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Voices

One Voice 2008 in New York:

Next step in a global movement

What started in San Francisco, an outstanding show of solidarity and active commitment to positive change, is making its way across the country and around the globe – Next stop – New York!

The One Voice Conference and Forum planned for November 14-16th, 2008 is organized and ready to go! The call for papers and early registration is open. We hope many of you will be submitting your work so you can share it at that time! The agenda is brimming with concurrent sessions, ELC (education leadership council) brainstorming sessions, a welcome networking reception and kick off meeting, a forum and a feast, the making of a new One Voice video, Declaration Writing Committee sessions, and so much more! This event, like all One Voice conferences will provide a rare opportunity for networking, bonding, and sharing of opinions, concerns, and proposed strategies of passionate educators! Read more at <http://www.elementaethics.com>.

One Voice Updates

When educators, administrators, parents, and students first hear about the philosophy of One Voice, it is amazing how often their first reaction boils down to a single word, “Wow,” often followed by a remark like “it’s about time!” As word is spreading in academic circles about the philosophy, mission, and activities of One Voice, more and more educators are joining the fray and planning to network in person at conferences in 2008 and 2009 (see upcoming events!) or online as a part of the ie3 network. The truth is many of our constituents are members of established associations, clubs, and organizations for teachers and professors.



Historic, Tarrytown, NY, of Sleepy Hollow fame, nestled beside the beautiful Hudson River will be the home of the next One Voice Conference and Forum.

But there is a new urgency to take action. What is obvious to many at this time, is the critical nature of the issues in education identified by the One Voice audience of subject matter experts in education (the educators themselves). So much work is being done to actively facilitate this important work – to identify the problems with the systems and processes of education, to design practical but powerful solutions, and to unite and facilitate the steps necessary to bring about the changes needed. This important work requires what seems embedded in the DNA of One Voice, a higher degree of activity, energy, unity, and grass-roots participation than other organizations normally support or facilitate. One Voice is making progress in all facets of its missions as defined by its audience (you!) through the growth of the ie3 network, the work of the Declaration Writing Committee, the findings of the ELCs (educational Leadership Councils), in the completion of the One Voice video and more!

When and where will you raise your expert voice for positive change?

Nov. 14-16, 2008 - Tarrytown, NY – Call for Papers & Early Bird Registration are open now!

MAY 2009 – SANTE FE

JUNE 2009 - SAN FRANCISCO

JULY 2009 – DENVER

AUGUST 2009 – SEATTLE

Welcome One Voice of Australia !

Dr. Susen Smith and Dr. Ronald Laura (contributing writers for this issue of Voices) have graciously offered to assist in the development of One Voice in Australia. Dr. Smith writes: "Professor Laura and I would also be delighted to be able to serve as the Australian representatives for the Institute and we would be prepared to organize a future conference of the Institute here in Australia if that is a direction you would like to take. We have included this in the concluding section of our piece for the newsletter." Of course, the One Voice Board and (we hope) many One Voice participants *down under* will work with Drs. Smith and Laura to host a One Voice Conference and Forum there in 2009 and an active and powerful node of the ie3 in Australia!

Welcome One Voice of Liberia!

David Konneh and a group of valiant educators in Liberia have stepped up to participate in the One Voice mission and to assist in the development of a One Voice ie3 group in their country. This is extremely significant and meaningful in that the conditions under which many Liberians live and attempt to carry out their work are very hard and debilitating physically and emotionally. When you read Mr. Konneh's article included herein you will get an idea of how the devastation of a country affects the ability of educators to live, work, and teach in the aftermath. Mr. Konneh and a delegation of three other educators will attempt to join us in NY, if application for a travel visas for them are approved.

ACTION LIST for Intentional Educators this month

HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO THIS MONTH THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPORTANT WORK THAT STARTED IN SAN FRANCISCO!

Now is the time to GET INVOLVED if you haven't already!

- Send us a list of the professional organizations of which you are a member. It is likely they have some or all of the same objectives, and we will reach out to partner with each one.
- Nominate yourself or a colleague to write "a declaration of intent" (see column at right for details).
- Nominate yourself or a colleague to step up and

take a leadership position in a national network for change (see bottom right of this page).

- Write! Write! Write! Your written thoughts wanted for this newsletter!
- Submit an abstract to the One Voice Event in NY and register to participate – or if you cannot attend – please share the web link with colleagues who might be interested in speaking or attending (<http://www.elementaethics>)

"There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."
Quaker motto

More updates from The One Voice Institute of Elemental Ethics and Education this month

HERE IS WHAT'S ELSE HAS BEEN HAPPENING FOR THE BOARD AND STAFF OF THE ONE VOICE INSTITUTE OF ELEMENTAL ETHICS AND EDUCATION

ONE VOICE VIDEO:

Made at the conference in San Francisco captures the passion and wisdom of some of the intentional educators who came together there. The piece is moving and will be enlightening to those less involved day-to-day in the world of education. It will be used as a powerful tool to communicate the critical voices of One Voice constituents. We hope you will take a moment to view it. See the link "Watch the One Voice Video" on the front page of the website: www.elementaethics.com.

THE ONE VOICE DECLARATION:

Starting with the findings of the ELC sessions in San Francisco and with additions contributed by various educators, and some formatting and editing by the One Voice staff, this important document is evolving slowly. This, perhaps the most important document written in decades, will be the focus review and expansion during all One Voice events scheduled for 2008 AND 2009. Be a part of this important project!

WANTED: ELC DECLARATION WRITERS



Like the writers that comprised the Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1776, a core group of passionate writers are needed to author the resolution, a declaration of educational intent that will inform the public of the expectation, standards, commitments, and requirements of today's educators. Will you step up and contribute? Email rosanna.pittella@elementaethics.com to nominate yourself or others. Your voice is needed.

WANTED: REGIONAL & NATIONAL IE³ NETWORK LEADERS

ie³ network



Are you ready to lead ?

The power to facilitate the systemic changes in education discussed at the conference and identified by the ELC panels can only come from networked communication, and tireless teamwork. Please step up to take a leadership position in this network, and act as a main point of contact in your region or state, or nominate a colleague as we build this infrastructure. Email: rosanna.pittella@elementaethics.com

Welcome Lisa Wright - New Advisory Board Member!

Lisa Wright, is an expert problem solver and strategist who has successfully resolved issues at a global level for many years. Ms. Wright is blessed with an uncanny ability to identify and dissect a problem, and negotiate with those in power to facilitate its resolution with unparalleled grace and elegance. Ms. Wright's unbeatable energy and work ethic, coupled with her strong belief system and polished leadership skills make her the optimal advocate for educators, students, and their parents. Ms. Wright's planning skills and business acumen, corporate financial prowess, and diplomatic capabilities are welcomed by the organization as critical factors in the One Voice Institute's potential for growth and advocacy in the years to come.

We are very excited about such an incredibly talented person joining the One Voice mission!



Hold the One Voice megaphone high and shout these three presumptions through it:

1. Education is an art, not a science.
2. No matter one's level or role in education, he/she must always perceive the pupil as his/her central responsibility.
3. No one can learn for the learner; all educators can and must do is provide the external environment and guidance for the learner.

By Dr. Russell A. Baum

More words from attendees of One Voice 2008 San Francisco

"Thank you for the wonderful opportunity your conference provided. I enjoyed meeting you, your team and many wonderful people and being a little part in your very important initiative. I hope to continue being involved in the future. (Dr. Susen Smith)."

"Many thanks....It was certainly a pleasure meeting you and your team in SF....THX for a wonderful experience... (Dr. Arthur Jue)."

"I have certainly enjoyed getting to know you, the Board of Directors, and all those that you brought to the conference. (Dr. Al Proffit)."

"I have been to and spoken at many education conferences---local, state, and national, but your conference was by far the best I have ever attended. The participants were sincerely dedicated and had much to offer....And, of course, your great staff worked endlessly to affect a positive outcome (Dr. Russell A. Baum)."

From Drs. Susen Smith and Ronald Laura, *One Voice, Australia*

Repersonalizing educational contexts for nurturing values, spiritual wellbeing and love of learning

Dr Susen Smith, University of New England (UNE), Australia

Professor Ron Laura, The University of Newcastle, Australia

Recently, *The (One Voice) Institute of Elemental Ethics and Education* held the 2008 International *One Voice* Conference in San Francisco where we presented two papers. The first paper was: *An ecological framework for dynamically and inclusively differentiating the curriculum*. The second paper was titled: *Reconceptualizing relationships within high-tech social and educational contexts*. Both papers were very well received and we were heartened by the interest in the topics discussed, the questions asked throughout, the exchange of contact details afterwards, and the possibilities for future collaborative research and practice projects.

Educators traveled from all over the world to attend this important conference and imparted a universal message of the need for paradigmatic change in thinking, educating and living. The educators who attended the conference should be heartened by the participants' affirmation of their expertise and rigorous capacities to identify key areas of need, designed to provide practical and relevant solutions to the issues raised. Within smaller forum groups educators acknowledged that there is currently too great a focus on skill development at the cost of nurturing values, ethical concern and moral sensibility which give purpose and deeper meaning to the life of learning. The ever increasing reliance on technology has led almost imperceptibly to contexts of learning in which education itself has become so technologized that there is less emphasis on personal relationships and social interaction, one consequence of which is the marginalization of student-teacher bonding and the loss of authentic learning. Where is the creativity and the joy in learning? Are the choices we make in teaching contributing to the narrative of a kind of education that reflects personal, meaningful, and reflective learning? Some solutions that were suggested included: the need for more curriculum differentiation to meet the individual needs of all students, a balance of multi-dimensional assessment approaches so that more qualitative methods support teaching and learning, helping students to think, create, live, and learn in different ways. A new awareness emerged to affirm the importance of re-personalizing educational contexts with more opportunities for student and teacher face-to-face emersion in teaching, constructing learning environments that capture the benefits of dynamic and lively interchange within small communities of enquiry which encourage debate, dialogue, self-reflection, and self-evaluation.

Exploration of these issues and practical suggestions for improved educational practice were interwoven through the fabric of both the presentations mentioned above. The key message of our first paper on dynamic differentiation is the need to focus on the individual student's uniqueness and strengths. The goal is then to plan teaching and learning around meaningful activities that have personal relevance to students and can be supported by effective strategies and committed personnel both within and without the classroom. Differentiating the curriculum takes a great deal of effort, and needs community support to be successful. Within the classroom the teacher can use dynamic social strategies such as peer tutoring, grouping, open-ended tasks and learning centres, to name a few, to support teaching to address individual student needs. There is much community expertise outside of the classroom that can in myriad ways be brought into the school community, some of which include mentoring, guest presenters, educational fairs, academic olympics, enrichment projects, to name only a few. If carefully monitored, technologies can play a productive role in supporting the dynamicity of differentiating the curriculum, but this process needs to be accompanied by educational contexts of personal interaction which provide the basis of the development of social values, creativity and meaningful living, all of which represent an important adjunct to the ostensible goal of attaining knowledge.

Additionally, the second presentation built upon the first by philosophically exploring the technologization of education through the depersonalization of communications. We argue that human relationships have substituted face-to-face human interchange in preference for technologically mediated communication, which has manifested itself in forms of social disconnection, alienation, and dehumanization. We also show that the ramifications of the commitment of western culture to power-based knowledge are of considerable educational significance. We argue that there is an urgent need to reconceptualize the educational epistemology of power in such a way that the repersonalization of human relationships becomes a primary goal of the learning process. Such reconceptualization will afford new opportunities for developing deeper and more meaningful personal relationships by immersing students in high-contact environments, which promote rather than inhibit educational, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Ultimately, there is the need to repersonalize education by way of student-centred learning, socialized face-to-face educational contexts, and using philosophical enquiry as a means of exploring values and attitudes. Repersonalizing education enhances teaching and learning through creative, authentic, meaningful teaching and learning that enhances the human spirit, which is, in turn, paramount to repersonalizing our lives.

The conference initiative provided by the *(One Voice) Institute of Elemental Ethics and Education* has made a unique contribution to the advocacy of worldwide quality teaching and learning and we welcome your response to the comments above. Professor Laura and Dr.r Susen Smith are delighted to be able to serve as the Australian representatives for the Institute and we would be prepared to organize a future conference of the Institute here in Australia. Expressions of interest in an Australian conference would be welcomed and Susen can be reached in Australia by phone: +61 2 67734299 or email: susen.smith@une.edu.au, and Ron can be reached by phone at +61 424155173. We would be pleased to meet with you next time you visit Australia and would enjoy visiting you when we are next in your part of the world. Go well in dynamically deepening the repersonalization of your lives and your teaching to re-engage students so that a love of learning is nurtured and joy of life blossoms.

Kind regards, Dr Susen Smith, University of New England

From David Konneh, One Voice educator in Liberia

ONE OF THE WORST CASUALTIES OF THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR (1989-2003) IS THE NATION,S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. AS A DIRECT CONSEQUENCE OF THE CONFLICT, THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, FROM KINDERGARTEN TO GRADUATE SCHOOLS OR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, SUFFERED AN ALARMING BRAIN DRAIN THE DESTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE, A DEBILITATING REDUCTION IN THE REAL INCOMES OF TEACHERS, LECTURERS, PROFESSORS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPPORT STAFF, LEAVING THEM VULNERABLE TO CORRUPTION AND DEMORALIZED AND INCAPACITATED AS PROFESSIONALS LANGUISHING IN THE BACKWATERS OF MAINSTREAM SOCIETY. THE GENERAL DECLINE IN THE NATION,S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT[GDP] IN THE LAST EIGHTEEN YEARS LEFT NO ROOM FOR ESCAPE FROM THE OPPRESSIVE INDIGNITIES OF ABJECT POVERTY BY THE LIBERIAN STATE, ITS PEOPLE IN GENERAL, AND TEACHERS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL DEVOTEES IN PARTICULAR.THE PROLONGED GRINDING POVERTY AND THE CALLOUS INDIFFERENCE OF MOST NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS TO THE DOWNWARD SPYRALL IN THE STANDARDS AND EQUALITY OF EDUCATION IN LIBERIA IS BASICALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECAY THAT HAS WRECKED THE SYSTEM, WHICH THIS ARTICLE WILL MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS. LIBERIA,S POST WAR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS BEING UNDERMINED BY THE FOLLOWING FACTORS AND CONDITIONS;

1.THE SALARIES OF TEACHERS,LECTURERS AND PROFESSORS ARE SO LOW THAT, WERE THEY TO SOLELY DEPEND ON ONLY THEIR MONTHLY INCOMES, THEY AND THEIR FAMILIES WILL DIE. THIS IS A SCIENTIFIC FACT THAT IS READILY VERIFIABLE IN TODAY'S LIBERIA.

2. MUCH HAS NOT BEEN DONE TO ECONOMICALLY ENPOWER LIBERIAN CIVIL SERVANTS AND ORDINARY LIBERIANS SO THAT THEIR PRE-WAR CAPACITIES TO ADEQUATELY SUPPORT THEIR SCHOOL-GOING CHILDREN ARE RESTORE SIGNIFICANTLY. SO PUPILS AND STUDENTS ARE RECEIVING MINIMUN SUPPORT FROM PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.

3. LIBERIAN STUDENTS, TEACHERS, LECTURERS,AND PROFESSORS HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF READING OR DOING RESEARCH AT NIGHT ON ELECTERIC LIGHT FOR EIGHTEEN CONSECUTIVE YEARS. THE AGGREGATE IMPACT OF THIS PROLONGED LACK OF ELECTRICITY HAS LEFT LIBERIANS WITH EYES PROBLEM AND HAVE RENDERED THEM FAR LESS EDUCATED THAN THEIR COUNTERPART IN OTHER COUNTRIES,CONSIDERING THE FRIGHTENING NUMBER OF MAN HOURS THAT HAVE BEEN WASTED AT NIGHT FOR THE DURATION OF BOTH THE CIVIL WAR AND THE FOUR POST-WAR YEARS.IN SHORT THE LACK OF ELECERICITY HAS HAD SERRIOUS NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE GENERAL INTELLECTUAL AND ACADEMIC PURSUITS OF ALL LIBERIANS,ESPECIALLY PUPILS AND STUDENTS.

4.THE POOR RENUMERATION OF EDUCATED AND HIGHLY EDUCATED LIBERIANS REPRESENTS A DISINCENTIVE FOR THE YOUTH TO TAKE THEIR EDUCATION SERIOUSLY.THERE ARE COLLEGE GRADUATES,MASTERS AND DOCTORATE DEGREE HOLDERS IN TODAY,S LIBERIA WHO CAN HADLY FEED, LET ALONE FULLY SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES ON THEIR JUST MONTHLY INCOMES.TO COMPOUND THE WOES AND FRUSTRATIONS OF THESE LIBERIANS AND THEIR SCHOOL-GOING CHILDREN THEIR EQUALLY OR OFTEN LESS QUALIFIES COMPATRIOTS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT FROM ABROAD AND ARE BEING PAID FABULOUS SALARIES BY THE STATE THROUGH EXTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE WORD BANK AND THE EU.THIS TREND TENDS TO INADVERTENTLY DEVALUE LIBERIAN EDUCATION IN THE EYES OF THE YOUTH AND DEMORALIZE OTHER EQUALLY EDUCATED LIBERIANS IN THE NATION,S SCHOOL SYSTEM AND UNIVERSITIES.

5. BRIBERY AND OTHER FORMS OF CORRUPTION HAVE CREPT THEIR WAYS INTO THE NATION,S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM BECAUSE TEACHERS WILL DIE IF THEY DO NOT SOLICITE BRIBES TO AUGMENT THEIR DISGRACEFULLY LOW SALARIES.

6. MUCH HAS NOT BEEN DONE TO ENFORCE DISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR WHICH ENGENDERED A GENERAL BREAK DOWN IN LAW AND ORDER AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCIPLINE IN LIBERIA.

7.THE EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS FULL REHABILITATION NATIONWIDE.

THESE PROBLEMS LISTED ABOVE DO NOT REPRESENT AND EXHAUSTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE ILLS OF LIBERIA,S POST WAR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. THEY ARE HOWEVER, IN MY VIEW, THE MOST PRESSING THAT REQUIRE PROMPT REMEDIES IF LIBERIA UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS ARE TO BE USED AS A TOOL TO RESTORE QUALITY TO LIBERIA,S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM WITH THE VIEW TO REENFORCING ITS ROLE IN ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. HENCE, THE FOLLOWING CORRECTIVE MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN PROMPTLY AS A MATTER OF URGENCY TO RESTORE QUALIFY AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF LIBERIA,S POST-WAR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA SHOULD SOLICIT ASSISTANCE FROM THE WORD BANK AND FRIENDLY BILATERAL CHANNELS TO CREATE NATIONAL FUND FROM WHICH TO FACILITATE A SUBSTIALTIAL INCREASE IN MONTHLY SALARIES OF TEACHERS,PROFESSORS, AND LECTURERS AND THE SUPPORT STAFF OF ALL ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRY. IN THIS REGARD IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT THE ACADEMIC STASFFS OF ALL SCHOOLS ARE VETTED REGIDLY TO DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF QUALIFIED AND UNQUALIFIED TEACHERS.THE UNQUALIFIED TEACHERS SHOULD BE SENT TO TEACHERS TRAINING INSTITUTES AND UNIVERSITIES, WHILE THE WORKS OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS ARE AUGMENTED BY QUALIFIED TEACHERS[TO BE IMPORTED IF POSSIBLE].THOSE TEACHERS GOING FOR FRESH TRAINING SHOULD BE GIVEN HANDSOME ALLOWANCES WHILE THOSE THAT ARE RETAIN TO TEACH BE PAID IN ACCORDANCE TO THE FOLLOWING MONTHLY SALARY SCALE; ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS- US\$200.00, JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS- US\$250.00, HIGH SCHOOL, TEACHERS- US\$400.00, UNIVERSITY TEACHING ASSISTANTS-US\$650.00, UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS- US\$800.00, UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS-US\$1,250.00. EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO RESTORE ELECTRICITY ON A 24 HOUR BASIS TO LIBERIANS HOMES THROUGH THE FULL REHABILITATION OF HYDROELECTRICITY FACILITIES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. FUNDS THAT THE WORD BANK IS USING TO PAY FEW IMPORTED LIBERIANS MINISTERS SHOULD BE AUGMENTED BY THAT BODY AND BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL DONORS TO FUND THE PROPOSED EDUCATIONAL FUND, AND A UNIFORM SCALE FOR BPAYING ALL GOVERNMENT MINISTERS ESTABLISHED. THE WILL ARREST THE CURRENT WAVE OF DISCONTENT AMONG CABINENT MINISTERS AND RESTORE A SENSE OF EQUITY AMONG LIBERIANS INTELLECTUALS AND APPRECIATE THE VALUE OF EDUCATION AMONG THE YOUTH. ALL OF THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE COUNTRY DAMAGED AS A RESULT OF THE CIVIL WAR SHOULD BE REHABILITATED, WELL EQUIPPED ONES BUILT TO ACCOMMODATE THE GROWING NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN THE COUNTRY.

ENACT A LAW AGAINST ACADEMIC CORRUPTION THAT IMPOSES LONG TERMS OF IMPRISONMENT FOR VIOLATORS ESPECIALLY TEACHERS.

I AM OF THE CONVICTION THAT IF THESE MEASURES ARE ADOPTED AS A MATTER OF EXTREAME URGENCY, STANDARDS AND QUALITY WILL BE RESTORE IN LIBERIA EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE SHORT TERM, AND THIS FEAT WOULD SERVE AS A RELIABLE TOOL FOR POST WAR LIBERIA'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.