

The Hindu Nine Year Plan: summary

Introduction

There are approximately 900 million Hindus worldwide, including 750,000 Hindus in the UK with more than 188 Hindu Temples. Bhaktivedanta Manor in Hertfordshire has more than 70 acres of land on which they grow their own organic vegetables and have a £3 million cow protection project where cows are treated based on Hindu principles. The Balaji Temple in Birmingham is built on what was previously disused wasteland. The Krishna-avanti Primary School in Harrow is the first state-funded Hindu school in the UK and was recently voted the most environmentally friendly primary school in the UK.

Nine Year Plan

The Hindu community in the UK has been working together since April 2009 to produce a long-term plan for environmental protection and education for the worldwide Hindu community. The Hindu long-term plan is for a period of nine years. The plan has been developed and endorsed by the largest Hindu temples in the UK, namely the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha in Neasden; ISKCON Bhaktivedanta Manor in Watford; Sri Balaji Temple in Birmingham; Sri Sanatan Mandir in Leicester; the Krishna-Avanti Primary School and the National Hindu Students Forum. The process has been facilitated by the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) – a recognised Independent Centre of Oxford University.

The initiative has been named the Bhumi Project. Bhumi is the Sanskrit word for 'Mother Earth'.

The Hindu Nine Year Plan will be monitored and developed by a working party consisting of members from Bhaktivedanta Manor, Balaji Temple in Birmingham, Swaminarayan Temple, the National Hindu Students Forum and OCHS. More temples will be added as the plan develops.

The Hindu Plan is currently being presented to various Hindu temples and organisations within the UK. We expect the majority of temples and organisations to endorse the plan.

Partnerships have been made internationally to form a network of persons who can implement the Nine Year Plan on a global level. Work has already begun to introduce Hindu temples and national organisations in America to the Plan. Experiences learnt from the implementation of the Plan in the UK will help when dealing with Hindus around the world.

We recognise the significance of India in any discussion on climate change. In this regard we will forge links with interested parties and seek to gain the blessings and endorsement from Hindu spiritual leaders. The Bhumi Project will subsequently be presented to national Indian Hindu organisations for implementation in their temples and social initiatives.

The Nine Year Plan is made up of various projects which fall under the categories of Education, Action, and Networking. These categories help to bring focus and direction to the projects for development and implementation. The short list below provides an overview of some of the larger projects which the Hindu community will be engaged in. It also shows the far-reaching nature of the Nine Year Plan.

- A Hindu Labelling Scheme – the development of a set of Hindu standards which can apply to a range of products and services.
- The promotion of a non-violent (ahimsa) lifestyle to reduce one's impact on the Earth.
- Encouragement and resources for Hindu temples to develop gardens on their land and to grow their own produce for use in daily worship.
- The development of cruelty-free dairies based on Hindu principles of animal husbandry.
- The provision of resources to Hindu temples on how to make celebrations and festivals environmentally friendly.
- Networking with current major international conservation projects – for instance, the cleaning and restoration of the River Ganges in India.
- The production of an energy efficiency pack for Hindu temples and households. This will also include a building survey pack for guidelines on constructing new temples.
- The development of a range of training courses for Hindu priests and devotees on best environmental practice.
- To research and share stories from the Hindu tradition which relate to the environment.