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**THE EARTH CHARTER:
PEACE EDUCATION AND VALUES FOR A SHARED WORLD**

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*“The most important new frontier for redressing
environmental crises and healing the Earth community
now is the frontier of the mind and spirit, the realm where ethics are
shaped and responsibility taken for the state of our world.”¹*

¹ Patricia Mische, “The Earth as Commodity or Community?” (Paper presented at the International Symposium on Cultivating Wisdom, Harvesting Peace, Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia, August 10-13, 2005).

Now, more than any other time in our history, technology has connected cultures, radically increasing the opportunities for contact between peoples across the globe. Religions are converging as never before, corporate conglomerations are multiplying, and differing economic and political systems are increasingly pitted against each other. Earth's resources are siphoned, patented, and commodified. This modern menagerie of cultures and worldviews creates for many an incomprehensible atmosphere of multiplicity and chaos that demands increasingly adapted ethics and values. In the shadow of this reality, the Earth Charter's preamble opens with the proclamation: 'We stand at a critical moment in history.'² What is this critical moment? It is a global-industrial society aborting its vital umbilical connections to the Earth. It is a greed-driven consumer culture that abandons humanity in search of wealth, and in doing so starves others in so-called 'third-world' conditions. Where are we³ now? How did we get here? And where do we go?

The Earth Charter emanates from a planetary movement following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. It is a new vision for an equitable and just global society. It is a call for respect of *all* life (Earth Charter Principle 1). The Charter is a declaration of 16

² Earth Charter Initiative, <http://www.earthcharter.org>.

³ The authors intentionally employ the pronoun 'we' throughout the text when wishing to emphasize the interconnectedness of humanity, including our shared history and 'common destiny' (Earth Charter Preamble: Paragraph 1).

fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful⁴ international community, that the authors contend advocates for the reconnection of respect for non-human life to a re-humanization of the Other and care for succeeding generations. The Earth Charter, thusly, represents a holistic and comprehensive approach to peace building and peace education through an interdependent awareness of the social, political, ecological, economic, spiritual, and ethical realms of life. During the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014),⁵ the Earth Charter operates as an international normative document for integrating values of sustainability into education.

Kamla Chowdhry affirms: “At the heart of the Earth Charter is the need to consider and strengthen the inner spirit of humans, to make moral and ethical choices, to move towards a technology with a human face, and toward non-violent economics that would cooperate with Earth and with nature rather than exploit it.”⁶ Thus, between each of these interlocked dimensions, between all species, at all times, and in all spheres of life, exists

⁴ The Earth Charter defines peace as “the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part” (Subprinciple 16f).

⁵ The UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development may be visited online at <http://www.unesco.org>.

⁶ Kamla Chowdhry, “The Spiritual Way, the Gandhian Way.” In *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World*, ed. Peter Blaze Corcoran, Mirian Vilela, and Alide Roerink, (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 180.

entry points into the study of peace, the creation of peace building institutions, and education that fosters peaceful personal behaviors and choices.

In order to realize a culture of peace, justice, and sustainability, our societies must reflect on the values that form a sociological commitment to each other and to all life. Leo Tolstoy said, “Tradition...tells me that I should do unto others as I would that they should do unto me. My reason shows me that only by all men acting thus is the highest happiness for all men attainable”⁷ — words from the Judeo-Christian tradition that resonate with sentiments expressed across the globe by most religions. This Golden Rule — to do unto others as I would that they should do unto me — is the core principle that guides the Earth Charter in its call for respect of *all* life (Principle 1).

Cultures of war and violence fragment, divide, and monopolize resources, rather than unite people. Noam Chomsky asks in *Hegemony or Survival* — echoing the research of Ernst Mayr who argued that only one species of fifty billion had evolved to the human form of intellect and stated that humanity is reaching the point in history when most species become extinct — “whether it is better to be smart than stupid?”⁸ Mayr claimed that Earth’s history of life shows that human intellect is not favored for survival, and Chomsky is pondering whether humanity’s care and commitment to life has grown as

⁷ Leo Tolstoy, “Nonresistance to Evil: Letter to Ernest Howard Crosby. In *Nonviolence in Theory and Practice*, ed. Robert L. Holmes and Barry L. Gans. (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, Inc., 2005), 71.

⁸ Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), 1.

quickly as our capacities of science. Steeped in decades of global arming and weapon development and distribution, these points no doubt evoke thoughts of nuclear proliferation, concentration of wealth in corporate hands, and the concomitant abandonment of social services — noting that nuclear and eco-violence threats are exponentially more destructive in an increasingly urban-centric and high-tech warring world. Humanity must return to contemplation on its ethics, economics, and politics to rethink values for a future of sharing, caring, sustainability, and justice. Where do we want to go? And how do we get there?

This dire call for reflection and action on our social, cultural, and technological values seems yet one more dystopian proclamation. Doomsday statements are seen and heard everywhere, and it seems that our media wallows in its spirit, capitalizing on the fear and violence across our globe. Our cultural productions, books and films continue to deliver violent and dehumanizing art. Rather than address our society's dysfunctions, the media often promotes and revels in them. Thomas Wolfe⁹ described this process as porno-violence, where the media delivers gratuitous violence to an audience increasingly placed in the shoes of the aggressor. (The viewer is thereby empathizing with the use of violence, positively reinforcing violence as a source of conflict resolution.) The Earth Charter, however, is not a doomsday statement. It is the sentiment of millions of people

⁹ Thomas Wolfe, "Pornoviolence." In *Mauve Gloves and Madmen, Clutter and Vine*. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1976).

around the world who are voicing their concerns and teaching that ‘another world is possible.’¹⁰

Violence against any form of life, and the claim to own certain life-forms, is a threat to global civil society and a functioning democracy. While our collective culture has a very opinionated and value-laden stance on issues concerning nuclearization, global warming, war and violence — the citizens of the nation are usually encouraged to disengage from politics. There is constant tension between what people want and what elites want. Following 9/11, the preferred Bush-led response to the attacks was for people to be spectators as the government and ‘experts’ handled the situation.¹¹ While discouraging citizens to express opinions counter to those held by the elite, citizens were encouraged to spend, spend, spend — in order to keep the war economy booming and viable. Allowing a few voices and so-called experts to lead unquestioned dismantles a democracy. The apex of successful manufactured consent is the creation of a politics of disengagement and spectatorship: watching events unfold from television sets in living rooms. However, democracy in its very essence is shared responsibility, the charge of all to respond to issues and attempt to problem-solve. At this juncture in history, there is a

¹⁰ William F. Fisher and Thomas Ponniah. *Another World is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum*. (London and New York: Zed Books, 2003).

¹¹ Jeremy Earp and Sut Jhally, *Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear, and the Selling of American Empire*. (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 2006). The Foundation may be visited online at <http://www.mediaed.org>.

need to reframe our perspectives away from the promotion of violence toward ourselves, toward others, and toward nature. These intertwined exploits against each other and against nature must be recognized and addressed in dialogue on our social values.

Making this point, the Earth Charter articulates our ‘universal responsibility’ (Preamble: paragraph 5) to preserve “the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world.” This is a strong statement, relaying in no uncertain terms that the impetus is on each of us to do our part in transforming our highly interdependent world into one that is humane, just, respectful, and ultimately sustainable for the generations to come. The Earth Charter provides a framework that is conducive to integration into peace education curriculum for creating an equitable, nonviolent world for all.

The Earth Charter: Beyond Silent Complicity

Many of us in the Global North are inundated with images of violence every day, and in many instances have become inured to and apathetic about it. We say: ‘It was his vocal provocation that instigated my vendetta. It was his aggressive nature that caused me to unleash my fists. It was either he to hit the ground or me. Life is a Darwinian competition of the fittest. In dropping the bomb, we saved countless lives.’ These acts of violence are considered by many to be necessary to realize peace and democracy in the world.

If, by this account, many of us expend our lives rationalizing violence, which is often justified by the very values — underscoring our cultures, religions, and politics —

that are antithetical to violence, we have intentionally undermined efforts toward a better and more humane society. Many of us rarely use our time making excuses for peace, except when appropriating the use of silence to connote a false sense of harmony when wishing not to confront agitations in our life. Yet is this peace? Peace is an active process. It is a process that requires patience, creativity, and cooperation.

In this light, when do government officials, academicians, parents, and merchants, among others, dare explore the notion of peace in earnestness? In our governance? In our media? In our schools? Many educators let such a challenge, which some consider the paramount task of humanity, pass us by in history class when someone declares such constructions of peace are idealistic, not real, a utopia of dreams. In so doing the educator allows naïve understandings of peace to be reinforced — then peace becomes passive and weak. In the same breath we allow others to exclaim violence as natural, innate, buttressed by claims of evolution from our animal ancestors. Yet, these claims are pretexts for other interests. The *Seville Statement on Violence*,¹² a document drafted by medical doctors and psychiatrists and adopted by UNESCO, challenges these very notions of innate violence. As Bjorkqvist states: “...there is no innate programming for clenching fists, beating, kicking, or shooting others. These patterns or scripts of behavior are learned, especially by watching aggressive models.”¹³

¹² David Adams, Editor, *The Seville Statement on Violence*. (Paris: UNESCO, 1989).

¹³ Kaj Bjorkqvist, “The Inevitability of Conflict, but Not of Violence: Theoretical Considerations on Conflict and Aggression.” In *Cultural Variation in Conflict*

Toh, Floresca-Cawagas and Durante have addressed the issue of violence when they speak about how “the ‘civilizing’ of violence in North[ern] contexts means the need for patient peeling away of layers of consciousness that rationalize domestic violence and external violent conduct in terms of individual, community, and global ‘well-being.’”¹⁴

The primary experience of the authors in the schools they attended in Kentucky and Ohio reflect that religion and politics are not to be discussed, in order to prevent critical inquiry into power relations and identity issues, as a means of personal and community conflict prevention. Conflict in this context is considered a negative phenomenon, leaving little room for students to learn about conflict resolution, peaceful settlement of disputes, mediation, and the means of transforming conflict into positive outcomes for all parties involved. Are we not doing students a grave disservice by discounting the importance of conflict in creating healthy, vibrant, democratic societies? Conflict is not synonymous with violence, yet that is what is portrayed in our school systems. Don’t question. Don’t argue. Don’t ask the difficult questions. Don’t rock the boat. Unquestioning obedience to authority is rewarded.

Ignoring or turning a blind eye to another’s identity, or to a corporation’s social and ecological policies, and never journeying with them to understand their being, is

Resolution: Alternatives to Violence, ed. Douglas Fry and Kaj Bjorkqvist. (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997), 35.

¹⁴ Swee-Hin Toh, Virginia Floresca-Cawagas, and Ofelia Durante, 1992. “Building a peace education program: Critical reflections on the Notre Dame University experience in the Philippines.” In *Peace Education Miniprints NO. 38*. (Malmo: Preparedness for Peace, 1992), 34.

pedaled as the refined and enlightened course of public conversation in many schools. No doubt the issues must be dealt with delicately and facilitated by a skilled practitioner; yet, rather than skill teachers in such processes, the schools espouse silence as the best measure and taking positions is viewed as destructive. Once again we return to the beginning enigma, of peace as passivity and silence in an increasingly multicultural world, where discourse for consciousness-raising, sensitivity, and respect of Others' identities is invaluable to peace building and ecological stewardship. The use of this tactic to silence dissenters allows the status quo and the powerful to maintain their leadership while claiming neutrality.

Martin Luther King wept in his 'Letter from Birmingham Jail':

...I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed by the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice....¹⁵

¹⁵ Martin Luther King. Letter from Birmingham Jail. In Holmes, R.L. 1990. *Nonviolence in theory and practice*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Inc., 1963), 72.

The Reverend Dr. King went on to express his disheartenment with the silence of the moderates through these bold words: “History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.”¹⁶

It is often that same moderate constituency that maintains education is a neutral act, that fails to recognize that the values being taught in schools are in fact their values. However, when alternative values are presented, education becomes an ‘indoctrinating’ space. Refusing critical discussion of values is complicity with ignorance and betrayal of truth-knowledge. This silence supports myriad forms of oppression and contemporary violence. Federico Mayor says, “Democracy and non-violence require the security of peace and not the peace of security; not the peace of imposition, of fear, of silence...the key to any democratic system is interaction, listening, and participation.”¹⁷

The Earth Charter on Democracy and Shared Responsibility

As governance has been changing dramatically over the course of the past century, moving, in general, from overtly authoritarian systems, monarchies, totalitarian dictatorships, and Communism to an ostensibly freer and less controlled representative

¹⁶ Ibid, 341.

¹⁷ Federico Mayor, “Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace.” In *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World*, ed. Peter Blaze Corcoran, Mirian Vilela, and Alide Roerink, (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 119.

democracy, one is led to believe by the cheerleaders of this process that this represents progress towards eliminating institutionalized systems of oppression. Oppression remains, although with the complicity of corporate media largely controlled by multinational corporations (MNCs), it may be more difficult to observe by many standards today than it was one-hundred years ago.

The complexities of these politics and the stratification of societies have been exacerbated by the rise of powerful MNCs. These corporations confuse the borders between nation, state, and power. In fact, for nearly 40 years, many MNCs have had capital greater than states.¹⁸ The most powerful MNCs are from leading industrialized nations, who perpetuate their global domination upon the modern landscape. Take, for instance, policies of corporate ownership, patenting of life-forms, and the stealing of indigenous knowledge (in violation of Earth Charter Subprinciple 12b), such as the patenting of the Indian neem tree by the US Department of Agriculture and W.R. Grace.¹⁹ How far has society regressed to allow the patenting and ownership of life?

¹⁸ Richard J. Barnet and Ronald E. Muller, *Global Reach: The Power of Multinational Corporations*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974).

¹⁹ The patent on the neem tree was revoked after a 10-year legal battle. See Vandana Shiva, *Earth Democracy*. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005), 145-147.

With the increased power and wealth of the MNCs also comes increased responsibility. Brenes describes this phenomenon as ‘differentiated responsibility,’²⁰ which he extrapolates from the Earth Charter (Subprinciple 2b): “Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good.” Brenes states that while we all share a universal responsibility to each other and to the protection of Earth’s ecological systems, those whom are privileged with greater power and freedom must also make greater strides toward ensuring the security of the environment and of all life. This stands in direct contradiction to the corporate value of the ‘bottom line’ and its duty to maximize profits.

Like the MNCs, the idea of representative democracy as accountable and infallible presses on in the minds of those who argue that peace invariably accompanies democracy, yet the authors fear democracy in this context has been reduced to a euphemism for free trade and market ideology. Friedman, for example, argues in his Golden Arches Theory that any two nations who have McDonald’s have not gone to war with each other since getting McDonald’s.²¹ Friedman correspondingly defends the use of military power to maintain the market — that to have a successful democracy based on free-market ideologies, nations must have military strength to enforce that ideology. He

²⁰ Abelardo Brenes, “Universal and Differentiated Responsibility.” In *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World*, edited by Peter Blaze Corcoran, Mirian Vilela, and Alide Roerink. (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 35-37.

²¹ Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 248-275.

argues that the US military is the “hidden hand” behind successful globalization. Globalization, through open markets, is again being propelled as a conflict prevention measure by means of greater economic interdependence. “Sustainable globalization requires a stable power structure, and no country is more essential for this than the United States...The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist,” he writes.²² Again the lines between corporation, state, and power are blurred. When considering these politics within an educational framework, this has tremendous implications for the need of educators to distinguish between competitive and cooperative education and the role of each in forming a conscious, informed and democratic citizenry.

However, the position that it is the responsibility of the United States to lead nations into a new era of democracy is a position grossly exaggerated by leaders of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, and William Kristol, masterminds behind the PNAC and prominent leaders of the Bush administration, proclaim that it is the responsibility of the United States to maintain hegemony over other states in the name of peace, justice, and democracy (Prados 2005, Shiva 2005, Media Education Foundation 2004), along with fellow associate Fukuyama who posits that “Western liberal democracy is the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution.”²³ The PNAC writes: “American leadership is good both for America and for

²² Ibid, 464.

²³ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*. (New York: Avon Books, Inc., 1992), Intro, xi.

the world; and that such leadership requires military strength, diplomatic energy, and moral principles.”²⁴ This position asserts ‘peace’ through imposition of U.S. values and military strength.

Representative democracies today, however, are undermined by the extreme wealth and power of corporations and ideological groups, such as the PNAC, whose charge it is to lead the world into a future crafted by elites under the pretext of humanitarianism. Maj. John Nagl says of the war in Iraq, as written in Marilyn B. Young quoting Peter Maass, “Almost inconceivable to most of them [Iraqis], I think, is that what we want for them is the right to make their own decisions, to live free lives.”²⁵ On representative democracy, Shiva writes that though democratic governments change through direct elections, corporate CEOs and boardrooms do not change through popular vote. So, although leadership is transformed at the federal and state levels, the policies of corporate control, privatization, and economic liberalization are not changed.²⁶ Thus, what the few elites want in boardrooms and powerful special-interest groups, they get through un-democratic corporate policies and lobbying of interests, accompanied by excessive military force.

²⁴ Project for the New American Century, <http://www.newamericancentury.org>.

²⁵ Marilyn B. Young, “Imperial Language.” In *The New American Empire*, edited by Lloyd C. Gardner and Marilyn B. Young. (New York: The New Press, 2005), 35.

²⁶ Vandana Shiva, *Earth Democracy*, 73-107.

While the PNAC is planning its global dominance through military strength and economic control, or hard power, the Earth Charter leads an international movement using people power, or soft power. The PNAC is imposing US values on the rest of the world. The Earth Charter borrows values from global cultures and shared aspirations. These values are innately attractive and intrinsically representative, giving people hope and faith in democratic processes — while under the guise of democracy, many ‘democratic’ world leaders are currently pursuing hegemonic power.

In a bid to engineer true peace, scholars and academics have studied the complexities of peaceful behaviors and mechanisms to get to the root causes of violence and the nature of power relations behind those who control states, corporations, and the syntax of peace. Galtung developed the notion of structural violence to expose the social injustices that continue in times of ‘peace’, what is now commonly referred to as a negative peace, the absence of war. (Positive peace, by contrast, is the presence of social justice.) By highlighting the realities that structural violence pervades our lives in so-called times of ‘peace’, Galtung challenged the notion that these were in fact periods of social harmony.²⁷ Peace and war are, in the view of peace scholars, not dichotomies whereby when one is absent the other is present. No. It is violence—defined as

²⁷ Johan Galtung, *Peace and social structure: Essays in peace research, volume six*. (Copenhagen: Christian Eljers, 1988).

intentional harm²⁸—in its broad and varied manifestations that is considered the gross hurdle to peaceful societies. War is but the macro-manifestation of organized violence within and between states.

Those working toward a world free from want and intentional harm have constructed a repertoire of theories, activities, films, and books to address the hindrances to the full self-realization of the individual. Through techniques such as futures imaging, participants imagine more peaceful societies²⁹ and prepare for a future, as Freire says, “in which it is easier to love.”³⁰ In progressive learning contexts, theatre activities and non-traditional education is used to question the status quo, construct solutions together, and prepare for alternative actions.³¹ These multiple techniques focus on the social agency of the individual and the group. These strategies and activities are discussed in length hereafter in relation to the relevancy of the Earth Charter in education for peace and justice.

²⁸ Betty Reardon explains: “In peace education violence is considered to be avoidable, intentional harm, inflicted for a purpose or perceived advantage of the perpetrator or of those who, while not direct perpetrators, are, however, advantaged by the harm,” *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*. (Paris: UNESCO, 2001), 35.

²⁹ Elise Boulding, *Building a Global Civic Culture: Education for an Interdependent World*. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), and David Hicks, *Educating for the Future*. (London: World Wild Life Fund, UK, 1994).

³⁰ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2006), 40.

³¹ Augusto Boal, *Games for Actors and Non-actors*. (London: Routledge, 1992).

Values for a Shared World

The Earth Charter preamble states: “We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community.” While the Earth Charter does not proclaim that it has arrived at the definitive ethics that should guide our global community, it has laid the cornerstone of the project for creating a better, shared future, and articulating the values of a global civic culture that will allow us to realize a common destiny of peace and justice.

As Leonardo Boff states, “[The Earth Charter] embodies the best and most established ecological institutions, making them fertile in the elaboration of a new vision....”³² Building this vision is central to education in the 21st century, teaching children the values involved in maintaining and restoring the integrity of the many ecosystems that support all life. The Earth Charter provides a blueprint for actions and values that, used effectively, can change our current course of ecological and social destruction. Steven Rockefeller, in his essay called “The Transition to Sustainability”, states that:

The Earth Charter views the Great Transition to sustainable patterns of development locally and globally as essential to the survival and flourishing of human civilization in the twenty-first century. It also

³² Leonardo Boff, “Respect and Care for the Community of Life with Understanding, Compassion and Love.” In *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World*, ed. Peter Blaze Corcoran, Mirian Vilela, and Alide Roerink, (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 43.

*considers a sustainable future as a real possibility that human beings may achieve if they have the will, courage, and vision.*³³

Employing the Earth Charter in the classroom will assist us in forming a sustainable future, but it will also produce resistance from some educators, parents, administrators, politicians, business leaders and commercial media. These professionals may feel that such a process of values exploration is indoctrinating, because the principles enunciated within the Charter are in conflict with the underlying neoliberal assumptions of the consumer-oriented world of MNC's in which we are immersed. This exact situation often happens in schools that teach the values of meritocracy, economic globalization, and 'survival of the fittest' to be historically deterministic. More troubling is that these values are taught through the pretext of neutral, objective education.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development, spoke strongly about the importance of the teacher and education in creating societal transformation when she said:

Teachers play a very important role in the transition between generations, in the knowledge from one generation to the next. Consciousness-raising is vital for change. Teachers can convey to

³³ Steven Rockefeller, Steven, "The Transition to Sustainability". In *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World*, ed. Peter Blaze Corcoran, Mirian Vilela, and Alide Roerink, (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 165.

*children a sense of respect and responsibility for nature and for the global environment....*³⁴

Advancing on this trans-generational relationship and our responsibility as educators and today's generation for the next, Brenes writes:

*The case for differentiated responsibility could rest on a principle of trans-generational justice. It can be argued that those individuals and groups who have accumulated more power throughout history by exploiting Earth's resources and the fruits of human labor have a proportionate debt to present and future generations within the context of our common good.*³⁵

To bring together the generations through education, however, teachers must facilitate a dialectical education with ideas that flow both to and from students. A central criticism of traditional education, hence, is that its didactic practices do not expose students to the dialogical processes of democratic decision-making, position-taking, and problem-solving. More cooperative and dialogical models of education do, and as dialogical education opens channels of communication both ways between the generations, youth become empowered to transform their world. Shiva, Kester, and Jani write: "For too long children have been used as tokenism and symbolism in public discourses, but this

³⁴ John Fien, "Learning to Care: Education and Compassion." *Australian Journal of Environmental Education* 19 (2003): 6.

³⁵ Abelardo Brenes, "Universal and Differentiated Responsibility," 35.

must change for they are as much part of building the future as adults are.”³⁶ They continue: “Youth under the age of 25 across our globe now represent nearly half the global population...and it is their future at stake in which education demands to have students active in the preparation of a common future.”³⁷

Paulo Freire is a pioneer in the educational field for his insistence on the importance of critical thinking, the ability of the educator to reflect, and the use of interactive and dialogic techniques within teaching and learning contexts. He uses the word ‘conscientization’ to describe what he feels is one of the most important aspects of education: a critical social consciousness that develops within civil society when its members are allowed to learn the mechanisms by which social systems truly work. He speaks about these concepts and their relation to democracy when he says:

*One defends democracy by leading it to...“militant democracy” – a democracy which does not fear the people, which suppresses privilege, which can plan without becoming rigid, which defends itself without hate, which is nourished by a critical spirit rather than irrationality.*³⁸

³⁶ Vandana Shiva, Kevin Kester, Shreya Jani, *The Young Ecologist Initiative. Water Manual: Lesson Plans for Building Earth Democracy.* (New Delhi: Navdanya, 2007), forward.

³⁷ Ibid, 2.

³⁸ Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness.* (London and New York: Continuum, 1974), 9.

Freire's work, for example, presents a model for dialogic, transformative education. He states that education is "...a specifically human experience...a form of intervention in the world."³⁹ Freire goes on to explain what he means by intervention:

*When I speak of education as intervention, I refer both to the aspiration for radical changes in society in such areas as economics, human relations, property, the right to employment, to land, to education, and to health, and to the reactionary position whose aim is to immobilize history and maintain an unjust socio-economic and cultural order.*⁴⁰

Freire believes that there is no avoidance of instilling values in students. Indeed, he believes that is the aim of education — to develop citizens who can think critically, create change, step outside of their oppression. He posits that the job of the teacher *is* to instill these values — that teaching is a political act, an act of transformation. Freire said, "I cannot be a teacher without exposing who I am...without revealing...the way I relate to the world, how I think politically."⁴¹

John Fien, in his article "Learning to Care: Education and Compassion" similarly states that "Education, like all social institutions and processes, is a human creation, its

³⁹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civic Courage*. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 90-91.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 99.

⁴¹ Ibid, 87-88.

nature and purpose determined by human values, history and changing patterns of power.”⁴² He stresses especially the importance of differentiating between values and attitudes, noting that “attitudes are derived from values and are value-expressive for particular situations.”⁴³ Fien states:

Teaching for values and not particular attitudes is a practical and ethical approach to issues in environmental education because it resolves many of the questions concerning indoctrination. It acknowledges the inevitability of values in the curriculum by advocating the promotion of the values in an ethic of care but does not dictate how students should respond to particular issues.”⁴⁴

The exposing and forming of values in education presents a platform for social transformation. Educators can responsibly facilitate the right for each individual to understand and consciously choose his or her own life perspectives and values through critical inquiry into social morality, and by working together to construct local and global ethics that guide our human and environmental interaction.

Peace Pedagogy and the Earth Charter

⁴² John Fien, “Learning to Care: Education and Compassion,” 11.

⁴³ Ibid, 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 13.

The Earth Charter illuminates the relationships between spheres of our community by highlighting the multiple dimensions of life through which we all live and learn, as well as the responsibility of the community, individuals, and schools in cultivating a culture of peace and respect. Edgar Gonzalez-Gaudiano asserts in the Earth Charter in Action, evoking the contemplation of Mayr and Chomsky, that society has become too fragmented and insensitive toward its wholeness and the beauty of life:

*...we seek to take advantage of the deep meaning of the Earth Charter by transcending conventional pedagogic activities...principally to try to dissolve the unfortunate, protective shell that the process of modern civilization has burdened us with, making us more and more insensitive, and less and less sympathetic, to the whole of life's value and beauty.*⁴⁵

Calling for holism over fragmentation, the process that formed the Earth Charter, and that which legitimizes the very document, is the collaborative, participatory, global theatre of dialogue that was used to realize the Charter. Respectful communication, values exploring, brainstorming, problem-solving, consensus building, and action-oriented decisions were necessary to direct the extensive international consultative process that brought together cross-disciplinary scholars. These cooperative techniques, suggested as

⁴⁵ Edgar Gonzalez-Gaudiano, "The Earth Charter in Action: Experiences and Perspectives for Education in Values in Mexico." In *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World*, ed. Peter Blaze Corcoran, Mirian Vilela, and Alide Roerink, (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 121.

pedagogies when employing the Earth Charter in education,⁴⁶ underscore sustainable development and peace education as holistic and comprehensive education. In peace education learners are participants in the selection of learning topics, materials, and facilitation processes. This, peace educators contend, is an educational practice consistent with the values of democracy, freedom, and autonomy espoused through the content of our schools. Reardon and Cabezudo write on education: “If, as would be the presumption of the widely proclaimed principles of democracy, the citizenry is to be actively involved in the design and pursuit of solutions, then the whole society must be educated for that purpose.”⁴⁷ Correspondingly, the Pedagogy of Democratic Engagement used at the Peace Education Center of Teachers College Columbia University is an exemplary model for participatory and just peace education.⁴⁸

A Pedagogy of Democratic Engagement is described as “active and participatory engagement of students in the learning process initiated by peace curricula...[it is] the

⁴⁶ Earth Charter International, *Using the Earth Charter in Education: Summary of guidelines and suggested pedagogies*. (Costa Rica: Earth Charter Center for Sustainable Development, 2007).

⁴⁷ Betty Reardon and Alicia Cabezudo, *Learning to Abolish War: Teaching Toward a Culture of Peace. Book 1: Rationale for and Approaches to Peace Education*. (New York: Hague Appeal for Peace, 2002), 17.

⁴⁸ The Peace Education Center at Teachers College Columbia University may be visited online at <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/PeaceEd/index.html>.

most relevant and effective pedagogy to prepare students for active participation in the global change process....”⁴⁹ Jenkins explains a Pedagogy of Democratic Engagement:

*A pedagogy of engagement fosters student reflection on reality and possibilities for action at the level of the individual learner; critical engagement with and analysis of existing knowledge; and engagement with the community around the issues under study toward the achievement of change.*⁵⁰

Using the Pedagogy of Democratic Engagement to incorporate the Earth Charter into learning contexts allows teachers and learners alike to explore global diversity and the role of international normative documents in constructing and maintaining peaceful societies. Jenkins further clarifies the relationship between peace pedagogy, diversity, and learner autonomy:

Peace education is based in such values as democracy, nonviolence, community, cooperation and social justice. Philosophically it embraces difference and diversity and also recognizes and values the autonomy of the individual learner. In consistency with these values peace education learning is often pursued through critical, reflective

⁴⁹ Betty Reardon and Alicia Cabezudo. *Learning to Abolish War: Teaching Toward a Culture of Peace. Book 1: Rationale for and Approaches to Peace Education*, 70.

⁵⁰ Tony Jenkins, “Learning for Transformative and Structural Change: The CIPE Model for Community Based Learning.” (Paper presented at the International Peace Research Association Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, June 29-July 3, 2006), 3.

*learning modes. In such learner-centered methods authentic values are autonomously developed by and within the learner, not inculcated by instructors.*⁵¹

Peace Education programs are designed to be comprehensive and interdisciplinary in the range of content covered and the methodology used. This approach to educating is akin to the Earth Charter's emphasis of interdependence, which deliberately counters the compartmentalization of knowledge. Burns and Aspeslagh state peace education "express(es) global awareness in terms of 'holism,' which can link the individual directly, rather than through stages, to the wider environment."⁵² Furthermore, realizing that all dimensions of living are interrelated, peace education transcends the common expression of 'the real world,' a term used to suggest that schooling is not applicable in the competitive, job-oriented, production-consumer society. This sentiment is simplistic and fails to recognize the broader personal and social purposes of education beyond mere job applicability and corporate services.

In the same regard, Shiva, Kester and Jani write on the link between ecological and social problems and the challenge of education in addressing societal issues:

⁵¹ Tony Jenkins, *Community-based Institutes on Peace Education (CIPE). Organizer's Manual*. (NY: International Institute on Peace Education, 2007), 29-30.

⁵² Robin Burns and Robert Aspeslagh, *Three Decades of Peace Education around the World*. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 11.

...Ecology is deeply linked to social justice and environmental care. The discourse often centers on the mismanagement and privatization of [resources], yet this single issue has numerous consequences including the health of communities, degradation of the environment, and increased poverty of the disadvantaged...It is clear that the resolution of these concerns will need a comprehensive and cooperative approach...[including] motivating within and with the young the engagement in possibilities of creating peaceful personal lifestyles and a commitment to preventing and resolving conflict....⁵³

Including learners in the process of envisioning learning, as well as preparing them for problem-solving, takes the preventative approach to conflicts and is driven by the belief that all people, particularly youth, should be empowered and equipped with the know-how to transform their world. Developing critical thinking, employing interactive educational pedagogy, focusing on the interdisciplinary nature of education, emphasizing citizenship education, and education for gender equality are just a few of the areas of importance in developing pedagogy that is in tune with the principles espoused in the Earth Charter. Teaching these principles demands that the educator be reflective and flexible in terms of content, pedagogy and context, constantly developing creative and interactive ways to engage their students.

⁵³ Vandana Shiva, Kevin Kester, Shreya Jani, *The Young Ecologist Initiative. Water Manual: Lesson Plans for Building Earth Democracy*, 2.

John Fien, in his article entitled “Education for a Sustainable Future,” discusses the parameters for a new vision of education, inclusive of “seek[ing] to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future”; providing “basic education as the foundation for all future education, [which] is a contribution to sustainable development in its own right”; “reorienting existing education” so that “policies, programs and practices...build the concepts, skills, motivation and commitment needed for sustainable development”; and promoting lifelong learning, “...including adult and community education, appropriate technical and vocational education, higher education and teacher education [as] vital ingredients of capacity building for a sustainable future.”⁵⁴

Conclusion

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future” (Earth Charter Preamble). Mayr and Chomsky ask, “is it better to be smart than stupid?” Humanity must choose its future wisely, and, as Brenes points out, it is the ‘universal responsibility’ of all to work toward a shared future based on respect for human needs and rights to life, human dignity, equality, and equal access to resources. It

⁵⁴ John Fien, “Education for a Sustainable Future: Achievements and Lessons Learnt from a Decade of Innovation from Rio to Johannesburg”. *International Review of Environmental Strategies*. Vol. 4, No. 1 (2003): 3-11.

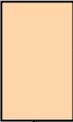
is additionally the ‘differentiated responsibility’ of those with greater privilege to employ that privilege to the sustainability of Earth’s resources and the protection of all life.

Though democracies are flourishing and autocratic states are weakening, one thing remains for certain: oppression continues. It especially continues through un-democratic corporate ecological and social policies. How do we address such oppression? How do we create peace? For one, we must learn to distinguish between democracy, peace, and competitive economics. Practitioners around the world have been working to counter and transcend such indignant and inhumane situations for many years. We, as educators, must learn to practice peace education as education for values awareness, student autonomy, and cooperative decision-making. Reardon, Cabezudo, and Jenkins present *A Pedagogy of Democratic Engagement* that is conducive to democratic classrooms, and the Earth Charter functions as an educational tool for cultivating democratic citizenship in this UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Representatives from across the globe have contributed to the Earth Charter as a foundation for building peace. The authors would like to encourage educators to experiment with Peace Education as a mode of democratic and ‘consciousness-raising’ education. Peace Education is a discipline that specifically addresses issues of violence, sustainable development, and human rights, and aims to develop a citizenry open and able to resolve conflicts and build peace in their communities, and by extension, throughout the world. It is therefore of critical importance that educators become aware

of this alternative approach to education that has so much to contribute to all areas of education for the building of a just, equitable and humane global society.

Educators can make a positive contribution in assisting the current generation to deal in a constructive way with the problems we are all facing, and thereby give us hope for peaceful and productive resolutions to the geopolitical and ecological chaos of our current world. Accordingly, the authors have included hereafter a lesson plan to assist educators in tackling global issues in their classrooms, to foster peace with each other, peace with ecology, and a sustainable future constructed on shared values. The lesson plan is but one small step for educators on their road to integrating values of peace and sustainability into their educational practice.



A Peace Education Lesson: Global Spending and Social Inequities

The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more.

--Earth Charter Preamble: paragraph 4

Introduction: It seems in our modern world that priorities become reversed, and sometimes quite perverse. We often end up spending much time and money on matters that are trivial and less important than the more humane issues of our daily lives. We spend extravagant amounts of monies on fine jewelry, name-brand clothing, tennis shoes, vacations, and holiday homes, despite that across the globe many of our contemporaries are simply struggling to survive. Per assessing our personal, corporate, and government global expenditures, what is reflected in spending priorities presents some ghastly

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In Factis Pax 2 (1) (2008): 30–68

<http://www.infactispax.org/journal/>

surprises. What things do we value as a global society? Do we place a higher emphasis on education or the military? Do we place more importance on ice-cream or sanitation and water? This lesson plan delineates the products and human needs upon which peoples and governments place care and concern according to the proportion of monies allotted each.

Level: High School/University

Core Subject: Social Sciences, History, English, Math, Economics, Peace Studies

Materials: Global inequity cards

Timeframe: 1 hour

Objectives:

Students will do the following by the end of the lesson:

- *Analyze* the effect of global values on our societies, peacelessness, and conflicts
- *Grapple* with the notion of diversity and empathy for others
- *Reflect* on gender relations, government and global concerns

Guiding Inquiry:

- What are the greatest government expenditures?
- What concerns does the government spend the least on?
- What are the values behind these expenditures?
- How does gender relate to these national and global expenses?

Procedures Followed

Activity 1

Ask students to write on a piece of paper a number between 1-10 (1 being of lowest importance and 10 highest), reflecting the importance they give to basic health and nutrition. Then have each student write the issue/product/concern they give the most importance in their life beside the number 10. Elicit responses.

Activity 2

Value cards: What are the priorities of global spending (i.e. Sewage management, Cosmetics, Education, Narcotics)? Students are given a set of cards and asked to put them in order from “most amount of money spent on” to “least amount of money spent on.” This should take about 20 minutes. After the groups finish their order, the teacher reveals the actual order according to country data. Debrief with a series of questions:

What is surprising from this order? What beliefs and national/global order lead to such emphasis? Then ask students to place the cards into the order in which they believe the cards should fall, and to develop potential action plans to make this a reality. What values and behaviors need to be realized to create this world?

The cards:

- Pet food in Europe and US
- Cigarettes in Europe
- Basic Health and Nutrition
- Perfumes in Europe and US
- Women's reproductive health
- Military spending in the world
- Narcotics in the world
- Business entertainment in Japan
- Alcohol in Europe
- Ice Cream in Europe
- Water and Sanitation for All
- Cosmetics in US
- Basic education

The correct order and spending:

1. Military spending in the world (780 billion USD)
2. Narcotics in the world (400b USD)
3. Alcohol in Europe (105b)
4. Cigarettes in Europe (50b)
5. Business Entertainment in Japan (35b)
6. Pet food in Europe and US (17b)
7. Basic Health and Nutrition (13b)
8. Perfumes in Europe and US (12b)
9. Women's reproductive health (12b)
10. Ice cream in Europe (11b)
11. Water and sanitation for all (9b)
12. Cosmetics in US (8b)
13. Basic Education (6b)

(Source: United Nations Development Program, Human Development Report 1998:37)

Reflection wrap-up

Debrief the activities with a series of questions: What is surprising from this order? What beliefs and national/global order lead to such emphasis? What could be misleading about these numbers? Who funded the report? What agency completed the report? What

could change the outcome of the priorities? What if another agency, with different politics or constituency leaning, had written the report? Then ask students to place the cards into their preferred order, and to develop potential action plans to make this a reality. What values and behaviors need to be realized to create this world? For a gender analysis, consider which points are more masculine and which are more feminine. Accordingly, where do the masculine and feminine cards fall in the order? (We find that the top expenses are masculine and the lower feminine.) What does this say about our societies?

Supporting Documentation

Earth Charter, Subprinciple 6e: *Avoid military activities damaging to the environment.*

Subprinciple 7e: *Ensure universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction.*

Subprinciple 9a: *Guarantee the right to potable water, clear air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required.*

Subprinciple 9c: *Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer....*

Subprinciple 16c: *Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration.*

Instructor's reflection:

What worked

What didn't

Suggestions for next time

Handout: Global Inequity Cards

Narcotics in the World	Pet Food in Europe and US	Women's Reproductive Health
Basic Education	Cosmetics in the US	Alcohol in Europe
Ice Cream in Europe	Military Spending in the World	Water and Sanitation for All
Basic Health and Nutrition	Perfumes in Europe and US	Business Entertainment in Japan
Cigarettes in Europe		

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