

Bjorn Heyerdahl

## A Re-Genesis: Actioning the Earth Charter

A response to Brendan Mackey's Article:

A Reflection on The Earth Charter Project and its Mission in the  
Anthropocene

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### Abstract

The relevance of the Earth Charter and many of the obstacles to its effectiveness in influencing change, highlighted in the scholarly article<sup>6</sup>, are best addressed, in my opinion, in a functional model, of *what its full expression may look like*, when lived by a real community.

### A Time for Actioning the Earth Charter

To introduce my response to Brendan Mackey's article on the current relevance and effectiveness of the Earth Charter, let me quote his conclusion, the sentiment that most deeply resonated with me:

"The Earth Charter opens with the statement that "We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future". The criticality of this moment cannot be exaggerated: we live in a state of planetary emergency. Furthermore, the future we are choosing is not just our own, but that of our children and the greater community of life with whom we share Earth as home. *It is time* we looked below the inspirational aspect of the Earth Charter and *dived more deeply into the substance of its text, the meaning of each principle, and the challenges that arise when we endeavour to put them into practice.*" Brendan Mackey (Italics mine)

The time for dialogue that excludes the practice of comprehensively implementing the principles of the Earth Charter and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on a personal, community, regional and global level, is over.

In my opinion it has long been over, and if we had developed as a species, to the average level of consciousness at which the Earth Charter was written, we would have an answer to the question posed in this article, etched into the fabric of all community life.

Our very foundations are collapsing because of how we and the rest of humanity are meeting our endless needs with ill-considered exploitation, production and consumption.

We are late, not just in our response to the call of the Earth Charter, we are late and retarded in our collective development of the conscious awareness and moral intuition required to respond. We are the “late breast fed fools” (Lyrics of Rodriguez, The Sugar Man, Rick Folks Hoax) who will not mature to the point of including all sentient life in our own expanded identity. Our immaturity, rather than anything inherent in the Earth Charter itself, is the cause of its apparent lack of effectiveness.

## Functional Delivery

What the world needs is a functional delivery method that meets humankind's needs in terms of urban design, architecture, and service delivery of clean water, clean renewable energy, food security, stage appropriate education and development of the whole human being. It should be one that engages all levels of human maturation and encourages healthful participation for the common good of every individual, every community in every region of our global home.

Endless academic and ethical debate in a time of such dire crisis is counterproductive and in many ways adds to the problem of inertia that plagues our global populations. Individuals, communities, organisations, institutions, schools, universities, many organs of the United Nations and NGO's specifically mandated with assisting us in reaching global or regional sustainability goals are ironically non-participatory in the solutions they propose. They remain conceptual or fragmented, rather than integrative of anything that would systemically reverse the damage we have done to ourselves and the whole system of life.

As Brendan Mackey states:

“It is time we looked below the inspirational aspect of the Earth Charter and dived more deeply into the substance of its text, the meaning of each principle, and the challenges that arise when we endeavour to put them into practice.”

Most of us are still talking about what we should be doing or are going to do, or what we still need to find out, instead of changing the obvious, to align ourselves with the principles and direction of the Earth Charter.

Therefore my *real* response to this article is to design and support the building of such models.

It has clearly not been Brendan Mackey's article alone that has prompted this response. It has been my long held intention and occupation to manifest such scalable, integral models of sustainability globally, in as diverse environments as possible, based on the ethics and principles of the Earth Charter.

These models and the integral climate change solutions proposed in this article do not exclude the need for dialogue, education, governmental engagement, influencing, policy writing and so on. In fact they are a highly effective way to engage and accomplish all those ends.

Winston Churchill famously highlighted the frailty of democracy by saying: “The strongest argument *against* democracy is 5 minutes conversation with the average voter.”

The strongest argument *for* community level implementation of the Earth Charter, I would echo, is 5 minutes conversation on sustainability with the average politician.

We are simply running out of time waiting for policy makers and politicians to lead the way.

## Modelling the Future We Want

The future we want requires demonstrating the potential effectiveness of the Earth Charter in scalable models that include a personal response, a local community response, a regional response and a global response to the ecological, political and economic crisis extant in our times.

What would relevance and effectiveness of the Earth Charter mean in model form?

How can it assist us in cutting this endless well intentioned dialogue and encourage and support systemic implementation and real functional change?

These are, for me, critical questions answered as follows:

An integral model of sustainability that is a full expression of the ethics and principles of the Earth Charter and that is a scalable, proportional contribution to meeting the SDG's fulfilling the following criterion:

The model has horizontal and vertical planes expressing its breath and depth of inclusion and functional fit as follows:

On the **horizontal plane** it is Integral in the full sense: All Quadrant, in the linguistics of the Integral Theory of Ken Wilber<sup>1</sup>, expressing the three truths of Plato<sup>2</sup>: the Beautiful (subjective or I perspective); the Good (inter-subjective or We perspective) and the True (the objective perspective and systems approach)<sup>3</sup> - making it effective across all spheres of this inhabited planet: the Atmosphere, Hydrosphere, Lithosphere, Biosphere, Ethnosphere, Noosphere and Technosphere.

The depth and height of the **vertical plane**, of such an integral model, engages all levels and stages of human development<sup>4</sup> with appropriate methodology; integral methodological pluralism<sup>5</sup>, none preferred and all included.

The patterns of life, in these afore mentioned spheres and systems of life, need to become *our* patterns in *our* designs. When we design to meet our needs, and we design in alignment with these patterns, we design sustainably and intelligently. We thereby express a high order of our humanity as a contribution to life, past, present and future.

An integral climate change solution delivers community models that protect communities from flooding and erosion; provides clean water and fresh food; creates jobs and long term economic development; sequesters carbon and adds biodiversity. They are designed to meet the needs of local communities, support nearby cities, provide business opportunities, express global citizenship, protect and enhance the natural environment. These integral community models are fully aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the ethics embodied in the Earth Charter and can be deployed anywhere in the world.

This is a new economy. This is an expression of the real economy. There are no externalities in the real economy of life.

## A Re-Genesis has begun

We have every motive, opportunity, the know-how and technology available to accomplish this imperative. We need an influential starting point.

The relevance of the Earth Charter and many of the obstacles to its effectiveness in influencing change, highlighted in the scholarly article<sup>6</sup> are best addressed, in my opinion, in a functional model, of *what its full expression may look like*, when lived by a real community.

This I believe is best served, now, by a model of living the Earth Charter, on its own campus, and that of the University of Peace, in Costa Rica, home of the Earth Charter Secretariat. So much good is already being demonstrated on and around the campus, and with 300 hectares of primary and secondary forest, the adjacent community of Al Rodeo, decades of modelling eco tourism and agro-ecology; we have a space and community that is poised to host the urgent dialogue and model the functionality of our highest intentions and most dire needs. This is a centre where we can develop and structure the academic courses and practical learnerships most relevant to peace, security and sustainability for our global populations right now. This can be a laboratory and living research project of the full expression of the Earth Charter in action.

This is one way we can *dive more deeply into the substance of its text, the meaning of each principle, and address the challenges that arise when we endeavour to put them into practice.*<sup>6</sup>

## Conclusion

Without functional, scalable models, lived in representative communities, demonstrating healthful, sustainable occupation of this planet, we have no way of really engaging, motivating and mobilising global communities in time to prevent cataclysmic cessation of life support systems of our biosphere.

## References

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