

END REPORT FOR WORK AT NEDI

Sept. 2001 – Mar. 2002

Prepared by: Michael and Liv Vitols

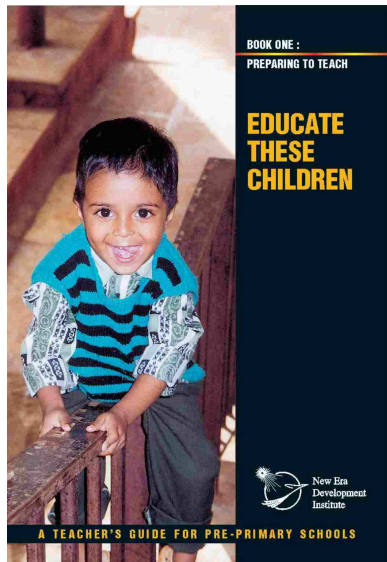


Upon the request of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India we arrived at NEDI in mid-September 2001. The task at hand was to help out with documentation and publication of NEDI material. Consultations were held with the NEDI management team and priorities set. Listed below is the result of our efforts together with staff at NEDI.

The main tasks included re-writing manuscripts, formulating lesson plan objectives, editing, writing of summaries for jacket covers, photography work, proofreading, contact with the printer (in Pune three hours away), layout, design, printing and some marketing and publicity activity.

EDUCATE THESE CHILDREN – a teacher's guide for pre-primary schools

The first, urgent task was to complete part of the pre-primary teaching training curriculum. The students had already arrived and were, once again, being given temporary handouts. Within two weeks time a limited printing of the first three books in the “Educate These Children” series was completed (50 copies). The students were thrilled to finally receive printed books, and the editing work and publication process gave valuable insight into both editorial and publication demands.



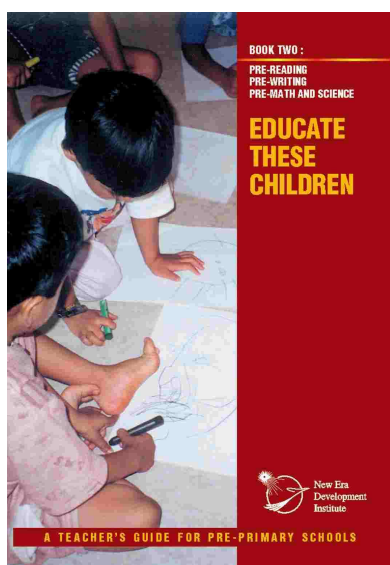
This rapid publication gave us the necessary time to prepare the final three books in the series, as well as to re-edit the first three. The editing work was much more extensive than anticipated, requiring sentence-by-sentence editing and rewriting of material. Visiting professors from the Telemark University College had also prepared several lesson plans. These were also in need of extensive editing and correction of language errors, as well as simplifying of text in order to adjust them to the level of materials produced by NEDI.

All six books in the “Educate These Children” were published in December as one set, giving a total of 588 pages.

Book One: Preparing to Teach

Presents and describes the school timetable, discusses teaching methodology such as encouraging children to think, teaching English, Cooperative learning and “The Thinking Teacher”. A special section was inserted on the needs of children with physical or psychological handicap.

An extensive section was added with materials for use during Assembly, including prayers, quotations, songs, poems, etc.



Book Two: Pre-Reading, Pre-Writing, Pre-Math and Science

Gives a theoretical introduction to the teaching of letters, numbers and science. 55 lesson plans are presented covering the subjects mentioned above.

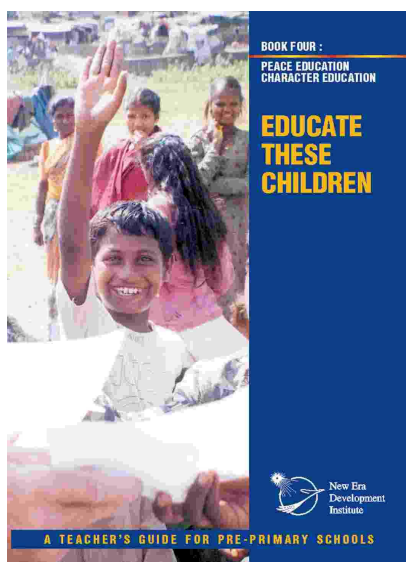
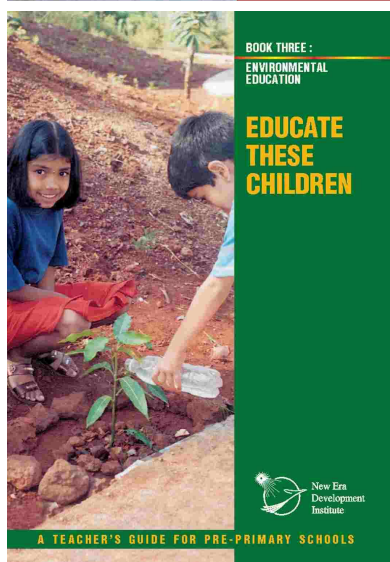
Book Three: Environmental Education

Introduces environmental education, explaining about the role of schools and the teacher, being at peace with Nature, and assessment of children (environmental education has a special focus on developing feelings, attitudes and responsibility for nature, as well as gaining knowledge). 14 environmental lessons are presented.

Book four: Peace Education and Character Education

Peace Class is introduced and how it should be a special time.

40 peace education classes are presented covering topics such as friendship, cooperation and compassion. Character Education is presented and 18 lesson plans are given.



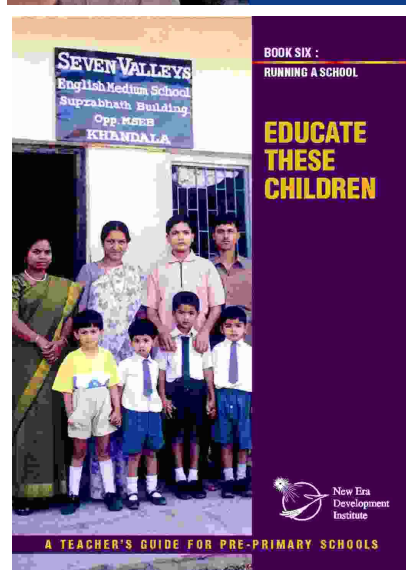
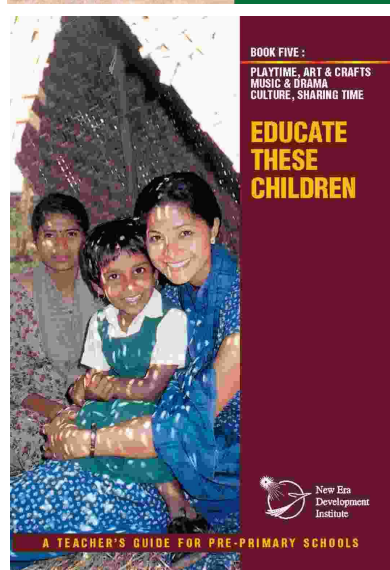
Book Five: Playtime, Arts & Crafts, Music & Drama, Culture, Sharing Time

A total of 91 lessons and activities are presented, including 34 cooperative games.

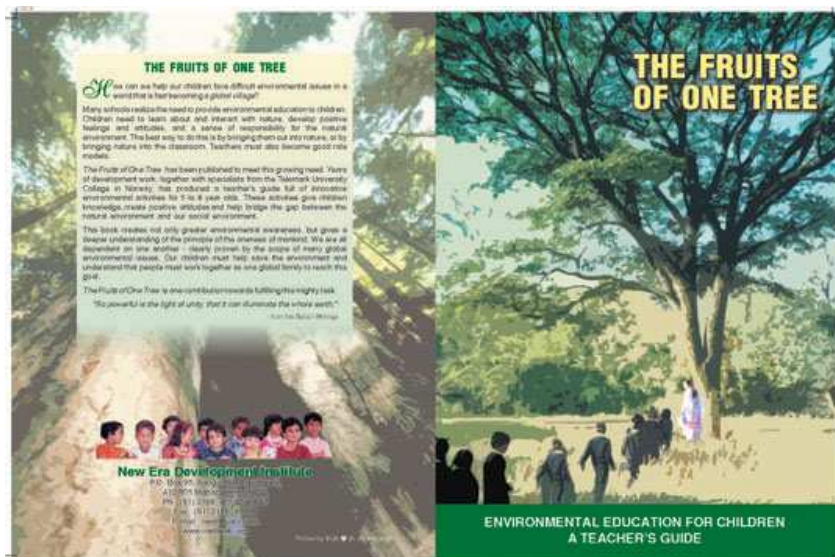
Book Six: Running a School

Presents ideas for making school equipment and material, learning activities and games for indoor play. A special section called “Nature’s Playground” was prepared by the Telemark University College to facilitate use of local natural areas and local materials when preparing playgrounds.

Simple instructions and tips on how to run a school, government regulations, discipline and working with parents and the community is included.



THE FRUITS OF ONE TREE – a teacher’s guide for environmental activities for children



This 182 page book presents 61 lessons and activities for children in the following five sections:

- Harmony with the Environment
- Awareness of the Environment
- Caring for the Environment
- Interdependence in the World
- Nature’s Playground

The text on the back cover summarizes the content and

reads as follows:

How can we help our children face difficult environmental issues in a world that is fast becoming a global village?

Many schools realize the need to provide environmental education to children. Children need to learn about and interact with nature, develop positive feelings and attitudes, and a sense of responsibility for the natural environment. The best way to do this is by bringing them out into nature, or by bringing nature into the classroom. Teachers must also become good role models.

The Fruits of one Tree has been published to meet this growing need. Years of development work, together with specialists from the Telemark University College in Norway, has produced a teacher’s guide full of innovative environmental activities for 5 to 8 year olds. These activities give children knowledge, create positive attitudes and help to bridge the gap between the natural environment and our social environment.

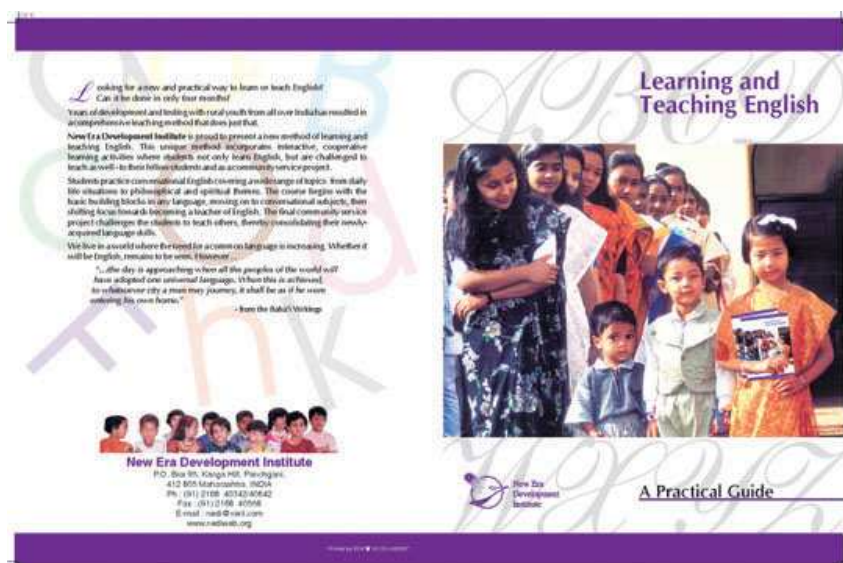
This book creates not only greater environmental awareness but gives a deeper understanding of the principle of the oneness of mankind. We are all dependent on one another – clearly proven by the scope of many global environmental issues. Our children must help save the environment and understand that people must work together as one global family to reach this goal.

The Fruits of One Tree is one contribution towards fulfilling this mighty task.

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the entire earth”

- from the Bahá’í writings

LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH – a practical guide



Due to the fact that the raw material needed to finalize the Peace Education Book was not ready as planned in January, it was decided to go ahead with editing of the four month course material NEDI has been using to teach newly arrived students English. This material was also used at the regional centers during the LOTUS project period.

59 lessons are presented. A special lesson section entitled “Talking about ...” was added to link this material to NEDI’s Core Curriculum material. Special micro-teaching sessions and a community service project were added, in order to provide training as teachers during the course. The result is an attractive 208 page book.

The text on the back cover summarizes the content and reads as follows:

Looking for a new and practical way to teach English?

Can it be done in only four months?

Years of development and testing with rural youth from all over India has resulted in a comprehensive teaching method that does just that.

New Era Development Institute is proud to present a new method of learning and teaching English. This unique method incorporates interactive, cooperative learning activities, where students not only learn English, but are challenged too teach as well – to their fellow students and as a community service project.

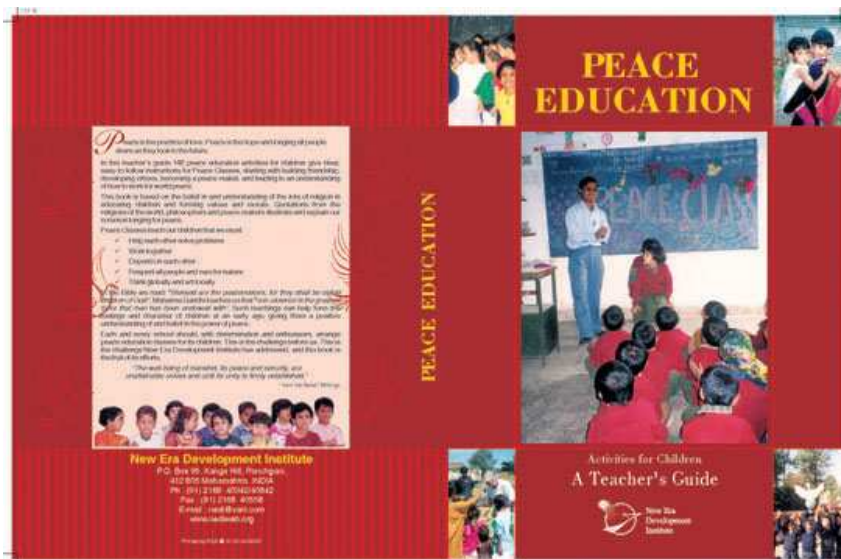
Students practice conversational English covering a wide range of topics from daily life situations to philosophical and spiritual themes. The course begins with the basic building blocks in any language, moving on to conversational subjects, then shifting focus towards becoming a teacher of English. The final community service project challenges the students to teach others, thereby consolidating their newly acquired language skills.

We live in a world where the need for a common language is increasing. Whether it will be English, remains to be seen. However ...

“... the day is approaching when all peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home.”

- from the Bahá'í Writings

PEACE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN – A teacher’s guide



Three weeks prior to departure, the raw material for this book was received for editing. It was arranged according to age levels and needed to be re-arranged thematically using the following headings:

- Friendship Activities
- Virtue Activities
- Peace-maker Activities
- World Peace Activities

As the editing work progressed the possibility of incorporating all peace education activities into

one book became clearer. The sequence of activities was restructured thematically, as well as by age into one book. This removed the need for duplication of various sections such as cooperative learning and cooperative games, as well as most of the pictures in the appendices. The final result is this 326 page Peace Education Activity Book for Children.

The text on the back cover summarizes the content and reads as follows:

Peace is the practice of love. Peace is the hope and longing all people share as they look to the future.

In this teacher’s guide 160 peace education activities for children give clear, easy-to-follow instructions for peace classes, starting with building friendship, developing virtues, becoming a peace-maker, and leading to an understanding of how to work for world peace.

This book is based on the belief in and understanding of the role of religion in educating children and forming values and morals. Quotations from the religions of the world, philosophers and peace-makers illustrate and explain our common longing for peace.

Peace classes teach our children that we must:

- *Help each other to solve problems*
- *Work together*
- *Depend on each other*
- *Respect people and care for nature*
- *Think globally and act locally*

In the Bible we read: “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called children of God”. Mahatma Gandhi teaches us that “non-violence is the greatest force that man has been endowed with”. Such teachings can help form the feelings and character of children at an early age, giving them a positive understanding of and belief in the power of peace.

Each and every school should, with determination and enthusiasm, arrange peace education classes for children. This is the challenge before us. This is the challenge New Era Development Institute has addressed, and this book is the fruit of its efforts.

“ The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.”

- from the Bahá’í Writings

COOPERATION CELEBRATION – November 2001

A special handout for the cooperation celebration describing NEDI's development and philosophy, and Norway's contribution to this development was prepared. A report was later written.

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY – February, March 2002

A press conference was held in Pune with a nice article being prominently displayed in the Pune section of The Indian Times (See attachment).

A press conference was held in Mumbai with several newspapers attending.

A meeting with the principals of schools in the Panchgani area is to be held on our final day at NEDI in order to present the new books. There appears to be good interest according to initial responses.

One final press conference will hopefully be arranged in Pune enroute to Mumbai Airport.

ARTICLE – March 2002

Principal H. Mehrassa of New Era High School and Auxiliary Board Member Swati Chinubhai took initiative to establish schooling for the children of migrant construction workers at the New Era High School. This generated considerable activity and success in giving the children a special school offer and helping bridge the gap towards integration in the local school system. An article describing this activity was written and has been sent to the National Spiritual Assembly of India for possible publication in an educational magazine that focuses on value-based education. The article is attached to this report.

REFLECTIONS

The amount of work involved in rewriting, editing and publishing was considerably higher than expected. The degree of incompleteness in the handout material that NEDI has been using (instead of textbooks) these past 10 years was considerable (other than the four completed Core Curriculum modules which are very detailed and complete). The rough draft material was also full of inconsistencies, both minor and major. It was thought-provoking to see how much that remained to be done. This is a lesson learnt with regards to future projects and monitoring of activity. It is not enough to simply ask how things are going and assume that all is well. Direct, hands-on contact with curriculum material is required. This would naturally require lengthier project visits than those carried out during the LOTUS and TRANSFER projects.

The technical equipment with which to do the work was constantly breaking down. Numerous hard disc crashes and inadequate UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply) equipment caused numerous losses of edited material. Problems were compounded by nearly daily power outages. Finally, a new hard disc and a new UPS were purchased by the newly arrived Director thereby alleviating the situation from January onwards.

The material that is now published must be regarded as "first generation" material. During editing many ideas for improvement of content were incorporated into the material. However, there is still much more that could be done. The existing time constraints limited this process.

The final editing of the last book was extremely hectic and demanding, with an 18 hour work day in order to finalize in time for printing. Due to extremely good relations with the printer we were able to finalize editing and complete printing before departure.

We have through Liv's pictures attempted to portray the noble and gentle people of India, and how these beautiful children and youth represent the hope for the future, given a proper education that is their human right and our obligation.

It has been a pleasure and an honour to be of service in this manner.

Michael and Liv Vitols, Panchgani, 10 March, 2002.

