BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Guiding Principles for Brahma Kumaris Centres and activities worldwide

Updated December 2024

THE BRAHMA KUMARIS

Introduction

Purpose and context

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University acknowledges the common responsibility of our community to use our natural resources in a sustainable and compassionate way and to consider ourselves to be guardians of those resources. We believe we can help each other to grow in terms of our awareness of the natural world as a living system that needs our care, and deepen our concern for those living with the consequences of the triple planetary crisis, climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

Articulating spiritual perspectives on environmental issues is part of supporting our commitment to sustainability and regeneration. Throughout the world, in Brahma Kumaris infrastructure and activities, we already find many examples of good environmental practices. However, this document aims to communicate our intentions to our global community in a more systematic way. We also recognise the different social, economic and cultural contexts that our centres and community work within. Therefore without compromising the core principles outlined in this document, each country is encouraged to adapt to local needs.

Target Group and Communication

This document is for all Brahma Kumaris centres and activities throughout the world including national teams and centre co-ordinators and is communicated worldwide through our International Coordinating Office in London.

Spiritual Foundation

The Brahma Kumaris promotes spiritual understanding, universal values and leadership with integrity through the practice and teaching of Raja Yoga meditation. This nurtures a healthy balance between our inner and outer worlds and encourages greater awareness of the role of consciousness and lifestyle in addressing environmental issues.

Adopting a less materialistic lifestyle and increasing the use of clean energy saves the planet's resources and brings greater well-being. Spending time in silent reflection, prayer or meditation helps us to connect with our deeper values and find the strength to live by them, enabling us to be more mindful of the impact of our choices.

Promoting and living by the principles of universal peace can lead to less violent conflicts and wars, thus enabling vast resources to be redirected to creating a healthy and sustainable society.

What we eat has a profound effect on our physical, mental and emotional health. Vegetarian/plant-based food, cooked with love, nourishes our whole being and brings inner clarity. It contributes to the health and future of the planet by reducing our carbon footprint. Additionally, it demonstrates our commitment to nonviolence.

Background

The Brahma Kumaris is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) of the United Nations with General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and affiliation to the UN Department of Global Communications (DGC). As an international NGO, the Brahma Kumaris has established the Brahma Kumaris Environmental Initiative which contributes an ethical and spiritual approach to global environmental concerns as an accredited observer organisation to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

The Brahma Kumaris has a worldwide network of centres in more than 120 countries.

Core Principles of Brahma Kumaris Environmental Initiative (BKEI)

The organisation recognises the impact of its activities and actions on the environment at local, national and global levels. BKEI works to raise awareness amongst all Brahma Kumaris centres to create a more environmentally friendly and sustainable and regenerative culture through six **core principles**:

- **Living with Simplicity** – choosing a vegetarian/plant-based diet, using utilities and resources mindfully, minimising waste and pollution.
- **Buying Compassionately** – purchasing local produce and/or environmentally sensitive products and services where budgets allow
- **Using Economically** – using products and resources carefully, avoiding waste, being mindful of life-cycles (Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Re-Earth (compost), founded on respect and gratitude
- **Learning Continuously** – understanding and improving our relationship with matter; working in partnership with other organisations, sharing best practices
- **Sharing Generously** – disseminating information in order to encourage a mindset of inclusivity and reciprocity in initiatives and projects
- **Leaving No Trace** – Leaving a place as you found it, or better than you found it. Promoting responsible behaviour when engaging with nature, ensuring that our human activities leave a positive impact on the environment.

BKEI has identified a number of ways it will encourage engagement with the **six core principles**:

- Raise awareness of this document - Spiritual Perspectives on Environmental issues - throughout the network
- Invite members of the network to contribute to and take responsibility for the core principles
- Offer current, relevant and practical training in environmental practices and awareness
- Develop materials to support an understanding of the relationship of consciousness, wellbeing and individual responsibility, to the environment
- As we enter an era of spiritual restoration, encourage restoring our relationship with nature
- Explore the benefits of nature exposure and cultivate the feeling of connection that it provides
- Meditate in nature. Pure thoughts and feelings arise more easily when we connect with nature.
- Continue to engage with renewable energy projects, including solar energy installations
- Initiate environmental schemes in local areas, such as Sustainable Yogic Agriculture and tree planting to offset carbon emissions
- Monitor and sustain good practice throughout the Brahma Kumaris Network
- Submit an environmental report to UNEP every four years via the Brahma Kumaris UN office in New York

The document will be reviewed every 4 years and is available on: www.eco.brahmakumaris.org