

EduFOCUS

ABE
ARCHDIOCESAN BOARD
OF EDUCATION, MUMBAI

Issue 8 | July 2021 | Private Circulation Only

CULTURAL

PSYCHOLOGICAL

EMOTIONAL

STUDENTS' WELL-BEING

SOCIAL

PHYSICAL

MENTAL



OSWALD CARDINAL GRACIAS
CHAIRMAN, ABE



FR. DENNIS GONSALVES
SECRETARY, ABE

Did you know...

The paper plane is the ultimate symbol and epitome of imagination, childhood, desire, magic, travel, communication, prototyping, iteration, simplicity, creativity, belief, optimism and design. (blog.prototypy.io)

We chose paper planes as the sub-theme for this issue of EduFOCUS because paper planes have the capacity to take us back to our childhood...to carefree and fun days when our imagination and creativity was unhindered by harsh reality. Most of us will remember flying these planes with our friends in school during our lunch breaks or even in the classroom. Take a break from adulthood and make a paper plane. Toss it around your room and relive those happy memories.

Paper planes are one of the most used subjects for origami tattoos. In origami, it means starting all over or "throwing yourself" into the future. It could also stand for fun, a carefree nature, a sense of adventure, a love of travel or aviation, a reminder to keep moving forward and so on.

Today, paper planes are visible all across the digital space. They are now almost an industry-standard logo for 'Send' – take a look at Instagram and some of the Google apps. Networking and messaging apps like WayUp and Telegram even have them as their logo.

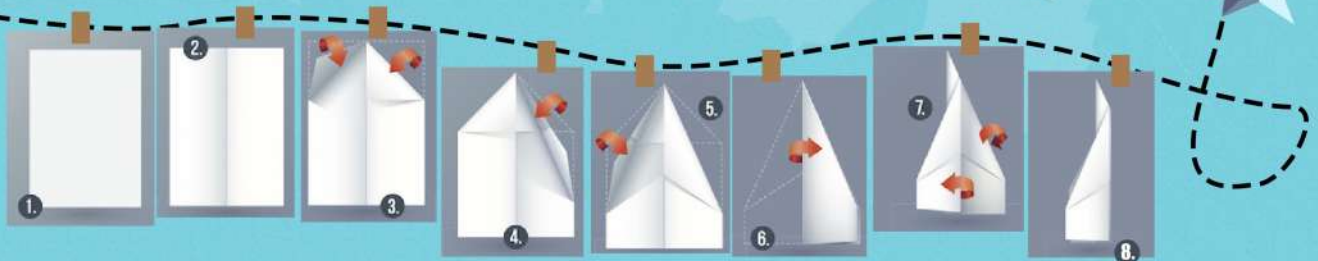
The practice of constructing paper planes is sometimes referred to as aerogami, after origami, the Japanese art of paper folding.

A paper plane thrown in space will not fly. It will float in a straight line.

Scientists, engineers and students use paper airplanes to study aerodynamics. They actually get to make paper planes as part of their job!

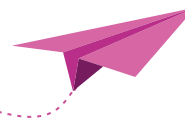
You can catch and throw paper planes with people from across the globe. Go to paperplanes.world on your mobile phone and follow the instructions to participate in this fun activity.

LEARN HOW TO MAKE A
PAPER PLANE
IN JUST 8 STEPS





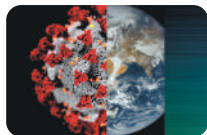
Check-in



05 Air-ditorial

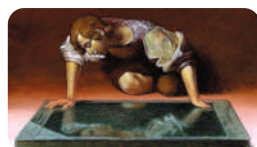
06 Chairman's Message

07 Secretary's Message



08 The Pandemic Effect:
Anxiety and Depression
in Children

16 Challenges to
Multiculturalism
in Online Learning



24 Student's Growth
and Well-being

28 Virtual Wellness



34 The Year of
Resilience

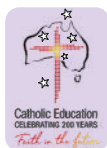


36 Emotional Development
and Career Guidance



39 Congregation for
Catholic Education:
Circular Letter to Schools,
Universities and Educational
Institutions

44 Catholic Education
in Australia – A Blessing for
200 Years



46 Pope: Schools should
form consciences to
generosity and equality

47 Education and
Learning:
Challenges and the
Road Ahead



49 Septuagennial Celebrations
at Auxilium Convent
High School, Wadala

54 St. Andrew's Among Top 100



55 Emotions –
A Multidisciplinary
Inquiry

56 Santa Kaun-spiracy



58 From Zoom to Zoomba –
International
Women's Day 2021

62 Awesummer 2021



64 DHI: Confabulation
on Faith and Films – Vol I

70 Film Review: Paper Planes



74 Uplift Your Spirits

EDITOR
Fr. Magi Murzello

EDITORIAL TEAM
Anjali Heredia Gracias
Nalini Sorensen
Dr. Omkar Bhatkar
Suzie D'Silva
Vanessa D'Cruz

Designed by **Oscar Fonseca**

Printed at **Print Hub, Mumbai**

Published by
**Archdiocesan Board of Education,
Mumbai**

BOARD OF ADVISORS
ARCHDIOCESAN BOARD
OF EDUCATION, MUMBAI

His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias – President

Fr. Dennis Gonsalves – Secretary

Dr. (Fr.) Francis Swamy SJ – Joint Secretary

Fr. Simon Lopes – Joint Secretary

Members of the Executive Committee

Fr. Elias D'Souza

Dr. (Fr.) Francis Carvalho

Fr. Adrian Ferreira

Fr. George Athaide

Fr. Gavin D'Souza

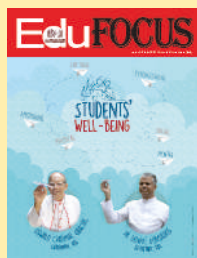
Fr. Clifton Lobo

Fr. Crispino D'Souza SDB

Mr. Guilherme Vaz


Sr. Maria Selvam FMM

Fr. Thomson Kinny



Cover Design Credit:

Fr. Nigel Barrett and the
AMCF - Catholic
Communication Centre team



CABIN CREW



Fr. Magi Murzello



Anjali Heredia Gracias



Nalini Sorensen



Dr. Omkar Bhatkar



Suzie D'Silva



Vanessa D'Cruz

We look forward to hearing from you.
Do send in your feedback to the Editor at
rector@standrewscollege.ac.in

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the articles are solely those of the authors and, not necessarily, those of the Archdiocesan Board of Education, Mumbai.



Fr. Magi Murzello

A parent asked me, “Father, when will school open?” I was tempted to scream back at her, “When was school ever shut?”

With online teaching and its complexities, schools never really did shut. Teachers had to put in effort 24x7 to maintain some semblance of normalcy for their students while putting their personal and family time on the backburner. The 'Zoom to Zoomba' report on page 58 is an eye-opener and shows how an already stressed job has become even more stressful and demanding for the teachers.

However, I realised that loss of learning was not that mother's main worry; the well-being of her child was her prime concern. The frictions and frustrations at home are traumatising children in myriad ways giving rise to an unprecedented mental health crisis. Suicidal ideation, emotional distress, human connection crisis, creativity crisis due to play deprivation, and screen dependency disorders have impacted children's mental well-being which is a core pillar of effective learning.

Isabelle Hau, an impact education funder and author, in her brilliant essay, “Education Has a Three-Headed Crisis. Mental Health Is Only Part of It” details a three-headed Hydra-like learning crisis consisting of mental health, empathy and creativity. Like Hercules who prevailed over Hydra in the Greek myth, education must bring together all its resources to build emotionally healthy learning environments, to teach empathy and social-emotional learning, and to foster creativity and collaboration through play. Taking a cue from Isabelle Hau's suggestion to create a fertile environment for creativity that embraces imagination, creation/ making and play, we have chosen paper planes as our sub-theme for this July 2021 issue of EduFOCUS (EFX J-21). Why paper planes? Mario D'Cunha, a product designer based in the USA, has the answer: It's the ultimate symbol and epitome of imagination, childhood, desire, magic, travel, communication, prototyping, iteration, simplicity, creativity, belief, optimism, and design.

We also brought together experts from diverse fields to put forward solutions to this multi-pronged crisis. We told them to keep it *plane* and simple. They moved in the flight direction and came up with air-mazing suggestions for students' well-being.

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.

When life gives you a pandemic, make a plane-demic.

See the flight side of life and soar high.

Enjoy your flight!

BOARDING PASS IS TRANSFERABLE. SHARE IT WITH OTHERS!

FLIGHT: EFX J-21

SEAT: FIRST CLASS

BOARDING TIME: AT YOUR CONVENIENCE

DESTINATION: STUDENTS' WELL-BEING



WELCOME ABOARD

CHECK-IN : 03

IN-FLIGHT MOVIE : 64

IN-FLIGHT SNACKS : 74

IN-FLIGHT MUSIC : 75

THANK YOU FOR FLYING WITH US!

ENJOY YOUR FLIGHT!

Chairman's Message

The Coronavirus pandemic has affected our lives with fear, anxiety, sadness at the loss of someone dear to us, and insecurity because we do not know what lies ahead. Three clear messages that have emerged as a result of the pandemic are: we need God; we cannot survive without the other; we have to shed ourselves of selfishness.



We had come to believe that we were total masters of all: economy, nature, and life itself. We were able to manipulate anything at will. Our self-confidence was rudely shaken by that invisible enemy, the origin of which is still not clear. In this moment of weakness, we turn to God realising that He has the answers we seek and only He can be our strength and refuge.

Big corporates, business houses, multinationals considered themselves so powerful that they attempted to control governments and their policies. Richer countries thought they could dominate the world; small countries did not matter. With the pandemic, we gradually came to realise that we need to work together if we want to survive. The existence of the virus in even just a tiny corner of the world poses a threat to all. We are all brothers and sisters and wherever we are in the world and whatever be our circumstances, we need one another's help to survive.

We have further come to the realisation that one is never fully protected until we assist our neighbours to protect themselves. Safety and survival can no longer be a private affair. We need to be the Good Samaritan caring for the traveller lying wounded on the road.

In the context of the pandemic and its consequences, we look at our educational scenario. It is terrible that our children have to go through so much. The sense of isolation caused by the lockdown is too heavy a burden on the little ones for far too long. The authorities have helped by scrapping some examinations but the bigger question remains: How do we give good education in the midst of these challenges? How do we ensure that our children still get a basic foundation in all branches of education and knowledge? How do we impart those skills so necessary for life: concern for the other, teamwork, patriotism, respect for nature, in the midst of a pandemic and the lockdown?

These are challenges but we will face them bravely even though we don't have clear answers. Jesus said, *"Fear not, I am with you."* We must remind ourselves and our students about this assurance. The pandemic will pass, hopefully soon, and life will inch forward, hopefully fast.

To all students in our schools, we say, *"You are most dear and most precious to us."* The struggles of our times are but challenges which have to be faced. The Government, the Management and the Teachers are doing all that we can to give you an excellent education even in the midst of uncertainties. Don't fear! Things will right themselves. Work hard, help your parents at home, keep a positive attitude at home and outside and never allow the situation to overwhelm you. All will be well! This is the assurance we have.

With affectionate greetings to the Management, Teachers and Staff in our Schools.

✠ Oswald Cardinal Gracias
Archbishop of Bombay

3rd July 2021

Secretary's Message

Every situation has both, good and bad effects, on our lives and the pandemic is no exception. We never thought it would continue for so long. It has badly affected all aspects of our lives: physical, social, psychological, economic and religious. People have lost jobs; many are working from home. We cannot meet our relatives and friends. Some are in quarantine; others are struggling to stay alive in hospitals. Many may have recovered, but some have died. Religious places are closed; people cannot attend the funerals of their loved ones. There is an atmosphere of fear and sadness.



While all this is happening, countries across the world have come together. Efforts are on to vaccinate the entire population while continuing to find a cure for the disease. Doctors, nurses and the other hospital staff are constantly busy with the stream of patients.

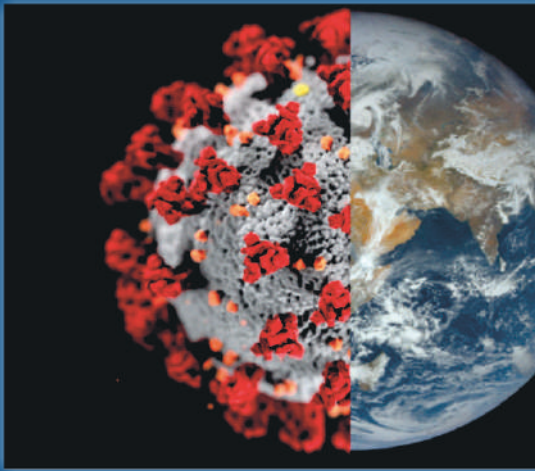
People have realised that the health is wealth. We are trying to eat nutritiously. We have learnt the importance of hygiene and sanitation. We have become courageous and are prepared for anything that comes our way. We have learnt to live in the present appreciating our experiences. We have learnt to remain positive and appreciate our loved ones. We have learnt to use technology to our advantage; learnt how to order medicines and food online, pay bills online, keep in touch with loved ones via WhatsApp and phone calls. We have seen the goodness of humanity even in the darkness. We have acknowledged that the life is precious; that family and friends come first.

More than a year later, we are thinking of starting physical schools but is it possible? Medical authorities are speaking of a third wave of the coronavirus which will affect children. Imagine if it really happens... children in hospitals on ventilators, children dying. It will be a stressful and sorrowful situation. If there is a third wave, there will definitely be no physical school for at least another year for the students from KG to Std. VIII.

Whenever physical school starts, our priority should be the well-being of the children. For that to take place, teachers should look after their own well-being first: physical, social, emotional etc. There will be students whose family members have suffered from COVID-19, some whose parents have lost jobs, some who have lost family and friends to the virus, some who have spent months in their native village with no internet connection and no access to education, some who have not paid fees, some who have lost interest in studies, some who have forgotten the basics of reading and writing, and some who are struggling to make sense of their lives. How then do we look after the well-being of these children? Dealing with these students will require a lot of understanding, love, and compassion as not all students adjust easily.

Teachers too will be adjusting to the new situation. They must follow government circulars issued by the education department from time to time to deal with the situation, reorganise class activities to follow COVID-19 protocol of social distancing and handwashing, show understanding to the students whose parents do not or cannot pay fees or to those who show no interest in their child's studies. Encourage students to come to school rather than remaining absent either because of no interest in studies or because of the fear of catching coronavirus from others. It will be a great task for teachers to reduce the stress, trauma and fear of the students. They may even have to refer cases to a counsellor/ psychologist with the consent of the parents. It will fall to duty of the teachers to teach their students that good can come from evil and they can still live long and healthy lives.

Fr. Dennis Gonsalves
Secretary, ABE



The Pandemic Effect: Anxiety and Depression in Children

Fr. Godfrey D'Sa, SDB

Introduction

Childhood must be a happy period in our lives. We love to see children happy, carefree and enjoying themselves. The business of childhood is 'PLAY' and it is wonderful to watch children at play, totally lost in either their real or imaginative world. Unfortunately, it appears as if in today's world, we have made 'STUDY' the business of children!



We often see parents only concerned about study! *"How many marks have you got in Marathi or Math? Have you failed in any subject? Into which college should I put this child? What classes should he/ she attend?"* And while all this happens, childhood comes to an end! Most of what a child remembers about his/ her childhood is school and tuitions, tests and exams! How sad is that!!!



Childhood should be a time for nostalgic memories of picnics and outings, overnight stays with friends, being part of a peer gang, getting involved in games and fun projects, days spent in running and jumping, laughing and screaming and just having a good time.

The Pandemic

COVID-19 has forced children to stay inside their homes, stopping them from going out to play and meet their friends. This definitely has quite an impact on their mental health and could cause anxiety, irritability and other unhealthy behaviours.

Schools across India have been shut for more than a year now. The disruption of COVID-19 came not just with the threat to health but brought along with it major changes to lifestyle like physical distancing, wearing masks and frequent washing of hands, and some of this assumed draconian proportions with the lockdown, which was necessary to contain the spread of the virus.



attention to some of these signs that tell us a child could be adversely affected by the pandemic – sleeping excessively or not sleeping at all, regular irritability, social seclusion, complaints of nightmares, headache and stomach ache without any physical cause, lack of concentration, excessive clinging to parents, feeling hopeless, unnecessary and uneventful crying episodes and bursts of violence. These are indicators that the child is disturbed and needs help.

Online Learning

With the imposition of lockdowns in India, schools have remained closed and online classes have replaced classroom teaching. While adults have found outlets for their frustrations, kids have been shuffled in front of a screen for online classes – without a warning. A year completed, they are lonely, angry and demotivated. Kids have got the boring part of the school at home – the classes. The

It is easier for adults to control their urge to step out of the house than it is for children. Children find it difficult to understand the restrictions put on them and turn stubborn and throw regular tantrums. Earlier, before the lockdown, they could go out every day where they could run about, meet new people, cycle and play ball with other children. Now they are confined to one of their rooms (if they have a separate one) and stuck with the same people day in and day out. This can be quite frustrating!

We could categorise children into three broad age groups: children under the age of five, middle age group and young teenagers (6 to 13 years) and older kids (14 to 18 years). Young kids need direct support and attention from parents. Both, young and middle age kids have high levels of energy and they express their stress through their body. Hence, running around or doing physical activity is a must for this group. On the other hand, older kids do not need much interaction with their parents. They typically do their own things or interact with their friends.

The lockdown has impacted children in many ways. They have become more negative, they don't have a fixed schedule, they have their parents around them all the time, and there could be increased arguments at home. These things can lead to anxiety, panic attacks, depression and also, although rarely, psychosis and paranoia e.g., refusing to touch anything for fear of contracting the virus!

While taking care of children, we may need to pay



fun part of school – playing and interacting with schoolmates, has been taken away from them.

This situation has provided children and adolescents with the perfect conditions for solitude and increased internet use. Increased opportunity for

internet use has made it more difficult for parents to control this access, and frequent and unsupervised internet use is associated with self-harm and suicidal behaviour in adolescents with other psychological risk factors. Adolescents are experiencing acute and chronic stress because of parental anxiety, disruption of daily routines, increased family violence, and home confinement with little or no access to peers, teachers, or physical activity. There has also been an increase in psychiatric disorders among adolescents – depression, anxiety and self-harm behaviours.

With online classes, kids are having a hard time self-regulating themselves. Some teenagers are getting addicted to online gaming and pornography. Screen time has gone through the roof! Also, for children with social anxiety, finding the spotlight on them during online classes has made them more self-conscious. Online classes have led to an increase in anxiety disorders and depression rates among children, along with an increase in conduct disorders and behavioural problems. A lot of parents are not able to gauge what their kids are going through. The



other day, a child's mother told me he was being lazy about work and then joked about how he felt like killing himself. I asked her if she ever joked about this when she was a child! She then realized it was a serious matter although her child said it in a joking manner.

There is also another set of challenges with online classes. Across the world and especially in India, a huge number of children from underprivileged communities do not have access to the internet or gadgets to support education in these times. Also, some children are not comfortable revealing their homes on video calls for fear of being judged by their friends from wealthier families. Power cuts and bad internet connection immediately log out the children from the online class. When they log back in, they find themselves out of sync with the rest of the class, worried that the teacher may ask them about something they unintentionally missed. Because of prolonged screen time, many kids are complaining of headaches. It will be a tough job to get kids de-addicted from their screens!

Those in Stds. I to III are not getting basic skills like learning to read, basic computation, or understanding how little things in the world work. The longer online classes have gone, the more demotivated kids have become about studying. Most parents and teachers are wondering how much education is really happening.

Understanding Anxiety and Depression in Children

Many children have fears and worries, and may feel sad and hopeless from time to time. For example, toddlers are often very distressed about being away from their parents, even if they are safe and cared for. But when a child does not outgrow the fears and worries that are typical in young children, or when



there are so many fears and worries that they interfere with school, home or play activities, the child may be having some problems with anxiety.

Children may be very afraid when they are away from parents (separation anxiety). They may have extreme fear about a specific thing or situation, such as dogs, insects, or going to the salon for a haircut (phobias). Some children are afraid of school and other places where there are people (social anxiety) or just very worried about the future and about bad things happening (general anxiety). Children could also have repeated episodes of sudden, unexpected, intense fear that come with symptoms like heart pounding, having trouble breathing, or feeling dizzy, shaky or sweaty (panic attack).

Anxiety may present as fear or worry but can also make children irritable and angry. Anxiety symptoms can also include trouble sleeping, as well as physical symptoms like fatigue, headaches or stomach aches. Some anxious children keep their worries to themselves which makes it difficult to spot the symptoms.

Occasionally being sad or feeling hopeless is a part of every child's life. However, some children feel sad or uninterested in things that they used to enjoy, or feel helpless or hopeless in situations they can

change. When children feel persistent sadness and hopelessness, they could be in depression.

Some of the behaviours often seen in children with depression include feeling sad, hopeless or irritable a lot of the time, not wanting to do or enjoy doing fun things, either eating or sleeping a lot more or a lot less than usual, being tired and sluggish or tense and restless a lot of the time, having a hard time paying attention, feeling worthless, useless or guilty, or hurting oneself and getting into self-destructive behaviour. Extreme depression can lead a child to think about suicide or plan for suicide. For youth between the ages of 10 and 18, suicide is among the leading causes of death.

It is not known exactly why some children develop anxiety or depression. Many factors may play a role including biology and temperament. But it is also known that some children are more likely to develop anxiety or depression when they experience trauma or prolonged stress, when they are maltreated, or when they are bullied or rejected by other children.

Children whose parents have depression are at a greater risk of being depressed. While depression affects all ages and both genders, girls are more likely to develop depression during adolescence. Researchers believe that brain changes in



adolescence increase a teen's vulnerability to depression and anxiety, and play a role in the severe gender disparity in these disorders. Depression and bipolar disorder affect 14.3% of youth between the age of 13 and 18, that is one in every six!

Adolescent girls are more than twice as likely to experience depression than boys. There could be a reason for this: the brain regions thought to be affected in depression have high concentrations of sex hormone receptors, which could explain why there is a gender disparity in depression. 15.9% of girls between the age of 13 and 18 have depression whereas 7.7% of boys of the same age have depression. With the pandemic and the lockdown, anxiety and depression have been on the rise.

Depression is a disorder, and one that can often go undetected in some people's lives because it can creep up on you. Depression doesn't need to strike all at once; it can be a gradual and nearly unnoticeable withdrawal from your active life and enjoyment of living. Or it can be caused by a clear event, such as the breakup of a long-term relationship, failing in exams, family problems, etc. Finding and understanding the cause of depression isn't nearly as important as getting appropriate and effective treatment for it.

Grief after the death or loss of a loved one is common and not considered depression in the usual sense. But grief can turn pathological and then we need help. Teenagers also go through the usual mood swings common to that age. More and more teens are experiencing symptoms of depression.

Depression usually strikes young adults, and twice as many women as men. It is theorized that men express their depressive feelings in more external ways that often don't get diagnosed as depression. For example, men may spend more time or energy focused on an activity to the exclusion of all other

activities or may have difficulty controlling outbursts of rage or anger. For women instead, it's a nagging feeling of helplessness and hopelessness. They feel as if nothing will ever get better and there's nothing they can do to improve the situation. These reactions are also symptoms of depression.

Getting Help for Anxiety and Depression

When left untreated, anxiety and depression can last for years. A child can go on with life struggling continuously, trying very hard to manage, not feeling understood and not getting support from others. It is a painful experience because on the outside everything looks okay but, within, the child feels like a mess, constantly struggling with the simplest things, and just can't understand why he or she feels that way. Everything looks so bleak and hopeless.



More than 85 to 90 percent of children with anxiety and depression can be treated effectively. In most cases, an individual eventually will experience a complete remission of symptoms. However, if untreated, you can continue to have symptoms and difficulty with daily life that can linger on for months or even years. Despite such good results from treatment, more than 85% of children do not get any professional help.

The most effective type of treatment for almost all types of acute anxiety and clinical depression typically consists of a combination of medication and counselling. Either treatment on its own is

about half as effective than when the two treatments are combined. That means that if you're only taking antidepressants or only counselling, it will generally take you twice as long to feel relief from your depressive symptoms.

Staying Healthy

Five ways to protect our children's mental health amid the pandemic and later:

1. *Self-regulation of fears and anxiety*

In any crisis, children perceive and react the way they see their parents respond to a particular situation. Let's say there is a flood, but the water cannot reach your house. If the parent gets into panic and starts freaking out, the child is bound to get affected seeing the fear in the parent's eyes. The parent's anxiety needs to be processed, but not in front of the kids. You need to regulate yourself so that you can calm the child in a difficult situation. With regard to the pandemic, it is okay to say: *"I feel frustrated not knowing when this will end!"* or *"I'm worried whether I will be able to keep my job."* Give your kids the words and language they can use to express their emotions like *"I miss being with my friends."*

2. *Follow a routine*

Children belonging to all age groups have some or the other kind of a routine. With the pandemic, the routine has gone haywire. There is a reason why children go to school, one is obviously to learn basic curriculum, but the larger picture is that they learn discipline and schedule. Right now, their schedule has been disrupted and, to top that, they are unable to go out or interact with their friends, and there is no physical activity. To overcome this, there has to be a balance and a schedule. Not the military type, but a schedule that aids parents in noticing the difference in their child's behaviour pattern and whether or not they are doing fine. A child with a fixed schedule also helps parents and caregivers plan their own day, especially when they work from home and also have to look after their child.



3. *Provide right information*

Though one should not overload a child with information, facts and reports about the coronavirus crisis, providing the right information and creating awareness is the key.

Children don't perceive a national or international emergency. They understand it as a family emergency. They focus on what's going to happen to them, their family and friends, and that's what needs to be addressed. Parents need to explain the situation and its impact on the family in simple terms.

You should also explain to the children the precautions that must be taken to keep them safe from being infected. The focus should be less on the deaths and more about prevention of the infectious disease. Tell them the real situation but also normalise it by saying it will pass. Also, making kids understand that the majority of those who were infected have recovered.



4. *Offer personal space*

Everyone needs a personal space without someone nagging them to do some thing or the other or constantly blabbering. In the time of coronavirus when people are living with their families, personal space seems to be lost somewhere.

Even children must get used to their parents not being around them, at least for some time during the day. Suddenly, the children find themselves in a situation where their parents are hovering over them all day. Parents should let children be on their own for a few hours. At least for some time, let them do what they like without being constantly supervised, of course after ensuring that they are safe.

5. *Engage, involve and interact*

The key to keep children busy is to engage with them, involve them in household chores and allow them to interact with their friends, family and neighbours.

Children under the age of 5 are easy to manage. By drawing reference to cartoon characters, you can talk about the virus, ask them to stay indoors and walk inside the house. Middle age children have energy and want to run around. Let them run in the house and jump on the sofa. Don't try to keep your house organised all the time. Also, let them watch TV, play video games for a short while, follow their hobbies like painting, drawing, video call their friends and talk about anything and everything. Don't



have tight boundaries. Make them study at least for an hour so that they are in touch with their subjects. Ask the kids for help and involve them in household chores.

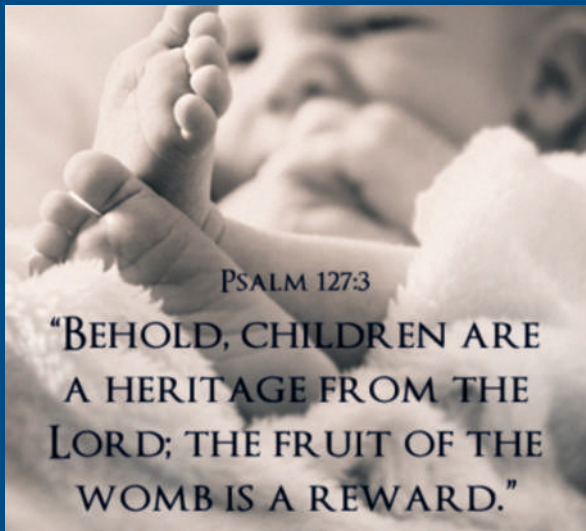
Conclusion

Children are vulnerable. They are easily affected when there is turmoil and disturbance around. It is true that even if we want to, we cannot protect our children from all harm. Certain unhappy situations will occur and all we can do as adults is to make sure that their effects will not last long.

What we are experiencing in the present situation with the pandemic is something unprecedented. COVID-19 has played havoc with our lives. It has played havoc with our physical health, wrecked our economy and another important area that has been badly affected is our mental health! Anxiety and depression have become common words. These have even become part of a child's vocabulary today! And during this unprecedented time of uncertainty and fear, mental health issues have definitely intensified.

The pandemic has affected everyone. It has changed our lifestyle dramatically and it has upset the routine of our children, leaving them wondering what 'normal' is all about! It is important that we take all precautions necessary to keep them safe and ensure that they are not infected. But while doing that, taking care of their mental health is of utmost importance. We must remember that the effects of mental illness can impact the growth and development of the child in many ways, leaving him/ her handicapped for life.

A catastrophe, like the one we are going through because of the pandemic, is devastating especially when it continues and lingers for months. We, in India, are in the second wave of the pandemic and scientists and experts tell us that there could be a



third and fourth wave. While the present situation is unnerving, managing to tide over it in a healthy way will make us and our children stronger and more resilient to face any eventuality in the future. We need not panic. We have been given ways to keep ourselves safe and, over the past year, we have found creative ways to help our children keep going. Use this very special time to know your children better, spend personal time with them, help them to verbalise what they are feeling within, teach them to collaborate in getting housework done, give them responsibilities, appreciate their efforts and show concern for their difficulties. When we have passed through this ordeal, our children will come out more confident and stronger. They will have picked up valuable life skills and hopefully they will no longer be afraid of an uncertain future. And that is our role as adults – to prepare our children to face the future with confidence!



Fr. Godfrey D'Sa SDB is the Founder Director of Prafula, *Centre for Psychological Wellness*. He specialises in individual and couple counselling as well as group therapy. Fr. Godfrey is passionate about promoting emotional health and helping children, youth and adults live happy and meaningful lives.



Challenges to Multiculturalism in Online Learning

Dr. (Fr.) Elvis Fernandes SFX,
Dr. Omkar Bhatkar



It's been eighteen months since the school uniform vanished into the recesses of the cupboard and the socks have had to be washed and shoes polished. 'Schoolbag' may sound a bit strange now as the mobile phone and laptop have become the new schoolbag. There is no aroma of hot samosas to fill the air during recess time nor is there a bell to mark the passage of time. School has shut down. Only security personnel guard the school which is no more a place of learning but empty benches painted in pigeon's poop. No one comes, no one goes, the poor security person guards an abandoned place of learning. Such is the plight of schools across Mumbai and most other parts of the country since the pandemic began.

Only one or two rooms in the school building are functional as school offices are sporadically open. By and large, the buildings have been temporarily abandoned by teachers and learners. The COVID-19 crisis has made this temple of learning a house of pests from the time we decided to move online.

In the last few months, our command over language has changed and we often use words unheard of before like 'virtual', 'Google Meet', 'Zoom', 'screen share', 'breakout room', 'Kahoot', 'Moodle' and so on. We have moved our schools online. The pandemic has made us accept that online teaching could be the future of education. But what does this online school look like? *“Does it have charts made by my friends and me?”*, *“How many floors does*

my school building have?”, “I had better sit with Satish so that we can share our tiffin. I really like the sambhar his mother packs in his tiffin!” ... such are the thoughts of a child going to school. And to add, there will always be a Totto Chan in class sitting at the window constantly looking out, probably waiting to see the band play or looking out at the clouds in anticipation of heavy rain so that she can get drenched on her way home. All of this seems to be stuck somewhere in the past.

In the face of the pandemic, the traditional learning space has been replaced by the world of Zoom where students and teachers have been reduced to tiles on a computer screen. The teacher no longer hears or sees the students interacting with each other while she presents her lesson but only hears herself against multiple tiles on mute and, more often than not, with only black backgrounds with names. Today, school is held on platforms like Google Meet, Zoom, and other software customised to meet the needs of this booming business of

Christopher kept asking, “Will Miss Lata come wearing the garland of flowers in her hair?” We smiled at Christopher’s “garland” and told him it was a “mogra gajra”. He didn’t know that.

I want to go cycling with Fahad, Christopher and Rushaad after school, and we will share one falooda.

What bothers me is what will happen to such friendships, such understanding and innocent curiosity? What will happen to the socialization practices of children? Can an online school allow me to share *dabba* with Satish? Can it bring me the fragrance of that *gajra* which Miss Lata used to wear? Can Fahad, Christopher, Rushaad and I sit together and talk of our mischief?

Paweł Kuczyński, a Polish-born political art satirist and philosopher, depicts the trajectories of childhood and excessive use of internet. His paintings are a cautionary tale to us.



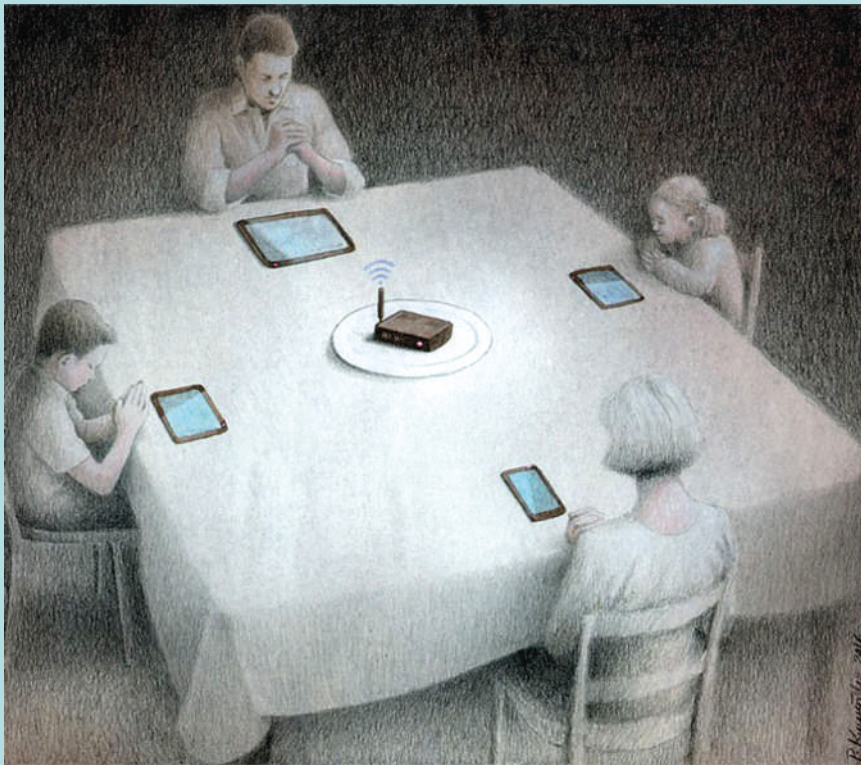
Education today is not just about the transfer of knowledge. The social process that allows students to learn from their teachers and friends—to develop their social skills, mindsets and capabilities—is just as critical. The skills that allow us to mix with people and learn to share, the feeling of oneness that comes with such diversity and friendships is equally important. Students need a supportive community and a safe learning environment in which they can process emotions such as fear, anxiety, and frustration, and where they can learn to cope especially in these terrible times. Schools have migrated online but migrating to an online education model involves more than simply replicating face-to-face activities in front of a webcam or recording a short lecture and publishing it on an educational platform or

online education. But the question that still very much unanswered is *“Will I get that sambhar from Satish’s tiffin?”*

YouTube. Can we just ‘copy’ ourselves from the physical space and ‘paste’ in the online space? Will

it be sufficient to call it learning? Can such learning be holistic? Wouldn't this system reduce children to tiles devoid of anything but a roll number? Will children be able to make friends, nurture relationships, learn mutual sharing and care, or is this system going to reduce them to isolated islands? To probe another important question, is the online school even interested in anything other than completing the syllabus? Even before the pandemic, the education system was busy completing the syllabus but the very presence of school infrastructure, physical as well as social, used to act as an adhesive in forming friendships in students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

"I still remember the first time I participated in the science exhibition and it was our first group project.



I went to my friend's home to construct it. It was then that I discovered that not all people have images of deities all over the wall and that food could be cooked without garlic and onion and then I knew a little bit about a Jain family. The Jain friend became the host to a Muslim and a Hindu boy, but all that we knew then was friendship and

working together. Only after growing up did I discover the depth of the relationship in a world becoming communally polarised."

Research indicates that students participating in collaborative learning tend to perform better than those completing independent work (Means et al., 2010). Online education raises two questions:

- 1) Does online education help discover cultural bonds while we work together?
- 2) Do we remain isolated even in a group because of the online barriers to communication?

Prioritising community building in the design of online courses has the potential to improve both, student experience and learning outcomes. But has online education taken cognizance of this?

Also, despite the advantages of collaborative learning, online learners can experience frustration associated with online learning experiences. Capdeferro and Romero (2012) found that students' frustration in online collaborative learning experiences adversely affected their emotions and learning outcomes. Student attitude was a significant predictor of frustration. Frustration is taking place at an intellectual and social level. From a student's performance point of view, online schools aren't able to explore the intellectual creativity of a student. From a social point of view, the child no more feels like a child but an adult to themselves. There is no play here, no samosas, no cycling, no namaaz of Faizan's

granny and all their whispering until she finishes her prayers. In short, there is no fun, no breather but only a mechanical way of completing the assignment.

From a social perspective, and even from a mental health perspective, we definitely have to develop

some ways to keep our children stimulated socially so that they're not, you know, they're not running on empty there.

What is socialization?

Child psychologist Lisa Long says, “*Socialization is a major part of children's development. They gain so much through experiences and play with each other that it is critical to their health.*” (Hagerty, 2020)

It is intrinsic for us to take note of this for students learning isn't just an intellectual activity, but a social one. Are we then missing the role of 'the social and the cultural' in the present online teaching? Have we forgotten the importance of multicultural education?

Researchers studying socialization in online learning note that definitions are quite broad, suggesting that “*Socialization is about people being able to mingle and establish connections on one or more levels. They speak [with] one another; share ideas and information and confirm the connections made through an agreed-upon means.*” (Irwin and Berge, 2006)

More broadly, and outside of the learning environment, sociologists define socialization as “*the process by which, through contact with other human beings, one becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable human being, skilled in the ways of a given culture and environment.*” (Giddens: 1991)

Often, the school is the “*agency responsible for socializing groups of young people in particular skills and values in our society.*”

Other definitions explicitly note the need for “*interpersonal and interactional skills*” or focus on the need for students to “*develop social skills appropriate to his or her social position and the need to be prepared for a profession*”.

While these definitions cover a broad range of concepts, clearly, students need a variety of experiences and exposure to differing views and perspectives to develop the skills to think for

themselves and effectively handle new situations. In a diverse country like India, it becomes intrinsic to facilitate inter-cultural dialogue for people to understand each other and work together. It is imperative to understand the role of culture in socialization.

What is culture?

Culture is a lot more than a list of holidays or food preferences or the language someone speaks. Culture is the framework around which we build



our identity. It influences how we engage with the world, the perspectives we take, and the expectations we have. Each one of us has a culture and we, as Indians, have identities built from multiple cultures. For example, we may consider ourselves part of the Mumbai culture, the IC Colony culture, the East Indian/ Goan/ Sindhi culture, the Sikh/ Buddhist/ Hindu/ Parsi culture, the culture of children born to inter-faith parents, the culture of people who enjoy comic books, the culture of people who are fisherfolk (Kolis), the culture of

environmentalists, the culture of film lovers, the culture of Dalits, the cultures and the sub-cultures that exist within them.

Hall (1984) puts forward another concept which helps refine the concept of culture. He views culture as communication and compares it to an invisible control mechanism operating in our thoughts. We only become aware of this control mechanism when it is severely challenged, for example by exposure to a different culture.

School is a space of physical presence and tangible interaction between the student and the teacher; and among students themselves. Such an environment in a traditional classroom promises significant positive outcomes in the life of the student. Knowledge gained through real-time interactions increase levels of student engagement with teachers. The traditional classroom environment encourages closer relationship among students. A shared learning experience among students is one of the mainstays of a physical school. Students can socialize and learn from one another about their ways of culture i.e., ways of living life.

Multiculturalism wasn't really a chapter in school textbooks and practising socialization wasn't purposefully inter-cultural. In a city like Mumbai, no one really had to put in extra effort to make school spaces inclusive and plural in nature. Mumbai and its aided schools is a tapestry of diverse religions, cultures and therefore inter-cultural living is a way of life rather than a prescribed lesson on human values from a textbook. But is the online school capable of holding space for this inter-cultural diversity to exist?

When discussing cultural diversity in the classroom, we tend to look at cultural differences that have been historically ignored or marginalized. We talk about the diverse cultural ways of life and most often students do it on their own. *When I was in school, I used to wonder why many of my classmates would run out immediately after school on Fridays, only to discover later that they would leave from their Catholic school to enter the mosque opposite for their Friday namaaz. It was then that I discovered that on Friday, my Muslim*

friends prayed and, on Friday, we worshipped the goddess and Friday was the day Christ was crucified. During Christmas, all children who volunteered to help in putting a school crib would spend time creating the nativity scene. During Diwali, our Catholic craft teacher would teach us to make the Diwali kandeel (lantern) while we also learnt to make a rakhi in school. As far as gender diversity was concerned, boys learnt to make handkerchiefs and knit. (These were skills to run a house efficiently, which isn't just girl's play.)

Now, what happens to these ways of cultural harmony? How will our children learn to live with 'differences' once this pandemic is over? Will they be empathetic enough? Will they still share and care despite differences? Has online socialization made them aware of the diverse rainbow that exists around them?

School, therefore, is a key place for them to learn about their history and culture. To other students – those who are mostly the majority – learning the music, festivities and belief systems of the cultures of their peers and what their backgrounds signify is a powerful tool in creating inclusiveness.

Textbook knowledge may be essential in terms of examinations, graduation and obtaining scholarships but, more importantly, information – regardless of its form – needs to be transferred into schematized knowledge systems and applied to life for students to become agents of change, to apply knowledge to reality to make a change in society. We aren't isolated islands; we are part of the social world around us. We have to learn to live with everything that is around us if we have to make sense of our existence, if we wish for a harmonious world.

What is “multiculturalism”?

“Multiculturalism” is the co-existence of racial, religious or cultural groups and entails diversity and inclusion. What happens to multiculturalism in times of online learning? The physical classroom allows the students to physically see and meet fellow students from different cultures, faith and identities day after day. *I remember vividly that, during my high school years, I had classmates*



coming from different states and religions. During the school break, I would go to a Tamilian Hindu Brahmin friend's home to watch cricket. This enabled me to have a genuine interaction with him and his culture.

A child or teenager spends so much time in school that the educational environment is clearly a key part of the student's socialization. Most students are involved in activities outside school that are socially formative, but the simple fact that the typical child spends more time “at school” (whether a physical school or online) than in any other activity suggests that the school will have a large impact on students' socialization process. Considering this, are we going to make space for inter-cultural dynamics among students? Will schools make the soil of

online teaching fertile for diverse plants to grow, so that there is cultural diversity promoting a balanced and plural social fabric?

Online learning curtails social interaction and the exchange of cultural ideas. Being physically away from one another, students will lack knowledge of customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking and communication styles.

As Paris and Alim point out in their book *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies* (2017): “... [s]tudents and their families [from culturally diverse backgrounds] are put in situations where, in order to succeed in school, they have to either deny or lose their cultures, histories, languages and literature.” Furthermore, the authors suggest that there is a need for change in both, the position and terminology related to pedagogical theory and practice. They offer CSP [Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies] as a solution, as CSP implementation “seeks to accept, support and sustain pluralism on cultural, literate and linguistic levels.” We, as educators, have to find means to sustain such cultural pedagogies in our spaces of education.

Some advantages of multicultural education by Welty and Lyon, 1994; McClelland and Stafford, 2000 are as follows:

- Multicultural education increases productivity because a variety of mental resources are available for completing the same task and it promotes cognitive and moral growth among all people.
- It increases creative problem-solving skills through the different perspectives applied to the same problem to reach solutions.
- Multicultural education increases positive relationship through the achievement of common goals, respect, appreciation and commitment to equality among the intellectuals at institutions of higher education.

- It decreases stereotyping and prejudice through direct contact and interactions among diverse individuals.

We have to admit that the virtual medium of learning has come to stay. We have been cornered into being part of the online school but can we think about this new form of schooling with open-mindedness? This new online school has no foundations; it is just a building floating in the air with internet connectivity. It can collapse anytime with no social foundation. The educator plays a key role in creating an environment that fosters awareness of diversity and a spirit for inclusivity. School principals and teachers have to think of different ways to bring inter-cultural understanding to young minds. We can't sit saying, *"That's all we*

can do. We are already overloaded with school syllabus. Where is time to bring inter-cultural values?" This attitude will deprive our children of socializing values and only we will be responsible for not thinking about it when the clock was ticking. We have a collective responsibility of teaching our children the inter-cultural way of life, the ways of plural existence to bring individuals who will be more aware and not disrespectful of the 'other' and, if possible, embracing the 'other' with no sense of otherness.

The way forward

Educators will have to facilitate the exchange of differing ideas and perspectives by introducing thoughtful questions and by encouraging student-

student interactions. An effective way to increase emotional connection between students is to foster the development of social presence and community. Educators need to make time for students to talk beyond textbooks, to introduce themselves and share their family's traditions, ethnic and cultural background. This will enable students to be sensitive to everyone's culture and to understand the cultural nuances, allowing the acceptance and celebration of diverse cultures. Multicultural education aims to strengthen cultural consciousness and intercultural competence.

Another important strategy to foster multicultural awareness is by incorporating diversity in the lesson plan. Ingraining cultural awareness and diversity in the lesson plan will enable students to relate to a real-life context. It helps to develop a sense of responsibility towards other communities. It instils the feeling of acceptance and appreciation of cultural diversity.



Source: The Minds Journal

All the above ideas will ensure a classroom environment that is responsive to increasing multicultural awareness and foster cultural diversity and inclusion in the classroom community. Multicultural education creates respect for human dignity. It helps to combat hatred, other forms of prejudice and discrimination. Multicultural education is a useful means to create awareness regarding cultural pluralism, especially now when the world has gone virtual.

Bibliography

- Capdeferro, N., & Romero, M. (2012). Are online learners frustrated with collaborative learning experiences? *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 13(2): 26-44.
- Giddens A., Duneier M., & Appelbaum R. (1991), *Introduction to Sociology*. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Hagerty A. (2020). *How virtual learning impacts kids' socialization and development*.
<https://www.wbtv.com/2020/08/17/how-virtual-learning-impacts-kids-socialization-development/>
- Irwin, C., and Berge, Z. (2006). Socialization in the Online Classroom, *e-Journal of Instructional Science and Technology*, Vol. 9 No. 1, March 2006
http://www.usq.edu.au/electpub/ejist/docs/vol9_no1/papers/full_papers/irwin_berge.htm
- Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2010). *Evaluation of evidence-based practices in online learning: A meta-analysis and review of online learning studies*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.
- Silverman, R., Welty, W., & Lyon, S. (1994). *Multicultural education cases for teacher problem solving*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Inc.
- Weinberger, A., Stegmann, K., & Fisher, F. (2007). Knowledge convergence in collaborative learning: Concepts and assessment. *Learning and Instruction*, 17, 146-426.
- Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World*, Vol 11, Peristeris, Konstantina, 2017/10/16



Dr. (Fr.) Elvis Fernandes SFX is a member of Society of Pilar with a doctorate in clinical counselling psychology. He is the Editor of 'Fr. Agnel's Call', a monthly mission and youth magazine.



Dr. Omkar Bhatkar is the Co-founder and Head of St. Andrew's Centre for Philosophy and Performing Arts (SAPP). He is a sociologist with interest in space and culture, theatre, gender, film theory, interfaith studies, and existentialist philosophy.

Student's Growth and Well-being

Johnson George



A school, I believe, is an extension of the home of a child. The students/ learners are therefore entrusted to the school as their caretaker and stewards. These students spend, on an average, 6 to 8 hours per day at school. While under their stewardship, schools have the moral responsibility to ensure their growth and safety in all dimensions – physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual. 'Marks/ Grades only' focused schools may not be developing a healthy competition. Having said this, it is not easy, but the expectations of a school curriculum include all these areas. The teachers, therefore, must possess the necessary skill and competence to create an appropriate learning environment. A 'one-method-of-delivery' may not fit all students. It is therefore suggested that teacher-student ratio remain between 1:15-20 maximum for proper attention and effectiveness.

Winning is really fun but winning does not always equal success. However, in our education system, we have a crisis in the win-at-all-cost cultures. We honour the students at the top of the pyramid, we effusively applaud those students who win inter-school championships bringing laurels to the school/ institution. This one-sided focus on marks/ grades and medals/ trophies damages them later on in other areas of development, thereby making them damaged teenagers/ adults.

We need to redefine success. Real success is developing champions for life for our world, win or lose. As parents and teachers, we can no longer lead from a place where winning is our only metric of success, where our ego sits centre stage, because it has been proven that that process creates broken human beings.

The school must take into consideration that all learners do not have the same emotional/

intellectual/ physical/ social quotient. This aspect requires teaching to be more creative, learner-focused, experiential and innovative. These students come from various backgrounds – single parent, stressed family environment, physically/ emotionally challenged, etc. Schools must have mechanisms to identify children with exceptions including the special needs learner. Their educational needs may not be met through regular instruction and assessment practices. The exceptionalities might include behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, giftedness, reading disorders, disorder of written expression, math disability, motor impairment, auditive/ visual impairment, or other learner needs. School management must ensure that:

- resources and training are in place to support accessibility in learning environments
- reasonable accommodation is provided for learners with special needs to promote an equitable access to facilities and the educational environments as other learners

Maria Montessori observed that **all children, regardless of culture or locale, experience the same stages of development at approximately the same age.** From birth to around 6 years of age, children have an absorbent mind. This means that they learn effortlessly, soaking in huge amounts of information as easily as a sponge soaks up water. Montessori explains that during this stage, children are “*constructing their individuality*” and “*impressions do not merely enter a child's mind; they form it*”. They will consciously seek certain experiences. Children in this phase are expanding their newly developed faculties and abilities. From 7



to 12 years old, children make a huge transition from the Absorbent Mind Stage to the Reasoning Mind Stage. Children in this stage become group oriented and like to work collaboratively. The question “why” replaces the “what” of earlier stages as they become interested in moral questions. Children at this age begin to use their imaginations more. As children enter into adolescence (12 to 18 years), they develop a 'social consciousness'. This is when children are developmentally ready to broaden their range of experience within a community, to learn skills for independent human living such as building, cooking, sewing, and maintaining a budget. This is a time for children to spend time discovering themselves and exploring their creative or artistic side.

As children, especially in Pre-primary and Primary schools, absorb everything in their learning environment, it is important to instil acceptable beliefs and value systems. Tony Robbins advises, “*Your whole life is controlled by two things: your beliefs and values.*” As teachers/ educators, we must instil values in the children to be just, truthful, merciful and loving. The school must project an image of integrity (honesty and fairness) in dealing with students and their parents where the teachers should hold themselves to the highest standards of professionalism in all their dealings. Parents and guardians may participate directly in the delivery of pre-primary activities, thus creating an acceptable learning environment.



Student's all-round development includes the following areas:

- i. **Emotional:** Ability to navigate through the ups and downs of life, understand one's emotions and regulate them. Cultivating 'Emotional Intelligence' is foundational to remaining resilient and effective in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) world. How do I intelligently manage emotions daily?
- ii. **Intellectual:** Ability to understand one's capabilities and effectively use these capabilities to expand and develop strengths
- iii. **Social:** Ability to interact with and relate to other people and form meaningful relationships
- iv. **Physical:** Ability to meet the body's need for exercise, food, sleep, energy and activities
- v. **Spiritual:** Ability to find meaning in life and live in alignment with one's values and beliefs
- vi. **Environmental:** Ability to appreciate and be responsible towards one's surroundings, nature and community

For adults, we will need to add Occupational and Financial as well to this list.

Another important area is to ensure the **physical and psychological safety** of the students. These include:

- i. **Transportation safety:** When using school transport from pick-up point to school and back, a trained driver and attendant must operate the school vehicle. The vehicle should comply with all transport safety regulations and be well maintained. Even if the transportation activity is outsourced, the responsibility of safety remains with the school management. The driver and attendant must be familiar with handling the safety requirement of the children, including special needs children, and emergency procedures.
 - ii. **School campus infrastructure safety:** Children must be trained in safety procedures in the school campus, the dos and don'ts, and they must be well guarded and supervised by the school management.
- Installation of cameras at strategic locations, security guards, appropriately fenced boundary



walls, strict entry rules and monitoring for visitors, etc. are some of the areas that must be looked into.

- The staircases must have fluorescent markers to avoid slippages.
- There must be an emergency drill conducted periodically with children and teachers in participation – these drills may include emergency fire situations, flood, natural disasters or physical threats.
- Drinking water and canteen/ meal rooms must be screened for hygiene and overall sterilization.
- An in-house first aid centre with a medical nurse and basic first aid equipment and bed is recommended, if not in collaboration with the local hospital.
- As special needs of the child are considered, their dietary special needs also play a crucial role – especially with respect to allergies e.g. nut allergy, seating arrangements for physically challenged students as these have also proven fatal in some instances when left uncared/unattended.
- School excursions and educational trips also fall under the category of school infrastructure safety as the management is fully responsible for the safety.
- Teachers must be trained to handle students that may turn aggressive and hurt other fellow students.
- While using lifts and escalators, there must be teacher/ staff accompanying the child.

- Frequent maintenance of fire extinguishers, lifts, escalators, etc. and cleanliness of the premises, toilets, classrooms are of utmost importance.

iii. Psychological Safety: There is a need to address psychological safety without delay. These are to be addressed on-time by well-trained counsellors to avoid instances of children harming themselves, attempting suicides or harming others.

- Positive disciplining specifically aims to involve children in respectful ways and encourages teachers to remember that children are capable of doing better. Offer corrections that are encouraging and respectful.
- Children are to be educated on good-touch and bad-touch concepts to avoid any sexual harassment by senior students or adults. In India, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) 2012 was formulated in order to effectively address sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children. Staff, drivers, attendants and teachers must be made well aware of the provisions of the POCSO Act. I have classified sexual offences under psychological safety as this has an enormous psychological impact on the child.
- Encourage children to maintain a gratitude journal – this helps in being grateful for what you have and it attracts abundance.
- Teach children to be empathetic – developing empathy towards self and towards others improves them.
- A student requires their teacher to play multiple roles in their growing up years and these roles include a good listener, encourager, inspirer,

optimist, challenger, practical motivator, empathizer and honest relationship.

- Give the children a dose of positivity daily – these include a splash of joy, a vial of inspiration, a touch of gratitude, a handful of self-love, a pinch of inspiration, a dash of love, a feather of hope, a shake of acceptance, a drizzle of mindfulness, a petal of kindness, a piece of resilience, a bit of good luck, a drop of optimism, a sprig of truth, a sliver of wisdom. Communicate positivity and bring out confidence in the students.

As teachers, we may often ask why all these are required to build a student, yet the industry today believes *“it is easier to build stronger and skilled students than to repair broken employees”*. We are preparing students to face a better tomorrow, to learn the necessary non-cognitive skills and to be industry ready. I'm reminded of insights on quality in education by well-known quality guru, Dr. W. Edwards Deming who said, *“Our schools must preserve and nurture the yearning for learning that everyone is born with. Joy in learning comes not so much from what is learned, but from learning.”* Dr. Deming believed in a system of education in which students have fun and take joy in learning, and teachers take joy in their work. A system of education must recognise that each student learns and interacts with the world in his/ her own way. While much of our nation has moved toward standardized testing and emphasising rewards and punishments as incentives to learn, we believe in a different way – a way that helps students thrive and grow and nurtures their natural curiosity and desire to create and innovate.



Mr. Johnson George is a management systems and business excellence consultant and a corporate trainer. He is a certified lead assessor/ examiner for various ISO management systems and business excellence award models. He is a certified master neuro-linguistic programmer and counsellor. He is a visiting faculty at management and degree colleges in Mumbai and has authored two books, 'An Insight into Corrective Action' and 'Christian Insight into Love, Joy and Peace'.

Virtual Wellness

Vanessa D'Cruz



The global health pandemic has shone a harsh light on the vulnerabilities and challenges humanity faces. Sometimes you only realise how important something is when you lose it yourself. I have been a victim of this pandemic myself. September 2020 was the beginning of my tryst with hospitals. It was such a crunch, first looking out for a COVID-19 ICCU bed for my ailing father. Thankfully, someone came to my rescue. After 45 days of struggle, my father passed on. Next was an injury that had my son, all of 7 years, get 14 stitches on his foot. My entire family was detected with the virus too which again brought me to the hospital doors. The pandemic induced fear and so much uncertainty. Yet in these difficult times, I had a Saviour above who looked after my well-being through various people who reached out to me in several ways. It is so important to have someone to talk to or share with to maintain your own sanity and I'm glad I was

surrounded with so many positive minds who helped me through.

As a teacher, the COVID-19 outbreak acutely made me aware that we had lost something when I had to suddenly shift to 100% online teaching. This change clearly had an enormous impact on education and on student well-being. But what is it exactly that we lost? And how does that insight help us shape our 'education system'?

It is evident that we cannot return to the world as before. We need to be better equipped in dealing with our students especially when schools reopen to physically welcome them. One thing that is becoming increasingly clear is that human connections, well-being and education are intrinsically connected, and that such a view can help us shape education that promotes well-being.

It is always important to continually think about how schooling should evolve so the kids get the most out of it. After an entire year of the school functioning through a computer screen, it has become clear that learning virtually has a place in the educational field and it would be really difficult to get rid of it. It is like a genie that is out of the bottle, and I don't think you can get it back in. Technology has stepped into the breach and will continue to play a key role in educating future generations. In a world where knowledge is a mouse-click away, the role of the educator must change too. Educators across the world are experiencing new possibilities to do things differently and with greater flexibility resulting in potential benefits in accessibility to education for students across the world.

Just when we thought that India had found the answer to the pandemic, we were engulfed with the second wave that seemed even more dangerous. It surely brought out the fact that virtual learning is here to stay. So how then do we secure our students' well-being through this virtual learning?

We could look at six well-being activities that could be used by teachers online and even when school reopens, using the research-based SEARCH framework, which stands for:

Strengths

Emotional management

Attention and awareness

Relationships

Coping

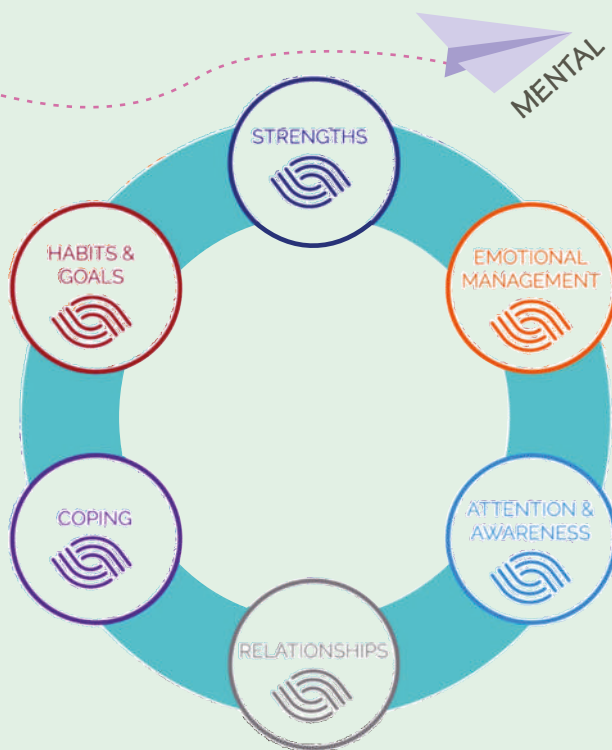
Habits and goals

Research suggests that students who cultivate these skills have stronger coping capacity, are more adaptable and receptive to change, and are more satisfied with their lives.

Educationists might consider using the activities in three ways:

Positive primer: to energize your students at the start of class to kickstart learning, prompt them to think about their well-being in that moment, get them socially connected online/ offline, and get their brain focused for learning.

Positive pause: to re-energize students at a time when you see class dynamics shifting, energy levels



dropping or students being distracted away from the screen or in class.

Positive post-script: to reward students and finish off the class in a positive way before they log off or before your class ends.

Rather than viewing these activities as another thing you have to fit in, use them as a learning tool that helps your students stay focused, connected, and energized.

1) Strengths

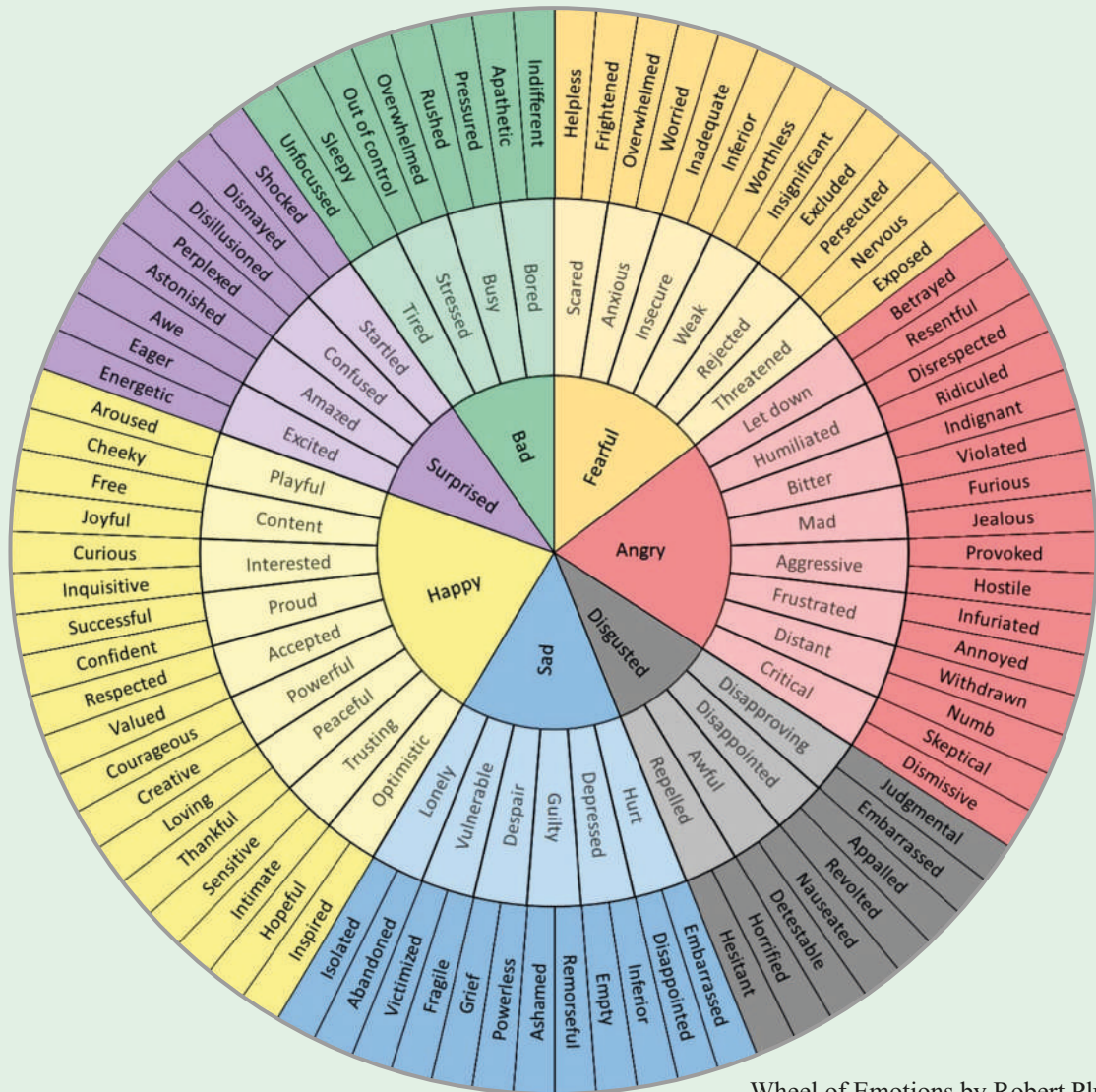
Activity: Staying strong during COVID-19

Learning goal: To help students learn about their own strengths

The teacher presents a questionnaire to the students and asks them to make a list of their strengths (such as kindness, courage, humour, love of learning, and perseverance). Once done, you could ask them to discuss these reflection questions:

- How can you use your strengths to stay engaged during remote learning?
- How can you use your strengths during home lockdown or family quarantine?
- How do you use your strengths to help your friends during COVID-19?

Research shows that using a strength-based approach at school can improve student engagement and grades



Wheel of Emotions by Robert Plutchik

as well as create more positive social dynamics among students. Strengths also help people to overcome adversity.

2) Emotional management

Activity: Managing emotions during the coronavirus pandemic

Learning goal: To normalize negative emotions and to generate ways to promote more positive emotions

The teacher creates an emotional wheel displaying emotions such as stress, curiosity, frustration, happiness, anger, playfulness, sadness, calmness, helplessness, hope. The teacher then presents a situation and asks them which of these emotions they feel. The teacher can guide the students to identify

which of the emotions could be used constructively.

Research shows that emotional management activities help to boost self-esteem and reduce distress in students. Additionally, students with higher emotional intelligence also have higher academic performance.

3) Attention and awareness

Activity: Finding calm during coronavirus times

Learning goal: To use a mindful breathing practice to calm our heart and clear our mind.

Do three minutes of square breathing, which goes like this:

- Imagine a square in front of you at chest height.
- Point your index finger away from you and use it

to trace the four sides of the imaginary square.

- As you trace the first side of the square, breathe in for four seconds.
- As you trace the next side of the square, breathe out for four seconds.
- Continue this process to complete the next two sides of the square.
- Repeat the drawing of the square four times.

Brief them on how sometimes we cannot control the big events in life, but we can use small strategies like square breathing to calm us down.

Students who have learned mindfulness skills at school report that it helps to reduce their stress and anxiety.

4) Relationships

Activity: Colour conversations

Purpose: To get to know each other; to deepen class relationships during remote learning

Randomly assign students to one of the following four colours: red, orange, yellow and purple. Provide the following instructions to them.

- Red group: Share a happy memory
- Orange group: Share something new that you have learned recently
- Yellow group: Share something unique about you

- Purple group: Share what your favourite food is and why

Once the sharing is completed, randomly ask the students what they have learnt about another classmate. By building up student connections, you are supporting their well-being as research suggests that a student's sense of belonging impacts both their grades and their self-esteem.

5) Coping

Activity: Real-time resilience during coronavirus times

Learning goal: To identify opportunities for resilience and promote positive action

- Have students brainstorm a list of all the changes that have occurred as a result of the coronavirus. As the students are brainstorming, type up their list of responses on your screen.
- Go through each thing that has changed and have the students decide if it is something that is within their control (like their study habits at home) or something they cannot control (like not attending school on campus).
- Choose two things that the students have identified as within their control and ask students to brainstorm a list of ways to cope with those changes.





You can repeat this exercise multiple times to go through the other points on the list that are within the students' control.

Developing coping skills during childhood and adolescence has been shown to boost students' hope and stress management skills—both of which are needed at this time.

6) Habits and goals

Activity: Hope hearts for the coronavirus pandemic

Learning goal: To help students see the role that hope plays in setting goals during hard times

- Find a heart image for students to use.
- Set up an online whiteboard to post the hearts on.
- Ask students to reflect on what hope means to them.
- Ask students to write statements on their hearts about what they hope for the world during coronavirus times, and then stick these on the whiteboard. Discuss common themes with the class. Finally, discuss one small action each student can take to create hope for others during this distressing time.
- Ask students to write statements on their hearts about what they hope for themselves, and then stick these on the whiteboard. Discuss common themes with the class. Finally, discuss one small

action each student can take to work toward the goal they're hoping for.

Helping students to set goals and have hope at this time can support their well-being. Research suggests that goals help to combat student boredom and anxiety, while having hope builds self-worth and life satisfaction.

I have tried some of these in my classroom teaching and it has helped students open up and relate better with the situations around.

We should look at these uncertain times as an opportunity despite the challenges. While learning cannot be quarantined and we have learnt a whole lot from this situation, we need to put values and show sensitivity to each other. Hence when we begin the physical school, I feel we need to review what we should RETAIN, RESTORE and REMOVE. Through this year, we have had to come to terms with the fact that children are better at technology than we are. We are no longer the 'Sage on Stage' or even facilitators, but we are now CO- LEARNERS.

We, as teachers, need to be a whole lot more flexible, think on our feet and adapt to changes as we know government directives towards education change constantly. If all goes well and we have the entire country vaccinated, which means we can reopen



schools once again, we cannot keep away all the wonderful things that the students have learnt during these trying times. We know that technology is very powerful, it can be an enabler but can also pose as a demon. Hence, it has to be tamed. Devices used for the learning process during the pandemic can be brought to school, provided the school management adapts apps to have some security codes, wherein only educational apps can work on them and this, I believe, will enhance the teaching – learning process too.

We need to ensure that '**screen time**' which is a concern for everyone is genuinely utilized for learning. We could introduce something called a '**vision championship**' wherein the students maintain a journal to monitor how much screen time they spend and on what. This will allow students to ascertain what is really important and what is not.

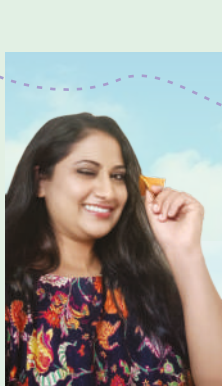
We may also identify students who will need extra support. We need to build a caring relationship. We have to stop looking at our students as merely a collection of percentages, but individual beings who

need to be appreciated and accepted for who they are. They need a whole lot of '**positive affirmation**'. We can indulge in something called '**care calls**' – the teacher can call to check on students and their families. You will notice a sense of security building and the bond with the teacher become even stronger. We can even have a '**gratitude journal**'.

We need to revamp our **timings** – the number of teaching periods. We need to concentrate on making our children feel comfortable adapting to school life once again and the curriculum rather than merely target completing the portion.

Assessment is a very important part of learning and we need to adapt different tools for assessment, breaking away from the traditional methods of assessments. Hence, we need not just look at tools that assess the academics but how the student went about the task. The student will be thus able to check their strengths and weaknesses and work on them accordingly. In such a way, the learning gaps need not be identified by the teacher only, the students too can check the same. They will feel confident to know themselves better.

There is constantly going to be co-learning and learning. We have to come to terms with the fact that the classroom has transcended the idea of space and time. Our National Educational Policy gives an impetus for us to get the best of both worlds. I would like to conclude that this change will bring about a synergy in the teaching – learning process, emphasising on personalization and competency skills and, most importantly, building on each child's intellectual confidence and their well-being.



Vanessa D'Cruz has been associated with education for the past 18 years and finds teaching to be a very enriching experience. She currently works as Senior Co-ordinator at Rose Manor International School. She is happy to be a member of the EduFOCUS Editorial Team as it gives her a preview into the latest trends in the field of education, the lives of teachers and students and allows her to interact with different intellectuals and educationists who work to meet the challenges of an ever-advancing knowledge-based society and a dynamically changing environment.

The Year of Resilience

Nalini Sorensen



Solely for the purpose of this article, I tried to imagine being one of my sons. I have two – aged 13 and 15 years.

I closed my eyes and imagined being stuck at home all day, in front of a screen, with teachers trying their best to make the class interesting for me.

I imagined, as I slouched lower and lower in my chair, that my mum or dad would walk into the room and correct me – yet again. They'd most likely ask me to sit straight. (As a complete side note, I've seen my sons sit in positions that would make most yoga instructors envious. They've displayed physical flexibility that I had no idea they possessed.)

I imagined the teacher telling me, yet again, to turn my camera on or speak louder as he/ she couldn't hear me mumble my response to his/ her question. I tried to pat down my dishevelled, uncut, unbrushed hair as I repeated my answer to the screen. I looked at my teenage self on that screen and saw how I looked to the rest of my class. That zit really caught the light.

I imagined overhearing my parents worried and

irritable about a whole host of non-school related issues – my grandparents' health, job insecurity, salary cuts, lack of availability of certain grocery items, another COVID-positive case in the building or neighbourhood – not realizing that I could hear them.

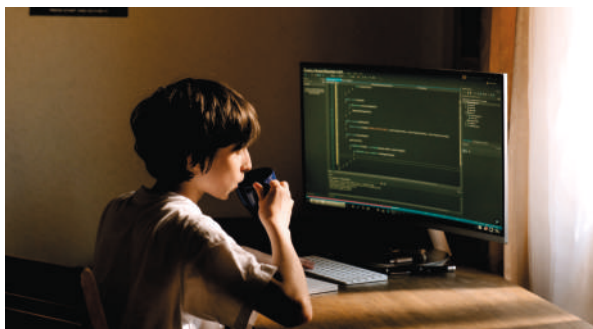
I imagined being able to feel my parents' own struggle – while trying to maintain a balance between their own office work and household chores. I could feel their frustration, their anger.

I could feel that anxious energy building up in the home that we were all confined to, for over a year, with no end in sight even today.

I imagined having a year of no outdoor time, no time with friends (an all-important part of teenage years), with all communication with my friends restricted to chats on the phone, text messages or messaging via social media. Birthday parties celebrated online, gaming online, *everything* more or less online.

The thing is it didn't take a lot for me to imagine this. I didn't need to dig deep into my creative pot. It has been the reality, to varying degrees, of all our children this past year. And yes, it hasn't been easy for them. This has been an academic year like no other. This has not been a normal year.

The bottom line is our children have had a rotten year and no one has acknowledged it. Our front-line workers have been acknowledged, and rightly so. Our teachers have been acknowledged, and rightly so. But, when I think back, our children haven't. So, I'm going to use a broad brush and generalize that this past academic year, what I call the academic



year of resilience, has been hard on our children and on their well-being – both physically and mentally. And it's been left unsaid. Unacknowledged.

It takes a certain amount of resilience to be able to, even at the most basic level, switch on that computer or handheld device and give another day of online school a go. I feel for our children. They've been thrown into this pandemic with no warning, and with no predetermined end date in sight. While I do wonder what the long-term effects of this year will be on our children, I'd like to believe that the world has changed, and that this has prepared them for a different world than the one we lived in before. One that none of us ever anticipated.

I can't provide any solutions and, of course, each child is different. What I can however recommend, as a mother who is quite in tune with her children, is to acknowledge the reality with your child. Children need their feelings validated. We often tend to forget this; we often reserve validation for adults, not children. So, when that report card comes in, remember that this wasn't an ordinary year. This was the year of resilience. Acknowledge the effort that your child put in, under very difficult circumstances. The fact that they've been heard and the fact that you've understood how hard it's been for them will go a long way in making them dig deep as the situation overflows into the next academic year.

And if you are a teacher? Well, then the starting point would be to acknowledge what a hard year it's been for you to your

students. Children can smell honesty like brownies baking in the oven. Share examples from your own life while asking them for examples from theirs. Share what's worked for you and your family, and ask them what's worked for theirs. This kind of conversation is comforting as we are living through times that none of us have experienced before. Openly declare that it's been a hard year for your students, to both your students and to their parents. Most importantly, try to focus on the student's growth, not his/ her grade.

A few weeks ago, we had one-on-one meetings with each of my sons' teachers. They are a bit of a blur; it felt a little like speed dating. But I had one clear standout. It was the meeting with my younger son's math teacher. She took me on a journey of growth – my son who wouldn't answer even when he knew the answer, my son who had his camera off and needed to be constantly reminded to turn it on, my son who would only send her messages in the private online chat – to – my son who now explained a concept he'd understood, to his friend, during the online class, with his camera on, and all eyes on him. I couldn't hide the pride I felt. And I don't even remember asking her what his grade was.



A teacher who acknowledges how hard it has been for his/ her students, who focuses on their growth, and who commends them for effort, will be the teacher who isn't forgotten, as these children make their way into adulthood.



Nalini Sorensen is an award-winning children's author, who loves spending time with children and looking at the world through the wonder of their eyes. She believes that life is too short to not laugh and seems to always attract highly humorous situations in her real life. She lives in Mumbai with her husband, two sons and dog.

Nalini has written numerous books, across various age groups, for children, and has been published by several publishers in India. She has contributed to anthologies, to children's magazines, and has written readers for schools in India. She is a TEDx speaker, and has attended and presented at numerous literary events across India.

She's on Instagram (@nalinisorensen) and on Facebook (@NaliniSorensenAuthor).

Emotional Development and Career Guidance

Shalu Mehrotra, Nidhi Jain



Psychotherapist Shalu Mehrotra, the vibrant programme 'Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham – Festival of Feelings' was launched in January 2015. This free of cost initiative reached out to students in Stds. V, VI and VII, and their parents. With a choice of 3 locations, students from 100 Mumbai schools were invited to spend a fun-filled day learning the art of handling difficult feelings while their parents attended sessions on effective parenting. In that first year, we reached out to 2,500 students and their parents; and the numbers only increased each year. Since then, we have definitely met more than 10,000 students and their parents.

Genesis

The Emotional Development and Career Guidance (EDCG) programme, popularly known as EDCG, turned 6 years old in 2021.

We could say that the academic year of 2015 – 16 was the birth year of EDCG when the pilot programme was run at St. Joseph's High School, Wadala and Holy Family High School, Chembur.

Prafulta, *Centre for Psychological Wellness*, has been working with students and their primary caregivers i.e., parents and teachers, through individual counselling, career guidance testing, workshops and various other trainings since 1998. All these services are geared towards building the emotional well-being of society.

Working with thousands of students over the years, a strong need was felt at two levels:

- i. With respect to emotional well-being, we need to reach out to the larger student population, not just the individuals coming to Prafula.
- ii. Just as there is a process for intellectual growth, students need to have a process for emotional and psychological growth.

Thus, with the conviction of Director Fr. Godfrey D'Sa SDB and the enthusiasm of Senior

These numbers were only possible because of the help of Prafula-trained counsellor volunteers.

This led to the germination of another idea: A single KKKG session created much-needed awareness, but more needed to be done to help students imbibe the various aspects of mental health. Thus, EDCG was born. While EDCG formally took birth in 2015 after the success of KKKG, yet, was that really the beginning? Ms. Shalu Mehrotra recalls that, many years ago, at a conference on emotional health organised by Prafula for school principals, Fr. Godfrey D'Sa SDB had spoken about the need to have a curriculum for emotional health. That idea stayed with her as a seed and flowered in 2015.

So what is EDCG?

Every formal education system follows a curriculum for intellectual development. However, no system emphasizes the emotional development of a child. While educational curricula help us develop our academic potential, it does not guide us enough to live effectively, to be happy. We need life skills for that purpose. We need to learn how to handle difficult emotions like anger, we need to understand how to interact with the opposite sex, we need to learn how to say 'No', we need to learn how to deal with mobile addiction.

Apt educational and career choices are also significant aspects of building the identity of youth. Often, this aspect is reduced to choosing between the science, commerce or arts streams in Std. XI based on marks obtained in Std. X. A studied process is required in schools to develop this aspect also. So EDCG caters to the development of youngsters in this zone; of understanding their interests, aptitude, strengths and then exploring various educational options from Std. VIII itself.

One could say that EDCG is a curriculum for emotional well-being chalked out from Std. V to Std. X.

EDCG consists of 4 sessions of 90 minutes each for each grade during each academic year. It also consists of 2 sessions with parents of each grade for 90 minutes each. The first session is conducted before the programme commences for the year. We clue in the parents about what will be done in the school with the students. The 4 relevant topics for each class (each class has age-appropriate topics) are shared and the parents are sensitized on how to handle issues that the children face today. In the second session with parents which is conducted after all the 4 student sessions are conducted, we share the feedback of the student sessions with the parents.

Whom have we been able to reach?

Since 2015, we have conducted EDCG at 9 schools. (St Joseph's, Wadala, Holy Family, Chembur, Victoria High School, Mahim, Infant Jesus, Jogeshwari, Holy Cross, Kalyan, Holy Cross, Parel, Canossa School, Andheri, Dominic Savio, Andheri, St Mary's, Mulund). In most of these schools, it is a process which has carried on for years. That is when the real benefit of EDCG flowers... when students go through relevant topics each year. Since 2015, we have reached out to at least 15,000 students and their parents through EDCG.

Our current status

We have been fortunate enough to receive CSR funds from L&T Hydrocarbon Engineering for EDCG and KKKG in the academic year of 2020-21. We have also had some individual donors to

help make this programme come alive. This has helped us reach out to more schools at a subsidised cost of Rs. 100 per student wherein the student attends 4 workshops and the parents attend 2 sessions with experienced counsellors.

With the increased number of schools, we created a larger team base to design, coordinate and conduct the workshops. Ms. Shalu Mehrotra heads the team with Ms. Nidhi Jain who coordinates all the activity in great detail. Ms. Ratandeep Chawla is responsible for all the beautiful presentations. She is also a team member who conducts workshops.

In the last academic year 2020-21 when the schools went online, we are proud to say that our team of 13 counsellors created each module for the online medium and we conducted them successfully for 5 schools. In this year, we reached out to 4320 students and their parents through EDCG.

Students got a chance to express their feelings of frustration due to the lockdown and learn ways of coping with the current stress. Some feedback from students, parents and teachers is given below.

Feedback from students, parents and teachers

The programme has been very well received by everyone involved. One of the students reported, *"All the workshops were amazing! I loved it very much. It is very, very useful for us now as well as for our future... And the teachers that explained the topics were very polite, kind and understanding... I really thank all the teachers who took efforts for these workshops."*

Another one said, *"The workshops were really very beneficial. 'The COVID-19 and its impact on us' workshop was extremely beneficial as it helped all the students take care of their social and mental health amidst all the difficulties during this pandemic. The career guidance workshop also guided us to pursue the career best suitable for us."*

Yet another Std. VIII student mentioned, *"I think you did a great job by helping us find out what was good for us and how we could tackle all our emotions during these hard times. I really appreciate that the counsellors were listening to*

each and every one of us, so none of us felt like we were left out at any point and they even solved all the doubts that we had. Thanks to everyone who was involved in making this program happen."

Even the parents had wonderful things to say about the sessions. One of them expressed that *"It was really helpful for my daughter. The children were engaged throughout as it was very well organized and very informative. The children enjoyed the varied activities and were very focused on each task. My daughter has changed her lifestyle and organises her work accordingly after attending these sessions."*

Another parent also found the sessions very helpful and interactive. He said, *"My child has understood the importance of responsible decision making. Now, he has inculcated values like keeping*

promises, consistency in everything he does, etc. which were taught in the sessions. We would like to thank you for your support and guidance."

The class teachers and other staff at school were also very happy with the sessions. They felt that all the counsellors came to the level of the children to make them understand the topics. One of the teachers mentioned that *"The workshops conducted helped the students to introspect. It made them aware about themselves and others too."*

Prafulta will continue to journey with students and parents using KKKG and EDCG in yet another challenging year ahead battling the ill effects of the coronavirus and building a more resilient society.

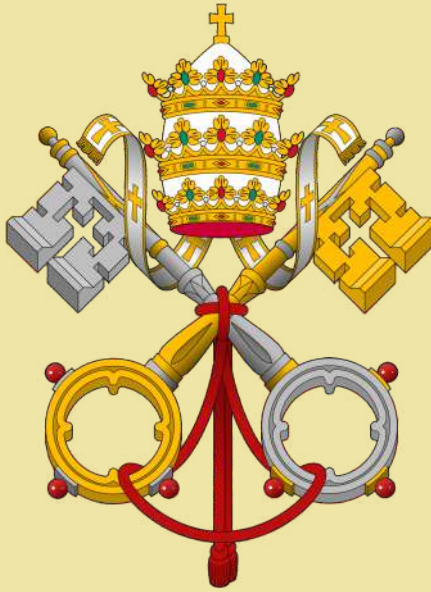
Wishing both physical and emotional health to all!



Shalu Mehrotra has completed her masters in applied psychology from the University of Delhi and Post-Graduate Diploma in Counselling Psychology from Xavier's Institute of Education, Mumbai. She has recently completed her international certification in anthroposophic psychotherapy. She has been working in the field of counselling since 1996 and has been with Prafulta since 2001. She coordinates the work of the Don Bosco Advanced Diploma in Counselling Psychology. She is also the Coordinator and Facilitator for ABE programme of Basic Skills in Counselling for teachers since 2004. She also coordinates the work of the counselling, career guidance and mental health initiatives at Prafulta. Her passion is to take mental health to society. She conducts programmes on emotional development for teachers, parents and counsellors on various emotional issues.

Nidhi Jain works as a psychologist at Prafulta Psychological Services in the area of community mental health. She has completed her bachelor's degree in psychology from St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, in 2001, with a distinction and she has subsequently completed her masters in clinical psychology in 2003 from SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, ranking first in the state of Maharashtra. She also has an advanced diploma in counselling and psychotherapy and an international certification in somatic psychotherapy. With her experience in this sector, Nidhi actively pursues making mental health care accessible to the community at large. She regularly conducts workshops and interacts with groups to spread awareness about mental health, educating and equipping them to deal with life.





Prot. No. 553/2020

Congregation for Catholic Education

Circular Letter to Schools, Universities and Educational Institutions

The spread of COVID-19 has profoundly changed our existence and way of life: “We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel, we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm”¹. Adding to our health concerns, we are also faced with economic and social woes. Educational systems around the world have suffered from the pandemic at both the school and university levels. Everywhere, efforts have been made to ensure a rapid response by means of digital platforms for distance learning whose effectiveness, however, has been lessened by a marked disparity in educational and technological opportunities. According to recent data from international agencies, about 10 million children will not have access to education in the coming years, thus widening the current educational gap.

Added to this, the very difficult situation of those Catholic schools and universities which, lacking

economic support from the state, risk closure or radical downsizing. And yet, Catholic educational institutions (schools and universities) have been able to, once again, become the new frontier of educational concerns, placing themselves at the service of ecclesial and civil communities, and providing a public educational and cultural service for the benefit of the entire community.

Education and Relationship

In this context, which unfortunately is still out of control in many parts of the world, several challenges have emerged. First of all, *distance learning* – albeit necessary in this extremely critical moment – has shown how the educational environment is made up of people who meet and interact directly and “face-to-face”: this is not a mere secondary context to educational activity but is the very essence of the relationship of exchange and dialogue (between teachers and learners) that is indispensable for the

¹ POPE FRANCIS, *Extraordinary moment of prayer on the parvis of St. Peter's Basilica*, 27th March 2020.

formation of the human person and for a critical understanding of reality. In classrooms, lecture halls and laboratories, we grow together and build a relational identity. In all ages of life – but all the more so in childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood – the process of psycho-pedagogical growth cannot take place without the encounter with others and the presence of others gives rise to the necessary conditions for creativity and inclusion to flourish. In the field of scientific research, academic investigation and, in general, educational activity, interpersonal relationships are the “place” where transdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity emerge as fundamental cultural criteria to curb the risks of fragmentation and disintegration of knowledge as well as to open this same knowledge to the light of Revelation.

Forming Educators

The pandemic's pervasive and protracted presence has also generated a widespread sense of uncertainty among teachers and educators. Their invaluable contribution – which has changed profoundly over the years, from both social and technical standpoints – needs to be supported through robust *continuing formation* programmes that can meet the needs of our time, without losing the synthesis between faith, culture and life, which is the keystone of the educational mission that is pursued in Catholic schools and universities. Teachers bear so many responsibilities, and their commitment must be increasingly transformed into *real, creative, and inclusive action*. Thanks to their work, a spirit of fraternity and sharing is nourished not only with learners, but also between generations, religions and cultures, as well as between humans and the environment.

Focus on the Human Person

For this to happen, the *relationship with and between real human persons* who are part of the *educational community* must be put at the centre; this relationship cannot be suitably accommodated within interactions mediated by screens or in the impersonal connections of digital networks. *Real human persons* are the heart

and soul of formal and informal educational processes, as well as an inexhaustible source of life by virtue of their essentially relational and communal nature which always implies a twofold dimension: vertical (open to communion with God) and horizontal (communion among human beings). Catholic education – inspired by the Christian vision of reality in all its expressions – aims at the integral formation of human persons who are called to live a specific vocation responsibly in solidarity with other people.

In a world where “everything is closely interrelated”², we feel united in finding new educational paths – in line with Christian anthropology – that allow us to grow together using the relational tools that are offered by current technology but, above all, by opening ourselves to listening to the *voice of others*: an irreplaceable and honest endeavour that requires us to dedicate time to common reflection and planning, drawing on personal stories, shared projects, the teachings of history and the wisdom of past generations. In this process of *formation in relationships and in the culture of encounter*, our “common home” with all creatures also has its place and value, because people, while they are formed to the logic of communion and solidarity, already work “to recover a serene harmony with creation”³ and to configure the world as “a place of true brotherhood” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 37).

Aiming at Service

The current situation has strongly highlighted the need for an *increasingly communal and shared educational pact* that – drawing strength from the Gospel and the teachings of the Church – can contribute to the spread of an authentic *culture of encounter* through generous and open synergies. For this reason, Catholic schools and universities are called to form *people who are willing to put themselves at the service of the community*. When we serve, in fact, we can experience that there is more joy in giving than in receiving (cf. *Acts* 20:35) and that our time can no longer be characterized by indifference, selfishness, and division: “the whole world is suffering and needs to be

² POPE FRANCIS, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si*, 24th May 2015, 137

³ POPE FRANCIS, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si*, 24th May 2015, 225

united in facing the pandemic” because “the challenge we are facing is shared by all, without distinguishing between persons”⁴. Formation to service in society, through promoting the common good, calls on everyone to “unite our efforts in a broad *educational alliance*, to form mature individuals capable of overcoming division and antagonism, and to restore the fabric of relationships for the sake of a more fraternal humanity”⁵.

Networking

It is now evident that “the pandemic has highlighted how vulnerable and interconnected everyone is”⁶, and this requires both Catholic and non-Catholic educational institutions to contribute to the establishment of an *educational alliance* which, like in a *team effort*, is aimed at “finding the common step to revive the commitment for and with the younger generations, renewing the passion for a more open and inclusive education, capable of patient listening, constructive dialogue and mutual understanding”⁷. This can be fostered by a more integrated cooperation network that forms a starting point for defining and sharing essential objectives towards which coexistence models can creatively and realistically converge as an alternative to the ones that currently characterize our individualistic and mass societies⁸. This is a wide-ranging responsibility that is open to all those who care about building a renewed long-term educational project based on shared ethical principles and standards. A valuable contribution can come from school and university pastoral care, as well as from individual Christians present in the various educational institutions.

Conclusions

The Congregation for Catholic Education – as already mentioned in its communiqué of 14th May 2020⁹ - renews its closeness and expresses its profound appreciation to all educational communities in Catholic schools and universities which, despite the health emergency, have continued to provide their services to avoid breaking the *educational chain* which is the foundation of both our personal development and social life. In view of future school and academic planning, albeit amidst uncertainty and concerns, the people who hold responsibility for our society are called to give greater importance to education in all its formal and informal aspects, coordinating efforts to support and ensure the educational commitment of all in these difficult times.

It is time to look forward with courage and hope. Catholic educational institutions have their foundation in Christ – the way, the truth, and the life (cf. *Jn* 14:6) – and a perennial source of “living water” (cf. *Jn* 4:7-13) which reveals the new meaning of life and transforms it. Therefore, may we be supported by our belief that in education dwell the seeds of hope: hope for peace and justice.

Vatican City, 10th September 2020

Giuseppe Card. VERSALDI
Prefect

Angelo Vincenzo ZANI
Titular Archbishop of Volturmo
Secretary

⁴ POPE FRANCIS, *Message Urbi et Orbi*, 12th April 2020

⁵ POPE FRANCIS, *Message for the launch of the Global Compact on Education*, 12th September 2019

⁶ POPE FRANCIS, *General Audience*, 12th August 2020

⁷ POPE FRANCIS, *Address to the participants of the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Catholic Education*, 20th February 2020

⁸ Cf. CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Educating to Fraternal Humanism. Building a Civilization of Love 50 Years After Populorum Progressio*, 16th April 2017, VI.

⁹ <http://www.cec.va/content/dam/cec/Documenti/COMUNICATO%20global%20compact%20IT%2014-05-2020.pdf>

Congregation for Catholic Education:

Circular Letter to Schools, Universities and Educational Institutions

A Commentary by Nirmala Carvalho

Vatican's newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, published the letter on 9th September 2020 signed by Cardinal Giuseppe Versaldi, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education, and Archbishop Angelo Zani, the Congregation's Secretary.

The global health pandemic has shined a harsh light on the vulnerabilities and challenges humanity faces with a clear picture of existing inequalities in the education system.

The Congregation for Catholic Education has, in its letter, appreciated Catholic institutions for adapting to the crisis, emphasizing the principle of the “relationship of exchange” between real people in a COVID-19 pandemic world, where remote learning is “necessary in this extremely critical moment”.

The Vatican reaffirms the direct and interpersonal relationship of exchange and dialogue between

teachers and students as indispensable for the learning process. That relationship, it said, “cannot find sufficient home in the interaction mediated by a screen or in the impersonal connections of the digital network.” Interactions with students and teachers is “indispensable for the formation of the person and for a critical understanding of reality”.

“In the perspective of future school and academic planning, albeit amidst uncertainties and concerns, those responsible for society are called to give greater importance to education in all its formal and informal dimensions by coordinating efforts to support and ensure, in these difficult times, the educational commitment of all,” the Congregation said.

In its letter, the Vatican Dicastery said the pandemic has emphasized “the need for an increasingly communal and shared educational pact that -- drawing strength from the Gospel and the teachings of the church -- will contribute a generous and open



synergy to spread an authentic culture of encounter.” The Congregation said that although digital platforms have allowed for education to continue, they have also brought to light “a marked disparity in educational and technological opportunities”.

“According to recent data provided by international agencies, about 10 million children will not be able to access education in the coming years, increasing the already existing educational gap,” the Congregation said.

“In classrooms, lecture halls and laboratories, we grow together and build a sense of identity in relationship,” the letter said. “At all ages of life,



but all the more so in childhood, adolescence and early adulthood, the process of psycho-pedagogical growth cannot take place without an encounter with others, and the presence of the other provides the necessary conditions for creativity and inclusion to flourish.”



The letter concluded by expressing its “warm appreciation” for the efforts of staff at Catholic schools and universities to continue educating students “despite the health emergency”. Because of the effort of teachers, the Vatican points out, a spirit of fraternity and sharing is nourished not only with the learners but also between generations, religions and cultures, as well as between men and women and the environment.



Nirmala Carvalho has been a Crux correspondent since 2004 and, in 2006, won the Communications Award from the Catholic Bishops Conference of India for “exceptional sensitivity to the Church and minority-related issues”. She holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy and a master's degree in sociology, both from the University of Mumbai.

Catholic Education in Australia – A Blessing for 200 years!

Avalon D'Abreo

Catholic education in Australia, which completed 200 years in 2020, owes its beginnings to the Irish missionaries

who first set up schools in Australia. It must be noted that it was a very difficult start. For the first half century of colonization, Catholics in Australia were denied priests and sacraments, churches and church schools. They had to teach their children at home or seek out schools and teachers elsewhere. Catholics were not wealthy and had to overcome many challenges.

The first Catholic school in Australia was set up within a Catholic community that lacked wealth, education or prospects, and had no ecclesiastical structure. In October 1820, the Irish Catholic priest, Fr. John Therry, established a school in Parramatta, the first official Catholic school. The present St. Patrick's Primary School in Parramatta and the Parramatta Marist High School both claim descent from this first school. After him came the other missionaries such as the Christian brothers, Sisters of Mercy, Jesuit fathers, Marist brothers, Salesians and many other congregations.

In 1866, the first Josephite School was founded in Penola, South Australia by Mary McKillop and Fr. Julian Tenison Woods, founder of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Mary McKillop is, today, Australia's

first and only recognised saint. The Josephite sisters have been instrumental in church and school life throughout Australia. In our own parish in the west of Melbourne, the Josephite sisters have made an immense and invaluable contribution over the past decades.

As secularism progressed in the Australian colonies in the late 1800s, the mood was increasingly against providing any funding to church schools. The thinking was that the government would provide education that was free, secular and compulsory. However, Catholics were determined to meet this challenge of rising secularism and sectarianism. They were determined to give their children a Catholic education that was based on Judeo-Christian values. Together with the lay faithful, the clergy and religious were equally resolute in this endeavour. Today, while Australian social thinking has evolved positively to Catholic education, there is still a gap in the public funding of Catholic schools that is received from the Australian government, and this shortfall which is around 30% is made up by additional fees paid by Catholic families.

Since its humble beginning in 1820, Catholic education has grown exponentially in Australia, and now accounts for the education of one in every five students in Australia with approximately 770,000



(clockwise from top left)
1866 - the first Josephite school was set up in a stable in Penola, South Australia;
1884 - St. Joseph's School, Strathbryn, South Australia;
1870 - Sr. Mary Borgia Byrne and novice Miss Mary Fitzgerald with students, All Hallows Primary School, Adderton House, Brisbane;
1943 - Christian Brothers College, Adelaide

Primary and Secondary school students in more than 1750 schools with nearly 100,000 staff. There are two Catholic universities as well, University of Notre Dame Australia founded in Western Australia, and the Australian Catholic University in the eastern states. Around 50,000 tertiary students are now enrolled in these two universities across their several campuses in Australia.

Catholic schools believe that education should be directed not just towards personal enrichment for the individual student but also to community contribution. One of the great successes of Catholic education is that many of its graduates have gone on to put their character, skills and knowledge at the service of others: as civic leaders or judges, leaders of industry, professions or trades, served in the military and in many other ways. Many have gone on to be spouses and parents, contributing to their parish and volunteering in their local community. Many, too, have joined 'caring professions' such as education and healthcare, or a life-long religious vocation as priests, sisters or brothers.

In our own corner of Australia, which is west of Melbourne, in the southern-most state of Victoria, we have benefitted from the great vision and work of Irish priests and the Josephite sisters. The founding of schools and churches in our area has facilitated not only quality education for our own children and for the friends around us, but also contributed to the growth in spirituality. We feel privileged and fortunate to have our two children educated from Primary school through to High

school in the Catholic education system. Our two children have received a comprehensive Catholic education for 13 years from Prep through to Year 12 with specialities provided at separate campuses. Through Catholic Regional College, Sydenham, they have experienced a modern school with a diverse curriculum focussed on every student – its mission is every student, every pathway. The school serves as a model school to other schools, locally and internationally.

Despite the many challenges of secularisation and sectarianism in a rapidly changing world, Catholic education has made a unique and invaluable

contribution to the education of Catholic children as well as those of other faiths in Australian society in its 200-year history. This extraordinary success is the result of the sacrifice of those who came before us and by the grace of God. Catholic schools are thus considered a jewel in the crown of the Catholic church in Australia, with few parallels in other countries.

With the collective will of the Catholic laypeople and leadership, we have every confidence that Catholic education will continue to play an important role in Australian society. It has weathered many challenges over the past 200 years and there will, no doubt, be more challenges to navigate ahead. The bicentenary of Catholic education in Australia is a time to pause and remember the past with gratitude, be inspired by what is happening in the present and look forward to the future with faith.

Images source: <https://200years.catholic.edu.au/>



Avalon D'Abreo is a financial services professional, contrarian thinker, university lecturer and life coach. He is an alumnus of St. Andrew High School, Bandra and currently lives with his family in Melbourne, Australia.

He runs two businesses – one in financial services education, training and development, and the other in personal and business coaching. He travels within Australia's capital cities conducting training and development programmes and he has extensive experience in project management, leadership and people management skills gained in three countries – India, UAE and Australia – within a multicultural environment. He firmly believes that personal education leads to personal empowerment, and that the best way to guarantee one's future is to create it!

Pope: Schools should form consciences to generosity and equality

Pope Francis sends a video message to the Latin American Federation of Jesuit Schools (FLACSI), felicitating it on its 20th anniversary.

Robin Gomes

Pope Francis envisages Catholic schools as “welcoming places” where one heals not only one's own wounds but also those of others. He wants them to be places where one learns to read and discern the “signs of the times”, but above all, he wants them to help develop in their students a critical attitude towards certain models of development and consumption that create shameful inequalities among people.

The Pope expressed his vision of an ideal Catholic school in a message he sent on Thursday to the Latin American Federation of Jesuit Schools (FLACSI), on the occasion of its 20th anniversary. Started in 2001, the federation of some 92 Jesuit-run schools in 19 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, is based in Bogota, Colombia. FLACSI was started by the Conference of Provincials for Latin America (CPAL), which promotes common policies, strategies and initiatives across the network in the service of education and the social transformation of the region.

Life for others

In his message, delivered in Spanish, the Pope who is a Jesuit, invited FLACSI schools to “go out”, following the example of Jesus “who teaches us to relate to others and to Creation”. He particularly

insisted on “meeting with the little ones, with the poor and the discarded”. “May our schools form hearts convinced of the mission for which they were created, with the certainty that life grows and matures to the extent that we give it for the life of others.” Instead, “life which is preserved ends up being a museum piece smelling of naphthalene, which does not help.”

Avoid “selfish elitism”

Hence “welcoming schools” should really have open doors, not just in words, where the poor can enter and where others can go and meet them. Schools should embody the wisdom of the Gospel, which is the privileged perspective from which one can learn so much. Schools, he said, should not withdraw into “selfish elitism”, but must be places where students “live together with everyone, where brotherhood is lived, knowing that everything is connected”. In this regard, the Pope said one should remember that “fraternity, in the first place, is not a moral duty”. Rather, it is the “objective identity of the human race and of all creation” by which “we are created in a family, as brothers and sisters”.

Forming consciences

The Pope also hoped that FLACSI schools “teach to discern, to read the signs of the times, to read one's life as a gift to be grateful for and to share”. He hoped that they “have a critical attitude on development, production and consumption models, which frenetically push towards a shameful inequality that makes the great majority of the world population suffer”. “As you can see, my desire is that your schools have a conscience and create consciences,” the Holy Father said, urging FLACSI members to be “disciples and missionary schools promoting faith and justice”.



Source: www.vatican.va

Education and Learning: Challenges and the Road Ahead

Fr. Joshan Rodrigues



Last year, in 2020, as we initiated virtual classroom learning to cope with the first phase of the pandemic, if anyone were to suggest that come June 2021, we would still be steadfastly tethered to the online mode of learning, you would have dismissed it as frivolous banter. And yet, here we are at the beginning of a new academic year, firmly married to the mechanism of online classes. The return to the familiar environment of the physical classroom still seems to be a long way off, considering the vulnerability of children and the current slow pace of vaccinations in our country. However, the expectation is that all relevant stakeholders have learned valuable lessons from the academic year gone by, which will lead to a more responsible and determined planning for the year ahead, keeping in mind the best interests of both students and teachers.

The initial euphoria over the cancellation of Std. X and Std. XII Board examinations has now morphed into anxiety once again for parents, students and teachers alike over the criteria that will be adopted for evaluation of students. While a certain degree of confusion reigned across all education Boards in the country owing to the unexpected nature of the crisis, State Boards and their associated institutions in particular have been found wanting in their ability to foresee the

road ahead and plan accordingly. The 'knee-jerk' responses to the fluctuating eccentricities of the COVID-19 virus, and the frequent policy changes did not make life easier for schools and their wards. Those in authority should have anticipated the long-term closure of schools, keeping in mind the young and vulnerable nature of their demographic, and accordingly put in place mechanisms for the gradual and consistent academic evaluation of their students.

Schools now find themselves with a lack of substantial data on the basis of which to evaluate their students and assign marks. Students are naturally concerned that their final marksheets will not reflect their true academic potential. This will in turn impact their future prospects. There are many other teething difficulties such as the evaluation of private SSC students, conducting entrance tests for admission to colleges and universities, a huge segment of the student population in India that did not have access to online learning, etc. Naturally, students coming from poor families suffer, as they find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. Make no mistake, regardless of what decisions are made, a certain segment of parents and students will remain unhappy, but that is the unflattering reality that educational authorities find themselves in.

Regardless of these challenges, there is a far greater point of concern. Educationists point out that the current crisis has laid bare the deficiencies and weaknesses of the current educational model, with its focus on examinations and marks. Learning has to be a continuous process; the focus should not be just about preparing a student for exams. The commercialisation of education had already led to it becoming 'career-driven' in its approach; the virtualisation of education could lead to a dangerous amplification of the same. The original unblemished purpose of education was to form enlightened 'citizens' who could take their rightful place in society, not to prepare them for a profession. That follows at a later stage.

The liberal arts education of antiquity focused on the Trivium – which was grammar, logic and rhetoric – to which was added later the Quadrivium (astronomy, mathematics, geometry and music). These were the seven liberal arts. In the modern era, the liberal arts would include the natural sciences, social sciences, arts and the humanities,

inclusive of history and philosophy. Without a strong foundation in the humanities, and a direct over-emphasis from a young age on professional or technical education, children may grow up to be great professionals, but 'poor' citizens. This does not augur well either for the individual or for society as a whole. Governments need to recognise this and make a course correction.

Speaking to participants at the Plenary meeting of the Congregation for Catholic Education in February last year, Pope Francis said that education must be *“oriented to the full development of the person in their individual and social dimension.”* The Pope said that *“education has the purpose of bringing him or her to the knowledge of himself or herself, of the common home in which he or she lives, and above all to the discovery of fraternity as a relationship that produces the multicultural composition of humanity, a source of mutual enrichment.”* Education, the Pope says, must respect the essential criteria in order to be effective - identity, quality and the common good.



Education today needs to adopt hybrid models of learning that includes children on both sides of the digital divide as well as the economic divide. Teachers and students must be brought together not just by the teaching curriculum, but also the curriculum of life and experiences.

**Source: The Examiner Catholic
Newsweekly,
19 – 25 June 2021**



Fr. Joshan Rodrigues is the Managing Editor of The Examiner Catholic Newsweekly. He completed his licenciante in social and institutional communications from the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome in 2018.

Septuagennial Celebrations at Auxilium Convent High School, Wadala



Sr. Meena D'Silva FMA

Auxilium Convent High School, Wadala is an all-girls school in the city of Mumbai and celebrated 70 glorious years on 19th March 2020 as an institution of learning and moral development. This institution is managed and run by the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco also known as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA). The FMA Institute was founded by St. John Bosco and St. Mary Mazzarello at Mornese in Italy in 1872. Within 5 years of its foundation, the sisters sailed to mission lands to educate and to evangelise. In its golden jubilee year, in 1922, six Italian missionaries reached Bombay by sea and proceeded to Tanjore in Madras on 22nd November 1922. Today, we are over 1,500 sisters and 150 novices involved in multifarious activities for the marginalised, young and women in 197 houses in India alone.



January 1946, the feast of St. John Bosco, the sisters met Archbishop Thomas Roberts SJ and agreed to take up the direction of the co-ed school from June 1946.

On 30th April 1946, Mother Teresa Merlo accompanied Sr. Eugenia Versino, the new

Superior, to Wadala. They were accommodated in the School staffroom. The following day they met Fr. A. Rebello, the Parish Priest and the Manager of St. Joseph's School, Wadala. It was agreed that the Parish Priest would continue to be the Manager and administer the finances of the School while the Superior as the Headmistress would be in charge of the academic organisation and disciplinary matters of the School.

In September 1945, Sr. Catherine Marnetto and Sr. Lutgarde Pereira met the then-Archbishop of Bombay, Rev. Thomas Roberts SJ, and expressed their desire to set up a convent in Bombay. The sisters were told, *"Here is a poor parish school, just 3 furlongs from the Don Bosco's Shrine, Matunga which you may take over even right now."* The sisters believed in their hearts that God had answered their prayers.

On 30th January 1946, at the invitation of Rev. Fr. Balaguer SJ, the Vicar General of Bombay, Mother Teresa Merlo, the Provincial of the sisters, and Sr. Luigina Appiano came to Bombay to finalize the formalities with the Archdiocese regarding the proposed foundation at Wadala. They were accommodated at St. Teresa's High School, Girgaum and visited the locality of Wadala. They discovered that it was indeed a very poor co-ed school. The infrastructure was rather weak and inadequate. This did not discourage the sisters. They were ready to sow the seeds of Salesian charism at Wadala. The following day, on 31st

The sisters were still on a lookout for a place to stay when Mrs. Philomena Pereira, the mother of Sr. Lutgarde Pereira FMA, offered the home of her son at Bandra. On 20th May 1946, Sr. Lutgarde Pereira and Sr. Eugenia Versino moved into their new abode at Bandra. On 24th May 1946, the sisters celebrated the solemn feast of Mary Help of Christians by making a pilgrimage to a little chapel at Bandra and to ask her to accompany them in their new mission at Wadala. God was gracious and, on 1st June 1946, two more sisters, Sr. Catherine Mania and Sr. Priscilla Fernandes, arrived from Madras to make the community complete. Sr. Catherine Mania would be the class teacher of Std. VII and teach the French language, Sr. Lutgarde Pereira would teach the Primary classes besides drawing and painting, Sr. Priscilla Fernandes would teach needlework and attend to housework, and Sr. Eugenia Versino would be the Superior and teacher in school. Their life consisted in rising, going to a nearby church, leave home by 8.30 am to travel by bus and train to reach school which began at 9.30 am. Their long day at school would end at 4.00 pm. Once again, they would make their way homeward which would take them an hour and a half each time.



Military Barracks – The First Convent!

The heavy monsoon made the daily commute to Wadala difficult.

Rev. Fr. Aurelius Maschio SDB, seeing their plight, invited them and gave them three rooms in the military barracks that were set up at Don Bosco High School, Matunga. The sisters soon realized that the prophecy of Msgr. Balaguer had come true for he had said, *“Have faith... and you will see the house arise from nowhere!”* And half-jokingly and half-seriously he had suggested, *“Throw a medal of Don Bosco in the place you want to stay.”*

The first convent of the FMA in the military barracks was named 'St. Joseph's Cottage'. The sisters now continued to lookout for a piece of land and, miraculously, on 22nd August, a piece of land was acquired in favour of the sisters.

The sisters, besides teaching in the School, also began the association of the Legion of Mary and the Crusaders of the Blessed Sacrament on 8th September. The weekly meetings were held on every Wednesday morning before the start of school. There were about 30 young girls attending the Legion of Mary, some of whom were past

pupils of the School, while nearly 100 children were enrolled as Crusaders. During the year, they prepared about 50 children for First Holy Communion. They also organised a fete to collect funds for the missions and staged programmes for the feast day of the Parish Priest and Christmas.

School Expansion

On 12th April 1948, the SDB Provincial, Msgr. Jose Carreño, along with Fr. Rego SDB visited the School. They visited all the classes overfilled with pupils and realized the need for the expansion of the building. In June 1948, Fr. Rego took over the management of the School and thus the school administration passed from the Archdiocese of Bombay to the Salesian Congregation. This is one of the few places where the FMA preceded the SDB in a new foundation.

On 6th June of the same year, with the assistance of the new Parish Priest Fr. Rego, the sisters began the festive oratory. The children came in large numbers to play games, attend catechism and benediction. Soon the sisters started the 'Children of Mary'. On 26th September 1948, the sisters were blessed with a pastoral visit by Msgr. Valerian Gracias. He was



St. Mary Mazzarello



St. John Bosco

delighted to see so much accomplished by the sisters that he appreciated their commendable work in the School and the Parish.

The New Construction Begins

The sisters, with the help of the past pupils and benefactors, started their begging expedition and placed their new venture under the patronage of St. Joseph. A plan for a new school building was made by Mr. Patki, the architect, and the sisters hoped and prayed to Mary Help of Christians that soon they would be able to open the doors of her “Auxilium” to the young of the vicinity.

On 7th December 1949, Mr. Patki came with an engineer to mark the boundaries of the land on which the new school would arise. After prayers of thanksgiving, praise and petition and the 'sowing of medals', the sisters returned to their cottage entrusting the land to Our Lady. Their joy was short-lived. Soon after Christmas, the sisters learnt that the municipal authorities refused to sanction the plan due to recent government restrictions. So, a new plan was made and the construction initiated.

Laying of the Foundation Stone

On 26th April 1950, at 5.00 pm, many gathered at the building site. The School band was in attendance with many pupils, numerous friends, benefactors, parents of pupils. On the dais were

Msgr. Gracias (Archbishop of Bombay), Msgr. Dyer (Vicar General), Fr. Maschio (Rector of Don Bosco) and Mother Teresa Merlo (Provincial of the Salesian Sisters). After a melodious welcome song, Sr. Eugenia Versino read out the official document. Then, enclosing it with medals of Our Lady, St. Joseph, and the relics of our founders it was solemnly embedded in the foundation stone and sealed. A little celebration for all followed at the cottage.

Wondrous Stories of Providential Help

The work began amidst much hard work, sacrifice and goodwill of many persons that led to the rise of a beautiful edifice. The sisters would often go begging from door to door, well-wishers would stage shows to collect funds while the children prayed to Mary Help of Christians to come to their aid.

On 15th March 1951, all the girls of the recognized Primary section of the St. Joseph's Parish Co-ed School were transferred to “Auxilium”. During this time a nearby, well-known school run by another congregation of sisters closed down so children came in great numbers for admission to the new school. Generous parents spontaneously supplied the various needs of the School. On 19th March 1951, the feast of St. Joseph, the sisters bid adieu to the little cottage and permanently moved into their

abode 'AUXILIUM'. On their arrival, they enthroned the statue of the saint amidst lights and flowers.

Goodbye Sr. Eugenia Versino!

Superior Sr. Eugenia Versino was preoccupied with the heavy debt yet to be paid. They urgently needed to collect more funds. On 30th March 1951, Sr. Eugenia Versino and Sr. Clementina Lobo went to visit a benefactress, Ms. Aurelia D'Silva, at Bandra. On





their return journey, they suddenly decided to meet Fr. Maschio. So, Sr. Clementina alighted first at the King's Circle station and, since the train was overcrowded, Sr. Eugenia could not alight along with her. The train started and Sr. Clementina made signs to her to alight at the next station of Wadala. However, all of a sudden, perhaps being pushed by the crowd, Sr. Eugenia fell flat on the platform hitting her head against an iron pillar. She was bleeding profusely and was immediately rushed to the nearby government hospital at Sion. The Salesian Fathers: Fr. Rego, the Parish Priest, Fr. Giacomello, Fr. Spratt and Fr. Maschio; the Salesian sisters: Sr. Angela Bosotti and Sr. Mary Bout, all rushed to the hospital with much hope, but the doctor pronounced that her life had ended! Her funeral was witnessed by large crowds of people of different faiths as she was laid to rest the following day at Sewri cemetery. The sisters were helped by several people to accept this tragic loss. They believed in their hearts and were resigned to God's will and plans.

Auxilium marches on... And the gift goes on...

June 1951: the new scholastic year began with 600 students on the rolls at Auxilium Wadala and Sr. Angela Bosotti as its new Superior. She continued in the footsteps of Sr. Eugenia Versino of completing the School building, paying off debts, etc. Auxilium Convent High School, Wadala grew from strength to strength. Sr. Berta Sperrfechter, a valiant German missionary, contributed much to the growth of this institution. In her capacity as head of the institution and Principal of the School, she reached out to all especially the poor and the marginalized. Her favourite phrase was *"Happiness does not consist in doing what one likes but in liking what one has to do."* She spent most of her years at Auxilium Wadala and breathed her last on 4th December 1991. Even today, it is with a sense of joy and gratitude that many alumni on entering the portals of AUXILIUM recall the love and tender care of Sr. Berta.

At Auxilium, all round formation and practising the preventive system are its hallmark. Besides helping



out in the Parish in various ministries, the sisters started the daily and festive oratory for the children of the neighbourhood and periphery. They would play games, receive instructions on moral living and get a banana and a glass of hot milk each day. After-school study was started in its earliest years. This initiative also bore rich dividends as the children came from different linguistic backgrounds. The parent-teacher association and the past-pupils association were started in the early seventies.

In its 40th year, in 1990, the sisters decided to reach out to many children of Wadala village and Antop Hill. They first enrolled them in school as they did not receive the support from their homes and admitted them to the boarding. Auxilium Wadala became their new 'HOME' where they were loved, cared and provided for by the sisters. Most of these children completed their education and are well-placed today.

In the decade that followed, the sisters decided to enter into new arenas of social impact. They started:

- NIOS for the dropouts of the locality
- ANMOL, a Home for street kids
- Doorstep and pavement schools for children to enable them join mainstream education
- A residence for trafficked women to in order to rescue them

Each of these initiatives were taken up to empower the poor and marginalized young girls and women. Auxilium has been the wind beneath their wings as they soared higher and higher. The students of the NIOS were enabled to join mainstream education and move on. Anmol Home for Girls moved through various phases and most of them are happily settled in life. Tuition classes with teachers at various places continue to help the girl child to study and dream big dreams.

In the Jubilee year 2000 and 50 years of Auxilium Wadala, we committed ourselves to: reawaken in young women a critical self-knowledge of the richness of their own femininity and to know how

to actively insert themselves into society thus becoming elements of social change for a better tomorrow with the motto FLY HIGH... THE SKY IS YOUR LIMIT. AUXILIUM SOARS HIGHER. Empowering our young women to grow as active citizens was our thrust. They learnt to appreciate themselves as women and reach out in love, service and gratitude.

During its Diamond year, in 2010, the School aimed at social outreach. Together with the entire Auxilium family, the Diamond years were made memorable for all especially the poor, weak and marginalized in the vicinity and in the periphery.

In January 2020, in its 70th year, Auxilium embarked on a new journey: Journeying Towards 75 years and Beyond. The entire school fraternity began the year with a solemn Thanksgiving Eucharist followed by a host of inter-school events for the students of the Primary and Secondary section. A fitting monument was raised in the memory of our sisters who have made Auxilium what it is today. A host of eco-friendly initiatives are being planned and carried out as the school strives towards becoming a zero-waste school and gradually making our vicinity a zero-waste neighbourhood. As a tribute to our support staff, a medical corpus is being raised for their continual health care.

Outside the walls of Auxilium, it is our past pupils who carry out our ideals in their lives with their contribution to society. It is heart-warming to see so many return with many happy and nostalgic memories and with a great desire to contribute towards making Auxilium make even greater strides.

To all our sisters who have contributed towards Auxilium Wadala, we are indeed grateful. To all our teaching and support staff, we owe a debt of gratitude for laying such strong foundations. To all our past pupils, we rejoice with you. To all who have proceeded ahead to our Father's house, we say a big 'Thank You'. To all who are associated with Auxilium, do continue to journey with us as Auxilium endures to make a difference in the lives of the young.

St. Andrew's Among Top 100

Jacinta Furtado



In November 2018, Design for Change (DFC) India teamed up with the Archdiocesan Board of Education (ABE) Mumbai to run a special edition of the I Can Challenge for ABE schools in Mumbai. The winners would win a chance to participate in I Can Children's Global Summit to be held in Rome in November 2019.

The I Can Challenge encourages children to identify problems in the world around them and to seek simple solutions to these problems. Fr. Magi Murzello, our Principal at St. Andrew High School,

Bandra, therefore encouraged the boys to put on their thinking caps and participate. Two teams were formed under the leadership of Ms. Jacinta Furtado and each took on different issues. While one team presented 'The Saviour of Water Bodies', the other team presented 'Fish-O-Ponics'. Imagine the joy of the students when Fr. Magi announced that both teams had won a chance to participate in the Summit.

The 11 students from the two teams along with teachers, Ms. Jacinta Furtado and Sir Vinod Nalawade, spent an enriching four days in Rome participating in the I Can Children's Global Summit where they met children from across the world. The two projects were also submitted for the annual I Can Challenge 2019 where 'The Saviour of Water Bodies' won a place in the **Top 100 Most Inspiring Stories of Change**.

This team of students had identified the need to “purify water bodies” after seeing a dead baby dolphin washed ashore with plastic stuck in its mouth. A few years earlier, they had also participated in a beach clean-up drive at Chimbai initiated by Fr. Magi himself. Therefore, 'The Saviour of Water Bodies', a water-purifying gizmo, was constructed by the students themselves out of mostly recycled materials like metal cans, Velcro and motors from old toy cars. They also kept the usage of plastic to a minimum. Pleased with the results of their gadget, they presented it to the rest of the School at the morning assembly. It was also an opportunity to educate their teachers and peers about solid waste increasing in water bodies day by day.



In March 2021, the students and their mentors received their certificates and a trophy for the School. It was indeed a thrilling end to a journey that began more than two years ago.

The video of the project can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mr_wQ6UJCg. One can also search for 'The Savior of Water Bodies' on the YouTube channel of Design for Change (Note American spelling of Savior).

Emotions – A Multidisciplinary Inquiry

Dr. Preeti Oza

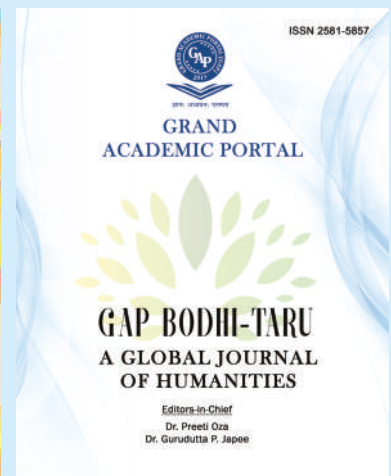
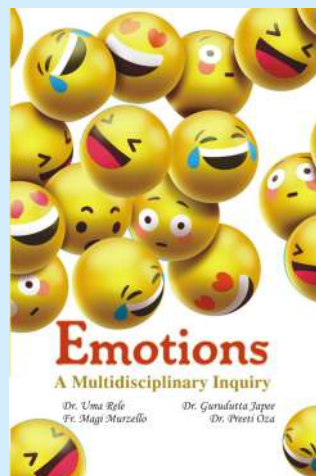


St. Andrew's Educational Foundation, Mumbai, Grand Academic Portal (GAP) and Nalanda Nritya Kala Mahavidyalaya (NNKM), Mumbai organised the XII International Conference on 'Emotions – A Multidisciplinary Inquiry'. Originally scheduled to take place at St. Andrew's Conference Hall in April 2020, the Conference had to be postponed to 4th and 5th December 2020 and took place on an online platform.

Emotions, the theme of the Conference, was the need of the hour especially during the COVID-19 pandemic as it offered a broad variety of research on how adequate or inadequate emotion regulation impacts our physical and mental functioning. The Conference included cutting-edge fundamental research, novel research, methodologies, and clinically oriented studies. Researchers interested in fundamental emotion research as well as investigators with a background in psychiatry, psychosomatics, health/clinical psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, behavioural medicine, medicine, sociology, history, management, anthropology, art and aesthetics, performing arts, visual art, culture studies, literature, theology and political science submitted their papers.

A total of 82 papers were received from across the globe including countries like Mauritius, Indonesia, Iran and UAE. The papers, besides being presented at the Conference's technical sessions, were either published in 'Gap Bodhi Taru – a global journal of humanities' Volume III Issue IV (www.gapbodhitaru.org) or compiled into an edited hardbound volume, 'Emotions – A Multidisciplinary Inquiry'. This book, by an international publisher with an International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is available for purchase on Flipkart. The choice of publication was left to the researcher's discretion.

Day 1 began with a keynote address by Dr. Gurudutta Japee, Chairman, Grand Academic Portal while day 2 had Dr. Omkar Bhatkar of St. Andrew's Educational Foundation deliver the keynote address. On both days, this was followed by a panel of speakers who were experts in their respective fields speaking about emotions and their impact. Two technical sessions were held each day with 12 – 15 papers presented at each session by the participants. The passion and the enthusiasm of the presenters shone through despite having to talk to a Zoom screen instead of a live audience. It was only because of their cooperation and willingness that it was possible to successfully move a conference of this magnitude to the online space. The Conference came to a successful close with each presenter receiving a certificate of participation from the organisers.



Santa Kaun-spiracy

Alice D'Souza



It's Christmas in the year 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Face masking, hand sanitising and social distancing are the norm. Spending is restricted to bare necessities because finances are tight. Who then will go about spreading joy and cheer especially to the less fortunate?

Enter Yeh-lo Santa and the Santa Kaun-spiracy!

Every Christmas, under the guidance of their Principal, Fr. Magi Murzello, the boys at St. Andrew High School, Bandra participate in a Yeh-lo Santa project. While the red Santa gives gifts to children on Christmas day, the yellow (Yeh-lo) Santa collects gifts from children after Christmas and distributes it to the needy.

This year the theme was 'Kaun Banega Santa? – Join the Santa Kaun-spiracy'; the concept being 'Will you be the courageous one and reach out to those in need? Do not let the fear of the virus stop you from being generous.' Each Andean was therefore gifted with a Happiness Jar filled with items to keep them safe. Santa's PPE kit comprising a PPE suit, a pair of latex gloves, soaps, hand sanitizer, tissues and a customised 'Proud to be Andean' face mask were each wrapped in

individual packaging by the Women's Cell of St. Andrew Parish and placed neatly inside the jar. The students could wear/ use the items as they went about distributing joy. They were also asked to return the jars to the School filled with goodies for the girl child which would then be distributed to orphanages.

Fr. Magi and his staff were overwhelmed when reports of the students' generosity started coming in. Not only did the students form a network to ensure that their needy classmates were taken care of but their magnanimity also shone through when the jars





children's excitement and the sisters' gratitude made the entire exercise a worthwhile one.

Each project has its fair share of learnings and Yeh-Lo Santa is no exception. In 2019, under the Santa SurpRice, jars were filled with eatables worth more than Rs. 200. The jars were to be returned with uncooked rice that would then be distributed to the needy. While the School students gave sacks of rice, many in the community took the

were returned to the School. Toys, personal care products, hair accessories, clothing, stationery, etc. came in large quantities. What was heart-warming to see was the care taken to pack the jars keeping the age of the recipient in mind. Some even had handmade decorations and little cards in it. Many also did not restrict themselves to the size of the jar but gave sacks of items for the girls.

The concept of the Santa Kaun-spiracy was also shared with the community around as well as benefactors of the School. Before he knew it, Fr. Magi had well-wishers from Australia and Canada logging on to Amazon and D-Mart to order basics for the orphanages. He was simply amazed, having never imagined that the idea would touch so many hearts!

On Saturday, 30th January 2021, the Women's Cell and Fr. Magi set out to distribute the goodies to the orphanages. Shraddha Vihar at Andheri West, Bal Sadan, Uttan Rehabilitation Centre and Dilkhush were the recipients of Yeh-Lo Santa's largesse. Because of the pandemic, it was not possible to interact closely with the children but that did not stop the children at Shraddha Vihar from greeting the group with a welcome song nor the children at Bal Sadan from turning up in their Sunday best. Seeing the

jars promising to return them as directed but did not do so. The organisers learnt that generosity could be abused. This time, there was a charge of Rs. 100 attached to the jar even though the goods were worth far more than that amount.

They also learnt that the concept had to be explained clearly to one and all as not all read the poster or the jar label. Some felt that the items in the jar had to be given to the house-help to keep them safe from the coronavirus while others wondered why they were receiving soap and hand sanitizer in the jar when



these could be given directly to the orphanages.

Nonetheless, the good far outweighs the bad. The students and the benefactors of St. Andrew High School will continue to aid Yeh-Lo Santa in his mission to spread joy and happiness to those who need it the most.

From Zoom to Zoomba – International Women's Day 2021

Suzie D'Silva

To register,
kindly contact +91 97692
anytime between 9 am - 5 pm

Registration free
and mandatory

LAST DATE TO REGISTER:
FRIDAY, 5TH MARCH, 2021

Reporting Time
3: 30 PM
Evening includes
Positivi-tea Party

All Covid protocols
and photo calls will
be followed

THIS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
ANDIE SALUTES THE TENACITY OF TEACHERS

**'FROM
ZOOM TO ZOOMBA'**

An evening just for you to share all your humourous anecdotes
and jugaad as you danced your way from the blackboard to
the screen!

SUN 7TH MARCH, 2021 • 4 TO 6 PM
VENUE : ST. ANDREW'S CONFERENCE HALL, BANDRA

Open to all school teachers & college lecturers teaching online

The Bandra SHE-link Project
ANDIE
Andean Network of Dynamic and Inspired Educators

It all began at an ANDIE (Andean Network of Dynamic and Inspired Educators) team meeting in January 2021 when we were reminiscing about the previous International Women's Day... a grand celebration spanning three days in March 2020, shortly before the pandemic hit and the country went into lockdown. The conversation naturally turned to front-line workers and their efforts during the pandemic. Some, like the medical fraternity, had been felicitated at award ceremonies and lauded by the press for their proactive role in containing the spread of the virus. Others, like the teaching community, had been forgotten and their role trivialized. If it were not for their commitment to their vocation, a major chunk of the population would have had to forego an entire year of learning. They switched so seamlessly between

the blackboard and the screen that it seemed like they were born with these skills. Only they would know the tremendous efforts they had to put in to maintain some semblance of normalcy in the lives of their students. The team thus thought it would be apt to celebrate the teachers' achievements this Women's Day. This was the origin of 'From Zoom to Zoomba'.

On Sunday, 7th March 2021, teachers from across Mumbai schools arrived at St. Andrew's Conference Hall, Bandra for an evening of edutainment. Ensuring Covid protocols were met, each teacher was welcomed at the registration desk with a participant's kit comprising a pink dupatta (which they had to wear in the most innovative way possible), a special Women's Day edition of EduFOCUS, a black 'smiley' face mask



and stationery. They made their way to their pre-assigned teams and enjoyed a hot cup of tea while they skimmed through EduFOCUS and filled in Dr. C.F. Wilson's stress profile for teachers. Following the theme of 'online' teaching, the teachers were assigned to one of three teams: Team Mobile, Team Tablet and Team Laptop. Each team had a moderator and a runner to ensure the event went smoothly.

The evening began with an icebreaker between the teams. It was a sight to see the teachers communicating 'Chinese Whispers' through actions only! In terms of an analogy, 'instructions to cook biryani were given, but we were served khichdi'. It was then explained to the teachers that effective communication between principal,

teachers, students and parents was the key to success especially during online teaching.

Fr. Magi Murzello, Rector of St. Andrew's Educational Foundation and Founder of ANDIE, welcomed the participants and explained the concept of the event before they settled down to sharing personal experiences and exchanging ideas. It was touching to hear the teachers share the challenges faced personally as well as in their inter-personal relationships and their workspace. But their inherent strength came shining through as they found ways to navigate the issues through trial and error and various '*jugaad*'.

Each team had 8 minutes to discuss one type of challenge (personal, inter-personal, academic) before moving on to the next type. Between each

Personal Challenges

Challenges	Learnings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational problems Low technical awareness Time management Minimal personal interaction with students and colleagues Health issues Salary cuts Maintaining a conducive environment in the home Lack of privacy Restricting movement of family members in the home Sharing devices with family members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YouTube videos solved technical and operational issues Children and spouses willingly shared knowledge improved communication within family Curating teaching methodologies Better lesson planning and streamlined lessons Increased confidence levels Time for other activities Saving money on travel, attire, etc. Yoga sessions



challenge, the teachers were taught short yoga asanas that would improve their physical and mental well-being. These asanas could also be taught to the students during online class to give them a much-needed break from their studies. The moderators then collated the 'Challenges' and 'Learnings' under each challenge and presented the findings to the entire audience.

It was now time for the Zoomba part of the evening. While ensuring social distancing, the teachers formed a circle and danced their hearts out to foot-tapping music by Delon Zee Sound and action songs led by Ms. Suzie D'Silva, the compere for the evening. They truly let their hair down and had a blast, not wanting the dance session to end.

But another delightful experience was next on the agenda. There was excitement all around

when the teachers discovered that *chaat* was the main item on the menu for the Positivi-tea Party... something that most would not have eaten during the lockdown as restaurants and roadside stalls stayed shut. It was lovely to watch them enjoy the *chaat* and chat as they continued to bond with one another. With that, the event came to close but not before each participant had collected their certificate of appreciation, a specially-designed Mission Sunshine bag and a well-being kit meant just for them.

The smooth flow of events and success of 'From Zoom to Zoomba' would not have been possible without the help of GAP (Grand Academic Portal) and the Women's Cell of St. Andrew Parish. We look forward to many more collaborations between ANDIE, GAP and the Women's Cell. May we go from strength to strength!

Inter-personal Challenges

Challenges	Learnings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Faceless students if video is kept off by the child ▪ Being judged by parents ▪ Connecting and creating a bond with children especially pre-school learners ▪ Reaching out to children who do not have access to a device ▪ Being a teacher 24x7 ▪ Gossiping between teachers and parents ▪ Convincing parents to let their children attend online lessons ▪ Financial constraints to invest in multiple devices, data plans, etc. ▪ Minimal social life ▪ Parent management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperation from parents is a must for smooth functioning ▪ Respect and appreciation from parents ▪ Understanding the family background of the child ▪ Ensure good attendance ▪ Build leadership skills ▪ Seek parents' help whenever required ▪ Personal phone feedback to parents ▪ Parents learn along with their child ▪ Support from and involvement of one's own family members ▪ Personal involvement ▪ Become tech-savvy and helping peers to overcome their challenges ▪ Reduction of school fees by the Management ▪ Overcoming ego issues

Academic Challenges

Challenges	Learnings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child's enthusiastic interaction disrupts teaching ▪ Online teaching medium vis-a-vis classroom teaching ▪ Parental interference during teaching ▪ Preparation of assignments and study material ▪ Re-enforcement and retention of concepts ▪ Student evaluation ▪ Keeping videos on during exams ▪ Exams answered by family members on behalf of the child ▪ Correction of worksheets and exam papers ▪ Unable to give personal attention to children especially the weaker ones ▪ Teaching mathematics and conducting science practicals ▪ Getting used to MCQs (Multiple Choice Questions) ▪ Decline in book reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students learn better through animation and PowerPoint presentations ▪ Creation of Google forms for MCQ exams ▪ Management of multiple devices and split screens ▪ Learnt how children use Google handles in different ways to obtain answers ▪ Learnt how to check/ correct test papers ▪ Usage of multiple portals (Zytpod/ Jamboard) to teach mathematics ▪ Management of assignments ▪ Remedial teaching for weaker children

Awesummer 2021

Anjali Heredia Gracias



St. Andrew's Educational Foundation, Bandra was proud to present their third edition of Awesummer in May 2021 for youth (16 – 25 years of age). Given that the pandemic put paid to all plans to hold in-person classes, it was decided to move the programme to the online space. Courses were therefore specially curated for this purpose. While there were some old favourites like Basic French and Elementary French, new courses like Food Design and Photography, Introduction to Opera, Empowering You with Competence, Etiquette and Personal Presentation, and Art of Selling were introduced. Well-known celebrities who were experts in their field like Chef Michael Swamy and Ms. Anna Bredemeyer were roped in to teach these courses. Awesummer 2021, because of its unique offerings, was highlighted in Midday on 27th April 2021.

Despite confusion over their exam schedules, enthusiastic students took the time to enrol and attend. Since the courses were online, there were even students from Pune, Kolhapur and Mangalore signing up, eager to put this opportunity to good use.

The Basic and Elementary French courses had a mixed bag of students. While some were freshers, there were others who were looking to brush up the little they had learnt in school. Nonetheless, they had a wonderful experience learning together as they wound their way through complex grammar rules and pronunciations with Ms. Christine Syiemiong's special mix of song, drama and art.

Food Design and Photography was another popular course with the youth. Chef Michael Swamy's wealth of knowledge and easy-going style had the youth falling over themselves to show off what they had learnt in his class. On viewing the 'before' and 'after' photos, one could see the difference his tips made. Whether it was the play of light or the angle from which the plate/



Before

After



Before

After



Before

After

Food Design and Photography with Chef Michael Swamy

"The sessions were very interactive. I loved the part where we all clicked pictures and got to see others' pictures too."

Anaida Pereira

"I loved the interaction with Chef and his tips and pointers. He is very inspiring and motivational."

Joshua Fernandes

Basic French with Ms. Christine Syiemiong

"My teacher very sweetly attended to all my doubts and cleared them. I did not know any French but now I can at least speak and understand basic stuff."

Radhika Joshi

"It was very interactive and student-friendly. Plenty of additional practice was provided."

Zaneta Fernandes

Elementary French with Ms. Christine Syiemiong

"Ms. Christine has an infectious enthusiasm for the French language which really helped me stay focussed in class. Also, the notes she sends every day are very helpful."

Shanice D'Souza

"Tr. Christine kept sending us a whole lot of worksheets and books to solve and improve our vocabulary. This course will be extremely beneficial for me in giving the Alliance Française entrance test. She also made us listen to ecoutes, read stories to us, made us speak in French and a lot more."

Adwitiya Ghosh

Empowering You with Ms. Anna Bredemeyer

"I learnt basic etiquette and also how to pronounce unique words."

Feushia Anthony Dias

Introduction to Opera with Mr. Daryl Arambhan

"A lot of important and interesting information about opera was explained very well through various clips and a presentation. Not just objective points but the instructor also shared his own opinions on a particular matter, which was interesting to ponder over."

Aditya Manik

glass was shot or the right quantity of food/ drink needed for that perfect photo, Chef shared it all with the students who kept peppering him with questions.

Mr. Daryl Arambhan, an operatic tenor who has recently returned from London, conducted An Introduction to Opera where he took his students on a brief journey through the history of opera and then showed them how various human emotions are

depicted in operatic works. He also introduced his class to significant opera composers and their respective backgrounds and styles of composing.

Despite being online, the attendees were highly appreciative of the efforts taken by the instructors to keep them engaged and motivated towards learning. At the end of their course, all students were thrilled to receive a certificate of excellence.

Summer of awesomeness

To liven things up during the summer break, a Bandra-based educational platform brings an eclectic series of virtual workshops from food design to dance and opera

GAYATHRI CHANDRAN
th-guide@mid-day.com

STARTING May 1, St Andrews Educational Foundation in Bandra will host Awesummer 2021, a series of online summer courses for youth between the ages of 16 and 25. Conducted over Zoom, these 10 different short courses can be attended from the comfort of their homes. "This time, keeping the pandemic in mind, we have had to curate subjects that would be easy to execute online," says Anjali Gracias, workshop coordinator, adding, "The facilitators

are all experts and well-known in their own fields." The workshops include activities like play-writing, scenography, food design, Bollywood dance, Zumba and more. The events are scheduled in a way that participants can pick up more than



Dr Omkar Bhatkar and Daryl Arambhan

one workshop if they choose, provided the timings are aligned.

Dr Omkar Bhatkar, sociologist and theatre practitioner, will helm courses such as Write Your Own Play and Introduction to Scenography. "With the play-writing course, I guide participants on writing a play entirely from scratch. They're also taught to write dialogues and how to put their ideas on paper. With scenography, the focus is on how to create a visual vocabulary, with a little



bit of history of certain scenographers and their works," shares Bhatkar. City chef and author Michael Swamy will teach a course in food design and photography. "Food design is about how you plate and present food. I'll be guiding participants on how to put how to photograph food, and how to make it more Instagrammable for a digital audience," he says. Operatic tenor Daryl Arambhan will conduct the Introduction to Opera workshop. "With



The Write Your Own Play workshop being held in pre-pandemic times; (inset) chef Michael Swamy

these theoretical workshops, I'm sharing some background about opera's origins using images and recordings from YouTube. I'll be depicting how opera showcases emotions of love, rejection, sacrifice and more. We will also have a ques-

tion and answer session where I will share with students what I've learned from my career, over the years," says Arambhan.

ON May 1 onwards
CALL 9769296630
COST ₹500 onwards



DHI: Confabulation on Faith and Films - Vol I

Krupa Thakkar

What is faith? What are the different ways of dealing with it? Can faith exist without religion? What purpose does it serve? Can faith and rationality go together?

As often used in day-to-day conversations, the idea of 'faith' seems to be the one we all understand, be it the followers of organised religions or the non-believers of it, be it the theists, the atheists or the agnostics. What



differs among people is where their faith is held, be it religiously or otherwise. But is understanding faith so straightforward? Probably not.

The beauty of faith is that no two people have it the same. Be it the things or people they believe in, be it its intensity or the sheer lack of it. There exists a whole spectrum between the two ends and with that, of course, exists all the unique ways of dealing with it.



In the quest for some such complex answers regarding faith, St. Andrew's Centre for Philosophy and Performing Arts (SAPP) organised a series of sessions that explored the idea of faith through the medium of cinema. The objective of the workshop



was to bring some curious and like-minded individuals together, helping each one of us delve deeper into what we really believe.



The discussions we had and then the whole elucidation on the film from faith perspective was so intriguing and insightful that the sessions reverberated in my mind post the confabulation. The whole process was so mind-blowing that I am looking forward to be associated with the team in future. This was truly a life-changing or rather life-enhancing experience for me.

Vrushali Gupte,
*Professor in Philosophy,
SIES College*

Why Cinema?

As it is rightly said, “Cinema is the mirror to the soul.” Well, what better way of understanding self, than by staring at it directly?

The beauty of cinema is that it affects different people, differently. Not only is it aesthetically pleasing but it also encourages an inquiry into the self, a realisation of one's own beliefs and prejudices. Also, because there is no possible denial of cinema, it creates a better world for us to live in!

“

Not at many places can we share what we feel. The workshop reassured us of being in a place where we could explore and trust our feelings. I had a cynical view of faith from the perspective of being a part of a religious institution. But with the character's situatedness in the institutional setups, it allowed me to be with them and go through a sensitive modification. All the movies were a first time watch for me. These movies have expanded my horizon of the way art can be done.”

Priyanka Gairola,
Kathak exponent

About Dhi: Confabulation on Faith and Films - Vol I

Dhi (धी), is a Sanskrit word that means



'understanding', 'reflection', 'religious thought', 'mind', 'design', 'intelligence', 'opinion', 'meditation', 'imagination', 'notion', 'intellect'.

Dhi: The Confabulation on Faith and Films is the idea of exploring faith, its understanding and practice while tapping into some vital questions on the philosophy of life by the unconventional medium of cinema.



Dhi is a festival of ideas, with the objective of encouraging participants to think beyond the obvious, to go further from the threshold to capture the essence of the film, to decipher the filmmaker's mindset. An equally important aspect of *Dhi* is to not hover only over the critical analysis of films but to also realize what emotions or feelings the movies evoke.

In Vol I of the series, several critical questions were pondered upon, answers to which were sought from films coming from different parts of the world like Poland, Russia, Japan, Iran, Tibet, America and Spain.

The series of eight lectures from mid-May to mid-June was conducted by Dr. Omkar Bhatkar, Co-founder and Head, St. Andrew's Centre for Philosophy and Performing Arts, Mumbai, Dr. Amita Valmiki, Head, Department of Philosophy, Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College, Mumbai, Prof. Poonam Chaudhari, Associate Professor, Anjuman-I-Islam's Allana Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai and Dr. (Fr.) Elvis Fernandes SFX, Convener, SADBHAV- an Interfaith initiative, Pilar, Goa.



As required by a confabulation, participants presented their ideas and feelings in the first half of each session followed by an analysis by Dr. Omkar Bhatkar and Dr. Amita Valmiki. The analysis included aspects of film theory, the intended outcome of the film and the possible interpretations of each.

What made *Dhi* even more special was the diversity of its participants. From students to research scholars to lecturers and artists, each one of us experienced and perceived the movies differently, bringing forth some interesting ideas and anecdotes. *Dhi – Vol I* saw participants from states like Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Goa, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, each coming with a distinct set of ideologies and beliefs.

“

When I joined, I assumed it to be a discussion of some meticulous films and I thought, as an actor, I will get to see some more films. Now when it's done, I feel like this is like a gamechanger workshop in my journey of understanding films, cinema, and further perceiving them. It opened door to so many perspectives which boggled my mind.”

Rishabh Joshi, Actor

“

The sessions were conducted really well and were quite engaging. The uncovering of various layers of a film helped me understand the films better and I was able to appreciate them better as well. I enjoyed listening to the varied perspectives of people on the same film.”

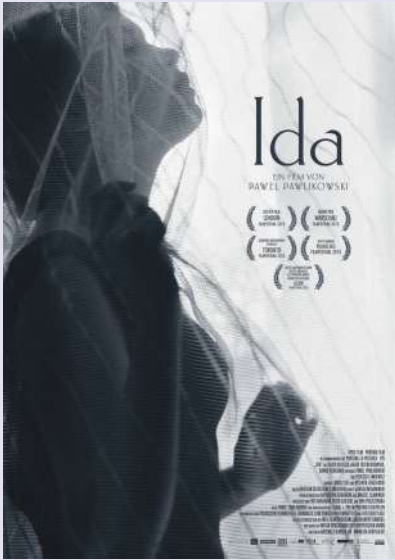
Mihir Bhatt, Digital Marketing Consultant

“

The sessions were wonderful, the films were a rollercoaster, some were scary, some were smooth... some took me very high and showed the whole view from the top! The discussions were very enriching.”

Valenie Lopes, BA student at Wilson College, Mumbai

Films curated in *Dhi* – Vol I



IDA (2013)

Directed by **Paweł Pawlikowski**

Written by **Paweł Pawlikowski and Rebecca Lenkiewicz**

Languages – **Polish, French, Latin**

Set in 1962 Poland, *Ida* is a story of a young woman who is about to take vows as a nun when she learns from her only relative that she is, in fact, a Jew. In the quest of discovering their family story and where they belong, both women embark on a journey together which brings confrontation to a birthplace never forgiven but also never abandoned. *Ida* is a masterpiece with almost every element in the story evoking the war years and their aftermath.

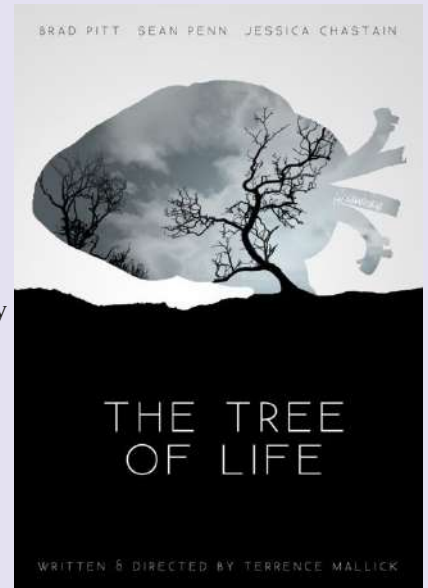
TREE OF LIFE (2011)

Directed by **Terrence Malick**

Written by **Terrence Malick**

Language – **English**

In this highly philosophical film by acclaimed director Terrence Malick, young Jack is one of three brothers growing up as part of the O'Brien family in small-town Texas. Jack has a contentious relationship with his father but gets along well with his beautiful mother. As an adult, Jack struggles with his past and tries to make sense of his childhood, while also grappling with bigger existential issues. Malick's "The Tree of Life" is a film of vast ambition and deep humility, attempting no less than to encompass all of existence and view it through the prism of a few infinitesimal lives.



SILENCE (2016)

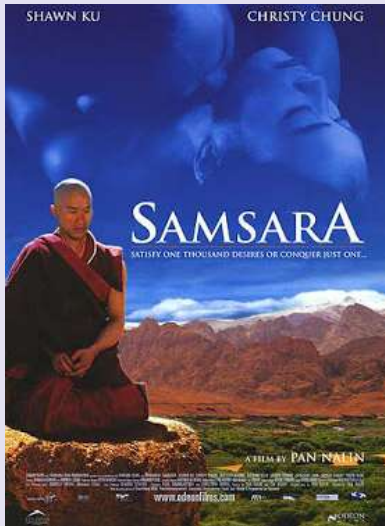
Directed by **Martin Scorsese**

Screenplay by **Jay Cocks and Martin Scorsese**

Based on *Silence* by **Shūsaku Endō**

Languages – **English, Japanese**

Two 17th-century Portuguese missionaries, embark on a perilous journey to Japan to find their missing mentor. While there, the two men minister to the Christian villagers who worship in secret. If caught by feudal lords or ruling samurai, they must renounce their faith or face a prolonged and agonising death. The film keenly understands Shūsaku Endō's novel and challenges the believer and the unbeliever alike, flattering no one and refusing to comfort anyone.



SAMSARA (2001)

Directed by **Pan Nalin**

Written by **Pan Nalin, Tim Baker**

Languages – **Tibetan, Ladakhi**

“Is it better to satisfy a thousand desires or overcome one?”

Pan Nalin's *Samsara* is the story of a Buddhist monk, Tashi, who after undergoing 36 months of continuous meditation, arrives at a prominent monastery and promptly has a troubling revelation – he wants to experience sex. When Tashi fails to squelch his growing desire to explore life's carnal pleasures, he leaves the monastery behind. But as he struggles to adjust after his sudden marriage to local peasant Pema, he realizes he may lack the tools necessary to cope with everyday troubles and temptations.

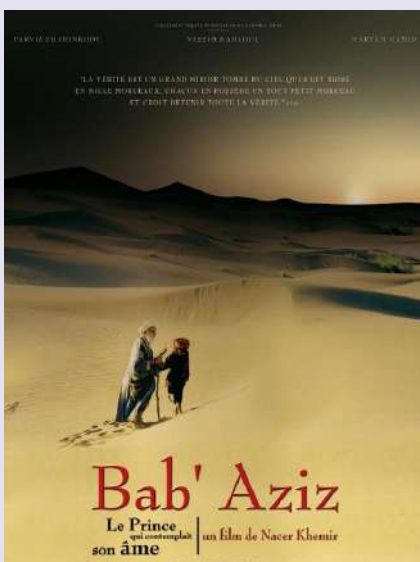
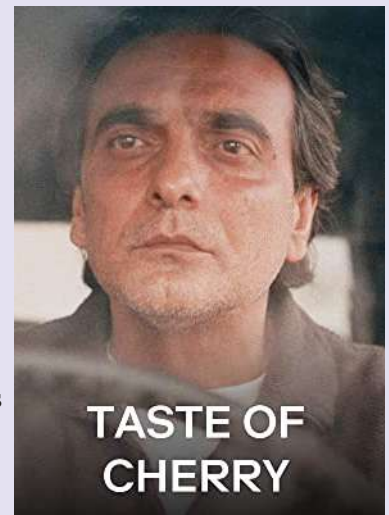
TASTE OF CHERRY (1997)

Directed by **Abbas Kiarostami**

Written by **Abbas Kiarostami**

Language – **Persian**

A middle-aged Tehranian man, Mr. Badii is intent on killing himself and seeks someone to bury him after his demise. Driving around the city, the seemingly well-to-do Badii meets with numerous people, including a Muslim student, asking them to take on the job, but initially he has little luck. Eventually, Badii finds a man who is up for the task because he needs the money, but his new associate soon tries to talk him out of committing suicide.



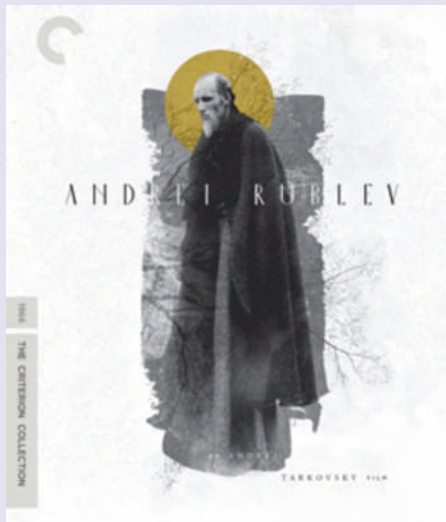
BAB'AZIZ (2005)

Directed by **Nacer Khemir**

Written by **Tonino Guerra, Nacer Khemir**

Languages – **Tunisian Arabic, Persian, Hindi**

Bab'Aziz — The Prince Who Contemplated His Soul is the last film in the Desert Trilogy of Tunisian director Nacer Khemir. An enchanting and parabolic film about the beauty, grace, humility and love of the Sufi path of the heart, *Bab'Aziz* is the story of a blind dervish Bab'Aziz and his spirited granddaughter, Ishtar. Together they wander the desert in search of a great reunion of dervishes that takes place just once every thirty years.



ANDREI RUBLEV (1966)

Directed by *Andrei Tarkovsky*

Written by *Andrei Konchalovsky, Andrei Tarkovsky*

Languages – *Russian, Tatar, Italian*

An expansive Russian drama, this film focuses on the life of revered religious icon painter Andrei Rublev. Drifting from place to place in a tumultuous era, the peace-seeking monk eventually gains a reputation for his art. But after Rublev witnesses a brutal battle and unintentionally becomes involved, he takes a vow of silence and spends time away from his work. As he begins to ease his troubled soul, he takes steps towards becoming a painter once again.

OF LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS (2009)

Directed by *Hilda Hidalgo*

Written by *Gabriel García Márquez, Hilda Hidalgo*

Language – *Spanish*

Based on Gabriel García Márquez's novel, *Of Love and Other Demons* is set against the backdrop of 18th-century Cartagena in Colombia, at the time of slavery and the inquisition, the story focuses on 13-year-old Sierva Maria and the dog bite that changes her life forever. Abandoned, displaced, in the midst of a sexual awakening and finally exorcised, Sierva finds an unlikely ally in a young priest and together they discover passion.



With an overwhelming response received for Vol I, SAPP has decided to continue the journey of understanding faith with *Dhi – Vol II: Interfaith Dialogue* through Cinema in collaboration with S.K. Somaiya College, consisting of a new set of movies by both, Indian and international film directors.



Krupa Thakkar is a bibliophile with an economics background, and love for all forms of art.



FILM
REVIEW :

Paper Planes

Welcome Aboard the Feel-good Flight

Berges Santok

Director: Robert Connolly

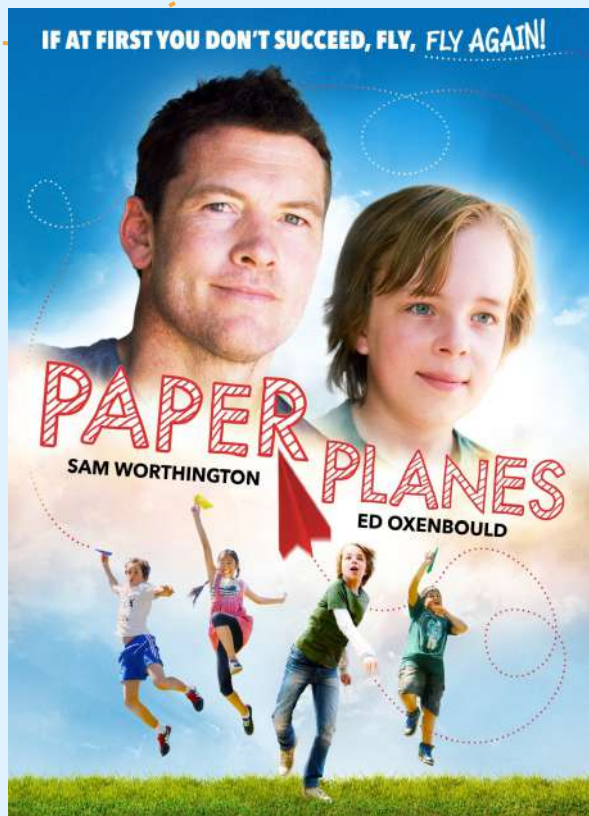
Cast: Sam Worthington, Ed Oxenbould, Nicholas Bakopaulos-Cooke

Genre: Children's film, inspirational, fun

Everybody loves to fly, or at least loves the idea of soaring high in the sky. An amazing feeling of liberation and achievement it is! Director Robert Connolly sets out to evoke this beautiful thought with his 2014 cinematic endeavour — Paper Planes. But, is this flight worth taking? You'll soon find out.

So, ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, latch on tight to your seat as you begin the fascinating journey of knowing whether this film is worth the ride. The film's name is enough to give you an idea of what it could be all about. Further your curiosity by viewing its teaser, and the film might manage to bring a smile to your face. Well, that's because it's a story of a small-town school kid engaged in his creative flight with paper planes. The story follows Dylan (Ed Oxenbould), a 12-year-old spirited boy whose mother recently died in an accident. He stays with his father (Sam Worthington) who has become depressive after his wife's death. He is unable to move on with life, and his depressive behaviour plays havoc with his relationship with Dylan. Life goes on until one day Dylan participates in a fun paper plane flying event in school, only to realise that he has a knack for making his plane fly far. Happy and excited, he shares this news with his father.

Dylan's world is now filled with excitement. He is encouraged to participate in the national paper plane flying competition. The winners of this competition will get a chance to compete at the world level in Japan. Thrilled, Dylan practises day and night, only to realise that he's not consistent at his game. Now, in this brief 'Oh-I-don't-know-what-to-do-next' moment, Dylan learns an important life lesson of figuring out things by ourselves with deep research and focus from his teacher, grandfather and father.



Dylan eventually does make us and his family buzz with glee as he manages to win the national competition. But he isn't alone. Two get the same score. The other one is Jason (Nicholas Bakopaulos-Cooke). Competition is tough, and with Jason in the game, it seems anxiety-laden too because Jason is one mean and arrogant fellow, reminding us of that friend who thought they were the BEST... always! However, in this entire journey, Dylan finds himself alone emotionally. He looks up to his father for support and motivation only to end in despair. Unfortunately, Senior Dylan is caught up in grief over his wife's death, so much so that nothing can bring him solace — not even his son's victory in the national championship.

The film moves forward and showcases Dylan's evolving friendship with his classmate, his math



teacher, his grandfather and the former paper plane championship world-record holder, a Japanese schoolgirl of his age. While life brings Dylan to Japan, it also brings him a sad encounter on the eve of the championship. His wrist is damaged. An anxious Dylan converses with his new Japanese friend who tells him to bring out the beauty in his journey of flying paper planes. Just before hitting the bed, Dylan makes a call home and shares his adventures with his father. Just before hanging up, in an emotional tone, he assures his father that come what may, he will always stick with him. Dylan's dad chokes up and he decides to fly to Japan to be with his son on his most important milestone. The day dawns. The kids are ready to taste victory, but there can be only one winner. Who will it be? Jason, the former world record holder, or Dylan? And, does Dylan learn something just before he flings his paper plane in the air? Well, you'll need to watch the film to know how the climax unfolds.

By now, you must have figured out that Paper Planes is a sweet little ride through the world of creativity, innovation, competition and fun. But there's more to it. For starters, the film is a delightful take on relationships and life lessons for children and adults alike. Let's start off with relationships.

Dylan and his father: It's a sweet and delicate one. The father is grief-stricken and is in the habit of clinging to the past. He also only watches video-taped broadcasts of the past on his television. Now, this father is not a selfish individual. He clearly needs help. He is also aware of his responsibilities as a father, but his grief has engulfed him so much that he turns a blind eye to his son's aspirations. Given these circumstances, how does Dylan react? Of course, he ends up being sad, annoyed and frustrated. Yet, he understands his father's predicament and is willing to support him. Dylan reminds us to be kind and supportive towards people and connect with them even when we are caught up in our own flight of dreams and success because, in the end, all that matters is our family and friends' togetherness in the long journey of life.

Dylan and his classmate: Starting off on an ugly note, this friendship sprouts pretty quickly. Kevin (Julian Dennison) is Dylan's first line of support. But not right from the start. At first, Kevin is envious of Dylan's success, but when he notices Dylan's determination and love for paper planes, his heart softens and he chooses to support his new buddy. Nostalgia takes birth! All of us have this friend at different stages of our lives who have stood with us



when no one else did. This relationship is a toast to all those friendships that we cherished and/ or continue to cherish. So, if you aren't in touch with that friend of yours, it's time to make that call.

Dylan and Jason: Despite Jason shining in the aura of arrogance and narcissism, Dylan never harbours a thought of wrongdoing. For Jason, there's no joy greater than winning. Their relationship is an example of common-place relationships we find at work, events and even in our family. This 'Jason' could be our peer, friend or sibling. And, how do we behave to return their favour on us? Don't we behave weird too? Well, we could borrow a leaf from Dylan and be the icon of kindness and goodness. And, if you at all wonder why, the answer is kindness prevails.

Dylan and Kimi: Dylan meets Kimi (Ena Imai) — the former world record holder, for the first time and his heart goes Mmmm... This friendship is sweet, fruitful and endearing. From Kimi, we learn to embrace the spirit of healthy competition and go beyond the dynamics of winning and losing. What matters is the journey and our learnings from that journey. It's all about creating beauty in that journey. She says, *"Wouldn't it be great if it were about more than whose plane flies the furthest – if it were about making something beautiful or surprising?"* Dylan

finds in Kimi a friend who could end up being his first girlfriend and also an emblem of trust, fun and wisdom. With Kimi, Dylan can only grow.

Paper Planes is pretty much a tale of sweet learnings about relationships and life. In this 96-minute film, Robert Connolly manages to share with us his positive perspective in a non-preachy fashion on competitive spirit and the attitude of going beyond winning a competition. In the ever-competitive world, where people go to unimaginable lengths to score a win, Paper Planes comes across as the age-old reminder in a modern avatar to slow down and enjoy the journey. From the perspective of Dylan and Kimi, Paper Planes manages to pack some really important messages in a fun, light and memorable manner. These messages are universal and timeless.

Enough of its relevance with regard to theme and messaging. What about its aesthetic appeal and merit? Pretty decent in almost all departments! The background score is peppy and rousing, reminding us of the kind of music in the film *Baby's Day Out*. Its mixed flavour would appeal to adults and children alike. Particularly memorable is the track in the initial moments of the film — *Beauty in the World*. It surmises the film's message right from the start. The cinematography deserves a special mention. It covers



with elan different terrains such as the countryside and cityside of Sydney and Tokyo. The lighting, both natural and artificial, goes a long way in setting the ambience and our connection with the frames. The editing team has done a competent job. The story's pace is good. This tight narrative not only adds to the film's enjoyment but also contributes towards good storytelling with brevity. Overall, the technical team doesn't disappoint.

A word of caution — Avoid expecting a miracle of any measures. This film is a modest venture with ambitious intent and professional-grade execution. Last but not the least, one can't skip noticing and appreciating the cast for their performance. A pat on the back to Ed Oxenbould. He is ably supported by the remaining cast members — all of them contributing in their own way to delivering a sweet story that's relatable too!

Final words? Paper Planes is not an original narrative

in any way. Originality with more drama, in-depth acting and memorable lines could have elevated the film. It's a seen-it-all kind of movie. The audience could also go a step further in calling it predictable. For instance, we know and can guess right who wins the championship in the film. Yes, it is this. And, in the same breath, it is so much more. True to Kimi's philosophy, this film is about unravelling the innocence, magic and goodness of our current juncture in life, discovering our latent talents and celebrating our milestones. This film would help you think of something beautiful during your viewing experience. It makes the growing up years so very much anticipated and nostalgic for the respective audience. Paper Plane qualifies for a breezy afternoon for children and/ or a family entertainer. It is a feel-good flight of fun, fancy and friendship that must not be missed. Two words in favour of this film. Recommended viewing!



Berges Santok is a cinephile, loves telling stories and works as a freelance writer. He aspires to make movies someday.



Uplift Your Spirits



What noise does an airplane make when it bounces?



Why did the teenage airplane get sent to his room?

Because of his bad altitude

What do you call a paper airplane that cannot fly?



Stationery

What sound does a new airplane make?

Newwwwwwwwww

If a baby is born on an airplane, I guess you could call it 'airborn'.



Where do veggies go after they get off the airplane?

To Cabbage Claim



Who invented the first airplane that wouldn't fly?

The Wrong brothers

Why did the librarian have to get off the airplane?

The flight was overbooked



What do you call a plane full of tired pilots?

Jet lag

What happens to a bad airplane joke?

It never lands



What's Robinhood's favourite way of travelling?

By an arrow-plane

What do you call an airline that flies backward?

A receding airline

What do you call it when a giraffe swallows a toy plane?

A plane in the neck



Why didn't the passenger know how to use an oxygen mask?

Because the flight attendant didn't ex-plane it properly

How do rabbits travel?

By hare-plane





ANDIE

Andean Network of
Dynamic and Inspired Educators

invites you to celebrate

Chill-o-plane Day

on 14th November 2021



Teach younger kids The Airplane song by Blippi (YouTube)

(Chorus)

Airplanes, airplanes
Flying all around the sky
Airplanes, airplanes
Flying way up high

Some airplanes are as big as a building
Some are small as a car (that's amazing)

Some airplanes transport people
Some fly near to the stars (that's far)
Some airplanes fly with propellers
Some airplanes fly with jet engines
I love to look up and see their wings
Waving down at me (hey airplane)

(Chorus)

Some airplanes can land on water
But most land on landing strips (so versatile)

Some airplanes fly just for fun
Some fly for business trips (business or pleasure)

You can make an airplane out of paper
Throw it in the air and watch it go
I love to look up and see its wings
Waving down at me (hey airplane)

(Chorus) x 2



**Spend the morning on the School grounds / hall flying paper planes.
Award prizes for the one that flies the longest, one that flies the furthest, etc.**

**Create your own paper plane. Use water colours, sketch pens, glitter...
The more creative the better. Your plane represents you. Fly high!**

**Look up videos on YouTube to learn about the history of the paper plane,
aerodynamics, designing the ultimate paper plane, etc.**



**Teach a child how to make a paper plane. Not every child knows
the art of folding one. You could also visit the site howthingsfly.si.edu/activities
for the paper plane gallery. Learn thousands of ways to fold a
paper plane and have a blast flying them.**

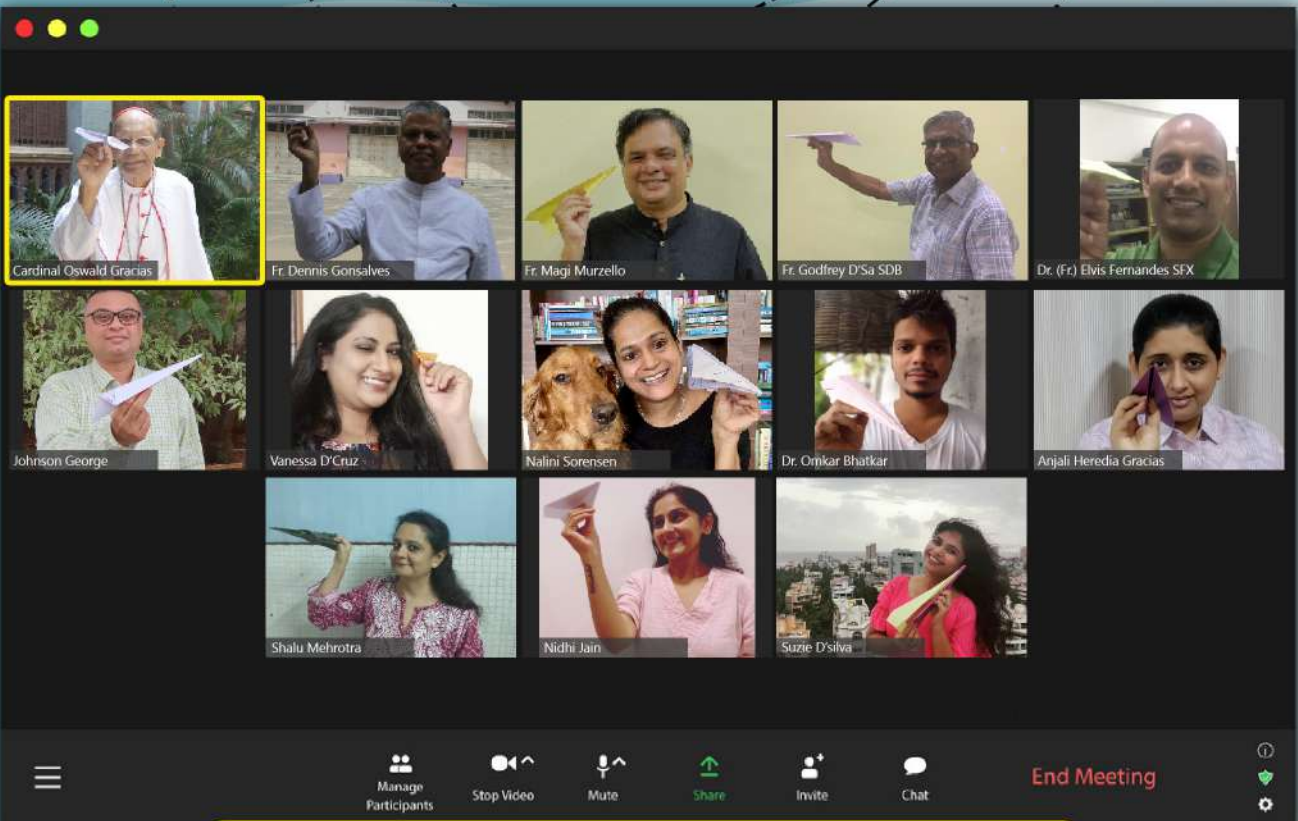


HELLO - PLANE DAY

This Teachers' Day, air-lift the spirits of your teachers.
Show air-preciation with a Hello-plane.

Suggestions:

- Students, parents and principals can send Hello-planes to teachers.
- Teachers can even send them to one another.
- Hello-planes can be sent online or parked at hangars in school.
- Security checks must be conducted.
- Hello-planes hijacked by com-planes and troll-planes must be banned and put on the 'no-fly' list to prevent crash landings.
- You can send as many Hello-planes as you wish.
- Hello-planes are not an exercise to determine popularity of a teacher.



*This issue is sponsored by St. Andrew's Educational Foundation, Bandra.
If your institution would like to sponsor future issues, kindly contact the Editor.*