

# Earth and Peace Education Associates



## EPE Transitions

Volume 1 Issue 1

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**Transitions**, the E-newsletter for *Earth and Peace Education Associates International* (EPE) focuses on our global community's progress towards a culture of peace, i.e. a society of institutions and norms based on nonviolence, ecological sustainability, social justice, and participatory decision-making. It aims to create an understanding of the reciprocal relationship between social and ecological peace - a prerequisite to effectively responding to social peacelessness and ecological degradation. You are invited to join the global network of educators working to bring about this transition.

The **content** of the newsletter provides guideposts to help you along the way:

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We hope you will find **Transitions** useful and invite you to contribute to future issues.

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# Creating Sustainable Communities

## *The Sustainability and Peace Institute (SPI) model of rural development in Sierra Leone and Togo*

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One of the major philosophical trends shaping 21<sup>st</sup> century reality is the trend towards integration. After some four hundred years of the use of the scientific method, which analyses, dissects and breaks into small parts the complex realities of social and ecological life, the need for integration is now seen in many areas, leading to an ever growing number of hyphenated disciplines, such as biochemistry, and interdisciplinary programs of study. The same tendency can be seen in the values realm. Here a global effort of the last ten years has led to the integrated statement of social and ecological values in the Earth Charter.

This trend towards integrating social, ecological and economic realities is destined to become the leading planning philosophy in both the industrialized and agricultural worlds of our times and is now becoming most evident in the sustainability revolution of which Andres Edwards (2005) recently presented an excellent overview in *The Sustainability Revolution: Portrait of a Paradigm Shift* (New Society Publishers).

The SPI model of rural African development is part of this sustainability revolution: it combines best practices in sustainable development and conflict resolution. It focuses on a sustainable use of energy and water for rural areas and trains community leaders in a broadly conceived peace education. Its value system is based upon EPE's integrated framework of contextual sustainability, which is closely related to the integrated value system of the Earth Charter. Let me briefly describe the principles that underlie the model, its components, and the present status of its implementation.

### **Principles**

1. The model is a *civil society model* of rural development. There is a definite need for a non- governmental approach in addressing the social and ecological problems and challenges in African countries. Presently the main African governmental initiatives for development are taken by the African Union (AU), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and various regional initiatives. Accompanying these African initiatives is the G8 Africa Action Plan, which is committed 'to promote peace and security in Africa, to boost expertise and capacity....' Though these initiatives are valuable, a non-governmental approach with a definite bio-centric orientation to people and planet well-being is a necessary complement to these governmental initiatives. This

civil society contribution is also recognized by the UPEACE Africa Program's five-year program which states, "What is often crucially missing [in government programs—F. C. V.] is the capacity of civil society to provide the framework within which differences are contested peacefully, prejudice is neutralized, bigotry is mitigated, and just and equitable representative democracies arise."

2. The SPI model considers *ecological integrity* not one issue among many, but the organizing principle for all issues. Thus, in situations of civil war or other conflict situations, the model not only emphasizes the social and ecological consequences of conflict, but also points to the need for imagining socially and ecologically sustainable futures, thus bringing conflict mediation and resolution to a higher frame of reference that all can share, i.e. a healthy environment.

3. Given that the economies of most African countries are still predominantly agricultural and that no healthy economy and society can be built up without a local food security system, the major emphasis of the SPI model is to contribute to *sustainable agricultural systems*, so that dependency on food imports is reduced in the short, medium and long term. Given this emphasis on agriculture, the SPI is to be located in rural areas, preferably near a major urban area.

4. Given that economic development and ecological integrity are impossible in tribal war-torn countries, the SPI model emphasizes the *non-violent resolution* of tribal strife and warfare as an integral part of its development approach.

5. Though the emphasis of the SPI model is (bio) regional, it also analyses, theorizes and mobilizes about *balanced external relations* both within Africa, the developing and the industrial worlds, and with international institutions such as the UN, the IMF and World Bank. It promotes local self-reliance and autonomy without promoting autarchy and is based upon the principle of subsidiarity as explained, among others, by the International Forum on Globalization ([www.ifg.org](http://www.ifg.org)).

6. The SPI Model sees Africans themselves as *the primary agents* responsible for changing their normative contexts in politics, economics and culture. Using their own cultural and ecological traditions and an integrated set of positive social and ecological values, they can develop the knowledge and aptitudes that can also be shared with the industrial world that is in great need of symbols of social cohesion and ecological integrity.

Given the above principles, the SPI model provides a model of holistic engagement in sustainability and peace research, education, and mobilization. In these three program areas it wants to collaborate and network with African and non-African NGOs that subscribe to this approach to social and ecological well-being.

### **Components of the SPI Model**

The SPI model trains community leaders in rural extension work in renewable energy and water management or eco-tourism, as well as the skills necessary for peace building. For three months these leaders are trained at the Institute using a core curriculum of peace studies that is similar to the one offered at the University of Peace in Costa Rica.

When the Institute is not being used for training, the facilities are used by domestic or foreign tourists, one of the major revenue sources after five years, when the grant monies have been used up. The extension services and training fees are the other two revenue streams that will provide for the self-reliant operation of the Institute. A Sustainability and Peace Education Consultation, which would provide the baseline data to evaluate the model's effectiveness after five years, is also planned. This evaluation procedure is considered necessary for both financial and scientific reasons.

The main outcome of the Institute's training program is to empower local people and give them access to income producing activities in eco-tourism and to the use of energy and water that are sustainable and locally controlled. As such the model acts as a counterforce to unsustainable urbanization and against the corporate economic globalization process that is engulfing African nations by keeping rural areas culturally and ecologically vibrant.

### **Present status of implementation**

In both Sierra Leone and Togo, the land for the Institute was donated by the local authorities. However funds are needed for the erection of the buildings, its computer facilities, photo-voltaic applications and to implement the extension programs and organize the Consultation. Two five-year budgets (\$1.3 million each) have been drawn up by EPE and its counterparts in Sierra Leone and Togo to meet these needs. Presently there are six SPI partner teams in industrialized countries pursuing this funding from their governments.

### **Conclusion**

The SPI model of rural development aims to contribute to the emergence of sustaining futures for humankind. Anchored in an integrated framework of social and ecological values, its position on the nature of sustaining futures is, in last instance, a query about values. Australian biologist/environmentalist Davison has framed the issue in this way:

*...the verb sustaining holds open the actively normative questions that the idea of sustainability raises. We are required to probe: What truly sustains us? Why? And how do we know? Conversely, we must ask: What are we to sustain above all else? Why? And how may we do so?* Aidan Davison, *Technology and the Contested Meanings of Sustainability*, SUNY Press, 2001, p.64.

## Guest interview

### *Peter Corcoran on the Earth Charter +5*

**PETER BLAZE CORCORAN is Professor of Environmental Studies and Environmental Education at Florida Gulf Coast University. Corcoran is a Senior Advisor to the Earth Charter International Secretariat and is a member of the Earth Charter Education Advisory Committee.**

The Earth Charter is a statement of universal ethical principles for building a just, sustainable, peaceful, and participatory global society. It reflects a conviction that if we are to survive and thrive through the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a radical change is needed in humanity's attitudes and values. It is a call to action to work for social change through value change, providing us with the means - an alternative value-based ethic. 2001 saw the formal launching of the final draft of the Charter and since then the Earth Charter Initiative (ECI) has been organizing activities to promote its endorsement by various organizations, groups, and governments.

Peter Corcoran was interviewed by Anita Wenden, *Transition* Editor, on *Earth Charter +5*, a meeting organized by the ECI to discuss the impact and future of the Earth Charter. The meeting was held in Amsterdam (The Netherlands) from November 5 – 7.

#### **Why was the meeting called? What was its purpose?**

To celebrate five years of Earth Charter activity; to convene young people from around the world who constitute the Earth Charter Youth Initiative; and to inaugurate a Third Phase of the Earth Charter with new goals, strategies, priorities, and a reorganized governance structure.

#### **What were some (or one) of the significant outcomes of the meeting?**

Unquestionably, the most important outcome was the official launch of a Third Phase in Earth Charter history. The First Phase was the drafting of the Earth Charter document itself, 1994-2000; the Second Phase was the endorsement and implementation of the Earth Charter, 2000-2005. In the Third Phase, the Earth Charter Initiative will develop the Earth Charter into a more powerful and strategic actor in sustainability; we will actively promote the Earth Charter in international law and diplomacy, business, science, and other fields, building on our success in education and local community work. Alan AtKisson of Sweden was named International Transition Director to guide this process.

A collection of over seventy thematic and descriptive essays inspired by the Earth Charter was launched by Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands. *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World* (KIT Publishers, Amsterdam, 2005) points toward the many possibilities for future utilization to work across faith traditions, nations, and generations, and the northern and southern hemispheres.

**What is the status of the EC today? To what extent has it become an actual guide to social planning? in what sectors? Can you add, briefly, an example of an EC success story?**

While the Earth Charter is increasingly well accepted, it remains relatively unknown among the general public and is not especially well known even among members of the sustainability community. An important outcome of the Amsterdam meeting was the launch of the major new publication, *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World*, to highlight ways in which the Earth Charter can be used. The book is organized by the structure of the Earth Charter and demonstrates a rich diversity of its uses, principle by principle.

Well-know contributors include Homero Aridjis, A.T. Ariyaratne, Princess Basma Bint Talal, Leonardo Boff, Kamla Chowdhry, Jane Goodall, Mikhail Gorbachev, Yolanda Kakabadse, Ruud Lubbers, Wangari Maathai, Federico Mayor, Steven C. Rockefeller, and Erna Witoelar. Contributors are practitioners, experts, and Earth Charter activists from around the world. There is a special emphasis on contributions from youth. All contributors write about the efficacy of the Earth Charter in their experience.

Strong examples of the usefulness of the Earth Charter in African diplomacy are found in two essays which speak to Principle 16 of the Earth Charter, “Promote a culture of tolerance, non-violence, and peace.” The essays of United Nations Special Representatives of the Secretary General, Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, “Degradation of the Environment as the Cause of Violent Conflict,” and Ambassador Jan Pronk, “The Earth Charter as the Basis for a Comprehensive Approach to Conflicts in Sudan” provide compelling examples of the importance of the Earth Charter in international diplomacy.



# Resources for integrative value-based learning

## *A value framework for critical thinking about social and ecological realities*

The questions in the box below specify each of the listed values - ecological sustainability, nonviolence, social justice, participatory decision-making – all based on the Earth Charter’s list of ethical principles. They can be used to 'make critical sense' of social and ecological realities, such as the excerpt from *The Deadliness Below*, which reports on the dumping of chemical munitions into the ocean.

### **Ecological sustainability**

- How are Earth’s resources, her life-supporting systems and various forms of natural life affected by the dumping of chemical munitions into the ocean?
- Are attempts being made to remediate ill effects of this social practice? to ensure the preservation of the oceans for the future?

### **Nonviolence**

- Has the dumping of the toxic weapons lead to conflict? Is conflict possible? If yes, between which groups? Why? Is there a power imbalance between them? Is one group experiencing oppression?
- How is the conflict being resolved? the power imbalance? the oppression? Through physical force or aggression? psychological violence? Or is the conflict being ignored? the imbalances and oppressions endured? Or are attempts made to resolve these conditions nonviolently? If so, what are they?

### **Social Justice**

- Are power, wealth, and/or resources used to benefit all the groups in the area? to ensure that they have access to what human rights allow? Or are they used in such a way that the human rights are violated? If so, which groups are suffering the impact of this violation? How? That is, which rights are being violated?

### **Participatory decision-making**

- In dealing with this problem, have the concerns of individuals and groups affected by the dumping of toxic weapon been solicited? Have their suggestions been taken into account? Have citizens taken their own actions to deal with the problem?

**Adapted from A. Wenden, “Value based perspective development” in *Educating for a Culture of Social and Ecological Peace* (SUNY Press 2004)**

## *The Deadliness Below*

Excerpted from an article by that name authored by John M.R. Bull (Daily Press, October 31, 2005).

As World War II drew to a close, the Army was faced with scant storage space in ordnance depots at home and huge chemical weapons stockpiles overseas. The solution: Dump the weapons off the coast of whatever country they were in.

The result: U.S.-made weapons of mass destruction litter the coasts of more than 11 countries - including Italy, France, India, Australia, the Philippines, Japan, Denmark and Norway, according to a 2001 Army report recently released to the Daily Press. The chemical weapons remain there

to this day. And they're extremely dangerous. Some of them have washed up on shore or been dredged up by fishermen. At least 200 people have been seriously injured over the years.

The Army now admits that it secretly dumped at least 64 million pounds of chemical warfare agents, as well as more than 400,000 mustard gas-filled bombs and rockets, off the United States - and much more than that off other countries, a Daily Press investigation has found. The Army can't say where all the dumpsites are. There might be more. "It's a disaster looming - a time bomb, say," said Dr. Gert Harigel, a well-respected physicist active in Geneva who's been active in international chemical weapons issues. "The scientific community knows very little about it. It scares me a lot."

A 1975 treaty signed by the United States prohibits ocean dumping of chemical munitions. But it doesn't address dump zones created before the treaty was signed. "Legally, nothing can be done," said Harigel, a member of the Geneva International Peace Research Institute. "But from a humanitarian point of view, they need to be pressured to do something."

#### DUMPSITES IN FIVE MORE COUNTRIES

The Daily Press uncovered an Aug. 24, 1944, memo - classified at the time as "restricted" - that revealed ....the United States kept stockpiles of chemical weapons during World War II in .... New Zealand, China, the former Soviet Union and unidentified "Latin American countries."....Other National Archives records detail two shipments of unidentified chemical weapons, totaling 20,000 pounds, in 1953 and 1954 from the United States to Fort Amador, Panama.

The Army said it informed the governments of those five unidentified countries in recent years of the dangers lurking off their coasts. But, it said, it was asked by those governments not to release the information to the public. Harigel said residents of those unidentified countries should be told by someone - either their governments or the Army - of the potential dangers...."Whether or not anything can be done at this point, the people there deserve to know," he said. "The danger increases with time. The shells are more and more corroding. The fishermen can easily get this stuff into their nets and get seriously hurt."

Scientists have determined that mustard agent damages DNA, causes cancer and survives for at least five years on the ocean floor in a concentrated gel. Nerve gas lasts at least six weeks in seawater, killing every organism it touches before breaking down into its non-lethal component chemicals.

Chemical-filled munitions now on sea beds are slowly leaking, and more surely will as years pass - depending on the depth of the water, the thickness of the containers and water temperature, according to a 2004 study by Jiri Matousek, a Czech scientist. The hazard of leaking shells likely will last for "another tens to hundreds of years," he concluded.

#### OTHER COUNTRIES WEREN'T TOLD

Japan's problems from U.S. chemical weapons dumping did not come to light until a government inquiry in 1973, after more than 85 fishermen were injured by chemical warfare agents dumped by either U.S. occupation forces or the Japanese military at the close of World War II. It wasn't until 2003 that Australia found on its own that the Army dumped more than 60 million pounds of chemical weapons off Brisbane. Australia pinpointed precise quantities and nautical coordinates. The Australian government has posted the area off-limits to mariners and released a well-publicized report on its findings.

.....[The] two [other] chemical weapons dumpsites in Canadian waters are off Sable Island and Nova Scotia, near the Grand Banks - one of the world's best fisheries. One site is spread out over at least 30 nautical miles (35 statute miles). It's presumed to have been created by the Canadian government after World War II ended.

"Fisheries are dying. The sea bottom is going bare. It's terrible," Kehoe said. "We are finding crab mutations that no one can explain. Cod are dying at their larval stage. Most of that stuff is starting to leach now" from their steel containers into the sea.

#### HUNDREDS HAVE BEEN HURT

Over the decades, many fishermen overseas have been seriously injured after being exposed to U.S. chemical weapons dumps created after World War II. "Around the world, accidents have happened," the Army's Brankowitz said. "Fortunately, there has been nothing I would call colossal or catastrophic accidents."

Denmark's government estimates that chemical warfare agents dumped in the sea by either the United States or Britain have hurt 150 mariners and have been found washed up on shore. In 1984 alone, 11 Danish fishermen were burned by mustard gas while fishing in the Baltic. Crews of fishing boats off the Danish island of Bornholm routinely wear chemical protection suits when near a known chemical weapons dumpsite. Vessels working other areas of the Baltic are required to keep gas masks and special medical kits aboard. The problem is so bad in the relatively shallow Baltic; the seabed is surveyed every summer by Latvia, Russia and Finland to determine whether long-dumped chemical shells are leaking.

At least 52 Japanese were injured in 11 accidents off Japan at just one of eight known U.S. chemical ocean dumps, mostly of captured chemical weapons stockpiled by Japan. When the Japanese government publicized the locations of those dump areas in the 1970s, the number of injuries dropped.

Since 1946, five Italian fishermen have died and 232 were burned by mustard dumped by the United States, according to Italian scientists at the University of Bari. The Army does not dispute the findings. An Australian fishing trawler in 1983 snagged a 1-ton steel container of mustard agent, dumped off Cape Moreton in Australia by the United States, and pulled it to shore, a 2003 Australian government report indicated. No one was injured.

In 2003, the Australian government created an in-depth report on what it calls chemical warfare agent - or CWA - dumps, identifying exact latitudes and longitudes of U.S.- and Australian-created chemical weapons dumps. The information was released to the public and widely publicized in the news media there. "The publication of this paper will, hopefully, prevent accidents occurring at the CWA dump sites where coordinates have been revealed," the report concluded. "It will also, hopefully, encourage other governments to reveal locations of their CWA sea dumpsites for the same purpose."

That's something that the United States hasn't fully done and should, out of simple decency to its citizens and residents of other countries where the Army created chemical weapons hazards, said Switzerland's Harigel. "The government is not open to the public in the United States," he said. "There should be pressure put on them."

## ***Projects for a Science and Math curriculum***

From *The New York Human Education Academy: Inspiring critical and creative thinking towards a more human world*. Contact: Matt Wildman [www.nyhea.org](http://www.nyhea.org) and [mattwildman@nyhea.org](mailto:mattwildman@nyhea.org)

### Objectives

To help students develop skills to:

- Critically examine humans' impact on the Earth
- Evaluate complex scientific issues
- Explore solutions to our global problems.

### Projects

- Explore an ecosystem examining first hand the animals and plants of the ecosystems well as its complexity, interdependence, and balance;
- Examine human's effect on ecosystems - consider the rationales and consequences of mega projects such as the building of the Three Gorges Dam in China, the cutting down of rainforests in Indonesia, the mining of bauxite in Asia, the destruction of the plains of the American Midwest;
- Evaluate genetic engineering – its ethical, environmental and health implications;
- Create consumption profiles of the water and energy we consume – evaluate the profile in the larger context of fresh water shortages and environmental pollution and consider positive actions we can take to conserve water and energy;
- Examine changes in climate through the identification of meteorological trends over the last century – determine the future implication of these changes and understand the actions required to forestall climate change;
- Design an eco-friendly life style – consider the energy we use, the cars we drive, the products we buy, and the water we consume;

## ***Recent publications***

Book series on global citizenship (S. Watson, 2004. Smart Apple Media)

Each book includes case studies, global facts, tables, maps and charts to enhance student understanding of ecological sustainability, social justice and participatory decision-making and guide their social action. Order from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

*Being Active Citizens* introduces the concept of global citizenship and challenges young people to think about their rights and responsibilities as family members and citizens of their nation and global community. ISBN 1 – 58340 398 –1

*Protecting Global Environments* discusses the need to protect animals and plants, as well as local and global environments. ISBN 1 – 58340 399 –X

*Respecting Cultural Differences* introduces the multifaceted concept of social diversity and stresses the need to fight prejudice and discrimination . ISBN 1 – 58340 400 7

*Valuing World Heritage* encourages young people to respect and protect indigenous cultures, historical traditions and the natural world. ISBN 1 – 58340 401 – 5.

*Understanding Human Rights* outlines basic human rights and provides an overview of the UN’s work in protecting human rights. ISBN 1 – 58340 402-3

*Improving the Quality of Life* discusses basic human needs, the rich-poor gap and global inequality.  
ISBN 58340 403 1

*Living Sustainably* discusses life style and development issues as these related to sustainable living. ISBN 1 – 58340 404 –X

*Making Global Connections* examines various manifestations of interdependence and the emerging global civic culture, e.g. travel, immigration, world trade, peacekeeping....  
ISBN 1 – 58340 405 –8

*Educating for a culture of social and ecological peace* ( Anita L. Wenden, Editor, 2004, State University of New York Press) Order from [www.sunypress.edu](http://www.sunypress.edu) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

The anthology explores how both peace and environmental education can transform the way we think and what we value. It acknowledges the reciprocity between social violence and ecological degradation and advocates a holistic and integrated approach for educating towards a culture of social and ecological peace with each chapter offering illustrations of how understanding can be translated into educational practice.

### ***Conference workshops and papers***

*Creating Ripples: Education, Environment and Culture*, the Fall 2005 conference of the Canadian network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM), brought together an international gathering of environmental, outdoor and global educators with the hope that, enriched by their experiences at the conference, they would create ripples in their communities on their return. Global education, which integrates social and ecological issues, was selected as an important thematic strand for the conference. Here are a few selected samples of workshops and papers with the name and contact e-mail of the presenter.

#### **The banana unpeeled**

This workshop explored the environmental, human rights and development issues surrounding the production and international trade of bananas. A bilingual unit has been

developed as a model for global education. *Letitia Charbonneau, Global Education Network.* [info@perc.ca](mailto:info@perc.ca) [letitia507@rogers.com](mailto:letitia507@rogers.com) [www.global-ed.org/curriculum.htm](http://www.global-ed.org/curriculum.htm)

### **The global schools we need: Global challenges and school solutions**

The presentation focused on global trends that are affecting profound change in our world, how globalization is prompting major educational reform in Europe and North America and how schools can create initiatives to teach youth to be informed and active global citizens. *Brian O'Sullivan, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.* [bosullivan@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:bosullivan@oise.utoronto.ca)

### ***Strategies and networking for environmental justice within environmental education practice***

The purpose of the workshop was to share information and create strategies for supporting efforts towards environmental justice within environmental education. *Alison Neilson, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.* [aneilson@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:aneilson@oise.utoronto.ca)

### ***Environmental education and contemporary challenge***

The session took the position that our guiding and stabilizing authorities are values that are buried so deeply in our belief systems and lifestyles as to be transparent – unrecognizable on a daily basis. Real change will require disrupting these assumptions and putting the 'status quo' up for debate. *Bob Jickling, Lakehead University* [bob.jickling@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:bob.jickling@lakeheadu.ca)

## **News about civil society organizations (cso's)**

### **Global Commons Institute (GCI)**

Global Commons Institute is an independent group concerned with the protection of the global commons, the common heritage of all humanity. It contributes to the work of the UN Framework for a Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Proposed by the Global Commons Institute, contraction and convergence (CC) is increasingly seen as the 'Plan B' to rescue the struggling Kyoto Protocol. Martin Wright, who interviewed Aubrey Meyer, Director of the GCI summarizes Meyer's idea.

We need to cut carbon emissions to a level consistent with a liveable climate. That's the contraction bit. The fairest way to do this is to gradually converge the amount people are allowed to emit until every citizen in the world has an equal share. In practice this means we need to agree on a sustainable level of carbon in the atmosphere and a date by which we need to reach and hold that total. Then we set national emission ceilings according to population so as to meet the goal on the basis of equal shares for all. By allocating by region, one takes care of countries with small populations and high carbon emissions.

For more detail visit the GCI website [www.gci.org.uk](http://www.gci.org.uk) or read Aubrey Meyer's *Contraction and Convergence: The Global Solution to Climate Change*

### **Journal of Peace Education (JPE)**

The JPE is a multidisciplinary and intercultural journal which understands peace education as education for the achievement of a nonviolent, ecologically sustainable, just and participatory society. It invites articles which promote discussion on theories, research and practices in peace education in varied educational and cultural settings. The Journal is published by Taylor and Francis and sponsored by the Peace Education Commission of the International Peace Research Association. For further details on the journal visit [www.tandf.co.uk/journals](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals). Editorial correspondence should be addressed to the editor, Dr. John Synott <[J.synott@qut.edu.au](mailto:J.synott@qut.edu.au)>

### **TFF**

The Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research (TFF) is an independent and innovative think tank in peace research and conflict mitigation. Their mission is peace: learning how to handle with ever less violence conflicts against other human beings, other cultures and Nature. They believe that alternatives to the main trends of our time are desirable and possible. Visit their website at [www.transnational.org](http://www.transnational.org) for news and news analyses, new ideas, debates....

### **Forum on Religion and Ecology**

The Forum on Religion and Ecology works to engage the world's religions in dialogue on the global environmental crisis. Scholars of religious studies explore how historical and contemporary religious traditions respond to critical environmental concerns and lay ethical foundations for the protection of the Earth and other species. The forum has a website <http://environment.harvard.edu/religion> which includes resources for research, teaching and environmental action related to ten religious traditions. It also offers resources for educators, including syllabi on religion and ecology, a speaker's list, a guide to videos and CD-ROMs and educational links.

***We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future....To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.*** (from the *Preamble to the Earth Charter*)

# A plea and a challenge

## *Educators for Peace: A Poem Plea*

FRANCISCO GOMES DE MATOS, Ph. D. is an applied peace linguist from Recife, Brazil.

Educators, help promote literacies  
Both well-established, emerging and new  
So that more and more people everywhere  
Develop what, why, where, when, and how to do

May your educational wisdom  
Always help foster autonomy  
Please commit your learners  
to sustaining democracy

Please Promote Human Rights  
And corresponding Responsibilities  
So your classrooms become lights  
For equal and just opportunities

In Freirean ways inspiring  
You can teach reality reforming  
As part of Citizen forming  
And help with World transforming

Of Peace you can be agents  
In communities of creation:  
Classrooms and Libraries  
Integrated for humanization

May your profession contribute  
To School frontiers transcending  
So that learners East and West  
To shared values keep ascending

In the History of Education  
Relevant Pedagogies abound  
Make Peace through Teaching  
A powerful, permanent School sound!

### **Epe mission statement**

Founded in 1992, Earth & Peace Education Associates International (EPE) consists of a global network of educators who aim to promote the recognition of the reciprocal relationship between ecological degradation and the violation of human rights on a local, national and global level.

*Contextual sustainability*, the organizing principle underlying EPE's educational approach, defines this relationship. It assumes that the Earth is the primary context and essential foundation of all social activity and that ecological sustainability is key to achieving a culture of peace. Reciprocally, respect for human rights characterizes the social context essential to ecological sustainability.

EPE's educational activities facilitate the development of an *integrated* and *value-based* perspective on issues related to the achievement of a culture of social and ecological peace.

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## **Contributions to *Transitions***

We welcome contributions for the newsletter, e.g.

- accounts from your region that show the link between social violence and ecological destruction or the reverse – social and ecological peace
- reports on projects working for the development of sustainable, just, nonviolent, and participatory communities
- educational resources

Send to Anita Wenden, Editor at [wldyc@cunyvm.cuny.edu](mailto:wldyc@cunyvm.cuny.edu)

