

Chapter 7

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND
EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES



Lithuania

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With the expansion and spread of Sathya Sai Education Programmes and the establishment of Institutes of Sathya Sai Education in different parts of the world, educationists have shown a keen interest to participate in Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) programmes and activities. International cooperation and exchange programmes have grown over the years, in different forms. This chapter gives a brief account of international cooperation between the Institutes of Sathya Sai Education and other educational institutions, Governments, and international organisations, including the United Nations.

Cooperation with Universities and the Academia

In the early years between 1980 and 1989, the European Sathya Sai Educare (ESSE) Institute (Denmark) started taking SSEHV to Europe by conducting seminars in Scandinavia, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Austria. During these years, ESSE also conducted three International seminars in Denmark (1984, 1987, and 1988). Educationists from Africa, Denmark, India, Thailand, and the UK participated and shared their knowledge and experience of SSEHV programmes in these countries with the participants coming from many European countries.

Between 1990 and 2006, the ESSE Institute (Denmark) conducted 95 international seminars in Austria, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Greenland, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Romania, Serbia-Montenegro, and Sweden. The ESSE Institute also actively participated in an international seminar in

Bangkok, Thailand, and conducted workshops in India at the International Conference on Strengthening Values Education (September 2000). The ESSE Institute's faculty is in itself a manifestation of international cooperation as it consists of trainers coming from some six European countries (Austria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, and Switzerland).

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Thailand (ISSE-Thailand) has presented the concept and experience of SSEHV programmes at universities in Dubai (UAE), Fiji Islands, Singapore, Auckland (New Zealand), Mindanao (Philippines), in addition to more than 10 universities in Thailand. ISSE-Thailand has also been invited by the American School in Morocco and the Indian School in Abu Dhabi (UAE) to expose their students to SSEHV.

The African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE-Zambia) was invited to present SSEHV at a Conference at St Andrews University, Scotland, sponsored by the Scottish Parliament as part of a public debate on education and world peace.

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education based in San Pedro, the Philippines, has assisted the University of Bali and the Kathmandu University to formally introduce SSEHV in the Bachelor of Education and Master of Education degree courses.

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Australia developed a global programme of SSEHV for parents. This programme was presented by ISSE-Australia at an International Conference in Prasanthi Nilayam in 1999 on the theme of Values Parenting. The Conference was attended by 300 delegates from all over the world. The trained facilitators subsequently started SSEHV Parenting Programme in their own countries.



ESSE (Denmark) at a SSEHV Seminar in Lithuania

Following the Conference, ISSE-Australia provided additional training to facilitators in several countries. Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences were held in New Zealand (1999), Papua New Guinea (2001), Fiji (2001), Japan (2000, 2004), Hong Kong (2000, 2004), Taiwan (2000, 2004), Malaysia (2004), Indonesia (2004), Sri Lanka (2000, 2005), and Singapore (2004, 2006).

In 2001, ISSE-Australia also conducted training workshops at the University of Goroka in Papua New Guinea for their senior academic and administrative staff and heads of departments. The workshops were also attended by inspectors of schools and principals of primary and secondary schools in Papua New Guinea. The workshops included topics covering SSEHV teaching, parenting, discipline, teenage issues, and curriculum reform with a focus on human values. Training was also given to the academic staff of the University in SSEHV for starting an undergraduate programme. Following this training, Goroka University started a Life Skills/ Human Values Programme for all teacher trainees.

In 2003, ISSE-Australia, ISSE-Thailand, and ISSE-Africa jointly participated in an Educare Conference on Children and Youth Character Development and Successful Parenting, in Malaysia. Seven hundred and fifteen teachers and educationists from 250 organisations attended the Conference. At the end of the Conference 60 principals expressed interest in having an SSEHV programme in their schools and nearly all delegates recommended that SSEHV training be conducted in their schools.

The Director of ISSE-Australia has also delivered public lectures on SSEHV in Fiji; Kyoto, Japan; the University of Technology in Hong Kong; in Colombo, Kandy, and Jaffna in Sri Lanka.

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education in Hong Kong has established close links with the University of Guangzhou, China, for introducing human values in education in schools in the Quandong Province. Preliminary results in Phase I of this project have shown significant beneficial impact on the behaviour of the children. They are more disciplined and have greater concentration. The Project is now

moving to Phase II and more schools will be involved in SSEHV.

The Academy of Sathya Sai Education in Malaysia has gained recognition for its work, particularly with the Teen Youth Programme. The Malaysian Academy has held workshops, seminars and public lectures on Teen Youth Programme and Sathya Sai Parenting in several ASEAN countries.

Cooperation with Governments and Non-governmental Organisations

ISSE-Thailand worked with the Ministry of Education and other government agencies in Thailand to introduce the Sathya Sai Human Values Programme to over 60,000 teachers and educators. The results in different countries were:

Fiji Islands

The Department of Education invited ISSE-Thailand to introduce SSEHV to teachers and educationists in five different towns.

Indonesia

The Department of Education invited ISSE-Thailand to train teachers in Jakarta.

Kazakhstan

Six teacher-training seminars were held.



Australia



Canada



Lao PDR

Lao PDR

Lectures in Sathya Sai Education were given to teachers and monks.

Malaysia

ISSE-Thailand introduced SSEHV to members of the Department of Curriculum Development.

Oman

The Ministry of Education in the Sultanate invited ISSE-Thailand to introduce SSEHV to teachers and educators.

Taiwan

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, ISSE-Thailand conducted two seminars for teachers.

United Arab Emirates

Training was given to 1,500 teachers under the invitation from the Minister of Education.

The Director of ISSE-Thailand visited Chihuahua in Mexico in May 2006 and presented SSEHV to 800 teachers, parents, and education officials. In the same month the Director of ISSE- Africa visited Venezuela giving seminars to 200 teachers and supervisors in the Ministry of Education. A pilot programme was set up with the Ministry of Education, as part of which teachers in four selected schools are being



Morocco

trained by members of the Sathya Sai Institute of Education in Venezuela. The Director of ISSE-Africa was also invited by the Government of Barbados to deliver a keynote address at the Fourth Education Conference in Erdiston College.

ISSE-Australia also trained government school teachers in SSEHV in Taiwan on two separate occasions. Approximately 80 teachers and parents attended on each occasion. The programme of training the teachers in the pedagogy of human values in Taiwan is now being followed up by ISSE-Hong Kong and by the alumni of ISSE Australia who hold its Diploma in Human Values Education.

In 2004, the Director of ISSE-Australia introduced an Outcome Based National Values Education Framework at a Conference organised by the National Education Council and the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka. The Conference, inaugurated by the Prime Minister Hon'ble M. Rajapakse, was attended by officials of the Ministry of Education, leading university educators and the principals of the leading schools. Since then, a National Committee on policy in values education has been established by the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka.



Sathya Sai Educationists at a SSEHV meeting in Nanjing, China

ISSE-Philippines has since its inauguration in 2000, conducted SSEHV training for over 10,000 teachers in the Philippines, and other countries in Asia. In 2002, ISSE-Philippines hosted a three-day International Convention on "Sathya Sai Educare – Integrating Values in Society". A total of 18 speakers and facilitators from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore participated. It was attended by 1,200 participants, including 30 diplomats and senior government officials, 900 teachers and educationists, 100 business and medical professionals, and 90 youth.

Cooperation with the United Nations and Other International Agencies

As Sathya Sai Education was gaining ground in Africa, the efficacy of human values in bringing about a lasting, positive change in attitude and behaviour in society was being studied by the United Nations. Values are not new to the United Nations. The UN Charter is replete with values such as equality, freedom, peace, and solidarity. Yet, the world organisation was seeking a practical way of translating values into its many-faceted developmental efforts.

Africa, steeped in its traditional culture and values such as respect for the nature and the spirit of Harambee (solidarity), provided an ideal landscape for introducing values in development projects. The opportunity came when, in a bold move, a group of international experts convened by the United Nations in South Africa in 2001, working together with the African Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE-Africa), unanimously adopted a human values-based approach to introduce water education in Africa. The five human values: Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct, and Nonviolence would be the driving force to bring about a caring society in Africa that would "give and forgive" rather than "get and forget".

The human values-based water education is an innovative approach that not only imparts information on water, sanitation, and hygiene but also inspires and motivates learners to change their behaviour and make wise and sustainable use of water. The value-based approach seeks to bring out desirable human qualities, which could help in making desirable choices in water resource management. Nurturing values such as honesty, integrity,

tolerance, responsibility, sharing, and caring in children during their formative years helps them to become caring and responsible adults in the future.

The following years would see African educationists: teachers, curriculum specialists, and educational administrators in a growing number of countries, such as Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, enthusiastically embracing human values through the United Nations water education programme. ISSE-Africa played a key role in training African educationists from across the continent in imparting education in human values.

Following an independent evaluation of the programme conducted in 2004, the programme has been further extended to five more African countries in the second phase.

The success of the programme in Africa generated interest in human values-based water education in other regions as well. In December 2003, UN-HABITAT and the Asian Development Bank jointly organised a Regional Consultation in the Asia-Pacific region on Values-based Water Education in cooperation with the Institutes of Sathya Sai Education in

the Philippines and Thailand. Among the participants were senior educationists from Australia, Brunei, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. Several regional agencies also participated in the meeting, notably the South East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) based in Bangkok. An important recommendation of the Consultation was to forge regional cooperation under the leadership of SEAMEO to introduce human values-based water education as a strategic entry point for supporting positive attitudinal changes among students, teachers, and all others involved in the education process. The Consultation also requested SEAMEO to provide active support to this programme.

The SEAMEO Council of Ministers adopted a declaration on values-based water education in March 2004 to support a collaborative initiative of the United Nations, the Asian Development Bank and countries of the region. Since then the human values-based water education programme has become operational in the Asia-Pacific region.

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