

## FORUM ON OUR GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Costa Rica 2000 Commission: A New Millennium of Peace

University for Peace - "*Si vis pacem, para pacem*"

San Jose, Costa Rica, November 6-10, 2000

## PEDAGOGY OF THE EARTH AND CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

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For the first time in the history of humanity, not because of the impact of nuclear weapons, but due to the lack of control in production, we may destroy all life on this planet. We may dub this possibility the **era of extermination**. We have moved from the production mode into the destruction mode; from this moment hence we shall have to constantly face the permanent challenge of reconstructing the planet. We have perhaps a little over 50 years to decide whether we wish to destroy or preserve the planet. The classical paradigms that have guided the production and reproduction in the planet so far, have placed at risk not only the life of human beings, but all existing life forms on Earth as well. During several decades, from the sixties, scientists and philosophers have issued **voices of alert**. Now we need to have a **new paradigm** whose central core is the Earth.

On the other hand, we live in a thriving **information era** in real time, of the globalization of economy - only for a few - of virtual reality, of the Internet, of erasing boundaries between nations, of distance education, of virtual offices, of robotics and automated production systems, of entertainment. We are living the cyberspace of ongoing education. The new information and communication technologies are the hallmark of the twentieth century. Marx affirmed that the change in production systems would transform the production patterns and production relations. This occurred with the invention of writing, the press, television, and is now happening with Internet. The spectacular development of information technology, whether it concerns the sources, its dissemination capacity, is creating a true revolution that has an impact not only on production and work, but especially on education and training.

The **scenario** is in place: *globalization* brought about by the onset of the technological revolution, characterized by the international nature of production and by the expansion of financial flows; *regionalization* characterized by the formation of economic blocks; *fragmentation* that divides globalizing and globalized nations, center and periphery, those who die of hunger and those who die due to excessive food consumption, regional rivalries, political, ethnic, and religious confrontations, terrorism.

The term "sustainability" may not be quite appropriate for what we intend to express below, so we are attempting to assign a new meaning to that concept. In fact, it is a "sustainable" term which, having been linked to development, is pretty worn out. While for some it is only a label, for others it turned into the expression *per se* of the absurd logic: development and sustainability would logically be incompatible. For us it is more than just a name for development. It goes beyond the preservation of natural resources and the feasibility of a development that's non-aggressive towards the environment. It implies an equilibrium of the human being with himself and with the planet, moreover,

with the entire universe. The sustainability we defend refers to the meaning itself of what we are, where we come from, and where we are going, as beings of the sense and contributors of the meaning of everything that surrounds us.

This topic should dominate over the educational debates in the coming decades. What are we studying at the schools? Aren't we building a science and a culture that are oriented towards the degradation of the planet and of humankind? The classification of sustainability should be linked to that of **planetaryity**. The Earth as a new paradigm. Complexity, universality, and transdiscipline appear as categories associated to the topic of planetaryity. What implications does this world vision have on education? The topic leads us to a *planetary citizenship*, a *planetary civilization*, a *planetary conscience*. As such, a **culture of sustainability** is also a planetaryity culture, i.e., a culture that departs from the principle that Earth is constituted by one single community of human beings, the earthlings, who are citizens of one single nation.

### 1. Sustainable Society

Following we shall attempt to launch a debate concerning a **Pedagogy of the Earth**, to include ecological pedagogy and sustainable education. This debate has its inception with the birth of the "sustainable development" concept, used for the very first time by the UN in 1979, to indicate that development could well be an integral process that should include cultural, ethnic, political, social, environmental dimensions- not merely economic. This idea was disseminated worldwide through the reports prepared by the Worldwatch Institute in the eighties, particularly by the one titled "Our Common Future," published in 1987 by the United Nations Commission on the Environment and Development.

Subsequently many criticisms have been made to this concept, at times because of its reduced use and trivializing, despite appearing to be "politically correct" and "morally noble." Other expressions exist that have a common conceptual foundation and complement each other, such as: "human development," "sustainable human development," and "productive transformation with equity." The expression "human development" has the advantage of situating the human being in the center of development. The concept of human development, whose central axes are "equity" and "participation," is a concept still under evolution, and opposes the neoliberal conception of development. It conceives a developed society as an equitable society, to be achieved through the participation of people.

As the sustainable development concept, that of human development is much broader, and at times, even more ambiguous. In the past few years, United Nations began using the term "human development" as a quality of life indicator based on indices of health, longevity, psychological maturity, education, a clean environment, community spirit, and creative entertainment, which are also the indicators for a **sustainable society**, i.e., a society that is capable of satisfying the needs of today's generations without compromising the capacity or opportunities of future generations.

The **criticisms** made to the concept of sustainable development and to the idea of sustainability itself originate from the fact that environmentalism treats the social issues and environmental issues separately. The conservationist movement arose as an elitist alternative of the wealthier countries, in the sense of reserving extensive natural preserves for their entertainment and contemplation- the Amazon, for example. There wasn't a concern about the planet's sustainability, but rather with the continuation of their privileges, in contrast to the needs of the majority of the world population.

In the face of these criticisms, the success of the ecological struggle nowadays depends mostly in the capacity of ecologists to convince the majority of the population, the poorest stratum, that this is not only about cleaning the rivers, unpolluting the air, reforest the devastated fields so that we may all live in a better planet in a distant future. It is about concurrently providing a solution to the environmental problems as well as to the social problems. The problems about ecology don't only affect the environment. It has an impact on the most complex being in nature - the human being.

The concept of "development" is not a neutral one. It has a well-defined context within an ideology of progress, which assumes a concept of history, economics, society, and the human being himself. The concept was applied during many years in a colonizing view, during many years, when the countries of the globe were divided between "developed," "in process of development," and "underdeveloped" ... always subjected to a pattern of industrialization and consumption. This assumes that all societies should be guided by a sole means of access to welfare and happiness, only to be achieved by the accumulation of material goods. The **neo-colonialist economic policies** of the so-called "developed" countries imposed development objectives, in many cases with a vast increment in misery, violence, and unemployment. Together with this economic model, with its sometimes criminal adjustments, ethical values and political ideals were transplanted, which lead to the lack of structuring of peoples and nations. It is therefore not surprising at all that many are reticent when one speaks about sustainable development. The development issue lead to the "agony of the planet." Today we have acquired awareness of an imminent catastrophe if we fail to translate that awareness into action to withdraw this predatory view from the term development, conceiving it rather as a more anthropological and less economic manner of saving the Earth.

It seems clear that there is an incompatibility of principles between **sustainability** and **capitalism**. This is a fundamental contradiction that is even in the midst of all debates of the **Earth Charter**, which may make it unfeasible. We attempt to reconcile two terms that are irreconcilable among themselves. Metaphysically these are not irreconcilable in themselves. They are only irreconcilable within the current context of capitalistic globalization. The idea of sustainable development is unthinkable and inapplicable in this context. The failure of *Agenda 21* serves as evidence. In this context, "sustainable development" is as irreconcilable as the "productive transformation with equity" defended by CEPAL. How can there be growth with equity, a sustainable growth in an economy that is inclined towards profit, led by unlimited accumulation, by exploitation of labor, and not by the needs of persons? Lead to its ultimate consequences, the utopia or the "sustainable development" project, questions not only the unlimited economic growth

that preys on nature, but also the manner of capitalist production. This would only make sense in a solidary economy, an economy guided by "compassion" - not profits.

The serious socio-environmental problems and the critiques to the development model started generating a greater ecological awareness in society in the last decades. Although this awareness has yet to give rise to significant changes in the economic model and in the courses of governmental policies, several concrete experiences point to a growing sustainable society in progress, as demonstrated at the Conference on Human Settlements *Habitat II*, organized by United Nations in Istanbul, Turkey in 1997. During this Conference specific experiences were presented for combating the "urban crisis," namely, violence, unemployment, dearth of housing, of transportation, of sanitation, which has been causing the defacement of the environment and the quality of life. These experiences point to the creation of a **sustainable city**. Little by little, policies of economic and social sustainability start emerging, constituting a true hope that we may still be on time to face "our global challenges."

## **2. Sustainable Education**

The sense of belonging to the universe does not begin at an adult age, nor is arise from a reasonable action. From the crib, we feel united to something that is much greater than ourselves. From childhood we feel deeply rooted to the universe and face it with a mixed expression of respect and astonishment. And during our lives we seek responses to what we are, where do we come from, where are we going, in short, what is the meaning of our existence. This is an incessant search that never ends. Education may play a very important role in this process, if we are taught to value many fundamental philosophical issues, but additionally, we are able to explore together with knowledge that capacity we all have to become fascinated with our universe.

Today we become aware that the **meaning of our lives** is not at all separated from the meaning of the planet itself. Confronted by the degradation of our lives in the planet, we have reached a true crossroad between the *Technozoic* path, which places all faith in the capacity of technology to pull us out of the crisis without changing an iota of our contaminating and consumer-oriented lifestyles, and the *Ecozoic* path, founded on a new healthy relationship with the planet, recognizing that we are a part of a natural world, living in harmony with the universe, characterized by the current ecological concerns. We are confronted with a **choice**. This shall define the future we will have. I really don't believe these are totally opposite paths. Technology and humanism are not in contraposition. But clearly we have incurred in excesses due to our contaminating and consumer-oriented lifestyles, and this is not the product of technology, but rather of the economic model. This is what should be envisioned as the cause, and this is one of the roles in which sustainable or ecological education should guide us.

Sustainable development, seen from a critical viewpoint, has a formidable **educational component**: the preservation of the environment depends on an ecological awareness and the formation of such an awareness depends on education. Here is where the Pedagogy of the Earth - or eco-pedagogy - comes into play. This is a pedagogy aimed at the **promotion of learning** of the "meaning of things departing from daily living," as stated

by Francisco Gutiérrez y Cruz Prado in his book *Eco-Pedagogy and Planetary Citizenship* (São Paulo, IPF/Cortez, 1998). In his view, we find the meaning of walking, by living the context and the process of opening new roads; not merely by observing the road. This is why it is a democratic and solidary pedagogy. The research by Francisco Gutiérrez y de Cruz Prado on eco-pedagogy arose from the preoccupation with the meaning of daily living. The formation is linked to the space/time in which relations between the human being and the environment specifically take place. These are especially found at the level of an individual's sensibility, much more than at the level of his conscience. Therefore, these are found more at the level of the subconscious: we do not perceive them and most of the time, don't know how these happen. As such, an **eco-formation** is needed to make them conscious. And that eco-formation requires an **eco-pedagogy**. As underscored by Gastón Pineau in his book *De l'air: essai sur l'écoformation* (Paris, Païdeia, 1992), a series of references are linked together for that purpose: the Bachelardian inspiration, the studies on the imaginary, broaching transversality, transdisciplinarity, and interculturality, the constructivism and the pedagogy of alternation.

We need an eco-pedagogy and an eco-formation today, we need a **Pedagogy of the Earth**, simply because without that pedagogy for the reeducation of man / woman, particularly the Western man, prisoner of a predatory Christian culture, we may no longer speak of the Earth as a home, as a haven, for the "insect-man," as stated by Paulo Freire. Without a **sustainable education**, Earth will continue to be considered only as the space that provides our sustenance and of the technical-technological domain, the object of our research, assays, and at times, of our contemplation. But it shall not be the space of life, the space of our haven, of our "care" (Leonardo Boff, *Knowing How to Care*, Petrópolis, Vozes, 1999).

We don't learn to love Earth by reading books on this subject, nor books on integral ecology. Our own experience is what counts. To plant and live through the growth of a tree or a plant, walking the city streets, or venturing into a forest, feeling the birds' chirping on sunny mornings, or who knows, watching how the wind sways the plants, feeling the warm sand of our beaches, gazing at the stars on a dark night. There are many forms of enchantment and emotion before the wonders nature reserves for us. It is logical that pollution and environmental defacement exist, and they should remind us that we are able to destroy this wonder, and also to create our ecological awareness and move us to take action. To caress a plant, gaze in awe at a sunset, smell the perfume of a pitanga (Surinam cherry) leaf, or the leaf of a guava, orange, cypress, or eucalyptus tree... are a myriad ways of living in permanent fusion with this generous planet and share our lives with all those who inhabit or form a part of it. Life does have a meaning, but it only exists as long as this relation exists. As the Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade once said, "I am a man dissolved in nature. I am flowering in every oak tree."

Drummond could only express this here on Earth. If he were on another planet of our solar system he would put it differently. Only Earth is amicable towards humankind. The rest of the planets, to be honest, are hostile to man, despite the fact that these originated from the same cosmic dust. There might be other planets outside our solar system that

harbor life, maybe intelligent life? If we consider that the matter from which the universe originated is the same, this would be highly probable. But for now, we only have one planet that is doubtlessly our friend. We have to learn to love it.

How does the principle of sustainability translate into education? It translates by asking questions such as: To what point is there a meaning to what we do? To what point do our actions contribute to the quality of life of the peoples and their happiness? Is sustainability a principle that reorients education, especially that concerning curricula, objectives and methods?

It is within this context of evolution of ecology itself that the so-called term "eco-pedagogy" is born - and still crawls - which was initially dubbed "pedagogy of sustainable development, and today has surpassed this significance. Eco-pedagogy is being developed as a **pedagogic movement**, i.e., as a **curricular approach**.

Just as ecology, eco-pedagogy may also be construed as a *social and political movement*. As any new movement, in process, in evolution, it is complex and may take different directions, sometimes contradictory amongst themselves. The term may be misconstrued as the expressions "sustainable development" and "environment." There is a capitalist view of sustainable development and the environment which, by being anti-ecological, should be considered a "trap," as Leonardo Boff has been arguing all along.

Eco-pedagogy also implies the *reorientation of curricula*, to include certain principles it upholds. These principles should, for instance, serve as guidelines in the preparation of the contents of the didactic materials. Jean Piaget taught us that curricula should contemplate what is significant for the student. We know that to be correct, but incomplete. Curricular contents have to be significant to the student, and these will only be so for him if these contents are significant for the health of the planet as well, in a much broader context.

In this light, eco-pedagogy is not just another pedagogy, beside other pedagogies. It only acquires meaning as a **global alternative project**, where concern is not merely about the preservation of nature (Natural Ecology), nor on the impact of human societies on natural environments (Social Ecology), but rather on a new model of sustainable civilization from the ecological standpoint (Integral Ecology), which implies a change in economic, social, and cultural structures. Consequently, it is associated to an *Utopian project*: modifying the human, social, and environmental relationships that we have today. This is where the deep meaning of eco-pedagogy lies, that of a *Pedagogy of the Earth*, as we call it.

**Eco-pedagogy** is not opposed to environmental education. Quite the contrary, for eco-pedagogy environmental education is merely a conjecture. Eco-pedagogy incorporates it and offers strategies, proposals and means for its specific undertaking. It was precisely during the **Global-92 Forum**, where lengthy discussions took place on environmental education, that the importance of a sustainable development pedagogy - or eco-pedagogy - was perceived.

Nowadays, however, eco-pedagogy has evolved into a movement and into an education perspective even greater than just the sustainable development pedagogy. It is intended more for a **sustainable education**, for an **eco-education**, which has a much broader meaning than environmental education. Sustainable education is not only concerned with a healthy relation with the environment, but with a more in-depth *meaning* of what we do with our existence, departing from our daily living.

### **3. Planetary awareness, planetary citizenship, planetary civilization**

Globalization, promoted especially by technology, seems to increasingly determine our lives. The decisions on what transpires in our day-to-day living seem to escape our grasp, since we make these decisions very distantly from ourselves, compromising our role as subjects of history. However, this is not right. As a phenomenon and as a process, globalization has become irreversible, but not this type of globalization - globalism - to which we have been subjected today: capitalist globalization. Its more immediate effects are unemployment, the widening of the gap between the few who have so much and the many who have so little, the loss of power and autonomy of many States and many Nations. We must therefore distinguish which countries are commanding globalization today - the globalizers (wealthy nations) - from the countries that suffer globalization, the globalized countries (poor).

Within this complex phenomenon we may also differentiate **economic globalization**, undertaken by transnational corporations, from the **globalization of citizenship**. Both use the same technological base, but with opposite logics. The first, subjecting States and Nations, is commanded by the capitalist interest; the second globalization is carried out through the Civil Society Organization. Globalized Civil Society is the response that Civil Society as a whole and the NGOs are giving today to the capitalist globalization. In this sense, the **Global-92 Forum** constituted one of the most significant events in the latter part of the twentieth century: it gave momentum to the citizenship's globalization. Today the debate surrounding the **Earth Charter** is becoming an important factor in building this planetary citizenship. Any pedagogy conceived outside globalization or the ecological movement, would have serious out-of-context difficulties nowadays.

The words to a song by the Brazilian singer Milton Nascimento say, *"Foreigner I refuse to be. Citizen of the world am I."* If the children of our schools would comprehend the profound meaning of the words of this song, they would doubtlessly be starting a true pedagogic and curricular revolution. How could I feel that I am a foreigner in any territory of the planet if I belong to one single territory, Earth? There is no place for a foreigner among earthlings on Earth! If I am a citizen of the world, boundaries cannot exist for me. The cultural, geographic, racial, and all other differences are weakened, in the presence of my feeling that I belong to Humanity.

The **planetary citizenship** (worldwide) notion is based on a unifying vision of the planet and a world society. This is set forth in different expressions such as, "our common humanity," "unity in diversity," "our common future," "our common nation," "planetary citizenship." Planetary Citizenship is an expression adopted to manifest a set of principles, of values, of attitudes and behaviors that evidence a **new perception of Earth**

as one single community, frequently linked to "sustainable development," it has a much broader meaning than its relationship with economics. It deals with an ethical point of reference that cannot be disassociated from **planetary civilization** or from ecology. Earth is "Gaia," a living super organism in evolution, and anything that transpires on it shall be reflected in all your children.

A sustainability culture presumes a **sustainability pedagogy** that becomes aware of the great task at hand of providing the formation of a planetary citizenship. This is a process already on course. The **planetary citizenship education** is starting through numerous experiences which, although many of them are local, these are targeted to an education that makes us feel members of the Earth and beyond, living a **cosmic citizenship**. The challenges are enormous, both for the educators and for those responsible for creating the educational systems. Nonetheless, certain signs are becoming evident within the society itself, that point to a growing search not only for spiritual and self-help issues, but for a more profound scientific knowledge of the universe.

Educating a planetary citizenship goes beyond a mere educational philosophy, beyond the enunciation of its principles, a re-orientation of our world vision on education, as a space for insertion of the individual, not in a local community, but rather in a community that is local and global at the same time. Educating, then, would not be as Émile Durheim explained as the transmission of culture "from one generation to the next," but the grand journey of each individual in his interior universe and in the universe that surrounds him.

Today's type of globalization is much closer to the phenomenon of a universal market, which is just one type of universalization. And even this universalization based on the market, may be viewed as a **cooperative globalization** or as a **competitive globalization** without solidarity. Between the absolutist statism and the invisible hand of the market, a new market economy may exist (and in fact does exist) (there are markets and markets!) where cooperation and solidarity prevail, and not savage competition, an solidary economy, the true sustainability economy. In view of the above, we need to build "another globalization" (Milton Santos, *In Favor of another Globalization: from the individual thought to a universal conscience*. São Paulo, Record, 2000), a globalization based on the principle of solidarity.

Globalization in itself does not pose problems, since it constitutes an unprecedented process of advancement in the history of humankind. What is considered a problem is competitive globalization where the market interests are above human interests, where the interests of peoples are subordinated to corporate interests of the great transnational companies. Thus, we may distinguish between a competitive globalization from a possible cooperative and solidary globalization which, at some point we referred to as the process of "**planetarization**." The former is hardly subordinated to the market laws, while the latter is subjected to ethical values and human spirituality. The Earth Charter addresses that second type of globalization, in the form of a universal code of ethics, and it should lend an important contribution, not only through its proclamation by the Member States, but especially, through the impact that its principles may have on the daily life of a planetary citizen.



Where does the **ecological movement** fit in this topic? It should be highlighted, as stated by Alicia Barcena, in the preface of Francisco Gutiérrez's book, that the formation of an environmental citizenship is a strategic element in the building process of democracy. With this in mind, an environmental citizenship is truly a planetary one, since in the ecological movement, the local and the global elements come together as one. The felling of the Amazon jungle is hardly a local occurrence: it constitutes an aggression against the entire planetary citizenship. The ecological movement has a myriad recognized achievements in bringing to the forefront the issue of planetarization. It was a pioneer in the dissemination of the citizenship concept, in the context of globalization, as well as in the practice of a global citizenship, and consequently today global citizenship and ecological movement form a part of one single field of action, of the same field of aspirations and sensitivities. However, planetary citizenship cannot only be environmental in nature, since there are worldwide agencies with environmental policies supported by capitalist globalization. One thing is to be "a citizen of the World" and quite another is "a capitalist of the World." The building of a planetary citizenship has still a long way to go within the capitalist globalization.

A planetary citizenship should have as its objectives to overcome inequality, the eradication of the bloody *economic differences*, the integration of the *cultural diversity* of humanity, and the elimination of the economic differences. One cannot speak of planetary or global citizenship without exercising an effective citizenship at the local and national levels. A planetary citizenship is, in essence, an **integral citizenship**; as such, it is an active and full citizenship, not merely as far as social, political, cultural, and institutional rights are concerned, but also in economic-financial aspects as well. It also implies the existence of a planetary democracy. Therefore, contrary to what neo-liberals uphold, we have a long way to go to reach an effective planetary citizenship. It still remains as a project of humanity, and is unattainable if limited only to technological development. It requires to form a part of the project of humanity as a whole. And it shall not be a mere consequence or byproduct of technology or economic globalization.

#### **4. The Eco-Pedagogy Movement**

This **journey through the millennium** is characterized by the unprecedented technological progress and also by an enormous political immaturity: while Internet places us in the center of the Information Era, the human government continues being very poor, generating poverty and deterioration. We may destroy all life on the planet. Five hundred (500) transnational companies control 25% of the world's economic activity, and 80% of the technological innovations. The capitalistic economic globalization weakened the National States, imposing restrictions to their autonomy, subordinating them to the economic logic of transnational companies. Gigantic foreign debts burden some nations and prevent the introduction of equality-oriented social policies. Transnational companies work for 10% of the world population which inhabits the wealthiest nations, generating a tremendous exclusion. This is the actual scenario of the journey - a scenario even more problematic because of the lack of alternatives.

The **classical paradigms** are exhausting their possibilities of adequately responding to this new context. They cannot manage to explain this journey, much less, travel in it.

There is a comprehensibility crisis going on, which many false prophets and charlatans take advantage of to offer magical solutions. A new spirituality has arisen which has been well made use of by the marketing evangelists. The response given by the bureaucratic and authoritarian statism is as deficient as the neo-liberalism of the market god. Neo-liberalism proposes more power to the transnational companies, while statesmen propose more power to the State, strengthening its structures. In the midst of all this is the common citizen who is neither a businessman nor the State. The solution seems to lie beyond these two classical models, but definitely not in an alleged "third path" that only intends to give an overlife to capitalism by sophisticating political domination, economic exploration, and provoking a massive social exclusion. The solution seems to originate today from strengthening the control of the citizen over the State and the Market, having Civil Society strengthen its capacity of governing itself and taking control of development. This is the important role of education comes into play, of the formation for an active citizenship.

We may envision that a sustainable community exists that lives in harmony with its environment, that does not harm other communities -- not today's communities, nor tomorrow's communities. And this cannot only be an ecological commitment, but also an ethical-political one, nourished by a pedagogy, that is, by a science of education and a defined social practice. In this sense, this eco-pedagogy inserted into that **socio-historical movement**, forms citizens capable of choosing the quality indicators of its own future, becomes a totally new and intensely democratic pedagogy.

The Movement for eco-pedagogy gained momentum particularly from the First International Symposium of the *Earth Charter in the Perspective of Education*, organized by the Paulo Institute, with the support of the Earth Council and UNESCO, held August 23-26, 1999 in São Paulo, and that of the *First International Forum on Eco-Pedagogy*, held March 24-26, 2000 at the Faculty of Psychology and Education of the University of Porto, Portugal. From these two gatherings the guiding **principles** of that movement were conceived, contained in the "Eco-Pedagogy Charter." Following are a selected few of these principles:

1. The planet as a single community.
2. Earth as the mother, a living organism in evolution.
3. A new awareness that knows what is sustainable, appropriate, or makes sense for our existence.
4. Our tenderness towards this home. Our address is the Earth.
5. A socio-cosmic justice: Earth is the great indigent, the greatest of all indigents.
6. A biophile pedagogy (promoter of life): get involved, communicate, share, relate, become motivated.
7. A concept of knowledge that admits that it is only integral as long as it is shared.
8. To walk with a meaning (daily living).
9. An intuitive and communicative rationality: emotional, not instrumental.
10. New attitudes: reeducating the way we look at things, the heart.
11. Culture gives sustainability: eco-formation. Broaden our outlook.

12. Classical pedagogies were anthropocentric. Eco-pedagogy departs from a planetary consciousness (genus, species, kingdoms, formal, informal, and non-formal education...). Let us broaden our outlook. From man to the planet, above genus, species and kingdoms. From an anthropocentric vision to a planetary consciousness, for the exercise of a planetary citizenship, and for a new ethical and social reference: the planetary civilization.

It cannot be stated that eco-pedagogy already constitutes a specific and marked tendency in the practice of contemporary education. If it already had definite and elaborate categories, it would be entirely wrong, since a pedagogical perspective cannot be conceived from a discourse prepared by experts. Quite the contrary, an elaborate pedagogical discourse is that which is born from a specific practice, proven and verified. Eco-pedagogy is still in the formative stage and being prepared as an education theory. It is expressing itself in various educational practices that the "Eco-Pedagogy Movement," led by the Paulo Freire Institute, attempts to assemble.

The Movement in favor of eco-pedagogy, born in the bosom of the Earth Charter initiative, is providing its support to the discussion process of the Earth Charter, precisely indicating an appropriate **methodology**, that is not the methodology of the simple governmental "proclamation," of a formal declaration, but rather the translation of a process lived and the critical participation of the "demand," as Francisco Gutiérrez puts it.

The Earth Charter should be construed especially as an ethical global movement that will lead to a **planetary code of ethics**, upholding a core of principles and values that strive against the social injustice and inequality that currently prevail in the world. There are five pillars that support that nucleus, namely: a) human rights; b) democracy and participation; c) equality; d) protection of minorities; and e) pacific resolution of conflicts. These pillars are the product of a vision of a solidary world that respects diversity (planetary consciousness).

The planetary exchange taking place today because of the expansion of opportunities of access to communications, particularly through Internet, should facilitate an intercultural and transcultural dialogue, and the development of this new planetary code of ethics. The campaign launched by the Earth Charter adds a new value and offers a new momentum to that movement towards ethics in politics, economics, education, etc. It shall really gain strength and perhaps be decisive, when the time comes to present a **project of the future**, a global and also local counterproject in opposition to the neo-liberal political-pedagogical, social and economic project, which is not only intrinsically unsustainable, but also essentially unfair and inhuman.

## 5. Earth as a paradigm

Gaia is equivalent to life. Many understand that it is illegitimate to envision Earth as a living organism. The Earth would not have this quality. Let us view life only from the viewpoint that we have of our own life, and the life of animals and plants. It is a fact that

we do not have the distance that astronauts have in space, for example, but we can have the same distance astronauts have in time, vaster than our own lifetime. The "Gaia hypothesis," which conceives Earth as a complex, living, and evolving super organism, finds its support in its history of billions of years. The first cell appeared over 4 billion years ago. From that time up to now, the evolving process of life has not ceased to be complex, forming interdependent eco-systems within Earth's macro-system, which in turn, is a micro-system, if compared to the entire Universe. We only manage to understand Earth as a living being if we distance ourselves from it in time and in space.

That view that astronauts had "from afar" caused profound changes in them, as well as in ourselves, who didn't live through that fabulous experience directly. Not only was it seen as a blue sphere in the middle of the universe's darkness, but it was perceived as a single unit. It therefore interfered also with the vision we have of ourselves, as a "sole community" (Leonardo Boff), as a "living system" (Fritjof Capra). That vision changed our conscience, with the paradigm that had guided us up to then. With this **planetary consciousness** our awareness of a **planetary citizenship** was born.

It is a fact that the paradigm of the instrumental reason that lead us to violence and to the negation of the fundamental human values, such as intuition, emotion, and sensibility. We are humans because we feel, perceive, love, dream. But there is also a **danger** of a trap in this new paradigm: it can lead us to the contemplation of nature and even to the deception of reality, a spirituality channeled by a religiousness based on passiveness. Instead of solidarity and fighting for justice, we would sit back and wait for a better world without work, without efforts, without conquests, without sacrifices. New human values that don't take into account the complexity and the contradiction inherent to all beings, objects, and processes destroy the possibility of a qualitative change in orientation of a new and needed civilization project. In order to acquire our own dimension as members of an immense cosmos, in order for us to assume new values based on solidarity, on emotionality, on transcendence, and on spirituality, to surmount the logic of competitiveness and capitalist accumulation, we must open a difficult road. No change is a pacific one. But it shall become a reality if we pray, only by our pure and sincere desire of changing the world. As Paulo Freire taught us, changing the world is urgent, difficult, and necessary. But in order to do so, we need to know, read the world, understand the world, not only scientifically but emotionally, and above all, become involved in it, organizationally.

Rationalism should be condemned, without condemning the use of reason. Rationalist logic lead us to plundering nature, lead us to death in the name of progress. But reason also lead us to discover planetarization. The poetic and emotional assertion of the astronauts that the Earth was blue was only possible after millions of years of the rational domination of the laws of our own nature. We must therefore condemn **rationalization**, without condemning **rationality**. When landing on the Moon the first time, astronaut Neil Armstrong claimed, "This is a small step for man and a great step for all mankind." This was possible through a colossal collective human endeavor that took into consideration all the technical, scientific and technological knowledge accumulated over the ages by humankind. This was no insignificant achievement. If we are able to form networks

within networks in the entangled world of planetary communications through Internet, that was possible thanks to the use of our imagination, intuition, emotion, as well as reason, due to the gigantic and suffered human endeavor to discover how to live better in this planet, how we can interact with it. It is true that we have done it erroneously at times. We consider ourselves to be "superior" thanks to our rationality and explore nature in a careless, disrespectful manner. We do not relate to Earth or to living things with emotion, with affection, with sensitivity. In this field, we are just crawling. But we are learning.

We are witnessing the birth of the planetary citizen. We have yet to imagine all the implications of this unique event. At this point in time, we feel, perceive, and get emotional about this fact, but we cannot adapt our minds and our lifestyles to that spectacular occurrence in the history of mankind.

We do perceive, as Edgar Morin did, that it is necessary to ecologize everything, and upon doing so, try living in this our planet whose inhabitants have discovered planetarization. What can we do as of now? We may question ourselves profoundly on the paradigms that guided us up to now, and attempt to live under a new paradigm that is the Earth viewed as one single community. And then continue walking, together, so that we may be able to still get "there" on time.

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