



Earth Charter International Report On Youth Engagement

November 2006 – December 2008



**Children's workshop in Cameroon organized by Earth Charter Youth Group
CAPEC (Photo: Ajomuzu Colette Bekaku)**

Report prepared by Dominic Stucker, International Youth Coordinator,
For Plan Netherlands

Earth Charter International
January 2009

Plan Netherlands, part of Plan International, provides generous financial support to Earth Charter International. Plan's vision is to live in a world in which all children realize their potential in societies which respect people's rights and dignity. Plan's mission is to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries, through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives, by enabling deprived children, their families and their communities to meet their basic needs and to increase their ability to participate in and benefit from their societies; building relationships to increase understanding and unity among peoples of different cultures and countries; and promoting the rights and interests of the world's children. www.plannederland.nl

The Earth Charter Initiative is the collective name for the extraordinarily diverse, global network of people, organizations, and institutions that participate in promoting and implementing the values and principles of the Earth Charter. The Initiative is a broad-based, voluntary, civil society effort. Participants include leading international institutions, national governments and their agencies, university associations, non-government organisations and community-based groups, city governments, faith groups, schools and businesses -- as well as thousands of individuals. The mission of the Earth Charter Initiative is to help establish a sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to promote the transition to a sustainable way of life founded on: respect and care for the community of life; ecological integrity; universal human rights; respect for diversity; economic justice; democracy; and a culture of peace. www.earthcharter.org

The Earth Charter Youth Initiative (ECYI) - an integral part of the Earth Charter Initiative - is a bold, diverse network that is convinced that urgent action is required to bring about a just, sustainable, and peaceful world. The ECYI holds that sustainability must be understood and implemented in a holistic and integrated manner, inclusive of ecological integrity, social and economic justice, and democracy, nonviolence, and peace. The network is active in over 70 countries and at the global level, with a diverse Membership, Youth Groups, Project Teams, and Partners. The Youth Leadership Team and the International Youth Coordinator offer guidance to the Youth Initiative. www.earthcharter.org

Acknowledgements

There are a great many individuals and organizations to thank for the successes of Earth Charter youth engagement in recent years - too many to list here. On a personal note, however, I would like to recognize some of them.

I am grateful to **Michael Slaby**, my predecessor. Without his volunteer efforts to mobilize young people to engage Plan Netherlands, the funding for my full-time International Youth Coordinator position may have never materialized. In turn, we are all indebted to **Plan Netherlands and Luuk Boon, Yvonne Heselmans, and Denise Lapoutre** for the generosity of their funding and trust in us, our strategy, and our activities.

My colleagues, both in Sweden and Costa Rica, provided daily inspiration and encouragement. **Alan AtKisson, Mirian Vilela, and our small team of staff and interns** worked diligently to help make the Earth Charter vision a reality. Brilliant thought partners, I learned an immeasurable amount from all of them and know that our friendships will last long into the future.

My wife, **Abigail Stucker**, deserves my utmost thanks for her love and support of me, especially when I worked late hours and was traveling far from home. I could not have chosen a better wife or mother to our twin toddlers.

I thank the **Council and Advisors** for stewarding the Earth Charter Initiative with understanding, compassion, and love. It was a special pleasure to support them in their work and collaborate on joint projects. Council members were very supportive of youth engagement, while always keeping an eye on the big picture. Special thanks to **Camila Godinho and Dumisani Nyoni**, the Council's youth representatives.

Within the ECYI, our **Youth Group Coordinators** deserve applause and respect for implementing sustainability and peace building projects on the ground, often with very limited resources. In many parts of the world, concepts in the Earth Charter are still met with suspicion or outright scorn. I appreciate **Youth Group members** who are working to bridge these divides. I am also humbled by the **thousands of young individuals all around the world**, engaged in innovative and meaningful work to help bring about a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world. Thank you for sustaining hope.

The representatives of the **Youth Leadership Team** are very dear to my heart. We had the opportunity to meet as a Team in India, the basis for strong relationships. I respect the care and commitment that the YLT Representatives bring to engaging and empowering young people with the Earth Charter. I consider them my peers and friends and look forward to continued collaboration through the emerging Youth Task Force.

During my two years with Earth Charter, I had the pleasure of convening talented teams around collaborative projects. I am grateful to all of our many **individual and organizational partners**; they helped make the ECYI what it is today. In particular, I am grateful to the dedicated **e-GLO Team**, especially co-developer and co-facilitator, **Mike Sheehan**. The **IPS Team** was also an inspiration and support to me, especially **Frits Hesselink**, co-coordinator of the Buddy Experiment, and **Carolee Buckler** who, through IISD, was an early supporter of our IUCN Resolution on IPS and the Earth Charter.

It has been a great privilege to be the International Youth Coordinator for the past two years. I highly value the Earth Charter Initiative network and will remain an active volunteer in promoting the cause. Finally, I wish to thank **Jaana Laitinen**, who is smoothly transitioning into the new International Youth Facilitator role. She is enthusiastic, committed, and innovative. Give her your support as she supports Earth Charter youth engagement.

For a full listing of YLT Representatives, Youth Group Coordinators, and Partners, please see the Annex.

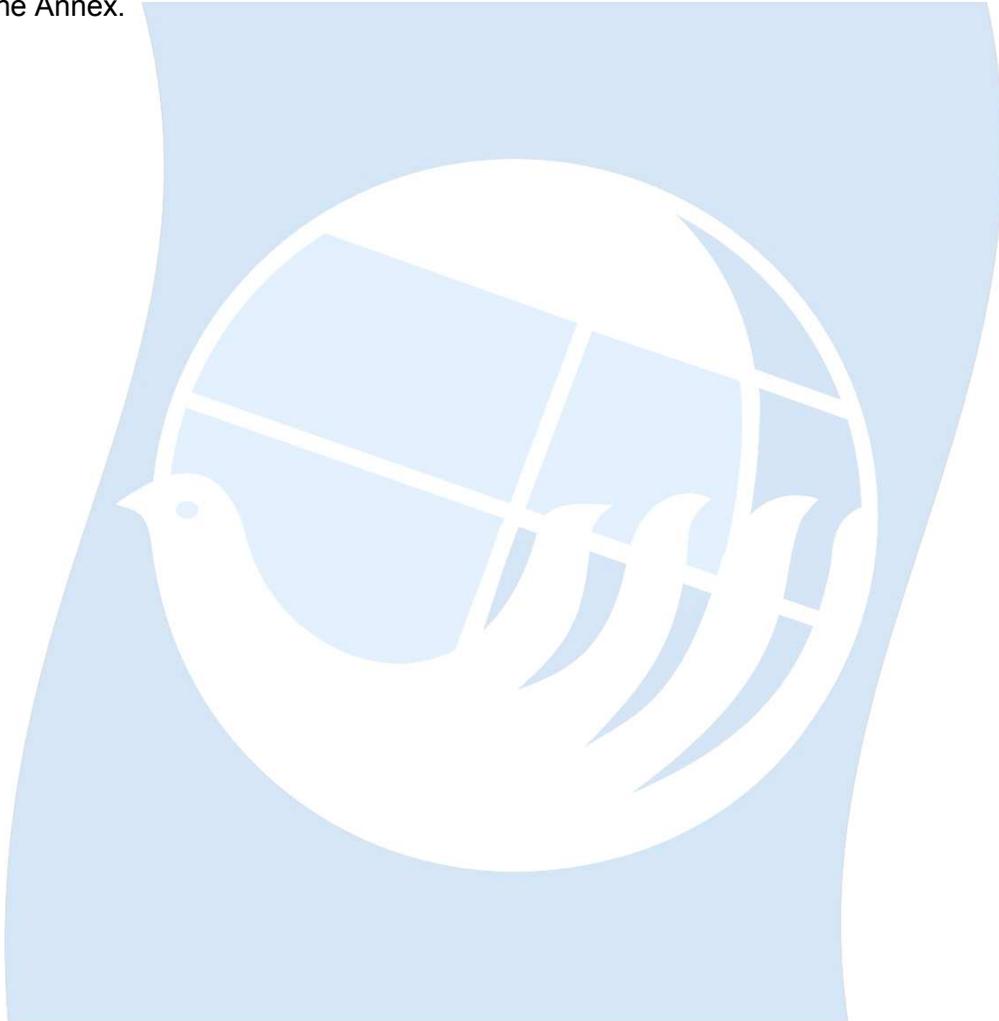


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Executive Summary

With generous support from Plan Netherlands, Earth Charter International was able to support unprecedented expansion of youth engagement in the Earth Charter Initiative.

With a full time Youth Coordinator, efforts exceeded all communications and publications goals, with the youth section to the website getting **2,400 unique visitors each month from more than 125 countries**. Furthermore, hundreds of youth have affiliated themselves with the Earth Charter youth network through decentralized social networking platforms, such as TakingItGlobal, Facebook, and WiserEarth. Youth network members wrote, edited, or contributed to nearly **20 print publications**.

The International Youth Coordinator - supported by interns, volunteer teams of youth, and partners - led **highly successful projects to engage young people on key sustainability and Earth Charter-related themes**. Projects included an online course on digital storytelling and leadership; a special fund for on-the-ground Youth Group projects; facilitation of youth participation in global governance processes; and a campaign for intergenerational partnership for sustainability.

Partly as a result of the above communications empowerment and engagement through projects, the Earth Charter youth network experienced accelerated growth. **At 2,500 individuals as of December 2008, the growth rate of membership, when compared to the two years preceding**

Plan Netherlands funding, increased by 750%.

Furthermore, **the number of Youth Groups quadrupled** over the past two years, a model of youth engagement that is especially strong in Africa.

A 12-person Youth Leadership Team (YLT) was elected for a 2-year term of service and is now engaged in implementing global action projects. The YLT was a forerunner of the Task Force model later proposed by the Earth Charter International Council. The Leadership Team has enthusiastically contributed to designing and **launching a Youth Task Force in line with Earth Charter International's new decentralized empowerment strategy.**

Background

Plan Netherlands Grant and ECYI Strategy

In May 2006, Plan Netherlands made a very generous, 2-year grant to Earth Charter International for youth programming. The grant totaled 251,003 USD. This allowed the Earth Charter Youth Initiative (ECYI), for the first time since its launch in 2000, to hire a full time International Youth Coordinator. Having started full-time work in November 2006, Dominic Stucker, in close collaboration with former Executive Director Alan AtKisson, developed an ECYI Strategy and submitted it to Plan Netherlands for review. Measurable indicators from the ECYI Strategy are referenced throughout this report. It had the following objectives and strategic focus areas:

Objectives

1. Raise awareness of the Earth Charter among key youth leaders and networks
2. Grow, empower, and support Earth Charter Youth Groups (ECYGs) engaged in local action projects
3. Facilitate the engagement of ECYI members in global sustainability decision-making processes

Strategies

1. Use cutting edge Internet technologies and presentations to engage youth around the Earth Charter
2. Develop and disseminate publications and resources to guide and support youth
3. Grow, support, and empower ECYGs

4. Cultivate an engaged Core Group, or Youth Leadership Team
5. Form durable partnerships with youth organizations and networks
6. Develop and implement e-GLO, an Earth Charter-inspired online leadership training
7. Facilitate the engagement of youth in global sustainability decision-making processes
8. Develop and implement an Earth Charter Special Projects Fund for Youth Groups

In addition to these eight strategies, the Youth Initiative also launched a Campaign for Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability, which is described below.

This report focuses first on empowering youth through Internet and communications technologies, presentations, and publications. Then, there is a section on engaging Youth Initiative members through meaningful courses, projects, and campaigns. And, before sections on lessons learned and finances, there is a section on the expansion of the ECYI membership, Youth Groups, and Youth Leadership Team.

Empowering Youth

Cutting-Edge Communications

At the heart of a strong network is good communications. Specifically, Earth Charter International (ECI), through its International Youth Coordinator, re-activated its youth e-mail group, launched a special youth section within the Initiative's website, and published strategic resource materials to improve connectivity within the Youth Initiative.

Young people are clearly bridging the digital divide to visit our webpage with fewer visitors corresponding to sparsely-populated regions such as the Sahara Desert and Siberia. Still, there are countries in central Africa, for example, that we must endeavor to reach.

The website's youth section consists of an introductory ECYI paragraph, an interactive blog, and action links to "Current Projects," "ECYI Leaders," "Getting Involved," and "Featured Resources." These were developed



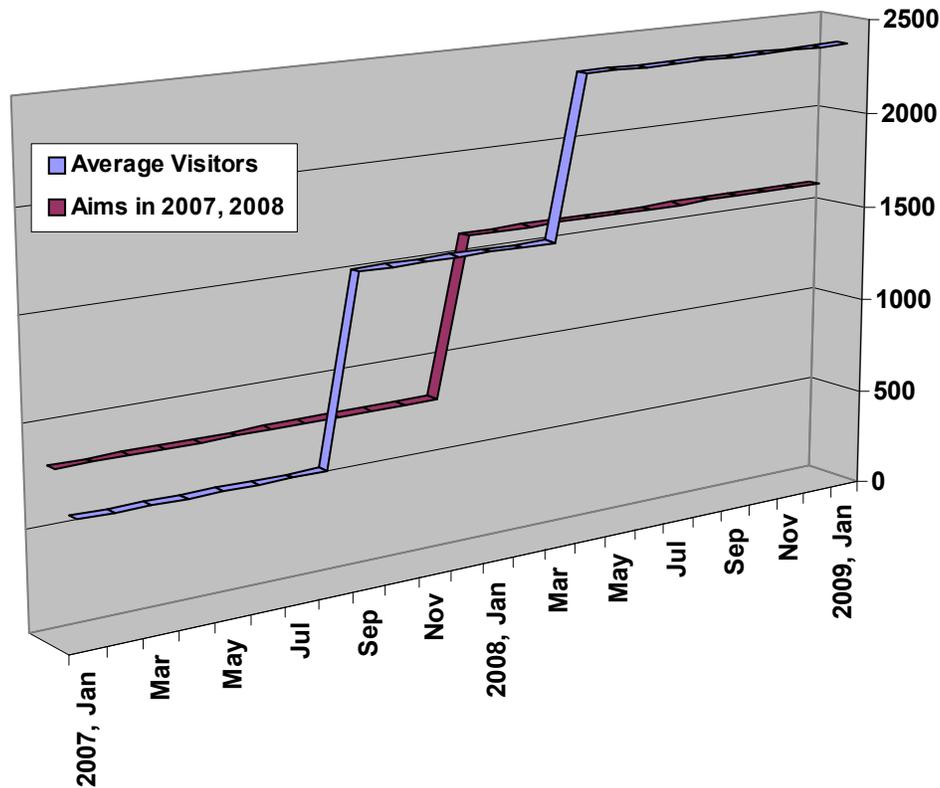
Location of Visitors to the ECYI Blog, August 2008 – January 2009

Over the course of the 2-year Plan Netherlands grant, **the ECYI e-mail group, hosted by partner TakingItGlobal (TIG), more than quadrupled in size.** Starting with 46 subscribers, the group now has over 200. Contents include calls for project partnerships, events, and educational and job opportunities. Furthermore, e-mail activity, while remaining highly relevant to ECYI members, increased steadily. In 2006, an average of 6 e-mails were sent each month; in 2007 this increased to 7; and in 2008 to 9.

Our ECYI blog, launched in late 2006, has attracted international attention. Over the past 5 months, (August 2008 – January 2009), people visited our site from over 125 countries, represented in this ClustrMap, above.

during the first half of 2007. It provides interested persons information about joining the Youth Initiative and forming a Youth Group, in addition to up-to-date news, often reported live from international events or projects. Indeed, **the blog has been especially successful, exceeding targets set in the ECYI Strategy.** For 2007, we aimed for a total of 60 news entries and comments; 24 news entries and 120 comments were posted, more than double our target. For 2008, we aimed for 120 news entries and comments and exceeded this target again with 24 entries and 164 comments. The average number of comments per entry went up as well from 5 to 7, demonstrating increased youth involvement.

ECYI Website: Average Number of Unique Visitors/Month Compared to Aims



When we launched special initiatives via our website, we noticed that the total number of visitors would peak and then remain at a higher level of activity. The graph, above, shows our aims for the average number of website visitors per month in maroon; 800 in 2007 and 1,600 in 2008. The blue line shows the achieved averages for three specific periods: 1) after the launch of the website's youth section in November 2006, we averaged 605 visitors / month; 2) following the interactive, online Youth Leadership Team (YLT) elections in September 2007, the average increased by a factor of 2.5 to 1,551 visitors per month; and 3) following the launch of the e-GLO course, IPS Campaign, and YLT global book project in April 2008, the average went up to 2,373,

surpassing our aim of 1,600 by nearly 150%.

Beyond our centralized website, the Earth Charter youth network has become active on decentralized social networking platforms. In addition to our long-standing group on TakingItGlobal, we "discovered" and then started creating and contributing to Earth Charter-related groups and causes on Facebook and WiserEarth in October 2007. For more on this decentralized phenomenon, please see "Expanding the Youth Initiative," below.

Publications

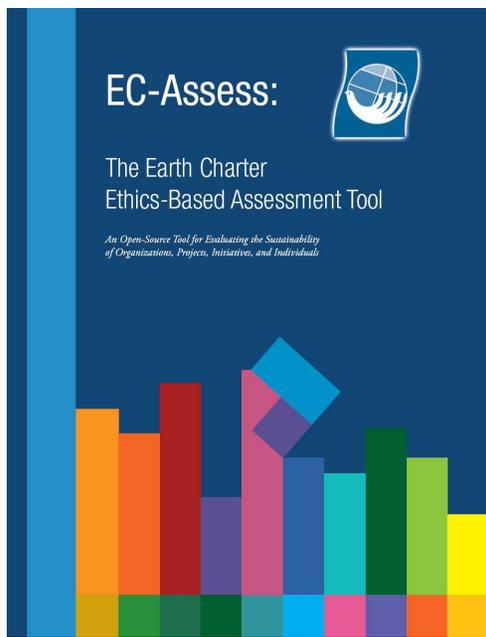
Over the past two years, Earth Charter International published 18

youth-related resources and articles.

Five of these concern the internal strategy and structure of the Youth Initiative, published in 2007. They include the:

- **ECYI Strategy, 2007-2008**
- **ECYI Handbook**
- **ECYI Member's Database**
- **Calling Youth Leaders to Action**, a workshop presentation for introducing sustainability, the Earth Charter, and the ECYI
- **Youth Leadership Team Guidelines**, outlining the YLT elections and strategy

We also published and/or contributed to 13 external publications.



EC-Assess, May 2007

In May 2007, in collaboration with former Executive Director Alan AtKisson, Dominic Stucker and Leah Wener developed and published **EC-Assess**, an integrated ethics-based sustainability assessment tool using the framework of the Earth Charter. A practical tool, it can be used by individuals, organizations, businesses, and governments to evaluate the degree

to which they care about specific sustainability principles and compare this to the action they are taking to realize each principle. Where there is a high level of care and a low level of action there is opportunity for strategic change and growth. An interactive worksheet was also developed to facilitate the application of EC-Assess and the Youth Coordinator has led workshops on EC-Assess in Scotland, Sweden, India, Costa Rica, and Spain.

In April 2008, **Interwoven Stories: The Fabric of Community** was published jointly by Earth Charter International and the University for Peace. Edited by former Earth Charter intern, Lisa Jokivirta, and former student, Jessica Moe, the publication is a collection of 74 personal narratives, poems, and photographs from University for Peace community members celebrating the Earth Charter concept of the "community of life."



Interwoven Stories, April 2008

Building on his experience at the International Conference on Climate Change and Vulnerability held in The Hague, Netherlands in February 2007, Dominic Stucker wrote an article for the widely circulated newsletter, e-CIVICUS, entitled **Reflecting on climate change and ethics: An Earth Charter call to action**. The article was published in

parallel with a workshop on climate justice organized by CIVICUS, GYAN, and the Youth Initiative at the CIVICUS World Assembly in Glasgow, Scotland in June 2008.

Dominic Stucker, Nicole Jirón Beirut, and Hamza Ali Alamoosh co-authored a chapter on the Youth Initiative for a book entitled ***Young People, Education, and Sustainability: Exploring Principles, Perspectives, and Praxis***. The book is edited by Peter Blaze Corcoran and Philip Osano and will be published by Wageningen University Press in 2009.

Dominic Stucker also wrote a chapter that references the Earth Charter in ***Environmental Justice and Sustainability in the Former Soviet Union***, edited by Julian Aygeman and Yelena Ogneva-Himmelberger, forthcoming from MIT Press in 2009.

The remaining publications are referenced in the next section on Engaging the Youth Initiative.



EC-Assess workshop, Ingrid Mulà (Spain / United Kingdom), Klaus Bosselmann (New Zealand / Germany) and Katy Kintzele (United States), IUCN Congress, Barcelona, Spain, October 2008

Engaging Youth

Purposeful Action

Earth Charter International, primarily through the International Youth Coordinator and key partners, sought to build capacity among youth through an online community leadership course, followed by small grants for Youth Groups. A guide for youth participation in sustainability decision-making processes was also prepared, in addition to a campaign on intergenerational partnership, both seeking to meaningfully connect people of different generations within the sustainability movement.

e-GLO

“e-GLO” (Earth Charter Global Learning Opportunity) is a semester-long, online digital storytelling and community leadership course inspired by the Earth Charter. In partnership with BeatBoard and Heart-in-Action Enterprises, Earth Charter International developed and offered the course in mid-2008 to **30 young people from 23 countries.** A total of 47 had applied, indicating the interest in the combination of topics offered.

Participants met every other week for eight 2-hour sessions in e-GLO's own virtual conference environment, powered by Heart-in-Action Enterprises. The use of webcams, mics, text chat, collaborative white boards, instantaneous polls, and PowerPoint presentations made for a very lively, interactive, and emotive learning

environment. Dominic Stucker of ECI; Mike Sheehan of BeatBoard; and our **committed e-GLO Team** of young, expert speakers from Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Germany, the Netherlands, and the USA - representing Reel Youth, Corporate Knights, the Diversity Institute, and the UN-mandated University for Peace - facilitated the sessions:

1. Introduction to the Earth Charter and e-GLO
2. Introduction to One Another
3. Media for Peacebuilding – Youth Voice within the Global Community
4. Grassroots Community Organizing
5. Addressing Key Challenges



e-GLO Seminar Room: “The screen shot seen round the world.” (Photo: Mike Sheehan)

6. Making and Marketing Social and Environmental Documentaries
7. Animated Youth Voice, and
8. Live, Interactive, Multi-media Event Open to the Global Public.

The final event, open to the public, was a 2-hour extravaganza spotlighting some of the best blogs, photographs,

videos, and animations created by participants. Featured work included:

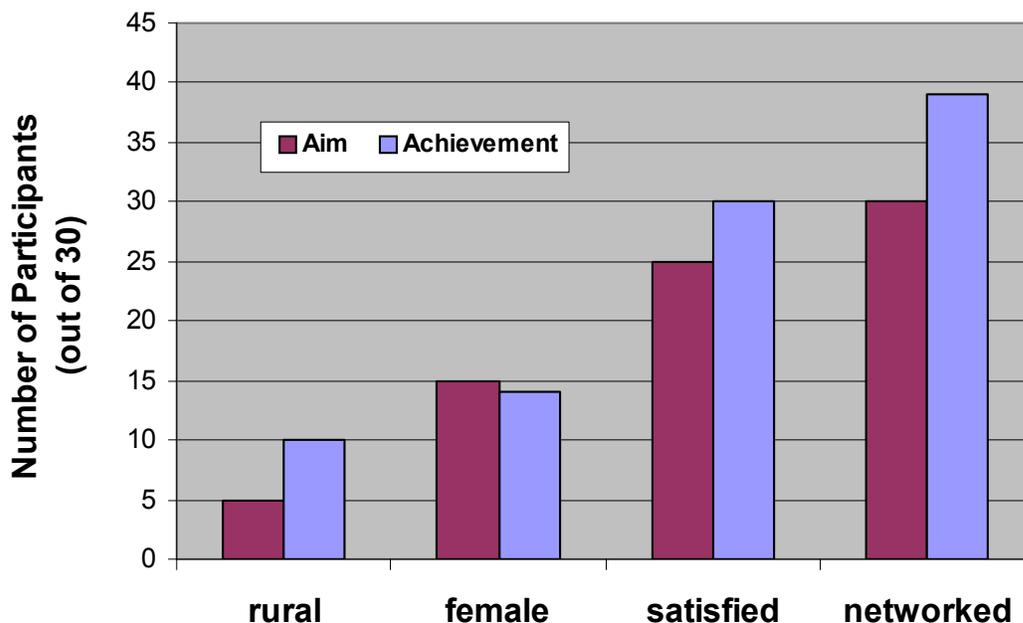
- **El Salvador / United States:** Clarice Sandoval, “Water and Sanitation,” video interview in Spanish (4 min), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5h5ujqG0_E
- **Latvia / Finland:** Irina Pleva, playful animation with serious message (1 min), <http://www.beatboard.org/eGLO/index.html>
- **Nigeria:** Esther Agbarakwe “Transformational Leadership” blog, <http://esthertransformationalleadership.blogspot.com/>
- **China:** Xiaoyuan Chen, video interview with community member (7 min, at bottom of blog), <http://chenxiaoyuan.blogspot.com/>

Our **e-GLO Group on Facebook**, created in parallel with the course, has

attracted over 300 members. The e-GLO Group provided a place for interaction among e-GLO participants and the public between sessions. Over 200 photos, videos, and links were posted by e-GLO participants and group members.

In an effort to **bridge digital and gender divides**, the ECYI Strategy aimed to attract at least 5 of the 30 participants from rural areas, while ensuring a balance of men and women. (See graph, below.) According to our survey of participants, **we graduated 10 rural participants, double our target. We also graduated 14 women** who performed at the “top of the class.” We wanted to give an effective training, aiming for a 25 out of 30 success rate. Here, again, we exceeded our aim with **100% of those surveyed saying that they would recommend e-GLO to a friend (El Mantawi, 2008).** Finally, we aimed to establish a strong, 30-person network. The network of participants, e-GLO Team members, and partners has, indeed, been vibrant and supportive of emerging projects, and has 9 more

e-GLO Success Indicators



members than expected, not including the additional members of the e-GLO Group on Facebook.

One of our expert speakers, Karim El Mantawi, then a student in the Media, Conflict, and Peace Studies Master's program at the University for Peace, conducted and wrote an in-depth evaluation of e-GLO: ***The Earth Charter Global Learning Opportunity – An evaluation of an Online Course in Digital Storytelling and Community Leadership*** (El Mantawi, 2008). e-GLO was also featured in a publication by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), entitled ***Supporting the Next Generation of Sustainability Leadership*** (Dagmar Timmer, Carolee Buckler and Heather Creech, 2008).

Special Projects Fund

In addition to capacity building and networking, ECI developed a “**Special Projects Fund**” (SPF) to financially support our Youth Groups in promoting and applying Earth Charter principles among youth. The two main goals of the SPF were 1) to help build youth leadership capacity for promoting sustainability and the Earth Charter and 2) to increase the number and impact of youth-led, Earth Charter-inspired projects that promote a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world.

Launched in October 2008, we received 16 completed project proposals, 4 more than our target. After a careful selection process based on the criteria in the SPF Guidelines, we chose the best 6 proposals, matching our original aim. Workshops and campaigns will be implemented in February – April 2009, with resulting action projects lasting, in many cases, for an additional year.



Earth Charter Youth Workshop, Guanajuato, Mexico, Nov 2008 (Photo: Dominic Stucker)

- **Congo**, ECYG AZUR Development: Strengthening Youth Activism on Sustainable Development using the Earth Charter as Tool for Change
- **Nigeria**, ECYG Calabar: Understanding and Discovering the Purpose of the Earth Charter in Achieving the MDGs: Toward Environmental Sustainability and Peacebuilding in the Niger Delta
- **Togo**, ECYG Togolese Foundation for Peace: Promotion of Youth Leadership for Sustainable Development in Central Togo Based on the Values and Principles of the Earth Charter
- **Belarus**, ECYG Youth International Club NEWLINE: Winter School: Youth Collaboration for Sustainable Development
- **Peru**, ECYG Asociación Peruana de Escultismo: Camp Cuzco
- **Canada**, ECYG Cowichan Intercultural Society Youth Projects: Tools for Forging Inclusive Solutions: Training Youth Leaders to

Facilitate Earth Charter Workshops and Action Planning Sessions

Instead of the aim of 9,000 USD for our first granting cycle, **we successfully granted 22,850 USD, in addition to 9,072 raised by the Youth Groups.** We had encouraged Youth Groups to raise 20% of their funds locally, but they surpassed this aim, raising more than 28% of the total. Project reports will be collected and posted online in May 2009.

Youth in Global Governance

In order to work toward our strategic objective of promoting youth participation in global sustainability decision-making processes, Leah Wener and Dominic Stucker prepared ***Youth in Global Governance for Sustainability: An ECIYI Guide.*** This practical Guide, to be published in 2009, will help young people find pathways to global governance processes through youth organizations, NGOs, state delegations, and, importantly, by conveying their high quality academic research to policy makers.



Hind Ottmani (Morocco) and Didier Gleyzes (France) at CSD-16, New York, May 2008

In 2007 and 2008, the Youth Initiative supported some of its most motivated members to participate in global governance processes. In April 2007, for example, the youth network, represented by 40 young Brazilians, contributed to an **Earth Charter International Strategy Meeting** in Sao Paulo. The new strategy, “decentralized empowerment,” led directly to the Youth Coordinator organizing the first ever Youth Leadership Team (YLT) elections in September 2007.

Following its election, the YLT met at the **4th International Conference on Environment Education** in Ahmedabad, India in November 2007. In addition to finalizing their Plan of Action, described in the section on Expanding the Youth Initiative, below, YLT Representatives contributed directly to the Ahmedabad Declaration, which mentions youth and the Earth Charter explicitly. Furthermore, Gabriela Monteiro (Brazil) produced an uplifting video documenting the YLT’s involvement in the conference. View the video [here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGdzPeJz48&eurl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGdzPeJz48&eurl).

A forerunner of the thematic “Task Forces” developed by the Council, the YLT helped stimulate the formation of the new Youth Task Force at an important **Earth Charter Network Meeting** in Amsterdam, Netherlands in December 2008. Nearly 30 youth from all over Europe and Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Indonesia, the United States, and Zimbabwe participated in all Task Force working groups and contributed, in particular, to the one on youth. In addition to their strategic input, a Project Team of youth participants captured the spirit of the meeting in an original video, shown during the Closing Ceremony. View the fun and informative video [here:](#)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip0oafPLEmU>.

Read more about youth's role in the emerging decentralized empowerment strategy in the Lessons Learned and Next Steps section, below.

In another example of youth in global governance, two young men, Mike Sheehan (Canada) and Joel Vengo (Democratic Republic of Congo) jointly participated in the **UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)** in New York in May 2007. Building on their successes, two young women, Hind Ottmani (Morocco) and Selene Biffi (Italy), as well as Didier Gleyzes (France) participated the following year. Significantly, Selene Biffi is the one of the two Coordinators of the Major Group on Youth and Children. As a result of the meeting, all three participants are actively serving on the first ever Steering Committee for their Major Group and planning activities for the next meeting in 2009. Under their leadership, the Major Group on Youth and Children has made unprecedented efforts to reach out to other Major Groups on issues of common interest.

Earth Charter International also supported one of its youth members, Esther Agbarakwe (Nigeria), to participate in the **CIVICUS Youth and World Assemblies** in Glasgow, Scotland in June 2008. An example of her active participation was her question – in a plenary of some 400 people – to Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Prime Minister of Ireland. Esther asked her about the obstacles she had encountered in her career, eliciting a touching response about fear of public speaking as a young girl, remedied by joining a debate club.

A young man from Bangladesh, Biozid Jessorey, was supported to participate

in the **IUCN's World Conservation Congress** in Barcelona, Spain in October 2008. Biozid supported the International Youth Coordinator in giving workshops and supported the adoption of the Resolution on Intergenerational Partnership, discussed next.

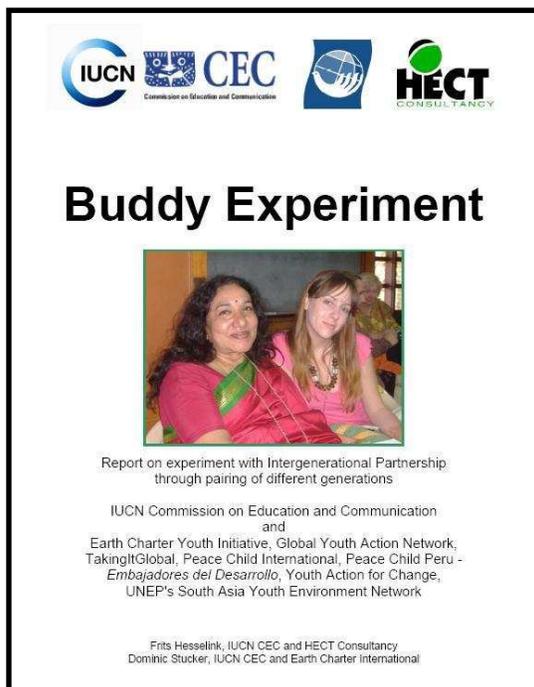
Intergenerational Partnership

Though not originally part of the strategy, **Earth Charter International seized the opportunity to develop and lead the Campaign for Intergenerational Partnership for Sustainability (IPS)**. Based on the conviction that intergenerational partnerships are essential for achieving a just, sustainable, and peaceful world, the Campaign used strategic international events to draft a Framework for Forming IPS; succeeded in getting the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN's) Members' Assembly to adopt a Resolution on IPS; and organized a very successful "Buddy Experiment" between youth and members of the IUCN's Commission on Education and Communication (CEC).

The drafting of the Framework started with a very participatory workshop at the 4th International Conference on Environmental Education in Ahmedabad, India in November 2007. **The Framework that resulted – immediately translated by enthusiastic participants into 6 languages - is a practical mechanism for helping people of different generations form effective working relationships in the pursuit of sustainability.** It was reviewed and revised at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in New York, USA in May 2008 and again at the World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain in October 2008. The Framework supports the **Resolution on IPS adopted by the IUCN**. The IPS

Coordination Team that supported ECI in promoting the Campaign consisted of the Global Youth Action Network (GYAN), TakingItGlobal (TIG), Peace Child International, Peace Child Peru – *Embajadores del Desarrollo*, Youth Action for Change (YAC), and UNEP’s South Asia Youth Environment Network (SAYEN).

already invited the International Youth Coordinator to assume the role of Special Advisor for Intergenerational Partnership on their Steering Committee. The World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) is considering a similar role for their Steering Committee, and the Council is seeking to appoint a young member as well.



As a concrete model of IPS, Earth Charter International partnered with the IUCN’s Commission on Education and Communication and HECT Consultancy to engage in a “Buddy Experiment” that paired 80 youth with 80 CEC members for 5 months leading up to the World Conservation Congress. Buddies learned a great deal from one another, reporting that **work on a joint project, contact with another culture, new ideas, and inspiration were the most beneficial aspects. Indeed, the Experiment was a success with **92% of participants** saying that they **would participate again** and the Buddy Experiment Report attracting significant attention on the CEC website. We hope to replicate the Experiment among other interested Commissions.**

The Resolution on IPS was co-sponsored by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the University for Peace, and the Center for Environmental Legal Studies at Pace University. **Drawing heavily on the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the IUCN, the Resolution seeks to engage the whole IUCN family – the Secretariat and Council, the six Commissions, and Member NGOs and States – in practical and effective forms of intergenerational partnership.** The Resolution could help stimulate intergenerational projects with Members, integrate youth onto Commissions, secure one or two youth seats on the Council, and open more doors for young professionals in the Secretariat. The CEC has, for example,

For more on the IPS Campaign, see <https://intergenerationalpartnership.wikispaces.com/Overview>.

Expanding the Youth Network

Dedicated Young People

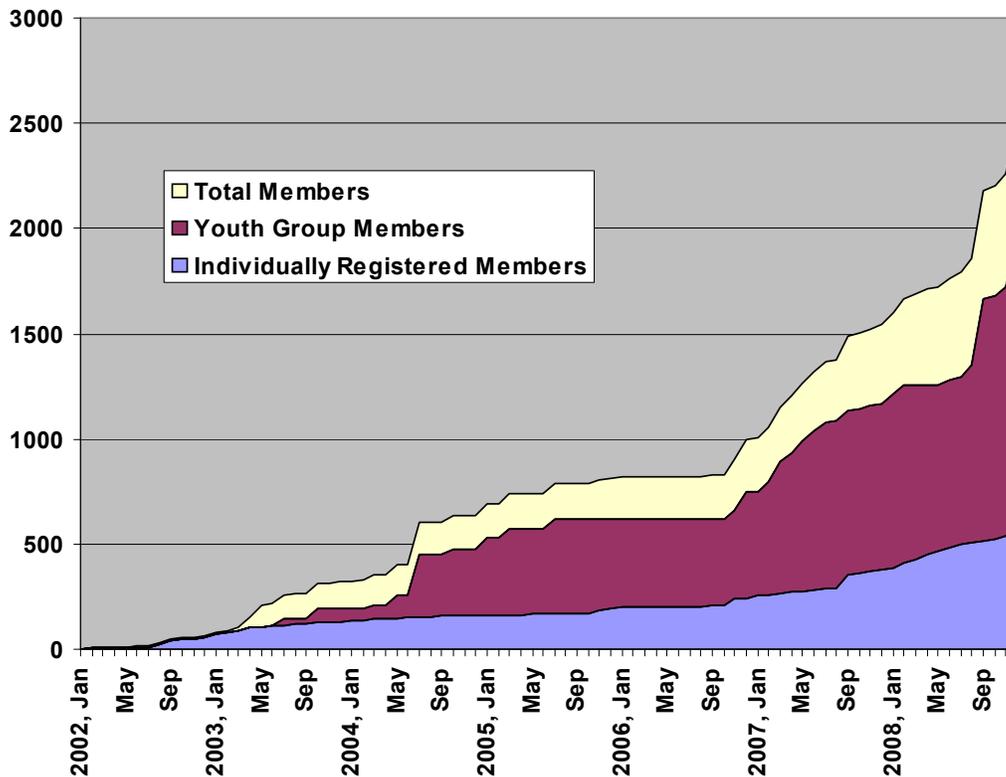
The Earth Charter youth network has experienced accelerated growth in 2007 – 2008, specifically in terms of membership, numbers of Youth Groups, and the election of the Youth Leadership Team.

The engagement of three full-time youth interns, who worked directly with the Youth Coordinator, contributed greatly to the stimulation and growth of the youth network. Special thanks go to Leah Wener (United States), who worked from October 2006 – August 2007; Lisa Jokivirta (Canada / Finland) from

October 2007 - April 2008; and Jaana Laitinen (Finland) from September 2008 – January 2009. Fittingly enough, Jaana will be the new Youth Facilitator as of February 2009. The Earth Charter youth network has also benefited from having, over the course of three semesters, 15 part-time student interns from the University for Peace.

The number of individually registered Youth Initiative members has more than doubled during 2007 – 2008, growing from 245 to 544. When compared to 2005 – 2006, this represents a 350% increase in the membership growth rate following Plan Netherlands funding. While still a modest number of youth, these individuals are highly committed and diverse, coming from over 70 countries and speaking more than 60

**Youth Initiative Membership,
2002 - 2008**



different languages. They are 49% women with an average age of 26 years. The graph, above, indicates in blue the growth of individually registered members since 2002. Significant moments include the real start of membership growth following the World Summit on Sustainable Development in August 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa; the EC+5 Meeting in Amsterdam, Netherlands in November 2005; the hiring of a full-time Youth Coordinator in November 2006; and the election of the Youth Leadership Team in September 2007. As can be discerned from the graph, these events caused jumps in membership, followed by increased growth rates.

A more accurate measure of membership, however, includes active individuals in our Earth Charter Youth Groups, shown above in maroon. Taking into account those Youth Group members who also registered individually, **the Youth Initiative totals approximately 2,500 members**, shown in yellow. When compared to the two years preceding Plan Netherlands funding, the **Youth Group membership growth rate increased by more than 750%**

special interest is the **Earth Charter Cause on Facebook, which has attracted 1,025 members in the last 18 months**. We are also very happy to report that the Youth Coordinator supported WiserEarth in their initiative to structure their social change platform around the Earth Charter principles. Please read more on decentralization in the Lessons Learned and Next Steps section, below.

Youth Groups

Our network of Earth Charter Youth Groups (ECYGs) has quadrupled in size since Plan Netherlands funding started in 2006, totaling 44 groups in 31 countries. This meets our stated aim to have 43 groups by the end of 2008. The Youth Group model is especially popular in Africa, where we have exactly half of our groups. See the table, below, and the Annex for a complete list.

An ECYG is a network or organization of young activists - often based in a university, registered as an NGO, or hosted by one of our Affiliates - working to bring alive the vision of the Earth Charter in their local and/or national

Location and Number of Earth Charter Youth Groups, Dec 2008

| Region | Africa and the Middle East | Asia and the Pacific | Europe and Central Asia | Latin America and the Caribbean | North America |
|--------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| ECYGs | 22 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 3 |

Furthermore, a new, decentralized trend is people – largely youth - affiliating themselves with the Earth Charter through social networking platforms such as Facebook and WiserEarth. For example, we started Groups on Facebook for e-GLO, now with over 300 members, and for the ECYI, now with over 200 members. Of

communities. Youth groups include a great diversity of young women and men from various ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. Our Youth Groups are engaged in a wide range of activities, including, for example:

- **translating the Earth Charter** into Finnish and Belorussian
- **holding youth conferences** on the Earth Charter in Belorussia, Latvia, and Ethiopia
- **promoting sustainable livelihoods** on Lake Victoria and in the slums around Nairobi, Kenya
- **promoting organic agriculture** in China
- **cleaning up beaches** in the Philippines
- **providing humanitarian assistance** after the August 2007 earthquake in Peru
- **campaigning for renewable energy** on university campuses in the USA

On trips to Mexico, Latvia, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, the Youth Coordinator made successful efforts to stimulate the formation of new Youth Groups.

Furthermore, Earth Charter International organized a Special Projects Fund, described above in the Engaging the Youth Initiative section. **Six Youth Groups are currently carrying out funded Earth Charter-inspired workshops and associated action projects.**

In addition to a special e-mail group for ECYG Coordinators, we have recently developed accessible, online Youth Group profiles using Wiki technology. Very shortly, each group may - in an empowered, decentralized way - post project proposals, calls for partners, activity reports, photos, etc, on their page, made official with the Earth Charter logo. Read more about such decentralized initiatives in the next section.

Though not tracked as indicators for the purpose of the Youth Initiative strategy, it is still interesting to note that the numbers of youth organizations

(excluding Youth Groups) and universities that endorsed the Earth Charter in 2007 – 2008 increased significantly. Since 2000, when the Earth Charter was launched, **53 youth organizations have endorsed the Charter, with 94% of these in the last two years. Similarly, 316 universities have endorsed since 2000, with 41% of these in the last two years.**

Youth Leadership Team

Of very special importance to the expansion of youth involvement in the Earth Charter Initiative were the election and continued efforts of the Youth Leadership Team (YLT). In collaboration with the former Core Group and Youth Representatives on the Council, the Youth Coordinator designed the **YLT Guidelines**, which provided for participatory, democratic elections and conceptualized the wide-reaching role for the Leadership Team.

The online elections were unprecedented, drawing 21 candidates from around the world. Each candidate provided their CV and photo, and answered the same set of platform questions. All were posted by region to the ECI blog. **A week-long “Town Hall Meeting” ensued, during which Youth Initiative voters engaged in lively debate with the candidates.** At the end of the week, votes were cast by e-mail and a 12-person group of 6 women and 6 men, representing all regions of the world, emerged as the Youth Leadership Team. See the Annex for a complete list.

The Youth Leadership Team has worked closely with the International Youth Coordinator and is entrusted with guiding the ECI and strengthening its regional networks. Its original goal remains unchanged: to engage, empower, and expand the number of young people working

toward a just, sustainable, and peaceful world.

As mentioned above, the YLT held its launch meeting soon after their election at the 4th International Conference on Environment Education in Ahmedabad, India in November 2007. Their primary goal, in addition to contributing in numerous ways to the Conference, was to **finalize their YLT Plan of Action for 2008 – 2009**. The Plan of Action became a three-part strategy for the Team, focusing on communication and networking; resource mobilization and partnerships; and global action projects.

Over a year later, the two global action projects, a radio campaign and a publication, are on track for success. The global radio campaign is

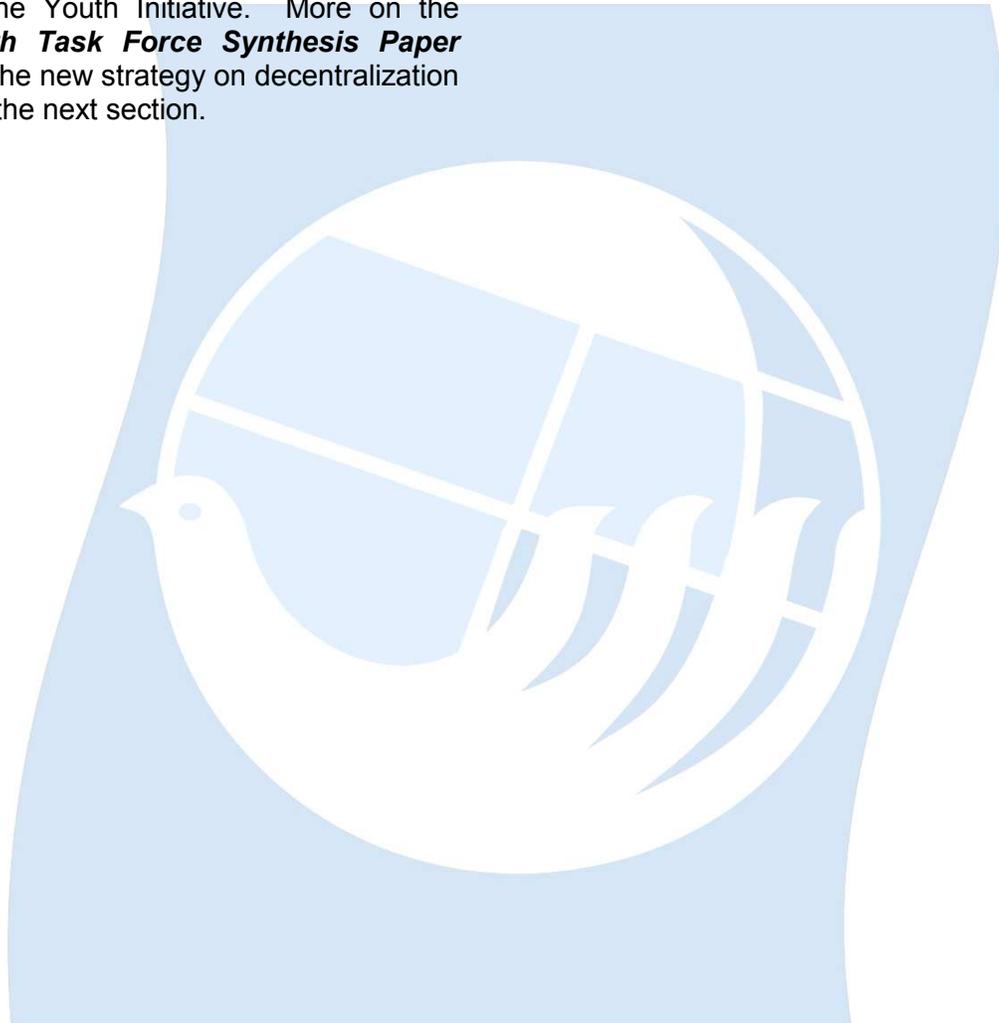
designed to promote the Earth Charter among young people in different regions around the world. It is planned to be aired in 2009, and features brief radio spots to be broadcast in local languages, accompanied by four days of activities that promote each pillar of the Earth Charter.

A second YLT project team is soliciting personal narratives and pictures for a worldwide, intergenerational publication on the theme of “...moments of unexpected connection or oneness in life [that] bring us closer together and foster a common vision of a better world.” They have already received over 100 submissions from all corners of the world. The publication is planned to be released in 2009.



Youth Leadership Team at 4th International Conference on Environment Education, Ahmedabad, India, Nov 2007. (Photo: Keren Nazareth)

Leading up to the Earth Charter Network Meeting held in Amsterdam, Netherlands in December 2008, **the YLT made significant contributions to the design of the emerging Youth Task Force, as well as the continued role of the YLT within it.** A Youth Task Force Synthesis Paper was produced and then discussed in Amsterdam. It now forms the basis for the way forward for the Youth Initiative. More on the ***Youth Task Force Synthesis Paper*** and the new strategy on decentralization is in the next section.



Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Toward Decentralized Empowerment for Scaling Up

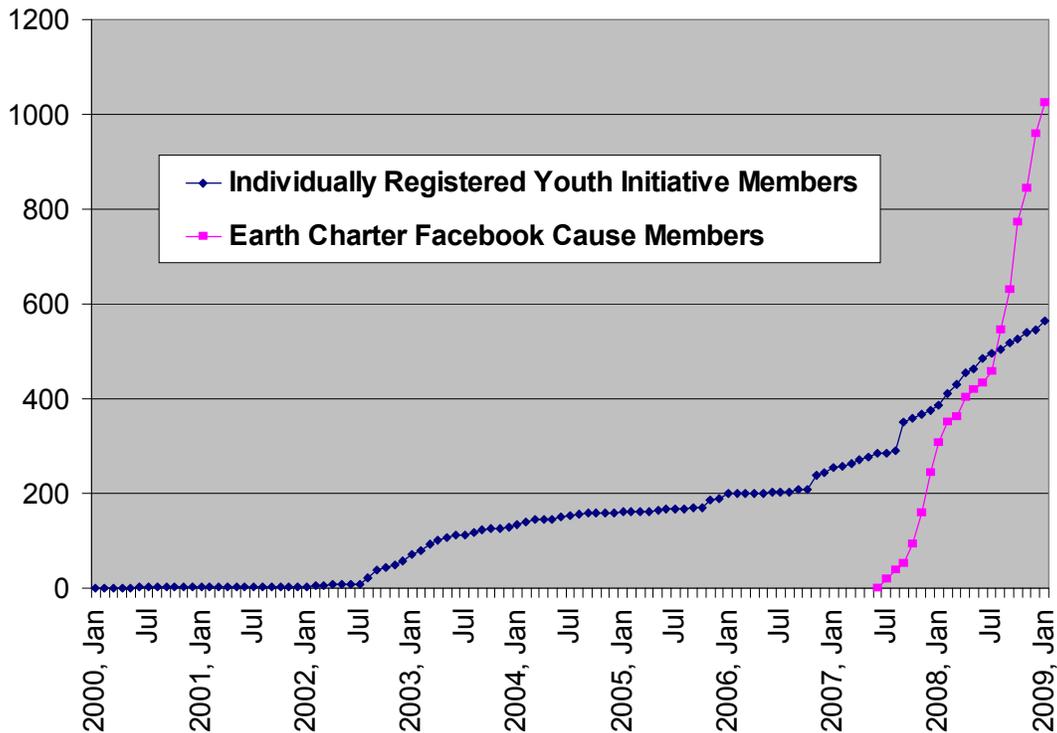
Earth Charter International, after consultation with the broader Initiative and direction from its International Council, is embarking on a strategy of decentralized empowerment for scaling up. The rationale is that ECI, if it becomes too centralized, can only achieve linear growth in membership and activities within the sustainability movement that it seeks to catalyze. The global challenges that we face – biodiversity loss, climate change, poverty, gender inequity - however, call for a more urgent approach.

It is essential, therefore, that the

Earth Charter movement - and those like it - grow at an exponential rate if we hope to survive and live in harmony on a planet that supports a diverse community of life. The Earth Charter and its vision of a just, sustainable, and peaceful world can help guide us along this path, while the **Action Guidelines**, developed by the Council, can help empower all of us to act – and act now!

As we seek to grow rapidly, however, we must also strive to maintain high quality in our activities. Youth, for example, are adept with new communications technologies, such as social networking sites. The graph, below, compares the growth of individually registered Youth Initiative members to Earth Charter Facebook Cause members. **The growth rate of the Facebook Cause during the period of June 2007 to January 2009**

Youth Initiative Growth: Centralized and Decentralized



was 366% faster than that of the Youth Initiative. The Earth Charter Facebook Cause has, at the very least, achieved rapid and decentralized endorsement of the Earth Charter.



Camila Godinho (Brazil), Youth Rep on Council, presenting Youth Task Force, Earth Charter Meeting, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Dec 2008

Young people all around the world – many in places wrongly assumed to be on the far side of the digital divide – spend a significant amount of time using new Web 2.0 technologies, which allow for greater user creativity and interactivity. **These young people are a cross-section of society, some aware of the sustainability cause, others not. We should meet youth where they are – whether online or in person - engage them in meaningful activities, and invite them to join the Earth Charter movement.**

Youth Groups

Indeed, the Earth Charter youth network is uniquely positioned to show what “decentralized empowerment” can look like in practice – in fact, it is already doing so.

Our work with Youth Groups – since 2003 – is based on the principles of inclusivity, volunteerism and

empowerment. So long as a group endorses the Earth Charter and implements activities in the same spirit, all are welcome and encouraged to join. **Youth Groups function with little centralized coordination and, more and more, are being encouraged to support one another with project design and to self-publish the results of their activities.** This is being achieved through the launch of **interactive, online profiles for each group using Wiki technology.** Described above, these web pages are to be managed directly by Youth Group Coordinators and display basic membership information, project proposals, activity reports, photos, links to videos, etc.

Youth Task Force's Project Teams

Furthermore, **having elected an action-oriented Youth Leadership Team, with representatives all around the world, was a forerunner to the seed Task Forces in Business, Education, Media, Religion, the United Nations, and Youth proposed by the Council at its meeting in Pocantico, New York in May 2008.**

In particular, the YLT quickly realized that its global action projects could serve to inspire other young people to form their own Project Teams and implement activities in a largely spontaneous and decentralized manner.

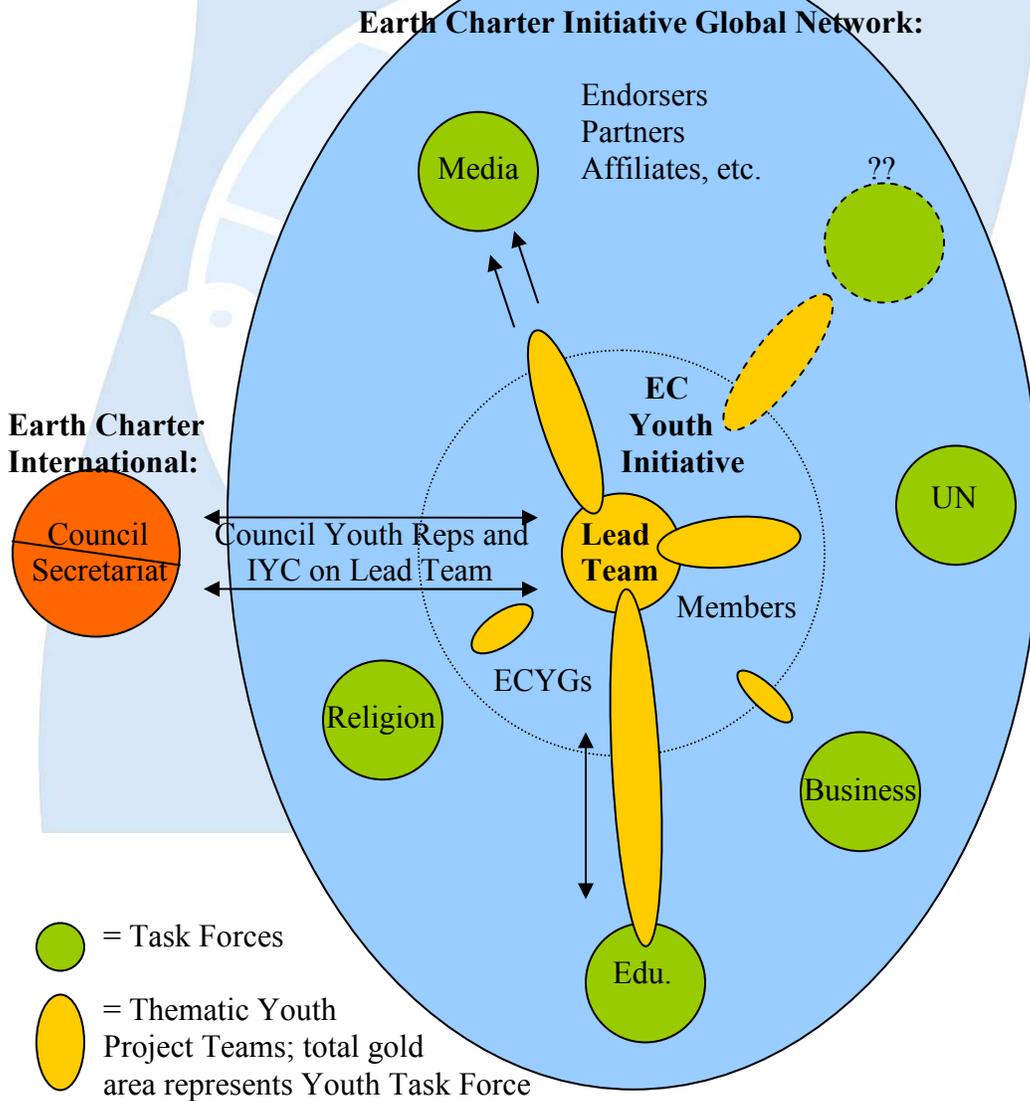
As a compliment to local and national-level Youth Group activities, these **Project Teams have a global, regional, and/or language scope and focus on the intersection of youth**

and a specific sector. For example, the radio campaign has a global reach through conventional broadcasting and the Internet, and is translating its messages into as many languages as possible. Its team members, unlike a Youth Group, are in Mexico, France, and India. The same goes for the oneness book project, with team members in the United States, Finland, and the Netherlands. Project Teams need not be large and may, unlike a

Youth Group, exist for a specified time span, complete their plan of action, and either disband or develop a further project, attracting newcomers.

Youth Project Teams are deliberately categorized according to the sectors of the other Task Forces, with the radio campaign under Media and the book project under Education. The intention, as can be seen in the Youth Task Force Diagram, below, is to

Youth Task Force Diagram
December 2008



encourage intergenerational partnership among Task Forces so as to move forward effectively on joint projects, drawing on the innovation, expertise, and experience of all, regardless of age. As with our Youth Groups, **Project Team Wiki pages are about to be launched to facilitate decentralized youth activity promoting the Earth Charter in key sectors.**

As reaffirmed at the Earth Charter Network Meeting in Amsterdam, Netherlands in December 2008, **the Youth Task Force, inspired and guided by the Youth Leadership Team, aims to connect and catalyze the next generation of sustainability leaders to live, love, and work according to the Earth Charter.**

“Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.” – Earth Charter, from The Way Forward

As a member of the Youth Task Force, I, Dominic Stucker, will contribute my time voluntarily to our movement for a just, sustainable, and peaceful world.

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