

Indo-Pakistan Youth Peace Initiatives



India and Pakistan are probably among the youngest countries in the world with the median age of India at 24.9 years and that of Pakistan at 19.8 years. That's a strong enough reason to demonstrate that it's the youth of both the nations who will play a great role in opening up channels of communication and understanding, thus dispelling the long clouds of suspicion, bitterness and war.



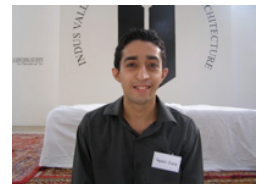
The directors of WAYE (World Alliance for Youth Empowerment), the youth body of the Art of Living Foundation, Dinesh Ghodke and Khurshed Batliwala, recently toured Pakistan for 2 weeks. Under Sri Sri's guidance and inspiration, they visited Pakistan to bring about a greater understanding among the youth of the two countries. This was a continuation of the message of peace and goodwill that Sri Sri brought to Pakistan as the first Hindu spiritual leader to visit them in July 2004.



Over 100 Pakistani youth from various universities underwent a 7-day program in the age group of 18 to 25 years at the Indus School of Arts and Architecture, Karachi. Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, Hindus and young people of the Sufi faith participated in the Youth Empowerment Seminar.



The aim was to empower the youth as individuals and then enable them to take responsibility for a violence-free, stress-free society. Strategies were also discussed to take initiatives for breaking prejudices by bringing together people through music, dance, drama, arts, sports and social service. Almost all agreed to the fact that since we take food, fashion, music and technology



from all over the world; it's time to globalize wisdom as well and not just potato chips and fizzy drinks. The youth thus have a major role in deepening the roots and broadening the vision of a nation.



The youth were inspired by the social work of the AOL volunteers during the Pakistan earthquake in June 2005 and the tremendous humanitarian efforts by the foundation worldwide.

The WAYE directors conducted programs in Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore and were featured in HUM TV, Jiyo Channel and TV1, major Pakistani TV networks and the top 4 radio channels, FM 89, FM 91, FM 99 and FM 103. They also met with the UNICEF, UNDP, UNAIDS representatives and sought to find more avenues to work together with the youth by building on each other's strengths. Discussions were also held with heads of various NGO's like Insaan and Maqсад Foundation and an understanding was reached to carry out youth exchange programs to be held between India and Pakistan for social service and cultural activities.

