Peace Education, ESD and the Earth Charter

Interconnections and Synergies

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Abstract

This article provides a review of how the values and principles of the Earth Charter initiative relate to two specific innovative movements of educational transformation, namely peace education and education for sustainable development (ESD). The interconnections and synergies between these movements and the Earth Charter are highlighted. Conceptual and pedagogical implications are drawn for implementing all three initiatives in ways that mutually strengthen and enhance their shared vision and mission to build a world infused with values of nonviolence, justice, respect, reconciliation and sustainability. However, they also share various commonalities of purpose, understanding of the root causes of conflicts and peacelessness and optimal strategies for building peace at all levels of life.

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Drawing on a holistic multidimensional framework of building a culture of peace, the article provides exemplars of how peace education, ESD and the Earth Charter empower members of all societies to overcome militarisation, direct violence, local/global injustices, human rights violations, ecological destruction and inner peacelessness.

Keywords: Peace education, ESD, conflict resolution, Earth Charter principles, culture of peace

INTRODUCTION

Since the early second half of the last century, several frameworks and movements for transforming educational systems have emerged to fulfill visions of a better world for all peoples and societies in the global community. These movements include education for disarmament; education for nonviolence and conflict resolution; education for a culture of peace or peace education; development education; education for local/global justice; human rights education; gender equity or nonsexist education; multicultural or intercultural education; education for sustainable development or sustainability; and education for inner peace or spiritual development. While these initiatives have, over time, developed core conceptual issues, methodologies, analytical language and institutional practice, a close examination of their 'theory and practice' reveals key conceptual interconnections and overlapping visions. This interdependence allows the rich knowledge, experiences and insights of diverse educational communities to benefit mutually so that the building of a better world can be enhanced through collaboration and solidarity.

In celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Earth Charter, it is meaningful to review how the values and principles of the Earth Charter initiative relate to these diverse and innovative movements of educational transformation. This is especially significant since the overall goal of the Earth Charter is 'to promote the transition to sustainable ways of living and a global society founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy, and a culture of peace' (Earth Charter 2009: 1). For this article, the interconnections and synergies between two movements—peace education and education for sustainable development (ESD)—and the Earth Charter, will be highlighted. Conceptual and pedagogical implications will be drawn for implementing all three initiatives in ways that mutually strengthen and enhance their vision and mission to build a world infused with values of nonviolence, justice, respect, reconciliation and sustainability.

THREE CURRENTS, ONE RIVER: PEACE EDUCATION, ESD AND THE EARTH CHARTER

If the vision of building a peaceful world is seen as a river journeying towards the sea, then the diverse but interrelated and complementary initiatives for educational and societal transformation may be regarded as currents, intermingling with their own

pace and dynamics. In this regard, peace education, ESD and the Earth Charter clearly have identifiable features, as expressed in their values, principles and strategies for action. However, they also share various commonalities of purpose, understanding of the root causes of conflicts and peacelessness, and optimal strategies for building peace at all levels of life.

As UNESCO has summarised:

> the overall goal of the DESD (Decade of Education for Sustainable Development) is to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. This educational effort will encourage changes in behaviour that will create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations. (DESD 2005–14)

Within this framework, society, environment and economy, with culture as an underlying dimension, are the key pillars on which sustainable development rests. Further, ESD affirms the centrality of values, including among others, respect for the dignity and human rights of all peoples and of future generations; protection and restoration of the earth's ecosystems; and respect for cultural diversity. Taken together, these goals and values underlying ESD encourage educators to bring into their teaching and learning knowledge, skills and values that overlap considerably with peace education.

In the same vein, the preamble of the Earth Charter (2009) acknowledges the common destiny of all life forms, hence the need to work together to nurture one Earth Community founded on 'respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace'. To further provide a common standard of behaviour and interaction for all individuals, institutions, organisations and governments, four interdependent principles are proposed: respect and care for the community of life; ecological integrity; social and economic justice; democracy, nonviolence and peace. Most importantly, to accomplish this goal, all peoples need to live with 'a sense of responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations' and to appreciate the interconnectedness of our 'environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges'.

Over the past several decades, such challenges have also catalysed the evolution of the broad field of peace education. From its earlier phase that emphasised education for disarmament or overcoming the scourge of war and other manifestations of direct violence, peace education has extended its boundaries to encompass many issues and problems of peacelessness, including injustices, social and economic marginalisation, human rights violations, intercultural conflicts, environmental destruction and a lack of inner peace. A holistic, multidimensional paradigm of peace education hence overlaps with other fields of transformation education such as human rights education, development education, intercultural or multicultural education and ESD.

Essentially, peace education seeks to promote a critical understanding of the root causes of all forms and levels of violence and conflicts, and to empower learners to engage in active nonviolent transformation towards a culture of peace. Globally, peace educators are active in diverse educational contexts from formal schooling and tertiary institutions to nonformal and informal education. One holistic framework

of peace education, which originated in the Philippines and has since been adapted in many other regions is shown in Figure 1, where a flower metaphor embraces six interrelated thematic 'petals' namely: living with compassion and justice; promoting human rights and responsibilities; dismantling the culture of war; building intercultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity; living in harmony with the Earth; and cultivating inner peace (Toh 2004; Toh and Floresca Cawagas 1987, 1991).
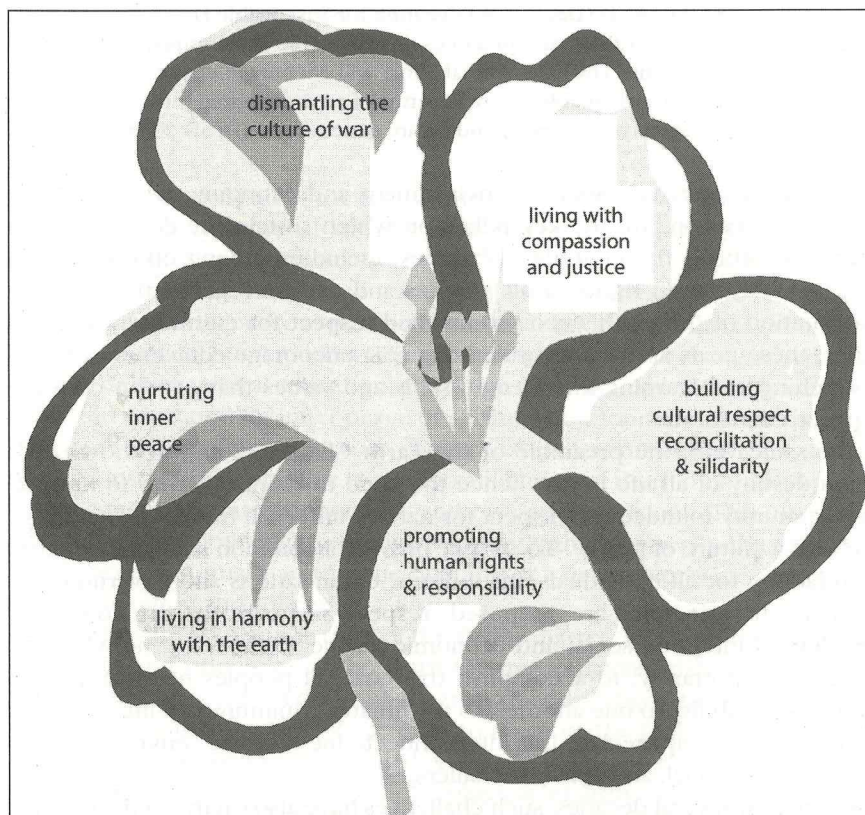

Figure 1 A holistic framework of peace education

Source: Toh 2004, p. 30.

The theme 'living with compassion and justice' emphasises the root causes of structural violence or local/global injustices that lie at the heart of economic marginalisation of the poor majority and the increasing disparities between the 'global North' and the 'global South'. The second theme, 'promoting human rights and responsibilities', focuses on raising awareness among all peoples of their rights and catalysing them to assert those rights as well as to show responsibility in upholding their own and others' rights. The theme 'building intercultural respect, reconciliation and solidarity', affirms the vital principle of treating all cultures and ethnic identities with respect, overcoming racism, stereotyping and all forms of discrimination and

promoting reconciliation to heal divisions and enmities. The theme 'dismantling a culture of war', is crucial in resolving or transforming all wars, armed conflicts and manifestations of direct violence from international to local, including even domestic contexts. In response to the growing ecological crisis, the fifth theme, 'living in harmony with the earth', advocates that people–planet relationships need to fully integrate principles of sustainability. Finally, looking 'inwards', the sixth theme in this holistic peace education framework emphasises the need for cultivating inner peace whereby a deep sense of spirituality helps individuals overcome alienation, despair and other symptoms of inner peacelessness and enhance the work of 'outer' or 'social' peacebuilding.

As elaborated in the discussion and analysis that follows, the interconnections and synergies between peace education, ESD and the Earth Charter initiative can be clarified through the lenses provided by these six 'petals' of educating for a culture of peace in local, national, international and/or global contexts.

DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND LOCAL/GLOBAL JUSTICE

Despite several decades of national and international development planning and program implementation, poverty and lack of basic needs remain among the most challenging problems facing humanity. The difficulties in attaining UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the target year is but one recent indicator of the scale and complexities of the challenge.

Peace education, the Earth Charter and ESD share a vision that development should build local, national, international and global relationships and structures that adequately meet the basic needs of all peoples based on values of dignity, freedom and justice. In its discussion of ESD's role in promoting development, UNESCO emphasised the vital goal of poverty reduction as a key pillar of sustainable development, whereby it is also interconnected with a host of factors and issues including gender equality, basic health, protection of environmental resources and educational access. Likewise, under its third principle of 'social and economic justice', the Earth Charter is also committed 'to eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative'. (Earth Charter: Principle III, 9). This means *inter alia* the right to basic needs, a sustainable livelihood and social security; equitable wealth distribution among and within nations; fair and sustainable trade; and the transparency and accountability of transnational corporations and international financial institutions.

In promoting ESD and peace education, however, it should be recognised that the field of development is highly contested. Thus the dominant and politically powerful paradigm, described in earlier times as modernisation and of late as globalisation, has argued that rapid growth, free trade and the private sector dominance will produce more wealth and jobs that will benefit all citizens. Northern (advanced, industrialised and wealthy) nations can help the South catch up through aid, trade and investments via integration in the globalised economy with leadership provided by the affluent nation-states, transnational corporations and international financial agencies or regimes (such as the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation).

In contrast, an alternative paradigm focuses on the realities of increasing marginal-isation of ordinary citizens despite globalisation-induced growth, investments, trade and consumerism. Hence decades of globalisation have increased structural violence or internal and international inequalities and injustices. ESD and peace education from this perspective also remind us of the burgeoning examples of ordinary peoples and communities empowering themselves via critical education to promote grassroots people-centred projects.

Undoubtedly, the interdependencies between sustainability and development based on local/global justice are very strong. Peace education challenges the priority given to unlimited economic growth and consumption, which can only exert grossly unsustainable demands on planetary resources. From the activities of mining, logging, mega dams, monoculture agribusiness, unsustainable urbanisation and privatisation of essential resources like water, the poor and marginalised will have even fewer re-sources for their basic survival. Meanwhile, they are forced to bear the burden of pollution and human-made 'natural' disasters such as industrial accidents, toxic wastes, flooding, landslides, drought, chemical poisoning and others (Anderson 2000; Shiva 2002; Worldwatch Institute 2005). Moreover, in an interdependent world, all humanity cannot escape the long-term consequences of an unsustainable development paradigm. If all human beings were to live with an overly heavy ecological footprint that a minority presently enjoys 'we would need many more planet earths'. In this regard, the trend toward 'corporate environmentalism' needs to be challenged where it results in the co-optation of sustainability principles (Karliner 1997; Fien and Tilbury 2002).

Hence, ESD, the Earth Charter and peace education need to include within their curricula a challenge to re-think the ideology of 'progress' driving consumerist, tech-nologically advanced societies. Citizens should be sensitised to the ongoing work of replacing conventional and dominant indicators of economic 'success' (such as GNP [gross national product], GDP [gross domestic product], etc.) with more holistic indicators such as the 'human development index', 'gross national happiness' index (advocated by the nation of Bhutan) and the GPI ('genuine progress index') that take into account principles of sustainability, justice and other dimensions of a culture of peace.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Peace education emphasises the fulfillment of the full spectrum of human rights as embodied in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and elaborated in successive conventions. Human rights are better protected and promoted when ordinary people empower themselves through education to build a strong civil society to which agencies of state and private power must be accountable in the spirit of authentic democracy (Reardon 1995; Symonides 1998). Likewise, a core value underlying ESD and the Earth Charter is respect for the human rights and dignity of all people and also future generations.

Since the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, considerable challenges remain in bridging the gaps between policies or laws and the protection of human rights. In many societies, powerful elites and agencies continue to engage in human rights violations while militarised conflicts and interventions and unjust economic structures have denied many citizens and communities their rights to security. Ecological destruction and accidents in the pursuit of 'ruthless' economic growth also leaves in its trail severe violations of a whole host of rights. Clearly, the global conduct of corporations and other business organisations and even international financial institutions, deserve the same level of monitoring and accountability as repressive dictators.

Peace education is especially attentive to the human rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups, including women, children, refugees and indigenous peoples. Unsustainable development and 'globalisation from above' have, for example, exploited women in the global assembly line and migrant worker sectors. In patriarchal systems, women's human rights are less fulfilled in almost every social, economic, cultural and political dimension of life. In this regard, the Earth Charter is particularly explicit and strong in affirming gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development, and ensuring universal access to education, health care and economic opportunity. ESD similarly acknowledges the vital role that women play in enhancing the sustainable management of resources. It is also most important to educate for the rights of children, now increasingly the most vulnerable and exploited sector, whether as child soldiers, street children, prostitutes or bonded labour. Another group deserving of solidarity in their struggle for rights, dignity and freedom are the refugees and asylum seekers.

Peace education and ESD, which integrate human rights education, also need to ensure that learners understand and develop a commitment to human rights as much as a deep sense of responsibility. This helps to overcome self-centred claims to rights without critical examination of one's own potential role in perpetrating violations directly or indirectly.

INTERCULTURAL RESPECT AND RECONCILIATION

In peace education, learners are challenged to critically understand conflicts between peoples of different cultures and ethnic/'racial' identities and promote intercultural respect, understanding and harmony. In ESD, respect for cultural diversity is a core value. The Earth Charter includes in its core principle the encouragement of mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations.

Compounded by a culture of war and structural violence, these conflicts have often led to brutal violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide. However, the simplistic self-fulfilling view of a 'clash of civilizations' has been challenged by peace educators and critical multicultural educators for overlooking the complexities of 'civilizations' and the historical record of intercultural cooperation and solidarity. Conflicts involving

communities and peoples of different cultures and traditions are not primarily caused by cultural difference per se, but by a complexity of root political, economic and social causes such as contestation for resources or territories; struggles for justice and self-determination and 'Islamophobia' in a fear-based post 9/11 national security paradigm.

This is exemplified by the situation of indigenous peoples worldwide. Victims of historical episodes of violent conquest and colonisation, indigenous peoples continue to suffer displacement and other human rights violations in the face of development aggression committed by local and international economic elites and organisations (Bodley 1988). In challenging such violations, the Earth Charter affirms 'the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods'. Peace education, ESD and the Earth Charter strongly affirm the value of indigenous knowledge, practices and rituals in biodiversity conservation and planetary and intergenerational sustainability (Bennagen and Lucas-Fernan 1996; Hawthorne 2001; IDRC 1993) and therefore also challenges biopiracy, where powerful economic forces for profit have unethically exploited indigenous knowledge (Knudtson and Suzuki 1992; Llamado de la Tierra n.d.; Shiva 1997).

Many societies have, through colonisation and migration, become highly multicultural. There is clearly a need to promote values, attitudes and social–cultural policies based on mutual respect, understanding, nondiscrimination and nonracism. The Earth Charter, ESD and peace education agree with the Delors Commission on Education for the twenty-first century, which stressed that one key pillar of education is learning to live together based on the principle of unity in diversity (Jacques 1996). The 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity provides another vital signpost for respecting the uniqueness of each culture. Hence, the development of intercultural education is an essential dimension in peace education and ESD since they affirm the value of protecting world heritage as a part of cultural sustainability. Similarly, the Earth Charter recognises 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' (Earth Charter Principle IV, 16f). However, as peace educators note, care is needed not to reduce intercultural education to a superficial 'celebration of diversity and harmony' overlooking the root causes of intercultural disharmony such as racism, discrimination, structural injustices and historical oppression.

Finally, in the promotion of multiculturalism in peace education, insights have been drawn from the interfaith dialogue movement. In global organisations (such as the World Conference on Religions and Peace, Parliament of the World's Religions, United Religions Initiative) and many local and grassroots community groups, representatives of diverse faiths, religions and spiritual traditions are gathering to understand each other's spirituality traditions while respecting differences. From dialogue, a process of reconciliation and healing of bitterness, enmity and distrust has often emerged. Different faiths are finding that they share many common values and ethical principles that, in turn, motivate collaborative action to resolve common societal and global problems (Mische and Merkling 2001). In this regard, ESD and the Earth Charter can also be enriched by drawing explicitly on the principles and practices of interfaith dialogue.

LIVING IN HARMONY WITH THE EARTH

This thematic dimension of peace education is clearly the most visible bridge connecting peace education with ESD and the Earth Charter. Over many decades, rural and indigenous peoples worldwide bearing the brunt of environmental degradation have organised to act as 'stewards' to save their local environment in order to sustainably meet the basic needs of their families and communities. Increasingly, religious institutions and leaders have spoken out for 'green theology' to practice their faith with reverence for the Earth. A growing number of governments and corporations are also adding their voices for environmental protection in response to the deepening problems of global warming, ozone layer destruction and other symptoms of the ecological crisis. Yet, as the outcomes from the 1992 Rio Conference and the recent unsuccessful Copenhagen Summit have demonstrated, determined action by governments and private sector agencies to promote ecologically sustainable 'development' remains limited by the overriding principles of growth-centred globalisation. The challenge of educating and mobilising for sustainable futures is hence a common struggle facing peace education, ESD and the Earth Charter.

In formal education systems, environmental education has become a regular theme in school curricula and pedagogy. While initial emphasis has been placed on educating children to be personally and socially green and for schools to be environmentally friendly, a holistic perspective to environmental education must dig deeply into the roots of the crisis. Hence, in ESD and peace education, personal acts of Earth-caring necessarily integrate principles of structural justice and rights between groups and nations, challenge unlimited growth and consumerism, advocate voluntary simplicity in lifestyle and promote the concept of Earth rights. Unless human beings relate to the natural environment according to the ethic of intergenerational responsibility, future generations will not be able to survive. The Earth Charter is likewise especially strong in its emphasis for ecological integrity and in acknowledging the urgency of adopting 'lifestyles that emphasize the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world' (Earth Charter: Principle II, 7f).

DISMANTLING WAR AND DIRECT VIOLENCE

The continuing cycle of wars, violence and counter-violence worldwide remains a monumental problem confronting humanity. Millions of people, including the very young, continue to suffer trauma, hardships and death from internal armed conflicts, interstate violence, militarised occupations and a seemingly endless and complex cycle of 'terrorism' and 'counter terrorism'. The problems of proliferation of 'weapons of mass destruction' and conventional weaponry continue to escalate, threatening to ignite further armed interventions and violence.

However, despite the odds, many civil society organisations and representatives of some governments remain committed to the nonviolent resolution of armed conflicts and the generic problem of militarisation. Efforts to abolish the arms trade, end recruitment of child soldiers and postwar or conflict peace-building efforts are

integral components of peace education and ESD. At a micro-level, dismantling the culture of war also applies to overcoming the problem of physical violence in homes and schools and the widespread cultural conditioning towards the 'acceptability' of violence via media, internet, videogames, toys and even sports. Consequently, education for conflict re-solution and critical media literacy are most relevant to peace education, ESD and the Earth Charter.

Furthermore, there is now considerable evidence of the interconnections between these various dimensions of a culture of war and issues of sustainability (Renner 2005). Wars, armed conflicts and militarisation continue to deepen ecological destruction. Increasingly too, the link between competition over resources and conflicts is growing stronger around the world (Klare 2001). Other social and cultural effects of militarisation include the diminished availability of resources for basic human development when trillions of dollars are monopolised by wasteful expenditures on militarised security. Where foreign military bases have been established, women in particular have been subjected to sexual violence and exploitation, while millions of war-created refugees have placed great stresses on the environment.

A holistic paradigm of ESD and peace education therefore includes issues and problems related to a culture of 'war' from macro to micro levels of life. Perspectives and experiences drawn from disarmament education, education for nonviolence and education for conflict resolution or transformation all have considerable relevance to the theory and practice of ESD and peace education. Unless current and future generations of children and adults are challenged to overcome a collective consciousness and attitudes that violence is an acceptable strategy to confront conflicts, the culture of war, with all its unsustainable practices and consequences, will remain strong.

The Earth Charter likewise exhorts the use of strategies to prevent violent conflict and 'collaborative problem solving' to resolve all kinds of conflict (Earth Charter: Principle IV, 16b). It recommends the demilitarisation 'of national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and conversion of military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration, (Earth Charter: Principle IV, 16c) and the elimination of nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction' (Earth Charter: Principle IV, 16e).

CULTIVATING INNER PEACE

While peace education and ESD share many complementary and overlapping concerns and perspectives, the dimension of cultivating inner peace has been more emphasised in peace education in contrast to ESD, which has tended to focus on the 'external' dimensions of building a sustainable world. In peace education, it is recognised that the inner dimensions and sources of peaceful values and practices should be equally cultivated in order to overcome alienation, loss of meaning and an epidemic of depression and despair, especially in affluent societies. This education for inner peace draws deeply from the insights, wisdom and teachings of prophets, saints and sages of diverse faiths and spirituality traditions. One increasingly practiced strategy for developing inner equilibrium and tranquility lies in diverse methods of meditation and contemplation.

Moreover, in peace education and ESD, inner peace should not be sought for in a disconnected way to the search for outer peace or building a peaceful world. As the engaged Buddhists and basic Christian communities have emphasised, peoples of faith and spirituality also cultivate a strong responsibility to work for nonviolent, loving, compassionate and just relationships, structures and a world community. In Islam, while the greater 'jihad' is to struggle for inner purification, Muslims are also called to practice social justice in society and the world.

It is not difficult to see how cultivating inner peace is also in accord with sustainability. When faiths and spirituality traditions educate their followers to see through the illusions of excessive materialism, power, greed, unkindness and violence and other attachments, they are more likely to reconsider the ideology of overconsumerism, fetish of brands or logos or fashion and the reduction of happiness to 'quantity' rather than 'quality' of life. Through cultivating greater inner peace, a person becomes more inspired to consider voluntary simplicity based on lifestyles and interpersonal and social relationships that uphold sustainability, justice, nonviolence, respect and loving kindness for all beings and the planet (Burch 2000; Thich 1996).

Not surprisingly, there is now considerable interest in 'green theology', in which different faiths are examined as inspirational sources of environmental values toward the vision of a shared global ethic. The ideas and work of Christian theologians and environmental advocates like Thomas Berry, Sean McDonagh, Matthew Fox and engaged Buddhists like Joanna Macy, Sulak Sivaraksa and Thich Nhat Hanh are a few exemplars in this regard (McDonagh 1995; Sivaraksa 2001). This link between faith and ecological sustainability has been well clarified across a spectrum of traditions, affirming the interdependence of all beings and the environment and the ecological integrity of creation (Bassett, Brinkman and Pederson 2000; Tucker and Grim 1994).

In sum, this reflection on cultivating inner peace as an essential theme of peace education for a culture of peace suggests that a holistic paradigm of ESD should not shy away from ideas, principles and sources of spiritual knowledge and wisdom found in all cultures, faiths and civilizations. In this regard, the Earth Charter's implicit recognition of the positive role that faiths and spirituality can play in building a peaceful and sustainable world also deserves to become more explicit. Understandably, the rise in the dominance and power of secularism has tended to marginalise as irrelevant the values and principles rooted in ancient wisdoms. While affirming that secular systems of knowledge and social practices have helped to build a culture of peace and sustainability, ESD needs to be critically open to other sources of understanding and sustainable living. Furthermore, by expecting this engagement to be critical, it means that faith and spirituality should also be examined for any contradictions in theory and practice.

TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES

Across diverse fields of education for transformation, there is a strong consensus that the desired goals and purposes of teaching and learning cannot be accomplished only on the basis of appropriate content. Equally important is how that content is taught

and learned. As summarised by UNESCO, various principles and processes have been identified as relevant and essential in ESD, namely: interdisciplinary and holistic, values-driven, critical thinking and problem solving, multimethod, participatory decision making, applicability and locally relevant. These call for pedagogical processes that are participatory, creative and nonbanking. Freire (1995) describes 'banking' in education as an approach where teachers are experts and learners are passive recipients of knowledge. In contrast, he proposes a nonbanking mode using dialogue in creating a more horizontal teacher-learner relationship in which both teacher and learner educate and learn from each other. Toh (2004, 28) further explains that this approach 'optimizes cooperative opportunities for learners to first talk about their realities, experiences, understandings, commitment, despairs, dreams and hopes, which are then facilitated by the teachers to critically engage with a range of alternative perspectives …'

In peace education the underpinning philosophy of the educational process likewise seeks to be critical, empowering and transformative (Goldstein and Selby 2002; Hicks 1988; O'Sullivan 1999; Toh and Cawagas 1991). Based on the experiences of diverse educators for peace and related fields of educational transformation, a number of key pedagogical principles for peace education can be articulated. Hopefully they can also be helpful to ESD implementation and practice.

The first pedagogical principle of peace education is holistic understanding, which means looking into interrelationships between and among different problems of peacelessness, conflict and violence in terms of root causes and resolutions. It is essential to draw a learner's understanding of various conflicts into a holistic framework; otherwise, a partial analysis that overlooks the wider roots of a problem will only result in partial, unrealistic or ineffectual resolutions. Holistic understanding also advocates that various levels and modes of education are equally important, whether formal or nonformal, whether educating children or adults or social, economic and cultural groups.

A second major pedagogical principle is dialogue. From the pioneering work of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, a dialogical strategy cultivates a more horizontal teacher–learner relationship in which both dialogically educate and learn from each other. In this regard, the community of transformative educators tends to rely on creative and participatory teaching–learning strategies. Learners are exposed to a range of alternative perspectives on a problem and are also encouraged to talk about their realities, experiences, understandings, biases, commitments, hopes, despairs and dreams. The learning process thus simultaneously surfaces the level of awareness and personal commitment of learners, as well as offers possibilities for dialogue within a 'learning community'.

In peace education the crucial role of values formation is emphasised through its pedagogical processes (Toh and Cawagas 1991). Recognising that knowledge is never free of values, peace educators constantly encourage learners to surface innermost values that shape their understanding of realities and their actions. Peace education is very explicit about preferred values, such as compassion, justice, equity, gender-fairness, caring for life, sharing, reconciliation, integrity, hope and active nonviolence. A strong indicator of peaceful pedagogy is that it stirs hopefulness, a faith that ordinary peoples can exercise patience, commitment and courage in transforming

their realities without falling into despair and a sense of powerlessness. ESD and the Earth Charter likewise endorse such values in their recommendations for action.

A fourth principle is conscientisation or what may be alternatively called 'critical empowerment'. While dialogical, participatory and nonbanking pedagogies and methodologies are crucial, they are not sufficient. Thus, peace education needs to move not only minds but also hearts and spirits into personal and social action for peace building. Critical empowerment helps learners go beyond describing symptoms of conflicts and violence in their immediate contexts. It challenges learners to engage in a personal struggle to actively transform prevailing realities of violence, injustice and unsustainability towards a culture of nonviolence, justice and sustainability. In their vision and strategies, both ESD and the Earth Charter similarly promote such education for critical empowerment.

CONCLUSION

This exploration of the existing and potential linkages between the Earth Charter, ESD and peace education has revealed some key interconnections, complementarities and synergies. There is a common vision to build a world that is nonviolent, just and sustainable, and respects all human rights for all peoples. Furthermore, there are clear expectations on the need for individuals, communities and institutions to go through a process of critical education that empowers them or their members to engage in personal transformation as much as systematic societal and structural changes. To conclude on the metaphor of 'Three Currents, One River', peace education, ESD and the Earth Charter, individually and collectively, bring to humanity and all parts of our planet a rich source of values, ideas, practices and strategies that, in due course and time, will hopefully yield a 'one world' community infused with values and principles of compassion, justice, active nonviolence, love and sustainability.

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