

Earth and Peace Education Associates



EPE Transitions

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Transitions, the electronic educational resource of Earth and Peace Education Associates (EPE), focuses on our global community's progress towards a culture of peace—a society of institutions and norms based on nonviolence, ecological sustainability, social justice, intergenerational equity and participatory decision-making. It provides you with resources that highlight the relationship between social and ecological peace—an understanding of which is essential 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 >

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Editorial Notes

In this issue of *Transitions*, Frans Verhagen adds ecological identity to the list of topics he has explored for us to better understand the process of **Building Sustainable Communities**. What is an 'ecological identity'? Why should we develop and nurture this dimension of our selfhood ? and how? These are the questions upon which you will reflect. Our **Guest Column** is written by George Jacobs, who explains the link between global warming and the food we eat, i.e. how our food choices can help the environment.

Resources for integrated and value-based learning provides an account of the plight of small and marginalized farmers in Orissa (India) as the basis for an exercise in value-based critical thinking. This section also provides Information of useful websites, e.g. one which will bring you in contact with a conflict resolution education (CRE) network and another with a green charter schools network. A report on a Photo Message Exhibit in Pune (India) organized by UNESCO's Asia Pacific Cultural Center for the Decade on Education for Sustainable Development suggests an approach to informal learning through photographs on 'living heritage', Other resources include a World Peace Game, an internet video, *Crash Course*, that considers the link between economy, energy and environment. The resources section also provides you with a short description of recent books - *Handbook on Peace Education*, *A pivotal moment: population, justice and the environmental challenge*.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) brings news about an educational CSO based in the UK, *Sustainability Frontiers*, and two climate justice CSOs , one based in Bolivia, *International Climate Justice Tribunal* and another in New York City, *WE ACT for Environmental Justice*.

The issue's concluding section brings a **Plea and a Challenge** from the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home is alive with a unique community of life....We must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community...Earth Charter Preamble

Creating Sustainable Communities

Ecological identity

Frans C Verhagen

FRANS C. VERHAGEN, M. Div., M.I.A., Ph.D. is a sustainability sociologist, co-founder of Earth and Peace Education International (EPE), and director of its sustainability education and research program. He is also the founder and president of the International Institute of Monetary Transformation.

www.timun.net

Discovering one's selfhood is a life long process and challenge. We are often forced by internal or external events to ask ourselves who we are and how we have to act towards other people. At times we may also question how we should relate to our physical environment or Nature, even to planet Earth and the Universe. These are questions that recognize our ecological self or ecological identity.

It is this ecological identity that is to be recognized and nurtured if we are to become fully human. It is essential to our selfhood. Besides being a father, mother, professor, artist, tennis player, activist...., we are also Earthlings. All of these statuses make up our identity and form the sum total of our relationships. The scope and complexity of our individual identity is well recognized by geologist Thomas Berry and cosmologist Brian Swimme's in their book, *The Universe Story* (1992). They state, "Our individual self finds its most complex realization within our family self, our community self, our species self, our earthly self, and eventually our Universe self."

Why is it important to discover and nurture one's ecological identity? In last instance, the future of humanity and the Earth depends on whether humans understand how to commune with the natural world rather than exploit it; on whether they develop their capacity for intimacy in human-Earth relations. "Already the planet is so damaged and the future is so challenged by its rising human population", states Berry, "that the terms of survival will be severe beyond anything we have known in the past." He believes that we stand at a defining moment in history, one in which the Earth herself calls out to us to embark upon a re-sacralization of Nature, a new ecological beginning. Our response to this call will depend on whether we recognize and nurture our ecological identity.

Like Thomas Berry, Ursula Goodenough (1998), professor of evolutionary biology at Washington University, emphasizes the need to connect with Nature. She writes, "Once we have our feelings about Nature in place, then I believe that we can also find important ways to call ourselves Jews, or Muslims, or Taoists, or Hopi, or Hindus, or

Christians, or Buddhists. Or some of each.” In other words, according to Goodenough, our capacity for intimacy in human-Earth relations is basic to our capacity to transcend cultural and religious differences in our human–human relationships.

The question of how to discover and nurture one’s ecological identity has been the subject of numerous books and conferences, the latter of which deal, particularly, with the connectedness with Nature of indigenous cultures. The recent Cochabamba Conference in Bolivia (www.cmpcc.org) is an example. Most of the publications have emerged during the last four decades from the deep ecology movement, which also include eco-feminist writings. Others came from concentrations such as bioregionalism, eco-psychology, Earth spirituality, education, sustainability sociology. Here I will highlight three, which have significantly contributed to the literature on building an ecological self.

High on my list is *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist* by Mitchell Thomashow (1996). It is a must read for anyone interested in changing the ways human beings exist in the world. Thomashow shows how environmental studies can be deeply informed by personal reflection. Through theoretical discussion as well as hands-on participatory learning approaches, he provides concerned citizens, teachers, and students with the tools needed to become reflective environmentalists. The questions he raises are: What do I know about the place where I live? Where do things come from? How do I connect to the Earth? What is my purpose as a human being? These are the questions that he identifies as being at the heart of environmental education. Reflecting on these questions contribute to developing a profound sense of self as being in relationship with natural and social ecosystems, a necessary grounding for the difficult work of environmental advocacy, he believes. Each chapter in the book includes learning activities, e.g. the Sense of Place Map, a Community Network Map, and the Political Genogram, most of which can be carried out on an individual basis.

Another important contribution to the literature on ecological identity is *Eco-psychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*. Edited by historian Theodore Roszak with Mary Gomes and Allen Kanner (1995), this pathfinding collection includes articles by premier psychotherapists, thinkers, and eco-activists which show how the health of the planet is inextricably linked to the psychological health of humanity, individually and collectively. The book makes it clear that the natural world is not just an ‘environment’ around us, but that it exists inside our souls and minds.

Finally, a classic of the sustainability movement, *Thinking Like a Mountain: Towards a Council of All Beings* is co-authored by John Seed, Pat Fleming and Joanna Macy (2007). According to Macy, a new beginning for the environment must start with a new spiritual outlook. Her writings evidence her strong Buddhist leanings, particularly those that stress the interconnectedness of all things in the world, which principle, she views as essential to overcoming the self-centeredness and anthropocentrism that has devastated the environment. *Thinking like a Mountain* is a book of readings,

meditations, rituals and workshop notes that provides a guide for discovering and nurturing our ecological identity. It helps us experience our place as members of the web of life rather than stewards, much less masters of the Earth.

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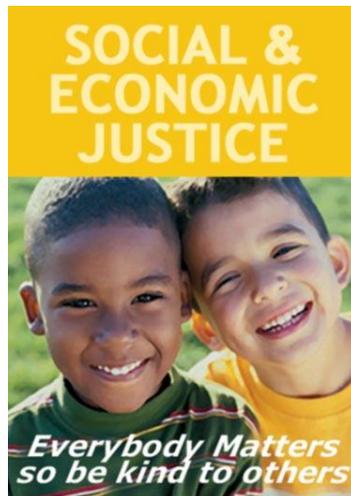
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Guest column

How Our Chopsticks, Forks and Spoons Can Help Fight Global Warming

George Jacobs

George Jacobs is an English teacher, teacher educator, and environment and animal welfare activist in Singapore. His latest book, with Tom Farrell, is *Essentials for Successful Language Teaching* (2010, Continuum).

Most of us eat at least three times a day. More people are becoming aware that what we eat affects not just our taste buds, our waistline and our wallet, it also affects the environment. We have green cars, green schools and now green food, though we're not yet talking about green M&Ms! Yes, the food choices we make can help the environment if we eat more fruits and veggies and less or no animal products. There are the two main links between our diet and the big GW (Global Warming).

Eating Meat Is Wasting Food

The first link between our food and GW is that eating meat is wasting food, because we have to feed many kilograms (kg) of food to the cows, pigs, chickens, etc. to obtain just one kg of meat. Think about yourself growing up. Do you know at what age the average human child gains the most weight? For girls, it's age 12, when they gain on average about 4.7 kgs, and for boys, it's age 13, when they gain an average of about 5.2 kgs. Think back to when you were 12 or 13, and ask yourself, "Did I eat only about 5 kgs of food that entire year." Of course not. You ate many more kilograms of food, and it's the same with non-human animals.

That's why eating meat is wasting food. We have to grow so much extra food to feed the other animals whom we human animals later eat. The GW link lies in the fact that we have to cut down so many more trees to obtain the land to grow all this unnecessary food. As you know, trees soak up CO₂ when they are alive, but when we cut down trees or burn them, CO₂ is released.

Eating Meat Gives the Earth Gas: GW Gas

Here's the second link between eating animal foods and GW: Eating meat gives the Earth gas, GW gas. When most people think of GW, they think of CO₂, and, yes, CO₂ is the largest contributor to GW, but there are other greenhouses gases that are actually more powerful than CO₂.

Methane is a greenhouse gas at least 20 times more powerful than CO₂. The animals we eat, especially ruminant animals, such as cows and sheep, emit methane as part of their digestive processes. That's right, burping and farting are melting the polar ice caps. Nitrous oxide, found in the manure of animals raised for meat, is another greenhouse gas. It is estimated to be about 290 times more powerful than CO₂ in terms of global warming impact. Did you know that the human animal population of about 6.8 billion eats about 60 billion of our fellow land animals every year? Think about all the manure our 60 billion friends are producing and all the nitrous oxide from that manure being released into the atmosphere. That figure does not include all the marine animals we consume—an increasing percentage of whom grow up not swimming freely but in Concentrated Feeding Operations less kindly called “factory farms,” which pollute bodies of water.

Livestock Contribute More GW Than Does Transportation

Most people think that slowing GW is about not flying in airplanes, about taking public transportation or about walking, and those are all good ideas. But, according to a 2006 UN report, *Livestock's Long Shadow* -

http://www.virtualcentre.org/en/library/key_pub/longshad/A0701E00.htm#sum,

production of animal products leads to more greenhouse gas emissions than does transportation. To quote the UN report, “The livestock sector is a major player, responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions measured in CO₂ equivalent. This is a higher share than transport. ” Some scientists dispute the 18% figure. A 2009 article in a World Watch Institute publication put the figure at 51%:

<http://www.worldwatch.org/files/pdf/Livestock%20and%20Climate%20Change.pdf>

On the other hand, one scientist recently put the figure, at least in the U.S., at only 3%:

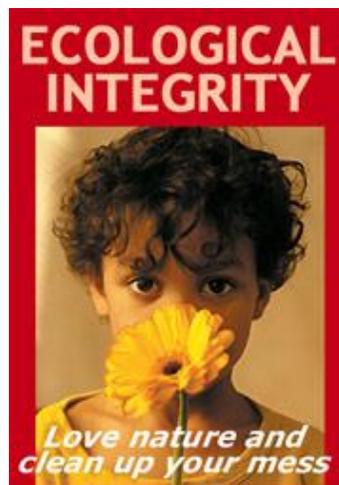
http://www.news.ucdavis.edu/search/news_detail.lasso?id=9336 Regardless, reducing meat consumption can play a role in reducing the enormous threat posed by GW.

What To Do and What To Chew

As usual, most people are waiting for the government to do something, such as reduce CO₂ emissions, or waiting for someone to come up with some miraculous invention that stops animals from producing methane and nitrous oxide. Instead of waiting for others to do something, maybe we should take a more pro-active stance. As one group of MIT students put it, “We are the people who we've been waiting for.”

This is where our chopsticks, forks and spoon become our valiant weapons in the battle to stop the destruction that GW is threatening. At each of our daily three meals and when we have those tasty snacks, we can make a choice. When we eat plant foods, we do our bit as we bite. Do I hear you saying, “Switching 100% to plant foods to help the planet might be difficult”? No worries. Every little bit(e) helps. Just try to eat more fruits and vegetables. It may take a while to adjust, but find some friends or family members to make the switch with you, and you may be pleasantly surprised how easy it can be.

Furthermore, a great deal of demographic evidence and evidence from health research suggests that humans do not need to eat meat to be healthy. For instance, tens of millions of people in India have been vegetarian for generations. As to the health research, one example comes from the American Dietetic Association which, after an evidence based review, concluded that “appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally adequate and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases”
http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-07/ada-ar070109.php.



Efforts to ensure respect for human rights in the 21st century should include protecting the habitat in which human beings coexist. Mary Robinson, former High Commissioner of Human Rights.

Resources for integrative value-based learning

A value framework for critically evaluating social and ecological realities *Anita L. Wenden*

The values listed in the box below are based on the Earth Charter's ethical principles. Each one provides a different perspectives on the plight of Orissa farmers as described in the NDTV report that follows i.e. the impact of erratic monsoons, water shortage and the dam project.

Use the questions that specify each value to have students critically evaluate the situation. Then ask them to decide whether the situation in Orissa lives up to or violates the ethical principles.

Ecological sustainability

- Find websites on the internet which can help you understand the link between climate change, monsoons and rain patterns in Orissa. (e.g. www.infochangeindia.org)
- Refer to your findings to decide whether *erratic* monsoons and lack of water in Orissa are due only to natural phenomenon or also indirectly to human activities.

Nonviolence

- The reporter entitles his article 'the killing fields'. What is the violence he refers to?
- Were the problems caused by the monsoon dealt with nonviolently? those caused by the construction of the dam project? Explain your view.

Social Justice

- In constructing the dam, did the government use its power and wealth to benefit all the groups in the state? If not, which groups suffered? Which of their human rights were violated? Which groups benefited? How?
- The government plans to provide subsidies for water pumps to help the farmers. Will this lead to an effective and just resolution of the farmers' need for water? of the effects of the monsoons? Why? Why not?

Intergenerational equity

- If the social and ecological problems described in the NDTV report are not addressed equitably, how will this affect the quality of life of small and marginal farmers in future generations? members of the whole Orissa community?

Participatory decision-making

- Has the government solicited the concerns of affected individuals and groups in dealing with the problems of Orissa's small and marginal farmers?
- 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)

Orissa's killing fields: Tragic irony

NDTV (New Delhi Television) Correspondent, 3 17 2010, Sambalpur, Orissa



Over 40 farmers in Orissa engaged in rain-fed farming ended their lives between September and December last year following a total crop loss because of a bad monsoon. 75 per cent of agricultural operations in Orissa depend completely on rains and even areas close to major irrigation projects are still deprived of irrigation cover.

As NDTV found out, families which were displaced 50 years ago when Hirakud, one of India's biggest river dam projects was built have yet to enjoy the fruits of their sacrifice. Bidu Kisan was among the 5 small farmers in Sambalpur district who killed themselves in November last year. Bidu took pesticide after a bad monsoon and subsequent pest attack destroyed his crop. He had taken 5 acres on lease and a loan of 15,000 rupees at 25 per cent interest from a local self-help group. The government says his death had nothing to do with crop failure, a claim his family disputes. "It was all because of the crop loss. He was deeply worried about repayment of debts and chose to end his life", says Deepa, Bidu's widow.

Ironically, Bidu's family is among those displaced 50 years ago by the Hirakud dam project. While big industrial units continue to draw water from the reservoir, farmers in this village, that's barely 20 kms away, have to depend on the mercy of the rain God, even today. Draupadi Bag, a villager, Khapsadera says, "We don't get water even for a decent bath. Don't you see how farmers are killing themselves because there's no water for their fields?" According to Ranjan Panda, Secretary, Water Initiatives in Sambalpur, "The government is talking of a subsidy for pump sets, when there is no source in the villages to pump out water from. Water is a basic need and people here have been demanding irrigation facility. The government is yet to act on that."

75 per cent of Orissa's agriculture is rain-fed and over 80 per cent of farmers small and marginal. With input costs rising and no hope of getting irrigation facilities or insurance cover just one erratic monsoon is as bad as poison.

Hirakud Dam is built across the Mahanadi River, about 15 km from Sambalpur in the state of Orissa in India. Built in 1956, the dam is the world's largest earthen dam. Behind the dam extends a lake, Hirakud Reservoir, 55 km long. Hirakud Dam is one of the longest dams in the world, about 16 mi (26 km) in length. It was the first major multipurpose river valley project started after India's independence.

The main purpose of the Dam was to check the massive flood that was affecting a large part of coastal Orissa. But construction of the dam greatly affected the natives of the western part of Orissa. Nearly 150,000 people were affected by the Hirakud project and nearly 22,000 families displaced. They are yet to be rehabilitated and receive their due compensation from the Orissa government. In the original estimate, an amount of \$2,580,000 USD was provided for payment of compensation to the affected people. After revision, the amount was reduced to \$1,935,000 USD and the total compensation paid to the people was, in reality, only \$645,161 USD. A large number of families were evacuated from their hearth and homes without compensation from 1956 onwards.

WEBSITES

The Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) Connection Website

<http://www.creeducation.org>

Anyone with interest in peace education will find useful resources at the Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) website. It includes articles, book chapters, lesson plans, and other informative resources related to all levels of peace education. It is the most comprehensive site on the Web for information about conflict resolution education, and all of the resources are free. The home page offers five doorway icons that are an entry to these resources, i.e. Researchers, Teachers & Trainers, Policymakers & Administrators, CRE around the Globe, and Partners & Projects.

Green Charter Schools Network

www.greencharterschools.org

The Green Charter Schools Network (GCSNet) is a national nonprofit organization of environment-focused schools, individuals, and partnering organizations. Launched in February 2008, it is a new resource for connecting with others who understand that educating for sustainability helps young people to gain the knowledge, skills, motivation and hands-on experiences necessary to make the world a better place for everyone and everything.

GCSNet's VISION is for every person to be environmentally literate and to practice and promote sustainability in their community.

Its **MISSION** is to support the establishment, enhancement and advancement of public charter schools with environment-focused educational programs and practices.

By acting collaboratively with others through the GCSNet, you can play a leading role in improving education. To connect with others who are fostering the development of green schools throughout the country visit the [Green Charter Schools Network](http://www.greencharterschools.org) website www.greencharterschools.org or contact them at:

Green Charter Schools Network | P.O. Box 14744 | Madison, Wisconsin 53708-4744 |
Phone: 507.313.6273 | [e-mail: info@greencharterschools.org](mailto:info@greencharterschools.org)

BOOKS

Handbook on Peace Education, G.Salomon & E. Cairns (Eds.), Psychology Press, 2009.

Peace education is an applied subject, practiced in differing ways, but always firmly based on a range of established empirical disciplines. *Handbook on Peace Education* is structured around contributions from expert scholars in these disciplines, e.g. social psychology, philosophy, communication studies, and political science, *and* contributions from experts with experience in applying peace education in a range of settings. These are complemented by chapters which deal with issues related to research and evaluation of peace education. It is divided into 3 sections: *the context* includes chapters that examine the link between peace education and history, the educational sciences, and peace education in societies involved in intractable conflicts; *the contribution of underlying disciplines*, i.e. psychology, social psychology, political science, philosophy and communication and media studies; and *approaches to peace education*, such as teaching about the culture of peace, story telling, history teaching & peacebuilding, unity based peace education and others.

A pivotal moment: Population, justice and the environmental challenge
L.Mazur, Island Press, 2009

With chapters by renowned experts, *Pivotal moment* provides an evidence based case to argue that justice, anti-materialism and women's rights can help limit both our population and its impact. It maps the complex connections among climate change, resource depletion, globalization, inequity and over consumption and then focuses on how population growth exacerbates them all but also results from them.

For more information visit www.islandpress.org To order email orders@islandpress.org

PHOTO MESSAGE EXHIBIT

The following report on a photo message exhibit held in Pune (India) and organized by Asia Pacific Cultural Centre of UNESCO (ACCU) as part of UNESCO's Decade for the Education for Sustainability (DESD) is included here as a model of how photography can be the focal point for a variety of community based informal learning events on culture, society and sustainability.

'Celebrating our Living Culture', the traveling photo message exhibit of the Asia Pacific Cultural Centre of UNESCO (ACCU) consists of an exhibition of 60 award-winning photographs on "Living Heritage" which aims to develop an understanding and respect for different cultures and traditions. It also provides an opportunity for critical reflection and dialogue with practitioners and interaction with community on culture, society and sustainability issues.

At its third stop in Pune, India (2009), panel discussions on 'Cultures of Sustainability' covered citizen action, research, teaching-learning, biodiversity management and others. Each panel considered how these areas of society have been shaped in the past and what the current challenges are in the context of sustainability.

A discussion on the linkages between the physical structure of the city and culture drew attention to the need for dialogue between different segments of society and the local government, especially since a master plan for Pune's core city area is currently being prepared. A special workshop on folk art and interaction with a traditional clay idol maker were arranged to help children understand cultural changes in the city.

Local citizens groups and NGOs working on waste, disaster, organic food, ecofriendly products, traffic, heritage conservation, planning etc. were also invited to put up posters about their work, under the theme 'Cultures of Sustainability'.

For more information visit www.desd.org

WORLD PEACEGAME

The smaller the world the more important the peace.

Organized by BigPictureSmallWorld, Inc. the World PeaceGame provides a framework for understanding the world and creating a culture of peace that leads not to just a world without war, but a just world where the exciting, dynamic possibilities of a world that works for 100% of humanity becomes a tangible and affordable reality. It puts you and your class, school, or organization in charge of bringing peace to the world. A wide variety of local, regional, national and global conflict situations are available to focus on.

Want to try to bring peace to the Middle East? The Congo? Iraq? India/Pakistan? The hot spot this week? The World PeaceGame puts you in a position to do so.

In the course of the game, players communicate, negotiate, resolve conflicts, set goals, solve problems and use their values, vision, creativity, and imagination as they work together to build peace. The game is highly structured yet free-flowing; information rich, yet easy to learn and play, as well as intense, fast, and fun. Players learn about the complexities of conflict, the costs of war, the price of peace, and what can be done to resolve conflicts in ways that bring peace to the world. And as in the real world, they can also lose. Players in the World PeaceGame begin as adversaries—and if successful— end as colleagues.

For more information and booking: email biginfo@bigpicturesmallworld.com or call toll free 1-866-820-8133 or visit our website <http://bigpicturesmallworld.com>

VIDEOS

The **Crash Course** is a series of 20 short videos which aim to provide a baseline for understanding the economy in order to better appreciate the risks that we all face. They provide a straightforward explanation of how our economy, energy systems and environment interact mainly from the point of view of countries in the North, and specifically, the United States. Nonetheless, it provides useful insights that can be applied to economies elsewhere and an understanding of how we got to where we are today, and some reasonable expectations for the future. The author, Chris Martenson is a trained research scientist, a former Fortune 300 VP and 'most importantly' as he likes to put it, 'a concerned citizen'. To sit in on the course, visit www.chismartenson.com



maryt.wordpress.com
clipped from Google - 5/2010

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

SUSTAINABILITY FRONTIERS

Sustainability Frontiers is a newly launched international not-for-profit organization formed through an alliance of sustainability and global educators dedicated to challenging and laying bare the assumptions, exposing the blind spots and transgressing the boundaries of mainstream sustainability related education. In different combinations, its members work regionally, nationally and internationally to promote school-based, tertiary, community and other forms of formal, non-formal and informal active social learning addressing current threats to the environment and to the well-being of human society generally (such as climate change, environmental and conflict-triggered emergencies, and social injustice). It has formal not-for-profit status and offices in both Canada and the United Kingdom. Initiatives so far underway include climate change education projects developing curriculum and learning activities for all grade levels as well as for teacher education; the preparation of two international climate change education case study compendiums; a partnership with the Teacher Creativity Centre, Palestine, for an International Academy for Civic, Human Rights and Sustainability Education. Sustainability Frontiers welcomes expressions of interest in forging partnerships for transformative educational change.

For more information on the mission, membership, offerings, projects, partners and publications of Sustainability Frontiers, visit <http://www.sustainabilityfrontiers.org> or write to info@sustainabilityfrontiers.org.

INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE JUSTICE TRIBUNAL

The International Climate Justice Tribunal is a social, indigenous CSO that is independent from the formal justice system. It is a people's organization which will judge and ethically and politically condemn those responsible for climate change *and* bring visibility to the impact of climate change on the lives of communities, individuals and peoples, on biodiversity and especially on the countries of the Global South. It will also contribute to raising awareness globally on the link between climate change, the capitalist model of production, consumption and development and the urgency of the struggle for environmental justice, including the payment of climatic and ecological debts.

General Objective

Give visibility to the causes responsible for climate change and their effects on human rights, peoples' rights and the rights of nature, as well as the impacts of measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, such as agrofuels, large hydroelectric dams, REDD and other ineffective solutions that constitute violations of these rights.

Specific Objectives

- Strengthen the social struggles for climate justice and raise the level of awareness on the need to respond urgently to the effects of climate change.
- Influence the adoption of policies, strategies and environmental actions that are adequate for preventing and mitigating the effects of climate change
- Promote the international classification of environmental crimes.
- Develop precedents of jurisprudence that contribute to the construction of a binding international body for the sanctioning of environmental crimes.
- Contribute to the formulation of the rights of Mother Earth through the Tribunal experience and the concept of ecological debt and climate justice.

For more information please visit <http://tni.org/events/international-climate-justice-tribunal> or contact: justiciaclimatica@gmail.com funsolon@funsolon.org

WE ACT for Environmental Justice

WE ACT for Environmental Justice is a vigorous advocate for and a significant monitor of the Northern Manhattan environment in New York City. This CSO works to inform, educate, train and mobilize the predominantly African-American and Latino residents of Northern Manhattan on issues that impact their quality of life – air, water, indoor pollution, toxins, land use and open space, waterfront development and usage, sanitation, transportation, historic preservation, regulatory enforcement, and citizen participation in public policy making. Committed to the [Principles of Environmental Justice](#), WE ACT is an active and respected participant in the national Environmental Justice Movement, and has provided effective leadership in the development of the New York City and the northeast region environmental justice alliances to network, collaborate and impact environmental policymaking.

WE ACT's five dynamic program areas include (1) Environmental health and community based participatory research; (2) environmental justice; (3) advocacy and government accountability; (4) sustainable development; and (5) movement building.

To learn more visit their website at www.weact.org

Justice and power must be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful and whatever is powerful may be just. Pascal

A plea and a challenge

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations.

It is a vision of development that encompasses populations, animal and plant species, ecosystems, natural resources and that integrates concerns such as the fight against poverty, gender equality, human rights, education for all, health, human security, intercultural dialogue

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) believes that we have to learn our way out of current social and environmental problems and learn to live in a sustainable manner. To foster sustainable human development, ESD supports five fundamental types of learning: learning to know, learning to be, learning to live together, learning to do and learning to transform oneself and society. It strives to:

- facilitate the acquisition of skills, capacities, values and knowledge required to ensure sustainable development
- foster the development of responsible citizens and promotes democracy by allowing individuals and communities to enjoy their rights and fulfill their responsibilities
- provide learning tools and content necessary for individuals to survive, to develop to their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. (from World Declaration on Education for All, Jomtien, 1990, Art. 1, para. 1.)

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), for which UNESCO is the lead agency, seeks to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, in order to address the social, economic, cultural and environmental problems we face in the 21st century. To learn how you can participate in the UN Decade of ESD, visit the UNESCO website at www.unesco.org/en/esd

Indifference finally grows lethal....The act of turning away, however empty handed and harmlessly, remains nevertheless an act. Cynthia Ozick

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



"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)