

Hot Off the *Chulha*: *Ghatti* (Grinding Wheel) Finds a New Home!

Want to grind fresh grains into flour and red chiles, coriander seeds and tumeric roots into spices? And, on top of it, get the best abs workout of your life? Then, join us in the Shikshantar organic gym, where a *ghatti* (traditional grinding wheel) has made its entry. Passed on to us from our grandmothers, it consists of two large flat stones pressed together. They are balanced on an axle, which two people together rotate, in order to grind the grains or herbs. It is part of our commitment to both slow food and to *shram* (joyful labor together). Come by soon, and check it out!

Upcoming Events

Udaipur as a Learning City



- It's wide, colorful and inviting... and built for many! We recently constructed a sofa from mud, rice husk, straw, stone and cow dung, to create a space for public interaction in our neighborhood. It is inspired by the traditional village chaupal. Stop by at the Shikshantar Chai Chaupal to warm yourself in the winter sun, have a cup of herbal tea and welcome passers-by for a chat!



- The food revolution is underway at Astha Training Center in Bedla. Sunny Gandharva, a long-time member of our team, and Leena Gupta, from the Foundation for Ecological Security, are leading the way by sharing healthy, local and organic foods at this retreat center which hosts over six thousand visitors a year. See what's cooking up in the kitchen and come on by to lend a hand!



- Winter is here, and so it's time to stock up on herbal medicines! This season, with the large crop of *amla* (a local fruit high in vitamin C), we are particularly focused on making chywanprash, a super wonderful health tonic with over 50 different kinds of herbs. We will also be making a natural cleaning agent for bathrooms and floors. Come by Shikshantar, or give Ram or Uma a call if you would like to host a herbal workshop in your neighborhood!



- Looms loom everywhere in Shikshantar these days! Stop by to learn how to pick up this simple and effective art, and to make your own simple handloom out of waste cardboard with Guddi and Hira. We have been using scraps of cloth to make colorful belts, bags and purses. Let your fingers do the walking... and see what you can create!

Unfolding Learning Societies Conference

After its first gathering in Udaipur in 2002, Unfolding Learning Societies traveled to Mumbai, Brazil, Pakistan, Jordan and Iran. We are inviting friends from all over India and from around the world, who are doing creative work in all kinds of fields, and are experimenting with new forms of lifelong learning and healthy learning communities, for the next conference, to be held in March 2009. Contact Manish Jain and Nitin Paranjape manish@swaraj.org, and visit our webpage to see the history of Unfolding Learning Societies:

http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/ls_discussion.html



Resources and Publications

Our Lives, Our Homes, Our Cities

We put together a small booklet highlighting some of the wonderful efforts people are making to transform their urban learning ecosystems into livable, healthy, environmentally sound and socially connected places. Check it out at www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/cityinnovationsbook.pdf. The beginnings of a film festival on urban living is also up on-line to check out and share with other members of your city community: <http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/urbanfilm.htm>



Reclaiming the Gift Culture

As the financial bubbles burst around the world, it is time to remember and revive an ancient, widespread and effective form of exchange and interaction: the gift culture, a culture of reciprocity, giving, receiving, conviviality and sacred exchange. Learn how the gift culture is an essential part of keeping alive the learning commons. Friends from all over the world shared their ideas and experiences in this new edition to the Vimukt Shiksha series: www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/giftculture.pdf. Help expand the intercultural dialogue!



Swapathgami - Hindi Edition

The latest Hindi edition of Swapathgami, the magazine of the Walkouts-Walkons Network, is in print and on-line! It contains stories from all over India on people engaging in dynamic actions to walk their own paths of living and learning. Download at www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/swapathgami_hindi14.pdf

Recent Activities

Swapathgami Filmmaking Workshop

We hosted our fifth annual filmmaking workshop in Udaipur, from September 12-21, 2008. 35 people participated, each making their own individual short film and then splitting up to make five films in small groups: creative cheating in schools, experiments in conscious living, stereotyping, Dharamanathji (a harmonium maker) and zero waste practices. Visit the Swapathgami homepage to find links to these films:

<http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar/walkoutsnetwork.htm>.



CCF Media and Self Expression Workshops

Shikshantar's Community Media Resource Center collaborated with CCF-India several times this year to conduct workshops with their NGO partners and schools on new thinking in education, critical and expressive media skills, and creativity and imagination. We offered children and their teachers sessions on photography, filmmaking, cooperative games, poster design, mural making, stick puppets, jewelrymaking, zero waste toys, etc.



Environment, Ecology, Livelihoods, Culture and Learning

Collaborating with Visthar-Bangalore and several local organizations, we hosted 16 students from Gustavus Adolphus and Concordia Colleges in Minnesota, USA, for their week-long course in Udaipur. They had a chance to explore forests, water, migration, organic farming, zero waste in our bio-region, and also to reflect on their lifestyles and possibilities for Swaraj in the future.



Art of Learning Centering in Zimbabwe

Several members of the Shikshantar family traveled to Kufunda Learning Village and Uhuru in Zimbabwe to participate in Berkana Exchange's Art of Learning Centering in October: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/8414358@N03/sets/72157608340904525/> We were inspired by how local communities were resiliently regenerating themselves amidst financial and political turmoil.



Always Room for More

Visitors, visitors, visitors! Shanti Lal Kothari stopped in from MP to share about local foods; Andrea came from France to share her talent with spinning pois; Narayanbhai Desai from Veddchi, Gujarat, shared stories of Nai Taleem and Gandhiji; Elisabeth from Norway shared experiences with KaosPilots; Doreen and Lars visited from Canada to host a workshop on acupressure... Hopefully, we will see your smiling face in Shikshantar soon!

Invitation to Contribute to Shikshantar in 2008



Celebrate Shikshantar's 10 year anniversary with us! We have seen Shikshantar organically evolve into a leadership learning community, a community media center, a zero waste center, an unlearning-healing center...and a jeevan andolan engaging with people of all walks of life, from all around India and the world. This has been made possible by the contributions of friends, who have given of their time, talents, energy, resources, and spirit. We are grateful and feel honored for all that we have received, and in turn, have been able to share back with our wide web of friends, families, organizations and movements.

We invite you to continue to help co-create this life movement: start up a creative experiment with your family and friends, write some reflections on your own un-learning journey, share ideas for new collaborations, walk out of something that you do/consume that doesn't support your deepest values. Please also consider making a financial or in-kind donation to support our work. We hope to start 2009 with a bang!

Shikshantar, a not-for-profit movement, was founded to challenge the culture of schooling and institutions of thought-control. We are committed to creating spaces of wisdom, imagination and friendship where individuals and communities can together engage in deep dialogues to: (1) generate meaningful critiques to expose and dismantle/transform industrial-military models of Education and Development, (2) reclaim control over their own learning processes and learning ecologies, and (3) imagine (and continually evolve) their own complex shared visions and practices of Swaraj. Shikshantar is run solely through the support of friends. We do not accept funds from international donor agencies, governments or corporations.

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