



## EPE Transitions

Volume 2 Issue 2

November 2007

EPE *Transitions* aims to educate towards an understanding of the relationship between social and ecological peace—a prerequisite to effectively responding to social peacelessness and ecological degradation, such as climate change. It provides educational resources intended to contribute toward our global community's progress towards a society of institutions and norms based on nonviolence, ecological sustainability, social justice, intergenerational equity and participatory decision-making. You are invited to join the global network of educators working to bring about this transition. *Anita Wenden, Editor & Director of Peace Education and Research, EPE.*

### Contents

- Sustainability, sustainable, sustaining and peace (p.2)
- A community conversation on educating for global sustainability (p.4)
- Resources for integrative value-based learning (p.8)
- Notes on the emerging culture of peace (p. 14 )
- Resource directory: Call to participate (p.17)
- Contact information (p. 17 )

**“The environment,” wrote the late Ken Saro-Wiwa in a letter smuggled from his Nigerian jail cell, “is man's first right.”**

# Creating Sustainable Communities

**FRANS C. VERHAGEN, M. Div., M.I.A., Ph.D. is a sustainability sociologist, President of Earth and Peace Education Associates International (EPE), and director of its sustainability education and research program.**

SUSTAINABILITY, SUSTAINABLE, SUSTAINING AND PEACE:

## *A Clarification*

The terms ‘sustainability’, ‘sustainable’ and ‘sustaining’ often vary in meaning causing confusion to those of us who wish to educate or plan for sustainable communities. The confusion can be reduced to some extent if we remember that concepts are born, not in vacuum, but in a certain socio-political context. By tracing the socio-political origin and development of ‘sustainability’ it is possible to acquire a better understanding of this contested term, which, to many, may seem to be more a buzz word than an expression of a new way of looking at reality.

Sustainability was first used in the foreword to *Limits to Growth*, authored by Donella Meadows and her team at MIT in the early 1970’s. ‘Sustainability’, here, was considered a holistic concept, indicating a worldview that integrated the social, economic and ecological dimensions of reality. Also writing in the 70’s, William Ruckelshaus, the head of the new US Environmental Protection Agency, considered this worldview a conceptual revolution—a totally new way of conceiving reality and of planning and evaluating. He compared the significance of the sustainability revolution to the significance of the Agricultural Revolution of the late Neolithic and the Industrial Revolution of several hundred years ago. Again, sustainability was viewed holistically.

In the 1980’s, the Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, whose conclusions were widely accepted by the international community, brought a new meaning to the term with the introduction of the notion ‘sustainable development’, which became an economic development paradigm for third world countries. ‘Sustainable development’ emphasized economic growth, underemphasized social concerns, and limited the notion of sustainability to its ecological dimension. It became the hook on which the various meanings of development could be hung. Being ambiguous, one can argue, the term found wide acceptance on account of that ambiguity. This usage of sustainability as economic development with an ecological dimension was further reinforced by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development also known as the Earth Summit) held in Rio in June 1992. In government documents resulting from the conference, development was viewed primarily in economic terms giving only a

secondary emphasis to the environment, though the conference's official title took the environment as its focus.

Presently, in common parlance, sustainability is understood to mean ecological sustainability. Speaking of life styles, people may refer to them as being sustainable in the meaning of environmentally friendly. If a company takes environmentally sound steps, it is considered by many to be sustainable.

Though never completely absent from various discussions since the 1970s, the holistic notion of sustainability was re-introduced and refined by the author at a peace conference in Bethel, Kansas (in the early 1990's) in a paper on contextual sustainability, which proposed a values approach for understanding sustainability. 'Contextual sustainability' 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, in other words, a society whose norms are based on the following values, i.e. nonviolence, social justice, intergenerational equity and participatory decisionmaking. Viewed from this perspective, *contextual sustainability* is another way of understanding peace.

**“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.”  
Martin Luther King**



# Guest column

## **A Community Conversation on Educating for Global Sustainability held in Hartford, Connecticut June 2007**

**Report by Mary Lee Morrison Ph.D., Founding Director, Pax Educare, Inc., The Connecticut Center for Peace Education**

Out of concern that our present pedagogical efforts so often do not provide our students with appropriate skills to deal with complex problems using systems approaches, and out of deep concern for the future of our planet, a group of educators, part of a loose association called CACE, Connecticut Alliance of Concerned Educators, applied for and received funding for a Community Conversation on educating for global sustainability. Our Conversation was held in June 2007, hosted by Watkinson School, a local private, independent day school in Hartford, Connecticut, one of whose administrators was on our planning team, and who is the board chair of Pax Educare, Inc. Our aim was to integrate our work into the educational initiatives occurring worldwide through UNESCO and the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

Our concerns were that the complex nature of understanding and dealing with global sustainability requires educational approaches which move beyond focusing exclusively on issues related to the environment. A more holistic approach is needed, to include issues of economics, peace and justice and social concerns. Youth need to feel that their actions can have an impact on making change, in the midst of issues that are quite complex and can engender difficult emotions, such as fear and helplessness.

Funding for the Conversation was provided by the League of Women Voters of Connecticut, whose funding came from a Connecticut based family foundation, the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund. The LWV provided mentoring throughout the planning process. The planning team consisted of 20 individuals, educators from both formal and informal settings, students and concerned individuals from the community. We tried to get as much diversity as possible in our planning team, ethnically, geographically, socioeconomically and in age.

Each member was charged with the task of extending specific invitations to 5 individuals to the Conversation, keeping in mind our goal of diversity. We had additional publicity in the form of a web site, a newspaper notice and publicity among each of the planning team's own networks. We ended up with over 90 people at the event, representing a culturally and economically diverse group, including teachers, school administrators, students, parents, home schoolers and immigrants. We had children as young as age 2 participating.

The aim was not to provide the audience with solutions, but the purpose of the Conversation was to give a space, within a uniform format throughout small groups and large group gatherings, to voice concerns and to come up with ideas of how to address issues related to education for global sustainability. Some of the ideas we incorporated were based on the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Toolkit (web site listed below).

One of the challenges we faced was the use of the term “sustainability”. It means many things to different people. We tried hard to define this, within the context of our using it. The idea of the Conversation was to not provide a forum/outlet for fear, anger and hopelessness, but to focus on positive, concrete ways individuals within their own communities might move forward in the light of the very many global challenges we face with regard to our planetary future.

The following queries guided our planning:

- (1) what kind of lifestyle would we like for ourselves and for our children 20-40 years hence?
- (2) what will the world community need to be like to deal with resource scarcity?
- (3) what kind of education do our children need to cope with these issues?
- (4) what can we do locally to begin implementing changes in education to provide our children with the capacities to deal with the future?

The Conversation lasted 4 hours. We gathered in the late afternoon for a light meal, provided by a local vegan juice bar, whose owner was part of the planning team. Food served was organic and locally grown. Networking began over food, and soon after we gathered for a large group introduction, in the school’s attractive amphitheater, beginning with a brief power point. This powerpoint was developed by a key member of the planning team, who is also at this time maintaining the web site (listed below). The idea was to help people understand, as much as possible in a brief time, some of the complexities of the issues, without engendering fear and a feeling of powerlessness.

Participants had been divided into small groups of about 20 each prior to the event to maximize diversity in age, gender, socio-economic status, ethnic and culture. Moderators for each group had gone through a 5-hour training with the funding organization, and each group had a recorder who also had been trained.

The planners had come up with four choices for the conversation that were introduced into each group, each of which was more like a focus for points of discussion, to guide group dialogue: curriculum, school community, green schools and community programs. Any or all of these topics could be addressed within each group setting. Ground rules for each group were set, including equal participation, listening with respect, each person having an opportunity to speak, agreeing to disagree, disagree with ideas, not people and to stay on task. One of the tasks in each group was to come up with areas of agreement, to find common ground, as well as disagreement.

Following the small group discussions, we convened again as a whole and groups reported back on their process, listing key areas which would point toward future action steps. The newsprint sheets were taken home and data was compiled by a member of the planning team. The results fell into 5 following areas for future action, emailed out to the list of participants, i.e.:

- 1. Dialogue/advocacy with policy makers who may have stakes in education for sustainability**
- 2. Develop activities to better address the needs of low income communities with respect to education for sustainability**
- 3. Develop community programs through libraries, community centers and senior centers**
- 4. Share strong existing school programs with other schools that have less developed sustainability programs**
- 5. Set up home schoolers' network for sharing resources and curricular ideas**

A follow-up gathering was held in October, this time held intentionally at a space in one of the lower income neighborhoods of Hartford. About a third of the former participants came, and an additional few participated who had not been part of the first group. The idea of this gathering was to continue the energy and momentum by encouraging participants to, in turn, organize their own community conversations and action projects, thus creating a sort of “domino effect”. Using a similar, though scaled down format as the June Conversation but focusing on the five action areas developed at the June Conversation, participants self selected particular groups. After a couple of hours of discussions, concrete action steps were identified. A sample of what emerged follows.

**1. Dialogue/Advocacy group-**focus on the university and K-12 schools, building on the strengths of initiatives that are already underway, including the “greening” of several area colleges and collaboration on peace studies initiatives to include sustainability. An intentional commitment to share ideas and resources among institutions was pledged.

**2. Addressing the Needs of Low Income Communities-** the group decided to start “small” with a painted trash can project (with the tentative name “Yo limpio Frog Hollow”) to initially be limited to specific blocks and then consider subsequently scaling up the project, involving as many community members as possible in this largely Latino neighborhood in Hartford.

**3. Community Programs-** sponsor Sustainability Support Groups using the book *The Low Carbon Diet - How to Loose 5,000 Pounds* as a template for groups to model. By January 2008 the group set a goal of launching a minimum of five simultaneous support

groups in different towns in the Greater Hartford region.

**4. Share Existing School Programs/Working With Home Schooling Networks**-these groups combined, since similar motivation and interests emerged. The use of the internet as a tool for sharing and networking emerged as a strong theme. One member volunteered to work on the development of a web site.

*My thanks to Bill Upholt for material used in this report.*

Community Conversation web site: <http://home.comcast.net/~upholt/>  
UNESCO Sustainability Toolkit <http://www.esdtoolkit.org/>

**"I know no safe depository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves," Thomas Jefferson wrote, "and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion."**

## **Graduation pledge of social & environmental responsibility**

I ,....., pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of any job opportunity I consider and will try to improve these aspects of any organizations for which I work.

Begun in 1987 at California's Humboldt State University, the Graduation Pledge is intended to be taken by students at commencement ceremonies. The commitment is voluntary and students determine for themselves what they consider to be socially and environmentally responsible. The pledge has been headquartered in Manchester College since 1966. For more information, visit [www.sageworks.net/pages/gradpledge.html](http://www.sageworks.net/pages/gradpledge.html)

# Resources for integrative value-based learning

A value framework for critical thinking about  
social and ecological realities

Listed below are the 12 principles of the *Charter for a Nonviolent World*, excerpted from a preliminary draft that grew out of the annual World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates sponsored by the Republic of Italy (Rome) and the Gorbachev Foundation. Do they recognize the Earth Charter values listed in the value framework? i.e. ecological sustainability, nonviolence, social justice, intergenerational equity, participatory decisionmaking?

Use the questions in the box to evaluate the principles from the perspectives of these five values. Which of the values from the framework are included? given most prominence? And which are not? Reflect on your evaluation and decide how the Charter should be revised to include all of these core values.

## **DO THE CHARTER'S NONVIOLENCE PRINCIPLES REFER TO:**

### ***Ecological sustainability***

- preserving and protecting Earth's resources & her life-supporting system and various forms of natural life
- the effect of human actions on these resources and life support systems
- remediating the ill effects of these actions

### ***Nonviolence***

- sources of violence
- how to avoid potential outbreaks of conflict
- nonviolent means of dealing with conflict

### ***Social Justice***

- the equitable distribution of power and wealth
- equal access by all to what human rights allow
- the violation of human rights

### ***Intergenerational equity***

- the effect of human activities that harm Earth systems on the future well-being of the planet,



people, and social stability and harmony *in the future*

**Participatory decision-making**

- the participation of civil society in decisions on issues that affect their quality of life

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

*Charter for a World Without Violence: 12 principles*

Convinced that adherence to the principles of nonviolence will usher in a more peaceful, civilized world order in which more effective and fair governance, respectful of human dignity and the sacredness of life itself may become a reality, the authors of the document invite members of the global community to live by the following 12 principles:

*First*

In an interdependent world, the prevention and cessation of armed conflict between and within States requires the collective action of the international community, which in turn requires strengthening the reforms of the UN system as well as regional cooperative organizations in order to empower it and to advance a system of global security.

*Second*

To achieve a world without violence, States must abide by the rule of law and honor their legal agreements.

*Third*

It is essential to eliminate nuclear and other immoral weapons of mass destruction through legal prohibitions which must be universal, verifiable and enforceable. States possessing such weapons are morally bound to ensure no such weapons of mass murder will ever be used. There is a universal obligation of all states to conclude negotiations toward the elimination of nuclear weapons.

*Fourth*

To reduce violence in society, the production and sale of small arms and light weapons should be reduced and strictly controlled at international, state and local levels. In addition there should be full and universal enforcement of international disarmament agreements and support for new efforts aimed at the eradication of the impact of victim-activated and indiscriminate weapons.

*Fifth*

We strongly condemn terrorism because violence begets violence. The struggle against terrorism cannot, however, justify violation of human rights, international humanitarian law, civilized norms, and democracy.

*Sixth*

Ending domestic and family violence requires unconditional respect for the equality, freedom, dignity, and rights of women, men and children by all individuals, institutions of the state, religion and civil society. Such protections must be embodied in laws and conventions at local and international levels.

*Seventh*

Every individual and state shares responsibility to prevent violence against children and youth, our common future and most precious gift, and to advance educational opportunities, access to primary health care, personal safety, social protection, and an enabling environment that reinforces nonviolence as a way of life rather than a Utopian dream. Peace education should be part of the school curriculum.

*Eighth*

Preventing conflicts arising from the depletion of natural resources, in particular sources of energy and water, requires States to affirmatively and, through creation of legal mechanisms and standards, provide for the protection of the environment and the adjustment of their consumption on the basis of resource availability and real human needs.

*Ninth*

We call on the international community and states to consider ways and means of promoting the meaningful accommodation of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in multi-community national states. A golden rule of a non-violent world: Treat others as you wish to be treated.

*Tenth*

The principal political tools, for bringing into being a non-violent world are dialogue, negotiation, compromise, conducted on the basis of balance between the interests of the parties involved, but also taking into consideration concerns relating to the entirety of humanity.

*Eleventh*

All states must devote sufficient resources to address the integrity in the distribution of economic resources, and resolve gross inequities which create a fertile ground for violence.

Twelfth

Civil society in all its articulations must be recognized as essential to building a non-violent world. Conditions should be created to enable and encourage civil society participation in political processes at the global and local level – this includes ensuring the empowerment and protection of human rights defenders, peace and environmental activists whose activities often place them at risk.

November 19, 2006

## Earth Scouts

Earth Scouts is a new national program developed by Earth Charter USA that inspires boys and girls from 3 to 13 years of age to:

- 1) Imagine a community where children and youth appreciate one another's differences
- 2) Have awe and a sense of wonder about nature and the cosmos
- 3) Engage in making their school and community better
- 4) Value independence and cooperation
- 5) Seek peaceful solutions to problems
- 6) Welcome new knowledge and experiences

Printed on Earth Scout badges are the Earth Charter values: universal human rights, eliminating poverty (economic justice), participatory democracy, respect for nature and a culture of peace. The Earth Scout slogan, 'Changing the World One Fun Badge at a Time', was developed by a 10-year old member of the design group, who suggested the slogan be in 'kid talk'.

Earth Scouts was developed by volunteers, including parents, youth, educators, artists and other enthusiastic community members. From their exercises and activities, we have developed the *Earth Scouts Facilitators Guide*, which provides guidelines and examples for each of the 16 principles of the Earth Charter. Parents and youth can develop their awareness of the interdependence of all life and the interrelatedness of all issues through these experiences as well as those designed themselves. For example, to understand the

principle, *Eradicate poverty as an economic, social and moral imperative*, and put it into action, an Earth Scout may:

- 1) develop a relationship with migrant farmer's child
- 2) learn the difference between organic and non-organic farming
- 3) understand the connection of migrant poverty to agribusiness
- 4) engage in experiences that illuminate the gender role difference between males and females in the migrant camp and discrimination of migrant farmers in their community
- 5) take action to buy locally produced food
- 6) advocate for changes that benefit migrant farmers

You are invited to help grow Earth Scouts nationally and globally. You may form or join an Earth Scouts Group of several families and youth. Or you may come an Earth Scouts Family in which just family members structure relevant exercises and activities to learn and act on the Earth Charter principles. Please share with us as you add your own ideas to the Guide so we may let others know and build it further. For more information, visit [www.earthscouts.org](http://www.earthscouts.org) or call Earth Charter US at (813) 254-8454

## Resurrection School: A Peaceable School

*“Our Vision is to nurture and affirm the Resurrection School students as positive peacemakers and successful academic students through the teaching of peacemaking skills in the context of God’s first story – The Universe Story.”* (Vision Statement)

In downtown Jersey City this small Catholic elementary school is making a huge impact! Students, teachers, administrators, parents and family members are striving to effect changes which are wide and deep. This dedicated school community is committed to developing skills and forming habits leading to inner peace, peace with others and peace with our earth.

Under the direction of two dynamic administrators: Sister Eleanor Uhl, OP, Principal and Sister Barbara Nesbihal, SC, Peace Coordinator and an energetic, committed faculty the students participate in learning experiences and activities that relate to both the greening of their environment and the prevention/ management of conflicts in the school community, including:

- regularly scheduled classroom Peace Circle meetings, facilitated by teachers. The children discuss things relating to their life in the classroom. (Family Peace Circle meetings are also held at the beginning of the new school year)
- the Botany Club developed and maintains a Peace Garden with indigenous plants visible alongside the school building – a space for reflection and solitude.
- Peer Mediators are available daily as the need arises and the Peace Coordinator mediates disagreements between colleagues or between teacher and parent. The

- mediators also present seasonal peace projects to the student body.
- honoring five adults from the area with the *Vision of Peace Award* at the Annual Harvest Festival. They are cited for inspiring others with their works of justice and peace.

In October 2006 Resurrection School became the first faith-based school in New Jersey to join the *Green Flag, Green Faith Program*. This interfaith initiative assists and monitors the school in operating in an environmentally healthy manner. The school named an environmental health team of students, teachers, parents who along with the administrators serve as a liaison between the school and the program and they also guide implementation of the various endeavors. Conservation techniques are taught and experts in the field of environmental health connect with the school community to offer advice and give presentations. As the outcomes of this project become more visible the school then serves as a model of environmental health within the community.

Members of this school community describe their efforts as a ‘work in progress’ and are well aware of the long road ahead to full integration of social and ecological peacemaking. However, in the last few years students and adults alike are increasingly connecting the peacemaking dots. For example, this year, after each event held, administrators, faculty and students are asking the questions: “How was this peace-filled; how was this ‘green’? What more can we do next time?” Indeed, why aren’t all of us asking these same questions?

**For more information contact S.Barbara Nesbihal, SC, Peace Coordinator. Tel 201 653 1699.**

## Behleem’s Peace Music Projects

Behleem’s peace music projects are an expression of Muhammad Iqbal Behleem’s commitment to spread global peace through music. Completed with contributions from his friends, artists from all around the world, they represent a hope for peace and a better world for our children and the generations to come.

The following are details on music projects completed in 2007 with the website where you can access them.

### 1) WORLD PRAYER FOR PEACE BY ALL ARTISTS 2007

A World Peace Prayer by 141 Artists from 34 Countries Praying for Peace Together  
<http://www.behleem.com/prayer2007.html>

### 2) PLANT MORE TREES

An environmental song made to support of UNEP (UN Environment Program) and part of a Billion Tree CD, which will be available soon on the UNEP website, along with a school kit. Lyrics are by Ashok Chakravarthy-India  
<http://www.behleem.com/trees.html>

### 3) ) MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH

A world peace song with lyrics by Tatomir Ion-Marius, Romania  
<http://www.behleem.com/maypeaceprevailonearth.html>

For more information on the project visit <http://www.behleem.com>  
You may also contact Muhammad, who welcomes your comments and feedback, at  
[iqbal\\_behleem@yahoo.com](mailto:iqbal_behleem@yahoo.com) or [ibehleem@gmail.com](mailto:ibehleem@gmail.com)

## PUBLICATIONS

*Urban Poverty and Development in the 21st Century: Towards an inclusive and sustainable world.* This research report argues that civil society, national governments, the private sector, and the international development community should harness the positive features of urbanisation (such as the potential for progressive changes in social, political, and economic relations) to create a more inclusive and sustainable global society.

<http://publications.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam/display.asp?K=e2007020814244902>

*Fair Trade: A Beginner's Guide* reveals why Fair Trade means more than just bananas coffee and chocolate. Author and activist, Jacqueline DeCarlo explains the principles behind Fair Trade and its development into a powerful economic tool. Packed with inspiring ways to make a difference, this book will encourage readers of all backgrounds to help end poverty, environmental destruction and human exploitation.

Order from [www.oneworld-publications.com](http://www.oneworld-publications.com)

*Reflective Peacebuilding: A Planning, Monitoring and Learning Toolkit* (John Paul Lederach, Reina Neufeldt, & Hal Culbertson) is designed to improve peacebuilders' abilities to learn before, during and after interventions in unpredictable conflict contexts. The tools were devised by practitioners and scholar-practitioners for use at the community level. They have had hands-on testing with practitioners from around the globe and can either stand alone or augment established design, monitoring, evaluation and learning systems and practices.

The toolkit was developed over several years as part of a learning collaboration between faculty and students at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame and Catholic Relief Services program staff in the Southeast, East Asia and Pacific Region (CRS SEAPRO). Electronic copies of the toolkit are available online at <http://kroc.nd.edu/> and <http://www.crs.org/publications/peacebuilding.cfm>

**Notes from the emerging culture of social and ecological peace**

## Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction in Nepal

*The following is a letter from Manish Thapa, Coordinator of the Nepal Peace Initiative Alliance sent to [CPIDiscussion@yahoogroups.com](mailto:CPIDiscussion@yahoogroups.com) (4/4/07) on behalf of ASPECT Asia [www.aspectasia.org](http://www.aspectasia.org)*

Dear Friends & Colleagues

Namaste

I would like to share with you exciting news from Nepal, especially about one of the initiatives that I launched in Nepal.

As most of you know, I have been lobbying for a state level Ministry/Department of Peace in Nepal since 2005. I formed a coalition, known as the "Nepal Peace Initiative Alliance", of 13 organizations which turned my initiative into a truly civil society movement as this coalition consists of NGOs, Academic Institutions, Media Organizations, Faith Based Organizations and Students Organizations including almost all sectors in Nepal. One of our basic objective was lobbying with the Government as well as with Maoist Insurgents at that time to start a dialogue to resolve the conflict in Nepal and to create a state level Department of Peace (we thought at that point that creation of whole Ministry would be impossible so we demanded at least a Department within a Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs).

Our initiative was further fueled when we were invited to join for the creation of the Global Alliance for Ministries & Departments of Peace ([www.mfp-dop.org](http://www.mfp-dop.org)) which aims to provide support as well as exchange of ideas and experience for lobbying for such departments & ministries worldwide.

When we achieved our first objectives - dialogue between the Maoists and the 7 key political parties, we actively supported the April Revolution which was instrumental in restoring the democracy in Nepal.

Afterwards we were in constant dialogue with 7 key Political Parties and Maoists for their support of the creation of a Department of Peace. We had a meeting with the chief advisor of the Prime Minister, leading political leaders, civil society leaders and international NGOs. We also had a very fruitful and positive dialogue with Maoist leaders and their student bodies and we stressed the need for such a Department in Nepal especially when Nepal is in a transition phase to restore peace, democracy and rule of law. Similarly we also stressed the instrumental role such a department can play in the reconstruction and reconciliation process without which the entire peace process will be of no use.

We were assured by both sides that they liked the idea and they were thinking

about it. To our surprise, on 31st March, 2007, at a meeting of key political leaders, it was decided to create a Ministry of Peace & Reconstruction. We thank all the political leaders and political parties for this step.

Now we can proudly say that we are among the first country along with Solomon Island to have such Ministry in place in governmental structures. There are more than 20 countries including USA, UK, Canada, Uganda, Costa Rica, Australia, where there are active campaigns for lobbying for a state level Ministry/Department of Peace.

We would like to thank all our supporters, well wishers and especially to Global Alliance for this success. Now we are redefining our strategies for a better & prosperous Nepal.

Thanking you all,

Manish Thapa  
Coordinator  
Nepal Peace Initiative Alliance  
<http://www.aspectasia.org/>

### Sustainable disarmament for sustainable development

On November 11 – 12, 2007, the International Peace Bureau (IPB) in cooperation with the Institute for Peace Studies, Bibliotheca Alexandrina. [www.peacestudiesinstitute.org](http://www.peacestudiesinstitute.org) organized an international seminar to consider the relationship between sustainable development and sustainable disarmament, as part of the IPB's broader project on this topic. Through this work the Bureau is building a global network whose aim will be to:

- 1) encourage states to shift resources away from military spending and towards greater investment in sustainable development;
- 2) draw attention to the negative impact of weapons on the development process and to promote disarmament; and
- 3) integrate these efforts into peace and social justice campaigns around the world.

The meeting brought together experts and advocates, diplomats and students, journalists and civil society representatives from many countries. For information on the outcome of the seminar visit the IPB website at [www.ipb.org](http://www.ipb.org)

### Voice of the People

Gallup International's unique survey 'Voice of the People' is dedicated to interviewing a representative sample of the population in more than 60 countries around the world. In this way, the views and attitudes of more than 1.5 billion global citizens can be taken into account in important decision-making. 'Voice of the People' is already regarded as a highly respected tool by many global institutions. For example, global politicians,



business leaders and key NGOs now regularly discuss results from the ‘Voice of the People’ at the annual Davos meeting of the World Economic Forum. For more information, see [www.voice-of-the-people.net](http://www.voice-of-the-people.net)

## International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility

There are many issues that confront scientists and engineers in today's world. These include weapons of mass destruction, genetic engineering, biotechnology, global warming and climate change, food supplies and agricultural production, energy use and alternative energy development, and pollution and health issues. How does one approach such issues from the perspective of global responsibility?

The Council members of the International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility are a dedicated group that is making its voice heard on the ethical uses of science and technology for disarmament and sustainable development. The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation has helped to foster the work of this international organization since its inception more than 15 years ago.

If you would like to find out more about their work and become involved in it, visit them online at <http://www.inesglobal.com/>

## A resource directory: Call to participate

EPE is in the process of developing a resource directory of educators and researchers whose educational work focuses on both social and ecological peace. The directory will be posted on the EPE website [www.globalepe.org](http://www.globalepe.org) for those who seek guidance and resources in integrating peace and environmental/sustainability education. Educators listed in the directory will also receive an electronic copy providing them with access to the expertise of colleagues in this field and opportunities to participate in joint projects of their choice. If you would like your name included in the directory, send the following information to Anita Wenden [wenden@rcn.com](mailto:wenden@rcn.com)

- (1) your name, institutional affiliation and contact email **and**
- (2) a brief description of educational projects aimed to promote social and ecological peace in which you are or have been involved

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.

EPE contact

Earth & Peace Education Associates International (EPE)  
97-37 63<sup>rd</sup> Rd 15e, Rego Park, N.Y. 11374;  
718 275 3932 (tel & fax)  
[info@globalepe.org](mailto:info@globalepe.org)  
[www.globalepe.org](http://www.globalepe.org)

Frans C. Verhagen, President and Director of Sustainability Education and Research  
[Gaia1@rcn.com](mailto:Gaia1@rcn.com)

Anita L. Wenden, Editor of *Transitions* and Director of Peace Education and Research  
[wenden@rcn.com](mailto:wenden@rcn.com)

*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 [wenden@rcn.com](mailto:wenden@rcn.com)



"The vast possibilities of our great future  
will become realities only if we make  
ourselves responsible for that future."

Gifford Pinchot (1st Chief of U.S. Forest Service)

