

WORKBOOK FOR MOVING OUR GLOBAL FUNCTIONING FORWARD

A Guide for 2008

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Dear Center Coordinators,

Om shanti and special greetings of love to each of you. Over the past year we have begun a careful process of reviewing the needs of the Brahma Kumaris worldwide to assure that, with the expansion of the family and the growing complexity in these times, we have the right kinds of guidance available to BK center coordinators, main instruments (living at or supporting the centers,) and regular students.

Background

According to the time, we want to assure that we have credible processes in place for applying our principles in the accurate running of the global organization in alignment with the laws and human rights conventions of the 21st century world and with our own Divine Constitution and other foundation documents. We are considering ways in which our guiding principles need to be updated to meet the demands of these changing times and of the expanded family.

Last October (2007), 75 representatives from India and abroad came together in Shantivan for a dialogue about the issues and needs faced by each centre. At the conclusion of that meeting, we agreed on seven areas of focus to improve our global functioning. Small teams were created for each area. They committed to write summary documents describing the important concerns in each area.

In February (2008) at the National Coordinators (NC) meeting in Gyan Sarovar, the chairs, co-chairs and designated Regional Coordinators (RC) for each of the seven working groups presented an overview of each area, based on the summary documents they had written, calling attention to important spiritual and administrative issues.

Between May 1 and September 1 of 2008, we want to extend this work further, to assure that we have the best ideas and important insights from the entire global family. We propose doing this by holding a series of conversations in each region.

Convening Conversations

Your National Coordinator will be facilitating this process in one of the three following ways:

1. The NC may host a retreat of all center coordinators and main instruments of their country. During the retreat, the group will engage in conversations about the seven topic areas that have emerged as important for our global functioning. [These topics are presented later in this workbook]
2. The NC may request that area coordinators facilitate retreats for some subset of the centers in the country. During these retreats, the groups will engage in conversations about the seven topic areas that have emerged as important for our global functioning.
3. The NC may request that each center in the country engage in a series of conversations on each of the seven topic areas.

Workbook

This workbook entitled *Workbook for Moving our Global Functioning Forward – A Guide for 2008* has been prepared to assist you in holding conversations. The workbook is being provided to help assure that these conversations are successful. It includes the background and context for the global functioning process, helpful guidelines for room set up, facilitation, and note-taking, and separate sets of questions for each of the topic areas.

Regardless of which of the three options your country is using, we encourage you to hold additional conversations with regular students on ONLY three of the seven topics: (A) Upholding our spiritual principles (Topic One), (B) Caring for our family (Topic Two), and (C) Providing Mechanisms for Reconciliation (Topic Four) On the pages that follow we have provided some questions on each of the topics to help make these conversations as rich as possible.

Reporting the Results

The working groups are depending on the quality of your feedback to make the final documents responsive to the needs, concerns and best ideas of BKs from around the world. Therefore, please take care in reporting your results.

At the end of the workbook you will find a blank worksheet template for reporting the results of the conversations on the seven topic areas. If you choose to hold seven separate conversations, we are requesting that you complete one copy of this worksheet for each of the seven topic areas on which you have held conversations. As

soon as you have concluded the conversations for a particular topic area, please collect the ideas and comments you received from the conversations on that topic area and paste them into the worksheet template.

Email the worksheet to your National Coordinator, and he/she will then e-mail it to their respective Regional Coordinator. The National Coordinator will also forward the collective worksheets on each topic to the Office of the Secretariat.

Outcomes of Conversations

Our hope is that a few things will emerge from these conversations:

1. Those in your centre will provide fresh ideas and insights for the working teams that are putting together the draft summary documents for each of the seven topic areas.
2. You will have an opportunity to talk in an open and positive way about areas that are fundamental to managing life at the center.
3. You will find ways to improve the current operations at your centre – even before the draft summary documents for each area are completed. If you have proposals for ways to improve operations at your center, the center coordinator should keep their national coordinator informed and the national coordinator should in turn keep the regional coordinator informed.

NOTE: NO PERMANENT CHANGES CAN BE MADE UNTIL YOU HAVE THE SUPPORT AND CONSENT OF YOUR REGIONAL COORDINATOR AND YOUR NATIONAL COORDINATOR.

Your cooperation is very important for the success of this initiative.
Thank you, In Baba's yaad,

BK Gayatri, Ken, and Judy

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Guidelines for Conversations

Preparing the room:

To encourage conversation, chairs should be set in a circle so that everyone in the conversation can easily see one another. If it is a big group, microphones should be provided so that everyone can be easily heard. There should be a flip chart on which a facilitator can capture all ideas suggested.

The role of the facilitator:

To assure that each subject is covered thoroughly and that time is used in a worthwhile way, someone should be asked to facilitate each conversation. The role of the facilitator is to do the following:

- Explain the context, the process, and the time available to everyone.
- Invite open sharing of ideas in an orderly way, making sure that only one person is talking at a time and that each person has the attention of the whole group.
- Assure that the conversation stays on a constructive note, focusing not on problems of the past, but on what we want more of in the future – how we want things to work going forward.
- Capture the essence of what each speaker says on a flipchart.
- Remind speakers when they are going on too long and need to bring their remarks to a close.
- Assure that there is a space in the conversation to hear from those who are quieter.
- Bring the conversation to a close by summarizing what has been said and thanking everyone for participating.

The role of the center coordinator:

In this workbook there is a template that can be used to create worksheets for each of the seven topic areas. The center coordinator – or someone designated by the center coordinator -- needs to fill out each worksheet with the information from the conversations. If someone else is designated to take the notes and complete the worksheets, the center coordinator needs to look closely at the information on the sheets for each topic area, and confirm that it reflects what happened in the conversation. The center coordinator sends this worksheet to the national coordinator

who again looks closely at the ideas expressed, translates them into English before sending to the Regional Coordinator and to the Office of the Secretariat.

The role of the note-taker:

It is very important to the global functioning process that the output from the conversations be reported accurately, so that it can be incorporated into the final draft of the summary documents for each topic area going forward. Here is some guidance for the person who is taking notes and filling out the worksheets for each conversation.

- When you are listening to the conversations, take notes on the important points being made in each conversation.
- Please be as specific as possible, including exact quotes where you think it will clarify what is being said.
- Make sure to include any differences of opinion, original ideas, or especially strong opinions that were expressed in the group.
- If an idea has already been stated, you do not need to continue to write it down, but indicate how much support an idea had from others in the conversation. Also indicate if an idea was offered, but not supported by others.
- We would like you to send each work sheet, as you complete the conversation. Your last conversation should be completed and worksheet forwarded to the Office of the Secretariat for Global Functioning by the NC no later than August 15.

A recommended timeline for those choosing option three.

Hold the conversation with instruments on one topic area every two weeks, concluding by August 15. [National Coordinators will hold one more conversation – with the board.] The dates on the schedule below are the dates by which the Office of the Secretariat for Global Functioning is requesting to receive worksheets. So, your schedule should look something like this.