

12-14 APRIL

2024 EARTH CHARTER CONFERENCE

**Reimagining education for
Ecological Civilizations**

PRELIMINARY LIST OF SPEAKERS AND ABSTRACTS



**Earth
Charter®**
INTERNATIONAL



**University
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OUR HOPE FOR PEACE

UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development with the Earth Charter



**UNi
ESD
& ST**

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

Co-founder and co-director,
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, 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:

Enhancing our Connection with the Community of Life*



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.

*Presentation in Spanish with interpretation (please bring your own computer or phone and earphones)

Radical Hope

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.

Retaining Ec

An Imaginal Journey to Your Ecological Consciousness



Brian Stafford

MD, MPH, Animas Valley
Institute, Pacifica Graduate
Institute

As a culture, we downplay the importance of imagination, especially in education, even though the people we acclaim as our greatest artists, writers, leaders, teachers, and scientists are the ones with the most magnificent imaginations. Imagination is perhaps our most valuable power on the journey to and ecological culture.

For this specific deep imaginal journey, Dr. Stafford will invite you to meet your own inner guide to ecological consciousness, a guide that will serve you in the moment, during the conference, and for the rest of your life.

Art supplies will be available to render your journey.

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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.

*Presentation in Spanish with interpretation [please bring your own computer or phone and earphones]

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.

Eco-Spirituality in the Development of Education for an Ecological Civilization



Jim MacLellan

Vice President of the Spirituality
and Sustainability Global Network
[SSGN]



Ensign Cowell

Board member, SSGN.
Environmental activist with 40
years of experience in finance.

This presentation will share foundations that may serve to nurture eco-spirituality in education and how they can contribute to the building of ecological civilizations. These foundations include the perspective of Laudato Si' - On Care for Our Common Home, the cosmology of the cultural historian Thomas Berry and certain ancient indigenous traditions.

We will also present the experience of our EcoSpirit project as an innovative approach to promote education through study of the root causes and present dynamics of modern industrial civilization's global devastation of the environment and creation of the global warming crisis.

This is a crisis that must be understood as threatening the destiny of all the sacred creatures of Earth's sacred Biosphere and, within it, our sacred human lives.

Cobb's Thought on Ecological Civilization Education and Its Significance to China's Education Reform Today



Meijun Fan

Director of China Project at
Center for Process Studies

This paper explores Dr. John B. Cobb, Jr.'s concept of ecological civilization education, arguing for a paradigm shift in education away from fostering "sophisticated egoists" towards cultivating future leaders capable of addressing ecological needs. It advocates moving from fragmented disciplinary thinking to interdisciplinary approaches, from value-free to value-laden education, and from competition-oriented to harmony-oriented education. It suggests that Cobb's ideas can help China move away from blindly imitating Western education models towards creating a unique Chinese ecological civilization education by integrating traditional Chinese wisdom with Western constructive postmodern thought.

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.

Reflections on Professional Development for Business Leaders from CSR to ESG and the Earth Charter



Ricardo Young

Vice-Chair, ECI Council,
president of IDS - Instituto
Democracias e Sustentabilidade
in Brazil and is part of the
Institute of Advanced Studies of
the University of Sao Paulo.

Following decades of working in the field of private sector engaging companies in Brazil in understanding and embracing the sustainability agenda, I see a need to highlight the innovative role leaders in the private sector need to have, the importance of educating the new leadership and also of relating the Corporate Social Responsibility, ESG, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Earth Charter. The central issue in the business and political world is leadership. How to ignite resolve in the leadership of the private sector to accelerate the inevitable process of making companies aligned and contribute to the aspiration of a more just, sustainable and peaceful world.

