



The Way Forward

10 Year Strategic Roadmap for the International Network of Engaged Buddhists

(2018-2027)

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The Story of INEB

The Roots of Engaged Buddhism

Shakyamuni Buddha advised monks, nuns, and lay people how to work to benefit society with ethical and altruistic intention and actions. Despite the Buddha's clear counsel, Buddhists today do not always apply the Dharma for social change. Instead, Buddhists around the world often focus only on their own meditation or ritual practices, scarcely recognizing the suffering just beyond the walls of their temple or Dharma center. Indeed, many teachers and senior Sangha members only teach or preach and choose not to encounter intimately those in suffering through deep listening.

Buddhist social activism as a movement arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with both ordained Sangha and lay responses to colonialism, foreign invasion, Westernization, and the injustices of oppression. We see examples in China, Burma, Sri Lanka, India and elsewhere, with the notable contributions of Angarika Dharmapala and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

The Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hahn coined the English phrase "engaged Buddhism" in the 1960s. Thich Nhat Hahn stressed in his writings in Vietnamese the need for "renewing Buddhism" and "a Buddhism updated" (the translated title of his 1965 book *Dao Phat Hien Dai Hoa*), concepts that he combined with the French phrase *le bouddhisme engagé*. While many academics and activists have since tried to define what engaged Buddhism is, Thich Nhat Hahn is clear that what the Buddha taught more than 2,600 years ago was an ideal of acting within society, not retreating from it. Ajahn Sulak Sivaraksa reminds us that, "Buddhism by definition is engaged. Meditation without social engagement is escapism." The Buddhist path is by definition engaged with people, because it deals with the suffering we encounter in ourselves and in others, right here and right now.

Ajahn Sulak's Kalyanamitra Network & the Birth of INEB

Ajahn Sulak first met Thich Nhat Hahn in 1974 in Sri Lanka at an interfaith gathering. Their camaraderie and work created the foundation for the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB). While Thich Nhat Hahn's articulation of Buddhist activism arose as a response to war, Sulak's Buddhist engagement evolved in response to globalism, the rise of transnational corporations, military dictatorship, and absolute monarchy.

Ajahn Sulak worked with other Buddhist trailblazers throughout the 1970s and 80s. This included working with Buddhadasa Bhikkhu on Dhammic education and Phra Payutto on Buddhist economics in Thailand, with Maha Ghosananda on promotion of peace and reconciliation in Cambodia, and with Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne on sustainable communities in Sri Lanka. Ajahn Sulak was also deeply drawn to the non-violent struggle that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has led among Tibetans and especially the power of forgiveness. Ajahn Sulak has maintained a close personal friendship with other Tibetans, namely Professor Samdhong

Rinpoche and Lodi Gyari Rinpoche. These are just a few of the many individuals who Ajahn Sulak has worked with and learned from, and who have helped shape innovative ways to apply the Buddhist teachings in contemporary society.

By the late 1980s, Ajahn Sulak recognized a need for a vehicle to bring Buddhists together across traditions and borders to cooperate for social change. He organized a meeting on his in-law's houseboat in Uthai Thani in central Thailand. Among those who attended were monks and nuns, meditators and radical leftists activists, professors and bureaucrats—in all, three dozen individuals from eleven countries, mostly though not exclusively Buddhists. Priests from three Japanese Buddhist sects were represented, as well as a group of Burmese monks, a handful of English, American, and German Buddhists, and a number of Ajahn Sulak's acolytes were present. The result of the three-day meeting was the creation of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), the organization that has since had the widest global reach of any of Ajahn Sulak's endeavors.

There was a lively debate at this time about the organizational structure of INEB. Ajahn Sulak's past experience of running overly compartmentalized organizations gave him the idea of having almost no regulations for INEB, which would be instead a "loose network of spiritually connected friends with no central authority." Ajahn Sulak convinced others that a network of *kalyanamitra*—spiritual friends—should be the central organizing principle. Along with *kalyanamitra*, Ajahn Sulak said, "I wanted to organize the network the way the Buddha had established the Sangha. I think the Buddha would agree with equality, fraternity, and liberty as our guiding principles."

Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Dalai Lama accepted Ajahn Sulak's invitation to become the patrons of INEB, representing the three Buddhist vehicles, or routes to enlightenment—the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. All three have attended INEB gatherings over the years but their participation has been more by association than participation.

INEB's growth started with individuals and groups in Southeast and East Asia, and spread to encompass other countries. 26 years after its founding, INEB has members and organizations in nearly thirty countries. The Bangkok-based INEB secretariat office coordinates activities with a handful of staff. The organizational structure remains decentralized. The focus of INEB arises from the concerns of the network members, not from Ajahn Sulak or others who are seen as elders of the organization. As the network is vast and diverse, so too are its projects, actions, and interests. INEB has supported human rights and social justice for the Burmese during the Saffron Revolution and the outcaste Dalit peoples of India as well as the right of self-determination for the Tibetans, the Buddhist peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tribes in Bangladesh, and other marginalized groups. INEB has advanced peace and reconciliation efforts in Sri Lanka, Cambodia and elsewhere, interfaith and Buddhist-Muslim dialogue, and various environmental campaigns including addressing the effects of climate change while opposing dams, mines, and deforestation. INEB has supported the equality of women,

especially the full ordination of Buddhist nuns, and has created platforms and tools for socially engaged Buddhist youth to engage in civil society, protest, and advocacy.

The Reinterpretation of Core Buddhist Teachings for the Contemporary World

1. The Three Poisons & Structural Violence

Throughout the 1990s, INEB was part of worldwide movement of socially engaged Buddhism that gathered strength and shared methods and resources. Among socially engaged Buddhists, there were different ways of expressing, countering, and offering methods to overcome personal and societal suffering to uproot greed, anger, and delusion and its structural parallels consumerism, militarism, and mass media. Ajahn Sulak’s articulation of the Buddha’s teachings in modern society was influenced by the work of the Norwegian polymath Johan Galtung, who pushed Ajahn Sulak to take on the systems of injustice rather than just focus on individuals. Galtung began writing about “structural violence” in 1969 to describe the institutionalized ways in which suffering is perpetuated in modern society, and Ajahn Sulak fused this concept with his analysis of socially engaged Buddhism. Ajahn Sulak summarizes structural violence as the “systematic ways a society’s resources are distributed unequally and unfairly, preventing people from meeting their basic needs.” To explain how these structures are maintained, Ajahn Sulak brings in the fundamental Buddhist teaching of the three “poisons” of greed, anger, and delusion and how they are at the root of personal and structural violence in the modern world.

Ajahn Sulak explains that personal greed—the insatiable desire for accumulation, an ever-expanding possessiveness—manifests on the societal level as capitalism, consumerism, and the extraction of natural resources in a manner that ignores the limits of the environment. He sees individuals’ seeds of hatred manifesting in the world as militarism and all the support structures for war. Ajahn Sulak’s harshest critique is reserved for the peddlers of delusion, which is the primary origin of all our troubles—advertisers and the popular media, which promote useless products and unwholesome ideas that lead people away from a meaningful life of contentment and toward poverty and a sense of separation and alienation.

“If we are serious about getting rid of greed, anger, and ignorance in ourselves,” Ajahn Sulak says, “we must inquire how we actively or passively take part in perpetuating the three poisons in society as ‘structural violence.’ Once we see the interconnections, we can work simultaneously on our own spiritual development and to dismantle the structural violence in society,” Ajahn Sulak wrote in *The Wisdom of Sustainability* (2009)

2. The Buddhist Precepts & Social Systems

Various INEB *kalyanamitra* have been on the forefront of enacting modern reinterpretations of the five Buddhist precepts—that is abstaining from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxicants. By extending these guidelines beyond an individual’s personal practice to society at large, the socially engaged Buddhist works at once on herself or himself and at the

same time for the benefit of others. For example, while we might not be killing outright, we must examine how our own actions might support war, racial violence, or the breeding of animals for human consumption. Regarding the precept to abstain from stealing, we are called to questions the moral implications of our participation in capitalism and of the depletion of natural resources. Ending political structures of male dominance and the exploitation of women is a natural extension of the precept to abstain from sexual misconduct. The vow to abstain from false speech naturally raises questions about the false and biased views voiced by mass media and mainstream education. Finally, the fifth precept, to avoid intoxicants, deals with nothing short of international peace and justice, since, as Ajahn Sulak has said, “The Third World farmers grow heroin, coca, coffee, and tobacco because the economic system makes it impossible for them to support themselves growing rice and vegetables.” Such a reinterpretation of the Five Precepts is an appropriate application of the Buddha’s teachings to modern socioeconomic and political dilemmas.

3. The Three Trainings, *Bodhicitta* & Positive Engagement

INEB was founded by individuals with a deep influence from the radical left, Marxist, and protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s. As INEB moves through the second decade of the 21st century, there needs to be a conscious effort to create a positive framework of engagement, not just to protest, and one that is anchored in *bodhicitta*. While different Buddhist schools teach *bodhicitta* in various ways, for INEB we understand that all sentient beings are endowed with *bodhicitta*—this potential for enlightenment within us—and this is the basis for our mutual respect. Our engagement with society arises from our *bodhicitta*. In this way, socially engaged Buddhism must continually find ways to rearticulate the fundamental Buddhist teachings, for example:

- ***Sila/ethics***—this is not only abstaining from harmful behavior, but is an expression of INEB’s solidarity of renouncing individual concerns and working for the benefit of the community. This is how we serve others in our family, community and beyond in ever more appropriate, mindful, and non-violent ways.
- ***Samadhi/meditation***—this is not only about cultivating right mindfulness and calm abiding meditation practice, but is where we open and learn with our heart, to go beyond of our comfort zone, and be with and serve those who are experiencing suffering.
- ***Panna/wisdom***—this is not only about cultivating the insight to cut through delusion by seeing the inter-relationship between our mind, our perceptions, and the world around us, but is to act upon this insight to remove the causes of suffering for oneself and others.

The Culture of INEB & the Challenge of the Way Forward

Connecting through *kalyanamitra*—spiritual friends—is the central core value of INEB that has sustained and must be maintained into the future work. The Buddha spoke often about the value of wise mentors and admirable friends to help guide us along the spiritual path. Ajahn Sulak likes to quote from the *Upaddha Sutta*, in which his close disciple Ananda asks the Buddha whether maintaining admirable friends and camaraderie is “half of the holy life.” The Buddha responds, “Don’t say that, Ananda. Don’t say that. Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie [*kalyanamitra*] is actually the whole of the holy life. When a monk has admirable people as friends, companions, and comrades, he can be expected to develop and pursue the noble eightfold path.”

One of the keys to being an authentic *kalyanamitra* is to remain honest with oneself and others. “Good friends will tell you what you don’t want to hear,” Ajahn Sulak often says. In Ajahn Sulak’s book *Religion and Development* (1986), he writes, “A Good Friend—*kalyanamitra*—would be one’s ‘other voice’ of conscience, to put one on the proper path of development so that one would not escape from society, nor would one want to improve society in order to claim it as one’s own achievement.”

This *kalyanamitra* network is what created the original organizational structure for INEB; and it remains so today. This is unique, precious, and must be maintained. At the same time, there are limitations to a loose network, and for the next decade of INEB work, we must consider how to create a more structured organization. As this structure is created, communication within and outside INEB must be consciously approached, including having a common vision and mission statement, clear priorities, guiding principles, and understanding how our “network” and “action” creates INEB’s public identity. Innovative ways must be sought to bring our *kalyanamitra* family into a more prominent, cohesive, and professional network. It will be a challenge to find effective, new management tools, ones that do not set up internal power dynamics and ones that will not corrode the original values of INEB core foundation. Yet, in order for INEB to have a wider reach, impact, and ultimately relieve the suffering of more individuals, we must accept the challenge with an ever-expanding vision and defined structure.

Regarding INEB’s outreach, our interest and care to connect to others to address local and global issues must become stronger. We need to give more attention—care—to connect with others using action that is not dependent upon boundaries or identity, and thus includes working with other faiths and those without religious belief. INEB has and must continue to respect life in all its forms. Our activism must remain progressive, and as Buddhists, we must dare to take on the responsibility for massive, global issues. The core value, study, and understanding of interdependence/*paticca samuppada* will guide us to realize fraternity, equality, and liberty. *Paticca samuppada* can be seen as our effort to see others’ varied perspectives and let go of our own ego-grasping position. At the same time, we must maintain in INEB the essence of wholesomeness (*kusala*), cooperative platforms for change, and valuing education at the local level—all of which are essential to building sustainable communities.

Additionally, INEB must keep equality as a top priority, especially in regard to addressing the various issues surrounding women's rights.

The multifaceted nature and speed at which suffering is being wrought in the world demands INEB to step to the next level as an organization. As we define and coordinate in a more structured manner, we can create a stronger sense of belonging to our *kalyanamitra* family. With deep respect for Ajahn Sulak and the trailblazers of socially engaged Buddhism over the last half a century, may INEB's work into next decade—2017-2027—truly alleviate the suffering of the world. As the 8th century Indian saint Shantideva wrote:

*Whatever joy there is in this world,
All comes from wanting others to be happy.
Whatever suffering there is in this world,
All comes from wanting oneself to be happy.*

*What need is there to say a whole lot more?
Buddhas work for the benefit of others,
Ordinary people work for the benefit of themselves,
And just look at the difference between them!*

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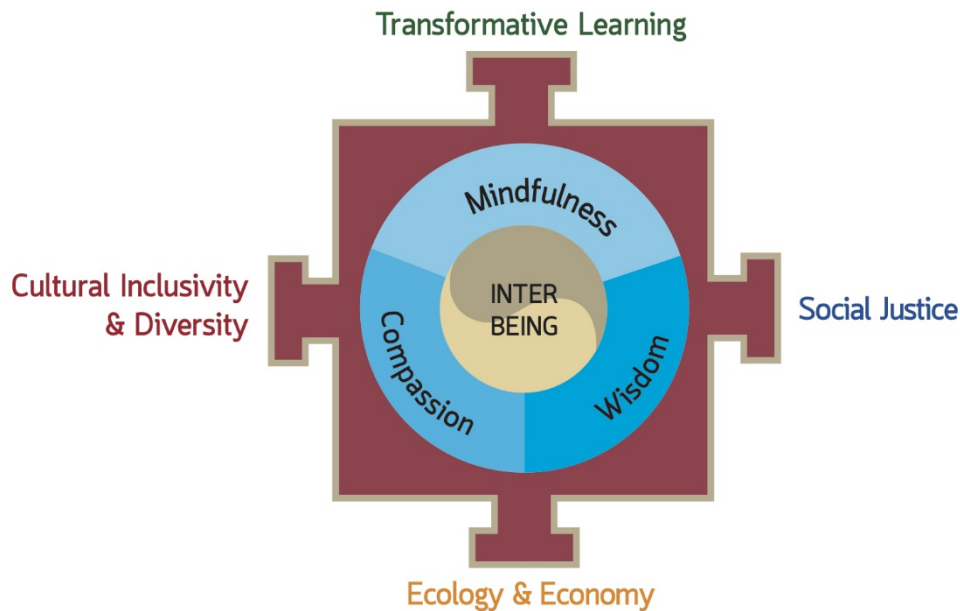
A Strategic Roadmap for INEB in the Next Decade

From *The Story of INEB*, we can appreciate the fundamental understanding of society and the collective values of INEB as the network has developed over the past almost 30 years. In order to move into this next ten-year era, INEB needs to build on these foundations and to understand more clearly how to organize its core activities to increase the strategic efficiency and impact of its work. When we speak of “strategic efficiency”, however, we cannot follow traditional or mainstream strategic planning techniques. Instead, what needs to be done is while maintaining INEB’s unique qualities, like our *kalyanamitra* family values, INEB must also identify on-going crises, issues, and challenges and then answer them with well planned programs and activities. The goal of this strategic process is to find a synergy between building organizational capacity, inculcating efficient management tools, and developing self-reliance in the programs and projects that we engage in.

One of the most important themes in INEB, and in socially engaged Buddhism, has to been “to think and act like a Buddhist”. This means using Buddhist teachings and practices to understand and engage in the contemporary world – rather than basing ourselves in other ideologies while becoming “activists who just happen to be Buddhist”. In this way, we would like to draw on one of the most powerful conceptual tools in Buddhism, the mandala, which provides a non-linear way of understanding how various phenomena interact and interpenetrate. The mandala reflects the core Buddhist concept of total interconnectedness and the core practice of the transformation of unskillful or neurotic behavior – rather than a dualistic approach of destroying “the bad/evil” and championing “the good/holy”. The INEB network has such a vast and interconnected group of activities and activists that a mandalic approach is a very fitting way to organize and schematize our work. While certainly not fully comprehensive, the four following areas summarize the core INEB areas of strategic engagement for “going forward” in the next decade:

- Transformative Learning – developing Buddhist pedagogy to integrate inner cultivation with social transformation
- Cultural Inclusivity & Diversity – using a wide variety of cultural means to transform the barriers created by greed, anger, and delusion
- Social Justice – engaging with structural violence for comprehensive social transformation
- Ecology & Economy – transforming our approach to the material world and our planet through social enterprise

A Strategic Roadmap for INEB in the Next Decade



Transformative Learning

Right View or Right Understanding is the first step of the Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path. Throughout its history, Buddhism has always emphasized proper education, understanding that the core human problem is not evil but rather ignorance. The proper response then to individual, inter-relational, and global problems is not the eradication of “evil” but the transformation of unskillful and ignorant behavior. INEB has been a pioneer in the Buddhist world for developing workshops and conferences focused on such transformational learning, and this will be a continued emphasis in basically all of our action groups, whether it is working to promote bhikkhuni ordination, Buddhist chaplaincy formation, Buddhist-Muslim harmony, alternative economics and development, ecological awareness, etc.

The newly formed INEB Institute provides a strategic base for this work. While still in its developmental stages, the Institute—as presently based at the Wongsanit Ashram outside of Bangkok—provides a center to host INEB’s wide ranging programs in transformational learning. While it is important to understand what the Institute provides the network, the Institute also gathers its strength from the wide variety of transformational leaders in the INEB network who act as speakers, educators, and spiritual mentors to those who join the programs. In this age where the educational paradigm of industrial modernism is in deep crisis, INEB’s transformational education programs provide a major educational resource to not only Buddhists but people of all walks of life. This is already in evidence in the students who have participated in the early stages of the Institute. In terms of the ten year strategy, the vision is not only to develop a centralized Institute in Thailand, but to nurture a “network university”

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with the hosting of INEB Institute programs at other such centers in the network, such as in Sri Lanka, India, Myanmar, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

Cultural Inclusivity and Diversity

The increasing polarization of the world over the last decade has become one of the dominant issues of our time. In many nations, for example Thailand and the United States, we are seeing a cultural stalemate between those who espouse tribalistic forms of ethnic nationalism and those who espouse comprehensive cultural inclusivity based in our interdependence. The cost of these conflicts has been a wide variety of human rights violations and a deterioration of key democratic institutions and systems. While political engagement and social justice work are essential, cultural engagement is equally as important. INEB's Honorary Advisor and Ecosattva, Joanna Macy, has called this "shifts in consciousness" in her threefold articulation of the Great Turning, noting that "structural alternatives cannot take root and survive without deeply ingrained values to sustain them." In terms of Buddhism, this is the ongoing historical struggle to realize Buddhism as a civilizational movement, like under the great Ashoka of India, rather than a force of ethnic nationalism as we see in much of Asia today.

INEB's leading founder Sulak Sivaraksa and its chairman Harsha Navaratne have both devoted significant portions of their activist lives promoting the arts as a means for building bridges across divided communities. For the next ten years, INEB will develop a Global Revitalization of Buddhism project, which specifically seeks to engage in the resurgence of Asia's two great civilizations, India and China. While Buddhism is on the rise in both of these countries, INEB plays an essential role to support a revival of Buddhism that builds bridges and is not used as a political force for the mutual antagonism of these two giants towards themselves or any other nations. INEB's continual stance – as influenced by the non-aligned stance of Vietnamese Buddhists during the Vietnam War – is one of total social engagement while avoiding politicalized engagement. As INEB Advisory Committee Co-chair Lody Gyari Rinpoche advises, the only way to deal with these two emerging nations is through culture, religion, art, and music. In this way, INEB will seek to develop various cultural programs through its transformational learning mandate to build a world of cultural inclusivity and diversity.

Social Justice

One of INEB's great friendships has been that between Ajahn Sulak and Norwegian peace activist Johan Galtung, who developed the seminal concept of structural violence. Under their influence, INEB has continually defined socially engaged Buddhism as working on the deeper causes of suffering and not just engaging in more simplistic forms of social welfare that religious organizations embrace – sometimes to cover up their complicity with powerful institutions that create structural violence and social injustice. Since its beginnings, INEB has developed a variety of programs in conflict transformation, such as its work in Cambodia with Maha Ghosananda in the early 1990s. In the last five years, INEB has made Buddhist-Muslim relations a central part

of its network activities. INEB has reached out to make partnerships with progressive Muslims in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka to work on conflicts in those nations and to build the civilizational culture that both Buddhism and Islam embrace.

However, INEB has always been concerned with regressive elements within our own Buddhist tradition and has sought to also develop dialogue with Buddhists in those countries who have espoused Buddhist ethnic nationalism. Indeed, in the work for social justice, there is much “inner work” that needs to be done, and so INEB is expanding its work on gender justice with more active support for bhikkhuni development in the Theravada Buddhist world. Child rights and protection are also a new area of engagement for the network. Finally, from its long standing commitment to marginalized peoples, INEB will continue to support marginalized Buddhists in Tibet, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and other regions. Our deep commitment to the Dalit Buddhist movement in India will also continue with the immense task of the Buddha’s own work to develop a civilizational ethic for the Indian subcontinent.

Ecology and Economy

The marriage of these two themes is fundamental in our present world, for without the proper economic design we will not be able to properly address the global ecological crisis. From the environmental side, INEB moved forward in 2012 with the formation of the Interfaith Climate and Ecology network (ICE), which combines the above themes of developing transformational learning with other like minded religious groups for the conscientization of their communities to live sustainably and work for climate justice. One of the sub-networks that emerged out of ICE has been the Eco-Temple Community Development Project. With a core group of member temples, this project is developing an eco-temple community design system integrating transformational education, rehabilitation of the environment, ecological temple design, clean energy development, and sufficiency economy in organic agriculture and consumer products.

In this way, work for ecology centrally includes work for a new economic paradigm. In these eco-temple projects, we can see how a temple at the center of a local community can promote the design system of “local production and local consumption”, creating a key fulcrum to practice the principle of subsidiarity. This forms the basis for participatory development and the building of more decentralized and truly democratic socio-political units in place of the massive centralization of the present industrial growth economy. INEB has also been a part of nurturing the development of Good Markets, which “operate as self-financing social enterprises to support an emerging new economy that is good for people and good for the planet.” The concept and practice of social enterprise is another core theme for INEB in the next ten years. In recalling the overall goal of this strategic process as stated at the beginning, INEB needs “to find a synergy between building organizational capacity, inculcating efficient management tools, and finding self-reliance in the programs and projects that we engage in.” Social enterprise is one of the key strategies to empower our many network members to take their organizations beyond the limited world of NGO activism propped up by donor funding and into this emerging new economy that has inner and outer ecology as core foundations.

Conclusion:

In the following section, you will find more detailed explanations of the many projects mentioned above. As always, the INEB Secretariat will continue to be the main coordination point for network linkages. However, like an ever-developing spider's web – Indra's Net – these main working groups will provide new centers of linkage and coordination, being run as decentralized, self-financed programs and projects. Flipping the current paradigm of hierarchical power on its side and emptying out the center of its "self", we seek to build an empowered webbed system of networks and alliances, working collectively but always providing space for new voices and initiatives.

INEB Concept Papers and Action Groups

1. INEB Institute: Institute for Transformative Learning

I. Strategic Considerations for this 10-Year Period

The 10-year period 2017-2027 is a critical period for human civilization. The main reason is the unpredictability of climate change and the uncertainty we face about how quickly we will be able to create new energy and civilizational infrastructure. Other serious conditions that frame this period are:

- Increasing social inequality and ongoing inability to create just economies on a rational foundation.
- The dangers and chaos that result from (new) wars, various arms races, and military threats.
- The need for decentralizing decision-making and for hearing the voices of marginal or oppressed groups, and the current difficulties in realizing truly democratic structures.
- Increasing chaos globally, especially in certain regions and localities. This will likely intensify as long as key issues like climate change and social inequality remain unresolved.
- With increasing chaos, we see more blatant attempts to manipulate people's fears and to build political power on the grounds of racism, hatred, super-exploitation, and solutions for the minority.
- The ease with which many people are drawn into consumerism, the drive for personal comfort, and a default state of ignorance about injustice and the need for alternatives.

II. The Role of INEB and the INEB Institute

In the larger world context, INEB can play an important role. Key strengths of the INEB network include a strong ethical stance, and a non-sectarian and inclusive *modus operandi*. Furthermore, the non-sectarian nature of the network is not only theoretical—it is based on real interpersonal and intergroup connections. INEB plays an important role in furthering collaboration across cultures and traditions towards developing many kinds of alternative models of practice, social action, and community.

One **weakness** of the INEB network is the lack of monetary resources. A second is that very positive connections and interactions may lack sufficient depth and practical means for further development. A third is that there are insufficient platforms through which seasoned leaders can share their wisdom with the incoming generations. Finally, decision-making procedures may at times be quite informal, with the possibility that some voices are left out.

The INEB Institute can help strengthen the network by: 1) creating new platforms for elders to share their wisdom with the younger generation; **2)** bringing about broader interactions between the various traditions and components of INEB; **3)** helping elevate

the INEB network's self-understanding to higher levels; **4)** providing for in-depth, sustained study of the challenges facing humanity at present; **5)** offering concrete models of higher learning programs that are holistic, experiential, transformative, ethically and spiritually grounded, and genuinely responsive to global and local challenges; **6)** building on the accumulated experience and visionary thinking of INEB members and leaders in the area of education and training; **7)** intensifying connections between the academic and activist worlds, and creating effective institutional structures for doing so; **8)** generating new income flows; and **9)** building spiritually grounded leadership and strengthening the perception of INEB as a network of integrity that is working for the common good.

Transformative learning has been an important theme and focus for INEB and its many partners. The role of the INEB Institute vis-à-vis other transformative courses and trainings within or close to INEB, will likely be as follows. The INEB Institute:

- 1) Will focus on the university level, bringing together the best trainings from the NGO and Buddhist worlds with the best of “higher learning” practices.
- 2) Can help create opportunities for sharing between the many courses and transformative learning programs developed by INEB members.
- 3) Can share expertise and provide assistance to those seeking to develop new transformative learning programs or upgrade existing programs.

III. Key INEB Institute Programs and Proposals for Development

The INEB Institute has developed five program designs so far, three currently active and two in preparation.

1. **English for Engaged Social Service (Active).** This is an English program for young adults who have made some level of commitment to work for personal and social transformation. The course works with a single group of students for a full three months, combining classroom work with fieldtrips, workshops, and other activities. It seeks to empower young adults through a focus on English language skills. However, it does much more: it enables students to work effectively towards their own personal development, provide mutual support across cultural differences, and construct a deeper analysis of and response to questions of spirituality, social well-being, and sustainability.

Proposals for Development of this program:

- a. Work to train new course leaders who could adapt this course to their local contexts.
- b. Seek partners in other countries who would be interested in developing this course locally to meet the needs of specific groups.
- c. Create a curriculum instruction manual for how to lead this course effectively.
- d. Develop this course as an income generating social enterprise.
- e. Create more effective ways to provide follow-up support for graduates, and to

measure the various impacts of this course.

2. **Awakening Leadership Training [ALT], and 3. Buddhist Leadership Training [BLT]. (Active)** These programs are for people committing themselves to work for social reconstruction at all levels. Both ALT and BLT are designed to enhance these people's life quality and capacities at the spiritual, intellectual, and practical levels. People who aspire to heal and make a just and sustainable society need to be updated and see more clearly the complex structural violence that harms the life of the people and of our planet earth. At the same time, they need knowledge of the many alternative good practices around the world seeking solutions for the multiple crises we face. ALT is a five-month program in a modular and integrated learning format focusing on personal and social transformation. It emphasizes general spiritual practice for inner growth and self-knowledge. The BLT program has a Buddhist approach to spiritual cultivation and engaged spirituality.

Proposals for Development of the ALT program:

The ALT program plans to continue its current format and expand into a master's and other levels of degrees and specialization over the next few years. For the masters, the training modules will provide the basis for course-work, alongside two theses – a) reflecting on personal cultivation, and b) application of learning to improve society. Specializations will include teacher training in mindfulness, bringing mindfulness into work for social change, mindful facilitation for empowerment, holistic sustainable social reconstruction, and conflict transformation. The aim is to bring a deeper learning experience for participants, and support them in bringing those experiences as a contribution towards meaningful social change.

4. **MA in Socially Engaged Buddhism. (In Preparation)** This one-year master's program will study socially engaged Buddhism as one of the very important ethical and spiritual traditions in the modern period. It will take students to meet with socially engaged Buddhist practitioners and scholars in Thailand, Taiwan, and India, allowing the students extensive contact with the three main Buddhist traditions and with Ambedkar Buddhism. The program is anthropological, field, and experience-oriented, and designed to enable mindful leadership in the face of looming crises. The program has been critiqued and refined, and needs only a university collaborator to provide accreditation.
5. **Transformative Adult Education Focused on Events, Issues, or Signs of Hope. (In Preparation)** These would be courses of 4 to 8 weeks, focusing on a specific field experience as inspiration and source of lessons for transformative leadership. Field experiences would be built around important events in the world of socially engaged Buddhism—such as Deeksha Bhumi in Nagpur, or an INEB conference. They could be built around specific issues, such as nuclear energy, or around projects that constitute signs of hope, such as eco-temples. They could also combine these elements, while

exploring their histories, contexts, and practical implications. The first two weeks of such courses would involve reading and online group learning, followed by two to six weeks on the ground.

IV. Important Considerations for the Next 10 Years

Concerns brought up in discussions about strategy for the next 10 years.

1. **Need for Income Generation Activities.** Many of the INEB Institute projects could be designed as social enterprises.
2. **Need for Sustainable, Democratic Decision-Making Structures.** If the INEB Institute and key partners are to develop high quality learning programs at the university level, clear decision-making structures and lines of responsibility are needed. Such structures should help free up energies, imagination, and cooperative opportunities, rather than engender bureaucratization.
3. **Need for a New Generation of Skilled Facilitators and Trainers.** This need is beginning to be addressed in our active programs, but much can be done for full impact.

V. Outline of Possible Future Directions

1. **Short field and experiential courses in languages other than English.** We can arrange short courses at sites throughout the Buddhist world, in which a single ethnic group has a chance to learn from others working for personal and social transformation, and do so in their native language. This is already occurring, but INEB Institute could facilitate this kind of learning and exchange between groups.
2. **Conferences or other exchanges involving those who are directly involved in spiritually grounded transformative learning.**
3. **Courses focused on language skills in languages other than English.**
4. **Exploring new ways to integrate the network by turning INEB member projects or other inspiring projects into learning opportunities.** Already an element in the INEB Institute's programs, such courses extended internationally could do much to help integrate the network.
5. **Create and build an endowment.**
6. **Develop research grants for scholars.**
7. **Create transformative learning projects within life-cycle oriented ecovillages.** (eg. retirement)

2. Buddhist “Chaplaincy” Training

Background:

Socially Engaged Buddhism emerged in the late 19th century not only as a movement to cope with and overcome the cultural and political force of western colonialism in Asia but also as a reform movement within Buddhism. Although rich in its local and cultural contexts, Buddhist institutions and monasticism by the colonial period had become bloated and corrupt through years of political and economic patronage. Anagarika Dharmapala, perhaps the first modern socially engaged Buddhist, spent his life trying to develop a more contemporary form of Buddhist practice that went beyond the enslavement of the lay sangha to the ritualism of the monastic sangha. Today, in the early years of the 21st century, these problems still persist and the monastic sangha throughout Asia is in crisis. The Sangha has been deeply marginalized from its former social roles by modern secular professionalism and deeply compromised through the onslaught of consumerism that has eroded monastic practice and its institutions. Traditionally, the Buddhist monk was a community leader and a trusted counselor to the community on a variety of issues from personal problems to community development. These roles have been largely lost today in most of Buddhist Asia.

The increased interest in and development of Buddhist “chaplaincy” is in one form an extension of the socially engaged Buddhist movement by educating and training Buddhist priests in how to engage with contemporary forms of suffering. This movement also is a part of the global trend of the interface between Buddhist psychology and practice with modern sciences, especially modern psychotherapy. In this way, a number of creative movements among the new generation of Buddhists in the West are offering contributions to this field. Numerous ordained Buddhists in the U.S. are now taking advanced training in public chaplaincy through the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) system. This system trains and certifies religious professionals of any faith to work in public institutions, most notably hospitals but also prisons and the military. It has an important requirement that religious professionals do not preach and convert but rather listen deeply and support people in suffering to find their own solutions. This type of religious professional is what we call the “chaplain”. At the same time, we are seeing organic movements in Asia developing contemporary forms of psycho-spiritual care, such as the Taiwanese training of Buddhist hospice chaplains and the grassroots movement of Japanese Buddhist priests in suicide prevention counseling.

Networking Potentials and INEB

There is now an increasing interest for interaction and mutual learning from these diverse regions and fields of interest. INEB is perfectly placed to be a facilitator in the growing movement with its networking ability and its close connection to a number of people persons in this movement, such as Roshi Joan Halifax (INEB Advisory Committee), Alan Senauke (INEB Executive Committee), Phra Phaisan Visalo (INEB AC), and Jonathan Watts (INEB EC). In order to

know the scope and potential of INEB activity in this field, a short survey of those active in this work is beneficial:

- U.S.A: Chaplaincy is focused on mostly hospice and end of life care training, but there is a growing interest in prison chaplaincy. Major organizations are: 1) Upaya Zen Center, founded by Joan Halifax, has both an end of life care program and a general Buddhist chaplaincy program in which Alan Senauke serves as a main teacher. 2) Two major Buddhist academic institutions for post-graduate degrees in chaplaincy: Naropa University (founded by Chogyam Trungpa) and the Institute of Buddhist Studies (Japanese Jodo Shin). 3) The New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care provides final stage residential training for CPE certification.
- Europe: Outside of numerous individual and smaller initiatives, Rigpa, founded by Sogyal Rinpoche, has a wide ranging number of programs for training medical care givers in Buddhist based compassionate care in Germany, France, Ireland, the U.K., and elsewhere.
- Japan: There are now 4 major, regional Buddhist suicide prevention networks in Japan. There is the Rinbutsuken Institute for socially engaged Buddhism (Jonathan Watts, advisor), which has a Buddhist chaplaincy training program for a wide variety of fields, and the Tohoku University Spiritual Care Counselor training program for Buddhists and other religious professionals.
- Taiwan: The Clinical Association of Buddhist Studies and the Lotus Foundation run a well-established Buddhist chaplaincy training program at the National Taiwan University Hospital's Hospice and Palliative Care Center. This is Taiwan's largest and most prestigious hospital. This program is now over 20 years old and has spawned a wide variety of smaller initiatives. There is also the Guan Yin Suicide Prevention Hotline that trains both monastics and lay people in counseling.
- Sri Lanka: The Damrivi Foundation has been offering a Buddhist psychology and counseling certification program since the mid 2000s.
- Thailand: The Buddhika Network for Buddhism and Society under the guidance of Phra Phasian Visalo has been developing a network of religious and medical professionals working for more integrated spiritual and physical care for the dying.
- South Korea: There are a number of initiatives in Korea for suicide prevention and also end of life care. One of the most prominent is the Buddhism Counseling Institute of the Jogye Order

The groups above and most Buddhist groups involved in this work know little about each other outside of their own national borders. However, Jonathan Watts collaborated with Joan Halifax and Phra Phasian on end of life care issues in 2006 for the collection of essays called *Buddhist Care for the Dying and Bereaved* (Wisdom Publications, 2012). During this time, he created a workshop on end of life care at the INEB Conference in Bodhgaya in 2011. In 2013, Watts

helped establish the above mentioned Rinbutsuken Buddhist chaplaincy training program in Japan and has helped form a formal cooperative relationship with the Taiwan Clinical Association of Buddhist Studies where Japanese priests do annual study tours. In 2015, Roshi Halifax started to come to Japan annually to provide training to medical nurses in resiliency through Buddhist practice. In November 2017 as part of the exposure activities of the INEB Conference in Taiwan, the founders of the Buddhist chaplaincy training program in Taiwan will present a half-day seminar on end of life care.

In 2007, the Japan Network of Engaged Buddhists and Rev. Shojun Okano (INEB AC) began networking Buddhist priests involved in suicide prevention, which eventually led to a number of regional associations. The Rinbutsuken Institute connects with these same priests who assist in their training program. In November of 2017, JNEB and Rev. Okano's temple along with Japan's largest Buddhist denomination, the Jodo Shin Honganji Order, will host an international conference on suicide prevention and Buddhist counseling bringing together participants from Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, Sweden, and the United States.

Future Plans and Prospects:

It is not the time to speak of a formal network on Buddhist chaplaincy training, although the Rinbutsuken Institute in Japan is slowly working towards such a goal. At this point, there is the need for increased mutual exposure to the variety of programs and activities. While there is a need for exchange and mutual learning, there is also the challenge of how to indigenize such training to fit various social and cultural contexts. Japan is in the midst of a "spiritual care counseling" boom, yet traditionally as Buddhists the Japanese have no clear conception of "spirituality". In this way, the Taiwanese spent a number of years learning from western approaches to end of life care but eventually created their own indigenous concepts and style for the work. The following are a list of activities to further develop this work:

- Site visits for mutual learning, especially for groups from any region who seek to develop their own training programs. INEB can assist by making people in the network aware of such work and the potentials for study and research. Jonathan Watts plans to visit Prashant Varma (INEB EC) and the Deer Park Institute in the first half of 2018 to begin their development of such a chaplaincy training program through the Khyentse Foundation. Prashant and a team will participate in the suicide prevention and Buddhist counseling conference in Japan in 2017.
- Hosting and facilitating short term training courses. INEB has numerous training centers throughout its network. As connections and interests develop in various countries on this issue, INEB can offer a non-affiliated umbrella for hosting short study and training programs with visiting experts in the field of Buddhist chaplaincy training.

These are basic areas of engagement as the movement continues to develop internationally. By the end of 2018, this proposal can be revisited and updated for further strategic development.

3. Community Buddhist Leaders: Building Monks and Nuns Leadership Skills and Capacity to be Engaged Buddhist Community Leaders

Background

The Buddhist temple historically used to serve as a spiritual place as well as the center of the village community providing several functions—social welfare, basic education, and economic development based on rural agricultural work with the local people. However, in the contemporary world, local communities have been changed by modernization and globalization at a dizzying speed throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. As economic resources have been centralized in the city, young people have moved to live in urban areas to develop their lives while putting a high value on materialism. On the other hand, almost all monks and nuns still rely on the traditional temple system developed in 17th and 18th centuries. Therefore, temples today are not generating enough income, and many young monks and nuns have left the village or given up their lives as monastics. This situation has been occurring in both Theravada (e.g. Sri Lanka) and Mahayana (e.g. Japan) countries.

The INEB Network provides good examples of Buddhist leaders who have reformed village temple communities using alternative development models. In addition, as an organization, INEB has consistently supported capacity-building for monks and nuns, encouraging inner transformation and community engagement as interrelated spiritual action. These activities should be continued but with some adjustments to curriculum and programs according to today's challenges and circumstances in particular communities, cultures, nations. Moreover, people look to religious leaders to respond in new and creative ways—supporting immigrants and refugees seeking freedom from religious, political, and ethnic oppression; protecting the environment which is home for all beings; healing addictions to drugs, alcohol, and media to which people turn to escape from the suffering of daily life. Based on these requirements, monks and nuns need feedback on themselves and society, continuing education, and training to meet the challenges of their evolving communities. INEB's mission in the coming years is to develop the resources, methodology, and network to provide much-needed support at the grassroots level.

Goal:

To develop easily accessible pedagogical training services and community development skills for grassroots level monks and nuns to become Engaged Buddhist community leaders linked with INEB.

Objectives:

1: To identify general and specific needs and challenges that face monks and nuns and their communities.

2: To identify the common and specific goals for trainees as Engaged Buddhist community leaders in different areas

3: To map and create a platform for Buddhist pedagogical exchange as *kalyanamitra*/spiritual friends by developing shared pedagogical and professional skills.

4: To build a responsive organizational base that can provide support and resources for sharing methodology based on Dharma (for example: an online database of resources and information).

5: To cooperate with different types of educational institutes or resources for identified needs. Especially after training programs are completed, to provide some trainees additional specific skills (e.g. English communication, business, and counseling skills) for running their programs.

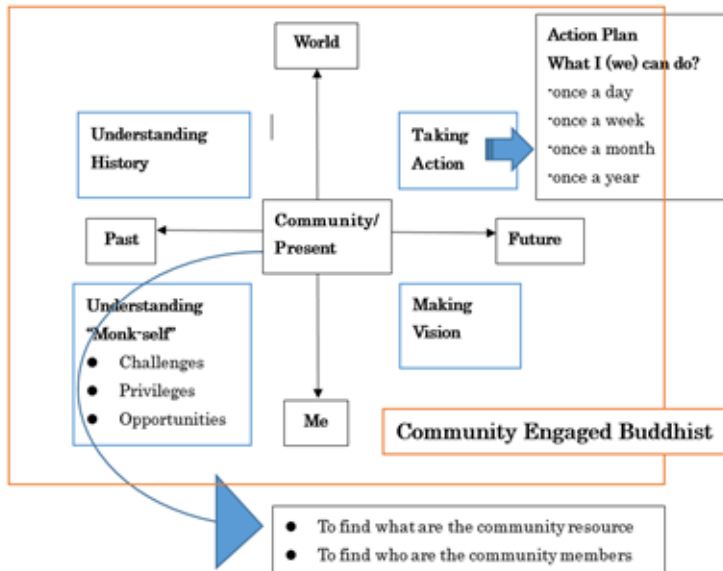
Duration: 3 Years for start up programs in Sri Lanka and Japan

Possible options for resources: Practitioners and academic researchers in practical studies for religious education and community engaged activities.

Activities

2017-18:

- Basic survey for mapping and getting the essence of several communities from leaders through meetings and small working group discussions at INEB conferences.
- Curriculum setting, preparing fundamental website for mapping Engaged Buddhist community leaders, and preparing online database of resources and information
- Preparing a model program in one Theravada country (Sri Lanka) and one Mahayana country (Japan) based on the concept chart below:



Key essence of Program

- *To get modern knowledge for understanding the current world situation and how to use and apply new technologies*
- *To apply ancient wisdom to modern knowledge (learning from the history of ancient monks and nuns who did community development with the people)*
- *To cultivate spiritual development*

2018-2019:

- Organizing model and pre-program in Sri Lanka and Japan as well as feedback programs and developing a website

2019-2020:

- Organizing several programs in Sri Lanka and Japan, reporting the process and result at the following INEB conference, understanding further challenges, and targeting next steps beyond Sri Lanka and Japan.

Target Partners:

- Sevalanka Foundation and Sadaham Sevana Institute (Sri Lanka)
- Nagaloka Institute and Dhamma Duta Temple (India)
- INEB Institute and Sprit in Education Movement (Thailand)
- Rinbutsuken Institute for Engaged Buddhism and the Tomoiki Foundation (Japan)
- Luminary International Buddhist Society (Taiwan)

4. Buddhism and Conflict Transformation

Conflict and its transformation is, as we are aware, very central to Buddhist practice and understanding. Within INEB there is great knowledge and experience of working in conflict situations and of teaching the processes of transformation and reconciliation. Indeed INEB members are already involved in many projects and as we would expect, experience of working as activists at grass roots level is impressive.

This proposal is to create a working group called the Buddhism and Conflict Transformation (Group BCTG), which would carry out a number of functions. We would like a variety of people with different experiences to be involved in this group, including activists, academics, advisors, thinkers, teachers, and so on. In this way, our joint experience can be drawn upon and feed in to the exploration and development of this field

Inner Transformation

The transformation of conflict is an ongoing process for Buddhists. It begins with the individual and moves out to the local society and then to the wider country and international societies. It is also aimed at specific conflict situations that emerge around the world, some small and some large, but all equally requiring a process of transformation. A central aspect of all transformational processes is that of individual inner transformation. An important aspect of our work will be to explore how best to develop qualities and skills that enhance an individual's peace building capacities, for example: aspects such as courage and self-reflection; an increased understanding of Buddhist ideas such as interbeing, interconnectedness, and the three poisons or unwholesome roots (*akusala-mula*). It is envisaged that a focus on inner work will feed in to the training process of Buddhist Conflict Transformation.

Networking

It is recognised that INEB has already much experience in this arena, e.g. working in various countries carrying out Buddhist/Muslim dialogue, teaching and training via the INEB institute, and individuals carrying out reconciliation work and so on. We would very much like to draw on this experience and include it within the resources of the BCTG project.

One early area of work will be to make contact with those organisations and individuals who are connected to INEB and are already working in these fields and to start to create a database of activity and knowledge. This can then build into a database and online resource of what the wider family of INEB is doing and what can be offered and made available.

Towards a Practical Toolkit of Buddhist Inspired Conflict Transformation

Based on previous material and work already being carried out, we intend to develop a Buddhist concept of Conflict Transformation. We will carry out research and make available resources as they become available. This kind of work has already begun by various people, for example John McConnell, (*Mindful Mediation*) and the Centre for Applied Buddhism in the UK as well as the INEB Institute. It is our aim to build on and disseminate this ongoing work.

In addition there are some systems, such as Non Violent Communication, which draw on Buddhist ideas and can be also made use of. This ongoing process would include individuals

carrying out research, visiting groups that are already working in the arena, learning from them, drawing on the experience of INEB members, and sharing these ideas, learning and expertise.

In this way we aim to begin to work towards creating a Buddhist inspired process of Conflict Transformation - a resource that can develop into a training for Buddhists working in the field. This training could then also be made available to people outside the Buddhist community who are interested in this work, both on an individual or institutional basis.

Collaboration

We will identify and contact national and international organisations which have great experience in this arena and who are active in conflict areas or who have experience in other ways. We seek to develop working relationships with them where possible and where suitable, for example Winchester University's Centre for Religion, Reconciliation and Peace, Quakers international, United Nations, Transcend, and others. This may help to bring a Buddhist perspective into aspects of conflict transformation.

Research and Conferences

In order to develop all this work we would like to start to organise and run seminars, workshops, and conferences looking at various aspects of conflict transformation and looking at the ongoing work of the BCTG. These could be organized initially along with regular INEB conferences and later specific events can be developed.

Think Tank and Prediction Methodology.

We have discussed the possible creation of a Buddhist Think Tank. This could be an aspect of the work of BCTG, possibly connected to an already existing research or academic centre. This think tank could take on the role of attempting to predict conflict situations and possible problems that are growing throughout the world. Prediction methodology needs some developing and opening up, and we could do research into this and bring our own Buddhist perspective on it. Through this, we may be able to develop a framework to understand various factors of conflict.

The ultimate aim is to produce papers that could be sent to governments and institutes involved in international and local conflict situations in order to help preempt conflict situations and aid in the process of preventing damaging conflicts.

5. The International Forum on Buddhist-Muslim Relations

 <p>International Forum on Buddhist- Muslim Relations</p>	<p>Contact Information: International Forum on Buddhist-Muslim Relations (BMf) c/o JKR 1258 Jalan Telok Off Jalan Gasing P.O. Box 288 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Malaysia Tel:+60377812494 Fax: +60377813245 www.buddhistmuslimforum.org www.facebook.com/buddhistmuslimforum (Interim) Secretary: K V Soon (Vidyananda) email: vidyananda@samma-ajiva.net</p>
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Background and Introduction

On the 16th of June 2013, the International Network of Engagement Buddhists (INEB), the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), and Religions for Peace (RfP) organized a consultative meeting on “Contemporary Issues in Buddhist-Muslim Relations in South and South East Asia” at the Bangkok Dharma Centre of the Japanese Buddhist denomination Rissho Kosei-kai in Bangkok, Thailand. This meeting was hosted through a partnership with the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Rissho Kosei-kai Bangkok Dharma Centre.



25 participants comprising Buddhist and Muslim religious leaders from South and Southeast Asian countries recognized the following challenges facing the two communities in the region as:

- Rise of extremism, hate speech, hate campaigns, and instigations leading to religious discrimination and violence

- Prejudice, fear, and hatred caused by ignorance, misperceptions, stereotypes, negative impact of traditional and social media, simplification and generalization of ethnic issues, and communal pressures
- Misuse of religion by certain religious, political, and other interest groups and individuals
- Socio economic dimensions of conflict
- Spillover effects across the region.

The participants also endorsed the Dusit Declaration of the 28th of June 2006 and committed themselves to implementing its shared action plan across the region. The participants also pledged to engage in multi-stakeholder partnership with governments and intergovernmental bodies—such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the United Nations.

Objectives

In the follow-up from the Buddhist-Muslim Consultative Meeting on June 16, 2013, a Common Action Working Committee (CAWC) was formed and had its meeting on August 21-22, 2013 in Galle, Sri Lanka. It concluded with the proposal to form a permanent body named the International Forum on Buddhist-Muslim Relations (BMF). The objectives of the BMF are as follows:

- To serve as a platform for intra-religious and inter-religious initiatives in education & advocacy
- To enable rapid reaction, solidarity visits, early warning, and conflict prevention in the event of conflict
- To develop and provide tools and materials for constructive engagement and strategic common actions
- To develop the effective use of media for positive messaging, particularly via the social & alternative media

This CAWC was renamed the Core Group of the International Forum for Buddhist Muslim Relations, comprised of:

Religions for Peace (RfP)	
International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB)	
International Movement for a Just World (JUST)	
Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah (PM)	

6. Empowerment of the Bhikkhuni Sangha

The Issue:

It is clearly stated in the Buddhist texts that in the very early period of the Buddha's teaching, he set out the fourfold community to take care of the development of the Dharma. It was thus both his mission and his intention to have bhikkhus, bhikkhunis, laymen, and laywomen. However, after the discontinuation of both the Theravada bhikkhu and bhikkhuni lineages in India and Sri Lanka by the 12th century AD, only the bhikkhu lineage was revived but not that of the bhikkhuni. Attempts to revive the bhikkhuni lineage in Theravada started as early as 1928 in Thailand but did not take off due to many shortcomings.

In the contemporary world, the revival of Theravada bhikkhuni became a reality in 1998 by the confirmation of the senior bhikkhu Sangha of Sri Lanka. Since then, many women have become ordained and now practice under Theravada Buddhism. Apart from Sri Lanka, there are now small groups of Theravada bhikkhuni in Indonesia (2000) and Vietnam (2002). The beginning of Thai Theravada bhikkhuni sangha dates from the year Ven. Dhammananda came back from Sri Lanka with her lower ordination in 2001 and higher ordination in 2003. There are now more than 270 bhikkhunis spread over at least 28 provinces in Thailand. However, none of these new bhikkhuni Sangha has been recognized, either by the Thai government nor the main bhikkhu Sangha.

Another problem area is that some women take quick forms of ordination and receive higher ordination all at one time. Ordination without either proper monastic education or monastic training will in the long run prove a draw back and more harmful to Buddhism. Fractures and fissures amongst the bhikkhuni Sanghas have also developed and obstruct the solidarity of their movement.

Strategies and the Role of INEB:

Ongoing support for monastic education and training for bhikkhuni: As much of the bhikkhu Sangha is still unsupportive at best and virulently opposed at worst, women need better opportunities for study and training.

- Ven. Dhammananda's Songdhammakalyani Bhikkhuni Arama in Thailand has launched an International Monastic Training (IMT) in June every year. This is a 4-week long training aimed for bhikkhuni. Coming from ASEAN countries, they do not need visas; for local Thai, they can stay through the vassa. IMT still needs support to recruit candidates who would benefit from the training. IMT is in its 4th year now and still needs input to improve the training program to make it a strong foundation for bhikkhuni primarily in Thailand, but always connected to Asian bhikkhunis, nuns, and laywomen. If INEB could promote the program and also provide advice about other training to support primarily the bhikkhuni, this will make IMT a more beneficial program.
- Educate and strengthen bhikkhuni in *dhmma vinaya* in countries where they are becoming a reality with vinaya texts in the language of each country

Organizing conferences and creating connections to strengthen Buddhist women in general and bhikkhunis in particular.

- The ASEAN Buddhist Conference (ABC) is one forum to realize this strategy. INEB could help organize various kinds of regional meetings, such as a study tour to Taiwan to learn about the great bhikkuni movement there. Ven. Chao Hwei (INEB Patrong) at Hongshi College and Ven. Zinai and Ven. Jenkir at the Luminary Monastery would be obvious, ideal partners for such a program.
- Encouraging research on the bhikkhunis issue in each country so that needs can be addressed properly.
- Developing different kinds of materials (videos, books, audio, etc.) so that the public has a better understanding of the issue.

Developing various social skills for bhikkhuni: Beyond their formal education, bhikkhuni also need support to better integrate into mainstream society. Ven. Dhammananda wants to emphasize the role of bhikkuni in social service, so they are not seen purely as a feminist rights movement but a complimentary part of the fourfold sangha of a healthy Buddhist society. The goal is for bhikkuni to not compete with the bhikkhus in practice and offering rituals but rather to compliment them.

- Bhikkhuni Viccitananda at the Sakhyadhita International Center outside of Colombo has a thriving social outreach program. The ability for her bhikkhuni to work as family counselors, especially for lay women, visiting and talking with them privately in their own homes is a significant service that monks cannot perform due to Vinaya rules.
- In Thailand, Ven. Dhammananda is taking her nuns out into society, presenting them as social workers first and bhikkuni second. Recently, their work in prisons has received critical acclaim and is receiving requests for expansion of this work.
- INEB can be very helpful as a non-affiliated social movement network to provide venues for activities, especially training programs, such as organizing a meeting in Thailand for Thai bhikkuni on the theme “What It Means to be a Bhikkhuni”. This would help them establish a unique but complimentary identity for them in Thai Buddhist society.
- Provide assistance to join various programs in Buddhist chaplaincy training for counseling and psychological care connected to INEB. A number of fully ordained female teachers in the West active in this field, such as Joan Halifax, would also be ideal as teachers and trainers in potential INEB sponsored programs.

Ven. Dhammananda will be working closely with the INEB Secretariat to further develop this project as well as Ven Kalupahana, a long time INEB member who has promoted bhikkhuni ordination in Sri Lanka. She has also offered to host a qualified young volunteer fluent in English to stay at her monastery outside of Bangkok to work as administrative staff for developing these programs.

7. Capacity-Building for Marginalized Communities

Since its establishment in 1989, INEB has helped marginalized communities across Asia build capacity for development and to advocate for equality of rights, treatment and opportunities in society. In the coming decade, INEB intends to expand support into new areas of training and capacity-building for marginalized peoples.

Specifically, INEB's **Marginalized Communities Initiative (MCI)** will join with the INEB Institute to develop training modules in key areas of community capacity building. The intent is to build on the already-existing leadership training and English-language training programs. The modules will range in content from the nuts and bolts of building community organizations, training in management and financial literacy, community journalism, self-sufficiency, problem-solving, transformative learning, governance, working with government institutions and foreign NGOs, as well as other specific training needs requested by communities.

In addition to building and implementing modular training programs at the community level, the Marginalized Communities Initiative will work closely with current partners and with other training and academic institutions, foundations, local NGOs and community organizations and funding partners. We intend to prioritize community-based peer-to-peer training and training of trainers so that marginalized communities can learn to help other marginalized communities and to share experiences.

This new phase of capacity-building began in 2016 with an innovative workshop and transformative learning experience between Indian Dalit academics and trainers and Nepali Himalayan Buddhist and Dalit community and NGO representatives. The workshop helped to crystalize the notion that peer-to-peer training, including trans-boarder training, can provide more responsive, timely and scalable training, often by trainers who themselves come from marginalized communities and have a deep understanding and sensitivity for the issues confronting other marginalized communities. Additionally, many marginalized communities are isolated and have little knowledge of other communities struggling with similar issues. The peer-to-peer training will encourage the development of a peer-level network of marginalized communities and thereby strengthen their collective voice.

Training is one of the main vehicles to build community capacity. In terms of INEB's 10-year strategy, the INEB Institute has an opportunity to become a hub of training activities to strengthen the impact of many of INEB's core activities including environment, community development, strengthening civil society capacity, conflict transformation and facilitating transformative learning. The association between the Marginalized Communities Initiative and the INEB Institute can provide an initial proof of concept and help to expand training opportunities to communities across Asia. As a long-term strategy, a growing INEB civil society and capacity-building curriculum strengthens and expands opportunities for the entire network of engaged Buddhists.

Currently the MCI is seeking funds to organize a pilot community capacity-building training in Nepal. This first pilot training will address overcoming the caste-based social structure that have dominated the Indian subcontinent for more than two thousand years, creating a legacy of poverty, marginalization, and discrimination for vast numbers of indigenous people and untouchables (*Dalits*). In Nepal, caste and ethnicity represent fault lines that have long fractured and divided society. Civil society structures and institutions are nascent and weak, and many segments of society have little exposure to democratic pluralistic systems. We believe that the best way to break the cycle of violence, repression, and marginalization is by building civil society capacity among disenfranchised communities, including the Himalayan Buddhist and Dalit communities, both traditionally outside of the caste system and both largely under-represented in the existing civil society system.

By leveraging many years of community-building experience by INEB and its partners, MCI will use INEB's modular training curriculum to empower disenfranchised communities by providing opportunities to gain the knowledge, skills, and the leadership and psychological strength and support necessary to engage fully in civil society. Most importantly, MCI aims to create sustainability and opportunities for organic growth through cross-border peer-to-peer training and project management. The backbone of our initiative is the use of English language training and leadership training as a vehicle to teach community development, civil society, and leadership skills. Our past experience with this approach has demonstrated that English training provides an encouraging and safe environment to introduce civil society training. Also, English fluency has proven to be the gateway to access with the international community and to legitimizing community access to many aspects of civil society participation.

8. Asian Network of Buddhists for Child Protection

Children are the foundation on which society is built. They are adults in the making and how society will unfold tomorrow depends on how we nurture and protect them today. In the present fast changing world, where there is an erosion of values as we have known them in the past, and where there is growing normalization of violence as a mode of expression of difference, the old methods of teaching, nurturing, and protecting are no longer adequate.

As reported by the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, “every five minutes, a child dies as a result of violence and every year, at least one billion children are exposed to violence and four out of five children are subjected to some form of violent discipline in their homes”. Girls are particularly vulnerable as “one in five girls between the ages of 15-19 have been victims of physical violence.” Another form of violence against children is the global phenomenon of online sexual exploitation and sexual abuse that includes recruiting children into prostitution and the production, supply, distribution, and possession of child pornography, as well as soliciting children online for sexual purposes.

It is therefore important that children are protected and prepared for the fast changing world in which they must be able to survive with dignity. This includes their ability to protect themselves and to stand up for what is just and right, while at the same time be able to understand and respect differences. For this to happen, we must recognize, promote and protect the rights of children wherever they are. However, while doing so, it is important for us to be mindful of local cultures and traditions.

Religious leaders and faith communities are essential partners who can take preventive action through their spiritual leadership and moral standing for ending all forms of violence against children. Buddhist leaders can help strengthen norms and values that support non-violent, respectful, and nurturing behavior within the family, the school, and the community environment where children and adolescents spend their time.

Bangkok Consultation

Arigatou International’s Prayer and Action for Children, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), and ECPAT International held a Consultation with Buddhist leaders from countries of the Mekong region (Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam) and Sri Lanka in Bangkok, Thailand on April 7-8, 2017. The two-day consultation focused on the role of faith communities in preventing violence against children in all its forms. It addressed in particular commercial sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism and online child sexual exploitation and abuse, a growing global phenomenon. Besides representatives of these faith communities of the Mekong region and Sri Lanka, key secular organizations working in the area of child protection participated. These included UNICEF, World Vision, the South Asia Initiative for Ending Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) and Save the Children.

Arigatou International is a faith-based organization founded by the Japanese Buddhist denomination Myochi-kai committed to building a better world for children by maximizing the potential of interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Arigatou holds Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC and partners with UNICEF, and also supports the efforts of other like-minded non-governmental organizations that focus on children's issues. Arigatou sustains the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC), another Arigatou initiative, whose members are located in some 45 countries. Since 2011, Arigatou has made ending violence against children a top priority by reaching out to leaders of diverse religions in many parts of the world to join this cause in light of their moral authority and influence, as well as the services they provide within their communities.

ECPAT International is a global network of organizations dedicated to eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children. This includes sexual exploitation of children through prostitution, child abuse images, the trafficking of children for sexual purposes and child sex tourism. With 95 members in 86 countries, ECPAT works to build collaboration among local civil society and the broader child rights community to form a global social movement for the protection of children from sexual exploitation. ECPAT works in partnership with non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, the private sector and law enforcement. It advocates for a collective response to protect children and put an end to commercial sexual exploitation.

Protecting Children from Online Sexual Exploitation - A Guide to Action for Religious Leaders and Communities, published by ECPAT and Religions for Peace, was distributed to all the participants as an important resource and to encourage action towards the prevention of violence against children within their own communities.

The Bangkok Consultation achieved the following results:

1. Informed participants about the global problem of violence against children, as well as the situation in the Mekong region.
2. Provided Buddhist leaders an opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue with international experts and representatives of secular organizations working for children who are tackling these complex issues of violence worldwide and in the Mekong region.
3. Participants considered some main lines of action for future activities drawing on Buddhist perspectives and teachings, and the practical experience of participating Buddhist leaders, as well as the secular organizations.

Participants agreed that an Asian Network of Buddhists for Child Protection be created within the network of INEB in order to foster dialogue and influence thinking and behaviour change in their societies.

Strategy

Goal: Establish an Asian Network of Buddhists for Child Protection within INEB's core program

Objectives:

1. Reach out to Buddhist communities that can become strong agents of change in the prevention of and response to incidents of violence against children.
Engage with Buddhist leaders on the global problem of violence against children through workshops and roundtable discussions with international and regional experts on children's rights and prevention of violence against children.
2. Create awareness and understanding among Buddhist leaders on the issues of child protection and child rights, and about laws in their respective countries dealing with these issues.
3. Work with Buddhist leaders and heads of institutions for developing child protection policies specific to the region/country in which they are located, based on the Buddhist method of altruistic mind, which forms the basis for loving kindness, compassion, generosity, and integrity
4. Make children themselves aware about their rights and duties, and inculcate in them the concept of altruistic mind
5. Collaborate with key local organizations and NGOs, as well as INGOs working on the issue of child protection and child rights, such as Arigatou International, ECPAT, UNICEF, Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, Save the Children, etc. to create curriculums and materials that are conducive to the local culture and traditions.

Possible options for resources: To be determined, but may be solicited from other potential partners such as Arigatou International, ECPAT, UNICEF, Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and others.

Activities:

1. Hold one regional consultation every year with Buddhist leaders beginning in Myanmar in October 2017 on children's rights and the prevention of violence against children.
2. Consultation with Buddhist leaders in Vietnam in 2018 on children's rights and the prevention of violence against children.
3. Consultation with Buddhist leaders in Cambodia in 2019 on children's rights and the prevention of violence against children.
4. Develop information/advocacy materials on violence against children in diverse Asian languages tailored for Buddhist leaders.
5. Set up a page on the INEB website to include news on the network.

Target Partners:

Both faith based organizations such as Arigatou International, Religions for Peace and secular organizations including UNICEF, Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, ECPAT, Save the Children and Plan International.

9. ECONOMICS FOR A SUSTAINABLE PLANET: A BUDDHIST CONTRIBUTION

The Problem

Living in a time of great change, it is easy to overlook that in the entire history of Earth, no species has ever before possessed the ability to alter or destroy this planet. Sometime between the invention of the steam engine and nuclear fission, the human species moved into the uncharted territory of the Anthropocene era, leaving behind 12,000 years of geological and climate stability. Anthropo (human) cene (recent), derived from ancient Greek, is a term many scientists propose to use to describe a new geological epoch defined by human impact on the Earth.

As engaged Buddhists, INEB members have been at the forefront of promoting equality, whether in the form of income, social, gender, religious, caste, class or political equality. Working with communities that have been among the last to see any benefit from successive political and economic regimes that have ruled the lives of marginalized peoples in Asia, INEB's culture is one of skepticism regarding the will and ability of dominant economic and political systems to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. As socially engaged Buddhists, INEB participants have a responsibility to not only bear witness to these failures, but to advocate for systemic change that will protect planetary sustainability and vastly reduce inequity.

The human species holds great power over the planet but remains in the earliest stages of understanding the enormous responsibility inseparable from this power. The toxic consequences of consumption and growth-driven globalization, political and economic destabilization and adverse environmental change can only be contained through responsible collective action.

Two thousand five hundred years ago Prince Siddhartha, the Buddha of our age, lived in Kapilavastu, the Shakya kingdom in modern-day Nepal. He would have lived in an agrarian society, millennia before the industrial revolution, before urban migration, before the existence of mega-cities, and before the advent of planetary-wide pollution and human contribution to climate change. Yet, despite all this change, the Buddha identified one element that would be slowest to evolve: the human mind.

It is the Buddhist understanding of nature of mind and interdependence that offers profound insights to bring harmony and balance to the Anthropocene epoch. Buddhism offers remarkable discoveries about our fundamental nature and the reality of interdependence. It speaks at the deepest level to the root causes of the economic and environmental challenges that we face today. The global economy is brilliantly complex but fundamentally flawed because it drives us away from our natural state of interdependence. Indra's Net exists in Buddhism and Hinduism as a metaphor to describe an existence of infinitely non-dual inseparability (*sunyatā*), void of that which is not dependent on other causes and conditions for its origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*). Each life is connected to every other life in this endlessly vast display of interconnection. Any change, however slight, in one impacts all. The global

economy touches virtually every human being, but unlike the connectivity of Indra's Net, the process is driven by unquenchable consumption. Interdependence exists superficially, but the connection is one of commodity rather than community. Community in the broadest sense inspires interdependence, whereas without a profound experience of interdependence we treat the entire planet and its myriad forms of life as commodities to accumulate and discard. At the most basic level, the Buddhist message for the Anthropocene era is that we are inseparably bound together with every element in the universe, and particularly bound to our little planet as it travels through the space.

Buddhist thinking sees how a distorted economic system is driving an environmental crisis, but this is only the starting point. At a deeper level, fundamental confusion about identity, dualism and interdependence create the internal and external conditions for suffering, and in this case, suffering on a planetary scale. Core Buddhist thinking on the causes of suffering, and the antidote through recognition and experience of our interdependent nature, translated into sustainable right living, provide essential direction for planetary sustainability. As Buddhists we can contribute greatly to the shaping of global solutions by helping to secularize these Buddhist notions into policy prescriptions for sustainable living. In this, we should seek to develop a clear contemporary message in language that can be understood universally.

We have created a destructive closed system of consumption-driven growth further driving even more unsustainable growth, compounding the resulting environmental destabilization and harm. Yet globalization, for all its shortcomings, has fueled a growth in wealth, enabling billions of people to move from poverty to healthier existences. One of the great ironies of this age is that far more people are living in far better conditions than ever before. How can this be possible if the global economic system is as pernicious as its critics claim? The answer can be found by separating temporary benefits from long-term consequences. It is like watching the Himalayan glaciers melt. They can continue to provide downstream water for the billions of people whose lives depend on the great Asian rivers fed by the glaciers. But if the glaciers are not replenished—as is the case—then eventually the water flow will stop, with unimaginable consequences for the beings inhabiting the region. In terms of capacity, a consumption-driven global economy would not necessarily cause critical harm to the planet had the human population remained stable at one billion people, as it had until the last 100 years. It is not just an issue of a seven-fold population increase to 7.5 billion people, but the fact that virtually all of the 7.5 billion people seek to fulfill their lives through greater consumption. Absent truly disruptive technological changes enabling all forms of renewable consumption and low-impact resources, the great population increases combined with greater consumption cannot be sustainable.

Time appears compressed in the Anthropocene epoch. Change that previously took eons, now happens in years or months. Our consumption-driven global economic system and its expanding use of non-renewable energy and material-intensive production have depleted the earth of resources and caused environmental changes that will impact the earth for many

thousands of years. Virtually all this environmental disequilibrium has taken place in the last 100 years.

Human degradation of the environment and the ensuing climate change can be seen as a byproducts of a larger structural crisis of sustainability, driven by economic systems that prioritizes growth without due regard to the social and environmental costs to individuals, families, communities and indeed, then entire planetary system.

Reforming the global economic structure requires a massive effort of collective will and knowledge to slowly transition from an engine of consumption to one that balances growth with sustainability and social value. Billions of people are tied to the current model, flawed though it may be, and any abrupt dislocation could cause unimaginable suffering, especially to the most vulnerable populations. To move beyond general statements towards comprehensive reform requires intimate knowledge of the workings of national and global economic models at a macro and micro level. Technical subjects such as fiscal, monetary and trade policy, the role of tax policy; as well as banking, capital flows, capital markets, employment and job creation have tremendous and sometimes unforeseen impact on our lives and planetary well-being. For Buddhists to contribute meaningful solutions to the crisis of sustainability require both an understanding of core Buddhist teachings as well as a contemporary understanding of social, economic and political disciplines.

INEB's 10-Year Strategy

Intelligent and balanced prescriptions are coming from a convergence of mainstream and alternative economic thinking. The 2008 financial crisis served to highlight the fragility of the global financial system, just as climate change has done for the environment. As a result, more institutions and governments are seriously examining the flaws inherent in our economic and policy models and some corporations, long seen as the most flagrant abusers of the environment and exploiters of the poor, are starting to transform business strategies to benefit from a growing circular economic movement that prioritizes repurposing, recycling and renewing.

These are positive steps and part of INEB's actions must be to encourage acceleration of positive change in the form of right living. Yet at a deeper level we must also question whether long-term sustainable change is possible without also working to expand the human experience of interdependence. If one examines the global popularity of the mindfulness movement, it is possible to imagine that a deeper understanding of interdependence can be built on the success of mindfulness. Just like the Buddha's ability to adapt his teachings to the capacity of the audience, we need to develop secular language and a secular curriculum to transmit interdependence.

The Plan of Action

The following proposed steps are intended to first clarify and then magnetize a Buddhist voice by adopting secular prescriptions that reflect the sustainability inherent in the Middle Path.

1. In collaboration with eminent economists (both alternative and mainstream), policymakers, foundations and Buddhist scholars, in 2018 INEB will launch a series of high level working group discussions to develop policies and an action plan intended to assist local, regional and international deliberations about economic and environmental reform. It is anticipated that the policies and plan of action will reflect secularized Buddhist Middle Way prescriptions to develop balance, harmony and sustainability for economic and environmental well-being;
2. Prepare for an inaugural conference on The Global Economy for a Sustainable Planet. The conference, intended for 2018 or 2019, will launch a coordinated initiative to offer Middle Way secular prescriptions for greater sustainability, equality, harmony, poverty-alleviation, renewability, moderation and comprehensive environmental protection. Although the underpinnings of the Middle Way approach are Buddhist, the initiative will be open to all and the organizers will seek to ensure the broadest level of participation. It is anticipated that the inaugural conference will be co-hosted by the Buddhist nations of Bhutan and Thailand;
3. Establish a post-conference structure to ensure and facilitate an active and coordinated global effort and an operational plan of action to utilize 2,500 years of Buddhist knowledge and experience to help transition to interdependence.
4. Through the INEB Institute begin to develop curriculum modules to teach experiential interdependence. To some degree, this is already an element in both the leadership training and English language training programs, but needs to be developed more fully.

10. Inter-Religious Climate & Ecology (ICE) Network:

Engaging Asian Religious Leaders in Climate Dialogue and Action

1. Background and Rationale

The global environmental crisis that our world faces today is widely being accepted as being multi-factored in nature, existing as a complex web of causal relationships that extend beyond just scientific cause-effect principles. International forums on climate change tend to focus on legal arrangements and technical considerations. In all of these discussions, an important point is often ignored. The climate crisis is rooted in human behaviour. Our current systems reflect our inner values and our beliefs about our relationship with the living world. Climate change is a moral issue, and the climate crisis, which we have created together, requires a shared ethical response.

Given the “inherent” nature of the crisis, it is becoming critical for religious/spiritual teachers and institutions to step forward and actively provide the necessary “inner” guidance that may enable the human race to respond to the environmental crisis in a peaceful, sustainable, and equitable way. Religious teachers and institutions are beginning to come forward to provide the necessary moral and ethical leadership. An African inter-religious campaign called “We Have Faith” was represented at the 17th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 17) in Durban, South Africa. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) passed a resolution at its 2012 World Conservation Congress inviting closer cooperation with the faith sector on climate and biodiversity advocacy.

The ICE Network emerged from an international conference on *The Inter-Religious Dialogue on Climate Change and Biodiversity Conservation*, which was held in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka in September 2012 through the collaborative efforts of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), the Sewalanka Foundation, IUCN, and the Commission on Environmental Economics and Social Policy (CEESP). As a result of this conference, a common understanding of the causes and impacts of climate change was articulated. An emphasis was placed on the urgent need to address inner spiritual values as they relate to our human stewardship and interconnected care and protection for our natural environment. The prevailing attitudes across religious communities that contribute to a failure of our responsibility towards the living world were critically examined. Structural impasses were also cited as an area that also must be urgently rectified, most alarmingly the absence of an international binding agreement for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Inter-Religious Climate and Ecology (ICE) Network seeks to actively engage religious leaders and institutions throughout Asia in climate education, collective action, and policy change. The long-term objective is to bring the wisdom of religious traditions and the moral influence of religious leaders and institutions into climate change dialogue and action. The overall goal of the project is to address the root causes of climate change and respond to the

emerging effects of climate change in a peaceful, equitable, and sustainable way. There are 4 components to realize these goals, which are described in the next section.

2. Implementation Strategy

2.1 Awareness & Education

Religious leaders and institutions engage in climate education, increase public awareness, and contribute to behaviour change.

This component of the network will develop resources and training programs to help religious leaders and practitioners better understand the climate crisis and explain it to others.

An Education Committee (EC), consisting of climate scientists and religious teachers, will collect educational materials on climate change drivers, expected impacts, strategies for mitigation, adaptation and response, and current political debates. The purpose of this action is to design appropriate **curriculum & resource materials** that would assist in teaching religious leaders. Each year, a special **“training of trainers” (TOT) program** will be offered for religious leaders. Senior religious leaders exercise considerable moral influence in their own communities and among key decision makers. If they are able to communicate effectively about climate change and integrate it into their teachings, they have the potential to influence people’s hearts, minds, and actions. Religious leaders from each country will also be encouraged to identify young people (Young ICE) who can assist with climate awareness and education. A TOT program will also be conducted each year for Young ICE members. A **Climate Education Fund (CEF)** will be established to provide funding support to help senior religious leaders and Young ICE members conduct awareness and climate education programs after they return home. The Fund will provide support for **at least 20 climate education initiatives** on a co-funding or matching grant basis. Examples of climate education initiatives are – translation and adaption of curriculum and resource materials, printing of awareness and educational materials, public teachings and events, workshops and conferences, youth camps, radio and television programs, local language websites and online videos (where appropriate), documenting local stories for national and international awareness, and integrating climate education into religious education and formal education.

2.2 Climate Action

Religious leaders, institutions, and communities catalyse collective action and develop initiatives for climate change mitigation, adaptation, and response.

This component of the network will support local initiatives driven by religious institutions for climate change mitigation, adaptation, and response. It will provide opportunities to exchange experiences and best practices.

A **Climate Action Fund (CAF)** will be established for providing funding support to local environmental initiatives run by religious institutions. The CAF will be overlooked by a committee, which will include environmental scientists and representatives from the main religious traditions in Asia. The Climate Action Fund will support **at least 30 local climate**

initiatives. Examples might include: “carbon neutral” temples, churches and mosques; home gardening and food security programs; livelihood diversification; community resilience programs (e.g. disaster plans, savings systems); disaster mitigation (e.g. reforestation, bunds, canals, rainwater harvesting); emergency response to climate disaster; documenting indigenous knowledge and local change; ecovillage models; Eco-Pilgrimage *Yathra* (raising awareness, in addition to cleaning the surrounding environment during the *Yathra* as a way to build environmental awareness). **9 case study reports** (one case study for each type of climate action initiative) will be produced and shared online and printed for distribution. The case study reports are intended to promote learning and catalyse new initiatives.

2.3 Local Networking & Advocacy

Local and national inter-religious networks are developed to exchange experiences, increase collaboration, and influence national programs and policies.

This component of the network will strengthen local and national inter-religious networks to increase exchange, collaboration, and advocacy action.

The ICE Network Secretariat—located in Seoul, Korea—will help strengthen at least 3 regional or national networks each year. The local networks will prepare a **database of key contacts**. The goal will be to include representatives from all major religious groups or sects in the covered geographical area. The ICE Network Secretariat will support the selected regional and national inter-religious networks to conduct a series of **strategic planning workshops**. Topics may include: basic training on local policy, basic training on culturally appropriate advocacy techniques, assessment of local challenges and opportunities, identification of key stakeholders to enable effective collaboration, and development and review of plans and targets. Each year, the ICE Network Secretariat will organize an **international gathering** for representatives from 3 participating regional or national networks. At this event, they will have the opportunity to exchange experiences and learn more about strategies for inter-religious networking and climate change advocacy.

2.4 International Networking & Advocacy

The Inter-religious Climate and Ecology (ICE) Network is strengthened to promote international exchange and collaboration and to influence international climate change debates.

The ICE Secretariat will coordinate the **development of a website** for the ICE Network. The site will serve as an online platform that brings together news, ideas, resources, and climate change testimonies from all network members. The online media platform will help generate awareness and interest in climate issues and ICE Network activities. The project will help ICE Network members bring the voice and experience of Asian religious leaders, communities, and institutions to **international climate change forums**. **International ICE Network Conferences** will be organized to provide an opportunity for representatives from all

countries and religions to share their experiences, identify opportunities for collaboration, and plan for future action.

3. Going Forward into the Future – ICE Network Expansion

The ICE Network project’s approach is cyclical in nature, and therefore can be replicated and re-implemented multiple times in the future. If the first kick-start 3 year project initiative is successful in achieving its objectives, the ICE Network plans to re-implement the project in the future in regions of the world that are beyond Asia. This replication would in the process help grow its network of religious/faith-based organizations, and expand its reach and influence at the international level.

11. Eco-Temple Community Development Project

“An Eco-Temple in every town in the world can transform our relationship with the environment.”

Background:

The Eco Temple Working Group was formed at the 2nd Interfaith Climate and Ecology network (ICE) international conference in Seoul, Korea in April 2015. This working group emerged from the participation of Rev. Hidehito Okochi of Japan in the 1st ICE Conference in Sri Lanka and the aftermath of the Fukushima nuclear incident. Since that time, the Japan Network of Engaged Buddhists (JNEB) created an International Project on Energy to share experiences on nuclear energy among Buddhists and other religious groups in the Global North, and in coordination with INEB conduct two study tours (2012,2015) for those in the Global South to learn of the resiliency activities of Buddhists priests and other civil society groups in Fukushima and to study more in depth Rev. Okochi’s own eco-temple communities in Tokyo. A two-day meeting held just after the INEB General Conference in Sri Lanka from January 29-30, 2016 was the first time this new sub network had an extended period together to share their activities and delve more deeply into the numerous interconnected issues in eco-temple community design.

Vision and Strategy: Holistic Design and “Seed Planting”

The specific goal of the project is to initiate and realize holistic Eco-Temple Communities based out of Buddhist temples (and applicable to the centers of other religions) in the INEB and ICE network. INEB and ICE members have a wide variety of communities, resources, and needs. By working together to develop an Eco-Temple Community Design Scheme, an information base of best practices and available resources can be developed for each community’s specific needs. The overarching goal is to develop ecological human communities that are sustainably interconnected with the natural environment through the community center of a religious facility/temple.

The Eco Temple Community Design is a holistic development process that involves much more than simply putting solar panels on the roofs of temples. It involves a comprehensive integration of: 1) ecological temple structure and energy system, 2) economic sustainability, 3) integration with surrounding environment, 4) engagement with community and other regional groups (civil society, business, government), and 5) development of spiritual values and teachings on environment, eco-dharma. In these 5 core components of the Eco Temple Community Design, there are a wide variety of methods of engagement to realize a full-fledged eco temple community. One of the core strategies is the practice of “seed planting” in which from action in any one of these 5 areas, a sustainable and renewable form of “capital” is generated to develop and sustain the other four areas.



This vision was first realized by our member Rev. Hidehito Okochi in Japan who by installing solar panels on his temple in Tokyo in the late 1990s and selling the excess electricity for profit has been able to financially run a local CSO working on global warming. Such “solar seed planting” can act as a key fulcrum for immediately realizing components of the holistic design—such as 1) ecological temple structure and energy system and 2) economic sustainability—while providing a financial base for realizing others—such as 3) development projects to support and maintain the surrounding environment, 4) educational projects with local community and other regional groups, and 5) realization of spiritual values by embodying environmental values in a religious community. In the long-term, as renewable energy grows, this “seed planting” can go beyond the installation of solar to include micro-hydro, wind, biomass, and even geo-thermal. Indeed, our newest member, Ven. Miao Hai of Zhengjue Temple (Mt. Lianhua, China)—who before becoming a monk held significant positions in research and development in the solar industry in China—has been providing technical consultancy and donations for the building of solar facilities ranging from 10kW to 40kW to a number of sites in the formal Eco Temple Network and in the wider INEB network. “Seed Planting” can also start with other initiatives in Eco Temple Community Design, such with our member Phra Sangkom Khunsiri’s Temple of Buddha Relics and Smart Pagoda who established Sufficiency Economy schools from environmental regeneration activities.

There are a huge number of potential sites for the work through the ICE and INEB Networks. INEB itself, as a predominantly Buddhist based network, has affiliates, members, and extended connections to temples throughout all of Buddhist Asia. These include extremely sensitive environmental areas, such as the Himalayas and the Mekong Delta, and areas of dense population where the human environmental footprint needs to be drastically reduced, such as India and China. The potential of just Buddhist temples, not to mention all religious

facilities, to act as centers for lifestyle change in terms of energy use and environmental preservation is needless to say immense.

Future Plans:

With this tremendous scope in mind, the Eco-Temple Community Development Project seeks to proceed step by step, temple by temple, by establishing a core foundation in a secretariat and its principal member temples. With the establishment of a secretariat and full time coordination by the Japan Network of Engaged Buddhists (JNEB) in April 2018, the essential work of 1) documentation of activities, 2) coordination of technological and methodological inputs in the network, and 3) coordination of site visits and conferences can be accomplished. The project, however, does not seek a funding model based on an annual budget for activities and administrative costs, which while yielding tangible outcomes does not create further “capital” and hence needs constant replenishing. Instead, using the model of “seed planting” mentioned above, the project seeks to secure single time donations towards one of the 5 design components, such as the construction of solar facilities, which gives rise to the other components in a system of self-renewing “capital” (social, environmental, spiritual, educational, and economic). In this way, we envision that these original eco-temples will then become become “seed planters” for new temples in the network, as seen in Ven. Miao Hai and Phra Sangkom’s expanding activities.

Project Sites:

- Sukhavati Eco-Temple (Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, India) under the Foundation for His Sacred Majesty (Mr. Gauthama Prabhu Nagappan, Executive Director)
- Shwenadi Monastic School (Kyaupaduang, Magway Region, Myanmar) under Ven. Yuzana, Abbot, and Socially Engaged Monastic Schools SEMS (Awipi, Coordinator)
- The Temple of Buddha Relics (Chiang Mai, Thailand) & The Smart Pagoda (Chonburi, Thailand) under Phra Sangkom Thanapanyo Khunsiri, Abbot
- Juko-in Temple & Kenju-in Temple (Tokyo, Japan) under Rev. Hidehito Okochi, Abbot
- Zhengjue Temple (Mt. Lianhua, Zibo City, Shandong Province, China) under Ven. Ren Da, Abbot & Ven. Miao Hai, Head of Renewable Energy Application
- Bodhi Hill Learning Community (Shan State, Myanmar) under Sai Leng Wan (Harn), Director
- The Sunshine Temple Project (South Korea) under Tae-Ok Lee, Secretary General of Won Buddhism Eco Network

The INEB 10 Year Strategic Roadmap Meeting Process

From October 11-14, 2016 At the Conference on Social Engagement and Liberation, commemorating the 60th anniversary Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's Conversion to Buddhism at the Nagaloka Instiute in Nagpur, India, a group of core INEB members held informal discussions about the need for INEB to develop a more systematic approach to its growing initiatives. We asked questions like, What must be addressed for INEB to continue to function as a “network” oriented organization? Is there a need to develop a more centralized body to manage network activities and other projects? Or is there a need for a more hybrid model? There were also important questions raised about how to better maximize the impact of INEB’s grassroots work, which doesn’t often translate on to higher levels of social policy making. In this way, we also questioned how organizationally INEB might better manage its initiatives by identifying and empowering the right leaders for them.



*a retreat and workshop of core INEB member,
from March 14-16, 2017 at the Wongsanit Ashram*

From that gathering and discussion, we decided to develop a one year strategic process leading up the next main INEB Conference in Taiwan in November, 2017. The first step was to organise a retreat and workshop of core INEB members, both young and old, from March 14-16, 2017 at the Wongsanit Ashram outside of Bangkok, concluding with a celebration of Ajahn

Sulak's 84th birthday at the Siam Society in Bangkok. 24 core INEB members attended this retreat. Deep discussions over a full three days were held, beginning with the core values and cultures of INEB and how INEB is going to move forward in the next 10 years. There are issues at the local, national, and international levels that INEB needs to address and answer but through developing its own unique perspective and practice. INEB has a wide range of work, and it is tied to multiple issues (such as gender, marginalized peoples, environmental, conflict resolution, etc.). There is no single "brand" through which INEB communicates its cause to the world. In this way, the retreat focused much of its time addressing some of INEB's core values, the tension between an "organic network" and "professional network", its public identity or "brand", and identifying new issues that could be worked on.

The second meeting in this process was held at the INEB Secretariat in Bangkok from June 3-4, 2017 with 20 core INEB members attending. The focus of this workshop was on moving forward through a collective effort, while still maintaining the individual projects run by smaller groups. There are roughly 11 core themes that have been identified for INEB to work on over the next 10 years as seen in the concept papers in this volume. There is always the need to look closely at how individual projects can be better linked to each other. Fundraising is also a persistent issue for each project, and there have been new suggestions to examine income generating activities within projects to end the complete reliability on donor organizations for funding. It is becoming more and more difficult for NGOs to be supported through the traditional grant based system and relying on donations. INEB is developing plans to incorporate unique, alternative ways to generate funds, which is articulated as "social enterprise" in the Strategic Roadmap article in this volume.

Following the discussions on these issues, a majority of the group feels that INEB should maintain its present structure as a loosely connected network, rather than as a formally structured, legally registered organization. There are huge negative implications in being legally registered, and INEB can still exist as it is and raise funds for its individual projects. One of the major reasons that it was suggested for INEB to become a formal, legal entity is fundraising. For this particular purpose, ideally, INEB could be registered as a legal entity to facilitate and catalyze fundraising, but without the need to have a large membership body that can bring in negative political and power dynamic implications. One possibility is that INEB can make a basic registration with a basic membership, which only requires by law a small body of board members. In this way, INEB can still continue to run and work as a loosely connected network, and its individual projects can continue their own agendas and fund raise for their own work. The pros and cons of INEB restructuring has to be brought out at the next INEB Executive and Advisory Meeting. A final decision will be made by these high level committees on whether to register INEB independently as an INGO or continue keeping it registered under a Thai NGO.

The third and final meeting in this process was held from September 23-24, 2017 at the INEB Secretariat in Bangkok. 10 core INEB members attended this workshop with the aim to discuss the drafts of the concept papers for each project. The basic outline of the concept paper was determined: describing and elaborating the concept, explaining a program with

background, issues that will be handled, preparatory groundwork, and rationale for implementing the activities, and finally a list all project activities. There is still the need to strongly consider how INEB can develop in institutional terms, particularly financially. INEB should consider developing a financial base from activities that would generate income, which would then be tied back into the projects. INEB should also consider hiring a full time fundraising coordinator to raise the necessary funds for its projects.