



Essential Education aims to empower children, youth and adults to make a positive difference in the world. We do this by providing resources, training and connections that will help people to develop their qualities and potential, and to live in a way that brings peace and wellbeing both to themselves and to the people around them.

Essential Education is an initiative of the Foundation for Developing Compassion and Wisdom. The Foundation is extremely grateful to Terrapinn as a primary sponsor and supporter of its activities since 2006.

INTRODUCTION

“It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.”

- Chinese proverb



Over 40 pedagogists, educators and parents gathered in Barcelona in July for a 4-day course on Creating Compassionate Cultures led by American educator Pam Cayton and sponsored by Essential Education

Welcome to our third newsletter of 2010, designed especially for Terrapinn staff to give you a taste of latest developments at Essential Education.

At a time of great difficulty and anxiety for many people in the world – whether due to the economic downturn, climate change or political upheaval – Essential Education is needed more than ever. Meaningful change starts with individuals, not with institutions, and if we can't each find ways to deepen and express our shared values and realise our potential, what hope is there for creating a more prosperous and peaceful world?

Essential Education isn't about soft skills, it's about survival skills. Through its stress on developing a kind heart and a smart mind, on promoting positive role models, and on taking responsibility for one another, it makes a practical and immediate difference to the way that people choose to live their lives, particularly (as you can read below) in challenging situations.

As the saying goes: “if you think you're too small to make a difference, try getting into bed with a mosquito!” Essential Education was only set up in 2005, but it already has a mailing list of more than 1500. These are people of all cultures and traditions, united by their commitment to making a positive difference in the world. We've now distributed over 2000 copies of our key publication, *16 Guidelines: The Basics*, and run training courses for more than 400 people from 5 continents.

Our main function is to inspire and support the development of community service projects, through providing Essential Education resources, training and connections to volunteers around the globe. Over the next six months, we'll be expanding geographically to offer training courses and presentations in Australia, France, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK – including the cities of Sydney and London, where Terrapinn has its offices. If you'd be interested in joining in, please write to us on info@essential-education.org.

PILOT PROJECTS FOR DISADVANTAGED PEOPLE IN THE UK

“People never talk to us about this stuff – they only talk to us about benefits.”
– Big Issue vendor participating in a 16 to live by workshop, Leeds, July 2009

The fact that Essential Education is based in the UK makes it a good place to develop pilot projects working with new and disadvantaged groups. Over the past 4 months, Essential Education volunteer Anna Colao has run 2 workshops introducing the 16 Guidelines for Life to the staff of a hairdressing salon in Sheffield, and 7 workshops for staff and vendors of the homelessness magazine the Big Issue.

From November onwards, Anna along with Essential Education Director Alison Murdoch will be training the youth workers of South London charity Flipside to share the 16 Guidelines with youth at risk. Flipside works with young people who have been excluded from school, who are under probation orders, or who have been involved with drugs and gangs, and Flipside Director Jean Carpenter feels that the Guidelines represent a set of ‘practical tools for life’ which can help them turn their lives around. We are now seeking funding to run the first 6-week programme and residential in Spring 2010, and to commission an evaluation of the programme before rolling it out more widely.

For many young people, it is unfortunately easier to relate to the shadow/opposite side of the 16 Guidelines than to the more positive side. For example, today do we live in a climate of ‘fear’ or of ‘courage’? Is the daily experience of the majority one of ‘despair’ or of ‘aspiration’? Using poetry, music, video clips and exercises, the 16 Guidelines can help young people explore the power of their thoughts and actions and to choose different role models and opportunities for themselves.

16 GUIDELINES AND TEEN-PARENT RELATIONSHIPS, SINGAPORE



Heather and James Chua

“When James Chua and his teenage daughter, Heather, decided to join Alison Murdoch’s workshop on the 16 Guidelines for Life in Singapore in February, they didn’t know what to expect...”

Essential Education volunteer Fiona O’Shaughnessy caught up with Heather and James after the workshop to discover their impressions and what they had learned. Click [here](#) to read more.

CASE STUDY – 16 GUIDELINES USED IN DRUG REHABILITATION IN THE NETHERLANDS



Johnny Reinhardt’s program has trialled the 16 Guidelines and mindfulness as a treatment for addiction – with encouraging results

Johnny Reinhardt completed the 16 Guidelines Trainers’ Training in March this year. He sent us this account of a pilot project that he subsequently set up in Copenhagen in Denmark.

I work as a chef in an institution for almost 300 drug addicts, some of whom are ‘double-diagnoses’ (having both a drug addiction and a psychiatric condition). The more I have learned and experienced with the 16 Guidelines the more I have thought they could be very effective as a treatment for our clients.

I received huge interest in the 16 Guidelines pilot project. Participants were very curious and eager to participate. They engaged enthusiastically, with some beautiful results from the exercises.

One “angry young man” from the group bumped into me and told me how his car had broken down in traffic. He then picked a card – delight! I thought, “Oh, now he will tell me where I can put those silly cards.” But instead he told me he had relaxed and decided that a broken-down car should not destroy his day.

Another story: a woman around 45 years old has begun to start every day with a mindfulness exercise, after which she chooses a daily guideline. After a few weeks of this practice, she had cut down her benzodiazepine depressant medication to only a quarter of what she used to take!

My guess is that the 16 Guidelines get you to focus seriously on your values *as a human being* – not just as a client or a drug addict or any other thing. And, of course, as a human being you want the same things as anybody else.

CASE STUDY – THE 16 GUIDELINES IN ACTION IN VIETNAM



Jan Kowbel is a volunteer teacher at Buu Tich Monastery in Vietnam. Keen to share the 16 Guidelines with the children there, she left her home in Canada with a copy of Essential Education’s children’s resource, Ready Set Happy, and a donated blackboard. She also asked her friend Heather Moore, a professional designer, to create some wall charts for the monastery school.

Each wall chart is illustrated with photographs. The wallchart for ‘service’ includes a photograph taken by Jan when she visited the monastery in the previous year, along with a photo of a woman in a wheelchair.

Jan wrote back to Heather:

Yesterday I had seen some wonderful examples of service and decided to talk about it in class. It is very difficult to have any meaningful conversation about these "concepts", because of the language barrier. They exist in full force, but couching them in simple language is difficult.

If you could have seen the look on their faces when they saw that the girls with the wash pans in the service guidelines were their very own selves.

They each wash their own clothes at least once and sometimes twice a day in these pans, at the well (yes with a wind up bucket). It is so much a part of their lives.

It also happened that that morning they were bathing Suco Tam Kong’s 80 year-old mother who has Alzheimer’s and lives at the monastery. Four girls carried her to bathe her. Later I mentioned to Suco Tam Kong that perhaps a wheelchair would be great. Language barrier again. So I took out the service picture and showed her the person in the wheel chair. Nods and smiles.

Previously I had asked permission to film the walking and chanting meditation that takes place each morning. When the time came for me to film, there was Suco’s mother all dressed and in her wheel chair. The girls wheeled her in lovingly and made sure she was part of the filming.

Your work is amazing - I can't begin to express how blessed I am to have it with me.

STOP PRESS – CANADIAN NEWSPAPER ADOPTS THE 16 GUIDELINES

A city-wide campaign named *Leading By Example* will be launched in the City of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada beginning October 17 by the main newspaper, the Hamilton Spectator. It is a 16 week online and print campaign inspired by the 16 Guidelines. Each week, readers will be invited to blog in examples of people in their community who they consider to be living exemplars of that particular guideline. More updates in the next edition of this newsletter...

WEBSITE UPGRADE

If you've found this newsletter of interest, you may want to visit our recently revamped website to find out more. You'll find new material [about us](#), about our [Core Curriculum](#) and about [Essential Education Programmes](#). Perhaps most importantly, you can read more about how Essential Education is being [put into action](#) around the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you'd like more information, please visit our websites:

Essential Education
www.essential-education.org

16 Guidelines
www.16guidelines.org

Alternatively, you can contact us directly:

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Thank you for your interest and support!