



## IDEC 2004 India Initial Program

Dear All

As seems to be usual with me in the last couple of years, I have been doing a lot of travelling. But it has been good because I have had meetings to announce IDEC. There is now an organising group in Bangalore led by the Concerned for Working Children (they initiated Bhima Sangha which is a working children's union) and they will help to involve groups that they know from India and elsewhere both to participate and to take sessions. I had another meeting in Chennai (Madras) and the children and teacher who came from Abacus to IDEC in the US will spearhead the organising from there. They will involve the many organisations working in and around Chennai for and with children.

There are other cities too who are interested and I am finding one or two key persons who will carry this forward. I have been telling them, that it is not only for the conference, but also for later.

The one in Bhubaneshwar held on 22nd May went well with a lot of enthusiasm from the six -seven organisations that I had invited. This was held in the UNICEF office. The next meeting will be held on the college campus which will be the venue of the conference and I will send you photographs from there. This will be a crucial meeting for which we have invited children - a mix of school-going children, working and street children, and children who are handicapped or disabled or differently abled. I will have the first meeting with them with help from the adults accompanying them and then they will participate in the meeting that will follow. This pattern will also be followed in Bangalore. After this meeting we will open up the registration because then we will be ready with the accounting system.

The programme for the conference is also taking shape. In the discussions had so far, we feel that we could have a series of workshops or forums continuing through the Conference. This could be on: training educators for democratic education (this emerged as an issue that needed more discussion and elaboration in the last IDEC); another could be on the theory & practice of democratic education (this hopefully could have Yaacov taking some of the lectures); another forum could be the Indian experience - from the Upanishadic mode of education to Gandhi to Tagore to the more recent work going on through the country; another suggested forum was the curriculum, which is an issue in India at the moment with governments changing textbooks to suit their ideology etc The time & venue for these forums will be fixed. Please offer to take any of these programmes, that will also be up on the website.

The schedule for the day:

- before breakfast: yoga, Tai chi etc
- after breakfast: the community gathers two sessions before lunch and one longer session after lunch
- evenings (4.30pm to 6.00 pm?): which are usually nice will be relatively kept free after an early dinner special speakers or cultural programmes

There will be parallel sessions, of course depending on the no. of workshops, speakers etc About three or four per session?

Some activities that are being planned:

- learning arts & crafts from traditional/contemporary artists (pottery, drawing & painting, building, weaving, puppets, folk dancing)
- trekking
- visits to local forest & lake
- visits to historical & cultural places in & around Bhubaneshwar (one van to leave every morning for the day)
- science corner (including night sky watching)
- paper craft (including origami, mon-kiri, papier mache)
- swimming can be organised in the nearby hotel
- beaches are abt 3 hrs away (one van can be organised every day, if there are any takers)

Please offer, suggest whatever else you would like to do or organise

Food: A variety of food from all over India & elsewhere will be served for the main meals. A cafeteria will also be opened through the day. It was suggested that we have one country on each day cooking one or two special items for the evening meal? If you let us know the ingredients that you want, we can let you know what is available and what is not.

Health: Will advise you as soon as I get the details of what vaccinations etc are actually required. There will be health room/tent with most systems being available - allopathy, homeopathy, ayurvedic (naturopathy - yet to find someone). Reiki & pranic healing will also be available.

Stalls: Besides the stalls by each organisation, we may have book stalls, health products, organic products also available or with whom you can link up with.

Travel: It has been suggested that it is better to apply for a tourist visa. But let me check this out again and confirm. We are planning out small trips that people can take in different locations to visit schools and projects. One that has kind of been finalised is to visit the project site of the Concerned for Working Children, which is in Karnataka on the south west coast. This is south of Mumbai & Goa and there is the calm ocean on that coast that is great for swimming. This trip could also include Chennai (visit to Abacus School? & other organisations) & Bangalore & perhaps a forest depending on the no. of days. Abt 6 to 7 days may be okay if one is flying. We can plan one around Delhi, another around Kolkata etc depending on yr interests and yr outgoing flight directions.

I think I will stop here, otherwise I will sound like a tourist brochure. I am sorry that I have not been able to put up the website, since I don't know too much abt it & waiting for somebody to take it on.

With affection  
*Amukta*

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