

**LIVING VALUES EDUCATION workshop, Banjul, The Gambia, 27 / 28 July 2008
summary report**



We are happy to report that our first Living Values Education workshop in the Gambia was a great success. The 20 participants who applied to attend all turned up and all (and more) were so enraptured that they came back for Day 2! The event was held in the home of a well-wisher in Banjul and was conducted in Wolof with English translation. Gambian-style lunch was provided for all participants.

The trainer was Monsieur Mamour Sylla, president of LV Senegal, who travelled by road from Dakar to voluntarily conduct the workshop. He was lodged by another well-wisher and transport was made available for his use. He came at the request of a group of educators who want to establish Living Values into schools, community groups, voluntary organisations, etc. in the Gambia.

Mamour's sincere and delightful delivery of the essence of the theme quickly put everyone at ease and everyone was soon deeply enthralled. It was clear even within the first morning that more and longer workshops would be required as soon as possible to explore more fully the potential of these universal values (such as *peace, love, respect, tolerance, unity, honesty, cooperation, simplicity, responsibility, freedom, happiness*) and how to implement them in our society.



Trainer, Mamour Sylla (left) with the LVE Gambia choir!

Participants were able to quickly experience the effect of Living Values in the classroom by taking part in various activities, which brought about a loving and humorous atmosphere within the group, and many people's attitudes changed dramatically as the course progressed to Day 2. They felt these values flower within them and they understood more fully the vision of Living Values Education.

July 27

Introductions - an interactive activity
Overview of LVE international
LVE in Sénégal - discussion
Personal values - reflection
Values of Gambia
How can we sustain our values?
Values Activities – Cooperation
Creating a values-based atmosphere
– visualisation,
The needs of a child – reflection
The qualities of an educator
Values in early childhood education
Prayer/reflection



Reflection



Creative activity - cooperation

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Reflection / feedback from yesterday
Active listening
Taking care of ourselves – the needs
of the teacher
Conflict resolution – role play
Values-based discipline
Working with parents
Implementing LVE – practical advice
Evaluation of the benefits and
results of values-based education
Vision and action plan
Feedback on the training
Closing ceremony
Prayer/reflection



Group discussion



Active listening exercise

This activity enabled the group to draw out ideas on good listening and communication skills and attitudes, based on their own experience.

We need to be friendly, speak clearly, politely and with respect; listen attentively, give advice only when asked for, encourage, and allow others to express their own ideas. The importance of facial expression, gestures, sensitivity to the other person's feelings, receptiveness, being open etc. Don't interrupt, ignore, criticize, argue, insult, over-repeat, raise the voice, and please don't give too much advice!

This experiential, participative style of workshop is something unique to Living Values and is very effective. Comments from some of the participants as to the effect of this workshop on themselves were "significant", "surprising", "wonderful" and all found it informative and inspiring and definitely something they wanted to initiate in their schools and in the Gambia itself.

From the feedback at the end of the workshop, the participants said they learnt things that they had never imagined existed, especially how to bring about the essence of the ideal atmosphere in the classroom – where every child feels loved, valued, respected, understood and safe. Others said they will now be able to cope with the needs of the children who were difficult to handle before. They stated that they would aim to implement whatever they had learnt into their lives now, and when schools open they will impart the knowledge they have gained to other teachers and students.



Tree of values

It was decided to consider setting up a Living Values Association in the Gambia and to hold regular weekly meetings for those who could be more active on the Committee, with monthly get-togethers for the others who had too many previous commitments. All participants wanted to be actively involved in the group and the first meeting was scheduled for the following Sunday evening.

We all want to thank Mamour so much for his selfless contribution to the development of this movement in the Gambia. He is an example and inspiration to us all and we look forward to his next visit and our continued affiliation with Living Values Senegal.

Living Values Education (LVE) is coordinated by the Association for Living Values Education International (ALIVE), a non-profit-making association of values educators around the world. LVE is supported by UNESCO and a variety of other organisations, agencies, governmental bodies, foundations, community groups and individuals. It is part of the global movement for a culture of peace in the framework of the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World. ALIVE is an independent organisation that does not have any particular or exclusive religious, political or national affiliation or interest.

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