

# Religious Organisations in the UK and Values Education Programmes for Schools [1]

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**ABSTRACT** *In the context of English schools' increasing interest in values education programmes this article examines the contribution of three religious organisations: the Brahma Kumaris Spiritual University, the devotees of Sathya Sai Baba and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Discussions of values and values education in relation to citizenship and the new (2002) statutory subject of citizenship education are summarised and, on the basis of preliminary small-scale ethnographic research, the authors report the classroom implementation of three programmes. Issues raised include the programmes' approach to diversity, the degree to which programmes that assert core universal values can incorporate critical reflection on them, and the extent to which the provenance of programmes matters.*

## **Introduction**

The article arises from a small-scale qualitative investigation which the authors conducted in 2000–01 in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick. The investigation involved informal interviews with those co-ordinating and using three values education programmes, the examination both of printed course material and video promotions of the programmes, plus observation of sessions in primary schools in Oxford, Coventry and Birmingham. The three programmes are, respectively: Living Values an Education Programme (LVEP), Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) and the West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project (WMQPEP). These three programmes, each supported by a religious organisation, had come to our attention in the late 1990s, a period during which moves were afoot to develop citizenship education as a curriculum subject.

Our study opens up an interface between schools and religious organisations that is developing largely unnoticed. This is the activity of some religious organisations in providing values education programmes that are being adopted (or adapted) by a growing number of primary schools. The relative invisibility of this development contrasts with the public profile (through parliamentary debate and media coverage) of other convergences between faith and education in the UK. Of these one is the statutory provision of religious education as a curriculum subject. Another is the existence of faith-based schools, which are set to grow in number following the Education Bill of November 2001 (HMSO, 2001).

The advent of citizenship education, as a statutory subject in secondary schools in England and Wales from September 2002, with the recommendation that primary schools provide opportunities for citizenship education, has brought more opportunities for values education. At the same time the religious organisations are increasingly aware that they have something to offer—see, for example, the document linking the SSEHV programme materials with the citizenship education requirements of the National Curriculum (Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Education Trust, n.d.a).

Two of the groups that are supporting values programmes in schools are the devotees of Sathya Sai Baba ('Sai devotees') and the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University ('BKs'). In both cases members emphasise a universalism that transcends any world religions category, although scholars variously classify them as Hindu *sampradayas* (followers of successive gurus), 'neo-Hindu' movements and New Religious Movements (NRMs). The third group, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), is historically rooted in the Christian tradition, although many members have a universalist outlook and do not readily identify themselves as Christian. In this article we use the term 'religious organisation' to refer, we hope unproblematically, to all three groups.

As a backdrop for reporting the three educational initiatives we briefly allude to the relationship between values education and citizenship education in official statements about citizenship and education in England and Wales. We will conclude the article by raising questions for educationists.

### **Citizenship Education: government statements 1990–2000**

Whereas the non-statutory cross-curricular theme of citizenship in *Curriculum Guidance 8* National Curriculum Council (NCC, 1990) provided no clear definition of citizenship, offered no clear structure for the subject and had no global dimension (Lynch, 1992, p. 31) the Crick report Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA, 1998) endorsed the concept of active citizenship. Crick envisaged three strands in citizenship education: community involvement, political literacy and social and moral responsibility. In his view moral values and personal development are both 'essential pre-conditions' (QCA, 1998, p. 11) for citizenship and are themselves political. He envisaged a less explicit emphasis on morality and personal development with older pupils (QCA, 1998).

In the non-statutory guidelines for Key Stage 1 and 2 (i.e. for 3- to 11-year-olds),

the work to help pupils become active citizens refers to choices; right and wrong; rules; responsibilities, rights and duties; and reflection on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Set alongside this section however is the personal, social and health education (PSHE) material which carries forward more strongly the emphasis which Crick put on the need for children to learn 'from the very beginning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other' (QCA, 1998, p. 11). Pupils are regarded as 'preparing for an active role as citizens' in Key Stage 2 (7- to 11-year-olds) (DfEE/QCA, 1999a) and 'becoming informed citizens' in Key Stages 3 and 4 (11- to 16-year-olds) (DfEE/QCA, 1999b).

### **Citizenship Education and Values Education**

Currently much of the British discussion of morality vis-à-vis citizenship education is conducted in terms of the broader area of values education. Taylor lists the numbers of subjects which shelter under this 'relatively new umbrella' (Taylor, n.d., p. 1) and alleges that the debates about terminology point to a lack of coherence and focus (Taylor, 2000, pp. 172–3). Links between virtues and character building, values education and the search for identity in late modernity have been made (Cairns, 2000; Enslin, 2000; White & Hunt, 2000). Little research has been done in the UK (unlike the USA) into the effectiveness of programmes of values education (Halstead & Taylor, 2000, p. 61). Taylor herself questions the assumption 'that values, attitudes and personal qualities are closely connected with behaviour' saying that 'the links are complex and not necessarily causal' (n.d., p. 2).

Recent writings in the West express a range of views about the definition of 'value' and the possibility of either identifying core/universal/absolute values or establishing their metaphysical status. In the absence of an agreed statement within education of what a 'value' is Halstead defines values as 'principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances which act as general guides to behaviour or as reference points in decision-making or the evaluation of beliefs or action' (Halstead, 1996, p. 5). In the early 1990s, official bodies such as the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) used 'values' as a key term in their attempts to define spirituality and morality: 'values are the principles that inform judgements as to what is morally good or bad' (SCAA, 1996, p. 10). Others, however, continue to resist collapsing values into morals by listing many different kinds of values (Dunlop, 1996; Taylor, n.d.).

There is, also, no agreement about the viability of attempts to identify core/basic/shared values which the community schools of a plural society can accept (Halstead, 1996) and SCAA (1996, p. 10) revealed a lack of agreement about national core values, and this was echoed in Beck's discussion of the difficulty of establishing consensus on core values (Beck, 1998, p. 94). Nevertheless, NCC/SCAA (1995, cited in Taylor, n.d.), provided a packaged list of values for schools to transmit. Grimmitt suggests that very general core human values can be identified but that they will be interpreted in different ways: and so 'core values ... both unite and divide human beings' (Grimmitt, 1987, p. 122). Disputes about the status of

'values/virtues' have been linked to debates about both relativism and authoritarianism (Halstead, 1996; Beck, 1998).

Despite the conceptual difficulties surrounding the nature of citizenship (and hence citizenship education) and of values (and hence values education), recent publications show some educationists approaching citizenship through values/values education (Bailey, 2000; Gardner, Cairns & Lawton, 2000; Lawton, Cairns & Gardner, 2000).

What follows are brief sketches of three religious organisations and of the values programmes, associated with them, which are currently in use in some schools.

### **Brahma Kumaris and Living Values**

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University is based on the early 20th-century teachings of Dada Lekhraj (Prajapita Brahma), a Sindhi businessman of Hindu background. As an international organisation, with about 4000 centres in 77 countries (Walliss, 2002) it is represented in Britain by 40 centres (Weller, 2001, p. 603). Whaling (1995) and Walliss (1999, 2002) summarise the historical development and content of BK outreach in meditation classes, conferences and work in prisons and homes for the elderly and hospitals; and they show the BKs' increasing internationalisation and links with the United Nations and UNICEF (Walliss, 1999). The meditation practice, of verbalised reflection with one's eyes open, is supported by a disciplined way of life (Howell, 1997, p. 151) and in the West this practice is linked with opportunities for empowerment and success in life (Skultans, 1993, p. 58; Walliss, 1999).

This information is provided because there is a link between the BKs and LVEP (Weller, 2001, p. 603). However, several informants stress that LVEP is not authored by the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, but by educators around the world who are sponsored by the BKs. The programme is 'endorsed by UNESCO, sponsored by the Spanish Committee of the Planet Society and the Brahma Kumaris in consultation with the Education cluster of UNICEF' (New York) (LV Abstract, 2002). It is produced 'by educators for educators': the main writer, Diane Tillman, is an American educational psychologist. Moreover, LVEP draws on other sources, such as the ideas of psychologist Carl Rogers (Tillman: communication to a colleague, 2002).

LVEP describes itself as 'a values education programme' which was 'produced in response to the call for values' and which offers 'a variety of experiential values activities and practical methodologies to educators and facilitators to enable children and young adults to explore and develop twelve key personal and social values' (Tillman, 2000c). It 'aims to improve values, attitudes and behaviour through education' (Walliss, 1999, p. 380).

In 2000 LVEP programmes were underway in 64 countries, and materials were in use in another 16 (Tillman & Quera Colomina, 2000). In 2001, the set of materials included separate manuals—one for parents, one for trainers of educators and others for teachers of 3- to 7-year-olds, 8- to 14-year-olds and 'young people' (Tillman, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c; Tillman & Hsu, 2000).

Each manual included an introductory section outlining the core assumptions of LVEP and the variety of values activities included (reflection points/imagining/relaxation-focusing/artistic expression/self-development/social skills—plus, for older pupils, cognitive awareness of social justice and developing skills for social cohesion, and careful outlines of activities for each of the 12—or for 3- to 7-year-olds—11 values). For older pupils, the scope is broader, but the supporting content less detailed (Tillman, 2000c).

The training manual advocates that trainees be invited to provide their own definition of what ‘a value is’ and suggests phrases such as ‘a guiding force in all we do and pursue’ and ‘to make positive decisions about our lives’ (Tillman & Quera Colomina, 2000, p. 15). Values ‘teach respect and dignity for each and every person’ (Tillman & Quera Colomina, 2000, p. 17) and are linked with Human Rights. One function of values is to ‘enable a young adult to become a confident citizen of the world’ (Tillman, 2000c, p. 19).

The source of the 12 core values is presented as consensus across countries. It was 20 educators from different countries who in 1996 affirmed 12 core values which had been set out in *Living Values: A Guidebook*, the forerunner of LVEP (Gill-Kozul, 1995). The training manual comments ‘human beings in all cultures share universal values’ (Tillman & Quera Colomina, 2000, p. 16) that may suggest that this consensus is rooted in a view of human nature. Similarly, Neil Hawkes in the same manual, asks teachers to think of values thus: ‘Are you aware of them within yourself? They are present but may be hidden’.

The 12 values are: peace, respect, love, happiness, freedom, honesty, humility, tolerance, co-operation, responsibility, simplicity, unity. The teaching materials indicate meanings for each value through a listing of reflection points. For all age groups the writers recommend starting with peace. Examination of session outlines in each workbook on ‘peace’ shows a variety of activities: including games, guided visualisations and song. Embedded within the sequence in each phase is a section on conflict resolution. In these sections, the mediator encourages each person to speak for him/herself or to state what the other has said; but does not rephrase each participant’s response. The teachers’ guide emphasises the importance of the teacher’s ‘staying in a peaceful place yourself’ (Tillman & Quera Colomina, 2000, p. 60), a theme expressed also in conferences and echoed by the teacher observed. Objectives and steps differ between phases, and the reflection points (which approximate to definitions) broaden so that young adults are encouraged to be more concerned with peace in the wider world community.

Teachers are expected to ask pupils to apply the values and so to ground them in concrete, everyday experience. The importance of learning to practise the values is stressed. Examination of the aims of the programme may suggest that more thought is given to the meaning and the application of the values than to their evaluation (Tillman, 2000b, p. 3). This is consistent with a position based on universal values that are in some sense regarded as absolutes.

The theoretical model used in the training manual is a ‘framework intended to help schools look at cycles both positive and negative’. Student behaviour is placed at the centre in a diagram intended for training. Underlying this is the belief that

children will learn in a positive, values-based atmosphere. A further theoretical link is made in one of the two sections by teachers; for ‘left brain thinkers’, connections are suggested with Howard Gardner’s intrapersonal intelligence (Tillman & Quera Colomina, 2000, p. 6).

In the early 2001 revision of the LVEP for young adults a secondary teacher in Oxfordshire contributes a short section directly on citizenship education (Tillman, 2000c iii). She identifies the topics of conflict resolution and human rights and the emphases on global community and mutual respect in society as important. The inclusion of the statement from the National Forum for Values in Education in the citizenship documentation indicates to her that ‘Values are part of the school curriculum’ (Tillman, 2000c iii). There are references to the wider world, especially in Tillman (2000c), but the materials focus in the main on the individual and her/his immediate contacts.

Our fieldwork included attendance at two Living Values conferences held for educationists at the BKs’ Global Retreat Centre in Oxford, although it is important to note that non-BK venues are also used for training. The first conference, ‘Making a Difference’, was designed to nurture the educators, and it introduced them to LVEP; the second, ‘Living Values: Train the Trainer (Europe) Workshop’ was for those prepared to train others. Both attracted a range of participants from different countries and backgrounds. Both included BK and non-BK speakers in programmes that incorporated presentations and activities.

Subsequently, two hour-long lessons (separated by a fortnight) with a Year 4 class in a First School in Oxfordshire were observed. In the first lesson, which was on the subject of ‘respect’, the teacher incorporated her own story into materials from LVEP. After careful questioning, children were invited to close their eyes and think of one lesson from the story before they worked on the story. The session ended with a few minutes guided reflection on the story. The second session, on ‘co-operation’, started with the lighting of a candle and reflection. A story, drawn from *You, Me, Us!* (Rowe & Newton, 1994) was followed by a task requiring group co-operation. Debriefing was preceded by the request that children close their eyes to reflect and the session itself ended with further reflection. The teacher, who co-ordinates the school programme, indicated in her comments that her school uses very similar processes to those used in a school in West Kidlington (Farrer, 2000).

### **Sathya Sai Education in Human Values**

From BKs and LVEP we turn to Sathya Sai Baba and Sathya Sai Education in Human Values. Devotees worldwide regard Sathya Sai Baba (born 1926 in South India) as a spiritual teacher, as a reincarnation of the saint, Shirdi Sai Baba and as an incarnation of God (as Shiva/Shakti). Probably worship of Sathya Sai Baba in Britain commenced in 1966 with a *bhajan* (hymn singing) group meeting at the house of Mr Sitaram (Jackson & Killingley, 1992, p. 183). Thirty-five years later there are over 145 centres and groups in the UK and the Sathya Sai Baba organisation is established in 137 countries (Weller, 2001, p. 619). Bowen provides a detailed study of one local ‘Sathya Sai Baba community’ (Bowen, 1988). Critics

inconclusively challenge Sathya Sai Baba's widely reported psychic powers (Haraldsson, 1987). His emphasis on love and selfless service, his establishment of educational institutions in Africa and Asia (including a university in South India) and hospitals, and the educational outreach of his followers are undeniable.

Sathya Sai Baba emphasises that '[t]he essence of education is concentration of mind and not collection of facts' and that '[i]f you develop a high level of patience and calmness, and remain free from selfishness, the basic truths that are always within you will naturally manifest and shine forth in your awareness' (Sathya Sai Baba, 1986, p. 2). His educational outreach initially involved classes known as Bal Vikas i.e. child blossoming (Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993, pp. 122–126), for devotees' children. As observed by Nesbitt in Coventry, classes focused on the 'human values' of truth, love, right action, peace and non-violence. Five teaching techniques were commended by Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Education Trust (n.d.a): 'silent sitting' (an example is described below), prayers, group singing, story telling, group activities (p. 20). Activities in Coventry's Bal Vikas included 'silent sitting', role play responding to a moral dilemma, competitions and voluntary social service such as carol singing in a home for the elderly. Values were taught through games such as matching animals and birds with values such as self control and gentleness (Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Education Trust (n.d.b).

Sathya Sai Baba intended his educational initiative to reach beyond devotees into national education systems. In 1986 The Sathya Sai (UK) Society for Education in Human Values published its first manual, which one reviewer saw as a means of bringing the teaching of human values 'to the teaching profession as a whole' (Riddell, 1986, p. 4). In her view the manual was 'as much directed to challenge the teacher's way of looking at life as to provide teaching tools' (Riddell, 1986, p. 4). In December 1986 'EHV Teacher Training Workshops' (already inaugurated in India and Nigeria) were announced for the UK (*The Sai World Gazette*, 1986, p. 2).

Now that citizenship education is on the education agenda nationally, the promoters of SSEHV recommend that their lesson plans 'be utilised and adapted to meet the requirements of the national curriculum' (Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Trust UK, n.d.a, p. 1).

In 2001 the SSEHV programme was running in two Coventry primary schools and it was in the process of being introduced in two more as well as in one Birmingham and one Rugby school. In Rugby the library hosted a three-day exhibition of the programme, and in October 2001 Coventry and Warwickshire Local Education Authorities independently began organising an inset training day on Educating for Human Values in the primary curriculum, in relation to citizenship and personal, social and health education.

The SSEHV manual (Alderman, 1999a, 1999b) provides detailed lesson plans for one introductory lesson, followed by five each on the values (in this order) of truth, love, peace, right conduct and non-violence. For every lesson the format comprises: a quotation/theme for the week, silent sitting, story—followed by questions, group singing and group activity. Quotations include (p. 81) 'Face your fear and it will disappear', and in the lesson which we observed (see below) the song was 'Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?'

Pages 8–66 of the manual provide a rationale of the programme in terms of personal development. The introduction links SHEHV with (p. 65) the Education Reform Act 1988's requirement that the curriculum 'promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of children' and the 'statutory requirement laid down in the Education (Schools) Act 1992 to ... "prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experience of adult life" '.

Fieldwork included observation of a Year 4 (i.e. 8- to 9-year-olds) SSEHV lesson at a Coventry primary school (which intended from September 2000 to establish it on a whole school basis as citizenship education) and attendance at a SSEHV open day in Coventry in 2001.

The Year 4 (fortnightly) lesson was conducted jointly by a father who was a Sai devotee and by a male member of staff and it lasted for one hour. The content, including tape recordings and cards, was provided by the SSEHV manual (Alderman, 1999a, pp. 151–155) supported by the song books (Braithwaite, 2000a, 2000b). Oral feedback on the children's homework led into revision of what the five values were and the introduction of the day's topic: peace. All the children sat still for a few minutes 'silent sitting' to the background music of a tape recording. They were told how to breathe and how to release tension from their bodies and given the image of standing under a waterfall. In the ensuing debriefing several pupils articulated their experience e.g. as relaxing. The teacher read a version of the story of St George in which the dragon is interpreted as greed. After a question and answer session children were invited to select cards from a pack. On each was printed an incident and three possible courses of action. In each case the class decided which course of action would be right and why, before ending with a song 'We wish you love and peace', to the tune of 'We wish you a Merry Christmas'.

The open day in Coventry—aimed at parents, teachers and children—presented SSEHV through displays of photographs; a video of SSEHV in three schools including pupils' reflections on how their behaviour had changed for the better; lectures by a member of the national SSEHV committee, by the Coventry teacher whom we had observed and by the SSEHV co-ordinator for the north of England. All present were guided through a silent sitting; watched a group of young people perform a role play centred on stealing perfume from a shop and then returning it after an argument; were encouraged to join in singing a song about love; heard from a Leicester teacher about values games that he had devised and from another speaker about values for parents.

## **Quakers**

Quakers, i.e. members of The (Religious) Society of Friends, number about 250,000 worldwide (Bowker, 1997, p. 359) and about 20,000 in the UK (Pennock, 2001, p. 21). Under the leadership of George Fox (1624–91) Quakers emerged as a group reliant on personal experience of the 'inner light of the living Christ' and critical of ecclesiastical hierarchies and institutions. Throughout their history Quakers have opposed warfare as being contrary to the teaching of Jesus. Friends' proactive work to resolve conflicts non-violently, and their conscientious



objection to war, have demonstrated twentieth-century Quakerism's primary concern with peace.

The West Midlands Quaker Peace Education Project (WMQPEP) was set up in 1984–85 to provide peace education—including peer mediation—through employing professional teachers and counsellors. There is no published programme, since the project tailors its input to individual schools—currently approximately 20 per year. The sessions offered include games that involve listening, observation and teamwork. The four key 'skills' which the project leaders hope to develop in pupils are self-esteem, affirmation (of oneself and others), co-operation and communication.

The project relates directly to whole school priorities such as attendance, behaviour and recognising and rewarding achievement, and helps particular schools to look at their unique needs in relation to whole school policies on bullying, aggression, management structures and relationships within the school (WMQPEP, 1998).

The WMQPEP video shows peer mediation education in Years 5 and 6 (i.e. 9- to 11-year-old pupils) at Redhill Primary School, Birmingham. The children participate in co-operative exercises such as arranging themselves in alphabetical order of their first names. They think about the qualities that would make a good mediator and take part in scripted role-plays. For example two pupils act as mediators with two others who are in dispute. Using their script the mediators ask if each party agrees to the meditation, then each mediator in turn asks one of those in dispute for his/her side of the story and then sums this up. Each disputant is also asked to say what the other child in the conflict is feeling.

Continuing to develop co-operative skills, and beginning to develop a 'feelings' vocabulary, were the two aims for the seventh weekly session (in which Nesbitt participated) of a ten-week programme with Year 4 pupils in a multi-ethnic Church of England primary school in Birmingham. In an apparently non-directive way the WMQPEP teacher introduced a sequence of circle-time activities, facilitated pupils in problem-solving and acted as a role model for the class teacher and educational assistant present by her affirmative, non-confrontational approach. The final game, 'sleeping hedgehogs', exemplified affirmation: the teacher sent one child out of the room, then asked another child to hide under a colourful cloth in the centre of the circle. The first child returned, blindfolded, to hear the others in turn make true, affirmative statements about the hidden child e.g. 'this hedgehog is good at games'. This child was allowed to re-emerge from the cloth only after the blindfolded child had attempted to identify him/her on the basis of the successive affirmations.

### **Reflection on BK, Sai and Quaker Programmes**

Issues for educationists who are concerned with values education in the context of citizenship are: how the words for the values are interpreted and explored and, related to this, whether the programmes exemplify values transmission or clarification; the question of how the programmes engage with diversity; the issue of eclecticism (of the programmes' content and the schools' application of the

materials); and, lastly, the criteria for schools in deciding on adopting a programme (however selectively).

To take the first issue; the value of peace is central to the WMQPEP, with its focus on conflict resolution, it is one of the five values of SSEHV and it is prioritised in LVEP. But examination of the initiatives of the three religious organisations concerned suggests differences in understanding and promoting peace, and these are congruent with differences between the religious organisations themselves. In SSEHV the values of peace, love and non-violence, and the emphasis on teachers developing inter-personal skills, as well as on drama and role-play, would all provide a basis for the specific skills of peer mediation provided by the WMQPEP. Peace, however, is presented as 'a state of equilibrium of the emotions' (Alderman, 1999b, p. 20), as 'being even tempered' (p. 129), 'contented' (p. 135) and 'patient' (p. 141)—an inner disposition rather than (the Quaker emphasis, see Leimdorfer, 1992) a process. LVEP materials suggest both disposition and process are important.

Related to the issue of interpretation is the extent to which programmes that assert core universal values can also incorporate critical reflection on them. More research would indicate whether the WMQPEP more strongly emphasises commitment to values or critical thought about them. (The latter approach was advocated by one Quaker, Rowe, who has been in the forefront of the theory and practice of citizenship education for over 15 years—see Rowe, 1992, 1995, 2000, 2001.) Evidence of discussion and critique of the human values philosophy were less evident in the SSEHV handbook, the lesson, the video and the open day: the quotations and songs and the morals of the SSEHV stories were confident and unequivocal. Riddell's (otherwise enthusiastic) review had indicated that some examples (e.g. of non-violence) gave contradictory messages and that the very positive presentation of political leaders as exemplars of human values was unbalanced (Riddell, 1986). The LVEP materials encourage pupils to question each virtue; but the approach is closer to that of a values transmission rather than a values clarification model. The teacher whom we observed was highly experienced in this work and used open questioning. More extensive fieldwork is needed to see whether qualified teachers, both of SSEHV and LVEP, introduce a critical dimension, and if so with what result [2]. Certainly a national drama contest in 2001, which was organised by the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation (UK), offered scope for exploring contested interpretations.

Third, further research is needed to ascertain differences of nuance in the responses to the challenge of diversity in (a) the values education programmes and (b) the religious organisations with which these programmes are, to varying degrees, linked. LVEP stresses that we are 'one human family' while commending use of materials from different cultural backgrounds. SSEHV (Alderman, 1999a) is dedicated to 'the children of the world', it is 'international and is being developed and culturally adapted for use in countries as far apart as Australia ... India ... and Zambia' (p. 8). On page 11 teachers are informed:

In today's multi-cultural and multi-racial society, with its changing norms and expectations, it can be difficult for a young person to know what is

right. It is not the purpose of this Programme to dictate the actions of the individual, but rather to offer them a secure base from which they may arrive at their own informed decisions.

Nevertheless, it is possible that, inappropriately used, the published programmes could lead to an undervaluing of plurality and a lack of awareness of how contested values and their interpretations are. Future research would need to include the training which teachers are required to follow before adopting or selecting from the programmes, as well as examining ways in which materials are being selectively used in relation to citizenship education.

Fourth, all three organisations share an eclectic approach which appears both in the published programmes themselves and in the way in which some teachers implement them. West Kidlington primary school used both LVEP and SSEHV, and had started its values education before the others were published (Neil Hawkes, personal communication); the first school which Henderson visited is developing its own materials drawing on LVEP and Rowe and Newton's *You, Me, Us!*

Fifth, for educationists (especially religious education teachers) reflection may also centre on whether, and to what extent, the provenance of these programmes should be a criterion in deciding upon using them even eclectically. The 2001 training course on SSEHV (see above) was postponed because of adverse media publicity about Sathya Sai Baba. This mentioned the SSEHV programme in UK schools (Kennedy, 2001, p. 3). The postponement points to the ambiguous status of religious organisations, not least in schools. The name, character and emphases of the religious organisations concerned are not always clear to the outsider, and the relationship between the organisations and values education initiatives may be complex, sensitive and contested, and differently perceived by 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. We suggest both that religious educationists deepen their knowledge of religious organisations so that they can provide informed answers to colleagues' questions, and also that they emphasise the importance of selecting and assessing programmes on educationally sound criteria.

Meanwhile, as indicated above, scholarly discussion of core values remains unresolved. The evaluation of these three models—both the paradigms and the practice—needs to feed into the wider debate.

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## Notes

- [1] An earlier version of this article was presented at the conference 'Citizenship and Education—International Perspectives on Cultural and Religious Diversity', University of Warwick, September 2001.
- [2] Since the original paper was presented Eleanor Nesbitt and Elisabeth Arweck have conducted a related study 'Fostering spirituality in late modernity: Brahma Kumaris in the

UK', funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, which is also funding in 2003 'Assessing the approach of Sathya Sai Baba's followers to young people's spiritual and moral development'.

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