

Can We Learn from the Barefoot People of Tilonia?

While we are making available our alcohol and associated culture to our indigenous people, maybe we should be taking a lead from the barefoot people of the world regarding our water and power supplies

Most of us have roof tops and the ability to put in a water tank. Is it possible that, if we had a water tank in our homes, it would put a huge dent in our city water shortage problem? Note the Rainwater Harvesting Association of Tigray which is now a registered body in Ethiopia and was officially inaugurated on 19 June. Barefoot solar and water engineers in nine countries are constructing rooftop rainwater harvesting systems after 6 months of training at the Barefoot College. The College has trained over 340 men and women from 16 states in India and nine other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to become barefoot solar engineers. And solar power?

Perhaps we can learn much from the barefoot approach in Ethiopia:

Follow the journey of 60 semi-literate middle-aged women doing six months training at the Barefoot College of Tilonia, Rajasthan (India) - training to becoming solar engineers and electrify 50 rural communities in Afghanistan, Bolivia, Ethiopia, Mali, Sierra Leone and The Gambia. Now, nearly 11,000 solar household systems and over 5,000 solar lanterns provide clean energy and light to more than 125,000 people.

Yes, solar panels on the roof of native huts providing power for lights and even computers. Each of these communities now enjoys light instead of darkness every night. Solar panels produce electricity for most homes in Tilonia besides feeding Barefoot College facilities including 20 computers and a telephone exchange.

This year, many more women and men are being trained by the Barefoot College to become Barefoot Solar Engineers. Besides tackling solar electricity and drinking water, the Barefoot College addresses the problems of health and sanitation, girl education, rural unemployment, income generation and social awareness and conservation of ecological systems.

About 1.1 billion people world wide have inadequate water supplies. Barefoot College advocates paying attention to centuries-old traditions of collecting rainwater to meet this shortage.

Energy from the sun and water from the rain are both free so here there is no big-money political lobby in support as there is with mining and oil interests. We need to ask "are we allowing ourselves to be talked out of using these resources by people who say they will never be an adequate replacement - when in fact the answer is that we need them not as a replacement but just as a means of reducing our need for oil and coal".

Are we so superior that we can't see this clear Barefoot message for us? For further information visit www.barefootcollege.org.

- Jim Vickers-Willis
Ex-journalist, Entertainer, Author
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EDUCATION | *showing children the way*

Reinforcing environmental issues within the school has become a predominant "life education skill" in our Peninsula schools-starting from the very basics to including whole community activities. Thanks to all the teachers dedicated to 'leading the way', this is a big task outside their general teaching duties.

Educating children as young as five to be aware of the environment, the impact they personally can have and to motivate and sustain it is a hard task. To initiate environment consciousness has been a huge combined effort with local schools and communities, local and state government, environmental groups and interest groups.

Many schools on our Peninsula have achieved, or are achieving 5 star status energy ratings with a view to sustainability. Parents of the future can and should understand the importance of this factor within our schools. By actively seeking out schools that provide these, we can shape our future.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

• BINNING IT:

Recycling all paper in the school. Compost bins provided within the classrooms for worm farms and chook sheds (within school), wrappers taken home leaving wrap free food in the playground (encouraging paperless food) non recyclable rubbish in bins (such as tissues) are allowable. Hence waste can be reduced maybe up to %50 more within the school.

• ENERGY:

1. Replacement of fluorescent light tubes with energy saving tubes that provide more light- 'SWITCH OFF' when not in use is a very important reminder.
2. Fans, open windows and closed doors are encouraged, but if heating and cooling facilities are necessary use in moderation.
3. Computers regularly shut down when not in use.

• WATER:

1. Provision of rainwater tanks for toilets
2. Containers placed under drinking taps- constantly removed by students when full then used to water plants.
3. Plant drought tolerant plants & vegetated ovals with drought tolerant grass.
4. Encourage students to drink from their own water bottle- filled constantly rather than wasting water from drinking taps.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS PROGRAM:

For example: a creek such as King's Creek borders on Hastings Primary School and both the community and the school have been committed to being 'weed warriors'- ridding debris and creating a 'frog bog' to attract indigenous frogs back into the area. Both children and community being involved create a sense of 'oneness'.

"Showing children the way" should be a school, parent and community involvement one that sustains our children's future. - Ginger Hill

Inspirational Learning on the Mornington Peninsula



Mornington Secondary College is substantially resourced to meet a diverse range of individual needs. We offer students excellent facilities to maximize the learning potential to maximum standards.

Our Vision... Mornington Secondary College, an inspirational learning environment built on mutual respect, is committed to success in a student centred, safe atmosphere. High educational standards are provided, expected and encouraged as are, respect for diversity, self and others. Our provision of broad educational opportunities allows all students a pathway to success as responsible members of the global community.



Weekly tours of our college are welcomed. To book, please contact the office.

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respect... honour... relationships... challenge