



*LIVING VALUES*  
E D U C A T I O N

## Overview

February 2007

Young people around the world are increasingly affected by violence, social problems, and a lack of respect for each other and the world around them. Parents, educators and concerned citizens in many countries are asking for help to turn around this alarming trend. Many of them believe that part of the solution is an emphasis on teaching values.

We must not just educate our children and youth “to know” and “to do”, we must also educate them “to be” and “to live together”.<sup>1</sup> Quality education recognizes the whole person and promotes education that involves the affective domain as well as the cognitive. Values such as peace, love, respect, tolerance, cooperation and freedom, are cherished and aspired for the world over. Such values are the sustaining force of human society and progress. What children and youth learn is later woven into the fabric of society and so education must have positive values at its heart and the resulting expression of them as its aim if we are to seek to create a better world for all.

In a world where negative role models, the glorification of violence, and materialism abound, older children and youth rarely acquire positive social skills or values simply by being told to do so. While “good” students may adopt values-based behaviors when exposed to “awareness-level” activities, they gain greater benefit when guided through an exploration of values and their implications for the self, others and the larger society. On the other hand, more “resistant” students or marginalized youth turn away from a moralizing approach to character education.

Educators, and activities, that actively engage and allow students the opportunity to explore and experience their own qualities are therefore of crucial importance. Students benefit by developing skills to cognitively explore and understand values. For students to be motivated to learn and utilize positive and cooperative social skills, the creation of a values-based atmosphere in which they are encouraged, listened to and valued is also essential. It is in this context, and in response to the call for values to be at the heart of learning, that Living Values Education Program (LVEP) has been developed.

### What is LVEP?

Living Values Education Program is a comprehensive values education program. This innovative global program offers training, a practical methodology and a wide variety of

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<sup>1</sup> Delors, Jacques, et al. **Learning: The Treasure Within**, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. UNESCO Publishing, 1996. ISBN 0 7306 9037 7

experiential values activities to educators, facilitators, parents and caregivers to help them provide the opportunity for children and young adults to explore and develop universal values. Educators are asked to think about their values, use their creativity to see how they can incorporate values into their curriculum in a practical way, and create a values-based atmosphere. The curriculum includes Living Values Activities for peace, respect, love, cooperation, happiness, honesty, humility, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance, freedom and unity. Used in formal and informal settings, LVEP also has special materials for use with children affected by war, street children and children affected by earthquakes.

Designed to address the whole child/person, Living Values Activities build intrapersonal and interpersonal social and emotional skills and values-based perspectives and behaviors. Students are engaged in reflection, visualization, and artistic expression to draw out their ideas; cognitive and emotional skills grow as they are engaged in analyzing events and creating solutions. The approach is child-centered, flexible and interactive; adults act as facilitators. During LVEP training, educators are asked to create a values-based atmosphere in which all students can feel respected, valued, understood, loved and safe. Part of LVEP educator excellence is viewed as modeling the values, respecting student opinions, and empowering children and young adults to enjoy learning and implementing values projects.

### **About the Organization**

The implementation of Living Values Education is coordinated by the **Association for Living Values Education International** (ALIVE International), a non-profit-making association of values educators around the world.

Drawing on a strong volunteer base, Living Values Education is supported by UNESCO and a host of other organisations, agencies, governmental bodies, foundations, community groups and individuals. It is part of the global movement for a culture of peace in the framework of the **United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World**. ALIVE International brings together national Living Values Education bodies and is an independent organisation that does not have any particular or exclusive religious, political or national affiliation or interest.

ALIVE is registered as an association in Switzerland. In some countries national Living Values Education associations have been formed, usually comprised of educators, education officials, and representatives of organizations and agencies involved with student or parent education.

### **International Usage**

LVEP is currently being implemented in 85 countries at more than 8,000 sites. While most sites are schools, other sites are day-care centers, youth clubs, parent associations, centers for street children, drug rehabilitation centers and refugee camps. The number of students doing LVEP at each site varies considerably; some involve 10 students while others involve 3,000.

## **Purpose and Aims**

LVE's purpose is to provide guiding principles and tools for the development of the whole person, recognizing that the individual is comprised of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

The aims are:

- ◆ To help individuals think about and reflect on different values and the practical implications of expressing them in relation to themselves, others, the community, and the world at large;
- ◆ To deepen understanding, motivation, and responsibility with regard to making positive personal and social choices;
- ◆ To inspire individuals to choose their own personal, social, moral, and spiritual values and be aware of practical methods for developing and deepening them; and
- ◆ To encourage educators and caregivers to look at education as providing students with a philosophy of living, thereby facilitating their overall growth, development, and choices so they may integrate themselves into the community with respect, confidence, and purpose.

## **Materials — The Living Values Series**

The initial materials developed for LVE, the *Educators' Kit*, began to be piloted in March of 1997. Brazilian educators involved with LVE developed more materials, and the *Manual para Educadores II*, containing Living Values Activities in Spanish, was printed with the cooperation of the National Committee for UNICEF in Spain in 1998.

As more materials were requested and educators around the globe contributed ideas and activities, LVEP's Living Values Series came into being. This set of five books was published by Health Communications, Inc., in April of 2001. The series was awarded the 2002 Teachers' Choice Award, an award sponsored by *Learning* magazine, a national publication for teachers and educators in the USA. A sixth book regarding children from zero to three will be published in 2005. The Living Values Series currently consists of the following books.

- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Children Ages 3–7*
- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Children Ages 8–14*
- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Young Adults*
- ◆ *LVEP Educator Training Guide*
- ◆ *Living Values Parent Groups: A Facilitator Guide*

LVEP Educator Workshops are available around the world and are recommended in order to implement LVEP most effectively. Educators, facilitators, parents and caregivers are important role models; the creation of a values-based atmosphere is the first step for values-based education and values education.

The Living Values Series has been published in Chinese, English, Hindi, Indonesian Bahasa, Japanese, Polish and Portuguese. One or more Living Values Activities books are published in Icelandic and Spanish. The facilitator guide for parent groups is available in Kiswahili. Translation is ongoing in another 21 languages, with some values units or unpublished versions of the books (available only to LVEP Training participants) in Arabic, Bahasa Malay, Dutch, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Karen, Khmer, Korean, Papiamentu, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Thai, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

In *Living Values Activities for Children Ages 3–7*, *Ages 8–14*, and *Living Values Activities for Young Adults*, reflective and imagining activities encourage students to access their own creativity and inner gifts. Communication activities teach students to implement peaceful social skills. Artistic activities, songs, and dance inspire students to express themselves while experiencing the value of focus. Game-like activities are thought-provoking and fun; the discussion time that follows those activities helps students explore effects of different attitudes and behaviors. Other activities stimulate awareness of personal and social responsibility and, for older students, awareness of social justice. The development of self-esteem and tolerance continues throughout the exercises. Educators are encouraged to utilize their own rich heritage while integrating values into everyday activities and the curriculum.

***LVEP Educator Training Guide*** — This guide contains the content of sessions within regular LVEP Educator Workshops. Sessions include values awareness, creating a values-based atmosphere, and skills for creating such an atmosphere. LVEP's theoretical model and sample training agendas are included.

***Living Values Parent Groups: A Facilitator Guide*** — This book offers both process and content for facilitators interested in conducting Living Values Parent Groups with parents and caregivers to further understanding and skills important in encouraging and positively developing values in children. The first section describes content for an introductory session, and a six-step process for the exploration of each value. In this process, parents and caregivers reflect on their own values and how they "live" and teach those values. The second section offers suggestions regarding values activities the parents can do in the group, and ideas for parents to explore at home. In the third section, common parenting concerns are addressed, as are particular skills to deal with those concerns. There is a small section on the needs of children from ages 0 to 2.

### **Materials — For Children and Youth At Risk**

For emergency situations, LVEP offers training to refugee teachers to implement *Living Values Activities for Refugees and Children Affected by War*. There are also special activities for children affected by earthquakes and street children. These materials are restricted, only made available to educators who undergo training for these particular modules. LVEP materials for children at risk consists of the following.

- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Refugees and Children Affected by War Ages 3–7*
- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Refugees and Children Affected by War Ages 8–14*
- ◆ *Living Values Activities, Earthquake and Tsunami Supplement for Children Ages 3–7*

- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Children Affected by Earthquakes Ages 8–14*
- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Street Children Ages 3–6*
- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Street Children Ages 7–10*
- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Street Children Ages 11–14*
- ◆ *Living Values Activities for Drug Rehabilitation*

***Living Values Activities for Refugees and Children Affected by War*** — This supplement contains activities that give children an opportunity to begin the healing process while learning about peace, respect and love. Designed to be implemented by refugee teachers of the same culture as the children, there are forty-nine lessons for children three- to seven-years old and sixty lessons for students eight- to fourteen-years old. The lessons provide tools to begin to deal with grief while developing positive adaptive social and emotional skills. A section on camp-wide strategies offers suggestions for creating a culture of peace, conducting values education groups for parents/caregivers, cooperative games, and supporting conflict resolution monitors. Teachers continue with the regular living values activities after these lessons are completed.

***Living Values Activities for Children Affected by Earthquakes*** — This supplement is available for children three- to seven-years old and children eight- to fourteen. Developed in response to a request from educators in El Salvador, the lessons provide a forum for children to discuss their feelings, learn that their reactions are normal responses to a difficult situation, and develop skills to help them cope.

***Living Values Activities for Street Children (LVASC)*** — These materials contain adapted living values activities on peace, respect, love and cooperation and a series of stories about a street children family. The stories serve as a medium to educate about and to discuss issues related to domestic violence, death, AIDS, drug sellers, drugs, sexual abuse, physical abuse, hygiene and healthy eating. LVASC 11–14 also includes the issues of emerging sexuality, sex and labor trafficking, and a further exploration of human rights. The stories are combined with discussions, activities, and the development of positive adaptive social and emotional skills and protective social skills.

***Living Values Activities for Drug Rehabilitation*** — The 102 lessons in this curriculum weave in values activities on peace, respect, love, cooperation, honesty, humility and happiness from *Living Values Activities for Young Adults*, with lessons related to drug use, emotional issues that arise with addiction and its concomitant behaviors, and the building of social and relapse-prevention skills. This approach is based on Living Values Education Program’s methodology. Participants are encouraged to explore and develop values in a group-facilitated process by first exploring their own dreams for a better world. Lessons on peace and respect build self-confidence and a supportive values-based atmosphere in the group, prior to beginning drug-related lessons in which participants are asked to explore and share their journey into drugs and the consequences in their lives. The lessons include experiences to help them deal with their pain and shame, and learn the valuable life-lessons that pain can teach. Positive intrapersonal and interpersonal social skills are taught, encouraged and practiced. Participants explore many aspects of their experiences and build relapse-prevention skills through discussion, art, role-playing and dramas.

## **The Beginning**

LVEP was initially developed by educators for educators in consultation with the Education Cluster of UNICEF, New York, and the Brahma Kumaris. Twenty educators from five continents met at UNICEF Headquarters in New York in August of 1996 to discuss the needs of children around the world, their experiences of working with values, and how educators can integrate values to better prepare students for lifelong learning. Using *Living Values: A Guidebook* and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* as a framework, the global educators identified and agreed upon the purpose and aims of values-based education worldwide — in both developed and developing countries.

## **Results**

Educator evaluations have been collected from teachers implementing the program in countries around the world. The most frequent themes noted in the reports are positive changes in teacher-student relationships and in student-student relationships both inside and outside the classroom. Educators note an increase in respect, caring, cooperation, motivation, and the ability to solve peer conflicts on the part of the students. Aggressive behaviors decline as positive social skills and respect increase. LVEP helps educators create safe, caring, values-based atmospheres for quality learning.

In Iceland, a veteran first-grade teacher reported seeing surprising and dramatic improvements in caring, respect, cooperation, concentration, and learning to read. In Lebanon, second-graders in a classroom at ACS have learned conflict resolution so well that they solve all peer conflicts themselves; the teacher reports she is free to teach. In Australia, a year-nine student reported, “It’s not just that I like values classes, I really enjoy them. At the start I was dead against values, I didn’t feel like I got anything out of the class. I distracted people and didn’t put in any effort. Then I thought for one lesson I would really contribute. That lesson changed the way I felt about values. I can relate to everything that we talk about. I find myself discovering things about myself that I never knew. Values class is really worthwhile.” In South Africa, formerly violent secondary students now lead LVEP workshops for their peers and are leaders for peace.

There are also wonderful stories from educators in special circumstances. In Thailand, one year after implementing LVEP, nine out of 24 refugee-camp teachers working with children and youth reported 100-percent improvement in violent behavior; the others cited an 80-percent reduction in aggressiveness. The new program for street children is bringing in very positive reports. In Vietnam, educators reported considerable decreases in aggression and at-risk behaviors. They noted, “Now they are confident and friendly with adults and their peers. There is almost no conflict in the classes and they now do not get into trouble after school either. The students have also developed many skits on how to keep safe from dangerous adults and really enjoy performing them. Now when they are on the streets and see children that are new to the streets they give support and advice to the new children and invite them to meet their teacher and join their classes.”

Should you wish to learn more about LVEP, or read the stories and comments of teachers and students using the program, please visit the Living Values Education Web site.

[www.livingvalues.net](http://www.livingvalues.net)