

**International Earth Charter Education Conference**  
**Leading the Way to Sustainability 2030:**  
**Education, the Earth Charter, and the Sustainable Development Goals**  
**29 - 31 January 2019**

# REPORT

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## Introduction

The Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development at University for Peace, with the support of World of Walas and Soka Gakkai International, hosted the Earth Charter International Education Conference: Leading the Way to Sustainability 2030. The conference took place at the University for Peace campus from 29 to 31 January.

More than 100 people participated from 18 countries, such as Mexico, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Brazil, the United States, Canada, Guatemala, France, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Germany, the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Japan, among others. A wide variety of sectors were represented, including universities, school educators, local government officials, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, as well as UNESCO representatives from both the Headquarters and the Regional Office for Central America and Mexico, and the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica.

This conference sought to share experiences and research projects and generate a dialogue on pedagogical approaches, materials and lessons learned in the search for necessary transformations in education processes for sustainable development and global citizenship.

The Conference was held in English and Spanish, with 66 presentations, divided into nine plenary sessions and four categories of parallel sessions, namely: school education, higher education, and non-formal education in English and Spanish. Among the speakers were recognized authors in the field of education, especially education for sustainable development, global citizenship, transformative education, among others.

In addition, pedagogical principles that encourage interaction and enjoyment were put into practice. In this sense, at the Conference there were nature walks, music and dancing, as well as moments of reflection, meditation and sharing among the participants. The idea was to work with “heart and mind,” offering moments for people to connect with each other and with nature.

The following links offer additional information about this Conference:

- [Conference Agenda](#)
- [Video about the Conference](#)
- [Photo Gallery](#)

This report offers a summary of the key ideas shared in the presentations, and when permitted, links to the power point presentations are shared. Annex 1 presents an overview of the Conference Programme.



DAY 1 Tuesday, 29 January

### Welcome remarks



Mirian Vilela, Executive Director, Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development at UPEACE (Brazil/Costa Rica)  
Francisco Rojas Aravena, Rector, University for Peace (Chile/Costa Rica)

On behalf of Earth Charter International, Mirian Vilela gave a warm welcome to all participants, emphasizing the main objectives of the Conference:

1. To share experiences and research on pedagogical approaches and lessons learned of the use of the Earth Charter in education settings, in connection with Education for Sustainable Development or Global Citizenship Education as indicated in the SDG 4.7.
2. To generate a dialogue on a pedagogical approaches and research agenda for the EC Center for ESD, and its partners and affiliates to advance the implementation of the SDG 4.7 and the mission of the EC Initiative with regards to education.
3. To highlight programmes and offer some training opportunities that provide

support to partners and the larger ESD community in using the Earth Charter to promote values related to sustainability and global citizenship education.

Focusing on SDG4 is especially relevant this year, since the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will generate a progress report on the implementation of this goal. In this sense, 2019 is an important year not only for governments, but also for civil society in general, to review the progress made towards the realization of the SDGs, specifically on education.

Francisco Rojas shared some insights about the connection between sustainable development and peace, in specific, SDG4 and SDG16, and the importance of working for peaceful and inclusive societies. In today's world, with 32 open armed conflicts, and global challenges such as climate change, it is important to find ways to promote access to justice and solid institutions. It is also important to understand conflicts, which is an important area of work for the University for Peace.

Rector Rojas considers the Earth Charter as an instrument for dialogue on essential topics related to sustainable development. He considers of key importance to redefine concepts related to development, and move to new paradigms that lead us to different ways to relate with each other. It is important to understand the dynamics of power and relations to bring about change in this world.

## Plenary Session I: Setting the Tone and Getting the Beat: The Earth Charter Education Contributing to Sustainability

### Earth Charter Education: Experiences and Lessons Learnt, Mirian Vilela, Earth Charter International Secretariat (Brazil/Costa Rica)



Mirian Vilela shared some insights about how to incorporate values and ethics of sustainability in processes of education and learning, and shared her findings regarding key pedagogical elements for an Earth Charter education. She has been analyzing nearly 116 published stories about how the Earth Charter has been used in education settings, bringing some notions from conferences that happened even before the Earth Charter was launched, such as the first educators Conference organized in Brazil by the Paulo Freire Institute, whose outcome was an ecopedagogy manifesto that is a guiding tool for Earth Charter education processes.

The key pedagogical elements of the Earth Charter pedagogy that she has identified are:

1. Human connection: creating a bond between members of the learning community, such as teachers, learners, administrative people, and parents
2. Connection with nature
3. The question: offer a space to delve on questions, and make room for many different answers and time to reflect
4. Dialogue: should be deep and transformational
5. Aesthetics: recognizing that all aspects that surround us can facilitate the

learning process (colours, sound, light, etc)

6. Holistic Approach
7. Arts and stories: using the language of arts in all materials and activities
8. There are other important pedagogical elements, such as modelling, coherence, sensibility, context, time, flexibility and surprise.



### **Radical Hope, World-Affirming Spirituality, and Intergenerational Action: A Vision for 2030, Peter Blaze Corcoran, Florida Gulf Coast University (USA)**

Peter Corcoran reminded us of the global change process that we are experiencing, where the natural and social world is in danger. He highlighted the importance of education as a key part to reduce vulnerability and build resilience. Education needs to be harnessed to move to sustainability, and to not reproduce the same forces that we had in the past.

The Earth Charter, he mentioned has a substantial education value, and this has been experienced at Florida Gulf Coast University, with a mandatory course about sustainability for all students of this university. So far, 25,000 students have taken this course.

For this Conference, Peter wanted to share some key inspirational ideas, that are present in the Earth Charter:

1. Radical hope: a key to avoid destruction is to not accept it as a given. Open awareness to solutions and imaginative alternatives. Take elements of democracy, community, philosophy of education. He quoted David Orr, who proposed to equip young people to do heroic things. Hope needs to be constructed, but it is important to acknowledge despair too. He also mentioned Joanna Macy, who argues that the pain that we feel for the world is natural, and this can be cathartic and helps us to move forward. We need to go to where the pain is, where the wounds are, and find healing and reconciliation.
2. World Affirming Spirituality: he referred to Steven Rockefeller's thoughts, saying that the Earth Charter is rooted in reverence to the mystery of being, and reverence for life, finding meaning and joy. This is at the heart of the Earth Charter and a world affirming spirituality, which seeks to live the ideal of being more in an ethical and spiritual sense—feeling part of a bigger world. It is important to realize that these notions are rooted in indigenous traditions —the reverence for life.
3. Intergenerational action: this is explicit in Principle 4 of the Earth Charter—to transmit the values of a sustainable livelihood to future generations.

In terms of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Peter stressed the importance of the participation of all generations and sectors, and that education is needed to make this happen—a values-based education that includes various skills for sustainability.

The Earth Charter has the capacity of bringing inspiration for action in education processes, connecting social and environmental issues. Peter mentioned that he learned about this strength of the EC from Wangari Maathai, who used to say that we cannot have peace without social economic justice, and we cannot have this without ecological integrity. We need to avoid apathy and move to action.

Radical hope, spirituality and intergenerational equity will inform our way to sustainability for 2030.

## Plenary Session II: Pedagogical Approaches for Education for Sustainability



### **The Transformative Work of Shifting Consciousness: A Holistic Perspective of ESD and the Earth Charter, Sam Crowell, California State University (USA)**

Sam Crowell, one of the facilitators of the Earth Charter Education Center, shared some of his reflections about moving to a pedagogy that is more coherent with a new worldview such as the one articulated in the Earth Charter. We do not remember the content we receive in school, he said, we remember the actions that teachers and others experienced with us. The Earth Charter stresses the importance of cultivating good relationships, honoring the land where we are, and honoring our ancestors and those who are yet to come.

Sam mentioned that there are some key learnings from anthropology about how to begin to create a culture that can be brought to education processes. One is to create and practice rituals, which help bring people together. It could be meaningful rituals at the beginning, middle and end of the education activity. Sam showed the audience a kindergarden morning greeting that he learned, which he thinks help to connect people with their surroundings, with those around us, and with our inner self: “Down is the Earth, up is the Sky, here are my friends and so am I. Good morning, good morning, good morning.” He also showed to the audience a chant to Mother Earth that can help connect people with the feminine energy of the Earth (with a sound – Maa-).

Another important question he brought up was how to do the shifting of mind and heart for an increased environmental consciousness. He thinks that it is important to start acknowledging the disconnection that there is sometimes between what we are and what we teach. Therefore, starting with educators, it is important to make our pedagogy consistent with our worldview, because it is often the case to use modernist ways in pedagogy when we try to convey a vision for sustainability. Sam shared his experience of doing a deep reflection of his worldview and modernist way of thinking, after that process, he felt a new sense of values, of connectivity, new concepts about the world, which were against the sequential and linear ways of thinking. “Life is not linear,” he said, “we don’t encounter the world with first, second, etc, but we encounter it as a mix, with a dynamic stability with constant change.”

His interest in new pedagogical ways motivated him to create a Master Program in Holistic Education. He shared some concepts and suggestions he has learned with this programme and his research on holistic education:

- “Embodied cognition”—recognizes the importance of the whole body in the learning process. When we are in a playful state of mind, relaxed but focused, we learn better. Learning is a physiological process. When these things happen, we are embodying. He suggests as well using physical metaphors for concepts, as a way to play with them, and to create an experience to embody concepts.
- “Embedded” – we are embedded in contexts and information in itself is meaningless without context.
- “Perception and action” –these are needed to learn. We need to act on what we perceive to learn.
- “Inactive notion” –a concept that comes from Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela’s work, which promotes the practice of silence, and asks questions such as: “Who am I in relation with the other?”
- “Enacting” –when you have a dream, you share the story with others. When you are sharing your story, you are enacting it. It is through the enactment when a dream takes a form.



**Categorical System Based on Ecopedagogy and its Practices, María Vilches, Metropolitan University (Puerto Rico)**

María Vilches is a facilitator of the Earth Charter Education Center. She shared some results from her research on ecopedagogy, education for sustainable development and the Earth Charter. Her main interest lies on how to make education a driver for change in people's worldviews towards an ecocentric view of life. She considers that the competences and abilities associated with education for sustainable development can have a role in the cultural changes for the emergence of a more just and solidary world. For example: the ability to see connections, critical thinking, the capacity to collaborate, the ability to manage uncertainty, problem-solving abilities, and the ability to experience awe.

María did research on how to integrate ecopedagogy principles in the eco-schools programme of Puerto Rico. Eco-schools is an international programme that has been very positive to bring changes to the national curriculum. She used as references the work of Francisco Gutiérrez, Cruz Prado and Moacir Gadotti on ecopedagogy, as well as

the work of the Center for Ecoliteracy and the Earth Charter.

The aim of ecopedagogy is a change of worldview based on complexity thinking, emphasizing a sense of unity, relationships, process, network—it is an ecological vision. It affirms an ethic of solidarity for the common good, with a strong commitment with the common good and other generations. Ecopedagogy is a proposal that highlights critical thinking, holism and complexity from a Latin American perspective. It aims at the evolution of consciousness where learners generate meaning based on their daily life experiences.

With the Eco-Schools programme, the approaches promoted artistic, affective and experiential activities where the connection with the surroundings, others (including different living beings) and oneself was sought. Ethical reflection was also encouraged, and activities such as meditation, visualizations and conscious encounters with other beings. Another important aspect is the action-oriented learning approach, where as part of the programme, learners need to develop collective projects that aim at generating sustainable solutions to local problems. With the ecopedagogy approach, the eco-schools programme encourages the interaction with different cultures, thus creating networks of collaboration.

## Parallel Sessions

### Session 1. Primary and Secondary Education and General Themes (English and Spanish) Facilitators: Sam Crowell and Alicia Jimenez



#### **Values-Based Arts Education Using the Earth Charter, David Reid-Marr, Idyllwild Arts Academy (USA)**

David Reid-Marr shared some experiences at Idyllwild Arts Academy (US) with values-based arts education. He mentioned that students are living difficult and pessimistic times, and rather than avoiding this pain, in his institution they believe in the healing power of art. They use the Earth Charter as inspiration in many of their classes. They also created an adaptation of the Earth Charter. David and Sam have systematized some of the experiences in this Academy with the Earth Charter. David read some excerpts about these student experiences. Find more information about David's work in this link: [www.reid-marr.com](http://www.reid-marr.com)

#### **CEUNA School Experience with Sustainability Values, Karla Aguilar, University Educational Center for Children and Adolescents (CEUNA) (Costa Rica)**

Karla Aguilar is the Principal of CEUNA School, in Costa Rica. She shared some details about this school's experience with the Earth Charter. CEUNA is a private school but it does not have a private owner, it is a non-for-profit association that owns and manages the school. Since 1995 they consider sustainable human development as a guiding axis of their work. During the 1990's, CEUNA got involved in the drafting process of the Earth Charter by organizing consultation workshops with children. Since then, they have been thinking of ways to introduce and put in practice the Earth Charter.

One initial action to introduce the Earth Charter in the curriculum was to create ecological projects with the students and teachers. With time, they have been creating and experimenting with other activities to share the Earth Charter, for example, an Ecological Festival that each year focuses on one principle of the Earth Charter. In this sense, members of the school community deepen their knowledge about the chosen principle through various types of activities. In addition, CEUNA invites other schools and community organizations to come to participate in this festival, and in this sense, they share their knowledge about the Earth Charter with many other people. The school also has a code of ethics, which is based on the Earth Charter. The pedagogical principle of action oriented learning is very important for CEUNA. Every year, all students need to get involved in at least one institutional project, such as the organic garden, nursery, composting, butterfly farm, forest conservation (the school owns a two-hectare forest), among others. CEUNA tries to be coherent with their mission of being sustainable, which is why they use clean energy sources (solar panels and a solar stove) and have a recycling collection center.

#### **Mobilizing the Earth Charter: Outdoor Preschools and Forest Kindergartens, Barry Wood, University of Houston (USA)**

Barry Wood shared his reflections about some possible solutions for the disconnect that exists between the education systems and the need to find solutions for our current sustainability challenges. One of the problems, he mentioned, is that education is containerized, everything is in "boxes", so most of the education activities happen inside, within walls. Children and youth that attend schools spend most of their time inside (at home, car,



school buildings), and this increases our disconnect with nature. He mentions that a solution is outdoor education, which only a small fraction of schools practice. Barry claims that outdoor schools are cheaper and possible in different type of climates. An alternative is to get kids out to the environment more often and for longer periods of time. This is transformative—it will change their feelings, their relationships with nature—and it is a way to prevent high consumerism behavior. He suggested to watch the video “[School’s Out](#),” and challenged UNESCO to think about the idea of promoting outdoor schools.

### **The Earth Charter as a Framework for EDS in the Puerto Rico Eco School Programme, Marisol Quiñones, Organización Pro Ambiente Sustentable (Puerto Rico)**

Marisol Quiñones followed up María Vilches’ presentation from the morning, offering more insights on the experience integrating the Earth Charter in the Eco Schools programme of Puerto Rico. She works at the NGO (OPAS) that is in charge of giving the Eco Schools certification to schools that apply for it. Eco Schools is a voluntary international certification that can be adapted to different contexts. In Puerto Rico, there are 37 schools in this programme. To participate in this programme, schools go through a reconceptualization of their curriculum, where they incorporate content and activities on water, biodiversity, and energy by using actions like creating organic gardens, all while incorporating arts in their activities. For example, some schools created sculptures of pollinators using plants that attract them. But not only environmental related actions are promoted, they also practice democratic skills and global citizenship notions. For example, students from one of the schools lobbied with government representatives for a bill to diminish the use of plastic bags in all sectors in Puerto Rico, and this bill was approved the same year it was proposed (2015 – Law 247-2015). All actions of the Eco Schools programme have been correlated with the SDGs.

Marisol mentioned that Hurricane Maria (2017) changed the context and daily life of all people in Puerto Rico. The Government was disarticulated and had no capacity to deal with the disaster. She said that it was the people and their sense of community that helped them. The schools part of the Eco Schools programme were very active in helping the community; putting in practice the values for sustainability that they had been reflecting upon before. Now, the schools work with the concept of resilience and the value of solidarity. The Eco Schools programme is also planning on doing teacher trainings incorporating the Earth Charter.

### **The Power of Digital Storytelling, Walter (Rocky) Rohwedder, Sonoma State University (Costa Rica/USA)**

Rocky Rohwedder works with youth – millennials – and he shared some ideas and learnings he has had with young people that could be useful to spread the message of the Earth Charter and achieve the SDGs. He mentions that youth nowadays are pragmatic idealists. They are ready to move to be entrepreneurs, and they want to do things to “change the world.” They want peace and justice, but move forward with innovations. Rocky mentions that a way to reach out to them with a complex message like the Earth Charter is through stories using digital media especially with mobile phones. “It is important to tell powerful stories,” he said, “It is narratives, not lectures of successful entrepreneurs, of people who have been able to make a difference. A good story engages our emotions; we can see ourselves in them. Stories are easier to absorb than facts and figures, and bring the possibility to embrace the hero’s journey. Stories are able to catalyze actions, and weave complex ideas.”

Rocky shared two examples of story publications in which he has been involved:

- 1) *Ecological Handprints* – an e-book. This has several of stories of people that have been able to move out of poverty. Who is doing it and how people are doing it. They focus on water, lighting, cooking. This book can be found here: [www.ecologicalhandprints.org](http://www.ecologicalhandprints.org)
- 2) An art publication called *the Lexicon of sustainability*.

In addition, Rocky shared about the experience with a project in Costa Rica: Project Localize [www.projectlocalize.org](http://www.projectlocalize.org). This is an educational programme that helps classrooms identify and promote sustainable economic, cultural and social progress in their communities. Students do art work based on pictures to tell stories about sustainable lifestyles, they put words in the pictures, converting the pictures in a digital story.

## **Session 2. Higher Education and General Themes – Facilitators: Peter Blaze Corcoran and Mirian Vilela**

### **The Earth Charter as a Pedagogical Tool, Maria Loffredo Roca, Florida Gulf Coast University (USA)**

Maria Roca shared her experience of teaching with the Earth Charter in various courses at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). She started her presentation by briefly sharing that FGCU has a historical commitment to environmental sustainability and in working with the Earth Charter. For nearly 20 years, the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education at FGCU has developed numerous scholarly projects with the Earth Charter including research projects that resulted in publications such as “A Voice for Earth: American Writers Respond to the Earth Charter”. The university has developed a required course for students in all five colleges of the university called “the University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future,” which has been very successful over the years and has incorporated the Earth Charter. Maria spent most of her presentation sharing her experience in teaching a full course on the Earth Charter called “Living the Earth Charter” in which she gives assignments involving cradle-to-grave/cradle-to-cradle projects; Personal Contemplative Experience/Earth Charter Response; Personal Plan for



Living the Earth Charter and Living the Earth Charter Community Partner Project.

She has also used the Earth Charter in other courses she offered over the years to which she gives assignments that invite students to experience “The Contemplative Life” and respond to that. She shared some examples of how she uses the Earth Charter as a pedagogical tool and the students’ response to that. For instance, in an exercise she calls “Earth Charter Creative Response,” students are invited to select a line from the Earth Charter or from “Owning the Imperatives” by Allison Hawthorne Deming, take the principle or line into an appropriate contemplative practice, allow a creative response to be inspired by the contemplative practice and produce and present the contemplative response. Students respond to this through an artistic expression such as a poem, a design or a sculpture.

### **Experience Teaching with the Earth Charter: The Promotion of Eco-Citizenship at the Center for General Studies National University, Heidy Vega, Universidad Nacional (UNA) (Costa Rica)**

In her presentation, Heidy Vega provided an overview of the experience and knowledge she acquired during 10 years of academic work using the Earth Charter as a pedagogical tool, in socio-environmental courses at the Center for General Studies, National University of Costa Rica. She expressed that the department of humanities of her university seeks to raise the consciousness of citizens concerning their responsibilities with the society and strengthen their sense of solidarity, cooperation, and respect for differences to contribute to common purposes. From 2005 to 2015, the Earth Charter was part of a course called “Education, Society and Environment: Research and Action.” This course involved practical activities, analyses of documentaries, discussion forums and artistic expressions among others.

Between 2015 and 2016, a new course emerged called “Eco-citizenship in Action with the Earth Charter” with the purpose to promote a sustainable lifestyle and stimulate the humanistic and professional formation of the students through the development of a greater environmental awareness, the promotion of the Eco-citizenship and the experience of the values of the Earth Charter. In this course, implemented with the collaboration of the EC Center for Education and EC young leaders, students had the opportunity to experience the UNESCO Youth Leadership Training on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Through this experience, students got familiar with the Earth Charter and topics such as Education for Sustainable Development, Systems Thinking, Conflict Transformation, and Leadership, Tools for ESD, Communication, Facilitation, and Networking. To complete the course, students had to go into their communities and facilitate their own workshops related to one of the themes they covered in class. The workshops took place in schools and other university settings. Prof. Heidi indicated that this has been very successful in engaging students with community service and in raising their civic-engagement and sense of responsibility.

#### **Using the Earth Charter to Teach Social Sustainability, Jacqueline Salmond, Florida Gulf Coast University (USA)**

In this presentation, Jacqueline Salmond highlighted the work Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) is doing to make sustainability the main focus of its educational model. She shared that since its inception, the university used a sustainability approach to its building and plans and since then has continued to improve the implementation of sustainability on its campus. The university created a course called “University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future,” which introduces students to sustainability concepts and the Earth Charter that every student, regardless of their major, is required to complete. She explained that this course has undergone a restructuring and now aims to reflect a more holistic approach to sustainability in which economy, equity, and the environment are more equally addressed. According to her, many instructors have successfully used the EC to focus on the ecological integrity aspects of sustainability; but she has been exploring ways to use of EC in this course to help students engage with the concepts of social sustainability. In this presentation, she shared some of the experiences gained over three semesters in implementing experiential learning and service learning and reflection through this course involving activities on Hurricane recovery such as after Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Michael. She indicated that the experiment of expanding the social dimension of sustainability through service learning has contributed to increase the sense of civic engagement of students. This approach to engage students with service learning experience has helped to increase students understanding on the concepts of inter-connectedness and complexity and also in connecting their lives with the bigger picture of sustainability.

#### **Dentists in Formation with the Earth Charter, David Eduardo Velásquez Muñoz, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México (Mexico)**

In this presentation, David Velásquez shared his experience in raising awareness of the impact of the dentistry practice in the environment and human health and on the importance of addressing the dentistry-nature relationship through his courses and work at the Faculty of Dentistry of the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico. He indicated that this was the first public university that endorsed the Earth Charter in Mexico over 14 years ago, and since then it has consistently worked to incorporate the principles of the EC in its teaching and operations. It aims to continuously increase the level of awareness on the Earth Charter and promote the understanding of its inclusive ethical vision. Its Dentistry School has been a pioneer in Environment Education and has incorporated the Earth Charter as part of the environment management plan and education it has developed. This plan involves proper waste management, water and energy saving and responsible consumption. As part of this effort, his faculty developed an environmental policy that has the objective to “encourage the practice of principles and values of sustainability in their professional practice.” They also developed the Dentistry Charter based on the Earth Charter as a manifest to guide every school activity, this document is used as a didactic tool, as a content for learning, and as a means to dialogue with the aim of promoting sustainable practice among dentistry professionals. For all these years, David has been teaching ethics for sustainability with the Earth Charter as part of the training of dentists and taking the lead in moving these efforts ahead in the Dentistry School.

### Session 3. Non Formal Education and General Themes - (Spanish) – Facilitators: Pepa Carrillo and Daniela Carvalho



#### **The Earth Charter and the City of Sao Paulo/UMAPAZ: Lifelong-Learning with Ethics and Aesthetics, Rose Marie Inojosa, Open University of the Environment and Culture of Peace (UMAPAZ) (Brazil)**

Rose Marie Inojosa shared the experience of the Open University for Environment and a Culture of Peace of the City of Sao Paulo (UMAPAZ) using the Earth Charter, where their vision is to convert Sao Paulo into a learning city. The Earth Charter is their map for action, and it is embedded in all their education actions. This experience connects with SDG 4, and it is an example of education for sustainable development in action at the local government level. UMAPAZ education programmes aim at transforming communities by changing habits of consumption and coexistence. The programmes offer freedom for people to choose what activities to do and what to focus.

This [video](#) presents an overview of the actions and impact that UMAPAZ has had with teachers and citizens to invite them to be change agents in their communities.

#### **Strategic Alliance Municipality of Santa Ana-Educational Centers, Rosa María Muñoz, Municipality of Santa Ana (Costa Rica)**

The Municipality of Santa Ana in San José, Costa Rica, is committed to doing actions to protect the environment and doing collaborative work with schools. Rosa María Muñoz, who works at this Municipality, shared the experience that began in 2016, when the Municipality generated actions to strengthen the environmental management of schools in Santa Ana County, offering training opportunities, and creating synergies with the private sector.

This Municipality is working with 34 schools, following a participatory non-assistencialist process. They are supporting local groups that are taking action on environmental issues such as: environmental brigades, youth for climate change group, and guardians of Uruca River. The Municipality organizes training workshops for this groups and for schools in general, in areas related to environmental management. In this sense, the schools can in turn support the actions to protect the environment along with the Municipality.

#### **The Earth Charter in Action in the 21st Century Company (Business Experience in the Era of Knowledge, José Luis Pérez Álvarez, Values Foundation (Spain)**

Jose Luis Pérez has been collaborating with Values Foundation (Fundación Valores) in Spain, with actions that are helping with the transformation of private sector institutions using the Earth Charter principles. The objective is to promote organizations with Heart and Soul and focused on the Common Good. He mentioned that their work is framed on the area of social economy; therefore, their focus is on the people. Their vision is to have businesses with a healthy work environment, where the production and activities carried out take into account the ecological integrity and social responsibility. In this sense, work will need to be undertaken in coherence with the values associated with sustainability.

As part of their pedagogical approach, they involve people working in the company with questions and activities to make them aware of their worldviews and the situation that we are facing as humanity and community of life. They used a variety of techniques aimed at personal growth in

coherence with the principles of the Earth Charter, in activities such as conferences, roundtables, courses and others, where employees participated. José Luis showed that in one of the companies where they carried out this process of having a healthier and sustainable work environment, the profits of the companies increased significantly.

#### **Session 4. Non Formal Education and General Themes – Facilitators: Alide Roerink and Irma Verhoeven**

##### **Seeds of Hope and Seeds of Change Exhibition: The Role and Impact of Non-formal Education Tools, Hiro Sakurai and Joan Anderson, Soka Gakkai International (Japan)**



Hiro Sakurai and Joan Anderson, members of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), shared about the history of this organization and its international members. SGI is Partner of the Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development, and their aim is to promote peace, culture, and education (ESD). To share and educate about these topics, SGI created the exhibits Seeds of Hope and Seeds of Change.

Seeds of Hope has three topics: Learn, Reflect and Empower. The panels contain a case study of actions that individuals can take.

Hiro and Joan mentioned that SGI also participates actively in United Nations processes, and they have seen dramatic change for good and they recognize the role of NGOs as partners. There are many benefits for been actively present at the UN, such as to generate key partnerships and be perceived as trustworthy partners.

The Earth Charter expresses values of Buddhism and at the same time, encourage Buddhists to use sustainability in their day to day life. The Seeds of Hope international exhibit was seen in many countries, including Ghana. “Just an exhibition will not create a big change but it might start change,” they said, “an exhibition alone is not enough to inspire a search for purpose.” Nonetheless, Seeds of Hope is accompanied by an education package to enhance its impact, and people trained as guides, who are transmitting the message of the exhibition. SGI wants to address the challenge of developing engagement, dialogue, reflection and empowerment. Hiro and Joan reflected on how we can incorporate the Earth Charter and the SDGs without feeling overwhelmed, and although there are no simple answers for this, what is very important for them is to emphasize the connection between the SDGs and Earth Charter.

##### **Engaging Youth with Sustainability and the Earth Charter, Christine Lacayo, Earth Charter International Secretariat (USA/Costa Rica) and Sofía Mendoza, Earth Charter Young Leader (Costa Rica)**

Christine Lacayo is the Youth Coordinator of ECI Secretariat in Costa Rica and Sofía Mendoza is an Earth Charter Young Leader. They started their presentation by sharing the history of the Earth Charter Youth Network and offered an overall explanation of the courses and topics the youth need to work on during the course. The EC Young Leader Programme (ECYLP) have participants from around the world—each participant produces three

workshops and three articles per year. There were four Youth Leaders in the room during the presentation.

The challenges the programme faces are: 1) scaling up and 2) generating strategic partnerships. An example of a successful strategic partnership is the cooperation with York University who adopted the course as part of their official course on sustainable development and leadership.

Some Success stories are shared: Emmanuel from Burundi (reforest Burundi) / Khadeejah from the Philippines / Guillermina from Mexico.

Currently ECYLP is working on extending the already existing workshops for 'student abroad programmes.' ECYLP also provides local workshops.

Sofia explained how she works as EC Young Leader: "Take responsibility for what you do, you can actually do something."

**SDGs and a Cross-Cultural Comparison of the African Philosophy of Ubuntu, the Bhutanese Gross National Happiness and the Native American Idea of Buen Vivir, Dorine van Norren, Ministry of Education (Netherlands)**

Dorine van Norren is interested in elevating the importance of indigenous wisdom and philosophy for moving forward with the Sustainable Development Goals. She mentioned that when the SDG negotiation started, there was a recognition that indigenous knowledge is indeed important. However, the SDGs turned out to be a western-based ideology: linear result-based and human right approach oriented.

Other cosmovisions have an inherent biocentric value orientation that is often ignored in academic and diplomatic circles. These claim to be more promising than continuing green development approaches, based in modernism. Dorine looked at a cross cultural comparison of the African philosophy of Ubuntu, the Bhutanese Gross National Happiness and the native American idea of Buen Vivir (BV) in relation to the SDGs, their general attitude towards the SDGs, how they view 'development', goals and indicators, leadership and the implicit value underpinnings of the SDGs; prioritization of goals by their adherents and missing links (in ca.120 interviews and literature).

Happiness adherents are upbeat, nonetheless in Buthan happiness is going down due to westernizing of the country, which results in losing traditional culture. Ubuntu is pragmatic, not only thinking about this generation but also the ancestors and future generations.

Buen Vivir, polemic towards the SDGs, is a biocentric concept that aims at promoting harmony with nature and with ourselves. Humans as individuals and equal to all other living beings, everything is about change and reciprocity.

A positive aspect is that the SDGs contain language of all three worldviews. A negative aspect is that the SDGs are not biocentric, aiming to respect nature for nature's sake, enabling reciprocity with nature. The SDGs embody linear growth/results-thinking which requires unlimited resource exploitation, and not cyclical thinking replacing growth with well-being (of all beings). The SDGs represent individualism and exclude private sector responsibility and do not enhance collective agency and sharing. This implies that there is a need for 'development as service' to one another and to the Earth. The glass can be viewed as half full or half empty, but Western 'modernism' is still a strong underpinning of the SDGs. Bridges can be built between Happiness, Ubuntu and Buen Vivir in re-interpreting the globalization process.

**Same Theme, Different Approaches - The Challenge of Working with Sustainability Values in Non-Formal Education, Cristina Moreno, Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development (Brazil)**

Cristina Moreno, a facilitator of the Portuguese programmes of the Earth Charter Center for ESD, shared some insights about her experience promoting the Earth Charter in non-formal education processes in Brazil. She said that people are looking for recipes to practice sustainability, but are not thinking about how to change their own life. She advised to not start with the words 'Earth Charter' when implementing education processes, but start

reflecting about common values that express the values in the Earth Charter, for example respect, justice, responsibility as a planetary citizen, solidarity, generosity, care and love. Then invite them to practice those common values.

When implementing the Earth Charter, it is important to keep in mind that many different approaches are needed to adapt and contextualize the message for the different sectors. Also, bring together the things that we all have in common, for example love (pura vida), and the values related to sustainability. To be a human being is to strive for a plenitude of life.

### **How Can We Help Decrease Rates of Child Marriage? Palina Gurung, Cornell University (USA)**

Palina Gurung shared her own experience where many of her friends were forced to be married, but in her case, her parents looked at her in the same way as her brother; therefore, she was not forced to be married.

The definition of child marriage is the one occurring when one of the spouses is younger than 18 years old. Palina considers that child marriage is in contradiction with many SDGs. There is a higher percentage of girls getting married than boys.

In Costa Rica, 25% of marriages are considered child marriages, but there are laws that prevent this type of marriages. There is a direct negative link between education and child marriage.

In Bangladesh, there is social pressure for this type of marriages, because it is perceived as it protects girls against harassment. Also, it is an issue related to poverty—the younger the girl, the smaller the dowry. Access to education is denied to girls that are married.

In Nepal, there is a law against child marriages, but it is still common. A social norm considers that when a girl reaches puberty it is time to get married. There are economic reasons around the dowry system and a strong tradition for girls to get married. Education is not free, therefore it is difficult for many girls to access it, and the subsidy system is affected by corruption.

The similarities in these cases is that there is a dowry system (except Costa Rica), and that there are government efforts that try to deal with this issue. But there are several differences, for example, Bangladesh suffers from natural disasters, which make the Government focus on this, and in Nepal the caste system continues to exist. Another problem is that many countries do not collect or give numbers about child marriages.

Among the solutions that Palina has considered are to generate conditions to make education more accessible to girls, providing uniforms and separate toilets, and providing free education. Palina will be exploring how the Earth Charter can support finding solutions for this issue.

### Plenary Session III: Leadership Driving Meaningful Changes in Education

#### **You are so much more than you think, Heleen de Mooij Lubbers, Stichting In Eigen Kracht (Netherlands)**



Heleen Lubbers inspired us to “look at talent differently,” to see beyond socially accepted skills and talents, and value those who are different— those who may not be considered as “intelligent” by education standards. She asked us to reflect, using her own experience, about the focus of the education system. Her daughter was diagnosed with a low IQ that would prevent her from reading, nonetheless, she was stimulated and valued, and is now an independent young woman with a career in horse back riding. Today, many students have experienced various challenges in reading, dyslexia, in concentrating or other forms of disability during their school years, she said, the important thing is to acknowledge and stimulate all the talents and passions of each individual child, and then a world will open up. In addition, when we stimulate that, “the impossible becomes possible,” she said. Heleen invited the audience to really “see” who was there, looking in the eyes of people and saying, “I see you,” in the sense of acknowledging the other person.

Heleen referred to the legacy of her father, Ruud Lubbers, who was close to the Earth Charter Initiative. One of his messages was: “A strong economy through ecology.” She said that her follow-up message is: “A strong society through connection and natural balance of heart and mind, in IQ and EQ.”

#### **UNESCO Plans to Advance the ESD Agenda, Bernard Combes, UNESCO Headquarters (France)**

Bernard Combes shared about his first encounter with the Earth Charter in 2003, when UNESCO adopted the Earth Charter and he was working in the area of Early Childhood. He reflected on the importance of having the Earth Charter available in ways that children could understand it.

Currently, UNESCO is coordinating efforts to build momentum, harness partnerships and offer guidance for the implementation of education for sustainable development, for which the Earth Charter is considered as a valid ethical framework. For the last 5 years, the work of ESD is been coordinated under the Global Action Plan on ESD (GAP), with five priority areas: 1. Advancing policy; 2. Transforming learning environments; 3. Building capacities of educators and trainers; 4. Empowering and mobilizing youth; 5. Accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. UNESCO is working with all SDGs, emphasizing that education, cultural and intangible heritage, as well as science, technology and engineering, the arts and freedom of expression are enabling factors to achieve all the goals.

Bernard referred to the UN General Assembly Resolution 72/222 that argues that ESD is needed for all, which is UNESCO’s favorite resolution. This resolution refers to SDG 4 Target 4.7, which in his opinion, is a complex target and it will be challenging to generate indicators for it. Bernard made a reference to the Future of ESD draft document, because the GAP ends in 2019 and UNESCO is preparing for the next phase. This document has been consulted with Member States and partners from civil society, and will be presented to the governing bodies of UNESCO and the UN in 2019.





What is in the vision of the future of ESD? Bernard reflected on the importance to focus on deep structural causes of unsustainability. Also, ESD needs to go beyond the rhetoric of the global south and global north differences, because ESD is perceived as a luxury in context of poverty. Therefore, it is important to make education (ESD) relevant to the context so that people learn things that are useful and meaningful for them, and to contribute to sustainable livelihoods. Values need to be integrated in education, especially those related to human dignity, conservation, sufficiency, moderation and solidarity.

Technology and artificial intelligence will have a role to deal with some “old” ESD problems; it will require the promotion of skills such as complexity and critical thinking, media and information literacy, as well as resilience and adaptation to changing conditions. ESD is about transformation, how to go further, understanding your own experience - not only using cognitive aspects but also social and emotional learning.

“Sustainability is not about something to learn, is something to live”, he said, referring to the initiative “good life goal,” that helps to contextualize the SDGs in personal life.

In terms of UNESCO’s role for 2030, the agency continues to support governments, strengthening national capacities for policy advancement, foster networking, conducting action research and global monitoring on ESD and SDG4.7. He mentioned that an important role is to show the impact and the progress in what they suggest to Member States in terms of the SDGs.

Useful links: [Education for Sustainable Development Goals](#). E-mail: [esd@unesco.org](mailto:esd@unesco.org)

(Español: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002524/252423s.pdf>)



### **Costa Rica Commitment and Experiences in Education for Sustainable Development, Henry Arias, Advisor, Ministry of Education (Costa Rica)**

Henry Arias shared the experience of the Government of Costa Rica in finding ways to incorporate education for sustainable development in the education system of this country. In 2014, the Government of Costa Rica decided to make efforts to find key elements for transformative education, and incorporate them in education public policies. In this sense, the Ministry of Education made a plan focusing on five areas of work: policy and conceptual, curricular, student participation, teacher training and institutional environmental management.

With the support of UNESCO, they coordinated a research study to deepen their understanding of what is education for sustainable development. With this input and input from others, they identified three areas to develop in education policies: global citizenship with national identity; digital citizenship with social equity and sustainable development citizenship. With these focus, they launched a new education policy that puts people and students in the center of the education process (Política Educativa La

Persona: Centro del proceso educativo y sujeto transformador de la sociedad). Also a Curricular Policy (Educar para una nueva ciudadanía) and an upcoming Policy on ESD (waiting for approval from the High Council of Education of Costa Rica). The new curricula, based on these policies, are not organized by objectives but by competences, and they are focused on promoting skills for life (not memorization of information). Henry mentioned that it is important to move away from the conceptualization of environmental education when implementing ESD.

In the Curricular Policy, the Ministry of Education has identified a series of actions, like incorporating ESD models in study programmes, a National Forum on ESD, including sustainability in the National Scientific Fair, and the development of materials and awards on sustainability issues. In terms of teacher training, they have developed several courses and seminars. One of them was implemented by the Earth Charter Center for ESD at the University for Peace. Also, they are linking their efforts with other ministries and public policies to reduce repetition of efforts.

**Plenary Session IV: Approaches to Values Based Education with the Earth Charter**

**The Impact of the Earth Charter in the Educational Community in Spain, María José (Pepa) Carrillo and María del Pinar Merino, Values Foundation (Spain)**



The Values Foundation (Fundación Valores), where María Jose (Pepa) Carrillo and María del Pinar Merino work, has been promoting the Earth Charter in Spain for fourteen years. They organize high impact events and workshops for the “mind, hearts and hands,” where the arts play an important role to express the principles of the Earth Charter. In this session, they practiced a couple of activities with music, songs and body movements, which are the type of exercises they use in their events to integrate the cognitive with the emotional and with the body. The songs were chants of praise to the Earth and life.

After enjoying the activities, both of them shared some of the projects the Foundation has undertaken in the areas of Communication and Education.

Communication: they are implementing a project called “Utopia for a Better World,” which is a series of conferences where they show experiences and models that have already been implemented to put sustainability into practice.

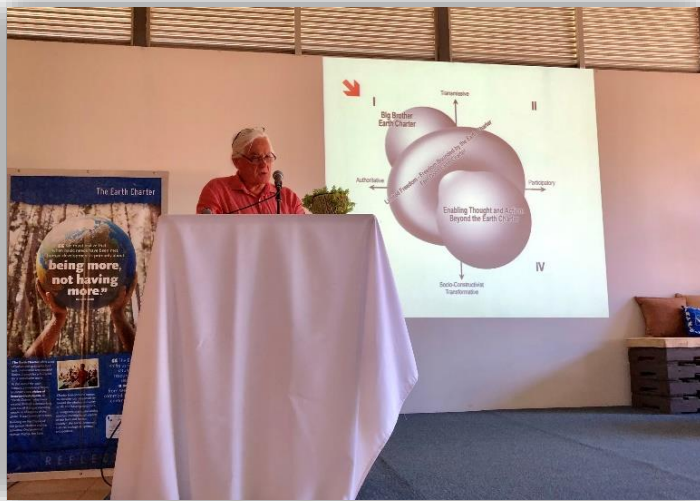
Education: they work with non formal education but in many instances with formal education institutions (such as schools). The Foundation has created activities that seek to connect people with their inner being, with those around them, and with nature, facilitating people’s connection with their surroundings.

They emphasize the connections of hearts with hearts, through the emotions. Regarding topics, they work on promoting a culture of peace with environmental education, gender equity and responsible citizenship. They use as references the Delors Report, Pedagogy to Be Happy (Toshiro Kanamori), Complexity Thinking (Edgar Morin), Ecopedagogy (Gadotti, Gutiérrez and Prado), and the work of Steiner, Montessori and Claudia Naranjo.

One Project they have created is “Schools with a heart”, which seeks to awaken the intelligence of the heart, to spark processes of transformation where people seek coherence between their heart and the rest of the body. We can learn with the heart and the brain. For each school interested in participating, they first do a survey to understand the context and then generate a proposal to support the process to have values for a sustainable living crosscut all subject areas. They have the approval of the Ministry of Education and the Institute of Teacher Training. In this project, the Earth Charter is a central reference.

**The Earth Charter, Ethics, and Essential Questions about Education, Bob Jickling, Lakehead University (Canada)**

“Meaningful change does not come from continuously doing the same thing,” Bob Jickling said in his reflection remarks about how to move to action and change the current issues of unsustainability. He said that even though more information about science and social justice issues will be helpful in keeping issues like climate change and social injustices current, still, something more radical may be essential. Arne Naess once said, “We have had for



a long time more than enough ecological knowledge about how to mend our ways.” For him, the important question was around value priorities, something with which Bob agrees.

In times of change, uncertainty, and stress, the interest in values and ethics increases.

Unfortunately, he said, ethics are messy and uncomfortable. The term has multiple meanings. In this sense, Bob’s presentation introduces an analytical tool, that he calls a *heuristic*. He chose that term because it suggests that this tool is meant as an agent of self-discovery, rather than a rigid framework. As such, this *heuristic* is designed to help educators reflect on their own conceptions of ethics and education, to help in the decision making process about content worthy of inclusion in their lessons, and examine the ways that this content might be educationally presented.

The Earth Charter, as a frequently referenced public document and statement of principles, is used as an example to illustrate the application of this tool. This application also illustrates some of the complexities and challenges that are inherent in educational activities. In the end, this *heuristic* is intended for use in critiquing current discourses, evaluating new initiatives, and finding one’s own educational place within present debates. He also hopes that it will enable users of the Earth Charter to find ever more challenging paths forward in environmental ethics. This presentation is based on a chapter in a forthcoming publication called *Environmental Ethics: A Sourcebook for Educators*.

Bob has been teaching environmental ethics for 25 years—before the creation of the Earth Charter. What excites him about environmental ethics is that he sees it is becoming more complex. For instance, there is the idea of an expanded self, and the notions of deep ecology of Arne Naess.

He referred to the pedagogical elements that Mirian Vilela mentioned in her presentation, reflecting that some of these elements are not core in education systems, “we are not in the mainstream.” He has worked for many years with environmental educators, and finds that for many years, these educators have been satisfied for having at least a place in the curriculum. “A place that tolerates us,” he said. Nonetheless, he thinks that it is important to be more disruptive about how the education plays out, how to get to the core of important decisions regarding the education and how it can be part of the change to deal with the situation we are living now (global change caused by humans).

One of the reasons he came to this Conference is to share a publication that he has been working on with a group from UNEP. The publication presents a “*heuristic*”—a word different from framework—that is a tool for discovery.

One of the extremes presents a type of education that is transmissive of information, while the other side of the continuum is a socio constructivist transformative. Horizontal axes present the outcomes – authoritative on one side and very participatory processes on the other side.

In Quadrant I is the place we occupy when we think of ethics like a code, and as Bob mentions, it is many times the place where we start. Quadrants II and III refer to education processes that engages kids with participatory activities, but it implies a bit of control of where things are going. In Quadrant IV, the expectation is that participants will be active in their education process, generating creative ways for their learning process, and enabling thought and action beyond the Earth Charter.

“No education is tidy,” warned Bob, “we probably operate in all those quadrants in different moments and this is fine. We can’t expect to always be in quadrant IV.”

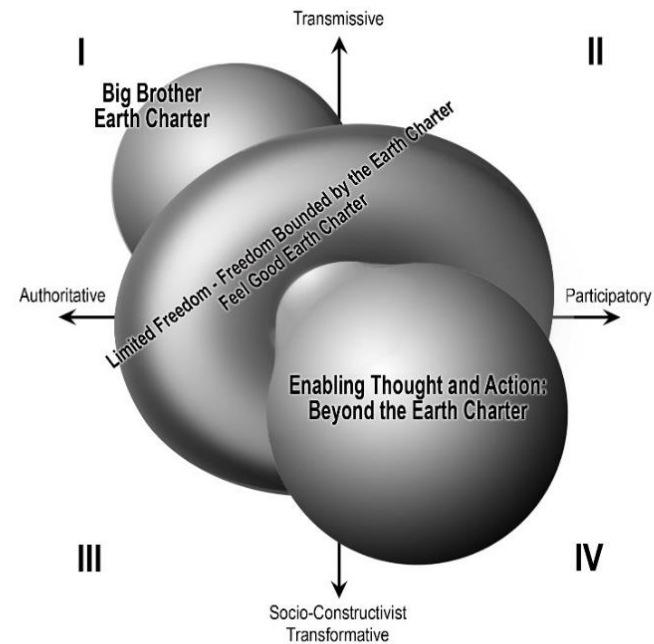
In times of change, as those we are living in today, the interest in ethics seems to increase; therefore, this is a good time to work in this field. Nonetheless, the majority of teachers or professionals have not taken philosophy classes, or ethics; therefore, it is challenging to talk about ethics, since it is something sensitive.

Bob reflected on questions that are arising, in terms of our situation in the world: Why is it that people do not care? Or why do not enough people care? Where does the moral impulse – the urge to act – come from? Bob argues that ethics should rely on duties, as duty is a good way to move forward. Can ethics be joyful? Can effective ethics be grounded in abstract principles? Or should this arise from lived experience?

Bob argues that we need an ecology of ethics, different approaches to take on these questions. He said that it will require that we eventually do work in a place like Quadrant IV.

Regarding meaningful and quality education, he thinks that is not about doing the same thing or being the same people. He considers that SDG target 4.7 is limited, and that a more complex perspective and approaches to education and ethics are needed. This brings the Earth Charter, as a *heuristic* in itself. The Earth Charter can be connected with ecofeminism, deep ecology and so on; this can be challenging for the students and make the Earth Charter an exciting tool.

The book that will be published and the content that served as a basis for this presentation can be found in this link: <http://goo.gl/ZJPPdz>



## Plenary Session V: Integral and Holistic Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship

### Value-Creating Global Citizenship Education and the Earth Charter: Integrating Diverse Perspectives within the UNESCO-Led Practice of Global Citizenship Education, Namrata Sharma, State University of New York (USA, India)



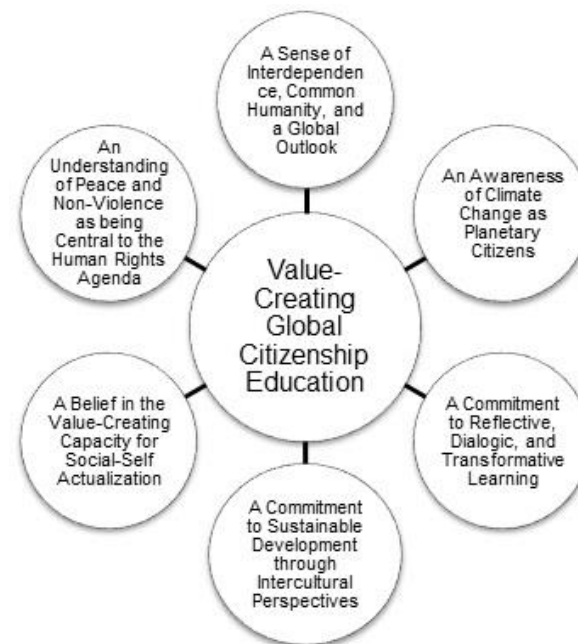
Namrata Sharma shared some insights from her recently published book that takes Asian examples that can make important contributions to the discourse and practice of global citizenship education. She was impressed to know that Dewey is better known in India than Gandhi; therefore, she thought it was important to highlight the messages of Asian thinkers. For example, Soka or value-creating education developed by the Japanese educators, Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944) and Daisaku Ikeda (b. 1928), and the educational ideas of the Indian political activist, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-

1948). These leaders of the largest mass movements of their respective countries have shown that there are a variety of ways of thinking, acting, being, and living that inform people and communities to create positive social change.

These perspectives can be important contributions to develop a values-based framework to implement SDG4, especially the target 4.7 on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCE), in addition to the Earth Charter, which serves as a model ethical framework.

Namrata reflected on the possible different paradigms and praxis that we can approach with the questions posed by the SDGs, for example those related to social justice. She asked, “how can we expand our focus from individual empowerment to enable bold collective efforts?”

“The heavy dominance of neoliberal capitalism worldwide,” she said, “is having an influence on promoting efforts focused on empowering the individuals, but this can leave out the particularities of the context, which are very important.” One of her guiding questions is how can education focus on the individual but is not individualistic? She considers that Asian thinkers (like the ones mentioned above), and their engagement with values, have created unique approaches. For example, Daisaku Ikeda talks about wisdom, interconnectedness of all life, unity of all consciousness. These notions resonate as well with the Earth Charter, which draws from the wisdom and traditions from all over the world, making it an important education resource, and adding to the intercultural dimension of GCE and ESD. She mentions that the lessons learned from experiences of people who have been using the Earth Charter in education settings are a resource as well, for the implementation of values-based education for sustainability.



UNESCO publications also provide themes and perspective interesting for value-creating GCE. She identified 6 themes, but her perspective on these are different from UNESCO, and she expands on her understanding of these themes in her book. The themes are presented in the figure. Namrata mentioned that value creating GCE focuses on compassion and emphasizing meaningful life connections with people.

Some of her recommendations for 2030 agenda are: broader engagement with human personal dimension, value creating GCE as a pedagogical approach that complements others, building relationships between learners and their surroundings, acknowledging lessons from different movements (such as the Earth Charter, Gandhi, Ikeda), and furthering the efforts that have been made. Value-creating global citizens are active (putting SDGs into action), creative (for self and others) and inclusive.



### **Engaging Urban Communities with the Earth Charter to Boost Local Sustainable Development: The Walas Way, Maria Scantamburlo, Walas Concepts (Netherlands)**

Maria Scantamburlo works at World of Walas, an international group specialized in sustainable community development. Maria mentioned that we need to find solutions for those living in cities, where most of the sustainability challenges are found; therefore, the solutions can be found there.

As part of the Walas method, they promote the principles of the Earth Charter and the SDGs and support all communities they engage with to use the Earth Charter Cities Manifesto as self-assessment tool, to translate the principles into practical actions, and to share these experiences in local networks. World of Walas CEO, Gerben van Straaten developed this Manifesto as an adaptation of the Earth Charter for cities to make it easier to put its principles in practice in urban development and city planning. The Manifesto was created and presented at the 2010 celebration of the Earth Charter in the Hague, the Netherlands. Since then, World of Walas representatives share this Manifesto in policy making platforms, and with UN Agencies like UNESCO.

In terms of practical action, the methodology they have been using in cities is First In and Last Out. When they start a project, they engage with the community and learn what they need, while taking the time to talk to all different sectors in that city. They come up with projects based on what people need.

An example of one of their projects is in a city in the Netherlands, where the most important economic activity was mining, but since their mining industry closed there is now a significant unemployment rate. The city asked Walas' CEO to create a concept for the city, so they bought a building complex and, after learning from the community, they created a micro credit programme for neighbors to start their own businesses. They opened spaces for innovators, co-design processes, all following the ethical principles of sustainability. In this sense, the Earth Charter is at the core of their strategy. They also use the ideas of urbanism of Jane Jacobs, the notions of place making, fair business, fair finance, economy and ecology in an integrated way, and good governance. World of Walas has been as well contributing to the EC movement organizing events in Canada and Netherlands. Find [in this link](#) several videos of CEO Gerben van Straaten explaining their methodology.

## Parallel Sessions

### Session 1. Primary and Secondary Education and General Themes - Facilitators: Sam Crowell and Alicia Jimenez



#### **Learning to Embed ESD in Language Texts for Primary School Children Learning through the Earth Charter: A UNESCO MGIEP Project. Lorna Down, University of the West Indies (Jamaica)**

Lorna Down shared some insights about her experience with UNESCO MGIEP Project, where they embedded Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into textbooks for children. UNESCO MGIEP produced a guidebook for embedding SD into textbooks, *Textbooks for Sustainable Development: A Guide to Embedding*. In 2018, this guidebook formed the basis for the project on embedding SD into core textbooks in Sikkim. In this project the aim was to build the capacity of textbook authors in Sikkim to embed concepts of sustainable development into language and maths textbooks. They interviewed children and include their experiences in the activities and materials of the textbooks.

One of the challenges of this project was the reluctance of some members of the project to include some topics that for them were “troubling.” Thorny questions concerning age-appropriate sustainable development materials, concepts and activities were raised. Lorna mentioned that teachers asked ‘What should children

be asked to think about? Will introducing certain issues make the text less fun, less enjoyable for the children? Are certain concepts beyond the ability of children?’

These questions blocked the inclusion of important SD topics such as ‘climate change’; ‘air pollution’; organic farming/sustainable land use, for considering them too complex for children. This limitation made her do research on how to introduce these concepts in ways that would be appropriate for children, and encourage teachers to go beyond their comfort zones, the boundaries of their disciplines and have a larger perspective, in this sense, language teachers incorporate concepts of science education, and viceversa. Children are experiencing pollution, inequality, and all those complex “troubling” topics. “Sometimes, children’s capacity to understand complex issues is unrecognized,” said Lorna. Complex content can be unpacked, and she found that the Earth Charter was a very good tool for this. The EC vision of a sustainable society and the associated values was imaginatively drawn in the text. Although some topics like climate change were not included as such, the vision of a sustainable world was expressed and shared through the activities.



**Teaching Indigenous Traditional Values, Fabier Mena Mena, School Ninfa Cabezas Gonzalez in Quitirrisi and Indigenous Center Oropopo (Costa Rica)**

Fabier Mena is a teacher from the Quitirrisí Indigenous Reserve of Costa Rica. He shared some of the challenges that indigenous communities in Costa Rica face. He says that even though there are many laws that protect indigenous rights to land, many people (including indigenous people) are unaware of those, and therefore, many times they lose their land for not adequately finding the way to protect it.

He was fortunate to have a university education, but when he was studying he was not interested particularly in education. He studied tourism management. Soon he realized that tourists were interested and valued traditional indigenous knowledge, arts, and culture in general, but many indigenous people were not valuing this. That is why he decided to become a culture educator, to promote care and sense of pride about his culture.

He created a Research Center on Indigenous Culture, called Oropopo, with which he expects to generate ideas for economic activities to support his community. The poverty level in Quitirrisí is among the highest in all the country— most of the people do not study, they are agricultural workers but work on other people's land, and the teenage pregnancy rate is high. Fabier believes that learning to value their culture will help children and youth of Quitirrisí, and indirectly the whole community, to think about innovative ways to increase the wellbeing of people. The way he works with students is first to gain their interest. He uses practical activities that are fun, and increase their manual abilities, while at the same time sharing values through storytelling.

**Cultivating a Culture of Peace in the Next Generation: Teaching for Sustainable Development through Innovative Strategies Implemented Locally and Globally for Undergraduate Psychology Courses, Carola Pedreschi, Miami Dade College (USA)**

Carlola Pedreschi shared about experiences with civic engagement projects with undergraduate students of the Department of Psychology, Miami Dade College. These students have been organizing education activities about human rights in schools and communities, not only in the State of Florida, but also abroad, where the students implement projects in rural communities of Nicaragua and Panama with an NGO called TECHO, that works on sustainable housing for poor families. In the schools and communities, the students put in action problem-solving and leadership abilities. Students use MAPTING, which is a photo-sharing app that connects pictures of actions with the SDGs and Earth Charter principles.

**The Strength of Collaboration: How Networks Can Help in ESD, André de Hamer, Duurzame PABO (Netherlands)**

André de Hamer shared some highlights of the Sustainable Teacher Training Institute where he works, which has training programmes for schools teachers on ESD in the Netherlands. He reflected on how networks can help the implementation of ESD, to not “re-invent the wheel”, and share resources —this is what this Institute has been promoting in the Netherlands since 2005, bringing government and other organizations together.

The training they offer takes place in nature areas, where participants spend some experiencing nature. Then, these participants are asked to bring their students to this nature area and be their guides. Many of the teachers are not interested in nature, but they change their perspective after experiencing it.

André also highlighted their work using the UNECE competences for ESD, which he thinks that jointly with the Earth Charter Principles and the SDGs can form the foundation of an effective Whole School Approach for achieving a socially and environmentally sustainable form of development in educational settings. The materials and framework of competences can be found in the webpage '[A Rounder Sense of Purpose.](#)' This website also contains information about projects and partners that are working on ESD with this model.

### **EARTH: An Eco-Pacifist Teaching Strategy Framed through the Earth Charter, Carlos Muñiz, EcoPeace Project (Puerto Rico)**

Carlos Muñiz shared a framework called the EcoPaz (EcoPeace) Project, which is a framework of scientific and ecopedagogical education, with which they conceptualize and design different approaches and tools that integrate socio-ecological, environmental and related to violence, conflict and peace aspects in education settings. EcoPaz started as a Masters Programme research project, that aimed at generating awareness of Puerto Ricans on where the food they consume come from (mostly Nicaragua). As part of the EcoPaz project, a particular educational strategy called Ti E R Ra (EARTH) was proposed.

This model summarizes a set of dynamic and interconnected pedagogical processes in a non-linear way, highlighting its socio-ecological, environmental, violence, conflict and peace dimensions. It promotes awareness as a primary expectation of the learning and teaching process, praxis as the process of reflecting on learning and action as a result of the whole process. The hurricane in 2017 has provided good metaphors to understand the interrelations of all things, because it transforme people and the environment, and made the connections of things explicit. The Ti E R Ra model presents four (4) general stages: exploration time, dialogical experiences, reflection-action and reflection-appraisal. Within the stage of dialogical experiences, there are three main phases: Sister Nature, Sister Humanity and Green Hope. For Carlos, their work connects with all Pillars of the Earth Charter, and the SDGs: 1, 4, 5, 11, 13, 14 and 15.

### **Session 2. Higher Education and General Themes – Facilitators: Peter Blaze Corcoran and Mirian Vilela**

#### **Involving Students as Partners in the Re-Orientation of Higher Education towards Sustainability, Harriet Sjerps and Chantal Blom, Leiden University (Netherlands)**



Harriet Sjerps and Chantal Blom gave an overview of their background and of Leiden University where they work. They started by emphasizing the importance of student led projects on sustainability and the student-professor relationship of collaboration. They offered an overview of student projects, for example, organizing a periodic Symposium on green topics, a petition for vegan-vegetarian options in the university cafeterias and a project that links health and sustainable food in the university. The university is working on integrating classes with the Earth Charter and Sustainability;

they shared that Leiden University established a student-led Green Office to house student sustainable initiatives, such as selling reusable bottles for tap water, and the creation of a sustainable teaching network to encourage staff and teachers to work collaboratively and continuously to implement sustainability practice in the university. This effort was inspired by the example from the National Union of Students in the United Kingdom that

have set up programmes and campaigns throughout the nation led by students.

According to them, Leiden University has been interested in the Earth Charter, and has carried out some activities to start using it. For example, they organized a group to play the Earth Charter Game as a way to involve more people in being familiar with the values and principles of the Earth Charter.

Harriet is teaching classes about ethical values for two minors with the Earth Charter. Students from many backgrounds and areas of studies are invited to read the Earth Charter and select a principle they wish to further explore and talk about in class; then they connect it to something in the past and the future. She expressed that through her courses she is making an effort to motivate students to think and prepare for the future and also to look at the Earth Charter in a very practical way.

They consider the Earth Charter (a) as a compass to look at the university sustainability plan and as a checklist to indicate what are the steps needed to be taken; (b) as an inspiration for the discussions in class and students projects (they look at examples of good practices such as through the project Pictures of Success) and (c) as an instrument of exploration to look at value systems in the curriculum to open up discussions about hidden (un)sustainable value systems at universities and to discover shared values.

#### **Socio-environmental Justice, Gender and the Earth Charter, Donna Roberts, Project Zula/Chatham University (USA)**

Donna Roberts started her presentation by sharing the history of how she came across the Earth Charter and engaged with the Initiative which goes back to an Earth Charter session during the 1996 IUCN Conference in Montreal. She also took part in the Rio+5 Forum in 1997. She shared some insights from her graduate research work, which used the Earth Charter, and focused on eco-feminism and popular education, with the goal to help fill the gap of international environmental education discourse that largely omitted the voices of women from so-called developing countries whose mother tongue was not English.

She then shared some reflexions on her experiences in teaching and linked it with her interest in the social and environmental justice dimensions of education for sustainable development. She has integrated the Earth Charter in courses for undergraduate and graduate students at Chatham University and formerly at Florida Gulf Coast University. She emphasized the importance she finds in the use of stories in teaching, and highlighted that it is by sharing personal stories that we spark change and motivation. She shared some of her own stories and brought the examples of a number of women leaders and good storytellers. She highlighted the importance to connect to the natural world and to find ways to inspire people to embrace an ethic of care.

#### **What the Earth Charter Could Offer to Engineering Education to Meet Global Challenges, Mohammed Baaoum, Virginia Tech (USA)**

Mohammed Baaoum has been part of several education programmes of the Earth Charter Center for ESD. He was part of the Earth Charter course on Leadership, Sustainability and Ethics for young leaders and the Online Certificate on Education for Sustainable Development. His interest is to incorporate sustainability and ethics in engineering education and nurture an ecological worldview among engineers. In his research, he is looking at how the Earth Charter could help engineering education to meet global challenges. His interest comes from the need to prevent harm to the environment; as an engineering student, he saw this was missing in the education he received.

He highlighted the following challenges facing engineering education: (a) the increasingly interconnected global society and economy creates an imperative need for graduating globally competent and socially responsible engineers (globalization challenge) and (b) engineering and technology have transformed the world we live in, yet the benefits engineering brings are distributed unevenly throughout the world. He also pointed to the fact that a large gap remains between today's technological advances and the needs of the world's majority.

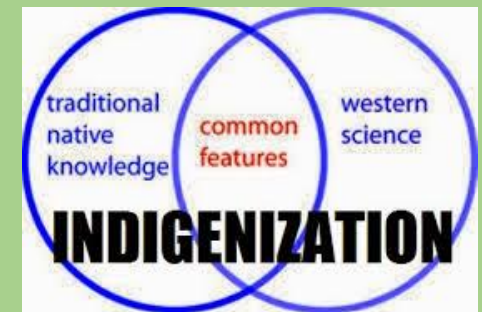
Mohammed reviewed the history of engineering and how it has fallen into this devalued environmental system. Some schools are calling to reform engineering to human engineering for a more interdisciplinary system. He highlighted that most of the world's challenges are directly related to

engineering: lack of adequate sanitation; access to water; access to electricity, etc. His research is looking at what needs to be changed in engineering education to better meet global challenges, and he thinks that the Earth Charter could add to Engineering Ethics, by bringing a broader picture and improving the way engineers work in the world. In his research, he is proposing to add more ethics and different language from the Earth Charter in the engineering education. According to him, the EC principles could be used as a powerful guide in reforming engineering codes of ethics with its firm emphasis on social justice and its ecological worldview. He shared five points he identified as Comprehensive model for fostering humanitarian engineering education: Reforming engineering ethics, curricula, pedagogies and culture and enhancing informal learning. He is advocating for the need to reform the engineering code of ethics.

#### **Integrating Indigenous Philosophy into Colleges and Universities, Sherlien Sanches, A Touch of Spirit Events (Netherlands)**

In this presentation, Sherlien Sanches shared some reflections on the differences between Western Science (Measurements, x and y axis components in isolation) and Traditional Knowledge (I am nature, I am the environment; feelings and values; relationship between component and environment), and on how indigenous knowledge can teach us invariably much about ourselves, about others and about how to look after our planet. It can contribute to the planet's modern vision on technology, science, even medicine, and provide us with examples of sustainable living. Indigenous philosophy is necessary and crucial to reconnect our minds with Earth energy and break from the materialistic mind.

She talked about the concept of Indigenization, as a process of naturalizing Indigenous knowledge systems, and of bringing Indigenous knowledge together with Western knowledge systems. She clarified that Indigenization does not mean changing something Western into something Indigenous but in bringing them together. She stressed that Indigenous philosophy involves the connection with Mother Earth, with ancestors and with how we live with the land. She indicated that bringing Indigenous knowledge and philosophy to education processes could strengthen a new spiritual paradigm and Earth ethics.



#### **Successful Delivery of Entry-Level Sustainable Business Education, Chris Beehner, Seminole State College of Florida (USA)**

Chris Beehner shared about the challenges he has faced in developing a sustainable business course at Seminole State College of Florida. He mentioned that in his college, teaching sustainable business is not very common, and business schools that have sustainability courses, are targeting upper corporate members. Numerous business schools and departments provide sustainability courses and programs; however, many only offer a single required (or elective) course. Also, the target of most current sustainable business education is current and future middle and upper-level managers, and not lower-level staff and supervisors, resulting in a gap between sustainability initiatives driven from the "top-down," and limited understanding and support from the "bottom up." The entry-level supervisors, analysts, and professionals often lack educational foundation in sustainability. According to this presentation, sustainable business education should occur at multiple academic levels, specifically community colleges, wherein students prepare for entry-level trade, supervisory, and professional positions at businesses, which have implemented or will implement sustainability programmes. The reason to provide sustainability education to entry-level employees is because these employees may bring practical ideas to the workplace given that they may live and work on the frontline of environmental and sustainability impacts and concerns.

He shared some elements on Successful Teaching Methods as follow: Chris uses active learning as pedagogical method, which is not the regular lecture; he uses activities such as role-playing so the students can act out how they can make change. They also use case studies and extract lessons learned to apply in different contexts. He focuses on experiential learning- field trips to sustainable businesses. In his class, he asks students to look at the

company and think how to bring about changes to the company as a whole. They incorporate enterprise thinking, and life cycle approach, considering where your product will go and what will happen with it. Chris mentioned that he is looking for ways to create service projects for more hands-on education.

A transdisciplinary approach, collaborative and transformative learning, and participatory evaluation are recommended pathways to achieving organizational change regarding sustainable business education (Moore 2005). Transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach might include: Systems thinking as a method of understanding and reflecting upon interdependency of systems and effects and feedback loops; foresighted thinking to analyze, evaluate, and develop a vision of the future and the corresponding impact of business decisions on the long term, collective future; strategic management, consisting of the ability to collectively design and implement projects, interventions, and strategies for sustainable development; enterprise thinking, life cycle thinking (LCT), and life cycle analysis (LCA) are viable business concepts that mirror environmental thought.

His interest and future research involve: looking at the outcomes of sustainable business education with students who embrace the sustainability as compared to students who are sustainability skeptics; an understanding of what teaching methods and curricula are most successful in changing the viewpoints of sustainability skeptics might improve the success of sustainable business education curricula; whether graduates of these entry-level sustainability programmes enhance business sustainability initiatives when hired as entry-level employees and supervisors.

### Session 3. Non Formal Education and General Themes - Facilitators: Pepa Carrillo and Christine Lacayo



#### **Education for Peace in Latin America - Practicing Values for Coexistence through Online Teaching, Daniela Carvalho, Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development (Brazil/Costa Rica)**

Daniela Carvalho shared about her Doctoral research project ideas, which focuses on online pedagogical mediation in non-formal education settings, to stimulate bonding among participants. Her research relates to the importance of the sense of being part of a community, with SDG 4 target 4.7 on the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, SDG 5 on meaningful participation of women, SDG 16 on building peace and prevention of violence and SDG 17 related to participatory alliance.

Daniela considers that creating a sense of community in the education activity will make it possible to maintain the interest of people in the course or education activity. It is also important to be coherent with what is taught and how it is taught. Peace education is about change of values, attitudes and behavior.

Therefore, when educating for peace in online or face to face settings, the practice of the values taught is important. If conflict arises, it should be addressed as an opportunity for dialogue and learning. Daniela uses the Earth Charter as a guide and foundation for her research and courses. She believes that the Earth Charter generates a sense of community, a reference point. It makes us feel responsible for

what we do, and helps us by giving direction and making the connection between us. Daniela created a network called the e-Coexist Network (Red e-Conviva), which offers a space to learn and practice a culture of non-violence in Latin America. The purpose is to train multipliers in non-violent communication. The third cohort started in 2019 in Brazil, and she plans to open this network in Spanish for other Latin American countries. This Network focuses on collective learning, connecting with the heart and the practicing empathy. More information here: <http://conviva.red/>

### **Sustainable Development and Education in the Framework of the Earth Charter, María Fernanda Chávez Portillo, Michoacán University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo (Mexico)**

María Fernanda Chávez is an economist and is doing Doctoral research on the economic side of sustainable development. María Fernanda shared her perspective about the complex challenges we are facing, and how sustainable development, even though it is considered as an alternative for development, is a complex concept that has several definitions, according to different worldviews. She mentioned three main concepts: 1) Modern environmentalism (relies on the potential of technology to solve problems); 2) Critical humanism (which has its roots in socialism, is responsible for the natural heritage); 3) Conservation ecology (has its roots in protectionism, they reject the notion of development). The Earth Charter tries to find a global consensus on the meaning of sustainability, its vision recognizes each individual's existence while asking for respect for cultural differences and other forms of life. The Earth Charter aims at a shared vision for the way forward. What type of education is needed to approach sustainable development?

María Fernanda considers the following characteristics: critical focus, complex thinking, multidisciplinary, social transformation, lifelong learning, gender equity, social and economic justice, and education as a right, not an investment. She mentions that in Mexico there are many ongoing efforts to value the wisdom of indigenous traditions to move to sustainability.

### **Universal Values as a Lever for Social Change, Workshop, María del Pinar Merino, Values Foundation (Spain)**

The workshop consisted in a series of fun activities to involve the mind, the heart and the body. The first activity was a welcome Greek dance. The purpose was to make people become present and recognize all those around them. People form a circle while holding hands, and then the group takes a step forward and a step back, a step to one side and the other side. The group repeats this movement while looking at each other, recognizing who was around.

The second activity was the dance of the opposites (collective Scottish dance). The purpose is to open our minds and creativity to help the group get a sense of community, working with the feminine and masculine energy. Participants make a circle but dance in pairs, following the song, people change their partner until all people have danced with each other.

The third activity was the values tree. Each participant works with someone they do not know very well and fill in the tree. At the roots are fundamental values, the branches are the abilities and capacity we have related to those values, the leaves are the expression of how we put in practices those capacities—the way we live—and the fruits are what results from our behavior.

\*\*For example, if love is in one root, then capacity to communicate can be one branch.

Values highlighted: respect, compassion, care, generosity, coherence, honesty.

The final reflection was that practicing these values we can change the world, our worlds.

#### Session 4. Non Formal Education and General Themes – Facilitators: Alide Roerink and Irma Verhoeven



##### **The SDGs and Cities, Workshop, Bernard Combes, UNESCO (France)**

Bernard Combes shared about a capacity-building workshop and supportive materials that have been developed by UNESCO in collaboration with Gaia Education Institute, to teach about the SDGs. This workshop can be implemented with any type of group interested in learning about the SDGs. The purpose is accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level, and the training is needed to clarify the scope of the SDGs.

Methodology: there are 3 Flashcards per SDG., Each card contains a photo with facts and data about the topic of the SDG, plus questions on the back. The data and questions of the back allow people in the group to start a conversation about how to apply the SDGs to their specific local context.

The idea for this session was to start with SDG4 and see how this goal can be a catalyzer for the rest.

After getting to know each other, people looked at the cards to familiarize

themselves with the content, thinking about any project or work they have done related to those topics.

Work with SDG 4 as catalyst: put SDG4 in the center, and then participants try to identify strong links with this goal and other SDGs. The strong links are actions, policies or partnerships that are making possible the implementation of those SDGs. Participants then identify weak links (dotted lines), and think about possible projects, actions or policies that could strengthen the links of those SDGs.

##### **The Pangaea Project, Anca Bunea and Ovidiu Cosbuc, All Together Foundation (Romania)**

Anca Bunea worked as a police officer trying to enforce the application of the law; nonetheless, she saw a lot of corruption and a lot of protest from people about the corruption. Therefore, she decided to change paths, and came across with the Earth Charter Youth Course and became an EC Young Leader. Later on, she founded the All Together Foundation. She also participated in a one-week intensive course from the Earth Charter Center for ESD on ethics, sustainability and education. With this course, she wanted to strengthen her skills to implement one of the projects of All Together Foundation, which is an education programme on the Holistic Evolution of Humans. Anca considers that a holistic concept of evolution of humans, where consciousness takes an important part, and the Earth Charter can have a role in guiding the evolutionary path towards sustainability.

The pedagogical methodology she uses in this programme is to go outside to reconnect with nature. Participants walk 250 km, passing eighteen villages, five cities, where they have the chance to talk with people and learn how many know about UN, UNESCO, Earth Charter, Sustainability. How they perceive sustainability in daily life.

In their exchange with villagers, they encounter interesting responses. For example, after hearing from participants about what sustainability is, a villager asked: “Why should we care about all of this if nobody cares about us?” It turned out that a large part of the people of the villages they passed

are on survival mode. Therefore, participants and the Foundation decided to create a virtual platform to share free stuff —it could be trade or give away items, products or services. This is a way to engage the people, and make connections with the communities along the walk.

The All Together Foundation charter is a “Personal Declaration” on life, value to life, gratitude for the gifts received, intergenerational justice, and an affirmation that all beings have the right to live.

### **Ecological Integrity, Education and the Work of Soka Institute in The Amazon – CEPEAM, Monique Tiezzi den Hartog and Tais Tokusato, Soka CEPEAM Institute (Brazil)**

In this presentation Monique Tiezzi and Tais Tokusato, who work at Soka -CEPEAM Institute in the Amazon, shared the actions that this Institute is taking to promote ecological integrity around the Amazon River, specifically in a 52 - hectare nature reserve (RPPN) that this Institute manages, where environmental conservation and the sustainable use of ecological diversity are stimulated. This reserve is close to the city of Manaus, which is expanding and therefore promoting deforestation. Schooling rate in this city is one of the worst in Brazil; there is a high dropout rate and 42% of the schools do not offer environmental education (although it is mandatory by law).

The presenters showed a video about the Institute – “Seeding Awareness in People’s Hearts.” They develop environmental education programmes and projects for global citizenship. In these programmes, participants have the chance to experience the beauty of nature through immersion activities, encouraging students to learn important concepts of ecology in a practical way, learning directly from nature. They include the Earth Charter and the SDGs as references in these programmes.

They do scientific research for the preservation of the environment and the creation of a seed bank with native species of the Amazon forest. On this regard, they have a project called “Seeds of Life”, in which a tree is planted for each person that is born in the city of Manaus.

All their actions are based on the idea that value arises from relationships. That is why they base their work on alliances with government, companies and representatives of communities with the aim of articulating actions and sharing impacts. They have partnerships with the Ministry of Education and Panasonic, for example. The Soka Institute - CEPEAM already impacted more than 40,000 students with its environmental education programme, generated 60,000 native seedlings planted through its projects and is saving about 70% of the Amazonian forest flora in its seed bank.



## Plenary Session VI: The SDGs and the Earth Charter in Education and Social Media



### **The Learning of Sustainability through the Earth Charter lenses: the Mexican experience, Mateo Castillo, Michoacán University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo (Mexico)**

Mateo Castillo has been actively involved with the Earth Charter Movement since 2002. In his presentation, he made a historical recount of the promotion of the Earth Charter in Mexico, from his perspective. The first campaign happened in 2002, where he led a process to have the former President Vicente Fox recognize the Earth Charter publicly at the Johannesburg Summit (Rio+5). The following President Felipe Calderón also endorsed the Earth Charter, and gave his approval for a Type II Alliance to start a programme called *Education for a Sustainable Lifestyle with the Earth Charter*, implemented by the Sustainable Development Consultation Councils. These councils promoted the endorsement of the Earth Charter by governmental and non-governmental institutions throughout the country, more than 1,000 organizations have endorsed. More recently, a network of focal points by state emerged. The members of this network created a workshop to train people on what the Earth Charter is. In non-formal spaces, they are offering training to

decision makers mainly from local governments. There have been efforts to translate the Earth Charter to indigenous languages.

The main workshop that the Earth Charter Mexican Network is offering is called “Internalization of the Earth Charter.” It covers cognitive, emotional, motor and affective areas. The notion of internalization means that we need to bring the ideas, values, concepts inside ourselves, and then it will be possible for individuals to exteriorize those. The only resource that we use in this workshop is the body, because it is a workshop to feel, to work with heart coherence and meditation. Among physical activities, they organize dramatizations, collaborative work and the dance of sustainability. It is a non formal education programme that has no formal lectures, but where people are given the chance to build their values framework. People can also reflect on what are the values they feel are absent in their lives and should be put into practice to be more sustainable. To be able to deliver these workshops, they made adaptations of the Earth Charter for different audiences (such as children or youth). Mateo and focal points of the Earth Charter Mexican Network have delivered more than 200 workshops, and have been collecting information on which are the most commonly absent values in Mexican society.



### **Mapting: A Social Media Tool to Learn, Engage and Share on the SDGs, Christine Lacayo, Earth Charter International Secretariat (Costa Rica/USA) and Tadashi Nagai, Soka Gakkai International (Japan)**

Tadashi Nagai explained what MAPPING is and why it was created. MAPPING is a social network app to share pictures that relate to actions that can be linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. That is, it allows people to share what actions they are doing to implement the SDGs, and, as a social network, it makes it possible for others to see what actions are being done in different localities. In this sense, MAPPING can be used as barometer for the implementation of the SDGs. Christine Lacayo showed the audience how to use this app, which can be found in Google Store or Apple Store. More information here: [www.mapting.org](http://www.mapting.org)



### **The Earth Charter, The 2030 Agenda, and Education for Sustainable Development, Rick Clugston, Union Theological Seminary (USA)**

Rick Clugston has been involved with the Earth Charter movement for over 20 years, beginning with the drafting process of the Earth Charter. He follows United Nations processes regarding sustainability, and gave a recount of the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) and the connection with the Earth Charter. He mentioned that it is commendable that Agenda 2030 is a product of the negotiations of 133 nations, all agreeing on a development agenda that put sustainability in the forefront. Nonetheless, he mentioned, it is still in many ways emphasizing the same neoliberal track, not making the transformative shift, and it is missing targets and indicators to be transformative. Government representatives continue to view the global challenges in terms of conflicts, respect boundaries, emphasizing governance. But, some steps forward have been done, and we need to work with this Agenda as starting point.

He considers that the Earth Charter covers all goals. SDG 4 is of relevance for the Earth Charter movement. He shared the key values of the Earth Charter to guide transformative change. For example, "The choice is ours: form a global partnership to

care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life" (Preamble). Also, the importance to live with a sense of universal responsibility, acknowledging that "we are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked" (Preamble). He stressed the notions of interdependence, intergenerational justice, the precautionary approach, social justice and peace.

In terms of SDG4, Rick shared information about progress to achieve this goal, and reflected on the question: how do we ensure that the competencies people gain will not be used to advance unsustainable enterprises? This is a major danger, therefore, it is important that the pursue of SDG4 be in the context of quality education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The Earth Charter can be useful to guide education processes, to prevent the promotion of unsustainable competences and behavior.

To conclude, he mentioned the importance of working in partnerships to increase the impact of the work towards sustainability. For youth, he suggests to collaborate under the Action for Sustainable Development Platform. Another interesting network is the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future.

## Day 3 - Thursday, 31 January

### Plenary Session VII: Research Initiatives with the Earth Charter – Past and Future



#### **Ecological Wisdom and Transformative Learning, Mark Hathaway, University of Waterloo (Canada)**

Mark Hathaway is a facilitator of the Earth Charter Education Center. During his presentation, he reflected about our current time of crisis, where we have good ideas about where we need to go, policies, even technological advances. “But there are not enough of us going to the right direction,” he said, “we need wisdom.” But, what is wisdom? It is not just abstract knowledge but experience as well— for the common good. A combination of mental, emotional, physical and spiritual activity. Wisdom goes together with humility, compassion, generosity, insights and constantly learning and unlearning. Wisdom makes people wanting to move towards action, and seeks the flourishing of the community of life.

Earth wisdom is ecological wisdom; it is present in all beings. How can we learn from that wisdom? We have to work with the Earth community and

fine-tune our senses to learn. Mark has been doing research on ecological wisdom, doing numerous interviews to learn from them what ecological wisdom is from different types of people, and he did sensing with other living beings.

For Mark, ecological wisdom resonates with the Earth Charter, especially the notions in the Preamble.

How do people experience it ecological wisdom? Through a sense of interconnections with other beings, where new forms of perception arise, working in harmony with the community of life. When integral transformational learning occurs, it could be with free play in nature, exploring, recovering the sense of wonder, then deep change of consciousness and action occur, a sense of joyful ethics.

Experiences of ecological loss can be also important and transformational, for example when returning to beloved places and realizing what is happening in that place. Indigenous way of life can be also transformation. They experience community and spirituality together, using visual art, focusing attention, connection of lands and other beings.

For the Earth Charter education processes, it is important to consider the process of perceive-enmind-enact of the values, to make the process transformation towards the vision expressed in the Earth Charter. Invite people into an experience of connection with the more-than-human world (highlighting messages of the Preamble). Use of personal stories to recall, relive, and reframe experiences. Remember that information and science play a role, but the arts do as well. Also activism—generate concrete co-created actions related to the practice of the EC values. Mark finished by saying that we cannot save the world on our own; we must work together with the community of life.



### **Traditional Stories and Earth Charter: Storytelling to Educate in a Complex Systems Worldview, Grian Cutanda, The Avalon Project (Spain)**

Grian Cutanda, an Earth Charter Affiliate in Spain, invited participants to learn more and possibly get involved in the social movement called “Extinction Rebellion,” that started in Great Britain with scientists that are tired of inaction from politicians, decision makers and private sector businessmen. They are organizing protests to ask Governments to take drastic measures against climate change.

Then, he shared about the work that he is doing, that is also trying to bring about change in people’s worldviews, to be manifested in people’s decisions and lifestyles. Grian made a theoretical recount of what is a worldview and which authors he is using to inform his work, in terms of the need of changing worldviews and what would be characteristics of a worldview to move ahead building a new civilization (Stephen Sterling, Gregory Bateson, Donella Meadows, Graeme Taylor, Alastair Taylor). He mentions that it should be an ecocentric holistic and integral worldview for values attitudes, and that transformative, transpersonal education processes will help in this worldview

shift. “The Earth Charter is also a wonderful tool,” said Grian, “because of the holistic vision it expresses, the values promoted and because it emerged from such worldview.”

In addition, myths, legends, tales, and traditional stories are tools to change worldviews. Grian said that myths are the building blocks of every civilization. He mentioned several authors that affirm that through narrative we construct reality and create the world. Grian’s research is focused on finding traditional stories that transmit a complex worldview and the values and principles of the Earth Charter—a planetary mythology. He read more than 2,000 stories, and from there selected 336 stories according to the principles and values of the EC. From these, he selected a subgroup of 126 stories to do an analysis. The stories selected represented 87 countries, 102 cultures, and 20 spiritual traditions.

Grian identified several complex system thinking categories and Earth Charter values, and then analyzed whether these could be found in the traditional stories. He found that almost all systemic categories were found in the selected stories, and with a bit less frequency the Earth Charter values. His results convinced him that traditional stories are capable of transmitting complex thinking and worldview, and therefore he thought about following up his project and create *The Earth Stories Collection*. This collection is inspired by the global seed bank in Norway. The idea is to create a repository of stories that will help humanity find stories that would be building blocks of planetary sustainable civilization. The idea is to start with 336 stories, translate them in all languages possible, and use them as education tool.

The idea is to create this collection with the support of Earth Charter International, the Avalon Project and the Scottish Storytelling Centre, whose Director is Donald Smith, a storyteller, director of theatre, storytelling activist and organizer of the Global Gathering of Storytellers, to spread the stories to activate change. With Donald Smith, they would create a Global Storytelling Lab, where storytellers from different parts of the world learn those traditional stories and would help to spread them out.

“Will we be able to carry out this great adventure?” He reflected, saying this phrase of the 5th Century: “if I must I can!” We need many hearts and hands to move forward.



### Values-based Assessment of Education Experiences with the Earth Charter, Alicia Jimenez, Earth Charter International (Costa Rica)

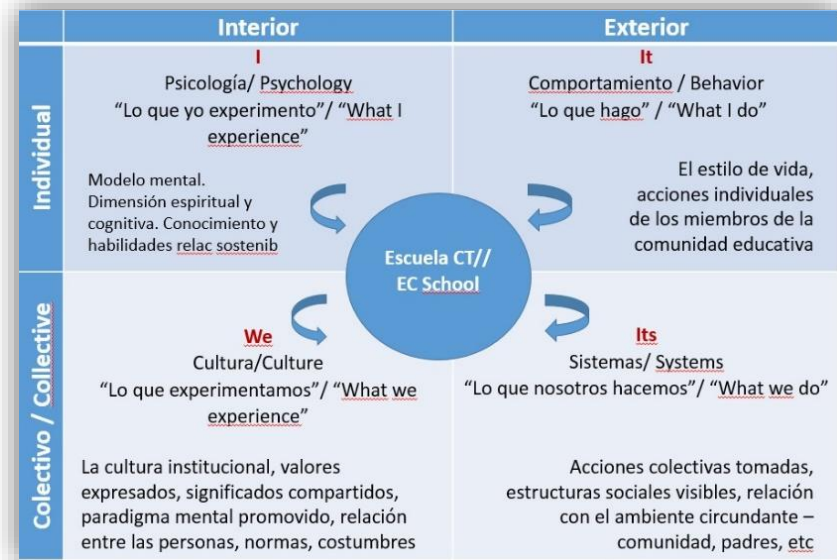
Alicia Jimenez works at the Earth Charter International Secretariat, and shared a research project that she is carrying out for her PhD Programme, that connects with her work at the Secretariat. The project aims at creating an Earth Charter quality seal for primary and secondary education institutions, that could help the Secretariat and Education Center to assess the transformational potential of the Earth Charter, and in turn, also serves as a tool to enhance the capacity of people working in those education institutions to better integrate the Earth Charter in their work.

The idea is to create an easy-to-use but complex and holistic seal. The idea is not to standardize institutions; it is to value the differences and also the common elements that an Earth Charter pedagogy brings. The main idea is to assess the whole institution approach

for sustainability using the Earth Charter, in this sense, assess whether the pedagogical context generated is conducive to the emergence of transformative learning experiences towards the practice of sustainability. Alicia is in the process of creating this seal, and she will be calling many people (some present in the audience) to give advise and feedback.

The foundation of the seal are the values and concepts present in the Earth Charter, therefore, the first step of developing this seal is to identify them. The criteria for these values and concepts are the action oriented principles of the Earth Charter. These two aspects: values, concepts and criteria can be the basis for other seals of the Earth Charter, that is, not only for schools, but for seals that in the future focus on private sector, universities and other groups.

The next step is to create indicators for the criteria. For this, and in order to facilitate that an integral perspective is used, Alicia will use Ken Wilber’s integral framework, which helps in the process of taking into account all interrelated dimensions of the human experience (as presented in the figure above). In this sense, the upper left quadrant is the individual’s worldview, what they think and know, and experience inside themselves. The lower left quadrant refers to the values and shared meaning that individuals have as part of groups. The upper right quadrant refers to the expression of individual’s values and worldview—it is their behavior and lifestyle. And the lower right quadrant is the collective actions that societies express: cultural, social and economic systems. The idea is to consider all these dimensions when



creating the indicators for the criteria, where the interconnections between them are evident. Each indicator will be accompanied by evidence, which will be the specific aspects that will be assessed.

Alicia presented the format of this seal, which will present first a list of requirements that institutions need to accomplish to be able to start the process of the seal (endorsement of the Earth Charter by the institution), and then a glossary expressing what is meant by each value and concept. She also presented the list of expected actions (evidence for each indicators), and the audit process (can incorporate self-assessment and third party audit process).

### Plenary Session VIII: Enhancing Educators' Capacities to Infuse Values for Sustainability in their practice



#### **Online Diploma on Education for Sustainable Development: Lessons Learnt and Possibilities, Rosalyn McKeown, York University (USA)**

Rosalyn McKeown is a facilitator of the Earth Charter Center for ESD. She presented the Online Certificate Programme on Education for Sustainable Development that this Center offers in English, Spanish and Portuguese. For Rosalyn, teaching online is a coherent way to practice sustainability, since it can reduce the ecological footprint associated to travelling, it can bring a diverse group of people and it is more affordable. This Diploma Programme takes place during five months, and consists of four courses: Course 1: A Planetary Perspective: Toward a Culture of Peace, Sustainability, and Well-Being. Facilitators: Lorna Down and Rosalyn McKeown  
Course 2: Values and Principles for Sustainability: The Earth Charter as an Ethical Framework and a Call to Action. Facilitators: Mirian Vilela and Alicia Jimenez  
Course 3: Transformative Learning and Education for Sustainable Development: A Holistic Pedagogy Grounded in the Neurosciences. Facilitator: Sam Crowell  
Course 4. The Way Forward: Models and Skills for Implementing ESD with the Earth Charter. Facilitator: Mark Hathaway

The courses are organized by sessions, each session lasts one week, and it is expected that participants have flexibility to complete the work of each session within that period of time. In addition, there are five live seminars: an introductory seminar, then transition seminars between courses, and a final seminar, where participant present the results of their final projects. Live seminars allow participants to get to know each other and interact in real time.

The target group of this Programme are K-12 teachers, education professionals, and academics in different areas. This Diploma has had participants from all continents. Rosalyn gathered some testimonials of transformation of several participants, and asked herself: how did this transformation happen? She believes that it is the learner-centered pedagogy that requires the participants to look deeply at their daily lives and reflect on those experiences together. There are several challenges of online pedagogy, for example no body language or instant feedback from students. Questions

come weeks after an instructor created the lecture or assignment. Nonetheless, online pedagogy are evolving, improving, and creating a common experience.



### **New Paradigms of Education, Cruz Prado, La Salle University (Costa Rica)**

Cruz Prado wrote a book with Francisco Gutiérrez that proposed a new pedagogical approach – Ecopedagogy (1997). This approach continues to be explored to put it into practice. It aims at education processes based on freedom, not control, on the practice of love, kindness and coherence. This approach is the foundation for a doctoral programme on Education that Cruz coordinates at the La Salle University in Costa Rica. This Doctoral Programme does not follow traditional academia, which for her repeats concepts but is not always coherent with the practice. The professors of this doctoral programme try to do what they preach. In fact, they do not call them professors, but companions; there are no classes but learning communities. The programme does not aim to teach, but to create and let knowledge to emerge.

‘We are very interested in letting the Latin American thinking to emerge and flourish, and inform a new pedagogical movement.’ Cruz showed a video of Eduardo Galeano talking about an alternative to the development thinking we have been using. Following the video, she said that in this doctoral programme they do not talk about development or education, but wellbeing and learning. It is important, she said, to strengthen the notions of planetary citizenship. In the face of our current pedagogical

challenges, she proposes to get together as a network or community of practice of eco citizenship, to exchange ideas for this pedagogical movement.

About this pedagogical movement, it is important to rethink education using the notions of deep ecology, and the political dimensions of ecopedagogy and planetary citizenship, where the sense of “I” is extended to include care and responsibility for other beings. In addition, it is important to bring the notions of systems thinking and interdependence that move away from a worldview of disconnection between human beings and nature. In this sense, it is important to promote eco literacy, knowing the ecological principles and using those in education, sharing and internalizing them, as well as using them as indicators.

### **Education as a driver for Ecological Civilization; the Earth Charter Approach, Song Li, Earth Charter Associates (China/USA)**

Song Li has been a longtime supporter of the Earth Charter Initiative, and is closely involved with the environmental movement in China. She mentioned that a reform that is promoting an ecological civilization started in 2017, with President Xi. This reform aims at doing systemic changes to build a beautiful China, where humans and nature form a community of life based on respect, following nature laws and taking into account future generations. The reform mentions four components, such as good development, sharing economy, solving environmental problems, ecosystem protection and reforms to environmental regulation systems.

Although there are many challenges to put this vision into practice, the principles of an eco-civilization have been incorporated in China’s five-year development plan, and included in the Constitution of 2018. In the area of energy, China has doubled the offer of solar power, and has cancelled 150



coal plants. In transportation, China is selling more electric cars than Europe and the US combined—an important incentive is that people are able to drive them everyday. They are also promoting the use of bicycles (2.4 million people use their bikes). An aspect to highlight from this reform is the concept of a sharing economy, which could mean a 10% of Chinese GDP.

Although it could be surprising to hear that these changes are being promoted in China, Song Li mentioned that in this country, people are realizing that the huge economic success of China came with a very high price. The majority of people are unhappy; they prefer clean water and clean air. In this sense, a legal and administrative framework has been set up around this reform, with targets, monitoring and follow up. What is important is that these commitments are translated into actions.

Song Li affirms that China is marking the end of the industrial era; the new era that is starting requires that people live in harmony with nature, as well as new technology for sustainable lifestyles. “The world is interdependent; we need more universal responsibility and to redefine the relationships between humans, and with nature,” she said, “I see that we need a change of heart and mind. A change of concepts and

worldview.”

“One criticism to make,” said Song Li, “is about the education system in China, which looks like a production line. Instead of being more, students lose their personality, this is a sad reflection.” There are schools that are trying things differently, bringing values like Confucianism, Buddhism, but still need to do more.

She reflected on the sentence of the Earth Charter “being more, not having more,” and a Chinese saying “be humble with nature and frugal in life.” The Earth Charter, as a set of principles, affirms many values, like passion, love, justice, care for the poor, conservation, which are the basis for a sustainable future and a cultural transformation based on spirituality.

Song Li commended UNESCO as it recognizes the Earth Charter as a framework for education for sustainable development.

### **Plenary dialogue - Interactive session: We are all citizens of the world, and children say: We are In! Angelica Sanchez (Spain)**

Angelica Sanchez collaborates with Values Foundation in Spain. During her presentation, she reflected on the role of children in society. It is common to think of them as Citizens of the Future, who will inherit the Planet and who are in a transition period until they, as adults, will be able to contribute to society. But children have a lot to contribute now, so Angelica made a call to change our perception and think of them as Citizens of Today, Adults of the Future. A fourth of the population are children, who have innate qualities, such as imagination, curiosity, feeling that “the sky is the limit”, they way they enjoy life, among others, that adults are losing as they fit into the established standards. There are many fascinating cases of children around the world who have been influential in their communities, so Angelica mentioned that it is important to facilitate their participation by believing in them, listening to them, keeping their illusions alive and contributing to their maximum potential.

Adrián, Rebecca and Victoria Álvarez participated in the Conference. They live in the United States and are in love with the Earth Charter, and they



wanted everyone to know about it. With their parents -Mary Carmen and Gustavo- and in collaboration with the Values Foundation in Spain, they created "The Trilogy of the Earth Charter" which are three YouTube videos where they talk about the Earth Charter in a simple way that is very easy to share in social media. The videos are:

**Video 1 - WHAT IS THE EARTH CHARTER?:** [Spanish with English subtitles](#)

**Video 2 - THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH CHARTER:** [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

**Video 3 - HOW TO USE THE EARTH CHARTER:** [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Adrián, Rebecca and Victoria shared their experience creating these videos, and gave inspiring messages for all attendees: Victoria commented that it was important to take care of the planet and "Recycle and give love all over the world." Rebecca encouraged the audience to "make every child in the world the voice of plants and animals, because some people do not respect them." Finally, Adrián shared: "We do not have to be adults to save the world, children can also help. With our imagination and the ability of adults, we can be a great team."



## Parallel Sessions

### Session 1. Primary and Secondary Education and General Themes – Facilitators: Sam Crowell and Alicia Jimenez

#### **The Experience of the UNESCO Schools Network of Costa Rica, Diana Borrás, Coordinator of UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network in Costa Rica (Costa Rica)**



Diana Borrás coordinates the UNESCO Associated Schools Network of Costa Rica, and in this presentation, she shared some of the projects they have been doing, emphasizing the fact that they have decided to use the Earth Charter as a foundation for the training projects and materials that they do for the schools. The aim is to support schools in putting into practice and understanding concepts such as global citizenship and sustainable development as a way to promote quality education.

This network is composed of public and private schools and high schools participants, in addition to adult education centers and teacher training institutes. Each institution prioritizes the important activities for them to get involved. What they all do in common is to commemorate international days, but with meaningful actions (projects).

There are four projects that she highlighted, and each project they have associated with Earth Charter principles that are put into practice:

- 1) World Heritage in the hands of youth: works with all the Earth Charter, all schools participate, and relates to topics on tourism, culture of peace, environment and identity.
- 2) GEMA: strategies to develop virtues: works with Pillars I, III and IV of the EC. It tries to develop human virtues, 25% of schools participate, and it aims at promoting peace and harmony.
- 3) Land of children and youth: it covers all the Earth Charter, children receive a piece of land in their school, and in this land they can create all activities related to the kind of life and world they would like to live. They work in groups, and all topics and education agendas are covered (peace education, global citizenship, sustainable development, values, intercultural, intergenerational). 30% of schools participate. As part of this project, UNESCO Schools Network coordination received funding to create a game and story books for children, and the Earth Charter Center for ESD was involved in this process.
- 4) Pilot projects: these are initiatives that UNESCO proposes, cover all EC principles, and the aim is to promote innovation. Some are related to finding solutions for climate change, while another one is about writing for peace.

#### **Peace Education for the Sustainable Development Goals, Heather Kertyzia, University for Peace (Canada/Costa Rica)**

Heather Kertyzia is a Peace Educator working at the University for Peace in Costa Rica. She coordinates the Master Programme on Peace Education at this university. Among many of the abilities that are promoted in this Master's Programme are: to analyze and transform small group or interpersonal conflict, facilitate restorative justice process, communicate nonviolently, evaluate schools systems and curriculums for elements of a culture of peace, perform an intersectional conflict analysis, among others.

From her point of view, peace education is any education that is trying to make a positive change in the world. In this sense, education for sustainable development, human rights, conflicts resolution, global citizenship can be seen as forms of peace education. Heather mentioned that there are direct links with peace education and SDGs 4, 5, 10, 12, 13 and 16.

She also mentioned that it is possible to implement education about peace, which is more theoretical, including topics and content that can be learned, for example, history of non-violent resistance, and others.

Education for peace refers to the promotion of values and skills to live in a sustainable peaceful world, such as non-violence, empathy and integrity; and skills such as non-violent conflict transformation, critical thinking, responsible citizenship. There is a methodology that she uses in education for peace, called intersectionality, which uses the drawing of a flower. In each petal, participants write a category that we humans use to divide ourselves (race, sex, religion, age, etc). In a petal above, participants write the privileged group of that category, according to their context (e.g in Costa Rica, for the category of religion the majority group would be Catholic). Then, participants color in the groups and categories of which they feel they are a part. The result is interesting: those whose flowers are very colorful reflect about their privileges, as well as those without color in their flowers reflect about their situation. This is a starting point for interesting reflections and conversations with students and professors, and the way we relate with each other.

Education by peace is another approach, that start with the concerns, needs and expectations of the community or students. It is experiential learning relevant to current problems or social issues, that is created along the way with the community. Heather did a mini quiz with the audience, to see to what extent people practice education by peace.

#### **I AM THE ANSWER: A Different Approach on Education for Peace and Sustainability, Javier Francisco Ortíz, Gaia Foundation (Costa Rica)**

Javier Francisco Ortíz and GAIA Foundation have been promoting the Earth Charter and a Declaration for the Conscious Evolution of Mother Earth. On 21 December 2012, they organized an activity called “Fire of Unity,” where indigenous groups signed an alliance to promote this declaration around Mother Earth. Javier Francisco shared a video that tell the story about this declaration, and the importance of traditional indigenous wisdom, to have a closer experience with nature.

GAIA Foundation is also implementing education projects with schools. For this, they first did research about lifestyle, personality and the essence of being humans, based on indigenous ideas and knowledge. He referred to the Earth Charter Preamble, where it talks about the mystery of being, and he connect this with the purpose of becoming the person that one wants to be. Their education programmes teach that starting from our essence, we can create an appropriate lifestyle, cultivating our consciousness. What is a conscious lifestyle? The decisions we make are informed by our values and personality, and this forms from our conscience and essence. How to cultivate our consciousness and essence? He thinks that yoga, meditation and doing collective action for good helps for this; therefore, GAIA Foundation is collaborating with the Ministry of Education to promote these actions in schools.

**Education for Global Regeneration: Holistic Approaches and Applied Cultural Evolution for Regeneration of the Planet, Joe Brewer, School for Applied Cultural Evolution (USA) and Eduard Müller, University for International Cooperation (Costa Rica)**

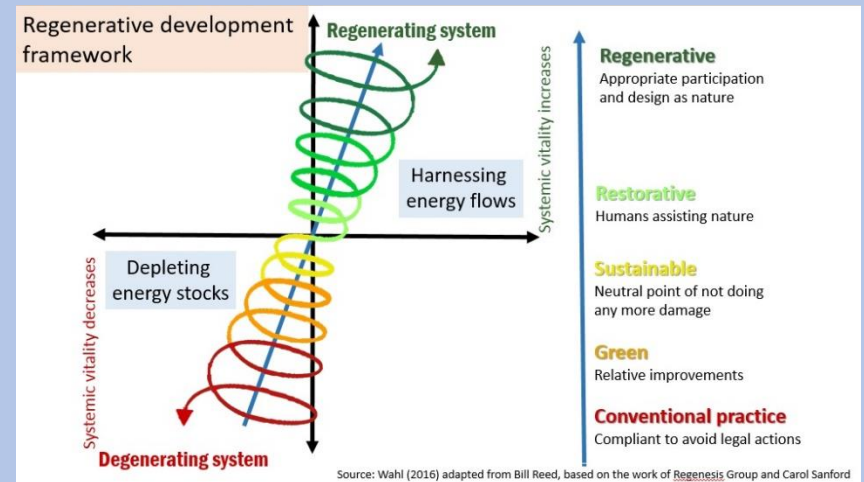
Eduard Müller and Joe Brewer are working with others in an alternative for development, beyond sustainability. This alternative is called regenerative development. Eduard Müller reminded the audience about the serious situation we are facing. Eduard said that development is not the answer, referring to the negative experience with “developed” countries, which have parasite resources, pollute and not all people have achieved wellbeing. He compared Costa Rica and Chile, countries with similar quality of life; however, Costa Rica has achieved it using less resources.

Regenerative development invite people to see themselves as part of nature, and that we belong together. Moving to regeneration needs a holistic view to seek for solutions and alternatives (see Figure). The end measurement will be wellbeing. There are six pillars of regenerative development, and the Earth Charter is at the center: Spiritual, Environmental, Social, Economic, Political, and Cultural.

Eduard and Joe, with others, are working on a project to use Costa Rica as a case study (regenerative hub) to learn how to move towards regenerative development. Eduard mentioned that they aim at reversing the ecological footprint and move away of fertilizers, among other actions. The plan is to have several sites for regeneration, generate a network of practitioners where Universities can join and share experiences. The idea is to do co-creation, move away from individualism, and collaborate.

Joe Brewer said that he learned that all the knowledge to solve problems nowadays already exists. However, this knowledge is buried in journals. We need to put together knowledge that exists, using two foundations – functional landscapes, and our own bodies, where all possible actions evolve, he said. We need to use social niche (network) where we coordinate actions and ideas, and partner with partners. We need to work with intentional communities, promoting agricultural organic practices and ecoliteracy, where we can share info and upscale.

The rationale of having a model in Costa Rica for regeneration is that it will be easier to see in small scale what works, and then modelling with Earth System, to track if what has been achieved are planetary goals (not necessarily SDGs). Human beings do not cooperate if they do not feel equal, which is why promoting equality is key to working on regeneration, said Joe. The extent of the damage done to Earth System is very wide; therefore, Joe thinks that it might not be possible for all places in the world to become healthier and practice regeneration. Nonetheless, he said that it is not needed for every location to succeed, at least few of them can give hope for humanity’s continuation. Joe mentioned that is is important to organize human labor, with ethics and regenerative development, where the measure is biodiversity, the energy that is supporting the complex web of life. He concluded saying that we know what we need to do, but we need to collaborate in order to move forward, create a network of regenerative networks— we have the knowledge, now we need the motivation.



## Session 2. Higher Education and General Themes –Facilitators: Peter Blaze Corcoran and Irma Verhoeven

### Revisiting the Earth Charter: Where Are We 19 Years Later and What Did We Choose? Mary Philip, Martin Luther University College (Canada)



Mary (Joy) Philip started with revisiting the Earth Charter; where we are and what choices we have made 19 years later. She invited participants to hold ourselves accountable: “every day I make a choice on food, transportation, etc. I choose my future and that of my children and grandchildren.

The choices we make have consequences. Our actions have consequences.”

She played a song called: “From a Distance.” This song is about the difference between how things appear to be and how they really are. From a distance, things look pretty good, but is it really the case?

The Earth Charter is meant for the world-wide context; it should be in tune with the context of regions, countries, cities, communities and so forth. It should be relevant to the way they reflect to the Earth. The Earth Charter was written nineteen years

ago, and since then many things have changed. The mission still remains and is valid; at its core it is about solidarity. An important question is: how do we translate it for the coming generation that it is relevant to their context. We need to be authentic to our context and our time. Joy uses this exercise with her students: pick 2 Earth Charter principles and share what is relevant to you?

She argued that we should reinvent ourselves as a species—making the human connection, and getting people involved and connecting with them to care about Earth.

She played another song: “The Earth Does Not Belong to Us, But We Belong to the Earth.”

Joy says we should also talk about the good things that we achieved. As an example: A village in India celebrates the birth of each girl by planting 111 trees in her honor, to prevent the girl’s death (culturally they are not preferred) and to create value, a trust is created to ensure the girl is not to be married before the age of 18 years. At the same time, it serves the purpose of environmental stewardship.

After showing the video “Living Bridges,” she went back to the questions of Earth Charter after 19 years: look at it closely; we did not do enough. How do we make the vision of the Earth Charter a reality? She thinks that is important to change the narrative; value the collective and not the individual. There is a crisis in human consciousness, and we need new stories that resonate our relationship with the Earth. We need to pull our resources together – make it possible. She also referred to the World Social Forum as a place to develop an alternative future and find solutions to the problems of our time.

### **High Impact Practices (HIPs) to Infuse Earth Charter, UNSDGs, Peace Education and Global Citizenship Knowledge and Skills into Undergraduate Teaching, (Workshop), Michael Lenaghan, Miami Dade College (USA)**

Michael started by explaining his work at Miami Dade College. He handed out his business cards to each of the participants. Some had a number on the back referring to one of the 10 questions he prepared. He asked participants to turn over the cards and start asking his first question. The participant with #1 on the card answered the question. The he answered the question himself elaborating the value it has for him and Miami Dade College. He continued with question #2 and let the participant with #2 on the card answer, and the same happened with the rest of the cards and questions.

His workshop was based on the method of “High Impact Practices” (HIP) to facilitate attractive, interactive, enjoyable and sustainable content exploration, application, and outcome measures which enable a highly diverse scholar cohort to succeed with high motivation based upon inclusive, yet exclusively combined per scholar, teaching/learning arrays within each scholar.

### **Session 3. Non Formal Education and General Themes – Interactive Session – Facilitators: Pepa Carrillo and Christine Lacayo**

#### **Bio-literacy with Earth Charter in La Reforma Prison, Geannina Herrera Blando, Ministry of Public Education (Costa Rica)**



Geannina Herrera is an educator that took the challenge to create an education programme with inmates in the largest jail in Costa Rica, called “La Reforma,” in 2005. With another colleague, they formed two groups: one that would receive formal education following primary education curriculum, and the other group they created a bio-literacy curriculum. The experience with the second group was very positive. At the beginning, Geanina said that it was hard to work as a group since they did not behave well among one another. They worked with them using campaigns, and one was around the environment day in June, where they used an Earth Charter children’s book to create activities and share the principles of the Earth Charter. Also, every Friday during one year, the National Electricity Company of Costa Rica offered workshops to this group, from creating art with recyclable materials to composting and other things.

She also continually motivated them to be kind, like gentlemen, so when interacting with people outside the prison, people will notice they were good people. She mentioned that they normally felt like victims who could not do anything. She was able to help them change this mentality.

The programme was experiential and hands on, so they were always doing a project. In addition to the ones carried out on Friday, the projects involved creating handicrafts, murals, cleaning, gardening, and even writing letters for leaders and politicians, asking them to take action on climate change. Eventually, she had to conclude this programme in 2011, because of the lack of support and coordination from the Ministries of Education and of Justice. But her interest to work with this population continued. In 2018, she was part of a hybrid course on Education for Sustainable Development, organized by the Earth Charter Center for ESD. The final project for this course gave her the opportunity to organize workshops and generate new activities with inmates of this prison.

Find here a [video](#) and an [article](#) about the story of the work that Geannina did at La Reforma.

### **The Earth Stories Collection & The Global Storytelling Lab, Grian Cutanda, The Avalon Project (Spain)**

Grian Cutanda explained with more details what The Earth Stories Collection and The Global Storytelling Lab are, which he introduced during the morning session. He said that the stories will be under the Creative Commons non commercial licence; therefore, any person can use them for education purposes. He also spoke about the ethical requirements that he and his team have adopted for this collection, for example, they will not make adaptations of myths, legends or stories from cultures that suffered from European nations colonization— they will be asked to present their stories in the way their storytellers would do.

Grian also mentioned that Federico Mayor Zaragoza offered to be Honorary President of this Collection, and the executive and academic direction will be under two women: Marta Ventura (President of Avalon Project) and Allette Willis (Professor of University of Edingburgh and Board Member of the Scottish Storytelling Forum).

### **The Earth Community, Intersubjectivity, and the Wisdom of Other Beings, Mark Hathaway, University of Waterloo (Canada)**

Mark Hathaway expanded some of his ideas about ecological wisdom from the previous plenary presentation, but he focused on practical aspects. He mentioned that in order to cultivate wisdom and have an intersubjective experience, a first step is to change some of our habits, and open up to the basic elements, feeling that we are earth, water, air and fire.

To practice intersubjective meditation, it is important to find a quiet place, take some time to be alert, close your eyes and try to listen and to feel the wise Earth, then open your eyes and feel what it feels like the Earth is communicating. Another method is to meditate during the night under a tree. The benefits of intersubjective meditation are a growing sense of connection, feeling love for nature and reciprocity, and experiencing the beauty of nature. It brings up an experience of communication with other beings, interacting with the Earth, transforming our perception, visualizing patterns, experimenting different sensations, and ultimately, feeling a sense of interdependence with all beings.

### **Internalizing the Earth Charter Values, Workshop, Mateo Castillo, Michoacán University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo (Mexico)**

Mateo Castillo offered a shorter version of an Earth Charter workshop that he has been conducting in Mexico for many years. This workshop uses the methodology of World Café with four groups, one group per Earth Charter Pillar. Each group reads all the principles of the specific Pillar, and then reflects on which values each person need to work in their lives, and write these values on paper. They rotate until all participants pass through all pillars. The whole group then revises what the seven values are that were most mentioned, and these are the values to work on as a community.

The following step is a personal meditation. All seated in a circle, with their feet on the ground and their eyes closed, enter into a state of meditation. Mateo put a high intensive music that follows the rhythm of the heart. When that music is on, Mateo asked the people to breathe and he guided people to think about the different types of crisis we are living (economic, social, and environmental). Then he changed to a softer music, and he asked the participants to think about the seven values they identified, and which of these values can they apply to solve the crises they have experienced. The idea is to visualize those values. Mateo changed the music again to one that is even softer. The heartbeat goes down. In addition, he asked the participants to visualize themselves working on putting into practice those values in their lives, and how does it feel to move to action.

To conclude, he asked participants to open their eyes, having in mind those values that each person visualized, then to find someone to hold and transmit the energy of that value into practice.

## Plenary Session IX: The Way Forward: Earth Charter in Education



Mirian Vilela concluded the Conference with an invitation for the participants to continue radiating light, care and love through their interactions in a teaching-learning environment.

In the closing plenary session, facilitators of each of the parallel sessions briefly shared some highlights of the discussions and what happened in each session.

Astrid Hollander, representative of the UNESCO office in San Jose, shared some ideas about what kind of education she expected her children to receive, and what she thinks is the purpose of quality education. She expects through the school experience children receive the knowledge and skills to help them contribute to society and above all to feel happy.

Mrs. Akpezi Ogbuigwe, a well-known speaker and former Director of the Education Division of the United Nations Environment Programme, gave the Conference closing remarks with an emotional speech. She posed the question: "If so much is being done, why do we still have compounding wicked problems?" She talked about the importance of powering the SDGs with the EC spirit as a crucial step to the future we want. She ended her speech with an emotional poem with an invitation to rise up to the task of social transformation through education.





## ANNEX: Conference Program

Day 1 – Tuesday, 29 January	Day 2 - Wednesday, 30 January	Day 3 – Thursday, 31 January
9:00 – 9:30am Registration and Welcome	9:00 – 9:30am Interactive session	9:00 – 9:30am Interactive session
9:30 – 10:30am Plenary Session I: Setting the Tone and Getting the Beat: Earth Charter Education contributing to Sustainability	9:30 – 10:30am Plenary Session IV: Approaches to Values-Based Education with the Earth Charter	9:30 – 10:30am Plenary Session VII: Research initiatives with the Earth Charter – Past and Future
10:30 – 11:00am Coffee Break		
11:00am – 12:00pm Plenary Session II: Pedagogical Approaches for Education for Sustainability	11:00am – 12:00pm Plenary Session V: Integral and Holistic Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship	11:00am – 12:00pm Plenary Session VIII: Enhancing Educators’ Capacities to Infuse Values for Sustainability in their practice
12:00 – 1:00pm Interactive Session - Networking	12:00 – 1:00pm Interactive Session – Experiencing nature	12:00 – 1:00pm Plenary dialogue
1:00 – 2:00pm Lunch		
2:00 – 4:00pm Parallel Sessions		
Session 1. School Education and General Themes - Plenary Room – with translation	Session 1. School Education and General Themes Plenary Room – with translation	Session 1. School Education and General Themes Plenary Room - with translation
Session 2. Higher Education and General Themes – Classroom 3 - English	Session 2. Higher Education and General Themes - Classroom 3 - English	Session 2. Higher Education and General Themes - Classroom 3 - English
Session 3. Non Formal Education and General Themes - Classroom 4 - Spanish	Session 3. Non Formal Education and General Themes – Classroom 4 - Spanish	Session 3. Non Formal Education and General Themes - Classroom 4 - Spanish
Session 4. Non Formal Education and General Themes - Classroom 6 - English	Session 4. Non Formal Education and General Themes – Classroom 6 - English	
4:00 - 4:30pm Coffee break		
4:30 – 5:30pm Plenary Session III: Leadership driving meaningful Changes in Education	4:30 – 5:30pm Plenary Session VI: The SDGs and the Earth Charter in Education and Social Media	4:30 – 5:30pm Plenary Session IX: The Way Forward
5:30 – 7:30pm Welcome Reception	Free evening	Free evening