

The Peace Gong



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"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."
- Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore

A CHILDREN'S REVOLUTION HAS BEGUN

Children creating collective experiences of shared values for humanity

AS the world continues to find itself in an abyss of conflicts and violence, children have an important role to contribute to peace and social change. Mahatma Gandhi had rightly said, "If we are to reach real peace in this world... we shall have to begin with children."

Yes indeed. When adults are busy fighting, trying to outwit each other, it is children who have to take the leadership and be the beacon light for a nonviolent planet. It is time children of the world take a pledge to cherish what they have, bring back the lost and contribute towards new possibilities for generations to come.

As Sir Herbert Read had observed, "Great changes in the destiny of mankind can be effected only in the minds of little children". Therefore, a revolution led by the young minds of the world can alter the world history and bring positive changes.

This revolution is "Child of Nature". It is developing a connection between children of the world. The Peace Gong young reporters are in touch with these young catalysts of change. This issue is devoted to the innovative work these catalysts of change are doing in their countries.

RAM SONI, INDIA

"No matter what happens in life, you will find the voice within yourself, as to what you need to do. There is no better friend of yours than you yourself".



Ram is a young healer changing the world since he was five years of age. He was born in the slums of Dahisar, Mumbai and has been raised with the sound of train horns with his plastic thatched home lying right next to the railway tracks. He channels good energy or healing by healing himself. In other words, he believes that souls are connected and by absorbing good energy himself, he can recoil it to the souls around him.

Every soul shifts for transformation and when his soul shifts, every soul around him also takes a new purpose. Ram currently is a mentor at *Touching Lives*, an organization which facilitated him to find his inner purpose and now he empowers and enlightens other children.

In his childhood, Ram would carry sacks of vegetables and walk miles to the vegetable market with sparkling eyes. He never complained about his father or his family and accepted his responsibilities happily as the eldest son of the family. The light in his eyes has always been a mirror to the light within him, which never dies. He would study under the street light or the dim light of his house.

Ram never even thought of completing his education, until *Touching Lives* reached out to him.

He would often share with his mentors how he could read people's minds, feel their auras and connect with the populace of the world. He was encouraged to take up professional courses on healing and therapies.



Now, Ram is a Certified Reiki practitioner, Access Bars Practitioner, Certified Talk to the Entity Practitioner, Birthing into being Practitioner and has developed many healing techniques himself.

He connects with slum communities and adds consciousness and spirituality to the life of people there. He spreads what may appear magic to the world. He has the ability to show us that this small world of ours is a part of something bigger. Every heart is a universe and the universe itself is a heart. He inspires not minds, but souls to walk on the path of light they were formed from. He illuminates this light and channels energies. You have the energy inside you too. Can you feel it?

KESZ VALDEZ, PHILIPPINES

“The fire that burned my skin and flesh is the same fire that started the flame in my soul. Flame that will warm cold hearts, a flame, that will shed light to the path of the lost and a flame that will spark hope lightning the entire sea of darkness and desperation.”

“Yes, I am young but I have a firm purpose to help make things better for generations to come and I believe that one is never too young to do something to help meet a need.”

Kesz Valdez from Manila, Philippines was a street kid who was maltreated and exploited by his parents who considered him as a bad omen. After running away from his parents at the age of five, he spent his childhood sleeping in abandoned sepulchers in the cemetery, eating leftover food at the garbage dump and begging for a life on the streets of the poorest slums in Manila. His thirst was satisfied by sewage water. He was saved from a hazardous fire which almost took his life. Further, when the flies were buzzing over his wounds, Harnin Manalaysay found him on the streets and treated and medicated him and his wounds. Manalaysay adopted him and became his mentor.

While celebrating his birthday for the first time for which the chosen date was 26th December, a day after Christmas, he was overwhelmed to receive many endowments for himself. He requested Manalaysay to share it with his friends on the street. Kesz, on that day, decided to share the values of a healthy life with children on the street and save them from deaths due to poor sanitation.

He started by making sweets and selling them and buying necessities for the children and continued on this path and founded “Championing Community Children (C3)”. From brushing your teeth three times a day to understanding the hazards of eating from the dumps and drinking sewage water to providing these children with basic commodities, C3 is trying all possible ways to make life better.

Kesz won the International Children’s Peace Prize in 2012 for the change he brought to the streets of Philippines. He is the symbol of hope for not only the children of the world but for all the people. He is an example of how simple acts of kindness change lives. According to him, sharing a meal, a toy, a pair of slippers or a smile can bring joy. By planting trees and by sharing

simple knowledge about washing hands before and after a meal and brushing teeth, we can inculcate better health around this world.

DENNIS NGORY, KENYA

“We all need to understand, that we are all part of this universal family. Now is the moment for humanity; to connect to our origins and find our purpose in life. Together we can start a new human course. We are all interrelated and we are all one.”

History has been the witness to how art changes the world. Dennis is a young photographer from Mathare and lives in one of the largest slums in Kenya. Painting with light even while living in one of the darkest places, Dennis is the symbol of passion, creativity and determination. Finding hope in humanity in one of the most perilous places in the world and believing in the collective power of the world, he is ambitious and has dreams to change the world by connecting with other children.



Dennis works with “Mwelu Foundation” which trains children in creative arts and essential life skills and provides education and most importantly a voice to the children. His photographs are an effort to breaking the cycles of poverty and violence which exists in their community. He takes in as much light as the aperture of his mind can take and adjusts his shutter speed through the pace of his life.



His house is a dim lit tin box placed between the narrow lanes with no space to walk. Dennis writes his dreams in his notebook every night. He takes charge to connect, focus and capture. He is documenting the world. He is tracing the footsteps we walk upon with a click and he will be the one to present the testimony of our actions.



LJ AND ESTHER, KENYA

*“Look inside you,
Together we can start the children revolution.”*

LJ and Esther are young rappers and singers from Billian Music Family (Mathare) who spread messages about issues in their community and children rights. They are working towards fulfilling dreams and aspirations of children in Mathare by creating awareness about the significance of education and spreading a word against the existing violence on children by their parents.



Through their songs they bring to our ears the melodies of melancholy of children in Mathare and children around the world who are facing similar situations. The new generation is crucial to the requirements of the world. The children of the world need care and protection. They need education. Children are the nation. Children are the world and they need to be treated in a better way where their rights are respected.

One of their songs gives a clarion call:

*“They can take our rights away, but this dream will never fade.
They can take your smiles away, but we are growing stronger every day.”*

They are spreading the message that the new generation can redefine new human values by showing the world the reality, a way to humanity, the potential of children, the union of races and the formation of a new global family. They believe that this will lead to the beginning of a new era. They are encouraging children all over the world to come and join them.

Can you see art dripping from your words or entering into your ears?

NEJMEH AND BARAA, LEBANON

“To all, love each other. Why do we not unite? Why don’t we turn our hearts to each other?”

“We want safety and peace. We don’t want war. My dream is to have hope in a beautiful Syria. My dream is to come back home.”

Nejmeh and Baraa reside in a Syrian refugee camp in Ketermaya, Lebanon with dreams in their eyes and hopes in their hearts. They are young girls teaching younger children. War can make

us desert our own houses. War can break hearts especially the hearts of children. But can war make us lose hope of a better tomorrow?

Without a roof over their heads, they started teaching with a piece of cardboard lying in the trash. With the help of some volunteers, they were able to arrange a blackboard. Sometimes, it is too hot for children to sit. Sometimes, it rains heavily. Instead of all these challenges, their hopes are high and they don’t give up on their endeavour.



These girls are like candles passing on a light. These girls have dreams like all other children. But their dreams are universal. They dream of education and peace. They dream to go home safe. These girls take charge for all the infantile dreams in the refugee camp and they take charge to nurture these dreams; to caress them, so that they keep on growing and developing.



Slowly and steadily, as the word about them is spreading across the world, they have started to receive donations, letters and stationery. They may soon have a roof over their head. But there are still a lot of issues; they have to find solutions to. Like, who will teach them? And at some point of time the children of the camp will need something beyond their knowledge. What will be done then?

There is hope in their heart. But is it enough?



Editorial

Child of Nature – Building Collective Consciousness of Human Race



“I believe that the potential of this generation is the realization that they have the power in their hands and with it they can change and bring positive transformation in this world. It is not the question of changing a nation or even a continent; but the entire planet. I believe this is the power of youth. The power to realize that nothing can stop us now. Nothing can prevent us from changing the world!”- Cesar Galvez, Child of Nature

A revolution is bigger than a planet moving around a burning star. It is fire itself, which burns within each soul. It is the light we were all born from. It is the spark of magnesium before the fireworks blow and glow in the sky. It is a candle lighted for eradicating the existing darkness. It is a bonfire to commemorate the origin of human race and its purpose on the planet. It is the incinerating flame which takes in all that needs to be discarded and turns the offences into ash. It is the beacon of hope which passes on like a flambeau through the hearts and souls of the people of the world.

In the purest hearts of the world is the flare of faith to alter the world. In the cleanest souls of the world lies the greatest ability to light this fire with care. For, an army of peace does not need wings of a dove. It needs human limbs which can spread to give and step to move forward. But it is only the tiniest feet which aim for the greatest leaps leaving petite footprints of the collective consciousness of human race.

“Child of Nature” is a medium which works to maintain the rhythm of these footsteps while the world is at stake. There is an innocent yet smart army marching for a better world. There is an army where young minds volunteer and build friendships globally and lay the foundation for the most peaceful and nonviolent revolutions of all.

“Child of Nature” is a symbol of love, spirituality, art, creativity and is the need of the world. Children around the world work on different issues and spread their messages for a One World

Family through music, photography, conferences, healing, tree plantation drives and journalism for global action.

“Child of Nature” promotes new generation as leaders of human awakening. It is a mixture of individual stories of extraordinary actions, an adventure story starring children of the world, a quest for connection between man and nature and the beginning of a new world.

To be true leaders with strong foundation of humanism, young people need to expand their nonviolent footprints. Inspired by the apostle of peace, Mahatma Gandhi and his followers like Martin Luther King, Daisaku Ikeda and others, looking at our daily nonviolent footprints makes us to be conscious of inculcating the art and science of nonviolence in our daily lives.

“The Peace Gong introduced the concept of NONVIOLENT FOOTPRINTS” to imbibe, gauge and measure our nonviolent action in our daily lives. This means that we bring a new perspective to our attitude, behavior, expressions, ideas and thoughts in a way that we can involve our energies with the calm and learn to absorb nonviolence. Getting rid of our prejudices, ego, stereotypes, dislike for others and ideas of hurting others for our own gratifications is something children learn from adults and are not born with and thus, they are the models to the world to walk on a nonviolent path.

Children of the world are uniting to make this planet a better place to live. They stand united to redeem what was lost and bring a new world not only in terms of the environment we live in but also in the values people around the world believe in. If we open our eyes and see, we can find flowers in the sewage. We can find paintings in storms. We can find solace in the noise of the street. All we need is imagination and the power to believe in the impossible.

You are a part of this revolution. You have no limits. You can do anything you want to do. You can change every bit of the world if you want to. In you, is the power of growing, receiving, channeling and giving! Your love is endless and your hope is never-ending. If you are reading this right now, you already know that you have a footprint you are leaving in this planet.

Martin Luther King has so rightly said, “If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

So The Peace Gong team calls upon all young people to continuously move forward to expand their “NONVIOLENT FOOTPRINTS” for a new humanistic world.

WILL YOU JOIN US?

We are grateful to the entire team for putting up a new look of The Peace Gong.

Noopur Soni, Class XI, Editor



Sowing the Seeds of Nonviolent Footprints

Noopur Soni (Class XI) and Babita Singh (Class XI)

A Psalm of Life' by 19th Century poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

*"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time"*

Many students like us are appalled to hear stories of adolescents taking to crime across the world. It is sometimes difficult to reason out how a child can harm another and most of the times we are out of our wit's end trying to find explanation to such wild and violent acts. In the society, every time a story is flashed, adults start debating on the reasons of why adolescents are indulging in violence. Different theories then start floating on what might have happened and what needs to be done.

While we young people read and listen to talks and ideas on how different social, economic and cultural issues may influence a young person to indulge in violence, The Peace Gong team after talking to children, youth and seniors felt on the need to evolve the concept of 'nonviolent footprints' to measure and gauge our acts of nonviolence in our daily lives.

Correta Scott King had said, "Nonviolence is a permanent attitude we bring to the breakfast table and bring to bed at night." The interviews suggested that the ideas of nonviolence should be sown in every person, right from infancy. Overall, the different views which came up can be summed up with what Mahatma Gandhi had said, "Nonviolence is a power which can be wielded equally by all-children, young men and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When nonviolence is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts."

Mahatma Gandhi had rightly said, "The very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness." The foundation of the philosophy of nonviolent footprints which the Peace Gong team developed during the International Day of Nonviolence as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi can be explained with this idea on the need to cultivate nonviolence in our daily lives.

The Peace Gong team developed the measures of our nonviolent footprints and how to expand these through the interviews. These included:

1. **Germination of the seed of nonviolence:** If we have to expand our nonviolent footprints, the seed of nonviolence should be sown right from infancy. It should be part our thought process and action from our childhood itself. All our studies and learning should be shaped from the perspectives of nonviolence.
2. **Attitude and Behaviour:** We can measure our nonviolent footprints through our attitude and behaviour towards others- not just human beings but all forms of life and nature. Our aim should be to promote mutual respect

and not hurt others through our action. We should learn to live in harmony not with our fellow beings but nature and other living forms. The idea of mutual coexistence is directly proportional to our nonviolent footprints.

3. **Our expressions - both verbal and non-verbal; significance of nonviolent communication:** We can measure and expand our nonviolent footprints through the use of our expressions. This includes both verbal and nonverbal expressions. How we communicate with others and the words we use are important measures of nonviolent footprints. Also our body language in communicating with others is an important indicator to measure our nonviolent footprint. *Nonviolent communication is an important measure of our Nonviolent Footprints.*
4. **Our thoughts and ideas:** Thoughts and ideas constitute important measures of nonviolent footprint. We can expand our Nonviolent Footprint by positive thoughts and ideas. When our thoughts and ideas are negative and aimed at hurting others, it is violence and it is when our nonviolent footprints shrink.
5. **Reaching out and the ability to engage in dialogues:** As young people find themselves in situations where they are not able to communicate and take part in dialogues, tendencies to get involved in conflicts and violence increases. So, the interviews revealed that the ability to engage in dialogues and get involved in open communication can help in expanding our nonviolent footprints.
6. **Anger Management:** Young people are stressed more than ever before due to increasing competitions and expectations to achieve big. This leads to situations when they become angry easily. Learning the art of anger management in this age of stressful existence contributes to expansion of our Nonviolent Footprints. Just like Mahatma Gandhi maintained an 'anger journal' to write down the reasons for getting angry during the course of the day, measuring our Nonviolent Footprints would involve maintaining an anger journal.
7. **Self acceptance:** An important measure of Nonviolent Footprints has to be the idea of self acceptance. Accepting one's flaws could be an important way to nurture compassion and empathy towards others.
8. **Acceptance of others** as worthwhile human beings not just by the class or caste they belong to. Treating people who are considered below us without civility has been the bane of our society. An early realization of this reality has to be inculcated, as this is an important measure of our nonviolent footprints.
9. **Getting rid of hatred:** Almost all social conflicts and violence have their origin in deep rooted hatred and prejudices. Homes and educational institutions need to help children to be free from such mindsets so that they can expand their nonviolent footprints.



10. Ego: Violence breeds in the minds of people who are obsessed with their hubris. If they are trained to understand their 'self' such people can be rid of unwarranted ego states.

11. Developing Cognitive skills: Being socialized by the traditional and new media, there is a growing tendency to be passive receivers of messages without being discerning. Training young minds to interact face to face with their mentors and peers and discuss issues threadbare need to be planned and executed. An active mind would develop positive thinking thereby expanding nonviolent footprints.

Children can take the lead for contributing towards a global nonviolent planet by coming together in solidarity and motivating their peers to expand their nonviolent footprints. Only when we, children, are able to expand our nonviolent footprints, we can inspire adults to follow us and restrain from conflicts.

How the idea of Nonviolent Footprints emerged....

Members of The Peace Gong youth team Asiya Naqvi, Syeda Rumana Mehdi, Neelakshi Malik, Divyashree Dubey and Abhishek Bharanwal first shared their thoughts on nonviolent footprints in a conference on *Gandhian Educational Ideas* organized by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi. Their opening lines set the tone for the evolution of the idea.

They said: "Humans cannot deny their role in the uprising of global violence. They also cannot blame it on only several people- the spread of violence shows that we all have played a role in contributing to the gruesome state of the world today. The idea of the Nonviolent Footprint is ingenious as it will enable us to see the impact we can make. Often we think that an action has minimal value and thus refrain from doing it but Nonviolent Footprint stresses on how even the smallest of actions can lead to a bigger action. It reminds us of our responsibility and accountability to Mother Earth and to other humans because we live in a shared space and each of us has equal ownership in resources. In our earnest journey in the search of nonviolence, no one is more powerful than the other. As we think of Nonviolent Footprints, we think of the Earth as a gigantic sheet of white fabric laid out and children, adults and senior citizens walk all over it, leaving their colorful footprints. So colourful that the black spots can be seen no more".

They used the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King as foundation for the concept of Nonviolent Footprints: For instance Martin Luther King had said, "Nonviolence says that within human nature there are amazing potentialities of goodness.... I think we all must realize that there is within human nature a sort of dualism, something within all of us which justified Plato in saying that the human personality like a charioteer with two strong horses each wants to go in different directions.... There is this tension and this struggle within human nature between the high and the low.... we must recognize that just as there is a capacity for evil, there is a capacity for goodness. Just as a Hitler can lead man to the darkest and lowest depths, a Gandhi can lead, men to the highest heights of nonviolence and goodness. We must always see these possibilities within human nature; the nonviolent discipline goes on with this belief that even the most difficult person, even the person who is committed to the old order with all his might, can be transformed..."

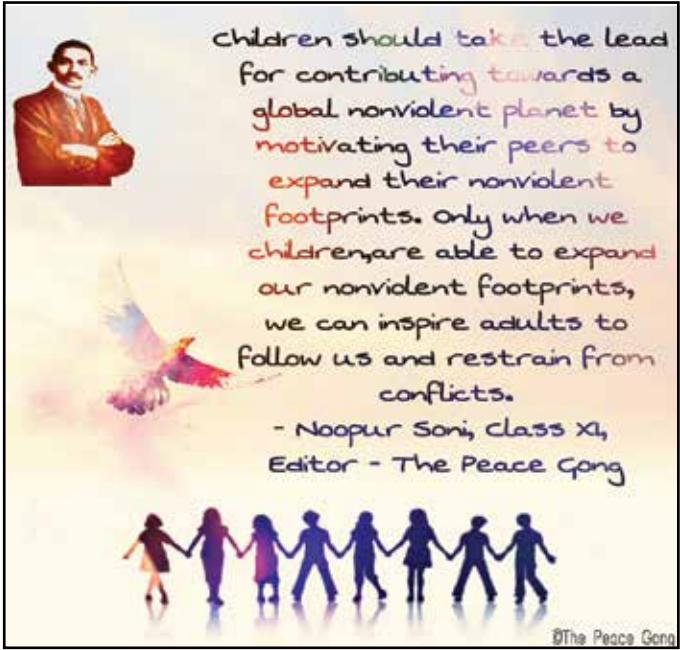
To take forward the ideas of the youth team, The Peace Gong child reporters interviewed many young people and experts which further contributed to the concept of Nonviolent Footprints. Excerpts of some of the views which emerged from the interviews:

- **Dr B S Panwar, Himachal Pradesh, (Mentor):** Compassion, empathy and tolerance should be the fulcrum of our thoughts and action. As teachers and parents, we should imbibe these ourselves so that children can learn from these and together we can expand our nonviolent footprints.
- **Devasheesh Sharma, (youth volunteer) of The Peace Gong, Delhi:** We do not need to use violence to claim our superiority. Our belief in mutual respect and levels of compassion and tolerance should be the measure of our nonviolent footprints.
- **Sonika Singh, (student), Aligarh:** In our effort to measure our nonviolent footprints, we need to nurture 'deep self-realization' that we have an organic relationship with nature. We need to see ourselves as trustees of Mother Earth and exercise mindfulness practices which will help us to approach to our problems and conflicts in a balanced way.
- **Dr Anjuman Borah, Assam, (Mentor):** If we can believe in the greatness and power of our own life, we will no longer feel the need to compare, compete, envy and trample upon others rights and freedom. Similarly, if we can believe in the greatness and dignity of others we will be more humble and be open to learning from others. We will have to share with others and help others to believe in their own potential too. This can be our personal contribution towards expanding our nonviolent footprints.
- **Aman Johri, (student), Aligarh:** Nonviolence is that art of living which not only instils in us the very seed of discipline but also empowers us to keep evils like bigotry, discrimination, ill-treatment etc at bay. Inculcating nonviolent behaviour and attitude in our action and thoughts can help us in managing our anger.
- **Arunesh Pathak, (youth volunteer) of The Peace Gong, New Delhi:** Violence benumbs our sensitivities and this makes our life poorer. A healthy and harmonized society can exist, only when its members imbibe moral and ethical values. Only when people imbibe these moral and ethical values they can practice nonviolence in daily lives.
- **Vidhushi Vaidhya, (Class XI), Jhansi:** The Gandhian principles of nonviolence should be the central idea which all societies today should follow and practice so that we as members of the society together work to expand our nonviolent footprints.
- **Sheetal Prasad, (Volunteer), The Peace Gong Jhansi; Jatin Pratap Singh, Shailendra Kumar and Aryan Russia (Class X, Jhansi):** When we hear of stories of young people committing crime, we get disturbed. The aim right from our childhood is how we imbibe the Gandhian principles of truth, nonviolence and mutual respect. The principles should be practices from our heart and soul so that we do not harm others.



These voices are steps towards building a society where peace and harmony amongst fellow beings become the order of the day. They are the silent footprints making their non-violent approaches in a society that longs for peace. These voices need to be heard.

- The Peace Gong's Measure of Nonviolent Footprints:**
- Germination of the seed of nonviolence
 - Attitude and Behaviour
 - Our expressions- both verbal and non-verbal; significance of nonviolent communication
 - Our thoughts and ideas
 - Reaching out and the ability to engage in dialogues
 - Anger Management
 - Self acceptance
 - Acceptance of others
 - Getting rid of hatred
 - Ego
 - Developing Cognitive skills



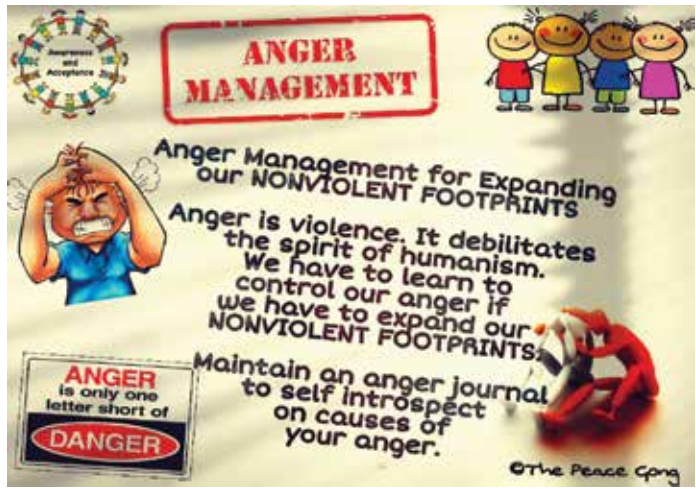
Peace in Chaotic Times –The First Unarmed Revolution

The Peace Gong in a conversation with the German girls, Angelina and Rosalie from *11 Wie Du* and Cesar Galvez from *Plant for the Planet*, both ambassadors of *Child of Nature*.

Angelina and Rosalie are pop activists. They are super girls using their superpower of music to make this planet beautiful again. Limberger sisters are fundraisers and amazing performers aiming to build a one world family.

Cesar Galvez is the President and Co-Founder of "Coexiste" as well as ambassador of "Climate Justice" from Mexico and ambassador of "My Word Mexico".

In Rendezvous...



Q1- What is children revolution for you?

Cesar Galvez- It is the revolution of the children. It is the revolution of hearts and consciences. It is the construction of a new world guided by children and young people with the direction of tomorrow.

11 Wie Du- The Children revolution consists of young people from all over the world and brings hope, joy, courage, unity, freedom, peace and love. Through this generation, we have the opportunity to change something and to spread our message.

We unite our forces and help each other to build a One World Family. Together we, the children and the youth can achieve enormous things and we can bring the world back into balance.

Q2-Why is it important for the world to have this revolution?

11 Wie Du- The young generation is the future. We have to do something for the world to preserve it. We are ready and motivated to take the Earth forward.

Cesar Galvez- It is necessary for human conscience to remember that we are one family, in one world and we must take care of ourselves, protect ourselves and love ourselves. Only this way we can contain the darkness that torments the world and this is why it is important.

Q3- What are the means this revolution uses and how does it take shape?

Cesar Galvez- This revolution is built on positive actions. We live in a chaotic world which needs an army of peace. This peace is achieved by building bridges of understanding and that can only happen with cooperation without borders, learning and actions and lasting answers for all the problems in the world.

11 Wie Du- We are young people. We participate and join various organizations, for instance, *Plant for the Planet*, so we

have a large network which is great! We are working for example with music and public media. We take different actions. One of our actions was for two wonderful girls, Nejme and Baraa, who had to flee from the war in Syria. They built up a school in the refugee camp in Lebanon to teach the other children. Children from all over the world collected donations, pictures and letters. We, (I I Wie Du) had the chance to represent the children from different countries and to meet the girls in the refugee camp. It is so nice to unite with them and to build friendship!

Q4- How is it different from the past and other present revolutions?

Cesar Galvez- It is the first unarmed world revolution. It is first youth- children's revolution. It is the first revolution where there is no fight for power but for global peace.

I I Wie Du- This is a peaceful revolution which gives hope. We support each other in our causes and follow the same goal. Young people from different countries change things in a positive way. We do not only talk, we stand up and do something. We believe in our forces and if we unite them we can reach everything.

Q5- Children and youth are the pillars of this revolution. Why are they important when it comes to movements and changes around the world?

Cesar Galvez- We are the largest connected community on the planet. We have access to more information than ever. It not only gives us the power to choose our destinations as never before. But at the same time it also places the responsibility to work together on our shoulders. We have the option to disappear and see our dreams turn into nightmares. But we are responsible. We have taken the responsibility.

I I Wie Du- We are the future. We have other perspectives which differ from adults and sometimes they are better. We also help determine how people deal with our planet. No matter how old people are, it is possible to bring the world back into balance if we unite and follow the same dreams!

Q6- How do you think this revolution will help in bringing forward a nonviolent planet or nonviolent footprint throughout the planet?

Cesar Galvez- We are undoubtedly the best way, for the world that wishes to erase past violence. We have never been so awake in relation to the connection with all living things. That is why this revolution is necessary for peace like no other.

I I Wie Du- There are many opportunities how to bring a nonviolent planet forward. We are a large community all over the world and we can support it through actions, meditation, public media, speeches, music and so on.

This endeavour continues...

Children Field School keep the children rooted...

Gokak Shishu Panchayat

Many students living in rural areas are unaware of issues concerning agriculture and rural concerns. Trend towards urbanization further creates a gap keeping many students ignorant of agricultural practices even though they come from families involved in farming.

To create awareness amongst rural children, the Gokak Shishu Panchayat has initiated Children Field School in Gokak, Karnataka. It is a time bound activity – one agricultural production cycle, involving a group of 20-30 student 'farmers'. Through the *Children Field School*, students in an agricultural farm are taught group observation, discussion, analysis, presentation, collective decision making and actions.

As part of the Children Field School, students are given the first hand experience in the village field, where learning sessions are organized in the field itself. Instead of textbooks, students learn from field work. The facilitators guide the members of the Gokak Shishu Panchayat in this learning process with an aim to promote discover-based learning and encourage learning by doing.



Through their involvement in Children Field School (CFS), members of the Shishu Panchayat are likely to become experts in farm practices that is further helping them understand their traditional rural culture. By being part of a natural school environment, children are likely to develop their knowledge base, leadership skills and decision-making abilities.

According to several members of the Gokak Shishu Panchayat, regular training in CFS enables them to understand local agricultural conditions and how to cope with problems in agriculture. It has given them new ideas of farming practices and could help them with their livelihood once they grow up.

(This story was translated from Kannada to English by A R Patil)

Happy Schooling through “Happy School Initiative”

The Peace Gong Kashmir



Schooling in difficult areas can be challenging for students. Conditions at home and communities may not make learning an exciting proposition. They may stop enjoying school and studies.

The importance of schools as site of happiness has been stressed by Gwang- Jo Jim, the Director of UNESCO Bangkok in her Foreword to the report on ‘Happy Schools – A Framework for Learner Well-Being in Asia Pacific’. She writes, “I believe that all children are entitled to be happy and enjoy their life in school, whether through a genuine love of learning, through building positive friendships and relationships, or through feeling a sense of belonging in the community and wider society. Moreover, we need all learners to be happy in order for future generations to contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous world.”

It is in this backdrop that The Peace Gong Jammu and Kashmir has endeavoured towards the “Happy School Initiative”, wherein volunteers reach out to students in schools and train them in different aspects of communication for peace and happiness. The team is reaching out to different schools and conducts regular workshops.

Some of the important features of the Peace Gong Happy School programme are:

- a) Mostly students of Class IX and X are part of this project.
- b) Series of meetings and discussions are organized with the school authorities, teachers and volunteers who are an integral part of the project to develop the work plan for children.
- c) Workshops are conducted as part of the work plan by the volunteers.
- d) The Peace Gong nonviolent communication literacy model

has been adopted and mixed with the goals of Happy Schools.

- e) The approach of nonviolent communication with a thrust on relationship building, nonviolent speech and action, openness and flexibility is integrated in communication literacy programmes. It enables children meet challenges in everyday life by being able to use communication empathetically and with compassion. This is the thrust of our intervention in the Schools and definitely can be important criteria to promote happiness and well-being.
- f) As the criteria of Happy Schools is to promote friendship and relationships in the Schooling Community, the effort is not just to encourage this through dialogues and creative workshops, but also to facilitate friendships with students not just within Kashmir but other parts of India.
- g) Another criteria of Happy Schools is positive and collaborative values and practices. All initiatives as part of this Initiative is collaborative in nature and children work together to develop newsletters and films on values of nonviolence and on the importance of happiness and well being.
- h) Students are made part of creative exercises such as poster making, role plays and dialogues on subjects of their choices. This enhances their creativity and engagement.
- i) By being able to develop their own messages on relevant themes, getting opportunities to express themselves through creative platforms, the initiative is an effort to promote leadership skills amongst students.
- j) As the whole process is collaborative in nature, students learn to work in groups and develop a feeling of camaraderie. As teachers and also volunteers are also involved, the initiative can help in developing the student-teacher relationship like that of a team.

“I believe that all children are entitled to be happy and enjoy their life in school, whether through a genuine love of learning, through building positive friendships and relationships, or through feeling a sense of belonging in the community and wider society. Moreover, we need all learners to be happy in order for future generations to contribute to a more peaceful and prosperous world.” - Gwang- Jo Jim,

Director of UNESCO Bangkok

Valued communication is essential for macro level development: Biplob Loho Chowdhury

“Communication for development, needs to have certain values, which are often absent in mass media-based communication strategy and action,” says Prof. Biplob Loho Chowdhury, (Project Director of Centre for Journalism and Mass Communication (CJMC) of Visva-Bharati University at Santiniketan. Prof. Chowdhury has developed the concept of ‘Community Communication Spectrum (CCS)’. “We need to use the communities’ own communication strategies to motivate them to act,” he points.

According to Prof. Chowdhury, the time to look closely at the trans-generational communication systems that started as early as from the Vedic period down through the centuries is of vital importance.

Recalling how CCS was initiated, Prof. Chowdhury explains: “Six years ago this remote village of 130 households (village community) about 80 km from Santiniketan – the hometown of famous Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore – was surrounded by paddy fields, but without a sustainable development concept”.

But today, it is a confident community with most households having access to water and sanitation, and most of its children are keen to pursue their education. One of the community leaders is even doing research in development communication at Visva-Bharati University.

In 2011, it was Prof. Chowdhury and his group of students had spent many days in the community, meeting members, to find out their needs and perception about their own resources. Three main problems surfaced: – lack of knowledge on health issues; lack of community organisation and apathy of government agencies in assisting the community.

“Surprisingly, adds Prof. Biplob that on inspection by a doctor, the health conditions of the members of the community was found good and therefore, they were encouraged to maintain their good health standards. A workshop was also organised on good parenting for better progeny.

Further the Namokanda Prochesta’ (NP) or Namokanda Effort was initiated by members of the community, mostly teachers in order to improve the developmental organisation structure of the village and take forward educational programmes.

The Namokanda Prochesta at a glance...

1. **“From grade I to I2 every student needs to be under the ambit of the NP programme**
2. **NP has been giving free tuition for students and offering annual scholarships**
3. **The ‘helping from within’ concept has encouraged villagers to share each other’s vegetable harvests and special food preparations.**
4. **Utilise local resources for self development**



“With the help of Visva-Bharati and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore Foundation, (an organization based in New Delhi), we are learning to make progress from within ourselves by utilising local resources”, says the community coordinator Srimantha Mandal (a CJMC graduate and a primary school teacher)..

The community has also set up a ‘Shishu Panchayat’ (SP) consisting of school-going children with its own chief minister and a cabinet of ministers to promote the ethos of active citizenship in them. With the help of students from CJMC, the young members of SP have produced their own newspaper with articles, poetry, cartoons and other cultural expressions. Their chief minister Rituparna Mandal (14) is also an accomplished singer.

“My role is to solve problems for our youth,” says Rituparna adding that she looks after the information, culture and ecology of the village. She further related a novel way of overcoming a gender barrier in the community through acting within the ambit of the SP. “We had a problem with



our community because our families don't want us to play with the boys. So we found a land outside the village where girls could play together”.

Smilingly ecstatically, Pooja Mandal, sports minister of SP shares: “We girls can play a lot of sports now. “If any child wants to play and doesn't know how to, we guide her – whether it is football, volleyball, badminton, gymnastic and even yoga.”

Another unique culture of the community is that no fund of any form is accepted from outside for implementation of community-initiated development programmes, because the people here believe that such a model is not sustainable.

Prof. Biplob Loho Chowdhury cites an example: He pointed out how the community had to spend over 30,000 rupees (470 dollars) every year to repair the road to the village after the rainy season. “Now they have learned how to carry out studies and prepare documents for

advocacy to the government for projects (which require huge funding). They have prepared a document to ask for government funds to bank the adjoining Dwarka River so that the houses and lands by the riverside can be saved from erosion during the next rainy season”, he informs.

Prof. Chowdhury further points out that ‘social media’ because of lack of its human touch, is not liked by these communities.

However, CCS is not the first of its kind in India. Prof. Chowdhury introduced his concept to three other villages in Assam in North-East India in 1998 to test the strength of DCFW for advancing communities into the path of sustainable development.

“The communication process must make communities realise their relevance, interdependence and interaction with the macro society”, he concludes.

Rinki Mondal, Rimpi Mondal & Priyatosh Mondal (all Class X)

(Translated from Bengali by Saugato Roy)

The Peace Gong Initiative on CYBERFASTING

October 2
International Day of
Non Violence
Gandhi
Jayanthi



We live in a digital world. Every moment of our life - right from the time we wake to the time we sleep in the night we are engaged with some digital platform or the other. Can you think of giving up your digital tools for some time and do introspection for your own self? Can you think of the time you

spend on the digital media and instead spend that time to help one of the poorest persons in the society?

Why CYBERFASTING?

“Fasts are a part of my being. I can as well do without my eyes, for instance, as I can without fasts. What the eyes are for the outer world, fasts are for the inner.”
- Mahatma Gandhi

For Mahatma Gandhi fasts were significant to look at one's inner self. In today's world when we rarely have time to look at our own self, here is an opportunity for something rewarding. The Peace Gong, a Media and Information Literacy initiative of the Gurudev Rabindrath Tagore Foundation has initiated a programme calling upon

all to join to CYBERFAST on October 2 (International Day of Nonviolence) and January 30 the Martyrdom Day of Mahatma Gandhi.

- CYBERFASTING means refraining from all types of digital media with which we are obsessed.
- It could be for a specific period of time.
- It is simple.
- You don't need to go anywhere or attend any event to practice CYBERFASTING.
- Just refrain from all digital media for specific period say from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- You may be tempted to log in to Facebook, look at your WhatsApp Messages, tweet from your twitter account, use your Instagram or Snapchat handle, end up using your email and much more.....
- Rather than getting lost in the virtual world try to connect with your own inner self!
- Think and relish the times you felt happy for!
- Think of something you can go and do for somebody in need!
- Fasting rejuvenates the body, the mind and the soul. Surely CYBERFASTING will help you to reinvent YOURSELF!

The Peace Gong, Delhi



Children Speak....

“The trillion tree campaign- this is our chance to kick off a global chain reaction for economic, environmental and social progress. Together, we can take effective steps against flooding, poverty, hunger and the refugee crises.”

- **Felix Finkbeiner, Plant for the Planet**

“Together we can inspire people. We can leave an eternal mark on earth. We can make a difference” - **Yugratna Shrivastava, Plant for the Planet**

“We must be unified with one heart and one soul and one vision. We understand we want true peace. True peace is respect for our natural resource, respect for all of our human and non-human communities, a comprehensive understanding of our place in the world as caretakers and stewards. That’s what we want and need for our survival if we are to survive on this planet that we are destroying.” - **Ta’Kaiya Blaney**

“We are all one being. We are all part of planet Earth. We all pitch in to help make the world a better place. We are all one voice and we are all one motive.” - **Noah Cecilio**

“Young people of the world, we are poised to make an unprecedented change. Really, we are on the precipice of transforming global society to make it more just and equitable. But if we want to do this we have to collaborate. That means that we have to transcend concepts which typically divide us like national borders, race, socio-economic status, religion and sexual orientation. We need to see ourselves, not as isolated individuals acting independently in our respective communities, but rather as citizens of the world who are working towards a common goal.” - **Hart Fogel**

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