

Globethics Repository



[Earth Charter+5 Progress Report] Education Programme Report – 2000-2005

This page was generated automatically upon download from the Globethics Repository.
More information on Globethics see <https://www.globethics.net>. Data and content policy of Globethics Repository see <https://repository.globethics.net/pages/policy>.

Item Type	Book chapter
Authors	Mackey, Brendan;Mukherjee, Mohit
Publisher	Earth Charter Initiative
Rights	With permission of the license/copyright holder
Download date	2026-09-18 14:50:15
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/186991

Chapter V

Education Programme Report – 2000-2005

Brendan Mackey, Chair, EC Education Programme Advisory Committee and
Mohit Mukherjee, Education Programme Manager, Earth Charter Secretariat
with contributions from Rick Clugston and Mirian Vilela

A) Introduction

Following the launch of the Earth Charter in 2000, agreement was reached that the second goal of the Earth Charter Initiative should be “to encourage and support the educational use of the Earth Charter in schools, universities, faith communities, and many other settings.” An ambitious set of objectives was established in the year 2000 for the education programme of the Earth Charter Initiative. These objectives included: developing and disseminating educational materials to promote understanding, from an Earth Charter perspective, of the fundamental challenges and choices facing society; building a global network of educators committed to working with the Earth Charter; and the formation of partnerships with appropriate educational organizations around the world. These objectives remain ambitious given that the use of the Earth Charter in formal education at any level is a formidable challenge. Few curricula address sustainability in their content, and when they do, they invariably steer away from explicitly addressing the ethical dimension. So, educators attempting to make use of the Earth Charter in their educational programs and activities are confronted by such barriers.

Nonetheless, as detailed in this chapter, the Earth Charter education programme has made remarkable progress towards its objectives. The objectives have been significantly advanced through the efforts of a substantial and growing network of educators around the world who have voluntarily developed educational materials based on the Earth Charter. In many cases, they have had to overcome significant inertia in their institutions and find creative ways of integrating the Earth Charter into existing curricula and activities. The cases presented in this chapter include wonderful and inspiring examples of teachers working with the Earth Charter in Spain, Australia, the United States of America, and Brazil. Implementation of the Earth Charter educational programme has also been greatly facilitated through the support of the international advisory committee, made up of dedicated individuals in key organizations (including UNESCO, IUCN, and the Jane Goodall Institute), together with activities sponsored by governmental education departments including those of Costa Rica and Mexico.

Thanks to the combined efforts of the Secretariat and the global network of educators, we can now proudly point to a substantial body of educational materials from cultures around the world. An indicative compendium of these materials has been compiled and is available via an online database on the Earth Charter Initiative web site. As a complementary resource, a generic “Teachers guide to the Earth Charter” has been produced by the secretariat and is currently being tested. This guide aims to assist teachers in understanding the educational

objectives of the Earth Charter and to catalyse the development of locally relevant and culturally appropriate educational materials.

At the international level, the Earth Charter has received widespread endorsement and uptake. UNESCO has endorsed the Earth Charter as a useful resource for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. The IUCN has also endorsed the Earth Charter as an educational resource. And at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Ubuntu Declaration on Education, Science & Technology for Sustainable Development endorsed the Earth Charter as “the inspiring, fundamental and balanced set of principles and guidelines for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century, which should permeate all levels and sectors of education.” Details of these and other key international initiatives are presented in the sections below.

All agree that action is urgently required to address the critical real world problems faced in securing a more just, sustainable and peaceful world. However, it is also clear that a “phase shift” in thinking is needed to catalyse the necessary social reforms. As noted in the synthesis of the first education online forum, “Education is the key to advancing the transition to more sustainable ways of living. Transformative education is needed - education that helps bring about the fundamental changes demanded by the challenges of sustainability.”³⁸

Historically, all processes of social reform are met with resistance from those comfortable with the *status quo*. Given this, we should not be surprised at the difficulties encountered by teachers in their attempts to integrate the Earth Charter into existing educational systems. However, the efficacy of the Earth Charter education programme cannot necessarily be evaluated based only on short-term perspectives. Education is a life-long process whose social impact might take generations to manifest. It may be that the true accomplishments of the Earth Charter education programme are not realized for decades to come.

³⁸ Mackey, Brendan G. (2002). Synthesis: Summary of the Earth Charter Education Advisory Committee Inaugural Online Forum. Brendan G. Mackey (editor). *International Journal of Curriculum & Instruction* Vol IV(1):81-96.

B) Initiating the Education Programme (2000 – 2001)

1) The International Education Advisory Committee

Overview

The Earth Charter International Secretariat established a programme in the year 2000 to promote the educational uses of the Earth Charter and to develop associated educational resources. An international advisory committee was formed in 2001 to assist the development of a strategic plan, including specific projects aimed at using the Earth Charter in higher education, schools, professional development, and as part of life-long learning at the community level. Members of the advisory committee were drawn from organizations and individuals who supported the Earth Charter and either had been using it in their educational activities or were interested in doing so. A first education online discussion forum was held between 26 August and 9 September 2001 with the aims of articulating an educational philosophy to underpin the educational use of the Earth Charter and identifying strategic educational opportunities, priorities and partnerships.

The results of this online forum are summarized in a document titled, *Synthesis*, the full-text of which is available on the Earth Charter website. It clearly articulates why the Earth Charter represents a unique educational framework, discusses some of the main principles and challenges of the Education Programme and provides recommendations on key priority areas for the programme to focus on going forward. The findings summarized in this synthesis report reflect the combined wisdom of the participants who represent a diverse array of educators from around the world. Some key conclusions and recommendations from the report are presented here.

Key principles

There was general agreement on a set of key principles that should be used to guide the development of Earth Charter educational programmes and materials:

- *Action research* – material should be developed in collaboration with a network of educators representative of the target audience;
- *Experiential learning* – wherever possible, use should be made of learning activities that involve action orientated learning or “learning by doing;”
- *Cross-Disciplinary* – the integrated ethical perspective presented by the Earth Charter requires inquiry unconstrained by conventional disciplinary boundaries;
- *Collaboration* – it is essential that we find collaborative ways to join efforts with educators in all fields.

Key roles

An important conclusion reached by the advisory committee was the recognition of two key educational roles for the Earth Charter, namely, (1) a framework and source of content for curricula aimed at educating for sustainable living, and (2) a catalyst for promoting an ongoing multi-sectoral dialogue on global ethics.

In addition to constituting a global ethical framework, the Earth Charter has a complimentary educational role to play in catalysing an ongoing "Socratic" dialogue on global ethics – inquiry and debate into the search for common understanding and shared values. As noted in the Earth Charter conclusion "...we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom."

Unique contributions and core themes

The Earth Charter provides material for three main educational outcomes:

- *Consciousness raising* - in terms of sensitising people to the complex matrix of environmental, social and economic problems extant in the world today and the need to move towards more sustainable patterns of behaviour;
- *Application of values and principles* – the main body of the Charter is action orientated and functions as a guide to more sustainable ways of living;
- *Call for action* – the educational challenge here is to help foster a culture of collaboration aimed at promoting justice, sustainability and peace.

The Charter's integrated ethical perspective provides a set of core themes on which to base new educational materials, including:

- Critical trends and choices;
- Universal but differentiated responsibilities;
- Interdependence of social, economic and environmental domains;
- Respect and care for the community of life;
- The role of local and global partnerships;
- Ecological integrity
- Economic and social justice
- Democracy, nonviolence, and peace.

Priorities for programme development

Several priorities for the Education programme were discussed and the following conclusions reached:

- A priority for the Earth Charter education programme was to document a set of cases that illustrate how educators have made use of the Earth Charter in a diversity of cultural contexts in at least four educational settings: schools; institutions of higher learning; community education; and professional development.
- Documentation was needed on the history and background of the Earth Charter, as well as a commentary on the development and drafting of the document, including the various sources drawn upon in the formulation of the principles (e.g. law, science, philosophy). A global consultation process was also important to develop.

- Given the high level of interest in the Earth Charter at the community level, there was a need for a module/training programme based on the Earth Charter for community leadership in sustainable living that would promote integrated community planning.
- Given the crowded character of modern formal education curricula, particularly in primary and high schools, opportunities should be explored to use the Earth Charter within existing educational programmes.
- In higher education, courses that would likely be open to use of the Earth Charter include those that already enable learners to clarify, challenge and extend their value systems, and programs that address the challenges of “big picture” issues such as international relations, globalization and peace.

Conclusions from the Advisory Committee Forum

Values education is an often-contested theme in education due to legitimate concerns about "which values" and "whose values" are being promoted. These concerns can be met so long as the values represent core values that are life-affirming, promote human dignity, advance environmental protection and social and economic justice, and respect cultural and ecological diversity and integrity.

The Earth Charter can validly lay claim to represent such a core set of values, particularly given the participatory and multicultural process that underpinned the drafting of the document. Given this, the Earth Charter provides critical content for development of curricula with the educational aim of teaching the concepts and principles of sustainable living.

2) The WSSD and Earth Charter Education

Introduction

The WSSD was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002. Several educational activities and partnerships were advanced during this Summit, and are briefly described below. The complete report on the World Summit by Steven Rockefeller is available via the Earth Charter web-site.

An Earth Charter Type II Partnership Focused on Education

The World Summit pursued two different types of outcomes. The Type I outcomes are the Political Declaration and the Plan of Implementation. The Type II outcomes are partnerships involving governments, NGOs, and businesses.

The Earth Charter Initiative developed a Type II partnership on the Earth Charter and education for community leaders that was approved by the Summit. Joining this partnership were the governments of Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, and Niger, UNESCO, the IUCN Education and Communication Committee, and thirteen NGOs.

entitled “*Educating for Sustainable Living with the Earth Charter*,” the three main objectives of this partnership are to:

- Train community development leaders in utilising the Earth Charter as an educational tool;
- Integrate the Earth Charter into the curriculum of selected organizations of global and regional reach;
- Develop, in partnership with significant international educational organizations, new curricular and educational materials using the Earth Charter.

Earth Charter in other education events

The Earth Charter was widely embraced by educational organizations during the WSSD. The Statement of Education for Sustainable Development from representatives of National and Regional Professional Associations for Environmental Education, with members in 73 countries and all continents, declared: “*we support the Earth Charter as an ethical framework for sustainability.*”

The Ubuntu Declaration, signed by eleven of the world’s foremost educational and scientific organizations, called for greening of classroom curriculum. In this declaration these organizations endorsed the Earth Charter as the inspiring, fundamental and balanced set of principles and guidelines for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful education. The organizations issuing the Ubuntu Declaration were: United Nations University; UNESCO; African Academy of Science; International Council for Science; International Association of Universities; Copernicus-Campus; Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership; Science Council of Asia; Third World Academy of Science; University Leaders for a Sustainable Future; and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations. UNESCO, in its role as task manager for Agenda 21 Chapter 36 on Education, Training, and Awareness, announced two major Type II partnerships related to higher education: Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP) and Educating for Sustainable Living with the Earth Charter. Both partnerships incorporate the Earth Charter in their programs.

Conclusion

An increasing number of educators have begun using the Earth Charter in their teaching and learning. These activities, some of which had arisen spontaneously, have reaffirmed the usefulness of the Earth Charter as a framework for education towards sustainability.

The events at the Johannesburg Summit helped generate significant exposure and support for the Earth Charter in education. It reinforced the feeling that changing values is a long-term educational process rather than simply an intellectual discussion about the benefits of sustainable development. At the conclusion of the Summit, the Earth Charter Steering Committee decided to prioritize the educational uses of the Earth Charter as a next step, keeping in mind the limited financial and human resources available.

C) Building the Education Programme (2002 – 2004)

Introduction

Given the growing number of individual educators using the Earth Charter, there was a need for coordination and communication to effectively advance the integration of concepts and principles of sustainable living into education. Teachers working in formal education systems were writing to the Secretariat requesting guidelines on how to teach with the Earth Charter. Non-formal educators were seeking workshop modules to introduce the Earth Charter in the settings they worked in. Both these groups of educators recognized that teaching the values underlying sustainable development was a complex task and wished for a community with which to interact.

The Earth Charter education programme responded to these needs for coordination and communication, resource development, and a supportive political climate to facilitate the educational implementation of the Earth Charter globally. Accordingly, the education programme has been focused on the following main streams of activity from 2002 – 2004, with many of them ongoing in 2005.

Overview of major streams of activity

- 1) Formulating a Plan of Action with key partners
- 2) Leveraging the opportunity of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)
- 3) Hosting a second Educators' Online Forum
- 4) Developing a 'Teaching Resource Database'
- 5) Creating a 'Guidebook for Teachers'
- 6) Collaborating with partners on developing Earth Charter resources.

1) Formulating a Plan of Action with Key Partners

A 3-day working meeting titled "Earth Charter in Action" was held in Urbino from 26-30 June 2003, bringing together key Earth Charter partners to develop a two-year Action Plan that would significantly advance the development and implementation of the Earth Charter education programme as well as the Type II partnership, "Educating for Sustainable Living Using the Earth Charter," launched during the Johannesburg Summit. Over fifty individuals representing nearly that number of organizations participated.

The Action Plan defined priority activities as well as mechanisms of coordination and implementation. Additionally, the following objectives were realized:

- Training and collaboration opportunities to strengthen each organization's capacity to follow through with their action plans;
- Establishing a coordination and implementation mechanism for the partnership;
- Making arrangements for funding partnership activities;
- Sharing of successful examples of implementation of the Earth Charter.

The Secretariat has unfortunately not been able to secure the funding necessary to ensure full implementation of this global partnership. Instead, in the absence of external funds, selected partners worked on elements of the plan for which they could secure the necessary resources. For example, in Costa Rica the development of materials and teacher training on sustainable living with the Earth Charter was undertaken. In Mexico, the Ministry of Public Education introduced the Earth Charter as an educational theme for primary and secondary school levels through its new Civic and Ethical Foundation programme. Soka Gakkai International added new content to their travelling exhibition on the Earth Charter and continue to present it at new locations around the world. More details on these and more activities are available in Section IV of the report.

2) Leveraging the opportunity of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014)

In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring 2005 the beginning of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. UNESCO was designated to be the lead agency in this endeavour.

In early 2003, UNESCO developed a first draft of an *International Implementation Scheme for the Decade*. The Earth Charter International Secretariat prepared a response to this document recommending that UNESCO use the Earth Charter as an educational instrument and an ethical framework for the Decade.

In October 2003, the 32nd General Conference of UNESCO adopted a resolution “recognizing the Earth Charter as an important ethical framework for sustainable development”. The Resolution affirmed member states’ intention “to utilize the Earth Charter as an educational instrument, particularly in the framework of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development”. This represented a significant acknowledgement of the importance of the Earth Charter within the Decade.

Since 2002, the education programme has been making concerted efforts to build on the above-mentioned resolutions and explore areas of collaboration with governments and educational institutions in order to help them implement the resolutions. It has also been in close communication with UNESCO, and has submitted three project proposals for the creating of educational resources based on the Earth Charter.

In October 2004, UNESCO’s revised Implementation Scheme for the Decade was launched. The Implementation Scheme prominently features the Earth Charter, stating, “*The Earth Charter sets forth a concise formulation of the meaning of sustainable living and development.*” (page 14). This notable mention of the Earth Charter sends a clear message to all stakeholders of the importance and relevance of the Charter’s vision in the context of the Decade.

3) Hosting an Educators Online Forum

In December 2003, responding to the need to further the discussions initiated in Urbino and to advance the education programme's activities, the Secretariat hosted an online forum entitled "*The Earth Charter as an Educational Framework for Teaching and Learning about Sustainable Development.*" The Forum brought together 120 registered participants from around the world to share perspectives and experiences of utilizing the Earth Charter as an educational tool.

The forum addressed each of the following topics:

1. Educational Philosophy for the Earth Charter.
2. Suggested Pedagogies for Teaching the Charter.
3. Current Educational Practice: To analyse the content of the online education database.
4. Defining an Earth Charter Education Toolkit/Guidebook

During the two-week forum, participants engaged in a rich dialogue with over 200 messages being posted, offering comments, insights and advice for the education programme. Based on the feedback received in the Forum, the Education Database was expanded and criteria for analyzing the content have been developed. The need for a 'Teacher's Guidebook' was confirmed, with valuable feedback on its structure, content and organization. A summary document capturing the richness of these discussions can be viewed on the Earth Charter website. The complete thread of discussions can also be viewed from the education programme link of the web-site.

4) Developing a Teaching Resource Database

A Teaching Resource Database was developed and made available via the Earth Charter web-site with the goal of capturing as many relevant experiences as possible in order to offer examples of how the Earth Charter was being utilized in the field of education. The database brings together educational materials, such as lesson plans, activities, and case studies that have been developed in different parts of the world using the Earth Charter as a guiding framework. The resources have been classified by educational level and are being continually updated. All educators who have used the Earth Charter as an educational tool are encouraged to submit any materials that they created to be included in the Database.

A Snapshot of the Teaching Resource Database

	Primary/Secondary	Tertiary/Higher Education	Non-Formal
<i>Number of Resources</i>	36+	13+	28+
<i>Kinds of Materials</i>	• Several children's adaptations in many languages • Suggested classroom activities in different subjects • Online student and teacher activities and training	• A 100-pg. handbook on the Earth Charter • Several course syllabi that explicitly use the Earth Charter • Suggested pedagogies for working with the Charter	• A collection of activities for communities to study the Earth Charter. • A guide to organizing an Earth Charter workshop • A description of a grassroots movements based on the Charter.

5) Creating a Guidebook for Teachers

The Secretariat received numerous requests indicating the need for an Earth Charter Education Guidebook for teachers in primary and secondary schools. The development of this Guidebook drew upon the experiences of the growing network of educators who are using the Earth Charter in their teaching. The Guidebook is written to all teachers, irrespective of their nationality or subject area and offers practical guidelines on how to bring sustainability into the classroom. The Guidebook is currently in draft format as it is being pilot tested by several teachers in the Earth Charter network. It will be available during the course of 2005.

6) Collaborating with partners on developing Earth Charter resources

The following resources have been developed primarily by our partners, with the education programme playing an important role in publicizing and disseminating them through our network.

UNESCO - Multimedia Teacher Education Programme, International

As part of its programme, "Educating for a Sustainable Future," UNESCO led the development of a multimedia teacher education programme entitled, *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future*. In 2002, a third version of this online module was launched. The programme contains 100-hours of professional development modules for teachers, curriculum developers, education policy makers, and authors of educational materials. It provides a valuable overview of the holistic and interdisciplinary concept of sustainability, its implications for teaching across the curriculum, its emphasis on values and ethics, and teaching methods that can be used for such subjects. The multimedia format of these modules means that they can be used by teachers either independently or in small self-study groups – even in isolated

locations – thus avoiding traditional barriers of access to training and new information. This material includes a substantial section on the Earth Charter and also suggests ways to be involved in the Earth Charter process. It is available at: <http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/>

A Study Manual of Reflection for Action, USA and Italy

The Earth Charter: A Study Book of Reflection for Action is a handbook of over 100 pages, offering an overview and background of the Earth Charter process and principles. It was co-authored by Elisabeth Ferrero and Joe Holland, from St. Thomas University, Florida, USA. In February 2003, Pax Romana announced the publication of the Italian version of the book. The book was also published in Portuguese by the Paulo Freire Institute in 2004 and presented at the Education Forum in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The English version is available via the Earth Charter web-site.

Earth Charter UNESCO CD and School Kit

Launched in 2003, this project has advanced considerably in 2004 under the leadership of *Pour la Terre* and in close collaboration with the Secretariat. The concept is for the production of a CD, geared toward children aged 5 to 13, with Earth Charter related songs performed by major local and independent artists. Each CD will contain at least 20 songs. The product is to be freely distributed and made available via Internet to educational facilities throughout the world by UNESCO, WWF and the Earth Charter Initiative.

This CD aims to be a teaching tool helping with the task of educating for sustainable development using the Earth Charter. An accompanying school kit will serve as a bridge between the songs and the Charter's principles, suggesting practical activities and applications. The resources should be ready by June 2005.

"Where We All Belong" CD by Raffi, Canada

In the summer of 2003, Raffi, a famous Canadian children's troubadour, launched a music CD inspired by the Earth Charter. *Where We All Belong* invokes the power of music to help promote the Earth Charter message. It contains three songs inviting people to celebrate life. The songs convey an inclusive vision of the Earth as an abundant home, "a circle where we all belong." It offers an opportunity for diverse groups to share the Earth Charter with their membership and is being used in several different educational spheres, from elementary schools in the Balearic Islands, Spain to St. Thomas University, USA.

Earth Charter CD-Rom, Italy

In late 2003, a new version of this Italian Earth Charter CD-Rom was produced by the Italian-based organization called Pronatura with financial support from the government of the Lazio Region and the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Environment. This Earth Charter CD-Rom is intended to serve as an educational resource and to raise awareness of the notion of sustainable development. It has been

distributed in 20,000 schools of Lazio, mainly in Rome, with the support from the Italian Ministry of Environment. The CD-Rom contains the text of the Earth Charter, its background history and supporting documents. For more information, please see <http://www.cartadellaterra.it>

Earth Charter Publications

Over the last five years, a number of publications specifically on the Earth Charter have been produced. For example, the book *Terra América*, published in Brazil in 2003, was inspired and guided by the Earth Charter. Many other publications with a substantial section on the Charter have also been put together. Additionally, the World Resources Institute report for 2002-2004 features several case studies, including one on the Earth Charter. You may find a more complete list of publications with references to the Earth Charter in Chapter XI of this report.

Section Conclusions

The period from 2002-2004 was significant for the Earth Charter education programme in the sense that despite limited resources, the programme was able to address many of the critical needs of educators working with the Charter. Lobbying on the part of the Secretariat resulted in the UNESCO resolution on the Earth Charter which also helped tremendously in generating the political climate necessary to facilitate the educational usage of the Charter.

The partners' meeting in Urbino, the resulting Plan of Action, the second Online Forum, as well as frequent e-mail communication helped generate a sense of coordination and focus amongst educators working with the Charter. Direct communication channels were established and the Earth Charter website became a dynamic tool, helping to share new resources.

This being said, the Initiative had been unsuccessful in its efforts to fundraise for the programme and consequently many potential projects outlined by partners were not able to move forward. Another shortcoming was that e-mail and web-based communication leaves behind those on the other side of the digital divide.

D) Educational Activities 2000 – 2005

"Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that sounds abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into reality for all the world's people."

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General

Introduction

Over the past five years, the Earth Charter has been endorsed and utilized by educators around the world in various settings including schools, institutions of higher education, community, and professional development organizations. Primary and secondary school teachers have found the Earth Charter an inspiring vehicle for engaging students to think

positively and creatively about their futures. University educators have found the Earth Charter a useful resource in courses on ethics, the environment, social justice, sustainable development, globalisation, peace education and international relations. Community educators have found that the Earth Charter can raise people's awareness of the global challenges we face, and assist them in evaluating their own situation to decide on positive courses of action. Undoubtedly, all these different groups have found that the Earth Charter explains the abstract concept of sustainable development by offering concrete principles around which an educational programme can be constructed.

This section of the education chapter offers a number of brief examples of how the Earth Charter is being implemented in different educational settings around the world. These represent a small sample of the many cases of the Earth Charter in action. The Earth Charter is actually being used as an educational resource by so many organizations in varied settings that we are not able to keep track of its usage and there are many cases that we are not aware of. The examples below therefore are illustrative and do not constitute an exhaustive list.

1) Primary and Secondary Education

Case 1: Education for Peace and Cooperation, SPAIN

Guillem Ramis was an elementary-school teacher on the Mediterranean island of Mallorca, Spain for most of his life. Over the years, he saw that the Island's ethnic composition was changing, due to increasing immigration. He noticed racism and growing xenophobia and realized that there was a need for "multicultural education." When he came upon the Earth Charter, he felt it was a blueprint to address these issues, as well as many more.

Guillem initially worked on a children's adaptation of the Earth Charter in order to make the language accessible to his young learners. He coordinated several translations of the adaptation, helped by foreign immigrants in Mallorca. The children's adaptations of the Earth Charter became the starting point for a number of activities for his class. His work attracted the attention of the Ministry of Education of the Balearic Islands, which gave him a position to set up the "Vivim Plegats" (*Living Together*) programme in the year 2000. Under his guidance, there are about 70 schools in the Balearic Islands that have incorporated this multicultural education philosophy based upon the Earth Charter.

As part of the Vivim Plegats programme, a multicultural team visited the schools regularly and gave performances about their cultures, so children learnt about life in different immigrant communities and other countries. They reflected the multicultural nature of the society, the challenges that different groups experience on the islands, and the political and cultural situation in the world. The programme encouraged inter-school collaboration and exchanges with schools in other countries. Schools also involved the community, from parent participation to cultural performances, exhibitions and essay competitions. Even though a change in government has meant that the programme is no longer supported by the government, the participating schools continue their commitment to the vision of the programme.

An 11-page detailed description of the Vivim Plegats programme can be found in the Earth Charter Education Database along with Earth Charter adaptations for youth and children.

Case 2: Secondary School Experience in Aguascalientes, MEXICO

'Educating for a sustainable development with the Earth Charter' is a programme that was initiated and is being carried out by two teachers, Gina Ramírez and Ana Lilia Martínez, in the Secondary General School NO. 15 of Aguascalientes.

They first put together a curricular proposal using the main principles of the Earth Charter, proposing to stimulate a change in attitude in the students and school community. The goal was to turn teachers, students, and school staff into agents for change, with a deep sense of caring for Earth and the larger living world. The proposal was accepted by the school board.

It was agreed that engaging the whole school community was very important in order to ensure an integrated process of change and have the whole school committed to the Earth Charter vision. Therefore, before the 2002 school year began, the teachers, administration and support personnel participated in a workshop about the Earth Charter, its history, its content, and how it related to their work. The teachers were encouraged to start relating their lesson topics with the principles of the Earth Charter.

The more the students became aware of the Earth Charter, the easier it was for teachers to make linkages between Earth Charter principles and class topics. This process helped students acquire and consolidate knowledge, abilities, attitudes and values needed for a responsible relationship with the environment. Subsequently, both teachers and students adopted an active and participatory role in working towards solutions to the problems that might affect their community.

Given the success of this Earth Charter-based education programme, the founding teachers have planned to share their experience and spread the Charter and their methodology to other schools in the Morelia and Zacatecas regions in Mexico.

Case 3: The Brink Expedition, AUSTRALIA

The Brink Expedition, an Australian initiative, began in May 2003 and will be finished during 2006. The expedition is travelling through 30 countries using human and natural elements. The aim of the Brink Expedition is to bring social and environmental issues into mainstream awareness – through technology (internet), media (radio, documentary), schools (curriculum) and sport (cricket).

The Brink Curriculum covers nine "Hotspots", or issues of social and environmental concern. Each of these hotspots carefully links back to the relevant Principles of the Earth Charter. The very first Curriculum Module - "The Brink Expedition and the Earth Charter" explores the Earth Charter and explains how the expedition itself is an example of the Earth Charter in action. The other Hotspots include:

- Ocean Care, Global Warming;
- Indigenous peoples of the Americas;
- Understanding Cultures;
- Fairer Trade;
- Endangered Species;
- Disappearing Forests; and
- Indigenous Australians.

When the Brink Expedition team visits a community, they communicate the message of the Earth Charter and spend time in schools to discuss the Earth Charter and the Brink hotspots. All schools registering with the Brink School Room receive a School Pack, containing the Earth Charter, a children's adaptation of the Earth Charter and the UNESCO CD-Rom *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future* as well as other Brink materials. The School Room of the Brink website currently includes 65 schools from Australia, USA, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, Kazakhstan, Spain and Sweden.

The story of the Brink Expedition has made its way onto television, radio and newspapers in Australia, Argentina, Chile and Spain. People who would not necessarily be aware of or concerned about social and environmental issues are beginning to take notice because they have been attracted to the adventure of the Expedition itself. Having already gained the support of the Education Department in Queensland, Australia, the Brink Organisation is working towards developing relationships with educational institutions across Australia and around the world, in order to shift education for sustainability into mainstream curriculum.

Case 4: Bringing the Earth Charter to Primary Schools, FRANCE

The Earth Charter has been utilized as a pedagogical instrument in the work of the French organization *Actions Pour Une Charte de la Terre*, which involves schools in different regions of France. In 2000, it disseminated the Earth Charter to primary schools which inspired drawings by children which were then exhibited at the Regional House of the Environment. In addition, they produced a book of these illustrations. The organization has been collaborating with another French NGO, *Les Amis de la Terre* (Friends of the Earth) which introduced the Earth Charter to a federation of 750 organizations advancing ecological integrity in France.

Most recently, in 2003, the organization coordinated three-day workshops for 150 students and teachers in Paris. These learning workshops with primary school children were organized under the theme “I will do something for my planet.” The workshops concluded with the decision to develop a pedagogical kit on the Earth Charter, produce an Earth Charter song, and create a French Earth Charter website.

In addition, *Foundation of France* agreed to provide seed funds for *Action Pour Une Charte de la Terre* to further their work linking education, art and the Earth Charter. It will allow the opening of a Centre of Education and the Protection of the Environment in Auvergne, France which will also play a role in teacher-training and the material development.

Case 5: Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education, COSTA RICA

Since 1999, even before the Earth Charter document was finalized, the Ministry of Public Education had been undertaking workshops with educators in primary and secondary schools to raise awareness of the Earth Charter Initiative and to promote its values and principles. In 2000, the Costa Rican national group, formed as a joint effort of the Museo del Nino, the University of Costa Rica, the National University, and the Long Distance Learning University, held a number of additional workshops for educators. One example was the workshop, “Explorations Inside and Out of the Classroom,” held in September 2000, during the Second Congress of Science. Specifically designed for educators, the purpose of the Congress was to provide teachers with tools to help children define concrete actions to implement the Earth Charter.

In 2002, the Costa Rican Ministry of Education included the Earth Charter into the transversal curriculum themes for primary and secondary schools under the “Environmental Culture for Sustainable Development” effort. This effort to integrate the core values of the Earth Charter into mainstream curriculum on a national level, led by the Ministry in consultation with key stakeholders, is a model example of how the Earth Charter can be a catalyst for curricular reform.

As the Secretariat is located in Costa Rica, there is special interest to use the example of the Costa Rican educational system as a model of what could be replicated in other countries. Accordingly, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Costa Rican Ministry of Education,

The Costa Rican National University and the Ministry of Environment has produced educational materials based on the Earth Charter for primary and secondary schools.

2) Higher Education

Case 1: University for Peace, COSTA RICA

The University for Peace (UPEACE) was established in 1980 “with a clear determination to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace.” From its headquarters in Costa Rica, UPEACE carries out peace education and research.

The “Introduction to Peace Studies” course, part of the core curriculum of the University, introduces students to the field of peace studies as an integrated, interdisciplinary area of research. As part of that course, a 3-hour session is devoted to the Earth Charter with the goal of introducing it as a document, a process, and a tool. In 2002, the Earth Charter Secretariat collaborated with UPEACE professors in putting together this class and offering specific exercises that engaged students in using the Earth Charter as an instrument or a catalyst for multi-sectoral, cross-cultural and interfaith dialogue on global ethics. The class was repeated in 2003 and has been included in the syllabus for future years.

In another important initiative at UPEACE, the Earth Charter has been used as a reference for the development of a Master’s Degree programme in Peace Education with a focus on training education policy makers and teachers. The Master’s programme, first launched in 2004, is geared to professionals in formal education who are working or would be interested in working in the development of peace education programs, particularly in the context of countries and regions experiencing conflict and development challenges. The preamble of the Earth Charter was used to articulate the learning goals of the programme. The Earth Charter is also incorporated explicitly as an important topic in one of the programme’s courses entitled “Sustainable Development Education.”

Case 2: Michigan State University, USA

In spring 2002, Professors Terry Link and Laurie Thorp of the Department of Resource Development, taught a course entitled “*Earth Charter: Pathway to a Sustainable Future?*” This course focused on the Earth Charter document as a vehicle for personal, institutional, community, national and global transformation. The professors designed the course as an alternative model for students, both in terms of pedagogical approach and learning assessment.

The class met twice a week for 80 minutes. In the first session of the week a featured speaker or group of speakers addressed a specific principle of the Earth Charter and was asked to provide short recommended readings. The second session was a discussion based upon the issues covered in the first session. Each student was required to participate in a semester-long project of engagement with the Earth Charter and their community. The project was documented through the compilation of a praxis portfolio.

Both the 5-page syllabus and course review (which details course design, evaluation and operation) are available on the Tertiary Education section of the Earth Charter Education Database at <http://www.earthcharter.org/resources>

Case 3: University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, INTERNATIONAL

The mission of the association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF) is to make sustainability a major focus of teaching, research, operations and outreach at colleges and universities worldwide. ULSF uses the Earth Charter as a key document in its programmes and partners with the Earth Charter Initiative on a range of activities.

ULSF is also a partner of the Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP), an effort to mobilize higher education institutions to support sustainable development teaching. The four partner organizations are ULSF, COPERNICUS-Campus, The International Association of Universities (IAU), and UNESCO.

Together the partners represent over 1000 universities committed to making sustainability a central focus of their teaching and institutional practice. From its founding, GHESP has used the Earth Charter as an inspiration and framework for its programmatic planning and is developing resource materials for teaching sustainable development in higher education of which the Earth Charter plays a central role. For more information, please see <http://www.ulsf.org>

Case 4: Florida Gulf Coast University, USA

The Earth Charter has been adopted in several courses and programmes at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). “The University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future,” for example uses the Earth Charter. This course is a graduation requirement in all five colleges of the University.

The Charter is also used in English composition classes and in the Learning Academy – an academic community-building programme for new students. Professor James Wohlpart relies on the Earth Charter when he introduces sustainability as an organizing principle into his English courses. The undergraduate programme in English was revised to include an emphasis on humans’ relationship to the environment, a focus that will also be key to the new Master’s programme in English. Students in these courses are asked to consider ways in which culture creates narratives that provide meaning in life and the way in which sustainability functions as a twenty-first century narrative. In an environmental literature course taught by Professors Wohlpart and Peter Blaze Corcoran, students are introduced to the Earth Charter as a new approach to global ethics and sustainability. In Professor Corcoran’s environmental education course, the Earth Charter is the focus of education for sustainable development and is being used as inspiration in reconceptualizing environmental education.

In late 2003, FGCU received the approval to establish a Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education. The Earth Charter collaborates with the Secretariat in Costa Rica on specific projects.

Case 5: Harvard University, USA

In August 2004, the Earth Charter Secretariat invited Dr. Fernando Reimers, professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, to learn about the Earth Charter Initiative.

Dr. Reimers, who is also the Director of the International Education Policy Programme, decided to include the Earth Charter in his introductory course titled, '*Education Policy Analysis and Research in Developing Countries*'. He taught it in 2004 and it is now part of the syllabus for future years.

Case 6: Federal University of Mato Grosso, BRAZIL

The Federal University of Mato Grosso in Brazil has been using the Earth Charter in a number of different areas. In November 2003, the University organized a seminar on Environmental Education involving over 500 participants with the Earth Charter as a central document and theme. The event, which took place in Mato Grosso from 6 to 8 November, was televised throughout Brazil.

The University has developed formative courses for public schools teachers to explore implementation of the Earth Charter within school curricula and political and pedagogical projects. The State Secretariat of Education of Mato Grosso collaborates with the University working towards building new socio-cultural paradigms of behaviour that reaffirm the principles of sustainable development. They have used the Charter in various regional seminars and meetings, teacher training courses, and in community education.

Case 7: Saint Thomas University, USA

Two-thirds of all ethics courses taught at St. Thomas include the Earth Charter as a required theme and reading. In Professor Ferrero's classes, students apply Earth Charter principles by doing organic gardening and documenting their experiences and reflections via journals, reflection papers, etc. In 2003, the University partnered with a local NGO, Florida Yards Neighbours, in a field course involving students and community residents in organic gardening and zero landscaping. According to the organizers, the project was successful and will be repeated every spring semester. Beyond multimedia presentations of their work, students are also asked to reflect on the content of the Earth Charter as part of the course.

Case 8: Western Michigan University, USA

Dr. Harold Glasser, Professor of Environmental Studies, has used the Earth Charter in his "Environment, Technology, and Values" class. Students are asked to evaluate and critique the document and carefully review each of the sixteen principles. They are asked to consider the following questions: Is the Earth Charter interesting and engaging? Does it encourage you to read on? Comment on whether you agree or disagree with each principle and why. Explain your position. In your view, do the principles do an adequate and effective job of outlining a path for a "sustainable global society"? Why or why not? What would you change to make a more compelling case? Comment on the "Preamble," the "Principles," and "The Way Forward." How relevant do you feel the Earth Charter is as a guide to public policy?

Case 9: Hendrix College, Arkansas, USA

Dr. Jay McDaniel, professor of religion, has used the Earth Charter in a course called “State of the World,” which satisfies a General Education requirement called “Global Challenges” at Hendrix. The syllabus states that “the purpose of this course is to enable you to consider ‘the big picture’ of the state of the world and your own place in making a constructive difference in the world.” McDaniel suggests that the Earth Charter’s preamble adequately assesses the state of the world and its principles capture the best hopes for the future. McDaniel has also used the Earth Charter in a course on Buddhism in the context of dealing with socially engaged Buddhism; and in a course called “Religion, Animals, and Earth,” suggesting that it offers guidelines for affirming animal welfare, environmental responsibility, and human well-being.

Case 10: Villanova University, Pennsylvania, USA

Professor Ted Nunez incorporated the Earth Charter into an undergraduate introductory ethics course at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. He introduces the Earth Charter after the class studies the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and couples it with a discussion of three sustainable development policy agendas to show students what the Charter might look like in practice.

Taking the Earth Charter as an educational and organizational tool, the students work in groups of two to consider the Charter within the context of Neo-Liberal, Ecological Modernization, and Globalization From Below policy agendas. Although some students always resist the Earth Charter, arguing that it is too idealistic and vague, Ted has experienced a generally positive response when he asks students if they would sign the Earth Charter, and what lifestyle changes they would be willing to make if they did.

In addition to his classes, Ted plans to have an Earth Charter table as part of Villanova's Earth Day events. His hope is to involve his students, who will by then be familiar with the Earth Charter, in education and outreach to the campus.

Case 11: Yeravan University, ARMENIA

The Earth Charter has been the theme of seminars and workshops and is being used as an educational instrument at Yeravan University. An Earth Charter booklet in Armenian, English, and Russian was published and distributed at the National Earth Charter Forum, in seminars and workshops held in rural areas of Armenia, and through national libraries. Related Earth Charter materials are also included (in Armenian) in the book *Towards Sustainable Development of Armenia*, published in September 1999.

In this country, which has lived with a history of genocide and repression, the new regime is embracing the roadmap for democracy and peace offered by the Earth Charter. Both the ASHD and Yeravan University are looking to expand their implementation of the Earth Charter to reach all sectors of society.

3) Nonformal Education

Case 1: The Paulo Freire Institute, BRASIL

The Paulo Freire Institute (IPF) recognizes the Charter's potential as a powerful tool to inspire positive change in individuals and communities. In its last 10 years of involvement in the Earth Charter movement, IPF organized and participated in many national and international gatherings to promote the Earth Charter's values and developed a new eco-pedagogy based on the Earth Charter.

In the IPF "JOVemPAZ" project (the Youth Peace Project), social educators are trained to generate school and community activities that focus on the development of a culture of peace and sustainability. The Earth Charter serves as a key element in this training, to encourage reflection on how a change in lifestyle can contribute to social change and the common good. In 2002- 2003, over 200 educators were trained through this project in three regions of Sao Paulo.

The Citizen School Project which involves some 150 schools in Sao Paulo, works to develop and improve relationships among members of the school community—parents, teachers, students and administrators. The project invites schools to develop democratic management practices including participatory development and evaluation of the school curriculum. Schools are invited and conducted to utilize the Earth Charter as a project guide.

In IPF's literacy projects, the Earth Charter is utilized as a document to teach sustainability. "It is useful not only for environmental education but as a guide to all our curricula," says Moacir Gadotti, Director-General of IPF.

Case 2: Earth Scouts, USA

Organized by the Institute for Ethics and Meaning, the Earth Scouts was conceived of in 2003 as an outgrowth of the Earth Charter Community Summits hosted in the U.S. It is open to all youth and adults.

The mission of the Earth Scouts is to empower youth to "change the world one fun badge at a time," through learning about the Earth Charter and participating in fun activities that will benefit themselves and the Earth community.

"Trailblazer" groups are developing programme and badge templates for children and youth from ages 3 to 13. Similar to other scouting organizations, Earth Scouts will be working towards earning badges. In each age group, there is one badge for each Earth Charter principle. Badges prescribe specific steps for youth to follow. Youth will be given age-appropriate guidance and support in designing their own requirements for fulfilling the badge steps.

The process of earning a badge is based on the 'Learn, Show, Do' model often used in cooperative learning environments. First, the scout will learn the principle through research,

answering guided questions, interviews, field trips, etc. Second, the scout will demonstrate his or her knowledge of the principle by sharing it with their Earth Scout group. Finally, the scout will participate in an activity that exemplifies the principle.

Case 3: NAIA (Nucleus of Friends of the Childhood and Adolescence), BRAZIL

NAIA was formed by teachers and popular educators in formal education who were looking for ways to organize alternative educational spaces to address themes not normally addressed in formal education. In that search for an educational space for liberation, reflection, and action, they found in the Earth Charter a document containing the fundamental values in the formation of eco-citizens, who respect themselves, others and the environment. With that, they hosted a 3000-person event within the World Education Forum, entitled “Living Together: to Know and to Live the Earth Charter” held in January 2003 in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

NAIA works with the Earth Charter to allow children to have a voice in their own future through proposing actions to be accomplished in schools and communities and global events related to the environment, human rights and ethical values. The goal is to help foster attitudes, habits and related values for a sustainable and peaceful global society.

In addition, and for the second consecutive year, NAIA organized a parallel event to the 2003 World Social Forum, entitled ‘FórumZINHO’ (Forum for Children). The event was marked by the free distribution of an illustrated booklet with an adaptation in Portuguese of the Earth Charter for Children, developed by NAIA. This booklet was developed to offer key Earth Charter messages to children. NAIA plans to carry on its ongoing contribution to raising of awareness in children and youth. For more information, please see:

<http://www.forumzinho.org.br/>

Case 4: Seeds of Change Exhibition, Soka Gakkai International, INT’L

Soka Gakkai International (SGI) is a lay Buddhist association headquartered in Japan with 12 million members in 185 countries and with a strong tradition of social engagement. It is also an NGO actively promoting peace, culture, environmental awareness and education. Its members are encouraged to contribute to their local communities and work for change.

In 2002, in collaboration with the Earth Charter Initiative International Secretariat, SGI produced an Earth Charter exhibition entitled “Seeds of Change: The Earth Charter and Human Potential,” which was first launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The exhibition describes the need for sustainable development and introduces the positive vision of the Earth Charter. It presents individual experiences from India, Costa Rica and Kenya, showing how personal commitment can make a difference when acting to solve local environmental problems such as deforestation and water shortage. The exhibition highlights the Earth Charter as a “map” showing the way towards a sustainable lifestyle.

During the Johannesburg Summit, the video “A Quiet Revolution” complemented the exhibition strengthening the message that “empowered individuals can change the world.” The video was later broadcast internationally by National Geographic. Since then, SGI has taken the “Seeds of Change” exhibition and the video to different parts of the world in order to promote public awareness of the Earth Charter and to stimulate discussion about the Charter's educational potential. The exhibition and video were produced in many languages, so it can be mounted in regional venues where there is the greatest need for grassroots education and information activities. The English version of the exhibition can be downloaded from the Earth Charter website.

Case 5: Educational activities with the Earth Charter, MEXICO

Since 2000, the Network of Environmental Educators in Michoacan prioritised their activities around the Earth Charter. In 2002, the Network launched a yearlong workshop for teachers at the Centro Educativo Morelia. They also introduced the Earth Charter as a didactic tool at the University of Vasco de Quiroga and the University of Morelia. They have developed a youth and adult training programme utilizing the Earth Charter and a pilot project of companion materials and exercises. In 2003-2004, the Network continued their educational workshops and added a training class for Montessori teachers.

Case 6: Radio Netherlands, COSTA RICA

Radio programmes explaining the Earth Charter began transmission in November 2000. These programmes were created by Radio Netherlands and consisted of 10 radio magazines distributed in weekly 24-minute sessions. They addressed the specific values of the Charter and provided detailed explanation, stories and interviews. Programmes were transmitted to 552 radio stations in Latin America and the Caribbean through Radio Netherlands. Short stories for children are being developed using the same format.

In addition, the Culture for Peace Programme of UNESCO's Regional Office, Radio Netherlands, and the Earth Council produced a children's planner book for 2001, the main theme of which focused on values. It features the Earth Charter, as well as a portion of its text on the back of each month's display. Fifty thousand copies of the planner were produced and distributed to schools throughout Central America as part of UNESCO's Culture for Peace Programme. Also, in support of this initiative, Radio Netherlands produced a storybook for children entitled "Historias de un Planeta Cercano" (Stories of a Neighbor Planet) with an exercise folder enclosed. The storybook uses the Earth Charter values as its main theme.

Section Conclusion:

The brief cases presented here illustrate the universal appeal of the Earth Charter, from educators working with a literacy project in Brazil to a university professor in the U.S. These examples reinforce the flexibility of the Earth Charter as a framework for bringing sustainability to educational processes. With the beginning of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and a growing recognition of the need for more holistic, integrated educational approaches, the potential for the Earth Charter to be further used as an educational instrument is great.

Please note that the highlights cited above from the Earth Charter network represent organizational efforts of working with the Earth Charter. In addition to these, a number of dedicated individuals have been working with the Earth Charter as an educational tool.

E) Consolidating the Education Programme (2005)

2005 represents five years since the Earth Charter was launched and offers a good time to take stock of what has been accomplished, to try to evaluate the impact generated, and to plan for the future. 2005 is also the first year of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development which should offer the Earth Charter education programme a favorable climate to advance its activities.

1) Year of Consolidation

Here are some of the main consolidation activities planned for the year in addition to the ongoing programmatic priorities.

- i. *Earth Charter+5 Event*: A major Earth Charter+5 event will be taking place from 7-9 November 2005 in Amsterdam. This event will gather most key Earth Charter education partners and will offer a platform for the educators in the network to share their experiences using the Earth Charter and for the Education Programme to set goals and priorities for the next five years.
- ii. *Cases*: The first Education Online Forum had concluded: “*One of the most practical and useful courses of action is to document a set of working examples and case studies that illustrate how educators have made use of the Earth Charter.*” The Education Programme is ready to take the next step beyond sharing experiences and will be putting together a compilation of case studies. The challenge is one of gathering enough information for each case to put together a clear and compelling account of how the Earth Charter is being used and the impact it is having.
- iii. *Content and Usage Analysis*: The education programme will also be conducting a content and usage analysis of the examples and materials on the Teaching Resource Database. The aim is to analyze how educators are using the Charter educationally and also point to possible gaps in usage.
- iv. *Third Online Forum*: An Education Online Forum will be held in mid-2005 to share progress, plan activities for the Decade as well as to prepare for the education thematic area of the Earth Charter+5 meeting in November.
- v. *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*: The Decade presents a unique opportunity for the Earth Charter. As mentioned previously, in 2003 UNESCO adopted a resolution affirming member states’ intention “*to utilize the Earth Charter*

as an educational instrument, particularly in the framework of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.” The Secretariat will continue to explore ways to provide concrete follow-up to the resolution passed and to promote UNESCO’s political recognition of the importance of the Charter in the context of the Decade.

2) Looking Ahead

The Earth Charter education programme faces a number of interrelated challenges in the coming years.

First, we cannot expect further significant advancement of the educational programme without injection of the financial resources required to fully implement projects, retain key staff, develop new materials and to refine existing ones, and for staff and collaborators to undertake the travel and discussions needed to engage with key educators and organizations around the world, particularly those from economically lesser-developed countries.

Second, the curricula of educational systems at all levels are increasingly “full.” Teachers are straining to cover core materials, and there is ever-diminishing space for new, additional content, however noble the theme. For most classrooms, the solution lies in finding creative ways of integrating the Earth Charter message into existing educational programmes and activities. This is a non-trivial task.

Third, the education programme must continue to build upon the excellent connections that have been established with significant international organizations and initiatives, including UNESCO and the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the WSSD Partnership, and IUCN.

Finally, from a philosophical perspective, the educational programme must continue to unfold in ways that, while avoiding proselytizing, nonetheless reflect the reality that advancing the transition to more sustainable ways of living requires transformative education. To quote again the *Synthesis* report from the first online forum:

“...accelerating progress towards sustainability depends on rekindling more caring relationships between humans and the natural world and facilitating the creative exploration of more environmental and socially responsible forms of development. The Earth Charter provides a unique framework for developing educational programs and curriculum aimed at transformative learning for a more just, sustainable and peaceful world.”