the botanical gardens. And how do they solve the problem of presenting it theatrically?

**Objective 3** – Social skills: Theater demands social cooperation, working together.

**Objective 4** – Psycho-motor skills: To mime the movements of the cabbage, the flowers and the insects demands attention to the body and awareness of how the body is moving.

**Objective 5** – Values: By giving a voice to plants, an existential value is given to the plants. And they become aware of the value of the ecological balance between plants and insects. Both values are an important part of Neo-humanist education.

Theater exercises can also be used to research various phenomena including social, biological and chemical phenomena. One can even add a physical theatrical element to mathematics.

For me it is most important to use theater in education because it is fun. We all like to play, and that is what theater is, play. Education should be full of joy. In a joyful atmosphere people learn easily. Thank you.
For a number of years scientific researchers in the U.S. have been studying the effects of high quality preschool (2½ to 5 year old children) education. Some of these results are surprising. They have found that while in Kindergarten and First grade, those who have attended preschool may be ahead of others who have not received the benefit of pre-academic studies, by third grade this advantage ‘evens out’ and is not sustainable. So what is the value of quality education for young children?

These research findings indicate that adults who have experienced high quality preschool education are more likely to:

- Complete higher levels of education,
- Take home a bigger paycheck,
- Be in better health,
- Have more stable relationships,
- And are less likely to commit a crime or be incarcerated.

What does this mean? To me it means that a high quality early childhood education provides a stronger socio-emotional foundation that can be beneficial throughout the life experience. When an adult possesses a strong social emotional balance, they are more likely to be in a position to contribute to and to be a more positive influence on the society and to be a better, more productive human being.

Early childhood education has receive global popularity for introducing young children to relationship building, nurturing the development of a greater understanding of one’s self, of other children, of other living beings, of our planet. Relationships are the very foundation of everything we do.

Positive social and emotional development occurs when students feel the teacher cares about them. This is an essential factor in yoga based neohumanist education. The relationship between student and teacher can be the key to successful living. What is the most ideal condition for children to learn?

- When children are happy, relaxed, safe, and feel connected to others.
- When they are excited about the information being shared.
- When there is no fear or threatening behaviors.

The main directive of early childhood education teachers everywhere is:

- To build a positive and caring relationship with every child, especially the children with the most challenging behaviors.

Neohumanist teachers are dedicated to ‘leaving no child behind’.

What are the best practices for maximizing the full potential of every child? What are the best practices for constructing a strong relationship with each child?

There are 7 keys to: Being the Most Effective Preschool Teacher in the World!!!

1) Physical Proximity/Physical Bonding

How do teachers show interest in a child? Teachers express this initially by being physically close to the child. When speaking with the child, teachers come down to the child’s level and speak face to face, eye to eye. I want you to imagine for a minute that you are Gulliver and you are in the land where everyone is as tall as the ceiling in the room in which you are now seated. WOW! And then there is one person who always leans down and speaks with you face to face. How would that feel?

There are many other ways in the preschool that the neohumanist teacher promotes physical closeness. Think of all the mudras we frequently see and use today. High fives, knuckle bumping, patting the back, hugging, sitting in the teacher’s lap - so many avenues for showing children that you are interested in them.

So how often does the ECE (Early Childhood Education) teacher demonstrate closeness? Often. Frequently... as much as you possibly can. Teachers are committed to ‘loving up’ every child in their care. ECE teachers want to ‘fill the cup’ of every child until it is overflowing with love and caring.

Why are we doing this? To build connection. To strengthen a relationship. To show every child that they are loved. To show every child that someone cares for them. This is the desire of every human being. It is what every one desires. It is what every child in a neohumanist classroom will feel and experience.

Note: When facilitating physical closeness in your situation, please consider societal cultural norms as well
as the culture of the family. Please also remember that some children have nerve endings in their skin that make receiving certain types of sensory touching, i.e., hugs, physically unpleasant and in some cases repulsive. Carefully weighing all of these considerations is highly important when implementing physical closeness.

2) Teacher Sharing

What is the essence of the teacher-student relationship? How does the teacher reach forward and create a bond of mutual sharing? By doing things with the children, individually and collectively.

We engage in simple conversations. “Tell me about your family. What did you do with mommie yesterday? How did you sleep last night? Tell me about where you live. Do you have any pets?” Teachers take time to listen attentively to what each child has to say.

Sometimes teachers do loving things for students even when they know the kids can do it themselves. We may offer assistance…just as you would do for a friend. “Let me help you with your coat.” “Oh, your shoe is missing. I can help you look for it.” When children are struggling with something, offer to do half of the activity. “Olivia I can put this shoe on and then you can do the other.” Teachers extend courtesy, kindness, and caring just as you would your best friend.

Teachers share materials that will help extend children’s play adventures. “Hi Sofia, what are you playing? Oh, you are playing with the babies. I know where there are some more blankets? What do you think? Can you use them? I’ll go and get them.”

Scientific research shows us that the more the teacher is actually on the same level as the child whether it is sitting in a chair or being on the floor - this creates a stronger socio-emotional bond. Teachers are no longer supervising at a distance. Teachers are engaged with the children on the floor, on the ground, playing with them, laughing with them. The ECE teacher of the new millennia walks side by side with each child. Teacher and student are experiencing each day by moving together…in a gentle, loving, and friendly partnership.

3) Student Caring and Sharing

In the ECE classroom we want to see children interacting with children, children working together on projects, playing games together, having fun together. How does the ECE teacher support children in building relationships with their peers? One technique is through partner play. In partner play all the children are paired up. The teacher may at times allow the students to naturally pair up, but there may be times when the teacher will pair them together with an intention in mind.

What sorts of activities can partners do together? The teacher may choose to have each pair engage in a different activity OR every pair in the class may do the same activity together. Buddy Reading Time is a simple activity when one buddy will read a book to the other buddy and then the other buddy does do the same. Other partner activities can include doing a painting or drawing together, playing ‘house’ together, doing yoga together, building with blocks together, playing ‘puppies’ together.

What is the advantage of such an activity? The students can experiment with how to play with one another. They can through a very short experience discover what friends like, what friends don’t like. The teacher can walk around the room and coach the students, provide assistance, and compliment students who are sharing and being ‘friendly’.

How long does partner play occur? Generally 10 minutes. It works most effectively when done daily.

While working with young children, teachers remember that kids are just embarking on that first step of life. Many young ones do not know how to play with others, how to initiate play in a positive manner, and are not proficient in turn taking. Teachers need to ‘coach’ children and give them ‘pointers’ on how to play together. We want them to have conflicts so they can find their way to social emotional competency. If they do not know how to get from Point A to Point B in a social situation, then give them the information. In the early stages of relationship building, the teacher may need to give children the actual script, the actual words. Once children become more comfortable with ‘the script’, they will then begin to experiment and find their own words.

In this effort to support them in developing compassionate friendships, role playing with puppets can be extremely effective. Children LOVE seeing puppets doing things THE WRONG WAY. They are eager to step in and help the puppet find a ‘friendlier’ way. Teachers who use puppets in the classroom to make a point will find the children assimilating the information 300% faster and more effective than a speech or lecture AND EVERYONE IS LAUGHING AND HAVING FUN. The puppet may hit someone on the head, grab someone’s toy, push in front of someone in line, etc., etc. Using puppets is a WONDERFUL TOOL for children to learn better socio-emotional responses to every day situations.

Another technique that helps in communicating to children what friends like and what friends don’t like is chatting with the kiddos about the two kinds of behavior: warm ‘fuzzy behavior’ and ‘cold prickly behavior’. The puppet asks students to describe what ‘warm fuzzy behavior’ is. You may want to give a few examples like sharing a book, rubbing a friend’s back, and asking them for more ideas.

Then asking the students about what they think ‘cold prickly behavior’ might be. Again the puppet may demonstrate some examples of both of these behaviors and students can guess which behaviors are ‘warm fuzzy’ and which are ‘cold prickly’. Throughout every
Day, teachers will identify and notice these behaviors as they naturally manifest. Children who exhibit ‘cold prickly’ behavior may be requested to do a ‘do over’...or to respond to a situation with a different ‘warm fuzzy’ approach. “How can you do that differently? How can you do that in a ‘warm fuzzy’ way?”

Neohumanist teachers look for ways to have children show other children that they care. When the teacher is busy, invite another child to assist a student in meeting a need. When a child falls in the playground, teach the children that the nearest child can help that child up and bring her/him to the teacher. How many situations in your classroom every day can be handled by another student rather than the teacher? What activities can you facilitate in your classroom that will encourage children to work and help each other?

- For example, “today we are all going to take turns walking up to someone in the class and tell your friend something that you like about them.”
- Invite the children to sit in a line like train cars and they can massage the shoulders of the child in directly front?
- What else can you do to promote children caring for children? How can children be supported in meeting their needs with each other?

A Job Board shows each child’s job for the week. These jobs may be helping around the school or helping each other, i.e., helping with coats, sweeping the floor, librarian, helping kids at nap time, feeding fish, watering plants, setting up lunch, inspector for inside the school (to make sure everything is put away), inspector for outdoor time, door holder, problem solver, etc.

Sand timers are the BEST TOOL for helping children to share. Watching the sand travel from the top of the timer to the bottom, is absolutely magical! Children can see the passage of time, when their turn will be coming up, and gives them a sense of safety, and confidence that their needs will be met.

Empower children so that:
- They are the helpers.
- They are the supporters.
- They are the comforters.
- They are resolving their own problems and conflicts.
- They are assisting in the management of the classroom.

Let the children know that they are valued members of the classroom society.

4) Communication/Interactions

The greatest gift a teacher can give the children is singing, rhyming, chanting, playing games. Why? Because these are activities that uplift the emotions and positively redirect the thoughts. These are activities that bind us together. Any time the class is singing together, life is very good! When do we sing? Like Mary Poppins - all day long - when cleaning the classroom, going from one place to another, sitting down to eat - any time there is a change in the routine or activity.

Brain science teaches us that there are 3 things the brain CANNOT RESIST. They are rhyme, rhythm, and repetition. Sometimes known as the 3 R’s, these three tools, whether they are used together, or just a couple at a time - are extremely powerful. The more teachers use them in the classroom, the better the response, involvement, and relationship building with the students.

Neohumanist teachers demonstrate and support how to have a conversation. Again teachers remember that young children are on that very first step of learning about communication.

Ask children:
- Tell me about one good thing that has happened to you today?
- About what they are doing while they are doing some activity.
- Look at the way you are moving your marker up and down the paper. I think that is quite extraordinary.
- Tell me about this block structure.
- Tell me what you like the most in the whole, wide world.

Teachers compliment and notice children (verbally aloud) when they are making good prosocial choices - when you see them sharing, taking turns, being kind, being considerate, being friendly. Comment positively on their efforts and participation. Too often much of our communication is negative based. Acknowledge that you notice what they are doing. Let them know that you enjoy your time with them.

- You are such a good friend.
- You are such a terrific helper.
- I missed you so much when you weren’t here yesterday.
- I love you so much.

Having conversations with young children is an effective way of building a caring connection. What questions can you ask that will extend and lengthen the conversation? How can you encourage your young friends to talk even more? The goal of an effective conversation is to have four turns. That means I speak (1), the child speaks (2), I speak (3), and the child speaks (4). With the 4-5 year old child, the teacher will strive for at least six turns.

There are two kinds of questions. Simple and complex. Simple questions are the questions you ask the shy child, the child who is 2-3 years old. These are the ‘what’, ‘where’, and ‘who’ questions. They require only short answers.

- What are you doing? Where is your shoe? Who is that?
Then there are the questions that are more complex...the questions that inspire higher, critical thinking. These are the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. These questions extend and grow conversation.

- Why do you think the water is getting hot?
- How did you decide to put crayon and paint on your paper?

So what does the compassionate teacher do with the responses?

- Well class, we have been talking about dinosaurs and today I have brought my friend ‘long neck’. She is vegetarian. She eats things that grow on plants, bushes, and trees. Raise your hand if you think you can tell me what this dinosaur eats.
- The students will say: bananas, avocados, tomatoes.
- And one student will say cheeseburgers.

To correct or not correct - that is the question. Once again teachers must remember that young children are on that first step in life. When a child is learning violin, she might hold it ... Well let’s say improperly. Will the teacher correct her immediately? No, the teacher will wait and allow the student to enjoy the instrument...and in time she slowly, slowly will change the position of the right arm, and later the right wrist, and later the left elbow, and the left wrist.

So in the world of learning conversation, how important is it to correct young children? In the beginning every answer is fine. In what universe is this ok? When we ask questions of a young child, we are asking them to: 1) Think about a topic, 2) Formulate a hypothesis, 3) Put together words in a sentence, 4) Wait patiently while raising the hand, and 5) Speak fearlessly. This is A LOT. In the beginning at the first step of development, all answers are welcome. As teachers, we are encouraging them to think, to guess, to contribute. Correction can come a bit later.

When communicating with children, give them:

- A lot of time to respond...especially boys.
- A turn in talking.
- Your full listening attention.

What do we learn through conversation? Turn taking, patience, cooperation, kindness, listening, concentration - skills that are required for a successful elementary school experience.

How often does the teacher speak with each child? As often as s/he can during free play, playground time, upon arrival, lunch, bathroom time, departure...whenever.....you can.

Why would a teacher do this? To build a bridge to each child. To connect.

5) Infusing the Relationship with Fun and Joy
How does the teacher make learning fun for your children?

- What makes children laugh? Integrate these things into every day activities.
- Do you know the main interest of every child? Have fun and laugh with them. Be silly.
- Have meaningful experiences with them.
- Be enthusiastic. Be dramatic.
- Sing for no reason at all. Laugh for no reason at all.
- Play games.

How does this enhance learning? When connections are made with the children, challenging behavior declines. Learning ‘goes through the roof’.

6) Empowering the Relationship with Positivity
What is the climate of your classroom? Is it sunny? Is it cloudy? Is it rainy? Is there lightning and thunder? What sort of climate would you like in your classroom? How can teachers support the ‘most positive climate’?

- Through unconditional loving and caring.
- No matter what.
- Leave no child behind.
- Create a family at school.
- Create a different kind of learning environment.

What are some methodologies that promote ‘positive climate’?

- Sweet and smiling behavior (especially when you don’t feel sweet and smiley)
- Expressing physical closeness and affection
- Showing affection through words
- Positive comments. (Acknowledge. Acknowledge. Acknowledge.)
- Extending activities and conversations.

Remaining positive with your students is one chapter. Keeping one’s thoughts positive is an entirely different chapter. Early childhood educators are continuously experiencing frustration and expressing patience. Keeping the mind filled with positivity can be challenging and exhausting.

Once upon a time there was a child at our school whom I will call Michael. Every day he would come to school and invite the other children to fight with him. He really didn’t want to fight but someone in his family thought that this behavior was ‘cute’. It drove me absolutely crazy. Then one day I decided to move out of the ‘this behavior is making me crazy’ chair to sit ‘in the opposite chair’. On this day I said, “Michael, come sit in my lap. I love you so. Tell me what you and Mommie have been doing.” Every day I hugged him up. Every day I told him how much I cared about him...and the inappropriate behavior declined. Taking the opposite
AMGK Italia held a Seminar on the topic of Microvita was held in Pescantina (Verona, Italy) during the weekend of February 22 and 23 and was attended by 30 interested meditation practitioners. The speaker, Dr. Hans Joachim Rudolph, an internist and specialist in Rheumatology, has been practicing yoga since 1972, and is the founding member and chairman of Microvita Research e.V. since 2007 and fellow of the Society for Microvita Research and Integrated Medicine since 2012.

The concept of Microvita was introduced by Shri P. R. Sarkar in 1996 and defined as follows:

*There are entities which come within the realm of both physicality and psychic expressions which are smaller or subtler than atoms, electrons or protons, and in the psychic realm may be subtler than ectoplasm. For such objects or for such entities I use the term “microvitum”. This microvitum, or in plural microvita, are not of protoplasmic order, and as such they have got little to do with carbon molecules or carbon atoms, which are treated as the initial points or initial stage of life in this universe. So far as physicality is concerned, the position of these microvita is just between ectoplasm and electron, but they are neither ectoplasm nor electron.*

*It is a human wont that whatever we know regarding any subject or any object, when we know that it exists but its characteristics or other particulars are not known to us, we say it is “mysterious”. So regarding these microvita, we may say it is mysterious. That is why I used the term “microvitum, the mysterious emanation of cosmic factor”. They are not of protoplasmic order, and hence the question of their protozoic structure or metazoic structure does not arise. They are something mysterious.*

In this seminar, Dr. Rudolph elaborated that we may define microvita as the transmission chain which enables unbroken continuity during time and space between the creator and the creation. The entity or entities coming within the conception of the mind are purely abstract, and those coming within the perceptions or feeling of the sensory or motor organs are purely matter. But the position of energy and microvita are on this silver line of demarcation between matter and abstract.

The concept of Microvita has many aspects and applications, and in this seminar Microvita were discussed in relation to the propensities of the mind, effects of and on meditation, and on the body. Here below are some of the statements made therein:

Neuronal assemblies are supposed to be quantum objects. Their electrical activities are transient and irregular, unless they are stabilized by a Quantum Zeno Effect-like interaction, which is, in turn, controlled by microvita. Specific neuronal assemblies represent human propensities, and these are also controlled by microvita. The set of microvita controlling human propensities defines the basic qualities of a person.

In the process of metempsychosis, it is enough to transfer this set of microvita from the dying to the new organism: It leaves the body with the vital airs (Pranah, including its tanmatras), exhaled at the time of death. Thereafter, two forces maintain its groupification:

- a) an attractive force based on the similarity of its components,
- b) a centripetal force towards a nucleus composed of the microvita with the strongest longing for a change of their internal state (similar to the driving force in Leibnitz’s monads).

Sets of microvita can exist for some time at the borderline between the physical world and the world of cosmic imagination, i.e. in the sphere described by Shri P.R. Sarkar as the silver lining between matter and abstract. From there, a set of microvita may enter a newly born child, consequently taking control over the development and expression of its propensities. If a suitable body is not available, such sets of microvita may also align themselves with aerial and luminous factors, creating what has been called “luminous bodies”. Sets of microvita as well as luminous bodies can help or harm their fellow human beings. Details may be found in Shri P.R. Sarkar’s writings about Deva and Pretayonitis.

*For more information please visit:  http://www.microvita.eu/Research/Home.html*
Effective global movements come into being in their own time. Occasionally they can explode onto the scene like the Occupy Movement but more usually they are nurtured into being with love, patience and commitment. This is the case for our Ananda Marga Gurukula. Such was the scope of Sarkar’s vision and the slender resources of the organisation that AMGK has been an idea waiting its time. Yet, the quiet genesis of the movement is gaining speed. Thus we see the recent formation of GANE, the Global Association of Neohumanist Educators. Similarly, starting in December of last year, we have the monthly online gathering of a small community of educators, social entrepreneurs, Proutists and well-wishers. We gather to discuss a wide range of ideas covering social evolution, the nature of consciousness, classroom practice, Proutist economics, the arts etc.

This diversity in areas offers a glimpse into the breadth of Sarkar’s vision for Gurukula. He has proposed 42 faculties for the Gurukula University, yet such is the explosion of knowledge over the past 24 years since his death it is not hard to find other candidates for faculty status. One simple example would be a faculty dedicated to the study of Social Entrepreneurship. To date we have held five webinars that covered a range of topics moving from Dada Shambhushivananda’s overview of the Gurukula project; Didi Ananda Devpriya’s discussion on Education for Balance; Marcus Bussey’s outline of an historical map for social evolution; Sid Jordan’s presentation of the Era of Neohumanism and Henk de Weijer’s introduction to the concept of Microvita. In May Didi Anandarama will tell us about an exciting project she and others have been running for over ten years involving children writing inspirational books. In June, Eric Jacobson will discuss Education for Transformation.

Future speakers will include Professor Ravi Batra discussing his ideas for ending unemployment, Professor Sohail Inayatullah talking about his new book on Prout, Acharya Maheshvarananda discussing Prout projects in South America and Africa, Professor Dhanjoo Ghista discussing his vision for Gurukula, Dr Jose Ramos discussing six scenarios for Spiritual Social development and Dr Jyoshna Latrobe discussing her work with sacred music. Presenters all have extensive experience in the areas they are presenting on and all sessions are recorded so that those who cannot attend a session will be able to listen to the session later and also download and share sessions they like with colleagues and friends.

As we grow this initiative, we look forward to more participation from the global Gurukula community and also – and this is important – from people generally interested in questions of social transformation and personal and social liberation. In this sense the webinars are definitely not in-house only. They are designed to alert us all to the breadth and possibilities of transformative learning. Neohumanist vision is able to infuse all subjects with new charm and challenges us to rethink our subjects and our assumptions. It also invites us to make connections and weave a truly interdisciplinary world of ideas and practices together in the best of the pragmatic tradition of taking an idea and doing something useful for humanity and the planet. This is what makes Gurukula Webinars such an exciting new project. I hope you can join us for the next webinar – they are listed on our Gurukula website: www.gurukul.edu where you can register.

The webinar, the Era of Neohumanism, by Dr. Sid Jordan, is presented on the next page.
Era of Neohumanism: Towards a Cooperative Spiritual Society
By Dr. Sid Jordan

In this article we will examine the consilience of knowledge from many fields of human endeavor that attest to the fact we have crossed the threshold into a new era of cooperation. Secondly we will apply P. R. Sarkar’s Neohumanism as a hub for the synthesis of all the related sciences, humanities and social movements contributing to an Era of Neohumanism defined by global cooperation and shared universal values that support the wellbeing of all. Finally we will examine how Neohumanism transcends economic, religious and political dogma to further the expression of cooperation in an Era of Neohumanism that moves us towards a spiritually oriented society.

As a global society we stand at the threshold of a new era of cooperation made urgent by impending economic and environmental melt downs that leaves us no alternative but to find a common ground to survive and possibly thrive.

Rebirth of a Gift Economy
Charles Eisenstein (2011) reflects a similar sentiment in his recent book, Sacred Economics. "The present convergence of crises--in money, energy, education, health, water, soil, climate, politics, the environment, and more--is a birth crisis, expelling us from the old world into a new."

Economic stability and justice go hand in hand as nations recognize that they must cooperate with one another to achieve monetary standards that have the capability to float the new and poorly regulated world economy. At the heart of the problem is what money has come to mean in the depersonalization and commodification of everything around us. Charles Eisenstein’s vision of a new economy suggests, "The next stage of human economy will parallel what we are beginning to understand about nature. It will call forth the gifts of each of us; it will emphasize cooperation over competition; it will encourage circulation over hoarding; and it will be cyclical, not linear. ” He further points to a split between spirit and matter concerning economics, “On a deep level, money and consciousness are intertwined. Each is bound up in the other.” In other words his concept of sacred economy encourages an approach that leads us back to the spirit of the “gift economy” reminiscent of primal societies, which he contends is “latent within all of us”.

Global Response to Environmental Crisis
Paul Hawken (1993) in his book, The Ecology of Commerce states that due to social and biological forces business is on the verge of a radical transformation. He envisions a restorative economy that “unites ecology and commerce into one sustainable act of production and distribution that mimics and enhances natural processes...acknowledges that we are all here together, at once, at the service of and at the mercy of nature, each other and our daily acts.” He states, “the promise of business is to increase the general well-being of humankind through service, a creative invention and ethical philosophy.”

Hawken (2007) in his later book, Blessed Unrest, states that the environmental movement is the largest social movement in all of human history numbering nearly two million organizations that evolved independently working towards ecological sustainability and social justice - “an instinctive humanitarian movement from the bottom up...responding to massive ecological degradation and rapid climate change.” Hawken in attempting to identify sources of this organic movement eludes to what poet Gary Snyder calls “the great underground traced back to healers, priestesses, philosophers, monks, rabbis, poets, and artists who speak for the planet, for other species, for interdependence, a life that courses under through and around empires.”

These authors, artists and social scientists are serving as witnesses and movers and shakers to move us into a new era of cooperation with one another and nature. They are implying that there is something positive in our human nature that can tame the crises that confront us. Let us look at the neuroscience and social science evidence of the Better Angles of our Nature that promote cooperation in humans.

Biological and Psychosocial Evidence for Reciprocal Altruism
In spite of the high profile of global violence in the news media, Steven Pinker’s (2011) book, The Better Angles of Our Nature, presents evidence to support the thesis that mankind is increasingly becoming less violent (see Graph, The Waning of War).

The Waning of War

Source: Human Security Report Project, the Uppsala Conflict Data Project, and the Peace Research Institute of Oslo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Worldwide</th>
<th>Colonel</th>
<th>Interstate</th>
<th>Civil</th>
<th>Civil (with foreign intervention)</th>
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</thead>
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<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>6,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19
Pinker’s story develops in this manner:

2. 1452 Gutenberg invented printing press.
3. Information and ideas spread in Europe and world.
4. Thomas Hobbes’ book The Leviathan; accept the rule of law
5 Civil regulation of Commerce
6. Increasing respect for “the interests and values of women”
7 Humanitarian Movement- respect for value of life
8. Rational approach to morality that supported general welfare
9. Improved human relations; large scale periods of peace post WWII
10. Discovery of self and self-actualization

Reciprocal Altruism

Robert Trivers developed a scientific approach to study “reciprocal altruism” using the Prisoner’s Dilemma that helps us see traits in animals and humans that support Pinkers thesis of a trend towards a less violent society. Trivers defines reciprocal altruism as requiring human instincts and emotions that include sympathy, socializing, deception and being deceived in our give and take interactions. The concept of reciprocal altruism has also incorporated the Dawkins’ concept of “selfish genes”. Selfish genes involved the “predisposition to reason mathematically, evolved as a mechanism of ever more devious cheating, and ever more penetrating detection of cheating in others.”

The Prisoner’s Dilemma game created by Robert Axelrod (1984) is played in humans with “no antecedent morality or ethic, only maximal gene replication that will determine the survivors and dominant interactional strategy in the population.” Thus it is first a biological concept secondarily influenced by psychological, social and moral factors.

The game is a dilemma because each player, not knowing the other’s moves or the possible consequences, must make a bet with considerable cost if the bet is lost. The “prisoner” metaphor in the game was used because it was based on two imprisoned “bad guys” who were given choices to defect (rat on the other), admit guilt or be silent. If both cooperate by remaining silent they get brief jail time of one month; both defect and get three months; if one is silent while the other squeals, the silent one is assumed to be guilty and gets one year, while the confessor goes free.

If we look at one game of the Prisoner’s Dilemma we see that the pay-off is higher for defecting rather than cooperating. Logic says betray the other but they soon realize that the reward is lower than if they had cooperated and remained silent. The same results are there when a new character is added called “the banker” who referees and then pays off one or both of the two player in real money: both cooperate and are awarded $300; or, each fined $10 if they both play “defect”; if one cooperates (sucker) while the other defects (self-protects) then the sucker is fined $100 for gullibility and the defector earns $500 for self-protecting. No matter what the reward is, in the one-on-one game the defector wins more than a cooperator.

These individual games (played a few times) seem to support defecting and cheating as more rewarding in the short run. Axelrod, Trivers and others extended the number of games played (“iterated” play) in which many individuals interact constantly, giving variations in strategies and a more “real life” look to the game. The results gave way to a true reciprocal altruism in which repeated play results in lots of time and memory that produced strategies that resulted in minimum punishment and mutual benefits without excessive costs.

The “iterated play” of this game involving the dilemma to cheat or cooperate can be applied across our human moral landscape whether we are looking at the tit for tat sanctions threatened between Russia and Western nations in the Crimerian crisis or the digital era “games” of the Wikileaks and Snowden episodes. Perhaps all of these “games” point to a more transparent set of negotiations in which individual nations are exposed for defecting or cooperating. This transparency allows for the general public to witness and participate in activism from the bottom up in demanding a more rational and cooperative future among people of all nations.

Pinker concludes that “though conflict is a human universal, so are our efforts to reduce it….mutual selfishness is ruinous… the highest total payout is when all cooperate.” Pinker also takes the position that sustaining a less violent history sometimes relies on conscious intentional reasoning by the movers and shakers of the five vectors:
1. The Leviathan –Rule of Law to Diffuse Exploitation
2. Regulation of Commerce- Distribution of Wealth
3. Feminization -Respect for the Values and Interest of Women
4. Cosmopolitanism Inclusiveness and Diversity

A New Science of Morality

Having examined some of the research evidence for our biological and psychosocial propensities for cooperation and peaceful relationships we now examine the pursuit by social scientists, evolutionists and neuroscientists to define a new Science of Morality. Evolutionist E. O. Wilson (Brockman 2013) suggested in 1975 that ethics would be taken out of the hands of philosophers and integrated into a new “synthesis” of evolutionary and biological thinking.

In a Science of Morality forum (Brockman 2013) John Haidt, social psychologist, suggested that we resort to collective moral decisions to correct the natural “confirmation bias” of individuals. Neuroscientist, Sam Harris cited the need for three morality projects:
1. Developing a non-judgmental understanding of what people do at a cultural, psychological and neurobiological level in creating a science of morality.

2. Understanding how the term morality “relates to human well-being altogether”

3. How to persuade all people to act in a more consensually agreed upon benevolent manner.

Harris states “we must begin with project number two-understanding right from wrong in universal terms…that the concept of well-being captures everything we care about in the moral sphere…there are a thousand different ways to tune the variables of selfishness versus altruism, to land us on a peak of the moral landscape.”

In Harris’ (2010) systaltic Moral Landscape peaks represent the flourishing of well being and the valleys reflect the deepest depths of misery.

**Era of Neohumanism**

Who then will answer the call to refine the definition of a universal morality and persuade the masses to adopt this benevolent and universal morality? Sarkar’s Neohumanist philosophy and education along with his Progressive Utilization Theory offer a synthesis of spiritually based morality and a path towards social equality.

Neohumanism makes use of an ancient universal code of morality and ethics called Yama and Niyama that is dedicated to the welfare of all beings - animate and inanimate; achieving personal and social balance based on considerations of time, place and person beyond any dogma. Yama and Niyama represent a systaltic movement of morality that is the bedrock of spiritual progress.

At the center of Yama and Niyama is “Awakened Conscience” which answers the call for a discriminating intuition based on rationality, study, and spiritual mentality. This code of morality transcends emotionally based sentiments such as geo-sentiments, socio-sentiments and human sentiments; establishing devotional sentiment towards all animate and inanimate beings. Awakened Conscience is acquired through “study” which seeks consensus to overcome confirmation biases in arriving at choices that serve social equality and mutual altruism beyond tit for tat - a true coordinated cooperation.

A companion theory to Neohumanism is Prout, a socio-economic approach to insuring social equality and justice. A central tenant of Prout (Sarkar 1996) is “One must not forget that collective welfare lies in individuals and individual welfare lies in collectivity.” As seen in Eisenstein’s principles for a gift economy, Sarkar supports the development of a local economy of cooperatives and a distribution of wealth that guarantees everyone the minimum necessities of food, clothing, housing, medicine and education. As Eisenstein supported a cyclical economy, Sarkar’s Prout is based on a theory of the Social Cycle that predicts the rise and fall of workers, warriors, entrepreneurs and intellectuals.

Refining Pinker’s notion for the need for “movers and shakers” who reduce violence and exploitation, Sarkar introduces the concept of Sadvipras who possess positive qualities of all these actors in the social cycle. As Pinker suggested that “movers and shakers” would operate on the five vectors of 1) diffusing exploitation, 2) equitable distribution of wealth, 3) gender equality, 4) societal unity and 5) rationality that serves the common good, Sadvipras stand at the center of the social cycle to prevent exploitation by any group of other groups in the social cycle.

**Neohumanist Education: Liberation of the Intellect**

Neohumanist Educators, Proutists and many like-minded moralists have created an expansion of consciousness towards a more cooperative and spiritual society. In order to create the further expansion of consciousness and to take the challenge of Sam Harris’ third project of “moral persuasion” we have to extend a Neohumanist Education (NHE) to all sectors of the society. NHE incorporates a flexible blending of Eastern subjective philosophy and Western objective science making it adaptable to different cultures of the world. NHE furthers the development of the Era of Neohumanism by liberating the intellect.

Sarkar (1959) states, “The spirit of morality will have to be instilled in human beings from the moment that they first start to learn the lessons of interaction. By interaction I mean social interaction. Viewed from this perspective, the mind of a child is the best receptacle for morality. But who will impart moral training or education?... Increasing the number of teachers in educational institutions may partially solve the problem of moral education, but the key to the solution lies with the parents themselves. In cases where the parents are unfit to shoulder this responsibility, the teachers and well-wishers of society will have to come forward and demonstrate their greater sense of responsibility.”

Established in over eighty countries Neohumanist Education is fulfilling this need for an all round education that includes universal moral and spiritual principles and practices in approximately one thousand pre-k through high schools and four colleges. Thus the Era of Neohumanism would have as it main task to educate and inspire all people to recognize the benefits of contemplative practices and serving others to insure the welfare of all.

**Humanity at the Threshold of a New Era**

Sarkar (1984) trumpets, “Humanity is now at the threshold of a new era. We do not want any dogma. The age of dogma is gone. What we want is an idea based on Neohumanism. We are for the entire created world; and not only for human beings or living beings, but for the entire animate and inanimate universe.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33
With great joy, last January we completed the 2014 Intensive Yoga Teachers Course amidst the beautiful and serene mountains of the Córdoba Province, Argentina. This year thirteen people got their Yoga Teacher Certificate after passing excellently the theoretical and practical exams.

Every year we feel the joy of sharing this deep experience of transformation, very difficult to explain in words. It is exciting to participate in the training of these people, knowing that each of them has added to their life several new and positive habits and skills, and that they bear the hopeful message of yoga and spirituality to many people in need, worldwide.

The course was held in an atmosphere of camaraderie and deep commitment. Students showed great interest in each of the topics and engaged in strong bonds of friendship and trust.

This course is a great challenge for everybody; seventeen days of immersion and absolute dedication, away from home, family and daily routine, in a new environment and sharing every moment with people previously unknown. Activities begin at five in the morning and extend until shortly before dinner. But all the physical and mental effort is amply rewarded with the results.

For us, as educators, it is encouraging to see that every year more and more people are interested in actively participating in social change toward a new era of higher consciousness and spirituality. The great effort made by our students to participate in this course, is proof of their genuine commitment and dedication. Certainly our world needs many people in this category, in this difficult era of moral and spiritual crisis.

We sincerely hope to continue every year with this activity and thus make our small contribution to the social and spiritual change that we all expect. We know that this work is not our merit, but of all those who came before us, inspired us and taught us. And especially it is the merit of people that every year trust us and make this wonderful experience possible. We express our deepest and sincere thanks to all.

And finally, our greatest gratitude is undoubtedly to the great philosopher, humanist and social reformer Shrii P. R. Sarkar, whose teachings are the base and perennial inspiration of this and many other educational and service projects around the world.
Ananda Marga Gurukula Teacher’s Training College
Anandanagar, India

After many years in the making, the Ananda Marga Gurukula Teacher’s Training College is now ready to begin accepting students.

Ac. Svarupananda Avadhuta, initiated the process of application on behalf of AMGK December 18th, 2012. After scores of visits to the offices of National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE- the statutory body responsible for teachers’ education in India) and after complying with all the requirements required by law, the NCTE accorded approval to AMGK on March 3, 2014 to begin classes for 100 students on July 1st, 2014.

A new complex for the Teachers Training College is now completed with the cooperation of all Gurukula sympathizers from India and around the world. However, the College is still in great need of support for equipping the institution with all multi-media facilities, an international-standard library facilities and visiting professors. The new College will currently be affiliated to Siddho-Kanno Birsa University in Purulia. This institution of Gurukula paves the way for other higher-educational institutions to be established at Anandanagar in the coming years.

Ac. Shambhushivananda Avadhuta, Kulapati of AMGK was physically present when the team from Siddho-Kanno University visited the AMGK TTC Campus in March 2014.

The concerned authorities were highly impressed with Shri P.R. Sarkar’s vision of Ananda Marga Gurukula as it is unfolding at Anandanagar.

We hope that the comprehensive vision of AMGK International University will also be actualized at Anandanagar in the not too-distant future.
NHE Activities in Chouf, Lebanon
By Ghada Hassanieh,
Education Project Coordinator, AMURT Lebanon

Since the beginning of the war in Syria, a continuous number of Syrian refugees have been fleeing to Lebanon, which is located on its Northern and Eastern boarders. The number of families which enter our area may reach more than 200 families per month.

The NHE Center, Smart Academy, and AMURT are located in Baqaata Village in upper Chouf, and we have been conducting educational programs for some time. Chouf is located along the Mediterranean Coast in the Mount Lebanon district, south of Beirut. Its mountain ranges reach an altitude of 188 meters in Niha village. In June 2013, AMURT started the “back to school” project. The main goal was to put as many Syrian children into schools as possible. The target number was 400 students distributed among 13 official schools in the targeted area, and succeeded in getting grants for enrolling 600 students. One of our targets was teachers’ trainings to help the teachers with the new challenges they would face because of the sudden increase in the number of students and because of the variety of academic level and backgrounds.

Recently we held a series of teachers’ workshops with 60 teachers, introducing them to ways of handling different psycho-social scenarios teachers may face with their refugee students. In the first workshop, we introduced Neohumanist philosophy and its educational principles and approach. This was followed by two workshops by Didi Anandarama. The first was on building a community in the classroom. The teachers learned psychic-social activities that help foster community in the classroom. The second one was on assessing the difficulties in the schools and classrooms and creating a congenial learning environment for integrating new groups in a harmonious way.

Didi’s observation after hearing the teachers’ feedback follows: “I have found the teachers open and receptive to the practical workshop. They contributed in a lively manner to the discussion and had a clear idea of how the material presented could be put to good use in their classrooms. They eagerly and in full number attended the second workshop and have expressed interest to be informed about future workshops. They found the material new and inspiring.

We continued with other workshops about Non-Violent Education. More teachers are joining our workshops, and consistently expressing the desire to attend all our educational trainings and activities, as they find everything presented is new and of deep need.

Preparation is now going on for Child Friendly Spaces. (Please see following article)

Now Chouf area and the educational field in Lebanon is a fertile field for the implementation of Neohumanist Educational philosophy, principles, strategy and methodology, which Lebanese society is in deep need of. As Chouf is combined now of a mixture of Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian and Iraqi populations, Neohumanist Education is especially relevant for building a positive, harmonized community for the future.
Training in Lebanon for Child Friendly Spaces for Syrian Refugees

In March, Didi Ananda Devapriya traveled to Lebanon to train a group of 12 women that will be soon opening up a “Child Friendly Space” for Syrian refugee children that have been excluded from mainstream education in the past two years. The civil war in Syria has caused a massive exodus of refugees – and a great number of them – 1 million have fled to nearby Lebanon. As Lebanon’s own population is only 3 million people, the influx of refugees has suddenly increased its population by nearly 25% which is greatly straining its fragile infrastructure.

Many of the families left behind well established careers and properties to find themselves squeezed into unhygienic, unheated, very poor living conditions. The trauma of living through the uncertainty and constant danger of shelling and bombs has scarred many of the young children, who are afraid to leave home. In addition, spaces in schools are limited and many refugee families are unemployed and lacking money to pay school fees and transportation. As a result, in the area that AMURT has been overseeing, approximately 2000 children have remained out of the formal school system.

Additionally, as a result, AMURT decided to open up a “Child Friendly Spaces” program to offer a transitional space to help children to receive non-formal education and reawaken their joy of learning. In this way, children can start the process of reintegrating into the education system but by starting out in a safer space that is less formally structured and more able to adapt to their socio-emotional needs.

The training included sessions to give a basic understanding of the impact of trauma on children’s development – in other words, normal reactions to abnormal situations, and how this might manifest in behavior, in order to be able to correctly interpret children’s behavior and support children in their journey of healing and development.

The teachers learned many cooperative games, began composing Neohumanist songs in Arabic, played with masks and learned creative story telling techniques. They also discussed the use of persona dolls, massage, breathing and simple yoga techniques for helping children gain self-regulation skills and allow the relaxation response to “turn off” the over-active “fight, flight, or freeze” response of the amygdala. They were a very diverse group – including professional educators, masters degree psychologists as well as several mothers of refugee children and other volunteers that had professional backgrounds in areas unrelated to education. The group was excited to start remembering and discovering many resources from their own childhoods or backgrounds and began sharing these amongst themselves. Several times the workshops sparked long interactive discussions directly in Arabic and the group was very engaged and creative throughout the two day training.

The first CFS will be held in a space that is being renovated directly above the current AMURT headquarters, and by summer time similar spaces will open up in several other isolated villages in the valleys. The project will begin operating in April and in its initial phase will serve approximately 100 children, though this number will quickly increase when the program begins multiplying. In all AMURT is targeting 500 children with non-formal education programs by July in addition to the 600 children AMURT continues to support in the formal education program.
AMS A I Philippines  
By Didi Ananda Kala’

Ananda Marga Special Academic Institution (AMS A I) Unlad-Bata – Bicol, is a Pre-school and Elementary service school in Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte in the Bicol Region of the Philippines. It is serving the local community along with the Indigenous Children (Kabihug, Aetas) in that mountainous area of the Philippines. The Kabihug Tribe is one of the oldest tribal communities in Bicol known as nomadic people, with no land and homes to call their own. They belong to the full-blooded tribe of Negritos, mostly shorter, with darker skin tone and curlier hair than your average Filipinos.

Our school was started over 10 years ago, in 2003. It opened with just a pre-school, and then eventually we saw the need in the community and added another grade level, at least one grade level every year, until eventually, we were able to produce elementary graduates, starting around 5 years ago.

Unlike regular schools in the country, AMSAI schools incorporate Yoga in their daily routine as part of Morning Circle, to set the pace of the day. AMSAI Bicol has 73 pupils from preschool to primary (grade 6).

Despite the school not having funds, this year, through the help of certain individuals, we managed to conduct a Teachers Training, seeing an opportunity for the growth of our teachers. The training was held in Manila, and tried to incorporate the knowledge of our teachers of NHE Projects all over the world. It included studies of Neohumanism, an introduction to the Ecology of Joy of Dada Caetanyananda, team building, an educational tour and many other things we could squeeze into the 3-day in-house training that would help the teachers get more understanding of how crucial their role is as educators of children, and to hopefully, play their roles better. A three day training is never enough, as there will always be something to learn. With this, we aspire to run trainings on a regular basis.

Also, this school year, we saw the 95% completion of a small library for the children. It started with a donation of both old and new books from local and international organizations. We were very happy to receive the books, and then we started thinking of how best to utilize them. We’ve thought of distributing them to the children, for our children cannot afford to buy their own sets of books. But a better idea sprung up, that...
Global Association of Neohumanist Educators

The Global Association of Neohumanist Educators (GANE) is a membership association for the professional development of Neohumanist educators worldwide for the purpose of strengthening the Neohumanist Education (NHE) global network of schools and teachers (pre-k - university level) and for coordinating and promoting Neohumanist Education on the regional and international level.

The website for GANE is now operational. Benefits to members are numerous and include access to discussion forums, network newsletter, educational conferences, resources, webinars, teacher training opportunities, etc. Also, all member schools and institutes are listed in a publically viewable directory, and all individual members are listed in a members only directory to facilitate finding each other for communication, collaboration and networking.

All Neohumanist Education related projects, schools and educators are invited to join. Please visit: <www.gane-educators.org>

Objectives

- To provide platforms for dialog and exchange amongst Neohumanist practitioners around the globe
- To provide a directory of individuals and NHE institutions
- To publish books, magazines, papers, articles, newsletters etc.
- To organize higher educational courses, trainings and ongoing professional development courses for adults
- To organize resources / libraries
- To initiate and develop projects to demonstrate the practical implementation of the NHE system of education and to promote the results of these
- To officially represent Neohumanist Education teachers
- To realize complex or interdisciplinary collaborations with those active in the field of education
- To organize or participate in events for interacting with different members and specialists in the field
- To represent NHE in a variety of educational bodies and networks
- To develop lobby and advocacy campaigns to harmonize the principles of NHE with public policies

will make the books available not only to present pupils, but hopefully to future generations more. And that is how the library was conceived. For our humble school, it is a radical idea to even think of this without financing. But we didn’t give up and slowly worked on planning, while temporarily housing the books in at the Bicol Master Unit. And sure enough, before the school year ended, the children were able to enjoy their very own library. Its small size is countered by the children following a schedule, so as not to get the library too crowded. Thus it can be said that the library is now fully functional, and the only remaining work is ensuring the books are secured from moisture. Preschool and primary pupils are seen here upon the arrival of the books.

There is much work to be done. We aspire at least to have the school vibrancy we have in our Las Piñas Preschool, where the parents are more able to support their children’s school activities, resulting to less dependencies on the school for costumes and other materials. Below are some photos of some activities in AMSAI Zapote, Las Piñas, Manila.
I’ve come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal.”
- Haim G. Ginott

Can you imagine an education in which each teacher would make an effort to get to know a child as an individual, fostering his or her unique gifts? And each classroom would be a safe place to explore and make mistakes? And where coordinated cooperation would enable us to move forward together? And where lessons would be structured to inspire organic growth?

This perspective puts some very different demands on teachers. Teachers are given back power, but also take on the huge responsibility of co-creating the educational process. Consequently, it also puts different demands on teachers’ training. To create teachers who can fullfill these new tasks we must include new syllabi into the curriculum and make the entire training more experiential. Qualities such as compassion, genuine love, strength of character and personal integrity should go hand in hand with knowledge, communication skills, leadership ability and a sense of aesthetics.

Indeed, reflecting upon my own life as a student, memories of many fantastic teachers come to mind. These were teachers who inspired and encouraged me, who lit the fire of my curiosity and passion for wisdom. But there were also a few who made me feel miserable, unworthy and incapable, who nearly destroyed my self esteem. There were more than a few who lacked any power whatsoever, whose minds were too weak and hearts too fearful. These teachers I hardly remember and I certainly do not remember any of their teachings. In my, more than 25 years as an educator of both children and adults, I have witnessed this same pattern.

Owing to my expertise in various educational philosophies and methodologies (from Montessori, Waldorf and NHE to main stream education in different countries), it became clear to me that the success of any system lies more significantly in the teacher’s personality than in the greatness of the educational philosophy. While not underestimating the value and inspiration of a good philosophy, it is the teacher who eventually either does or does not bring an ideal to life.

Hence, my main focus in recent years has been on how to design and conduct teachers’ training such that it:

- awakens the teachers ability for self reflection and develops their self awareness.
- helps teachers recognize their own cognitive and emotional tendencies without self abuse.
- enables teachers to be more proactive and responsive rather than reactive and judgmental.
- builds skills and perspectives that cultivate a larger sense of equilibrium while reminding us that life is ever changing.
- inspires the wisdom of the heart and cultivates a sense of compassion for oneself and others.
- emphasizes organic rather than mechanic growth.

The profound science of bio-psychology (which for example explores areas such as empathy, mirror neurons and emotional intelligence, decision and problem solving abilities, metaphoric thinking etc.) has been my inspiration in this work. It also serves as a tool for a well-founded professional explanation of the processes that are happening inside of us.

However, the training that I offer is predominantly experiential. A dynamic integration of theatre, music, deep visualization, color therapy, painting, writing, dance, yoga and meditation are the tools with which teachers explore their inner worlds. They learn how their discoveries can nourish and guide their personal and professional lives as well as be applied in educational situations.
As Du Bois states: “Children learn more from what you are, than what you teach.” In a similar way, teachers learn more from who their mentor is, than from what s/he teaches.

I sincerely hope that the enthusiastic teachers in many different countries who I have had the privilege to teach, are the best evidence of the deep reaching results that such process oriented education initiates in us.

Tatjana has designed a customizable introductory 2-3 day workshop that can be used as continuing education. If you are interested in this program for the teachers at your institution, contact Tatjana at: tapasii@hispeed.ch +41 044 926 12 18, +41 (0) 76 575 12 18

Neohumanist Education Teacher Training
Zonnelicht School, Den Bosch, Holland

The team of teachers in the Den Bosch schools has grown, and there were about 30 teachers in attendance for the annual Neohumanist Education Teachers Training in March. This year, the teachers had expressed the desire to deepen their inner growth and thus the focus of much of the training was on personal development and spirituality.

When the first session opened with a kiirtan, several of the teachers described a welcome feeling of coming “home” again to themselves – remembering the nice feeling that had been created in the previous year’s training. Indeed, each year a greater sense of unity has been growing and many of the teachers have been taking their personal journey of development quite seriously.

As Neohumanist education puts a great emphasis on the key role of the teacher’s rich inner life it is a great achievement for a school to create an atmosphere that facilitates and nurtures this process. Indeed, by the end, some of the teachers were expressing that they are ready for more advanced topics, which again is a positive sign that demonstrates the maturity of the team.

Following the training, the teachers decided on their own initiative to start a short collective meditation session during the lunch break, and several teachers have felt that it has helped them in their personal development as well as creating a positive, supportive feeling in the school community.
All the processes of change, imagination, and learning ultimately depend on love. It isn’t just that without mothering humans would lack nurturance, warmth, and emotional security. They would also lack culture, history, morality, science and literature.¹

Alison Gopnick, Philosophical Baby

The opening of science’s probing eyes and expanding heart into the previously taboo areas of love and spirituality is bringing out of the shadows the impact mother-infant love has on evolutionary consciousness. As spiritual aspirants, our current challenge is to become active and conscious participants in the extraordinary task of transforming human love into universal love. We are beginning to acknowledge that human love depends to an unparalleled degree on our individual and collective mother-infant relationship, the primal bond which sets the foundation for our ‘capacity to love’.² Allowing that relationship to open doors to the greatest of all relationships, that of the unit self with the Cosmic Self, may be one of human love’s deepest functions, one that the convergence of science and ancient spiritual wisdom is helping us to explore.

Let’s begin at the beginning and take a look at human love. The budding of mammalian mother love millions of years ago, together with the emergence of language and its newfound communication skills, heralded a massive jump in consciousness - the desire and ability to care about another’s well-being as much or more than caring for oneself. In comparison to our reptilian ancestors’ lay-the-eggs-and-run behavior, a subtle yet powerful magnetism evolved between mother and infant, creating perhaps the strongest biologically grounded love story in our unfolding evolutionary drama. Over time, the primitive mother-infant attachment deepened into interpersonal love. “The conclusion (from the empirical data) is that human love evolved on the basis of the mother-infant relation.”³

The perceptions of love that shape our lives lie deep in the pockets of implicit, pre-verbal memories, beginning in the primal period — before birth, during birth and the formative year after birth — arguably combined with past life, extracerebral memories. If that love is strong, secure, cooperative, open-ended and mutually respectful, it creates neural wiring in what is called the brain’s ‘care and nurturance’ system.⁴ Continuous reinforcement of this system wires it to be a dominant lens for viewing the world, triggering more easily and more often than the stressful ‘fight or flight’ system. But beyond that, and particularly if the mother’s spiritual awareness is clear and consistent, it also sets the stage for trust and love within a deeply spiritual relationship with divine presence, however that presence may be perceived.

The earliest faith is the basic trust and hope in the care of others. A caregiver’s nurturance, protection, and availability provide the basis for the earliest grasp of divine care.⁵

Thompson & Randall, Children’s Spiritual Development

Mechanisms that mediate trust between individuals are the same mechanisms needed for trust in God.⁶

Paul Zak, author of the Moral Molecule

It is intriguing to think of mother-infant love as a possible prototype for human-Divine love, a critical link in the emergence of the spiritualization, or perhaps universalization, of love. We cannot help but be astounded and deeply wonder about the magnitude of attraction, resilience, joy and mutual dependency built into this most rudimentary of all human relationships. Within a Tantric context, awareness of the Infinite is also a relationship, a personal relational experience based on intense mutual attraction and reciprocal feelings of bliss. Evolutionarily, perhaps one feeds the other - human love wires us for transcendent love and transcendent love broadens our perception and expression of what love is… and in the process, our physiological structures become more refined, more inherently capable of understanding life at ever deeper levels.

It is striking that the physiological and emotional resilience associated with spirituality is the same kind of resilience associated with positive parental nurture. In short, the two kinds of connectedness analyzed here-connection to others and connection to the transcendent- seem to influence the same biological systems in quite similar ways.⁷

Report from the Commission of Children at Risk
Mothers may be in a unique position of being primed for universality because of the enormity of love which has overtaken their lives. When talking about the birth of her daughter, Caroline confides that she was totally unprepared for the magnitude of love she felt for and from her newborn. Though she loved many people in her life, mother’s love was of an intensity unknown to her before. And when her daughter became a mother and gave birth, Caroline reported that she was equally astonished at the depth of love that spontaneously rushed through her for her granddaughter. “That powerful love again just swept me off my feet!”

This story is not unique to Caroline but can be heard from mothers around the world. We are, by nature, in love with and very focused on our children. It is compelling to think that, as we consciously cultivate spirituality, we may be moving towards an ability to hold all created beings as dear to us as our own children. Really dear to us, not just as a lovely concept but as a reality in our gut and heart and soul.

I realize now that this is how I’d like to love everybody. How I feel about my daughters is how I want to feel about everyone. This love is teaching me that.

Themis, mother of two girls

It is equally as compelling to ponder on the influence of the infant in this metamorphosing love story. Well-accepted data on the influence of a mother’s thoughts and feelings on her child abound, but what about the other way around? From the moment of conception, mother and baby are in a partnership, deeply intertwined in all levels of being. There is little reason to think that the infant’s influence is not equally as strong, albeit in different ways.

Research suggests the undisturbed state of the prenatal and infant mind as being spacious and blissful, somehow transcending boundaries of time and space. Newborns are situated in “a certain type of bliss”, in which the subconscious mind remains calm and tranquil while waves from the causal mind easily surface in the subconscious. A long-time NHE teacher recognizes prenatal awareness as being “I am one with everything” and argues that mother or parents may feel some of this, imbibing something of a sense of wholeness within themselves and oneness with all things. In other words, the prenatal and infant live in a fleeting state of being that few adults will have full access to in their lifetime but which infants may help us remember simply by their existence.

Conclusion: The mother-infant dyad, particularly in the primal period from conception to the first year of life, is the closest example of a ‘two-in-one’ phenomenon in our current framework of existence. This reciprocal nurturing exchange prompted a huge evolutionary shift in awareness and intelligence in times past and may be just as significant in our present stage of spiritual evolution. We know that the neurological circuitry formed in the infant during this time has an enormously long-lasting impact on the capacity to love. We also now know that massive brain changes, with corresponding shifts in consciousness, occur simultaneously in the mother, significantly expanding her understanding and experience of love. On top of that, mother love and divine love are being shown to enhance us in remarkably similar ways. It is possible that mother love, when permeated with spiritual ideation, may imprint an expansive experience of life and love in the fetus in utero and the infant after birth. What is needed is a greater acknowledgement of the powerful feedback loop of love between mother and child and its long term ramifications; a radical restructuring of our social systems around pregnancy, birth and early infancy to reflect the sacredness of this love; more research into the prenate/infant/child’s consciousness and its effect on mothers; and perhaps most importantly, the widespread commitment of mothers to make sustained, conscious efforts to direct this love to its Source.

A note to fathers: Father love is, of course, just as crucial and profound as mother love but has garnered far less research and data. That said, some of the points mentioned in this article could have said ‘parent’ rather than ‘mother’ due to the historically recent trend of pro-active fathering. In fact, the emerging phenomenon of direct-care fatherhood raises many fascinating questions about spirituality and evolution and needs further exploration in light of the overall picture of an evolving global consciousness.

Footnotes
8. Commission on Children at Risk, “Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities” sponsored by the Institute for American Values, YMCA of the USA, and Dartmouth Medical School
10. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, “Cerebral and Extracerebral Memory”, Ananda Marga Philosophy in a Nutshell, part 4
11. Donald Moore, Developmental Stages of I Feeling
Master Units
Challenges and Solutions
By Tapan and the Master Unit Team in Saigon, Vietnam

I always ask myself, when will Master Units (eco-communities) become standard models in our society. Because the idea of master units is very nice but it is not so easy to develop them in our lives.

Challenges
Master Units are usually located in rural areas, not near cities. If they were located in cities, there would not be enough land area for farming. People may understand the important role of Master Units but their jobs and families are dependent on cities. Persuading oneself or one’s family to live in a Master Unit is not so easy. Even if someone is ready to stay on a Master Unit, then comes the question of how to survive while developing a Master Unit. But Master Units are not only for risky individuals who like stories of adventures. No, master units are our stories, our communities.

In our case, the Master Unit in Phuoc Tan, Ananda Uma, is located in a rural-industrial area, 45 km from Ho Chi Minh City. We are developing our project in such a way that city people can ride/drive to stay at the Master Unit and work on it on the weekends. It means that we need to create an attractive fresh-green environment there. Currently about 500 young trees of neems and trom (Sterculia foetida) have been growing on our land as well as many other fruit trees, like banana, mango, coconut and grapefruit trees.

Solutions
If we recognize that a Master Unit is a need, we need to make a development team for the Master Unit and decide who will stay in the Master Unit. How will the first inhabitants survive? First, we need to build a house for the first inhabitants with water, electricity, etc. How will we get money for building? A long journey begins with one step: a few people in a small house are the first step. What will the first inhabitants do in our Master Units (plant vegetables, food crops...)? How to plant vegetables, trees? We need water, manure... we need to dig, drill some wells or make some ponds for collecting the rainwater? (we can read "Water Crisis and Conversation", Ideal Farming by P.R.Sarkar). Who is in charge of financing? Who is in charge of techniques such as house building, a Master Plan,...? So we need many resources from the Master Unit team.

In our Master Unit team, we have 10 people working in different areas like neem and trom trees, fruit trees, watering work, electrical system work, construction etc. Even though, currently we don’t have anybody staying there permanently, we have our volunteers going there for such projects at certain times. And we have received many donations from our local contacts and yoga students.

Wholeness
We need unity and harmony, not only human beings but also animals, plants, water sources, forests... We need to share information with master units all over the world to speed up the process of creating a better environment. We do not think these are our dreams at nights, but these are our jobs every day. Shrii P. R. Sarkar, the founder of Master Units has said, “Time will not wait for us”, and you, what will you wait for?

We know that our project or in particular, our trees take time to grow well and strong but we do not wait, we put in the young trees and take care of them so that we are moving step by step, little by little every day. And from this project, we are enjoying and moving in a happy mood, believing that our Master Unit will become an ideal place for our community. We wish many and many more Master Units all over the world will be developed for all beings’ benefits.

More information please check our website: anandauma.weebly.com

ACTIVITIES COMPLETED
2013

March: Medical camp - Free Dentist
May: Planting Fruit trees
July: Fencing the front land
August: Forest project - planting Neem & Trom trees
September: Lemon tree project
October: Medical camp with AMURT&AMURTTEL
November: Fencing backside of the land
December: Adobe house workshop, Fundraising
In announcing this new era P. R. Sarkar reviews the phases of human evolution from one million years ago forward to eras when humans developed increased intellect, social and cultural life. He states that when intellect began to prevail many dogmas were created. In this new era dogmas are being replaced by rationality and reason that serves the entire humanity rather than “a particular tribe or a particular clan or a particular nationality.”

Sarkar (1984) concludes, “So ours is the age of Neohumanism – humanism supplying elixir to all, one and all. We are for all, and with everything existent we are to build up a new society, a Neohumanistic society.”

To build this Neohumanist society each of us will have to begin with taking one step at a time towards benevolent actions and cooperation with others near and far. Moralists of the World Unite!!

Bibliography in the order presented in article
P. R. Sarkar, “Prout Economics”

CONTINUOUS FROM PAGE 16
How to Be the Most Effective Preschool Teacher in the World - By Mary Jane Glassman

stance, sitting in the opposite chair, embracing the opposite attitude - is a wonderful technique for occupying your mind with positivity.

7) Embracing the Relationship with Caring and Respect

So how does the teacher show emotional and social proximity? How does the teacher show interest and caring?

Scientific research indicates that a warm, calm, melodic voice is more effective than an authoritative, cold, ordering, and directing voice. In fact, this is what I call ‘the best friend’ voice. This is the voice you use when speaking with your partner or best friend. Sweet and melodic…not flat and monotone. Think about and notice the voice you use when speaking with friends and compare it with your ‘classroom voice’. Bring that ‘best friend’ voice into the classroom and notice the results. Notice the feeling. Notice the connection that comes.

The neohumanist teacher fulfills the needs and requests of all students. If the teacher is unable to meet a student’s need, then the teacher lets the student know when it can be fulfilled. Other children may be invited to help. Even if a fear seems unreasonable, the teacher will acknowledge and value the fear that is very real to the child and is supportive in giving the child a better sense of balance without fear.

It is essential that the ECE teacher model the behavior that we want the students to integrate into their being. Teachers say: “please” and “thank you” - A LOT! Every time a teacher makes a request of a child (just as with a friend), ‘please’ is included with that request and when the request is granted, it is followed with ‘thank you’. These words are exchanged constantly throughout the day. The more the teacher models respect and consideration to each child, the more the children will begin adding these words (and the accompanying sentiments) to their verbal vocabulary with their friends and family and add them to their emotional repertoire.

Teachers acknowledge a personal misunderstanding and mistake with “I’m so sorry. I wasn’t paying attention.” “I’m sorry. I didn’t understand what you wanted.” “I’m sorry. You are right. This is taking a long time.”

Using imagination, creativity, and being silly, can take the teacher the distance. “Oh my goodness. Five of you need my help right away. (The teacher waves her arms up and down.) Am I an octopus? Do I have 8 arms? No, how many arms do I have. Yes, you are right. I only have two. So I will help Fernando and Allena first and then I will come to Finlay, Thea, and Sienna.”

In the neohumanist classroom teachers have the opportunity of creating a microcosm of what the world can be like. The teacher can support the development of a compassionate school family environment. It is indeed exciting that scientific research is validating the very fundamental principles of neohumanist education, acknowledging the importance and redefining the essential best practices for reinforcing and nurturing the teacher-student relationship for supporting social and emotional competency.

The following is my favorite guideline for effective teaching in the early childhood classroom from the Vedas:

Let us move together. Let us sing together.
Let us come to know our minds together.
Unite our intentions. Let our hearts be inseparable.
So that we may live in harmony and Become One with the Supreme.
GLOBAL NEWS

QAHIRA SECTOR

Centru Tbexbix, Malta

The Easter holiday period in Malta brought to an end the first phase of an art project at Centru Tbexbix. This was marked by an open day which included an exhibition of art and works created by the participants.

The project, entitled “Empowerment Through Art”, is providing free art classes for women and children by a professional art teacher, and was approved for funding by the Commissioner of Voluntary Organisations in Malta.

Beneficiaries of the project, parents as well as members of the public visited Centru Tbexbix throughout the day, with special guests being the Minister of Education himself, as well as the mayor of Bormla. Everyone showed a lot of appreciation for the education and social support programmes which Centru Tbexbix is offering to the community.

A video about the education that is offered at Centru Tbexbix was shown, and we briefly discussed the benefits of Neohumanist Education, focussing on the yoga, creativity and personal development aspects. Before he left, the Minister instructed us to have a meeting with him to present a proposal on how the Government can support the project.

For regular updates regarding what is happening at Centru Tbexbix, visit the news page on www.tbexbix.org

Nile River School, Egypt

The garden around the school is in full bloom year-round with lots of colourful flowers and vegetables. The children are learning to draw real flowers from the garden. Everyone is painting flowers in a vase on a piece of board that we varnished after and they hang it up in their houses. They are getting orders from neighbors already! These two kindergarten kids are very proud of their work!

We also started painting the indoor walls of the children's houses as their beautiful art needed nice clean walls. The villagers never felt confident to paint their own walls and they have been living in cement walls for years. Only some could afford painters. Now the children are learning to paint their own houses! Also we started making flower gardens near their houses. Our school is expanding into the village!
BERLIN SECTOR

Reykjavik, Iceland

At the end of last year, Dada Shambhushivananda visited the NHE school Leikskolinn Saelukotin. In existence since 1986 it is one of the first NHE schools in Europe. An extension of the school building is underway, and Dada participated in the initial laying of the foundation. Dada gave many lectures while there and taught several classes for the teachers.

Romania

Morningstar Holistic Course Center

In May 2014, the Romanian Association of Neohumanist Education (A.E.N.) will open up the “Morningstar Center”, a holistic course center which will offer natural therapies, including homeopathy, bach flowers and massage therapies as well as courses in personal development, yoga, martial arts and workshops in detoxification and natural well-being. The center will open with a workshop led by Vinay Steve Gunther on “Spirituality and Personal Development” and later in the month we will have a guest from Portugal leading a detoxification workshop. We look forward to inviting more international experts from our Neohumanist network of specialists. The center will also host Neohumanist Education trainings led by A.E.N. We welcome international guests and students!

Anti-Bias Education - “We all have a story”

AMURTEL Romania, in partnership with CPE (Center for Equal Partnership – a gender equality organization) and Romanobutiq (a Roma rights organization) won a grant from a Norwegian fund “NGO Fund” for a project entitled “We all have a story” which will introduce anti-bias education in Bucharest kindergartens. The project will first work with teachers, challenging stereotypes and social barriers by learning to tell and listen to each other’s person stories in a group that will include minorities, people with disabilities and gender perspectives. The goal of these sessions will be to create authentic relationships between the participants, as well as to practice telling personal stories in engaging ways for young children. A second phase of the project will be to introduce a diversity of classroom friend in the kindergartens, who share their personal stories with the children. Persona dolls will also be an important tool used in the project. The Gradinita Rasarit kindergarten will be the pilot of the project – but we expect to reach at least 25 kindergartens and 100 teachers during the course of this two year project. At the end, the project will produce a manual and online materials which will be available publicly.

Ananda Rta Master Unit a.k.a. AMURTEL Romania

Social Garden

Our farm successfully concluded its second season of Community Supported Agriculture having delivered more than 5 tons of vegetables to an average of 31 enrolled consumers. The project received a grant in order to install a modern drip irrigation system as well as a prize for excellence in business plans for sustainable social enterprises, which was used to build an additional greenhouse. The farm now has 700 square meters of greenhouses and an irrigation system. We also hosted a Permaculture Design Course in March 2013. The farm was featured on the cover of one of the main Romanian newspapers in July. One of the objectives of the farm, besides offering organic food directly to a consumer group is also to provide work experience to the young people leaving the Familia AMURTEL children’s home. Six youth were involved in the project last year, and it created 2 jobs in the local community. The farm is now busy gathering its consumer group for a third season.
Gradinita Rasarit Kindergarten, Bucharest
The “Gradinita Rasarit” kindergarten in Bucharest is flourishing – with a steady stream of parents now lining up in the waiting list to join the program. Many are attracted to the attention given to the menu and are delighted with the fact that not only is it vegetarian, but that we also supply the kindergarten with organic vegetables from our own farm during the growing season. We have been able to maintain a maximum capacity all school year.

Over the summer, we decided to transform the smaller kindergarten in the north of the city into a holistic course center so the remaining kindergarten benefitted from having all of our most experienced Neohumanist education teachers in one place. The team is united, experienced and performing very well together.

The annual staff training took place in the August together with our EVS volunteers and included a sessions on “Vistara, Rasa, Seva”, Kamishibai story telling, Permaculture for children, Anti-Bias curriculum and sharing of resources from the International Neohumanist Educators Conference in Sweden, which Didi and Magda, our educational director, attended together.

Fountain of Hope
The Fountain of Hope, after school center, at last achieved accreditation as a social service, a major landmark which took several years to realize. This is the first step in being able to be eligible for a state subsidy. The project struggled financially in the past year, depending exclusively on sponsors as the local government was unable to continue funding their share of the expenses. However, the involvement of the EVS volunteers greatly enriched the program, as well as the involvement of two very creative local volunteers, Valentin and Anca who recently traveled to Holland to participate in the ETC in Den Bosch.

European Voluntary Service – an opportunity for young Europeans (18-30 years old) AMURTÉL Romania hosts EVS opportunities at our Neohumanist kindergarten and the Fountain of Hope after school center. Please contact Didi Ananda Devapriya if you would be interested to apply: didi@amurtel.ro

DELHI SECTOR

AMGK Launches Community Services in Chandigarh, India

With personal guidance and inspiration from Dada Shambhushivananda of AMGK and cooperation of a local team consisting of Ravinder, Jasbir Singh, Payal Sodhi, Daavin Vohra, Dada Atidevananda and many others, a program has been launched to establish a “Neohumanist Center” in Naya Gaanv, just behind PGI, Chandigarh. The land has been donated by Ravinder and the construction is being made possible by cooperation of many persons. Recently, Dada Shambhushivananda and his team also visited the site and announced that a community kitchen will be started soon. This initiative led by Payal Sodhi will be supported by the local Smarpan Foundation also. Daavin Vohra is preparing to establish a Yoga Academy at the same site to bring the benefits of yoga and sentient life style ideas to the local population.

AMGK has chosen Chandigarh as one of its hubs in India in order to share its visionary programs and initiatives. In 2015, a conference on "Neohumanism: Thought and Practice" is also being planned in Chandigarh to commemorate the 25th anniversary of AMGK. Other plans include tutoring of neighborhood children, NERI (Neohumanist Education Research Institute) and medical services.
NEW YORK SECTOR

Prama Institute and Wellness Center- Asheville NC

We are moving into our second year of combining the conference and retreat activities of the Prama Institute and the Prama Wellness Center. The focus of both programs is experiential learning of a yoga life style that involves proper diet (vegetarian), proper exercise (asanas and aerobic exercise), social support (satsaunga) and meditation practices (mindfulness and mantra). The Prama Wellness Center accomplishes this with three day, five day and ten day detox programs that combine health and yoga therapy consultations, nutritional education, yoga and meditation sessions, support group, mud baths, massage, hot tub, sauna and meditative walks. There is ample free time, journaling and hiking on the beautiful trails that access 150 surrounding acres on the French Broad River. There are also individual and small group retreats on a flexible schedule at the wellness center.

The Prama Institute has filled its 2014 calendar and much of its 2015 schedule for rentals to groups that include yoga teacher training, yoga therapy, poetry workshops, and a variety of healing arts workshops. The Prama Institute has expanded its own seminars to include five day Yoga of Silence, Yummy Yoga (teaching vegetarian cooking combined with yoga and meditation classes), and Pantanjali Unveiled: Eight Limbed Yoga (beginning of series of Tantra and intuitional sciences).

Ananda Girisuta Master Unit

We are expanding our gardening to produce more organically grown food for the Prama Institute and Wellness Center program participants and those living on the Master Unit. Additionally we are developing cooperation with local farmers to participate in growing kale as a commercial crop.

We have recently completed the development of the third floor of the community residence of the Katuah (Cherokee word meaning “Mother Village”) Ecovillage which is a community next to the Ananda Girisuta Master Unit. The community residence when fully developed will be a 3500 square foot home that can house two families on the first two floors and single people and interns on the third floor. This ecovillage will be developed as a community land trust which will eventually be collectively owned as a cooperative community and have the prospect of rentals in cohousing units and home ownership. Ramesh Bjonnes, the director of our Prama Wellness Center, has recently completed construction of his home on the ecovillage.

Bjonnes has recently completed his second book on Tantra; the first book was Sacred Body, Sacred Spirit: A Personal Guide To The Wisdom Of Yoga and Tantra published in 2012. The second book Tantra: Yoga of Love and Awakening has just been released by Hay House India. The book, written and researched over a period of six years, is based on the Tantric philosophy and practices as taught by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti and the author's over 35 years of experience as practitioner of Tantric yoga. Copies at reduced price can be ordered here: http://www.uread.com/book/tantra-ramesh-bjonnes/9789381398463
NAIROBI SECTOR

Accra, Ghana - An update on the Lotus School

In September we had the privilege of hosting the head of Gurukula, Dada Shambhushivananda. While in Accra he visited our Children’s Home and Preschool and spoke at a public event. The event held at the Ministry of Information was a great success and hosted over 50 attendees. It was a wonderful experience to hear him share his expertise in Neohumanist Education and speak on the theme of Self Realization and Social Action.

We completed this school term with sixty students and five teachers, developing more psychological methods of teaching adhering to the principles of Neohumanist education. We commemorated Children’s Day with a variety of fine arts activities, competitions, sports and toys distribution. In the Winter holiday season time we called all the children of the community to a meal and to take part in fun activities. It was a time of service and sharing at Lotus Children Center.

Regular Teachers’ Meetings
In our weekly meetings each teacher has the opportunity to give a workshop in a chosen subject. During the last months we learned about origami, drama, physical exercises and games. This program improved the teacher’s knowledge, self confidence, ability to talk in public and unity among themselves.

Mass Feeding with Health Education in Schools
After organizing continuous ARS (All round Service) activities in poor areas of Ghana, including medical camps we came to realize the real cause of malnutrition in children apart from poverty, is bad food habits. AMURTEL then decided to implement Mass Feeding with a Class on Nutrition. The food is being prepared with plenty of local vegetables which we mention the qualities of in the class.

New Roof
After 5 months of fund raising finally we are able to replace the old roof of our Ananda Marga Children’s Home. The old roof was a constant danger during the rains since it could break at any time. Our contributors were NAWA (North American Women’s Association); Emanuele Antola Foundation and IPMC director. It was the best quality available in the market and will last at least 70 years.

Teacher’s Training Center
We are fund raising to build a Neohumanist Training Center in Ghana. There is a strong need for trained teachers in Ghana. It is a chance to help shape and strengthen the education system in the country, particularly primary school. At the moment we need monetary help to do the registration of the land and build a fence to secure it. Email: Didi Ananda Gayatri - jiivaprema2@yahoo.com.br www.lotuschildrencenter.org

MANILA SECTOR

Lampang, Thailand
Rajabhat University
Dada Shambhushivananda gave a talk to the weekly three hour meditation class given by Nuntaka for the Education Faculty.
NHE Activities in East Asia
By Tang Tamminga

Actually I don’t know where to start, so much is happening, planned and unplanned but all flowing perfectly well by the Grace of the Universe and with the good intentions all gradually merging into one force!

Taipei
In Taipei, Karuna Guo, founder of the Neohumanist Education Association Taiwan, has been developing her Intuitive Art Training at universities and academies and now has been requested by the Government to open a two year course to train professors in guiding others to draw from the heart. They recently had an exhibition of their works and attracted much public interest. Their choir practice and performances are still ongoing. The programs usually consist of her own take on classical Chinese tunes and texts. She has attracted so much support that the Association is planning a nationwide Neohumanist Education seminar in November 2014, in Hualien.

Lien Chin-fa continues his work with handicapped people throughout the island. This is a group that needs much emotional and social support as well as spiritual inspiration. Their general meeting, just completed this month, usually attracts lawmakers from both sides of the political spectrum as well as government officials, apart from over a hundred members. The new chairman, A-he is a retired CEO of an insurance company, and uses his managerial skills to further yoga for handicapped people through the publication of a DVD and other resources.

In Taipei, we finished the intermediate Teacher Training Course in Kids Yoga in March and had 16 graduates. Several of them will open kids yoga and QTE classes in the summer, bringing the total of regular AM kids yoga activities in Taiwan to over 40 different places. The next course is planned for June in Taichung and the advanced program will be in November 2014.

Malaysia
In Malaysia, Shi-hui and Anna have been enormously active. They are busy networking, teaching and organizing service projects (every December they have a ‘Give back project’ where they invite parents and kinds free of charge to their workshops, attracting hundreds of people!) We had ten days of workshops (non-stop) with new people, old friends and plenty of kids. Participants at the programs included teachers from Sumatra and Vietnam. The photo is of the Ananda Sutram workshop (we used the drama format – it made all the concepts very simple and visual!)

New Publications!
Apart from that, we have started publishing again! After many years of hesitation we published three storybooks about Little Star – and wrote a guide for parents and teachers (Tools for the Heart – downloadable from RainbowABC.com). Each story is arranged around a theme for further activities. The three themes are: My Special Place, Changing the Colors of the Mind and Gifts of the Heart. The reason we did this is that we experienced that 80% of children do not automatically connect in Quiet Time to the concept of Cosmic Love. By introducing other ways of connecting to the intuitive self (through imagery and fantasy) we hope children will find it easier to go within and at a later stage will be able to explore the Ocean of Bliss. The story books are available upon request from niramaya@yahoo.com.

The Tools for the Heart Training is a very revealing and sometimes emotional experience for the parents and teachers as well as it is for some the first time to really connect to their inner selves. In the picture you see some of the teachers displaying their ‘Heart Drawings’. We found it is a good introduction to teaching meditation, where we learn to let go of all colors of the mind.

The Balance Kids Program is now ready to be launched in China. After the first phase of training we realized that China requires a unique format and repackaged our program. Lots of exciting activities lie ahead.
"Celebrating Springtime at Nile River School"

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