

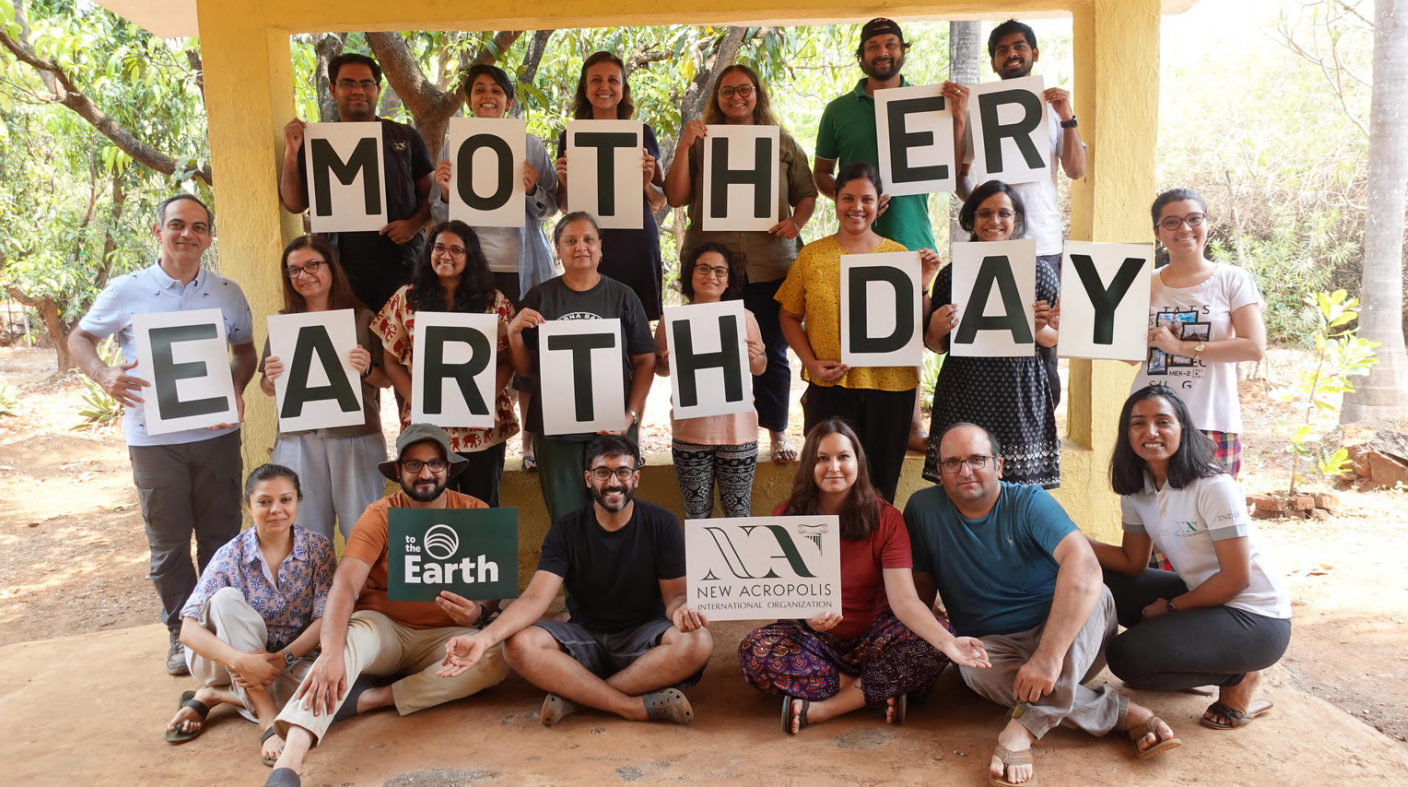
The Dream of MANAV BUSTAN

by Harianto Mehta



Demonstrating the spirit of volunteering, members of New Acropolis Cultural Organization collectively contributed time, effort, and funds, persevering over several years, to find suitable rural land, despite budget constraints, and challenges resulting from the pandemic, to serve as a country home of our work as a School of Philosophy. Finally acquired on 12th August 2021, the land was christened Manav Bustan.





WHAT:

The Persian word Bustan translates to a fragrant orchard, referring to a landscaped agricultural garden comprising a montage of fruit trees, vegetable seedlings, medicinal shrubs and spices.

Manav Bustan expands this vision, in the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the traditional Indian ethical worldview that recognizes the inherent universal fraternity between the earth, its diverse flora and fauna, human beings, and the celestial forces. Across the sub-continent, for centuries communities have celebrated and preserved the resulting harmony through practices such as Ayurveda and Sacred Groves - a testament of the profound philosophical relationship between all living beings that is entrenched in the Indian culture, and has evidently served as a vital element to the progress of human civilization.

At Manav Bustan, we seek to nourish and cultivate this fraternity, by integrating Ecology with human beings from diverse walks of life, searching to unite together in pursuit of Wisdom and Virtue; to revive the capacity to harmoniously dream together, be together, live together, and construct themselves together, in alignment with the natural laws of life. Because ultimately, in order to build a new and better world, we need to become new and better human beings.

WHY:

Away from the everyday demands of urban life, Manav Bustan will serve as an education and community development facility at which to revive our true ethical and conscious human nature. As human beings, we are part of Nature. The same principles that govern and harmoniously integrate the myriad elements of Nature, such as Goodness, Beauty, and Justice, characterize the human potential, which we can collectively and individually learn to express, through practical education.

A key component of this education is to awaken the spirit of volunteering. Too often, volunteering has been reduced to devoting time and effort for a specific social/ecological activity at a convenient time, when possible. Instead, a philosophical education would reveal that the human consciousness is predisposed to altruism and morality, with the courage to fight ego-centrism to contribute effort for the good of the larger community, and the generosity of concern for the welfare of all.

By facilitating the practical experience of this potential in a focussed and inspiring natural environment, the goal is to bring that experience into our daily urban lives, in order to bring real and meaningful change.





HOW:

The initiatives and programs at Manav Bustan will be curated and conducted by New Acropolis Cultural Organization, and will serve:

- To refine human abilities such as concentration, memory and imagination, in order to live richer, more meaningful lives through various exercises and traditional practices such as Yoga.
- To improve the capacity of each one to harmoniously contribute as an integral part of a human community, with courtesy and dignity, to overcome challenges, harnessing the power of collective strength and creativity.
- To learn to create a sustainable symbiosis with Nature through the construction and management of:
 - Rainwater harvesting and management, ground water recharge
 - Sustainable agricultural systems, permaculture/food forests, Ayurvedic Gardens
 - Organic waste management and composting
 - Soil enrichment
 - Bee-keeping
 - Animal Husbandry
 - Forestation to preserve local ecosystem of flora and fauna
- Employ the use of art, artisanal crafts, and work as a means of education to construct oneself; carpentry, ceramics, agriculture, etc.
- To examine and preserve the essence of local traditions and timeless values embedded in customs.
- Engage with local communities to build sustainable livelihoods, water conservation, hygiene, and value-based education.

WHO:

Through a multi-pronged approach, the vision includes programs for city-based volunteers seeking real change, special educational opportunities for school children, and initiatives to address needs of local rural communities.

- Volunteer Seminars comprising classes, group discussions, and practical work projects.
- School camps for children focussed on value education, and exchange programs with rural student communities to build solidarity and generosity.
- Engage with local artists and artisans in an effort to preserve local traditions, art forms, and customs.

WHERE:

The 10acre property, located off the Mumbai-Goa Highway, is at a 15-minute drive from Mangaon town (Raigad District). At the foot of the Sahyadri range, the region receives an annual rainfall of around 3000mm, and a seasonal tributary of the Kaal River, which carries flowing water from the monsoon through the end of January, marks the property's southern boundary. A lush mango orchard, in addition to native flora forms a thick year-round canopy.

At present, our facilities include:

- Campground to accommodate up to 50 persons, with picnic benches, gravel pathways, and campfire area
- Washroom blocks with 6 toilets, 4 bathrooms and dish washing area
- Gravel pathway to the river
- Indoor Kitchen and Hall
- Mango Orchard (250 trees)



YOUR SUPPORT NEEDED:

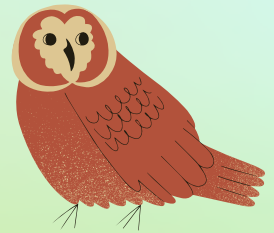
We have identified and prioritized amenities for near term development to effectively facilitate the Manav Bustan vision. Your support can be extended either as donations or as CSR contributions.

DONATIONS

Donations can be made to New Acropolis Cultural Organisation, which is a Section 8, Not-for-Profit Organization, having 12AA registration and 80G certification under the Indian Income Tax Act. All donations are therefore eligible for 50% deduction from Taxable Income under Indian Income Tax.

Your support can be extended as financial donations, equipment and materials, professional services such as architecture/agricultural expertise, etc. towards the following.

- Multi-purpose Community Hall for seminars, yoga and meditation sessions
- Dormitories
- Communal Kitchen and Dining Hall
- Artisanal Workshops
- Agriculture - as per the recommendation of Ecology consultants
- Forestation
- Repair of existing check dam



CSR CONTRIBUTIONS

The most immediate need is to implement a long-term solution to ensure year-round water supply for both domestic and agricultural needs. Despite an annual rainfall of approximately 3000mm, the region suffers from acute water shortages from January through June. Due to hard rock topography, rainwater fails to percolate to enrich ground water levels, since most of the rain water flows away downstream.

To alleviate this challenge, local authorities had put in place a checkdam, more than 10 years ago, to ensure sufficient water is stored through the year for use by local farmers, to support ground water re-charge that feed several wells in the vicinity, as well as enhance the local ecosystem. This checkdam is now defunct due to damage in its foundations, and requires urgent repair.

Estimated Budget for Repair of Checkdam: Rs 35 Lakhs

Duration of work: 2 months, April-May (need to complete before Monsoon)

A full technical report can be provided upon request.

A suitable implementation agency has already been identified, registered and approved to receive CSR funds and execute CSR projects, with the necessary technical expertise needed for this project.

Contributions towards this initiative will be allocated immediately, to ensure timely completion of the project, prior to the upcoming 2023 monsoons.



ABOUT NEW ACROPOLIS

New Acropolis Cultural Organization is an independent member of International Organization of New Acropolis (IONA), which was founded 65 years ago, and currently operates with 400 centers across 60 countries. Established in India since 2006, we are a Section 8, not-for-profit company, having Section 12 AA registration and Section 80G Certification under the Indian Income Tax Act.

The word Acropolis originates from ancient Greek and translates to the higher city, referring to the building of a higher state of consciousness within each human being, so as to awaken a sincere pursuit of Truth, Goodness, and Justice. The key to construct a new and better world therefore, lies within reach, since it depends ultimately on the actualization of our own human potential. As a school of practical philosophy, our efforts and activities to achieve this audacious goal, are aligned to 3 timeless principles, which we recognize as essential in order to bring about real change.

Fraternity

To promote an Ideal of international fraternity, based on respect for human dignity, beyond any difference of gender, culture, religion, social class etc.

Knowledge

To encourage the love of wisdom through the comparative study of philosophies, religions, sciences and arts, in order to achieve a knowledge of the human being, nature and the universe.

Development

To develop the best part of the human potential, by promoting each person's fulfilment as an individual and as an active member of society. To act in harmony with Nature in order to improve the world.