

A Report on

PROJECT J.G.

Discussion Groups

The graphic features a blue background with a white border. At the top center is the logo for LANGUAGE of LIBERTY INSTITUTE, which includes a stylized flame icon. Below the logo, on the left, is the text 'ABHIYAAN' in large white letters, followed by 'aspire to INSPIRE before we EXPIRE' in smaller white and orange text. In the center are two book covers: a blue cover for 'ABHIYAAN' and a black cover for 'The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible: A FREE MARKET ODYSSEY' by Ken Schoolland. To the right of the books is the text 'BOOK DISCUSSION' in large white letters. At the bottom, a white dashed box contains the word 'PARTNERS' and logos for LIBERTY INTERNATIONAL and POKHARA RESEARCH CENTRE.

Bishnu Hari Timilsina

21st February, 2021

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Background

Project Jonathan Gullible is a student and teacher program to reach up to 30 teachers and 2000 students within six months. The first J.G. book discussion was conducted in both English and Nepali languages, with 20 teachers in Pokhara in January 2021 at City Square Banquet, Newroad, Pokhara.

ABHIYAAN- Aspire to Inspire before we Expire: Pokhara Research Centre along with Language of Liberty Institute, Liberty International and Bikalpa - an Alternative are partnering to support livelihood of people, teaching principles of economics and liberty and organizing Liberty Camps to educate young individuals about the rule of law, private property and freedom of speech.

The J.G. project aims to educate young people in Nepal in the principles and moral and practical value of entrepreneurship and free-market economics, and how free, voluntary trade and innovation produce wealth for the individual and the community, greater development and flourishing of personal potential, and increased opportunities, freedom, and happiness for everyone.

The book named **The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible -- A Free Market Odyssey** by Ken Schoolland* was chosen for the round table discussion. The book presents basic economic principles in the form of a fictional story of a small boy shipwrecked on an island, where he struggles to understand the attitudes and practices of the local people. This book provides a very effective introduction for students new to the study of economics, as well as possibly some fresh ideas for more experienced thinkers in this field. It helps us gain a better understanding of how the real-world works -- how and why people make economic choices; how they actually behave in terms of psychology and incentives, and not just mathematical models and theories.

“The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible”

This book is fun. It challenges readers to think about why some countries are rich, while others are poor. It explores alternative thinking about important economic, practical and philosophical matters. The variety of ideas will challenge readers to

ponder, question, and engage in meaningful discussions. Underlying all this is the respect for, and tolerance of, the individual.

Ken started writing economics commentaries in 1980 for radio. Straight commentary from an academic economist was dry and uninteresting. He thought he would spice up these radio spots with fantasy dialogues. Friends were willing to perform with him, and so Jonathan Gullible was born.

Immediately, interest among listeners soared! The ideas were provocative and outlandish, yet they drove home hard-core free market ideas in a humorous way. Later, he enlisted a dozen friends as actors to produce the episodes as a dramatic series. Again it was a hit! Since then *The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible: A Free Market Odyssey* has been used for radio broadcasts, discussion groups, essay contests, skits and theatrical productions around the globe.

Each chapter, except the first, starts with a short "parable" about Jonathan Gullible and his encounters with the strange laws of an island and its inhabitants. The story highlights the absurdities of the laws, the controls imposed on people's lives, and the economic drawbacks of these laws. The laws are recognisable as common to countries throughout the world.

As the story unfolds, the part we play in political decision-making and personal responsibility is introduced for discussion. There are many subtle nuances. Sometimes people miss the meaning of a story, so each "parable" is followed by commentaries and relevant background information. These commentaries are meant to provide only the gist of each issue. Books and websites are recommended for further research. They will be particularly useful for projects and debates.

Questions following each chapter are guidelines for group discussions about self-responsibility and life skills that will arouse an interest in the areas of sociology, macroeconomics, philosophy, political science and ethics.

Teachers are warned that the book contains chapters that are critical of contemporary education systems. We believe that students should not be shielded from hard questions about schooling. Rather, we should trust students to take a hard look at the circumstances that are most familiar to them. Indeed, these chapters are typically the most popular with students.

This widely-acclaimed book has been published in fifty-five different languages, and has received numerous awards. (*The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible*, n.d.)

Purposes of the J.G. Project

- To spread knowledge about the free market and economic choices.
- To understand how the real world works.
- To discuss the book in person with 15 teachers and 2000 students

Initial Phase

The initial phase was developed and organized as a discussion program for economics teachers of Pokhara valley to show how the free market, voluntary trade, and innovation produce wealth for the individual and the community, greater development, flourishing of personal potential, increased opportunities, freedom, and happiness for everyone.

Around twenty teachers of Pokhara from different institutions participated in the discussion where they expressed their views on the book. The author of the book, Ken Schoolland, also joined the program through video conferencing to introduce the book give the background. Glenn Cripe, Executive Director of Language of Liberty Institute, delivered a welcoming message. The program was moderated by Sujan Regmi, Executive Director of Pokhara Research Centre, moderated the program. Bishnuhari Timilsina, program coordinator, welcomed all the participants and explained the goals of the program.

Discussion

The participants discussed chapters of the book and considered

- How the unique experiences of Jonathan Gullible can be taught to students to help them understand the real world.
- The ownership of public goods by private enterprise.
- How public resources become overexploited before they reach maturity and no one feels responsible for the ownership. There is no personal motivation to protect the common resources and public enterprises are not well-managed.

Conclusion

We decided to conduct further discussions with students starting in a few weeks to teach them the principles and the moral and practical value of entrepreneurship and free-market economics.

Further Planning for Project J.G.

- We will organize discussion groups in different schools in Pokhara starting in early March, reaching 400 students per month.
- We will expand the program to other cities in Nepal in collaboration with different local organizations.
- We will start to organize similar programs in India, Uganda, Tanzania, and Latin America in the summer.

Pictures and Video Link





Cited from Source

The Adventures of Jonathan Gullible. (n.d.). Academic Foundation. Retrieved February 22, 2021, from

http://academicfoundation.org/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=482

Thank You!!