

Good Practices in Education for Sustainable Development  
Using the Earth Charter

UNESCO/ EARTH CHARTER INTERNATIONAL  
Education for Sustainable Development in Action

## Table of contents

---

*i* Introduction

### Non-formal

---

- 2** *ProDanza and Echeri, Mexico* - Promoting an Environmental Culture for Children through Integral Art and the Earth Charter.
- 8** *Valores Foundation, Spain* - Training the Trainers: in Values Education.
- 14** *Group of Eco-pedagogues, Brazil* - Experiential Workshop for Educators on the Earth Charter.
- 20** *Earth Scouts, United States* - Changing the world one fun badge at a time.
- 27** *Edmund Rice Center, Australia* - Education for Eco-justice at The Edmund Rice Centre.
- 34** *Portuguese Association of Environmental Education (ASPEA), Portugal* - The Earth Charter: Environmental Education and Sustainability Tool.
- 40** *University of Guanajuato, Mexico* - For youth, by youth: Using the Earth Charter to raise awareness among university students.
- 46** *The Bioma Institute, Brazil* - Improving the quality of life in the communities of Sao Paulo.

### Primary and Secondary education

---

- 54** *Ministry of Education, Tatarstan* - Reorienting Tatarstan's educational system towards education for sustainability.
- 60** *Conciencia Ecológica de Aguascalientes, México* - Earth Charter Booklets for Pre-School and Primary School Children.
- 67** *Wondai State School P-10, Australia* - Learning to see the big picture with the Earth Charter!
- 73** *Little Animation, Canada* - Playing and Learning about Sustainability: Kids, online media, and the Little Earth Charter.
- 79** *CLEAN-India, India* - Earth Charter in Delhi Schools: One Earth, One Family.
- 85** *Voyager Montessori Elementary School, United States* - Butterflies and being kind: An elementary school embraces the Earth Charter.

- 90 **Ministry of Education, Romania** - Values for a sustainable future:  
The Earth Charter and educational curriculum in Romania.

## Higher Education

---

- 98 **University of Granada, Spain** - Experimenting with the Earth Charter:  
Activities of the Faculty of Educational Sciences.
- 104 **National University, Costa Rica** - An Integral Approach towards Sustainability:  
Experiences of the National University of Costa Rica and the Centre for General Studies..
- 110 **Florida Gulf Coast University, United States** – Infusing the Earth Charter into Research and  
Curriculum: One American University’s Example.
- 115 **Seychelles National Institute of Education** - Teacher education on sustainability  
(Integrating Education on Sustainability into Teacher’s Education).
- 121 **Yerevan State University, Armenia** - The Earth Charter as a pedagogical tool for sustainability  
at Yerevan State University, Armenia.
- 127 **National University of Distance Education, Spain** – Faculty experiences using the Earth Charter in  
Distance Learning Programmes.
- 131 **University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, United States** - Becoming a Sustainable Campus:  
An Experience with the Earth Charter Community Summits.
- 137 **Rhodes University, South Africa** - Using the Earth Charter as a thinking tool and a talking point:  
Reflections on environmental education courses.
- 142 **National Institute for Physical Education, University of Lleida, Spain** - Earth Charter Project..  
in Motor Action.
- 147 **University of Auckland, New Zealand** - The Earth Charter in the Classroom:  
Transforming the Role of Law.
- 151 **Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology, Russia** - Sustainable Education in Russia:  
The Experience of the Mendeleev University of Chemical Technology.
- 157 **Daugavpils University, Latvia** - Experience of the Institute of Sustainable Education,  
Faculty of Education and Management

## Introduction

---

The overall goal of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) is “to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects of learning to encourage changes in behavior that allow for a more sustainable and just society for all”. A key question that often emerges is: *what are the values inherent in sustainable development* that could help us, as human beings, to realize the vision of sustainability?

Increasingly, more groups and individuals around the world are recognizing the Earth Charter as an empowering and practical source of these values. The Earth Charter resulted from a decade-long, worldwide, cross-cultural civil society dialogue to identify the widely shared values and principles of sustainability, and is being used as a values-based educational tool to guide humanity towards a sustainable future.

As a matter of fact, UNESCO, during its 32nd General Conference in October 2003, adopted a resolution recognizing the Earth Charter “as an important ethical framework for sustainable development”. The resolution affirms member states’ intentions to “utilize the Earth Charter as an educational instrument, particularly in the framework of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development”. So, how is this being accomplished?

This publication has been envisioned to offer stories – case studies from around the world – that highlight how groups and individuals are using the Earth Charter as a tool for education for sustainable development. These stories come from non-formal and formal educational settings and describe a variety of experiences, including the development of guidebooks for primary school teachers, the inclusion of sustainability values in universities’ departments of education, law, engineering and general studies; the reshaping of local, regional and national curricula; and, the creation of vital and engaging programs and workshops for children and youth.

The richness and diversity of these stories demonstrate that the Earth Charter’s integrated approach can help to clarify the vision of a more just, sustainable and peaceful world at the same time as it broadens this vision. These stories also show that there is no single ‘right way’ of approaching this task – the methods used for bringing the values of sustainability into educational practices depend on the context, creativity and the level of engagement of those involved.

In the process of preparing this publication, a set of criteria were developed to select these stories which best responded to the purpose of the ‘good practices’ series, of which this publication is now a part. The following criteria were used for selecting the stories:

- *Are values-driven experiences that use the Earth Charter as a framework or tool*
- *Promote transformative learning – characterized mainly by:*
  - Promoting ‘learning’ more than ‘teaching’
  - Concentrating more on the construction of meaning than on communicating the message
  - Promoting the mutual transformation of teachers and learners
  - Focusing on local knowledge and community-based decisions and actions
  - Orienting learning more towards process than product/result

- *Use constructive and participatory methodologies*
- *Use multiple methods and integrative approaches*  
Experiences that use interdisciplinary approaches to assess and address issues, drawing upon a variety of methods: writing, art, drama, debate, scientific analysis, etc.
- *Are context specific and action oriented*  
Experiences where teachers and students (and/or community members) are learning about regional, national and global issues while carrying out actions through field trips, projects, and community service opportunities.
- *Are on-going experiences that can also offer 'lessons learned'*

This publication includes twenty-seven illustrative stories from countries around the world. Each one is written by a different author – a schoolteacher, community activist, youth worker, university member, minister of education, law professor, teacher trainer, art instructor – and each brings a different experience to light. To build some continuity in sharing these experiences an effort was made to organize the content of each story around three main sections: (1) A general description of the experience, including its objectives, duration, target group(s), and information about the leading organization(s) involved; (2) A detailed explanation of the methodological aspects and activities of the experience; and (3) A final section on the conclusions and lessons learned from the experience.

The stories in this collection share a common objective – to contribute to building sustainable societies. We hope that you will enjoy the wide variety of contexts, objectives and methodologies presented in this publication. Furthermore, it is our hope that these experiences will stimulate and inspire new efforts to integrate the values of sustainability into education and into all educational settings across the globe.