Exploration of the whole is central to Lifebridge’s mission, so we look at the trend toward networks, networking and the urge to connect with great interest. The networks that connect us are becoming more tangible, more obvious, more real, and affect all of us in many ways. The amazingly broad scope of this movement also illustrates the fact of our increasing closeness, interdependence and deepening awareness of ourselves as a single human race. Many of the organizations we’ve supported are actually networks of networks; intertwining and mutually supportive organisms that share a common vision and common goals: to build a better, more sustainable and just society for all of Earth’s people. This issue of The Bridging Tree highlights the growing trend toward networks and the implications this phenomenon holds for our global community.

Recently, our global inter-connectedness has been greatly enhanced by the communications industry, namely the internet. Facilitating the communication of countless groups and individuals across borders and cultures, this amazing invention is spurring the growth of networks of all kinds. Many organizations now have e-newsletters and youth groups are using the internet as an organizing tool, seeking to build partnerships across cultural lines. NGO’s are collaborating and pooling resources to achieve a more effective impact, and political movements are using the internet to build constituencies and consolidate their power base.

From the Ecovillage Network to local currency systems, from peace groups or meditation groups to microcredit, these networks have now become essential to the way we “do business”, as almost every aspect of our lives is influenced by networks of some kind. Even networks are interconnected! One can easily join a network with a few clicks and “networking”, a new verb, has become an activity for which time is set aside at conferences. In fact, many people feel this “time for networking” is the most valuable aspect of any gathering. Our network is our tribe, our group, our family and we love to see our network grow and join with others thereby enhancing the whole. Plus, it’s fun to see the extent of mutual friends and acquaintances in a room of supposed “strangers”.

Of course, we can only highlight a few types of networks in this small space, but all the groups reporting here are working to build positive and life affirming structures aimed to improve the conditions of the populations they serve.

Our hope is that you will find inspiration and encouragement within and we’d love to hear more about your networks and what they are doing to promote a better world.
Are You a Cultural Creative?

Are you a Cultural Creative? This list can give you an idea. Choose the statements that you agree with. **You are likely to be a Cultural Creative if you...**

1. ...love Nature and are deeply concerned about its destruction
2. ...are strongly aware of the problems of the whole planet (global warming, destruction of rainforests, overpopulation, lack of ecological sustainability, exploitation of people in poorer countries) and want to see more action on them, such as limiting economic growth
3. ...would pay more taxes or pay more for consumer goods if you could know the money would go to clean up the environment and to stop global warming
4. ...place a great deal of importance on developing and maintaining your relationships
5. ...place a lot of value on helping other people and bringing out their unique gifts
6. ...do volunteering for one or more good causes
7. ...care intensely about both psychological and spiritual development
8. ...see spirituality or religion as important in your life, but are concerned about the role of the Religious Right in politics
9. ...want more equality for women at work, and more women leaders in business and politics
10. ...are concerned about violence and abuse of women and children around the world
11. ...want our politics and government spending to put more emphasis on children’s education and well-being, on rebuilding our neighborhoods and communities, and on creating an ecologically sustainable future
12. ...are unhappy with both the Left and the Right in politics, and want a to find a new way that is not in the mushy middle
13. ...tend to be somewhat optimistic about our future, and distrust the cynical and pessimistic view that is given by the media
14. ...want to be involved in creating a new and better way of life in our country
15. ...are concerned about what the big corporations are doing in the name of making more profits: downsizing, creating environmental problems, and exploiting poorer countries
16. ...have your finances and spending under control, and are not concerned about overspending
17. ...dislike all the emphasis in modern culture on success and "making it," on getting and spending, on wealth and luxury goods
18. ...like people and places that are exotic and foreign, and like experiencing and learning about other ways of life.

**If you agreed with 10 or more, you probably are a Cultural Creative.**

"The Cultural creatives, How 50 Million People are Changing the World," is a groundbreaking book by Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson. Written in 2000, this important and illuminating book is the result of 13 years of research documenting the characteristics of a large portion of North American citizens whose motivations reflect values of inclusiveness, social justice and environmental stewardship. Largely uncounted by traditional methods, this robust and significant social group has the potential to help midwife our civilization into a new paradigm more fit for the 21st Century. For more information about the book: www.CulturalCreatives.org

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The Lifebridge Foundation, Inc. was established in 1992 for the purpose of supporting organizations and individuals who, through cultural, educational, and/or scientific means, are dedicated to creating bridges of understanding among all people by bringing to realization the concepts of one humanity and the interconnectedness of all life.

We support groups and individuals whose innovative projects reflect these concepts; whose work exemplifies a global vision, demonstrates a spirit of inclusiveness, and fosters transformative action in a changing world.
Wisdom Of, By And For The Whole
Tom Atlee

There is natural wisdom in and among us. There is a place within us where we are all one -- one spirit, one life, one humanity, one story -- whether we know it or not.

There is a web around us, among us, that runs through us and winds through all the rest, linking us all as co-creative kin, journeying together to a shared destiny of our own making -- whether we know it or not. "We all live downstream."

The Great Halls of Power and Media are not built to understand this. For the most part, they are prizes in the battle, fought for and held by those alienated from the heart of the world, spouting distractions to spirits yearning for connection, wholeness, a chance to be real.

Today hundreds of millions of people are globally networked through computers and common interests, learning together, yearning together, creating new insights and possibilities together, co-evolving constantly. Our interconnectedness is becoming more obvious and our co-creativity more possible. The fact that so many people put information on the web and converse there makes it a universal encyclopedia -- a true collective memory and mind -- that any of us can tap into and participate in. We are developing a global collective intelligence, grounded in the free interchange of ideas and stories that are the trademark of democracy.

Our global collective intelligence can be used -- and is being used -- for profit, for healing, for exploitation, for transformation, for disruption, for trivia. It is an enabler, a source of power for whatever human beings want to do. For this reason (among others), human individuals, groups, organizations and populations are vastly more powerful than we were during all prior ages of empire. We can do -- and are doing -- almost anything to create bigger, more novel effects in the world, fiddling with everything from atoms to ecosystems, from DNA to the human psyche. But great power, without wisdom, almost always proves fatal. The greater the power, the greater the fatalities. We need wisdom now more than ever before, wisdom relevant enough and powerful enough to monitor our other growing powers.

National democracies and the international democratic/sustainability movements lack ways to translate our precious diversity into wisdom of the whole, by the whole, for the whole. Without such holistic common sense wisdom to orient ourselves together for the common good, we can just as easily destroy the world as heal and transform it.

Fortunately, as our need for such common wisdom has emerged, so have various means to satisfy that need. One promising approach uses the natural diversity and fellowship of citizens to generate commonsensible solutions to community and societal problems.
The Global Eco-Village Network
Weaving the Sustainability Web

May East

Our generation has witnessed the emergence of the Network as a pattern for societal reorganization. Network is a unique pattern of organization common to all living systems. Nature is formed by networks. Molecules are atomic networks, cells are networks of molecules, organisms are networks of cells, ecosystems are networks of organisms, the planet a network of ecosystems. Wherever there is life, there is network.

The Global Ecovillage Network was established in 1995 during a conference at the Findhorn Foundation in Scotland entitled, "Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities; Models for the 21st Century". It established an international secretariat in Denmark and three regional secretariats in the USA, Australia and Germany, each having the clear mandate of building up regional and national networks and cooperation across regions.

The GEN "seed group" consisted of the following: Findhorn Foundation Community, Scotland; The Farm, Tennessee; Lebensgarten, Germany; Crystal Waters, Australia; Ecoville, St Petersburg, Russia; Gyorufu, Hungary; The Ladakh Project, India; The Manitou Institute, USA; and The Danish Ecovillage Association.

In nine short years, GEN has become a worldwide association of communities and individuals working to create a sustainable planetary culture. It does this by promoting networking and exchange activities within the ecovillage movement and communicating the ecovillage experience to mainstream policy-makers, planners and professionals. GEN places a high priority on publicizing the activities of its members in the fields of eco-building, waste management, organic agriculture, energy generation, community-level governance, sustainable transport, community currencies and local economic development.

GEN members include large networks like Sarvodaya (11,000 sustainable villages in Sri Lanka); EcoYoff and Coluifa (350 villages in Senegal); ecotowns like Auroville in South India and Nimbin in Australia; educational centres such as Findhorn Ecovillage in Scotland, the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales, Earthlands in Massachusetts; permaculture design sites such as Crystal Waters in Australia, Cochabamba in Bolivia and Barus in Brazil; small rural ecovillages like Gaia Asociacion in Argentina and Huehuetocotl in Mexico; and urban rejuvenation projects like Los Angeles EcoVillage.

After nearly a decade of existence, GEN carries the ecovillage message into all of the main governmental and civil society forums. It is a leading participant in a UNITAR training program to help local authorities implement the worldwide Agenda 21, has ECOSOC consultative status at the United Nations, is represented at events such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the World and European Social Forums, the World Urban Forum, and addresses countless conferences and seminars world-wide on sustainability-related themes.

The great challenge of our times is to build and nurture sustainable communities — social, cultural and physical environments in which we can satisfy our needs and aspirations without diminishing the chances of future generations. What is sustained in an ecovillage is not economic growth or development, but the entire web of life on which our long term survival depends. A sustainable community is designed in such a way that its ways of life, businesses, economy, physical structures and technologies do not interfere with nature’s inherent ability to sustain life.

"Ecovillages", asserts GEN, "are human-scale settlements, rural or urban, in the North or South, that strive to create models for sustainable living. They emerge according to the characteristics of their own bio-regions and typically embrace four dimensions: the social, ecological, cultural and spiritual combined into a systemic, holistic approach that encourages community and personal development."

The implementation of an ecovillage involves a bottom-up grassroots effort rather than a traditional top-down approach. Its philosophy states that the problems involved in living sustainably are too complex and too diverse to be solved from a traditional top-down perspective. It would be impossible for an overall solution to take into account the vast differences between North and South, between urban, suburban, and rural living, and among the many cultural traditions.

The Ecovillage movement has been referred to as the "Habitat Revolution", a revolution that is weaving threads of global solidarity, advancing our shared agenda and showing without delay how we can effectively move towards sustainability in the 21st Century.

For further information on the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) please contact: GEN-Europe: info@gen-europe.org, GEN Oceania & Asia: genoa@genoa.org.au. Ecovillage Network of the Americas: gen@ecovillage.org

May East is Director of International Relations of GEN.
YES! Magazine

Educational Networks “Positively” Energized

Kim Corrigan

The mission of the Positive Futures Network, publishers of the award-winning ad-free YES! magazine, is to support people’s active engagement in creating a just, sustainable, and compassionate world. Through the action-oriented stories in YES!, we highlight everyday heroes, at home and abroad, who are tackling profound social justice and environmental challenges and creating positive solutions today.

Our YES! Youth Education Program strives to get solution-based YES! materials to classrooms nationwide to inspire a new generation to advance environmental and social justice and compassion. Now in our third year, we support over 2,200 teachers across the country with free one-year subscriptions and have provided more than 10,000 free single issue copies to educators at conferences. Research shows that of the teachers who get YES! in their hands, half use articles directly in their classes. We’ve reached over 55,000 young people nationwide.

When the program was first launched in 2001, we thought our offer of a free subscription to YES! for educators would result in a flood of requests. An early survey showed that teachers are eager for materials that can help lift their students out of despair and show them change is possible, yet for most teachers, simply letting them know that the materials are available is not enough. Teachers are inundated with solicitations and are often too busy with existing required materials to spend time researching new publications. We realized we needed help to reach them and started to connect with like-minded teacher training organizations and educator networks.

We encouraged leaders of major educational organizations to learn more about YES! as an educational resource. As a result, in early 2004, The National Education Association, The Public Education Network and the North American Association of Environmental Educators recommended that their members apply for teacher subscriptions to YES! resulting in over 800 new teacher-subscribers.

Networking and building partnerships have helped us deepen the impact of our program. We developed a YES!-based environmental justice reader in cooperation with Global Visionaries (www.global-visionaries.org), an educational nonprofit, and tested it at Cleveland High School in Seattle. Young people were the heroes of most of the stories, and Terrell Rosetti, a 9th grader said, "The YES! readings are more valuable than text books because they are life stories—they are real. They show that one kid can make a difference."

This April, the YES! education program brought together three organizations to create a workshop for teachers in the Seattle area. The three-hour event, inspired by our “Whose Water?” issue, was co-presented and held at a local museum. We brought in an internationally recognized expert on Middle East water law to discuss global water issues with 44 teachers. Teachers received a curriculum guide, a YES! discussion guide, and access to local organizations who offer students service-learning opportunities related to water. The educators’ evaluations were so positive that the coalition of partners will create another workshop next year with the focus on another YES! issue.

Building positive partnerships increases our reach and strengthens our program’s impact. We continually seek out new groups and explore ways to cooperate and we invite you to join us. Working together to make a difference makes our efforts more effective; and best of all, fun!

"Teachers are eager to share positive trends with their students. It’s essential to give students a sense of hope so they can realize a better future." — Gilda Wheeler, Facing the Future—a YES! Education Partner

Kim Corrigan is the Education Outreach Manager at The Positive Futures Network. For more information visit: www.yesmagazine.org and www.futurenet.org

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY NETWORKS

Check out the latest issue of YES! (Fall 2004 — “Can We Live Without Oil?” issue) for great resources, network links and information about alternative energy solutions. www.yesmagazine.org

Erika Petersen with her class at Professional Children’s School
Why Is Peace So Hard To Achieve
Arun Gandhi

After many decades of working for peace and nonviolence I offer some thoughts for general consideration and, hopefully, action.

I find two weaknesses that make the task of achieving peace more difficult than it needs to be. First, the peace movement is horribly fragmented and second, we tend to set goals that are almost impossible to achieve.

Let me address the first problem of fragmentation. All over the country there are thousands of small groups with more or less the same agenda, each functioning independently. The divisions are ideological, spiritual and, as in my case, egotistical. It is the spiritual division that I find most disconcerting. Often after my talks people ask me: "Are you a Christian?" When I say, "no" they show amazement and add: "But, you speak like a Christian." This is beyond my comprehension.

Are peace and nonviolence different in other religions? Does this kind of thinking imply that only Christians can work for peace and nonviolence? Is there any difference between Christian peace and Hindu peace and Muslim peace? Isn't peace a universal concept to be enjoyed by all?

Exclusivity has, historically, caused more friction and conflict in society than brought peace. It also prevents others from joining the peace movement. I consider myself to be broad-minded but I shy away from spiritual association not because I disrespect any religion but because I believe my Faith is my business and because I respect all people for who they are and not because of what they are affiliated with.

The ideological and the egotistical divisions are less threatening. I am guilty of egoism because I have convinced myself that I alone understand the essence of grandfather Gandhi's philosophy. This weakness is something I am working on.

These and a few other concerns prompted me to reflect on why we, as peace groups, are so divided and what do we need to do to make our voice stronger. In a vicarious way my thoughts kept nudging me towards the model of the National Rifle Association. They have local chapters that work locally and cater to the local needs and are affiliated with a national office that monitors and coordinates all activities and muscle for lobbying the government. It is this unity that gives them the clout to make a difference.

If people can come together to ensure their right to own guns why can't people come together to ensure peace and harmony under the umbrella of an organization like The Federation of Peacemakers of America? What we would have to do is to elect a national board of prominent peacemakers. The Board would oversee the activities of the federation, which would be staffed by professionals. Each affiliate organization and individual would pay a monthly fee. Can we be as committed to peace as the NRA members are to their agenda?

Imagine how effective peacemakers would become with such united action? The Department of Peace would have become a reality and the war against Iraq could possibly have been averted. Admittedly, this is still a nascent idea. I am not an expert in conceiving such federations and so I am stuck at this stage. Of course, a federation of this nature would mean it would have to be a secular organization. Religion should be the private preserve of peacemakers and should not interfere with the work for peace.

I offer this skeleton of an idea for what it is worth. If there are experts among peacemakers who wish to take it to the next level I hope they will. Or, it can become another casualty on the road to peace.

Arun Gandhi is founder/president of the M. K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, Memphis, Tennessee. (www.gandhi-institute.org)
principles that peace does not exist without the component parts that support social health such as financial means, access to education, restorative justice, open communication and democracy, and that women are the most powerful untapped resource to build peace in the world, PXP launched the Global Network in early 2004.

Registrations rapidly arrived from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ghana, Kenya, Suriname, Togo, Canada, Brazil, India, Ireland, Argentina, Nigeria, Israel, and Mexico. As of July 2004, more than 100 women’s circles are in the Global Network, with 56 Sister Circle Links in direct communication with each other.

The communications are deepening. One woman from a U.S. Sister Circle is on her way to meet her “sisters” in Kabul, while another is providing a computer to the women of her Sister Circle, a cooperative in Oaxaca, Mexico, so they have easier access to the Internet. The potential to create a force of women who can stabilize their communities and cultures is just beginning to emerge in this early experiment.

Supporting the Global Network is not only the documentary “Women on the Frontlines”, but a full service Education Forum that includes a monthly e-Newsletter, a weekly news service reporting on the actions of women around the world, and a website of recommended books, links, and resources on creating “circular” groups based on the feminine principles of inclusion, deep listening, and equity. One can subscribe to the newsletter “PEACE TIMES,” or the news service “News of the Week” at www.peacexpeace.org.

In addition, a 16-minute video, “Peace x Peace: The Power of Circles”, explains the dynamics of circular organization and dialogue and shows the Global Network in action around the world. It is a perfect way to begin a discussion with your women-based group on joining the Global Network.

The vision is huge, the goal is peace, the time is now. PEACE X PEACE is helping to make it happen by connecting women around the world and supporting them to discover how they are alike, to enjoy how they are different, and to do the work needed in the world from the local to the global.

Patricia Smith Melton is Executive Director of PEACE X PEACE.

Today, citizens around the world are connecting through the tools of the Internet and PEACE X PEACE (“peace by peace”) is taking connection a step further – linking women’s groups in the United States one-on-one with “Sister Circles” outside the United States. PXP empowers women to form a force, a web of connection and understanding, that can convert actions of violence born of fear and misunderstanding into actions of peace that support individuals to live well and work together across divides.

Through this Global Network, women’s groups communicate directly across cultural barriers to inform and support each other. PXP plans to multiply these connections into the thousands within the next few years, including an initiative linking women’s groups in Muslim nations with women’s groups in the U.S.

PXP is based on the findings of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security which states that women and children are not only the primary victims of conflict, but that women know best what is needed on the ground to create healthy viable communities, cultures and nations.

PXP’s initial project is a film documenting the work of women healing their cultures in five nations. “Peace by Peace: Women on the Frontlines” premiered at UN headquarters October 2003 on the third anniversary of Resolution 1325, and is being broadcast by Public Television stations throughout the U.S. and around the world. It highlights women working for the education of girls in Afghanistan, truth in media in Burundi, financial equity in Bosnia-Herzegovina, participatory democracy in Argentina, and advocacy of restorative justice, rather than retribution, in the United States. The film is available at www.peacexpeace.org.

While PXP was creating this vital documentary hoping to change the way the world defines and builds peace, the core group developed the infrastructure for the Global Network enabling all women with access to the Internet to become “women on the frontlines.” Based on the
The American Heritage Dictionary defines a network as "an extended group of people with similar interests or concerns who interact and remain in informal contact for mutual assistance or support", a dry description of the remarkable richness of human relationships that is at the heart of the United Religions Initiative’s global grassroots network.

The purpose of the United Religions Initiative is to promote enduring, daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to create cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

Begun in 1996, the United Religions Initiative, or URI as it is typically known, is a locally rooted and globally connected organization of people from all traditions and walks of life. Its 25,000 members are active on 5 continents and in more than 50 countries.

From its beginning, the founders of URI were committed to creating a flexible organization that would keep authority at the most local level. To do this, the URI brought together religious and lay leaders, community activists, and business people from around the world to collaboratively design the organizational structure. In doing so, they found inspiration in the self-organizing systems of nature.

As a result, today the URI is an extraordinarily flexible, responsive, and resilient network that is growing and expanding in unimaginable ways. Its basic unit of organization is called a Cooperation Circle – a group of at least 7 people from at least 3 different religions, spiritual expressions or indigenous traditions who come together to address common concerns. Since June 2000, the URI has grown to more than 250 Cooperation Circles around the world.

Cooperation Circles serve a myriad of purposes. They share stories and perspectives from different faith traditions, foster local peace building, offer humanitarian relief, organize interfaith festivals, develop educational programs and create opportunities for interfaith encounter and reflection, among many other activities. Each Cooperation Circle, grounded in its own hopes and aspirations, is connected to the entire URI community through the URI network.

This network is rich with stories of hope, courage, and healing. It is a network that connects American congregations with Cooperation Circles in Africa who are working to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS and care for the orphans of this pandemic. It is a network that brings a Jewish woman from Israel and a Muslim woman from Jordan together in Berlin, Germany, to share each others’ pain and hope for a resolution to the conflict in the Middle East. It is a network that finds a Sikh from India, a Catholic from Pakistan, and an Indian-born Muslim praying together for an end to the hostility between nuclear neighbors India and Pakistan. It is a network that brings Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim youth together to learn about each other and serve their communities. It is a network that forges friendships and working partnerships of Hindu and Lutheran, of Sikh and Buddhist, of Zoroastrian and Christian. Of elder and youth. Of Argentinean and Malawian. Of heart and heart.

Almost daily, we hear stories about how the URI network inspires people to act from their deepest values, how they draw strength from knowing they are connected to others toiling thousands of kilometers away on a shared vision that they created together for a better world.

In an interdependent world, global networks are vital to the future of our planet. All of us, no matter where we live or how we may choose to worship or not, share this Earth as one global community. Networks that foster real relationship and real connections among people of vastly different beliefs and backgrounds serve as catalysts to positive change that benefits all.

Jennifer Kirk is Manager of Philanthropy of the United Religions Initiative. For more information about URI, visit www.uri.org

OTHER INTERFAITH NETWORKS
Interfaith Center of New York — www.interfaithcenter.org
The Temple of Understanding — www.TempleOfUnderstanding.org
World Peace Prayer Society — www.worldpeace.org
Banking on Dignity
How Microcredit Can Alleviate Poverty

by Sam Daley-Harris

Bilquees Rafeeq lives in Lahore, Pakistan. Four years ago Bilquees’ husband was unemployed and she was often unable to feed her four children. “My children would cry all night and I would be completely helpless,” she remembers. When Kashf Foundation was forming a group of women to receive a loan, a majority of the members were unwilling to include Bilquees in their group at first, fearing that she would be unable to repay. Bilquees proved them wrong, however, and has repaid all her loan installments on time.

Her first loan was US$72. She used it to buy large pots and pans for making pappurs, a light crispy snack that resembles crackers. She fries the pappurs at home and her husband helps her pack them. Her family lives in a single room house for which they pay US$10 per month in rent. In the morning this room is used to pack the pappurs and at night mats are laid out on the floor where the six members of Bilquees’ family sleep. With monthly sales typically bringing in US$100, Bilquees can now afford to send her children to school and has some savings for emergencies. “I want my children to acquire an education so they can improve their lives,” Bilquees says. In February 2003, Bilquees and her husband purchased land to build a house of their own and planned to start building the next year.

The Microcredit Summit, a civil-society effort, was launched in 1997 to multiply stories like Bilquees’ 100 million times. The Summit’s most recent report found that 41.6 million very poor families had been reached with microcredit by the end of 2002. Seventy-nine percent of the clients are women. Bilquees’ story illustrates why microcredit is so critical to cutting absolute poverty in half by 2015, why more must be spent, and why we must ensure that a significant portion reaches the very poor.

Some critics see the goal of reaching 100 million clients by the end of 2005 as unrealistic, but this audacious goal is part of what makes the Microcredit Summit a unique and powerful network. The Summit has sought to challenge the field and its more than 3,500 practitioner members not only to reach more clients, but also to remain true to the Campaign’s core themes: reaching the poorest, reaching and empowering women, building financially self-sufficient institutions, and ensuring a positive measurable impact on the lives of the clients and their families.

The Summit has consistently sought to overcome the barriers to the most difficult of our core themes, such as reaching the poorest within a financially self-sufficient institution. By commissioning papers discussed at global and regional meetings and by conducting trainings and classroom sessions for thousands of practitioners in Africa and Asia, we have been able to prove conventional wisdom to be wrong.

Currently, the Microcredit Summit is directing efforts to promote cost-effective integration of microcredit with education in child survival, reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS prevention. One initial reaction to this effort was, “Lunacy, let bankers be bankers and let health educators be health educators.” This objection was overcome and the Campaign has commissioned papers on this topic that have been discussed in regional and global meetings. Now, trainings throughout Africa and Asia are playing a key role in helping practitioners take advantage of this valuable approach.

The Microcredit Summit has always sought to identify what others in the field have not yet embraced and give those topics the global attention they require if we are to improve the lives of the very poor. This commitment makes the Summit a one of a kind initiative and of growing importance as we approach the 2005 United Nations International Year of Microcredit.

Sam Daley-Harris is founder of the anti-hunger lobby RESULTS and director of the Microcredit Summit Campaign. The 10th anniversary edition of his book "Reclaiming Our Democracy: Healing the Break Between People and Government" will be published in the fall by Camino Books.

Local Currencies and Community

The local currency movement is a vital global network that seeks to restore money to its place as a facilitator of exchanges of all kinds of goods and services, not as an end product or goal in itself. Locally specific, these systems have the added benefit of strengthening community relations, supporting local business and enhancing circulation of the time and talents, the true value, of neighbors helping neighbors.

Money Links
www.schumachersociety.org
www.localcurrency.org
www.lets-linkup.com
www.futureofmoney.com
www.timedollar.org
www.ithacahours.com
The Center for A New American Dream
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Web: www.newdream.org
The Center for a New American Dream helps Americans consume responsibly to protect the environment, enhance quality of life and promote social justice. They work with individuals, institutions, communities and businesses to conserve natural resources, counter the commercialization of our culture and promote positive changes in the way goods are produced and consumed.

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The Legal Defense Fund’s Corporations and Democracy Program partners with rural municipalities and grassroots organizations to eliminate corporate interference with local decision-making. Their goal is to eliminate the ability of corporations to use “rights” to override the building of sustainable communities. Their Democracy Schools program helps educate organizers to work with communities and municipal governments to adopt laws directly confronting corporate “rights” and powers.

Darjeeling Goodwill Animal Shelter
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The Darjeeling Goodwill Animal Shelter [DGAS] in Kalimpong, near Darjeeling, India is a center for the healing and care of animals. In addition to providing free or minimal cost treatment for local animals, it aims “to promote awareness of the divine interconnectedness of humanity with the other kingdoms of nature”.

Enersol
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Enersol develops and introduces sustainable energy solutions for rural communities. By supporting the use of clean, renewable solar energy for health and education.
applications in Latin America, they are committed to demonstrating that it's possible to improve the quality of life in rural areas of developing nations around the world.

**Global Greengrants Fund**  
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Global Greengrants Fund supports community-based grassroots groups in the developing world working on issues of environmental justice, sustainability and conservation. They believe that grassroots environmental work is a key fulcrum for encouraging the growth of a stronger civil society, more responsive institutions, a greater diversity of voices in policy decisions, greater empowerment for the weak, stronger and more sustainable local economies, environmental justice and respect for human rights.

**KIND U.S.A.**  
(Kudirat Initiative for Democracy)  
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Web: www.Kind.org

KIND’s mission is to empower democracy and development in Africa by strengthening organizations and creating initiatives dedicated to the advancement of women and youth.

**The Otesha Project**  
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640 Laverendrye Dr.  
Ottawa Ont. K1J 7C4 CANADA  
Tel: 613-237-6065 / Fax: 613-747-6261  
Email: info@otesha.ca  
Web: www.otesha.ca

The Otesha Project's education programs and bicycle tours use theater, multi-media, puppetry, and story telling to engage a wide range of audiences. They focus on re-evaluating our daily choices to reflect the kind of future we'd like to see - rethinking what we really need, conserving resources, and voting with our dollars.

**Sustainable Hudson Valley**  
Melissa Everett, Acting Director  
PO Box 116  
Cottekill, NY 12419-0116  
Tel: 845-679-9597  
Email: melissae@netstep.net  
Web: www.hvscn.org

Sustainable Hudson Valley serves as a catalyst for sustainable society through education, training, technical assistance and catalytic projects in economic development, green building, renewable energy and civic process skills.

**United Religions Initiative**  
Jennifer Kirk, Manager of Philanthropy  
PO Box 29242  
San Francisco, CA 94129  
Tel: 415-561-2300 / Fax: 415-561-2313  
Email: jkirk@uri.org  
Web: www.uri.org

URI is a locally rooted and globally connected organization which empowers people to act from their deepest values in ways that share the sacred and serve the world. Its purpose is to promote enduring daily interfaith cooperation, to end religiously motivated violence and to promote cultures of peace, justice and healing for the Earth and all living beings.

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**Help Us Help**

If you are inspired by the kinds of vital, transformative projects The Lifebridge Foundation supports, please help us help! You can participate directly as an investor in the highest ideals of humanity by giving generously to our general fund or directly to a group of your choice. Your money carries the energy of hope and is a tangible expression of your own compassion. We accept checks or credit cards. To contribute by credit card, visit www.lifebridge.org and click "Donate Now through the Network for Good”. If a substantial gift is within your means, call us at 845 338 6418. All contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.
It takes a team to create these Gatherings: Kudos to the Wainwright House staff in Rye, NY, and the staff and board of The Lifebridge Foundation. And special thanks to Puja Thomson for her “invisible” but truly effective facilitation and to Melissa Anne Wood for her lively and generous assistance in all things miscellaneous.

The Ninth
Lifebridge Grantee Gathering
June 3-6, 2004

It is a credit to Lifebridge that you created a setting where such risks could take place -- and brought together creative innovators open to respond. Everyone seemed committed to exploring through a balanced mix of intuition, intellect and emotion. I found it invigorating to challenge each other in a spirit of playful seriousness. -- David Grant

We form a brotherhood of people striving to uplift humanity by means of poignant drama, integrity in politics, the restoration of the environment, the voice of indigenous peoples, understanding of the animal kingdom, honest press, insightful literature, peace summits and organizations, powerful documentaries, generous foundations, and holistic/global education. Together, our varied projects form a dynamic gestalt that must contribute to healthier trends as the relations of the members of the human family to one another and our planetary home. -- Vicki Diane Johnston

Infinite gratitude to Lifebridge Foundation for its unique mission to nurture the seeds of peace through

The conference was like walking into a room of relatives I had never met but immediately knew and saw the resemblance to ... Although I know I may never meet some of these people again, I can close my eyes and see their faces and feel their strength and fire and love – and KNOW that they are out there making change happen, one step at a time. And I know that there are more beyond them and more beyond me who work for a better world as well. And I can open my eyes and be refreshed and strengthened by them again and again. -- Stephanie Barton-Farcas

I don't really know what I was expecting of the gathering, I only know that it turned out to be a hell of a lot more rewarding than I thought it would be. It was fun, and everyone was so honest and friendly. A rare opportunity to have a bit of space and time to converse at a high level about our aims, dreams, views about life, society, and our various problems in prosecuting our work. To laugh and cry together. I was frankly humbled to be in the company of so many people doing such valuable things -- without exception. With the commitment on display at this gathering, great things are being done and will be done, enabled by the foresight, wisdom, trust and collaborative energy of the Lifebridge Foundation. Without such enablers, those of us attempting to do our work would be left stranded. -- Paul Devereux

Participating Grantees

Stephanie Barton-Farcas, Nicu's Spoon
Jonathan Berman, Five Points Media
David Currie, Share The Spirit of Peace
Paul & Charla Devereux, authors
Galen Fulford, Ocean Arks International
Arun & Sunanda Gandhi, MK Gandhi Institute
David Grant, Nonviolent Peaceforce
Vicki Johnston, Robert Muller Center for Living Ethics
Martin Kuplens-Ewart, TakingIT Global
Deborah Moldow, The World Peace Prayer Society
Bill Pfeiffer, Sacred Earth Network
Martha Ruest, Riverkeeper
Michiel Schotten, researcher
Sanhita SinhaRoy, Progressive Media Project
Joanne Sunshower, the ICSEE (The International Collaborative for Science, Education & The Environment)
Nisma Zaman, PEACE X PEACE
Mary Zepernick, POCLAD (Program on Corporations, Law & Democracy)
so many creative individuals, each shining a spark of the divine. -- Deborah Moldow

Mainstream funders tend not to understand the pivotal role of spirituality and emotional openness in the peace and environmental movement. With Puja's facilitation, nothing was "woo-woo" just real... and it’s that realness/authenticity that lends itself to the kind of synergy that leads to solutions. I felt the group came away, rejuvenated, intellectually stimulated, re-committed, and best of all, well fed. -- Bill Pfeiffer

I had never experienced anything quite like this before, where such a like-minded group of people from such a wide variety of fields came together, for the common purpose of sharing each other's stories and supporting each other in the work we do... I feel very refreshed and recharged from those few days together. One of the things I enjoyed most was the space we each got to be ourselves and the respect and appreciation everybody had for each other. It was very refreshing to be in a different group of people with such a wide variety of experiences, backgrounds and perspectives and it made me realize how much talent there is out there and how much there is to learn. There was a great balance between talking and silence and perhaps more importantly, is the idea of the "undercurrent" that connects us that we take with us. These connections run deeper than the physical eye, and have provided each of us with a new network of experience, ideas and support to draw strength from in our work. -- Michiel Schotten

The Lifebridge gathering made me feel a part of a larger tradition of collective work, one now engaged in a culture of creative resistance -- whether through the arts, education, the sciences or other forms. In these times, the necessity is for us to pull together and to speak up and make our work and be visible. The gathering helped me refocus on these goals. And as if this weren't enough, I met a lot of wonderful people to boot! -- Sanhita SinhaRoy

The environment that this retreat created allowed for the opportunity for me to work through a personal issue in a supportive group. I also found the exchange of ideas between people from such different fields empowering, motivating and synergistic. We’re all doing important work in our own ways but we can still achieve a feeling of oneness in it all. -- Nisma Zaman

The Lifebridge Foundation provided a unique opportunity for grantees to form community around our common vision and hopes – across generations and cultures. The retreat refreshed me and enriched my work in ways I know will continue to unfold. -- Mary Zepernick

GLOBAL SPIRITUALITY

Triangles is a spiritual service activity transcending any barriers of race, creed, class, economic and political conviction. Triangles workers help to create a worldwide network of light and goodwill by briefly linking daily in thought and intention with two other people, anywhere in the world. Be a part of this global effort to build a world of peace and loving human relations! For more information: www.triangles.org

More Spirit Links
www.ngws.org  www.synthesis.tc
www.aquaac.org  www.globalspirit.org
www.lucistrust.org
In September 2000, a special United Nations Millennium Assembly was held to mark our entrance into a new millennium and to discuss goals to work together to create a better world. More world leaders participated in this occasion than any other ever. All 191 Member States of the United Nations pledged to try to meet the following 8 Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015.

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
   - Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
   - Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

2. **Achieve universal primary education**
   - Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

3. **Promote gender equality and empower women**
   - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

4. **Reduce child mortality**
   - Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five

5. **Improve maternal health**
   - Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

6. **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**
   - Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
   - Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

7. **Ensure environmental sustainability**
   - Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs; reverse loss of environmental resources
   - Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
   - Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

8. **Develop a global partnership for development**
   - Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory.
   - Includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction—nationally and internationally
   - Address the least developed countries’ special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction
   - Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States
   - Deal comprehensively with developing countries’ debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term
   - In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth
   - In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
   - In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies — especially information and communications technologies

For more information see: www.unausa.org or email lvann@unausa.org.
## UN CALENDAR

### International Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>International Year to Comemorate the Struggle against Slavery and Its Abolition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>International Year of Rice</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>International Year of Microcredit / International Year for Sport and Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>International Year of Deserts and Desertification</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### September 2004 - March 2005: Special Days and Weeks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 September</td>
<td>International Literacy Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 September</td>
<td>International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 September</td>
<td>International Day of Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-30 September</td>
<td>World Maritime Day during this week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 October</td>
<td>International Day of Older Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-10 October</td>
<td>World Space Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 October</td>
<td>World Habitat Day (1st Monday of October)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 October</td>
<td>World Teachers’ Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 October</td>
<td>World Post Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 October</td>
<td>World Mental Health Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 October</td>
<td>International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (2nd Wednesday of October)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 October</td>
<td>World Food Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 October</td>
<td>International Day for the Eradication of Poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 October</td>
<td>United Nations Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 October</td>
<td>World Development Information Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>24-30 October</td>
<td>Disarmament Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 November</td>
<td>International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 November</td>
<td>International Day for Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 November</td>
<td>Africa Industrialisation Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 November</td>
<td>Universal Children’s Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 November</td>
<td>World Television Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 November</td>
<td>International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 November</td>
<td>International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 December</td>
<td>World AIDS Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 December</td>
<td>International Day for the Abolition of Slavery</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 December</td>
<td>International Day of Disabled Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 December</td>
<td>International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 December</td>
<td>International Civil Aviation Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 December</td>
<td>Human Rights Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 December</td>
<td>International Mountain Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 December</td>
<td>International Migrants Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 February</td>
<td>International Mother Language Day</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### International Decades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year -</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994-2004</td>
<td>International Decade of the World's Indigenous People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-2006</td>
<td>United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2010</td>
<td>International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2010</td>
<td>Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2015</td>
<td>United Nations Literacy Decade: Literacy for All</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Decade for Action ‘Water for Life’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### UN Days & Years Meditation Initiative

PO Box 58, Paekakariki, New Zealand

www.UNmeditation.org / info@intuition-in-service.org

Calendar also available on the UN website at: www.un.org/events/ref43.htm
Receive a copy of our 10 Year Anniversary video with your donation of $35 or more. Be inspired by this commemoration of a decade of our grantees’ efforts to demonstrate inclusiveness and transformative action for a better world. Be a part of the growing holistic movement — your financial contribution will help continue our work in nurturing the emerging holistic paradigm.

___ YES, I want to help the Lifebridge Foundation promote the interconnectedness of all life. I have enclosed a tax-deductible gift of $35 or more.

Please send me a copy of The Lifebridge Foundation’s 10 Year Anniversary Video (___ VHS ___ DVD).

Name:__________________________________________________________________________________
Address:_________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________
Daytime Phone: __________________________ Email: _______________________________________

Please make checks payable to The Lifebridge Foundation. Credit card donations can be made online at: www.Lifebridge.org. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery of the video.
The Lifebridge Foundation * PO Box 327 * High Falls * New York, NY 12440

The Lifebridge Foundation is associated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations.