

12-14 APRIL

2024 EARTH CHARTER CONFERENCE

Reimagining education for Ecological Civilizations

PRELIMINARY LIST OF SPEAKERS AND ABSTRACTS



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One Human Family and One Earth Community: My Journey into Leading a Values-based University



James Wohlpart

President, Central Washington
University. Former Provost and
Executive Vice President,
University of Northern Iowa

My journey into and through a values-based leadership philosophy will be shared in this presentation, a philosophy founded on the “imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.” Beginning with my origins in a small college town, and then through my foundational time at Florida Gulf Coast University, I will trace my journey into the presidency at Central Washington University where we are in the process of creating a whole-person, place-based “model learning community of equity and belonging.” Because the Earth Charter has been integral to my journey, this story will be told partly through the way in which my leadership philosophy has emerged from the new epistemology and the new ontology that the Earth Charter demands.

“Ecological Civilization” and Transformative Education



Mary Evelyn Tucker

Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology. Journey of the Universe Project

Creating “ecological civilization” is an idea that originated in China and is spreading beyond it. In 2017 it was enshrined in the Chinese constitution and promoted by the highest levels of government, both national and provincial. It is now discussed at Chinese universities by administrators, faculty, and students. It is also present on the ground in organic farms.

The term indicates that something broader, namely cultural values and ethics are needed in the great transformation for a flourishing Earth community. This idea is being picked up in the west with discussion circles (such as “Ecociv”) and ecological practices (such as ecoeconomics and ecoeducation). This talk will illustrate why “ecological civilization” is a critical new path for education for our current challenges.

Envisioning Education in an Ecological Civilization



Jeremy Lent

Author, *The Web of Meaning:
Integrating Science and
Traditional Wisdom to Find
Our Place in the Universe*

An ecological civilization envisages a deep transformation of our current civilization, from one based on extraction and exploitation to one based on life-affirming principles, leading to profoundly beneficial changes in virtually every aspect of society—including education. This talk explores how education might be transformed accordingly. Our current education system is designed to deaden the intrinsic creativity of young people and mold them into effective producers and consumers of the global economic machine. We explore the possibilities of an education system which, instead, encourages youngsters to follow their unique aspirations and provides them the tools to cultivate their own deep fulfilment as prosocial members of a thriving society.

Pedagogical Implications of Framing Sustainability, Inclusion, and Global Citizenship through the Principles of the Earth Charter



Namrata Sharma

Faculty, State University of
New York, Consultant.

This featured presentation is centered around the key question: how do we address teaching about sustainability, inclusion, and global citizenship based on alternative paradigms? Value-creating global citizenship education is developed as a pedagogical approach from a study of diverse perspectives, ecological worldviews, and Indigenous knowledge such as reflected in the drafting of the Earth Charter. This approach is aimed to enhance the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, and beyond. The key focus is to build resilience and hope through engaged relationships between learners and their natural, social, and educational environments.

Imagining an Ecological Civilization Through the Lens of the Earth Charter: A Holistic Perspective of Ethics, Voices From the Global South, and Creating a New Educational Story for the Future



Sam M. Crowell Jr.

Professor emeritus, California State University. Founder, MA in Holistic and Integrative Education, Senior Researcher and Faculty, Earth Charter Center for ESD

Using the Earth Charter becomes most powerful when we act in harmony with its worldview. An ecological civilization not only requires a shift in consciousness and values if it is to be achievable, but we must engage in creating multiple stories of a regenerative future and an education that sustains it. This presentation begins by exploring some key characteristics that unite imagination with action. It considers ethics in terms of alignment rather than solely an intellectual process. It urges us to be receptive to possibilities of using ancient perspectives such as Buen Vivir in today's context and listening to the voices from the Global South. Finally, it encourages us to use storytelling as we imagine a pluriverse of ecological futures using the Earth Charter.

The Earth Charter Principles: the courage to reimagine the future



Akpezi Ogbuigwe

Chair of the Earth Charter International Council. Founder of Anpez Centre for Environment and Development (ACFED)

In recent decades various efforts in education for change and the role of education as an instrument for social transformation, be it education for sustainable development, climate change education, transformative education, transgressive education or environmental education have increasingly been touted as the solution to our present debacle. Underlying all these forms of education is the glaring need for a more caring, respectful, responsible, equitable and ethical citizenry committed to the shared vision of building ecological civilizations. Is this a mirage or is the missing link the courage to reimagine a kinder, just and saner future as encapsulated in the Earth Charter Principles?

Dreaming Together: Reflections on the Principle of Intergenerational Equity



Peter Blaze Corcoran

Professor Emeritus, Florida Gulf Coast University. Senior Advisor Earth Charter International

Envisioned as a creative thought experiment, this collaborative keynote seeks to weave together seemingly disparate voices into an intergenerational polyphony. We hope to reimagine responses to impending and future ecological catastrophes. We will invite participants to dream with us on a collective, intergenerational search for prospects not yet here.



César "CJ" Baldelomar,

Visiting Lecturer in Religion, Mount Holyoke College and Boston College

Intergenerational collaboration and dreaming are crucial to the effective implementation of Earth Charter principles and to crafting a robust prophetic imagination that dares to imagine what never was. How can we move beyond familiar educational and political paradigms and scripts to allure others to change their hearts and minds in ways that foster authentic solidarity across all types of differences? What is the role of imagination and creativity, especially during moments of deep uncertainty and instability? How can the melding of all sorts of voices lead to unforeseen possibilities for care and love? During our time together, we will journey toward responses to these timely questions.

Enhancing our Connection with the Community of Life (in Spanish)



María Vilches Norat

Faculty, Earth Charter Center
for ESD. Former Professor,
University Ana G. Mendez,
Puerto Rico

In this workshop, I will provide theoretical and practical insights into the eco-pedagogical strategy of creative visualization to promote a sense of unity, compassion, and belonging to the planet's community of life.

Cultivating Wisdom for Ecological Civilizations



Mark Hathaway

University of Toronto, Faculty
Earth Charter Center for ESD,
co-author, *The Tao of
Liberation*

Ecological wisdom emerges from an intimate experience of life's interconnectedness and inherent value. It encompasses various ways of perceiving and understanding, along with knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence. This wisdom enables humans to listen to Earth, embrace the sacred, and engage in actions fostering harmony among species. Rooted in justice and equity, it seeks the well-being of future generations and goes beyond material pursuits. Building on my ecological wisdom research and insights from O'Sullivan's (1999) transformative learning, this presentation explores implications for reimagining education within O'Sullivan's survive, critique, and create framework. Key themes include attending to, imagining, and co-creating with nature, as well as developing practical skills for a fulfilling life.

Pedagogies of Interbeing for a Regenerative Peace Education



Stephanie Knox Steiner

Professor, University for Peace

In this presentation, I will weave together themes from my doctoral dissertation on (re)orienting education towards learning life with experiences, learnings, and practices from the Peace Education masters programme at the University for Peace to trace pedagogies for interbeing. Education has the potential to be liberatory and transformative, peace can be learned, and if we want to see a more peaceful, just, regenerative world where all beings can thrive, we must create educational spaces where we can learn towards this world. In this presentation I will outline pedagogies supportive of unlearning and relearning to remember our interbeing with all of life, and explore the possibilities within current structures and institutions while also reaching beyond them towards more generative possibilities.

Radical Hope: Shaping an Alternative Future Out of Narrative and Myths



Grian Cutanda

Avalon Project and Earth
Stories Collection

Adopting an eminently transdisciplinary approach encompassing epistemology, psychology, worldview education, comparative mythology, narrative therapy, futures studies, system dynamics, and sociology, this presentation shares preliminary results of ongoing research building on The Earth Stories Collection. Addressing the imperative to tackle eco-anxiety, particularly among the youth, and fostering hope for a transformative future, the paper proposes creative development for an alternative narrative. Exploring self-organizing mechanisms in complex systems and studying civil society actions, a hypothesis is presented suggesting that diverse world cultures harbor cultural narratives – future myths – arising from the collective unconscious. Aligning these with narratives of the 'dissident minority' may generate a positive systemic attractor, facilitating a civilizational leap towards a more intricate global society, grounded in the Earth Charter's complex worldview.

The Relationship of Climate Event and Crisis, Forced Migration and Displacement, and Resulting Trauma and Resiliencies.



Rose Cardarelli

CEO, The Education for All
Coalition

This session will serve to inform an audience of educators, care givers, practitioners, government officials, policymakers and more about the relationship of climate event and crisis, forced migration and displacement, and resulting trauma and resiliencies. A focus on the impact of education, social emotional learning, mental and physical well-being as it 1.) relates to climate mitigation decisions so informed policies and investments can be made; 2.) examines the importance of climate education in empowering children to understand, adapt to, and mitigate the impacts of climate change; and 3.) emphasizes the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to provide comprehensive responses and support and to identify ways to leverage partnerships at the local and international levels to work collaboratively.

Retaining Ecological Consciousness and Pathways to Ecological Awakening: Keys for Education for All Ages



Brian Stafford

MD, MPH, Animas Valley
Institute, Pacifica Graduate
Institute

In this presentation, I'll introduce Ecological Consciousness and Ecological Awakening. Ecological consciousness, inherent at birth, is often lost in Westernized societies due to ego- and anthropo-centric influences in parenting, education, and religion. Ecological awakening marks a psychospiritual passage, where individuals, raised in egocentric societies, consciously embrace their primary belonging to the Earth community. I'll discuss necessary changes in child-rearing to preserve innate eco-centric consciousness, exploring pathways to ecological awakening. Drawing from extensive research, I will also highlight eco-awakening moments in the lives of ecological movement leaders and ordinary individuals.

Moving Forward with Sustainability in Big and Small Ways



Tim Echols

Georgia Public Service
Commissioner
Founder, Clean Energy
Roadshow

Long-time energy regulator and clean energy experts talks about how sustainability is more like a jigsaw puzzle and less like a gear box. Echols explores ways that individuals, neighborhoods, schools, cities and even states can live more sustainable lives. He will unpack energy efficiency, recycling, composting, alt-fuel vehicles, solar, RNG, and even hydrogen and how these can be implemented in the right situation. He'll talk about "energy burden" and helping those with less money who would like to participate in the clean energy economy.

Cultural Dimension as the Fourth Pillar of ESD: Interpreting China's Ecological Civilization Education from a Cultural Perspective



Yichen Wang

PhD student at IOE, University
College London

While the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is widely recognized as being underpinned by three pillars: society, environment, and economy—the importance of a fourth pillar, culture, is increasingly recognized yet remains insufficiently explored. This presentation highlights the significance of cultural values in "Ecological Civilization Education (ECE)," a distinctive ESD model in China. Through qualitative analysis of policy documents and teaching practice cases, the presentation reveals how cultural underpinnings are not only encouraged by Chinese policies but are also actively integrated into educational practice. By understanding the cultural dimensions that influence ESD in China, the presentation calls for a culturally enriched global ESD framework, aiming to foster adaptable, culturally responsive strategies suitable for diverse educational settings.

Touching Hearts for the Transformation of Social Consciousness: The Work of the Mexican Earth Charter Network



Mateo A. Castillo Ceja

Research Professor, Michoacan
University of Saint Nicholas of
Hidalgo and Mexican Earth
Charter Network

In this presentation we will share the work of the members of the Mexican Network, the diversity of educational projects and social practices inspired by the Earth Charter, some quantitative and qualitative results, approaches to the impact of the fruits of these efforts, and the challenges and challenges that we experience in these moments of crisis.

Global Citizenship Education for a Sustainability Transition in Europe



Ann Cathrin Nachtwey

Leadership, Sustainability and
Ethics course alumna and Earth
Charter Young Leader,
Germany

As part of a Spring 2023 with Earth Charter International Internship, the qualitative mixed-method research study explores opportunities of Global Citizenship Education for accelerating a sustainability transition in Europe. It is therefore, based on prosocial values, that Global Citizenship is evaluated to help local and regional communities to unite in diversity while formulating collective crises response.

Following thereby the root causes of a relational climate emergency, the study shows that inner and outer transformations go hand in hand; while interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergenerational interactions provide essential meeting points for communication, reconciliation, and co-creation. Global citizenship education as the key for looking beyond personal contexts, respecting and understanding different layers of identity from a higher level of consciousness, may thus foster care and action for the greater community of life.

Building an Interdisciplinary Sustainability Communication Major



Nejem Raheem

Professor of economics and
Chair of the department of
Marketing Communication at
Emerson College

I propose a presentation on Emerson College's new academic major in Sustainability Communication, aligning with various conference themes. I'll address the global need for this major, our design approach, and anticipated outcomes. This major aims to prepare students for sustainability communication through training in scientific principles, Earth Charter and UN SDGs, and communication theory. Practitioners will acquire "durable skills" such as group management, leadership, and cultural competency. This mix of competencies, deemed crucial by developers, students, advisors, and scholars, is vital for effective communication in sustainability—be it in films, reporting, campaigns, messaging, or policy outreach. I aim to explore how these competencies can propel us toward an ecological civilization during the conference.

Integrating Undergraduate Biology Education and Community Engagement



Paul Stephenson

Professor of Plant Biology,
Department of Biology Rollins
College

This presentation reports the results from an NSF grant which funds: Teaching Undergraduate Biology through Urban Agriculture [TUBA]. Our objective is to develop ways in which undergraduate students can learn topics in biology through experiential activities in partnership with community organizations whose focus is food security and community health.

GCED, ESD and the Earth Charter as foundation and drivers of ecological civilization

In this panel discussion, we will explore the role Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and the Earth Charter are having in cultivating and paving the way towards an ecological civilization.



MA Shuang

Director, International Exchanges
Department, Professor in English language
and literature, and the Vice Dean of Teaching
and Learning at Asia-Australia Business
College, Liaoning University, China



Utak Chung

Adjunct Professor, Kyung Hee
University, Former Director UNESCO
APCEIU, Assistant Secretary General,
Korean National Commission for
UNESCO, South Korea



Atsufumi Yokoi

Vice President for Global Engagement
Strategy of Okayama University, and UNESCO
Chairholder in Research and Education for
Sustainable Development, Japan



Panel: Teaching for Community, Compassion, and Democracy


Florida Gulf Coast University and Central Washington University, USA

I. Building Strength Through Community

Susan Kaspari and Sasha Wohlpert, Central Washington University

Students interested in environmental, economic, and social sustainability and who pursue related academic courses or co-curricular activities also often experience anxiety, and even hopelessness, around worsening environmental and societal crises. We explore how The Earth Charter principles can serve as keystones, supporting students as they co-create the knowledge and skills to be sustainability leaders on campus, in their communities, and in their future endeavors.





II. Four Pillars for Change: Transforming Education Through Compassion and The Earth Charter

Andrea Fortin and Maria F. Loffredo Roca, Florida Gulf Coast University

Teaching the four pillars of the Earth Charter through the lens of compassion offers a transformative perspective. The concept of compassion brings the suffering of others into focus as a catalyst for action to promote positive change. Teaching compassion not only for other people, but also for the environment, can inspire acts of kindness rooted in The Earth Charter's 16 principles.

III: Modelling Democratic Engagement Through Scenario-Based Learning

Miles Mancini, Eric Otto and Sam Walch, Florida Gulf Coast University

Civility; peaceful assembly, association, and dissent; mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation —these are core Earth Charter values and hallmarks of democratic engagement. But the increasing polarization of public discourse makes it difficult for students to find models for how to practice such engagement. We employ “scenario-based” pedagogy in our team-taught Introduction to Humanities class, allowing students to exercise democratic participation. Role-playing disparate perspectives, students debate ethical questions that arise during weekly fictional scenarios.



Incorporating Sustainability Across the College Curriculum—A Library of Open-Access Content Designed to Facilitate Adoption of SDGs into Course Curricula

Richard Plate, Devon Bazata, Martha Hubertz, Sharon Woodill, Jim Paradiso and Ryan Chabot, University of Central Florida

Our team from the University of Central Florida (UCF) has been part of an effort to increase UCF student and faculty awareness of sustainability-related challenges. Anecdotally, when we present or discuss sustainability to people not focused on the topic, they tend to view sustainability narrowly, for example, as recycling or protecting the trees. As a result, while sympathetic to the concept of sustainability, they do not feel particularly connected to it. To address this misperception, we are developing an open-source, online textbook of content designed for adoption by faculty who teach courses that, while not focused on sustainability, cover some overlapping concepts. While this will exist as a textbook, it is more accurate to view it as a library of class resources designed within the framework of the United Nations sustainable development goals. Faculty using our content will be able to adopt single, free-standing activities/exercises that introduce individual SDGs, build skills for addressing SDGs, and show examples of organizations from UCF and Central Florida that are addressing SDGs.





Touching Hearts for the Transformation of Social Consciousness: The Work of the Mexican Earth Charter Network

Mateo Alfredo Castillo Ceja, Research Professor, Michoacan University of Saint Nicholas of Hidalgo and Mexican Earth Charter Network

Since its establishment in 2013, the Mexican Earth Charter Network has actively worked towards fostering a more just, sustainable, and peaceful society. Over 1,300 affiliated institutions, including academic and business entities, civil society organizations, and government bodies, collaborate to create alliances, reaching an estimated million individuals, spanning children, youth, political leaders, academics, successful entrepreneurs, and social figures nationwide.

The network aspires to be a pivotal force in societal and civilizational transformation, promoting loving sustainability that dignifies diverse human communities. Rooted in a spirituality that respects life's sacredness, it cultivates planetary consciousness through inclusive, fair, and peaceful practices.

This presentation outlines the diverse educational projects and social initiatives inspired by the Earth Charter, offering both quantitative and qualitative results. It explores the impact of these efforts on various sectors and addresses the challenges faced amid contemporary crises. The Mexican Earth Charter Network's vision unfolds through the collaborative work of its members, contributing to a positive shift in consciousness and societal values.



Education For Sustainability: The Earth Charter as a Promoter of Peace, an Experience from Mexico (Presentation in Spanish)

Mateo Alfredo Castillo Ceja, Janet Ortiz Ruiz, and Shafia Sucar Succar, Mexican Earth Charter Network

The Earth Charter, a UNESCO-recognized educational tool for sustainability, advocates for peace through its 16th principle, especially 16.f., emphasizing the importance of right relationships with oneself, others, cultures, life, Earth, and the broader interconnected whole. Criticizing the current capitalist, individualistic, and competitive development model for fostering unsustainable consumerism, leading to social issues like poverty and war, the need for a post-capitalist world is evident.

Drawing inspiration from the Multiconvergence of Global Networks and the Earth Charter, a transformative experience unfolded within the Mexican Earth Charter Network. Employing the methodology of Theater of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal, rooted in Latin American political-artistic commitment and African Zulu healing practices, the workshop delved into real cases of structural injustices—racism, machismo, slavery, xenophobia, homophobia, social repressions, and war. This presentation explores the emotional and reflective outcomes of this experience, highlighting its potential as a political training alternative and a catalyst for a peace-centric culture. By fostering empathy not only for victims but also among society members facing prevailing injustices locally and globally, such workshops contribute to cultivating a culture of peace.



Well-Being, Lifestyles and “Buen Vivir”: Critical Reflections from The Earth Charter

Mateo Alfredo Castillo Ceja, Research Professor at the Michoacan University of Saint Nicholas of Hidalgo and Representative in Mexico of the Earth Charter International Initiative; Shafía Sucar Succar, Retired Research Professor from the University of Guanajuato and Earth Charter Focal Point in Guanajuato; and Rafael Martínez Blanco, Independent consultant and Earth Charter Focal Point in Mexico City

Members of the Mexican Earth Charter Network are addressing concerns about the impact of contemporary lifestyles and the need for comprehensive indicators assessing contributions to Planetary Wellbeing. Through a critical analysis, they aim to develop proposals rooted in complex thinking inspired by the Earth Charter. Key topics include the social and environmental problems reflective of the current civilization crisis, stemming from a destructive illusion ingrained in the pursuit of well-being within the capitalist development model. Their reflections emphasize that well-being measurement should encompass the local natural and cultural context of each community, extending beyond human-centric indicators to consider the interrelation and interdependence of all living beings. Philosophically, they assert that living involves meaning and purpose, emphasizing the multidimensional, sentient, and spiritual nature of human existence. This broad, complex, and evolving concept of living prompts the aspiration to simply "Live."



Conscious and Agroecological Consumption in University Students from the Ecocentric Vision of The Earth Charter

David Eduardo Velázquez Muñoz, PhD in Continuing Education, Autonomous University of the State of Mexico

In the search for sustainable lifestyles, the phenomenon of human consumption takes on central importance as a factor for transformation. In this sense, the approach to consumption related to food sovereignty makes agroecology emerge as a sustainable alternative, where conscious consumption contributes to personal, social and planetary well-being. At the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico (UAEMex, by its acronym in Spanish), its research networks and allies of the Earth Charter (EC), promote food sovereignty and consumption through the initiatives of conscious consumption markets, sustainable cafeterias and research based on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Earth Charter.

This work presents the results of three research projects carried out at the UAEMex in the last three years, which document the contribution of the EC towards an ecocentric vision in the student body, the relationship of the principles of this declaration with the agroecological perspective of the consumption and the promotion of conscious consumption through fair, ethical and social trade markets within the university as part of the formal and non-formal environmental education programmes with the EC.



Planting the Seeds of the Earth Charter

Debby Ellen, Ed.D., Associate Professor, Education Department Chairperson, Guam Community College, Co-Founder of Talaya Micronesia, Inc., Education for Sustainable Development/Earth Charter Educator

Objective: Share experiences and research on innovative approaches including lessons learned from the use of the Earth Charter in various education settings around the world.

This session will focus on sharing some of the strategies and practices being implemented in elementary schools and at the community college level on the island of Guam. This includes incorporating the Earth Charter into college courses for future educators, college students learning about the Earth Charter and incorporating it into learning centers, thematic units, and the creation of books that reflect their experiences and concerns related to our islands. Elementary students are creating their own books which are based on the Little Earth Charter and their connection to their island/homeland for a Young Author event. Kindergarten through high school educators are introduced to the Earth Charter during Projects-Based Learning (PBL) trainings and base their PBL plans on at least one Earth Charter Principle. In this way, we hope to create a shift of consciousness and conversations toward a more peaceful, sustainable community and planet.



Transforming Teacher Professional Development: Examples of Isomorphism and Holistic Education at Wish School Brazil

Marina Gadioli Lenzi Mari, Director, Wish School, and Andressa Lutiano, Founder, Wish School

This presentation will share an example of transformative learning through the experience of the Wish School and its application of isomorphism. Defined by Sergio Niza (2009), isomorphism is a methodology that aims to offer educators the attitudes, procedures and techniques that are intended to be learned and applied by them. In other words, it is the notion that teachers need to experience the same type of learning they want to provide for their students.

Wish School is a holistic education school with 120 students, from Kindergarten to High School, located in São Paulo, Brazil. At Wish we took the idea of isomorphism to the next level and applied it not only with educators but also with supporting staff, management and families. We used its premises not only for pedagogical and methodological purposes but also for teachers' social-emotional development, conflict resolution, trust-based conversations, among others.

The experience we witnessed at Wish School demonstrates the need to be coherent with values and procedures through the educational process, in order for a transformative learning environment to thrive. In my presentation I will share strategies applied at the school for each level of the organization, connecting them with the transformations we noticed.



Sustainability and Indigenous Knowledge: The Role of Education in Kiribati

Alice Tekaieti, Research Community Officer, The University of the South Pacific

It is important to find out the level of commitment in Kiribati to education for sustainability (EFS) in the formal school system - its curriculum and syllabus. Also important is the involvement and engagement of local communities for Indigenous Knowledge (IK) practices in both urban and rural areas since the initiation of the Decade for Education and Sustainable Development (DESD). This is of great importance to Kiribati and the wider Pacific community in the Pacific region in providing possible solutions because major issues of 'sustainability' are also experienced within a period of recognised climate change. The methodology used in this study is called 'te tao tabon inaa,' a uniquely Kiribati approach to discussion between the interviewee and researcher. The approach taken enables teachers and community members to reflect on their own interaction and teachings, their perceptions on sustainability and IK integration into formal schooling. The data collected represents the participants' perspectives, life experiences, teaching perceptions and understanding of the nature of sustainability and IK practices in one urban and one rural community. Specifically, the study will examine the benefits and challenges of education for sustainability and the role of indigenous knowledge in the formal school curricula as well as in the social life of the two communities.



Education: Process, Praxis or...

Mary (Joy) Philip, Professor, Lutheran Global Theology and Mission, Martin Luther University College

The call for abstracts gives a list of possibilities but the central theme is education. The rest of the questions come after that. How one interprets and engages in this endeavor called education will determine its relevance and efficacy. As the conference description says, the 2024 conference, “Reimagining Education for Ecological Civilizations,” builds on previous Earth Charter Conferences focused on education for sustainability and global citizenship, and for planetary well-being. To stay on course, I would like to reflect on education in relation to “Planetary Well-being.” This could, of course, include environmental education, eco-Literacy, climate education, peace education, listed among the thematic topics. In the past year Mother Earth has been subject to scorching heat, be it from extremely high temperatures, on one side, and battered by pounding storms, and hammering hurricanes, not to mention mercilessly swallowed up by the very life-giving water now turned tormentor through torrential rains and rising sea levels, on the other. In the Vedic tradition, education is human beings’ third eye or the inner eye. The presentation will focus on what it means to have education/knowledge as our inner eye. What does it mean to open those inner eyes, to have education in the context of Mother Earth groaning in pain, especially, to work towards her well-being?



Catalyzing Arts Education for an Ecological Civilization: Insights from Haumea Ecovercity in Ecological Art Practice and Values-Based Transformative Learning

Cathy Fitzgerald, Founder, Haumea Ecovercity, and Dr Nikos Patedakis, Independent Philosopher and Podcaster, DangerousWisdom.org

Since 2019, Dr. Cathy Fitzgerald, an ecological art practitioner and sustainability educator, along with Dr. Nikos Patedakis, an eco-aesthetically oriented philosopher, have spearheaded the development of Haumea Ecovercity. This modest, yet innovative, independent online transformative ecoliteracy learning platform has successfully engaged with over 300 creative and cultural professionals from all art fields, from Ireland and abroad. The foundation of their holistic, wisdom-based transformative learning model rests on a comprehensive 7-week Earth Charter course to guide creatives, art educators and cultural professionals in their work to inspire audiences and communities to reflect and act for ecological cultural renewal.

Fitzgerald and Patedakis aim to share underacknowledged insights stemming from five decades of evolution within the emergent field of radical ecological art practice, still a marginal area in contemporary art education, as a contribution to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). These revelations hold the potential to deepen comprehension of the intricate interplay between creativity informed by ecoliteracy and transformative learning.

In tandem, the authors acknowledge the wealth of experience and research spanning multiple decades within the realm of ESD that could benefit and affirm radical ecological arts practice as a model of transformative learning for arts sustainability education.



Value-creating Perspective in Environmental Education

Tamy Kobashikawa, Research Coordinator, Instituto Soka Amazônia

This oral presentation aims to introduce the value-creating pedagogy applied to environmental education in non-formal education.

The purpose of the Value-creating Approach is for each student to find happiness and transform society. The prime point to implement in the environmental education field is the respect for the dignity of life, in which all human beings are the same, and all forms of life deserve to be equally respected. It argues that one's behavior transforms the local community, the nation, and even the world [concept of human revolution or inner transformation], through understanding the respect for the dignity of life, and the relationship between being and the environment. The approach puts the student first, praising each one as a unique individual considering their socioeconomic-environmental context, in a dialogue with the “protagonism” of Paulo Freire [1996].

Located in front of the Encounter of the Waters of River Negro and River Solimões, in the Brazilian Amazon, the Soka Amazon Institute creates opportunities for individuals to connect with the environment. It takes at the core the value-creating perspective in environmental education through many experiences, such as on an expedition in the forest, collaborating with "ribeirinhos" when planting a seedling, in a class or lecture, and even on a visit to the Private Reserve of Natural Heritage Dr. Daisaku Ikeda.



Systems Thinking Education for a More Sustainable World

Gitanjali Paul, Education Programme Manager, Compass Education

Today's global issues are complex and interconnected. Climate change, structural inequality, and political polarization are some of the many systemic problems we must unravel to cultivate a more sustainable world. Yet, how can we reimagine education to support positive systems change if we don't teach systems thinking?

Systems thinking helps learners of all ages navigate and impact their local and global communities. Whether in K-12 or nonformal learning environments, explicitly teaching systems thinking tools and mindsets fosters individuals' sense of agency to hope and act for a better future. Furthermore, these tools can help integrate ESD topics like the UN SDGS into existing curriculums while developing critical 21st-century skills.

This interactive session will share examples of systems thinking tools and activities that 3000+ educators from 861+ organizations in 96+ countries have taken to bring ESD into their education work, including The Sustainability Compass tool, which utilizes four Compass Points- Nature, Society, Economy, and Wellbeing- to identify systems elements and interconnections. The framework's inclusion of individual wellness is unique to sustainability conversations but critical to realistic and holistic sustainable outcomes. Attendees will walk away with specific ideas of how to use systems thinking to further their own educational work and goals.



Information Literacy Through Lateral Reading in the Environmental Studies Classroom

Victoria Machado, PhD, Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences, and René Tanner, Head of Research Services, Olin Library, Rollins College

As climate change continues to impact communities around the world, there is widespread need to improve science literacy (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2016). As educators, one of the best places we can cultivate this is within the classroom. However, in an increasingly polarized society (Pew 2014) and with an over-abundance of information, students must develop the skills to effectively and efficiently sift through sources, recognize biases, and find the most reputable data. While this process of critically thinking about how and where they obtain their information takes time, skill, and practice, its rewards can be overwhelming as students feel more confident of the information they gather and the sources they choose to listen to. The following presentation engages lateral reading, a form of reading that involves looking across multiple sources instead of deep into the original site. This practice can be introduced as an in-class activity for cultivating and honing student information literacy skills. We explore ways we can further reinforce the importance of considering sources in a polarizing climate that requires evidence-based data to make informed and meaningful decisions.



Partnering for Sustainability: Community Engagement Coursework as a Pedagogical Approach to Building Eco-Literacy

Rachel Winter, Lecturer, Rollins College

Community partners are an invaluable resource for engaging students in learning experiences beyond the academic classroom and can offer tangible examples of real-world sustainability issues. My Fall 2023 Communication Campaigns course is working alongside the Seminole Education, Restoration and Volunteer (SERV) Program to develop updated educational and promotional materials designed to highlight the key issues facing Seminole County, Florida, waterways. As part of this project, students researched household and industrial contaminants, shoreline degradation, and invasive species. Students are thereby engaged in both learning, and educating others, about sustainability as they create educational materials designed for use with both children and adult learners. Further, the students' promotional materials can be used by the SERV Program to attract additional volunteers for the organization's spring events, including waterway restoration, invasive plant removal, and the St. Johns River litter cleanup. Therefore, although the students are learning valuable communication skills, they are also learning to use these skills to convey important information about conservation, preparing them to educate future communities about sustainable lifestyles.



The Epidemic of Air Pollution: Awareness of The Detrimental Impacts on Well-being and Health

Virginia Keating, Student, Rollins College

Air pollution, a pervasive issue since the Industrial Revolution, remains a silent killer contributing to chronic illnesses and mortality. Despite its profound impact on health, this problem often goes unnoticed amidst other perceived causes of disease. Many physicians lack a comprehensive understanding of the environmental factors linked to prevalent health issues like asthma, mental health problems, COPD, lung cancer, and respiratory infections. As an Environmental Studies major and Global Health minor at Rollins College, my extensive research focuses on the consequences of air pollution-related illnesses, particularly in urban areas of the United States, Africa, and my current project in India. The global scale of this issue necessitates public awareness and education to empower individuals to advocate for their health, understand the main causes of air pollution in their communities, and adopt sustainable practices. Particularly, communities facing systemic disadvantages, like those affected by redlining, require targeted education and accessible solutions for mitigating indoor air pollution's health impacts. By promoting community education, equitable healthcare, sustainable solutions, and a shift in mindset, we can collectively address and alleviate the detrimental effects of air pollution on a global scale.



Ecologies of Learning and Practice for an Ecological Civilization

Norman Jackson, Emeritus Professor, University of Surrey, Founder, Lifewide Education, Founder, Creative Academic

Education systems all over the world are beginning a journey to support the societal and cultural transformations necessary to achieve a more sustainable future, but can this happen without fundamental changes in what learning means in the context of an Ecological Civilization?

Learning and self-education are essential to developing competence as an organism to interact effectively with our environment, not just in the present, like all organisms do, but mindful of an imagined future. Such an understanding draws attention to the fundamentally ecological nature of our existence. Fundamentally, we are interbeings living within and with an ecological world of relationships, connectivity, interdependencies and transformations. As we interact with our world, we weave together aspects of ourselves and our environment, in an ecology of practice through which we transform ourselves and the world around us.

We have reached a point in human history where the moral purpose of education and individuals' commitment to learning and self-education throughout their life, need to be broadened beyond themselves as beings to recognise themselves as interbeings. Understanding learning and practice as ecological phenomena, is an important step in the transition to an Ecological Civilization.



Assessing Educators' Knowledge about the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals in a Brazilian Municipality

Flavia Schwartzman, Consultant, UNESCO and Research and Extension Center Sustentarea, School of Public Health, University of Sao Paulo

The school is a crucial space for students' whole education, which includes the education for sustainable development (ESD). In Brazil, an education law establishes the inclusion of food and nutrition education, environment and health as cross-cutting themes in the school curriculum. To implement ESD, teachers must have the knowledge and skills to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the curriculum. Objective: To assess the level of knowledge of teachers about the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Methodology: An online questionnaire was applied to early childhood and lower secondary educators of the public network of a municipality in São Paulo, Brazil. The sample was composed of 142 educators from 15 schools, representing 48.8% of the total educators of that municipality. Results: The average age was 44.1 years (SD=9.9 years), the majority being female (83.2%) with experience in education of more than 10 years (60.5%). 64.1% declared having basic knowledge about the SDGs and the 2030 agenda, 23.2% intermediate and 12.7% advanced. Among those with intermediate or advanced knowledge, the majority had more than 10 years of teaching experience (72.6%; $p=0.03$). Conclusion: There is a need to train educators on sustainability issues, especially the ones with less experience.



Giving the Planet a Voice through the Science of Storytelling

Ariani Serrani, Storyteller, Curriculum Developer, “The Jungle Jinn” and Janice Colina, Circular Economy Curriculum Developer.

Our presentation showcases the transformative impact of interactive storytelling in fostering eco-consciousness, particularly through our innovative educational storybook, 'The Jungle Jinn.' Grounded in Earth Charter principles, the story revolves around an ordinary human navigating a magical jungle, struggling to find her unique place amidst nature's beauty. Notably, the audience shapes the story's outcome, mirroring the current environmental crisis and empowering readers to be protagonists, authors, and teachers of their environmental journeys.

'The Jungle Jinn' integrates interactive curricula covering diverse environmental education themes such as overconsumption, overproduction, and managing eco-anxiety. Over the past two years, the curricula have engaged over 300 students in locations like Monteverde, Costa Rica, and Curitiba Parana, Brazil. Currently taught at the CATIE Tropical Agriculture Research and Education Center in Turrialba, Costa Rica, to secondary school students (grades 6-11), it demonstrates significant potential for inspiring behavioral change. The fusion of storytelling and interactive lessons not only encourages students to envision a new world but also instills the belief in their tangible power to create it.



Change from Within in Jamaican Schools: Exploring and Engendering School Culture Change for Peace and Parental Engagement

Therese Ferguson, Senior Lecturer, The University of the West Indies

The culture of a school can be characterised as the deep, embedded, long-lasting values, attitudes and beliefs that shape the expectations and processes within a school, including an overall culture of peace or, its antithesis, violence and indiscipline. Within the Small Island State of Jamaica, school violence is a notable issue. This paper focuses on the Change from Within programme, a school-based intervention in Jamaica run under an Education for Sustainable Development thrust and focused on preventing school violence and indiscipline by reorienting school culture. This qualitative research focuses on four schools within the current cohort of CFW schools and employs semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions principals, teachers and parents have of their schools' culture and the factors that they believe influence these cultures. Preliminary findings indicate that factors such as stakeholder engagement and involvement, staff, perceptions of community members (based on academic rating and performance in non-academic areas) and socio-economic backgrounds, influence school culture. Additionally, the data suggest that parents who actively participate and are intentionally involved in schooling and the education of their children contribute to positive school cultures. Findings will be useful in offering insights into the ways in which schools with cultures characterised by violence and indiscipline might move towards cultures of peace.



Education and Technology to Reduce Waste in Food Production

Anderson Rabello, Professor, Federal Center for Technological Education of Minas Gerais

Brazil is one of the largest food producers in the world, but approximately 46 million tons of food per year is wasted (around 30%). The reasons are inadequate production technology and infrastructure, as well as a lack of awareness of how to make the best use of food. On the other hand, around 70% of the food consumed by Brazilians is produced by family farming, i.e. on small rural properties. It favors a sustainable production chain with low environmental impact, as well as generating jobs and income for producers. However, it is more affected by the lack of food production technologies and has greater difficulty in accessing education. To solve these problems, researchers and educators at the Federal Center for Technological Education of Minas Gerais are providing drying and storage technologies adapted to the use of surplus production in family farming. Vegetables that are not suitable for immediate consumption can be dehydrated and stored for up to two years, reducing waste by more than 90%. The dried product gains added value, contributing to the circular economy. The project benefits hundreds of producers through the sustainable use of energy resources and education in good practices in food production.



Holistic Education from the HeArt

Darshell Kaur, Circle of Roots / The HeArt Dayton, the House of Healing Arts

This presentation will share the experience of a small group of peacebuilders and educators in Dayton, Ohio, that brings the heart into their classrooms and actively create unique immersive educational experiences for their students in higher education. In the university teacher education department and in the broader community, culture humility is being taught as a necessary skill for the future of humanity inside and outside the classroom. Topics of culture, restorative practices, social identity, and trauma awareness/resilience healing practices are explored inside of the classroom, and peacebuilding and community upliftment projects outside the classroom, in neighborhoods intentionally underdeveloped by the government. We use a holistic heart-centered approach to teaching equity through peacemaking circles and creative expression, centering students' lived experiences to explore what is culture beneath the surface. Culture is taught as something we can co-create if we first start from a place of reflection and self-awareness, to better understand ourselves and how we fit into the larger human family. This approach, combined with community based participatory action research building intentional relationships across historical and social differences, is actively breaking through barriers of isolation and fear of the other which plagues our hyper-segregated midwestern city of Dayton.



The Epidemic of Air Pollution: Awareness of The Detrimental Impacts on Well-being and Health

Virginia Keating, Student, Rollins College

Air pollution, regarding chronic illnesses and mortality, is a silent killer that gets drowned out by other possible causes of present disease. Suppose the health issues are noticed and dealt with. In that case, many physicians lack an understanding of the environmental issues of the modern century that are most likely causing health issues such as asthma, mental health issues, COPD, lung cancer, respiratory infections, and, at times, death. Air pollution is a very prominent problem that has been killing our earth since the Industrial Revolution; humans are interconnected with the earth. It is crucial that every citizen be aware of everyday encounters in their environment that are negatively affecting their mental and physical health, even if it is in an indirect way. My ongoing extensive research into ambient and indoor air pollution as a student at Rollins College as an Environmental Studies major and minoring in Global Health has developed my in-depth understanding of the main factors and consequences of air pollution-related illnesses. My research thus far has been focused on redlining, systemic discrimination, and capitalistic tendencies in the urban sectors of the United States and Africa in relation to chronic illnesses, with a current research project focusing on the issues in India. Air pollution-related illness is a serious problem on a global scale that affects us all, even if we are not actively aware of it in our own communities because we think we are not as at risk as other places around the world. This is why education on properly mitigating what is in our control to improve our well-being is crucial. However, the communities that are most affected by the deadly impacts tend to be communities that are disregarded and already lack proper health care programs. My hope is to educate the everyday individual to be better equipped to minimize the health impacts through self-advocating to physicians about health issues that could very well be related to their environment, creating awareness of the main causes of air pollution in their city to help navigate solutions in areas that are long overdue for equitable change, and educating other community members about alternatives in their everyday lifestyle to lessen the impacts of indoor air pollution.



A Review of Rollins Rethinking Fashion Utilizing Value-Belief-Norm Theory to Activate Changemakers

Grace Dance and Karie Yanez, Graduate Students, Rollins College

Based on the value-belief-norm (VBN) theory, this proposal will conduct a survey to measure college students' changemaker mindset, eco-literacy, and sustainable behaviors. One of the project's purposes is to determine the extent to which college students change their behaviors to make more eco-friendly choices based on information posted on the Rethinking Fashion social media account. The survey's second purpose is to inform the Rollins College Social Impact Hub's strategies in promoting its Rethinking Fashion Show, which began in October 2018 as an event designed to inform and provide the community with conscious, sustainable consumption choices. Originally, the Rethinking Fashion Show had four local brand partners and focused primarily on fashion, but as of 2023, it has expanded to include 32 local and global brand partners, including student entrepreneurs with a diverse range of products. Moreover, the Rethinking Fashion Instagram account has also grown dramatically, with more than 2,972 digital impressions in the past 30 days. The Rethinking Fashion Show, campaign, and Instagram account largely focus on SDG #12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by showcasing sustainable, eco-friendly, and ethical brand partners. The results of the survey and implications for future research will be shared during the presentation.



The Relationship of Love and Environmental Activism

Karen Auld, Citizen Scientist, Auld Creative Consulting Enterprises [ACCE]

The environmental movement is currently fueled with the emotions of shame and blame. Having worked in the environmental field for over 30 years, I have seen first-hand how that energy doesn't work with most people. There is however a different energy, in fact it is the most powerful form of renewable energy on the planet, that unites and inspires people into action. That renewable energy is love.

My presentation will be broken into three parts. Part One, I will share the results of my research on the connection of happiness/love and environmental activism. This research was conducted with one of the leading experts on happiness in the UK, Dr. Robert Holden. Quantitative and qualitative data collected from the study shows that happier people are more prone to participate in pro-environmental actions.

Part Two will demonstrate how love, aka The Hippie Movement, was the catalyst of the environmental movement and how environmental pioneers like Jane Goodall and Jacques Cousteau used love to change hearts and minds.

Part Three will provide actionable steps for the audience to lead with love in their own activism and as tool in environmental education. As Jacques Cousteau said, "We protect what we love."



Engaging Students in Sustainable Practices IRL (In Real Life)

Andrea Eklund, Professor, Apparel, Textiles and Merchandising, Faculty Senate Chair, Central Washington University

Research indicates that Generation Z college students show the highest levels of concern for the environment (First Insight, Inc., 2021). Despite their strong desire to embrace sustainability, they often find themselves constrained by budget limitations. Teaching sustainability within higher education plays a crucial role in fostering a sustainable future. How can we engage college students and provide them with sustainable strategies for daily life, enabling them to contribute to the well-being of our planet?

In order to tackle this challenge, I recommend the introduction of focused sustainability strategies on college campuses. Workshops can cover topics such as budget-friendly alternatives, DIY solutions, and responsible consumer practices. Additionally, creating accessible online resources, such as blogs, and social media campaigns, can provide students with ongoing guidance. Collaborations with local businesses can offer student discounts on sustainable products. Student-led sustainability clubs and initiatives can foster a sense of community and encourage peer-to-peer knowledge sharing.

By integrating these strategies, we can empower college students to make sustainable choices within their financial constraints, fostering a generation that not only cares deeply about the planet but also possesses the practical tools to contribute.



Integrating Problem-Based, Transdisciplinary Education into Teacher Preparation Programs for Sustainable Development

Jenn Manak, Professor and Reading/ESOL Coordinator, Rollins College

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a series of overlapping, interconnected real-world issues that are best solved from a transdisciplinary perspective. It is critical to prepare future teachers and their students to become the next generation of solution-seekers who collaboratively work across disciplines, cultures, and identities to seek new solutions to these dynamic issues in our global society (Manak & Puig, 2021). How can we foster our students to become engaged, motivated, and literate citizens who address real-world issues?

Real-world issues are multifaceted, complex topics for young people to understand. Children's literature provides educators with an age-appropriate tool to increase students' awareness of the SDGs and scaffold their knowledge about these real-world issues (Holshouser & Medina, 2021). In addition, problem-based instruction inspires our students to be more aware and learn how to take action. Problem-based, transdisciplinarity instruction motivates and empowers students while drawing knowledge from a variety of disciplines to solve current challenges (Kaufman, Moss, & Osborn, 2003). Integrating the SDGs and inquiry-based, transdisciplinary instructional practices into teacher preparation programs will develop future teachers who are knowledgeable and passionate about promoting sustainable development in their classrooms and inspiring future generations of global solution-seekers.



What is “biohacking your health”?

Teresa Skrepenski, Consultant and professional speaker in the areas of business and entrepreneurship

Social media has recently been throwing around this idea of “biohacking your health” which has made people innately curious but also overwhelmed by an information overload that may or may not be beneficial. Believe it or not most people are “biohacking” their health in one form or another without even knowing it. My personal journey included getting a DNA test done which changed my life forever and allowed me to focus my health efforts on my genetic profile. Through simple “biohacking” I have lost 20 pounds of fat, reverse aged 2 years, released childhood trauma and even kicked a sugar addiction I didn’t even realize I had. During this session I would like to provide you with solutions for overall better health and well-being at any age.



Using Poetic Language to Inspire Awareness and Civic Engagement

John Beaton, Poet

I thought a version of the Earth Charter written in the elevated language of poetry would help learners connect emotionally with its message, so I redrafted its contents in poetic form. I have presented the poem to groups in Canada and the U.S. It inspired audiences, raised awareness of the Charter, and prompted enquiries as to how they could discover more about it. In this presentation I will share the poem and facilitate a discussion. Together we will explore how poetic language can deliver the Charter's vision of ecological civilization in ways that, by touching hearts as well as minds, inspire awareness, civic engagement, and senses of urgency and agency.



Demonstrating the Earth Charter as a Unifier of Global Voices on Social and Environmental Justice

Zulfi Ali, Senior Lecturer, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK

Based on the experience of over two decades of involvement with social and environmental justice education and activism in the Global South, in this paper I argue for the possibility of using the Earth Charter to bring together global voices and actions for reimagining education. I start by making three observations. One, given the imminent existential threats and even civilizational collapse, the lack of urgency in addressing these challenges through education so far has been shocking. Two, the Sustainable Development Goals have failed to create a bottom-up people's movement for action based on praxis – theory-based action. Three, educationally our voices have become fragmented due to the many different and competing 'educations', such as: Environmental Education; Education for Sustainable Development; Global Citizenship Education; Peace Education; and Futures Education, to name a few. I argue that the Earth Charter is ideally placed to create synergies across the globe and create a unified instead of a fragmented movement of educators to meet the social and environmental justice challenges we face. This has not happened yet. Finally, I present a research -based case study of how the Earth Charter was used at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK, to test this out.