Educate for a sustainable way of life with the Earth Charter

Values and Principles for a Sustainable Future

www.earthcharter.org
Which is the purpose of education?
Topics for today:

- Comment on the political frame of ESD
- Review the SD concept and Education for Sustainable Development
- Know about the Earth Charter as an educational tool
- Comment on some examples of the Earth Charter in education
- Reflect on how to apply the ESD in the education practice and share with others.
What is Sustainable Development?
This concept reaffirms the fact that social problems are related to the economical and environmental problems...

Sustainable development is the one which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987
What is Education for Sustainable Development?

This kind of education prepares all people to confront and resolve the threats upon the sustainability of our planet.
Key Themes in Education for Sustainable Development

• Overcoming Poverty
• Gender Equity
• Health
• Environmental Protection
• Rural Transformation
• Human Rights

• Intercultural Understanding and Peace
• Sustainable Production and Consumption
• Cultural Diversity
• Information about Technology and Communications
Which are the in depth abilities of Education for Sustainable Development?

The ability to:
- Think in a critical manner
- Communicate effectively (written or orally)
- Collaborate and cooperate with others
- Approach problems with an holistic, integral or systematic vision

Additional Abilities:
- Be life long learners
- Move from understanding to action
The teaching/learning process for Education for Sustainable Development must be:

- Student centered
- Very contextual and flexible
- Collaborative
- Transformative
- Participative
- Multidisciplinary in its character

‘How’ we educate must be as important as ‘what’ we teach!
Why could it be a challenge to integrate ESD within the formal education systems?

Because the main characteristics of the formal education systems nowadays are:

- Competitive
- Very week connections between themes
- Passive learning is the norm
- Grades are the main motivation
What is the Earth Charter?

The Earth Charter is a declaration of ethical principles for building a more just, sustainable and peaceful society in the 21 century.

A process of dialogue, alliances and activities
The systemic nature of the Earth Charter

I
Respect and care for the community of life

II
Ecological Integrity

III
Social and Economic Justice

IV
Democracy, non violence and peace
The Earth Charter’s central themes respond to the needs of our society

Some Earth Charter’s Central Themes

- Interdependency
  - Principle 1a

- Community of Life
  - Principle 2

- Peace and non violence
  - IV

- Differentiated Responsibility
  - Principle 2b

- Universal Responsibility
  - Preamble
The Earth Charter can advance three fundamental educational objectives:

I. Awareness
   - Environmental Problems
   - Social Problems
   - Economic Problems

II. Values Application
   - Principles

III. Invitation to Act
   - Creation of Alliances:
     - Schools
     - Civil Society
     - Businesses
     - Governments
Why the Earth Charter provides a unique framework for an education on values?

1. It offers an integrated approach

2. Articulates the principles for the promotion of a sustainable future

3. It is a pedagogical tool for a culture of peace

An Earth Charter data base with resources is available at www.earthcharter.org/resources
Examples of Earth Charter educational materials

A resource for all
- An Earth Charter guide for Teachers

Reorienting existing Educational Programs
– Primary schools in Costa Rica

The Earth Charter Guide for Teachers and the Costa Rican materials can be downloaded from our webpage
www.earthcharter.org
How are some people using the *Earth Charter* in their professional lives?
Educational experiences with the Earth Charter

• Communities of Hope Project. Arts Teacher: Cardiela Amézcua. Michoacán, Mexico.

• Environmental culture workshops through art and the Earth Charter.
Educational experiences with the Earth Charter

- Education National Institute Seychelles, Africa.
- Sustainability education courses for teachers.
Educational experiences with the Earth Charter

- The Little Earth Charter, an online multimedia educational project in Canada.

- This is a short curriculum for teachers and parents, regarding values for sustainability ethics.
Educational experiences with the Earth Charter

• Environmental Institutional Program, Guanajuato University Mexico.

• Development of workshops for young students, promoters of the Earth Charter.
Educational experiences with the Earth Charter

Support of NGOs to Universities and Schools:

- Cogeme Onlus Foundation and the Catholic University in Brescia, Italy: A joint effort to offer courses for teachers and students.
• Values Foundation, Spain:
The Faculty of Education Sciences of the University of Granada has carried out a research project based on the practical interpretation of the 16 principles of the Earth Charter.
CONCIENCIA ECOLÓGICA DE AGUASCALIENTES

Conclusions

• Education for Sustainable Development is about abilities but also about values

• The ‘how’ is as important as the ‘what’

• Besides the fact that there are not many ESD material available, it is necessary to have the active participation of teachers to promote ESD in creative ways.

• The Decade offers the opportunity to advance Sustainable Development Education initiatives at all educational levels.

• The Earth Charter provides a valuable educational framework for Education for Sustainable Development
How can the principles of Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter be incorporated into the national curriculum of Italy?