

AYUDH is a movement of young people who want to lead a life based on spiritual values. Starting with ourselves, we want to help generate a future of hope, peace, and social engagement while maintaining an awareness of universal spiritual principles.



**INTERNATIONAL
YEAR OF
YOUTH**
AUGUST 2010-2011
OUR YEAR OUR VOICE

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INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF YOUTH

12 AUGUST 2010 TO 11 AUGUST 2011

In December 2009, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 64/134 proclaiming the Year, signifying the importance the international community places on integrating youth-related issues into global, regional, and national development agendas. Under the theme Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, the Year aims to promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity across generations, cultures, religions and civilizations.

The world is facing many, often overlapping, crises including financial, security, environmental and other socio-economic challenges hindering the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals. Investing in and partnering with youth is key to addressing these challenges in a sustainable manner.



AYUDH at the United Nations Representatives Attend Launch of International Year of Youth

AYUDH representatives took part in the launch of the International Year of Youth, themed Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, held at the United Nations General Assembly Hall in its New York City Headquarters on Youth Day (August 12, 2010).

The opening speech given by His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, recognized the deep potential that lies within the younger generations and urged all youth to engage with the world to become a global citizen, while stressing the importance of investing in young people.

The speech was followed by various performances- in music and dance, as well as inspirational videos and slideshow presentations given by youth representatives of several NGOs.

Furthermore, the United Nations pledged the 2010-2011 year

as the International Year of Youth, a time during which the U.N. will attempt to meet three important goals: increasing the awareness of investing in youth, mobilizing and engaging youth and youth-led organizations, and increasing the inter-cultural understanding between youth.

Other notable speakers included

“Youth deserve our full commitment--full access to education, adequate healthcare, employment opportunities, financial services and full participation in public life.”

-UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

Monique Coleman (actress, singer, and dancer), H.E. Samir Laabidi (Minister of Youth, Sport and Physical Education of the Republic of Tunisia), and Jane Stewart (Special Representative and Director, ILO Office to the United Nations).

This is a great inspiration for AYUDH members world-wide to continue wholeheartedly in their efforts. To find out more about AYUDH's plans for the Year of Youth, visit www.ayudh.org or write to info@ayudh.eu.

Submit Your Green Stories!

With the UN's International Year of Youth motto, "Our Year. Our Voice," AYUDH members around the world are encouraged to share their views and experiences on various youth-related subjects. One new forum for AYUDH members in a special column, called "AYUDH's Green Stories" in *Matruvani*, M.A.M.'s monthly spiritual magazine. The same stories are also going to be published on www.embracingtheworld.org.

We invite YOU to write a 300 - 500 word article about how Amma's teachings and example have inspired you to implement the principles of sustainability and ecology into your personal life. Whether you have changed from going to school in your parent's Ferrari to riding a bicycle, or whether you have mobilized your friends to join you in a large-scale clean-up in a natural reserve, they are inspiring to hear about.

In your article please outline which teachings of Amma inspired you, how you went about doing this, what impact your actions have on nature and society, and what you can tell other youth who hope to learn from your example.

Questions? info@ayudh.eu
Please submit reports to: reports@ayudh.eu



Life is a chance, take it
 Life is Love, share it
 Life is a hymn, sing it
 Life is a dream, make it real
 Life is a must, do it
 Life is a challenge, face it
 Life is beauty, admire it
 Life is bliss, taste it
 Life is precious, protect it
 Life is a mystery, embrace it
 Life is a promise, fulfill it
 Life is a fight, accept it
 When life gives a hard time, smile!
 Life is happiness, embrace it
 Life is beauty, admire it
 Life is joy, celebrate it!

-Youth song composed at exchange

Youth Meeting for a Better Future Sixth Annual European AYUDH Exchange

Entitled “Embracing Life – Living in the Respect of Nature”, the 6th European Youth Exchange of AYUDH welcomed in total 73 youth from 8 European countries to La Ferme du Pleiss, France from July 24 to August 1, 2010, and was co-sponsored by the European Commission’s “Youth in Action” program.

The program included inspirational talks by Br. Shubamrita and Bri. Dipamrita focused on the values that can help us integrate our respect for Nature into our daily lives. There were additional talks on energy consumption by an expert on carbon governance, on water consumption, and about the complexity and origin of some of the major ecological challenges faced in the world today.

Four different workshop modules were offered to the participants of the youth exchange, and each participant could choose one workshop from each module, that were based on the different dimensions of sustainability. They were called the “CARE” workshops, which stands for:

C – Community Service: The youth could contribute to a sustainable community in different ways, like working in an organic vegetable garden.

A – Artistic: The youth could develop and express their creative potential through painting, drumming, singing, or glass crafting.

R – Revitalization: These workshops addressed stress-management, enabling the youth to develop their creativity and productivity while studying or working, through IAM Meditation, Tai Chi, Qigong, and more.

E – Ecology: These workshops were dedicated to environmental protection and maintenance of biodiversity, like building a “hotel” for insects or recycling plastic trash into valuable fashion items.

For many participants this marked the sixth year of getting together for this European Youth Exchange. The bond that had formed amongst the youngsters through all these years deepened with the new participants who blended in the group seamlessly, bringing new inspiration and cultural enrichment to the group.

A visit to the nearby cathedral of Chartres, as well as bonfire, games and soccer matches allowed everyone to enjoy the diversity of cultures, nationalities and languages of those present.

Amrita Watoto Boma AYUDH Kenya to Volunteer with Children's Care Center

Amma's tireless worldwide philanthropic programs and her philosophy of selfless service for spiritual development have inspired Amrita Centre Kenya to establish a children's care centre that will provide shelter and education for needy children. Eleven acres of land near Athi River, Nairobi, have already been donated for the purpose of establishing the envisaged children's home. Our plans for the children's home include dormitories, classrooms, an administrative block, a playground, sports facilities, a medical clinic, and more. Amma inaugurated the construction during her visit to Kenya in April of 2009. Upon completion of the first phase of construction, 54 children were adopted by Amrita Centre Kenya. The children's home will be able to house about 108 children between the ages of 6 and 14 years.

I visited the orphanage recently and I must say it looks amazing so far and is nearly complete. There were about 25 children at the home when I went and the smiles on their faces were absolutely priceless. I spoke with the children to find out how they felt about their new home. They were eagerly waiting to move in soon and couldn't wait to look at their new home and school. During the visit, Bank of India also distributed school bags to all the children; the excitement



"There are two types of education: education for livelihood and education for life. The main purpose of education should be to impart a culture of the heart—a culture based on moral and spiritual values." – Amma

that ran through these children was amazing. They were thrilled. These children have faced a lot of problems such as improper living standards and lack of parental care. Many families can barely make ends meet, such that most children cannot continue schooling. Without a correct upbringing, such children's lives become a challenging existence, ever dependent on others for their survival. A proper home and school would be their only respite from such difficult conditions.

Amrita Watoto Boma looks beautiful. I think it has to be the most

modern and eco-friendly orphanage in Kenya. I couldn't help but get a little emotional at one point because I felt that this project will be a great success. The children will have a better standard of living and care and better schooling—they will enjoy learning with new materials and they will also enjoy spending time in their new play area.

AYUDH Kenya hopes to visit the home as often as we can to see how the children are doing, and we also hope to host fairs over the weekends and mentor the children.

-Sheena Shah

The Journey to La Ferme du Pleiss Two Bikers Travel 700 Kilometers to AYUDH Exchange

Two members from Ayudh Netherlands took the ecological theme of Ayudh's 2010 youth exchange, 'Embracing Life', very seriously, and decided to travel to the retreat at the M.A. Center in Pontgouin, France, in an environmental friendly way—they went by bicycle! What was at first meant as a joke came into reality on the 12th of July 2010, when Ayudh's Dorien and Maaike set off from Amsterdam packed and prepared and with old-fashioned racing bikes. Traversing the Belgium and French countryside and passing through sweet little villages, big industrial cities, campsites, and endless grain fields, the two finally reached La Ferme du Plessis on the 22nd of July.

"When I wanted to give up, I visualized our arrival in the ashram. In this way we were able to go on and challenge the high climbs, the heat, and the long road." Maaike

Cycling around 700 kilometers in ten days put the challenge of "embracing life" to the test: it required using physical and mental strength to keep biking despite challenging hills and bumpy roads, being outside in storm, rain or striking heat, and appreciating what is growing on the countryside.

The bikers commented that being in nature and cycling all day was a spiritual practice to keep their minds at peace—when biking on such a long trip, hearing for hours nothing but birds, pedals, and wheels spinning, one can clear the mind from distractive thoughts. Said Maaike, "Amma's presence was clearly there, and whenever my legs were tired after cycling for hours or when I wanted to give up, I visualized our arrival in the ashram. In this way we were able to go on and challenge the high climbs, the heat, and the long road." The trip even inspired Maaike to dedicate her career to developing sustainable and social projects for nature.



The very first East Coast exchange brought together a handful of young activists eager to use AYUDH as a forum for loving and serving the world.

First Annual East Coast Youth Exchange

AYUDH Congregates at Brand New M.A. Center in Washington, DC

The inaugural AYUDH East Coast Youth Exchange was held from August 14-15 at the M.A. Center in Washington, DC. Led by Br. Dayamrita Chaitanya, the retreat brought together over 30 youth from around the United States for a weekend of activities revolving around the theme of “Embracing Life.”

The exchange commenced with a live webcast with Swami Amritaswarupananda in Amritapuri, who gave the attendees inspirational advice on how to embrace life as Amma’s children. Enthused, the AYUDH members cooked and served a 9-course meal for Mother’s Kitchen and participated in a park restoration project, as a way of loving and serving the world and Nature.

That evening, after a lively bhajan set featuring AYUDH singers and musicians, a handful

of attendees put on an amazing talent show with a variety of acts, including photography, Bharatanatyam, breakdancing, poetry, a capella, Indian classical singing, Jazz, and a vivacious rendition of “Lean on Me.”

One of the weekend’s highlights was Br. Ramanand’s bhajan class for “Meri Jhoppidi De,” which intertwined the talents of several AYUDH members. From guitar solos to girls vs. boys, classical Indian notes to a clarinet interlude, an alap and a spontaneous rap solo, each and every participant rejoiced in the song and the escalating tempo. Satya Valis quickly spun out a rhyming rap

written by Satish Mishra, playing on the meaning of the song. “No desire for the name/ no desire for fame/ I show no shame/ my love for Him’s like one and the same/ so I chant His name/ Oh Rama Oh Rama!”

To culminate a weekend of “Embracing Life,” retreatants tied a string around each of their wrists to symbolize one specific promise made to themselves to become more active AYUDH

**No desire for the name
No desire for fame
I show no shame
My love for Him’s like one
and the same
So I chant His name
Oh Rama Oh Rama!**

members and better individuals, so that, guided by Amma’s Love, they may be able to create a bright and sustainable

future for their brothers and sisters around the world.

French Students Explore JSS

Four Engineering Students Travel to Idukki to Better Understand the Functioning of NGOs

Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), or also the Institution for Peoples Education, is a governmental program founded in 1963 that is run in cooperation with Indian NGOs. JSS Idukki, founded in 2003, is operated by Embracing the World (ETW).

The main goal of ETW's JSS program here is to promote the overall development of the residents of Idukki District by improving their quality of life and supporting their self-preservation on a community level. The program primarily serves a population of forest dwellers and semi-rural inhabitants from remote and mountainous areas, such as members of particular tribes who often live in abject poverty.

We arrived in India on August 12th at Amma's Ashram in Amritapuri. When we got Darshan from Amma the first night, we were surprised by the attention and intensity she has for each person in front of her. It felt like she knew us and was already expecting us. We were also impressed how well organized all the work processes at the Ashram were; even though all the work is done by volunteers, everything runs smoothly.

The next day we left Amritapuri to go to Idukki. After a few days, we visited an Ashram deep in the forest near Katapana, where coffee, cardamom, pepper, cacao, chili, ginger, and jackfruit are grown. It was interesting to see how they grow the crops in the forest without disturbing the trees that already stand there. We also had the chance to meet children who went to school in Idukki. We even taught them two French songs. At first they were shy, but after a while they came out of their nutshells and we tried to communicate despite the language barrier.

Along with other volunteers, we distributed rice to those in the food program. All of them were grateful and hospitable—

in each house we received a warm welcome and were offered food which we rejected, but without success. The villagers live in simple houses and we felt guilty eating their scarce supplies. We were truly touched by a very old blind woman who was so happy to meet us that she took our hands to her forehead to thank us. We were moved by the smiles the people living there kept on their faces despite the hard living conditions.

The last day there, we distributed rice after Swami Jnanamritananda, who is in charge of the JSS Idukki program, gave a speech. We could give the food to the people thanks to the love and compassion of Amma. But Swami J explained that it is also Amma's wish that they should give those feelings back to their families and friends, so that the rice not only nurtures the body but also the mind. Each recipient reacted differently; some burst out crying, some were smiling, some thanked us over and over again, some were taking our hands in theirs. All those feelings show us how important and vital the ration of rice is for them as they can live from it for a whole month. For us, it was the most intense yet joyful experience, both physically and mentally, in Idukki.

That night we arrived in a tribal hamlet, where we learned from the local women how to cultivate mushrooms and to make mats out of bamboo. Even though we couldn't speak their language, we quickly managed to communicate.

We also noticed that everybody here eats what is produced locally whereas in France we export the food we grow and then import the same food because of the lower prices due to globalized markets and trade subsidies. This experience in the tribal area also marked the end of our stay in the Idukki district. We then traveled back to Amritapuri for the Onam festival before we returned home full of new experiences.

We were moved by the smiles the people living there kept on their faces despite the hard living conditions.

French students from ISTOM, an engineer school for international agro-development, visit Idukki and distribute bags of rice. In their third year of study, they are required to gain work experience in a charity organizations in order to understand the general structure and functioning of NGOs.





Amma's Acre Tree-Planting project operates through an all-year-round fundraising effort by the youth in the form of selling tree-vouchers which covers the cost of the saplings and their care over coming year. The amount raised allowed a team of eight to plant around 50 trees over the weekend.

AYUDH UK plants trees on Amma's Acre

On 14 February, in the true spirit of St Valentine's Day, Ayudh's tree-planting project in Exeter celebrated the healing relationship between man and nature. The day began with morning archana after which Amma's youth, cold but optimistic, were given an induction into the art of tree-planting.

Owing to the heavy snows, the uppermost layer of ground required

greater attention with our shovels. The process of planting the willows, ash and oak included digging out an area large enough to cover the roots of the trees without suffocating their base, cutting the stakes by which the trees would be supported and encasing the trees in protective guards.

These trees were planted on the land either side of a footpath, affording a walk across the hill and down into pastureland beyond. The view —an amalgam of greens —was that of the

undisturbed countryside, breathtaking, beautiful and truly inspiring. Collectively, we managed to plant more than 50 trees, each with great care, attention and enjoyment.

In the evening there were bhajans in celebration of Maha Shivaratri, whilst our experiences with nature were further felt in camping out in a Mongolian Yurt, warmed by a temperamental wood-burner and the unceasing laughter of youth.

-Neela Bhurtun

Making Wealth from Waste: AYUDH Netherlands Fundraises for Farmer Relief

AYUDH Netherlands organized two workshops in the Spring that allowed participants to create treasure out of what might be seen as trash. Donata Papadia from Italy taught AYUDH members how to make wallets from recycled milk cartons and beautiful storage boxes from old cans and magazines. In this way, AYUDH learned how to find creative solutions for waste that is produced, and developed a higher awareness for what to do with the waste we all produce.

On April 30, AYUDH members sold the items made with recycled products at the Queensday flea market in Amsterdam in order to fundraise for Embracing the World's Farmer's Suicide Relief Project.





“GrowIn’ – One Seed at a Time” is a green initiative by AYUDH to encourage youth to cultivate their own food, in whatever space they have available.

Through an online platform and local training courses, AYUDH will teach youth to grow veggies on a city balcony, a window shelf, or in a garden. The aim is to grow healthy organic local food, reducing our footprint on the Earth and reconnecting with Nature.



AYUDH Ireland Inaugurates GrowIn’

The first Irish AYUDH GrowIn’ event took place on April 17 and 18, 2010, which was a weekend dedicated to the Global Days of Service. A small group of youngsters came together to learn how to grow their own vegetables at home. The workshops were organized by AYUDH Ireland’s local GrowIn’ gardener and were held in the garden of a center for the homeless. We spent the first day outside making raised beds out of recycled timber. We were joined by some of the inhabitants of the shelter and happily worked side by side to improve the vegetable garden and make it ready for a new season of organic homegrown vegetables.

As a break from our hard work we had a small demonstration on how to make handicrafts from

recycled plastic. For this, old compost bags were re-used by washing them, cutting them into strips (plastic yarn) and croqueting them into nice handbags: from waste to wealth. After this we learned how to make a wormery, the yield of which is the highly acclaimed worm compost, a great fertilizer. On the second day, we learned how to grow potatoes in tires and spent some time learning how to mix soil properly and grow vegetables in pots. We made compost tea, another highly acclaimed organic fertilizer and soil improver, and prepared some recycled mayonnaise buckets for even more vegetable plants to be sown. As a nice conclusion to the day, we all sowed a few seeds together with other youth groups all over Europe during a live Skype session, while chanting “Om Lokah Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu”—may all beings be happy.

-Aisha Oron

AYUDH Italy GrowIn’ Vegetables in an Empty Garden

The first National-level Italian AYUDH meeting in 2010 was held on the shores of the Lake Monate in Osmate (Varese province) of Northern Italy, and it began by creating a garden from an empty plot.

After freeing the soil from weeds and stones, AYUDH members sprinkled organic fertilizer and created flower beds elevated for water drainage. Thanks to the mild temperature, they could sow directly into the soil, after which members covered the area with tarpaulin sheets to protect future shoots from Crows, sparrows and other birds. They planted potatoes, onions, radishes, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, and even tulasi (holy basil).

“The biggest threat for mankind today is not a third world war but the loss of harmony and widening separation between man and nature.” -Amma





The German Ayudh Youth Group decided to dedicate a complete weekend in order to learn how to grow vegetables. It took place in the German Amma Centre in the spring of 2010. One AYUDH member happens to be a professional organic gardener, and she planned the event as well as conducted the activities. She explained to the

participants how to prepare a bed, which soil to take, how to sow the seeds, how to plant, how to maintain the garden, and how to harvest seeds for the next year. That weekend, AYUDH members sowed and planted seeds on a hilly bed. During the summer, several vegetables were harvested, which allowed AYUDH to make a significant contribution to the

German Centre. Furthermore, everyone took seeds in pots back home and began growing their own vegetables. The weather was brilliant, as if the sun was eager to contribute to a good outcome. In the evening, everyone had a bonfire and discussed future plans. Next year's event will be held from May 13-15, 2011, at the German Centre.