



# Foundation for World Education

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NEWSLETTER

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## INTEGRAL EDUCATION: TAKING ROOT IN THE U.S.

*An interview with Prapanna Smith, the founder/  
president of the Center for Integral Education*

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**Q** The Center for Integral Education is a pioneering organization in the field of Integral Education in America—How did it all begin?

**A** In January of 1994, just before I left Matthew, my 11 year old son, in Pondicherry for the beginning of his 10 years of schooling at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre for Education, I toured a number of Integral Education schools in Delhi, Hyderabad, and Orissa. Following that tour, as I was preparing to leave Pondicherry and Matthew, I was deeply struck by the idea that someone needed to introduce Integral Education to the United States. It was, in fact, the nexus of these two events – leaving Matthew in Pondicherry and seeing those Integral Schools in India – that really drove the vision for a school in the USA deep into my consciousness. I felt then, and still feel now, that part of my work is to provide the kind of education I had seen in India here in the USA so that parents who wish their children to have an Integral Education don't have to send them thousands of miles from home as I did. After a number of years of contemplating this work I finally took the plunge and got started.

“Integral Education is a holistic approach to learning that emphasizes the process of self-development in all parts of the being: physical, vital, mental, and psychic.”

In 1998, I incorporated the Center for Integral Education, Inc. (CIE) as a California non-profit public benefit corporation. After several years of preparation and planning, in September of 2002 CIE opened the doors of the first Integral Education School in the USA, the Rainbow

Kids Integral Preschool (RKIP), located in the Mira Mesa neighborhood of San Diego. Since that time RKIP has grown to full student capacity of just over 100 students. In 2006,



CIE opened the Integral Elementary School (IES) near the UC San Diego campus in La Jolla. There, children ranging from kindergarteners to sixth graders are provided with an Integral Education which is grounded in the spiritual philosophy and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

**Q** How is Integral Education different from other approaches to education?

**A** Integral Education is a holistic approach to learning that emphasizes the process of self-development in all parts of the being: physical, vital, mental, and psychic. One of the central aims of Integral Education is to help students become aware of their selves, to find their life purpose, and to develop the knowledge and tools they need to manifest that purpose. In Integral Education, students are encouraged and supported to become aware of the different parts of their being so that they can eventually develop the self-mastery they will need throughout their lives. They learn about their special and unique talents, and in doing so they begin to get a sense of what their life purpose may be.

This means that academic achievement is only one aspect - an important one to be sure - of several components that are addressed in Integral Education. In addition to meeting the cognitive needs of students, meeting affective needs and fostering character development form the bedrock of a good Integral Education program. The idea

*Funding the evolution of consciousness around the globe...*

is to “turn students on” to learning, to help them become life-long learners, and to prepare them to lead meaningful lives as adults. This is a vastly different approach to learning than the modern industrial paradigm we see in many schools today. There the aim is to prepare students to enter the workforce, become consumers and providers of goods and services, and to earn a living. In Integral Education, creativity and the awakening of the latent human potentialities that lie within each student are prized over and above the utilitarian approaches found in most schools today.

**Q** Can you give an example from a child’s perspective?

**A** Taken as a whole, CIE’s Integral Education programs at RKIP and IES are student-centered approaches, in which students are provided free, yet structured, learning environments that will help them to develop their innate capacities and awaken to new ones. At RKIP small children from the ages of two to five begin their educational journey with daily morning meditation and regular yoga sessions, as well as with an excellent program in social development and early academic skills. At IES, in addition to the standard academic program, students

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meaningful and effective for every student. In areas where students have remedial needs, they are provided lessons and guidance to help them catch up. Where students show particular inclinations or abilities to excel in any subject beyond their grade level, they are allowed and encouraged to fly as far as their respective wills and levels of development will take them.

**Q** What is most inspiring to you about this work? And do you have any advice for other schools / educators seeking to adopt this educational approach?

**A** Probably the most inspiring thing for me in this work is to witness the joyful learning among our students in both schools. It is, moreover, a privilege for me to merge my vocation with my sadhana.

I am also very fortunate to have a wonderful team of dedicated individuals who are walking this path with me. That said, I am not sure I would recommend this work for everyone. At times challenges can be overwhelming, particularly if you choose to subject your work to market forces by opening a private school rather than face the many hurdles and barriers to implementing spiritual components while running a charter school in the public system.

An entrepreneur once told me, you need three key components to do this work: a vision, a team, and funding. The first of these is not difficult for anyone with a strong sense that one’s life-purpose lies in this work. The second is doable, too. But the third always represents a major challenge. My suggestion for anyone contemplating the opening of any school: don’t do it unless you are prepared to make tremendous personal, emotional, and financial sacrifices for many years and maybe for the rest of your life! As for myself, I have chosen this path, or rather Mother chose it for me, so I have absolutely no regrets. For me there is boundless joy in the knowledge and conviction that I am fulfilling the mission I was sent here to accomplish.

**B** – Prapanna Smith is the founder/president of the Center for Integral Education and holds several degrees in Education Administration, and Teaching. Prapanna lived at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram from 1998 to 2001 and, during that time, he was a teacher of History, Geography, Philosophy, and Study Skills at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (SAICE). During his tenure there, he was highly involved with the school’s latest experiment in Free Progress Education, a truly student-centered approach to learning and teaching that is being developed and refined at the school. Prapanna has most recently completed his PhD at the UC San Diego-CSU San Marcos Joint Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership.

For more information on the Center for Integral Education and its affiliated schools go to [www.integraleducation.org](http://www.integraleducation.org).

## F.W.E. MISSION STATEMENT

The Foundation for World Education awards grants to incorporated nonprofit organizations around the world that support integral education, human unity, conscious evolution, and a transformed world as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The FWE provides a continuous stream of funding for current and future generations through responsible management of its endowment, receipt of donations and bequests, and discerning selection of grant recipients.

The FWE aspires to be instrumental in transmuting financial energy to its true purpose in the unfolding evolution and manifestation of a greater consciousness on earth.

enjoy a range of activities specifically designed to provide them with the means to explore all aspects of their being. Along with yoga and meditation, these include art, music, drama, dance, Awareness through the Body, and physical education. Through Individual Learning Plans (ILP), which delineate specific areas of need for each student, learning at IES is highly personalized. Teachers keep and maintain the ILPs to help them create learning experiences that are

*Planting seeds of human unity...*

# INTENSIFYING THE FOCUS ON INTEGRAL EDUCATION

*"The education of a human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his life."*

— *The Mother, On Education (Bulletin, 1951)*

Recently FWE has resolved to focus on supporting and extending the practice of Integral Education. We wish to promote creativity and innovation in the field as well as communication between educators whose work is in accord with the broad principles of education espoused by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

In promoting Integral Education in all its many manifestations we are inspired by words of Sri Aurobindo, such as:

*"Nothing can be taught. Mind has to be consulted in its own growth. Work from the near to the far."*

Though there are many forms that will emerge out of the vast field of IE, we also understand there is a central importance given to the psychic being as a key element in the growth of a child in the various planes of his or her being — physical,

vital, mental — as well as in the spiritual evolution of each unique individual.

For many years FWE has extensively supported a variety of Integral Education programs in Auroville, and we are working to further our collaboration with programs like the Rainbow Kids Integral School in the United States and the Sri Aurobindo Schools and Societies in India. We are also initiating a few projects, such as a gathering for teachers to share actual classroom experiences with Integral Education; a booklet describing Integral Education practices; and a power point CD or video to illustrate these practices. We welcome all ideas and suggestions.

In February, 2009 we sponsored a warmly received "conversation" between teachers in Auroville in which they could share their ideas and their experiences with Integral Education. Some fifteen teachers from six different schools

attended this conversation. They shared "practices that worked" that ranged from student written and directed plays to a high school survey of water and sanitation in the villages of the bio region which resulted in recommendations to the Auroville health service. We are sponsoring another, longer "conversation" this year and hope it will enable teachers, in the context of the Auroville school system, both to deepen and widen their understanding of fundamental principles of Integral Education and to generate a list of good practices to ground those principles.

## AWARENESS THROUGH THE BODY

As a further step in promoting Integral Education we are sponsoring a series of workshops on Awareness through the Body in the U.S. this summer. Awareness Through the Body (ATB) promotes self-awareness, concentration, and confidence through movement activities and reflection. ATB is a unique contribution to the practice of Integral Education. It was developed in Auroville by Aloka and Joan and has been practiced with children and adults in Auroville for about ten years.

*B* For more information about these workshops visit: [www.awarenessthroughthebody.wordpress.com](http://www.awarenessthroughthebody.wordpress.com)



Awareness Through the Body for kids



Awareness Through the Body for adults

*"...by means of a rational and discerning physical education, we must make our body strong and supple enough to become a fit instrument in the material world for the truth-force which wants to manifest through us."*

THE MOTHER

*Long-term giving to transform the earth.*

## GUIDELINES FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Foundation for World Education invites grant applications from individuals, programs and groups who share the vision for a transformed world espoused by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. *All proposals must be presented to FWE through the auspices of a nonprofit organization* and are subject to review by members of the board before a decision is taken. Proposals must be received by the board *four weeks in advance* of a scheduled meeting. Please email your proposal to the secretary. If your organization is submitting a proposal for the first time, please include a copy of its nonprofit tax exemption status. See below for upcoming application due dates.\*

### PROPOSAL FORMAT

- **Summary/overview:** Name of your project/program and brief explanation of what you plan to do.
- **Need/rationale:** Justify the significance of your project /program in relation to your organization's mission and the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.
- **Program implementation and schedule:** Explain how you will implement this project. Include a time line and statement of the future viability of this project. Is it self-sustaining after initial seed money from the FWE, or will there be future requests to support the program?
- **Personnel:** Names and qualifications of groups and individuals directly responsible for project.
- **Project's contribution:** What is the duration and extent of influence your project will have for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's vision of the Integral Yoga? How is your project related to other organizations or individuals currently engaged in the work of the Integral Yoga?
- **Current and future funding:** List sources of income and/or other funding sources for your project.
- **Budget:** Detail income and expenditure.
- **Final and progress reports:** Indicate method proposed to evaluate effectiveness of the project/program while in progress; written final report to be submitted within one year of completion of the grant or grant renewal. Indicate name of person who will prepare the final report.

#### \* DUE DATES FOR NEXT SCHEDULED MEETINGS:

- MAY 12, 2010
- AUGUST 30, 2010
- JANUARY 7, 2011 (for main granting session)

## GRANT ALLOCATIONS 2006 - 2008

### 2006 Grants \$38,943

Auroville (via the PCG) .....	\$25,200
Antioch-Auroville Teacher Exchange.....	6,000
AUM 2006 Scholarships .....	3,000
Hladina Method (via Soleil Lithman).....	3,000
Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives, Conservancy....	1,743

### 2007 Grants \$39,075

Auroville (via the PCG).....	\$21,600
Antioch-Auroville Teacher Exchange .....	4,000
AUM 2007 Scholarships .....	2,000
AUM 2008 Seed Money .....	2,000
Center for Integral Education.....	2,000
CIIS Haridas Chaudhuri Documentary .....	2,000
White Rose Foundation, Integral Education,	



FWE Board Members from left to right: Gordon Korstange, Bhuvana Nandakumar, Margo MacLeod, Heidi Watts, Jerry Schwartz, Paula Murphy, Dakshina Vanzetti and John Schlorholtz

### How you can participate ...

The Foundation for World Education allocates annual grants through disbursement from its endowment. Since grant requests keep growing, we are able to fund only a portion of the worthy projects we consider each year. We therefore seek to grow in our ability to give grants by increasing the endowment.

The FWE encourages donations, bequests, long term giving, and tax advantaged estate planning. We also welcome the establishment of designated funds for areas of special interest--see our website for further details. As we are a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation, contributions within the U.S. may be partially or fully deductible for income or estate taxes. Please consult with your own tax advisor to determine the specific tax benefits that may available to you. (For additional information on wills and trusts go to [www.fwegiving.org](http://www.fwegiving.org).) We are happy to answer questions and work with contributors to build a plan for giving. Your gift to the FWE is a gift to future generations and to conscious evolution in diverse fields of human endeavor.

## Foundation for World Education

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