

Leadership for Sustainable Change Certificate
Personal to Planetary Transformation based on the principles of the
Earth Charter

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“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 a 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 declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to future generations.”

Preamble, Earth Charter

Over the years, students and faculty at John F. Kennedy University have expressed a desire to apply principles of psychology, human development and human potential to social action, diversity and systems approaches to planetary issues. After many discussions we realized that a major need for the 21st century was a new paradigm of leadership that would solve problems, shift systems and create opportunities that engendered respect and care of the community, ecological integrity, social and economic justice and world peace. To this end, we created a leadership certificate which could be completed separately or included within a master’s degree in Integral Psychology or the MBA program at John F. Kennedy University, and which would have as its

mandate and philosophical foundation the principles of the Earth Charter.

The *Leadership for Sustainable Change* certificate prepares potential leaders in any field such as education, ecology, business, organizational and community development, politics, the arts, economics and health among others, to lead systemic social change in service of all beings on the planet.

We believe that the following certificate objectives are essential if future local and global leaders are to manifest and actualize Earth Charter goals in their fields. Thus, it is intended that, at the end of our leadership program, students will be able:

1. To develop, strengthen and apply transformative leadership skills towards leading sustainable social change in any field of interest.
2. To design and implement a social change project within a results-oriented, learning-in-action academic environment
3. To access a global identity, a world-centric perspective, inner wisdom and deep compassion as source of social change action in the world.
4. To cultivate emotional intelligence, conflict transformation skills and a conscious awareness of and response to global suffering
5. To perceive and experience more deeply the interrelationship and interdependence of all life.
6. To engender new possibilities and opportunities for others to access their inner power and wisdom and become leaders in service of co-creating history, celebrating diversity, seeing multiple perspectives and generating a more just, harmonious and peaceful world.

This certificate was inspired by the work of Dr. Monica Sharma, former director of *Leadership and Capacity Development* at the United Nations and co-founder of the *Leadership for*

Sustainable Change certificate. When asked why she chose to collaborate with JFKU on this certificate, Dr. Sharma replied:

“Because of the values of John F. Kennedy University which has demonstrated:

- a. A deep appreciation of the power of human consciousness for global change
- b. An ability to take new cutting-edge ideas, develop them and create new knowledge
- c. An ability to take new ideas forward and make them more mainstream
- d. Sincerity of purpose beyond what is profitable - no compromise on values.”

For transformative change to happen on the planet, it is important that it be financially, technologically and ecologically sustainable. Regarding the transformation of consciousness required for these shifts, Dr. Sharma states, “Transformation to me means the powerful unleashing of human potential to commit to, care about and courageously bring about change for a better life for *everyone*. Transformation occurs when people give up their automatic way of being and commit themselves to a different future, recognizing that they can influence the flow of events and thus create new futures-individually and collectively.”

Why is a new paradigm of leadership needed? It is clear that we live in a time of major transition on the planet. We have possibilities today that have never existed before. The Earth Charter itself is the result of an evolutionary consciousness shift toward a world-centric view of life. We are all in this together. The revolution in communication technologies and the Internet have made it possible to connect all people in the world for the first time in human history.

Yet, in spite of much innovation, we continue to see worldwide poverty, lack of employment and education, violence, unequal opportunity and unsustainable action that create much

suffering for many. It is easier for some to relegate these social problems to other countries; however, a recent study entitled “Measure of America: American Human Development Report 2008-2009,” modelled on the United Nations Development Program’s Global Human Development Report, provided development rankings for the US on health, education, and other social factors. The Measure of America is published by Columbia University Press and The Social Science Research Council, and states that, of the world’s 30 richest nations, the US has the highest proportion of children living in poverty and the most people in prison. Other statistics in the report are equally of great concern. In explaining the causes of our crises, we often focus on financial, technological, political, military, legal, and economic approaches. These approaches are necessary, but insufficient. Global problems and their solutions depend on the way we see and experience ourselves, others and the world. Visionary leaders need to create new futures that are sustainable; they must have the capacity to address the invisible patterns and systems that create existing social and global problems; they must have the ability to apply leadership skills to initiatives in any sector and organizational setting at any level of scale.

This certificate seeks to create a vision of leadership that responds to world crises in a new and transformative way. Leadership action sourced from inner wisdom and empowerment, conscious full spectrum project design, results-oriented learning, partnerships, collaboration and synergy building, cross-cultural understanding, profound self-inquiry and resiliency in the face of adversity, transformational speaking and accessing deep levels of intentionality, accountability integrity and commitment, and responsibility for the entire planet, are some of the ways participants learn to express their leadership skills as global citizens .

The first intensive begins with a reading of the Earth Charter. While participants stand in a

circle, each person individually moves to the center of the circle and reads a paragraph. This is a very auspicious beginning and touches everyone deeply. We then spend time discussing the major principles of the Charter, and the new kind of leadership needed to bring Charter principles to all areas of life in the world. At this time, we also discuss what it means to be a global citizen physically, emotionally, socially, mentally and spiritually. Throughout the program, leadership concepts, skills and practices are taught with a direct link to the Charter, and students relate their personal growth, leadership development and project design towards creative ways of implementing democracy, community well-being, economic, educational and gender equality, development of human potential, respect for cultural and religious diversity, universal access to healthcare, safeguarding human rights and promoting a culture of peace.

Leaders are not only born, they are also developed. Participants to the program come from different cultural, economic, age, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political backgrounds, but have a similar global vision. Participants include

- Pioneers for change in any field and at any stage
- Employees and policy makers working in the fields of politics, education, administration, ecology, business, health, human development, the arts, cultural diversity and spirituality, among others
- Community organizers, social activists
- Socially engaged spiritual activists
- Organizational consultants, social entrepreneurs

A recent research review article *Leadership: Current Theories, Research and Future Directions* conducted by researchers from the Departments of Management at the University of Nebraska and Arizona State University examines theoretical and empirical

developments in leadership and reviews 15 leadership models. The researchers claim that “looking back over the past 100 years, we cannot imagine a more opportune time for the field of leadership studies. Never before has so much attention been paid to leadership... The period that leadership theory and research will enter over the next decade is indeed one of the most exciting in the history of this planet.” We agree with this statement, and want to be sure that the philosophical foundation of our program sources wisdom and action in service of the planet.

The Leadership for Sustainable Change certificate is a nine month program with *three* face to face six day meetings in Pleasant Hill, CA. Students come to the program with an idea for a project or a project already in place, that enhances Earth Charter principles, benefits communities and the environment, and impacts or changes a particular system. During the remainder of each quarter, students complete reading, writing and project-based assignments, receive coaching and advising from instructors via email and phone calls, and build an effective and supportive learning community.

The three courses in the program are:

- ***Being Change: Visionary Leadership in Action***
In this intensive, students explore Global Citizenship and the principles of the Earth Charter as the foundation for leadership. Wisdom, Social, Personality and Professional profiles as sources for action; recognition and transformation of personal and collective shadow; practices that enhance self-awareness, self-empowerment, clarity of intention and trust; leadership sourced from wisdom, empathy, integrity and accountability; strategies that lead to generative change in the workplace and community; developmental stages of leading and partnering, and a conscious full spectrum project design that fosters

sustainable, systemic change in service of all beings.

- ***Designing Change: Creating Shifts and New Leadership Practices***
In this intensive, students continue to apply a full spectrum approach to project design. Topics include Earth Charter principles in action, operational strategies, results chain, personality leadership styles, understanding roots of systemic problems, dynamics of power locally and globally, team building, transforming breakdowns into breakthroughs, cross-cultural awareness and inquiry, transformational speaking, conflict transformation, enrollment and marketing.
- ***Leading Change: Actualizing Your Vision and Project***
Topics include Earth Charter vision of oneness and integrity, tools for principled action sourced from wisdom and deep integrity, direct application of leadership skills to Earth Charter principles, global citizenship in action, living systems as guide for systemic change, empowering others as leaders, developing and sustaining allies and partners, measuring results, learning from feedback, tracking change and next steps.

Participants are admitted once a year, in the fall quarter which begins in October. The course of study is an interactive process. Students dialogue, engage in critical thinking, examine options, integrate multiple perspectives, and create possibilities for sustainable social and global change. At the end of each quarter, participants write a final paper which demonstrates their application of coursework to their personal growth, project design and implementation and future goals.

Students complete the program with a profound sense of commitment towards being a global citizen and a leader of sustainable social and global change in service of all beings and the planet.

We end the program once again in a circle reading from the Earth Charter and conclude the program with the following paragraph:

“As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles...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... 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.”

Earth Charter

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