

**Earth Charter Communities/Nigeria
and African School of Excellence
Suleja, Niger State, Nigeria**

The Art & Skill of Dialogue
*A Practical Manual to Communication &
Dialogue for a Global Community*

One Year Course

By Stephanie Tansey
tansey@usa.net

Create exactly the skills and depth of communication
you need to build your
relationships and heal your community!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Manual is the work of Stephanie Tansey, director of Earth Charter Communities (ECC), uses a Value Creating Education methodology and combines the ethical principles of the Earth Charter; with dialogue skills developed from the pioneering work of Linda Ellinor and Glenna Gerard of The Dialogue Group, Dialogue: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation; trans-cultural, trans-faith and community skill-building; infused with the indigenous values systems of the African culled from the seminal work by George B.N Ayittey in Indigenous African Institutions. It is a combination unique to Earth Charter Communities/Nigeria (ECC/N).

Earth Charter Communities/Nigeria appreciates the help of Mr. Enyi A. Abu, founder and director of the African School of Excellence, whose successful use of this ECC/N program made this program possible, and the students and administrators, who listened, observed, comprehended and now apply in amazingly deep and effective ways.

The Art & Skill of Dialogue
*A Practical Manual to Communication &
Dialogue for a Global Community*

DIALOGUE SKILLS MANUAL
One Year Course

For Self Development and For Schools

STEPHANIE TANSEY

Published by
Earth Charter Communities

Copyright © 2009 by Stephanie Tansey

All rights reserved. No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

DEDICATION PAGE

Dedicated to Tsunesaburo Makiguchi who showed me the way, Josei Toda who showed me the how and Daisaku Ikeda, who showed me the power and art of dialogue.

Table of Contents

	Page
Forward	1
Mr. Enyi A. Abu, director of African School of Excellence, and the Impact of Dialogue Skills in his School	
Dialogue Skills Program Training for Administrators and Faculty	3
Purpose of the Course for Students	
Value Creating Education	
The Teacher as Artist	
Makiguchi Method of Teaching	
The Village and the Cosmos	
The Garden and Education	
Course Schedule and Development, Format for Sessions, and Lesson Planning	8
Respect and Care for the Community of Life	
Setting up the Dialogue for a Global Community Program	
Dialogue for a Global Community Program	
Program Sections	13
Section One. Earth Charter and Awareness of the Community of Life	
A. Respect and Care for the Community of Life	
B. Care for the Community of Life with Understanding, Compassion and Love	
C. Build Democratic Societies that are Just, Participatory, Sustainable, and Peaceful	
D. Secure Earth's Bounty and Beauty for Present and Future Generations	
Section Two. Dialogue Skills: Be the Master of Your Mind and Don't Let Your Mind Master You	22
A. What are Dialogue Skills?	
B. The Skill of Noticing your Thinking	
C. The Skill to Suspend your Judgments To See the Whole Picture	
D. The Skill of Recognizing and Suspending your Assumptions To Hear the Other Correctly	
E. The Three Ways of Listening: The Skill of Having Meaningful Dialogue	
F. Listening for Shared-Meaning	
G. The Skill and Value of Inquiry	
H. The Skill and Value of Reflection	
I. The Skill and Value of Silence	
J. Non-verbal Dialogue	

Section Three. Traditional Institutions in a Modern Context	39
A. Community Council Systems and Inter-faith Relations	
B. Human Rights / UN Human Rights	
C. Forgiveness and Inter-tribal Relations	
D. Traditions and New Modernity	
Section Four. Community Building Principles	47
A. Respect	
B. Cultural Modesty	
C. Disparagement vs. Encouragement	
D. Creating Harmony	
Section Five. Living a Contributive Life	56
A. Who is responsible for your learning?	
B. Who are you, Where are you going, Why do you study	
C. Observation, Comprehension, Application	
D. The Dragon Gate and You	
E. Africa and You	
F. Africa, the World and You	
For Further Information	64
Bibliography	65
Appendix	66
A. The Earth Charter	
B. Inter-faith Dialogue Strategies	
C. Earth Charter Community Scouts Design	
D. African School of Excellence Garden Program	
E. Parental Community Outreach Program and Community	
F. Outreach Programs	
G. Session Plan Forms	

FORWARD

Mr. Enyi A. Abu, director of African School of Excellence, and the Impact of Dialogue Skills in his School

I am the founder and director of the African School of Excellence which was established in September 2007. I asked Stephanie Tansey in February 2008 to help my students understand the value of dialogue. I have been practicing dialogue skills for two years together with the faculty and the students.

I realized the value of this program immediately because I saw the effects of my own communication with students and faculty. I adopted the program as the philosophical foundation of the school and part of my faculty's professional development program. I also started an Earth Charter Communities club for the students.

I began using dialogue skills to help students develop self-discipline despite their difficult and impoverished lives. The basis of dialogue skills is to respect and care for the community of life. Our students' skills quickly began to extend to this community of life, when for example, during one of our environmental hikes, we had had an interaction with some hunters and talked them into releasing their monkeys. These same monkeys were trained and fed by the students and even when we took them back to the mountains and jungle, the monkeys preferred coming home with us.

Within a few months of using what I learned, I began to see a change in the behavior of the students. The school reported in May 2008 that there was a 20% reduction in violence and misbehavior. I began using dialogue skills to successfully engage with the Muslim schools around and we began to create football matches. Today the almajiri, the students of the militant Muslim school nearby, are all in good terms with the school and they have even contributed to the building of the new wing.

Within the administration, the Dialogue Skills program has been very helpful in dramatically building better relationships with the teachers as well as within the education ministry and the traditional community institutions. I was also able to create a peaceful dialogue whenever there was a conflict raging in the emirate councils. The rate of violence from within the local community has drastically reduced as well.

My dialogue skills has also helped to bring together the community to help develop a School Meal program. Students were coming to school hungry and unable to study. I was able to talk with the local farmers who donated farm land to the school for the school garden that helps the student to study math, home economics and the sciences. This enriched the students nutritionally and educationally.

In the second year of the Dialogue Skills program, the same students who were gang members the previous year became ardent supporters of the Earth Charter Communities Club and facilitators in the dialogue skill lessons that Stephanie continued to teach at the school.

The ECC/N program has also enabled me to create the self-discipline to master my own mind and take control and responsibility for my actions. Working towards building a healthy community building I have come to know how to deal with those who may try and stop our efforts. I am currently studying and want to become great at humanitarian competition, that is, to use the power of dialogue to create value and vanquish injustice. This is my life's aim.

The financial management for my family and school is another way that we have created new skills through the ECC/N program. Affected by the principles of the program, we control what we have, managed it well, and make meaningful use of it. At school this has resulted being able to afford a new wing with six more classrooms and two offices. The cost estimate was N4.5 million but we were able to build it for just N2,015, 000. Both the students and the community have helped with this because of their wisdom and energy.

Furthermore I was able to motivate community members and show them to trust that, with a collective effort, we can do great things and be happy that we are contributing to building our society. With such a spirit, this summer, we were able to build a bridge over the flooding waters nearby so many more farmers can get to their crops. When the cost for this was just N500 we all realized the value of dialogue skills.

My work with the local community has resulted in that the community now really helps protect the school buildings in the evenings and on weekends. Our local community has also been able to solve some of their problems with neighboring communities as well. In this way our community, made up of diverse tribes and religions, is beginning to live in harmony and to prosper.

I believe that because we use the Dialogue Skills program, the African School of Excellence is in the forefront of changing the lives of children. We learned how to listen. We learned to have control over our emotions. Also about how to accept the diverse tribal cultures around us which has lead to a free flow of learning. This helps us live the mission which is to produce well-rounded human beings. The whole school now knows how to apply these skills to their own situations, to resolve conflict between two parties or between tribes or religions and to help resolve differences with the neighbors, with your family, and in business environments as well.

Dialogue Skills Program Training for Administrators and Faculty

Congratulations! You are now part of a community of global citizens who are learning to strengthen the power of their dialogue. You are in good company. Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Rumi, Amos Oz, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rachel Carson, Betty Williams, Wangari Matthai, and Jane Goodall are all people who mastered this wonderful art form and with it, changed their community for the better. You can do this as well.

There are five sections to the manual. Collectively the Dialogue for a Global Community Program which we call “Dialogue Skills” includes environmental consciousness raising, transforming and building relationships using dialogue skills, community building, using African traditional institutions in a modern context, and learning to live a contributive life.

First, the Earth Charter’s ethical principles help us see how we connect to the community of life. The Earth Charter was created through the power of dialogue to nurture a peaceful, just and sustainable global community. We can become part of this growing community and this will help us nurture the global citizen inside each of us. Becoming a global citizen will help Nigerians develop the ability to see many points of view and perspectives that will help you help others.

Second, Dialogue Skills are good for many things. You can improve your relationship with a family member, with your spouse, or with your boss and have wonderful, meaningful relationships, even if you have a lot of problems with some one now. This manual was written to help you personally, and with the hope that these skills will construct, in a gradual, but concrete manner, solutions for inter-faith and inter-tribal relations for all the people of Nigeria.

Dialogue Skills take time to master, but with great dialogue skills come great power to create change. You will develop long-term relationships with people. Let's be like the turtle rather than the rabbit. Go slowly, deepen your ability to talk heart to heart and strengthen your personal integrity. You will then see success. Think long- term about teaching your skills to future generations as well.

Third, Using Traditional Institutions in a Modern Context enables you to tap into your own culture and apply your deep heritage to modern concerns. This is the Century of Africa and the wisdom of Africa – sound community councils, respect for human rights, deepening the African treasure of forgiveness, and creating a new era in inter-tribal relations will help the rest of the world learn to coexist as well. There are practical applications which you can use to be more successful in school, at your work, and for your personal character development.

Fourth, Community Building Skills will help you nurture and revive your community. Today many communities are suffering because their place in our market-driven economy is not very secure. You can be the difference and enable your community to become vibrant. These self-awareness disciplines will help you deepen your respect for others, and develop

cultural modesty so that your personal belief systems don't interfere with enriching your relationships. You also will learn to encourage rather than disparage and how to create harmony in your society. In turn you will become respected and people will come to you for advice.

Finally, Living a Contributive Life begins with consciously constructing your Self. You begin by asking yourself questions about who you are and where you want to go. Ask yourself how you can make sure that you truly are learning so that you can get where you want to go, that your learning helps you polish yourself and helps your community. Through discussion, storytelling, and collaborative artistic activities, in these exercises and discussions, you too can connect to the hope that is Africa and contribute to the world and Africa's place in it.

Purpose of the Course for Students

The purpose of our program is to give students an introduction to tools that will help them build a successful life that contributes to the community of life. The Dialogue Skills program can be very useful at school and in the future lives of students. It will help them listen better and so, learn more effectively. Using our program students to gain experience in resolving conflicts in their personal lives and communities.

What is Value Creating Education?

Value Creating Education is education that nurtures self motivation in students so that students want to lead a contributive life. The purpose of educating is to enable students to lead a happy and contributive life. It is based on the teachings of the Japanese educator Tsunesaburo Makiguchi who believed that to lead a happy and contributive life, students need to purposefully create value. Humans, in thought, word and deed, can add value or cause harm to their community. Creating value means that actions, or your thoughts, words and deeds, will contribute to the world, rather than cause the development of personal greed or anger. These positive actions benefit, beautify or create good for the world. Makiguchi believed that any community or village is a microcosm of the whole world. Your actions impact your immediate surroundings and in this way impact the world. Education should be well organized around helping to create benefit, beauty and good for individuals and society. In the same way that doctors learn from their studies and experience to cure patients and are rewarded for it, students should learn how to best contribute to the world.

In order for students to lead a contributive life, they first need to want to do so. People create value only when they want to. It cannot be forced or cajoled. Teachers need to develop the ability to guide the students to their own self-awaking. This self awakening to fulfill their full potential will also bring forth their desire to help society and the planet in their own unique way. Every student, regardless of background or individual capacity, can discover and develop those unique abilities and interests. (Education For Creative Living, p.185)

Teachers need to develop their teaching materials and implementation of these materials in such a way that they encourage self-initiative in students. Sociological factors of class levels and school management and supervision needs also to be taken into consideration. As well, the age, capacity

levels, gender issues, school, home and society and culture elements, employment related skill development, and knowledge development also play into the development of the student. Suchh

environments affect the development of students and so must be considered. It is the teacher who can guide the student through this complex puzzle by using a methodology that is rich in ways and principles for living a contributive life. By having such a foundation, the student wants to and has the skills and experience to lead successful contributive lives because they fully understand their local environment and community. These students will make a real difference in the community of life.

With these complexities in mind, teachers strive to develop an educational methodology for their subject/s that is useful, good and satisfying in their young lives and in their communities where they live. What you teach, the homework you assign, the development of the student's capacity to use the new knowledge in practical ways at home, the encouragement to ask questions and guide but not always provide the answers will help them become the masters of their own mind with the character to choose carefully and wisely in thought, word and deed.

Be careful that the educators you want to emulate are those whose methods are not removed from the realities of every day life. Just as we wouldn't want to be treated by doctors with no plan or training, students don't want to be taught by someone who has not taken the time to understand how to best teach them.

Books are fine but we want to never lose sight of the human factor in achieving results. While learning from other educators can be useful it is important that we not become dependent because we need, as educators, to exemplify our serious dedication to the learning process ourselves. This is the living image of education. (ECL, 179)

The Teacher as Artist

Teachers need to create a method of teaching that will not become obsolete nor tire from repetitive implementation. So take your daily teaching activities as your object of study, by comparing your plan to your results, estimating effects to actual outcomes, and using these findings to set forth new directions of planning. And of course use your fellow teachers to compare and develop your method of teaching.

So teachers must practice and experience in their own lives the principles and techniques of learning that they want their students to understand and to acquire. Learn to notice your thinking, notice your assumptions and judgments, and notice your listening capacity. Notice what you say and how you say it. Notice your intent when you ask questions or make statements. In others words, be the change you want to see in your students. Learn to love to read. Learn to read for depth and focus. Do you use applicable materials from Nigeria home rather than abstract ones from abroad? If we force feed ourselves, then we will force feed our students. But if we ourselves are engaged in our own self-initiated study, the process of formulating our own ideas becomes an outline of how to guide students in their studies.

Reading should supplement rather than replace our own firsthand search for effective teaching principles and techniques. Students have real lives and being able to apply value to

these lives is the whole purpose of education. Self study on the part of the teacher is the primary preparation for a competent method of teaching. With this orientation toward learning on the part of the teacher, teachers will realize that they don't need to know everything to be a good

teacher. What they need to be good at is guiding students to lead a contributive life by integrating values of benefit, good and beauty into their teaching.

Unlike technicians and artists who use material resources to create benefit, beauty and good, teachers nurture the spiritual growth and development of human resources, directing them in the creation of spiritual values whereby they in turn will create material value. Thus education stands as the highest technology or art. (ECL, 169)

Makiguchi Method of Teaching

At the foundation of Makiguchi's focus on value creating education is compassion. Many teachers already care about teaching or about students. What is needed is for them to want to care more and more deeply. The more and more teachers care about their students, the closer and closer students get to appreciate their full potential. The more and more teachers can perceive the true potential in students, the more the students will be able to see this for themselves.

How do we learn to care more and how do we do this at the same time for many students? By determining to live a contributive life ourselves. Believe in your own full potential to make the world a better place and then each day do something to make it so. You will see that your students will take notice and begin to do the same. At some point the student will realize that he or she is in the driver's seat of their education. Once one student realizes this then the rest of the class will also begin to become independent learners. This is how they will succeed in their lives and contribute more to the community both during their school years and into adulthood.

In this way you will be able to guide more and teach less. Guiding is so much more effective than teaching. Although it may seem to be easier just to tell them what they need to know, in fact, their new self-motivated learning will make class more enjoyable. The ones who are self-motivated will want to help their classmates. The older students will want to help the younger ones. All of a sudden the school will be filled with excitement and deep joy.

Teaching as a Guide is not easy to establish in oneself because you need to get rid of old habits in yourself and in your students. But with patience on both sides the satisfaction of growing and being in a wonderful garden of flowers instead of a hothouse of flowers that are dyed and grown so quickly that they lack any deep scent will become clear to all. Teachers are to leave the fact-feeding to books and instead take a supporting role to the student's own learning experience. (ECL, 58)

The Village and the Cosmos

The place where you live is a microcosm of the whole world, where all of us live, and so education should be designed to help the student create value in their immediate surroundings. Education should be well organized around creating benefit, beauty and good. The ecosystem of

school community consists of human beings, other living beings, the surface of the planet and its interface with the rest of space at that particular place in a particular time period. Living in unison with the rest of the universe in your ecosystem is about living in and contributing to the whole ecosystem. If you destroy or denude or damage the ecosystem then you are diminished yourself. But if you contribute to developing, beautifying and helping the community then you too will be embellished.

To show how people evaluate, discard, and select, and eventually enjoy or suffer things according to tripartite standards of beauty and ugliness, loss and gain, and good and bad is to demonstrate how we all live in worlds of value of our own making and remaking. Education serves to increase people's powers to create such values. As means, subject material can be aligned to focus on the following three areas: subjects for the economic valuation of life, subjects for the moral valuation of life, and subjects for the aesthetic valuation of life.

As a teacher, you can use the school and the community in which it is located, to help students observe, comprehend and apply what they learn.

First you can use the village community to help your students observe what you are teaching them in a real place. You can use the topography, the layout and quantity of the village homes, the kinds of labor, kinds of foods, cleaning utensils, textiles, and parental marketing skills or farming skills as part of your homework requirements. Sharing this reporting in the classrooms helps students learn to speak well and engage their fellow students. Science lessons can use the water table and rain measurements to help students understand climate change and think of ways to conserve water. English writing skills can be developed by describing beautiful scenes, flowers, bridges and family stories. Math skills can be polished by using discarded materials to demonstrate facts, equations and formulas. Health classes can use hygiene lessons from home. African history can be enhanced by learning about the religions and cultural traditions of students and seeing what you all have in common. Political science can be better understood by going to the community council leaders and learning from them about justice and how to govern wisely.

Next you can discuss, check and test the students to make sure that they understand your lesson and its application in their village. You will find that learning about triangles and circles at school and then looking for triangles and circles in their village will greatly increase their comprehension. Learning about sodium and H₂O in science and then drinking salted water at home will do the same. Learning about pollution of the land at school and noticing the places in the village area that are polluted will do the same. Learning about economics at school and then observing the way markets work is also very helpful.

Finally the ultimate test of whether the student has learned what you taught is how he or she applies it. How has he or she added value to the community? Is the family better because the student is able to help the parents with the development of their business? Or by using

their knowledge to clean or beautify the inside or outside of their homes? Is the neighborhood better because the dialogue skills of the student has helped changed and enriched their relationships with the neighbors? Is the moral development of the student helping to develop a community consensus on how to make everyone's lives better? Have their dialogue skills helped to talk with local government officials and others so that the village attracts business and good people? All this you can learn from the student, from the parents and from the community throughout the year, and over the years, and then once the students become global citizens in their communities.

In the same way a single individual can use his or her village to learn everything about the laws of the universe, of the ecosystem of the community, which will enable them to live wisely, experience deeply, and contribute immensely to the good of the community.

The Garden and Education

To guide students in how to live their lives in harmony with the natural world and the human world, is to guide them in creating value in these areas. By working and developing a garden, teachers and students can observe, comprehend and apply their growing experience to life and to their own lives as well. What is the ecosystem of the garden? What is the right balance of sun, water and minerals that enables the plants to grow well? Why does the wrong balance affect the plants so much? How does that relate to me? Where are good examples and bad examples in my own life?

The garden is also helpful when you teach science, math, writing stories, and understanding how to care for life. It helps them apply what you have been teaching them in a real way with real results – fruits and vegetables. Seeing a good ecosystem of soil, insects, and humans working together with the elements helps them learn how to live well with the community of life. It also helps the school add nutritious food to supplement the diets of students so they can focus and learn well.

The garden also helps students observe themselves in society as well as observe others. It helps them grow into socially conscious living beings. An individual may begin at the school without much self-awareness and help in the garden by only doing what he or she is told. The student begins to see the growth of plants, smell and touch the earth and the rain. Then one day he or she consciously feels happy about the growth of the fruit or vegetables or sadness at the disease or death of a plant. Next growing self-awareness enables him or her to want to help the plant and the garden become plentiful and beautiful. Finally he or she is aware that all the students and teachers have been working together in the garden and the wonderful result is the effect of this harmonious activity together. Social good has been created through the efforts of individuals working together. P189

Course Schedule and Development, Format for Sessions, and Lesson Planning

The introductory program was conducted once a month for about a school year. This manual is set up to provide the basic elements of the program. There are twelve session and assumes

that when students have off that the teacher will give them work at home that will touch on that session in the program.

In subsequent years, teachers and more senior students, acting as apprentices, may want to work with students at new levels so that the dialogue skills can be deepened.

Each session format combined all of the elements of the program: environmental consciousness raising from the Earth Charter, dialogue skills development, community building values, African traditional institutions in a modern context, and living a contributive life.

Each Lesson Plan (see Table 1) combines the skill building of all five sections in a kind of cascade. Section One, The Earth Charter, enables students to think cosmologically. This sets up Section Two, Dialogue Skills, which enables students to work on their own inner communication skills. This sets up the recognition and value of the Traditional institutions and their use in modern daily life. Understanding the value of community building enables the student to apply Dialogue Skills learning to solve community problems. Finally all of these sections help students nurture the desire in their lives to polish their lives and unearth their potential to help their community become successful as well. Examples of lesson plans are available in the Appendix. However, here is the basic lesson plan:

Table 1: Lesson Plan 1

	Review	New	Application
Earth Charter		<i>Explain what the EC is and recite and discuss the principle so that it is clearly understood</i>	Create a deep discussion
Dialogue Skill		<i>Notice Your Thinking</i>	Do exercise
Community Building		<i>Respect – how do you create respect in the community?</i>	Do exercise
The African values in a Modern Context		<i>Council Systems – how elders are chosen, how justice and peace are upheld.</i>	Discuss how to set up a council in the class: what works today and what does not?
Living a Contributive Life		<i>Who is in the “driver’s seat” of your education?</i>	Discuss ways a student can become the best “driver.”

We use the four main principles from the Earth Charter which represent the entire Earth Charter. In subsequent years you will want to begin to use the rest of the sixteen principles. Each principle has sub-principles all of which shape the 12-month program

RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

1. *Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.*

- a. Recognize that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.*
- b. Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity.*

2. *Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love.*

- a. Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and to protect the rights of people.*
- b. Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good.*

3. *Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.*

- a. Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential.*
- b. Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible.*

4. *Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.*

- a. Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations.*
- b. Transmit to future generations the values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities.*

Setting up the Dialogue Skills Program

Preparation for each session is critical. This manual will provide you a basic program for beginners. However, if there are more advanced students mixed up among the new students then the teacher must be able to utilize them in a way enables them to learn as well or they will get bored. Such students can become facilitators along with you, help you design lessons and create materials, keep good records of the lesson plans and materials, help students with their stories or homework, or write up articles from the sessions for the website. Again, using teacher's or student examples of ideas and concepts in this manual, rather than those in this introductory manual, will also help students apply such skills at home.

Steps to Take to Plan Your Lessons:

Below is a full twelve-month program. Once you know what you need to teach that session, go to the five sections and pull together the components of the lesson plans. Choose which exercises to do and decide how to do them. Make sure the session is very interactive – that students ask questions, present stories, work in small groups and make presentations, and use students to help or role model the points you want to make.

Always maintain the value of respect in the classroom so that students can feel very comfortable sharing what they know in front of the class.

Sometimes the lessons are learned without you having to “teach” - for example, creating a collaborative summary of a discussion builds community without you having to teach this. Stopping disparaging remarks and asking for encouraging ones instead teaches this as well as a presentation by you. So just be sure that you cover all five sections in some way.

School Year Schedule for the Dialogue Skills Program

Session/ Month	The Earth Charter	Dialogue Skill	African Values in a Modern Context	Community Building	Living a Contributive Life
1/ Sep	What is the Earth Charter? Respect and Care for the Community of Life	<i>What are Dialogue Skills? Noticing Your Thinking</i>	<i>Why are African Values so important? Council Systems and Interfaith Relations</i>	<i>How does a community become healthy? Respect</i>	<i>Why we want you to live a contributive life. What does this mean?</i>
2/ Oct	EC Principle 1a.	<i>Judgments</i>	<i>Council Systems and Interfaith Relations</i>	<i>Respect</i>	<i>Who is responsible for your learning?</i>
3/ Nov	EC Principle 1b.	<i>Assumptions</i>	<i>Council Systems and Interfaith Relations</i>	<i>Respect</i>	<i>Who Are You- How do you apply EC in your life?</i>
4 Dec	2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love.	<i>3 Types of Listening</i>	<i>Human Rights/UN Human Rights</i>	<i>Cultural Modesty</i>	<i>Where Are You Going? How do you apply dialogue skills in your life?</i>
5/ Jan	EC Principle 2a.	<i>Shared-Meaning</i>	<i>Human Rights/UN Human Rights</i>	<i>Cultural Modesty</i>	<i>Why Do You Study? How do you focus your daily efforts?</i>
6/ Feb	EC Principle 2b.	<i>Shared-Meaning</i>	<i>Human Rights/UN Human Rights</i>	<i>Cultural Modesty</i>	<i>Observation, Comprehension and Application</i>
7/ Mar	3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.	<i>Inquiry</i>	<i>Forgiveness and Inter-tribal Relations</i>	<i>Encouragem ent vs. Discouragem ent</i>	<i>Dragon Gate and Democracy How can you help?</i>

8/ Apr	EC Principle 3a.	<i>Reflection</i>	<i>Forgiveness and Inter-tribal Relations</i>	<i>Encouragem ent vs. Discouragem ent</i>	<i>Dragon Gate and Tracking Story How can you help?</i>
9/ May	EC Principle 3b.	<i>Silence</i>	<i>Forgiveness and Inter-tribal Relations</i>	<i>Encouragem ent vs. Discouragem ent</i>	<i>Dragon Gate and Forgiveness Story</i>
10/ Jul	4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.	<i>Non verbal communication</i>	<i>Traditions and New Modernity</i>	<i>Creating Harmony</i>	<i>Dragon Gate and Your Life Story</i>
11/ Jul	EC Principle 4a.	<i>Non verbal communication</i>	<i>Traditions and New Modernity</i>	<i>Creating Harmony</i>	<i>Africa and You</i>
12/ Jul	EC Principle 4b.	<i>Non verbal communication</i>	<i>Traditions and New Modernity</i>	<i>Creating Harmony</i>	<i>Africa and the World and You</i>

Program Sections:

Section One: Earth Charter and Awareness of the Community of Life

The Earth Charter (see Appendix) is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful society. Already translated into many languages, the Earth Charter seeks to inspire in all peoples a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well being of the human family and the larger living world. It is an expression of hope and a call to partnership.

These fundamental principles form an ethical vision that sees our future as possible only when humans understand that environmental protection; human rights, equitable human development and peace are interdependent and indivisible. It is a new way of thinking for many of us. These sixteen principles stated in the Earth Charter are not legally binding, but constitute a consensus of how we can approach the future of the world and preserve this vision for the generations to come. It is a fresh and energizing tool to use in school and in your community and will create a sense of common destiny.

In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development asked for the creation of such a universal document, which would set forth fundamental principles for sustainable development. Maurice Strong, the Secretary General of the Earth Summit and Chairman of the Earth Council, along with Mikhail Gorbachev, President of Green Cross International, were the driving force behind the development process. Today the Earth Charter's international headquarters and educational center is located at the University of Peace in Costa Rica.

It is just this connection to dialogue that makes the Earth Charter useful as a model to follow when teaching and acquiring dialogue skills. The drafting of the Earth Charter involved the most open and participatory consultation process ever conducted in connection with an international document. Thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations from all regions of the world, different cultures, and diverse sectors of society have participated. Both experts and representatives of grassroots communities have shaped the Charter. It is a people's treaty, which sets forth an important expression of the hopes and aspirations of the emerging global civil society.

Many times dialogue is the last thing on the mind when confrontations take place. And many confrontations happen at the local level, in your family, neighborhood, community, and between people of diverse cultures. The Earth Charter enables us to look at conflict from a global perspective. It is the kind of perspective that enables new ways or ideas to emerge. It enables people in conflict to reawaken their deep connection, even if for an instant, to the community of life and the family of humankind. In that one instant you are part of a wonderful family. In that one instant you are part of a whole. You remember your love for nature and your desire for the wellbeing of others.

Topic 1 – Respect and Care for the Community of Life

a. Recognize that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.

b. Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity.

The whole of the sixteen principles of the Earth Charter is about: Respect and Care for the Community of Life. What do we really mean by respect? By caring? What is the Community of Life? Many of us believe that we should respect our elders. That respect means to honor, to admire, to hold dear, and to obey. The Earth Charter asks us to convey the same meaning and value to the whole community of life. The community of life is all life around us – not just humans, but the animals, birds, insects and plants and all of the elements of life. We come to realize that by recognizing our connection to the community of life, we become members of that community. What affects others in the community of life also affects ourselves as well. When animals are abused, we are also in pain, albeit subconsciously. When there is happiness in another part of the world, we are “feeling” that happiness as well.

The same is true about caring. Caring means to keep from harm, to help, to nurture. We need to take care of all in the community of life. Not just the plants that grow our cloth or the animals that gives us milk, eggs and meat. Caring doesn’t mean that eating meat is forbidden. Carnivores are a natural part of life. We need to honor and respect the lives that feed us. Each member of the community of life plays a role in our lives and we play a role in theirs as well.

As members of the community of life we want to remember not to waste the lives of others, not to kill casually or litter the ground for convenience. We say that a butterfly that flaps its wings in Africa helps to create a hurricane in South America. We all play a role in the evolution of life and we need to recognize this and take responsibility for our actions.

Humans have a long history of warfare and internal strife. To change the future we have to accept the inherent dignity of one another and believe in the full potential of all.

Suggestion for Discussion

Discuss “Respect and Care for the Community of Life” and, together, write a short paragraph, or story, about what this means to you and your community.

Discuss, or write a story, about how important the whole ecosystem is to human beings and how fragile it is now.

Discuss how to create respect and make peace with people you dislike, and with those you are prejudiced against. How does making peace make you feel?

Participant’s Comments:

Since I came to know about the Earth Charter, I have changed from being destructive to being appreciative. Mercy Michael, Grade SS1 Age 16

I have learned to respect and love the community of life.

Joel Eze, Grade SS1, Age 16

Teacher's Notes:

Topic 2 -- Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.

a. Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and to protect the rights of people.

b. Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power come increased responsibility to promote the common good.

If you look at the news today you will see many examples where dialogue would be very useful if only people knew how to empower their lives with it. For example, the international community is in a financial crisis. This affects the price of oil, which has gone up; the oil is needed to make petrol. If the government demands that petrol prices be cheaper, petrol stations will make less. Even if we don't realize it, the international community is always influencing our lives. If we are ignorant of our connection with the rest of the community of life we will not see clearly the path ahead of us. In the past ignorance of the world around you did not make it disappear. Today as well, Nigeria needs to be well educated in and conscious of local, regional, national, continental and international affairs so she can see the right path to the future clearly.

This Earth Charter principle shows us that as we progress in life we need to make sure that we also take responsible action to make sure that we do not harm the community of life of which we are a part.

Those people who, because of their circumstances, have more freedom, knowledge and power than others, and use these to harm others or the environment, are only hurting themselves in the long run. We need to realize that we all have three poisons: the poison of anger, the poison of greed, and the poison of stupidity. The Earth Charter teaches us that when we learn to turn these poisons into the virtues of courage, compassion and wisdom, we become a powerful force for good because we are bettering the lives of everyone. If we can do this then the community of life will become a better place to live, a more just, sustainable and peaceful global community. Become the champions of the common good!

With owning, managing or using natural resources in your community, today especially in the era where the planet is in peril, comes the duty to prevent further environmental harm and to make sure all have access to the basic necessities for living in the community. We have all begun to recognize that true happiness comes from living a contributive life and that the true nature of competition is being the most respected most in your community for what you do for others.

Suggestions for Discussion

How can we take better care of our homes and the school community? How do you love someone you hate?

Choose a news story or situation in your community. Talk about, or write a story about, how dialogue could play a valuable role.

How do you feel when you listen to others?

What can you do to take better care of the natural resources that you use – for instance the water you drink and the paths you use?

Participant's comments:

It has helped me in the area of caring for the living things around me.
Ramlat Bello, SS1, Age 15

I have learned to treat everything in the community with love.
Vivian Paulinus, Grade SS1, Age 15

It has taught me to care for the community of life.
Abraham Sunday, Grade SS1, Age 15

Teacher's Notes:

Topic 3 – Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.

a. Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential.

b. Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible.

Misery happens to people who are hopeless, you might feel, because of your own financial or family situation. It has nothing to do with being rich or poor. It is a state of mind, a reaction to circumstances that lead you to believe that there is no light at the end of the tunnel. You might feel hopeless about your government ever helping you, for example. Loving someone for years and years who will never love you could create it as well. Having too much money that you spend your life buying instead of caring could also create it.

Being miserable means that you feel like you cannot believe that things will get better in your future. The Earth Charter principle speaks to us about how we can ensure our future is hopeful. In your community you can build your community into one in which everyone has a voice. When everyone has a voice then there is a common understanding of what justice looks like and feels like. The value and sense of responsibility of doing your part to create a sound community is a natural feeling. You will find that your community is more and more connected to the entire community of life and because of this, makes the wise decisions that enable livelihoods to become better at sustaining families and the community. In essence, you can say that each person who decides to live a more contributive life, and raises children who feel the same way, is building such a society.

A society is a living organism. Living organisms are successful when all of the cells contribute as well to the wellbeing of other cells. An unhealthy society is one in which the cells are either too ill to help others or just don't care enough about others. We can become a healthy global community by each of us living such a contributive life that you can see your community change and become vibrant and full of hope. To do this we need to build up our Respect and Care for the Community of Life, and affirm that with our increased freedom, knowledge and power we will increase our responsibility to promote the common good.

The United Nations, the African Union and the State of Nigeria all guarantee human beings for all, yet everyday these rights are abused. However if even one of us overcomes the abuse from others and rises to their full potential, all of us become more hopeful and are inspired. Living the principles and using the skills of the Dialogue Skills program can help you to do this. You can be the one who overcomes injustice, rights wrongs, and helps others to learn to live such a contributive life as well.

Today, economic and social injustice account for much of the poverty we have. Everyone should be able to have the kind of meaningful work that contributes to society and that is environmentally sustainable for the sake of our future generations. Your Dialogue Skills program can help you create such a future.

Suggestion for Discussion

How can you make your community more conscious of their impact on the environment, on other people?

What actions could you and your community take to be more respectful and caring of the whole community of life?

How do you educate yourself and others about what human rights you are guaranteed?

Can you see yourself living a meaningful life that helps the community and yet helps the environment as well?

Participant's Comments:

I have learned to manage our environment including keeping and caring for the community of life.

Mary Ann Nwozor, Grade SS2, Age 16

I learned how to so that for the generation coming would not regret I came on the scene.

Amoo Jumoke, Grade SS1, Age 14

Teacher's Notes:

Topic 4 – Secure Earth’s bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

a. Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations.

b. Transmit to future generations the values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities.

To secure Earth’s bounty and beauty we first need to value and appreciate it. We may think we have no time to appreciate the Earth or its beauty because we need to survive every day. This is a mistake. Appreciation brings us perspective on our own circumstances. And seeing beauty lifts our spirits. We need to take the time to appreciate the rich beauty and bounty that the Earth possesses and that these are here for everyone to enjoy. We cannot just take from the Earth, especially now when the Earth has less and less to offer. Doing so is giving into the poison of greed and poisons make you sick or can even kill you.

In the same way, we need to take time to bring beauty back into our lives - a small sprig of springtime in a cup in your kitchen. Create a place for a healthy bush to grow outside your door. Take time to admire a flowering tree on your way to work or school. All of these can lift your spirit, which is why beauty exists in the first place.

Cultural environmentalism is the effort to preserve the places in your life that have good memories for you; where you used to fish or swim; where you used to go for firewood; the shady tree in your village, where many discussions took place. These experiences helped to make you who you are today. We need to make sure that we preserve as possible the places that enrich us and that we teach our children to do the same. Appreciating and basking in the beauty of the Earth is a way to connect you and future generations to the community of life. It will help you to Respect and Care for the Community of Life, and affirm that with our increased freedom, knowledge and power that we gained by our enriching experiences, we will increase our responsibility to promote the common good.

We need to transmit to future generations these same values. We need to look at our traditions and institutions, evaluate them and determine which we can resurrect and use in a modern context. This new era we are creating needs the wisdom of Africa, whose heritage of dialogue in its traditions and institutions, can help to create the long-term flourishing of Earth’s human and ecological communities.

Suggestions for Discussion

What childhood memories does each of you have of wonderful experiences in natural or beautiful settings? How can you help your children create such memories?

The freedom of action of human beings has left this planet polluted. How are you going to be different? How can you ensure that your children’s children will live in a wonderful place?

What traditions do you think you should preserve and what should you discard in your tribe?

Participant’s comments:

I have been able to attend to people in the right manner and not to pollute the community so the upcoming generations can also enjoy peaceful lives and preserve their community for coming generation.

Agbadobi Blessing, Grade SS1, Age 16

I now know and see life as valuable.

Mohammed Abdullahi, Grade SS1, Age 15

For us to have peace I have to recognize that peace is achieved by oneself.

Adiole Shedrack, Grade SS1, Age 17

Teacher's Notes:

Section Two: Dialogue Skills: Become the Master of Your Mind, Don't Let Your Mind Master You

A. What are Dialogue Skills?

Dialogue Skills will help you transform yourself and your relationships. You can change deep-seeded problems in your life, your family and in your community. Human beings communicate mostly by what we say to one another, but also with our body language, our silences and with our unspoken intentions. We can also communicate through our art and our music. Take control of your life and direct it towards helping your community and the whole human family and you will see your own life grow as well. Because we are all one family, everything you think, say or do has an impact. Make that impact constructive. Make your life more contributive. Make the world a better place. You will, at the same time, be constructing your own palace of the self, and with it, the potential and power to effect change and create a good life.

All relationships can be described in one of two ways. You either have an I/You relationship with someone or some thing or an I/It one. An I/You relationship is warm, bonding, nurturing and spiritually uplifting. An I/It relationship is one where we use another for selfish reasons. Either you are used or others use you. This is a terrible way to live because it is devoid of trust, love, meaning and value. Yet we have many such relationships with people, with other life forms, and with the planet itself. You can see that the current global crisis was created by such I/It relationships. Now we can help heal our communities and the world by learning how to transform these poisonous relationships to enriching ones. Dialogue skills will help you make any I/It relationship into an I/You one.

One of the reasons that we have bad relationships is because we are unaware that we don't really communicate well. You may be thinking that when you say A, B, C that others hear A, B, C. In fact many times they are hearing D, E, F or even X, Y, Z. The reverse is the same. You may be hearing D, E, and F when the other person meant you to hear A, B, C. Dialogue skills can help you discover the disconnection and fix it.

Practically speaking you will find dialogue skills very, very useful. Used properly you will find that your co-workers and boss treat you differently. Your family understands you better. Government employees help you out more often. People generally like you better and are willing to help you more.

Dialogue skills take time to master completely. You have to unlearn a lot of habits – such as instant, unthinking responses to others instead of reflecting before you speak or, thinking about what to say next instead of really listening. It will also take time to really imbed these new skills so they come naturally. But with practice and resolve, you will find a whole new world of relationships. So be patient with yourself, and with the process and you will begin to see change.

We are just learning this skill but our children will be much more proficient at it if you teach them. The trend in the world is to use dialogue instead of force. So teach not only yourself these dialogue skills, but also teach your children and your grandchildren. In this way,

slowly and gradually, future generations will, through the power of dialogue, change the face of the world one real relationship at a time. This bottom-up development is how real change in civilizations begins. In any century it is the ideas that float up to the top which create value and transform society.

Of course, dialogue with cultures-in-conflict is much more difficult. That is why I hope you will begin practicing your dialogue skills with friends, family and community around you. Later you will be able to learn to speak with people who are angry, against you, or fear you and change the outcome. This is the power of dialogue used by someone who is skilled and wants to be in dialogue.

*Stephanie taught herself dialogue skills using Ellinor and Gerard's **Dialogue** book. She would take a section and practice it for a week before going onto another. Once she got these basics down she added her own projects, exercises and observations to fit the different cultures and needs of the people in the program. You can do the same, embellishing the skills and molding the exercises to best help you with people of your culture. Her hope is to develop higher and better Dialogue Skills for herself and help people manifest the art of dialogue. She believes that this is an important new field of learning.*

B. The Skill of Noticing Your Thinking

Our first skill we want to develop is to notice your own thinking. Most conversations go bad because of you are not in control of your thinking, nor your judgments or assumptions. This leads to poor listening skills. What you say is based upon these judgments and assumptions. This leads the Other to react against your presumed judgments and assumptions and reply from the same place.

So the first skill you need to develop is to: Notice Your Thinking. Once you are aware of your ideas as they come to you, you are able to put them aside to listen to what someone is really saying. You become the Master of Your Mind. You can then learn to control your mind and emotions.

C. The Skill to Suspend Your Judgments To See the Whole Picture

Everyone makes judgments. But are you judging correctly? "I will turn right at this corner," might seem to be easy. But many times we make judgments about people before we really understand what the other person meant. "She is not a good worker because she is always late." "He is a bad father because he cannot control his children." Remember, we think, speak and act based on that judgment. So if it is wrong then we cannot create much value for ourselves, indeed we add wrong to wrong. In actual fact, you don't really know why the person said what they did. Actions are taken for thousands of reasons. When we don't control our judgments we can be very wrong. In the case of the father, for example, his wife and the mother of his children had just died and they were all distraught with grief.

To correct this tendency we need to practice suspending our judgments. You actually decide to not make a judgment or you put that judgment at the back of your mind until you know the real situation. You will learn to observe judgments, your own and others while remaining neutral. You need to be the master of your judgments and do not let them master you.

D. The Skill of Recognizing and Suspending your Assumptions To Hear the Other Correctly

Judgments come from assumptions, split-second assumptions that we make unconsciously. They can control how we think, say and act. We need to learn to notice and be in control of our assumptions. You actually need to “hunt” for them so you can perceive when you are acting from one!

We are all born and live different lives from one another. Even siblings are different from each other, so much more than for others in our family and community. Of course different cultures and religions have their own unique assumptions and ways of looking at life as well. We are becoming a global village but we don't think the same way. We all view the world in our own particular way but don't realize that others do not. It is as if we all have different colored eyeglasses on. We may think we see everything very plainly but don't realize that we have blue eyeglasses on and think that the world is blue. Others will think their red version of the world is the true reality as well. Our own personal experiences influence how we view the world. It is the same with cultures. Some Americans think, for example, that everyone else thinks the same way they do. This is not true of course. We have to recognize that we need to take off our eyeglasses because they are blinding us to how others see the same situation.

Assumptions are those things we think we know. Below are two Ladder of Actions Tables (read it from the BOTTOM UP) which shows you the impact of two individuals coming to the same meeting. One is what happens up the ladder when your mind is mastering your thinking. The other is when you are mastering your mind.

We can use these two tables to become more aware of our own thinking and see how the assumptions we make affect our actions. They will also help you to discover the origins of your misunderstandings and conflicts. This is adapted from Chris Argyis' Ladder of Inference which is a dialogue tool to show you how we infer. The Ladder of Actions Tables are important because they show that to every action (thought, word or deed) there is a reaction: When two people meet, they start with their own life's experience. From there they make assumptions, draw conclusions, adopt beliefs from those conclusions and speak based on those beliefs. Most of this occurs in a nano-second so you are unconscious of really knowing why you say what you do. We want to slow this down for you so you can again, be the master of your assumptions, and not enable your mind to master you.

<i>Ladder of Actions Table</i>		
Me	The Other	Your Mind Mastering You
Take Action in Word and/or Deed	Take Action in Word and/or Deed	You respond based on what your mind believes to be right.
Adopt Beliefs Thoughts	Adopt Beliefs Thoughts	Your mind accepts that correct Statement
Draw Conclusions Thoughts	Draw Conclusions Thoughts	You make a judgment based on the assumptions in your head.
Make Assumptions Thoughts	Make Assumptions Thoughts	Your assumptions from your experience cloud your ability to hear the true reason behind the statement the other person has just made.
Your life's experience now- deeds, family, culture, faith	His/Her life's experience at this moment – deeds, family, culture, faith	Your environment into which you are born and raised, and your life's experience up to the moment of the meeting.
Begin Climbing ^^^^	The Ladder ^^^^	Here ^^^^^

<i>Ladder of Actions Table</i>		
Me	The Other	Mastering Your Mind
Take Action in Word and/or Deed	Take Action in Word and/or Deed	You are able to see the interconnection between the two of you and fuse
Adopt Beliefs Thoughts	Adopt Beliefs Thoughts	Your Mind accepts that correct Statement
Draw Conclusions Thoughts	Draw Conclusions Thoughts	You conclude correctly about the Statement you heard because you see there is mutual respect
Make Assumptions Thoughts	Make Assumptions Thoughts	Perceive/react/suspend/and ask questions to make sure you are correct
Your life's experience now- deeds, family, culture, faith	His/Her life's experience at this moment – deeds, family, culture, faith	Your Life's Reality
Begin Climbing ^^^^	The Ladder ^^^^	Here ^^^^^

There is disconnect between you and me when neither of us have mastered our assumptions, and so it is difficult to work towards the right conclusions together. We are not using Dialogue Skills. However if even one of us has become aware of the disconnect and corrects it, real understanding can begin to grow. This deeper connection between you and me will also enrich our communities. We all will have taken a step forward.

You want to trust your ability to perceive correctly. This can only happen if you get rid of your unconscious assumptions first. The following are a series of exercises to help you

develop your skill at dialogue. To really reach the art of dialogue, you need to polish these skills. In the same way that you begin playing an instrument, like a piano, with practice you

will get better and better and become adept at it. You then reach the next step where you don't have to think about the skills but work on your heart. Unlike the art of music, however, at some point everyone can become an artist of dialogue.

Exercise I: Developing the Skill of Noticing Your Own Thinking

1. Meditation Exercise: Sit quietly and comfortably in an upright position. Close your eyes or fix them on a point in front of you. Bring your attention to your breathing. There is no need to change it. Simply focus upon it. Notice the inhale, the slight pause, and then the exhale. Follow your breathing.
2. Now, simply bring to mind some thought, some current situation that is demanding a good deal of your attention, at work, at home, anywhere. Once you've brought it to mind, release the thought or move it away from the center of your mind and simply sit.
3. Notice how a steady stream of thoughts continues to move through. Some may catch you and off you go. Then along comes another and you may notice your breathing changing or your jaw clenching or your mouth turning up in a smile. Notice each thought and each of your responses. Then release it and refocus on your breathing. Continue noticing and releasing, noticing and releasing, returning always to listening to your breathing.

Practice this several times. It is a lot of fun. You will begin to control your mind and your responses. Congratulations, this is the key to meaningful dialogue.

Exercise II: Noticing Your Judgments and Learning the Truth

1. Perform the Meditation Exercise: Sit quietly and comfortably in an upright position. Close your eyes or fix them on a point in front of you. Bring your attention to your breathing. There is no need to change it. Simply focus on it. Notice the inhale, the slight pause, and then the exhale. Follow your breathing.
2. Now, someone says the following to you: "You insulted me!" Observe your reaction. Suspend it. Pretend you are picking it up off the floor and letting it float on the ceiling. Or, pick it up and suspend it at the back of your mind. Practice again with: "You are cheating me!" Observe your reaction. Notice how it leads you to judge. Ask yourself from where does this need to judge come? Why do I think this? Practice again with: "Nigerians will never have good government." Observe your reaction. Notice how quickly your emotions impair your objectivity. Suspend them.
3. Start with the first statement again, "You insulted me!" How can you find out what the person meant by saying this when your mind is full of reactions? So by suspending these and not reacting, you have the chance to find out why did he or she really say it? You can ask,

"Why do you feel that way?" What makes you say such a thing? Giving the other a chance to express himself or herself will help you know how to respond. What you thought could be totally different from their reason. Make sure you understand why people say what they do.

4. Now go to the other statements – “You are cheating me!” and “Nigeria will never have good government.” Practice asking questions that will help you discover the truth feelings behind what people say to you.

5. Practice with your friends and your family.

Exercise III: Hunting for Your Assumptions

Once you start looking for your assumptions you are sure to find them in the most interesting places! Why do you think the way you do? What has led you to believe what you do? By hunting for examples of assumption you can begin to notice your assumptions before you speak from them. How do they affect your world view? Your sense of hopelessness or fear? Your feeling of superiority?

Here are some statements and observations that will get you started. Think about your reaction to these statements. Ask yourself what you believe about them. Then ask yourself, how did you come to believe your opinion? Is your opinion the truth of the matter or have you let something color your view. Good hunting!

Inter-cultural assumptions:

When will they learn to do things on time?

The Middle East Crisis is hopeless.

Africa will always be abused.

In your community:

The children in that family are lazy because they are spoiled.

Wealthy people are happy people.

You cannot trust other tribes.

You cannot have a good relationship with someone who is not a Christian.

Personal assumptions:

He got the promotion because he is a yes man.

I know why the man cheated me.

My husband refuses to understand me.

My wife's sisters never say anything good about me.

I should move to a place where people are nice to me.

People say rude things to me because they dislike me.

Once you have found your assumption, ask yourself why you feel the way you do. If you can remember, remember when you first formed this opinion. Think about your assumption. What could be reasons why your assumption is wrong? What could be reasons why your assumption is correct?

Now start to recognize your assumptions by hunting for them for a day, or at an activity with others. How many assumptions did you find you had?

Once you recognize your assumptions, you can try suspending them. Instead of judging or assuming you understand a person, try going beyond your own opinions and ask questions of the

other person. What made you say that? Can you tell me how you came to this conclusion? Is there some history that I don't know about? Listen well to the answers. Compare this with your judgments and assumptions. Keep asking questions until you are sure you understand the other person. You can say, "If I understand you correctly, you said... And you said it because you feel... correct?" When you are sure you truly understand the other person, then you can decide whether you agree or disagree, whether your judgment or assumption was correct or not. You can choose to say to the person, in a respectful manner, "I really agree with you," or "Even though we both agree that I understood you, I really disagree with your comment and here is why...." If you disagree it would be good to agree at least to disagree!

Even though this seems like a very long process, you will see that you will quickly speed things up as you practice. Then you will have many discussions that really enrich your friendships.

Participant's Comments:

I have learned how to dialogue and to ask questions instead of making judgments.
Tolulope Adeleke, Grade SS1, Age 16

I have been able to master my mind and not let my mind mastering me.
Munirat Aliyu, Grade SS2, Age 15

Teacher's Notes:

E. The Three Ways of Listening: The Skill of Having Meaningful Dialogue

There are three ways we listen. The first is to the Other Person. The second is to our reaction to what we hear -- assumptions and judgments we make, and to our emotions. The third is to listen for where we can discover where we could collaborate. What you COULD agree on, where you could both find satisfaction. This is called Shared-Meaning and the effort creates Mutual Respect, a key ingredient in creating peace. This is where both of you can create something new together greater than the sum of both your wisdoms. You learn to listen for the coming of this new idea into your mind, because the more you experience its value, the more you achieve with it, and the more useful and rewarding for the both of you.

We need to listen deeply, with a willingness to hear what is real and important to the Other. When we do, we both become more real to each other. Listening adds color, life and dimension to the relationship. As Ellinor and Gerard teach us, not listening bleaches and flattens until the other person becomes superfluous. They become collateral damage for us. But since we are one human family, this deeply wounds us as well in the long run in an unconscious way that we don't notice. And listening can be a great source of power - because then you can see the person.

Exercise I: Listening to another Exercise

Start a conversation with a friend. Notice your thinking. At what point do you stop listening? When you think of what to say next? When the person says something that upsets you? Now and then purposely stop listening and begin listening again. Try hard to listen deeply. What nuances about what the other person is saying become clearer? Listening well takes focus and internal silence.

Exercise II: Listening to the Self

Practice with a friend. Start a conversation with a friend about an interesting topic. Once you have listened deeply to your friend, say something like, "Let me think about this for a minute." Think about your reaction. Think about your assumptions and judgments. How did you get to a particular assumption? What does that say about you? Did you really hear your friend correctly? To be sure, say something like: Why did you say.... or what did you mean when you said.... Listen again to the answer and then repeat back to the friend. "What I understand is you think.... Would that be correct?" The friend will either say yes or will correct your understanding. Once you understand truly you can have a real conversation.

Every real conversation you create builds your ability to have more and more real conversations, real friends, and real relationships. This is because you have mastered your mind and not let your mind master you. We are all born brothers and sisters. This is the true reality of all relationships. We just forgot.

It takes time to polish and develop the skill of developing Shared-Meaning and make it part of your life. For now we are going to start simply. Later we will get into deeper levels of collaborative wisdom.

F. Listening for Shared-Meaning

Albert Einstein once said, “No problem can be solved at the same level at which it was created.” (Dialogue, 107). In order to solve a problem between one another we have to look for a new idea to emerge from the struggle of disparate views. This is true between two people as well as cultures in conflict.

Each relationship is a story played out over time. As you develop your skill at creating Shared-Meaning you will open the door to horizons you cannot see as yet and productive answers that have not yet evolved.

Exercise III: Listening for Shared-Meaning

First find a friend to practice with. You are going to be looking to find the common patterns between the two of you. You are looking for what is meaningful to you both individually. The added value is coming up with Shared-Meaning.

Sit comfortably, facing one another. You say to the friend. “My favorite color is _____. What is your favorite color?” Your friend will respond with another color. Your task then is to find a way to relate one color to the other. For example, if you said blue and the friend said yellow, what is a way to share this information and make it into something meaningful? You could say, “green” You could also say “the yellow sun is in the blue sky.” What kinds of wonderful creative ways can you think of to link the experience of your two lives together? The sky where you are talking can remind you of a sky or green experience from your youth, for example.

You are practicing learning to share in a meaningful exploration of opinions together. This creates a bond. Here are some subjects you can try but you can also find your own: your favorite pet, tourist spot, coffee, music. The “favorite” part makes it meaningful since you both feel special about the subject. The “pet” is the differing point. Because you work at it together, an undiscovered connection between the two of you develops. This discovery is what Shared-Meaning is all about.

With time, Shared-Meaning will help bring mutual understanding of who you are together and where you are going together. Not just my wisdom, but also your wisdom and sometimes, not just your wisdom but also my wisdom. Each of us is the star of our own life's drama and that you enrich your life's drama with new collaborative relationship. Shared-Meaning not only enriches your relationships but it also changes the direction of your life as well. This is the deep importance of the unity of the human family. Of whom we are becoming together.

Seeing the whole, the common bond and reality is especially useful in deeply conflicted relationships. You know the story about the blind men and the elephant. Each of the blind men touched the elephant in one area of its body and thought that an elephant is a trunk, or a tail, or an ear. But an elephant is all of these things and more.

When you are in disagreement with a friend, ask yourself, what common bond do we have? What is important to us both? What is preventing that from being part of this conversation? What is the elephant here that we can't see? As you strengthen Shared-Meaning, have conversations and then dialogues with people who are not your friends. With people you

dislike in fact. You will be amazed at the difference these skills make in widening and deepening your capacity for friendship.

Exercise IV: Listening Collaboratively

Find a friend and use one of the Earth Charter ethical principles such as “Respect and Care for the Community of Life.” Discuss this for a while. What does respect mean to you? You can ask each other. What about care? What does the community of life mean? Create a collaborative statement together after a good discussion where you really understand the other's point to view. “To respect and care for the community of life means...” This is a wonderful way to learn to spiral your conversation towards something more deeply meaningful. Don't be surprised if you feel yourself changing and becoming more responsible as a matter of fact!

Participant's comments:

This has taught me to settle disputes in a peaceful way.
Frank Enuneku, Grade SS1, Age 15

This has taught me to make peace with all people.
Muhammed Bashir Habib, Grade JSS1, Age 12

Teacher's Notes:

G. The Skill and Value of Inquiry

Socrates changed western civilization by concentrating on inquiry rather than winning an argument. To “know yourself for an unexamined life is not worth living” – the most famous quotation of Socrates – speaks to this spirit of inquiry as well.

The power of inquiry comes from the ability to master your mind by holding an attitude of curiosity above all other emotions and thoughts in your mind. This enables you to open the door to new insights about yourself, the other person and what you can do together. Questions about relationships, connections and patterns can see into another's way of thinking and bring about a new level of understanding and innovation. Learning to ask fundamental questions is the key.

Inquiry and reflection help us get to the bottom of problems and solutions. Seeing a new idea and then taking the time to reflect on it is extremely valuable. It helps you as well to sort out your own assumptions and judgments before you act on them.

This happened to Stephanie Tansey when she was living in Turkmenistan. She was practicing dialogue skills with a wonderful textile artist. The artist told her, in a way to test her reaction, that she was a gift to her husband. In Stephanie's culture for a woman to be a gift was an insult to womankind. Using the power of curiosity she suppressed her reaction and when she was sure she was filled with curiosity, she asked, “What is it like to be a gift?” She discovered that among the Turkmen being a gift meant that the two families were very close. The artist and her fiancée met and she agreed to the marriage. So Stephanie's cultural assumption was entirely wrong. Through the experience she developed a friendship with the artist who taught her deep insights into the Turkmen people. Develop your power of inquiry!

Exercise I: Using Curiosity and Questions

Perform the Meditation Exercise: Sit quietly and comfortably in an upright position. Close your eyes or fix them on a point in front of you. Bring your attention to your breathing. There is no need to change it. Simply focus on it. Notice the inhale, the slight pause, and then the exhale. Follow your breathing.

Now think of the last insult someone has said or did to you. Suspend the pain and ask yourself to bring up only your deep curiosity about why this person did this to you. When you feel yourself in control, ask it out loud. If you feel any anger, hatred or pain, try again. Remove the painful thought from your mind and think only about deepening your curiosity. When you ask, “Why did you say that to me?” with pure curiosity the effect on the other person will be vastly different.

Practice with a friend. When you think you are ready, look for opportunities to go practice. First suppress your reactions to shocking statements. Then decide to go where you have not been before. Dig deeply into yourself and bring out as much infinite curiosity as you can.

Exercise II: The Unasked Question

Another inquiry skill is being able to get to the Unasked Question in the room. Many times people don't want to risk asking important questions for fear of getting hurt or getting into trouble. Getting to know the person by creating a real conversation will help unveil it.

Try These Questions!

1. When you want to know a detail about the person, perhaps his or her age, and asking may be impolite – you could ask: “What did you study in school?” or, “How have you used your studies in your work?” or “Where did you go to university?” or “And when did you graduate?” Such questions can teach you about the person you are speaking to AND get an idea about how old he or she is.

2. When there are personal subjects that are off limits

When you want to have a meaningful discussion with someone whose people are in conflict with yours, such as Christians and Muslims, the unasked question might be about previous violence. Start a good discussion by bringing up any of the Earth Charter principles. “Respect and Care for the Community of Life” is an example. We are all part of the community of life on this planet. We all are concerned with the future of our children. It may not seem like dialogue but it is a simple way to start or develop a relationship. This will lead to many interesting conversations. It has led to breakthroughs before elsewhere and can for you as well. In this way you can, over time, develop real interest in each other’s cultures and finally to a real dialogue.

H. The Skill and Value of Reflection

Reflection is not very emphasized in the west. In Chinese schools, however, students are still taught to think thoroughly through a problem from elementary school. We are all both products of our cultures and we have to think to change the way we jump to conclusions. No wonder it is hard to understand one another.

When faced with a problem Stephanie quickly began discussing a solution, because in her culture she was taught that thinking quickly was very important. She had a Chinese colleague who when asked his opinion would sometimes take hours to reply. She came to trust his opinion because she saw he actually thought about it deeply.

A discussion can go so fast that you are not clearly thinking through your answers. Especially, if the discussion is heated. Things can easily get worse. Or as bad, conversations remain static – you always say what you think and the other person says what he thinks and both go away frustrated until the next time the same topic comes up. Couples, office-mates, and parents and children experience this a lot.

Exercise III: Developing Reflection

People can learn to reflect by remembering to ask for time to think or by giving others time to reflect. You can say: “Your point makes me realize I need to really think about this more. Give me some time and let’s talk again.” “Let’s both reflect on this issue and look at it again tomorrow.”

Exercise IV: Intercultural Reflection

When having a discussion with a person from a different culture or religion you can say, “You know I need time to think about what you just said. We are from different cultures. I want to make sure of what I think so that you can understand me better.” Or “This is very important that

we understand one another, can we reflect on our discussion and discuss this further the next time we meet?" This will give you the chance to develop the relationship further. It will also help a new path, a path not take before, to emerge before you.

With inquiry and reflection you can learn to build up a subject of interest to the two of you and create something wonderful and purposeful together. Through the careful use of inquiry, and then asking reflective questions, or reflection time, listening in the three ways to one another, your success at programs and projects will become more valuable and lasting.

I. The Skill and Value of Silence

Stephanie once studied the ancient Noh Drama of Japan. There is a very important drum that is beaten during the performance. A very famous Noh drummer said that being a good drummer is more about the space between the beats than the beats themselves. "Is Shared- Meaning the product of collective meaning or the silent spaces out of which questions and thoughts emerge?" (Ellinor, Gerard, 123) All conversations and dialogue can be enriched by attention to silence.

In Dialogue; Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation, Ellinor and Gerard describe what happens when you create a profound silence. In the story a dialogue group is having a weekend retreat:

"We've been in silence since last night. No phone calls. No television or radio. No conversation. I clean up my dishes, get a cup of coffee, and very intentionally go sit at a table with Elizabeth. She is eating cereal. We share the table, but not much else. We only initially make eye contact. Smile. Nod our heads in greeting. ... I stare out of the window. She focuses on her cereal. As I sit looking out the window, a strange thing happens. It is as if a two-dimensional scene becomes three-dimensional, and then four. Even the air between the trees takes on substance. I feel I can reach out and touch the house across the lake. The trees are vibrating with fullness. I can see tones of brown in the bark, shades of green in the smallest leaf buds. I can see the wind moving through space. It is as if in the silence, seeing becomes some fuller version: SEEING ... [She observes her counterparts] this is how we really are - large(r) than life and full and fascinatingly unique. Not some weak imitations that have become flattened and dulled by fear of judgment, hidden amidst the noise and business of our day-to-lives. I thanked the silence for its power of revelation. (Ellinor, Gerard 124.)

Exercise V: Using Silence to Reconnect to the Planet

Next time you are in a park or on a beach. Lie down and be deeply silent. Listen deeply for the noises of nature. Smell for the smells of the natural world around you. Feel the air on your body and face and the ground below you. Open your mouth and see if you can taste the air. Then look at the sun or moon and locate yourself as a person on a planet connecting deeply to the sun or moon above you. Then see if you can feel the earth move in orbit.

Exercise VI: Using Silence to Reestablish Dialogue

Next time you are having a heated discussion with someone, suggest a ten-minute silence between you; or a ten-minute reflection time; or a ten-minute inquiry time or you can use all three techniques. Then begin your conversation again.

Participant's comments:

I have learned how to notice my thinking and to suspend judgment and also on how to have quite time.
Joy Akubueze, Grade SS2, Age 19

Teacher's Notes :

J. Non-verbal Dialogue

The Skill and Value of Listening Through Non-verbal Channels to Create Community

We are so used to communicating verbally that we forget that there are many other ways to do so. Indeed, there is much that dance, music, sharing of food, art, having a beer, movement, entertaining, meditation or body language can be used to create a collective consciousness. As the book *Dialogue* mentions, “Developing a capacity for listening through nonverbal channels is a powerful addition to dialogue. We consider it right up there with the capacities for suspension of judgment, identification, and suspension of judgment... Nonverbal channels are primary ways of learning and integrating for many of us.” (Ellinor, Gerard, 129). But our capacity to notice these things in ourselves and in others is very, very rusty. So we need to practice.

Exercise I: Non-Verbal Communication Through Observing Yourself

We just practiced noticing the world around you through our senses by letting silence pervade our life. Now begin to perceive your own body movements. How you walk, what your face does when you smile, when you frown. When you are nervous what does your body do? Why do you like the music you do? What goes on in your mind when you invite people over? When you accept an invitation to meet and have a drink. When you meditate. When you are angry. Next, notice the same about your friends. What happens with his eyes when he talks? To her back when she dances? How does it feel to eat together?

People say that humans developed the language part of their brain to such a degree that other parts are out of balance. Strengthening your capacity to perceive will open gateways to new levels of consciousness.

Exercise II: Looking at an Idea/ Global Problem Together and the Dance Mandala

We will be creating dance mandalas in these exercises. A mandala is spiritual art that is inspired by our hearts and minds and created by our hands. A dance mandala is one where we create the same spirituality through dance. Dance is an ancient spiritual experience in Africa. We will look at an idea or global problem together and express our lives through the Dance of the Warriors. This is an ancient dance and each tribe has its own version. We will ask each tribe to perform its own version and participants, after all participants have danced, we will discuss the dancing. We will be accompanied by a drum.

Topic: How Can We Become Heroes of the New Africa?

Facilitator: If you are facilitating this exercise, ask for silence once everyone understands what he or she will be doing. Ask them to stand in a relaxed way by tribe and become aware of their breathing. Ask the participants to allow your chosen question to take shape in their minds in the silence-produced awareness. Divide by tribe. Now beat the drum as the start. Have each tribe dance while the others watch.

Now ask the participants: What do you feel when dancing? When you were watching the others? Do you see any patterns? Where are the differences? What were similarities? What are you expressing with your body movement about the topic? What makes you curious or reflective? How do the dance patterns connect with the words in the dance? Can you see a common perspective emerging? What is it? The facilitator then can summarize into a statement to which everyone agrees.

Exercise III: Looking at a Problem Together with the Dance Mandala

This time discuss how you could put together a Dance Mandala of the Voice of the Warriors to Save the Community of Life. Discuss the dance steps. Discuss the words.

Topic: How Can Africans Help People Outside Africa Lead a Peaceful Life?

Facilitator: If you are facilitating this exercise, ask for silence once everyone understands what he or she will be doing. Ask them to stand in a relaxed way by tribe and become aware of their breathing. Ask the participants to allow your chosen question to take shape in their minds in the silence-produced awareness and dance what they feel.

Now ask the participants: What do you feel when dancing? What are you expressing in your dancing? What fierceness about your goal do you feel now? How do you feel about being together with the rest of the dancers? Can you see a common perspective emerging? What is it? The facilitator then can summarize into a statement to which everyone agrees.

Then think about the two dances together in silence. What different feelings do you have for one or the other? Do you see any similar patterns in your daily lives? What new feelings have begun to emerge? Can you see a new idea that was hidden before?

Deepening the dialogue like this can help you to listen for internal individual and collective images and symbols to create a collective consciousness. In this way you have made the invisible visible so that the community can know how to act.

The next exercise is to listen to learn more about each other and to discover the deep meaning of your togetherness.

Exercise IV: Looking at a Problem Together More Deeply with Regular Mandala

You will need a facilitator, sheets of paper and a large cloth and crayons, decorating ribbons and colored paper and tape as well as a bell.

Part One

Choose a topic of deep interest to you both. Example: Shouldn't religion bring people together? Distribute paper and crayons. Focus your minds on the topic. The facilitator asks for silence. At the ring of the bell. For one minute each person will ask himself or herself to receive a symbol from inside their life that addresses the question. Do not question the symbol. Simply translate it as best you can to the paper in front of you. You may not understand the symbol until later when you both talk about it. When the bell rings pass your paper to your neighbor. When the bell is rung, ask yourself, "What is missing" and draw this on the new paper until the bell rings again. Do this until everyone has had the chance to work on all of papers.

Then put all of the papers on one the large cloth and discuss. Each of you can talk about the symbol you received and what you did with it on your paper. Reflect on them as a collective set of images. Are there any repeating themes? Patterns? What have you learned from this

activity that will be important for you to carry forward into your work or in your relationships? Now place the mandalas outside of the cloth.

Part Two

Rework the first topic in a different way. Example: Shouldn't religion unite the potential for good in people's hearts? This time you are working to create something together. Each has white paper and crayons. The facilitator asks for silence for the entire exercise once it is clearly understood. The facilitator rings the bell.

Each participant asks himself or herself for a symbol and makes a drawing with that in mind. When all are satisfied with what they wanted to depict, place them all in the center of the cloth. With total silence using non-verbal dialogue, continue to decorate the whole mandala together with the crayons and ribbons until all are satisfied. Form a circle with all of them. Continue to decorate and embellish the large mandala until again all are satisfied.

Enter into conversation about the large “mandala,” and the experience of its creation. Where did your symbols come from? A dream? A fear? What made you feel the symbol was right for the group? Can you describe what makes it feel whole? How it feels to create this collective consciousness? How it feels to create this being in one living community?

Participant's Comments:

I have learned how to use the mechanism of dialogue skills to bring peace.
Uche Esther, Grade SS2, Age 17

This teaches me to settle issues using the dialogue skills and to live in peace and have love, kindness, endurance, and goodness.
Confidence Isiorji, Grade JSS1, Age 13

Teacher's Notes:

Section Three: Traditional Institutions in a Modern Context

Professor George Ayittey says, in his foundational work **Indigenous African Institutions** that the vast majority of Africa's conflicts have been intrastate rather than between countries. They are not about driving away colonials or redrawing boundaries. They are about political power - the power to grab resources and distribute them, the power to keep oneself in office, and crush enemies. Military and economic power, after the departure of the British, became the prevailing value and focus of the leaders of Nigeria. This has caused the development of character, justice, sustainable development, and peace to take a back seat to a system of living based on greed. A largely disconnected and poorly educated population is still living in villages and communities throughout the country. The anger has led to both inter-tribal and inter-faith conflicts. The ravages of conflict have led to poorer economic prospects for the average Nigerian, indigenous conflicts, and wanton destruction of the environment. Where is the way forward? (Ayittey, 528)

Professor Ayittey says that the answer is, in part, recognizing the pre-colonial history and value of traditional institutions. The village chief, the community council and the villagers have a long tradition of democratic, just, economic and human rights institutions dating back thousands of years did a very good job of keeping order, living sustainably on the land and marketing products in a system that was both profitable and which strengthened the society. (Ayittey, 531)

Today these chiefs and community councils are still very respected by both the people and the government have weakened. If strengthened, they could do what the government has not been successful at doing – create development that really works for the villages. Today the infrastructure to get products to market does not exist for the majority of these villages. They will remain poor until there are roads. Today the ancient markets are prevented from participating in the real agricultural economy. If allowed, they know how to produce and market well and the trade that they could inspire could ignite the villages into taking development into their own hands rather than waiting for others, the government or international donors, to help them.

To achieve this, villages and communities in the country and in the cities need to determine which of the many institutions of the past can be of value today. The international community knows very little about their existence, but that doesn't mean that they are not important. They are deeply important to building healthy communities in Nigeria. Indeed many Nigerians have forgotten much about the past or never learned it at all. If you do not know where you come from, how can you know where you are going?

It is clear that many of the chiefs and councils still exist and operate throughout Nigeria. However past traditions need to be brought forward and connected to international principles so that Nigeria can join the building of the peaceful, just, sustainable global community. Whereas these indigenous institutions sufficed in the past, they must now be linked to the present and future to be relevant and help create the future. Through deep dialogue between the tribes Nigeria can come to a consensus that includes development of healthy inter-tribal and inter-faith relations. How can these values be brought onto the national stage?

Nigerians need to recognize that Africans have always had human rights in their communities. The value of the human being was much higher in the past than it is today. Wealth was, and in places still is, something to which the whole family or tribe contributed. As members of a community, one had the right to get help in business and other enterprises and the responsibility to contribute and support others.

This is what a healthy community is like and there were many throughout Nigeria. What part of this traditional economic system can help heal the national economy? How can the tribal communities create enterprises that lift everyone up, enable roads to be built, and educate children? Through deep dialogue.

Nigerians have a great value that is as old as the human being. Many people are suffering and are miserable because of the acts of others upon themselves, their families, their tribes and their religion. There is one way to wash away all of anger and hurt. It is the act of forgiveness. Such an ancient tool in the past could bring the dawn of a new era to Nigeria, clearing out the ravages of oppression and creating the renaissance of Nigeria.

Nigerians need to begin a great discussion about how to create the new Nigeria. Nigeria is part of the international community. What is the special gift that Nigeria has, the special mission of Nigeria to give to the Century of Africa which has just begun? In what way can Nigeria help the world flourish? The answer lies in deep and harmonious unity of purpose. Through deep dialogue.

A. Community Council Systems and Inter-faith Relations

Many tribes have community councils so the community council system is very much a part of Nigerian life. Interestingly even though there are many tribes in Nigeria, it seems that most community councils operate in the same basic way. So here we have a common pattern.

One of the valuable aspects of the councils is its use of customary law. Customary law is law that is derived from the consensus of the community. They are derived, as well, from natural law, from learning passed on from parent to child throughout the centuries. Statutory laws are laws that have been written down and voted in by governments. Nigerians must decide on how to ensure justice when there are two systems. Both have value and problem areas. Customary law hears and settles disputes in the best way for their community. We live in a global community and so without statutory laws, no one will understand how to enable justice to take place between countries and between citizens of different countries. Finally human beings recognize that we are part of a community of life and as such, we are just beginning to create and apply laws to preserve the planet and resolve social problems together such as poverty and climate change.

Inter-faith Relations

Practicing suspending judgments and assumptions is a good idea before opening a discussion with someone from a different faith. Take a good look at yourself and think about your belief system. What part is African, and what part is Christian or Muslim? Many people are deeply religious and some cannot listen to another's strong beliefs. Problems can then be either

ignored or discussed internally until something occurs that brings it out into the open and terrible violence occurs. This is where Dialogue Skills can be very useful.

First of all, it is important to search through your feelings about the Other. Think about how you came to such assumptions. What have you actually read about the other religion? How much of what you know about the Other is based on what others have said? How much of what you know was said with great anger or fear? How can you create a better understanding so you can develop respect for the religion and for the people who practice it? You don't need to agree to respect the people from another faith. Take the time to read something about their history, their beliefs, and their problems from an objective source. What questions would you like to ask a practitioner if you could?

When you feel that you have control over your emotions you may be ready to speak to such a practitioner. Having good inter-faith dialogue is one of the most difficult skills to have so take your time and develop the relationship over time. You will be well rewarded.

Suggested Discussions:

Why are African values common among so many different tribes and religions?

How can they help you today?

What is your tribal council like? How does it differ from the Local Government Area council?

Can councils be helping work out interfaith matters?

Could strong councils help build businesses that are both good for people and good for the environment?

Participant's comments:

I've learned how to give what I have so that others can survive. I have also learned to appreciate the community and make use of dialogue skills.

Gabriel Bamidele, Grade SS2, Age 17

Teacher's Notes:

B. Human Rights / UN Human Rights

Although the rights of the community predominate over those of the individual, Professor Ayittey says, Africans believe that individuals are freeborn. Relations between other tribes are completely different. Other tribes' people are strangers, outsiders, competitors and potential enemies. But within the tribe or village each individual had certain basic human rights. (Ayittey, 49-50) Here is a list of only some of them.

1. The right to equal protection of the law.
2. The right to a home.
3. The right to land sufficient for earning livelihood for oneself and family.
4. The right to aid in times of trouble.
5. The right to petition for redress of grievances.
6. The right to criticize and condemn any acts by the authorities or proposed new laws.
7. The right to a general education covering the morals and good manners, family rights and responsibilities, kinship groups and social organization, neighborhoods and boundaries, farming and marketing, rapid mental calculation, and family, clan, tribal and state histories.

Ayittey lists twenty of these and notes that most of these rights have disappeared in modern Africa. He reports, "Respect for human beings was once a part of African tradition. We must now, however, recognize that we have lost this tradition." (Ayittey, 51)

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights was developed by collaborative dialogue discussing the pre-existing rights of many of the cultures of member countries of the U.N. That is why, perhaps, is very similar to African rights of the human being which were passed down through tradition over thousands of years.

Every member of the United Nations has signed this Declaration. Here are some examples:

1. The right to life, liberty and security.
2. The right to recognition as a person before the law; the right to judicial remedy; freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
3. The right to education.
4. The right to marry and to found a family; the right to own property.
5. The right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being.
6. The right to social security.

There are 30 rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Nigeria signed on to which means that all Nigerians have universal human rights. Now Nigerians need to make human rights a reality.

Use education and the arts to teach the value of human rights.

How can Nigerians reclaim their human rights? Sometimes taking a stand is really vital, but more often than not, dialogue can really move the mountain gradually. Africans have always

relied on storytelling, art and music to educate and inculcate in children a strong sense of community and other values. The saying, “It takes an entire village to raise an African child,” is very well known.

Why not use the same teaching methods to teach about the value of dialogue skills, human rights, environmental consciousness and community? Through storytelling, community songs and dances and art children can resurrect their ancient wisdom and also shape a new day for future generations as well.

Suggested Discussions:

Which human right do you think is the most important? Why?

Why is social and economic justice so important in building a healthy community?

How can human rights education help your community?

Can councils help solve human rights grievances?

Participant’s comments:

I now know that peace is achieved by recognizing the wholeness created by the right relationship with oneself; others; others culture; other life; earth and the larger whole of which all are a part.

Favour Omonu, Grade SS2, Age 17

Teacher’s Notes:

C. Forgiveness and Inter-tribal Relations

According to Indigenous African Institutions, Africa has its own indigenous conflict resolution mechanism. For example one such court institution requires four parties, an arbiter, the two combating parties, and civil society, or those directly and indirectly affected by the conflict (the victims). When disputants cannot resolve their differences by themselves, the case is taken to a chief's court for adjudication. This is open to the public. The complainant makes his case, then the defendant. After all arguments have been heard, the chief renders a decision. The guilty party may be fined three goats. The injured party receives one goat, the chief another goat for his services, and the remainder slaughtered for a village feast for all to enjoy. The latter social event is derived from the African belief that it takes a village to heal frayed social relations. Thus, traditional African jurisprudence lays more emphasis on healing and restoring social harmony and peace than punishing the guilty. Further, the interests of the community supersede those of the disputants. (Ayittey, 530)

This mechanism is based on the value of Africans place in forgiveness. This great capacity to forgive is prevalent even in the most extreme circumstances that happen during wartime. How much more easily could it be applied to the problems between people, between tribes and between people of different faiths today? This is another way that traditional institutions can play a modern role. Indeed changing the I/It of inter-tribal strife to deep I/You friendships through dialogue is a wonderful way people can make great changes for the sake of Nigeria.

Instead of seeing the Other tribe as strangers or the enemy, the tribes of Nigeria could compete in having the most people who are really making a difference in your country.

Exercise: Working Together at Humanitarian Competition

Create a group that consists of people from different tribes to help think about how you can all work together for the land and people of Nigeria. Decide on a facilitator. Go around the group and find out the different tribes represented. Find out what each tribe has been known for in the past. Then discuss how each tribe can contribute to the land and people of Nigeria. Some are fisherman, others trades people, or artists, or herders and farmers. These could be transformed into, for both women and men, doctors, information technology experts, engineers, economists, small and large business owners, scientists.

Then think about what the land and people of Nigeria needs to become a peaceful, just and sustainable place. After this discussion, go back to the tribal strengths mentioned earlier. How can all the tribes help with these needs? These values could be integrated into environmental protection, resolving injustices and human rights abuses and the development of a well-informed citizenship.

Finally talk about competing for the sake of others. Can the tribes change the energy that goes into the hate and fear into energy that works for the common good? What could be some examples? How could this help the rest of Africa? The World?

Suggested Discussions

What does forgiveness mean to you?

How does forgiveness feel when you forgive someone?

What role do you think forgiveness should have in tribal and religious conflicts?

What is the connection between forgiveness and respect?

Participant's comments:

I have learned to respect the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
Amarachi Ozoemena, Grade SS2, Age 17

Teacher's Notes:

D. Traditions and New Modernity

We have seen many ways traditional African institutions could be helpful to modern Nigerians. The chiefs and councils are very valuable assets to Nigerians. However there is an internal conflict between the modern government system and these traditional institutions. Nigerians need to figure out how to interconnect the two systems of government. This will take good dialogue skills.

Individual inter-faith dialogue can help personal relationships change. Tribes of different religions can use the same councils to resolve differences. Bi-lateral councils can be used when government institutions are too weak to maintain order, or when emotions run deep, grudges remain profound and the impetus to improve matters needs consensus.

We have seen that human rights were and need to be again a vital part of Nigerian life. How and why Nigerians forgot about who they were and where they were going is something that needs to be thought through. Then educating ourselves and educating our children will shape a new tomorrow. Dialogue through storytelling and the arts can really make the difference here. Renaissances don't usually come all at one time. Usually one person makes a difference in some humane way, then another and then another. Then one day the whole state of mind of a people changes and a new era has been born. This is the case of the election of the first African American president to the United States. Not one man or woman did everything. Each person did something.

Finally the act of forgiveness needs to run like a fresh stream over Nigeria again. Forget and forgive about the past. Focus on the future of your people and begin walking together. Compete at the Nigerian Tribal Olympics for nurturing the best doctors, teachers, innovators, scientists, green economists, deepest family feeling, most care of others, most courage to help save the world, best mentors of the youth, and most leaders of the Century of Africa.

Suggested Discussions:

- What traditions do you have in your tribe? How are they different from others?
- How do we choose which traditions to keep and which to leave in the past?
- Tracking is an ancient tradition. How can it be used in daily life today?
- Gathering firewood today is creating more desert-like conditions because we are running out of trees in this area of Nigeria.
- How can we change this tradition and still enjoy gathering around the food that your mother makes?

Participant's comments:

This has help me to develop love for my country and not to disrespect others for their religion.
Cynthia Ezejiofor, Grade SS2, Age 19

I now know about tracking, how to be silent in order to master my mind.
Tauheed Mohammed, Grade SS2, Age 16

Teacher's Notes:

Section Four: Community Building Principles

As with any dialogue skill, to live good community building principles you must first be sincere. Only people of integrity can engage well with other people in a community and accomplish something good. If you are arrogant, feel superior or look for your own self-advantage, they will hear this in their hearts. Again, as with dialogue skills, start strengthening your community-building principles by doing exercises that will improve your own self-awareness and your feelings about the Other. All relationships come down to the Self and Other relationship or the I/It or I/You relationship. These relationships are built upon what you think, say and do to the Other and the reverse is true as well.

There are three principles critical to building a healthy community - the principle of respect, the principle of cultural modesty, and the principle to encourage rather than to disparage. These principles will help you to build harmonious unity. Working on your own self discipline in this way will not only help you perceive the true issues that need to be addressed in your community, but you will serve as a model for others.

A. Respect

We know that the Earth Charter is all about respect – “Respect and care for the community of life.” “Care for the Community of life with understanding, compassion and love.” “Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful.” “Secure Earth's Bounty and Beauty for present and future generations.” We need to widen what we respect. And when we do we will find that more and more others respect us. This demonstrates how deeply connected we are with the community of life. By polishing our own lives and finding the way to respect anyone and anything, we deepen and widen the level of respect we have for others.

During these troubled financial times this might be hard to see why the act of respect is so valuable or applicable. Yet we cannot get away from the fact that we are all part of a community of life. What I do to you actually hurts me in the end. This is the deeper reality of our relationship.

Many times our own cultural arrogance gets in the way of respecting others. We cannot see through our cultural biases and assumptions. It is this blindness that prevents us from building community. It is important to remember that when you think, speak and act on these assumptions, the effect this has on the Other is that he or she thinks, speaks and acts on their assumptions about you. You can overcome this problem.

The act of disparagement is another critical problem for a community. We may think that we are merely stating the truth about a person. This is very far from the truth. You are forgetting the value of life. And the value of *your* life. Disparagement means that you cannot find your connection to the community of life. It puts a cloud over your life and prevents you from seeing the good or helping the good emerge from the Other. Hunting for when you disparage and eliminating acts of disparagement can transform your life. And when you transform your life, you inherently build community.

Your ability to respect anyone, to be curious about others and modest about yourself and your acts of encouragement rather than disparagement will help you create wonderful and healing dialogues with the members of community. Your community will see new life and hope arise from these dialogues and together you will be able to create projects that will enable your community to thrive as never before.

Dialogue is truly an art. The intention of the artist is what makes a painting distinctive. If the intent is to make a living, to manipulate the public, to be the best, or to help illuminate, it will show up in the work of art. The same is true in dialogue. First and foremost you must ask yourself - what is your intent? What do you intend to make happen in the conversation? If the answer is to engage in meaningful dialogue, then you will be amazed at how valuable these community building principles can be. It will turn you into a statesman and a citizen of the world.

The Skill of Respecting in Thought, Word and Deed

How do we get to respect? First there are many definitions of respect. How do we define it? Respecting in Thought, Word and Deed are actions that demonstrate a person's recognition of the infinite potential of all life. President Barack Obama is a great example of the impossible becoming possible.

Of course the person you are trying to respect may not be demonstrating this in any way! But we need to keep our eye on the ball: you are my brother or sister because we are all part of the community of life and as such have vast potential. Acts of deep respect are more about our own self-discipline and self-awakening. This doesn't mean that we should let others abuse us, cheat us, defeat us, or mistreat us. We just cannot let their actions make us think, say and do things that are disrespectful. We are responsible for our beliefs and must not let others taint our profound belief in the dignity of life.

It is about creating actions based on the deep truth that we are all brothers and sisters. What you will find is that people begin to respect you in a whole new way. Once you stop judging and start looking for and reminding yourself that the person in front of you is deeply connected to you in some way, you find that that person begins to treat you differently as well.

Using this kind of training Stephanie was able to build a community around her that nurtured each other, at work and in her community. She started with an angry and frustrated community and built a deep community of people who learned how to live happily together, to welcome more and more diverse people, and who work to help others to have the same.

Don't start with your enemy. Start with your family. When you are faced with an enemy it is much, much harder. Be the master of your mind; don't let your mind master you. You don't have to pretend but you do need to stretch your courage, compassion and wisdom.

Exercise: Thought, Word, and Deed Training

Step One: (Thought) Notice your thinking. Think about a relative you have a problem with. Think about three things you dislike about them. Then think about three things you respect. (Thought)

Step Two: (Word and Deed) Think about someone at work you dislike. Think about three things you dislike and three that you can respect. Then think about their connection to you

and to the community of life. What contribution are they making? Even if it is tiny, what does that teach you something about living? What small way could thank them? Could you say something? Or greet them more warmly the next time you see them?

Step Three: When you go out in public observe your thoughts, words and deeds. After a while you will see that people begin to treat you differently, because all of a sudden, they feel a connection to you.

Participant's comments:

I have learned to respect the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
Amarachi Ozoemena, Grade SS2, Age 17

I know now to respect for we are all connected to one another.
Isaac Godwin, Grade SS2, Age 18

I have learned to respect and care for the community of life.
Juliet Okafor, Grade SS2, Age 16

Teacher's Notes:

B. Cultural Modesty

The Skill of Developing Cultural Modesty

Martin Buber, a master of dialogue, pioneered the idea of the I/It and I/You relationships, and with clarity showed us how to change an I/It relationship to an I/You through dialogue. It is all about seeing the human in the Other. We grow up in a particular ethnic culture, and then adopt a life philosophy based on what we believe in – it could be Islam, Christianity, Traditional Religion or secular belief systems like capitalism, socialism, democracy, customary laws societies vs. statutory law, state and stateless societies, patrilineal and matrilineal societies, and a number of deeply held beliefs that education courses have embedded into our lives. Other cultures can and do look at us from entirely different sets of belief. If we are not able to recognize our own cultural tenets then we think that everyone believes what we believe. This is very far from the truth.

Cultural Modesty involves merely being curious and interested in the Other person who is from a different culture. It will free yourself from the boundaries of your own culture and broaden your life. The more you do this the more successful friendships and business relationships you will gain and the more your culture will be respected. The less you do this the more barriers, both obvious and invisible, prevent you from a truly fruitful relationship.

In the Chinese History Museum in Taipei, there is a line of history marking the beginning of Chinese culture and other historical events in the history of humankind. While the Chinese history and many others start up around 10,000 years ago, the United States, coming onto the scene only 1775 is merely a tiny fraction of this. If Americans don't realize this then they do not understand the world. 300 years, no matter how active does not equal to 10,000 embedded in the lives of others. Through this simple lesson Stephanie learned to express deep respect for the Chinese people and their long history and this enabled her to start the relationships with Chinese that led to the successful founding and success of her school in Beijing.

Begin with people in your immediate community before you try your skills out with other cultures, particularly ones in which you are in conflict, or disagree with for some reason.

The poet Rumi said, "The universal light of humanity burns in the innermost depths of diversity. We must bring each of these lights together." To bring these lights together we need courage, compassion and wisdom. Once we unlock our minds, we can begin to build our intercultural capacity and become global citizens and in time, engage in inter-civilization dialogue with great results. By transforming into global citizens, both sides of cultures-in-conflict can develop real and sustained relationships. And remember both sides of cultures-in-conflict need to develop cultural modesty!

Exercise: The Skill of Recognizing Cultural Arrogance

Step One:

Notice your thinking. Think about a person you dislike. Brush the thought away. Think of a person from another culture. Then think of another person who is a citizen of your country or part of your community but is not originally from your area.

Observe your reaction. What are the differences between your reactions to all three? The similarities? Where do you think these differences come from inside your life? Once you

comprehend why you feel the way you do, what new actions can you do to create a better relationship? If you are successful at this then you have begun broadening your relationships.

Congratulations!

Step Two:

Practice this with someone from a different culture. Take the principle of the Earth Charter that is interesting to the both of you. Discuss it from both cultures and then from the point of view that we are all part of the community of life. What have you learned about yourself and about your friend? Did you feel yourself become arrogant that the beliefs of your culture were superior to theirs? If you did, how can you get back into balance with your friend? We all have cultural arrogance. We need to be able to recognize it in ourselves and in others. If you recognize it in yourself, by talking about it you may be able to help the Other observe it in themselves. Again, congratulations!!

Step Three:

You can use this exercise within your own community as well. After all generational culture and gender cultures are as powerful as ethnic culture. Parents and children, men and women all have ways of looking at the same things in very different ways. If you can suspend your judgments and assumptions, you can become curious at how the Other person thinks. “Can you help me by describing how you came to believe what you do?” “What is behind your thinking when you say.” Many people do not know how to create great dialogue with even their family and community. This is because their arrogance doesn’t allow them to see others as they truly are – a valuable part of the human community.

Participant’s comments:

I have learned to respect people's culture, traditions and beliefs.
Nwokocha Ijeoma, Grade SS2, Age 16

Teacher’s Notes:

C. Disparagement vs. Encouragement

The Skill at Recognizing Disparagement in Thought, Word and Deed

Disparaging others is a deeply ingrained part of living. We look with disdain on people whose opinions we don't share, whose music is not what we like, whose political preferences we don't share. We hold people who we have wronged in contempt and cultures that have done us wrong in the past with hate. These negative feelings hamper our ability to respect and to find the wonderful relationships that might be hidden between people. We all have had the experience of learning to like someone we used to dislike. We want to change this happenstance into a skill we can use in our lives.

Harboring negative feelings brings down your own life. It does nothing for the other person who might or might not even know how you feel. The point is that your negativity prevents you from being happy, from using that moment of thought more wisely, more effectively. Many times you don't even know you are disparaging other people.

Stephanie Tansey discovered that she disparaged whole institutions, whole groups of people that she was afraid of because they didn't care about the same things that she did. As she hunted for her disparagements, she discovered many. And when she cleared her mind of them, the world around her changed as well.

Now we will learn to find treasured friends in the most unlikely places. Rather than disparage, encourage. The power of encouragement, of praise, is astounding. When praised highly by others, one feels that there is no hardship one cannot bear. Such is the courage that springs from praise.

Exercise I: Recognizing Disparagement

Notice your thinking. Bring up someone you disparage. Ask yourself why do you disparage that person? Notice your feeling of negativity. Does it feel good? Does it make you want to dance with joy? Of course not.

There are obviously people who do wrong. Of course you should speak out and correct their wrongful acts if you can. Just don't condemn the person, because this is disparagement.

Exercise II: From Disparagement to Encouragement

Step One: Notice your thinking. Think of a person. See if you can separate the actions from the life of the person. What would you say to that person about his or her action? This very thought is an action. Because all life is interconnected, you are already on the way to helping him correct his or her life. You may in fact at some point be able to talk to him about the error in such a way that change occurs. To help someone who is deeply in error is a wonderful thing.

Step Two: Select someone who you normally disparage. Make a project out of encouraging that person on a regular basis. See what a difference encouragement makes to that person and to you.

We have a lot of negativity in our lives. Disparaging others only makes our own life heavier. Let's learn to encourage rather than disparage, this is the fastest way to help the Other become a

better human being. In this way you will have changed an I/It relationship to an I/You relationships. This can be the beginning of a treasured relationship.

Participant's comments:

I have been taught to use dialogue skills in handling situations and to avoid conflict. I know now not to disparage or to discourage others.

Simon Innocent, Grade SS2, Age 17

Teacher's Notes:

D. Creating Harmony

The Skill of Connecting to the Community of Life

The human community is made of a rich assortment of cultures, religions, and ways of understanding how to live life wisely. The Earth Charter's sixteen principles begin and end with Respect and Care for the Community of Life. Connecting to the community of life will make you to become a global citizen. From that grand perspective then the community problems you have will begin to seem manageable. This is the purpose of this manual.

Are we really part of a community of life? We are similar in many ways, we all have symmetry, and we grow our limbs the same way. Even non-living things like shells have symmetry. They also have a beginning and an end. Indeed every life on this planet has its own story of how it was born, grew, got sick and died. We are all connected by these stories. Sometimes I am telling my story (growing in some way). Sometimes (like on a beach sunning) the ants smelling my watermelon are into their own story. The waves are full of creatures living their story. And we are all connected to the planet by the elements – water, earth, fire and air. What we think, say and do has impact in our own lives. How can we say that we have no connection with others? There is great value in connecting to life. We just need to start to do it.

Creating harmony comes first from polishing our own self-awareness and getting rid of disrespect, arrogance, and disparagement. Next we have to reach out to the members of the community with courage, compassion and wisdom. One to one dialogues, group discussions, enjoying cultural activities can all be useful for the human community.

What about for your environment? One might say that there are, ultimately, three relationships in the life of a person - the relationship between the individual and his or her own Self, between those individuals and living beings, and between that individual and the planetary environment.

Many of us have forgotten or ignore the environment but we do so to our peril as we know now from the current global warming going all around us. This is affecting your community and it was caused by incremental but pervasive disrespect, arrogance and greed, and disparagement of environment. To reconnect to our planet and other life on it is a vital action to healing your human community around you.

Exercise: The Skill of Connecting to Nature

Did you ever have a favorite tree, bush, or pet when you were little? A favorite family outing? Does it still exist? Many of these places no longer exist so you may have to look for a new experience in nature. It could be a tree or bush on your way to work or school. A plant in your home. It doesn't matter. Think about your feelings towards this wonder of nature. Plants and animals are known to feel as well. You have been having a dialogue with nature only you don't realize it.

Exercise: The Skill of Building a Harmonious Community

Notice your thinking. Think of your community as a living organism. What could the community do together that would help it develop into a thriving and flourishing place to live?

Use your Dialogue Skills and talk with members of your community and see if you can come up with a common purpose, something that everyone agrees to.

Once you have your mission project, create a plan and a strategy together. Assign different parts to people and then meet regularly to report and develop the project further. Don't forget to include the Earth Charter principles, the training in dialogue skills, and the community building skills as part of the encouragement and training.

You will see your community develop and your project develop. Both must be done together or there will be disharmony.

Start with a small project and then build up slowly as you all become better and better at creating harmony, until you can really tackle big changes and succeed.

Participant's comments:

For me this is an act of co-operation. I am happy to be a partaker of this.
Kingsley Chimezie, Grade JSS2, Age 16

Teacher's Notes:

Section Five: Living a Contributive Life

What is the value of living a contributive life? What does this mean?

It is a very complex world and the human and environmental degradation is more complicated than ever before. Unseen greed, anger and stupidity on the other side of the planet can affect your daily life. Pollution, social strife and corruption, global health problems, diminishing of food and natural resources, climate change are all part of our world today. How then are you going to make your way in life?

The answer lies in the very nature of life itself. The community of life connects each of to one another. What you think, say and do in your school, family and community does indeed affect life around the world. So contributing to the world is really contributing to yourselves as well. It is the right way to create a very satisfying life for yourself and your family.

You could be the one person who really makes a difference. Your community needs people who know how to solve problems, how to talk to people so they want to do the right thing and who can lead others into a future where meaningful work, humanitarian business, a thriving environment, and the power of dialogue is what is used to solve the problems of the world really becomes a reality.

Dialogue is the key. Develop your skill until it is an art. This takes courage and faith in yourself. Dialogue is inherent in all humans, we have just neglected using it. Developing your art of dialogue takes character. And the world desperately needs people who can courageously develop the power of their voice so that human beings can solve more and more problems through collaboration and do away with harmful violence.

How can you develop character? You need to assess your strengths and weaknesses. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? Do you know them or can your friends help you look at yourself? Once you know them, polish your strengths and change your weaknesses. If you lack confidence, for example, think of projects that will help you build that confidence.

Finally think deeply inside and find your mission. How do you find your mission? By discovering what it is that you love to help other people with and connecting that to what your community or the world really needs help with. What kind of wonderful life can you have knowing that so many people are so happy because of you!

If you hate growing vegetables to sell to the community even though the community needs vegetables then that is not your mission and though it might be something for the short-term. Many times what you work at and what your mission is not the same. You may never be paid for the artwork you create but your paintings can bring joy to many people.

If you like to help your brothers and sisters learn to read, then perhaps some kind of teaching is what could be your mission. If you love selling, but sell products that are unhealthy, this cannot be a mission. However if you love selling, and sell products that make life better for others, then this can be a great mission.

The next step is to develop your mission over time. What skills or experience do you need to acquire? Why can teach you? Do you need a university education or some kind of professional training? Can you apprentice with some one? Your mission can change over time of course, but setting up a plan for your life as far as you can see it, will help keep you focused on your dream.

You need to develop your moral character. You need to build up your sense of what the right thing to do is. Knowing right from wrong is an instinct that human beings have agreed is a way to live in harmony with one another. There are locally correct actions, though, that might not be right for the whole nation. At the same time, there are actions that are could be wrong for the whole international community and the community of life. Develop your moral character so that you are respected at the local, national and international levels. That is the fastest way to create the change you want to see in the world.

To develop your moral character, you need to build confidence in your basic instincts of right and wrong. Ask yourself, when you do something wrong, “Was that the right thing to do?” Or help others and ask them, “Was that the right thing to do?” We all know what *right* feels like. We all know what *wrong* feels like. The more you ask these questions the more you will build a stronger instinct to do the right thing. This will become an instinct rather than an exercise. You will feel great when you do the right thing and really terrible when you do a wrong thing.

Mistakes are not the same thing as doing something wrong. Mistakes happen because of some unconscious reaction or because you lack the necessary knowledge. Happily, even when you make mistakes, you can decide to change this “poison” into “medicine.” Turning poison into medicine is a principle that says that through your own willpower you can turn a problem into helping you to see how to better move forward that you couldn’t have seen if you had not made that mistake.

Finally you need to develop your willpower. Your will is an incredible power source. It can give you the strength to achieve victory no matter what the obstacles. On the other hand, a weak will cannot achieve the joy of finding and accomplishing your mission.

How can you strengthen your will power? By setting goals for yourself and working hard to achieve them. When you fail, get back on your feet. When you succeed, choose a more difficult goal. In this way you can grow your will power to be as great as the whole universe. Everyone has this potential but few achieve it. A thousand mile journey starts with a single step. Keep going and you will achieve great things.

In other words, making your way through the world by living a contributive life is something that will benefit yourself as well as others. As you develop your power of dialogue your future prospects will bright because your community respects you and appreciates you. The environment where you live will be more peaceful so you can enjoy your life. Your work of strengthening your character will bring you the joy of fulfilling your mission will bring you great satisfaction.

Suggested Discussions

What is the value of living a contributive life. What does this mean?

*How do you apply Dialogue Skills in your life?
How can you help others remember their rights?*

A. Who is responsible for your learning?

It is normally thought that teachers and other elders are responsible for your learning. However ultimately your learning is up to you. If you don't learn how to write well who is the person who will suffer the most? Not the teacher. Again, if you can't learn to solve problems mathematically, who will have a problem in university? Not the teacher. It is you who will suffer the most.

You become educated through the effort you put into it. Once you realize this you will look differently at your work and at your teacher. You will see the marks on your tests as signs that you really understand the material or don't. If you have a lot of wrong answers, what does this mean? That you do not understand something. What can you do about this? Ask your teacher. Or, ask your parents or other people in your school. Sometimes it takes some people more time than others. If you don't ask questions then you lose the opportunity to learn and apply that knowledge in the plans you have for your life.

On the other hand, if you are getting good marks on your tests, that means you understand what you are being taught. Then you can ask yourself, "How does this subject fit into my mission?" or "How does this subject fit into my future studies?" Perhaps you can even do additional work so that you can excel not only in your class but in Nigeria or the world.

... it is through education that we are liberated from powerlessness, from the burden of mistrust directed against ourselves. We awaken the abilities which have been lying dormant within us. To arouse and extend the soul's aspiration to become full and complete. Can there be any more sublime experience in life?

The individual who has been liberated from self-doubt, who has learned to trust in him--or herself, is naturally able to believe in the latent capacities of others. One becomes able to look beyond the present appearance of another to perceive and believe in the wondrous treasures hidden within. Daisaku Ikeda, founder, Soka University System

Suggested Discussions

How can we learn to trust ourselves? To be free from self-doubt?

In what ways are you taking responsibility for your learning?

How can we get better at this?

How can we awaken our soul's aspiration?

B. Who Are You? Where Are You Going, Why Do You Study?

"The struggle to create new life from within is a truly wonderful thing. There is found the brilliant wisdom that guides and directs the workings of reason; the light of insight that penetrates the farthest reaches of the universe; the undaunted will to see justice done that meets and challenges all the assaults of evil; the spirit of unbounded care that embraces all who suffer. When these are fused with that energy of compassion that pours forth from the deepest sources of cosmic life, an ecstatic rhythm arises to color the lives of all people.

As you meet various trials and difficulties, thus polishing all the many facets of the jewel which is life, you will learn to walk the supreme pathway of humanity. ...those who embrace life's native creativity now stand and will continue to stand in the vanguard of history. Bringing the creativity of life to its fullest flowering is the work of human revolution. Carrying out this kind of human revolution is your mission throughout your life.” Daisaku Ikeda, founder, Soka University System.

Here you can see that your life has vast potential. How can you cultivate that potential? By revolutionizing your own life. This human revolution can be as vast and powerful as you make it. No one and nothing can prevent you from becoming wonderful unless you let them.. You are free to grow as big as you please. The Earth Charter principles can help you shape your goals and connect you with people all around the world who are also living a contributive life.

Where Are You Going?

Every relationship you have is either an I/You or an I/It. What relationships do you want to change into valuable ones? How can you build, in your life, a network of friends and mentors who will be there to help you achieve your goals?

Relationships are how you construct your path in life. Your relationship with people will determine many things. These people will either hire you or fire you, make you laugh or weep, enable you to get into university or not, will either buy what you have to sell or walk along without even seeing you.

Practicing and polishing your dialogue skills will help you change any bad relationships to good ones. They will deepen friendships into partnerships. They will determine your income and a satisfying marriage. They will help you achieve your goals.

Why Do You Study?

Many people study to better themselves. Unfortunately being knowledgeable does not always lead to happiness. Many very wealthy people, who have had access to the best education, live a lonely existence or actually do harm to others and think they can get away with it. Where is their mistake? How can you make sure you do not fall into the same sorry state? By determining to be a good global citizen.

When you live a contributive life, your study is focused on polishing your body and mind and creating ways to help others to do the same. The next global economy is all about this – how to create a just, sustainable and peaceful living ourselves and how can we help others to do the same? When we have the Earth Charter, dialogue skills, and community values very much a part of our lives, we have the tools to build our lives and our mission. You are learning to be good global citizens. A global citizen has:

- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living.
- The courage not to fear or deny difference; but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures, and to grow from encounters with them.

- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places.

This development of such wisdom, courage and compassion enables us to go beyond the confines of our own community and culture and embrace the world. When we do that, we find that the world will embrace us as well. We study and then apply what we have learned so that we develop the wisdom, courage and compassion to make good choices along the path to our mission.

Suggested Discussions

Who Are You? Where Are You Going?

Why Do You Study?

What is your battle today? What will it be tomorrow?

C. Observation, Comprehension and Application

Education is all about observation, comprehension and application. Indeed Makiguchi felt that if you did not apply what you learned in such a way it added value to you and the community, then you had not yet learned it.

Again you as the student can learn to use what you are learning in your every day life. It is a great way to learn and to make sure you have learned it well. Each day you can review the basic elements of what you learned that day and think about how to apply them in your home or your community. You might not be able to do everything so you can imagine ways to use what you learn as well. This is what makes education come alive for you.

First observe your neighborhood or community. What is in your community? What stores, paths, roads, waterways, shops, animals, trees, bushes? What is the traffic pattern? What kind of people live next to you? What is your home like? What are the environmental problems you can see? You can continue your observation to include the topography, the layout and quantity of the village homes, the kinds of labor, the kinds of foods, cleaning utensils, textiles, and parental marketing skills or farming skills, the food products grown, the market products, and the governing structure, cultural festivals and family activities.

Next understand your neighborhood or community better by asking the questions: why, how, when, who? How are some people like you and how are they different? When is the road in front of your home the busiest? And so on so that you create a good understanding of your community. You need to make sure you understand what you are learning in school as well.

Finally you can begin to think, in science class, for example, what you have learning could be helpful in your community? In Language class, what kind of language skills could be helpful in your community? What kind of math or measurements can you do that will help your family with cooking or accounting? What kind of healthy habits would be good for you to share at home? What kind of economic wisdom would be helpful to your family or for your plans for your future support of your family?

Sometimes you will see that you thought you learned something in school but when you applied it at home that you saw that you really didn't fully understand what you learned. This is great because now you can go back to the teacher or a friend and make sure you got it. In this way your community can really help you help yourself.

This is the very essence of education – to live a contributive life helps you live a successful one as well. Polish yourself and help others to do the same.

You can use your community to learn everything about the laws of the universe, the ecosystem of the community, and this will help you to live wisely, experience deeply, and contribute immensely to the good of the community at home and to the whole community of life. Developing your powers of observation, comprehension and application will build a fountain of wisdom in your life.

Suggested Discussions

What does it mean to observe?

What does it mean to comprehend?

What does it mean to apply what you have learned?

If you have applied what you have learned and it has caused harm, did you actually really learn anything?

What is the relationship between adding value and education?

D. The Dragon Gate and You

A waterfall called the Dragon Gate exists in China. Its waters plunge a hundred feet, swifter than an arrow shot by a strong warrior. It is said that a great many carp gather in the basin below; hoping to climb the falls, and that any that succeeds will turn into a dragon. Some are swept away by the strong currents, some fall prey to eagles, hawks and other birds, and others are netted, scooped up, or even shot with arrows by fishermen who line both banks of the falls. Such is the difficulty a carp faces in becoming a dragon.

In China, a dragon is a mythic creature that is so powerful that it can control the weather in the sky. Such a creature can do so much for himself but also for the world.

Today trying to create democracy in Nigeria is like a carp trying to swim up the Dragon Gate. Creating a government that is of the people, for the people and by the people is a very big task. Nothing is nobler than an alliance of awakened people. Nothing is stronger than the voices of the people who have stood up to make a difference. To bring forth, develop and unite the power of the people that has long been stifled is the hope and deep wish of humanity.

Dragon Gate and Tracking:

How are you going to develop the skills to help Africa?

What tracking skills will you need to make sure you get up the waterfall and become a dragon? A tracker knows exactly where he or she is going. Both body and mind are focused on the task. The body is making only the movements that will quietly but surely

bringing the tracker closer to the goal. The mind is focused on victory. What strengths and weaknesses do you have as a tracker? What can you do to polish these?

Dragon Gate and Forgiveness

Africa has much to offer the world and indeed this century, many say, will be the Century of Africa. This Century of Africa will be a century of life in which all living beings on this planet can live together in peace and harmony. The time has come when the entire world will learn from the energy, the strength and the wisdom of Africa, which has held on to the happy pulse of life in spite of all that was taken from it by others.

Many say that it is the traditional value of forgiveness that gives Africa its strength. How does that happen? How does that happen in your experience? How can you help others learn to forgive?

E. Africa and You

The human population today is 6.6 billion and is thought to have survived unimaginable trials and tribulations for some 7 million years. This awareness alone could serve to bring people closer to each other. Just like a massive family, whose members share similar joys and sorrows, we could all live in a more peaceful world if we could deepen our understanding and appreciation of the humanist spirit of Africa.

Here is the Mother Earth of humankind. It was from here that civilization began to expand to all corners of the world. From here continuously blows a new wind. In ancient times, in the Roman period and in modern times, the wind of hope blows from Africa, carrying an abundant, mighty and animated ambience.

How can you develop a deep understanding of the value of Africa? How can you explain it to those who are not African in such a way that they realize its value?

F. Africa and the World and You

The African soul holds rich wisdom that brings together human beings, human beings and nature, and human beings and eternity. Humanity may find a source for its renaissance in the African concepts of fusion and coexistence among a broad diversity of living beings.

In what ways can you learn to fuse better, to coexist better in your community? How can you use your experience to help non-Africans to do the same?

Suggestions for Discussions:

What kind of character does a fish need to get up the waterfall and become a dragon?

What does that fish need to understand about the animals and people as it makes its way up the waterfall?

How are you going to become a dragon?

How can you help Nigeria become a democracy?

How are you going to develop the skills to help Africa?

What is the role of forgiveness in the journey of your life? In the journey of Nigeria and Africa into the future?

Participants Comments:

This has given me the courage to see the future bright and to contribute positively to it.
Irene Augustine Onogwu, Grade SS1, Age 18

I now know that am in the driver seat of my education.
Chioma Nwafor, Grade SS1, Age 14

It taught me to use dialogue skills and to be the driver seat of my education
Yusuf Isah, Grade SS1, Age 14

I have come to know that I am in the driver seat of my education.
Victor Udeogu, Grade SS1, Age 14

I have learned not to pollute the environment and am a changed person compared to when I first came to ASE. Bode Alonge, Grade SS2, Age 18

I have learn how to be patient with people in life. i am slow to anger now.
Jimoh Ibrahim, Grade SS2, Age 16

For more information:

Earth Charter Communities is directed by Stephanie Tansey. For more information, contact her at tansey@usa.net. In Nigeria, you can also go to: www.earthchartercommunities.org/nigeria or contact Mr. Enyi A. Abu, founder and director of the African School of Excellence, african.schoolsuleja@yahoo.com.

In the U.S, contact Glenna Gerard, co-author of the book Dialogue which has been so invaluable to us is continuing to teach facilitation programs. You can contact her at glenna49@earthlink.net.

About the Earth Charter: www.earthcharter.org

The Earth Charter is a widely recognized, global consensus statement on ethics and values for a sustainable future. Developed over a period of ten years, in what has been called the most extensive global consultation process ever associated with an international declaration, the Earth Charter has been formally endorsed by over 2,500 organizations, including global institutions such as UNESCO and the World Conservation Union (IUCN), and thousands of individuals.

The Earth Charter Initiative has a large community network of diverse and governmental, civil society, religious, business, and international institutions who are formally or informally linked to the Initiative, as Affiliates, Partners, Endorsers and Supporters.

The Earth Charter Initiative is a global civil society effort. The Initiative is supported by Earth Charter International (ECI), a small coordinating secretariat governed by the Earth Charter International Council and comprised of a small network of regional centers and field-posted representatives. The headquarters is at the University of Peace in Costa Rica along with an educational center, Center for Education for Sustainable Development.

The Earth Charter Teacher Resource Center which is a forum for the educators using the Earth Charter as an educational tool worldwide:

<http://trcwiki.free.fr/joomla/>. Here you will find links related to lesson- and unit plans that relate directly to the Earth Charter principles. The Education Center encourages you to add to our continually growing list of resources and to provide input as to how effective you found these resources to be in your educational practice.

The Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development has a website <http://ec-snet.wikispaces.com> which is designed to provide a space for collaboration and sharing for teachers and students who are putting into practice activities and projects on education for sustainable development using the Earth Charter. We have created this online resource in response to petitions made by many students and teachers that are using the Earth Charter as educational tool.

There is also a new short Earth Charter video produced by our Brazilian Affiliate. This very short video is wonderful for children and adults and can be used in a variety of settings. This and other Earth Charter-related videos are available at <http://www.youtube.com/user/ECInternational>

Bibliography

Ayittey, George B.N. Indigenous African Institutions, Second Edition (Ardsley, NY: Transnational Publishers, 2006)

Linda Ellinor, Glenna Gerard, Dialogue: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1998)

Bethel, Dayle M., ed., Education for Creative Living; Ideas and Proposals of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, A. Birnbaum trans. (Ames:Iowa State University Press, Ames)

Bethel, Dayle, ed. A Geography of Human Life by Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (San Francisco: Caddo Gap Press)

Future Development

Future developments will include Professional Development Training Programs for teachers outside of ASE and an Institute for Inter-faith Conflict-De-escalation and Dialogue.

APPENDIX

The Earth Charter www.earthcharter.org

PREAMBLE

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

Earth, Our Home

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

The Global Situation

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, and a massive extinction of species. Communities are being undermined. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance, and violent conflict are widespread and the cause of great suffering. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems. The foundations of global security are threatened. These trends are perilous-but not inevitable.

The Challenges Ahead

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. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.

Universal Responsibility

To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.

PRINCIPLES

I. RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.

- a. Recognize that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.*
- b. Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity.*

2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love.

- a. Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and to protect the rights of people.*
- b. Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good.*

3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.

- a. Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential.*
- b. Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible.*

4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

- a. Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations.*
- b. Transmit to future generations the values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities.*

In order to fulfill these four broad commitments, it is necessary to:

II. ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

5. *Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.*

- a. Adopt at all levels sustainable development plans and regulations that make environmental conservation and rehabilitation integral to all development initiatives.*
- b. Establish and safeguard viable nature and biosphere reserves, including wild lands and marine areas, to protect Earth's life support systems, maintain biodiversity, and preserve our natural heritage.*
- c. Promote the recovery of endangered species and ecosystems.*
- d. Control and eradicate non-native or genetically modified organisms harmful to native species and the environment, and prevent introduction of such harmful organisms.*
- e. Manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems.*
- f. Manage the extraction and use of non-renewable resources such as minerals and fossil fuels in ways that minimize depletion and cause no serious environmental damage.*

6. *Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.*

- a. Take action to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive.*
- b. Place the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and make the responsible parties liable for environmental harm.*
- c. Ensure that decision making addresses the cumulative, long-term, indirect, long distance, and global consequences of human activities.*
- d. Prevent pollution of any part of the environment and allow no build-up of radioactive, toxic, or other hazardous substances.*
- e. Avoid military activities damaging to the environment.*

7. *Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.*

- a. Reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials used in production and consumption systems, and ensure that residual waste can be assimilated by ecological systems.*
- b. Act with restraint and efficiency when using energy, and rely increasingly on renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.*
- c. Promote the development, adoption, and equitable transfer of environmentally sound technologies.*
- d. Internalize the full environmental and social costs of goods and services in the selling price, and enable consumers to identify products that meet the highest social and environmental standards.*
- e. Ensure universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction.*

f. Adopt lifestyles that emphasize the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world.

8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.

a. Support international scientific and technical cooperation on sustainability, with special attention to the needs of developing nations. b. Recognize and preserve the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being. c. Ensure that information of vital importance to human health and environmental protection, including genetic information, remains available in the public domain.

III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.

a. Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required. b. Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves. c. Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.

10. Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.

a. Promote the equitable distribution of wealth within nations and among nations. b. Enhance the intellectual, financial, technical, and social resources of developing nations, and relieve them of onerous international debt. c. Ensure that all trade supports sustainable resource use, environmental protection, and progressive labor standards. d. Require multinational corporations and international financial organizations to act transparently in the public good, and hold them accountable for the consequences of their activities.

11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity.

a. Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them. b. Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries. c. Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members.

12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

a. Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national, ethnic or social origin. b. Affirm the right

of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods. c. Honor and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies. d. Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance.

IV. DEMOCRACY, NONVIOLENCE, AND PEACE

13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice.

- a. Uphold the right of everyone to receive clear and timely information on environmental matters and all development plans and activities which are likely to affect them or in which they have an interest.*
- b. Support local, regional and global civil society, and promote the meaningful participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making.*
- c. Protect the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent.*
- d. Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures, including remedies and redress for environmental harm and the threat of such harm.*
- e. Eliminate corruption in all public and private institutions.*
- f. Strengthen local communities, enabling them to care for their environments, and assign environmental responsibilities to the levels of government where they can be carried out most effectively.*

14. Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.

- a. Provide all, especially children and youth, with educational opportunities that empower them to contribute actively to sustainable development.*
- b. Promote the contribution of the arts and humanities as well as the sciences in sustainability education.*
- c. Enhance the role of the mass media in raising awareness of ecological and social challenges.*
- d. Recognize the importance of moral and spiritual education for sustainable living.*

15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.

- a. Prevent cruelty to animals kept in human societies and protect them from suffering.*
- b. Protect wild animals from methods of hunting, trapping, and fishing that cause extreme, prolonged, or avoidable suffering.*
- c. Avoid or eliminate to the full extent possible the taking or destruction of non-targeted species.*

16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace.

- a. Encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations.*
- b. Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes.*
- c. Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense*

posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration.

d. Eliminate nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

e. Ensure that the use of orbital and outer space supports environmental protection and peace.

f. Recognize that peace is 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.

THE WAY FORWARD

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfill this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter.

This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realize the vision. We must deepen and expand the global dialogue that generated the Earth Charter, for we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom.

Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonize diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organization, and community has a vital role to play. The arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments are all called to offer creative leadership. The partnership of government, civil society, and business is essential for effective governance.

In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations, fulfill their obligations under existing international agreements, and support the implementation of Earth Charter principles with an international legally binding instrument on environment and development.

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.

Inter-faith Dialogue Strategies

Creating good Inter-faith dialogue takes time. The following is an example of how to progress.

Create opportunities to greet practitioners of other faiths. When you see that some are responding well to you have reached the first stage.

The next stage is starting a conversation. If the person is a market seller you could greet him in his own language. If you get a good response, then you have reached the second stage. You can now discuss the goods being sold and perhaps he will even sell it more cheaply because you have started a relationship with him.

The third stage would be when you can sit down and have a conversation about the family, about common interests.

The fourth stage would be being comfortable asking him a question about his beliefs.

“I have always wanted to understand your religion better. May I ask you a question (with great curiosity)? When he says yes, ask a question that is not sensitive. “Have you been to Mecca?” What was it like?”

The fifth stage is when you can begin to ask sensitive questions, always using curiosity so that you are in good control of yourself.

At some point he will start asking questions as well. Do not try and convert him. Respond to the questions not to your desire to help him understand how great your religion is.

In this way you will have developed a host of experiences. You will have made some mistakes. When you do, just apologize for them. Apology is a great tool in inter-cultural relations and much will be forgiven.

Earth Charter Community Scouts Design

The Earth Charter Community Scouts Program at ASE consists of three teams. Each team has a different focus: community, leading others, and dialogue. The teams meet regularly and also participate together in hikes and community service. ASE plans to incorporate job training and business development through the recycling of waste materials, and in this way help sharpen the positive thinking of the youth. We also will help the women of our community harvest their produce and market them sustainably and in this way empower them to help them raise their families and grow a healthy community.

African School of Excellence Garden Program

As part of the Value Creating Education methodology, ASE also maintains a garden which enables students to have a practical way to apply their academic learning. It also serves as a

basis for community service since the fruits and vegetables to into the school's breakfast program. This also helps students learn how to farm well and also help contribute to their family's economic fortune.

**Earth Charter Communities/Nigeria
Parental Community Outreach Program and Community Outreach Program Seminar**

Purpose of the Seminar

The purpose of the seminar is to give an introduction to adult community members the unique blend of environmentalism, dialogue skills, community building and seeing African traditional values in a modern context that ASE is teaching its students so that they can create value with their lives, both for themselves and for others. This seminar can help someone resolve differences, restore harmony with the environment, create community, use their heritage in a wise and productive way and lead a contributive life. These are all ingredients to a happy and successful life.

Seminar Schedule

The seminar is conducted over five days. Each day's workshop consisted of four sections. The Section One uses the Earth Charter to learn about and raise the global consciousness about our connection to the community of life and the principles of living that will enable us to become good global citizens. Section Two is learning about and practicing dialogue skills. Section Three is remembering and applying traditional African institutions in a modern context. Section Four is identifying, comprehending and applying the values that create harmony in a community. Our method, education for creative living, is the method of teaching we use to guide others.

Session Plan Form

Session Plan Sections Sample (Session 2 or 3 in the case below)

Section	Introduction or Review	New	Application
Earth Charter	What is the Earth Charter?	<i>Respect and Care for the Community of Life</i>	Create a deep discussion and explanation
Dialogue Skill	What is a dialogue skill?	<i>Assumptions</i>	Do exercise
Community Building	Respect	<i>Cultural Modesty – how do you create this in the community?</i>	Do exercise
The African values in a Modern Context	Councils	<i>The history of Human Rights in Africa.</i>	Discuss how to set up a council in the class: what works today and what does not?
Living a Contributive Life	Why live a contributive life?	<i>Who is in the “driver’s seat” of your education?</i>	Discuss ways a student can become the best “driver.”

Blank Session Plan -- make copies and use for each session. Keep each on file for next year.

Section	Introduction or Review	New Material	Application
Earth Charter			Create a deep discussion
Dialogue Skill			Do exercise
Community Building			Do exercise
The African values in a Modern Context			Discuss how to set up a council in the class: what works today and what does not?
Living a Contributive Life			Discuss ways a student can become the best “driver.”

NOTES: