

Connections

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Celebration

Kids Changing
the World

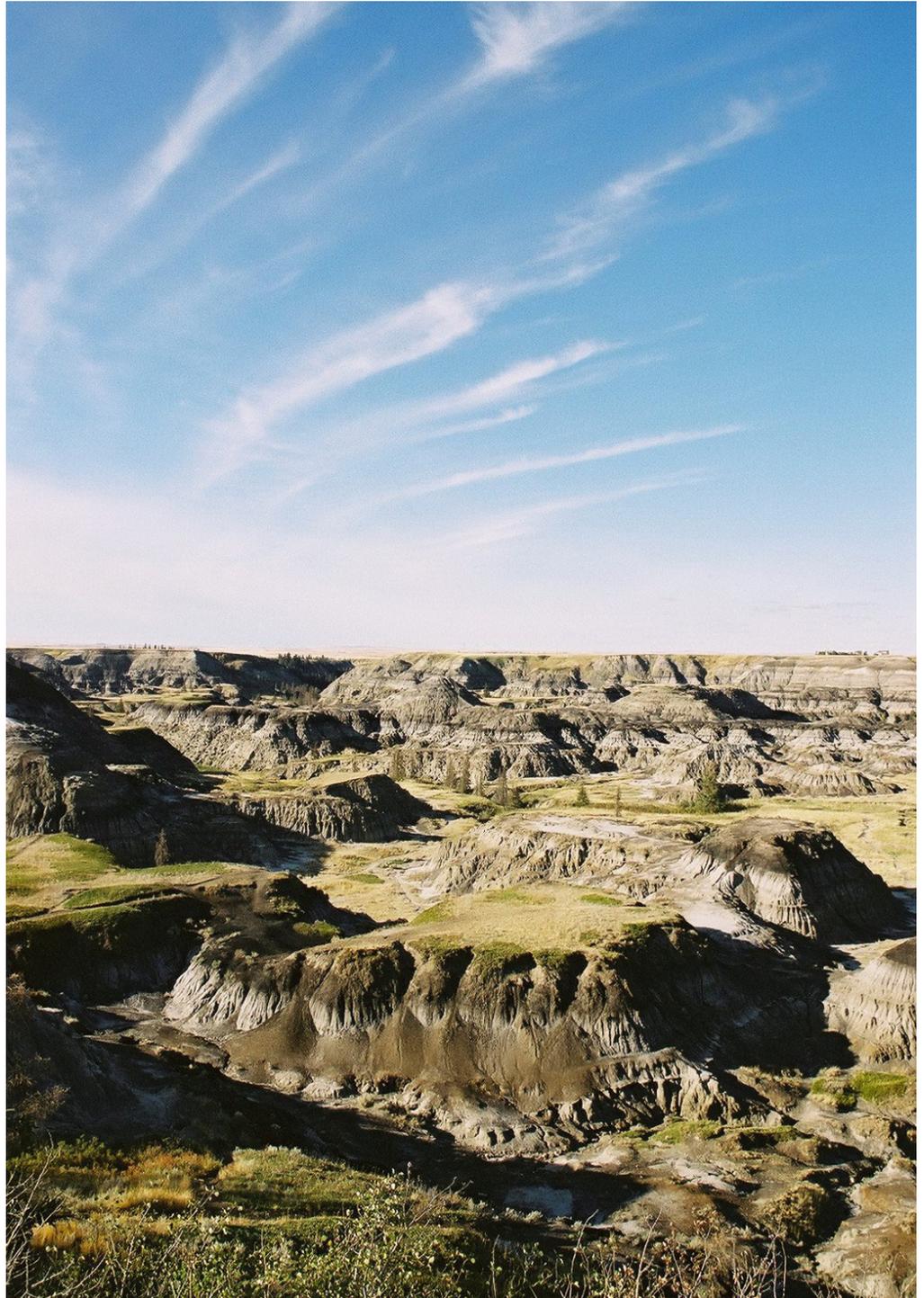
The Earth Charter

Craftivism



The newsletter of the Global,
Environmental & Outdoor
Education Council

To promote involvement in
quality environmental and
outdoor education



Editorial

From the Editor

What better time to celebrate than spring, and what better place to celebrate than Canada? When the first pair of geese honk on their way toward the river near my house and I find the first pussy willow on a southerly slope, I am reassured by the constancy of nature—it is always a reason to celebrate after the darkness of winter.

The media brings its unending stream of disaster onto my breakfast table, but I am reassured by the Human Development Report (<http://hdr.undp.org/2004>), which shows that Canada is once again doing well with regard to life expectancy, educational attainment and income. Although Canada's fourth place in the last report is not as good as the first place that politicians used to brag about, we are still a nation to cherish.

When we gathered at our Banff conference this spring, we had much to celebrate as a council. We have endured for 25 years. We have broadened our mandate by incorporating a global perspective. We have inspired many educators through the calibre of speakers, workshops and field trips at our conferences. We have been a haven in the storm for educators dealing with controversial issues in education. We have built supportive networks among colleagues. We have sung, played, hiked and cried with one another in both joy and grief as we share this journey as educators.

I hope that this issue of *Connections* will not only cheer you up with the many reasons to celebrate but also inspire you to try out some of the ideas presented here:

- Kitty Cochrane's Global Education Club, where kids change the world. Visit www.kittycochrane.com to see hundreds of student projects that are helping the world.
- Nigel Dower's comprehensive case for the Earth Charter. At last count, 14,352 groups, organizations and individuals have signed their support for the Earth Charter. Your class might want to look into this (www.earthcharter.org).
- Nicole Burisch's descriptions of muggings and knit-ins, which illustrate activism through craft.
- Suzanna Wong's delightful listing of children's literature that inspires and entertains while it teaches.
- Gareth Thomson's report of a national strategy to promote environmental education, which focuses on six ways of advancing environmental learning and sustainability in Canadian schools.
- Mijung Kim and Khadeeja Ibrahim-Didi's marriage of science and collage—a strategy that builds a deeper understanding of interconnections.

Many writers and scientists have published dire warnings of what may befall Earth if certain trends are not reversed quickly. My insatiable curiosity often leads me to knowledge that I'd rather not know but that I feel I must know. However, one gift of getting older is coming to understand that celebration is as necessary to life as breathing. Through celebration, we inspire others to join us on our path to a more sustainable, just and peaceful world for all of Earth's creatures.

—Sara Coumantarakis

Articles and Features

Kids Changing the World

Kitty Cochrane

“Can a kid change the world?” I ask.

It’s September, and it’s the first meeting of the year for our Global Education Club, which is made up of Grades 4–8 students who volunteer once a week during their lunch break to help the world become a better place.

The students look at me. Changing the world is pretty big.

“The whole world?” asks Scott.

“What needs changing?” asks Julie.

If adults can’t fix the world, how can a kid? think the rest, looking at each other.

We’re all sitting together in a circle so that we can see each other

and talk as equals. I can see that they’re feeling a bit daunted, just like every adult does, including the world’s finest leaders, when we think of our vast planet and its enormous problems. So I make it personal and possible.

“Are you smart?” I ask. There are nods all around. “Are you sometimes smarter than your parents?” They respond with big nods and smiles.

“Sometimes adults get all muddled up in tangles of thoughts. Have you noticed that?” The kids are grinning now. “I believe that kids see things clearly. Kids know when something is fair or not. And kids just go ahead and get things

done instead of yakking about it too much. What do you think?”

They all agree, laughing.

“So let’s get to it. Let’s decide what some of the world’s big problems are, and remember that they can be our own community’s problems, too.” Within 10 minutes we have a list: pollution, homelessness, overpopulation, hunger, deforestation, unequal distribution of resources, education, health care, disabilities and disease, and violence. We note how our community is local, national and international, and that the issues and people are all interconnected—by helping one, we help them all. We discuss the classic development and global education mantra: if we’re not part of the solution, then we’re part of the problem.



Our club commits to awareness and action: we learn about each problem in turn and share what we learn with our school community—kids, staff and parents. Then, through consensus (with me gently facilitating) we plan an action to address each issue—a concrete activity that will help in some way.

After that first half-hour planning session, we had a broad list of dozens of fun and challenging things we can do during the year. Our activities are loosely organized around United Nations days and other special days, such as International Women's Day and World Day for Water. We rolled up our sleeves, we opened our minds and, with the power of children's optimism, energy and unfailing sense of justice, we got to work.

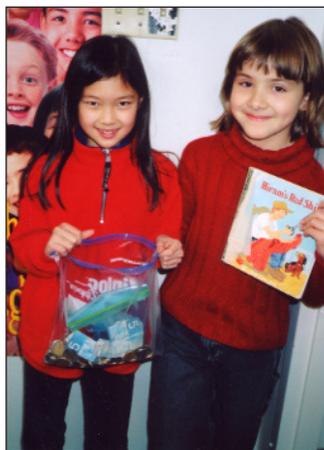
Over the past 13 years, the Global Education Club has accomplished hundreds of amazing tasks. There are some yearly favourites. We paint our faces for International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21 and then debrief by talking about the hurtful comments we received. We hold a used book sale each fall and sell donated books for a quarter, with the proceeds (usually around \$200) going to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) to help make Braille and recorded books, and to the

Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) to support literacy programs in developing countries. For World Hunger Day in October, we collect 1,500 food bank items through classroom competitions (the class that donates the most items gets a chocolate cake). We set up a juice box recycling program in every room in our school, and classes and clubs take turns sorting them every two weeks. Each year, we collect used eyeglasses and hearing aids for people in developing countries.

Every year, there are original ideas. Last year, each club member brought in a small bag of candy, and we layered the candy in a huge jar. Students and staff paid a dollar for a chance to win the jar by guessing the number of candies. The proceeds (\$240) went to an environmental organization. One year, we rallied at the school to get recycling drop-off centres in our community—it was about time! We were heard, and our city councillor came to ask our opinion. When the drop-off centres were set up the next year, we educated and rewarded families who participated. Another year, we raised funds through a bake sale to protect a

whale named Salty—"Buy a Sweet for Salty." A visiting Japanese teacher taught us how to make sushi a couple of years ago. Another time, we held an international fashion show with the help of our local multicultural association and our own students' international clothing. We collected consumable items for our local women's shelter (toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo and so on). We made cookies and identified on a world map where all the ingredients came from, and then discussed world trade. For the past three years, we've visited local helping organizations, including the Salvation Army homeless shelter and thrift shop, the water purification plant and the soup kitchen at the Baptist church. The students' favourite activity is walking the dogs and petting the cats at the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA).

Global Education Club students sometimes run with their own ideas. Brian has given three yearly presentations on Hanukkah, complete with yummy potato latkes. Caitlyn in Grade 6 collected used batteries from students to ensure



that they were safely disposed of. Students who are not regularly involved in the Global Education Club sometimes approach the club to do a project. Sierra in Grade 1 drew and sold beautiful pictures to raise \$58 to help endangered dolphins. Four other Grade 4 students collected used blankets for dogs at the SPCA.

Teachers in our school also have their pet projects. Mr. Schrama coordinates our yearly Terry Fox Run, including videos, trivia contests, a run for older students and a big map for tracking our fundraising progress across Canada. Mrs. Houldin and her Grade 1 students collect money year-round to donate bed kits (bedding, clothes and school supplies) to children in developing countries. Whenever there's an international disaster—an earthquake, a flood or 9/11—Mrs. Marcellus and her family respond. They often place a dead tree in a big bucket in front of the library, and students donate a loonie to put a leaf on the tree, with the funds going to Red Cross

Disaster Services. After last year's tsunami, they spearheaded a districtwide challenge to give up a pop for the day and donate the funds. Each Christmas, Mrs. Neumann has her Grades 1 and 4 students fill shoeboxes with gifts for children in wartorn or developing countries. Our counsellor coordinates an annual milk jug recycling event. Our librarians collect for Loonies for Literacy.

The helping bug is infectious, and it reaches our students' parents as well. Every Christmas, parent volunteers organize an outstanding bazaar with garage-sale items that students can buy for 25 cents. The bazaar has raised up to \$1,400 for Santa's Anonymous and the food bank. One mom coordinates a phone book recycling program. Another mom brought in a pile of water bottles for recycling and then matched the funds with a donation.

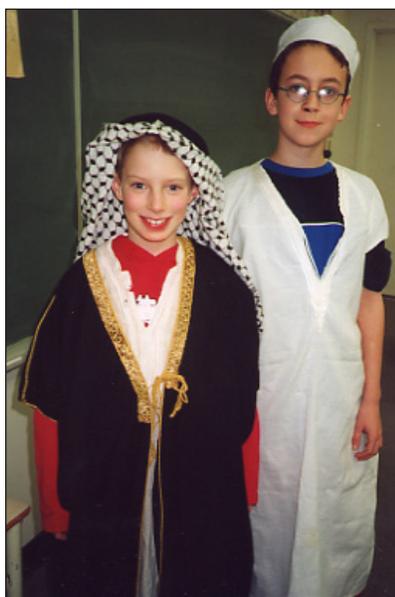
The Global Education Club members are a varied lot. Some are gifted and need a place to stretch their leadership, problem-solving and organizational skills. Some are

challenged academically, behaviourally or socio-economically and feel equal, needed and successful in the club. Some are just dodging the 20-below outdoor recesses.

The club has received the Fort McMurray Award for Distinguished Youth and has been recognized through Baha'i and YMCA peace awards. But the real rewards are what the students gain; they all come away with a greater understanding of the world and their rights and responsibilities within it. They've learned, shared, worked together and succeeded in making a difference. They glow with pride and hope. They've stretched themselves and grown as citizens. Our school has come to understand that students must be taught not only how to read and write but also how to be capable and caring local and global citizens.

Each year, I ask the students why they come to the club. A student named Brian summed it up for all of them: "I enjoy the club because it helps other people, and that makes me feel good. It teaches us to be kind and responsible when we grow up." Now that's worth celebrating.

For more information on the Global Education Club, check out our website at www.kittycochrane.com.



Kitty Cochrane is a teacher at École Dickinsfield School in Fort McMurray, Alberta. As part of her preparation to become a teacher, she volunteered in Gambia, West Africa, with Canadian Crossroads International. She has travelled and worked in 30 countries and has worked in developing education, Native education and global education for over 20 years. Her articles on global education and teaching have appeared in The Green Teacher, Baobab and Teaching Today.

The Earth Charter, Environmental Protection and Global Ethics

Nigel Dower

The following article was written in the belief that an environmental organization would do well to endorse the Earth Charter. In the first half I argue that (a) ethics—having an ethic and thinking about ethical issues—are important to environmental protection, (b) the appropriate form of ethics is global and (c) the Earth Charter is a balanced and effective expression of a global ethic. In the second half, I address a number of objections to or reservations about the Earth Charter (and ethics in general) that many people have, including those in environmental organizations.

The Need for an Appropriate Ethic

Why Are Ethics Important?

Successful environmental policies require many things, not the least of which are sound scientific understanding and clear, practical environmental laws that nation-states and their international organizations are willing to both pass and implement. None of this will happen (or if it does, it will not be effective) unless ordinary people support moves by the government to pursue environmental policies,

enact legislation and ensure that the laws and policies work. This support, in turn, will happen only if people have an ethical commitment to environmental values.

From the point of view of an expert—such as a scientist or an environmental lawyer working for an organization like the World Conservation Union (IUCN)—the ethical basis may seem so self-evident that it is hardly worth focusing on. An expert who is drawn to work for such an organization is likely motivated by a serious concern for nature conservation, the preservation of species and so on. The ethical basis may not be the same for everyone (some may have enlightened human-centred, biocentric or ecocentric concerns), but an ethical commitment to certain general goals will be shared, and disagreement will be only on technical questions about means and effective methods.

However, a large part of the population does not accept that environmental ethical values and the moral passion required to realize them are self-evident. Effective policies require that the vast majority of people are on board, so the question is, What kind of ethic will get them on board?

What Kind of Ethic Do We Need?

The kind of ethic that is needed must fulfill four qualifications that relate to (1) content, (2) scope, (3) style and (4) social actualization. The ethic needs to

1. have a certain content in being about essential human goods alongside concern for the environment and being sufficiently robust in its account of duties as to provide a basis for making progress toward a future that would be substantially better for humans in general than is the case at the moment;
2. be global in scope—that is, be a common universal ethic that includes a commitment to global responsibility;
3. be motivational by being both emotionally and intellectually engaging; and
4. be widely shared, seen as the product of intercultural agreement and consultation, and embodied in public symbols and statements.

The Earth Charter fits the bill in all of these respects.

Content

To be successful, an environmental ethic must combine concern for human well-being and social justice

with concern for the environment. The former refers to morals for social coexistence (not harming, deceiving, coercing or stealing from each other, and so on) and principles of distributive justice, which allows everyone to access sufficient resources to realize his or her basic rights. The latter refers to protecting the environment and environmental sustainability so that human well-being can be achieved both now and in the future. Preserving the environment is also important because of the independent value of other life forms, ecosystems and so on.

An environmental ethic must involve not only a commitment to serious environmental protection but also a concern for human well-being and social justice. A combined concern for both environmental protection and human well-being and social justice is not only intellectually sound but also necessary if people are to take environmental protection seriously.

The content of this ethic needs to be sufficiently robust and rich to challenge people to act in new ways (because current practices are socially unjust and environmentally damaging) yet not too specific (it must be accessible to a wide range of people and consistent with a wide range of philosophies and religious and cultural beliefs).

There are two issues. First, an ethic cannot be so idealistic and demanding that people are left unmoved, yet cannot be so bland and unchallenging that it requires people to do little more than they are used to. An ethic needs to

contain both realizable requirements for here and now, and future ideals to strive toward.

Second, the content cannot reflect the presuppositions of any one religious, philosophical or cultural perspective. This is one of the challenges of universalism. A mid-range universalism is needed; an ethic should not be so minimalist that no difference is made, nor so maximalist that it is unreasonable and unacceptable to people of many different beliefs (for a middle way, see, for example, Dower [1998]).

Global Scope

There are many reasons why an ethic with the above content needs to be interpreted as a global ethic. A global ethic has universal values and norms, and includes a principle of global responsibility in which people and countries in a position to take effective action are responsible for dealing with extreme poverty, violation of human rights, wars and so on elsewhere in the world.

First, ethics develop through finding cooperative solutions to common problems, and many of our problems are global problems that require global solutions.

Second, restricting ethical concern to only some people is arbitrary given our common human nature (see, for example, Heater [2002] and Dower [2003]). Universal morality is intellectually compelling, as is obvious in the cosmopolitan tradition that goes back to the Stoics.

Third, globalization has produced such a high degree of interaction, interconnectedness and development

of global communities with a common discourse that the emergence of global ethical thinking is inevitable. This does not mean that there is just one common ethic—quite the contrary—but there is now a common field in which rival global discourses can interact with one another and attempt to identify or create global ethical consensus. The Parliament of the World's Religions's Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (Küng and Kuschel 1993), for example, is an attempt to highlight the common core values of the world's major religions. Another attempt to create a global ethic can be found in the Commission on Global Governance's construction of a global civic ethic in 1995. The Earth Charter is another attempt to produce an ethic acceptable to a wide range of people throughout the world.

Style

To be motivating, an ethic needs to be both emotionally and intellectually engaging. This is particularly true if it is to motivate people to act in new ways that often go against conventional assumptions. An inspiring ethic needs to be more than a dry formulation of words; its general character and the language used to express it should engage the heart and have a visionary quality. An ethic must do more than just contain ideals; it must inspire people to identify themselves with a moral life, as part of a moral community and as seeking to create a better country or world. The language used plays a significant role in developing an emotional engagement with morality. Religious

affirmations and creeds often have this character, and secular commitments can have a similar visionary quality. The language of the Earth Charter has this emotionally engaging quality, and some have even called it poetic.

An ethic needs to be intellectually engaging so that people can be serious about making moral discernment, deciding on a course of action, deciding which principles to accept and so on. An ethic rarely exists as a set of values and norms in the absence of ethical thought and reflection (this may be seen as the activity of ethics as opposed to an ethic). Ethics should not be contrasted with having an ethic or thought of as something studied only by philosophers and other academics. An ethic (a set of values and norms that are acted on) should be grounded in ongoing reflection. A global ethic is the combination of belief, thoughtful application and background reflection. The Earth Charter fits the bill once again; although it may initially look like a rich set of principles, its real value lies in being a critical tool for engaged ethical reflection and decision making.

An ethic should be both emotionally and intellectually challenging. All too often, a person's ethic is one or the other or neither—intellectually rich but emotionally unengaging, emotionally charged but not properly thought through, or just superficial (such as following social rules and little else). It is therefore a challenge to create the conditions necessary to engage someone's ethics (and, of course, the necessary content, too).

Social Actualization

As was indicated earlier in connection with the role of public declarations, a global ethic (assuming that this is the form an appropriate ethic should take) may have certain characteristics that make it less acceptable or more acceptable. This may have to do with its provenance, or how it has come to be accepted. Especially with something like a global ethic, it is important that it be the product of a worldwide consultation process. It cannot be the brainchild of just a few thinkers. An ethic is also a publicly shared set of values and norms. It may or may not be stated in a declaration or charter, but having it embedded in a public statement that can be endorsed or accepted gives it a certain credibility. If many thinkers throughout the world endorse it, it can claim to be a global ethic. This also adds to its motivational power and contributes to a moral culture.

For some thinkers, an ethic that is publicly shared and that is the product of consultation and consensus building is a genuine global ethic. For others, what makes an ethic a global ethic is its set of values and norms that someone's moral thinking has led him or her to endorse (being publicly shared or widely endorsed is a bonus or an extra—something that makes it more likely to be widely accepted). All of these are examples of how an ethic can be thought of as global. The Earth Charter is therefore a global ethic and, indeed, the right kind of global ethic in all of the above respects.

The Earth Charter

Background

The text of the Earth Charter was agreed upon in March 2000. It was produced by the Earth Council, an international NGO based in Costa Rica. Although four editors were involved in the drafting process, the text was developed, vetted and modified by a much larger group of representatives from different parts of the world. The charter was the product of extensive consultations all over the world and over a number of years. The 1987 Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future*, suggested the creation of a Charter for Nature. The charter did not come to fruition in that form, but the idea was taken up again after the Rio Summit in 1992. It now exists as a people's charter—something that both individuals and institutions can endorse and adopt for their work. Educational institutions in particular are wanting to use it for educating children in the right values for living in the 21st century. Hopefully, governments will endorse it in the United Nations, even though its format does not lend itself to the creation of law. The IUCN is also advancing a similar Covenant on Environment and Development that could provide the basis for effective international law. The more ordinary people, NGOs, educational institutions, local governments and so on that endorse the spirit of the Earth Charter, the greater the pressure on governments will be to eventually accept it.

Familiarization with the Earth Charter

At this point, the reader is invited to read the Earth Charter and become familiar with its main ideas (it is easily accessed on the Internet and can be found at the end of this article). What follows is a brief summary of the Earth Charter and discussion of some of the salient features of its content that illustrate why it is the right kind of global ethic for us to accept and use.

The Earth Charter consists of a preamble; the central body of the text, containing four sections; and a final section entitled "The Way Forward." The four sections are "Respect and Care for the Community of Life," "Ecological Integrity," "Social and Economic Justice" and "Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace," and within each of these are four main principles and a number of subprinciples.

The Content of the Earth Charter

The content of the Earth Charter combines concerns for ecological integrity, social justice, democracy and peace. The first four main principles in Section I consider similar concerns:

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.
2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful.
4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

These are the founding principles or commitments, and what follows them are the necessary expressions or implementations.

The Earth Charter acknowledges that having a list of principles does not get rid of dilemmas in implementation, but it does provide a framework of principles that it recommends. The following will present a number of interpretative issues and then address objections that may be raised.

Is the Earth Charter a Comprehensive Ethic?

These principles, in one sense, constitute a comprehensive ethic in that they cover all the common aspects of well-being and the common norms necessary to enable everyone to achieve his or her potential for well-being. However, these principles are not comprehensive in two respects, which adds to the Earth Charter's acceptability.

First, the Earth Charter does not claim to be an exhaustive ethic capable of covering every aspect of an individual's or group's existence. Despite its richness, it leaves room for further values and norms, such as those associated with religious or cultural traditions, or personal choices about how one ought to live. A further feature of the Earth Charter is the principle of respect for cultural diversity, which parallels respect for biological diversity. This is possible only because the Earth Charter does not attempt to state the full range of values and norms applicable to all people. This brings out the point that it constitutes a common ethical framework because this is seen as the minimum necessary given the twin goals of

(a) ecological integrity or living within our ecosystemic limits and (b) living justly and peacefully with all other humans. Although the Earth Charter might be seen as having ethics that are too complex to be thought of as a common core, its main principles are actually not that specific. Many of the subprinciples are expressions or derivations of the main principles, and they add enough detail to keep people from rejecting the framework as a whole.

Second, the Earth Charter does not purport to be an ethic that is a set of moral beliefs combined with a complete worldview that justifies or rationalizes those moral beliefs. It is not a Christian ethic, Buddhist ethic, humanist ethic or biocentric ethic, but it can be supported as the appropriate expression of an ethic by a Christian, Buddhist, humanist or biocentric.

One of its strengths and attractions is that it is accessible to people from many different backgrounds and with different worldviews, philosophies or theologies. The examples I have given may, however, seem controversial; some may think that the Earth Charter is both religious and biocentric and that it would exclude anyone who wasn't a religious biocentric. The issue is important and needs explanation.

Is the Earth Charter Biocentric?

First, is the Earth Charter biocentric? That is, is it committed to an ethic in which all life forms are intrinsically valuable? If so, anyone who is an anthropocentrist, believing that humans alone have

intrinsic value, would have to reject it. Principle 1.a. of the Earth Charter is biocentric. It states that "all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings." This is the only statement of intrinsic value. Principle 15 gives an injunction to avoid suffering in higher animals, but this relates to sentience, not necessarily to life. Section II often refers to ecological integrity, but this idea does not necessarily equate with intrinsic value. Ecological integrity is about the limits needed to maintain or restore ecological systems on which future human health and well-being depend. Thus, ecological integrity can be interpreted in an enlightened, anthropocentric way.

There are two responses to the statement in Principle 1.a. The first response (in my opinion, the right response) is to say that, yes, it is a biocentric principle, but it is a very mild biocentrism that should be acceptable by an anthropocentrist who is otherwise happy with the Earth Charter. There are two points here. First, the biocentrism speaks about life forms having value, but it does not claim equal value (and, indeed, could hardly do so, given principles such as Principle 15, which allows for the rearing or hunting of animals). This is certainly nothing antihuman or misanthropic. Second, endorsing the Earth Charter does not require that one sign up to a moral creed that must be accepted in all its particulars (such as how a religious catechism works). The Earth Charter should be read not as a final moral truth but as a tool for promoting

international cooperation and solidarity for changes that need to be made to the way we behave collectively. It is an ethical perspective from which one is prepared to think, deliberate and engage in dialogue.

The second response is that even Principle 1.a. is not as straightforward as it seems. A friend of mine (a resolute anthropocentrist) claims that it can be interpreted as not being biocentric. The point is that value is claimed in the context of interdependence and that, although a form of life may have no direct worth to humans (utilitarian or aesthetic), it has value (not intrinsic value) to the ecological interdependence that it is a part of, and humans should respect and maintain that interdependence. What this illustrates, *inter alia*, is that many of the key principles are open to different interpretations. This is not a weakness of the Earth Charter. This demonstrates that it should be seen not as the final, unambiguous set of moral truths but, rather, as the best approximation that humans can cooperate in using to forge common understandings and develop common goals.

Is the Earth Charter a Religious Ethic?

What about the religious tone of the Earth Charter? Is it acceptable to atheists, secular humanists or any moral thinkers who, even if religious, adopt secular philosophical positions, such as Kantianism, utilitarianism, human-rights theory and so on? Again, there are two points to be made about this.

First, the language of religion and theology is remarkably absent from the charter. There are, rather, a number of references to spiritual values and beliefs. Some of these are references to respecting values and beliefs as being important to the people who have their own understanding of their relationship to the Earth (that point is easily accepted by a secular liberal). Furthermore, although many people understand the term *spiritual* as a reference to a transcendent realm, others consider wonder and reverence for nature to be spiritual and to be important aspects of human experience that do not necessarily have metaphysical implications.

Second, as mentioned before, there is room in the Earth Charter for a secular thinker to ignore the spiritual aspect and still endorse the Earth Charter as a whole (or endorse its "spirit," in a different sense of the word).

Is the Earth Charter, Then, a Bland Ethic Aimed at the Lowest Common Denominator?

It might appear from what I have written that the Earth Charter is acceptable to so many different thinkers from so many different backgrounds that it is, in effect, a rather bland ethic aimed at the lowest common denominator and intended to include everyone. If that were the case, it would not be useful or significant.

It is important to understand that, although the Earth Charter is presented as a global ethic, it is not presented as an ethic that is already universally accepted. No such ethic

exists (nor likely will exist for a long time). The end of the charter's preamble states, "We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community." The charter is a work of advocacy. It is promoting a community with shared values that is made up of people from all over the world. It is not promoting a community in which everyone has the same values. Its advocates are hoping that others will adopt its principles. Some advocates may think that all rational-thinking people will accept it, given time and exposure. Others may be more skeptical but advocate the charter because they believe that it is the best hope for humanity.

Why Have Many People Not Accepted the Earth Charter?

Three groups of people have not accepted the Earth Charter. First are those who reject either key aspects of it or its ethical tone. Second are those who have not considered the Earth Charter or the ethical principles that it advocates (which, of course, can be advocated outside of the Earth Charter) but who would likely endorse it after learning about the charter and its principles. Third are those who have read the Earth Charter but consider it to be too demanding or unrealistic.

Why Is the Earth Charter Unacceptable to Some People?

Although a wide range of thinkers find the Earth Charter acceptable, a few do not. They could include a religious fundamentalist for whom it is important to have a more specific

ethic linked to his or her theology, a relativist who has denied universal values, a nationalist or communitarian who rejects or downplays global responsibility, or a free-market libertarian who rejects agendas of anti-growth and extensive responsibility.

These diverse thinkers disagree with the Earth Charter on a deep level, and even with full understanding of the charter may still reject or fail to endorse it. The replies sketched out below are likely too brief to convince objectors, but they will at least alert Earth Charter advocates to this resistance.

Fundamentalism

The religious fundamentalist may reject the Earth Charter for many reasons, including things that are included (such as respect for cultural diversity, equality of women, acceptance of diverse sexual orientations) and things that aren't included (such as specific ethical commitments based on the truths of a specific religion).

The reply to the religious fundamentalist illustrates one of the greatest challenges the world faces, that of finding a middle way—the core common moral values that can be endorsed by diverse religions and cultures. In recent history alone we have witnessed the fall of Communism; followed by the emergence of a universal, liberal, democratic, capitalist value system (Fukuyama 1993); and the pessimistic opposition to this, heightened by an endemic clash of secular and religious worldviews (the latter represented now by Al Qaeda), and cultural and religious worldviews (Huntington 1996).

Hans Küng (1991) said that "there will be no peace in the world without peace amongst the religions; there will be no peace amongst the religions without dialogue between the religions." Although some people may consider the Earth Charter as party to the continuing clash of civilizations and the expression of a liberal, secular worldview (despite its gestures toward religious or spiritual values), it is more likely to be perceived as an expression of the common ground between many worldviews. Everyone but the most extreme of advocates of particularist agendas ("our way is right for the rest of the world") will recognize that a common ecological and social framework is necessary for coexistence.

Relativism

The relativist may reject the Earth Charter on the grounds that its proposed universal values and global ethic are illusory. From the relativist point of view, morality is culturally specific and there is no universal point of view from which to construct a global ethic (see, for example, Wong [1984]). Some people may think that relativism was more plausible in the past, when societies were more discrete and separate from one another, but, with extensive globalization, relativism is no longer tenable. However, globalization does not deliver a clear verdict. Globalization has created new communities that are deterritorialized, or spread across the world, and that share values across old societal boundaries (see, for example, Scholte [2000]). For the relativist, however, these communities remain multiple ethical

communities, and their existence is evidence of neither an emerging community of universally shared values nor an inevitable and rational progress. The relativist may not be able to deny that an Earth Charter community is emerging, but he can still reject the universalizing or proselytizing agenda of the Earth Charter by arguing that it is without foundation.

Defusing the relativist objection is an important task (see, for example, Borchert and Stewart [1986] and Dower [1998]). First, it must be shown that a global ethic can be universal without undermining the importance of cultural diversity. Respecting diversity (within and between societies) is, itself, a universal principle. Second, there is surely a core of moral norms that are both recognized in all societies and accepted by reason, and this makes it consistent to accept a variety of other values. Third, because a true relativist would have to consider there to be no universal innate human essence, he or she therefore could not accept the universal normative status of all human beings or defend universal human rights (Apel 1992).

Communitarianism

A different kind of rejection may come from a communitarian or nationalist who views the Earth Charter's commitment to global responsibility as problematic. The global ethic in the Earth Charter is not merely about accepting common values but also about accepting responsibility across borders. The charter's preamble states that we are "at once citizens of different

nations and of one world in which the local and the global are linked." Principle 2.b. affirms that "with increased freedom, knowledge and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good." We have a common but differentiated responsibility (for example, rich countries and people have greater responsibility because they have greater means). Principle 9 says that eradicating poverty needs to be an ethical, social and environmental imperative. The entire document is redolent with the perspective that global problems require global responses.

It is this global perspective that may be rejected by those who think that moral obligations are intended primarily (if not exclusively) for members of their own community or nation-state (see, for example, Sandel [1982] and Taylor [1989]). We are still a long way from considering that what happens elsewhere in the world matters as much as what happens within our own established political communities. Whilst many of us may regret this situation and think that the Earth Charter will help correct the community and state bias, a true communitarian or nationalist will think otherwise and thus question the ethical agenda of the Earth Charter.

The communitarian can be answered with several arguments. First, the communitarian can be taken on his or her own terms. If ethical values depend on socially established and consciously felt communities, then a global ethic must have value because a global community (or at least networks of global communities) exists. An

important aspect of globalization is the globalization of community (Scholte 2000)—the emergence of public declarations like the Earth Charter and the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic, global civil society and the informal Internet are all evidence of this.

Second, it can be argued that a community is not only about the sense of community but also about the objective interdependencies of human beings across the world (this can also apply to wider communities with other species, such as in Aldo Leopold's [1949] idea of land community). Even though we may not be able to feel our global interdependence, it is real and pressing, and it generates powerful obligations. This is partly what Piet Hein had in mind when he said that "we are global citizens with tribal souls" (as quoted in Barnaby 1988, 192).

Third, if we view our obligations and their strength as a function of the communities (political or otherwise) that we belong to, we fail to see that we are morally obligated to anyone (or any being) whose well-being we might affect, including the vulnerable and those on whom we do not depend, as well as the powerful and those on whom we do depend. This view is recognized in virtually every religion and moral theory, including utilitarianism, Kantianism, natural law theories and human rights theories (see, for example, Dower [1998]).

Libertarianism

Finally in my (not exhaustive) list of opponents is the libertarian free-market capitalist, for whom at least two things are wrong with the Earth

Charter. First, it is loaded with too many positive obligations. In the libertarian view, the only core value (a global value) is respecting the right to liberty by not violating this right by, for instance, deceiving, coercing or stealing from others (see, for example, Nozick [1974]). Second, the Earth Charter states in its preamble that, “when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more.” This strikes at the heart of free-market capitalism—the pursuit of economic growth—which is primarily about having more.

The key to adequately replying to the economic libertarian lies in accepting the central importance of liberty or freedom but then disassociating this from the minimalist ethic of economic liberty and the endorsement of the unrestricted free market (see, for example, Sen [1999]). First, it is important to point out that, although liberty is important, so are other aspects of basic human well-being, such as security and availability of the basic necessities of life. Second, if liberty is a public value (that is, valuable for everyone), then a wide range of background conditions are required for its realization, including moral and legal restraints, and positive interventions by public bodies (involving the use of taxes) to secure the economic means to make liberty effective. Third, liberty can be the power of economic choice only if its exercise enables people to choose activities and ways of living that will lead to well-being and a full life. Increasing wealth alone does not guarantee liberty.

This brief review of and replies to some of the main objections to the Earth Charter shows *inter alia* that the Earth Charter is by no means aimed at the lowest common denominator and that a number of groups of thinkers may disagree with it on a basic level.

The Challenge of Informing Those Who Need to Be Informed

There is also the second group of people, who have not accepted the Earth Charter because they do not yet know about it but who likely would endorse it given suitable exposure to it. Reaching this large cohort of those yet unconverted or uninformed is the biggest practical challenge for Earth Charter advocates, and it requires work in formal and informal education. A commitment to the Earth Charter is energized by the belief that many others will come to accept it. The Earth Charter’s ethical imperative rests on this belief. But is this belief realistic on the scale that is required?

The Problem of Moral Weakness

The third group presents a different issue. Some people may read the Earth Charter but not endorse it because they feel that it is too idealistic and personally demanding. It may be seen as idealistic in that the principles it presents can be adhered to only by a margin few, and that the vision will therefore never be realized. It may also be seen as too demanding, and people may hesitate to sign up to it because they feel that they will not be able to fully live up to it.

It would be impossible to require that all of the Earth Charter’s principles be fully and immediately implemented and endorsed by every means available. People of normal moral strength would be unable to advocate for this. Likewise, people of normal moral strength would be unable to advocate for many other ethical codes (such as the Christian ethic). The Earth Charter is a complex mixture of ideals to aspire to, principles that can be acted on immediately and principles that are challenging and require effort to follow. Take, for instance, Principle 6.e.: “Avoid military activities damaging to the environment.” Virtually all military activities damage the environment in some way, which makes this a radical demand, and psychologically and politically impossible to fully implement. Yet the principle is clear: because the environment is destroyed by military activity, we should endeavour to reduce the military footprint on the world. The Earth Charter does not always demand immediate and full implementation but, rather, provides a direction in which we need to move.

It is an interesting exercise to divide the Earth Charter’s principles into those that can be aspired to, those that provide direction and those that are immediately mandatory; not everyone will divide it up in the same way. This is not a weakness of the Earth Charter but, rather, shows that it is a complex tool for discussing and testing its ideas. We must not confuse our inability to live up to an ethical code with moral insincerity. Failing

to live up to certain central elements of one's moral code can be serious and may require censure from others and guilt in oneself, but failing to contribute as much as one is able in creating a better world should not be treated in the same way.

Many people accept and endorse the Earth Charter because they believe that the more people accept it, the more likely its goals will be effectively pursued and its aspirations will become policies. This is based on three observations. First, the more people accept certain principles, the more there will be action in accordance with those principles. There is a conceptual connection between moral belief, moral motivation and moral action. The connection, however, is far from being automatic. Second, the greater the mutual recognition of shared values, the greater the encouragement to act on those principles through a sense of solidarity. Third, the public embodiment of an ethic in something like the Earth Charter reinforces that an ethic has a shared public nature and thus increases its effectiveness in policy making and political change.

Relevance to Environmental Organizations

The following summarizes why it is important for environmental organizations to take on global ethics and the Earth Charter in particular.

- A global ethic is important because
- making our values explicit energizes us for action;
 - justification for what we do and recommend (whether legal, scientific or institutional) is, essentially, ethical (unless it is a mask for vested interests);
 - an organization needs an explicit global ethic to hold its commitments together;
 - a shared global ethic is a source of strength when it is acknowledged that the worldviews supporting it are different (including anthropocentric, biocentric, various religious worldviews and so on);
 - a global ethic provides a particular ethic formulation around which members with different backgrounds can unite;
 - a global ethic is visionary and inspirational and is a carefully thought-out and nuanced synthesis of diverse ethical concerns with principles relevant to the work of environmental organizations.

An environmental organization that endorses an explicit global ethic will be better able to persuade others of the ethical basis for improved laws and procedures. It will also be better able to engage with the sources of resistance to a global ethic by being aware of the nature of the ethical disagreements. In publicly identifying with an ethic that combines concern for the environment with concerns for social justice, peace and democracy, the organization will be able to present itself as signing up to a balanced ethic that is acceptable to those in both richer and poorer countries, those interested in nature

conservation and those interested in basic development. The Earth Charter is gaining widespread support throughout the world, and an organization that signs up to it will be showing solidarity with many participants in global change, thus becoming more effective in delivering its message throughout the world.

Note

The ideas in this article originated from a paper I gave on the Earth Charter at a conference at Pocantico, New York, in April 2002. They were further developed for a conference in Aberdeen, Scotland, for members of the Ethics Specialist Group (ESG) of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) to use in promoting the Earth Charter within the IUCN at its 2004 congress in Bangkok. It was originally written with specific references to the IUCN. I am grateful to members of the IUCN ESG and also members of the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA) for their helpful comments. A different but complementary treatment of the issues in this article can be found in "The Earth Charter and Global Ethics," published in the Spring 2004 issue of *Worldviews* (a special issue devoted to the Earth Charter). Although the focus in this article is on environmental protection, the general arguments concerning the relevance of global ethics and the Earth Charter in particular apply equally well (with appropriate detailed adjustments) to individuals and organizations concerned with development, peace, human rights and other global issues.

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The Earth Charter

(adopted by the Earth Council in March 2000)

Preamble

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward, we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and lifeforms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and

a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to future generations.

Earth, Our Home

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust.

The Global Situation

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources and a massive extinction of species. Communities are being undermined. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance and violent conflict are widespread and the cause of great suffering. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems. The foundations of global security are threatened. These trends are perilous—but not inevitable.

The Challenges Ahead

The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.

Universal Responsibility

To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life and humility regarding the human place in nature.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following

interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.

Principles

I. Respect and Care for the Community of Life

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.
 - a. Recognize that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.
 - b. Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical and spiritual potential of humanity.
2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
 - a. Accept that with the right to own, manage and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and protect the rights of people.
 - b. Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good.
3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful.
 - a. Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide

everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential.

- b. Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible.
4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.
 - a. Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations.
 - b. Transmit to future generations values, traditions and institutions that support the longterm flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities.

In order to fulfill these four broad commitments, it is necessary to:

II. Ecological Integrity

5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.
 - a. Adopt at all levels sustainable development plans and regulations that make environmental conservation and rehabilitation integral to all development initiatives.
 - b. Establish and safeguard viable nature and biosphere reserves, including wild lands and marine areas, to protect Earth's life support systems, maintain biodiversity and preserve our natural heritage.

- c. Promote the recovery of endangered species and ecosystems.
 - d. Control and eradicate non-native or genetically modified organisms harmful to native species and the environment, and prevent introduction of such harmful organisms.
 - e. Manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems.
 - f. Manage the extraction and use of nonrenewable resources such as minerals and fossil fuels in ways that minimize depletion and cause no serious environmental damage.
6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
 - a. Take action to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive.
 - b. Place the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and make the responsible parties liable for environmental harm.
 - c. Ensure that decision making addresses the cumulative, longterm, indirect, long distance and global consequences of human activities.
 - d. Prevent pollution of any part of the environment and allow no build-up of radioactive, toxic or other hazardous substances.
 - e. Avoid military activities damaging to the environment.
 7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights and community well-being.
 - a. Reduce, reuse and recycle the materials used in production and consumption systems, and ensure that residual waste can be assimilated by ecological systems.
 - b. Act with restraint and efficiency when using energy, and rely increasingly on renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind.
 - c. Promote the development, adoption and equitable transfer of environmentally sound technologies.
 - d. Internalize the full environmental and social costs of goods and services in the selling price, and enable consumers to identify products that meet the highest social and environmental standards.
 - e. Ensure universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction.
 - f. Adopt lifestyles that emphasize the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world.
 8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.
 - a. Support international scientific and technical cooperation on sustainability, with special attention to the needs of developing nations.
 - b. Recognize and preserve the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being.
 - c. Ensure that information of vital importance to human health and environmental protection, including genetic information, remains available in the public domain.

III. Social and Economic Justice

9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social and environmental imperative.
 - a. Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required.
 - b. Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves.
 - c. Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve

- those who suffer and enable them to develop their capacities and pursue their aspirations.
10. Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.
 - a. Promote the equitable distribution of wealth within nations and among nations.
 - b. Enhance the intellectual, financial, technical and social resources of developing nations, and relieve them of onerous international debt.
 - c. Ensure that all trade supports sustainable resource use, environmental protection and progressive labour standards.
 - d. Require multinational corporations and international financial organizations to act transparently in the public good, and hold them accountable for the consequences of their activities.
 11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care and economic opportunity.
 - a. Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them.
 - b. Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders and beneficiaries.
 - c. Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members.
 12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.
 - a. Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language and national, ethnic or social origin.
 - b. Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods.
 - c. Honour and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies.
 - d. Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance.
- #### IV. Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace
13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making and access to justice.
 - a. Uphold the right of everyone to receive clear and timely information on environmental matters and all development plans and activities that are likely to affect them or in which they have an interest.
 - b. Support local, regional and global civil society, and promote the meaningful participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making.
 - c. Protect the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association and dissent.
 - d. Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures, including remedies and redress for environmental harm and the threat of such harm.
 - e. Eliminate corruption in all public and private institutions.
 - f. Strengthen local communities, enabling them to care for their environments, and assign environmental responsibilities to the levels of government where they can be carried out most effectively.
 14. Integrate into formal education and lifelong learning the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.
 - a. Provide all, especially children and youth, with educational opportunities that empower them to contribute actively to sustainable development.

- b. Promote the contribution of the arts and humanities as well as the sciences in sustainability education.
 - c. Enhance the role of the mass media in raising awareness of ecological and social challenges.
 - d. Recognize the importance of moral and spiritual education for sustainable living.
15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.
- a. Prevent cruelty to animals kept in human societies and protect them from suffering.
 - b. Protect wild animals from methods of hunting, trapping and fishing that cause extreme, prolonged or avoidable suffering.
 - c. Avoid or eliminate to the full extent possible the taking or destruction of nontargeted species.
16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence and peace.
- a. Encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations.
 - b. Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes.
 - c. Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a nonprovocative defence posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration.
- d. Eliminate nuclear, biological and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.
 - e. Ensure that the use of orbital and outer space supports environmental protection and peace.
 - f. Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth and the larger whole of which all are a part.

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

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

In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations, fulfill their obligations under existing international agreements, and support the implementation of Earth Charter principles with an international legally binding instrument on environment and development.

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

The Way Forward

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfill this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter.

This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realize the vision.

Craftivism: Using Craft Practices as Tools for Social Activism

Nicole Burisch

One might wonder how a hand-knit scarf, or a ceramic cup for that matter, is in any way revolutionary. An artist can make a painting with a political message, and a designer can create a poster with an activist message, but can simple, useful crafts be used in a similar way? Craft practices, such as ceramics and textile work, have historically been linked to political and social causes through the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 1800s and by writers like William Morris (1884). Handcrafted objects were seen as standing in opposition to mass-produced goods, through both the subtle aesthetic differences and variations of individually made objects and their production outside of often inhumane factory conditions. This positioning of craft objects is still somewhat relevant, but the concerns and approaches of the antiglobalization movement have opened up new ways that craft can be used, practised, appreciated and taught for social-justice and political-activist issues.

The impetus for the overlapping of craft and activism is emerging from practitioners in both fields. Craft makers are becoming interested in using their work to address political, social and environmental concerns, both



through contextualizing and explaining the value of their work and through reflecting their personal beliefs. Lisa Barry, one of my fellow Alberta College of Art and Design (ACAD) graduates, commits “muggings.” A mugging involves giving away her handmade ceramic mugs, especially to people who might not usually use them or be able to afford them. During a May 22 interview, Barry explained that she initially envisioned the muggings as a chance to introduce people to the aesthetic merits of handmade objects, but she was also interested in subverting conventional ideas about gift-giving and consumption. Many of the recipients of Barry’s mugs are not sure how to process being mugged; they are surprised and even shocked that she wants to give them something for nothing. This element of surprise has opened up opportunities to discuss issues

of consumption and gift-giving, and to prompt the recipients to rethink conventional expectations and models of giving and receiving. I have also seen Barry take a Styrofoam mug out of someone’s hand and replace it with a ceramic one, thus opening a discussion on using reusable and ecologically friendly products. The face-to-face interactions that these muggings bring about are just as important as promoting handcrafted ceramics, and they provide an opportunity for dialogue and education.

The activist community is also using craft materials and processes to promote their causes. The Revolutionary Knitting Circle is an activist group based out of Calgary (several other revolutionary knitting groups exist in other cities across North America). The group meets once a month and also holds knit-ins as a form of protest (one was

staged outside Banker's Hall in downtown Calgary during the G8 Summit of 2002). Participants knit banners with revolutionary slogans and armbands with peace symbols, and they participate in skill-sharing at monthly meetings. Their manifesto (yes, they have a manifesto) explains that their work is part of a constructive revolution in which people can create useful items outside a corporate model and employ a nonaggressive tool for protest. Member Grant Neufeld pointed out during a June 8, 2004, interview that people approach him on the street to ask him what he is working on, thus allowing him to initiate dialogue outside the context of a protest. The skill-sharing and social interaction that take place at the informal meetings are also critical to this group's success. Those who might not otherwise feel welcome in or comfortable with other forms of activism can learn about social justice and political issues through discussions at the meetings, and be drawn into participating in protests and campaigns through their involvement with the knitting circle.

There are many other examples of how these two fields overlap, including ceramic artist Matt Nolen,

who decorates his pots with imagery that addresses such issues as ozone depletion and credit card debt; activists who make puppets or props to use in protests; the AIDS quilt project; and other craft co-ops and people who would rather make things themselves than buy them. The muggings and the knitting circle, however, use hands-on teaching and face-to-face interactions as the cornerstones of their activities, which is where their strengths lie. Teaching a craft almost always works best with some hands-on instruction, and this kind of instruction invariably provides an opportunity for exchange between participants, often beyond the teaching of the craft itself. The informal dialogue and face-to-face interactions that occur between revolutionary knitters and in Lisa Barry's muggings allow for the relaying of messages and concerns about issues in a nonthreatening and participatory way. This takes place while solutions are demonstrated, such as making things yourself or drinking from a reusable mug.

The possibilities for continued sharing and borrowing between craft and activism are limitless and will lend credibility and flexibility to

both. By finding creative ways of sharing and teaching their knowledge, craft producers, activists and craftivists demonstrate the benefits of exchanging ideas between different fields to promote the causes they support.

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Celebrate Children's Diversity and Differences by Using Picture Books

Suzanna Wong

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.

—Henry Adam

“Multicultural literature is literature that incorporates people of diverse cultural backgrounds . . . and people from other cultures. Culturally authentic multicultural literature is usually written by members of a particular culture and accurately reflects the values and beliefs of that culture” (McGee and Richgels 2004, 331). It is important for children from diverse cultural backgrounds to hear stories about characters from those backgrounds. Let’s celebrate the differences and diversity among the children in our classrooms. “See[ing] themselves in literature increases children’s self-esteem and enlightens others about the worth of different cultures. All children need experiences with culturally authentic literature about a variety of different cultural backgrounds” (McGee and Richgels 2004, 331). In this article, *multicultural literature* will refer to literature that deals with ethnicity, gender, disability and socioeconomic status in Canada.

Brief History of Multiculturalism in Canada

Is Canada a multicultural society? Most Canadians would reply, “Of course it is!” and many would answer with political correctness in mind. Since the Canadian government passed a multiculturalism policy in 1971, multiculturalism has been a keystone of Canadian immigration policy. This has had a profound influence on the demographics of Canada. Canada has a decreasing birth rate and an immigration rate second only to New Zealand.

Canadians are generally tolerant of diversity, and many of us are proud of our country’s values and beliefs about cultural differences. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which came into effect in 1982, enshrined multiculturalism as a distinguishing characteristic of the Canadian way of life. Not everyone embraced this act; it did not pass in Parliament without a fight from the opposition. In 1988, Bill C-93 was passed as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*. It became the first formal legislative vehicle for Canada’s multiculturalism policy.

Canada is internationally admired as a pluralistic society that tolerates diversity, respects First Nations culture, respects the English- and French-speaking charter groups and accepts immigrants and refugees. Moreover, the Supreme Court recently asked the government to revisit the gay-rights debate to have same-sex marriages recognized in our society. Sadly, however, our international image does not always reflect the reality of our daily life.

Personal Experiences with Multicultural Literature

To the world, Canada appears to be a multicultural society. Our national image can be deceptive, however, in light of such instances as the sharing of Meyer Arar’s file with the United States by the RCMP and CSIS (and the unsubstantiated allegations leaked to the press), an RCMP officer’s long battle to wear his turban with his uniform, and the ethnic profiling of Middle Eastern immigrants after September 11. Recently in Edmonton, several of the Islamic community’s mosques have been vandalized.

It is still a minor irritation to be constantly asked where I come from (I have been in Canada for almost 44 years). Rarely is my husband asked where he came from, and he is an immigrant. This is because he is white and does not have an accent. As a visible-minority Canadian, I have always been aware of racially prejudiced remarks and stereotyping statements. Some people are unconscious of making such remarks. Some classrooms do not always reflect sensitivity for children's cultures in both content and instruction. A culturally sensitive curriculum will decrease the "artificial dichotomies created when studying 'other' cultures" (McGee and Richgels 2004, 160).

When I was a child, I was extremely sensitive about the notion that I represented a nation of 1.3 billion people—China—even though I had never been there. Teachers who thought that I was an expert on anything and everything Chinese caused me many embarrassing moments in class. At one point in high school, I actually denounced my cultural heritage simply to avoid being noticed as different from my classmates. I did not go as far as Michael Jackson—a black American musician who changed his physical features and possibly his skin colour through plastic surgery. Even though I was proud of my Chinese heritage, I was not an expert on Chinese studies, and many of my teachers neglected to acknowledge this.

According to Bainbridge and Pantaleo (1999, 118):

There are important warnings to be heeded when working with multicultural literature in classrooms.

People from visible minority groups should not be expected to respond to multicultural literature as "representatives" of their culture. Such an expectation is demeaning and detracts from their responses as individual readers with unique histories; it also assumes that the individual is negatively "different" and not fully integrated into Canadian society and culture.

Unfortunately, my elementary school teachers were neither sensitive to this issue nor insightful about multicultural literature. My Grade 2 teacher read to us *The Five Chinese Brothers* (Bishop and Wiese 1938), and it was very difficult not to correct her perception of the Chinese culture. This book was not authentic and was full of imaginary facts created by the authors, but she used it as a reference book on Chinese culture. It certainly was not a celebration of my Chinese heritage or culture.

After every Christmas holiday, I loathed the thought of not having any Christmas presents for Show and Tell. My teachers had such sympathetic looks on their faces. Finally, in Grade 3, my mother decided to give us unofficial Christmas presents so that we would have something for Show and Tell (fortunately, she kept the tradition of lucky pocket money for Chinese New Year). Why did my mother adopt the giving of Christmas gifts? She said it would be easier to pretend that we were Christians than to be different. Why couldn't she celebrate our family's differences and diversity?

In the '60s, there was not a single children's book that could explain why we did not celebrate

Christmas. I searched for such a book in the Edmonton Centennial Public Library in 1968 and was very disappointed with the results. The only Chinese cultural books were written by non-Chinese writers. Now, however, it is refreshing to be able to read a multicultural story written by such authors as Paul Yee or Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak in which you can learn something authentic about different cultures and celebrate diversity.

Value of Multicultural Literature in the Classroom

Only 16 per cent of Canadians were born outside of Canada, and 90 per cent of foreign-born Canadians live in Canada's 15 largest cities. Over 30 per cent of Vancouver residents and 38 per cent of Toronto residents (more than a million people in Toronto alone) were born outside of Canada. As a result, a school such as Thorncliffe Park Public School in Toronto has 72 ethnic groups making up the school population, among whom 42 languages are spoken. How can Canadians deal with this pluralism in schools while maintaining a harmonious, unified Canadian identity? Having a common ground in education will be the solution. Teachers need to promote high-quality, authentic multicultural reading material in class and provide opportunities for children to celebrate their diversity and differences. Using multicultural literature in class has many benefits, including

eliminating racism through the children's learning to respect each other; creating a more colourful Canada through the recognition of the different contributions of cultural traditions and arts; developing an understanding of Canadian policy on immigration; helping children gain more knowledge of other countries and, in turn, become citizens of the world; and promoting caring for each other, racial harmony and peace in Canada.

"Children's literature, then, is one vehicle through which teachers, as well as students, can begin to recognize racism in society and learn the value of keeping an open mind" (Bainbridge and Pantaleo 1999, 112). Furthermore, according to Davis and Sumara (2000), "literate practices (such as reading) have not merely changed what humans know, they have transformed how humans think and act." Kathryn Au (1993, 176–78) points out several benefits of using multicultural literature in class in her *Literacy Instruction in Multicultural Settings* (she writes about American education but her ideas are applicable to Canadian education as well). The benefits are to provide aesthetic experiences so that students will take pride in their own cultures, encourage children to think critically and emotionally so that they can respond to the complexities of multicultural society and encourage dialogue between different cultural groups. Hopefully, in the future, my Muslim friends' children will no longer have to stay at home and not attend school because of Ramadan, the Beaverbone boys—from a First Nations family—will not have to cut

their beautiful braids when they start school, and gay students in high school will no longer consider the desperate solution of ending their unhappy lives. "It is one thing to encourage the principles of diversity of Canada. It has proven quite a different challenge to transform these principles into practices that foster inclusiveness" (Fleras and Elliot 2002, 129). It is our professional duty to start educating young children to embrace these principles of diversity.

Historical Development of a Canadian Multicultural Genre

For many years, children's literature in Canada was written and published mainly by the British and the Americans. My generation grew up reading such books as *Charlotte's Web*, *The Wind in the Willows* and *The Famous Five* and *Nancy Drew* books. It was difficult for Canadian writers and publishers to produce books with a Canadian theme because of the dominance of American and British publishing companies. Our market was not big enough to support a Canadian-only book industry.

Fortunately, the Department of Canadian Heritage has been working very hard to promote Canadian materials. Over 20 years ago, when I became a mother, I started to notice Canadian authors, such as Robert Munsch, Jean Little, Dennis Lee, Farley Mowat and Gordon Korman. My sons could read about Canada, experience Canadian themes and interpret what it means

to be Canadian. However, these books are still very much mainstream, middle-class, white-family stories. Only recently has a surge of Canadian literature focused on visible minorities. Such authors as Paul Yee, Dale Klassen, Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak, Morningstar Mercredi, William Roy Brownridge and Julie Lawson are contemporary Canadian authors who write on the theme of multiculturalism. This genre will help young Canadian children find and celebrate their Canadian cultural identity.

What is the Canadian cultural identity? Most Canadians answer this question by saying that Canadian culture is different from American culture. This is repeated weekly by the CBC television program *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. Not only do we write books about Canadian culture, but we also boldly venture into making television programs to distinguish ourselves from the United States. On July 1, we put up Canadian flags in our front yard, and this year CBC even televised the Giller Prize ceremony. We are loudly announcing that we are proud to be Canadians. These patriotic gestures are starting to show in Canadian children's literature.

Canada is a pluralistic society, so it makes sense to have stories about different cultural groups. Canadian multicultural literature is distinguished from other children's literature in that it fosters diversity instead of making a distinction, celebrates differences instead of patronizing differences, recognizes the history and contributions of immigrant groups and promotes living together

in harmony instead of isolating ethnic groups.

Having multicultural literature in the classroom is only half the solution to combatting racism and other types of discrimination. Teachers play an important role in this journey of promoting multiculturalism in Canada. They have the power to choose books for their classrooms. However, teachers are sometimes not well-enough informed on multicultural literature, and books purchased for school libraries can be patronizing and moralistic. I recently came across *Dim Sum for Everyone* by Grace Lin (2001), and it not only was condescending but also contained much inaccurate information.

The books that teachers select “must be accurate and not include stereotypical images” (Bainbridge and Pantaleo 1999, 13). But what makes a good multicultural book? Should only ethnic-minority writers write about their own cultural groups? When is a good time to read multicultural books? Should multicultural books be read only in social studies class? What is the best way to integrate multicultural books in the early grades? How much does the teacher’s own point of view affect the interpretation of multicultural books? If a teacher is uncomfortable about gay issues, for example, should he or she read books like *Asha’s Mums* (Elwin 1990) and *Daddy’s Roommate* (Willhoite 1991)? Teachers need to demonstrate fair and just values in their lessons when using multicultural literature. Children’s attitudes can be easily influenced by teachers, and it is critical to guide them toward acceptance of others.

Criteria for Selecting Multicultural Canadian Children’s Literature

I have been extremely critical of my elementary school teachers for choosing children’s books that were not authentic. How can the authenticity of a multicultural book be tested? Choosing a book written by an author who belongs to the cultural group does not guarantee its authenticity. A great example is *Dim Sum for Everyone*. Dim sum is similar to a special Sunday brunch and is not a daily meal as the book suggests. Also, sharing individual dim sum dishes with others is actually very rude. “When testing the authenticity of children’s books which are not familiar, teachers must seek the advice of people who are knowledgeable about the culture being discussed” (Bainbridge and Pantaleo 1999, 117).

I often have concerns and questions when I purchase multicultural books for my classroom. The most common are as follows:

- How do I find good multicultural literature?
 - How do I know if it’s actually good?
 - How do I know if a book will work for the objectives I have in mind?
 - Will my students (and their parents) respond to this book?
 - How do I make sure I am representing a variety of cultural groups?
 - How do I avoid perpetuating stereotypes?
 - How do I prepare myself for any negative responses from my students?
- The following is a guideline to selecting multicultural literature. It is adapted from Bainbridge and Pantaleo (1999, 118) and Edwards and Queen (2001, 43–45). Ask yourself these questions before using a book with your children:
- Is this book appropriate for in-depth use as literature? Is it well written, with a style and language attractive to young readers? Is the story convincing? Would you read it yourself? Would you enjoy reading it aloud? Does the content of the story match the maturity of your students?
 - Is it appropriate multicultural literature? Are the characters real and authentic? Are the characters portrayed positively? Would the children gain respect for and understanding of the cultural group being portrayed? If some characters are depicted negatively, do they change and grow?
 - Do the illustrations go with the text and improve the story? Do the physical features of the cultural group look authentic?
 - Is this a current publication or an outdated story? (*The Five Chinese Brothers*, for example, was written in 1938.)
 - Who has reviewed the book? Has anyone from the cultural group given any feedback?
 - Will this story evoke feelings in students, strike a chord with students or provoke students to react with passion and critical thinking?

Teaching Activities to Support Multicultural Literature

The teacher's role in multicultural-literacy development is vital to the success of the lesson. The teacher must guide the students to come up with their own views and interpretations and to gain positive experiences. Teaching multicultural literacy is similar to teaching any type of literacy in that it encourages young readers "to read for pleasure and satisfaction, with confidence. They need to be able to draw on their experience of the world with their experience with other text" (Altmann 1998, 9). Teachers themselves must have "personal enthusiasm [because it] is crucial if [they] are to convince young people to read" (Altmann 1998, 9). A superficial and unpersuasive attitude is more damaging to students than not reading so-called controversial and ideological literature. I have heard colleagues read multicultural literature to children in the Safe and Caring program with an unenthusiastic tone of voice and an unconvincing attitude. What will children get out of this lesson? Will it have a negative effect? Should the teacher be spending time on a topic she or he is passionate about or comfortable with instead? In a situation like this, the principal should exercise his or her leadership skills. A team-teaching approach could also eliminate this problem. For example, if one of

my colleagues is uncomfortable with the topic of gay parents, I can read the book with her class and she can help with the follow-up activities.

I have used some of the following books in my class, and some were recommended in Bainbridge's course. Students in Division 1 will benefit from activities based on these books. Discussions and grand conversations are possible activities for younger children, but they must be guided carefully at the beginning. Children's experiences provide an important starting point for many kinds of literacy activities, especially for multicultural literacy. Having children talk about the events and people in their experiences is a foundation for both reading and writing. I have used the following discussion questions in my class: What happened to you when you listened to the story? How did you feel about the characters in the story when they acted a certain way? What made you feel the way you felt? What did you learn from this story? What do you think of the illustrations? How did the illustrations help you understand the story?

Canadian Multicultural Children's Literature

I have rated the books out of four Canadian flags. A book with four flags is highly recommended. The books are listed alphabetically by the author's last name.

Brownridge, W. R. 1995. *The Moccasin Goalie*. Illustrated by W. R. Brownridge. Victoria, B.C.: Orca Books.

Preschool–Grade 2



Danny loves to play hockey with his friends in their small Canadian town—Willow. Although he can't skate because of a "crippled leg and foot," he plays goalie in his leather moccasins. When a town team is formed, he is cut because he can't skate. Danny is very disappointed, but his spirits are revived weeks later when the coach asks him to replace the team's injured goalie in the biggest game of the year. Danny steps in, plays well and is invited to stay on the squad for the playoffs. This is a great book to read to children if there are special-needs students with physical disabilities in the class. Read it in September to build a positive learning environment.

The following review was written by Dave Jenkinson (1995):

The large, lavishly coloured paintings are excellent to sustain the mood of the story; the text is easy to read. I like to read this book to my students when there is a problem of picking teams during recess time. Brownridge's full-colour paintings—especially his double-page spreads—powerfully capture both the biting cold of prairie winters and the eye-dazzling brightness of the season's days as rays from the low winter sun reflect off snow-covered land. A series of three consecutive double-page spreads focusing on the critical game dramatically freeze-frames the

action. Only the presence of horse-drawn sleighs gently reminds contemporary readers of the book's period setting.

The combination of a warm, affirming story and fine illustration makes this a suitable book for all collections that serve young listeners and readers. It was awarded the Canadian Children Book Centre Choice for 1996. I loved this book.

Eyvindson, P. 1996.
***Red Parka Mary.* Illustrated by R. Brynjolson. Winnipeg, Man.: Pemmican Publications.**
K-3



Peter Eyvindson has written a gentle and thoughtful tale about intergenerational friendship and love. Both the Chinese-Canadian and First Nations cultures emphasize respecting elders, and this story clearly demonstrates this attitude. The book is highly recommended.

The following is a review by Lorraine Douglas (1996), Youth Services Coordinator at the Winnipeg Public Library:

A seven-year-old boy narrates his story about his elderly neighbour, Mary. At first, he is afraid of her but, after an encounter, the two develop a remarkable relationship. Before Christmas, the boy decides to buy Mary a red parka because she is always cold. After he gives her the parka, she promises him a fantastic gift on Christmas Day. They play a guessing game and he finally receives a small heart-shaped

bead which symbolizes the love Mary can give to him. The full-colour paintings by Winnipegger Rhian Brynjolson are rich in character and emotion. The scenes in which the boy, in folk-tale fashion, tries to guess what he will be given are very amusing. In one scene, the backdrop of Buckingham Palace appears, and in another, everything turns gold—including the boy's dog! This tender tale is a welcome addition for library collections as it presents a realistic depiction of contemporary First Nations Peoples. Children will enjoy sharing this story at Christmas and at other times during the year.

Gilmore, R. 1998. ***A Gift for Gita.* Illustrated by A. Priestley. Toronto, Ont.: Second Story.**
K-4



This is the last book in the Gita series. It is about a young East Indian immigrant. When Gita's beloved grandmother visits her in Canada, Gita's father announces that he has received a job offer back in India. The family struggles with the decision of staying in Canada or going back to India. Gita's grandmother wants her family to go "home" to India. Eventually, Gita's family decides that, although they miss India, Canada is their new home. The book's main themes are Indian culture and traditions, job relocation, immigration experiences, family heritage and the meaning of home. I have used this book to introduce the Grade 2 social studies unit Families Around the World.

Gregory, N. 1995. ***How Smudge Came.* Illustrated by R. Lightburn. Red Deer, Alta.: Red Deer College Press.**

K-6



Cindy is a developmentally challenged adult who lives in a group home where no pets are allowed. When she finds an abandoned dog on the street, she has to hide the puppy in her room. While she works as a cleaner in an extended-care home called Hospice, she keeps the puppy in her apron. One of the patients, Jan, is nearly blind and, when he holds the puppy, he can hardly see it. "It is like a smudge in the dark," he says. What will Cindy do with the puppy? How can she keep her puppy a secret? With her determination and loving personality, and with Jan's help, she finally gets to keep her puppy in Hospice.

I was speechless after reading this book. This is a heart-warming story about human kindness. I strongly recommend this book to anyone who can read or be read to, and especially to teachers with special-needs students in their class. Gregory demonstrates that every human being has the right to love and be loved by someone. The character of Cindy, who is a Down's syndrome adult, presents the difficulties and deep feelings of someone who is not able to make their own decisions. I unfortunately did not know about this book when I had two Down's syndrome children in my class. The rest of the class was initially quite frightened of them because they looked different.

This book has won both the Mr. Christie's Book Award for best Canadian children's book and a B.C. Book Prize (Sheila Egoff Children's Prize). It has also been honoured as a Canadian Children's Book Centre (CCBC) Our Choice selection and was placed on the American Bookseller's Association Pick of the Lists.

Harrison, T. 2002. *Courage to Fly*. Illustrated by Z.-Y. Huang. Calgary, Alta.: Red Deer Press. K-3



Meg has immigrated to a new Canadian city from her Caribbean home. Her anxiety and loneliness in a new and strange country are captured in this story. Meg cherishes her unexpected friendship with an old Chinese man who practises Tai Chi every morning in their apartment courtyard. One day during an early snowstorm, Meg finds a tiny, injured swallow and brings it home to nurse it. When the little bird is better, she is reluctant to release it back into the wild. The old Chinese man gently suggests that the bird belongs to the wild.

I found this book a bit disjointed and unfocused with the theme. However, the soft watercolour painting by Zhong-Yang Huang enhanced the text and complemented the book well. Although the book did not receive many positive reviews, it received many awards. It won the 2003 Alberta Book Awards Children's Book of the Year, was honoured as a CCBC Our Choice selection, was nominated for the Canadian

National Institute for the Blind 2003 Torgi Literary Awards and an Ontario School Library Association 2003 Blue Spruce Award, and was recommended by CBC Radio's Children's Book Panel in December 2002.

Sanderson, E. 1990. *Two Pairs of Shoes*. Illustrated by D. Beyer. Winnipeg, Man.: Pemmican Publications.

K-3



This is a wonderful picture book about a young First Nations girl who receives two special gifts for her birthday. Maggie receives a pair of black, patent-leather shoes from her mother—exactly what she wanted. In her excitement, she runs to her kokom's (a Cree word for *grandmother*) to show off her special birthday present. Her kokom agrees that the black leather shoes are beautiful. Under her grandmother's bed is another special gift for her—a lovely pair of beaded moccasins. This is a very precious gift because her kokom is blind, and the moccasins were handmade by her. Maggie is torn by receiving two pairs of shoes for her birthday. Which pair should she wear? She loves both the black leather shoes and the beaded moccasins. Her kokom gives her this advice: "Today is a special day for you, for you have been given two pairs of shoes. From now on you must remember when and how to wear each pair."

My sons have two distinctive pairs of shoes that they switch between on a regular basis. When

they are with the Wong household, they put on their Chinese slippers, and when they are with the Griffiths household, they put on their hiking boots. Many children have learned that there are times and ways to wear different pairs of shoes. I have certainly learned to wear many different shoes in my life.

The glossary at the back of the book is useful. Young children will enjoy the colourful illustrations by Native artist David Beyer. His drawings capture the delight and tenderness of the relationship between Kokom and Maggie.

Skrypuch, M. F. 1996. *Silver Threads*. Illustrated by M. Martchenko. Toronto: Viking. Grades 3-6



Anna and Ivan are young newlyweds who have escaped hardship in the Ukraine and started a new life in the Canadian frontier. When the First World War erupts, Ivan volunteers to fight for his new homeland, but tragedy strikes. While Anna waits for her husband's return, hope comes from an unexpected source. The book is based on a true story. It won the 1995 Taras Shevchenko writing award and was chosen as the Ontario Library Association's Best Bet for 1996.

Jennifer Johnson (1996), who works as a children's librarian in Ottawa, states the following:

Silver Threads interprets a powerful personal experience in light of extraordinary events in the world and on the domestic front. Librarians building

Canadiana, western Canadiana and multicultural collections will want this book on their shelves. . . . The author has used an illustrated format to explore the Ukrainian immigrant experience of the early twentieth century. The choice of format limits the presentation to the detriment of character development.

Spalding, A. 2000. *Me and Mr. Mah*. Illustrated by J. Wilson. Victoria, B.C.: Orca Books.

K-6



Ian loved living on a prairie wheat farm before his parents were separated. When he and his mother move to the big city many kilometres away from his father, Ian feels isolated and lonely. With no friends and only a barren backyard to play in, he becomes curious about the strange old Chinese man next door who grows strange vegetables. Ian is inspired to grow his own sunflower in his garden. He realizes how much he has in common with Mr. Mah because both of them have been displaced from their original homes. They share stories from their pasts and their friendship grows, despite their cultural and age differences. They both keep memorabilia in boxes—Mr. Mah keeps memorabilia from his past in China, and Ian keeps his toys from the prairie. This is a warm story of friendship, kindred spirits and cultural understanding, with gardening as a theme. It earned a Canadian Library Association Book of the Year for Children Award

honourable mention in 2000. I used this book for a Grade 2 Safe and Caring unit on friendships.

The following review is by Diane S. Marton from Arlington County Library in Virginia:

Each pleasing watercolour painting, rich in blues, greens, yellows and browns, spills across to the opposite page, softly merging with a smaller illustration. Ample white space surrounds the text. Despite some stilted language and occasional heavy-handedness, this title should be considered for collections needing material on intergenerational or interracial relationships.

Trottier, M. 1999. *Flags*. Illustrated by P. Morin. Toronto Ont.: Stoddart Kids.

K-4



A young girl named Mary meets a gentle Japanese-Canadian named Mr. Hiroshi when she spends a summer with her grandmother by the Pacific Ocean. When Mr. Hiroshi is removed from his well-maintained, beautiful home by the ocean and put in a detention camp during World War II, Mary sadly agrees to take care of his garden until he comes back. She is too young to fully understand why Mr. Hiroshi has been taken away from his home and thinks that his absence will be very short. As the summer progresses, she realizes that his return is unlikely. The new owner replaces Mr. Hiroshi's peaceful and calm Japanese garden with a lawn, fills in the pond and

removes the irises. To keep the memory of Mr. Hiroshi's garden alive and to prepare for the future, Mary digs up some iris bulbs and saves them for her own garden. *Flags* is a tender story about the mistreatment of Japanese-Canadians during World War II.

This book brought back warm memories of my next-door neighbours, Mr. and Mrs. Kitaguchi, who as children were sent from Vancouver Island to a detention camp in Lethbridge. Mr. Kitaguchi gave my oldest son a May Day tree for his first birthday. For the past 22 years, whenever the May Day tree blooms, we think of how kind he was. I can relate to how Mary feels about Mr. Hiroshi's garden because gardening together is a good bonding time for friends. I have used this book for my Grade 2 unit on Japan, and the children wanted to know why the Japanese-Canadians were evacuated and relocated. This is also a great book about intergenerational friendship. The author's note provides a brief history of Japanese-Canadians, including their deportation during the war and the long-overdue apology from the Canadian government. I strongly agree with her sentiment that "perhaps this story will plant the seed of peace in the hearts of those who read it. And perhaps peace will grow there, much like it did long ago, in Mr. Hiroshi's garden." It is our responsibility and obligation to read books like this to our children so that history will not repeat itself.

This book won the International Youth Library's 2000 White Raven Award and the 2000 Storytelling

World Honor Award, was a CCBC Our Choice selection, and was listed in the Children's Book Council's *Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People*.

Valerie Nielsen (2001), a teacher-librarian from Winnipeg, writes:

Maxine Trottier is a prolific writer. In *Flags*, the author has demonstrated her gift for taking a small piece of a larger story and developing it through the eyes of a child. Her story of innocence and friendship set against a backdrop of suspicion and racism is a moving and powerful one. Award-winning artist Paul Morin brings the beauty of the setting and the strength of the characters into focus with his stunning paintings.

Ye, T.-x. 1999. *Share the Sky*. Illustrated by S. Langlois. New York: Annick Press.

K-2



Fei-fei lives with her grandfather in China. They both love flying kites, and her grandfather makes the most beautiful kites with traditional methods. One day, a letter comes to her from Canada, requesting that Fei-fei join her parents. With trepidation and worry, she travels to Canada by herself. Happily reunited with her parents, she must learn a new language, eat strange new food, and attend a new school. Her worries disappear when she meets her teacher and classmates, and finds that the classroom is full of beautiful

kites. This is a story about family bonding, the difficulties that immigrants face in a new country and the importance of common experiences to break the language barrier. The illustrations by Suzane Langlois are a bit stereotypical. The furniture, for example, is old royal-court furniture, and peasants in a small Chinese village would not possess such luxurious decoration, even with relatives overseas earning Canadian dollars.

Luella Sumner (2000), a librarian at Red Rock Public Library in Red Rock, Ontario, writes: "The illustrations, rendered in watercolours, are full-page size, vibrant with colour and very pleasing to the eye. The pictures of the village in China are full of minute detail, the kites bright with imaginative design."

Conclusion

After reading numerous selections of children's multicultural literature from Canada, I am delighted with the many excellent books written by Canadians on Canadian cultures. Our publishing industry has come a long way. Because global education and multicultural studies are not part of the Division 1 curriculum, I hope that by integrating multicultural literature, we will encourage children to believe in the most important values—tolerance, respect, acceptance and compassion.

Let's celebrate children's diversity and differences by using picture books.

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Celebrate *Connections*: We Are Not Alone

Joy Finlay

Naming our journal *Connections* didn't come easily when it was done many years ago. It took soul searching, and the members of our steering group reached within themselves in search of an expression that would reflect the importance of communicating and reference the web of life. The Council was born out of connections established at several events that brought some of us together through shared ideas, methods, resources, concerns and mutual support.

One event was the week-long session for Alberta teachers, held at the newly established Blue Lake Centre near Hinton. I was one of the instructors. My day-long sessions had to be consistent with my four Rs (reality—hands on, relevance—interpretation and teaching methods, responsibility to the environment and self, and relatedness—ecology, or connections in the web of life). We were all inspired by this week together.

Another event occurred after I returned from a month of visiting outdoor education camps that had received support funds from the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation. Emmett Smith, the director of the program, invited me

to report on the success of the projects, which were teacher-initiated and -driven. I participated in each camp for one day, and in several hikes up the slopes of Yamnuska during one memorable week. I came away with a profound sense of pride about what was being accomplished in each camp. I felt swamped in a positive way by the eager questions of teachers who were asking about the outdoor school camps. My visits had served a professional development need in the emerging field of environmental and outdoor education. I was a vehicle for linking, confirming and sharing, but we needed another vehicle, a means, to continue this.

The crucial moment for this Council came when Brad Blocksidge exclaimed, "We need a specialist council!" The process of establishing the Council took a long time, and we were busy, but, as they say, the rest is history. The proof of our connections goes on—through the journal, conferences, friendships, mentoring and sharing. We are not alone.

We've come a long way, and there is a long way to go. I am reading *Beyond the Outer Shores: The Untold Odyssey of Ed Ricketts, the Pioneering Ecologist Who Inspired John Steinbeck and Joseph*

Campbell, by Eric Enno Tamm (2004). I had used Ricketts's *Between Pacific Tides* as an identification reference for intertidal-life field trips that I was leading on the coast of British Columbia in the 1970s. I was delighted with the approach of connecting the invertebrates according to interlocking factors that determine their distribution (degree of wave shock; type of bottom; rock, sand and mud; and tidal exposure). Ricketts was an ecologist, but now I read that he was Doc from Steinbeck's (1945) *Cannery Row*, too. He was an unassuming scientist who loved the natural world so much that it hurt. His all-consuming vision and ecological approach was a forerunner of the times, especially his concern about modern society's materialism, technological mania and relentless harvesting of forests and seas.

I reference Ricketts because he was alone in his time—a lone advocate of an ecological approach to life. He had no one with whom to celebrate his ideas. Sixty years after his death, his approach is more relevant than ever. We have a growing understanding of our need for connections of all sorts—in the whole world, in our individual world, with each other and with nature.

An ancient Nuu-chah-nulth principle says that “everything is one” (*hishukish ts’awalk*, pronounced *he-shook-ish tsa-walk*). In the complex swirl of life, this phrase is exquisitely simplistic, encompassing both mundane and universal connections and entanglements.

When we moved to our retirement home on a piece of rock and bush near Victoria, I lost many connections, including many books I gave up. I did keep one snaggy ball of orange flagging tape. I used it to connect (or summarize) our experience after each field course. Participants became entangled in a web of tape as the ball was passed, unwinding. It was a visual “web of

life,” and it encouraged participants to think about the significance of connections and to speculate about breaking or keeping them. Broken tape is easy to fix—it just has to be tied back together. But what if real-life connections are broken? How do we mend them?

Our small group dared to dream. The Council and *Connections* became a reality. Now, decades later, the conference will celebrate this and give us further momentum. Our interdependence sustains us. The links we have to each other and with air, water, earth, and plants and animals are essentials for life and for living on Earth. Let’s celebrate connections.

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Joy Finlay is the founding president of GEOEC and a noted naturalist, educator and writer on ecological issues. She has mentored many educators in western Canada.

A Rising Tide Lifts All Ships: A National Strategy to Promote Environmental Education

Gareth Thomson

What would you say if you knew that somewhere in Canada a group was preparing a strategy aimed at improving the lot of every environmental education organization in the country? This article demonstrates how this strategy will help all organizations in the same way that a rising tide lifts all ships, no matter how large or small.

Background

In September 2000, the J. W. McConnell Family Foundation established Green Street, a program designed to enhance the excellence and ease of delivery of environmental education in the Canadian public school system. Green Street works with approximately 20 provider organizations, and over 150,000 students have benefited from its programs thus far. The Green Street mission—ensuring student engagement in environmental stewardship—means that both students and the environment benefit as a result of the program.

The National Strategy

The next phase of the Green Street program was launched at the

August 2004 meeting of the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM). Through its discussion paper “Engaging in a National Dialogue on Environmental Learning and Sustainability (ELS),” Green Street proposed a number of activities on the following six themes to advance ELS in Canadian K–12 classrooms over the next six years:

1. Create a culture for ELS
2. Support youth engagement
3. Provide support for educators
4. Advance relevant education policy and curriculum
5. Support networks that promote ELS
6. Undertake research and create opportunities for ELS

At the EECOM conference, participants fully endorsed the strategy and helped piece together a preliminary implementation plan to accomplish these six themes. The EECOM Steering Committee also passed a motion that “EECOM support the mission, goals and programs of the Green Street program, and endorse the Green Street national strategy for school-based environmental learning and sustainability as a powerful and highly functional framework for

advancing environmental education in Canada, as it corresponds to a great degree to EECOM’s own broad strategic goals.”

A Rising Tide

The 40 organizations contacted at EECOM agreed with the metaphor that compares this strategy to a rising tide.

Organizations such as a university that includes environmental education in its teacher training or a small nonprofit organization that includes school visits as part of its activities would benefit from this strategy, even if they don’t receive any direct funding. Participants also emphasized three points:

1. Network development adds to and supports the fifth theme. A network is a critically important means through which all the other themes are communicated and strengthened.
2. Important synergy exists between the six themes—they strengthen and reinforce each other.
3. All activities envisaged in this strategy must be measured against how effectively they will contribute to engaging youth in environmental stewardship.

The graphic that follows this article was generated by workshop participants to show how the rising tide might help a typical nongovernmental organization (NGO) involved in ELS.

What Is Next?

Clearly, this strategy has tremendous potential to help engage youth in

stewardship activities. Over the next months and years, the Green Street group will refine both the strategy and the implementation plan and seek out funding and support for this ambitious and important plan.

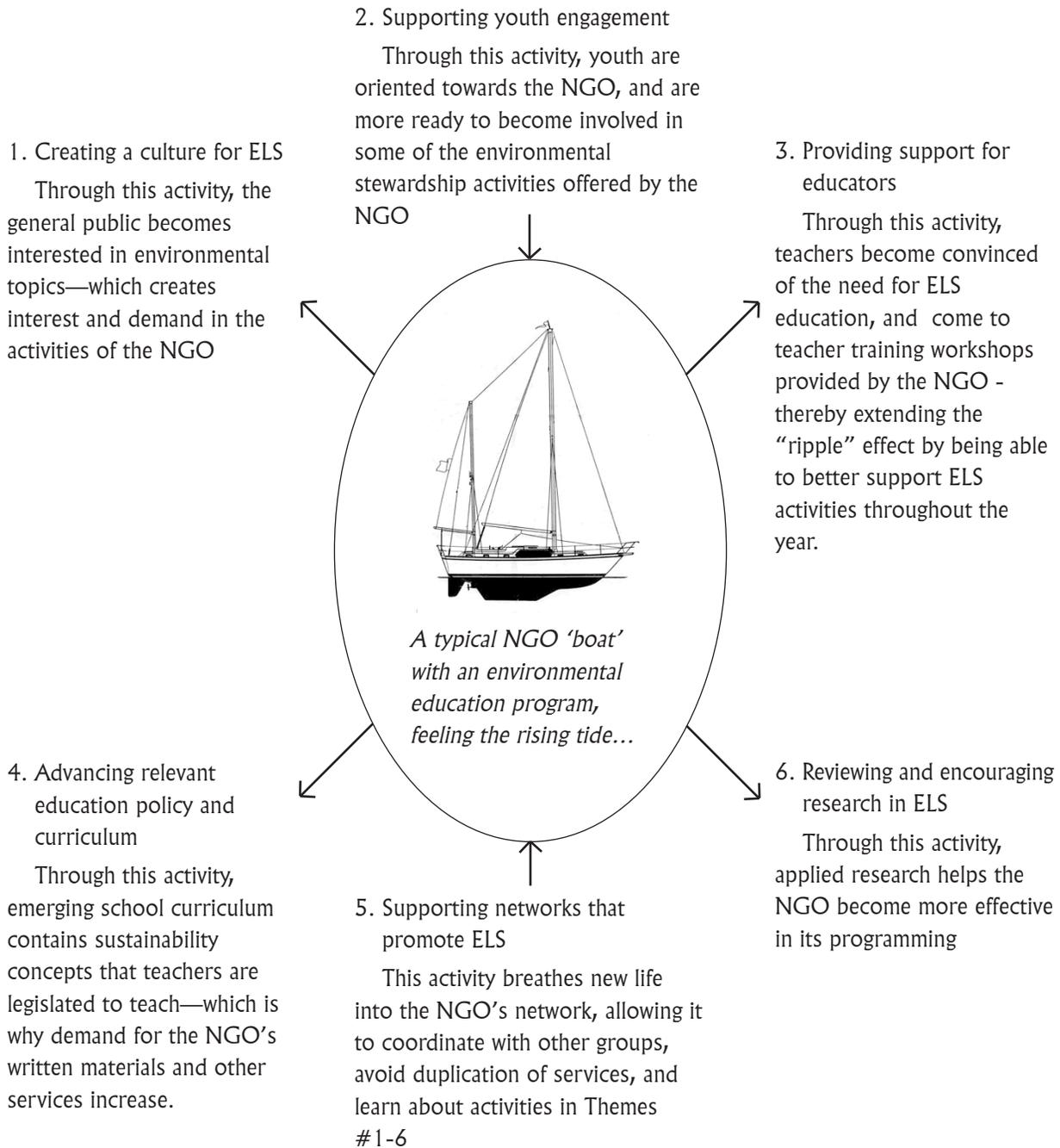
For more information on Green Street and on the national strategy, visit www.green-street.ca (click on What's New? to download the discussion paper). Anyone

interested in commenting on the current draft of the national strategy or finding out more about this work should contact Green Street manager Pam Schwartzberg at pams@green-street.ca.

Gareth Thomson is the education director of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Calgary/Banff chapter) and a member of the GEOEC executive.

'A Rising Tide lifts all ships'

A demonstration of how the Green Street National Strategy would help a typical non-governmental organization (NGO) involved in environmental learning and sustainability (ELS)



Systems Thinking and Collage-Making: The Relationships of Ecosystem and Environmental Justice

Mijung Kim and Khadeeja Ibrahim-Didi

Science and Technology in the Modern Global Era

The relationship between science, technology and society is complex and reciprocal in the era of global economy and political structures (Bijker 2003; Capra 2002; Mayor 1999; Goldsmith 1984; Smith 2002; Wilson 2002). The achievement of science and technology has become a tool to compete in the global markets, and it seems to be considered evidence of a sophisticated and civilized society. This tendency is often associated with consumerism and capitalism in contemporary society, resulting in a subculture of modernity in our time (Rees 2001, 2002).¹ We celebrate the development of modern science, technology and industrialization but often forget to question where we situate ourselves in the relationships of science, technology, society and the environment (STSE); human well-being; and sustainable future in this unfolding world. “The degradation of the Earth is seen as the condition

for ‘progress’ of humans. . . . The language in which our values are expressed has been co-opted by the industrial establishment and is used with the most extravagant modes of commercial advertising to create the illusory world in which modern industrial peoples now live” (Berry 1999, 62–63). The interrelationship between industrialization, development and progress, and environmental values needs to be questioned in terms of ecological and social sustainability. The terms *progress* and *development* need to be re-examined in relation to well-being with togetherness, appropriateness of ethics, and human rights and justice. We need to question what criteria of well-being and whose ethics and justice we have been concerned about in the discourse of modern civilization.

There have been increasing concerns about modern science and technology in local and global communities: bioethics and humanity, exploitation and environmental destruction, inequity, violence and so on. One example is claims of biocolonialism caused by the

marriage of unethical use of modern science and technology—globalization that is destroying agricultural prospects, business and the environment of developing nations (Shiva 1997).

I grew up in a small village in Africa. We used to grow our food crop, such as millet, yellow corns, bananas and so on, but now it has been replaced by cash crop, such as coffee and tea. The more cash crops, the smaller space and the poorer we get. People told us that scientific and technological crops and facilities would help us when they brought those crops into our country. Our forests were destroyed by outsiders and it causes shortage of rain nowadays. We don’t have food, don’t have rain and don’t have money to buy food from the United States, Canada or Europe. . . . Before science and technology, we need to appreciate what we have and realize we have only one mother earth.

This story raises questions about how modern science, technology, society and the environment are

related to human lives in the global scheme. We, as both local and global citizens, need critical-thinking and decision-making skills to cope with controversial environmental issues related to science and technology. How can science education respond to these needs in the classroom?

Scientific Knowledge as Life Knowledge

Science education has attempted to take into consideration the above concerns through focusing on “scientific literacy for citizenship” (Aikenhead 1994; Hodson 2003; Hurd 2002; Kolstø 2001). The emphasis on scientific literacy can bring forth ethical and responsible relationships to scientific knowledge, addressing social-democratic

decision making and the relationship between science and technology.

An STSE-oriented curriculum requires interdisciplinary strategies to promote the interrelationships between scientific knowledge, values and action. It is therefore critical to reconceptualize our understanding of epistemology in science teaching and learning. However, school science mainly takes an objectified view of scientific knowledge and can disconnect students’ experiences in school science from their everyday lives (Aikenhead 1994; Driver et al. 1996; Hurd 2002). In this circumstance, it is difficult to enhance scientific knowledge as context-bound and participatory life knowledge.

Epistemological objectivity in science education allows us to be anthropocentric and separates us from the environment. When

knowledge is objective, it can be utilized for the selective benefit of a particular species. However, if we understand that knowledge is a product of our interactions in the world—that our interactions have changed the world because we are part of that world, we begin to see that every action of any living species (even knowledge-making activities) affects everything else. Additionally, knowledge becomes seen as a static commentary of one way that we contribute to the unfolding world. From this regard, anthropocentric approaches to progress might be revealed as self-defeating.

To overcome separation and anthropocentrism, science education and STSE education can start by acknowledging

- science as a human construct that is constrained by a physical reality, and



- knowledge (of which science is one domain) as embodied in ways that we recurrently elaborate and enact the world with other species.²

In science education, the debates on ecological sustainability and environmental issues have been taken up largely within the STSE discourses. The STSE discussions are based around social justice, ecological sustainability and environmental justice (Berry 1999; Rees 2002; Wackernagel and Rees 1996). However, teaching ecosystems and environmental issues in science classrooms often falls into objective scientific concepts or abstract conceptual knowledge, disregarding values, socioeconomic structures and possible actions that intermingle in reality (Hart 2002).

Toward a New Paradigm of Ecosystem

Understanding that scientific knowledge is enactive underscores the need to reconceptualize responsibility toward ecosystems and the environment in science education. An ecosystem is commonly considered a hierarchical system of biota and biotic interactions of matter and energy, and it is a concept of the natural environment; there is not much sense of human presence in the flows of ecosystem. “In the extreme this dichotomy emerges as a distinction between community³—the system of populations—and ecosystem of matter-energy

transformations through biota and environment. The separation of community and ecosystem ecology in textbooks and classrooms is evidence of the acceptance of this dichotomy” (King 1993, 22).

In an ecological paradigm, our understanding of ecosystems and the environment needs to start from our participatory relationships in the world. A process-functional approach understands ecosystems as an integral part of the world system and requires us to look into the transferring and processing of matter and energy. This flow of energy and matter in ecosystems functions as dynamics of lives. To understand the relationships of dynamics, we must understand how our everyday life is related to the web of the flow. How can we sustain our modern, urban lifestyle within the web of ecological dynamics? How do everyday goods play a role in the web of life? What role do scientific and technological innovations play?

Making a Collage

The following is an STSE teaching strategy—making a collage on the interrelationships between the human and nonhuman worlds. This activity attempts to manifest the relationships in everyday lives that render us complicit in the modern technological culture. This activity begins with a concept of ecosystems based on systems thinking (Capra 1996) and focuses on the connectedness of the web, not on objects and subjects themselves.⁴ It is also crucial to understand the importance of engaging everyday objects, artifacts and technologies

in developing the relationships between ecosystems and human activities. This activity facilitates the uncovering of relational networks.

This activity can be incorporated in various classroom and workshop settings. For example, the following description has been modified for teaching the Interactions and Ecosystems unit in Grade 7 Science.

Grade 7 Science: Unit A—Interactions and Ecosystems

Outcomes for STSE and Knowledge

1. Students will investigate and describe relationships between humans and their environments and identify related issues and scientific questions.
2. Students will trace and interpret the flow of energy and materials within an ecosystem.
3. Students will monitor a local environment and assess the effects of environmental factors on the growth, health and reproduction of organisms in that environment.
4. Students will investigate and describe relationships between humans and their environments, and identify related issues and scientific questions.
5. Students will trace and interpret the flow of energy and materials within an ecosystem.
6. Students will monitor a local environment and assess the effects of environmental factors on the growth, health and reproduction of organisms in that environment (Alberta Education 2003, 11–12).

Activity Process

Teacher's Preparation		
1. Collect various magazines (commercial and noncommercial) or clips from magazines of pictures of artifacts and technological and natural objects. (Teachers can save class time by collecting clips beforehand. However, having students select their own pictures will allow them to reflect on how commercialized magazines represent modern culture and encourage consumption to satisfy individual or social desires.) 2. Collect chart paper, scissors, glue sticks and coloured pens. 3. Put students in groups of four or five.		
Teacher-Student Activity		
Themes	Steps	Strategies/Possibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Elements of ecosystems</i> • <i>Consumption and the environment</i> 	1. Discuss the connections between ecosystems and our everyday lives in the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students discuss what elements of the natural environment are and how our everyday goods are related to ecosystems. (The separation of a city environment and the natural environment needs to be discussed by looking at the consequences of our everyday actions. For example, when does a garbage can become an ecosystem, and what life does it sustain?)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Living and nonliving elements of ecosystems</i> • <i>Interrelationships of ecological web</i> 	2. Select pictures. 3. Cut out the pictures and glue them on a piece of chart paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students select any items from the magazine clips based on what they have discussed (pictures of everyday life goods, such as books, cars, food, water, tables and so on; and natural living or nonliving elements, such as water, land, air, sunlight, animals, plants and so on). • Students talk about the basis on which they will arrange the pictures. They discuss the relationships between the pictures. • Students draw lines where things are related and write remarks or comments (like a concept map).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Roles of modern science and technology</i> 	4. Find the roles of modern science and technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students look at their collages and find places where science and technology are related, and then they comment on those relationships. • Students discuss how science and technology play a role in the grand scheme of the environment and human life.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discuss responsible citizenship.</i> • <i>Where are humans in the ecosystems?</i> 	5. Discuss and reflect on your group work with others.	Questions: 1. What are the expectations and limitations of science and technology in terms of the sustainability of the environment and the world? 2. What can we do as individuals and groups? 3. What is the role of scientific knowledge in how an environment evolves? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students discuss their work with other groups. (This can be expanded to a class discussion.) • Students talk about possible actions, everyday behaviour and environmental ethics they can adopt as democratic citizens.

Evaluation and Reflections

This STSE activity is a useful way of exploring the interrelationships between urban and natural ecosystems, human consumption, knowledge and environmental ethics. Using clips from magazines is an intriguing and effective way of examining social and cultural aspects of contemporary society. Participants can look at their lifestyles, public domains of modern culture and current social and environmental issues.

This activity has been done with various groups, from elementary students to adults. Elementary students examined the elements of ecosystems, their everyday products and pollution. Adult groups debated biotechnology, environmental destruction and globalization. The magazine clips helped the participants engage creatively in timely and provoking discussions.

This activity can be modified and used with any level of participants and can promote rich discussions on STSE issues. Possible topics include biotic and abiotic components of ecosystems, ecological footprints (Wackernagel and Rees 1996), environmental destruction, consumption, global market system and overexploitation. The flexibility and creativity of classroom teachers and facilitators will make this activity more dynamic and interactive. The strategy suggested above is only one of many possibilities.

Closing

Because we share this world, we are always thrown into relationships with others, and we are therefore

inevitably complicit in the web of life. The challenge is to live mindfully and responsibly. We are on this journey together.

Notes

1. Rees (2001, 2002) explains that we create and live in a modern myth in which human welfare can be equated with ever-increasing material well-being, and in which this ideology transforms decent, well-rounded citizens into single-minded, consuming machines.

2. Here, the word *enact* means that every action causes a physical change in the world. Scientific knowledge is a product of scientists' actions and therefore changes the world by allowing people to act. For example, after the splitting of the atom, the knowledge became part of our collective domain of actions, and tragedies like the bombing of Hiroshima became possible.

3. King uses *community* to refer to human communities.

4. In systems thinking, "nature is seen as an interconnected web of relationships, in which the identification of specific patterns as 'objects' depends on the human observer and the process of knowing" (Capra 1996, 38).

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- Mijung Kim and Khadeeja Ibrahim-Didi are graduate students in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta, conducting research on science and environmental education. They have used collage in numerous professional development workshops.*

Bringing the Parkland Conservation Farm to You

The Parkland Conservation Farm near Vegreville, Alberta, offers agricultural and environmental education programs at its farm site and in schools. The programs correspond to the Alberta science, social studies and agriculture curricula. They include the following:

- Aspen Parkland Adventures
- Aquatic Investigations
- Climate Change Olympics
- Get Down and Dirty with Soil

- It's Snow Time
- Rain or Shine
- Wetland Wonders
- Agriculture in the 21st Century
- Food for Thought
- Rural Responsibilities
- Safety on the Farm

Some of the programs created for learning groups include the following:

- All About Plants
- Predators and Prey
- Species at Risk
- Nature Walks

- Compass and Navigation Challenge

Choose from any of these programs or suggest a program that could be created for your learning group.

To book a program, contact Pamela Gottselig, outreach instructor at the Parkland Conservation Farm, by phone (780) 764-3927, fax (780) 765-3936 or e-mail pcfreach@telus.net. Visit the website at www.parklandconservationfarm.com.

Teachers Dig Professional Development at the Royal Tyrrell Museum

Palaeo Week for Teachers offers memorable, educational and unique professional development at Dinosaur Provincial Park, in the Drumheller valley and at the Royal Tyrrell Museum's ATCO Tyrrell Learning Centre.

Rave reviews from teachers across Canada stem from the program's mix of engaging activities and practical classroom applications. The museum's objective is to offer teachers first-hand experiences in palaeontology and geology, and to give them the resources they need to use their experiences effectively in the classroom.

This year's five-day program is scheduled for July 25–29 and will have educators participating in field trips to the UNESCO World Heritage site at Dinosaur Provincial Park and to sites in the Drumheller valley. Teachers will receive the latest

scientific information while working with the museum educators and palaeontologists. In the museum's centennial legacy project—the ATCO Tyrrell Learning Centre—teachers will be introduced to fossil casting and will create their own fossil replicas.

Teachers will also be introduced to numerous education programs, including an Internet-based activity called Cretaceous Crime Scene that helps junior and senior high students think like detectives by using clues to solve an ancient palaeo-mystery.

The cost to participate in Palaeo Week for Teachers is \$400, including taxes, program materials, field trips, lunches and educational resources. Palaeo Week for Teachers is a recognized professional development opportunity, and

teachers may be eligible for funding through their school division.

The Royal Tyrrell Museum is operated by Alberta Community Development and integrates the science of palaeontology into a wide variety of educational programs. The museum is open year-round and is located six kilometres northwest of Drumheller. It is the only Canadian institution devoted exclusively to palaeontology. Winter hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.

For more information and registration details, visit www.tyrrellmuseum.com or contact Earle Wiebe, science education administrator at the Royal Tyrrell Museum: e-mail earle.wiebe@gov.ab.ca, phone (403) 823-7707 (dial 310-0000 for toll-free access outside Edmonton).

The Big Picture

The Global Education Project in Mansons Landing, British Columbia, has created a poster for classroom use called The Big Picture. The poster describes “the state of the planet on a single piece of paper.” It presents data on global ecology, fresh water, human

conditions, coal, oil and gas, food production from the land and the ocean, biotechnology, nanotechnology, pollution and toxics, warfare and wealth, and power and might.

All material is footnoted and suitable for educators, scholars and

activists, and should provide many starting points for discussion and research.

The Big Picture is available from the Global Education Project: online www.theglobaleducationproject.org; e-mail gep@sunship.com; or phone (250) 935-6785.

Behind the Pandemic: Uncovering the Links Between Social Inequity and HIV/AIDS

If you are a teacher, facilitator, educator or trainer working with Canadians aged 15 and over, the free resource *Behind the Pandemic* can help you explore HIV as a social and international development issue and provide you with the tools, awareness and inspiration to make a difference.

The kit contains complete instructions for leading activities, including ready-to-copy activity pieces and background notes for facilitators. It has three modules:

1. Basics and Background Information

- Learn how HIV is transmitted
- Discover the history and current state of the global HIV pandemic
- Link health and social factors through an interactive health race

and a model developed by the United Nations and world leaders to slow the pandemic

2. Global HIV Pandemic Simulation

- Experience the challenges HIV poses for individuals, communities and nations
- Explore the interconnections between social issues and HIV
- Connect human realities around the world and the need for an integrated approach to the crisis

3. Moving into Action and Stopping the Pandemic

- Explore how an integrated approach can slow the progress of the HIV pandemic
- Analyze case studies detailing positive and innovative responses to the pandemic

- Get involved in initiatives to respond to the global pandemic

Behind the Pandemic was designed for experienced facilitators and teachers to use with the following groups:

- High school social studies and global issues classes
- AIDS service organization staff and volunteer training
- Nongovernmental organizations working on global issues
- Postsecondary-level classes and groups

No special expertise in HIV/AIDS issues is required to use this resource.

For an electronic copy, check out the publications section at www.usc-canada.org. Contact pandemic@usc-canada.org to order a print copy.

Teaching the Invisible: Evoking Vision and Care for Nature

August 1–9, 2005
Sooke, British Columbia

Program Description

How can we evoke in our students and children a love and care for the natural world of which we are a part? How can we conserve curiosity, wonder and deep appreciation for the world around us? Teaching the Invisible is a program for teachers, environmental and outdoor educators, and parents

that provides an understanding of the biological basis of love, care and vision and our relationship with the biosphere.

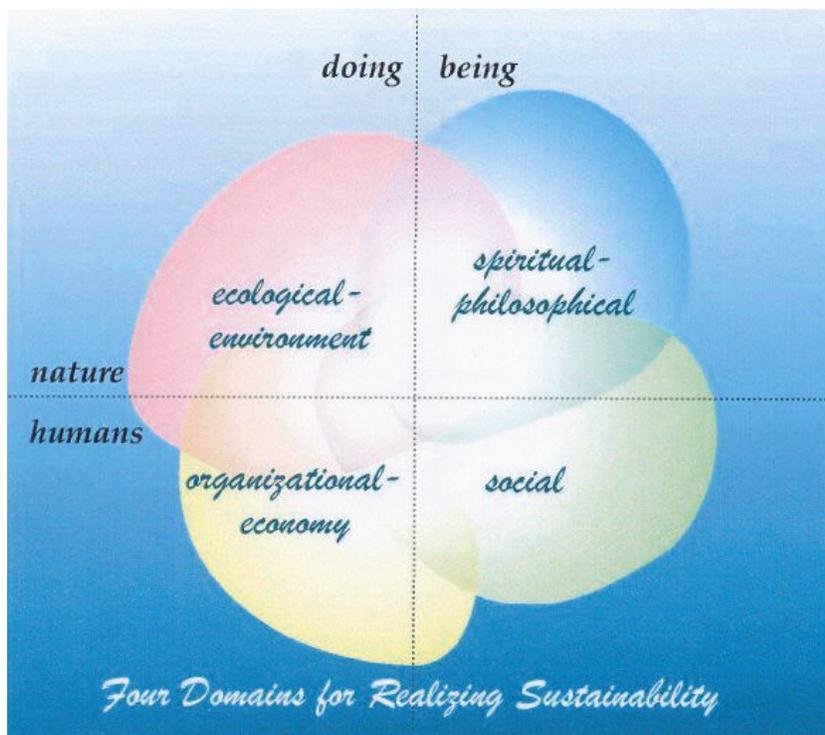
Facilitator Pille Bunnell is a systems ecologist who has specialized in explaining various disciplines from a systems perspective. She was the director of environmental literacy with an international consulting firm. She designed and co-authored the first *State of the Environment*



report for British Columbia, and developed public school curricula on ecology. She is currently an associate professor at Royal Roads University. In recent years, her focus has been on cybernetics, and she has written papers and both fiction and nonfiction books that deal with the nature of complex systems and human cognition, and the practical applications of these to the multifaceted relations between humans and the biosphere.

Visit www.centreforearthandspirit.org for details on tuition, lodging and food. Scholarships are available.

The Centre for Earth and Spirit is directed by Sister Maureen Wild, a keynote speaker at the 2004 GEOEC conference. She can be contacted by e-mail at mawild@telus.net or by phone/fax at (250) 642-1878.



Permission for Use of Photographs or Student Work

The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) requests the permission of parents/guardians for the reproduction of photographs depicting their children and/or the reproduction of work assignments completed by their children. The photograph/work will be reproduced in the Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council (GEOEC) newsletter, *Connections*, and is intended for teacher professional development.

Name of student _____

I, _____ (printed name of parent/guardian of student), agree to the use of this photograph/work for the purpose stated above.

Signature _____

Relationship to student _____

Address _____

Postal code _____

We have recently begun posting archived issues of *Connections* on the GEOEC website (www.geoec.org/connections). Are you willing to have your child's written work posted on the Internet as well?

- Yes, I agree to have my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website.
 - Yes, I agree to have my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website, using a first name only.
 - No, I do not want my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website.
-

Please fax or mail forms to

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The Alberta Teachers' Association

Global, Environmental & Outdoor Education Council

Mission Statement

To promote involvement in quality global, environmental and outdoor education

Objectives

- To provide a vehicle for Alberta teachers for professional development and communication in global, environmental and outdoor education
- To study and make professional recommendations about global, environmental and outdoor education issues
- To network with other provincial organizations that have similar concerns

Membership

- Regular member—Members of the Alberta Teachers' Association, as specified in ATA bylaws, are entitled to full privileges of council membership including the rights to vote and to hold office.
- Student member—Student members of the ATA are entitled to all benefits and services of council membership except the right to hold office.
- Affiliate member—Persons who are not ATA members as specified by ATA bylaws receive all the benefits and services of council membership except the rights to vote and to hold office.

Publications

- The GEOEC recognizes the wide range of interests among members and strives to foster the exchange of ideas and provide information and articles relating to

the various components of the elementary and secondary curricula through publication of *Connections*.

Annual Conference

- The annual conference features a blend of activities, indoors and outdoors, ranging from hands-on workshops to social gatherings. All grade levels are represented in sessions. The emphasis is on practical information and application. The annual general meeting of the GEOEC is held in conjunction with the conference.

Executive

- Volunteer teachers are elected to serve on the GEOEC executive.
- Contact the president of the GEOEC through the ATA office if you are interested in running for a position.
- Elections take place at the annual general meeting during the conference.

Environmental Action Representatives (EARs)

- News to and from your provincial area is relayed through a person acting as a GEOEC representative for that school area.
- If you are interested in being an EAR for your school, please indicate so on your membership application.

Enviroshops

- Various activities and workshops organized by the Council
- Presentations in different locations around the province

JOIN NOW AND BECOME INVOLVED IN THE GLOBAL, ENVIRONMENTAL & OUTDOOR EDUCATION COUNCIL

Name _____ Alberta Teaching Certificate No. _____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

School or Employer _____ Grade Level/Specialty _____

New Membership

\$25.00 Regular and Affiliate Membership

\$45.00 2-year membership

\$65.00 3-year membership

Renewal of Membership

\$12.50 Student Membership

\$30.00 Subscription for nonmembers

I would be interested in serving as an Environmental Action Representative Yes No

Make cheque payable to the Alberta Teachers' Association and mail it with the application to the Association at 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton T5N 2R1.

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