

SEVA TIMES

THE ART OF LIVING SOCIAL PROJECTS



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DECEMBER 2021

THE ART OF LIVING INTERNATIONAL CENTER, BENGALURU



Acer Tablets for Class 10 Students of The Art of Living Free School in Bengaluru



On November 9, 2021, 13 girls studying in Class 10 in The Art of Living Free Schools in Bengaluru received tablets from ACER in the presence of Smt. Bhanumathi Narasimhan, Director, Women & Child Welfare Projects, The Art of Living Foundation, and Shri. Bhasker Bhandary, Senior Director-HR Acer. This initiative was taken by The Art of Living's SSRDP to help the students in this era of digital learning.

Free Tablets for 30 Rural Students in Sujanpur



Sujanpur, Himachal Pradesh: On November 18, 2021, The Art of Living's International Association for Human Values (IAHV) in association with Grazitty Interactive (Mohali) gifted Tablets to 30 students of classes VI to VIII in government secondary schools in Tihra, Doli, and Manihal. Rajesh Kumar, The Art of Living faculty, stated that the majority of children studying in these schools belong to the low-income groups, with parents who work as daily wagers. Their studies were hit hard during the pandemic when education went online as they could not afford internet devices like Tablets and smartphones. Gifting these children with Tablets ensured that they would no longer be deprived of online education. Nishant Sharma, Block Development Officer, Tihra Sujapur, was present at the distribution.

Children Thrilled with New Uniforms



Children studying in The Art of Living Free Schools in Tripura, Rajasthan, and Karnataka are happy to be back in school after the Government gave permission to start offline classes. All of them have received new school uniforms.

65 Children from Assam Arrive at Bengaluru Ashram



A new batch of 65 children from Assam have arrived at the Bengaluru Ashram. Like the 118 children already residing at Bengaluru Ashram, they too will receive free education through The Art of Living Free Schools.

Art of Living and Radico Khaitan Begin Work on Kosi River Project

Rampur, Uttar Pradesh: The Art of Living's Vyakti Vikas Kendra India (VVKI) in partnership with Radico Khaitan will work on getting the Kosi river to flow in a steady stream once again and increase the level of groundwater along its banks. A team of river rejuvenation experts from VVKI have arrived at Rampur to chart out the course of action. The project, which includes the construction of six subsurface dyke walls in Kosi river between Lalpur and Madarpur, will be completed in three phases over a period of two years at an estimated cost of 25 crore rupees.

Earlier this year, at the request of Lalit Khaitan, Chairman of Radico Khaitan, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar sent a technical team from VVKI's River Rejuvenation Project to Rampur to conduct a detailed study of Kosi river. After the completion of the study in August, the findings were analyzed at the technical lab in The Art of Living Center in Bengaluru. A detailed report of Kosi and its tributaries was presented to the district magistrate, Ravindra Kumar Mander. A proposal was made to construct subsurface dyke walls and injection wells at six locations in the river in the stretch

between its origin and its culmination in Ramganga in the first phase. A report was also presented on the techniques to be employed while constructing the dyke walls. It would take approximately six months to complete the constructions. On

| **Team of experts from VVKI prepare outline of project after conducting a detailed study**

| **Impact of the project will be visible in six months**



Kosi river near Rampur - downstream view from NH 9 (Picture courtesy: ArmouredCyborg)

completion of the project, parts of the Kosi river which dry up during the off season will start flowing once again and the level of groundwater will increase in Rampur.

K. P. Singh, Director, Radico Khaitan, said, "The project report is ready. Discussions have been held with the Government of Uttar Pradesh. A presentation has been made before the District Magistrate.

He has formed a committee. In a way this project has been set in motion. Our effort will be to see that the first phase of the work will be completed before May-June, before the rains start. Next year, we will decide the modus operandi after seeing its

progress. The project will be completed in two years. Because of this, the blocks of Rampur which are in the dark zone like Chamrauva and Saidnagar, there are a few such areas, we are hopeful that these areas will come out of the dark zone."

Ravindra Desai, Director, River Rejuvenation Projects, VVKI, said, "When a river is rejuvenated, solutions have to be found to all the

problems that plague the entire river and ecosystem. Here, the flow of the river is reduced, groundwater levels have fallen, so problems have increased and will keep increasing if we do not fix these problems now. That is why scientists from The Art of Living came here, studied for 3 months, and gave a report. To solve the problem, we will be constructing some structures – subsurface dykes – barriers constructed across the river below the riverbed - which facilitate the arrest of subsurface flow, to obstruct the natural flow of groundwater. This will have many advantages. The impact of one subsurface dyke will be felt over an area of 40 square kilometers. In other words, many villages will be impacted and will benefit from it."

Apart from building these constructions, VVKI will also be working with the farmers in the area, to promote water literacy. In a process termed 'area treatment' they will be working with the farmers in the area to promote water literacy and help them in constructing recharge wells in their farming land and also in constructing recharge shafts in water bodies and promote agrohorticulture and agroforestry.

Tribal Pride Day - Our Duty to Preserve Rich Tribal Culture Says Gurudev

Bengaluru, Karnataka: Gurudev applauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's declaration of November 15 as Tribal Pride Day. He stressed the importance of preserving the rich culture of the tribal people which has been preserved in India for thousands of years. In his tweet on November 14, 2021, Gurudev said, "Modern generations have much to learn from tribal societies and their harmonious and sustainable ways of living. It is our duty to honor and preserve the diverse and rich tribal heritage of the nation."

On the first Tribal Pride Day on November 15, 2021, Gurudev had a meeting with Horen Sing,



November 15, 2021, Gurudev had a meeting with Horen Sing,

Member of Parliament, and Tuliram Ronghang, Chief Executive Member, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council,

and other representatives from Assam's tribal areas at The Art of Living International Center in Bengaluru. People from tribal regions of India who are volunteering at the center also joined the meeting.

Through their various service projects, The Art of Living, Vyakti Vikas Kendra India and IAHV have been actively working towards bringing about a sustainable transformation around the world along with the remote and tribal areas in India.

Tribal Day Celebrations and More in Jharkhand



Mukhiya; Bhim Singh Munda; Kashinath Mahato, Upamukhiya; and Amrit Ranjan, Prakash Kumar, Parvati Manjhi and others from The Art of Living, were present on the occasion.

Hand-Press Leaf Plate Making Machine Installed in Kadalkocha



On November 14, 2021, The Art of Living's Vyakti Vikas Kendra India (VVKI) gifted a hand press machine to make leaf plates and bowls to rural women in Kadalkocha, and also trained them to operate the machine. This will

provide the women with an opportunity to be economically independent. Praveen Kumar, Project Mentor, mentioned that a year ago, rural women were taught to make these biodegradable plates and bowls by hand. Installation of the machine made their work easier and faster thus increasing production. Vikram Sharma, from VVKI, Bengaluru, who was present on the occasion, added that making biodegradable plates and bowls would be very profitable for the women of this region as Sal leaves used in their manufacture were abundantly available in the region.

More Branches of Sri Sri Library Set Up in Tribal Areas

The Art of Living's Vyakti Vikas Kendra India (VVKI) has opened two more branches of Sri Sri Library in tribal areas – one in

Hartopa village, Potka Tehsil, Purbi Singhbhum District; and another in Deshwali village, Karra Block, Khunti District. At the inauguration of the library in Hartopa, the local youth welcomed the guests from VVKI in their traditional dress and gave a glimpse of their rich tribal culture by performing the Pata dance.

With the opening of these two libraries there are now 23 branches of Sri Sri Library in the tribal villages of Jharkhand.



Lush Green Man-Made Forest in Navi Mumbai



Mumbai, Maharashtra: In 2017, the Forest Department of Maharashtra, The Art of Living's Vyakti Vikas Kendra India, and the Hariyali Foundation, entered into a tripartite agreement to develop 34 acres of arid land in Tetvadi, Rabale, Navi Mumbai, into an urban forest.

With expert knowledge provided by the Hariyali Foundation and the help of 11 Corporate clients, The Art of Living's sister concern, International Association for Human Values and Vyakti Vikas Kendra India have successfully implemented the project and the once barren land is now a green paradise! In a span of four years, over 14,500 trees of around 80 native species have been planted with a surprising survival rate of 90%.

"Under the guidance of Hariyali, we built 3 check-dams that store rainwater, 17

bandharas, 2 borewells, and have set-up a drip-irrigation system over 60% of the land. The site is also maintained by full-time workers who help in activities like weeding. These measures have helped maintain the high survival rate of the plants," says Nagesh Vankadari, Project Lead, IAHV-VVKI.

Vinayak Suri, a volunteer from Mumbai International Airport says, "I am coming here for the second time for the tree planting exercise. The feeling is very good and the weather is very good. We find it very interesting as a team building activity. We can see that the trees we

planted last time have grown."

Hundreds of volunteers regularly visit the site and participate in tree planting activities. Coming from the concrete jungle of Mumbai, they are happy to have found this site where they can connect with nature and contribute towards conserving the environment. Their efforts have reduced the temperature of the place by 2.5 degrees and attracted a variety of biodiversity.

The man-made forest will be handed over to the forest department in 2024 with each tree having grown to an average height of 10 feet.



Reviving Traditional Tile-Making Craftsmanship



Sri Sri Rural Development Program (SSRDP) is now offering a course on making traditional Athangudi and Chettinad tiles. These unique, intricately patterned, colorful, handmade tiles, named after their original place of manufacture in Chettinad, Tamil Nadu, are a testimony to the rich cultural heritage of the Chettiar community, who effectively adapted many influences to their own brand of local craftsmanship. The tiles are made by a unique process using local soil. According to the artisans who make

these tiles, the charisma of the tiles is due to the sand used in it, which is of just the right composition. The team in SSRDP providing training in this craftsmanship have personally undergone training under the original craftsmen of Athangudi.

Athangudi tiles are ecofriendly and can hold their own against mechanized floor tiles made of ceramic, granite, and marble tiles. They are made using traditional colors and patterns from a bygone era, making it a natural choice for creating an ethnic ambience.

Mobile Phone Repair Technician Training at SSRDP Center of Excellence



Bengaluru, Karnataka: There was a time when owning a mobile phone was a costly affair only to be indulged in by a marginal few who could afford it. Today it has become more of a necessity than a luxury and the number of cell phone users is growing at an unimaginable pace. Studies estimate that India will have 966 million mobile phone users by 2023 and every one in two users will have a smart phone. Not so surprising then that there is a high demand for mobile repair technicians who have a thorough knowledge about the working of these complex electronic gadgets and can troubleshoot problems and fix them.

Sri Sri Rural Development Program Trust (SSRDP), along with its partner Supertone Foundation, now offers a 45-day residential course, Mobile Phone Repair Technician at its Center of Excellence in Bengaluru. The course is open to youngsters between the age of 18 and 35 years, who have passed the 10th standard. Only 10 students are enrolled in a batch. Participants learn both hardware and software repair. Theory sessions are followed by practical hands-on experience in a high-tech lab.

Shrikrishna Pethe, Trainer, Mobile Phone Repair Technician, says that youth from different parts of the country are enrolling in the course. Training is imparted in several languages like Hindi, English, Kannada, Marathi etc. Two batches have completed training so far – the first batch trained from August 16th to September 30th and the second batch from October 10th to November 25th.

A mobile repairing center requires minimal investment; a technician can start off by working from home itself. Most of the participants from the first batch opted to be self-employed and opened their own mobile repair centers. Only two participants requested job placement and they were suitably placed.

Tapasya Puri, director of training at SSRDP, says not all youngsters are good in studies but that should not be an impediment to their success in life. By acquiring a set of skills in fields of their choice, they can go on to climb the stairs of success. Mobile repairing is one such skill by mastering which one can easily find a job as a technician or choose to be self-employed.

BOOK REVIEW

'Sita - a tale of ancient love'

by Ranjani Govind

In the just-released 'Sita: A Tale of Ancient Love' (Penguin India release) by Bhanumathi Narasimhan, sister of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, what seizes a reader to its narrative is its breezy back and forth swings to Sita's life through Sita's own memories while she is sheltered at the Ashoka Vatika garden at Lanka, after she is abducted by the Lankan King Ravana.

How Sita grew up with her sister Urmila, their absorption of values from wide-ranging subjects they are exposed to, the syllabus of understanding that their parents Janaka and Sunayana and saint-gurus expose them to, every portion of the read is made engrossing.

What the book emphasizes is the path that Sita fashions for herself to walk past the "unexpected terrains" in her life which is made engrossing. Take the instance when Sita is awestruck with Ravana's wife Mandodari's beauty when her kind words describe Ravana. Sita studies Mandodari's feelings as "the wife's innate and independent calling" as the unexpected guest visits Sita at Ashoka Vatika to "willingly explain" the paradoxical state of affairs that Lanka and her King are thrown into!

... "You perhaps do not care for my words, but I wanted to tell you that Ravana is a good king and a good husband. He has brought prosperity to the people of Lanka. They love him. Do not think entirely ill of him, Sita."

The author says that "seeing them all from Sita's eye was the best part to her narrative." Consider the

contemplations brought forth in the book when Mandodari continues to speak her mind to Sita!

*.....Sita was amazed at the loyalty of this woman to her husband. Who was she trying to convince about the goodness of her husband? If she was jealous, she didn't show it. She wanted for her husband what he wanted for himself, even if it cost her dearly. Ravana was lucky to have her as his wife.

It was unfortunate that he did not see it. Sita heard her in silence.

Based on a variety of religious texts and tales passed on since generations, the description reflects the author's understanding presented in simplified form. The book also contains 16 eye-catching illustrative-paintings from Pratibha Kumari.

Running to 318 pages with a poetic prologue and epilogue, at once making it lyrical and distinctive, what follows are 25 chapters of Sita's memoirs, some of them even being her teenage dare-devil adventures such as her foray into the thick forest with her sister on horseback to bring back the cows and present them to Rishi Yagnavalkya; her passionate and tender side that has her eyes locked with her idealistic man Rama at first sight before her Swayamvara.

Amongst the several unknown facets brought forth, Bhanumathi's book brings about an endearing conversation between Urmila and her husband Lakshmana just before he decides to accompany Rama and Sita to the forest. An excerpt....



Smt. Bhanumathi Narasimhan

*'Urmila, I have something to tell you. I am going to the forest with Bhaiya,' said Lakshmana. 'Will you be back for dinner, my lord?' she asked in her sweet and chirpy voice. Lakshmana could not but smile. He held her by her shoulders and looked into her eyes with tender love. 'Your innocence is my greatest joy, Urmila!' Lakshmana had a direct manner. 'I need your help – will you do what I ask of you?' Urmila sensed that something was amiss, but she was prepared to stand by her husband come what may. She loved him dearly. 'Yes, tell me...'



Contact 7019138680 for copy of the book

5 Yogic Insights To Overcome Type-2 Diabetes



Type-2 diabetes can be corrected by lifestyle. So, a little change in diet, understanding, and community welfare activities, would push the health index of our country to newer heights. Let us all make this happen more often in all parts of the country and make our country free from diabetes!

Follow a holistic & nutrition-rich diet

Our diets should be such that it consists of a variety of fruits and green vegetables primarily, keeping a minimum weightage of 30-40% for grains. So, a little awareness of nutrition and reducing the quantity of



starch from our diets will help correct Type 2 diabetes quickly.

In the ancient times, people followed this simple Ayurvedic wisdom while preparing their food. Like they would include at least one green vegetable in their daily meals or they would top their rice with ghee which turned it into a complex carb preventing the rice from digesting and getting converted into sugar too quickly in the blood.

The world is now opening up to Ayurveda for such valuable insights on food and lifestyle for a healthy living. You can incorporate “dinacharya” – the daily routine prescribed by Ayurveda and many such ways to balance your diet and manage diabetes with ease.

Know stress & diabetes are interlinked

Stress and tension are the social ills of modern society giving rise to psychosomatic diseases such as diabetes globally. Stress contributes to rise in blood sugar by increasing the secretion of stress hormones like cortisol and could be a leading factor



for causing Type 2 diabetes. Stress means you have many things to do in a limited span of time where the demand for energy is more than ever. The more responsibility you have in life, the more is the need for meditation. Meditation and breathing techniques like the Sudarshan Kriya can help in reducing stress considerably and bring in a state of deep relaxation.

When you are busy with a lot of work and ambitions in life, the more is the need for you to meditate regularly to foster good health, energize your mind and keep stress to a minimum level.

Yoga regulates insulin

Yoga is a science of well-being and there are specific yoga asanas that help control and prevent diabetes. The goodness of yoga heals our body and effectively releases tensions from the muscles such as the neck, shoulders, and thighs while we hunch over desks all day. Yoga has multiple benefits and it can make our life so much better than what we could imagine. It makes our body strong,



brings focus to the mind, and overall, our energy becomes very positive with a regular practice.

Yoga might be a lesser-known measure to combat diabetes but a consistent practice helps you not only burn fat but also manage the right insulin level in your body.

In the service of society, one starts to heal

Happiness is sustained when we give. There is a direct connection between altruism and our health and happiness. When people engage in service to society their mindset changes because they start thinking bigger. From dwelling in the worries of the future and one's personal needs, the focus has shifted to doing something together for a better world.

So when a person comes from a spirit of service and connects with the people in the society, starts caring and sharing themselves with others around, a lot of improvement can happen in their health and outlook towards life and the way they see themselves.

A happy state of mind matters



Happiness is a prerequisite for good health. When you feel well in the mind, it impacts your endocrine system and there are multiple research works today to support this. Today, much of the diseases that people are suffering from are psychosomatic in nature which means they were aggravated by mental factors. A strong mind can carry a weak body, but not the other way around.

See, we all face challenges in life, but we can choose how to respond to it by broadening our awareness. A broader mindset acts like a vaccination for stress and tension because it gives your life a bigger outlook and purpose, fueling you with energy.

Wisdom shared by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar on September 28, 2021, at a panel discussion with a delegation of doctors hosted by The Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India (RSSDI).

Divyang Camp for Free Wheel Chair Distribution



Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Shri. Thaawarchand Gehlot, Governor of Karnataka, inaugurating the camp

Bengaluru, Karnataka: Over 300 physically challenged people received free wheelchairs at a Free Divyang Camp for Wheel Chair Distribution jointly organized by The Art of Living, Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, Rotary Bangalore Sadashivanagar, and Rotary

Bangalore Malgudi, and SBI Mutual Fund, at Sri Sri Ayurveda Hospital, Kanakapura Road, Bengaluru, on Saturday November, 20, 2021. The camp was inaugurated by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Shri. Thaawarchand Gehlot, Governor of Karnataka.

At a similar camp organized at Sri Sri Ayurveda Hospital in 2018, over 400 differently abled people from economically challenged backgrounds received free aids and assistive devices. The organizers hope to hold more such camps in the future.



Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Shri. Thaawarchand Gehlot, Governor of Karnataka, with some of the beneficiaries

Blood Donation Camp in Molela



Nathdwara, Rajasthan: On the first death anniversary of Shri Saubhagyamuniji Maharasa on October 24, 2021, volunteers of The Art of Living in Molela and Unique Art and Diamond Mumbai Vashi Molela, had jointly organized a blood donation camp in which 68 units of blood was collected. The camp was organized in the auditorium of Shree Kardhar Government Senior Secondary School. This was the 9th blood donation camp organized by The Art of Living in Molela. This time the blood that was collected was given to the blood bank at Govardhan Government Hospital of Nathdwara.

Volunteers Make Diwali Joyful for the Needy



Molela, Rajasthan: Like they do every year, this year too volunteers of The Art of Living in Molela made Diwali joyful for the poor and needy by visiting their homes and gifting them with clothes, toys, sweets, lamps, bangles, lunch boxes, bags, and other necessary items. Messages posted on social media asking people to come forth and contribute towards making Diwali memorable for the downtrodden received a good response and there were ample gifts available for distribution.

Saris Distributed Among Tribal Woman



Aurangabad, Maharashtra: On the occasion of Diwali and the birth anniversary of freedom fighter and tribal leader Birsu Munda, The Art of Living's Ashtavakra Reading Group of Aurangabad, in collaboration with Vijayashree Colony and Ayurvedic Foundation, distributed saris to over 300 tribal women. The distribution took place on October 24, 2021, in Daregaon village in Phulambri Taluk of Aurangabad.

Blood Donation Camp in Bagbahara on Guru Nanak Jayanti



Bagbahara, Chhattisgarh: On the occasion of the 552nd birth anniversary of the Sikh founder, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, on November 19, 2021, volunteers of The Art of Living had organized a blood donation camp at Shri Jin Kushal Suri Bhawan, Bagbahara, from 11AM to 3 PM. 58 people donated blood at the camp, including 8 women. Prior to the camp, members of the chapter spread awareness among the people about the importance of blood donation using slogans like, “*Ek unit blood ke liye taraste dekha hai, maut se ladte pareshan dekha hai; samay par milta koi raktdata toh, usko Bhagwan bante dekha hai.*” (A life desperately in need of a unit of blood I have seen; Hanging precariously between life and death I have seen; A blood donor arrives on time, in him God incarnate I have seen.) The people were made aware of the fact that though it was not difficult to find blood donors locally, when people of the area went to Raipur for advanced treatment, they had to run from pillar to post looking for donors. Donor cards issued at blood camps such as this would help them to get blood in Raipur, if ever the need arose, even in the absence of donors.

Inverter Batteries Gifted to Government Senior Secondary School in Molela



Nathdwara, Rajasthan: Power supply being rather erratic in rural areas, the Shree Kardhar Senior Secondary School in Molela was heavily dependent on its two invertors to keep

the computer laboratory running and not disrupt the education of its students. However, the frequent power outages were rough on the inverter batteries and they broke down. When the principal of the school, Ramchandra Saini, voiced his concern to The Art of Living team that his students were suffering a severe setback in their studies due to the breakdown of the inverter batteries, the team decided to immediately set things right. On November 14, 2021, the team gifted the school with two much needed inverter batteries.

Diwali Celebrations at the Old Age Home in Hazaribagh



Hazaribagh, Jharkhand: On November 3, 2021, volunteers of The Art of Living in Hazaribagh celebrated Diwali with the elderly men and women residing at the Hazaribagh Old Age Home. Each volunteer took on the responsibility of one elderly person, and gifted him or her with a set of new clothes. All of them lit lamps together and distributed sweets and exchanged Diwali greetings. Tarakeswar Soni, faculty, The Art of Living, gifted a photograph of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar to Neeraj Kumar, who is in charge of the old age home, and appreciated his service towards the elderly. This apart, volunteers also distributed new clothes to the differently-abled living in the city with whom they are conducting an ongoing program to promote sanitation and employment.

Joyful Diwali Celebrations with the Third Gender



Hazaribagh, Jharkhand: The Art of Living volunteers in Hazaribagh organized a meet for members of the third gender on the occasion of Diwali. Eunuchs who attended the Meet enjoyed a sumptuous breakfast and received saris, trousers and shirts, and children's garments as gifts. Dr. Avinash Kumar Misra also conducted a free nadi pariksha for the benefit of the eunuchs. The chapter presented a picture of Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar to Soni, representative of the eunuchs.



From Vision To Reality

Gurudev's Dream: When Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was asked in an interview what His problems were, he replied, "My big problem is I am a dreamer. Knowing very well that there is violence and that there are problems in the world, I still dream of a violence-free society, a violence-free world. I know it will take its own time but I can't give up my dream. This is my big problem; I hold on to it. Though, if you read newspapers and watch television, it appears that we are so far away from this dream. Yet I keep dreaming the same dream – to see the world united in love, peace... a violence free, stress-free society."

Translating Vision into Reality: It is this dream, this vision, of a stress-free and violence-free society that is the founding vision behind The Art of Living and its sister organizations and it translates into action at two levels – the individual and the societal. At the individual level, The Art of Living courses and self-development programs offer powerful tools to eliminate stress and foster a sense of wellbeing and belongingness in this chaotic world. At the societal level, various large-scale social transformation projects are undertaken spanning such diverse areas as holistic rural development, disaster relief and trauma care, free education for the rural and tribal children, and promotion of organic and zero-budget farming.

Dharma Sthambha Yojana - Bridging Two Disparate Activities: The Dharma Sthambha Yojana (DSY) is a unique initiative that serves as a bridge between these two seemingly disparate activities. On the one hand, there are the service projects, whose impact and effectiveness critically depend upon monetary resources. On the other hand, there are today millions of socially-conscious individuals (many of whom are graduates of The Art of Living courses), who are quite willing to set aside a portion of their income for the betterment of society. The goal of DSY is thus to effectively channel

monetary resources, from the individuals who are willing to contribute, to the service projects in the field, where their contribution can have the most beneficial impact on society.

The Art of Living Social Projects, with the help of thousands of volunteers and organizers, has to date successfully completed 143 projects in 23 states and 3 Union Territories of India, touching the lives of over 4,56,67,550 beneficiaries. Here is a glimpse of what has been achieved in the last 40 years:



River Rejuvenation: Many rivers in India had been dry for so long that they had even disappeared from the maps. Since 2013, thousands of dedicated Art of Living volunteers have consistently been working towards reviving our drying and dying rivers in India. With the help of geospatial technology and remote sensing, they have so far revived 48 rivers and tributaries, benefitting over 9,320 villages and over 12 million people. 6,56,944 trees have been planted under the River Rejuvenation Project and over 26,000 recharge structures have been constructed.



Over 512 tons of garbage has been cleared from river Yamuna

Environment Care: Over 81 million trees have been planted in 36 countries so far. Over 2 million Lakshmitaru trees have been planted. In 2020, Mission Green Earth 2020 was launched under which 10 million saplings will be planted by 2025. Over 100 ponds and lakes have been cleaned and de-silted. 18 waste management plants have been installed with a total capacity to process 11,600 kilograms of waste in a single day. Over 1000 waste pickers in 5 states have been trained in waste segregation. In other environmental care projects, 600 tons of garbage has been removed from river Pampa, 512 tons from river Yamuna; 43,980 cleanliness drives

have been conducted across the country.



Skill Development: Although India is one of the youngest populations in the world with an average age of 29 years, the skilled workforce is a meagre 2%. The Art of Living has so far trained 3,07,323 youth, in over 500 districts across India, in various Government skilling programs at its skill development centers and in prisons. Youth from economically weak backgrounds, a majority of them from rural areas, have been trained in over 50 different job roles providing them with an opportunity to be self-employed or gain placement in good firms.



Free Education: Over the last four decades, The Art of Living has been running free schools in remote and tribal parts of India. Currently there are 702 free schools where more than 70,000 children are being prepared for a brighter future. 19 schools run by VVKI are in remote tribal areas catering to over 3200 students, 45% of them girls. Children studying in the free schools receive free books, uniforms, and meals.

Women Empowerment: Over the last 40 years, The Art of Living has been working to integrate girl child protection and women empowerment as a cross-cutting theme across all its projects and programs. Women from all socio - economic - cultural backgrounds have undergone programs for resilience-building, strengthening them to handle personal and societal challenges with tenacity and courage. Over 1,11,000 women have been trained in different skills, making them economically independent. One million have pledged to protect the

girl child. 250,000 people have undergone sensitization programs against gender testing and child marriage. Over 100,000 girls have been sensitized on health, nutrition, child-marriage, female foeticide, and dowry. 620 Self-help Groups (SHGs) have been formed for income-generating projects.



Over 90% of the workers on the Naganadhi River Project were women

Rural Development: Since the heart of India beats in its villages, infrastructure and people development have been the primary focus. 2,26,848 rural youth have been trained in Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP). 3,588 Panchayat Members have been trained in Good Governance. 50 GP Scheduled Tribes have been sensitized on their Rights and Acts. Over 20,000 rural women have been trained and are working under the MGNREGA scheme. Over 62,000 toilets have been constructed in an effort to create Open Defecation Free (ODF) villages. Over 1,10,000 smokeless chulhas have been distributed to save women and children from the damaging effects of indoor air pollution and reduce cooking time. Over 1000 biogas plants have also been constructed. Over 70 'Adopt a Village' projects have been successfully completed. Apart from natural farming, rural youth are also being trained in dairy farming.



Over 2.2 million farmers in 22 states have been trained in organic and natural farming techniques

Sustainable Agriculture: The Art of Living has trained over 2.2 million farmers in 22 states in organic and natural farming techniques and this is slowly bringing a transformation in agriculture. Farmers are also being educated in agroforestry and

agrohorticulture to not only improve the environment but also give them more economic stability. Four Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) have been formed to provide end-to-end support and services to small farmers. Farmers are being educated on the importance of preserving, propagating, sharing, and exchanging their indigenous heirloom seeds to ensure that this precious biodiversity does not become extinct. Farmers are also being motivated to preserve indigenous breeds of cows.

Health & Sanitation: VVKI is working on various projects with government departments and has completed 15 such projects so far. 90,200 Health Camps have been conducted across India. Over 100,000 have been educated on menstrual health and hygiene through Project Pavitra.

Renewable Energy: Over 1,65,000 + people have benefited under the 'Light A Home' project where solar lamps were distributed in villages that had little or no electricity supply. 28 Solar Micro Grids have been set up for the Integrated Rural Energy Access Model Village program. 720 villages across India have been electrified with solar energy. 152 schools have been electrified with solar power. 150 solar energy entrepreneurs have been trained to take care of solar-powered multipurpose charging stations. Over 500 youth have been trained in operations, maintenance, assembling, repairing, and installation of renewable energy products.

Dharma Sthambha Yojana (DSY) welcomes you, to be part of The Art of Living Social Projects by donating a part of your income. Donations are eligible for tax exemption under section 80G of the Income Tax Act.

Donate Now: <http://vvki-dsy.org/donate>

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40 Years of The Art of Living - Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



Knowledge and wisdom are eternal. They are ancient and yet ever new. And that's what The Art of Living has been doing – enlivening wisdom, kindling compassion, and uniting people of all strata of society. This is a timeless journey and a journey towards one's self. The framework to hold this timeless wisdom was born 40 years ago – on November 13, 1981. Justice P.N. Bhagwati (Chief Justice of India) and Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer (Chief Justice of India) met with me and they both became the founder trustees of this

organization. So, a reluctant recluse was roped into a framework of organization for some very good cause and very good reason. I must remember Pitaji (Shri. R.S.V. Ratnam, Entrepreneur, Vedic Scholar) here and Veda Brahma Gunjur Narayana Shastri Ji, the Chief Secretary of Karnataka State, N. Narasimha Rau, and the most acclaimed administrator of Bengaluru City, Lakshman Rau, were all the initial trustees of this organization. The journey began and prominent people have been spearheading this movement called Art of Living and cutting across race, religion, nationality, language, this movement has stood up as a hope for a happy, prosperous, and ethical lifestyle. Rural development, river rejuvenation, conflict resolution, schools for children, name it – there are many, many avenues in which Art of Living has been active. Art of Living movement has also through

its sister organization, International Association for Human Values (IAHV), taken up the 5H Program – Health, Hygiene, Homes, Human Values, and Harmony in Diversity for millions of people around the world. Through PRISON program, it has transformed the lives of inmates, on the other hand, it has cared for rural development through skill development of people, providing food for those who are in need. Another project that Art of Living has passionately taken up is women's empowerment, gender equality, and justice for all. Art of Living is also very passionate to care for environment and so our volunteers have planted millions of trees around the globe. Water is the main source of sustenance and Art of Living has done substantial work in reviving 48 rivers in India. All the service projects have come out as an expression of love

for humanity and the intention to spread joy in society, and we need to continue doing this.

For me, the entire world is an Art of Living movement. Anyone anywhere in the world if they are compassionate and they are passionate about spreading love and joy in society, just consider them as part of Art of Living.

These 40 years have been a very, very interesting and exciting journey. Thousands of teachers and millions of volunteers around the world have worked with such joy, such pleasure, to spread happiness around the world. And it is time for everyone to feel proud of their achievement of bringing happiness to the doorstep of millions around the world. Let's keep going. There is a lot more to do. All the best to everyone.

- Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Our Social Projects

River Rejuvenation | Rural Development | Skill Development | Tribal / Free Education | Environmental Care
Natural Farming | Women Empowerment | Health & Sanitation | Renewable Energy | Disaster Management

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