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INTRODUCTION

“In a world woven with diversity, our greatest strength is found in unity and shared purpose.”

We are pleased to introduce the fourth edition of the Earth Charter Magazine, which brings voices from individuals working in different contexts offering an opportunity to exchange knowledge, experience and reflections related to sustainability, education and the Earth Charter.

In his article, Andrew Gebert, affiliated with the Ikeda Research Institute for Soka Education at Soka University Japan, explores Tsunesaburo Makiguchi’s pedagogical ideas, emphasizing geography’s role in human consciousness and agency as well as in the interactions with the environment.

Samira Sarkardei, an environmental engineering researcher and educator, recounts her journey in search of life purpose. Her reflections on interconnectedness illustrates a spiritual and moral approach to environmental stewardship linked with the Earth Charter’s principles.

In her article, Deeksha Aggarwal, an international lawyer, discusses the 2024 UN Summit’s Pact for the Future. She examines its alignment with the Earth Charter’s calls for justice, inclusivity, and sustainability and emphasis on commitment to global cooperation and the protection of future generations.

Mateo Castillo Ceja, a distinguished leader in environmental movement in Mexico, draws connections between the Earth Charter, the 2030 Agenda, and the new Pact for the Future. He positions the Charter as a vital ethical framework for contemporary global agendas by further emphasizing the convergence of the Earth Charter, the 2030 Agenda, and the Pact for the Future

Ann Cathrin Nachtwey, university student and ambassador of the Earth Charter from Germany, shares her research exploring opportunities of global citizenship education for accelerating a transition to sustainability in Europe. She highlights the importance of fostering inclusive, sustainability-driven communities and the role of youth in advancing Earth Charter values.

Wendy Coulson, reflects from her lens as English language teacher and trainer, the connections that can be made between Education for Sustainability, Global Citizenship Education and the 21st century skills through the teaching of English teaching. She suggests that social responsibility and ecological consciousness can be fostered through the teaching of English.

In her article, Heidi Vega García, academic at the General Studies center of National University, Costa Rica, shares her experience in underdoing a pilot course which aims at engaging participants in a reflection on the values and principles of The Earth Charter through artist expressions.

This issue prominently features photographs of Daisaku Ikeda, Buddhist philosopher and educator, founding president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) and long stand supporter of the Earth Charter movement symbolizing not only his sensitivity to the beauty of nature, but also his enduring legacy in promoting global peace and ethical leadership.

We hope this issue encourages its readers to envision a future shaped by an ethic of care, compassion, responsibility, and interconnectedness.

“Hope for the future lies in our shared willingness to uphold principles that transcend borders and generations.”

MIRIAN VILELA, MARIA SOSA SEGNINI,
AND DEEKSHA AGGARWAL
EDITORIAL TEAM





Dialogue with Nature: Photographs by Daisaku Ikeda

Daisaku Ikeda (1928-2023), president of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) Buddhist movement, was an avid photographer who found beauty and uniqueness in ordinary scenes. A series of his photographs has toured over 40 countries and territories in an exhibition titled "Dialogue with Nature." In 2002, a selection of his photographs was exhibited at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in the Earth Charter tent, accompanying the exhibition "Seeds of Change" jointly created by the SGI and the Earth Charter International.

Ikeda described photography as a spiritual struggle, a challenge of capturing the eternal in the moment. He wrote, "I would be very happy if I am able to share, to

some small extent, my joy at communing with nature, the 'mirror of the heart.' In this hectic age, it is important for us to stop from time to time, take a deep breath, and look closely at ourselves and the world around us." His wish in presenting his photographs, he stated, was that they might offer viewers a sense of hope and confidence.

Buddhist philosopher and promoter of peace through dialogue, Ikeda was a long-term supporter of the Earth Charter, frequently referencing it in his annual peace proposals. He also made contributions during the drafting process.

Joan Anderson

Senior coordinator, Peace and Global Issues of the SGI



Photo Credit: Daisaku Ikeda



Photo Credit: Seikyo Shimbun

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Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's Geographic Pedagogy and Dialogue for Sustainability



Andrew Gebert

Andrew Gebert is affiliated with the Ikeda Research Institute for Soka Education at Soka University, where he teaches courses on Soka Education and translation studies. He is also adjunct faculty in the Value-Creating Education for Global Citizenship program at DePaul University in the United States. His research focuses on the work of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi in the context of modern Japanese intellectual history.



The Earth Charter notes both the importance and difficulty of the forms of dialogue needed in our quest for a sustainable future. Locating ourselves in the larger currents of history, it is valuable to survey the past for precedents and resources. Here, I focus on the human geography of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), educator, pedagogical theorist and Buddhist critic of the Japanese war effort. In particular, I consider the idea of multifaceted interest, an idea that originated in the philosophy of Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), and which exerted a significant influence on educational thinking in modernizing societies worldwide in the latter half of the nineteenth century, including Japan. This approach, together with Makiguchi's focus on the realities of the local community as a vital resource for learning, can provide a framework for more productive interaction and dialogue among stakeholders—including in cases where there is a perception of conflicting interests—opening paths to more deeply rooted understanding and collaboration.

Makiguchi's Engagement with Geography

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi is known as the progenitor of value-creating (soka) education, focused on the lifelong happiness of learners. The reform movement he initiated among educators following his conversion to Nichiren Buddhism in 1928 was violently suppressed by Japan's wartime regime, leading to his death in prison in 1944. Reconstituted as

the Soka Gakkai in the postwar years and taking on an international scope as the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) from 1975, the movement has, particularly under the leadership of Daisaku Ikeda (1928–2023) engaged in activities toward a global culture of peace (Ikeda, 2000). The SGI has collaborated with the Earth Charter International on a range of undertakings and projects since 1998.


Makiguchi wrote on a wide range of subjects, including community studies, educational philosophy and practice, and the real-world significance of Buddhist thought.

Geography was one of Makiguchi's earliest interests; his first major work, *The Geography of Human Life* (Jinsei chirigaku), was published in October 1903, when he was thirty-two and, of contextual significance, just months before the outbreak of the Russo–Japanese War at a time of heightened nationalistic emotions.

The book earned Makiguchi recognition and would later help him gain entry to some of the more elite circles of Tokyo intellectual life despite his lack of a full



Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda



“The Earth Charter notes both the importance and difficulty of the forms of dialogue needed in our quest for a sustainable future. Locating ourselves in the larger currents of history, it is valuable to survey the past for precedents and resources.”

Andrew Gerbert



university degree [he studied at the Hokkaido Normal School, a training college for elementary school teachers].

The forms of geographic study dominant in the nineteenth century often had a narrow economic or political focus. Much of the work in this field was implicitly or explicitly developed in the service of Euro-American colonial-imperial goals.

Central to this was the idea of geographic determinism, the view that certain geographic features—climatic conditions or the complexity of coastlines relative to the landmass of a region, for example—either favored or hampered the development of “civilization”—a concept assumed to be fully self-evident and embodied in the cultural practices and standards of Euro-America.

Japan at the end of the nineteenth century was an emerging power that remained subject to the threat of colonial domination. Preventing this and preserving Japan’s independence was the overriding objective of the political establishment. This national goal was reflected in the

work of Japanese geographers [Takeuchi, 1984], some of whom applied the logic of geographic determinism to assert Japan was destined to play a unique world historical role [Uchimura, 1894, pp. 183–209], or who worked to cast Japan as the center at least of Asia, if not the world [Kano, 1999, pp. 118–121].

Makiguchi was principally concerned with enabling people to develop a clear understanding of the complex and evolving relationships between themselves and their surroundings. He believed that such an understanding, fostered from early in life, would empower people to make those relationships more productive of positive value for themselves and their community, which he defined on the three dimensions of the local, the national, and the global. This anticipates the Earth Charter’s call “to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked” [Preamble].

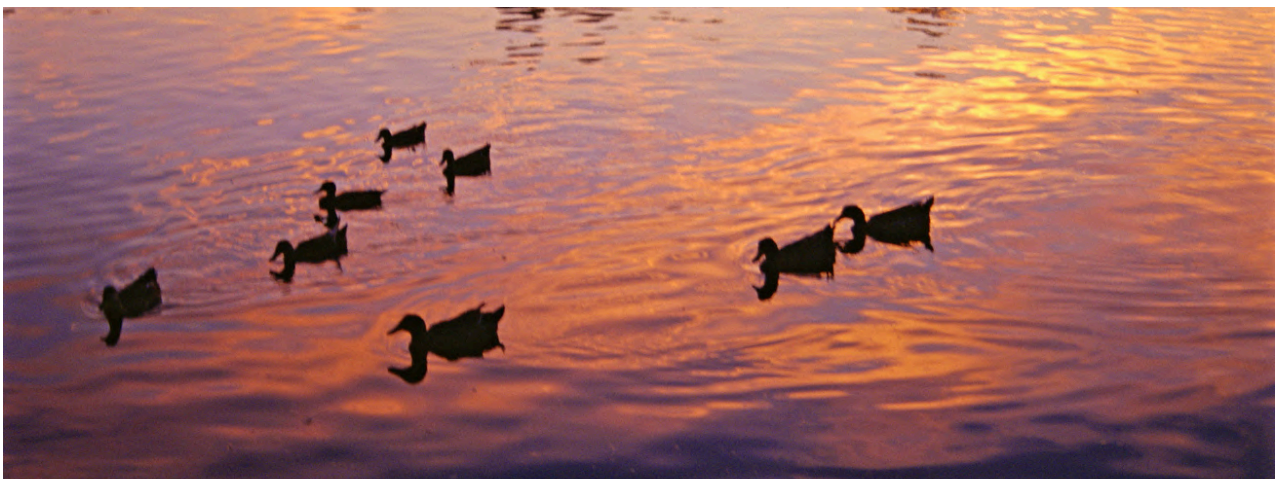


Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda



This approach led Makiguchi to break with the dominant modes of geographic practice in a number of ways.

Because each individual- every community -stands in a unique relationship to the environment, the understanding he sought to foster could only be realized by centering humans as agents of knowing, learning, and acting. The “map” of the world he developed might thus be understood as one without a center, or with an unlimited number of centers, each being the point from which people experience and interact with the world.

Makiguchi felt that our immediate surroundings, carefully observed and understood, provided the basis for a far more extensive understanding:

Although the physical setting which I attempt to discuss in this book may be limited, when we observe the local community in a careful and orderly manner, we discover that it contains an infinite array of materials for study and learning. ... If we first clearly understand the geography of the local community, the phenomena of a single town or village, we may easily grasp the geography of all nations. Thus the proper order for research in geography is first to scrupulously observe the local community and from this to derive and determine the principles to be applied to geographic phenomena more generally. [Makiguchi, 1981–1996, Vol. 1, p. X]

Countering the dominant strains of geographic determinism, Makiguchi was an early proponent of what Saito [1983] identified as “environmental possibilism” [pp. 407–408]. For Makiguchi, every environment presents its inhabitants with a complex of challenges and opportunities; the authentic goal of education is to enable people to meet these challenges and realize the opportunities in their surroundings. This view resonates with the stress on human agency and empowerment through learning that permeates the Earth Charter.

Makiguchi offered the physical circumstances of Japan as an example. That Japan, as an archipelago, was surrounded on all sides by oceans, was an undeniable and foundational reality, one shared by other island nations. How the surrounding oceans would function in the lives of people, however, was not fixed, but would be determined by a dynamic relationality.

Put simply, for the inhabitants of islands oceans could function in two broadly different ways. On the one hand they could serve as isolating barriers. Makiguchi offers the view that for much of the life of our species, fear had kept humans from venturing out onto the oceans’ expanses. With the development of knowledge in the form of navigational technologies, as well as the courage and vision to travel to unknown regions, these same oceans were transformed into thoroughfares connecting the world’s peoples. [Makiguchi also expressed a clear



awareness of the dangers these connections brought, in particular to societies that had previously enjoyed a protective isolation.)

Makiguchi called on Japan to transition from being an “island nation,” isolated from the rest of the world, to a “maritime nation,” connected to the rest of the world through commerce and peaceful exchange [1981–1996, Vol. 1, pp. 225–230].

In the final section of the book, Makiguchi envisaged a transformation in the nature of competition, from a binary struggle for survival modeled on the era’s understanding of biological evolution, to competition that embodies a mutual striving for excellence. In this way, he sought to look beyond the “dominate or be dominated” paradigm that characterized Japan’s political culture and that would justify an increasingly aggressive stance toward the country’s neighbors following victory in the 1904–05 Russo-Japanese War.



Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda

Multifaceted Interest

In considering how we learn from and act in our local community, Makiguchi urged awareness of the multidimensional nature of our interactions with our surroundings.

In the book’s concluding chapter, Makiguchi states that “The multifaceted interest that is the most essential objective of instruction can be cultivated through the use of easily overlooked teaching materials in the immediate surroundings...” [1981–1996, Vol. 2, p. 432] recapitulating the theme of our immediate surroundings as an essential site of learning.

Here he was citing the idea of “multifaceted interest” [vielseitige Interesse] propounded by the German philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart [1776–1841], often referred to as the father of psychological pedagogy. Developed by his successors, Herbart’s ideas were widely influential in Japan in the 1890s; they were among the works Makiguchi studied and read in translation during his years at the Hokkaido Normal School.

Interpreters of Herbart typically broke interest into a total of six categories. In a pedagogical text that Makiguchi cites, the author listed these categories with the following English translations: “Empirical interest, speculative interest, aesthetical interest, sympathetical interest, social interest, religious interest” [Yuhara 1892, p. 8].



Makiguchi illustrated the idea of empirical interest with the examples of a child playing in a rural landscape, or an ordinary citizen finding refreshment from the stresses of daily life there. This level of interest requires little more than that we experience and are aware of our surroundings. He illustrated utilitarian interaction with the examples of a farmer concerned about the coming harvest, a businessperson whose moods swing in anticipation of market fluctuations for the product of that harvest, and a military officer considering the tactical implications of a landscape. A geologist and a naturalist are enlisted to illustrate speculative [scientific] interaction; a poet's and painter's response to the beauty of the landscape demonstrates aesthetic interaction. Then Makiguchi describes a traveler who had been long separated from his native place and greets its mountains and rivers "with the intimacy of an old friend" and, further, cites "a person concerned for the welfare of the world, conscious of and sympathetic with society, who may feel a sense of gratitude [toward the land] for the great benefits provided to the life of the local inhabitants" [1981–1996, Vol. 1, p. 30] as examples of sympathetic and public interactions, respectively. Finally, a person of religious faith is described as reverently discovering the limitless power of nature in the grasses and trees of the landscape.

In addition to different human actors engaging with their surroundings in different ways, Makiguchi noted that the same person will experience different

kinds of interest and engagement with their environment at different times.

While this listing of interests may not be exhaustive or directly applicable to our present-day situation, the diversity of relations it posits between humans and their [natural and cultural/human] surroundings offers an important practical tool in support of effective dialogue.

Interaction with the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future: The 2030 Agenda, through its call for climate action [SDG 13], highlights the importance of mitigating and adapting to climate change, while the Pact for the Future emphasizes a just energy transition. The Earth Charter brings an ethical dimension to these efforts, emphasizing that any technological or policy solution must align with natural systems, preserving ecological balance over the long term. It serves as a constant reminder that climate justice and sustainability are deeply interwoven.



Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda



Educational and Practical Implications of Multifaceted Engagement

The Earth Charter eloquently spells out the importance of dialogue:

“We must deepen and expand the global dialogue that generated the Earth Charter, for we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom.

Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonize diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organization, and community has a vital role to play. The arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments are all called to offer creative leadership. The partnership of government, civil society, and business is essential for effective governance.” [The Earth Charter, The Way Forward]

I believe that Makiguchi’s view of humans as intrinsically embedded in their surroundings and motivated by an evolving complex of interests can help facilitate the many difficult discussions and decisions that constitute the path to a sustainable global society.

Forward-oriented dialogue will indeed require involving “the arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media,

businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments,” but those entities will be represented by actual human individuals. The qualities those people embody and the kinds of dialogic practice they bring to the exchange are crucial.

Following Herbart, Makiguchi felt that encouraging multifaceted interest early in life contributed to the development of character.

While much work has been done developing best practices around dialogue across differences, these must be supported by something at once deeper and more granular if they are to avoid becoming formulaic or mere technique. Key here are questions of self-definition and worldview, how we understand ourselves in relation to the world and its manifold others—what has classically been referred to as character.

If individuals enter into dialogic engagements with a heightened awareness of the diversity and variability of their own interests and concerns, the possibilities for outcomes that leave no one behind can be meaningfully enhanced. One aspect of this includes the humility that comes from recognizing the conflicts and contradictions in our own stances and reactions over time. [As an avid urban walker and cyclist I am both humbled and mortified to find myself, in a taxi under time pressure, viewing my comrade pedestrians and cyclists as obstacles.]



An approach based on the recognition of our multifaceted interests could help the holders of critically important specialized knowledge step out of those confines and engage with other stakeholders from a less narrowly focused standpoint. It could open otherwise siloed bodies of knowledge into a broader conversation as people share not only their expertise, but also their interests and commitments as parents, as children, as members of spatial or other communities; who take meals with family and love sunsets.

It could likewise help avoid the stalemates and entrenchments that often characterize clashes among single-issue constituencies, including the resentments that can linger even, or perhaps especially, after a mutually unsatisfactory “compromise” among such constituencies has been reached.

Makiguchi’s embrace of the fostering of multifaceted interest as a learning goal can be understood as an active embrace of diversity, including the inner diversity of experience among humans and over time. Such diversity functions in ways analogous to the complexity and diversity of biospheres, enhancing the adaptability, robustness, and, ultimately, sustainability of our quest for an equitable and inclusive future.

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Photo credit: Samira Sarkardei

A Journey of Surrender, Purpose, and Interconnectedness: How My Travels and Faith Led Me to the Earth Charter



Samira Sarkardei

Samira Sarkardei is an Environmental Engineering researcher and Earth Charter Educator specializing in sustainable development. With a PhD in Food Safety, she is pursuing a MASc in Civil Engineering at the University of Victoria, focusing on WASH in low-resource context. An experienced international educator, she has worked across Tanzania, Brazil, the Caribbean, and the UK. Samira contributed to the Earth Charter's Education for Sustainable Development program and the RUSH initiative, promoting climate resilience and social justice. Her work bridges science and community, emphasizing human rights, access to clean water, and integrating Earth Charter principles into research and teaching.



Over the last two decades, I have traveled to 120 countries, driven by a search for purpose, identity, and a sense of belonging. These travels were not merely geographical but spiritual, intellectual, and emotional explorations of who I am, where I come from, and what I am called to do in this world. My journey has taken me through the vibrant landscapes, the complexity, and the bustling cities of the seven continents, each experience adding a layer of meaning to my evolving self. Yet, it was in South Africa, in 2023, that I experienced a moment of profound spiritual surrender—one that would forever change my path and align me with the principles of the Earth Charter.

For years, I resisted fully accepting my faith. I was deeply connected to my work, whether it was teaching science to high school students, research and development in academia, or working with the United Nations to advance sustainable development. But spiritually, something was missing. Despite my achievements, I felt an internal struggle, a sense of incompleteness. I was searching for a greater purpose—one that transcended my professional life and allowed me to feel truly connected to the world and the people around me.

This struggle began to shift during my time in Tanzania, where I was engaged in education for sustainable development (ESD). I had the privilege of working alongside local communities, which instilled in me a deep respect for collective wisdom and the importance of nurturing

our natural and spiritual environments. It was here, in the vibrant landscapes of East Africa, that I began to reflect more deeply on the interconnectedness of life, drawing inspiration from the rich cultural and ecological tapestry around me. I realized that my work was more than just imparting knowledge—it was about co-creating solutions, engaging with communities, and honoring the wisdom and values they brought to the table. My role as a researcher and educator was evolving, and I began to see the need for a more profound connection between knowledge, action, and spirituality.

However, it wasn't until I traveled to South Africa that I fully surrendered to this calling. In that land, with its deep spiritual history and struggles for reconciliation, I encountered a sense of stillness and truth that I had never experienced before. I could no longer run from the relationship God was calling me to. I experienced divine peace, a peace that only comes from surrendering to God's plan and trusting in His wisdom. It was here that I finally understood that my purpose and identity could only be found in the conformation of my heart to divine wisdom. This surrender was not a result of religious doctrine, but rather a deep, personal relationship with God and the teachings of His Gospel. I embraced the idea that my faith was not separate from my work in sustainability, education, and public health but rather an integral part of it.

During this period, I participated in the Earth Charter's International Online



Certificate Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. It was here that the teachings of the Earth Charter and my own faith converged in allowing me to experience a deep personal reflection and transformation that fundamentally reshaped my worldview, particularly around interconnectedness, stewardship, and the relationship between humanity and the Earth. I began to see my work through a new lens, understanding that sustainable development was not just about the physical and economic aspects of life but about fostering a spiritual and emotional connection with the Earth and with one another. This realization had a profound impact on my current research in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) systems.

The Earth Charter came to me at a pivotal time, offering a framework highlighting ecological wisdom, social justice, and the importance of living in harmony with all life forms that not only aligned with my personal values but also provided the global, interconnected perspective I had

been searching for. The Earth Charter teaches us that we are part of a larger community of life, one that demands our care, respect, and understanding. The Charter's four pillars—Respect and Care for the Community of Life, Ecological Integrity, Social and Economic Justice, and Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace [Earth Charter Commission, 2000]—resonated deeply with my faith which emphasize the stewardship of God's creation and the sacred connections between all beings. These pillars mirrored the spiritual transformation I had undergone, which as centered on interconnectedness, compassion, and love for all creation. My faith calls me to love and care for the Earth as an extension of my relationship with the Divine, and the Earth Charter has provided a practical framework for living out this spiritual calling.

One of the most profound insights I gained during this period was the importance of change—both personal and collective. The Earth Charter's preamble states, "When basic needs have been met, human



Photo credit: Samira Sarkardei



“We need to use our creative spirit to align our designs with Nature's. Everybody has a piece of this puzzle. Nature has strategies for critical issues like: packaging, atmospheric balance, transportation, and energy management. By using similar materials, recipes and structures we can have high performance without high toxicity and waste.”

Anne-Marie Daniel from NatuR&D and RUSH

Photo credit: Samira Sarkardei

development is primarily about being more, not having more.” (Earth Charter Commission, 2000). This resonated deeply with me as I reflected on the spiritual teachings that focus on transformation from within. Change, I realized, is not just a conscious decision but a deep-seated process that begins in the heart and soul. It is about aligning our values, emotions, and unconscious thought processes with the actions we take in the world. As I delved into Earth Charter’s teachings, I was reminded of my spiritual walk with God and how it teaches me the power of reconciliation, peace, and love. These same values are at the core of the Earth Charter’s mission to foster democracy, nonviolence, and peace. The wisdom I gained during my time in Tanzania and South Africa, both from the people and the landscapes, reinforced my belief that to truly thrive as a global community, we must embrace our differences and seek common ground rooted in love and respect for all forms of life.

My current research focuses on bio-sand filtration as an eco-friendly solution for providing clean drinking water to rural and

underserved communities. Through this work, I’ve witnessed the deep connection between human well-being and the health of the Earth. When we harm the Earth, we harm ourselves; when we care for it, we strengthen our communities. This understanding, supported by the Earth Charter’s emphasis on ecological integrity, aligns with both my scientific and spiritual beliefs. My involvement in initiatives like the Resilient Urban Systems & Habitat (RUSH) has been a direct extension of these values. RUSH embodies the Earth Charter’s four pillars. Through community engagement in research, storytelling, and participatory action, RUSH has become a platform for fostering climate resilience, healing ecosystems, and building stronger, more connected communities (Whatstherush, 2024). The initiative’s focus on social, environmental, and economic dimensions aligns with the Earth Charter’s holistic approach to sustainability and equity.

One of the highlights of my work with the RUSH initiative was designing and leading community mapping and storytelling workshops with UVic’s Geography



department. These workshops, involving participants from high school to university, focused on identifying climate challenges and solutions through creative expression. Participants shared stories, co-created knowledge, and explored climate resilience by drawing, painting, writing, and using photos or music. This process, rooted in the Earth Charter's teachings, emphasized interconnectedness and fostered community bonds through artistic activities, aligning with the Charter's approach to collective action and resilience.

On the last days of my career as a high school teacher, I shared ideas during a professional development workshop that I developed while participating in Earth Charter's Online Programme. I focused on two key principles: "Education for Sustainability" and "Culture for Peace over Culture for Violence," both supporting the core value of "Respect Life for All," central to Earth Charter's approach to Education for Sustainable Development. These ideas are grounded in the Earth Charter's four pillars: Respect and Care for the Community of Life, Ecological Integrity, Social and Economic Justice, and Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace. Together, these pillars reflect the values needed to promote self-reflection, dialogue, participatory processes, and peaceful coexistence in a new biological, social, and environmental realm on Earth. This exercise expanded my thinking using system thinking and provided an opportunity for me to discuss Earth Charter's "Vision of a sustainable way of life" as discussed in the "Way Forward of the Earth Charter" [Earth Charter Commission, 2000].

Even though all cultures know that there are certain values and ethics which are universally shared by humans, the approach to recognize these values as shared human rights and/or duties and/or global consciousness are culturally different worldwide, influenced significantly by religion, philosophy, civilization and tradition. This could be the contributing factor to the disconnect we feel between our lives and other beings in our environment. Interpretations by different nations over the years have contributed to our present fragmented worldwide views, fuelled by political agendas and gains, separating Economy, Nature and Society dimensions. However, in order to sustain a healthy Earth, these three dimensions must be viewed as interdependent rather than fragmented. Societies can differ from each other based on their opinions, cultures and interests, but together in a structured way make up a community. The success of a community and the success of the economy of a community depends on the success of the societies together with sustainable use of nature and resources. What measures the success of these dimensions are the values

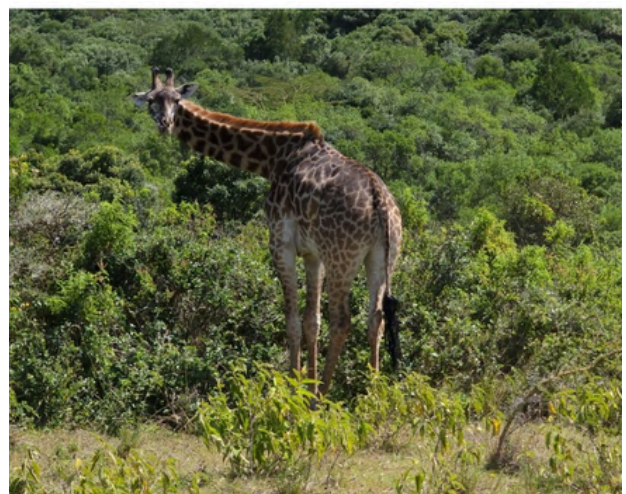


Photo credit: Samira Sarkardei



Photo credit: Samira Sarkardei

and ethics of each community. Earth Charters adds ethics and spirituality as the fourth dimension to the global movement contributing to a planetary consciousness of Humans as the Global Citizens with universal but differentiated responsibilities to care, respect and be responsible for the Earth Community.

My experiences in Tanzania and South Africa, along with my connection to the Earth Charter, has deeply influenced my approach to both life and work. The Earth Charter's principles guide me in honoring the sacred interconnectedness of all beings and offer a path to healing, not only for the Earth but for our collective soul. Reflecting on my travels, I see how my search for purpose has led me to this moment, where my faith and work are intertwined, supported by the Earth Charter's framework for living a life that honors both the Earth and my spiritual path. My journey has been about embracing the interconnectedness of life, wisdom from communities, and the call of the Earth. Committed to ecological integrity, social justice, and peace, the

Earth Charter has been a guiding light, reminding me that we are all part of a greater whole. My faith, work, and the Earth Charter have taught me that true belonging is found in connection, and together, we can create a just, sustainable, and peaceful future.

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What's the RUSH?

**“My faith, work, and the
Earth Charter have taught me
that true belonging is found
in connection, and together,
we can create a just,
sustainable, and peaceful
future.”**

Samira Sarkardei



Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda

Paving the Path to a Sustainable Tomorrow: Insights from the Summit of the Future



Deeksha Aggarwal

Deeksha Aggarwal is a lawyer and advocate for social justice, environmental sustainability, and animal protection, with notable courtroom and humanitarian experience. With a Master's in International Law and Human Rights, she has argued cases of national significance in India's Supreme Court, including the banning of glyphosate, prohibiting female fetal abortions, women's child custody rights and protecting animals through the banning of Jallikattu and circus captivity. Deeksha combines expertise with a commitment to ethical impact, striving for a more just and sustainable world.



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The Summit of the Future 2024, held on 22nd and 23rd September as a part of the United Nations General Assembly, was a landmark moment for international governance, diplomacy and law, reflecting the global community's commitment to addressing 21st-century challenges. Central to this effort was the adoption of the Pact for the Future, a broad agreement focused on reforming multilateral institutions and accelerating global action on issues such as climate change, digital governance, peace and security. As per the press release, "This Pact is the culmination of an inclusive, years-long process to adapt international cooperation to the realities of today and the challenges of tomorrow." [Press Release, General Assembly – GA/12641, 2 October 2024]

The Summit of the Future is being considered 'ground-breaking' as "the agreement of the Pact is a strong statement of countries' commitment to the United Nations, the international system and international law." It is believed that the Pact would lay the foundations for a sustainable, just and peaceful global order – for all peoples and nations. [Press Release, General Assembly – GA/12641, 2 October 2024]

The Impact

The Pact is one of the most wide-ranging international agreements and has a couple of highlights such as focus on future generations, culture, sustainable futures, multilateralism and others. It has ripple effects such as 'establishment of a UN Special Envoy for Future Generations' which was announced at the Hamburg



Sustainability Conference on 7th October, 2024. The call for establishing a UN Special Envoy for Future Generations is reinforced by The Pact for the Future as it advocates for the creation of similar offices at the national level and reflects upon the growing international recognition of intergenerational equity. The Declaration on Future Generations, which was also adopted at the Summit, promotes forward thinking approach to global governance. It suggests the idea that current decisions must account for their impact on future populations.

The Pact has further recognized that culture is integral to economic, social and environmental development policies. The Pact supports linguistic and cultural diversity in the digital space, particularly in creating safe, secure, and trustworthy AI systems. This acknowledgment of culture aligns with UNESCO's 2021 Recommendation on AI Ethics, emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations in technological advancements.



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A key outcome of the summit is the adoption of the Global Digital Compact, which establishes a non-binding framework for digital and AI governance. It is the first comprehensive global framework for digital cooperation. The Compact includes an agreement on a roadmap for global AI governance, through the establishment of an AI Scientific Panel, global policy dialogue on AI and exploration of the establishment of a Global Fund for AI capacity building. While ambitious, this Compact raises critical legal questions regarding enforcement and compliance under international law. The absence of binding legal obligations, particularly in the area of data governance and cybersecurity, underscores the need for future treaties to secure international cooperation on these issues.

Introduction of measures to reduce global disparities in science, technology and innovation was agreed upon and commitment by leaders was given to use science in policy-making, to support developing countries in achieving the SDGs. The summit highlighted the importance of aligning future actions with existing frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]. In particular, the 2030 Agenda and the upcoming 2025 World Social Summit are expected to serve as key moments for reviewing progress by combining efforts, in an aligned manner.

Sustainable development was also discussed. The Pact for the Future reaffirms global commitments to climate action,



particularly through accelerated efforts to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. It emphasizes the need for climate justice, recognizing the disproportionate impact of climate change on developing countries, and advocates for greater financial support for climate adaptation and mitigation. However, from a legal perspective, these commitments remain voluntary, leaving significant questions about how to enforce them under international environmental law.

Youth, taking the center stage, expansion and strengthening of youth participation in global decision making was agreed upon, empowering the Youth for Sustainable Futures. There is no doubt increasingly more spaces are emerging for youth voices and representation at the decision-making table.

Member States representation

At the summit, member states demonstrated their commitment to empowering youth in the green transition. During the side event titled “Empowering Youth for Sustainable Futures,” various countries shared initiatives aimed at equipping young people with the skills and opportunities necessary for a sustainable future. India highlighted its Lifestyle for Environment [LiFE] initiative, which integrates green education into school curricula and promotes sustainable consumer choices. Leena Nandan, Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, emphasized the need for strong advocacy and education systems that embed sustainability at their core. Cuba showcased its Tarea Vida project, which

advances the circular economy and announced its commitment to join the Green Jobs for Youth Pact, focusing on creating green job opportunities for its youth. Armenia and Portugal underscored their commitment to educational reforms that equip young people with necessary green skills. Armenia is integrating green technologies into vocational training, while Portugal focuses on both technical and soft skills development for the green sector. Cyprus emphasized the importance of effective implementation mechanisms for national action plans and committed to conducting green skills assessments in various Asian countries to tailor solutions for green job integration. These initiatives highlight a collective drive among member states to support youth in navigating the green transition, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and opportunities needed to build a sustainable and inclusive future.

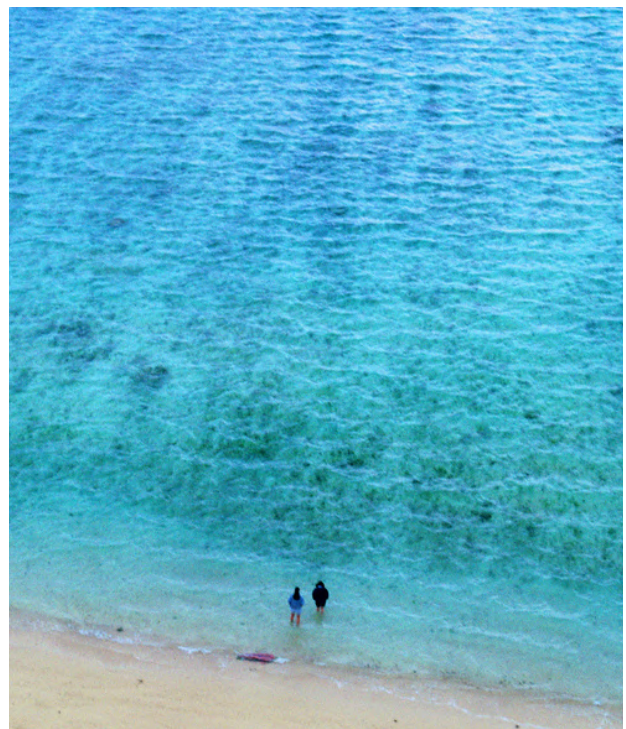


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Challenges

The Pact for the Future addresses core diplomatic and legal challenges, particularly the tension between state sovereignty and global governance. The call for multilateral reforms, particularly within the UN Security Council, aims to address the underrepresentation of regions like Africa, Latin America, and Asia-Pacific. The summit's outcomes reflect the need for legal reform within global institutions to ensure that governance frameworks are fit for modern challenges. Each of these changes require courage, the good will and commitment of strong leadership to effectively move ahead these decisions. At the same time, diplomatic tensions were evident, particularly with Russia and Argentina refusing to endorse the Pact. Russia's opposition centered on sovereignty concerns related to digital governance, demonstrating the complexities of navigating global governance within a realist international relations framework. Argentina rejected the Pact for the Future over concerns about national sovereignty and economic freedom.

Digital sovereignty was another major concern. It is still a complex issue on how to balance global cooperation with national interests. Frustration at the slow pace of institutional reforms was expressed by countries from Africa and Latin America.

However, the biggest challenge is the implementation of the commitments made in The Pact. Since most the provisions are non-binding, ensuring compliance is going to be difficult, keeping in mind the diverging national interests and financial gaps of different countries. Especially with the ongoing geopolitical tensions, multilateral cooperation could be strained heavily.

There are several issues which still need a lot of discourse, clarifications and commitment. One such is 'green transition and youth' – engagement of youth to ensure national policies for climate change. This needs to be discussed with economic and resource availability in



mind. Education and skill development play an important role. This could especially backfire if the youth is starving, unemployed, with no collective vision for the future.

Some aspects of The Pact require a significant amount of reflection. Who is the voice of the future generations? Among the numerous voices that are now being heard which are bifurcated, come from different contexts, which have experienced life differently, still have a distinction made amongst them, the parity of global north and global south can still be seen in a varied manner. This also raises a question of who is selecting these voices? How are we deciding that a particular young being is capable of sitting at the table with the decision makers, with a forward looking and non-biased voice? While this declaration is rightfully acknowledging that we must be learning from our past achievements and failures and their consequences, to ensure a more sustainable, just and equitable world for present and future generations and how the past, present and future are interconnected, it fails to recognize the gap

between the present developed-developing-underdeveloped countries and the future developed-developing-underdeveloped countries. It also fails to take into account that the values, traditions and education which is being transmitted to the future generations, is going to shape the future developed-developing-underdeveloped countries. We further need to consider who is fighting for whose rights. It should be a point of notice that there was under representation of youth coming from the sinking islands at the Summit. It goes to show that those who are the most affected by climate change, are more often than not, not able to be in the forefront of the conversation about it.

Moreover, while youth is committed and have enough mechanisms to fight for climate justice in regions like Europe and America, there is no access to strong regional legal mechanisms, similar to European Court of Human Rights or Inter-American Court of Human Rights in Asia where youth can represent themselves. So, do they continue to be under-represented?

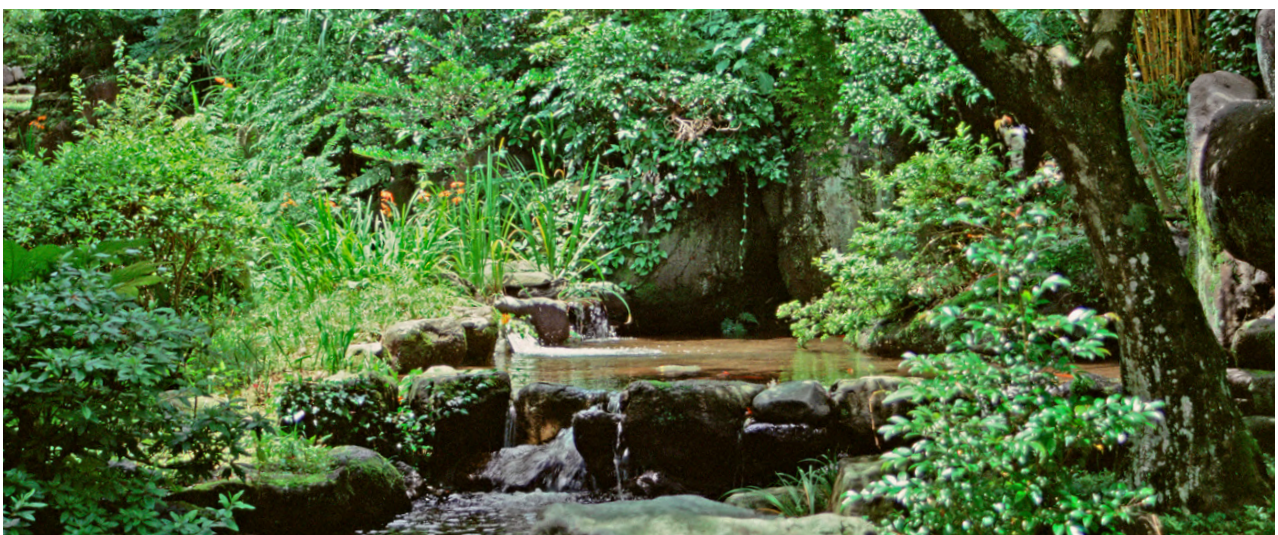


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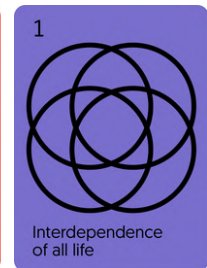
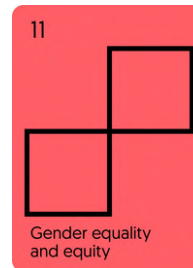


Earth Charter a path forward

The Earth Charter can significantly contribute to the success of the Summit of the Future by providing a strong ethical framework centered on sustainability, social justice, and intergenerational responsibility. Its principles emphasize ecological integrity, equitable distribution of resources, and respect for human rights—all critical to achieving the goals of the summit. By advocating for environmental stewardship, participatory democracy, and cultural diversity, the Earth Charter can guide member states in implementing the Pact for the Future with a focus on long-term sustainability and ethical governance.

The Earth Charter can inspire collective action at both national and international levels to improve policy frameworks by emphasizing shared ethical principles and global cooperation. At the national level, the Charter encourages integrating sustainability into laws, education, and governance systems. Internationally, it pushes for binding global agreements, ensuring that countries work together to address climate change, resource equity, and intergenerational responsibility.

Countries can use the Earth Charter's principles to shape domestic policy by embedding sustainability and social justice into education systems, legal structures, and economic policies. This ensures that laws are designed with both environmental protection and equitable resource distribution in mind. By aligning national laws with the Charter as a reference, countries can pursue a holistic approach to sustainable development.



On the global stage, the Charter encourages states to collaborate on binding international agreements that address climate action, biodiversity protection, and cultural diversity. It promotes international dialogue and cooperation, ensuring that policies crafted at the UN or other global forums prioritize collective well-being over individual state interests. The Charter's emphasis on an integrated approach and shared responsibility could foster stronger commitments toward global environmental agreements and multilateral reforms, such as those needed for climate financing and digital governance.

Conclusion

The 2024 Summit of the Future laid the groundwork for significant global reforms in areas such as governance, digital cooperation, and environmental sustainability. The adoption of the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact, and the Declaration on Future Generations signals the international community's commitment to addressing pressing global challenges. However, these frameworks remain largely aspirational without binding mechanisms for compliance, even though the press release states “[The Pact]... makes clear commitments and achieves concrete deliverables on a range of issues,...”. The summit's success will ultimately depend on



strong political will, necessary legal reforms, and the development of robust enforcement systems to ensure meaningful implementation.

Incorporating the principles of the Earth Charter in new efforts of global and national governance frameworks offers clarity on the path forward and the underlying principles that these pivotal changes require, by emphasizing the importance of collective action, sustainability, and social justice. By aligning national and international policies with the Charter's ethical framework, member states can foster long-term governance that addresses the needs of both present and future generations. This holistic approach can catalyze the creation of more inclusive, just, and sustainable global systems, ensuring that the ideals of the summit are realized in practice.

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Weaving a Sustainable Future: The Convergence of the Earth Charter, the 2030 Agenda, and the Pact for the Future



Mateo Alfredo Castillo Ceja

Mateo Alfredo Castillo Ceja holds a degree in Pharmaceutical Biochemistry from the Michoacan University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo and a Ph.D. in Sustainable Development Sciences. A distinguished leader in environmental public policy and citizen participation for sustainability, he founded the Center for Environmental Studies A.C. and the State Council of Ecology of Michoacán, Mexico (COEECO), where he served as president. He is a member of the Council of the Earth Charter and has received awards such as the National Award for Ecological Merit and the World Earth Charter "Máximo T. Kalaw Jr." award. Currently, he is an academic at the Michoacan University of San Nicolás de Hidalgo, where he coordinates sustainability projects and the Special Program for "Pueblos Mágicos" towards Sustainability.



Humanity stands at a critical juncture where the decisions we make will shape the path for future generations. We face unprecedented global challenges: climate change, environmental degradation, social and economic inequalities, and the increasing erosion of human rights. In response to this reality, three key documents—the Earth Charter, the 2030 Agenda, and the recent Pact for the Future—have emerged as essential guides for building a more just, equitable, sustainable, and peaceful world.

Though each of these normative frameworks was conceived in different historical contexts, they share a common objective: to promote harmonious lifestyles within a sustainable development paradigm that balances the needs of people, the planet, and prosperity, ensuring justice and equity. The Earth Charter, with its profound ethical, systemic, and holistic approach, continues to resonate within the proposals of the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future. As these global agendas unfold to address contemporary challenges, the Earth Charter provides a broad, systemic perspective and an ethical framework that strengthens and guides the implementation of policies and actions towards a sustainable future.

The Earth Charter: The Ethical Pillar of Sustainability

Launched in 2000, the Earth Charter emerged as a response to the civilizational crisis characterized by escalating environmental degradation, economic


uncertainty, and social injustices of the 20th century. Through its four pillars—Respect and Care for the Community of Life, Ecological Integrity, Social and Economic Justice, and Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace—it establishes an ethical framework for addressing the most pressing issues of our time.

The document focuses not only on environmental preservation but also places significant emphasis on social justice, intergenerational equity, and human dignity, recognizing that humans and nature are deeply interconnected and interdependent. Unlike other guides that center on specific objectives, the Earth Charter calls for a cultural and ethical paradigm shift, inviting humanity to rethink its priorities and act with shared responsibility through a holistic and systemic approach.

This framework remains relevant today, as both the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future incorporate many of these principles into their own commitments.

The 2030 Agenda: Translating Principles into Global Goals

In 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, marking a global milestone in the commitment to inclusive and sustainable development. With its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 2030 Agenda sets out a series of concrete and measurable targets addressing issues ranging from poverty and hunger eradication to climate action



“The Earth Charter calls for a cultural and ethical paradigm shift, inviting humanity to rethink its priorities and act with shared responsibility through a holistic and systemic approach.”

Mateo Castillo Ceja



and biodiversity protection.

The SDGs not only aim to solve environmental or social issues in isolation but promote a holistic vision of development that encompasses the interconnectedness between planetary health, human well-being, and economic prosperity. This systemic approach is clearly influenced by the concept of the community of life championed by the Earth Charter, which emphasizes the interdependence between humans and the natural world. Likewise, the SDGs reflect several principles outlined in the Earth Charter.

For instance, SDG 13: Climate Action underscores the urgency of addressing the climate crisis, aligning with the Earth Charter's second pillar, Ecological Integrity, which calls for the protection of natural systems and the restoration of damaged ecosystems. Similarly, SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities is intrinsically linked to the third pillar, Social and Economic Justice, which advocates for a fairer distribution of resources and opportunities, ensuring that

the most vulnerable communities are not left behind in the transition to sustainability.

Additionally, the 2030 Agenda promotes inclusive and participatory governance, reflected in SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. This goal emphasizes the importance of transparency, accountability, and citizen participation—principles that are also fundamental to the Earth Charter. Sustainability cannot be achieved if decisions are not democratic, transparent, and grounded in respect for human rights, as the Earth Charter asserts in its call for democracy, nonviolence, and peace as pillars of sustainability, as marked in its fourth pillar.

The 2030 Agenda represents a global commitment to translate the ethical principles of the Earth Charter into concrete and measurable actions. However, as the Earth Charter itself warns, true change must extend beyond mere technical implementation. Cultural and ethical transformation (as well as a shift “in mindset and heart”) is essential for the SDGs to achieve lasting and profound



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impact. This is where the Pact for the Future comes into play as a necessary evolution that renews these commitments and projects them toward a horizon of climate justice and global solidarity.

The Pact for the Future: Accelerating Transformation Toward Justice and Sustainability

Adopted in 2024, the Pact for the Future responds urgently to the need to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and address emerging challenges, particularly in terms of climate justice and global equity. Unlike the 2030 Agenda, which establishes specific targets, the Pact for the Future places a stronger emphasis on intergenerational justice and the need to ensure that the benefits of sustainable development reach the most vulnerable communities.

This new pact revisits the principles of the Earth Charter, especially those demanding a balance between the rights of present and future generations. Intergenerational responsibility—a cornerstone of the Pact—is closely aligned with the Earth Charter, which asserts that today’s decisions should

not compromise the well-being of future generations. This principle is evident in the urgency to tackle climate change and protect ecosystems, ensuring future generations can enjoy a healthy and prosperous planet.

The Pact for the Future also reinforces a just energy transition, a central aspect of climate justice. Like the Earth Charter, the Pact acknowledges that climate solutions cannot be effectively implemented if they fail to address the social and economic inequalities that exacerbate climate change’s impacts. Here, social justice intertwines with environmental justice, reaffirming that any transition toward a green economy must be inclusive and equitable, ensuring that communities most affected by the climate crisis are the first to benefit from mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Additionally, the Pact for the Future strengthens the importance of inclusive and transparent governance, a foundation of both the Earth Charter and the 2030 Agenda. It recognizes that citizen participation is crucial to ensuring that

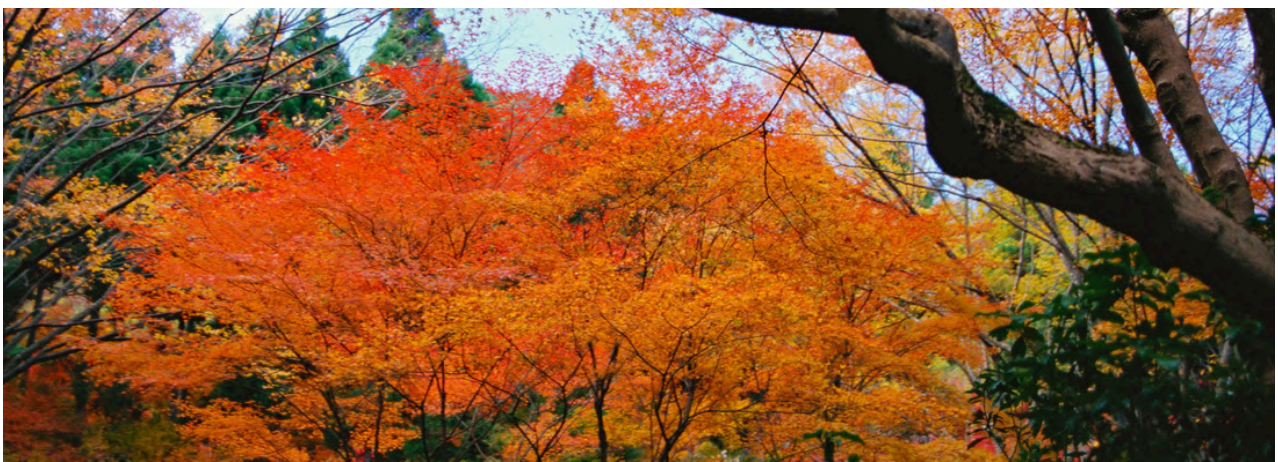


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solutions are legitimate and effective, particularly in addressing complex challenges such as the climate crisis and global inequalities.

The Relevance of the Earth Charter and Its Interaction with the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future

The Earth Charter has become a comprehensive ethical framework for global sustainability. Though more than two decades have passed since its creation, its principles remain essential and are reflected in the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future. As these international instruments progress in their objectives, the Earth Charter offers an ethical foundation that guides and weaves the path toward a more just, peaceful, and sustainable future.

Through the Earth Charter's four pillars, we can reflect on its relevance and its interaction with the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future.

1. Respect and Care for the Community of Life

Earth Charter: This principle promotes an ethic of respect for all living beings and care for the planet as our shared home. It drives the need to recognize the interdependence between humans and nature.

Interaction with the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future: The 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future reaffirm this

commitment through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water), which advocate for biodiversity and ecosystem protection. The Earth Charter retains its relevance by proposing a deeper vision that not only promotes conservation but also emphasizes an ethical relationship between humanity and the planet. This principle is fundamental in the Pact for the Future, which underscores the urgency of an economic transformation that respects ecological limits.

2. Ecological Integrity

Earth Charter: It advocates for the protection of ecological systems, the restoration of biodiversity, and the prevention of irreversible environmental damage. This principle establishes a vision of ecological balance as the foundation for sustainability.

Interaction with the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future: The 2030 Agenda, through its call for climate action (SDG 13), highlights the importance of mitigating and adapting to climate change, while the Pact for the Future emphasizes a just energy transition. The Earth Charter brings an ethical dimension to these efforts, emphasizing that any technological or policy solution must align with natural systems, preserving ecological balance over the long term. It serves as a constant reminder that climate justice and sustainability are deeply interwoven.



3. Social and Economic Justice

Earth Charter: This pillar advocates for the eradication of poverty, economic and social justice, and equal opportunities for all people, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable.

Interaction with the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future: both the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future recognize inequality as one of the greatest challenges in the modern world. The Earth Charter offers a comprehensive perspective that reinforces the need for an ethical approach to equitable resource distribution. In particular, climate justice—a priority of the Pact for the Future—is deeply rooted in this principle of the Earth Charter, calling for climate solutions that especially benefit those most affected by climate change, who bear the least responsibility for causing it.



4. Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace

Earth Charter: The fourth pillar promotes citizen participation, transparency, inclusive decision-making, and conflict resolution without violence as foundations for peace and social justice.

Interaction with the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future: The Escazú Agreement, along with SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), highlights the importance of transparent governance, citizen participation, and international cooperation. The Pact for the Future further strengthens global governance and accountability mechanisms, emphasizing that climate-related decisions must be inclusive and participatory. The Earth Charter remains relevant as it underscores that inclusive and participatory democracy is essential to addressing sustainability challenges. Without effective participation—especially from the most vulnerable communities—any progress toward sustainability will be incomplete.

The Earth Charter remains not only relevant but crucial in the current global context, providing a comprehensive ethical framework that goes beyond technocratic approaches. Its strength lies in its ability to inspire a change in how we understand our relationship with the planet and with one another.

In a world where the 2030 Agenda and the Pact for the Future call us to action to confront the climate crisis, poverty, and inequalities, the Earth Charter provides a



fundamental ethical vision that helps strengthen the path toward sustainability with a focus on respect, care, justice, tolerance, inclusion, peace, and ecological integrity.

In conclusion, the Earth Charter, the 2030 Agenda, and the Pact for the Future are key pieces in building a sustainable future, and their interaction is not only complementary but necessary for strengthening the journey toward sustainability. The interplay among them can be considered as essential ingredients for weaving a sustainable future. While the Earth Charter establishes the ethical principles and foundations, the 2030 Agenda transforms them into concrete goals, and the Pact for the Future accelerates the commitment toward climate and social justice, especially at a critical moment for humanity.

The convergence of these three instruments offers a comprehensive, broad, and ethical vision of sustainable development. They not only guide us toward technical solutions but also remind us that deep transformation requires a shift in our values and behaviors—a transformation of consciousness into substantive and effective actions. As we face global challenges, it is essential that these frameworks remain as guides and references, ensuring that our actions are not only effective but also morally sound, contributing to the common good and weaving a sustainable future for all.

At this critical moment for humanity, where environmental, social, cultural, political,

and economic challenges confront us with our own survival, the Earth Charter offers the moral compass necessary to guide our actions toward a more just, equitable, and sustainable future.

The 2030 Agenda sets the objectives, while the Pact for the Future drives their implementation. However, it is the Earth Charter that reminds us that only through ethical principles prioritizing life in all its forms can we achieve true sustainability.

In this sense, the Earth Charter not only remains relevant; it stands as an essential pillar that ensures that in our pursuit of development, we do not sacrifice the fundamental values of justice and respect for the planet. Sustainability is not a destination but a journey that we must undertake with ethics and conviction. On this journey, the Earth Charter will always be the guiding thread that weaves, with certainty, a prosperous future in balance with our environment and in harmony with future generations.

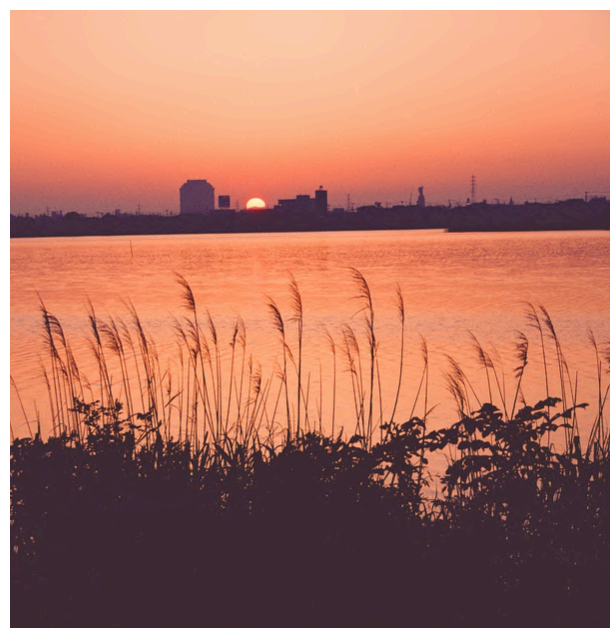


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Insights from my Internship & Bachelor's Thesis



Ann Cathrin Nachtwey

Ann Cathrin Nachtwey, student, ambassador, and co-founder of garden of futures, joined hands with Earth Charter International in 2019. Alumna from Global Project and Change Management (BBA) at Windesheim Honours College, Windesheim University; she independently integrated the Earth Charter principles and library into her learning experience. She thereby devoted her final semester with a remote Research and Project Management Internship to the global Earth Charter network; after which she decided to go back to her roots and started a traineeship in organic fruit farming. Endeavoured to translate theory into practice, by walking the talk of her own research; she recently embarked on a new academic journey.



In this article, I am outlining my research findings on the topic of Global Citizenship Education for a Sustainability Transition in Europe. It was over a period of five months, that I interned for the Earth Charter International based in San José, Costa Rica. Remotely from Paris, I contributed to the organisation's mission and vision with research and project management support. It was an honour to consider myself as an extended arm of the Earth Charter team and join hands with European affiliate and partner institutions. Hand in hand, it was a pleasure to help in the co-design of a new youth community, called We Grow Together (WGT). On behalf of the Earth Charter young leaders' network, I was happy to prolong my voluntary activities for the co-facilitation of the first edition of the WGT youth summer camp 2023.

Now, the purpose of my research was to explore the opportunities of global citizenship education for accelerating a sustainability transition in Europe. Associated with prosocial values, a shared global citizenship identity was anticipated to help local and regional communities to unite in diversity, while formulate collective crises response. A particular focus laid on interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergenerational approaches stimulating and contributing to inner and social-cultural transformations. Based on identified gaps in the present literature, the study followed the underexplored role, and therein potential, of introducing global citizenship content into local community contexts. Linked to the Earth Charter and ECI, research findings further led to the composition of an Advisory report, putting forward a range of recommendations.

The conceptual framework underlying the research design was inspired by the imagery of an open 'global citizenship' umbrella. With education as the entry point, the study explored the potential of interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergenerational inter/actions supporting inner and outer transformation processes. What is thereby commonly referred to as a transformation 'from the inside-out', suggests that individual change naturally translates to the social-cultural level; while, reversed, communal and regional changes are proven to decisively influence personal identities.

It was through a mixed method approach and qualitative data collection, in form of twelve semi-structured interviews, that the study aimed for quality over quantity findings. Moreover, multiple internal ECI team and community meetings, including the 2023 International Earth Day webinar, enlarged the scope of data. Likewise, secondary sources, essentially four transcribed and coded episodes of the Earth Charter podcast, deepened the analysis. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the thematically analysed research findings, along which I drew final conclusions.

1. Facing a relational climate emergency

Preliminary research points to the basic conception of facing a relational climate emergency. As technological innovations boost online engagement, studies reveal trends towards less eye-to-eye contact, which transforms human-to-human relationships, fundamentally. Field research concludes that the same is mirrored in



Photo credit: Earth Charter International

human-nature interconnectedness. Hence, what starts with the neglect or avoidance of in-person encounters in the real world, may continuously fuel a disconnection from socio-cultural and environmental contexts. Imprudence in the consumption of mass media, particularly social media, is here observed to further isolate information islands. Linked to a learning crisis, with ethics and aesthetics at its core; focus lays on relation/ships.


2. Following the roots of present-day crises

Looking at the root causes of present-day crises, complex systems surface. Besides studying and approaching them systematically, they inherently incorporate communication and explanation obstacles. Alongside finding and addressing leverage points, the way current realities are being understood and framed becomes essential, which explains an ever-louder call for new narratives, decolonising languages. It is for the same reason that the role of the public space for democratic citizens participation and co-creation is being re/discovered. Offering meeting

points for dialogue and information exchange sets incentives for civic discourse and debates, as well as relationship management. It appears to be not for the lack of scientific data and proof, but common spaces, that awareness and action can mature. The design and use of such spaces may thereby lay in the hands of global citizens, holding a shared response and decision-making ability.

3. Transforming from the inside-out and outside-in

As echoed throughout the research, transformation unfolds from the inside-out and outside-in. Unconsciously or knowingly, transformations are understood to mutually reinforce, and feed into each other. Different examples led here to the conclusion that transformative life experiences commonly mark the starting point of critical self-reflections. Research findings therefore align with Jack Mezirow's transformative learning theory, which highlights the 'Disorienting dilemma' as a catalyst for personal change. Triggered to re/assess personal values,



**“What starts with the
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Ann Cathryn Nachtwey



beliefs, and behaviours, the learner is set on a journey inward. It was emphasised that with patience, empathy and sympathy, as well as persistence; introspection involves the whole human being. Welcoming a new generation of strategic leaders, those who find themselves ahead, embodying their journey, may empower transformations to the large-scale.

4. Fostering conscious minds and altruistic behaviours

What starts with the awakening to human-nature interconnectedness, may spark wonder and awe for one Earth community. Several sources highlight the skills of systems and futures thinking as central qualities for fostering conscious minds, respecting and sighting life interdependence. Arguably best facilitated through first-hand interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergenerational learning experiences, global citizenship content is proven to motivate altruistic behaviours. It is with care, and a sense of loyalty for one planet Earth, that personal and collective experiences shape the way we relate, communicate, and explain ourselves. Within the frame of this research, global citizenship education and identification was understood as an organic, lifelong learning process, taking place anywhere, anytime, involving everyone.

5. Learning by reconnecting and interacting with life

Research findings signal that informal and formal, as well as experiential and experimental, learning practices play an

important role in the internalisation of lessons. Learning was thereby framed as a collective and collaborative process, which suggests project-based teamwork as an interactive opportunity for re/connection. Special attention was here drawn to the relationship building among learners from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Both, offline, and online, storytelling alone was advocated as a transformative tool for shaping dominating narratives. Stories of immigrants, migrants, and nomads were mentioned as particularly powerful. Evoking questions on identity and relations, honest encounters stimulate inner growth, mutual respect and trust. Besides, welcoming first sight differences with emotional intelligence likely re/creates flows of knowledge and wisdom.

6. Empowering creative expressions from the heart

Next to highlighting the power of stories, research findings attribute a special role to the arts in identity development. Artistic expressions are here being recognised for their all-encompassing head, heart, and hands interplay. Creativity at the core, they invite to a release and translation of emotions, especially encouraged throughout childhood years. In relationship or attunement with oneself, the arts may also counteract to self-limiting beliefs of the mind. It is with regard and response to increasing mental health challenges, that a re/prioritisation of creative outlets and classes into school curricula is highly recommended. Furthermore, the study hints to the he/arts naturally blending interdisciplinary, intercultural, and



intergenerational elements. In addition to processing and expressing thoughts, feelings, and emotions; deep listening is understood as an essential precondition. It is within the same field of research, that symbols, imaginations and dreams are given special attention.

7. Reviving and rooting with local communities

Local communities are being re/membered for their important function of providing a trusted environment for transformative learning to take place. With the invitation to re/imagine common areas, a need for small-scale, inclusive, creative, and safe spaces echoes through. Moreover, interviewees talked about the forgotten resource of rooted togetherness, growing resistance and resilience for new climate realities. Social gatherings and community building processes were therefore being referred to as a possible solution, and response to feelings of belonging. Inclusive of disciplines, cultures, and generations, local communities can further facilitate a process of joint sense and meaning making. What starts on doorsteps with simple life practices and face-to-face meetings, is simultaneously awaited to unleash a 'bottom-up intelligence'. Ultimately, meeting basic human needs and celebrating the small gifts of life, is put back into the centre.

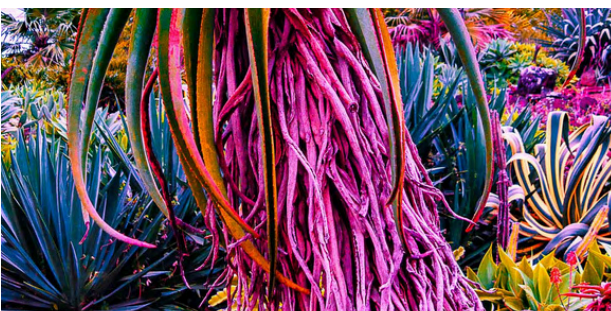


Photo credit: Valerie Lilette

8. Building bridges for new social infrastructures

Thinking globally, acting locally; what is planted on communal grounds may grow and flourish to the international level. Thus, amid a relational climate emergency, local community engagement becomes an inspiring starting point for 'glocal citizenship' reconciliation. Global citizenship education may hence enrich mindsets and qualities for social bridge-building. The understanding of multiple realities and their distinct contexts is thereby urged to proceed a process of adaptive co-creation. Yet, with little trust in and between populations to join hands and facilitate change, research findings address a lack of collaborative efforts. Furthermore, it is with critical reflections on the design of present learning environments, that long-term transformations are anticipated to happen in the outdoors. Transitions towards sustainable societies are generally expected to require larger infrastructural changes, providing strong networks of support and safety nets.

The research study draws on the conclusion that global citizenship education and identification can drive transformative sustainability transitions on all societal levels, inside and outside the European continent. By awakening to human-nature interconnectedness, life interdependence; a shared sense of loyalty and responsibility may shape individual and collective climate actions. This becomes especially crucial regarding a relational climate emergency, which lays at the roots of present-day crises. Commonly referred to as a transformation from the inside-out,



reversed, outside-in, fostering conscious minds and altruistic behaviours calls for interactive – naturally, interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergenerational – community engagement, including the revival of the public space. It is through the he/arts and storytelling that creative expressions encourage a re/connection of the head, heart and hands, shape narratives, and contribute to the co-design of new sustainable infrastructures.

Personal Reflection

My starting points were in fact turning points of major societal transformations, showing its evident effects, ever faster. Thus, almost 25 years after the Earth Charter has been officially launched on June 29, 2000, at the Peace Palace in The Hague, The Netherlands, the declaration remains as relevant as ever. Globally engulfed by conflict and an overflow of information, let alone rising climate challenges, my research reminded me of the power of words.

Send around the world as an invitation, I wish more people received and considered the Earth Charter as a common way forward. Especially regarding our shared responsibility for the greater community of life, including future generations, our words today may become building blocks for sustainable futures, tomorrow.

My personal reflection on global citizenship education and identification centres around deep listening and weaving together stories of and for change. My message is to meet, join hands, and co-create the space in-between!

Acknowledgment

The study has been enriched by the profound knowledge and professional expertise of Amanda Bennett, Bernard Combes, Prof Dr Sam Crowell, María García Alvarez, Viviana Quea Acosta, Dr Jonathan Reams, Renaud Richard, Ruben Ritzén, Monique Van Dam, Jelena Vasic, Maïke Verhagen, and Dr Mirian Vilela; and supported by the kind guidance of my thesis supervisor and examiner. I would therefore like to express my sincere gratitude, and appreciation for everyone who in/directly contributed to the research, including the wonderful collaboration with Valérie Lilette.

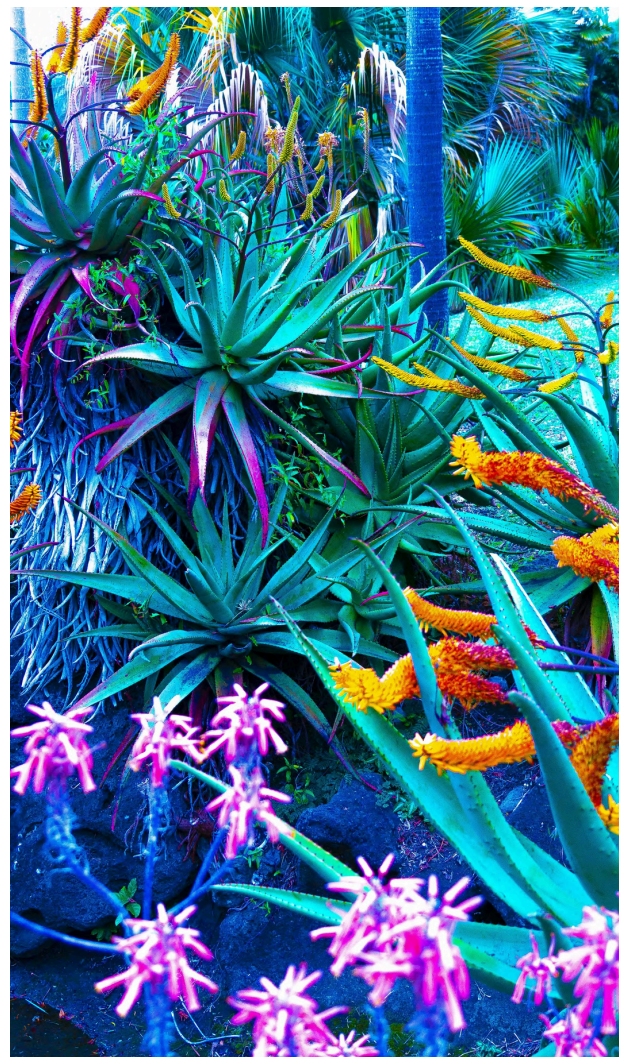


Photo credit: Valérie Lilette



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Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda

Expanding 21st Century Skills in English Language Teaching through ESD and Transformative Learning



Wendy Coulson

Wendy Coulson is an independent, international English-language teacher educator based in Mexico. Due to personal and professional transformative experiences, she has shifted her training focus to Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship in English-language Teaching (ELT). She earned a certificate from the Earth Charter Institute in ESD which qualified her to become an Earth Charter School Seal Verifier. She holds master's degrees in Applied Linguistics and K-12 Bilingual Education.



I recently attended a three-day international English-language teaching (ELT) convention in Monterrey, Mexico held annually by MEXTESOL (Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages). The conference theme was “The Shift Towards Non-traditional ELT Teaching Models.” Among the numerous plenary talks, presentations, papers and workshops to choose from, there were four sessions—one of them mine—on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). I attended all of them to try to read the pulse of where we are in the field five years away from Agenda 2030, aka the Sustainable Development Goals. At first touch, the pulse seems weak, at least in Mexico, however, I believe that teaching methods that support ESD and Global Citizenship Education (GCE) can help create this shift towards transformation—and it’s already happening!

The field of ELT made a great leap towards ESD at the turn of the century. The Twenty-first Century Skills of communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking (known as the 4 C’s) are now an ELT curriculum and textbook staple and a common topic at conferences. Let’s look at what they mean in the classroom.

- **Communication** – Expressing thoughts clearly through writing, speaking and images using a variety of media and interpreting text
- **Collaboration** – Working together to accomplish a common goal
- **Creativity** – Producing new, unique, or diverse ideas

- **Critical Thinking** – Using higher order thinking skills such as analyzing, critiquing and consolidating

Mirian Vilela, director of the ECI, in a presentation given in the ESD, GCED and Transformative Learning online course, emphasized that important skills needed to tackle the SDGs were collaboration and creativity—two of the 4 C’s. She also listed some core features of Global Citizenship Education involving critical thinking like questioning assumptions —another one of the C’s. Communication is the remaining ‘C’ that she did not mention directly but is implicated by the interconnectedness of both ESD and GCE aims. Since engagement is central to these aims, communication is absolutely necessary, especially in the language classroom. The wide acceptance and inclusion of 21st Century Skills in ELT is indeed a fundamental shift.



Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda



But it's not enough. In three of the sessions on sustainability at the Mexico conference, the presenters asked the audience if they had heard of the SDGs. Less than half of them raised their hands. English-language teachers may be cultivating the 4 C's in their classrooms, but how can using these skills impact the SDGs? In my view, as a veteran English teacher and teacher educator, the answer is through transformative learning approaches.

In her chapter entitled 'Sustainability and Global Citizenship Values Education with the Earth Charter: Reflections, Experiences and Pedagogical Elements,' Mirian Vilela (2020) identifies and describes seven pedagogical elements from her research that are key to creating transformative learning environments. After presenting the elements, I will suggest how they can deepen and widen the role of ELT in Agenda 2030 and beyond.

1. The Human Connection
2. The Human-Nature Connection
3. Question
4. Dialogue
5. Aesthetics
6. Art, Stories and Metaphors
7. Integral and Systemic Approach

The Human Connection involves personalization. It involves the heart. Some teachers with a heavy teaching schedule and large class sizes may find this difficult in practice. TESOL International Association puts human

connection at the heart of its best practices framework, The Six Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners (Short, D. et al., 2018), as Principle 1, Know Your Learners, and suggests some activities and routines to help teachers. Here are a few additional ideas.

- Use students' lives as content
- Personalize and localize textbook content
- Use pair and group work often. Change the seating so that students get to know each other and share their ideas.
- Use dialogue journals to get to know students individually
- Greet students individually at least once a week. Show them that their presence and contributions matter.
- Reflect on your own well-being and your connections with colleagues and neighbors

The Human-Nature Connection in ELT is something fairly new. In our classrooms, we may talk about the environment, but don't tend to make true connections with it. As Bob Jickling (November 4, 2021) remarked in an Earth Charter International webinar called Pedagogical Approaches for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Transformative Learning, "We need to have relationships with the world that we have never had" to teach in the transformative realm. It's about shifting to an ecological worldview and seeing ourselves as a part of nature and a responsible global citizen.



What is an ecological worldview and how might this look like in the ELT classroom? It involves seeing ourselves as a part of nature, learning from the natural world and acquiring the vocabulary to talk about it. As teachers we can help cultivate care for the world if we help students perceive it in multiple ways. Here are just a few ideas to help: Build an encyclopedia of the wisdom of the natural world; Write proverbs encapsulating their wisdom; Take your class outside to write a short description of a natural element and read it for others to guess or have them write different types of poetry outside; Play the Mystery Bag with natural elements. [See reference below.]

Question, dialogue, and art, stories and metaphors are related more directly to communication and thus can be more readily understood and accepted in most ELT contexts, so I'll take them together. Asking and answering questions is an important part of an ELT curriculum. As with any curricular element, we can use questions to examine anything. In ESD, we want to move students to higher order thinking questions that begin with 'why', 'what if' and 'what would happen if'. These kind of question starters can challenge students to question their consumption behaviors and assumptions. Learning about different ways to ask and answer questions will open up dialogue and lead to more English practice and new ideas.

Storytelling has always played an important role in my English classes, especially at the primary level. But what if we chose stories that engendered the values of the Earth Charter as in the Earth Stories Collection? What if we elicited personal stories of local

natural places to instill a sense of wonder and care? We could also tell stories giving natural elements such as the sun, a butterfly and a mountain a voice. Questions, discussion and storytelling are not new to ELT, but the ecological content may be.



Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda

Aesthetics is the fifth pedagogical element. Many English-language teachers don't have their own classroom and may find this element difficult to implement. However, the main point is for your classroom and your own practices to reflect what you are teaching as much as possible. This is a point for self-reflection and perhaps a topic at a teacher's meeting. Some ideas are:

- Bring in plants or natural elements for a nature table or corner.
- Put up student work on the wall.
- Set up a recycling system. Use less paper and other materials.

So far, the six pedagogical elements I have given suggestions for can be implemented at the individual teacher level. Nonetheless, in my experience, pedagogical element number seven, an Integral and Systemic Approach, is necessary for the sustainable implementation of the first six. Alicia



Jimenez Elizondo [2020] provides a framework and process for beginning a whole institution approach to sustainability with the Earth Charter Schools Seal intimately connected to Vilela's seven pedagogical elements. Using the Earth Charter Schools Seal indicators can give a school, a department, or like-minded teachers a focus and direction for professional development towards sustainability.

In my 30 plus years of teaching practice, I have been looking for transformative experiences to make meaning for what I do. The first experience was teaching in a Waldorf, or Steiner, school in central Mexico. I didn't fully realize it at the time, but the strong philosophy that drove its pedagogy allowed the seven elements presented above to come naturally into the lessons. I would say the pedagogy was the foundation, the seven elements were the walls, doors and windows and teacher and parental development through personal and group study, conferences and community events was the roof of this holistic house.

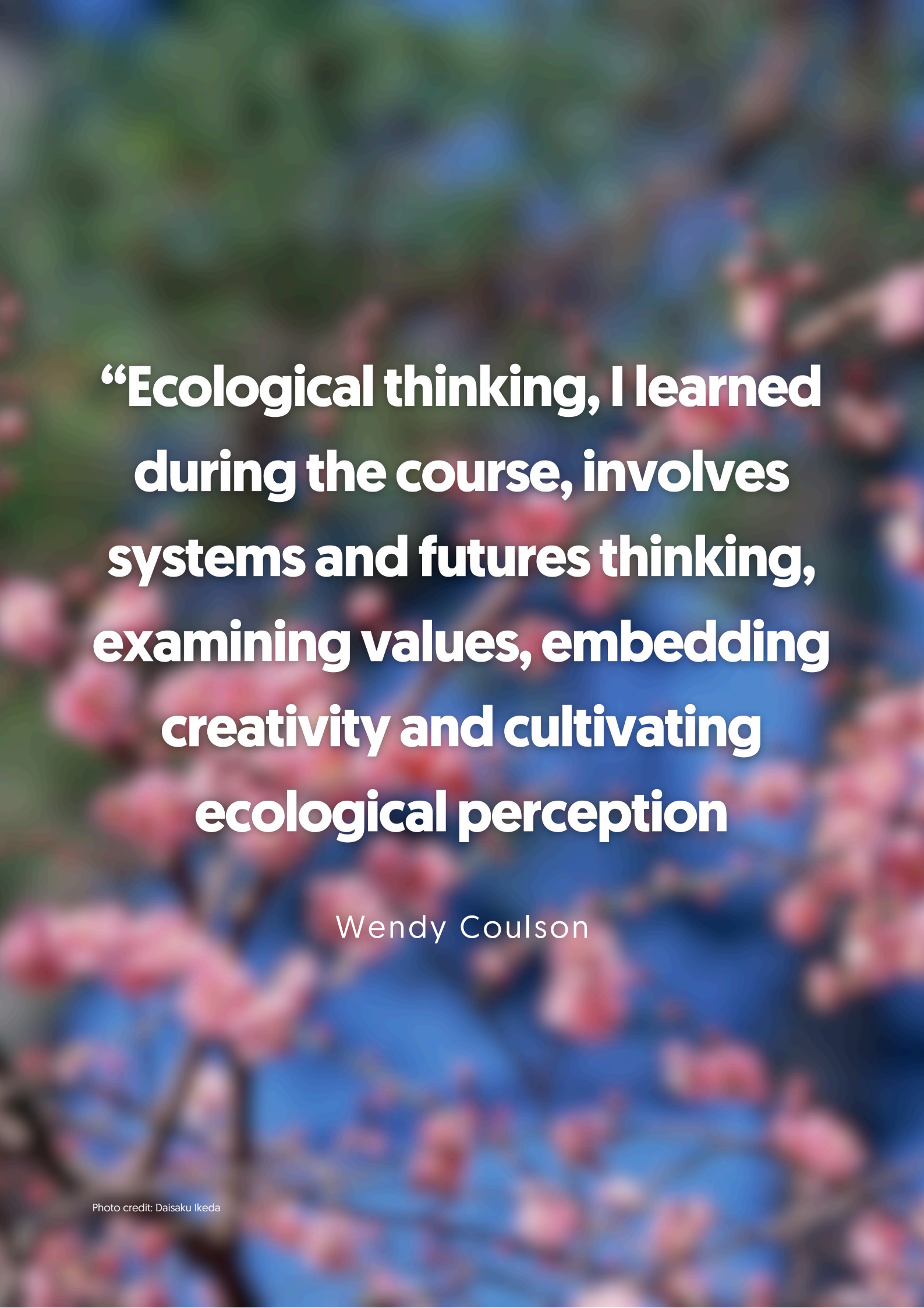
The second transformative learning experience that impacts my teaching as an ELT consultant today was studying the online certificate in ESD with the Earth Charter Institute. As a consultant working for various education agencies, it's not easy to apply the pedagogical elements or a whole institution approach. However, learning about the thinking behind ESD, ecological thinking, has transformed the way I see my role as a facilitator and course creator. Ecological thinking, I learned during the course, involves

systems and futures thinking, examining values, embedding creativity and cultivating ecological perception. I am not part of a particular school environment, but I can certainly create experiences that lead to a shift in thinking.

I want to conclude with something I learned about at the MEXTESOL convention that gives me great hope. I learned about a framework for sustainability for ELT from Cambridge University Press [Blue, 2022] which was created to help teachers know about and integrate sustainability issues into their English lesson with a breakdown of some component skills. It includes transformation as one of its four core areas as well as knowledge, skills and innovation. That this is an emergent discussion in my profession that is compatible with ESD and the seven pedagogical elements sets us up for an even greater shift.



Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda

The background of the image is a soft-focus photograph of numerous small flowers, likely cherry blossoms, in shades of pink and light blue. The flowers are scattered across the frame, creating a textured, bokeh-like effect. The overall color palette is cool and natural, with the white text providing a high-contrast, clean look.

**“Ecological thinking, I learned
during the course, involves
systems and futures thinking,
examining values, embedding
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ecological perception**

Wendy Coulson



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Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda

Artistic Tools for Integrating the Earth Charter into Higher Education



Heidy Vega García

Heidi is an Academic at the General Studies Center (CEG) of the National University (UNA), Heredia, Costa Rica. She leads the courses “Eco-citizenship in Action with the Earth Charter” and “Humanistic Perspective of Global Climate Change.” Doctor in Latin American Studies with a Mention in Latin American Thought; Master in International Relations and Diplomacy with a Mention in Environment and Development (National University, UNA, Heredia, Costa Rica). Diploma in Interdisciplinary Research in Education for Sustainable Development (DIIES) from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).



This text summarizes my learning as a participant in the virtual course for educators “Artistic Resources for Playful Learning of the Principles of the Earth Charter,” taught by Professor Arline Sobalvarro Sobalvarro as part of her Final Graduation Project for the Master’s in Technology and Educational Innovation at the National University of Costa Rica. The course integrated transpersonal pedagogy and artistic tools, fostering creativity and teaching the Principles of the Earth Charter.

Course Development

The course took place over four weeks (from August 1 to 31, 2024, totaling 12 hours) on the Virtual Campus platform of the National Technical University. Each week, the instructor facilitated various learning experiences, utilizing Transpersonal Education and artistic tools to foster creativity in teaching the principles of the Earth Charter. The course included reading assignments, weekly project creation, forums, and interaction processes.

Unit 1: Conceptual Foundations of Transpersonal Education and the Principles of the Earth Charter

This unit covered the foundations of Transpersonal Education (Santiago, 2010), highlighting its importance. It included a five-minute guided meditation to promote self-awareness and a creative writing activity (poetry) to reflect on the principles of the Earth Charter and Transpersonal Pedagogy.

Unit 2: Art as a Pedagogical Tool in 21st Century Education

This unit explored how art can be a powerful tool for learning. Participants created a parallel text based on the book *How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci* by Michael J. Gelb (1999), using applications like Canva or Genially. This activity fosters creativity by combining text, images, and multimedia.

Unit 3: Integration of Transpersonal Pedagogy and Art for Learning the Principles of the Earth Charter

Here, we delved into the connection between transpersonal pedagogy and art as complementary means for learning. Reflective photography was used to capture moments of connection between the inner world and the environment. Additionally, a movement expression activity was developed with music, designing movements inspired by nature and the principles of the Earth Charter.

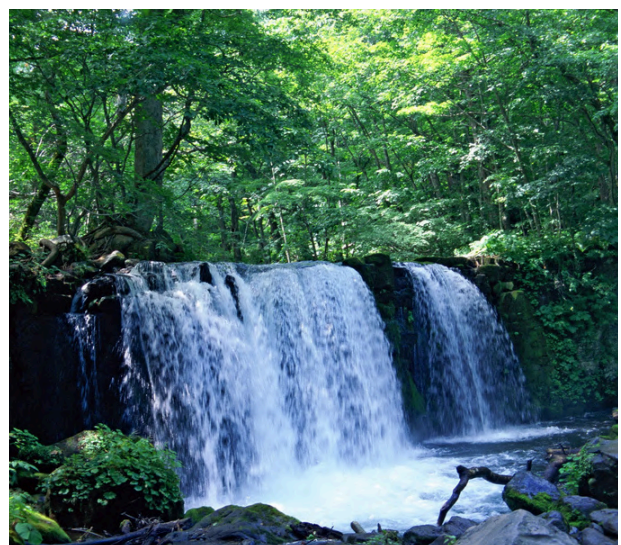


Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda



Unit 4: Final Project - Designing a Class with a Transpersonal Approach and Artistic Tools

A collage and a lesson were designed based on the story "María Patria" by Raúl Carrillo Meza. The class focused on one of the principles of the Earth Charter, including a short meditation and an artistic activity that fosters reflection and creativity among our students.

Creativity and Personal Creation

Throughout the course, I was able to express my personal creativity in the following activities:

Poetry "If the Earth Could Speak"

This poem, inspired by the principle "Respect and Care for the Community of Life," was written in relation to Mother's Day in Costa Rica [August 15].

“

IF THE EARTH COULD SPEAK

If the Earth could speak,
It would cry out for love of its life-giving
mantle,
Urging us to protect its essence in a sacred
pact,
A bond of love, a natural duty.

If the Earth could speak, in a deep, resonant
song,
It would highlight the worth of each being
in the world,
Inviting us to unite in a fraternal bond,
Respecting and caring for its maternal love. ”



Photo credit: Daisaku Ikeda



Reflective Photography: “Connection Between My Inner and Outer World”

The reflective photography activity allowed me to connect my inner world with the natural environment. In this case, I took three photographs of my city, reflecting on the principle of the Earth Charter: "Respect and Care for the Community of Life." This principle invites us to respect and protect the Earth and its diversity, recognize the interdependence of all beings, and acknowledge the intrinsic value of every form of life. It is essential to care for natural resources with compassion and to prevent environmental harm, assuming the responsibility to promote the common good. Additionally, we must build just, sustainable, and peaceful societies that guarantee human rights and allow for the full development of each individual. Finally, it is crucial to preserve the resources and beauty of the Earth for future generations, instilling values that ensure long-term prosperity.

“El árbol de la vida” / “ The Tree of Life”

This majestic fig tree at the National University is much more than a simple tree;

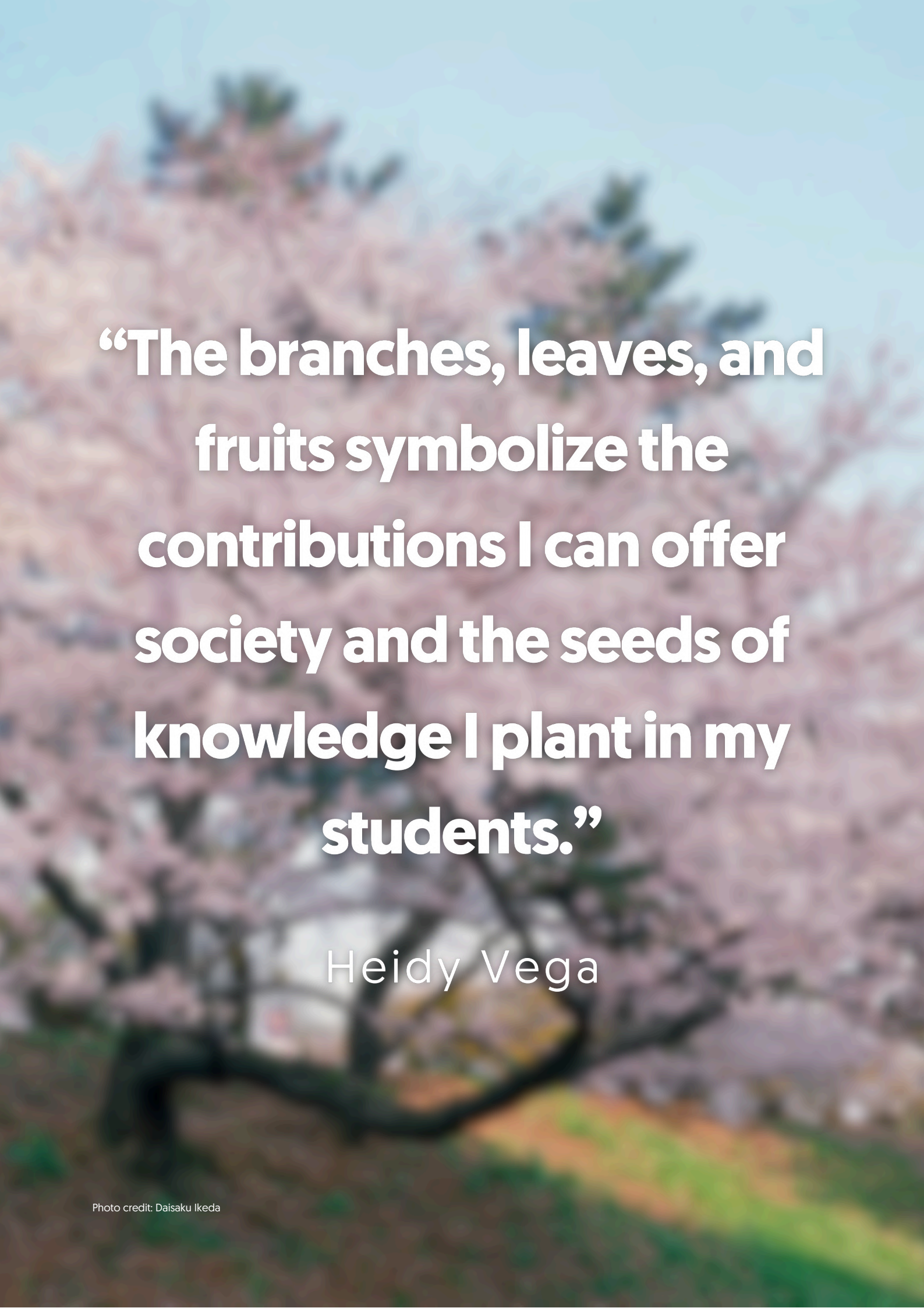
it is a living symbol of sustainability and a profound metaphor for my inner world. Its roots, firmly anchored in the earth, evoke my connection to the past: my grandparents, my family, and the educational experiences that have strengthened my trunk. The branches, leaves, and fruits symbolize the contributions I can offer society and the seeds of knowledge I plant in my students. This fig tree, which has become a treasured asset of the University, reminds us of the importance of preserving natural wealth for future generations.

“Viva Heredia”

The city of Heredia, my hometown, holds a central place in my life. Here, my process of socialization, understanding of reality, and connection to nature have all been woven together. My emotional bonds have formed in its streets and parks; it is the city where I grew up, developed, and where I now live and work. Heredia is deeply connected to my roots as a human being; it is my place in the world. Known as the "City of Flowers," this small city has great educational significance, being the



Photo credit: Heidy Vega



**“The branches, leaves, and
fruits symbolize the
contributions I can offer
society and the seeds of
knowledge I plant in my
students.”**

Heidy Vega



Photo credit: Heidy Vega

birthplace of many of Costa Rica's leading teachers. The National University, of which I feel profoundly honored to be a part, is the heir to this valuable educational heritage. This educational legacy aligns with the principle of building democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful. Heredia, with its rich tradition of education and social commitment, embodies these values by fostering an education that not only seeks knowledge but also the construction of a more equitable and harmonious society.

"Passing Through the Tunnel"

This photograph captures a lit tunnel in Oxigeno, one of the largest shopping

centers in Heredia. This space stands out for integrating sustainability principles, with expansive green areas and a lake, creating an environment that harmonizes with nature. As I walked, I was struck by the aesthetics of the tunnel, but what truly made the moment special was overhearing a conversation between a mother and her child. The boy, filled with excitement, eagerly wanted to cross the tunnel, and at that moment, I saw it as a metaphor for life itself. The tunnel represents the path we all travel, filled with lights and shadows, guided by hope and curiosity. This moment connects deeply with the principle of caring for the community of life with understanding,

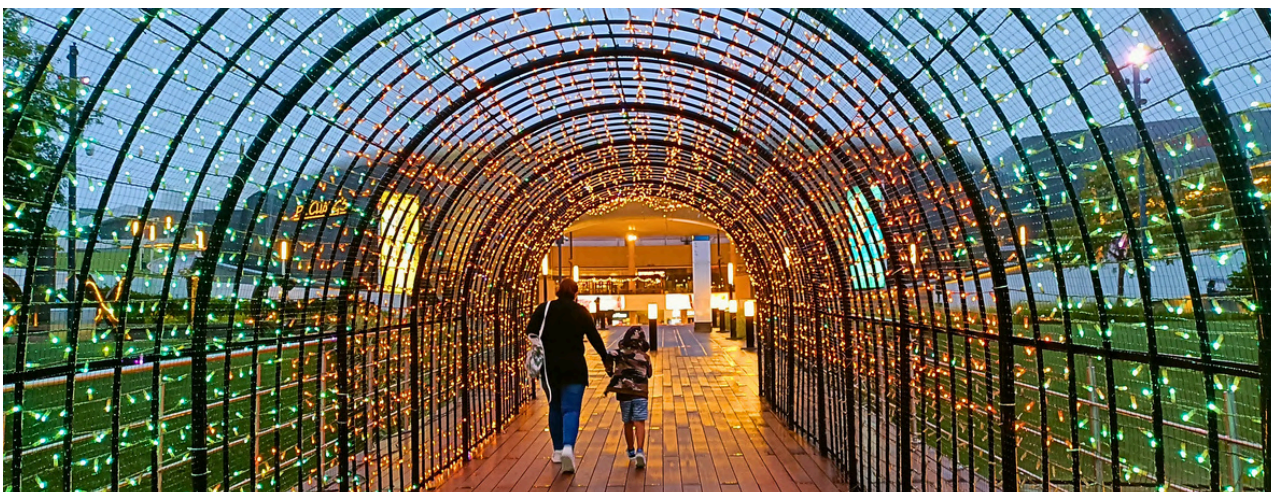


Photo credit: Heidy Vega



compassion, and love, recognizing the importance of supporting new generations on their journey. Additionally, the integration of green and sustainable areas in the shopping center reflects the commitment to ensuring that the fruits and beauty of the Earth are preserved so that both children and adults can enjoy a world full of life and harmony.

Rhythm of the Earth: For this activity, I used an excerpt from the song “Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto: Act 1” by Vanessa-Mae, from which I designed a sequence of movements that recreate the flight of butterflies, following the rhythm of the music. To do this, I used fans and recorded a video.

Collage: As a final activity, I created a collage, which is a chronological visual representation of what I learned in the course. It intertwines key concepts with images that reflect transpersonal pedagogy, meditation, art, creative writing, Da Vincian principles, reflective photography, body expression, and music. It also includes images of the products created during the course, serving as a visual log of their evolution.

Parallel Text on the Principles of Leonardo da Vinci: In addition, I carried out a reinterpretation of Da Vinci's principles, gathered in the book "Genious Intelligence" by Gelb [1999], in a parallel text created in Canva. The book explores how we can emulate Leonardo's way of thinking to develop our own capabilities, as the human brain has almost unlimited potential. The author, Michael J. Gelb, identifies seven “Da Vincian” principles:

1. **Curiosità [Curiosity]:** Maintain an insatiable curiosity and continuously seek learning.
2. **Arte/Scienza [Art/Science]:** Balance science and art, logic and imagination.
3. **Dimostrazione [Demonstration]:** Verify knowledge through experience and learn from mistakes.
4. **Sensazione [Sensation]:** Continuously refine the senses to enrich experience.
5. **Connessione [Connection]:** Recognize the interconnectedness of all things and phenomena.
6. **Corporalità [Corporality]:** Cultivate the body, grace, and physical balance.
7. **Sfumato [Vanish]:** Embrace ambiguity and uncertainty.

The book also draws an analogy between the Renaissance—a historical period of cultural and intellectual revival—and the potential for personal renewal when applying Leonardo da Vinci's principles in our lives. These principles provide a practical guide for cultivating personal genius by seeking a balance between curiosity, practical experience, the refinement of the senses, and the recognition of interconnections in the world. Leonardo da Vinci used nature observation to merge art and science. He studied anatomy, the flight of birds and insects, among others, seeing nature as an essential source of knowledge.

In Conclusion

What I learned in the course has a positive and transformative impact by fostering a more holistic and enriching way of learning. Integrating transpersonal pedagogy and artistic resources in the university classroom provides an



innovative methodology and promotes a deeper connection with academic content. Transpersonal pedagogy, by focusing on the integral development of the student, encourages education that goes beyond cognitive aspects, incorporating cultural, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. This helps perceive learning as a more meaningful and personal process, facilitating a more authentic understanding of the topics addressed.

The use of artistic resources in the classroom fosters creativity, self-expression, and critical thinking, promoting creative problem-solving. Guided meditation helps connect the inner self with nature, integrating the principles of the Earth Charter into personal identity. Creative writing allows for reflections on sustainability through literary techniques such as poetry and short stories. Artistic resources transform abstract concepts into visual representations, such as creative observation inspired by Da Vincian principles and reflective photography, which connects the internal world with the external environment. Finally, body expression and classical music explore the relationship with nature from a sensory and emotional perspective, deepening the understanding of the interdependence between the environmental, social, and personal.

In summary, if university educators apply this holistic approach in our classrooms, integrating academics with personal and spiritual development, we can foster a

more experiential, meaningful, and transcendent learning of the principles of the Earth Charter. In this way, we can promote greater awareness and ecocitizen commitment among higher education students.

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About the Earth Charter

Crafted by visionaries over twenty years ago, the Earth Charter is a document with sixteen principles, organized under four pillars, that seek to turn conscience into action. It seeks to inspire in all people a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the whole human family, the greater community of life, and future generations. It is a vision of hope and a call to action.

About the Earth Charter International Center for Education

The ECI Education Center, located on the campus of the UN Mandated University for Peace in San José, Costa Rica, offers a variety of online and on-site education programmes that highlight the importance of incorporating sustainability values and principles into decision-making and education. It provides an opportunity for participants to expand their understanding of sustainability and see the possibilities for turning it into action. Since 2012, the Earth Charter Education Center coordinates the [UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development with the Earth Charter.](#)