

DIWALI



IECB-DIWALI NEWSLETTER 2016



photo courtesy: Sunita Puria



Rangoli and photo by Ruta Kapre



Drawing by Iasha Kommajosyula



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IECB events/Sessions

past and upcoming

30 Jan 2016: First day of weekend school

13 Feb 2016: Marathon Dream (Lekha Warrior and Venu Gopal Goru)/weekend school

27 Feb 2016: Is natyashastra genesis of Physioterapy?(Krithika Iyer)/weekend school

5 March 2016: Organic myth (Steven Desmet)/weekend school

13 March 2016: weekend school

9 April 2016: Photography tips and tricks (Nishant Deshpande)/weekend school

17 April 2016: How to talk to kids: alternative to punishment (Dr. Aiste Grubliauskiene)/weekend school

24 April 2016: Sport facilities in Belgium (Sunil Bhadouriya)/weekend school

8 May 2016: IECB 6km group running at '15km Woluwe'

22 May 2016: Health and nutrition guidance (Dr. Vijaya Bhagvat)/Weekend school

5 June 2016: Good touch and bad touch (Titoo Khambayate)/weekend school

19 June 2016: Hobbies and sports and origami session (Raj Kini)/weekend school

4 September 2016 : Keys for survival in Belgium-culture and job (Sehul Shah)/weekend school

11 September 2016: Introduction to access consciousness (Rupal Bosamia)/Weekend school

2 October 2016 : Family education in intercultural setting (Anupam Premanand)/Weekend school

16 October 2016: Pregnancy in Belgium/weekend school

27 Nov 2016: Men are from mars and women are from venus (Dr. Prishnee)/weekend school (Other upcoming topics: Health and nutrition guidance, why natural cosmetics)

11 December: Why natural cosmetics (Ruta Kapre)/ weekend school

Please check our website
www.indiaeducationcentre.eu for further updates and location.

From January 2017 admissions for new kids are possible.

Happy Diwali

Diwali is here - the gracious festival celebrating victory, of myth and mystery; the festival that signals triumph over tragedy. May it Bestow all with Love and Happiness

About IECB

Being an Indian overseas is a challenge indeed. There are several consequences one cannot control. Positive side is: getting a global view and a wider platform. But on the other side there are indirect challenges and expectations. Getting integrated in the local society, preserving our 'Inside of being an Indian', instilling or respecting 'Indian values' in our kids. This is why we have established India Education Centre Belgium. It's a platform for all Indians living in Belgium, where they can share their worries, express them, get new friends for yourself and your kids. Learn about local culture. It is with a sense of great pride and pleasure that we invite you to visit IECB: try the weekend school for kids, as well as attend our Open sessions. Come and discover for yourself what makes IECB a preferred activity for you and your kids.

India Education Centre Belgium (IECB) is an unique platform for all Indians residing in Belgium. It has been established with following goals:

- Foster friendship within the Indian community in Belgium
- Provide a forum to share knowledge and ideas
- Educate younger generation of Indians about India
- Promote and preserve linguistic and cultural heritage of India
- Promote integration with local Belgian culture
- Contribute to humanitarian causes, provide a helping hand in charity drives

Weekend school for kids

Here we have modestly summarized IECB vision for weekend school.

- To provide platform for Indian origin kids to meet and know each other
- To instill pride about Indian origin, identity and culture
- To provide support as a community during their formation years outside India
- To introduce them diversity and uniqueness of India on global platform. Let them understand that it could be different places they come from, different languages they speak, different food they eat, different music, art, culture they enjoy; but still they are Indians.
- To introduce them Indian languages, glorious history, cultural diversity, heritage in art, architecture, music, literature and even Indian games (khal)
- To put all above aspects in perspective with globalized lifestyle of kids
- And most of all to achieve this in a simple, child friendly, playful, singing and story-telling approach



THOUGHT CORNER

Written by,
Dr. Prishnee Datta, (Ph.D.),
Clinical and Developmental Psychologist/Psychotherapist
www.counsellorforyou.com



HAPPY DIWALI

Candles and decorations to brighten and lighten your life;
Presents and sweets to share and sweeten your success;
Firecrackers and Pooja, to overcome evil and thank God for his many blessings;
Is my humble wish for you and your loved ones this Diwali.

Some Food for Thought This Diwali: The Rules for Being Human

“The best way to predict the future is to create it” -**Abraham Lincoln**

Towards that end, here is some food for thought: In the world where fear rules and love is taking a back step we need to look within and **Choose** to learn to love ourselves and others, so as to bring some change in the world for a better tomorrow for our children! Therefore, what better place to start than to just acknowledge what has come down the ages on what it means to be human.

Being Human: The Rules Handed Down from Ancient Sanskrit

1. YOU WILL RECEIVE A BODY.

You may like it or hate it, but it will be yours for the entire period this time around.

2. YOU WILL LEARN LESSONS.

You are enrolled in a full-time, informal school called life. Each day in this school you will have the opportunity to learn lessons. You may like the lessons or think them irrelevant and stupid.

3. THERE ARE NO MISTAKES, ONLY LESSONS.

Growth is a process of trial and error, experimentation. The “failed” experiments are as much a part of the process as the experiment that ultimately “works”.

4. A LESSON IS REPEATED UNTIL IT IS LEARNED.

A lesson will be presented to you in various forms until you have learned it. Then you can go on to the next lesson

5. LEARNING LESSONS DOES NOT END.

There is no part of life that does not contain its lessons. If you are alive, there are lessons to be learned.

6. “THERE” IS NO BETTER THAN “HERE”.

When your “there” has become a “here”, you will simply obtain another “there” that again, looks better than “here”.

7. OTHERS ARE MERELY MIRRORS OF YOU.

You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects to you something you love or hate about yourself.

8. WHAT YOU MAKE OF YOUR LIFE IS UP TO YOU.

You have all the tools and resources you need; what you do with them is up to you. The choice is yours.

9. THE ANSWERS LIE INSIDE YOU.

The answers to life’s questions lie inside you. All you need to do is look, listen and trust.

Source:

<https://beingatruehuman.wordpress.com/2012/09/08/rules-for-being-human-handed-down-from-ancient-sanskrit/>

Diwali: the festival of lights and forgiveness

Written by Bhuvana Rajkumar

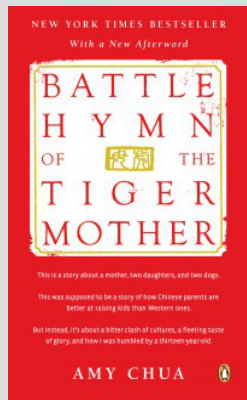
Every relation has its own importance. But we don't have the liberty to choose most of them. Someone has rightly said “Thank God we can choose our friends”

Having stayed abroad for more than 12 years, no one can understand the importance of friends more than me. When we leave our country and come to a totally new place, the importance of friends increases manifold, specially, if you land in a country where people do not speak English. Starting from the very basic to the very complicated issues, we need to take the help of friends. Once we start living and get slowly accustomed to our new lifestyle, we slowly start helping others with our experiences just like someone did for us. And we start making friends which is the beauty of this relationship. They are like our family members and we tend to lean on each other for anything and everything. We meet some people with whom we bond so well that it seems like a relation of a lifetime. And then there are people whom we meet who makes us wonder the true meaning of the word "FRIEND" They use us to our maximum potential and when they realise that we are of no value to them, they just move on and behave as though we have never known them. We can let these kinds of people spoil our spirits, or we can choose to ignore them. The second option is a better one and if we realise that these people are not worth our time, we can let go of our bad feelings towards them. And that is where the essence of the festival of Diwali comes, which emphasises the importance of victory of good over evil. The festival of lights teaches us the lesson of forgiveness and to enlighten our souls with good thoughts and deeds. Let us all join hands this Diwali to do something positive not only for us, but to people around us even in the smallest possible way because who knows: A small act of kindness can go a long way in building a better tomorrow for someone else.



Book Review

Written by: Natasha Sharan



When the idea of writing a book review was bounced on me, I immediately thought of the last book I read, 'Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother' by Amy Chua. This piece is a brief introduction to the book along with my take on it and parenting.

The book talks about the strict parenting style with a disciplined and focused approach coupled with respect and obedience towards parents. It is a book that will resonate

with a lot of Indian mothers.

The book is about music practice sessions and more practice and then some more. As per the author, mastering any musical instrument requires patience, dedication, discipline, focus and it helps build life skills that you can apply to your life. So her children, apart from going to school spent hours and hours daily practicing their violin and piano. The 'daily' word is to be taken seriously here. There was no exception to this rule, no sick days off, no meeting friends, and even practicing daily on vacations. The result? Both children today are very successful and have gotten into Ivy League colleges, in the United States.

But, the process of reaching this final stage was fraught with lots of tears and heart breaks, a difficult time for the mother and as well as the kids. The mother lost the best years of her youth. The children went through an emotionally difficult phase because of a no mistakes policy was followed in the house.

Today, after the success of the book, the author in interviews says she would do it all over again, except take a more balanced approach to parenting. A middle path, which does not border

on any extreme, be it strictness or laxity, in the parenting approach.

Comparing the case with India, how many of us are guilty of pushing our children to the brink of being the best and thus have no regard for their psyche or emotions. How often we hear news of children as young as 15, killing themselves. How often do we know what impact our words and actions are having on their tender mind?

So, what is the way forward? Do we give up on the ways of a tiger parent and be more considerate of the child's emotions and interests? Or do we continue being the strictest parent possible and just wish that our child is strong enough to take all the pressure.

We surely should take an interest in her academics, help her develop a literary taste, ask her to solve, puzzles, participate in quizzes, debates, elocutions. We should set fixed hours for studying, focus on her weak subjects, give her all the support (mentor her yourself or find mentors). We should observe her strong areas and help her build a career in those. Every child is not meant to be an engineer or doctor.

But wait, also give her time to pursue a favourite extra-curricular activity (football, music or dance). Do not push her into endless activities just to fill her day and hope she becomes a prodigy in any one of these.

Let her spend quality time with family and friends, who teach her to be a good and compassionate human being.

Most importantly share a close bond, with her, which tells the child that she matters as a person too and of your undying love for her, no matter what.

This Diwali, push your child to be the best, but first ensure that she knows that she is the light of your life.

Bharatanatyam in Brussels

Report by Jyothsna Krishnan

In the past decade, much of Belgium has woken up to the undeniable presence of India –not only on the political & economic scene, but also in the cultural scene. Although largely influenced by the Bollywood jhukas and mutkas (big banner releases worldwide also happen in Brussels & Antwerp multiplexes simultaneously) the sheer increase in the number of globetrotting Indians opting to live in this tiny country either for a short period of 1-3 years or more, meant avenues to pursue Indian art & culture were more visibly sought by these expats. Exposure to the "exotic" (not just snake charmers!) culture by way of Indian neighbours or increased travel to the Indian subcontinent & easy access to information by Westerners has piqued their interest & involvement in some truly ethnic forms of Indian music & dance. The Europalia festival in 2014, featuring Indian music & dance legends performing all over Belgium also did much to help the cause. While the South Asian dance scene is more pervasive and quite mainstream in neighbouring Netherlands due to the large Surinamese population with Indian roots, the Belgian community is discovering the Indian community as not only highly skilled professionals for the labour market, but also with an enriching art & culture heritage. Didn't the US & UK discover the Sitar maestro Ravi Shankar when George Harrison of Beatles did?

Today there are at least a bunch of schools for Indian music & dance run by either Indians/Asians (climusic-Sangit School Brussels for Hindustani music; Artlounge9 –for primarily Bollywood based and semiclassical dance) or by Westerners who have taken to the vibrancy of Indias' cultural palate (Mayasapera dance company specialising in a variety of classical dance forms of India, and

Bollywood fare as well).

One such school –Nada Brahma – run by the Belgian guru Eric Rozen specialising in Bharatanatyam has been running for over 8 years now and also holds annual dance recitals of this classical South Indian art form in Brussels. In the last 3 years, there have been the "Bijam" (seed), "Pushpam" (flower) and "Natya Mala" (garland) annual shows by this school.

Eric Rozen, the Guru himself has been active on the Belgo dance & music scene for over 20 years. The choreographies of the school are designed by Eric's own gurus with minor adaptations done at Brussels. The students of the school are a truly international mix coming from Japan, China, Canada, France, Greece, Italy, Belgium & India, ranging in age from 7 to until you can move your limbs in a coordinated fashion for the "adavus"(basic building blocks of Bharatnatyam). Which also means varied competency level & skills of the participating students.

Some IECB moms are part of this glorius art journey in Brussels; in a quest to find their childhood passions, neglected extracurricular activities, hidden talents and simply to do something for "their souls", these dancing Divas are also contributing to educating the unsuspecting western audience about a rigorous, intense, strenuous yet sensual, spiritual & graceful dance form from India - no less classical than their own ballet. Many of them are working moms juggling careers & family life and dancing their way to set a beautiful example to their kids - that age is just a number if you want to learn new things & find your passions !!!

And as long as India lives, so will its rich culture - in every myriad form in every little country around the globe, adopted & adapted by one & many for many reasons – most of all because...it simply is dynamic & irresistible.



HALLOWEEN AND DIWALI



Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1. This day marked the end of summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year, the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31 they celebrated Samhain, when it was believed that the ghosts of the dead returned to earth. In addition to causing trouble and damaging crops, Celts thought that the presence of the otherworldly spirits made it easier for the Druids, or Celtic priests, to make predictions about the future. For a people entirely dependent on the volatile natural world, these prophecies were an important source of comfort and direction during the long, dark winter.



Sun is known as the planet of light and Moon is considered for wealth. On the day of Diwali, both of these planets are weak, due to which, dark forces become very powerful. As these planets are weak and dark forces become powerful, we pray, worship and light candles as well as Deepak to fulfill the deficiency of Sun. Good forces strengthen due to light and spiritual practices like worshipping God. In other words, lighting candles, worshipping and praying are all mass remedies to strengthen good forces against dark forces.

On the day of Halloween, people do lighting and visit haunted attractions to light up all the dark places. Halloween celebrators light bonfires and party all night on the day of dead people. On the other hand, on Diwali people light candles, Deepak as well as crackers. They don't leave even a single corner of the house dark. It is recommended to light up all the corners of your surroundings on the day of Diwali. Hence, we can conclude that Halloween and Diwali are mass remedies to keep a balance between dark and good forces.

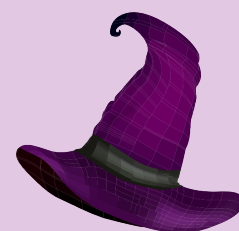




Photo Courtesy: Sunila Puria

Diwali special Receipe

Anarsa-Maharastian Diwali special



Ingredients:

3 cups rice
1 tbsp poppy seeds (khuskhus)
3 cups grated jaggery (gur)
1/2 cup milk
Ghee (Clarified butter) for deep frying

How to make Anarsa :

Wash the rice two to three times and then soak the rice in water for 3 days. Do remember to change the water every day. After third day drain and spread the rice evenly on a clean cloth sheet for 3-4 hrs. Now little by little grind the rice into fine powder. Finally sieve it through a fine mesh to get a fine powder. Now in a bowl mix grated jaggery and powdered rice. Sprinkle milk little by little, kneading mixture into a pliable dough. Make the small lemon size balls from this dough. Keep covered with a moist clean cloth. Use a plastic sheet; sprinkle some poppy seeds on it. Take the small lemon size ball and press over poppy seeds. Rotate and thin the ball into a round with hands. Meanwhile heat ghee in a frying pan. Fry the anarsa in it with poppy seed side up. Shallow fry till golden on low medium heat. Keep pouring the hot oil on the center of the anarsa so that it gets evenly brown. Drain and keep aside to cool. Store in an airtight container after completely cooled and crisp.

Note: 1. Do not dry out the rice too much. The rice should be damp when you grind the rice into powder so that a dough can be made with jaggery.
2. Always use rice which is not too sticky.

(Source: <http://www.indianfoodforever.com/holiday-recipes/holi/anarsa.html>)

POETRY

The River

Girija Nair

When the river flows,
It flows far and near,
It leaves behind something's, it carries with it something's
As it flows it is on its own journey.
Moving ahead, soaking in each experience.
No push no pull, on its own.
Oh little child,
You are like a river,
Flowing with your thoughts,
Flowing with your actions,
Soaking in the experience,
Learning from it, not learning from it, being with it or moving away.
Enjoying what is in store for you.

Autumn

Girija Nair



Autumn, Oh Autumn,
Vibrant and lively
Colours of different shades
So bright and beautiful.
Colours of Acceptance,
Colours to Let go
Colours shedding the old
Awaiting the new.
My racing mind stops
To soak in your colours
To look and look
To be lost in your beauty.

In my moments of despair
You bring in the hope,
In my solitude
You bring in the colours
In my happiness
You shower the leaves of joy

OH, autumn you shall go now
To come back again!!!

Your colours are an example of change
Your colours are so refreshing

Autumn Thank you so much
For allowing me
To share and enjoy your beauty!!!

Diwali delights

Lekha Warrior

The hands of friendship
Pull you near,
Take it, hold it and wipe your
tears
When you are my friend,
Life is easy ,
Tell me my friend..
Why should I fear?

The smiles of our loved ones,
Bring us close together
In our hugs, humanity resides
Crystal clear
With you as my loved one ..
Tell me dear
How can life, possibly keep me
aside?

The sands of time,
Fly days to months and years
In these fractions of moments,
lives we have lived reappear
With you by my side,
As a good and faithful steer..
How can I be engulfed and
disappear?

Loyalty, friendship and love,
Give us the victories we seek,
Evil will lose to the duel
That poaches on the weak

The Good in us
Can light up more than our lives,
Along with the lamps
On a Diwali night

The food, the lights, the
sweets..galoreBut the joy of
sharing and giving is even more

Acknowledge this feeling,
Acknowledge your bliss,
Recognise your blessings

Love for Kids : Cinta Anak Foundation

by Syrah Mohaideen



Going to India every year is like getting my battery recharged. Charged by the love of my family and friends, charged by the great food, charged by just being there. Every time I am there I am also confronted with poor kids deprived of their basic needs. After becoming a mother it touched me even harder.

One day our servant maid in India complained to me that she cannot give proper education to her kids and it is very difficult because of our Indian education system which has become more a business. I heard so many of these stories. Poverty essentially threatens every child rights on survival, development and protection. Poverty follows a vicious cycle as poor children grow up to be poor adults who then pass on debt to their children. Leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, achieve their full potential or participate as full and equal members of our society. I wanted to do something about this. Decided to do a small drop in this big ocean, there born a Cinta Anak Foundation, it is an independent non-governmental organization founded in 2013. Our aim is to improve the lives of children and to protect their rights by providing education and family care.

With our program, we are providing financial help for their basic school education. This program is meant for the children whose parents has complete awareness that education is very important for the future of their kids. We offer Annual school fees & school accessories.

The cost to help one kid getting a better future is around €80 - €180 per year.. We raise funds by organizing events in Belgium like QUIZ program, cooking classes and also we have our recurring sponsor who sponsor specific kids. My sincere thanks to all the Sponsors and quiz Participants.

Currently we are sponsoring 26 kids for their complete school year education and it is an absolute pleasure to do this. Since 2013 I have more to look forward in India. Meeting the kids that we sponsor, their smiling face and the gratefulness of their parents.

Criteria for educational sponsorship
Parents income <1 Euro / day,
Handicapped parents, Orphan /
handicapped children

Applicable only for children between the ages of 3 - 17 years (basic education)

Way of working

We pay the school fees directly to the schools and we don't give money to their parents. This is to ensure that the money reaches the schools correctly for the education. Receipts of the payment are followed and documented. Our motto is to have ZERO overhead on the sponsored money. We have trustworthy volunteers no other than my mother and brother who follows the kids.

Long way to go at least we all start somewhere.

Some interesting moments during my meet and greet with these kids. Smiling face: positive attitude. We sponsor this small boy who has no father and raised by his mother. Already as a single parent raising a kid is a challenge poverty makes it harder. She cooks some food in the morning and go to work leaving him alone at home since he is 4 years old. He eat himself, goes to school alone, play in the street and wait for his mother who comes late (20.00hrs) in the evening. He manages himself all alone at this tender age (7 now). So what is so special about this boy is he looks always happy and energetic. I

get constantly inspired by him and by his positive energy.

Dream big

I went to the village called Nemli where one of the kid that we are sponsoring is living. They were so kind to receive us and we spend the whole afternoon with them in their village. They live in a very minimal living conditions, mother and father are doing labour work but they are determined to send their kid to a school.

Evening classes

One of my aunty Kamar Rahim is taking evening classes. Some of the kids that we are sponsoring is going to this additional evening class. It was nice to see them studying. My aunty insist them to do some breathing exercise during the study session and it is great to see them doing it. She gives them motivational guidelines.

Day school

I also visited the school where some of the kids that we are sponsoring are studying. Went through their books and records and they are doing well. Long way to go for them but at least there is some starting point. Once again thanks to all the sponsors

Our organization is part of International committee Limburg VZW (www.icvzw.be.).

More info visit www.Cintaanak.be

Follow us <https://www.facebook.com/FoundationCintaAnak>

If you are interested to contribute contact us via <http://www.cintaanak.be/supportus/index.html>



photo courtesy: Sunita Puria

Photo and design by Ruta



Access consciousness

A session by Rupal Bosamia
written by Anupam Premanand

Access Consciousness is a therapeutic healing method. Founded and developed by Gary Douglas and the co-founder is Dr.Dain Heer. Access Consciousness consists in stimulating the 32 points called BARS around a person's head in leading to a healing initiation for personality resolution process. This, as per Rupal through her own personal experience, has a significant effect upon solving personality conflicts, phobias, earlier saturated preconceptions and negative tendencies thereby restoring equilibrium.

Called Body Process, the sessions last for 45 min to 1 hour as per the need of the person. The method of Access Consciousness makes use of the combination of latest brain function understanding, empirical studies along with ancient Indian energy chakra knowledge, concepts.

Amongst the several benefits of this method, anger control seemed to be one of the most significant one, in addition to amelioration of negative self-image and those perspectives which lead to suffering. It assists in recovering from emotional and behavioral repeatability and rigidity. In addition, it works upon the general tendency in always trying to prove oneself principally by working upon our

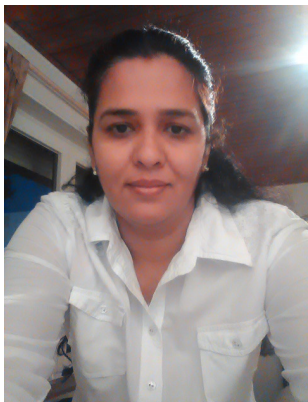
subconscious area of primitive mind consciousness.

Along with adults, this method has also proved itself successful with children in cases like ADHD conditions and usual pranks. Assisting in family balance, it encourages children to express themselves and for both parents to see a personal and relative perspective of personal points of view in choosing the best.

The price for one session seems reasonable for 30 euros. This appears a good opportunity in trying to go positively and creatively beyond the box towards a more fulfilling and progressive life.

Rupal conducts her sessions in Antwerp and is reachable on 0486484101.

Creativity



Written by Girija Nair

My name is Creativity. I am now trying to find out the meaning of my name. I have some idea about what my name means but the way people around me are using me I am very confused. I

am now wanting to try and learn and undo some confusion related to my name.

Imagine in a faraway land where there were no specific words for one particular thing how life would be. Imagine you say blue and someone else understands blue as something else, what would happen? How would life be there? How would it be when you paint something or make somethings completely based on the data you have collected? Imagine a mind with loads of storage but no categories or no compartments. Would that be fun or would it be boring? There I can see my name being used to the true sense.

Child shows a drawing and painting and I

hear my name being called. In a group we often hear parents tell Oh your child is creative or my child is very creative. More often we also hear oh we were doing creative work. Child has drawn as per your instructions, child is given instructions paint the sky blue, paint the grass green and so on and so forth. What are we doing to the child? Are we allowing the creative beans to come out of the child or are we compressing me in them. Can the child be allowed to paint or draw as per their thoughts.

Where all can you use me? I can be used in every field. I can be used while cooking, talking, drawing, painting, playing, making things. I can be used in each and every thing that you do.

How can you use me? The first step according to me is to look around more and look around more and look around more. As soon as you see something do not get into qualifying it- Oh this is so beautiful or oh this is so ugly or this is so noisy etc. You be with the thing look at it in different angles, different views. So let us take an example- When you are in a park with your children you let them be on their own and you be on our own. After coming back you ask them to describe what all you saw and you will be surprised to hear the details that they have seen or heard and will be surprised by how less you have seen. Children have lots of details with them and when you see their drawing sans adult intervention we see all these details come out into their creation. If you want your child to use me or have

me in them I would ask you to push them to think differently. Let's say if they are singing I would be happy if you tell your child now can you sing like a crow, how do you think a tree would sing or how would the clouds listen to you sing. The objective is not to make a perfect singer but to let the child explore and understand what all he can do and in how many different ways to do the same thing. Now if they have to do this they have to have OBSERVE things around them. With this skill of observation am sure the child will be richer and I will be used more. The child has lots of data and will be able to use it as and when required. Child moves away from the trap of compartmentalising things or putting them in any particular category and child is a free bird to do different things.

Same with you parents if you have a parenting issue look at the issue differently. Try out different things. Over the years you have collected lots of data, play around with that data, put a constraint on yourself that I will not do the same thing or I will not solve this in the same manner and there you go you will move beyond what you do daily and will be doing things differently.

So my dear friends how my name was finalised was through the process of collecting data, using that data differently and then doing something.

Keys for survival in Belgium – Culture & job

Session by Sehul Shah
Edited by Mugdha Baviskar



As an immigrant Belgium it is important to understand and respect the differences in culture and beliefs of the country. Most of the times these differences result in conflicts amongst colleagues, neighbors, local friends or business partners. Sehul shared a few anecdotes to put into perspectives these differences and beliefs.

Culture is indeed a very vast and varied concept and hence there cannot be exact solutions or answers to avoid such difference oriented conflicts. Although culture is deep rooted, beliefs of a culture can be better understood. Belief is more or less a trend, style, taste or mode of living. For example : Football being the most loved game of Belgium, everyone knows “Les Diables Rouges” or “Red Devils” and if you don't know this it can be shocking for the fellow Belgians. As you try to integrate into a new society, it is necessary to understand the habits and interest of the people and adapt to your surroundings.

Compared to India, the Educational system here in Belgium is quite different. Mostly the education in Belgium is based on answering the child's “what” and “why” questions. This is actually an encouragement for children to ask more and more questions and begin a quest for finding answers to everything around them. Children are allowed to do what they like the most and the system completely relies on their natural instincts unlike in India where the parents have to take control of their child's education.

Another very important aspect of Belgian life is “Sports” .Sports are not only taken up as a hobby but also as a must do activity. Olympics and other national and international championships are

given tremendous importance and are religiously followed by all the locals. Due to their positive outlook towards sports and health, all the athletes get immense motivation and support needed in order to perform well at all levels.

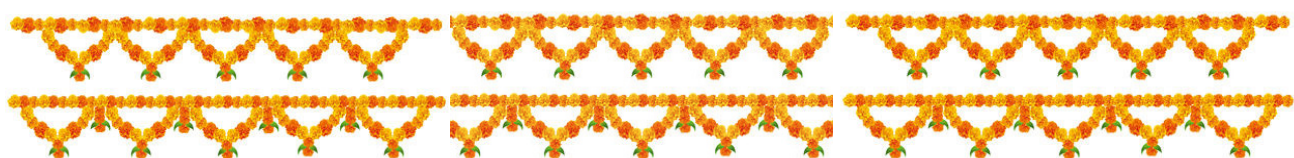
Considering the working culture in Belgium, it is more reserved compared to India .In India, multi-tasking is the need of the hour whereas here people believe that taking extra workload is in fact snatching away potential job opportunities for job seekers. They believe very strongly in following their roles and responsibilities as per their job description. Gender equality is already in place and it is apparent that the society is fair and not biased towards one gender.

Focusing on the job scenario in Belgium, Sehul shared a few key findings about the job industry and also provided tips to find a job. Finding a job is one of the key success factors for us living in Belgium.

Belgium job market is highly conservative. This is the industry where marginal cost is high and is closing down most of its businesses related to the steel industry and the heavy automobile industry. The Wallonia region, which used to be the key contributor to Belgium economy, is struggling today. There are ample opportunities in the service and financial sectors, life science, biotechnology etc. Belgium economy is highly dependent on its geographical location and has highly sophisticated transport network. So jobs in logistic sector, supply chain fields are in abundance.

A few things you must keep in mind before starting your job search are:

Speaking at least one of the official languages of Belgium (Flemish or French) is considered as key asset in your job search. Asymmetry of information is quite normal between the interviewee and interviewer, it is important to navigate company's website to understand long-term vision, company's culture. Be prepared for long-term strategy behind the job description. Try and speak what the recruiter wants to listen. Collaboration, teamwork is more important than any technical skills.



Believe in God! Believe in goodness!

Mugdha Baviskar



I have always been a strong believer in goodness and maybe that's why every now and then, I am faced with situations where my faith in goodness and humanity grows more and more strong. One such incident happened in the 2014. I was engaged to be married and like any other bride-to-be had my share of curiosity, excitement and also fear to some extent. As my groom-to-be was in Belgium and I was working in India, had to take care of the visa process all by myself. As Nasik doesn't have a Visa office, I had to do quite a few trips from Nasik to Mumbai. Luckily most of these journeys were in the comfort of our car with my Dad with me and few with the Private Travel Bus and at times also the state transport bus (Or ST as we call it). One day while me and dad were returning from Mumbai, Dad had an urgent call from work and had to drop me midway near Kasaara ghat. Kasaara is also a railway station where the local (Mumbai Local to be precise) stops so there is good availability of shared taxis. We went to the taxi stand and agreed upon one of the taxis after a long negotiation. As there were no other passengers, I felt good as I wouldn't have to sit next to strangers awkwardly. I took the seat next

to the driver (I called him uncle but I have used the word "driver" just to make it impersonal and with due respect to his profession). I kept my briefcase next to my feet so I don't lose it and can keep my eyes on it. (The briefcase had all my documents from my passport to my marriage certificate). My father took the driver's phone number just to make sure I will be safe and also noted his Taxi's number. (It wasn't really a taxi but an old Tata Sumo probably 2nd Hand in a terrible condition). It was dawn already and I wished to be home as soon as possible. At the beginning it felt pleasant while getting driven through the beautiful Ghats of Kasaara and those breathtaking views from the mountain were just like a dream. But after some time it started to become really dark and I suddenly felt a sense of insecurity. After all that had been happening in the country, it was extremely difficult to stay calm and feel secured in the company of an unknown person. Just to make sure that fear doesn't show up on my face, I called mom and gave her my whereabouts. After the ghat long gone, the driver picked up many passengers who were returning home after attending a devotional event. As they had so much to talk about I was completely amused and forgot all my fear. I could see that although I had paid him a lot for one person, he earned a lot through these additional passengers much more than he would have normally earned but I wasn't complaining as long as I reached home safe. I was the last person to be dropped off and just when I was about to pay him, He insisted I should pay more because my house is a little far than he expected. I was obviously upset as he had already been paid what he wanted by Dad and it wasn't fair of him to demand more money. I gave him the money and told him that, as you, we earn our money through hard work too and it's not right after earning so much by accommodating more people than the Sumo can take. But I couldn't carry on

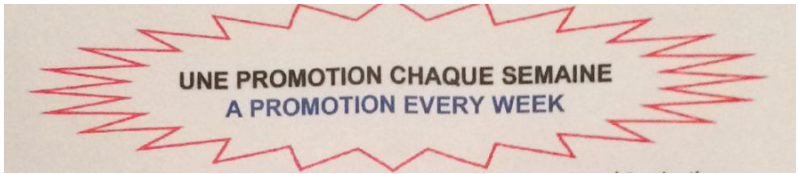
forever as Mom was eagerly waiting for me so I stopped the argument and went home. Only 10 minutes later did I realise that while I was having an argument with the driver, I forgot to take my briefcase which was by my feet. This got me terribly worried as all my important documents were in that bag (as valuable as a treasure) and I also regretted the fact that I had an argument with him. As usual when I told mom, she was not impressed and before she could react more, I told her that my passport is with me (LIE) only the other documents are missing. In a complete state of panic, I suddenly realised that Dad had in fact taken his number and that was a big sigh of relief. Without wasting any more time I called Dad and told him about the incident. But Dad couldn't reach the driver that night and I had an absolutely restless night. As soon as I woke up the next morning, I took the driver's number from Dad and immediately tried calling him. Luckily, he answered. He said that my briefcase was indeed safe with him and we decided a location and time to meet so I can have it. As decided I drove to the set place exactly on time and waited for him. The more time it was taking, the more restless I was getting. After half an hour, I finally saw him coming and my happiness knew no bounds when I caught a glimpse of the briefcase. He asked me to open it and make sure everything is in place and it certainly was. I was overwhelmed and so grateful to this man and was almost in tears when I said thanks to him. I also tried to offer him some money for his kindness but he politely refused and invited me to his place for a cup of tea. I didn't go to his place and on my way back home I realised something beyond this incident and it will stay with me forever. I realised that as long as such people exist, our faith in humanity will be restored every now and then. Yet again, I had experienced a renewed sense of god and goodness!



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