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Earth Charter
Workshop Tool Kit
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This Toolkit is offered to you as an instrument and guide to use when you wish to organize an Earth Charter Workshop.

How to use the toolkit?

This toolkit has different sections; you can choose the section you need to undertake the design of your workshop depending on the goal of the activity.

- What is the Earth Charter?
- How to organize an Earth Charter Workshop?
- Activities to promote individual and communitarian values.
- Activities to design an Earth Charter Workshop based on the four broad principles of the Earth Charter:
 - ✓ **Respect and Care of the Community of life**
-Respect Earth and Life in all its diversity-
 - ✓ **Ecological Integrity**
-Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love-
 - ✓ **Social and Economic Justice**
-Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations-
 - ✓ **Democracy, No Violence and Peace**
-Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful-

There is another section that could be use as personal toolkit after the workshop:

- How I can develop actions on the Earth Charter?
 - **Personal Actions** /My Skills
-Potential of Humanity-
 - **Community Actions** /My Relationships
-Global Ethics-
 - **Environmental Actions** /My Space
-Community of Life-

What is the Earth Charter?

1. What is the Earth Charter?

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It 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 help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history.

2. Is the Earth Charter primarily concerned about the environment?

In the Earth Charter there is a special emphasis on the world's environmental challenges. However, the document's inclusive ethical vision recognizes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible. It provides a new framework for thinking about and addressing these issues. The result is a fresh, broad conception of what constitutes a sustainable community and sustainable development.

3. Why is the Earth Charter important?

At a time when major changes in how we think and live are urgently needed, the Earth Charter challenges us to examine our values and to choose a better way. It calls on us to search for common ground in the midst of our diversity and to embrace a new ethical vision that is shared by growing numbers of people in many nations and cultures throughout the world.

How to organize an Earth Charter workshop?

The First step:

- Define the goal of the workshop:
 - Analyze the Earth Charter Document, historical background or process, etc (1).
 - Sensitize the group about the Earth Charter
 - Use the Earth Charter as an instrument to analyze the community or group reality and find sustainable solutions.
 - Others

The second step to undertake such workshop should be to clarify the following aspects:

- Each specific group that participates in these workshops needs to be put in the right context with regards to the Earth Charter process. This must include elements such as the purpose of the Earth Charter Initiative, its historical background, the need for an ethical commitment and fitting this process into the group's reality.
- Clarify the conceptual meaning of values², principles³, ethics⁴ and sustainable development⁵, you should also go beyond a conceptual definition and bring these concepts to the reality of communities and people.
- Request participants to share their own opinion about these.

The Third step is to ensure participants understand the content of the Earth Charter Document.

- The Workshop activities should consider that the Earth Charter offers an integrated approach of our social, environmental and economic goals, through four broad interrelated commitments:
 - Respect Earth and Life in all its diversity,
 - 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.

It will be good to open a space for participants to reflect on this. Highlight that the Earth Charter is focused on the positive side each human being has and that it relies on our creativity to build a different future which is sustainable.

- The pedagogical actions of these workshops should guide the change of attitude needed to harmonize personal and collective interests. This includes the search for the balance between individual aspirations and

those belonging to the entire community. The work initiated with the Earth Charter process should analyze and educate people in the responsibility of human beings to achieve common good. It is important to ensure that will be an interactive process with continuous reflections of our own attitudes and the principles contained in the Charter.

- In this context, each part of the Earth Charter should be presented (a briefing on its contents).
- Time should be allowed for participants to exchange views on how they can apply or relate the content of the Earth Charter to their day-to-day decisions.

(1) The Earth Charter Process:

*What is the Earth Charter and why do we need it? (PowerPoint presentation available on www.earthcharter.org)

(2) Meaning of Values:

Values are related to the importance of something. They are subjective and are the first point that motivates an individual to make decisions.

(3) Meaning of Principles:

Principles are generated by values. They offer norms and guidelines for conduct. They relate to reasoning and decisions.

(4) Meaning of Ethics:

It has its origin in the Greek word "ethos", which means the behaviour of a group. It is formed by a set of principles that directs the attitudes of this group/ society towards the communal property of this community system.

(5) Meaning of Sustainable Development:

Is the process that moderates the human scale in the planet and revalue the environment as a vital counterpart in the interdependence between human beings and nature?

Suggestion: Organizers of a workshop are encouraged to look into definitions/meanings of the terms above and come up with an explanation they feel comfortable with.

Activities to promote individual and community values

Activity 1:

Objective: Analyze how each person can promote the Earth Charter.

Steps:

1. Split the general group into small working groups;
2. Ask each participant to write down individually: "two positive characteristics that describe myself"
3. Ask them to answer individually: "identifying two things I would like to improve in myself"
4. Share individual information with the small groups with the help of a board or something similar.
5. Discuss the experience in the bigger group.
6. In the bigger group: Describe four common characteristics the whole group has.
7. In the bigger group: Discuss how those characteristics can promote the Earth Charter principles.

Reflections:

*The Earth Charter is not an international declaration separate from our daily life. Most of the attitudes and positive actions found by doing the activity could be found in the Earth Charter.

Activity 2:

Objective: Creating a common vision for the future.

Steps:

1. Request the group to answer the following questions:
"What are your personal aspirations"/ "what do you want to achieve in life?"
2. Request that the participants share two or three ideas with the group.
3. Discuss in groups: "What is the environmental, social, economic impact of each of these?"
4. Discuss in groups: "Can you align these aspirations with the principles of the Earth Charter?"

Reflection:

* Think on the importance of the convergence between your goals and the impact on the common good.

Activities to design an Earth Charter workshop based on the four broad principles of the Earth Charter:

"Behind every action there is a value"

****Respect and Care of the Community of life

Respect Earth and Life in all its diversity

The **Earth Charter** highlights our sense of **interdependence** and **global responsibility**. With this understanding we urge to walk towards a **culture of peace**.

Activity 1:

- Objective: Highlight the sense of interdependence and global responsibility.
- Materials: small pieces of paper, 1 marker.
- How to organize the game:
 - *Make 3 or more groups with the small pieces of paper.
 - *To each of the paper groups assign a letter of the alphabet or a symbol and write it down. Ex: group 1- letter a; group 2- letter b; etc.
- Instructions for the group:
 - *Ask the participants to be quiet.
 - *In silence put on participant's forehead a small piece of paper with the symbol written down. Make sure the participant doesn't know which symbol is written on his or her paper.
 - *Mix up the group.
 - *Ask the participants to find their own letter group. The participants cannot talk or write.
 - *After 5 minutes the 3 letter or symbol groups must be together. To do so, the help of other participants who are not part of their group will be necessary.
- Reflections:
 - *Discuss the experience with the entire group.
 - *Ask the group: how they were capable to find their letter or symbol groups?
 - * Discuss the experience and think about interdependence and global responsibility.
 - *Request the group to find a principle in the Earth Charter that can be related with the experience.
 - *Request the group to think about how the experience is related to their work in their organization.

****Respect and Care of the Community of life

Respect Earth and Life in all its diversity

The **Earth Charter** highlights our sense of **interdependence** and **global responsibility**. With this understanding we urge to walk towards a **culture of peace**.

Activity 2:

- Objective: Highlight the importance of team work.
- How to organize the game:
 - *Ask participants to make a circle.
 - *Ask participants to take a hand of a partner in front and one from the partner diagonal to him or her. (all at the same time)As they take different hands they will make a human knot.
 - *Ask them to dissolve the human knot and recreate a circle holding hands all the time.
- Reflections:
 - *Discuss the experience with the entire group.
 - *Ask the group: how they were capable to dissolve the human knot?
 - * Discuss about the phrase "all the parts are important"
 - * Discuss the experience and think about interdependence and global responsibility.
 - *Request the group to find a principle in the Earth Charter that can be related with the experience.
 - *Request the group to think about how the experience is related to their work in their organization.

****Ecological Integrity

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

Sustainable production and consumption, habits for health, lifestyles might emphasize on the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world. 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.

Activity 1:

- Objective: Highlight the importance of sustainable resources management.
- Materials: One wooden box that support the whole group standing on it at the same time. Or masking tape to draw a square on the floor.
- How to organize the game:
 - *Put the wood box in the middle of the classroom or place where the activity is developing. Or draw on the floor with masking tape a square. Nor the box or the drawing must be not too big.
- Instructions for the group:
 - *Tell the group: The box is an imaginary island where the entire group (population) must live.
 - *Then, ask the group to stand on the box for 20 seconds, all at the same time.
 - *If you are using the wooden box: The feet cannot touch the floor.
- Reflections:
 - * Discuss the experience with the entire group.
 - *Ask the group: how they were capable to fit all in that space?
 - * Discuss the experience and think about: resources management. Highlight that a resource is limited or not depending on how we *manage* it; not on the *amount* of resources.
 - *Request the group to find a principle in the Earth Charter that can be related with the experience.
 - *Request the group to think on how the experience is related to their work in their organization.

****Ecological Integrity

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

Sustainable production and consumption, habits for health, lifestyles might emphasize on the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world. 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.

Activity 2:

As a workshop facilitator you have to invite people do to the following reflective exercise:

With your eyes closed:

1. Identify 2 important materials/ objects that you use daily. (instruments such as a pen, car, cloths, glasses, money, soap, shoes, any daily used article)

*Think of the use you give to it and how do you relate to this instrument/article.

*Visualize the raw materials that were necessary to produce this article/ object, where they come from? Which are the natural resources used to have it at your use?

* Visualize how these materials are produced, their process of transformation (persons participating in its production and other natural resources used and waste)

*Visualize the transformation of these materials.

*Then when you don't need it any longer what will happen with this?

Which should be your personal values when using these materials?
(You should ask these questions slowly to give people time to think)

2. Identify 2 kinds of formal organizations to which you belong. (football club, associations, church, family)

*Visualize what goes on when you are within this group, what happens, how to relate to each other?

*Which are the topics that are of concern to your organization?

*Who is benefited or affected by this organization?

*Who it empowers- who is empowered and who is not?

Which values should guide / govern the organization that you are part of?

3. Identify 2 types of skills or knowledge that you have. (Accounting, computers, carpentry, teaching, music, etc.)

*Visualize when and how use each of these skills.

- *How does this benefit or help others (which are the effects: bad or good?)
- *Who is affected?
- *Who is benefited?
- *Is it used to empower others?

Which values should govern the skills that you have? And How can that contribute to the common good?.

4. Identify the two most important persons in your life (write their names)

- * Visualize each of these persons.
- *See how you relate with each of them
- *How you talk to them and about what?
- *What do you offer and what do you receive?

Which values are guiding and should guide/ govern these relationships?

****Social and Economic Justice

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

A New Social organization is needed, which promotes social, environmental and productive processes in sustainability emphasizing on team work.

Activity 1:

- Objective: Share opinions in a creative way about our actions to promote Social and Economic Justice.
- Materials:
 - *Big Papers
 - *Newspapers and magazines.
 - *Scissors
 - *Glue
- Instructions for the group:
 - *Select an Earth Charter principle concerning on Social and Economic Justice.
 - *Split the group in subgroups.
 - *Each subgroup must define actions to promote the principle selected.
 - *Once they have discussed it ask them to make a poster (using the big paper) with all their ideas using the newspapers and magazines. The action or actions must be possible to explain by using the poster.
 - *Each group will select a relator who will ask to the entire group: "what is the message of the poster?"
 - *Once the entire group has participated the relator will explain the message.
 - *One person of the entire group will write down all the ideas the group has about the posters. At the end of the activity this person will expose all the ideas trying to figure out one principle idea about the ideas the group has to promote the principle on Social and Economic Justice.

Note: The idea of using the newspaper and magazines is to obtain simple and daily solutions, avoiding intellectual or complex and non- realistic speeches.

- Reflections:
 - *Discuss the experience with the entire group.
 - *Think about strategies to promote the Earth Charter by doing daily actions with daily resources.
 - *Request the group to think in how the experience is related to their work in their organization.

***Social and Economic Justice

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

A New Social organization is needed, which promotes social, environmental and productive processes in sustainability emphasizing on team work.

Activity 2:

- Objective: Distinguish the different roles involved in social decisions.
- How to organize the game:
 - *Define a social and economic situation that must be solved.
 - * Write down on different small pieces of paper different roles: business man, environmental people, NGO`s staff, government, students, and others.
 - *Make a subgroup of 5 people who will be actors of a play. (the rest of the group will observe the first part of the activity)
 - *Give to each of those acting people one small paper with the role written down (make sure no one else knows the others roles)
 - *Ask the actors to act the role (the role written on the small paper) by acting the situation previously defined. They must solve the situation during the play.
 - *After the play, ask to the rest of the group (who were not part of the acting subgroup) to find out which were the roles of each of the actors.
 - *Then, ask the bigger group to identify an Earth Charter Principle that could help to solve the problem.
 - *Then, ask to the acting group to re-act the situation with the Earth Charter in mind.
- Reflection:
 - *Ask participants to think about the experience.
 - *Put the Earth Charter in action.
 - *Make a reflection about the importance of finding a common values framework.
 - *Request the group to think about how the experience is related to their work in their organization.

***Democracy, Non Violence and Peace

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

A culture of peace is based on respect and care for the community of life; ecological integrity, social and economic justice; and democracy, non-violence and peace. As a culture, it needs to be lived daily, and be based on values and principles that govern individual and collective decisions. But more than simple individual decisions these values and principles, should govern the relations between myself, my own interests, and the interests of the collectivity.

Activity 1:

- Objective: Explore alternative ways of communication
- Materials:
 - *Small pieces of paper
 - *Marker
- How to organize the game:
 - *This is an activity to be undertaken in pairs or groups of 3 or 4 people depending on how big the whole group is.
 - *Select several animals that make sounds and make a list.
 - *Write down the names of the animals on the small pieces of paper.
 - *You should write the name of an animal twice or any number depending on how big you want to make the subgroups.
- Instructions for the group:
 - *Ask the participants to make a circle.
 - *Give to each participant a small piece of paper with the name of the animal. (make sure no one knows which is the animal of the partner)
 - *Ask them to find their pair just by doing the sound the animal makes.
- Reflections:
 - *Ask participants to share how they felt by doing the animal sound.
 - *Make a reflection about the importance of finding different strategies to communicate.
 - *Make a reflection about the relationship between good communication and the promotion of a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace.
 - *Request the group to find a principle in the Earth Charter that can be related with the experience.
 - *Request the group to think in how the experience is related to their work in their organization.

***Democracy, Non Violence and Peace

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

A culture of peace is based on respect and care for the community of life; ecological integrity, social and economic justice; and democracy, non-violence and peace. As a culture, it needs to be lived daily, and be based on values and principles that govern individual and collective decisions. But more than simple individual decisions these values and principles, should govern the relations between myself, my own interests, and the interests of the collectivity.

Activity 2:

- Objective:
 - *Building a common vision.

- How to organize the game:
 - * The goal of the group is to build a new society.
 - * The participants are survivors of a nuclear war and they are trying to create a new society.
 - * Make a list of 10 values and 10 actions to be used during the activity.
 - * Split the group into subgroups.

- Instructions for the group:
 - * Ask to each Sub-groups: "which are the 3 values your subgroup think is are less important to build the new society" (by using the list previously made)
 - * Discussing the question with the entire group: define the three values less important for the entire group.
 - * Do the same with the following question:
 - Which are the 3 less important actions?
 - Which are the 3 more important actions?
 - Which are the 3 more important values?

- Reflection:
 - * Discuss the experience with the entire group.
 - *Request the group to think on the importance of achieving a common vision and values framework.
 - *Request the group to compare the Earth Charter writing process and the experience of the activity. .
 - * Discuss the experience and think about tolerance, non-violence and peace.
 - *Request the group to think in how the experience is related to their work in their organization.

****Ending Activity

This is offered to you as an ending activity. Highlight the fact that each of us has something good to share and could be strengthened if it becomes part of something bigger. It is related to the Earth Charter because promotes the relationship between values and actions.

Activity:

- Objective: To achieve a common vision.
Think about skills each of the participants has that could be helpful if he/she shares it with the rest of the group. Envision the power the group has by joining the best of all. Behind every action is a value.
- Materials:
 - *Glue
 - *Masking Tape
 - * Handkerchief
- Instructions for the group:
 - *Split the group into subgroups.
 - *Ask participants to find on the yard or at the hall something that represents their contribution (in values) for the group (Ex: a pencil-creativity; glass- honesty; grass-strength; flower-peacefulness)
 - *In subgroups: Ask participants to put on a handkerchief their contribution (the pencil, the grass, the flower, etc.) and explain to the group why they choose it and how can it complement the contribution already in the handkerchief.
 - *Ask the participants to build a sculpture with all the contribution.
 - *With the entire group: Ask the subgroups to show and explain their sculpture.
- Reflections:
 - *Request the group to reflect about the relation between values and actions.
 - *Request the group to think about how each of us has something good to share and could be strengthened if it becomes part of something bigger.
 - *Request the group to think about "How they think all those contributions of the group could help to promote the Earth Charter."

Inside each human being there is a wide spectrum of capabilities, intelligences and potential to generate opportunities that need to be discovered by one and shared with others. Through those capacities, each of us can better understand the importance of our existence, how much each can positively contribute to the common good and see the world from different angles respecting differences.

******Activities to relax the group**

These activities are offered to you as relaxing activities, you can choose the time to do them. They could be done as ice breaking activities or in the middle of the workshop. They are related to the Earth Charter highlighting attitudes such as team work, common visions, sharing sensibilities and own resources.

Activity 1:

***Objective:** Show the importance of the individual actions in the achievement a common goal.

1. Ask the group to make a circle.
2. Ask participants to start counting (in group but one at the time) without saying the numbers that are multiple of 3. When is time to say multiples of 3 ask them to say "Boom" (ex: 1, 2, boom, 4, 5, boom,7...)
3. Ask them to do it faster and faster the next time and the goal is to reach 100.

***Reflection:** Ask the participants to think on "How important is their participation in the achieving of common goals."

Activity 2:

***Objective:** Show how each person has something good that might improve the quality of the group.

1. Ask the participants to make a circle looking to the back of the partner.
2. Ask them to do a massage to the partner.
3. Ask them to run around and make massage to the other partner.
4. The entire group in circle is doing the massage at the same time.

***Reflection:** Ask participants to think on "How they feel sharing something good with the rest of the group"

In order to share life in the world we need a common approach, a common vision in which all are part, and in which the change is not felt as a threat but as an opportunity. This common approach allows and demands that every citizen have the right to be responsible for her/ his own commitment, as well as for a safe and healthy place to live. Each of the Earth Charter principles has to be considered, not only as a responsibility, but also as a right that we all have to make effective.

The Earth Charter process calls us to balance "my approach" into "your approach" by recognizing the differences and ensuring the common good. This can be done counting on the capabilities each human being has.

- What are these actions?

These actions are based **my skills, my relationships** and **my space**. Invite participants to think of his / her reality today and how could they improve it through daily actions:

Skills: refers to our abilities, interests and strengths and how these can contribute to a common good.

Relationship: refers to our relationships with our family, friends, community, the large community of life, country, region and the world, and how to improve these relationships.

Space: which means the reality of our place, and how to improve it, note that, we are referring to the Earth and surrounding as our space.

- These actions in my daily life!:

*Personal Action based on My Skills

What does that mean?

It means...to recognize the dignity; each human being has the potential to generate opportunities.

"...the inherent dignity of all human beings"

Action Example: Listen to people.

*Communal Action based on My Relationships

What does that mean?

It means...to recognize our interdependence and universal responsibility

"It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility"

Action Example: Take care of public areas.

*Environmental Action based on my space

What does it mean?

It means...to recognize that we are part of the community of life, and every action we take will have an impact on the environment and in other human communities.

"The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust"

Action Example: Watch your consumption.

¹ For more action examples go to www.earthcharter.org and look for 10 ways to promote the Earth Charter.

- How personal actions/my skills; community actions/ my relationships and environmental actions/ my space are represented on the Earth Charter?

Topic on the Earth Charter	Action	What does it mean?
<p>Potential of Humanity</p> <p>"... Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential."</p>	<p>Personal Action /My Skills</p> <p>"...the inherent dignity of all human beings"</p>	<p>Each individual has an inner strength that needs to be discovered and shared. Our skills can help us see the world from different perspective; simply by sharing the best of us we can help to promote the Earth Charter.</p>
<p>Global Ethics</p> <p>" We need a shared vision of basic values to be the ethical foundation for the emerging world community"</p>	<p>Community actions /My Relationships</p> <p>"It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility"</p>	<p>It is a shared notion of bringing harmony and reconciliation between the various interests of the world. Global ethics calls for a process of listening and talking with each other. It implies viewing the world from different angles, respecting the differences and seeking synergies and point of convergence to achieve a common good.</p>
<p>Community of Life</p>	<p>Environmental Actions /My space.</p> <p>"The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust"</p>	<p>We are part of a living planet. We are not apart from bio- chemistry cycles. The environment is not a separate sphere from our daily life. We are part of the community of life, which is all the living world: plants, animals, humans</p>