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World Citizenship Project

Interdependence of humanity and the World Citizenship Project



Prize-giving ceremony, City Montessori School, Lucknow, India

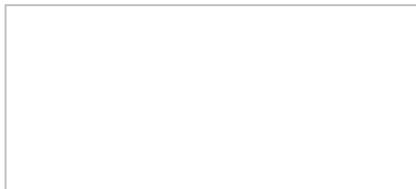


Dr C S Rai, the Mayor of Lucknow, admires some of the posters

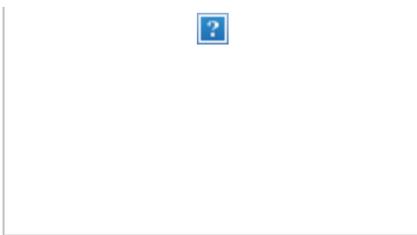
It is relatively easy to observe that the human body is but an evidence of the animating principle of “Unity in Diversity”. Consider how when the human body begins to perform a task, each member of the body is unified and coordinated in action by the brain, yet diversified in capacity and function so as to help it complete the task. The suspension of stars and planets in the vast empty space is yet another evidence of the principle of “Unity in Diversity”. For it is the diversity of gravitational forces from each planet on the others, in an orderly way as commented on by Einstein himself, that sustains the continuous motion of each planet. Every breath of fresh air each and every one of us breathes is also a sign of the principle of “Unity in Diversity”. For without the diversity of natural forces air would not have circulated through the Earth’s atmosphere reaching us. In just the same way every drop of water we drink or use has travelled thousands of miles circulating the Earth, cleansing and at the same time unifying the human family with all other created things.

The growth of every language is yet another evidence of the regenerative and animating force of the principle of “Unity in Diversity”. For it is well recognised that languages grow fastest by the assimilation of words from other languages. In a similar way in commerce one can observe the power of the same principle at work. For if an imaginary company had a single large customer, then one would say that our imaginary company is very unstable and too dependent on a single customer. A company with large number of products and customers is regarded as more stable. Of course there are limiting factors which are required for sustainability and the good of the overall market but that is beyond the scope of this article.

The important point here is that the principle of “Unity in Diversity”, that is unity of purpose but diversity of capacities and actions, when applied to large scale systems in a coordinated and measured way can and does lead to regenerative systems. Just as we see in the numerous galaxies, the Earth’s weather system or the human body.



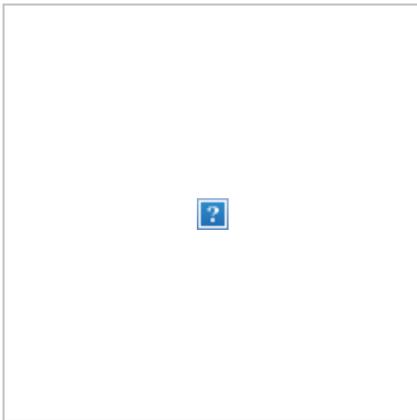
Whilst any intelligent person would easily accept interdependence of humanity as the hallmark of 21st



Some of the many participants in the WCP in the City Montessori School



The Barnet Community WCP prizewinners with their certificates



Lord Taylor of Warwick at the launch of the WCP in Westminster



Some of Ealing's WCP team: Mrs Mohtadi, Mrs Sabzewari, Mrs Youssefian and Mrs Cameron



Century, what is sometimes less readily perceived is that this has been the destiny of humanity from the beginning of creation.

Historically, humanity started from small villages, growing and joining up to make up the cities then counties and finally countries, to the point where today there are no single autonomous village left on the world scene. Sustainability of life in the village springs from the diversity of a pool of capacity that a larger country can provide and thereby brings the world of humanity closer together.

To date no man-made system or product has ever been able to regenerate itself on such a scale for so long.

Consider how a single principle of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, that of "Unity in Diversity", has an impact that can sustain and regenerate such vast and varied natural forces – something that no man-made system can match. Consider how important such knowledge would be to the world outside. Yet we have not so much as touched on even deeper more profound spiritual unity as described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which touches on nothing less than the core aim of humanity's spiritual journey on Earth. Nor has this article so much as attempted to describe any other principal of the Faith, thus providing a glimpse of the vastness of Knowledge still hidden in the Writings.

A cursory glance at the escalating problems engulfing the world today should convince most Bahá'ís of the even greater urgency for spreading the solutions of the Faith to the world outside. In some cases these solutions need to be direct, in others, especially where the generality of the masses is concerned, nothing but a simple, clear and focused yet indirect message will do, as many people simply shy away from discussing religion. In such cases all we can do is to serve and provide the solutions.

The World Citizenship Project (WCP) is a programme with a proven track record that can help your community to achieve this goal. Put very simply WCP is a competition that runs in schools with the aim of helping children to have a better understanding of interdependence of humanity in a creative and exciting way. From its first successful implementation in September/October 1995 at Suffolk Coastal, to Brent, Barnet, Westminster, Ealing, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Durham, many friends have helped to shape and form the project. Last year a number of changes reinvigorated the project.

Although WCP has been implemented in many countries, for the first time last year a few communities including Barnet, Westminster and Ealing agreed to link up with City Montessori School (CMS) in Lucknow, India. www.cmseducation.org. As you may know CMS was founded and is run by two dedicated Bahá'ís, Mr. & Mrs Gandhi. According to the Guinness Book of Records CMS is the largest school in the world, with 27,000 pupils. Equally important, CMS is the first



Beverley Evans Matthews with Lord Mereworth



Mitra Djalili and Lisa Nichols, two Bahá'í artists, created a wonderful ambience at the launch ceremony

27,000 pupils. Equally importantly CMS is the first winner of a very prestigious award by UNESCO for teaching peace at school. This was a great opportunity to support the Project that could not to be missed. Basically, for the link up, the WCP was implemented in the UK and at CMS, and then selected top entries from the two countries were swapped. It is very important to recognise the enormous effort that those in CMS have put into the project. Firstly, they had to endure such cold spells in December of 2002/ January 2003 that the schools in the whole district were shut. Then there was the exam period and finally severe heat waves. Despite all these, purely and steadfastly focusing on promoting the WCP, they persevered and succeeded.

As the pictures indicate, 1500 pupils were present at the CMS prize giving ceremony in August of 2003 with many entries from the UK on display with VIPs visiting the stands.

The programme for this year also involves linking up with CMS. It involves no further cost or extra work on behalf of any community, but it is a tool to ensure that the whole community receives the maximum benefit out of the work done throughout the year. It also adds a further dimension to the project. Some teachers have already commented on the benefits children in the UK have had from seeing the high standard found in the entries from the CMS.

This year Lord Taylor of Warwick (a judge and a TV personality) launched the project at Westminster City School.

The new aim of the project is to have a large presentation at the Albert Hall in London by October 2005. Already the team from the old "Voices of Bahá" have pledged to cover all the cost of Bahá'í musicians coming from across the world. They will be organising the entertainment part of the evening. At their request the tour will be called "The World Citizen Tour". In this way we are drawing on the capacity and experience of Bahá'ís and furthermore there will be no extra work for any community. It is simply a matter of organising the project in such a way as to receive the maximum benefit for all the communities. The tour and the project at school also lend themselves well to other local activities, like having a series of discussion panels presenting the Bahá'í perspective on "Globalisation" and the "Unity of Mankind".

For the coming year many communities are starting the project in January/February of 2004. In many communities only a single person is organising and contacting the schools. If you need any information about the project please don't hesitate to send an email to: farjad@worldcitizenship.org or simply view the web site at www.worldcitizenship.org

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