

## NETWORKING FOR MAHATMA



*Peter Ruhe, the German archivist on Gandhi.*

**THE** foremost Gandhian archivist in the world, Berlin-based Peter Ruhe has leveraged Web 2.0 to create a global Gandhian movement.

He has launched [www.gandhitopia.org](http://www.gandhitopia.org), a Facebook-type social networking site for Gandhian students, scholars, activists and institutions. It has given a platform to little-known activists such as Akshay Bakaya to come together and pursue their dream.

“I realised that networking and communication within the Gandhian world is lacking,” Ruhe says. “We now have 200 members on the site, of whom nearly 50 per cent are foreign nationals.”

Ruhe, whose family was badly affected during the Second World War, was drawn to Gandhi’s teachings out of his desire to work for a humane world without wars and violence.

“Just see the various forms of violence we are facing every day and everywhere. Gandhi has shown ways to solve these problems,” he says.

A consultant to Anil Kapoor and Feroz Abbas Khan’s movie *Gandhi, My Father*, Ruhe began his Gandhian work in 1984 by launching the not-for-profit Gandhi Information Centre in Berlin. He has organised exhibitions, lectures, film screenings and seminars on Gandhi all over Europe, Israel and even in India. In 2002, he established the charitable GandhiServe Foundation, which claims to be the world’s biggest audio-visual archive on Gandhi.

*Neha Tara Mehta*