

February 2007

Dear friends of the Alliance,

As I travel around the world it has become clear to me that human beings around our planet are longing for three things: (a) tools for personal transformation, (b) a way to serve without selfish motivations and (c) a deep desire to connect with each other and build deep relationships. The same modern capacities that have the potential to lead to utter destruction give us now the means, methods, and technology to provide the tools for personal transformation, to offer the opportunities for service and to connect people at a deeper value level at a broad scale, and this is the engine that we are setting in motion with the Alliance.

And through the deep relationships we build with each other, we will find deep energy to further our own personal transformation and to transform our institutions, society and the world.

The exchange of ideas and passion to bring about these changes are both inspirational and key to the change we want to see in the world. It is through action, based on a deep understanding of our interconnectedness and shared fragility, that love manifests, heals and builds the new relationships of trust and compassion in our social fabric. Today we start in the Newsletter a new interactive forum to promote, share and inspire these actions.

Margaret Mead said once "Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." We can do it.

Namaste,

Deepak Chopra

Alliance Action

The New Humanity Forum

Welcome to the new "Alliance Action" section. This is a new interactive forum for members of the Alliance to share their experiences, ask questions and inspire others.

We've had lots of wonderful contributions from you for the "A Reader Writes" column, and this section will be an opportunity to publish more of your stories. This section is all about Action - so please tell us what you've been doing, flag up any events that are happening in your area, tell us about the people and initiatives that have inspired you, raise issues and connect with others.

To use Deepak Chopra's metaphor about the metamorphosis of the butterfly: this is where the imaginal cells in the caterpillar join up to create a butterfly!

Our first item in Alliance Action comes from Jayshree Mannie, who has a passion for education that meets the needs of the whole child. Please respond to her direct - but drop Alliance Action a line too. And please keep your stories coming in

(See Send us your news - left).

Educreate: Global Education Transformation

I have been in education for over 20 years and I believe that introducing an education which is based on building character, creative intelligence – growing the whole child through a human-values system – is so needed right now.

My passion is bringing about change through education. This is a place, where when filled with unconditional love and support, the most beautiful beings are birthed. When children's creativity and imagination is supported through innovative learning approaches, their genius flourishes. The current "industrialised" education system is an insult to the integrity and sheer genius of our children.

I have been blessed to work with such amazing people around the world and they all share the same passion of recreating education, education from the heart, for the heart. There are many unsung heroes who are working away quietly and unobtrusively with children and bringing about transformation in how children learn and how we teach.

My heartsong is to bring all these great souls together to help transform education globally. A forum where they can share their ideas, share their working models, vision quest solutions, propose and implement strategies and move the creative energy of Educreate forward. Our prayer is that this event will set in motion, the energy for transformation in education, globally.

This dream has inspired me to organise a Global Education Forum to action it.

I know that I am not the only one carrying this tiny spark, as there are millions out there who share this vision. So let us tiny sparks get together and create a blaze of transformation, for our children, for our planet. The time is now!

Jayshree Mannie

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World Social Forum: Activists Determined to Take On Globalisation's Challenges

by Joyce Mulama

NAIROBI (IPS) - The mammoth World Social Forum (WSF) wound to a close in the Kenyan capital after five days of dialogue, art, poetry, dance, drama and protests led by participants from around the globe who believe "another world is possible" -- the slogan of the global civil society movement.

"But the challenge remains what we shall do when we go back home. Remember the story of the little humming bird,"

Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace laureate told IPS.

Maathai was referring to a story she repeatedly narrated at the Forum of how a tiny but determined humming bird successfully put out a huge forest fire. While much bigger animals in the forest watched from afar, the bird made several trips to the river, bringing water in its little beak, to douse the raging fire. "We should not feel overwhelmed by the huge problems facing us. However small you are, you can make a difference to create a better world for all people, for Africa," she kept repeating through the five days.

More...

More on the World Social Form...

The Struggle Continues for Mozambican Women

by Ruth Ansah Ayisi

MAPUTO (IPS) - The contradictions in Maria's life are typical of many women in Mozambique. On one level the 33-year-old is advancing. She is able to attend night school to gain the education that the 16-year-long civil war interrupted when she was a child. She has learnt to sew to complement the money she makes as a trader. She is trying to take the necessary steps to "live positively" after finding out that she has contracted HIV.

Here lies the rub. She has been unable to negotiate safer sex with her husband, who is also HIV positive. She has also not been able to leave him, despite the fact that he beats her regularly and threatens their children with violence. The youngest is only 10 years old.

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Chile: Enter Salvation, Stage Right

By Daniela Estrada

SANTIAGO (IPS) - Among the profusion of plays on offer in the Chilean capital in the new year is a festival of moving dramas in which the actors are convicts and slum-dwellers, who are trying to escape marginalisation by going on the stage.

The festival was organised by the Cultural Corporation of Artists for Rehabilitation and Social Reinsertion through Art (COARTRE), headed by actress Jacqueline Roumeau, and financed by the regional government of Santiago, the capital of this South American country of 15.6 million people. One of the five plays in the festival, which has had great success with audiences, is "Chilean People's Stories", which is nothing other than a string of tales, some funny and others sad, about ordinary people, with as many needs as dreams.

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More about COARTRE...

An Ode to Joy

The Croatian artist Ivan Rabuzin depicts a life in which only beauty exists.

Ivan Rabuzin is a self-taught artist renowned as one of the foremost lyrical painters of the 20th century.

Rabuzin's earliest drawings and paintings date from the mid-1940s and display an academic and realistic treatment of his subjects and a striving for impressionist effects. He began to exhibit his work in 1956. In 1959 he discovered the theme of lyrical landscapes and with it his own visual language. Finding archetypal symbols in the surrounding countryside, he began to create personal and highly recognisable works. He found the utmost simplicity, concision and perfection in the sphere and the circle, which were to become his symbols of the absolute, symbols of completeness.

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Green Sunday

A response to climate change.

Sir Nicholas Stern has written a lengthy report for the British Government outlining the urgent action needed in response to the imminent climate crisis. Most of his solutions to global warming are technological, based on finding alternative, non-fossil-fuel sources of energy. They are all commendable, but it will be some time before we can implement these solutions.

In the meantime, we can do something immediately: we can declare Sunday to be a fossil-fuel-free day or at least an energy-saving day. We can start this week, this month or this year. We can start individually and collectively.

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There is no wealth but life

John Bloom, guest Editor of latest issue of Resurgence introduces some interesting concepts in the field of finance.

Money is a source of great pleasure and pain. How it is used heals and harms both individuals and societies. But money is not a thing. It is symbolic. It serves a broader and deeper economic system embedded with rights, values and intentions. On a simple level, money was invented to account for value in the production and exchange of goods and services. Such an accounting system inevitably reflects the values, priorities and flows of human activities. Dig a little into the system, whether your cheque book or a national budget, and you will find a mirror of your economic self, or the character of a national economy.

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In brief:

Wal-Mart Goes Green

Lee Scott, the Chief Executive of Wal-Mart says that we have a responsibility to "leave a healthier humanity and a healthier planet for future generations." Wal-Mart has launched a number of green initiatives this year, and has told suppliers to cut packaging by 5% by 2013. To prove that small changes can make a big difference, Lee Scott said that work with just one toy supplier meant 497 fewer containers were required for shipping, saving 3,800 trees, 1,000 barrels of oil and \$2.4m a year in shipping costs. "That's just one supplier, just one product line and just 255 items."

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Random Recycling

Publishers Random House will be increasing the percentage of recycled paper it uses to print its books from under three percent to over 30 percent by 2010. It is the first publisher to make such a commitment.

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The Forgiveness Project

Phyllis Rodriguez lost her son in the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, but she has become friends with Aicha el-Wafi, the mother of Zacarias Moussaoui, who has received a lifesentence for his role in the hijackings that day. Phyllis met Aicha through the Forgiveness Project, a non-religious, non-political group that works to promote conflict resolution.

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Knitted Furniture

PIRWI is a design and manufacturing company based in Mexico City, which champions the designs of young designers concerned with sustainability. Their first product, the Knit Chair designed by Emiliano Godoy won an International Furniture Design Award.

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Environmentalism runs for French Presidency

José Bové, the environmentalist who became famous for taking down a part-built McDonalds in 1999, is leaving his sheep farm on the edge of the Massif-Central to run for the French presidency. He has been described as a modern-day Robin Hood and John Wayne and has gained a reputation for battling against genetically modified organisms and "crap food". He set up the Confédération Paysanne, promoting organic farming in 1987. "I will be the spokesman of the voiceless" he said.

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Affluenza

Money doesn't make us happy. We knew that, but why? And what can we do about it? A new book called Affluenza, by the psychologist Oliver James, finds out.

Send us your news!

Are you a change maker? We want to hear from you!

We'd like to share your stories of positive change in this newsletter. If you have a story to tell, email it to Rachel Marsh, editor of The Alliance e-newsletter, Resurgence: <mailto:rachel@thecupoftea.co.uk>