



EPE Transitions

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Transitions, the e-educational resource of 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, intergenerational equity 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. *Anita Wenden, Editor* < wenden@rcn.com >

CONTENTS

- **Carbon offsets and the climate crisis (p.2)**
- **Biocratic education (p. 4)**
- **Resources for integrative value-based learning (p. 6)**
- **News about educational civil society organizations (p. 10)**
- **A plea and a challenge (p.13)**
- **Contact information (p.14)**

Be the change you want to see in the world.

Mohandas Gandhi

Creating Sustainable Communities

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CARBON OFFSETS AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS

In April 2008 representatives of more than 160 countries began formal negotiations in Bangkok, Thailand, on a treaty to address climate change, with the secretary general of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, urging governments to help in saving the planet. “Saving our planet requires you to be ambitious in what you aim, and, equally, in how hard you work to reach your goal,” Mr. Ban told delegates in a recorded video message. The weeklong meeting laid out the agenda for the talks, which are scheduled to conclude at the end of 2009.

One of the main challenges for negotiators will be reintroducing the United States to a global system of emissions reductions. The United States signed but never ratified the Kyoto Protocol, the 1997 agreement that binds wealthy countries to make specific cuts in greenhouse gases. The new treaty would follow the Kyoto Protocol after its binding terms expire in 2012.

A rancorous meeting in Bali (December 2007) exposed deep fissures over how countries plan to approach global warming. Some countries disagree over what role wealthy and poor countries should play in reducing emissions. And even among wealthy countries there is significant discord. Countries also disagree on how much to compensate developing countries for their efforts in reducing global warming. The agreement reached at that meeting called for wealthier countries to help finance cleaner-burning energy technologies and non-fossil-fuel alternatives in developing countries.

The United Nations calculates that at least \$200 billion will be needed by 2030 for these changes. As a measure of the enormous potential shortfall, the world’s wealthiest country, the United States, has so far proposed to contribute only \$2 billion over two years.

While governments attempt to resolve their differences and move forward with a global plan for mitigating or adjusting to the impacts of climate change, what can youngsters do, in school and at home, to become constructive international participants in responding to this most urgent social and ecological problem and challenge of our time?

One ongoing activity for youngsters and their families is to measure their *carbon footprint* and to reduce it. A carbon footprint refers to the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) their daily activities emit. To measure these total daily emissions, they first list their daily activities and then visit a carbon offset organization such as www.carbonfund.org, where they will find a carbon calculator which determines the GHG's emitted for each one. Once their baseline GHG emission total is added up, a family can start discussing how they can reduce it. They can even develop a carbon budget for one year or develop a cap to be reached over several years. For example, how can they use electricity more efficiently? reduce temperatures for heat or air conditioning? use mass transit, tune up the car and drive less to reduce emissions of car travel? David Gershon's *Low Carbon Diet*, listed with the educational resources in *Transitions* 2(1), shows how a family can lose 5000 pounds of CO₂ in 30 days.

However serious a family or school becomes in reducing its carbon footprint, humans will always produce GHG gases, particularly, CO₂. A second activity, therefore, is for youngsters and families to engage in buying *carbon offsets*. This means paying for the carbon emissions that one is (not yet) able to avoid, e.g., by car and air travel. Personally, I have cut air travel by one third in the last two years and I have offset my remaining GHG emissions of air and car travel by sending \$10 per 1000 miles to two organizations in Africa: the Center for Democracy and Peace in Sierra Leone www.cdpeace.com and the Solar Energy Lighting Fund www.self.org which provides simple solar electric equipment for rural residents. By supporting these organizations to produce a more ecologically sound energy system, which reduces GHG emissions, I am able, therefore, to offset to a certain degree the impact of the carbon emissions emitted when I travel. There are over 100 different carbon offset organizations by now, both for profit and non-profit, which accept payments of different amounts to offset carbon emissions. They invest in planting trees, renewable energy projects or technologies etc., all of which reduce carbon emissions. Investing in carbon offsets from these organizations, therefore, is an investment in a more ecologically sound energy system that leads to greater well being of people and planet. (For a comparison of 12 of these organizations, visit <http://www.carbonify.com/finder/offset-tag-companies.htm>)

Unfortunately, however, many carbon offset organizations do not invest in carbon reducing projects in agricultural societies in the global South though it is these societies that are the planet's ecological creditors, while it is the industrialized societies in the global North, who are its ecological debtors. In fact, it is the pollution emitted as part of the North's industrialization over the last two hundred years which is the main cause of human-produced or anthropogenic GHG emissions. Thus, it is only fair that citizens in the global North push these organizations to invest funds from carbon offsets in the global South, where people have the hardest time adjusting to the rising temperatures that lead to poor crops, increased food prices, insufficient water, unpredictable weather, coastal flooding, etc. Such advocacy can be a third activity for schools and families. Some students, particularly in high school, may even advocate for members of the Chicago Climate Exchange (CCX), which was launched five years ago and which is providing a national carbon emissions trading program in the U.S., to direct the potential

environmental and economic benefits of establishing a national carbon offsets market to the developing world.

A fourth activity, which would include both carbon foot printing and carbon offsetting, is the recent emergence in the UK and increasingly in the USA of *Carbon Reduction Action Groups* (CRAGGERS) <http://www.carbonrationing.org.uk/maryland> . These groups are based upon geography, age or other criterion are being formed to assist members to become ever more efficient at carbon reduction by mutual support or criticism. Why not start one in the school or in the neighborhood? It will be fun to compete with oneself, other group members and other Craggers in developing an ever simpler life style where being more is considered more important than having more.

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

Guest column

What is Biocratic Education?

Christopher Hrynkow is Lecturer in Catholic Studies and in the Social Foundations of Education at the Arthur V. Mauro Centre for Peace and Justice, University of Manitoba

In *The Dream of the Earth*, geologist Thomas Berry writes poignantly about the contextual importance of a movement beyond democracy to biocracy. Berry defines a biocratic future as “a period of mutually enhancing human-earth relationships.” To constitute this reality, the institutional features of even the best liberal democracies would have to be “greened” in such a way that the larger-life community would be able to participate in the human decision making processes. Within this expanded moral context, human affairs would gain their meaning through intercommunion. Value and worth would then mark all professions, occupations and activities, precisely to the degree that they enhance and contribute to the larger life community. For, in Berry’s estimation, it is only when we take our cues “from the very structure and functioning of the universe [that] we can have confidence in the future that awaits the human venture.”

Viewing teaching as a key profession in this regard, biocratic education seeks to foster a complex notion of intercommunion. This vision embraces not only a space for the participation of diverse people and groups, in line with the imperatives of democratic or multicultural education, but also makes a place for the natural world within the classroom. The enlarging of the moral community is seen as contextually necessary given the realities of the present earth crisis.

For instance, today, the wealthy are living in a manner that, if adopted by the entire world's human population, would lead to ecological collapse and perhaps even to our own extinction. In that ecological collapse could precipitate the end of *homo sapiens* on this planet, our current way of being in the world is often termed suicidal. As Dennis O'Hara of the University of Toronto's Centre for the Environment argues, over consumption by the wealthy should also be considered homicidal because it is the economically poorest members of the human family, those least responsible for the current malaise, that are bearing the heaviest burden of the ecological crisis.

Even if the vast majority of humans could somehow survive ecological collapse, it would nonetheless remain a tragedy, as we would have destroyed the life processes that sustained and created us over millennia. In line with this reasoning, Berry terms our tendencies towards greed and over consumption as "pathological." In support of this characterization, Berry posits that as we lose biodiversity we are, in a real sense, losing ourselves by destroying humanity's essential existential reference point in the natural world.

Biocratic education seeks to use the power of insight to transform this situation. The approach engages the clout of learning to heal the social pathology that is ruinous to the creative functioning of life on this planet. Herein, diversity is viewed as a strength. A biocratic methodology of peace education does not seek artificial placidity. Rather, biocratic education actively works to create space for dynamic learning. Such a vibrant approach has the potential to reform destructive and pathological tendencies in the discourses educators both present and model for students.

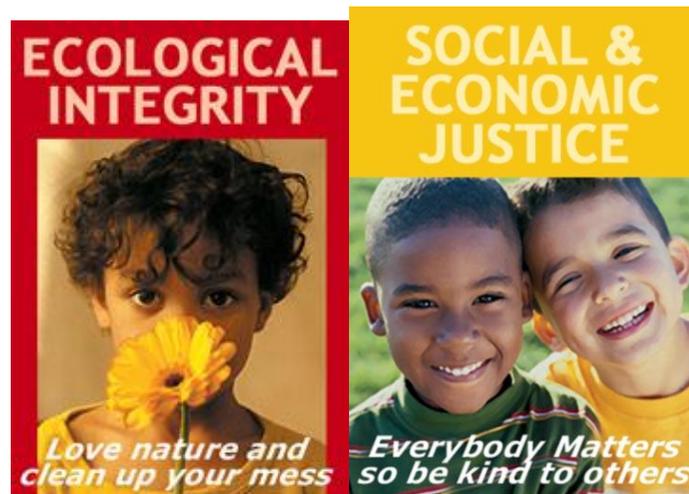
Because biocratic education works on the level of insight, at first glance it may seem overly abstract. Yet, the approach cannot and must not remain an abstraction if it is to be transformative. It follows that an essential premise of biocratic education is that a realization of the fractured nature of the current human-earth relationship will lead to changes in behaviours that address injustice on multiple levels.

In practical terms, this transformative potential of biocratic education rests on attentiveness. As part of my own teaching in the Social Foundations of Education at the University of Manitoba, I have been given a mandate to raise future teachers' awareness of larger social phenomenon that will affect their work. Starting with the realization that moral neutrality is not an option, and working together as a learning community, we interact with issues surrounding class, ethnicity, culture and gender in a discursive format. The section of the course under my charge ends with a discussion of biocratic education.

In their reflections on the course, despite being trained in diverse subject areas, many students choose to comment on how a biocratic perspective will inform their teaching careers. Most of these reflections deal with a form of attentiveness. So that, just as these future educators demonstrate a firm ambition to model good contemporary democratic behaviour by being attentive to issues surrounding class, ethnicity, culture and gender, they also commit to walk lightly on the earth. There is no disconnect between these goals for a biocratic teacher. Indeed, in my experience, such holistic attentiveness is a crucial part of what most teacher-candidates view as their fundamental responsibility to a diverse and sustainable future.

Chris Hrynkow

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Resources for integrative value-based learning

A value framework for critical thinking about social and ecological realities

Anita L. Wenden

The values listed in the box (p.7) are based on the Earth Charter's ethical principles. They offer different perspectives on the conflict over the planned extension of a rail line

between Shanghai's middle class citizens and the government described in the short article that follows.

Use the questions in the box to have students critically analyze and evaluate the situation and then ask them to decide whether the Chinese government should proceed with the plan to extend Shanghai's rail lines.

Ecological sustainability

- How will Earth's resources, her life-supporting systems be affected by the planned extension of Shanghai's rail line?
- Have plans been made to prevent or remediate possible ill effects of extending it ?

Nonviolence

- Have the plans to extend the rail line led to conflict? If yes, between which groups? Why?
- Was the conflict ignored?
- If not, what means were taken by the government to resolve it? by the Shanghai's middle class citizens? Was physical force or aggression used? psychological violence? Or nonviolent means? If so, what were they and who used these various forms of resolving conflict?
- Has the conflict been resolved? If not, why not?

Social Justice

- In choosing to extend the rail line through a middle class neighborhood, was the government's power and wealth being used to benefit all the groups in the area? If not, what groups would suffer? Which of their human rights would be violated ? Which groups would benefit? How?

Intergenerational equity

- How will urban projects such as the planned rail line extension affect the wellbeing of future generations? Consider their effects on (1) Earth's life supporting systems and on (2) social stability and harmony.

Participatory decision-making

- In dealing with this problem, have the concerns of individuals and groups who will be affected by the extended rail line 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)

Plan to Extend Shanghai Rail Lines Stirs Middle Class to Protest

SHANGHAI — Yang Yang, a 29-year-old saleswoman, had never imagined herself in the role of advocate. But when she learned from her housing development's electronic bulletin board of the city's plans to extend Shanghai's futuristic magnetic levitation*, or maglev, train line within 30 yards of her house, she was angered about the effect on property values and began networking with other middle-class opponents both in her neighborhood and all along the planned train route. The new maglev line is planned on the right side of the Ding Pu River, prompting protest from residents on both shores.

*** Magnetic levitation is a technology which uses the power of heavy magnets to pull the train over a rail.**

Word of the anti-train sentiment quickly gathered momentum, and on Jan. 12, a sunny Saturday afternoon, Ms. Yang found herself in Shanghai's most important public square with a few thousand other similarly disgruntled residents, many of them carrying signs and chanting slogans denouncing the train project, in one of the largest demonstrations this city has seen in recent years.

This coalescing of homeowners here around issues like property values, environmental safety, urban planning and how tax money is spent is seen as the strongest sign yet of rising resentment among China's fast-growing middle class over a lack of say in decision making. Ms. Yang said: "The money is from us, the taxpayers. Shanghai may be relatively rich, and it enjoys fast growth, but this is no justification for them spending the money collected from us on a pure prestige project."

Many of the early opponents of the route extension seized upon objections cited in a protest last year that forced a retracing of the line in which people voiced fears about radiation from the train's powerful electromagnets, but grievances have multiplied. Beyond the voicing of deep-seated skepticism about the government's priorities and about what many feel is the waste of taxpayers' money, what most distinguishes this wave of demonstrations from other recent protests is a new insistence that the government seek the public's consent in decisions that directly affect their lives. "You could say this is a sign of a rising middle class and the awakening of a sense of real citizenship," said Hu Xingdou, a professor of economics at Beijing Institute of Technology.

With its tradition of top-down decision making, secretive deliberations and little tolerance for dissent, the Chinese government has almost no practice of real popular consultation. Recently, though, under President Hu Jintao's policy of "harmonious development," the state has made tentative efforts to solicit public opinion, but opponents of the maglev train and other critics say the Shanghai crisis has shown the government's initiatives to be far too timid. "Why are they so late to reveal their plans and why so secretly?" said Zhang Junying, 71, who lives along the projected train route.

He was referring to the government's mention of the new route on an obscure environmental Web site in January, with an invitation for responses by letter or e-mail within two weeks. To many, the announcement seemed intended to attract as little attention as possible. That discreet approach quickly backfired as word spread among residents that the government had only given them a two week window to stop the project. City offices were besieged by phone calls as well as by letter and e-mail writers. When the government did not respond, a protest movement was born.....

(For Shanghai's leaders) outbreak of unrest in a city that functions as China's international showcase would be unwelcome. Moreover, if a citizens' movement here did manage to force the government to reverse its plans, disgruntled citizens in cities all over China could take their cue from Shanghai. Shanghai's leaders have suggested that the city

would postpone any decisions on the train until tempers had cooled. But behind the scenes the government is working hard to break the back of the movement, sending scores of police officers to neighborhoods where meetings have been held, briefly arresting people who appear at gatherings to oppose the maglev, forcing them to erase digital photos they have taken of protests and to sign confessions. Demonstrators say they have been warned that if arrested a second time, they will be detained for 15 days. Others have been told by their employers that they will be fired if they take part in protests. Media coverage of the controversy has been banned.

The protesters have responded by organizing themselves as a loose movement that is not easily suppressed. They use electronic bulletin boards and You-Tube to post news of protests and keep the protests publicly leader less to avoid arrests. Zhao Fang, 35, a housewife, suggests that authorities underestimated the opposition to the project.

Adapted from ‘Plan to Extend Shanghai Rail Line Stirs Middle Class to Protest’ by Howard W. French, *New York Times* 1/27/08

Education for a sustainable future: A resource for curriculum developers, teachers, and administrators

Education for a sustainable future is a guide for Manitoba (Canada) curriculum developers and educators to integrate concepts about sustainability into new and existing curricula. It is interdisciplinary, outlining the sustainability knowledge, skills, values, and life practices that need to be integrated into the curriculum, the classroom and the community. The following is *Education for a sustainable future*'s vision for education in Manitoba:

Students will become informed and responsible decision-makers, playing active roles as citizens of Canada and the world, and will contribute to social, environmental, and economic well-being, and an equitable quality of life for all, now and in the future.

To download a copy visit <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/future>

The Miniature Earth Project

This is a short web movie that reduces the world's population to a community of 100 to provide a perspective on our differences-ethnic, religious, gender, quality of life, satisfaction of basic needs. The movie is available in five languages and can be downloaded to your computer from www.miniature-earth.com It is based on the 'State of the Village Report' written by Donella Meadows which is available at <www.sustainer.org/dhm_archive/index.php?display_article=vn338villageed>

The Story of Stuff

From its extraction through sale, use and disposal, all the stuff in our lives affects communities at home and abroad, yet most of this is hidden from view. The Story of Stuff is a 20-minute, fast-paced, fact-filled look at the underside of our production and consumption patterns. The Story of Stuff exposes the connections between a huge number of environmental and social issues, and calls us together to create a more sustainable and just world. It'll teach you something, it'll make you laugh, and it just may change the way you look at all the stuff in your life forever. You may download it from www.storyofstuff.com/index.html, order a DVD or participate in the Story of Stuff blog.

True cost of food

The national Sierra Club's Sustainable Consumption Committee has produced "The true cost of food" a 15-minute animation video. It is an excellent teaching tool for introducing discussions of food topics as environmental issues. Check it out at www.truecostoffood.org and order one from truecostoffood@aol.com

E-newsletter of SOLIDARITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND NON-VIOLENCE

The mission of this independent newsletter is to provide a commented digest on current research and emerging issues related to human solidarity, ecological sustainability, and both religious and secular non-violence. The newsletter views violence as the main obstacle to human development and intrinsically linked to religion with patriarchal gender violence being the most pervasive expression of religious violence. Mitigating violence therefore requires overcoming the patriarchal mindset, especially in religious institutions. For more information visit www.pelicanweb.org/solisust.html

Outward peace is useless without inner peace.

Mohandas Gandhi

News about civil society organizations (CSO's)

WiserEarth

WiserEarth www.wiserearth.org serves the people who are transforming the world. It is a community directory and networking forum that maps and connects non-governmental organizations and individuals addressing the central issues of our day:

climate change, poverty, the environment, peace, water, hunger, social justice, conservation, human rights and more. Content is created and edited by people who choose to participate. As of 4/7/08 the directory consisted of:

108, 615 organizations www.wiserearth.org/organization

11,935 people www.wiserearth.org/user/browse/name

3049 resources www.wiserearth.org/resource/

468 events www.wiserearth.org/event/

485 groups www.wiserearth.org/group/action/browse

Culture of Peace News Network (CPNN)

The culture of peace news network <<http://cpnn-world.org>> is a project of the Global movement for a Culture of Peace initiated by the UN where readers exchange information about books, events, music and web news that promote a culture of peace, i.e. to respect all life, reject violence, share with others, listen to understand, preserve the planet, rediscover solidarity, work for women's equality, participate in democracy. At CPNN you can read about peace events and actions that have taken place in all regions of the world. You can also submit your own report to the website and discuss reports submitted by others. CPNN is a self-sustaining network. If you would like more information and/or have questions about how you can participate write to coordinator@cpnn-world.org

New Economics Foundation (**nef**)

The New Economics Foundation **nef** is an independent 'think and do' tank, whose members believe in economics as if people and the planet mattered.

The Foundation works on economic, social and environmental issues through a mixture of practical pilot projects and tools for change, in-depth research, campaigning, policy discussion, and raising awareness through the media and publications. They also incubate new organisations and campaigns that can create long-term change in society.

Nef projects address issues that are related to economics, environment and society. However, they also have specific areas of focus that form their priority work plans, i.e.,

- 1) Clone town and ghost town Britain: the decline in neighbourhood shops and services viewed as sounding the death knell for Britain's local economies
- 2) Real world economics: **nef** aims to expose the problems with the international finance and economic systems and create appropriate remedies
- 3) Well-being: **nef's** leading aim is to create a new economy that serves people and the planet. We want to begin to redefine wealth and progress.

To join **nef** or sign up for their newsletter visit them at www.neweconomics.org

Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education

Founded in 1999, the Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education (GCPE) is an international organized network that promotes peace education among schools, families and communities to transform the culture of violence into a culture of peace.

The Campaign views peace education as a holistic, participatory process that includes teaching for and about human rights, nonviolent responses to conflict, social and economic justice, gender equity, environmental sustainability, international law, disarmament, traditional peace practices and human security. The methodology of peace education encourages reflection, critical thinking, cooperation, and responsible action. It promotes multiculturalism, and is based on values of dignity, equality and respect. Peace education is intended to prepare students for democratic participation in schools and society. The Global Campaign for Peace Education has two goals:

1. To see peace education integrated into all curricula, community and family education worldwide to become a part of life;
2. To promote the education of all teachers to teach for peace.

The Global Campaign for Peace Education is presently being coordinated by the Peace Education Center at Teachers College, Columbia University and may be contacted by writing to peace-ed@tc.edu The papers of the Hague Appeal for Peace have been archived at Swarthmore College Peace Collection and can be found at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/Library>

Human Rights and Peace Society (HURPES)

As part of its anti-global warming campaign, the Human Rights and Peace Society, an NGO located in Katmandu, has submitted a 10-point suggestion to the Nepalese government for taking necessary steps for the conservation of environment.

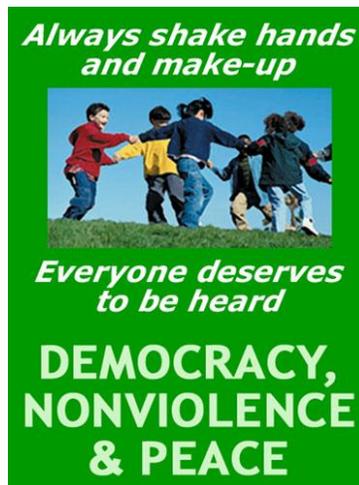
It suggested that the government:

- 1) formulate a national plan of action and implement it to control the effect of climate change and global warming
- 2) include peace education, environmental education along with human rights in their school syllabi.
- 3) form an environmental commission coordinated by the ministry of Environment, Health and Forest

For more information visit

Nova Scotia Environmental Network (NSEN)

The Network's mission is to connect environmental and health organizations together to conserve and enhance our natural environment and achieve a sustainable future for Nova Scotia. The purpose of the NSEN is to provide support for its members in their efforts to achieve their environmental and health goals, by facilitating information exchange and by providing a medium for coordinated action plans.



A plea and a challenge

On Satyagraha

Mohandas K. Gandhi

....There is no halfway between truth and nonviolence on the one hand and untruth and violence on the other. We may never be strong enough to be entirely nonviolent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep nonviolence as our goal and make steady progress towards it. The attainment of freedom, whether for a man, a nation or the world, must be in exact proportion to the attainment of nonviolence by each. Let those, therefore, who believe in nonviolence as the only method of achieving real freedom, keep the lamp of nonviolence burning bright in the midst of impenetrable gloom. The truth of the few will count, the untruth of millions will vanish even like chaff before a whiff of wind.

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.

Mahatmas Gandhi

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*

Send contributions for the newsletter to Wenden@rcn.com, 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



