

It starts with one



“Seeds of Hope”

Exhibition Activity Pack







Learn, Reflect, Empower

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Please note that participants need to be told what to look out for before they view the exhibition.

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Kids	Teens
	
Appropriate for elementary age children	Appropriate for middle and high school age students
Teens+	All ages
	
Appropriate for middle and high school age students and older	Appropriate for any age from "Kids" to "Teens+"

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About the activities

This collection of activities was created to supplement the Seeds of Hope exhibition with educational activities for all ages, in support of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

Each activity uses the "Learn, Reflect, Empower" formula used in the exhibit and outlined in Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda's 2002 proposal on education and sustainable development (see <http://www.sgi.org/sgi-president/proposals/environmental-proposal.html>). First, it is crucial for us to grasp the basic facts, deepen our awareness and our understanding. Then we must reflect on how the way we live affects each other and our global environment. Finally, we have to take concrete actions to resolve the issues we face. The activities in this book provide a setting for participants to engage in meaningful dialogue, exchange ideas, and leave feeling empowered that they can make a difference.

They can be used in informal group settings with non-professional facilitators or in a classroom situation.

Seeds of Hope is a joint project with the Earth Charter International, and the Earth Charter is introduced in the exhibition as an integrated set of values and principles for sustainable living. Several of the activities highlighted here thus refer to the Earth Charter. (See <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org> for further information)

There are currently three kinds of activities for this exhibition: activities directly linked to the exhibit, activities to explore the ideas behind the exhibition, and activities focused on the Earth Charter. Each activity has been designated as appropriate for elementary school age students (kids), middle school and high school age students (teens), and/or middle and high school age students and older (teens+), used to designate activities that are appropriate for both teens and adults. When facilitating the Earth Charter activities, it would be good to have a copy of the Earth Charter available. (It can be downloaded in 50 languages from the www.earthcharterinaction.org website.) A version of the charter for elementary age students and an adapted version for junior high and high school age students can be found in the annex of this booklet.

About being a facilitator

Facilitating an activity can be lots of fun, but it's also natural to feel a little nervous. If you are facilitating one of these activities and it's your first time, here are some helpful tips about being a good facilitator:

- Be flexible and willing to change
- Respect the group and the participants
- Try not to imply that you know more than the group
- Encourage people's opinions
- Create a comfortable atmosphere
- Keep track of time (most activities shouldn't run longer than 20-45 minutes)
- And remember, being a facilitator doesn't mean you have to be the expert, it just means you are there to guide the activity.

Activities linked to the Seeds of Hope exhibition

Please note that participants need to be told what to look out for before they view the exhibition. If necessary, you can access images of the panels at <http://www.sgi.org/resource-center/ngo-resources/education-for-sustainable-development/seeds-of-hope.html>



Inspired (Teens+)

Have everyone choose one person featured in the exhibit that they were inspired by. Let them know about this before they view the exhibit. Let everyone share the person they chose and talk about what inspired them. This should lead into a discussion about people in our communities who inspire us. Here are some possible questions to help lead the discussion:

- Could they relate to this person's experience?
- Do they know anyone in their community that reminds them of this person?
- Do they know anyone in their community making a positive change?
- What are some common characteristics that these inspiring people possess?
- How can we develop these characteristics ourselves?

*If you will have the chance to meet with the group again, ask them to prepare their own simple "panel" for the exhibition, featuring words about someone who has inspired them and some kind of illustration or design.

**The documentary film "A Quiet Revolution" <http://www.sgi.org/resource-center/sgi-videos/a-quiet-revolution.html> features two of the cases introduced in the exhibition; Kenyan environmentalist Wangari Maathai, and the story of rainwater harvesting from India. It can be used together with this exercise.



Power of Pictures (All ages)

This activity is centered on discussing the viewer's favorite panel or picture in the exhibit. Before everyone views the exhibit, tell them to keep an eye out for a photo or panel that they are particularly impressed by. Have everyone come together after viewing the exhibit and share the photo or panel they chose. Here are some possible questions to help lead the discussion:

- What was the most powerful thing about this photo/panel?
- What did you think about or feel when you first viewed this photo/panel?
- Why is it important to observe everything in our environment?



Behind the Words (Teens+)

This activity is centered on discussing the viewer's favorite quote within the exhibit. Give everyone a small piece of paper and a pencil/pen before viewing the exhibit and ask them to write down their favorite quote in the exhibit. Have everyone come together after they view the exhibit and share their quotes. Here are some possible questions to help lead the discussion:

- What do you like about this quote?
- How can we apply this quote in our daily lives?



Taking Action (All ages)

The second to last panel is the "I will ..." panel on which people write a pledge/goal/determination about an action or actions that they will try to carry out. Have each person share what he or she wrote on the panel. After each person shares what they wrote, everyone can brainstorm and share ideas about how they can be successful at putting their pledge into action.



Endangered Species Quiz (All ages)

This is a 12-question quiz about endangered species, why they are endangered, and what we can do to help. Some of the questions are multiple choice and some are open-ended. The main goal of this quiz is to reflect on the content of the questions and answers while having a bit of fun. Each answer comes with a short explanation. The final question leads to a discussion that gives the participants an opportunity to share ideas. View the quiz on page 18.



Safari (Kids)

EQUIPMENT: Animal list. (See pages 24-25).

PURPOSE: This activity allows students to learn about different animals while having fun at the same time. Students will also reflect on why it's important to know about different animals, their habitat, and how we are all interconnected.

PROCEDURE: Give each student a copy of the list of animals featured in the exhibit. Tell them to pick one that they think is really cool and interesting, but to keep it a secret. After they pick an animal, have the students come back to the activity area and pair up with another student.

Each pair of students does rock, scissors, paper (or coin toss) to decide who will go first. The winner (A) says one fact about the animal they chose without saying the name. This can be a fact from the fact list, or one they make up. For example, they can say: where the animal is from, what color it is, how long it is, what it eats, etc. The other student (B) tries to guess what it is. If B can guess the animal A was thinking of on the first try, then B can say a fact about his or her animal and A tries to guess what animal it is. If B can't guess the animal A was thinking of on the first try, then they do rock, scissors, paper again. The winner says one fact (this might be a second fact) about their animal and the other student tries to guess what animal it is. A and B continue this until both students can guess each other's animal. Have them sit down after they guess each other's animal.

After the students are done, have them sit in a circle, ask them what animal they chose and what they liked about that animal. Possible questions you can ask them are:

- Have you heard of these animals before?
- What are some other animals you like and/or see in your environment?
- Are these animals connected to each other? Are we connected to these animals?

In the end, remind them that the Earth is every living being's home and that we are all interconnected. And because we are all interconnected, it's important to know about each other and take care of each other. It's important to get to know our friends, our community, and our environment.

Activities to explore the ideas behind the exhibition

Random Acts of Kindness (Kids)

EQUIPMENT: 1 pencil and 1 piece of paper per student

PURPOSE: Poverty, conflict, and environmental degradation are all interconnected, and human greed and selfishness lie at the core root of this vicious cycle. If we want to stop this cycle then we must start by overcoming our own self-centeredness. This activity helps children define and explore the concept of kindness and how kindness can play a major role in becoming more compassionate and less selfish.

PROCEDURE: Have everyone sit in a circle and start a short discussion about being kind. Possible discussion questions could be:

- What does being kind mean?
- Have you ever seen someone be kind to someone else at school?
- Has anyone ever been kind to you and how did it make you feel?
- Can you be kind to the environment?

After the discussion, give each student a paper and a pencil. Ask them to write down at least five different ways they can be kind during the course of a day. Then have everyone share what he or she wrote.

Random Acts of Kindness (Teens)

EQUIPMENT: 1 pencil and 1 piece of paper per student

PURPOSE: The exhibit emphasizes that human greed and selfishness lie at the core of environmental degradation, which is part of a vicious cycle of poverty and conflict. The most effective way to make a positive change in the world is to start by overcoming our own self-centeredness. This activity allows high school students to explore the concept of kindness within their own social circles and how they can use "random acts of kindness" to help make this world a better place.

PROCEDURE: Have students sit in a circle and start a discussion about kindness. Possible discussion questions include:

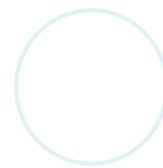
- 1) Define kindness
- 2) Have you ever felt disappointed because you did something for someone else, but they didn't return the favor and/or recognize it?
- 3) If you expect to get something back, are you performing a kind act or just trading favors?
- 4) Has anyone ever done something for you without you expecting it? How did it make you feel?
- 5) What are some examples of people or groups in history who have helped others without expecting anything in return? What do you think of them? (If they can't think of anyone specific, try to provide some examples such as Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. or people in the local community).
- 6) Why would it be good to do random acts of kindness for people?

Next, give each student a paper and pencil and have them write a list of 10 random acts of kindness they can do in their life at home, at school, in the community, and for the environment.

Provide a list of examples if they have trouble thinking of different ways.

Examples:

- Encourage someone who is down, or send them a card or gift
- Turn in items to be recycled (kindness towards the environment)
- Say thank you to someone for their hard work who normally doesn't get acknowledged (shopkeeper, food server, cleaner, etc.)



Random Acts of Kindness (Adults)

EQUIPMENT: 1 piece of paper and 1 pencil per person

PURPOSE: Poverty, conflict, and environmental degradation are all interconnected and self-centeredness lies at the core root of this vicious cycle. If we want to stop this cycle then we must start by overcoming our own self-centeredness. This activity explores the concept of kindness and how we can incorporate more of it into our daily lives.

PROCEDURE: Have everyone listen to some quotes about kindness and ask them to choose one that they like.

"No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted." – Aesop

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless." – Mother Teresa

"Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution." – Kahlil Gibran

"One who knows how to show and accept kindness will be a better friend than any possession." – Sophocles

Ask them to share why they chose that quote and what they think that means. Use this as a springboard for a discussion about kindness. Possible discussion questions could be:

- 1) Have you ever felt disappointed because you did something for someone else, but they didn't return the favor and/or recognize it?
- 2) If you expect to get something back, are you performing a kind act or just trading favors?
- 3) Has anyone ever done something for you without you expecting it? How did it make you feel?

Next, give each person a piece of paper and pencil and ask them to make a list of 10 random acts of kindness they could do in their daily life at their home, in their community, at their workplace, and in the environment.

**This activity was adapted from activities found at <http://www.actsofkindness.org/>.



R-E-S-P-E-C-T (Kids)

EQUIPMENT: 1 piece of paper and 1 pencil per student

PURPOSE: This activity helps the students explore the concept of respect and why respecting yourself, others, and the environment is important in today's world.

PROCEDURE: Have everyone sit in a circle and start a short discussion about respect by asking everyone what they think respect means. Then go over some respect "Do's and Don'ts." For example: be polite to others, be accepting, don't make fun of others, don't lie, etc. After going over the do's and don'ts, talk about some possible situations students might find themselves in and what they would do.

- 1) While you are on the school bus, a kid who isn't popular and who other kids are laughing at comes and sits beside you. He or she looks sad. Would you talk to him or her?
- 2) You are playing soccer and you accidentally kick the ball through a neighbor's window. What should you do?
- 3) You accidentally spill your milk on your friend's desk during lunch. What should you do?

Explain that sometimes you have to be strong to show respect to others and stand up for what is right. Encourage the students to write a poem about respect. Use each letter in respect to start a line. For example:

Respect means loving
Everyone.
Stand up and be brave, be
Polite
Everyday, I will try to
Care about you, me, and
The world.

** This activity was adapted from "Kids Talk" developed by the University of Illinois Extension College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences.



Climb the Tree! (Kids)

EQUIPMENT: 1 piece of paper and 1 pencil per student

PURPOSE: This activity helps students think about what they can do every day to help the environment through developing a motivational "Climb the Tree" chart. Students will learn that our daily interactions with each other also contribute to our impact on the natural environment.

PROCEDURE: Start a discussion with the students about how they can help the environment. They will probably give answers like: recycle cans, turn off lights when not in use, don't leave the water on when brushing teeth, etc. However, in order to truly help the environment, we must develop compassion and kindness within ourselves. Ask the students about ways they can be kind towards their family, their friends, their teachers, their communities, and the environment.

Now give the students the paper and have them draw a tree with lots of individual leaves. Then have them write down all the different ways they can be kind under and/or around the tree. This will be theirs for them to take home. Whenever they do something kind, they can color a leaf. The more kind things they do, the fuller and more beautiful the tree becomes.

Some examples that they can write under the tree are:

- Donate toys you don't use to a local shelter
- Help a friend on the playground
- Tell a teacher thank you for their help
- Help your family clean the house
- Suggest a good book for a friend to read
- Say thank you to the store clerk
- Say hello to the bus driver
- Turn off lights when you aren't using them
- Recycle cans
- Don't leave water running when you brush your teeth



What's the difference? (Teens+)

EQUIPMENT: None

PURPOSE: One of the themes throughout the exhibit is a need for us to overcome our own self-centeredness and become more compassionate. Self-centeredness stems from a disregard for others. We behave like this for a variety of reasons; one of them being that we don't feel a connection to those people. This activity helps participants realize that while we all have our own differences, we share many similarities with each other. Many times, we can be quick to judge others and think negatively about those we don't know (or even those that we do). However, no matter how different we may seem on the surface, we all have similarities. Through recognizing these similarities while appreciating the differences, we can work towards becoming more selfless. This activity helps us appreciate all of our similarities while cherishing what's unique about us. Through compassion and understanding for others, we can build stronger relationships with each other.

PROCEDURE: Have everyone get into groups of 5 or 6 (2-3 if there are fewer people). Give them 5 to 10 minutes to discuss traits or characteristics that all the members in the group have in common. They should try to find at least three traits they have in common. These similarities or commonalities should not relate to physical traits, since the point is to try and find commonalities that we wouldn't necessarily know by just looking at someone. (For example they all have a pet, they all watched a movie last night, they all had toast for breakfast, etc.)

Next, the groups will try to see how many points they can get by finding commonalities with other groups. Have all the groups come together again and choose the order of the groups (1, 2, 3, etc). Have group 1 share one of their commonalities. Group 1 will get a point if any of the other groups had the same commonality. They can get extra points if none of the groups had that commonality on their list, but all of its members do actually share that trait in common.

For example, Group 1 said they like chocolate. None of the other groups had that in their list so group 1 wouldn't get any initial points. However, after asking who likes chocolate, all of the members in two of the other groups said they do, so Group 1 would get 2 points during that second round of asking. Then Group 2 shares one common trait they found, and this continues until all of the groups have shared their list of three commonalities. The group with the most points at the end is the winner, and the point is to reward people for finding things they have in common

Next, have everyone get back into their groups and give them another 5-10 minutes to discuss the unique qualities that they each have. If they have trouble thinking of unique qualities, have them talk about unique qualities they admire in others. (If time is running short then you can skip this and move onto the final discussion).

Finish the activity with a short discussion about the importance of finding similarities between each other. Possible discussion questions include:

- 1) Why is it important to recognize similarities between people? How can that help us make our communities better?
- 2) While recognizing similarities, we should also cherish our unique qualities. How can we do this at our school or in our home?
- 3) How can you use today's activity the next time you find yourself having a misunderstanding with someone?

**This activity was adapted from "Character Building Activities: Teaching Responsibility, Interaction, and Group Dynamics" by Judy Demers.



Imagine (Teens+)

EQUIPMENT: None

PURPOSE: We live in a world where we are using resources faster than the Earth can naturally replenish them. We also live in a world that is becoming much smaller due to technological advances, while at the same time we feel more and more disconnected from each other. This activity helps people be more aware of the interconnectedness in this world.

PROCEDURE: Have everyone look around the area and choose one item. It can be any item in the room (chair, purse, table, light, pencil, etc.). Now tell everyone to close their eyes and only picture the item that they chose. They are going to imagine the journey that item took to get to this room. Tell them think of all the materials that make that item. Where did those materials come from? How were they put together? Who made that item? Where was the item shipped from? How did that item get to this room? How many different people has that item seen?

Now have everyone open their eyes again. Ask some people to share what item they chose and what they thought about when their eyes were closed. Ask the group some other questions such as:

- 1) How many people didn't know what went into making the item they chose?
- 2) How can we show appreciation for our environment and the items around us?
- 3) Do you think it's important to know what goes into making the items we use in our daily lives?
- 4) Everyone contributes to the world in different ways. How can we show appreciation to those around us?

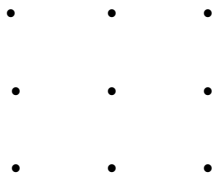


Making a Difference (Teens+)

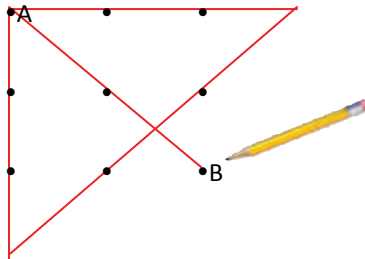
EQUIPMENT: One piece of paper, one pencil per person, and a copy of the Earth Charter (page 28 for simple version, page 31 for standard version).

PURPOSE: The power of one person can be incredible, as shown in the exhibit with the different examples of people taking action in their own communities. How can we take action in our communities? Sometimes change can seem impossible, but this activity helps us realize that something that may seem difficult (almost impossible), is actually quite approachable if we think "outside of the box." At the same time, aligning our vision of change with the principles of the Earth Charter can ensure a better future for everyone.

PROCEDURE: This activity starts with a warm-up. Give everyone a piece of paper and pencil. Tell them to draw 9 dots arranged in 3 rows of 3.



Tell everyone to try and connect all of the dots using only four lines without lifting the pencil from their paper (they cannot pick up the pencil and start from another dot). Many might say that four lines aren't enough or that it is impossible without lifting the pencil off the paper. Tell them to try and think outside of the box. The solution is, as illustrated here, starting from point A or B:



Then have everyone come together and hand out copies of the Earth Charter. Give everyone some time to read through it. After everyone is finished reading, start a discussion about thinking outside of the box and taking action in their communities that fits with the principles of the Earth Charter. Possible discussion questions are:

- 1) How did it feel when you were trying to solve the puzzle? How did you feel after you saw the solution?
- 2) What are some of your personal aspirations?
- 3) What are the potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of these?
- 4) Were you inspired by any of the people taking action in the exhibit?
- 5) Did reading the Earth Charter give you any ideas as to what you can do?
- 6) What are some changes you'd like to see in your community?
- 7) How can you start contributing to that change?

For supplementary materials that can be used with this activity, please see the DVD "A Quiet Revolution." (See <http://www.sgi.org/resource-center/sgi-videos/a-quiet-revolution.html>)



Sustainability Checklist (Teens+)

EQUIPMENT: 1 copy of the Earth Charter (page 31), 1 copy of the checklist (page 26) or blank paper, and 1 pencil/pen per person.

PURPOSE: It's easy to read about sustainability, but it can be a lot more difficult putting this concept into action without having some structure and/or guidelines. This activity helps participants develop their own guidelines through making a checklist of actions that they can do in their homes, workplace, and communities to contribute to sustainability. The checklist is modeled after the Earth Charter and encourages thinking about what sustainability means on all levels.

PROCEDURE: First, have everyone read through the Earth Charter. Then hand out the copy of the checklist and/or blank paper. If you are working only with blank paper, then encourage participants to use the section titles in the Earth Charter to help organize their checklist (Respect & Care for the Community of Life, Ecological Integrity, etc.). Have everyone go through the checklist and write what they think they are capable of doing in their communities. After everyone is finished (give them about 20 - 30 minutes), go around the circle and let people share what they wrote. Hearing other people's checklists might help generate more ideas. Finally, encourage people to set target dates in which they want to complete sections of the checklist (or all of it).



Act Locally (Teens+)

EQUIPMENT: A television and a DVD player or a computer with media player capabilities. One copy of "A Quiet Revolution," which can be found viewed online at <http://www.sgi.org/resource-center/sgi-videos/a-quiet-revolution.html>

(Copies are also available free of charge for educational use from classixcommunications@yahoo.com)

PURPOSE: "A Quiet Revolution" is a 30-minute award-winning documentary featuring three stories about people who made a significant contributions towards sustainability in their local communities. Two case studies featured in the "Seeds of Hope" exhibition (Wangari Maathai and rainwater harvesting) are highlighted in this thought-provoking documentary.

Sometimes it can be difficult to see what changes we can make in our communities, but this activity gives us insight into what others around the world are doing and how sometimes it takes just an idea to start a great wave of change.

PROCEDURE: Before watching the documentary, have a short discussion about what people thought about the exhibit, specifically about theme "It Starts With One ." Possible questions can include:

- The exhibit addressed many problems our world is facing.
What are some problems your local community is facing?
(These could be environmental, economic, or social.)
- How did you feel about the emphasis on "It Starts With One" seen throughout the exhibit?

After about 10-15 minutes of discussion, introduce "A Quiet Revolution" and have everyone watch the documentary or an excerpt of it. (It can be viewed in three 10-minute sections on the SGI website or as a whole.) After watching the documentary, start another discussion about what we can do in our local community to contribute to positive change. Possible questions can include:

- How did the people featured in the exhibit go about creating change in their communities?
What were the steps they took?
- How can you start taking steps towards tackling the problems facing your communities?

Earth Charter Activities

The Seeds of Hope exhibit is a joint initiative with the Earth Charter International. The Earth Charter is a declaration of values and principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society. The following activities focus on the Earth Charter and how we can incorporate its principles in our daily lives. More activities and resources can be found at www.earthcharterinaction.org.



Read and Share (Teens+)

This activity is centered on discussing principles in the Earth Charter that everyone is impressed with. Give everyone a copy of the Earth Charter and have them read through it. Elementary age students can take turns reading aloud or have everyone read aloud together. After everyone is finished reading the Earth Charter, ask each person to share the principle in the Charter they were most impressed with and why. Ask them if they have had any experiences related to the principle or if they have seen it in action in their local communities. (Or if they have ideas as to how this principle could be made a reality.)



Read and Share (Kids)

A major principle in the Earth Charter is respect for life and all living creatures. Have the students read the short story, "The Hermit and the Children." This short story encourages students to reflect on this principle and think about how their daily actions can affect life around them.

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*The Hermit and the Children retold by Susan Tobin
from Spinning Tales*

There was an old man who lived alone in the woods outside of a small town. He had little to do with the people of the village. All sorts of odd tales, stories, and rumors circulated around town about him. The children in the town delighted in teasing and playing tricks on this old man. It was said that the hermit was very wise, so the children were always trying to outsmart him.

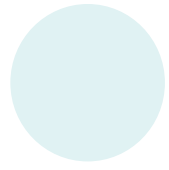
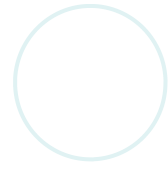
One day, the children thought up a new trick. They snared a small bird and carried it through the woods to the hermit's cabin. One boy held the bird in his hands behind his back. The boldest of the children stepped up and knocked on the old man's door. When the hermit opened the door, the boy with the bird said rudely, "Old man, what do you think I have behind my back?"

Now, the children did not believe the old man could guess it was a bird. But if he did, they planned to ask him, "Is it alive or dead?" If he guessed, "Dead," the boy would show him the live and fluttering little bird. But, if he guessed, "Alive," the boy planned to crush the bird in his hand and show the old man the dead bird.

Living close to nature, the hermit was very observant. He noticed a small down feather float to the ground behind the boy's back, and he said, "You have a bird in your hand." The children's eyes opened wide in amazement. He was smarter than they thought. They were ready with the second question, "Is the bird dead or alive?"

The hermit thought for a moment. He looked at the faces of all of the children, and then directly into the eyes of the boy who held the bird, and said, "The answer is in your hands."

”



After finishing the story, have participants talk about what they think the story means. Possible discussion questions include:

- 1) What do you think, "The answer is in your hands" means in our lives at school and at home?
- 2) What are some living things that you care about? You can include your favorite plants, animals, insects, and people!

You can follow up the discussion by having students draw pictures of their favorite things, cut them out and glue them into a book. You can make a simple book by punching holes in sheets of paper and binding them together with yarn, string, or ribbons.

**This activity was adapted from activities found at www.thelittleearthcharterinaction.org

The following activities can be found in the "Earth Charter Workshop Toolkit" by Nicole Jiron Beirute on www.earthcharterinaction.org



Building a common vision (Teens+)

This activity focuses on the Earth Charter principle of "Democracy, Non Violence and Peace" and building democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.

How to organize the game:

- The goal of the group is to build a new society.
- The participants are survivors of a nuclear war and they are trying to create a new society.
- Make a list of 10 values and 10 actions that will set the pattern for the day to day workings of the new society.
- For example:
 - Values: Freedom of speech, Resourcefulness, Friendship, Fun, etc.
 - Actions: Helping those in need, working hard every day for 8 hours, saying hello to everyone you see, etc.
- Split the group into subgroups.

Instructions for the group:

- Ask each Sub-group: "Which are the 3 values your subgroup think are the least important for building your new society" (by using the list previously made)
- Discuss the question with the entire group: define the three values which are less important for the entire group.
- Do the same with the following question:
 - Which are the 3 least important actions?
 - Which are the 3 more important actions?
 - Which are the 3 more important values?

Reflection:

- Discuss the experience with the whole group.
- Ask the group to think about the importance of achieving a common vision and values framework.
- Ask the group to compare the Earth Charter writing process and their experience of the activity.
- Discuss the experience and think about tolerance, non-violence and peace.
- Ask the group to think about how the experience is related to their own lives.



Team Work - Human Knot (Teens+)

This activity focuses on the "Respect and Care of the Community Life" principle in the Earth Charter and requires participants to work together in a team to solve a problem. The Earth Charter highlights our sense of interdependence and global responsibility. With this understanding we are helping to build a culture of peace.

How to organize the game:

- Ask participants to make a circle.
- Ask participants to take one hand of a partner in front and one from the partner diagonal to him or her. (All at the same time). As they take different hands they will make a human knot.
- Ask them to dissolve the human knot and recreate a circle while holding hands the entire time.

Reflections:

- Discuss the experience with the entire group.
- Ask the group: how they were able to dissolve the human knot?
- Discuss the phrase "all the parts are important"
- Discuss the experience and think about interdependence and global responsibility.
- Request the group to find a principle in the Earth Charter that can be related to this experience.
- Request the group to think about how the experience is related to their own lives

Extra Resources and Activities

A Quiet Revolution – A 30-minute award-winning documentary featuring three experiences (including two featured in this exhibit, Wangari Maathai from Kenya and rainwater harvesting from India) about change and starting at the local level. This documentary is used in the activity "Act Locally" and can also be used with "Inspired" and "Making a Difference." (See <http://www.sgi.org/resource-center/sgi-videos/a-quiet-revolution.html>). It can be viewed in full, or in three separate short episodes of under 10 minutes each.

Blind Walk – Stop relying on your vision--use other senses to experience nature and your surrounding environment.
http://www.childrenoftheearth.org/teacher_activites.htm#Blind%20Walk

Spider Bingo – Spot different kinds of spiders' webs and complete "Spider Bingo."
<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Activities/Observe-and-Explore/Play-Spider-Bingo.aspx>

Five senses nature walk – Use all five senses to observe your surroundings, with versions for different age groups.
<http://www.freekidcrafts.com/fall-5-senses-nature-walk.html>

Alphabet Hike – Go out in nature and look for shapes which look like letters of the alphabet
<http://www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Be-Out-There/Activities/Observe-and-Explore/Take-an-Alphabet-Hike.aspx>

The Council of All Beings – Speak on behalf of another living creature.
<http://www.rainforestinfo.org.au/deep-eco/coab.htm>

Kindness in Your Community – Find a variety of ways to give back to your community.
http://www.actsofkindness.org/images/downloads/original/RAK_group_and_individual_ideas.pdf

Sustainable Education Module – Sustainable education curriculum for teachers, developed by UNESCO.
http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/TLSF/theme_b/uncofrm_b.htm

Endangered Species Quiz

1. Has human behavior led to the extinction of other living creatures?
 - a. Yes, human behavior has increased the extinction rate of other living creatures by 1,000 times.
 - b. Yes, human behavior has led to a few extinctions during the last century.
 - c. No, human behavior has not led to the extinction of any living creatures because extinction is a natural occurrence.

2. Think of tigers, polar bears, gorillas, monarch butterflies, rhinoceros, walrus, giant panda, bluefin tuna, turtles, and penguins. Out of these animals, what three do you think have been identified in the top ten most threatened species in 2010 by the World Wildlife Fund?

3. What are the major threats to these animals?
 - a. Tourism, lack of money, and inter-animal fighting
 - b. Habitat loss, poaching, and climate change.
 - c. We don't know what the major threats are yet.

4. Habitat loss is a major contributor to the depletion of many animals. Why are these animals losing their homes?
 - a. Because people want to use the land for farming and/or use the resources to make different products.
 - b. Because the animals don't take care of their homes.
 - c. Because other animals come and take them.

5. Poaching is the illegal trade or killing of animals and/or plants and it happens all over the place. Why is poaching so prevalent in our world?
 - a. Because poachers are actually concerned about the animals/plants and want to relocate them to a safer place.
 - b. Because poaching can bring in a lot of money for the poachers.
 - c. Because poachers don't like animals and want to get rid of them.

6. Climate change is a big threat to our world's ecosystem and all of its living creatures. For example, six of the seven species of marine turtles are threatened with extinction partially due to climate change. How does climate change effect marine turtles?
 - a. The oceans are getting too warm for the turtles to live in and swim comfortably.
 - b. Animals that never ate them before because their natural food source is becoming scarce are now preying on marine turtles.
 - c. There has been a decline in male marine turtles because the eggs are affected by temperature and the temperature increase at nesting sites is resulting in more females than normal.



7. Many animals are also threatened by extinction because of human-wildlife conflict. For example, elephants in South East Asia are going into areas where people live and this can be very dangerous for both the elephants and the people who live there. Why do elephants go into human populated areas?
- Because they want to find other elephants.
 - Because they want to become friends with the people.
 - Because they are hungry and are looking for food.
8. The mountain gorilla is a primate and our closest relative in the animal kingdom. It is also threatened by extinction. How many primates are threatened by extinction?
- Not many other than the mountain gorilla.
 - About 20% of primates are threatened by extinction.
 - Nearly half of all primates are threatened by extinction.
9. The world's 25 most endangered primates live in 17 different countries. Can you name 2 of them?
10. Why do you think we should care about endangered species?
11. One of the featured animals in the exhibit is the Golden Lion Tamarin. It was down-listed to endangered from critically endangered in 2003. It's not safe yet, but this is a step in the right direction. What contributed to this positive step?
- Intense conservation efforts made by a variety of individuals and organizations.
 - The Golden Lion Tamarin found a new home to live in.
 - Nothing special, the Golden Lion Tamarins naturally got off of the critically endangered list.
12. Can we make a difference where we currently live?
- No, I'm only one person and everything is too far away to help.
 - Yes! Changes happen because one person stands up and I can do that!



Answers:

1. a

Extinction of any number of species does occur naturally in the environment, however, the rate of extinction has increased by 1,000 times due to human behavior including: deforestation and habitat destruction, hunting and poaching, and illegal wildlife trading.

2

If you named any of these animals then you are correct. The World Wildlife Fund has identified all of these animals as the top ten most threatened species in 2010. Tigers, polar bears, mountain gorillas, monarch butterflies, Javan rhinoceros, Pacific walrus, giant pandas, blue fin tunas, leatherback turtles, and Magellanic penguins are all at risk of becoming extinct.

3. b

Habitat loss, poaching, and climate change are the three biggest threats to the animals listed above. Habitat loss means that the animals are losing their homes because the areas they live in are being destroyed. Poaching means that animals are being hunted and collected by other people for financial gain. Climate change is also threatening these animals because the weather in the areas they live in is changing too quickly and the land can't adjust.

4. a

Many animals are losing their homes because people want to use the land for farming and cattle grazing because many people need food. They clear out all of the trees and natural plants so they grow different plants or let their livestock graze on the grass. However, the land can't support farming and grazing for very long and so they have to go clear out more land. As people use more and more land, the animals that live there lose their homes and source of food.

5. b

Unfortunately, poaching is big business worth billions of dollars. Sometimes animals are killed just for their fur (tigers, pandas, bears) or other body parts like tusks and horns. These items are then used to make a variety of products like musical instruments or ornamental pieces and sold in markets around the world. Even plants used for medicine are poached to the extent of near extinction. These exotic items are sold to tourists and other large consumers. We need to educate ourselves, the general public, and the local people who engage in poaching about the effects it has and how it greatly threatens the natural balance of our world ecosystem.

6. c

The sex of the offspring is determined by the temperature of the sand in which the eggs are buried. Colder temperatures result in male turtles and warmer temperatures result in female turtles. There are many other ways that climate change is affecting marine turtles including loss of food sources due to higher oceanic surface temperatures. Our world's landscape changes naturally over time. However, it's been changing much quicker than ever before due to climate change and the burning of fossil fuels. We need to act quickly to help save our world from this ever-growing threat.



7. c

The elephants' natural habitat is being cleared and destroyed by people and that means their natural source of food is also being cleared out. They venture out to human populated areas because they are hungry and want to find food. However, the elephants end up trampling through farmland and homes, which makes the people very angry. The people don't want the elephants coming through their areas and so they try to catch them or hurt them and that starts the human-wildlife conflict.

8. c

There are 634 types of primates that are known of and 48% of them are threatened by extinction.

9.

Madagascar, Vietnam, and Indonesia are the top three, with 5 threatened primates in Madagascar, 5 in Vietnam, and 4 in Indonesia. Other countries also include: Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, China, India, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru and Côte d'Ivoire.

10.

There are many answers to this question, but one reason why we should all care about endangered species is because of something called biodiversity. Biodiversity means having many different kinds of living things and it is crucial for the health of our planet. Another reason is interconnection. All of the species on our planet (including us) play a different role and if too many species die out than we could face many problems. Imagine how many more bugs there would be if there were no spiders and other animals to eat them!

11. a

It would be ideal for endangered species to naturally get off of the endangered lists. However, one of the main reasons they are on the list in the first place is because of people and that means people need to help them get off of the list. The Golden Lion Tamarin was very close to becoming extinct in the wild because of habitat loss and poaching, but people took action and made a difference. Many private and public organizations created natural reserves so the Golden Lion Tamarin could live in protected areas in the wild.

12. b

It doesn't matter who you are or where you live, you can start making a difference exactly where you are. How can you make a difference? Let's take a few minutes and think of some different ways we can help, and share what we come up with.

Discussion time: Have the participants share what they came up with for question 10. If they are having some difficulty coming up with ways they can help, you can use these lead-in questions:

1. What can you do in your school or neighborhood?
2. What kinds of organizations do you think contribute to conservation efforts?
3. What kind of species do you want to help?

Safari Animal List

<p>Siau Island Tarsier</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives only on Sulawesi, a volcanic island. 2. It's a primate, recently discovered. 3. It has big eyes and tiny hands. 	<p>Day Gecko</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It has flattened toe pads with scales. 2. It can climb up glass walls and across ceilings. 3. It can be bright green with red spots.
<p>Greater Flamingo</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It eats algae and crustaceans. 2. The pigments in the food it eats give it its pink color. 3. They have spectacular courtship dances. 	<p>Angora Rabbit</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They have very soft and abundant wool. 2. Their wool makes luxury yarn. 3. It looks like a fluffy ball.
<p>Frill-necked Lizard</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives in northern Australia and southern New Guinea. 2. It lives mostly in trees. 3. It can be as long as 91 centimeters. 4. It frills out its neck when it's scared or during courtship. 	<p>Black Swallower</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives in the deep sea. 2. It has a huge stomach. 3. It can swallow fish bigger than its own body.
<p>Sea Cucumber</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It swims at 2cm per minute. 2. It eats a lot of the scraps on the ocean floor. 3. It is pink and transparent. 	<p>Western Lowland Gorilla</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives in central Africa. 2. It eats bamboo and insects. 3. It's very quiet and shy, but strong. 4. It can grow to be very tall at 1.8 meters.
<p>Leafy Sea Dragon</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives only in the sea along the Australian coast. 2. It looks like seaweed. 3. It uses the fins around its head to move. 4. It grows to about 20 cm long. 	<p>Rosy-lipped Batfish</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives in warm temperate seas. 2. It can walk on its fins. 3. It likes to hang out in the sand. 4. It has bright red lips.
<p>Red Panda</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It looks like a large cat. 2. It likes to eat and sleep. 3. If it feels threatened, it stands on its hind legs to appear larger. 	<p>Narwhal</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives only in the Arctic Ocean. 2. They have two teeth. 3. In males, one of the teeth grows into a long sword-like tusk.

<p>Sea Otter</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It can use rocks to open shells. 2. It eats sea urchins, which helps the kelp forests they eat survive. 3. It likes floating on its back in the sea. 	<p>East African Bongo Antelope</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Its coat is vibrant when it's young, but turns darker with age. 2. Adults have horns. 3. It has a dark red coat with white stripes, and large ears.
<p>Kalinga Ornata</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is a sea slug which lives in the Indian and West Pacific Ocean. 2. It likes the muddy sea bottom. 3. It grows to be 13 centimeters long. 4. It glows when it is stimulated. 	<p>Scarlet Malachite Beetle</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives only in the United Kingdom. 2. It is very rare, only found in 8 places 3. You can only see them once a year, from May to June.
<p>Poison Dart Frog</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's native to Central and South America. 2. They have brightly-colored bodies. 3. They grow to between 1.5 - 6 centimeters. 4. They let their tadpoles crawl on their backs and take them to water. 	<p>White Peacock</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is very beautiful and looks like a fan. 2. The color of its feathers comes from light reflection, not dye.
<p>Olm</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives mostly in underwater caves in Southern Europe. 2. It's blind, but it has a very good sense of smell and hearing. 3. It has no color in its skin. 4. It eats, sleeps, and breeds underwater. 	<p>Emperor Tamarin</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was named after a German Emperor who had a long white mustache. 2. It usually lives in groups of four with one female. 3. They all take turns caring for the babies.
<p>South American Tapir</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is the largest wild animal in South America. 2. They are excellent swimmers and can move quickly on land. 4. It has a long nose or snout. 	<p>Mountain Apollo Butterfly</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives in the mountains of Europe above 1,000 meters. 2. It's known as the "great eye." 3. It lives on plants which grow next to rocks when it's a caterpillar.
<p>White-faced Saki Monkey</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives in Latin America. 2. It lives in forests and eats mostly fruits. 3. They are very devoted and a pair will mate for life. 4. It is black with a white face and black nose. 	<p>Golden Lion Tamarin</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It lives in the coastal forest of Brazil. 2. It is a bright golden orange color. 3. The fathers raise the young and carry them on their backs. 4. The young are usually born as twins.

Sustainability In Your Community

Using the four pillars of the Earth Charter as a framework and a model, let's make a checklist of actions that support sustainability at the local level. A few possible actions have been listed to get you started, but please feel free to personalize the checklist and write your own ideas next to the blank boxes listed in each section. Please share ideas with others around you; if we all take action in our local communities, we will see great changes happen all over the world.

"Think globally, Act locally"

Respect & Care for the Community of Life

- Invite a friend(s) over and engage them in a dialogue on the significance of the interconnectedness of life
- Go to your city council (or community group) and propose a day dedicated to "Respect & Care for the Community of Life"
- Ask the Parents and Teachers Association to host an event about sustainability in schools that encourages students to get involved.
- Host a neighborhood party

Ecological Integrity

- Install compact florescent bulbs
- Carpool or take public transport to work/school
- Reuse existing plastic bags for groceries and other common uses
- Plant a tree
- Clean up local stream/park/beach
-
-

Social and Economic Justice

- Donate items to local food bank
- Buy local foods
- Visit senior citizens
- Volantear at a local shelter
-
-
-

Democracy, Non-Violence & Peace

- Register to vote in the next election
- Participate in an interfaith dialogue
- Support/promote a local youth anti-violence program
- Write to your city councilor about a local sustainability issue you are concerned about
-
-

We are living at a very important moment in Earth's history. Every day, the people of the world are moving closer together. We need to unite across cultures to choose our future: to protect nature; to respect human rights; to create a world where all can live together in peace and justice. We have a responsibility to care for life – both at present and into the future.

The Earth is our home

The Earth is only a small part of the immense universe in which we live. The Earth itself is full of life, with a rich variety of plants, animals and peoples. In order to survive, we as human beings need the soil, the water, the air, the plants and the animals. It is our duty to take care of life on Earth.

The Global Situation

Today, our way of living often harms the environment. The way that we produce and consume goods depletes the Earth of its supplies of water, air and soil, endangering the lives of many plant and animal species. The growing world population continues to drain the Earth of its natural resources. At the same time, we are faced with war, famine and disease.

What can we do?

The choice is ours: we can start making changes so that we can build a better future for everyone. The **Earth Charter** gives us a path to follow – www.earthcharterinaction.org

Everybody is responsible

To change our world, we need to be responsible for our actions, because everything that we do is interconnected – everything on our planet is woven together into the fabric of life. We need to think about the way that we use resources and the way that we care for plants and animals. We need to think about the way that we treat other people. If we all take responsibility for our own actions, we can start to work together to care for the present and future wellbeing of humanity and all living things on this planet. Together we can all share in the hope for the future.

RESPECT AND CARE FOR ALL LIVING THINGS

- 1. Respect the Earth and all living things: people, animals and plants.**
 - a. Understand the importance and the interconnectedness of all living things.
 - b. Accept all people as unique and valuable.
- 2. Care for all living things, with understanding, compassion and love.**
 - a. Use natural resources wisely, taking care not to cause harm to the Earth
 - b. Protect the rights of people and accept their differences.
- 3. Form groups of people who act justly, treat others equally and work together peacefully.**
 - a. Recognise everyone's right to be free and the right to choose how they will develop and grow.
 - b. Include all people and work towards safe, peaceful and fair communities.
- 4. Co-operate so that all people can enjoy the beauty and the fruits of the Earth.**
 - a. Act responsibly for the present, making sure not to neglect the needs of future generations.
 - b. Pass on knowledge and encourage future generations to be caretakers of the Earth.

Adapted in November 2002 for young people from the first 4 Principles of the original version of the Earth Charter.

For the complete document, see www.earthcharterinaction.org

Collaboratively developed by Alison Steel, Steve Pudney, Ben Glass, Louise Erbacher and the Queensland Earth Charter Committee Inc, with assistance from the students of St Anthony's Primary School, Kedron.



Earth Charter for Teens

One human family -- One Earth community

Preamble

We are living at a very important time in Earth's history. The choices we make today will determine the future of all life on Earth.

All people of the Earth are in the same human family. We need to respect each others' diverse cultures and different spiritual beliefs.

People, plants, animals, soil, air, and water form one Earth community. We need to listen to and help one another and work together to protect our Earth community.

Earth, Our Home

Planet Earth is part of an amazing, vast universe. On this planet are many different kinds of environments, encompassing plants, animals, and people -- all linked to one another in a complex web of life. All forms of life depend on one another and on Earth's soil, air, and water. When one part of the web of life is weak or unhealthy, all other parts are affected, too.

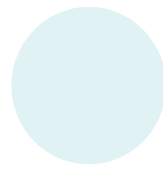
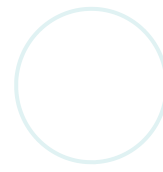
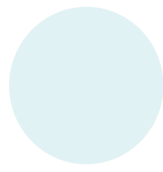
Earth provides everything we need. Every man-made thing started from something in nature. Plants and animals provide food and clothing. People build shelters using soil, clay, rock, trees, plants, and animal skins. People depend on air to breathe and on water for drinking, cleaning, growing plants, and more.

Problems on Earth

People have been treating Earth badly, misusing and wasting a lot of what they take from nature -- plants, animals, water, and energy. Some of these precious natural resources nature can replace, but it often takes a long time. Others are irreplaceable. Examples of many environmental problems include deforestation, soil erosion loss of wildlife homes, pollution of the oceans, over-fishing, and global climate change. Many industries release pollutants into air, water, and soil. While some people have much more than they need, many, many others do not have enough food or clean water to stay healthy. Violence, such as war, destroys homes, health, and life.

What We Must Do

All people must join together to care for Earth and for one another. We have the scientific knowledge and means to clean up our air, water, and soil. We have the knowledge to protect and wisely manage our planet's natural resources. We need to have an Earth Ethic which takes care of everyone's basic needs. The principles of the Earth Charter show us what to do.



RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

1. Respect the Earth and all life.

- a. All forms of life need one another.
- b. All forms of life are valuable, including those that people think are useless.
- c. All people have the potential to think and learn, to create beauty and to live together respectfully and in peace.

2. Understand, love, and care for the community of life.

- a. When we use plants, trees, soil, water, and Earth's other resources, we have a responsibility to protect and preserve them and to use them carefully.

3. Find ways for people to live together peacefully and to work together for the good of all.

- a. All people deserve their dignity and respect.
- b. Everyone should have opportunities to care for Earth, other people, and the community of life.
- c. Help people discover what they love to do and learn how to do it well.

4. Make Earth healthy and beautiful for all children of the future.

- a. What we do today affects all life in the future.

ALL FORMS OF LIFE ARE INTERCONNECTED

5. Protect and restore the web of life.

- a. Protect and preserve Earth's diverse ecosystems.
- b. Protect plants, animals and all other living things from extinction.
- c. Respect equally people of all cultures.
- d. Protect the health of all natural habitats. Examples include forests, grasslands, mountains, coral reefs, oceans, and all wildlife homes.

6. Don't take chances if there is a possibility that Earth's environment may be harmed.

- a. Think about future consequences of what we do now.
- b. Require people who want to do something new to prove that it is safe before they begin.
- c. Don't pollute any part of the environment.

7. Live and promote sustainable communities in ways that are economically just and healthy for Earth and for people.

- a. Buy things you can reuse and recycle. Don't waste.
- b. Health is more valuable than money.

8. Share with others what you know about how to protect the earth.

- a. Cooperate with others in projects that restore damaged habitats.
- b. Recognize and preserve the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being.

EVERYONE DESERVES EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

9. Guarantee that everyone has enough to meet their basic needs.

- a. Everyone has a right to clean air, water, and soil.
- b. Everyone needs enough nutritious food to eat.
- c. Everyone deserves safe shelter.
- d. Everyone deserves quality health care and protection from disease.
- e. Everyone has a right to education.



10. Be sure that everyone gets a fair share of Earth's resources.

- a. Encourage those who have more than they need to share with those who do not have enough.
- b. Help people in developing nations.
- c. Businesses and banks should not be allowed to do anything that will harm people or the environment.

11. Secure equality for women and girls.

- a. End violence and discrimination against women and girls.
- b. Encourage women to become leaders.
- c. Make families loving and safe for all members.

12. Protect the rights of all people to live in dignity, health, and happiness.

- a. Ensure equal rights for all people regardless of their culture, ethnicity, skin color, language, religion, or sexual orientation.
- b. Support sovereignty and self-determination for indigenous peoples in order to secure their rights to their traditional homelands and culture.
- c. Honor and support young people. They are the future.
- d. Protect and restore places of cultural and historical importance that have special meaning to each culture, including sacred sites.

PROTECT FREEDOMS AND CREATE PEACE

13. The purpose of government is to serve and protect all the people.

- a. Warn about and protect people from something that may endanger their health or the health of their community.
- b. All people should have the right to say what they think, including the right to disagree with their government.
- c. All people should be free to meet and to talk about all decisions that affect their lives.
- d. All people should have informed consent regarding decisions that affect them.

14. Study and learn ways to protect and restore the web of life.

- a. Make sure education is available to all.

15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.

- a. Prevent cruelty to animals.
- b. When hunting, trapping, or fishing, protect animals from unnecessary suffering.
- c. Prevent the death or injury of wildlife through careless behavior.

16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace.

- a. Encourage people to use their words to resolve conflicts.
- b. We need to listen to each other, say how we feel, and consider each other's feelings.
- c. Instead of making weapons and waging war, we need to resolve conflicts peacefully.

THE WAY FORWARD

The survival of our precious planet Earth and all life depends upon creating a new Earth ethic. People of Earth must join hands together to develop a universal culture of peace. In this new millennium, more than ever before, we must all work for the eradication of poverty and world hunger, for the protection of the environment, and for social and economic justice.

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 life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. 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 to 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 long-term 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 non-renewable 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, long-term, 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 to 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 labor 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, color, 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. Honor 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 which 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 life-long 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 non-targeted 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 non-provocative defense 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.

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. 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 long-term 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.

ORIGIN OF THE EARTH CHARTER

The Earth Charter was created by the independent Earth Charter Commission, which was convened as a follow-up to the 1992 Earth Summit in order to produce a global consensus statement of values and principles for a sustainable future. The document was developed over nearly a decade through an extensive process of international consultation, to which over five thousand people contributed. The Charter has been formally endorsed by thousands of organizations, including UNESCO and the IUCN (World Conservation Union). For more information, please visit www.earthcharterinaction.org.