The Blue Dot

Exploring new ideas for a shared future



KINDNESS

The Force that will Help us Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Features

- The Need for Kindness & Compassion - Embodying the values of Mahatma Gandhi
- The Neuroscience of Kindness
- Three Ways for Schools to Help Students Cultivate Kindness

The Blue Dot
Exploring new ideas for a shared future

ISSUE 9, 2018

PUBLISHED BY UNESCO MGIEP

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization | Mahatama Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development

35 Ferozshah Road, ICSSR, Building, 1st Floor
New Delhi 110001, INDIA

THE BLUE DOT features articles showcasing UNESCO MGIEP's activities and areas of interest. The magazine's overarching theme is the relationship between education, peace, sustainable development and global citizenship. THE BLUE DOT's role is to engage with readers on these issues in a fun and interactive manner. The magazine is designed to address audiences across generations and walks of life, thereby taking the discourse on education for peace, sustainable development and global citizenship beyond academia, civil society organisations and governments, to the actual stakeholders.

THE BLUE DOT is published biannually.

SUBSCRIPTION

The Blue Dot is available free of charge.
To receive all future issues of the THE BLUE DOT, subscribe to bluedot.mgiep@unesco.org

MANAGING EDITOR

Sana Khan, UNESCO MGIEP

DESIGN

Prasun Mazumdar Design | www.pmdindia.in

© UNESCO MGIEP

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of UNESCO MGIEP.

The image used on the cover of this issue of The Blue Dot is purely representational and conceptual in nature.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

ANANTHA K. DURAIAPPAH

Director



NANDINI CHATTERJEE SINGH

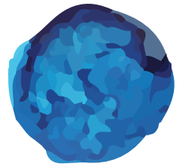
Programme Specialist - Science of Learning



SANA KHAN

Communications Officer





“Look again at that dot.
That’s here. That’s home. That’s us.

On it, everyone you love,
everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of,
every human being who ever was,
lived out their lives.
The aggregate of our joy and suffering
thousands of confident religions,
ideologies, and economic doctrines,
every hunter and forager, every hero and coward,
every creator and destroyer of civilization,
every king and peasant, every young couple in love,
every mother and father, hopeful child,
inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals,
every corrupt politician, every superstar,
every supreme leader, every saint
and sinner in the history of our species lived there-
on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.”

CARL SAGAN
PALE BLUE DOT: A VISION OF THE HUMAN FUTURE IN SPACE

DIRECTOR’S
MESSAGE



Kindness - The Secret to Achieving ***the Sustainable Development Goals***

In 2015, 193 countries collaborated and agreed on the ambitious 2030 global agenda, defining 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that would help us collectively work towards developing a better world. Over time, the SDGs have helped us understand the interdependency of living beings on the planet – how one’s actions in a remote corner of the world can have direct impact on another’s well-being in another part of the globe. Climate change is one such classic example – in which one country’s policies and actions can cause a direct impact on another country – sometimes quite severe such as increasing temperatures causing devastating bushfires, droughts and floods.

The interconnectedness of these global issues poses for us a moral and behavioural predicament. *An individual must be empathetic to realise, consider and therefore modify her / his actions – to avoid the negative impact that her / his actions can cause to fellow living beings in neighbouring states, countries and in other parts of the world.*

Which brings me to the importance of ‘kindness’, a force that inherently improves the happiness and well-being of the giver and receiver.

If we continue down that path that we have been walking in the past, of producing ‘economically efficient beings’, and attempting to narrow the inequality gap, we are doomed for failure. **Instead, we must pursue a grander goal - that of human flourishing, for which we must learn to be empathetic, share the finite resources that we have globally as well as appreciate that merely monetary wealth is not the key to happiness.**

The good news is that by nature human beings are empathetic. However, the external environment by diverting our attention towards pursuit of material wealth, suppresses this natural trait. Recent neuroscientific research however suggests that just as individuals can be trained in the cognitive aspects, the emotional parts too can be trained – in short human beings can be trained to be empathetic, compassionate and kind. **Training young people in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can help spark for us acts of kindness. SEL helps individuals recognise and regulate emotions, identify positive purpose, demonstrate empathy for others, take constructive action and promote human flourishing.**

In the eleventh issue of The Blue Dot, we focus on ‘Kindness’ – as the force that will help us achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, towards making the world more peaceful and sustainable – a better place to live in the future for our children. We hear from Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’, Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India on ‘The Need for Kindness and Compassion – Embodying the values of Mahatma Gandhi’, experts such as Zoran Josipovic on the neuroscience behind kindness; Michael Karlin and Brendran Ozawa-De Silve on the science and theory behind kindness, and from educators (Vicki Zakrzewski and John-Tyler Binfet) on how kindness can be practiced in our classrooms. Our cover story on ‘Kindness – the force to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals’ discusses the biology of kindness, how kindness can help us achieve the SDGs and Kindness and SDGs and the Youth. Further, we have a hand-picked collection of youth stories on kindness, extracted from the 7,300+ stories we have from 120 countries around the world as part of UNESCO MGIEP’s #KindnessMatters for the SDGs youth campaign. Lastly, the publication covers the first edition of the World Youth Conference on Kindness, which was held in August, 2019 in New Delhi, India – including the #KindnessConcert – in which Grammy Award Winning musician and UNESCO MGIEP’s Kindness Ambassador, Ricky Kej led an ensemble of stellar musicians and launched the official #KindnessAnthem. Happy Reading folks and may the force of kindness be with us all! As always, I will look forward to receiving feedback in order to improve future editions of the magazine.



ANANTHA KUMAR DURAIAPPAH
Director, UNESCO MGIEP

CONTENTS

The BlueDot
ISSUE 9, 2018

Director's Message 01

- **Kindness - The Secret to Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals**
  By Anantha Kumar Duraiappah | Director, UNESCO MGIEP



Foreword 02

- **The Need for Kindness & Compassion - Embodying the values of Mahatma Gandhi**
  By Audrey Azoulay | Director-General, Unesco

06



OPINIONS

- **The Neuroscience of Kindness**
  By Zoran Josipovic
- **The Science, Theory & Practice of Kindness: A Brief Overview**
  By Michael Karlin And Brendan Ozawa-De Silva
- **Three Ways for Schools to Help Students Cultivate Kindness**
  By Vicki Zakrzewski
- **Kindness in Schools: Insights from Students and Teachers**
  By John-Tyler Binfet

30



COVER STORY

- **Kindness - The Force that will Help us Achieve Sustainable Development Goals**
  By Bhavya Arya, Kuany & Nandini Chatterjee Singh

44



YOUTH VOICES

- **Youth Example of Kindness for SDGs**

44



KINDNESS STORIES 60

- **What is 'Small Kindness' Movement?**

INTERVIEWS

- **Interview with Ricky Kej, Kindness Ambassador**

50



ACTIVITY BULLETIN

What we have been up to at UNESCO MGIEP

The Need for Kindness & Compassion - Embodying the values of Mahatma Gandhi



SHRI RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK'
HON'BLE MINISTER OF HRD



Our world today is seeing several paradoxical forces at play. On the one hand we have rising knowledge economies, increasing youth population and globalisation, on the other, we are also facing significant challenges - localised violent conflicts, deteriorating global peace and climate change, among others. Our young people, specifically, face the brunt of these challenges. A World Health Organisation report in 2015 stated that mental health problems with the younger generation are increasing rapidly. There is continuous pressure on young people to excel in academics to secure jobs, which comes with its share of stress.

The need to build peaceful and inclusive societies towards a more sustainable future has never been more pressing. At a time like this, the values and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi are more important than ever before. *All his life, Gandhi Ji devoted himself to the practice of Truth (Satyagraha), Non-violence (Ahinsa), Compassion and Kindness.* Latest research from the sciences of learning indicate that these principles if embodied by our young will help us address the pressing challenges the world is facing today. While we may have differing opinions and values, the ability to understand, respect diversity and to live together as one on this planet is the only sustainable path for humanity. **As Gandhi Ji aptly said, "the very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness".** The world stands in a unique position to take lead in addressing the global challenges with its relatively young population.

> *As Gandhi correctly said, "The very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness".*

Our education systems can empower the young and play a pivotal role in achieving peaceful and sustainable societies by embodying the values of Gandhi Ji. Academic success, while important, cannot be the end goal of our education system. *Education must pursue a grander goal; that of human flourishing. In this, there is a need for education to not be restricted to the usual intellectual exercise of regurgitation but a journey through self- of building peace first with the self to find peace within the society. Schools can play a critical role in facilitating this transformation by honing students' social and emotional capabilities to nurture informed, kind, empathetic and compassionate citizens.*

If real societal change is to be achieved, Gandhi Ji's learnings will need to be built into our education systems and exemplified in our daily lives. Social and emotional skills such as empathy, mindfulness, impulse control, kindness and criticality can be built through constant experimentation and experience, the same key pathways that Gandhi Ji himself deployed to build and ultimately embody them.

I am very pleased with the impact the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) had made since its inception in 2012 - in promoting the values and ideals of Gandhi Ji - with specific focus on building social and emotional learning in formal, informal and non-formal education systems. **A person who reads about Gandhi Ji does not automatically imply that she/he will inculcate the values in their daily life. Practice, experimentation and building social and emotional competencies is a must if we are to truthfully exemplify Gandhi Ji.**

Some recent initiatives that have been particularly impactful include the introduction of the first ever World Youth Conference on Kindness for Sustainable Development Goals in 2019, which saw over 1,000 participants launch the #KindnessMatters global youth campaign - and has garnered almost 8,000 stories from 120 countries and the training of these youth in social and emotional learning

I am happy that the eleventh issue of the Institute's flagship publication, The Blue DOT, focuses on 'Kindness' with extremely inspiring and transformative kindness stories from around the world. I look forward to continued association with the Institute as we collectively work towards what Gandhi Ji earnestly advocated – global peace, beginning with the self!



RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK'
Hon'ble Minister of HRD

Expert
Perspectives

Practicing kindness can be a transformative process.

Neuroscience has established that emotion, motivation, learning and experience - are all present in the brain in the form of linkages among specific neurons. The ability to form new connections (neuroplasticity) forms the basis of new habits, new knowledge, skills and attitudes in humans. Through neuroplasticity, positive behaviours such as empathy and kindness can be reinforced. Behaviours anchored on the competencies of kindness, empathy and compassion form the foundation of a more sustainable future.

The Neuroscience of ***Kindness***

ZORAN JOSIPOVIC



ZORAN JOSIPOVIC, PhD, is a research associate at NYU Langone Medical Center, and an adjunct faculty in the Department of Psychology, New York University. With his wife, Judith Blackstone, he founded the Nonduality Institute where he is the principal science investigator. His research interest are states of consciousness cultivated through contemplative practice, what these states can tell us about the nature of consciousness and its relation to authentic subjectivity, and what relevance this may have for understanding the global and local organization in the brain.

The brain is a complex, self-organising system that simulates and represents experiences through competitive as well as cooperative activity of populations of neurons, at both local and global levels. Its optimal functioning depends on the flexible, dynamic balance between specialised, locally segregated activity, and more generalised global integration. Both excessive segregation and excessive integration can lead to suboptimal functioning. *Interestingly, to fully prosper, the human community needs to similarly continuously adjust toward optimal balance between individual freedom and social responsibility, between national sovereignty and globalisation.*

One of the key ingredients that can facilitate finding such optimal balance, both on an individual level and as a society, is the development of the capacity for kindness and altruism. **Research shows that training kindness can increase positive emotions, social connectedness and pro-social behaviours. It can decrease negative feelings and social biases, and even slow biological ageing.**

At a basic level, cultivating kindness toward ourselves and others allows us to find commonality with all life. It 'opens our hearts' and helps us to accept the basic existential predicament of our lives that we are all beings facing death. That understanding, coupled with the realisation of the universality of suffering, of struggles and joys, can decrease our own alienation and distress, which are so often exacerbated by our defensive self-centeredness and self-aggrandising.

Research shows that training kindness can increase positive emotions, social connectedness and pro-social behaviours. It can decrease negative feelings and social biases, and even slow biological ageing.



Several key emotional competencies contribute to the capacity for kindness – empathy (feeling with another), love (affection for another), compassion (feeling for another's distress), and the theory of mind (ability to understand another's beliefs and intentions). The brain networks involved in these competencies show hierarchical structuring, from relatively simple perceptual-motor circuits to highly complex ones such as those involved in the theory of mind.

In particular, empathy and compassion have been found to involve three levels of processing:

1) An initial assessment performed by the amygdala and the components of mirror neuron system in the inferior frontal/pre-motor and inferior parietal cortex;

2) Affective simulation involving bilateral insula and the anterior and middle cingulate gyrus;

3) The cognitive component engaging the executive system for emotion control via attention and re-appraisal in the frontoparietal and temporal areas, and the areas associated with theory of mind in the dorsal medial prefrontal cortex and temporo-parietal junction.

Additionally, compassion, like love, has been found to activate systems for reward and positive affect, involving ventral tegmental area, nucleus accumbens and the orbito-frontal cortex.

Several key emotional competencies contribute to the capacity for kindness – empathy (feeling with another), love (affection for another), compassion (feeling for another's distress), and the theory of mind (ability to understand another's beliefs and intentions).

Research in the field of contemplative neuroscience has shown that kindness and related competencies can be trained, resulting in both functional and structural neural plasticity. Training in such complex practices, which require simultaneous activation of perceptual, affective and cognitive capacities, increases global synchronisation and integration among different networks, leading to enhanced mobilisation of the brain's resources and increased processing efficiency. Future research will specify to what degree capacities such as kindness, love and compassion are innate predispositions as opposed to being learned skills. Such research could help us to realise the benefit of that ancient but extraordinary insight from spiritual traditions, which says that the highest good is already present in all of us, and it only needs liberating and cultivating, to blossom and bear fruits of benefit for all. ▸

The Science, Theory and ***Practice of Kindness:*** A Brief Overview

MICHAEL KARLIN AND **BRENDAN** OZAWA-DE SILVA



MICHAEL KARLIN is Assistant Professor of Psychology at Life University in the Positive Human Development and Social Change Department and the Associate Director of the Life University Center for Compassion, Integrity and Secular Ethics. Karlin is the co-author of Compassionate Integrity Training, a multi-part training program that cultivates basic human values as skills for the purpose of increasing individual, social and environmental flourishing. Karlin received his Ph.D. in Religious Studies and a Graduate Certificate in Jewish Studies from Emory University in 2014. His dissertation, "'To Create a Dwelling Place for God': Life Coaching and the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic Movement in Contemporary America," is an ethnographic study of two Jewish life coaching programs that blend psychology, religion and contemplative practice in order to provide resources with which individuals can construct moral selves and heal psychological wounds.



BRENDAN OZAWA-DE SILVA is the Associate Director for SEE Learning at the Center for Contemplative Science and Compassion-Based Ethics at Emory University. Prior to this, he served as associate professor of psychology at Life University, and as associate director for the Center for Compassion, Integrity, and Secular Ethics at Life University. His research focuses on the psychological, social, and ethical dimensions of prosocial emotions and their cultivation, with a focus on compassion and forgiveness; and his chief interest lies in bringing secular ethics—the cultivation of basic human values—into education and society. He was the founding director of the Chillon Project, a higher-education-in-prison program; he is a Fellow of the Mind and Life Institute; and he is an associate editor for the Journal for Healthcare, Science, and the Humanities. He holds doctorates from the University of Oxford and Emory University.



What is Kindness?

Kindness is a quality that seems inherent in human beings. Like most vital things, however, it is at once very simple and very complex, with multiple layers that can be explored extensively.

On the simplest level, kindness is showing consideration to others, as opposed to being insensitive, harmful or apathetic. On this basic level, kindness has universal appeal. Not only human beings, including infants and children, but also animals appreciate kindness.

The reason for this is simple. Our most basic motivation is to strive for survival, well-being and happiness. Being treated by others with cruelty, indifference or insensitivity goes directly against this basic wish. So, we want others to treat us with kindness and this is common to all humans.

The Science of Kindness

Additionally, as social animals, we need others' kindness to survive. As with all mammals and birds, we are not self-sufficient at birth, or even for several years thereafter. In infancy, without maternal care and the care of others, we would quickly perish. Therefore, this basic need for care means that even on a cellular level–deep within our biology and physiology–we respond to kindness. We are interdependent and our bodies know it.

For instance, our nervous system is wired in a way that affective touch, such as the kind or loving touch of someone we feel close to, activates different parts of the brain (the posterior insular cortex and anterior cingulate cortex). This is different from discriminative touch–the touch we use to feel something ourselves (which primarily activates the somatosensory cortex)–which activates different nerve fibres. Affective touch can make us feel relaxed, safe and calm, activating our parasympathetic or "rest and digest" response–but typically only if our brain interprets it as coming from a kind, non-threatening source. If the touch comes from someone we don't like, it can have quite the opposite effect, causing us stress and a completely different (and less healthy) physiological and chemical response in our body. This activation of the sympathetic nervous system (the "flight or fight response") can cause the release of stress hormones (such as adrenaline and cortisol) in our bodies, elevating heart rate and blood pressure, and increasing inflammation. This activation occurs when we perceive another's touch as unkind.

For instance, our nervous system is wired in a way that affective touch, such as the kind or loving touch of someone we feel close to, activates different parts of the brain (the posterior insular cortex and anterior cingulate cortex).

A great deal of research has emerged on the long-term importance of affective touch for infants as well as its impact on adults. From this we can see that kindness is not a mere concept in our heads; it is also a biological reality in our bodies. There are multiple layers of complexity to the science of kindness that we have yet to explore.

We can see that kindness supports happiness and flourishing even on social, national and international levels. 'The World Happiness Report', a project undertaken by the United Nations, has shown that even more than economic factors, happiness and life satisfaction are facilitated by factors such as trust and social support, which are themselves manifestations of kindness. It should come as no surprise to us that kinder societies are happier societies; it may, however, be surprising to some to know that kindness is even more important than wealth. In fact, contrary to the idea that simply having more wealth results in more happiness, data from the 2019 World Happiness Report suggest that generosity (showing kindness by giving wealth away) is also positively correlated with happiness in societies. This coincides with other data showing that we tend to feel rewarded when we act kindly and benefit others.

Research increasingly supports the long-held belief that kindness is good not only for others, but also for ourselves. While religions have also taught the importance of kindness for millennia, we see that kindness is not a religious matter; it is a basic human value. It belongs to what both the Dalai Lama and the World Happiness Report have a called universal secular ethics.

What Supports Kindness?

Kindness has layers of complexity even at a conceptual level. If someone asks for something that might be harmful for them, for instance an alcoholic asking for a drink, is it kind to give it to them? Which economic policies or political agendas are the kindest? When does kindness to oneself mean pushing past one's pre-conceived limits and when does it mean giving oneself a much-needed break?

If we look at these complex questions, we can see that kindness is supported by discernment and by empathy. In some cases, you may want to be kind to someone, but because of a failure to understand their perspective or resonate with them emotionally, you may end up saying something hurtful or insensitive.

Naturally, kindness is also supported by compassion. If you are inclined to wish another person to be happy, protected and relieved of suffering–in other words, if you are compassionate towards them–you will not want to harm them. In such a case, your actions towards them are more likely to be characterised by kindness.

From this we can see that the cultivation of many other skills and dispositions–such as compassion, empathy and discernment–will enhance kindness. Since kindness is vital for us on both biological and social levels, we should invest in methods that help us cultivate kindness as well as the skills and dispositions that support it. This includes introducing the science, theory and practice of kindness in educational settings so that children can benefit from this knowledge and can begin the practice of self-care and care for others from an early age.

In order to have a fully formed capacity for kindness, one must first learn to be kind to oneself and practice self-compassion. When we are not emotionally aware or are unkind towards ourselves, it is very difficult to be kind to another. Learning to have greater self-compassion can put us in the right physiological, emotional and mental state to be kind to others.

We have established that kindness is supported by related skills and dispositions, such as forgiveness, empathy, compassion and discernment. Further, to develop kindness for the greatest number of people, these practices should rest on a foundation of impartiality, where we learn to see our common humanity. In other words, we must realise that what all human beings have in common vastly outweighs our differences, and that all human beings naturally seek to experience greater well-being and less suffering.

Also, for us to fully express our innate capacity for kindness, we must learn to develop the very systems we live in so that they reflect, manifest and support kindness and compassion. In this way, the institutions we create and maintain–economy, education, criminal

justice, and others—can best enable and promote flourishing for all in just and equitable ways.

Increasingly, programmes for both children and adults are reflecting this multi-level approach to kindness, teaching skills to develop greater individual, interpersonal and system-level kindness. A few examples of these programmes are Life University's 'Compassionate Integrity Training' and Emory University's 'SEE Learning', both of which offer numerous free resources for adults, educators and students to practice by oneself or with others. Several other programmes also offer research-based methods for cultivating kindness to oneself and others, such as Emory University's 'Cognitively-Based Compassion Training' and Kristen Neff's 'Mindful Self-Compassion'. Links to these programs are provided below along with sample practices.



In order to have a fully formed capacity for kindness, one must first learn to be kind to oneself and practice self-compassion. When we are not emotionally aware or are unkind towards ourselves, it is very difficult to be kind to another.

Although this is a relatively new topic of science, a growing body of research now suggests that using these practices, as well as learning more about the science and theory of kindness, is a useful and practical way to promote one's own and others' health and happiness.

Simple Kindness Practices

The following are some practices taken from Emory University's 'SEE Learning' programme and Life University's 'Compassionate Integrity Training'. These can be used to cultivate kindness for oneself and others:

1-MINUTE SELF-COMPASSION (from SEE Learning):

Adjust your posture to one that is most comfortable and take 10-20 seconds to ground (become aware of the way your body is supported) or resource (bring something to mind that makes you feel better or safer). Now spend a few seconds to become aware of your natural wish for well-being and to be free of distress and unwanted hardship. Remember that everyone goes through difficult times, but things are always in a constant process of change. Consider if you are pushing yourself too hard due to unrealistic expectations that you might not have for a good friend. What kind and wise thing might you say to help such a friend if they were in your situation now? Conclude by taking a moment to send yourself positive, healing thoughts and energy in any way that feels best for you. If you like, you can visualise something that represents your own strength, resilience, and confidence (like a ball of light that starts in your heart and then grows to fill your entire body). Notice what you feel on the inside.

CONTEMPLATIVE JOURNALING ON SELF-COMPASSION (from Compassionate Integrity Training):

Instructions: Write down your answers to the following questions. The greatest benefit will come from repeated consideration of these questions over time. They can be used in connection with the 1-Minute Self-Compassion practice above or the contemplative practice recording found on the CIT website.

Start with bringing to mind a resource or focus on the contact of your body with a surface, object or another body part, and allow yourself to notice any neutral or pleasant sensations that arise in your body.

1. If possible, describe a time in your life when you set realistic expectations for yourself and you met or exceeded your expectation?

2. How did it feel to meet or exceed your expectations?

3. Describe a time when you failed to meet your own expectations and reacted harshly to yourself, or a current situation in which you feel you might fail to meet expectations.

4. Imagine someone you love dearly telling you about this situation and their feelings of self-judgment. What specific things would you say to them?

5. Do you think these same things would apply to you in your situation? Why or why not?

6. Although the outcome may not have changed, how would your well-being have been affected if you had set more realistic expectations for yourself?

7. If you are engaging in concrete steps or practices to set more realistic expectations for yourself, how has that been progressing, or what have you been learning?

8. Did you gain any insights from today's journal entries? If so, explain what insights you gained and why they might be valuable.

1-MINUTE COMPASSION (from SEE Learning):

Adjust your posture to one that is most comfortable and take 10-20 seconds to ground (become aware of the way your body is supported) or resource (bring something to mind that makes you feel better or safer). Bring to mind a person to whom you would like to send love and compassion (visualize them sitting or standing before you if this is helpful). Take a moment to recognize them as a human being just like yourself, who wants happiness and doesn't want distress and unwanted hardship. Take a moment to recognize whatever hardships they are going through, have been through, or will go through in the future. Now send them your love and compassion in whatever way feels best to you. If you like you can visualize something that represents this, such as sending them a warm, healing light that emanates from your heart and gradually fills their entire body with well-being. If you like, you can also imagine saying to them, "I wish you happiness and freedom from all suffering." Notice what you feel on the inside.

CONTEMPLATIVE JOURNALING ON COMPASSION (from Compassionate Integrity Training):

Instructions: Write down your answers to the following questions. The greatest benefit will come from repeated consideration of these questions over time. They can be used in connection with the 1-Minute Compassion practice above or the contemplative practice recording found on the CIT website.

Start with bringing to mind a resource or focus on the contact of your body with a surface, object or another body part, and allow yourself to notice any neutral or pleasant sensations that arise in your body.

1. Write down the name of one of the people you journaled about in the Empathic Concern skill.

2. List at least three ways this person has benefited you or others.

3. As you think about all the ways this person has benefited you and others, describe your feelings for this person.

4. Close your eyes and bring to mind whatever difficulties this person may be facing, faced in the past, or might face in the future. After you have done that, take a moment to think about what this person would really want more than anything else. Then imagine yourself giving them, or making it possible for them to receive, whatever it is they truly desire and feel would make them happy. If it is helpful, you can imagine sending white light from your body that envelops them and that symbolises your compassion for them. After you have done this, note down how this makes you feel.

5. Recall the fact that every moment of every day we are supported by a vast network of people we know and do not know. Recognize that no matter our social status or economic privilege, we are all vulnerable to present and future problems. We all experience all manners of suffering, aging, illness, separation from loved ones, stress, worries, anxiety, physical and mental illnesses, and disappointments. Contemplate on how others, like your loved one, deeply wish for happiness. After doing this, note down any observations you have about your feelings or thoughts.

6. What insights, if any, did you gain from today's journal entries?

7. If you are engaging in concrete steps or practices to increase your compassion, how has that been progressing or what have you been learning?

Links :
For further information and resources on the cultivation of kindness, visit -
www.compassionateintegrity.org
compassion.emory.edu
seelearning.emory.edu
self-compassion.org

Three Ways for Schools to *Help Students Cultivate Kindness*

VICKI ZAKRZEWSKI



VICKI ZAKRZEWSKI, Ph.D., is the founding education director of UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. As an international thought leader on the science of well-being in education, Vicki writes articles, gives talks and workshops all over the world, and leads the GGSC's annual Summer Institute for Educators. Vicki also sits on several advisory boards, consults with organizations on how to incorporate the science of well-being into education, and is the lead creator of the GGSC's, Greater Good in Education, a collection of free research-based practices for cultivating student and teacher well-being. Vicki earned her Ph.D. in Education and Positive Psychology from Claremont Graduate University.

Schools try many approaches to encourage students to be kind and helpful—from rewarding them for good behaviour, to implementing service-learning programmes, to directly teaching them social and emotional skills.

Sometimes, however, the most powerful learning happens when students are encouraged to discover something for themselves—especially when what they're "learning" is already a natural part of who they are as human beings. According to science, kindness is a natural part of us all.

Kindness Starts Young

Many studies have demonstrated that children as young as 14 months have innate altruistic tendencies, well before socialisation can have a major influence on their development.

For example, researchers Felix Warneken and Michael Tomasello found that in a variety of situations in which an adult experimenter was ostensibly having trouble performing a task, 18-month-old infants readily helped. In one scenario, an experimenter who was hanging towels on a clothesline dropped a clothespin and appeared

Many studies have demonstrated that children as young as 14 months have innate altruistic tendencies, well before socialisation can have a major influence on their development.



to have trouble reaching for it. In an even more challenging scenario, the experimenter was unsuccessfully trying to get a spoon by squeezing his hand through a tiny hole in a box; unprompted, the children not only helped, but also showed the adult a more effective approach of lifting a flap on the side of the box.

In speculating why such young children had the impulse to help, Warneken noted that they did so even if no parent was present and, thus, couldn't have been responding to unconscious parental cues. For instance, children still helped when doing so required them to disengage from playing with a toy or to climb over obstacles. "Children are thus motivated to help another person," writes Warneken, "even if it involves opportunity costs or effort to do so."

Science has also shown that young children receive a boost in positive emotions when giving away something of their own to another. For example, in one study, toddlers were introduced to a puppet that liked treats. Each child was given eight treats and then watched the experimenter give a treat to the puppet. After being asked, children gave one of their own treats to the puppet. Next, the experimenter found

Science has also shown that young children receive a boost in positive emotions when giving away something of their own to another.

a treat and asked the child to give it to the puppet. Researchers found that while the children's happiness levels increased when they shared a "found" treat, happiness levels were even higher when the children sacrificed their own treat.

While these experiments show that kindness and its resultant joy are innate from a very young age, this quality/ experience still needs to be cultivated as children enter environments where incentives that support these aspects are not always in place. Thus, it is incumbent upon schools to create environments in which these qualities can flourish.

What schools can do to cultivate kindness

Both research and experience offer some key insights for schools that would like to develop students' innate kindness:



Instead of offering rewards for good behaviour, teachers and school administrators should model kindness toward students and one another, and talk about how much better it feels to be kind rather than unkind.

1. Hold the rewards
Schools don't need to reward kind behaviour; the reward occurs naturally through the warm feeling that comes from helping another person. People who witness others doing unexpected kind acts often get a similar warm and uplifting feeling—psychologist and researcher Jonathan Haidt calls this elevation. *Haidt's research shows that across cultures, human beings are moved and inspired when they see others acting with courage or compassion, and this elevation makes them more likely to want to help others and become better people.*

Yet, rewarding children for kind actions has become commonplace in our schools. These kinds of rewards go against everything researchers know about developing altruistic tendencies in children. Perhaps the most convincing argument comes from a study in which scientists found that 20-month-old children who were offered a reward for helping behaviour were less likely to help again compared to those who had not received a reward.

Instead of offering rewards for good behaviour, teachers and school administrators should model kindness toward students and one another, and talk about how much better it feels to be kind rather than unkind. If students see adults behaving compassionately and if they learn to notice within themselves how kindness makes them feel happy, they will be intrinsically motivated to act on their natural proclivity for altruism.

2. A gentle nudge will do
It does not take much to bring out students' inherent kindness. Simply hearing about the science of kindness can motivate students to try it for themselves. Research, however, suggests that it can be even easier than that.

In a study published in the journal Psychological Science, 18-month-old infants were shown photos, each featuring one of four backgrounds: blocks, two dolls facing each other, a single doll, or two dolls facing away from each other. The study revealed that the background of the photo decisively influenced behaviour—the toddlers who saw the dolls facing each other were three times more likely to spontaneously help a person in need than were the toddlers who saw the other background images. All it took was a gentle reminder of our human connectedness to prompt these toddlers to reach out and help someone.

Such reminders are easy for schools to do—hang posters that show kind, helpful behaviour; greet students by name as they enter the classroom; use a warm tone of voice with students; write an encouraging word on an assignment; start the day with a positive quote; and share stories of kindness.

3. Express gratitude
Saying "thank you" to someone who has done something kind for you is not the same as rewarding that person. Instead, it's an affirmation that we have received a gift. According to gratitude expert Robert Emmons, gratitude is a relationship-strengthening emotion. "Mainly," he writes, "because it requires us to see how we've been supported and affirmed by other people."
Schools that implement practices fostering gratitude receive a myriad of benefits. *Research by Jeffrey Froh and Giacomo Bono indicates that gratitude increases students' positive emotions and optimism, decreases their negative emotions and physical symptoms, and makes them feel more connected and satisfied with school and with life in general. Gratitude also makes teachers feel more satisfied and accomplished, and less emotionally exhausted.*

Fortunately, gratitude is one of the easiest things to encourage in schools. Here are a few ideas:
• Hang gratitude bulletin boards in the school hallways and in the staff room on which people can write what they're grateful for.
• Start or end class time or staff meetings with everyone stating one thing for which they're grateful.
• Have students keep gratitude journals.
• Help students understand the deeper aspects of gratitude by teaching explicit lessons. Visit Greater Good in Education for free elementary and secondary gratitude lessons.

Lighting the Torch of Kindness

"A student is not a container you have to fill, but a torch you have to light up."

This oft-quoted saying from Albert Einstein beautifully expresses what students may experience when they learn that kindness is innate in all of us. Rather than being coerced into kindness by the promise of rewards, students can discover of their own volition what is already inside them—the joy that arises from making the world a better place through their own kind acts.

A version of this article first appeared in ASCD's "Educational Leadership." ▸



Kindness in School: *Insights from Students and Teachers*

JOHN-TYLER BINFET



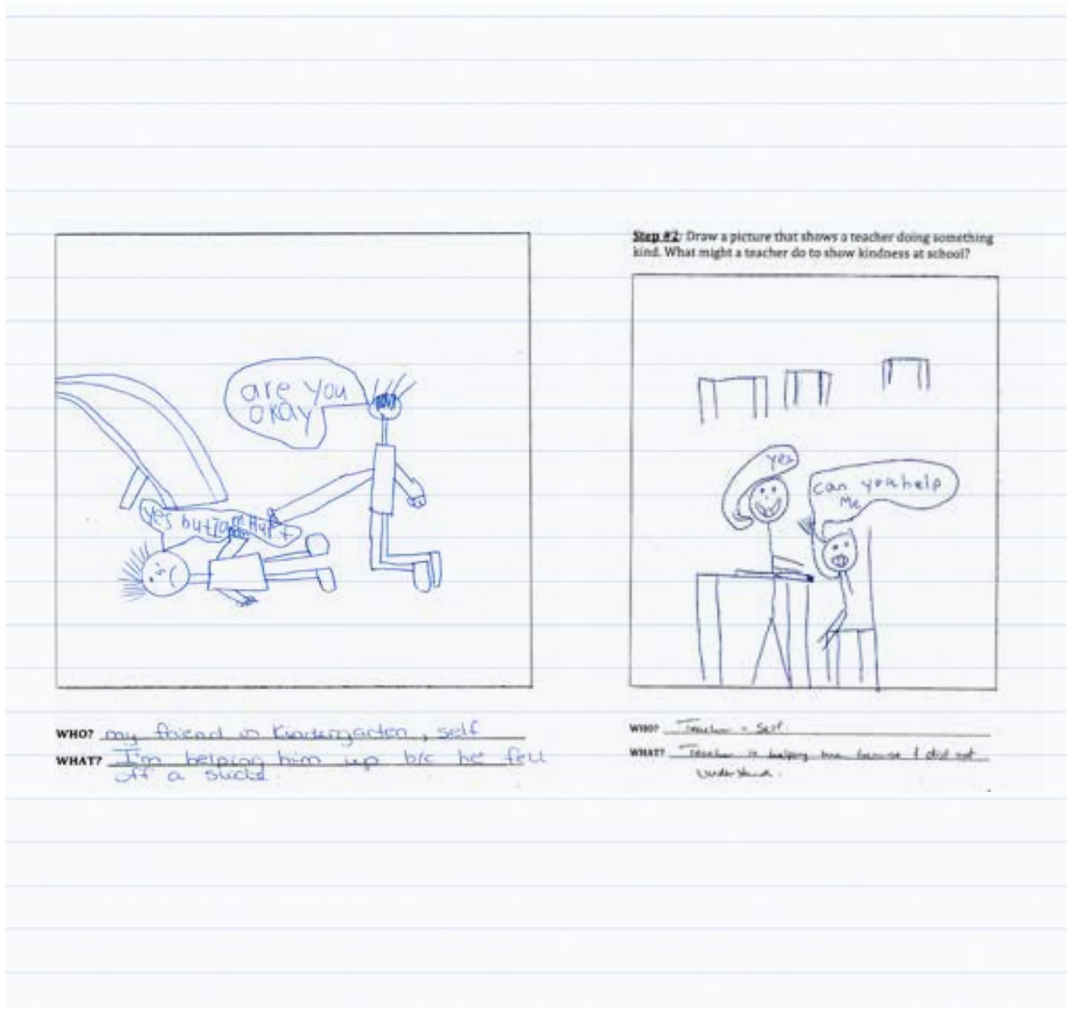
DR. BINFET is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia. He has two distinct research streams: 1) the investigation of kindness in school including how children, adolescents, and teachers understand what it means to be kind within a school context; and 2) the effects of canine-assisted interventions on undergraduate student well-being. Dr. Binfet is the director of UBC's Building Academic Retention through K9's (B.A.R.K.) program. Founded in 2012, B.A.R.K. routinely sees 60+ therapy dogs brought to campus to support students' stress reduction and overall well-being.

As a researcher at the University of British Columbia, I spend a lot of my time in schools investigating how students and teachers understand kindness. This involves asking students and teachers to define kindness and to recall both examples of kindness they have done and examples of kindness they have received at school. Doing so provides a window into their understanding and helps researchers and educators alike, elucidating the conditions that foster interpersonal prosocial behaviour. Here, I share how kindness is defined by students and teachers, provide illustrations of "pedagogical kindness," and showcase how students are kind within the context of school.

What Kindness Means from Students' Perspectives

After a review of published kindness definitions (see Binfet, 2015), it was evident that no definitions had been proffered that incorporated the perspective of school-age children. To respond to this gap in the literature, I conducted a series of studies aimed at having students (aged 5 to 14) define kindness. To date, I have surveyed and interviewed over 3,000 students on what it means to be kind at school. Their understanding of what kindness means holds potential to inform adult stakeholders interested in fostering kindness. **When asked to draw what kindness looked like to them, young students defined kindness as helping others in two distinct ways: 1) helping others physically; and 2) helping others emotionally.**

When asked to draw what kindness looked like to them, young students defined kindness as helping others in two distinct ways: 1) helping others physically; and 2) helping others emotionally.



Older students can be asked outright to provide a definition of kindness and their definitions showcase nuanced understanding of what it means to be kind. As with younger students, older students also differentiate between helping physically and helping emotionally.

Teachers' Understanding of Kindness

Not satisfied with only asking students about kindness, graduate student Holli-Anne Passmore and I investigated teachers' perceptions of kindness at school and coined the term "pedagogical kindness", which was showcased in a 2017 publication in the International Journal of Emotional Education. To our knowledge, this was the first study of its kind to explicitly investigate kindness and teachers. Using stratified random sampling across three school districts, we surveyed 257 public school teachers who taught a variety of grades, from kindergarten through to 12th grade. According to educators in this study, kindness took place predominantly in classrooms (i.e., > 80% of the time), teachers were kind most often to students (64%) and fellow teachers (31%), and on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from poor (i.e., 1) to excellent (i.e., 5), teachers rated the quality of their kind acts as "good" (i.e., 3).

When asked to define kindness, teachers in this study defined kindness in several ways:

1) Caring: "Kindness is caring for the people around you and wanting good things for them"

2) Showing empathy: "Striving to understand the feelings and emotional states of others"

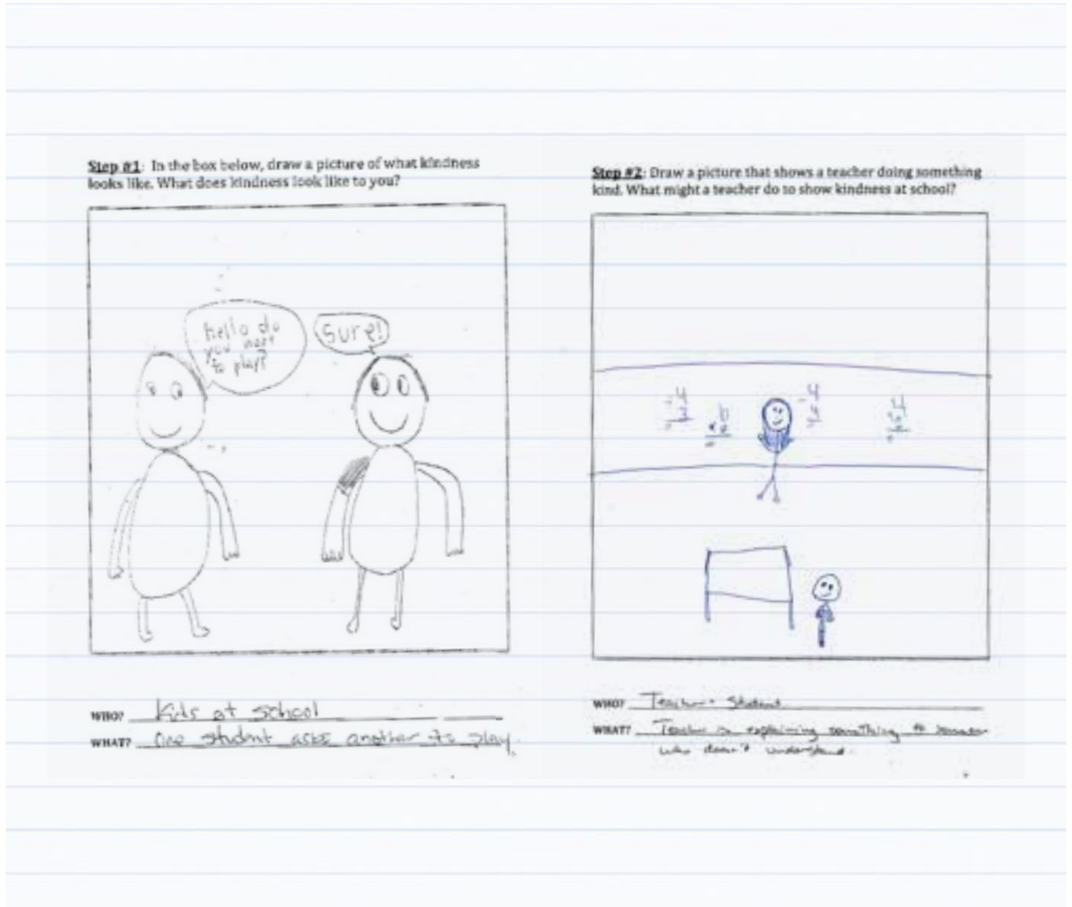
3) Being respectful: "Kindness is showing respect to self and others through actions that reveal acceptance of individual differences."

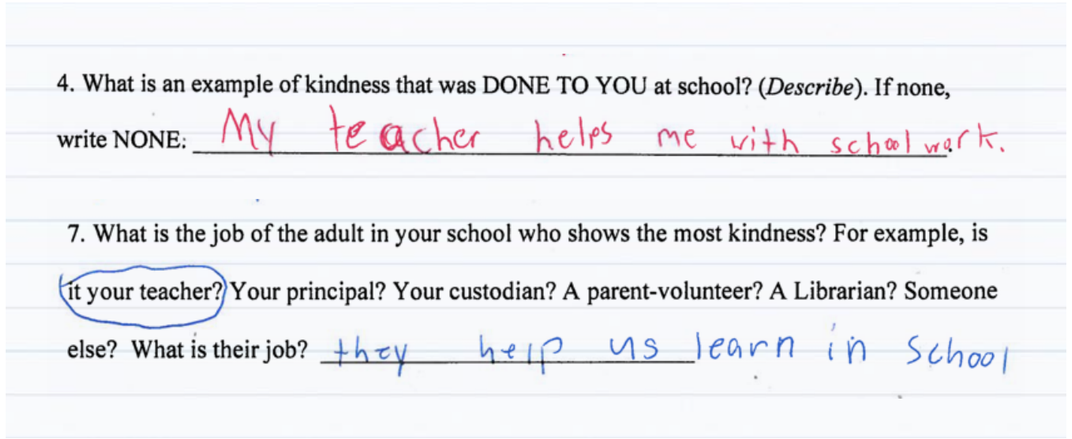
Extending the investigation of teachers and kindness in schools further, I asked elementary and middle school students to identify the things their teachers did that they considered kind. You might be surprised to learn that on being asked whether their teacher is kind, public school students (at least in Western Canada, where these studies were conducted) resoundingly recognise teachers as kind agents within a school. In particular, students identify teachers as kind when they are teaching students – either through instruction directed at themselves or as observed when teachers provide instruction to other students in the class. Examples from intermediate-age students (ages 9-11) showcases how students perceive kindness in their teachers.

This perception that teachers demonstrate kindness through teaching was also evidenced in young children's (ages 5-8) drawings of teachers being kind.

Fostering Kindness in Schools

Parents and educators alike can be informed by students' views on kindness at school and, in turn, use these insights to help





nurture conditions in which kindness can flourish at schools. *Certainly, the modelling of prosocial behaviour by adults in the school is an important pathway through which kindness can be encouraged.* Parents and educators can also foster kindness by advocating for kindness-themed literature and class assignments that encourage students to reflect upon and enact kindness to others within and near their school community. Older students can be encouraged to participate in service-learning initiatives that see them helping community members or agencies in need. Educators too can have their thinking challenged around how to be kind at school, and can reflect on their interactions with students who misbehave and incorporate "kind discipline" (Winker, Walsh, de Blois, Mare, & Carvajal, 2017) as a framework for supporting students. In short, the study of kindness stands to inform school communities about topics such as kind discipline and pedagogical kindness, and about how students' understanding of kindness can help shape learners and learning communities. ▸

REFERENCES

[1] Binfet, J. T., & Gaertner, A. (2015). Children's conceptualizations of kindness at school. Canadian Children, 40, 27-39. http://dx.doi.org/10.18357/jcs.v40i3.15167

[2] Binfet, J. T., & Passmore, H. A. (2017). Teachers' perceptions of kindness at school. International Journal of Emotional Education, 9, 37-53. http://doi: 10.1080/08927936.2016.1181364

[3] Winker, J. L., Walsh, M. E., de Blois, M., Mare, J. & Carvajal, S. C. (2017). Kind discipline: Developing a conceptual model of a promising school discipline approach. Evaluation and Program Planning, 62, 15-24. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2017.02.002

KINDNESS *the Force that will Help us Achieve Sustainable Development Goals*



BHAVYA ARYA

BHAVYA ARYA is an avid observer of human behaviour and likes to connect the dots between individual patterns and social moorings. She has conceptualized and edited a book, In a Gentle Way We Can Shake the World: Mahatma Gandhi and Today's Global Challenges. She has also done independent research with 500 middle-school students on the effects of positive psychology. An awarded top-ranking school student and a passionate Odissi dancer, she lives in Gurgaon with the goings-on in her mind and makes all effort to also accommodate her parents and younger brother.



KUANY

KUANY, a nomad from South Sudan, started his education in Kenya as a refugee and won the Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Symbiosis International University Joint Scholarship where he finished his MBA, graduating a gold medalist. He is trained in critical thinking and inquiry-oriented education. At UNESCO MGIEP, he is in charge of #YouthWagingPeace, TAGe and the overall PVE-E coordination. Kuany is also a trainer for the UNAOC MENA (the Middle East and North Africa) Young Peacebuilders Programme. He is the author of The Enlightened Darkness - an intimate meditation on the causes and consequences of the Sudan civil war. He is using the book's proceeds to support girls' education in South Sudan.



NANDINI CHATTERJEE SINGH

NANDINI is a cognitive neuroscientist and leads the Rethinking Learning programme. She is passionate about translating neuroscientific evidence on learning and education from laboratory to classroom. She is currently designing a programme for socio-emotional learning in school classrooms using interactive digital technologies. Nandini also leads the Difference Learning project at UNESCO MGIEP towards achieving 'inclusive' education.



The Yemeni Civil War, persisting since 2015, has seen many brutalities – thousands of deaths, induced famine, and millions in need of urgent aid. **For 24-year old Mohammed Kamal Baobaid from the war-torn city of Aden in Yemen, this presents an opportunity to be of service to his fellow citizens. An engineer by profession, Mohammed founded E-nabled Aden in 2017, which uses 3D printing technology to make lightweight, movable and easy-to-use prosthetic limbs for people who lost limbs in the war. E-nabled also offers training on the use of prosthetic limbs. In 2017, he produced 10 limbs, and since then, there have been many requests. The organisation has now expanded to include education, cleanliness and recycling as some of its goals.**

Instead of harbouring a feeling of revenge for the 30-year-old motorist who was found guilty of causing Gerrard Machin's death by dangerous driving, Patricia did not just forgive him, but also motivated him to get on with his life, even requesting the court not to sentence him.

Elsewhere in the United Kingdom, Patricia Machin, by a cruel stroke of fate, was turned into a widow, as her husband Gerrard, 77, lost his life after spending nine painful weeks in a hospital after having been knocked down by a car. Instead of harbouring a feeling of revenge for the 30-year-old motorist who was found guilty of causing Gerrard Machin's death by dangerous driving, Patricia did not just forgive him, but also motivated him to get on with his life, even requesting the court not to sentence him.

According to a study by the World Health Organization (WHO), Indians are among the worst hit by depression, with nearly 36 percent of the population having suffered a major depressive episode. While one person in India commits suicide every four minutes, younger Indians are among the worst hit. That is why Richa Singh, an IIT Guwahati alumnus, started www.yourdost.com, an emotional support system for people to discuss problems with qualified and experienced individuals, in anonymity. Available as a free service through its web portal and mobile app, YourDOST has close to 70,000 users, a number that is growing by nearly 40% every month. A majority of the reported depression stems from issues such as bad performance in competitive exams, relationship problems, anxiety during exam preparation, and the feeling of rejection arising from working in a field that people do not enjoy.

Kindness can be broadly described as a benevolent and helpful action motivated by the desire to help another without the expectation of explicit reward or to avoid explicit punishment (Pam, 2013).

These humanitarian acts reflect the universality of kindness and its simple yet effective power to make the world a better place. **Kindness can be broadly described as a benevolent and helpful action motivated by the desire to help another without the expectation of explicit reward or to avoid explicit punishment** (Pam, 2013). Research reveals that humans are both generous and kind as a species (Summer, 2018; Keltner, D. 2009). Accumulating evidence now supports the hypothesis that the roots of kindness are embedded in biological evolution and prosocial behaviour or actions that benefit others have been reported not only in humans but in birds, bees, rats, chimpanzees and humans (Summer, 2018; De Waal et al, 2011; O Judson, 2007). For instance, it has been found that common marmoset monkeys spontaneously provide food to unrelated monkeys, even if those monkeys do not reciprocate (Burkart, Fehr, Efferson, & van Schaik, 2007). Similarly, vampire bats have been reported to share blood with both related and unrelated bats, thereby preventing bats with unsuccessful hunts from starving to death (Wilkinson, 1984).

This evolutionary basis for cooperation, compassion and kindness is predicated on reciprocity (Trivers, R.L., 1971; Barber. N, 2004. Goetz, Jennifer L et al. 2010). In many cases, especially in complex systems, this reciprocity can be so implicit that it might be deemed non-existent (Sapolsky, 2011). For example, in naked mole rats' colonies, some members seem like free riders – who get their share of fat from eating food contributed by the other members of the group without working. On first impressions that may lead to the conclusion that other members of the group are being altruistic to the free riders (or the obese naked mole rats are cheaters), detailed scrutiny reveals a distinct later role for the obese mole rats. During the rainy season, the obese mole rats protect the colony from flooding, by moving big rocks to close the entrance to the colony (Burda, H., Honeycutt, R., Begall, S. et al, 2000; Sapolsky, 2011).

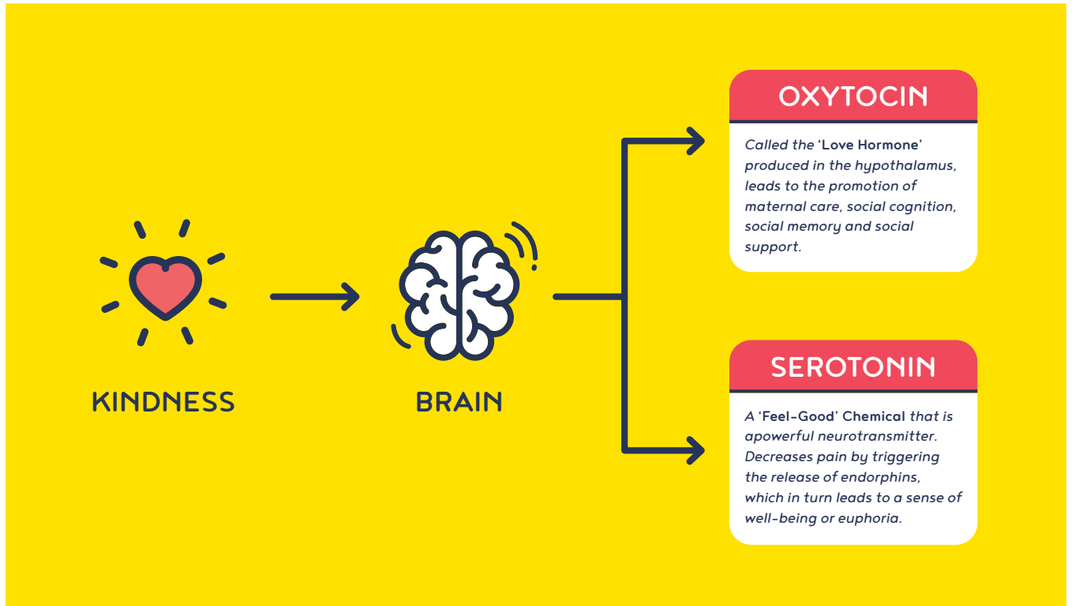
Neuroscientific research investigating the primary reasons for engaging in prosocial behaviour indicates that deliberate or intentional acts of kindness, including acting generously, not only activate 'reward circuits' in the brain but also offer the promise of happier societies and human flourishing (Kelly, 2016). In this article, we review the scientific evidence that supports the pursuit of 'acts of kindness' and present supporting arguments to posit that the explicit cultivation of intentional acts of kindness may also be fundamental for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and for building peaceful and sustainable societies.

The Biology of Kindness

Biologically, acts of kindness have been shown to increase levels of oxytocin in the body (Mascaro, Negi, Raison, 2015). Oxytocin is a hormone produced in the hypothalamus, a small region in the base of the brain, near the pituitary gland, which is released when people bond 'socially' (Lee, Macbeth, Young, 2009). Also called the 'love hormone', oxytocin is strongly linked to trust (Insel & Hulihan, 1995). Among the various behavioural effects of oxytocin are prosocial actions such as the promotion of maternal care, social cognition, social memory and social support (Bielsky & Young, 2004, Donaldson & Young, 2008, Neumann, 2009).

Kindness also facilitates the production of serotonin, which is commonly known as the 'feel-good' chemical that provides healing and calming feelings (Berger, Gray, Roth, 2009). A powerful neurotransmitter that has a wide array of functions in the human body, serotonin decreases pain by triggering the release of endorphins (the body's natural painkiller), which in turn leads to a sense of well-being or euphoria. Popularly called the 'helper's high' by Allan Luks and Peggy Payne (Luks, 1988), this state describes the healing power of doing good. Neuroscience evidence shows that the neural circuits involved in chemical 'highs' are the same ones that are activated by kindness and compassion (Filkowski, M. M., Cochran, R. N., & Haas, B. W., 2016).

Kindness thus provides a strong basis to regulate those chemicals that are naturally in the body and boost a sense of well-being and increase social bonding (Sapolsky, 2018). Nevertheless, it is essential to be aware of the context specificity and inherent group bias of hormones such as oxytocin and serotonin. On the one hand, oxytocin can promote prosocial behaviour such as trust building within the in-group; on the other, it can also promote pre-emptive aggression towards the out-group (De Dreu C., 2012). Thus, the same hormone, in different contexts and



other factors, can lead to different, and sometimes even opposite and undesirable actions or outcomes. Thus, it is important that the context underlying a specific behaviour be relevant. However, we argue here, that if kindness becomes automatic and ubiquitous, even the contexts under which such hormones operate, could be more favourable.

Kindness as Innate

As indicated in the introduction, the occurrence of prosocial behaviour has been widely reported not only in human beings but also in animals and birds. *Kindness is natural and is a consequence of the evolutionary cooperative social and emotional instinct in species.* For instance, in an experiment with rats (Bartal, Decety, & Mason, 2011), it was found that when a rat was given a choice between two containers—one holding chocolate and the other holding a trapped rat who appeared to be suffering—the free rat would try to help the suffering rat first before seeking the chocolate. Other research has indicated that ants and bees may sacrifice their reproductive potential to help raise the offspring of others (Nowak, Tarnita, & Wilson, 2010). The same is true for rhesus monkeys (Masserman et al, 2006). These and similar studies suggest that kindness has an evolutionary basis and is not just guided by social advantage or obligation.

In fact, in recent years, social scientists have built a case for 'survival of the kindest', wherein it has been suggested that humans are successful as a species precisely because of our nurturing, cooperative, altruistic and compassionate traits (O. Judson, 2007. Goetz, Jennifer L et al. 2010. Barber. N, 2004). It is this trait of kindness—and our inherent capacity to cooperate—that we think could be harnessed, mainstreamed and celebrated as the unifying force to accomplish our goals of social, environmental and economic equality and sustainability—as encapsulated in the SDGs.
In the next section, we discuss a possible way of doing so.

Kindness as Happiness

Scientific and anecdotal evidence indicates that kind people are happy people. A series of studies undertaken by Otake et al. (Otake, 2006) showed that happiness increases through an act of kindness. Their first study with Japanese undergraduate students, participants were deemed happy people and less happy based on their total scores on the Japanese version of the Subjective Happiness Scale (JSHS). The results indicated that happy

But why do acts of kindness increase a person's sense of happiness? One possible reason is that being kind to others brings you to the present, thus compelling you to be mindful and aware, diverting your attention from intrusive thoughts (Kelly, 2016), which at times could also be negative.



people not only desired to be kind but were also more attuned to the recognition of kindness and more likely to behave in kind ways. The second follow up study conducted by the same group with female undergraduate students found that simply by counting acts of kindness in a week, people appeared to have become happier and more grateful. In short, these studies showed that not only were kinder people happier, they also noticed acts of kindness and therefore, continued to be both kind and happy.

But why do acts of kindness increase a person's sense of happiness? One possible reason is that being kind to others brings you to the present, thus compelling you to be mindful and aware, diverting your attention from intrusive thoughts (Kelly, 2016), which at times could also be negative. Another reason for wanting to be kind is that the awareness of being kind, especially to someone in need, heightens the sense of one's good fortune. In 1975, Fenigstein et al. wrote that 'increased awareness of the self is both a tool and a goal' (Fenigstein, Scheier and Buss, 1975). The process of being kind thus creates greater self-awareness, which, in turn, has been linked to psychological well-being (Sutton, 2016).

Kindness also leads to reduced anxiety and depression while improving self-worth. In a study conducted with highly anxious individuals by the University of British Columbia (Alden, 2013), participants performed at least six acts of kindness in a week. After one month, they reported a significant increase in positive moods, relationship satisfaction and a decrease in social avoidance. By promoting perceptions that are more positive and expectations of a person's social environment, kindness also helped reduce social anxiety and social avoidance (Dacher, 2009).

Kindness is thus successful in not only initiating a virtuous cycle but also one of rewarding, whereby one act of kindness leads to more, and in the process, makes more people more kind and grateful. This suggests an interdependent and sustainable cycle involving kindness and happiness, where acts of kindness make one happy, and increased happiness, in turn, increases the probability of engaging in more kind behaviours, thus further amplifying happiness.

How Can Kindness Help Achieve the SDGs?

In 2015, at the annual United Nations General Assembly, the Member States unanimously adopted the SDG's or the Sustainable Development Goals (also referred to as the 2030 Agenda). The SDG's are a set of 17 individually pertinent and collectively indivisible goals ranging from the eradication of poverty, health and climate action to renewable energy, gender equality and peace. They are summation of the collective aspirations for a future worthy of our planet.

Since the adoption of the SDGs, governments, businesses and wider civil society organisations the world over have taken up the arduous challenge of mobilising societies to act to realise a peaceful and sustainable future. This urgency for action has also been induced by the fact that some of the challenges that the SDGs set out to address are materialising by the day, especially the looming climate catastrophe.
As much as the SDGs have inspired individual and collective action, they are yet to internalise a mindset that is peaceful and sustainable among individuals. Something is needed to internalise and make automatic the mindset to co-exist (with the planet) peacefully and sustainably. This is where kindness could play a significant role in creating and internalising such a mindset. Imagine a world where it is intuitive and easy to be kind to each other, to all beings and the planet; where individual and collective action is informed by this simple and natural secular ethic.

A recent article by Dasgupta et al. (2015), suggested that the SDGs are not necessarily a set of consistent objectives but rather a series of potentially conflicting goals. This is because they entail inconsistencies in actions—and antecedents--required to achieve the SDGs. For instance, climate change might require cutting down personal consumption, while maybe allowing others who are in poverty to increase theirs and not expecting them to cut as well for climate change. The willingness to do so requires both, to forgo or give up and to help others. Both are acts of kindness and are sustainable. Another example is a young teacher who decides to take a substantial pay cut and forego the convenience of the city to teach in marginalized communities, therefore, bridging the gap in education. A final example is the inspiring case of Mohammed (above) who might have had to forego an opportunity for a lucrative job in the private sector to build prosthetic limbs for victims of civil war in his country. The achievement of the SDG's thus demands that development agents to consider multiple perspectives and make necessary tradeoffs.

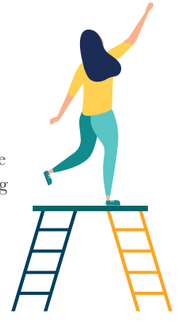
At the level of the individual and social collectives, these tradeoffs in SDGs are cause for dissonance (Festinger, 1957). According to dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), inconsistent cognitions evoke aversive arousal states, that are inherently emotional and lead to attitudes and behaviors aimed at reducing the arousal (Randles et al., 2015). When confronted with dissonance, human beings align cognitions to facilitate the execution of actions that are not conflicting (Jones & Gerard, 1967). Thus, dissonance strains and challenges both rational decision-making and emotional capabilities to attain the SDGs. This dual potential of dissonance to undermine development goals by enabling compromise and inactions necessitates the need for appropriate dissonance management for the attainment of development goals. Given the emotional inclination of dissonance, its management requires emotional competencies.

This is where we posit that kindness provides an answer. If human beings maintain coherent thinking (Gawronski, 2012), build emotional resilience and demonstrate altruistic behavior, the attainment of the SDG's might become a reality. Coherent thinking builds rational perspective and intercultural understanding, emotional resilience draws upon positive emotions to cope with negative and stressful experiences (Tugade and Frederickson, 2004) and kind or altruistic behavior that seeks to improve another person's welfare, (Batson,1998) ensures that cognitive thought is converted to action.

Kindness, SDG's and Youth

In addition to kindness, if humanity is to achieve the SDGs, it must put youth at the forefront. According to the World Bank's 'The Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals 2017', 42 percent of people are under the age of 25. Unfortunately, most sit on the side-lines of political and social discourses they should be leading (Simpson, 2018). In spite of their sheer numbers and their inspiring work to achieve the sustainable development goals, young men and women continue to be marginalised and their civic and political participation is low (The Commonwealth, 2016). The sheer size and concrete work of the youth should warrant them the agency to drive the 2030 agenda.

Agency, however, is not enough! For the youth, as mentioned earlier, the SDGs may still entail inconsistencies in action. For instance, while policies to counter climate change are a necessity for future survival, in the short term they may necessitate compromising personal well-being (Asah & Singh, 2019). To be changemakers, therefore, youth need to engender a set of competencies that obligates them to weigh options, defer gratification and take appropriate decisions for the long term to ensure the achievement of the development goals.



To understand how



acts of kindness can enable the youth to take such decisions, it is worthwhile to review the development of the adolescent brain.

The pleasure neurotransmitter dopamine, associated with the brain's recognition of reward, undergoes significant changes from pre-adolescence to adolescence (Anderson, Dumont & Teicher, 1997). Neurotransmitters are chemicals produced in the brain that enable transmission between neurons. Dopamine, which is produced in the substantia niagra, not only helps regulate movement, attention learning and emotional responses, but also enables people to seek rewards and to actively seek them. Research shows that the concentration of dopamine receptors undergoes significant changes during adolescence (Anderson, Dumont, Teicher, 1997) and continues into youth. These changes in the concentration of dopamine receptors have important implications for sensation seeking (more commonly known as risk-taking) and play a significant role in reward-seeking behaviour.

Research at the National Institute of Health (Kringelbach & Berridge, 2015) showed that the same area of the brain is activated when participants respond to food or sex (namely, pleasure) or think about giving money to a charity, which helps to explain why giving feels good. Another study (Moll, Krueger, Zahn, Pardini, de Oliveira-Sou- za & Grafman, J, 2006) found that the mesolimbic reward system in the brain, which are activated by stimuli like sex, drugs, food and receiving money, are also engaged when people make charitable donations.

We posit that this heightened reward sensitivity in the youth can be harnessed to promote kindness and prosocial behaviour in them. Their need for reward-seeking behaviour can be fulfilled by priming them to perform acts of kindness. Since dopamine contributes to feelings of pleasure and satisfaction as part of the reward system, the neurotransmitter also plays a part in addiction. Thus, the release of dopamine in response to the activation of the pleasure centre would encourage the youth to become addicted to performing kind acts, thus amplifying overall kindness—while at the same time strive to ensure that this addiction is not for the feeling resulting from the act but in the act itself.

Research on prosocial behaviour in the youth has also demonstrated that being kind not only improves well-being but also increases popularity and fosters meaningful connections with other people (Layous, Nelson, Oberle, Schonert-Reichl & Lyubomirsky, 2012). Caprara et al, (2000) show that prosocial behaviour has a strong positive association with peer acceptance. This relationship is likely bi-directional, as individuals who feel accepted are more likely to do things for others (Sandstrom & Cillessen, 2006) and, in turn, gain



the acceptance of their peers.

Increasing peer acceptance is a critical goal as it is related to a variety of important outcomes (Wentzel, 2005, Wentzel, Baker & Russell, 2009), including reduced likelihood of being bullied (de Bruyn & van den Boom, 2005). The study succeeded in increasing both happiness and peer acceptance among pre-adolescents through a simple prosocial activity with nine- to eleven-year-olds. **The study also concluded that students who were happy and well-liked by classmates exhibited more inclusive behaviours and less externalising behaviours such as bullying.** Thus, encouraging prosocial activities has ripple effects beyond increasing the happiness and popularity of the doers.

The study also concluded that students who were happy and well-liked by classmates exhibited more inclusive behaviours and less externalising behaviours such as bullying.

Furthermore, classrooms with an even distribution of popularity (i.e., no favourite children and no marginalised children) showed better average mental health than stratified classrooms, suggesting that entire classrooms practising prosocial behaviour may reap benefits, as the popularity of all students in a class increases (Layous, Nelson, Oberle, Schonert-Reichl & Lyubomirsky, 2012). A less stratified classroom of today could result in a less stratified society of tomorrow.

In its report, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development recognises that the core elements that constitute social drivers of sustainable development are underpinned by social norms and values that are critical in making the transition to a sustainable future (UNRISD, 2013). **Such values relate to human dignity and rights; a sense of identity and citizenship; commitment to social justice, fairness and equality; inclusivity, tolerance and solidarity; and respect for diversity and environment. To put these values into practice, individuals first need to develop the foundational competencies for prosocial behaviour—self-awareness, emotional regulation and resilience.** The ability to consciously recall positive emotions and experiences to cope during times of stress and conflict is described as emotional resilience, and has been shown to possess adaptive value and manage dissonance (Isen, 1999). We prescribe the conscious inculcation of kindness as a means to promote and develop both prosocial behaviour and emotional resilience. Kindness and prosocial behaviour represent actions that are rewarding, altruistic and motivational, and give rise to positive emotions (Nelson, Layous, Cole & Lyubomirsky, 2016) and happiness (Rowland & Curry, 2018). They have also been shown to be sustainable as behaviours (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Consequently, the specific cultivation of kindness serves as a necessity to achieve the sustainable development goals—for a kind and prosocial individual will extend the same to fellow beings and the wider planet.

To realise a world that is peaceful and sustainable, there is need to replace violent and unsustainable systems, which requires a massive behavioural change on an individual and then on the collective level.

The Kindness Movement

To realise a world that is peaceful and sustainable, there is need to replace violent and unsustainable systems, which requires a massive behavioural change on an individual and then on the collective level. As established above, research from the cognitive neurosciences indicates that behavioural change stems from functional and structural biological changes in the brain that occur as a consequence of neuroplasticity. Given the massive benefits of kindness and prosocial behaviour, it is time we consciously promote and augment this naturally occurring prosocial circuit in human beings such that it is automatically activated. A spiral of numerous acts of kindness strengthens the circuit, and in return, the circuit induces individuals to perform more acts of kindness.

As described earlier, adolescents and the youth are uniquely positioned because of the brain development that they undergo at that age. The explicit promotion of prosocial behaviour can arm them to tackle dissonance that exists because of beliefs, attitudes values and feelings about oneself, others or the environment. Not to forget, humans have a fundamental need to belong to something larger than themselves (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). One's social responsibility is rooted in relationships with others—individuals must feel connected to others and see oneself as part of a larger entity. When supported by others, growing autonomy during adolescence can also foster social responsibility, as autonomy entails having the agency to act on one's values—values that involve helping others and contributing to society (Wray-Lake & Syvertsen, 2011). The ability of adolescents to identify and define social responsibility, in turn, is important in defining who they are, where they fit in the social world and building confidence in their sense of agency (Youniss & Yates, 1997). A confident, self-aware and values-conscious youth can lead the world towards peace and sustainability, and kindness presents itself as the ideal trait to drive this movement. ▸

REFERENCES

[1] Allen, S. (2018). The Science of Generosity. Greater Good Science Centre, UC Berkely. Retrieved from https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper-Generosity-FINAL.pdf

[2] Andersen, S. L., Dumont, N. L., & Teicher, M. H. (1997). Developmental differences in dopamine synthesis inhibition by (±)-7-OH-DPAT. Naunyn-Schmiedeberg's archives of pharmacology, 356(2), 173-181.

[3] Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. Psychological bulletin, 117(3), 497.

[4] Barber, N. (2004). Kindness in a cruel world: The evolution of altruism. Amherst, N.Y: Prometheus Books.

[5] Bartal, I. B. A., Decety, J., & Mason, P. (2011). Empathy and pro-social behavior in rats. Science, 334(6061), 1427-1430.

[6] Berger, M., Gray, J. A., & Roth, B. L. (2009). The expanded biology of serotonin. Annual review of medicine, 60, 355-366.

[7] Burda, H., Honeycutt, R., Begall, S. et al. Are naked and common mole-rats eusocial and if so, why?. Behav Ecol Sociobiol 47, 293–303 (2000) doi:10.1007/s002650050669

[8] Burkart, J. M., Fehr, E., Efferson, C., & van Schaik, C. P. (2007). Other-regarding preferences in a non-human primate: Common marmosets provision food altruistically. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 104(50), 19762-19766.

[9] The Commonwealth (2016). Global Youth Development Index and Report.
Retrieved from: http://cmydiprod.uksouth.cloudapp.azure.com/sites/default/files/2016-10/2016%20Global%20Youth%20Development%20Index%20and%20Report.pdf

[10] Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Pastorelli, C., Bandura, A., & Zimbardo, P. G. (2000). Prosocial foundations of children's academic achievement. Psychological science, 11(4), 302-306.

[11] Keltner, D. (2009). Darwin's touch: Survival of the kindest. Psychology Today.

[12] De Bruyn, E. H., & Van Den Boom, D. C. (2005). Interpersonal behavior, peer popularity, and self-esteem in early adolescence. Social development, 14(4), 555-573.

[13] De Dreu, C. K. (2012). Oxytocin modulates cooperation within and competition between groups: an integrative review and research agenda. Hormones and behavior, 61(3), 419-428.

[14] De Waal et al, 2011. PNAS August 16, 2011 108 (33) 13847-13851; https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1111088108

[15] Eisenberg, N., & Mussen, P. H. (1989). The roots of prosocial behavior in children. Cambridge University Press.

[16] Filkowski, M. M., Cochran, R. N., & Haas, B. W. (2016). Altruistic behavior: mapping responses in the brain. Neuroscience and neuroeconomics, 5, 65–75. doi:10.2147/NAN.S87718

[17] Galván, A. (2010). Adolescent development of the reward system. Frontiers in human neuroscience, 4, 6.

[18] Goetz, J. L., Keltner, D., & Simon-Thomas, E. (2010). Compassion: an evolutionary analysis and empirical review. Psychological bulletin, 136(3), 351–374. doi:10.1037/a0018807
happiness, The Journal of Social Psychology,

[19] Insel, T. R., & Hulihan, T. J. (1995). A gender-specific mechanism for pair bonding: oxytocin and partner preference formation in monogamous voles. Behavioral neuroscience, 109(4), 782.

[18] Kelly, J. D. (2016). Your best life: Kindness is its own reward. Clinical Orthopaedics and Related Research, 474(8), 1775-1777.

[20] Keltner, D. (2009). Born to be good: The science of a meaningful life. W W Norton & Co.

[21] Kringelbach, M. L., & Berridge, K. C. (2010). The neuroscience of happiness and pleasure. Social research, 77(2), 659.

[22] Layous, K., Nelson, S. K., Oberle, E., Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2012). Kindness counts: Prompting prosocial behavior in preadolescents boosts peer acceptance and well-being. PloS one, 7(12), e51380.

[23] Lee, H. J., Macbeth, A. H., Pagani, J. H., & Young 3rd, W. S. (2009). Oxytocin: the great facilitator of life. Progress in neurobiology, 88(2), 127-151.

[24] Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. Review of general psychology, 9(2), 111-131.

[25] Mascaro, J. S., Darcher, A., Negi, L. T., & Raison, C. L. (2015). The neural mediators of kindness-based meditation: a theoretical model. Frontiers in psychology, 6, 109.

[26] Masserman et al (2006, Altruistic "Behavior in Rhesus Monkeys", American Journal of Psychiatry, 121(6), pp. 584–585

[27] Michael, L. (2011). Brain oxytocin is a main regulator of prosocial behaviour-link to psychopathology. In Autism-A Neurodevelopmental Journey from Genes to Behaviour. IntechOpen.

[28] Moll, J., Krueger, F., Zahn, R., Pardini, M., de Oliveira-Souza, R., & Grafman, J. (2006). Human fronto–mesolimbic networks guide decisions about charitable donation. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 103(42), 15623-15628.

[29] Nelson, S. K., Layous, K., Cole, S. W., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2016). Do unto others or treat yourself? The effects of prosocial and self-focused behavior on psychological flourishing. Emotion, 16(6), 850.

[30] Nowak, M. A., Tarnita, C. E., & Wilson, E. O. (2010). The evolution of eusociality. Nature, 466(7310), 1057-1062.

[31] O Judson (2007). The Selfless Gene. The Atlantic 300 (3), 90-98, 2007

[32] Otake, K., Shimai, S., Tanaka-Matsumi, J., Otsui, K., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2006). Happy people become happier through kindness: A counting kindnesses intervention. Journal of happiness studies, 7(3), 361-375.

[33] Ahern, P (2013). The Gift of Kindness. Penguin UK.

[34] Rowland, L., & Curry, O. S. (2019). A range of kindness activities boost happiness. The Journal of social psychology, 159(3), 340-343.

[35] Sandstrom, M. J., & Cillessen, A. H. (2006). Likeable versus popular: Distinct implications for adolescent adjustment. International Journal of Behavioral Development, 30(4), 305-314.

[36] Sapolsky, R. (2018). Double-edged swords in the biology of conflict. Frontiers in psychology, 9, 2625.

[37] Sapolsky, (2011). Behavioural Evolution: Stanford University Biology Lectures. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0Oa4Lp5fLE&feature=youtu.be&t=1h11m38s

[38] Simpson (2018). The missing peace: independent progress study on youth and peace and security. Retrieved from: https://www.unfpa.org/resources/missing-peace-independent-progress-study-youth-and-peace-and-security

[39] Trivers, R.L. (1971). The evolution of reciprocal altruism. Q. Rev. Biol. 46, 35–57.

[40] United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2013). Emerging Issues: Social Drivers of Sustainable Development. Retrieved from http://www.unrisd.org/social-drivers-note

[41] Wentzel, K. R. (2005). Peer Relationships, Motivation, and Academic Performance at School. I: Elliot AJ og Dweck CS (red.): Handbook of Competence and Motivation. NY.

[42] Wentzel, K., Baker, S., & Russell, S. (2009). Peer relationships and positive adjustment at school. Handbook of positive psychology in schools, 229-243.

[43] Wilkinson, G. S. (1984). Reciprocal food sharing in the vampire bat. Nature, 308(5955), 181-184.

[44] Wray-Lake, L., & Syvertsen, A. K. (2011). The developmental roots of social responsibility in childhood and adolescence. New directions for child and adolescent development, 2011(134), 11-25.

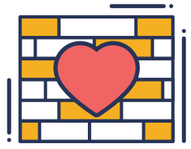
[45] Youniss, J., & Yates, M. (1997). Community service and social responsibility in youth. University of Chicago Press.

[46] Youth Participation in Decision Making, World Youth Report 2003, https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-youth-report/world-youth-report-2003.html

#Kindness Matters

UNESCO MGIEP has initiated a global youth campaign titled, **'Kindness Matters for the SDGs'**, the purpose of which is to mobilise the world's youth to achieve the 17 SDGs through transformative acts of kindness. Here are 17 shining examples of young people doing their bit to make this world a kinder, more compassionate place.





Deepak Ramola,
India

Story 3

The Wise Wall Project was initiated in the village Saur, Uttarakhand, in 2017 with the aim to document life lessons from the village and showcase the collected wisdom through art on the village walls. The project transforms villages into living classrooms, turning the walls into blackboards and canvases. Further, these learnings are shared with the world in a creative way, such as transforming the villages into veritable open-air galleries that exhibit human wisdom. The project has also initiated an education fellowship in Saur with the aim to educate villagers. Additionally, the Saur Village Festival has been established as a tribute to the 'mela' that was celebrated before the advent of large-scale migration to cities. The Wise Wall Project is a part of Project FUEL, which was founded in 2009 by Deepak Ramola to collect life lessons from people worldwide and turn them into interactive and performance activities.



JinKyeong Cho,
Republic of Korea

Story 4

Jin-kyeong works to change a system that 'punishes' rather than 'protects' underage victims of sexual exploitation. While she believes that a change in laws is vital, she established the organisation Stand Up Against Sex Trafficking of Minors ('10 Up') in 2012 to provide specialised support to such victims in South Korea. 10 Up's holistic approach addresses victim identification, emergency intervention, and recovery, as well as support for independent living. 10 Up trains formerly at-risk youth as peer counsellors to identify potential victims, especially via messaging apps. In addition to these prevention efforts, 10 Up provides victims with professional support for recovery. A group of doctors, psychologists, and lawyers provide support for 1,000-5,000 cases every year, followed by additional help for housing, career, education, and other needs. Jin-kyeong has also partnered with a new media company to create content that seeks to change how the media portrays sexual exploitation.



Freweini Mebrahtu,
Ethiopia

Story 15

At age 13, Freweini Mebrahtu, like most girls her age in Ethiopia, had to hide from her mother that she had begun menstruating because of the shame associated with it. Girls in Ethiopia are often married off after their first period, resulting in child pregnancies and medical complications. With no access to sanitary pads, girls often have to use to hide stains and often drop out of school. Mebrahtu's experiences led her to work towards removing the stigma associated with menstruation. While in the US, Mebrahtu saw the many sanitary options available and, in 2005, designed a reusable pad for women back home. She eventually built the Mariam Seba Sanitary Products Factory, named after her daughter. The factory employs 43 women who produce 750,000 pads annually; these cost 90% less than a year's supply of disposable pads and have benefitted nearly 800,000 girls since 2009. In 2014, Dr Lewis Wall and his wife established a non-profit called Dignity Period to support Mebrahtu's work. The organisation, in partnership with Mekelle University, has organised educational workshops for more than 300,000 students and distributed 150,000 free menstrual hygiene kits bought from Mebrahtu's factory.



Je'net Kreitner,
USA

Story 16

Je'net Kreitner found herself homeless in 1994. She had studied theatre worked in the entertainment industry, and was also happily married with a son. In 1991, in a show ironically called "Homeless", she portrayed the lead character of a street addict who has grown up being abused. This rekindled in Je'net memories of her own childhood, where she had been abused by family members, including her father. Speaking up about it made her lose her family's support, along with her job and marriage. She and her son were eventually thrown out by her husband. Homeless, Je'net received help from strangers, including her now-husband Patrick. This inspired her to help other women and children in need. Eventually, the couple established Grandma's House of Hope, a non-profit that "aims to empower the invisible populations of Orange County." The program provides shelter, basic necessities, and services to women, children, and families living in poverty or those affected by trafficking, domestic violence, or serious illnesses. Since 2004, the organisation has rescued more than 10,000 women from the streets and provided more than 2 million meals to families.



Sushil Reddy,
India

Story 6

Sushil Reddy, an IIT Mumbai graduate, undertook the Sun Pedal Ride – a 7000-km long journey on a solar-powered bicycle across 5 Indian states – to educate people about the importance of using renewable energy. To ensure that his journey made a significant impact, Sushil contacted various NGOs and schools in the cities that he travelled through. He ended up conducting seminars in cities such as Mumbai, Surat, Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Porbander, Somnath, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Mt. Abu, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bhatinda, Chandigarh, and Roorkee. Sushil also interacted with students, villagers, and experts, and explained to people how they could incorporate solar energy in their homes.



Abhinav Malhotra,
India

Story

Abhinav Malhotra started Rab Shukran in New Delhi as India's first 'happiness brigade'. This gratitude drive has now expanded to different parts of India and involves the youth giving gratitude cards to people who do 'thankless jobs' – traffic policemen, security guards, cart pullers, sweepers, ambulance drivers, bus drivers, and others. The Rab Shukran Youth Brigade aims to create equality, break barriers, alleviate stress, and spread the message of peace and love by consciously practising gratitude.



Kasha Sequoia Slavner,
Canada

Story 7

Kasha Sequoia Slavner is a 20-year-old multi-award-winning documentary filmmaker, an entrepreneur and social justice advocate. At age 14, she took time off school to start The Global Sunrise Project – a documentary about being a global citizen. She travelled worldwide and interviewed 30 stories of human triumph over adversity, including Canadian Vietnamese napalm bomb survivor Kim Phuc. The Global Sunrise Project's motto is 'Let's Shine Together! Let's Change the World!' and creates media that inspires people to make positive change. Kasha was recently selected as the recipient of the first Kim Phuc Youth Award for Peace. She is also the youngest member to join Canada's only feminist peace organisation, The Canadian Voice of Women for Peace.



Samir Lakhani,
India

Story 8

Eco-Soap Bank is an environmental non-profit organisation working to save, sanitise, and supply recycled hotel soap to people in developing countries, in some of which only 1% of households have soap for handwashing. Launched in 2014, Eco-Soap Bank has provided more than 1.1 million people with soap and hygiene education through partnerships with other NGOs, and has also recycled over 125 tonnes of soap that would otherwise have wound up in landfills. Their work has enabled many clinics to give soap as a preventative resource to patients suffering from diarrhoea, which accounts for 1 in 9 child deaths worldwide. The organisation employs 147 women from disadvantaged backgrounds, who also serve as hygiene ambassadors, selling recycled soap in their communities.



G Karthikeyan,
India

Story 11

Growing up in an orphanage, G. Karthikeyan was surrounded by intellectually disabled people, many of whom had been discarded by their parents. Sensitive to their special needs, Karthik vowed to help them live a life of dignity, something that the nearly 1.6 million intellectually disabled people in India are often denied. Karthik built his own orphanage in 2004, where he imparted vocational skills to physically and intellectually disabled children. Not satisfied with this, he established the Sristi village in 2014, which has its own fish pond, a dairy and a vegetable farm. The villages' residents are the intellectually disabled; they are trained by seasoned local farmers and volunteers. Karthik's plans to make the village completely financially sustainable through initiatives such as a bakery and animal husbandry. He also plans to replicate this model at other places with the help of the government.



Dhruv Lakra,
India

Story 9

There are almost 8 million deaf people in India, of whom only 67% find employment, primarily in low-paying menial positions. Misunderstood and oppressed, they are often mistreated and made to feel that they are society's outliers. A chance encounter with a deaf boy convinced Dhruv Lakra to establish Mirakle Couriers in 2009. The organisation employs 70 deaf employees and delivers 65,000 shipments per month to clients such as Mahindra & Mahindra, The Aditya Birla Group, Victory Art Foundation and Essel Propack. This for-profit enterprise combines professional excellence with a social cause – providing employment and dignity of life to the deaf. The company has won several awards, including the 2009 Hellen Keller award and the 2010 National Award for the Empowerment of People with Disabilities.



Frank Schlitchtmann,
Germany

Story 10

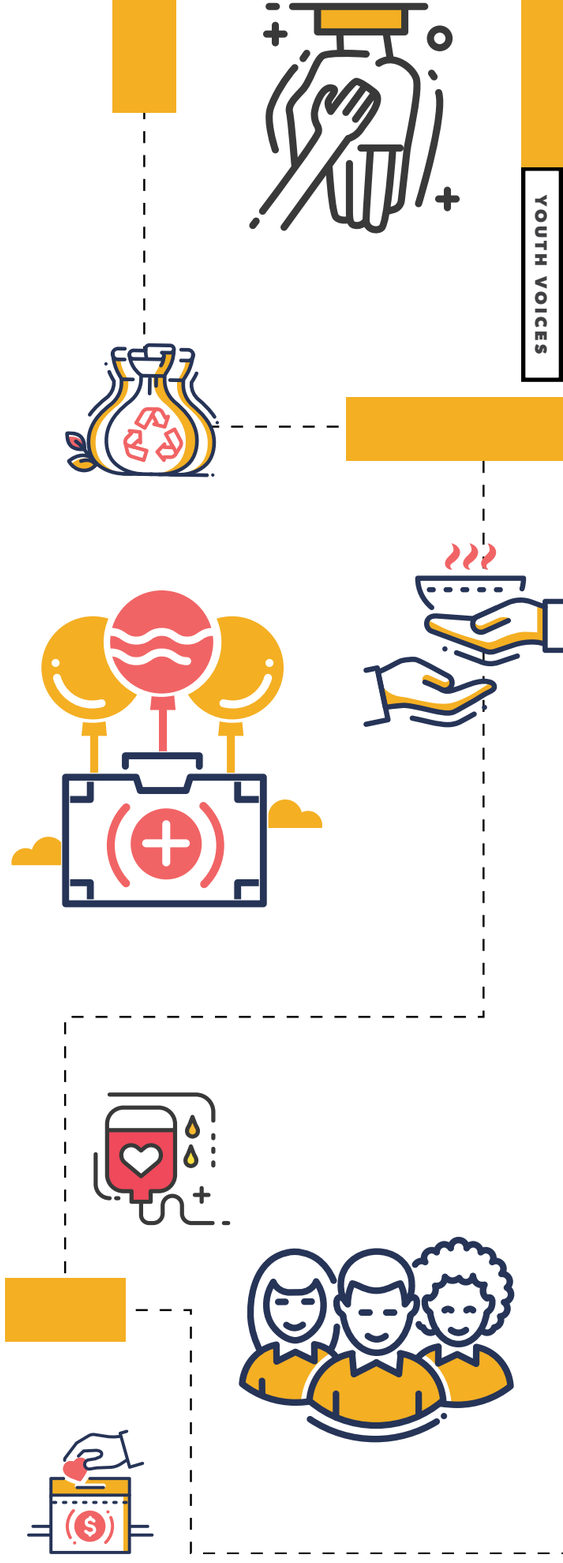
Gunehar, a small Himalayan village in the Kangra Valley, has witnessed a resurgence from obscurity as a result of the efforts of Frank Schlichtmann, a German Indophile who has lived here for a decade. Schlichtmann gave an artistic makeover the village in the form of ShopArt ArtShop (SA AS) as part of his 4tables Project, which aims to give Indian artists "the opportunity to work on arts in a wholesome manner outside the confines of the usual, urban-centric art spaces". This process-oriented non-elitist conceptual arts festival takes place every three years. The first edition, held in 2013, featured 13 emerging artists and drew more than 6,000 visitors. The month-long second edition involved 11 contemporary artists and attracted more than 10,000 visitors.



Dr Pravin Chordia,
India

Story 12

Dr. Pravin Chordia believes that living a life closer to nature is the logical solution to modern-day woes. A general surgeon from Pune, Dr. Chordia gave up his 22-year-old practice and moved to Velhe Taluka, Dhanep, in the Sahyadri range, to realign himself and his family with nature. He planted 2.5 lakh trees and reforested 45 acres of the 110-acre land that he bought there. This family also adopted other sustainable living practices – such as making mud brick houses, growing produce organically, generating biogas, installing solar panels – eventually creating an eco-village that they named Serene Eco Village. These practices were extended to and now include local farmers, for whose produce the family created a market in Pune. In addition, Dr Chordia runs a free clinic in Pune that guides people on how to lead a healthy lifestyle without depending on drugs.







Mohammad Zabi Khan,
India

Story 5

Moved by the plight of deserted dogs, Mohammad Zabi Khan established 'A Place to Bark' in 2014. This Hyderabad-based NGO rehabilitates abused, abandoned pedigree dogs, apart from rabbits, turkeys and ducks. Zabi initially established the organisation close to his home and eventually moved it to the campus of his college KG Reddy College of Engineering & Technology, after authorities there saw the success that he was achieving. Zabi conducts awareness sessions at schools and colleges, and encourages people to adopt rescued animals. He has also collaborated with a local designer to organise a fashion show to highlight animal abuse. Close to 50 volunteers — from Zabi's college and from all over Hyderabad — assist him in his mission of rescuing abandoned animals and finding homes for them.



Vaibhav Anant,
India

Story 13

With single-use plastic straws being the biggest threat to marine ecosystems, Vaibhav decided to create a harmless, sustainable alternative. In October 2018, he established Bambrew, which uses bamboo to makes straws, cutlery, and disposable food packaging. The straws made by Bambrew are now exported to countries such as the US, UK, Canada, and France. The bamboo is sourced from North-eastern states in India, where the company also employs locals, who now earn up to INR 15,000 per month. Brambrew supplies its products to companies such as Zomato, The Lalit Hotels, Byg Brewsky, Big Pitcher, and Arbor Brewing Company. The company has also built a patent-pending technology for making natural, biodegradable, disposable straws from bamboo fibres and bamboo waste. Nearly 200 bamboo artisans have been employed by the company and the aim is to expand this number to 1,000.



Michiel Vos,
Netherlands

Story 14

Discarded coconut residue often causes drain blockage and air pollution (when burnt) in Southern India. While India is yet to address this problem, Dutch start-up CocoPallet has found a sustainable solution. The company uses coconut husk from Asian countries to produce biologically processed transportation pallets that are organic, greener, cheaper and stronger than wood or plastic pallets; they eventually save nearly 200 million trees annually in the Netherlands. This idea has its root in a primitive Indonesian procedure that was discovered by Jan Van Dam, a plant-fibre scientist at Wageningen University. CocoPallet produces the pallets in Sumatra, Indonesia from local plantations, thereby eliminating transport costs and creating extra income for local farmers. Accenture and Bloomberg have awarded the company for this innovation. Founder Michiel Vos hopes to expand his business further to rid other Asian countries of their coconut waste.



Prithvi Raj,
India

Story 1

Not far from our college is a huge slum where thousands of people live in small huts and have very few clothes. Fifteen of my friends and I decided to help these people by creating 'The Kindness Wall', where people could donate old clothes on the hangers and cartons that we had put up. We distributed these clothes in the slum every weekend. Our team soon grew to 110 members and we registered as a student NGO. Till date, we have donated thousands of clothes and utensils to slums, orphanages and old-age homes, but have been completely self-sustained. We now also conduct dance, music and art therapy sessions for paediatric cancer patients. Through our "Phoenix Project", we have reached out to college students to nurture an environment where everyone can share their mental health status without hesitation.



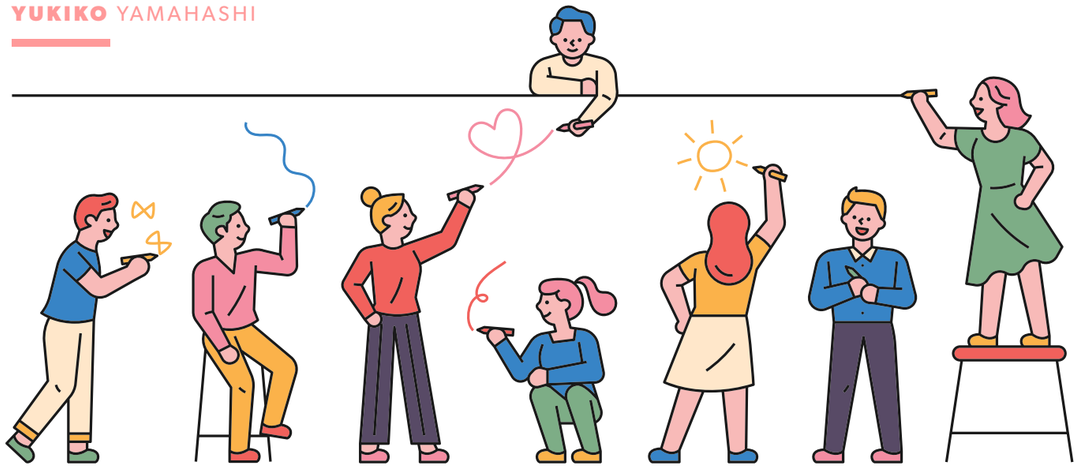
Ajay Das Gupta,
India

Story 2

In Singapore, Ajay attended a workshop run by visually impaired people, where he had to perform tasks in complete darkness. This made him realise that most people take vision for granted, whereas numerous visually impaired children are unable to enjoy the visual element of stories. Another experience, where Ajay read stories to visually impaired kids, became the core of The Kahani Project – a non-profit that involves volunteers recording and uploading stories, and crowd-sourcing them on an open platform. Story sessions are conducted by volunteers in blind schools, along with 'Storythons' where many people simultaneously record stories. To date, 500 stories have been uploaded and accessed by listeners in 70 countries.

What is the “Small Kindness” Movement?

YUKIKO YAMAHASHI





YUKIKO YAMAHASHI, Executive Director and Secretary General, graduated from the Law Faculty, Gakushuin University in 1979. Employed by the Small Kindness Movement head office. Appointed Secretary General in 2005, and Executive Director in 2014. She took initiatives to collect relief donations immediately after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 and support projects for the victims. Within the public interest incorporated foundation she reviewed the past programs and is engaged in leading new programs for the public good.

“I want all of you to be brave in practicing ‘small kindness,’ thereby creating a wave of kindness that will someday wash over all of Japanese society.”

These words were spoken in March 1963 by Seiji Kaya, then President of the University of Tokyo, in his farewell address to students on graduation day. His speech, reported in newspapers and on TV, marked the start of the Small Kindness Movement.

Our activities began in June 1963 with the plain and simple message, “Be kind to others.” We received support from many people in all walks of life, from ordinary citizens to those active in literature, business and the mass media. Our movement attracted much public attention throughout Japan, largely due to the fact that Tokyo was hosting the 1964 Summer Olympic Games the following year and the entire nation was preparing a warm welcome for overseas visitors.





When chosen as our first President, Seiji Kaya said, “The Small Kindness Movement aims to promote a caring society, where people are kind to each other and practice good manners. Such behaviour is especially important today, when humanitarian gestures tend to decline as mechanised civilisation thrives.” His ideas expressed at that time form the basis of our activities today.

“Let us put into practice whatever kindness we can so that it becomes the norm in society.” Under this slogan, the Small Kindness Movement has developed nationwide to have 35 prefectural member organisations with 170,000 members. They are engaged in various heart-warming activities in their communities.





"The Small Kindness Movement aims to promote a caring society, where people are kind to each other and practice good manners. Such behaviour is especially important today, when humanitarian gestures tend to decline as mechanised civilisation thrives."

Seiji Kaya,
Japan's First President

We are continuing our efforts in the belief that what society needs most today is good will, as shown by small acts of kindness. We believe that these activities contribute much to society and to world peace.

Main Activities

"Let us show whatever kindness we can, so kindness will become the norm in society." Based on this thought, the Small Kindness Movement organizes activities to encourage the practice of small acts of kindness to strengthen ties among its members and, above all, to encourage humanitarian behaviour.

"Small Kindness Action Award"
This award was instituted at the beginning of the movement. We receive recommendations from people who have seen individuals and organisations performing an act of kindness, and we award the recommended persons and organisations, and present them an honorary certificate. We consider both recipients and recommenders "Small Kindness" players. The award aims to motivate people to put kindness into action and expand the network of thoughtfulness.

Clean up Japan Campaign
Every year, with the slogan of "Clean Japan, Beautiful Soul," 300,000 people across the country take part in cleaning activities in their neighbouring communities. By encouraging participants to pick up trash, the campaign aims to develop the habit of not littering. Members take part in the activity with their families and workplace colleagues. The programme encourages interaction among participants.

Composition Contest
This is held every year to help primary and lower secondary school children write their experiences of practicing kind acts and provide them with an opportunity to think about considerate thoughts and words. In evaluating the compositions, emphasis is given not only on children's writing skills but also on their candid expression of feelings related to acts of kindness.

Postcard Campaign (Essay Contest)
We collect essays written on a postcard by people expressing their gratitude that they could not express at the time of having received kindness from others, or which they hesitate to express in daily life. People of all ages contribute their essays.

Supporting "Greeting Campaign"
Schools conduct the "Greeting Campaign" to help students acquire the habit of greeting others. We support these schools by offering them banner flags, sashes and other goods. The number of primary and lower secondary schools conducting the "Greeting Campaign" using these goods is steadily increasing in the country.

"Japanese Hospitable Welcome" Project
We began this project in 2018 in anticipation of the Olympics and Paralympics to be held in Tokyo in 2020. The aim of the project is to welcome visitors to a clean Japan, and with pleasant greetings and kind acts.

We promote the existing activities in collaboration with the "Tokyo 2020 Support Program", which is authorised by the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. In accordance, the "Tokyo 2020 Support Program" logo will be attached to the goods used for the activities. Themes focusing on connection with the world are designated for composition and essay contests. Deploying these and other activities, we intend to enhance the consciousness of participating in the Olympic and Paralympic Games among members in all places in Japan.

Kindness is important for people. Yet, it is expressed in different forms by individuals or nations. Admitting this, we would like to continue our Small Kindness Movement under the spirit of "You may go your way, and I go my way, but we go well together." ▸



Interview with **Ricky Kej,** ***Kindness Ambassador***



RICKY KEJ, Grammy® Award Winner, US Billboard #1 Artist, UNESCO MGIEP's 'Global Ambassador for Kindness' is an internationally renowned Indian Music Composer, and Environmentalist who has dedicated his life and Music to creating awareness on the environment, and positive social impact.

Kindness goes a long way in making life a joyful experience. "Kindness Matters" is not just an idea but an experience that makes us human. Life is filled with myriad experiences, some extraordinary while others are run of the mill. What makes experiences memorable, however, are acts of kindness. A little bit of kindness is all that is needed to turn something ordinary or perhaps awful into something exquisite. Since the dawn of time, the essence of life and civilisation has lain in numerous acts of kindness. It is inspiring to look back because it gives us the chance to take stock of how far we have come as human beings. How did we come this far? It has been kindness all the way! Humanity has, on numerous instances, been pushed to the brink of absolute hopelessness. *At such moments of sheer darkness, kindness has given hope. It is through kindness that one makes history, it is through kindness we kindle compassion, and it is through kindness that we can come together to build a future that is sustainable and meaningful for all.* I cannot help but recall a quote by the renowned thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He asks, "What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?" Kindness to me has been central in everything I do. In fact, it is from kindness that my creativity and my zeal for life emerge. To top it off, Mother Nature has been my biggest teacher of kindness. The idea that kindness matters is almost akin to poetry in nature. From coexistence to compassion to the interdependencies of species that form the delicate web of life, nature has taught and inspired me. My life's message and purpose is an embodiment of nature. This is where my music and work come in – with everything that I create, I strive to encourage sustainable living and generate environmental consciousness. All of my music has been a dedication to nature, compassion, environmentalism and sustainability. I have been actively involved with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program of the United Nations and it is very close to my heart. I have always believed that only when people start acknowledging an issue and start a dialogue to solve it can a solution to be achieved. My aim is to inspire that dialogue. In India as well as worldwide, I frequently interact and collaborate with different organisations, government bodies, private entities, educational institutions and scientific communities that are working hard to mitigate the effects of climate change by incorporating aspects of the SDGs in everything that they do. I recently collaborated with the Karnataka government in creating jingles for the SDG programs to enable the government to spread awareness about the SDGs. These songs covered topics such as clean water and sanitation, life on land and under water, gender equality, women's upliftment, sustainable living and pollution. **One of my biggest areas of focus is the future of our planet – our children. I believe that if we are to create a more environmentally conscious society, we need to start with children.** In line with my belief, I have created a musical education program called 'My Earth Songs' – 27 rhymes/songs created for children and inspired by the (SDGs). These comprise the first set of songs in the world to be made on the SDGs.

"What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?"

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Renowned Thinker

Everyone needs to play their part to help reach these goals. As musicians, we must use our art to enhance the importance of these goals and spread awareness about them. Our audience will sing our songs and hum them many times a day; as each of these goals progressively catch their attention, the SDGs will become a topic for conversation and eventually inspire positive action. These songs, launched by the UNICEF, have been published in over four million textbooks in India for the 2019 academic year (in English, Hindi & Kannada). I am in the process of releasing them in many more languages across the world.

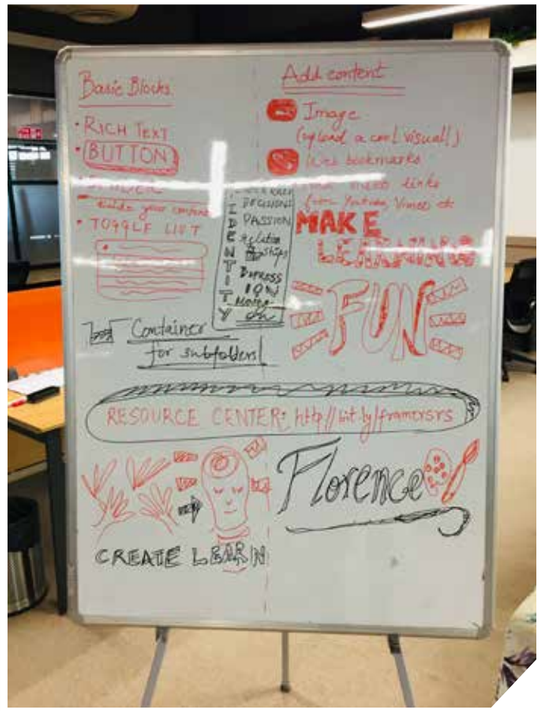
I also took great joy in being a panellist on the first-ever film festival centred around kindness. In November 2019, Film Bengaluru, in association with UNESCO MGIEP, showcased some amazing films centred on the theme 'Kindness Matters'.

In 2019, I was also conferred the honour of being a 'Global Ambassador for Kindness' for the UNESCO MGIEP. I see this as a position of responsibility because it empowers me to spread the message of kindness and compassion wherever I go and with whatever I do. Further, I had the absolute joy and honour of composing the official UNESCO MGIEP Kindness Anthem 'Shine Your Light'! This song means a lot to me because it brings to the fore the driving force in everything that I do – kindness.
I am excited for the future because there is so much more to be done and I look forward to the many possible collaborations with the UN and UNESCO MGIEP. ▸

CoDesign Workshops

Games for Learning and FramerSpace teams at UNESCO MGIE, organized a series of CoDesign workshops in June in various parts of Delhi NCR. These workshops were designed to provide a unique learning space where students took the role of creators. At the end of each workshop, students presented their courses to other learners and received feedback. Here are some snippets.



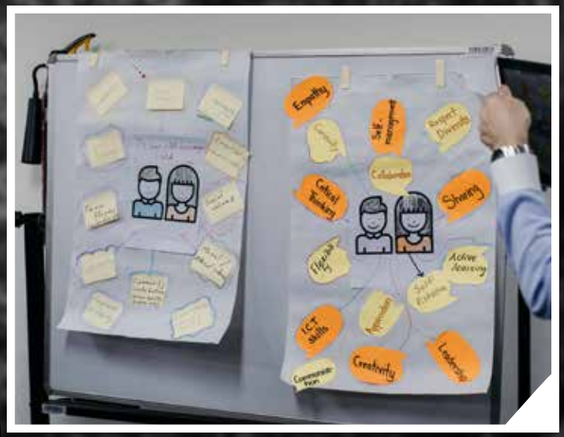




Global Citizenship Education & Social and Emotional Learning

As part of the second phase implementation of UNESCO MGIEP's courses on Global Citizenship Education and Social and Emotional Learning, the institute conducted its second capacity building workshop, from August 7-9, 2019 at TERI retreat Resort in Gurugram, India. In a one of its kind training, the workshop saw an overwhelming participation of 50 middle-school teachers from five countries, namely Japan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka.





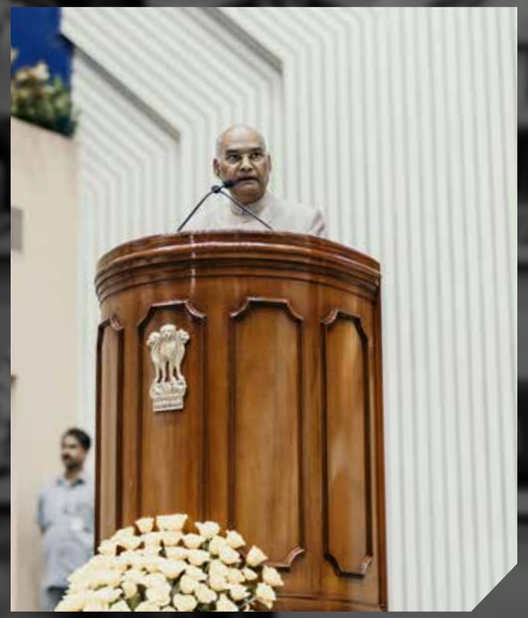


Ahinsa

UNESCO MGIEP, in cooperation with Permanent Delegation of India, hosted the Fourth Ahinsa Lecture, featuring a dialogue between panelists and a life-size hologram of Mahatma Gandhi, on progress towards Sustainable Development Goals for Education. The event was opened by the Ambassador of India to France and Permanent Representative of India to UNESCO, His Excellency, Mr Vinay Kwatra and the Assistant Director-General Priority Africa and External Relations, UNESCO, Mr Firmin Edouard Matoko.
The AHinsa Dialogue , held on Ocotber 1 at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, commemorates the International Day of Non-Violence (Octover2), which marks Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.



Youth & Kindness: A Formidable Force



UNESCO MGIEP organised the first-ever World Youth Conference on Kindness at New Delhi from August 20-23, 2019. Themed 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Gandhi for the Contemporary World – Celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi', the Conference brought global youth leaders, policy makers and Nobel laureates, among others, under one umbrella.

The Conference was inaugurated by the Honourable President of the Republic of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, and saw participation from approximately 1,000 youth representing over 27 countries from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. It culminated with the adoption and release of the 'New Delhi Declaration on Kindness for the SDGs'. The New Delhi Declaration is a synthesis of 1,200+ youth voices from 117 countries, meticulously substantiated and summarised by the 60 youth participants.

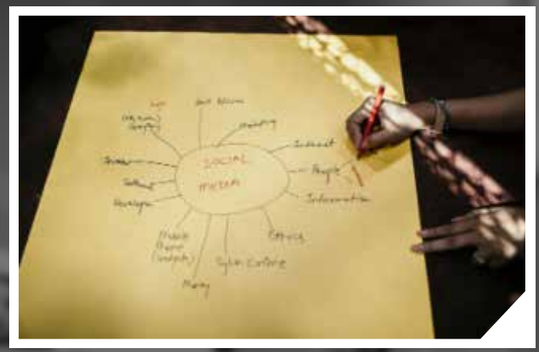
Highlights

- *President of India inaugurated the first World Youth Conference on Kindness in the presence of Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India*
- *60 youth from 27 countries trained on Social and Emotional skills by national and international experts*
- *More than 1,000 youth participants gathered at the conference main event on August 23 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi*
- *Three high-level plenaries comprising neuroscientists, Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education specialists, human rights activists, policy makers, and change-makers were held, involving animated discussions with the youth*
- *Adoption of New Delhi Declaration on Kindness – a youth-led manifesto comprising over 1,200 youth voices from 117 countries*
- *Conference concluding remarks by Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi*
- *Power-packed concert by Grammy-winning artist and UNESCO MGIEP Kindness Ambassador Ricky Kej and release of Kindness Anthem*

The first World Youth Conference was divided into two parts:
• International Capacity Building Workshop on social and emotional learning
• The main plenary-based conference

International Capacity Building Workshops (August 20-22, 2019)

UNESCO MGIEP co-curated workshops to build the social and emotional competencies of the youth by elaborating on pertinent global issues such as the prevention of violent extremism, social media for social good, media literacy and religious harmony.



SEL Competencies
In partnership with the Center for Compassion, Integrity and Secular Ethics (CCISE), Life University, USA, UNESCO MGIEP organised a three-day intensive capacity-building workshop – the Compassionate Integrity Training (CIT) – to build the social and emotional learning (SEL) skills of the 60 youth participants from 27 countries.

The overall aim was to enable the youth leaders to ideate and implement community-wide activities to further train educators and mobilise their respective communities for long-lasting peace and sustainability, leading to a stronger kindness movement across the globe.

> *"I think the CIT course was life-changing for me, in terms of myself and how I understand my body and my mind in sync. It has changed the way I respond to my relationships, and it has given me the tools to understand and empathize with systems better, and that helps change them more effectively."*
>
> **ANOKHI PARIKH** , Participant, India

PVE through Emotional Education
The #YouthWagingPeace workshop focused on building the youth leaders' capacities through an experiential journey to understand as well as build emotional defences to prevent violent extremism. Conducted over two days and combining a plethora of methodologies, the workshops took the youth on a journey of inner exploration and nuanced understanding of the concept of violent extremism, including its drivers and effective interventions. By the end of the workshop, in addition to having initiated or advanced their inner journey towards self-transformation and inner peace, the youth participants were given an insider's view on violent extremism and the role of emotional education in building their defences.



> *"It was really inspiring to listen to Arno's personal story and how it motivated him to work for peacemaking in conflicted areas. His 'active listening' activity made me realize that I still have a lot of unprocessed hurt personally that I have to work on."*
>
> **AKASH UPASE** , India

The Science behind Kindness
This session focused on introducing youth leaders to neuroscience research on kindness and on showing that being kind activates a "reward network" in the brain. The session engaged the youth leaders with the evidence-based research to develop strong foundation of science behind kindness.

Social Media for Social Good
'The Logical Indian' designed the training for social media for social good. It focused on how to leverage social media to influence policy-level changes. The session equipped the youth leaders with hands-on tools to use new-age media to challenge ubiquitous bad news with transformative stories of kindness.

This training complemented training on the use of photography as a tool for change, which led by Zishaan Akbar Latif, independent photographer and representative of Arushi, an NGO working for people with disabilities. ▸



World Youth Conference on Kindness

The main conference aimed to provide global youth and policymakers an innovative, engaging and inspiring platform to come together and discover ground-breaking pathways to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through multiple high-level plenary panels.

The conference included a special address by the Honourable President of India, Shri Ram Nath Govind; Union Minister, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'; Chair, Governing Board, UNESCO MGIEP, Prof. J S Rajput; and Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, Shri R. Subrahmanyam. The opening session also included two youth representatives, Ms. Suhani Jalota, Founder, Myna Mahila Foundation, and Ms. Sorina Petrescu, Founder, TMoves.

In his inaugural address as Chief Guest, Shri Ram Nath Kovind said at the opening ceremony, "Following Gandhiji's footsteps, we must let ourselves and our children interact and engage with those whom we tend to define as 'them'. Greater interaction is the best way to develop a sensitive understanding, which can help us overcome our prejudices". He also added, "Gandhi, synonymous with kindness, had said that to show kindness to one person was more praiseworthy than the bowing of a thousand heads in prayer."

PANEL 1: The Art and Science of Peace

Following the opening ceremony, the first plenary session brought together experts from areas as diverse as philosophy, neurosciences and filmmaking. The discussion elaborated on the correlation between the science and philosophy of kindness. Dr. Nandini Chatterjee Singh, UNESCO MGIEP, talked about the science behind being kind compared to being aggressive, and how research shows that as a species, human beings are wired to choose kindness. Prof. Michael Nagler mentioned that, "Non-violence is a power that arises from our awareness of unity with others. There is a level on which the decision of being kind or unkind works. It's something that operates on subtle energy. I do not think that peace and justice can happen without non-violence."

> *"There need to be more grassroots initiatives by the government, focusing on youth. Aggression and violence can be combatted through compassion. It is important to register youth voices and acknowledge identities"*
>
> **ELENA CUOMO** , Argentina.

> *"Encouraging active youth participation in policymaking, promoting holistic education systems that develop emotional, social and economic capacities of youth, and critical thinking are necessary to prepare the youth for life's challenges and help them make informed decisions"*
>
> **ABDULLA RASHID** , the State Minister of Education, Maldives.

PANEL 2: Kindness and the Prevention of Violent Extremism: From a Platitude to a Transformative Force

The 10th high-level Talking Across Generations on Education (TAGe) plenary session was moderated by Chaker Khazaal, author and public speaker. The session brought together six youth participants and three policy makers in an engaging dialogue on how youth are at the frontlines of extremism and violence, and how education, supplemented by social and emotional learning, can be used as a tool to prevent violent actions. Upma Chawdhry, Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, concurred that ensuring youth participation by creating safe environments for them is fundamental to the prevention of violent extremism. She encouraged the youth to volunteer and contribute to the community.

> *"Young people are confused and frustrated, and we put them in a world that does not value kindness. Early interventions such as talking at schools and teachers can bridge that gap and bring humanistic values to students,"*
>
> **LUCY PLUMMER** , UK.

> *"Words cannot express how proud I feel of having the privilege to share over 4 days of my life, with some of the gentlest, and inspiring people from my generation. They give me so much hope and and energy to relentlessly pursue a more inclusive, progressive, compassionated and sustainable world for everyone".*
>
> **CESAR ZAMORA SALAZAR** , Mexico







Panel 3: Youth Agency: Scaling Up Acts of Kindness

The final high-level plenary session involved five youth leaders participating for a dialogue to ponder on the questions mentioned above and propose concrete ways of giving youth their deserved agency to create and scale up acts of kindness.

The concluding session had an inspiring speech by Nobel Peace Laureate and founder of Kailash Satyarthi's Children's Foundation, Mr. Kailash Satyarthi. The conference culminated with the adoption and release of the 'New Delhi Declaration on Kindness for the SDGs '. At its core, the New Delhi Declaration proposed the immediate formation of a Global Youth Alliance for a Decade of Kindness from 2020 to 2030.

To the Tune *of Kindness*



Grammy Award-winning musician and UNESCO MGIEP Kindness Ambassador Ricky Kej led an ensemble of stellar musicians at the #Kindness Concert, where the musicians also launched the #KindnessAnthem.

The energy in the packed auditorium at IIT Delhi on August 23, 2019, could have put any music festival to shame. That's right, at the #KindnessConcert organised by UNESCO MGIEP at the World Youth Conference on Kindness, Grammy-winner Ricky Kej and his ensemble of stellar musicians drove the crowds to a frenzy as they performed powerful numbers composed to moving tunes on the theme of environmental consciousness and kindness for the planet.

Ricky Kej, along with fellow Grammy-winner Laura Dickinson (Singer & Grammy® Winner from USA), Brennon Denfer, Manoj George, Fateh Ali Khan, Murad Ali Khan, IP Singh and Manjunath, captivated the audience through a mesmerising show that was attended by more than 1,000 people. In addition, world-renowned speed painter Vilas Nayak painted a beautiful piece of art for the night alongside the concert.

The two-hour long concert concluded with a special composition—The #KindnessAnthem "Shine Your Light"—which has been created by musicians from four continents, including three Grammy-winning Musicians—Ricky Kej, Laura Dickinson, Woulter Kellermen and a number of incredible international artists such as the Mzansi Youth Choir and Grammy-nominee Lonnie Park, who also co-authored the anthem and provided lead vocals.









Commenting on the anthem, Ricky Kej said, "The #KindnessAnthem for UNESCO MGIEP's #KindnessMatters campaign is an energetic, upbeat song, filled with positivity. "Shine Your Light" is the official anthem for #KindnessMatters for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The anthem is about showcasing simple acts kindness in our everyday lives, and how these acts can help solve our problems. I am honoured to have worked closely with my good friend, Lonnie Park, who wrote the anthem with me."
Earlier this year, Ricky Kej was appointed UNESCO MGIEP's Global Ambassador for Kindness. Ricky is a strong advocate and champion of environmental consciousness and sustainability. His album "Shanti Samsara" was launched by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande in the presence of World Leaders at the United Nations COP21 Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015. The album has received significant critical acclaim.

"Shine Your Light" is the official anthem for #KindnessMatters for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The anthem is about showcasing simple acts kindness in our everyday lives, and how these acts can help solve our problems.

In 2018, UNESCO MGIEP launched the #KindnessMatters for the SDGs campaign on October 2, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, which is celebrated as International Day of Non-Violence. The goal of this campaign is to mobilise the world's youth to achieve the 17 SDGs through transformative acts of kindness. Thus far, through the campaign, close to 8,000 transformative acts of kindness have been generated from over 50 countries. The campaign aims to be the foundational step towards the ultimate request (backed by 250, 000 transformative stories of kindness by global youth) to the Member States of the United Nations to declare 2020 to 2030 as a Decade of Kindness for the Sustainable Development Goals.

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Mahatma Gandhi Institute
of Education for Peace
and Sustainable Development



+91 11 23072356-60

35 Ferozshah Road,
ICSSR Building, 1st Floor,
New Delhi, 110001, India

Website: http://bluedot-mgiep.org/
Email: bluedot.mgiep@unesco.org

/MGIEP.UNESCO.ORG
/MGIEP
/UNESCO_MGIEP
/UNESCO_MGIEP