

Peoples' Sustainability Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility

1. PREFACE

The original document approved and signed in 1992 is the TREATY ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY and was created by several educators from all over the world, during a process called the 1st International Journey on Environmental Education. It was published in five languages and inspired by many Civil Society Organizations and Environmental Education networks. In addition, the Treaty on EE became the main reference document of Public Policies on Environmental Education in Brazil. During international meetings on EE, it was agreed that the Treaty on EE is still one of the main international documents on EE. The Journey on EE is composed of a very diversified group of environmental educators, engaging in different forms; from child to adult education, formal to popular methodology, elementary school to university settings, etc. All of our work is founded in the values and principles of the Treaty on EE, which is also supported through the implementation of public policies (Annex 1). The 2nd Journey now is revisiting the principles of the Treaty and work on the Action Plan for Rio+20 and beyond. For this purpose, another document called Open Letter from Educators for a Fair and Happy World (Annex 2) is being created collectively, reaffirming the principles of the Treaty on EE adding to it new contemporary concepts. The International Journey on EE has joined the People's Sustainable Treaty Initiative envisioning the convergence with the common goals. Thus, the present People's Sustainability Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility is a reorganized document that comprises such background with the addition of The Action Plan for the Global Network on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility (Annex 3).

It is more than unacceptable that in 2012 we still have wars and are spending money on weapons, that there are a billion hungry and miserable people, and a lack of clean water and sanitation for huge portions of humanity. There is an unacceptable violation of human rights (gender diversity, ethnic, generational, social and geographical conditions), a loss of species, culture, language and genetic diversity, greedy gains, urban violence and all forms of discrimination and projects of oppressive power. The human manifestations in several countries for the overthrow of dictators of all kinds are indicators of the need for new proposals for the organization of 7 billion human beings. It is evident that governance and governability of the planet must be in the hands of local communities in which there must be the overall responsibility for the common good of humans and non humans and all natural systems and life support.

The carrying capacity of Mother Earth is nearing its limit, due to the mode of occupation, production and consumption of the capitalist system, which has become the global economical model, and now also features the rhetoric of a Green Economy. For us, whatever concepts or terms used, the key is that the socio-environmental vision be always at the fore front. E.g. atmospheric greenhouse gas pollution continues unabated when the scientists have told us for years that global climate change will greatly increase across of these, while the basic understanding of global climate change science is consistently found to be poor. And the number of climate refugees keep raising. Building Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility is based on the value of life, which the economy must serve.

Sustainable Societies are made of environmentally educated citizens in their communities, where they decide for themselves, based on their own needs, the meaning of a Green Economy, of Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Climate Change and many other concepts that can be moved away of their original meaning or motivation -which is the transition for another world- and are co-opted or coined to serve the hegemonic liberal rationality. Each community can see and feel beyond words and semantics, while maintaining their course towards a global unity, tracing their own history.

Educating ourselves for Sustainable Societies means situating ourselves in relation to the current global system, reshaping our presence in the world, and leaving the comfortable position of neutrality. Because education is always based on values, regardless of whether it is formal, non-formal, informal, direct or distant learning, there will never be neutrality in education.

Educators from all over the world agree that the way toward real sustainability can be through various existing currents which are based on values and principles linked to sustainability: Transformative Learning, Ecoliteracy, Popular Environmental Education, Ecopedagogy, Gaia Education, and Environmental Educ-Action are some of them. All of these currents contribute to the construction of new models of society and remind us of the need to develop knowledge, awareness, attitudes and skills that are necessary to participate in the construction of these new models, integrating them into our way of being, producing, consuming and belonging.

More than ever we advocate an education that invokes admiration and respect for the complexity of living systems, with the utopic vision to build sustainable societies through the ethic of care and protection of the biological and social diversity. In making this educational process, the transdisciplinarity intrinsic to socio-environmental education leads to interactions between the various areas of science and technology and the different manifestations of popular and traditional knowledge. This allows the integration of existing knowledge, the production of new knowledge, and new social and environmental actions, while carrying out the Dialogue between Wisdom and Care as High Technology in the Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility.

The local reclamation of these concepts and utopias under the force of the Planetary Identity, empower learning communities through a practice of dialogue, a sense of belonging and manifestations that are necessary for well-being and individual and collective happiness. In these practices the essence of the spiritual dimension emerges as a radical practice of ethical valuing of life, respectful care for all living things, connecting hearts and minds through love.

It is a process that empowers the individual to practice dialogue with oneself, with others, and with the planetary community as a whole, restoring a sense of citizenship and overcoming the separation between society and nature. Such is the Education that we want!

2. PRINCIPLES

These principles were first presented in the Treaty on EE for SS and GR signed in 1992. Now it is the basis of the guidelines and the action plan of the Global Network on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies of the People's Sustainability Treaty on Environmental Education.

Principle #1: Education is the right of all; we are all learners and educators.

Principle #2: Environmental education, whether formal, non-formal or informal, should be grounded in critical and innovative thinking in any place or time, promoting the transformation and construction of society.

Principle #3: Environmental education is both individual and collective. It aims to develop local and global citizenship with respect for self-determination and the sovereignty of nations.

Principle #4: Environmental education is not neutral but ideological. It is a political act.

Principle #5: Environmental education must involve a holistic approach and thus an interdisciplinary focus in the relation between human beings, nature and the universe.

Principle #6: Environmental education must stimulate solidarity, equality and respect for human rights involving democratic strategies and an open climate of cultural interchange.

Principle #7: Environmental education should treat critical global issues (e.g. climate change crisis), their causes and interrelationships in a systemic approach and within their social and historical contexts. Fundamental issues in relation to development and the environment, such as population, health, peace, human rights, democracy, hunger, degradation of flora and fauna, should be perceived in this manner.

Principle #8: Environmental education must facilitate equal partnerships in the processes of decision-making at all levels and stages.

Principle #9: Environmental education must recover, recognize, respect, reflect and utilize indigenous history and local cultures, as well as promote cultural, linguistic and ecological diversity. This implies acknowledging the historical perspective of native peoples as a way to change ethnocentric approaches, as well as the encouragement of bilingual education.

Principle #10: Environmental education should empower all peoples and promote opportunities for grassroots democratic change and participation. This means that communities must regain control of their own destiny.

Principle #11: Environmental education values all the different forms of knowledge. Knowledge is diverse, cumulative and socially produced and should not be patented or monopolized.

Principle #12: Environmental education must be designed to enable people to manage conflicts in just and humane ways.

Principle #13: Environmental education must stimulate dialogue and cooperation among individuals and institutions in order to create new lifestyles which are based on meeting everyone's basic needs, regardless of ethnic, gender, age, religious, class, physical and mental differences.

Principle #14: Environmental education requires a democratization of the mass media and its commitment to the interests of all sectors of society. Communication is an inalienable right and the mass media must be transformed into one of the main channels of education, not only by disseminating information on an egalitarian basis, but also through the exchange of means, values and experiences.

Principle #15: Environmental education must integrate knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and actions. It should convert every opportunity into an educational experience for sustainable societies.

Principle #16: Education must help develop an ethical awareness of all forms of life with which humans share this planet, respect all life cycles and impose limits on humans' exploitation of other forms of life.

3. COMMITMENTS

We need a wider commitment to build a strong Global Network on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility, inspired by the efforts mobilized from the last 20 years, where people and institutions have committed themselves with principles, goals and objectives defined in the Treaty on Environmental Education, acting with public policy, social movements, with formal and popular education.

Namely, we demand a clear commitment from Organizations of social movements:

- ecologists, women, youth, farmers and unions, neighbourhood, ethnic and artistic groups and others;
- NGOs committed to grassroots social movements; professional educators interested in establishing programs related to environmental issues in formal education systems and other educational activities;
- those within the mass media who are ready to accept the challenge of openness and democracy, thus initiating a new concept of mass communication;
- scientists and scientific institutions that take ethical positions and are sympathetic to the work of social movements and organizations;
- religious groups interested in working with social organizations and movements; local and national governments able to act in tune and in partnership with the aims of this Treaty;
- business people committed to working within a rationale of recovery, conservation and improvement of the environment and the quality of life; and alternative communities that experience new lifestyles in harmony with the principles and aims of this Treaty.

We have to learn and practice other ways of making public policy from the communities, and State policies need to be committed to quality of life. Therefore, it is urgent to strengthen the education processes committed to human emancipation and political participation in building sustainable societies, where every human community feels committed, active and included in the sharing of wealth and abundance of life on our planet.

We will establish and strengthen local and planetary action plans, which focus on an education that is able to unravel the structures of class and power between people, nations and institutions that currently exist on our planet Earth.

4. SIGNATORIES

1. Moema Viezzer, Brazil, ComSol, International Journey on Environmental Education

2. Denise Maria Gândara Alves, Brazil, Oca/ESALQ/University of São Paulo, International Journey on Environmental Education

3. Marcos Sorrentino, Brazil, Oca/ESALQ/University of São Paulo, International Journey on Environmental Education

4. Rachel Trajber, Brazil, IMAS, International Journey on Environmental Education

5. Sheila Ceccon, Brazil, IPF, International Journey on Environmental Education

Please send your endorsements and comments to: Dr. Denise MG Alves (ecodenise@gmail.com) and Moema Viezzer (mv@moemaviezzer.com.br)

For more information on the treaty please visit: www.sustainabilitytreaties.org and www.tratadoeducacaoambiental.net

6. Isabel Dominguez, Brazil, CESCAR, International Journey on Environmental Education
7. Nilo Diniz, Brazil, Ministry of Environment, International Journey on Environmental Education
8. Miriam Dualibi, Brazil, Instituto Ecoar, International Journey on Environmental Education
9. Monica O. Simons, Brazil, Guarulhos Municipality – SS/CEAG, International Journey on Environmental Education
10. Andrée Rider, Brazil, Instituto Supereco, International Journey on Environmental Education
11. Jacqueline Guerreiro, Brazil, REBEA, International Journey on Environmental Education
12. Pedro Aranha, Instituto Ipanema, International Journey on Environmental Education
13. Robbie Guevara, Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education – ASPBAE
14. Marta Benavides, El Salvador, Siglo XXIII
15. Aidil Borges, Cabo Verde, International Association on EE Researchers -NEREA
16. Nicole Bidegain Ponte, International Council for Adult Education – ICAE
17. Eda Tassara, Brazil, Institute of Education/University of São Paulo, IBECC-UNESCO
18. Hiera E. Kane-Osorto, Mexico, Siglo XXIII
19. Cecilia Fernandez, International Council for Adult Education – ICAE
20. Valerie Bernard, Switzerland, Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University-BKWSU
21. Frances Quimpo, Philippines, Center for Environmental Concerns-CEC-Phils
22. Dominic D'Souza, India, Climate Justice Network
23. Joaquim Pinto, Portugal, Associação Portuguesa De Educação Ambiental
24. Aidil Borges, Cabo Verde, Ministério de Educação e Ensino Superior
25. Nelida Céspedes, Peru, Consejo de Educacion de Adultos para America Latina
26. Nelson Friedrich, Brazil, Centro de Saberes y Cuidados Socioambientales de la Cuenca del Plata, ITAIPU
27. Patricia Jaramillo, Colombia, Red de Educacion Popular con Mujeres de América Latina
28. Javier Benayas, Spain, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
29. Camilla Croso, Consejo de Educacion para America Latina
30. Diogo Damasceno, Brazil, REJUMA, International Journey of Environmental Education
31. Celita Eccher, Uruguay, International Council for Adult Education
32. Moacir Gadotti, Brazil, Instituto Paulo Freire
33. Leonardo Boff, Brazil, Carta da Terra

- 34. Sonja Olsson, Dnamarck, International Environmental Initiative-BKSWU
- 35. Daniella Tilbury, United Kingdom, University of Gloucestershire, Copernicus Alliance
- 36. Peter Carter, Canada, Climate Emergency Institute.

5 ANNEXURES

1. ACTION PLAN: Guidelines and Timeline

The guidelines were originally created in 1992. The timeline is being built and is comprised of the purposes to manage, organize and articulate a wide Environmental Education Network, which were raised from a broad survey of local and global EE initiatives inspired by or aligned with the principles and guidelines of this Treaty.

Guidelines:

Guideline #1: Turn the declarations of this Treaty and of other Treaties produced by the conference of citizens' groups during the Rio 92 process into documents for use in formal education systems and in education programs of social movements and social organizations.

Guideline #2: Work on environmental education for sustainable societies together with groups that draft other Treaties approved during Rio 92.

Guideline #3: Make comparative studies of the treaties of citizens' groups and those produced by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and use the conclusions in educational activities.

Guideline #4: Work on the principles of this Treaty from the perspective of local situations, necessarily relating them to the state of the planet, creating a consciousness for transformation.

Guideline #5: Promote knowledge, policies, methods and practices in all areas of formal, informal and non-formal environmental education and for all age groups.

Guideline #6: Promote and support training for environmental conservation, preservation and management, as part of the exercise of local and planetary citizenship.

Guideline #7: Encourage individuals and groups to take positions, and institutions to make policies, that constantly review the coherence between what is said and what is done, as well as the values of our cultures, traditions and history.

Guideline #8: Circulate information about people's wisdom and memory, and support and inform about appropriate initiatives and technologies in relation to the use of natural resources.

Guideline #9: Promote gender co-responsibility in relation to production, reproduction and the maintenance of life.

Guideline #10: Stimulate and support the creation and strengthening of ecologically responsible producers' and consumers' associations, and commercial networks that provide ecologically sound alternatives.

Guideline #11: Sensitize populations so that they establish Peoples' Councils for Environmental Management and Ecological Action to research, discuss, inform and decide on environmental problems and policies.

Guideline #12: Create educational, judicial, organizational and political conditions to guarantee that governments allocate a significant part of their budgets to education and the environment.

Guideline #13: Promote partnership and cooperation among non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movements and the UN agencies - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and others - at national, regional and international levels to jointly set priorities for action in education, environment and development.

Guideline #14: Promote the creation and strengthening of national, regional and international networks for joint action between organizations of the South, North, East and West with a planetary perspective (e.g. foreign debt, human rights, peace, global warming, population, contaminated products.)

Guideline #15: Ensure that the media becomes an educational instrument for the preservation and conservation of natural resources presenting a plurality of views and reliable and contextualized information; and stimulate the broadcasting of programs generated by local communities.

Guideline #16: Promote an understanding of the causes of consumerist behaviour and act to change practices and the systems that maintain them.

Guideline #17: Search for self-managed, economically and ecologically appropriate alternatives of production which contribute to an improvement in the quality of life.

Guideline #18: Act to eradicate sexist, racist and any other prejudices, as well as contribute to the promotion of cultural diversity, territorial rights and self-determination.

Guideline #19: Mobilize formal and non-formal institutions of higher education in support of teaching, research and extension towards the community in environmental education, and the creation in each University of interdisciplinary centers for the environment.

Guideline #20: Strengthen social organizations and movements in order to enhance the exercise of citizenship and an improvement in the quality of life and the environment.

Guideline #21: Assure that ecological organizations popularize their activities and that communities incorporate ecological issues in everyday life.

Guideline #22: Establish criteria for the approval of education projects for sustainable societies, discussing social priorities with funding agencies.

Timeline:

The following actions guide more complex spreadsheets derived from these key actions.

Short Term (2012-2015)

Action #1 During the event Rio+20: Update the managing group to follow up the continued activities; Launch the Network of Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility; achieve the maximum of signatories for the Treaty of Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibilities and its new Plan of action walking together the PST.

Action #2 Develop a communication plan for the Network of Education for Sustainable Societies, with emphasis in the portal of the Network.

Action #3 Organize a global survey on practices on environmental education with instruments for evaluation such as common indicators for different parts of the Planet working on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies with Global Responsibility.

Medium Term (2016-2025)

Action #1 Organize the first Planetary Meeting (Global Event in 2016) of Sustainable Educators Spaces on formal, non-formal and informal education (enlarging the area of influence of the Treaty and the Planetary Network, including the systematization of the global survey and a collective preparation of a proposal for Sustainable Educators Spaces in formal, non-formal and informal education.

Action #2 Launch a new international process to select new campaigns for sustainable societies through the Planetary Network of Educators for Sustainable Societies (from 2016 to 2024).

Action #3 Monitor the process during the Decade and organize the 2nd Meeting Global Education for Sustainable Societies, with the new campaigns and local actions. Evaluate previous campaigns and the state of the art of sustainability (event in 2022) and establish a Working Group and a new Treaty Circle to revisit the Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility based on the years of global experience with the implementation of Plan of Action;

Long Term (post 2026)

Action #1 Organize the 3rd Meeting on Global Education for Sustainable Societies, with the new flags and jointing local actions (event 2026).

Action #2 Evaluate the state of the art education for sustainability, including the findings of the status of the Treaty on Environmental Education implementation proposed.

Action #3 Organize a new Plan of Action.

2. References

1. National Program of Environmental Education. Ministry of Environment, Brazil, .
http://www.mma.gov.br/estruturas/educamb/_arquivos/pronea3.pdf
2. Details of the Treaty of Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility process, please see: www.tratadoeducacaoambiental.net.

3. Zero Draft of the Open Letter from Educators for a Fair and Happy World (Obs: no received contributions to date were included in this version, because the process is open until Rio+20).

We, educators from all over the world, now when our Planet once again brings forth the major issues that were addressed in Rio 92, we reaffirm our adherence to the principles and values expressed in planetarian documents such as Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility, the Earth Charter, the Charter of Human Responsibilities, the Rio Declaration, among others.

But it is not enough just to reaffirm! Plethora of theoretical references enlighten us, its the principles, values, policies and action plans proposed in the cited documents must truly out of paper, despite of the “development”, that has kept 80% of humanity apart of the minimum conditions of life in Culture of Peace, with environmental and social justice.

It is unacceptable that we still have wars, spending on weapons, a billion hungry and miserable, lack of clean water and sanitation for huge portions of humanity. It is unacceptable violation of human rights (gender diversity, ethnic, generational, social and geographical conditions), the loss of species

diversity, culture, language and genetics, greedy gains, urban violence and all forms of discrimination and projects of oppressive power.

The human manifestations in several countries for the overthrow of dictators of all kinds are indicators of the need for new proposals for organization of 7 billion humans. It is evident that governance and governability of the planet must be in the hands of local communities in which there must be the overall responsibility for the common good of humans and non humans and all natural systems and life support.

We need to learn and practice other ways of making public policy from the communities, and State policies require to be committed to quality of life. Therefore, it is urgent to strengthen the processes educators committed to human emancipation and political participation in building sustainable societies, where every human community feel committed, active and included in the sharing of wealth and abundance of life on our planet.

The carrying capacity of Mother Earth is nearing its limit, due to the mode of occupation, production and consumption irresponsible of capitalism, which has become the global economical model, and now also features the Green Economy speech. For us, whatever concepts or terms used, the essential is that the socioenvironmental vision is always ahead. Building Sustainable Societies in Global Responsibility is based on the values of life to which the economy must serve.

Sustainable Societies are made of environmentally educated citizens in their communities, where they decide for themselves and from their own needs what it means Green Economy, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Climate Change and many other concepts that can be moved away of their original meaning or motivation - which is the transition for another world possible - , being co-opted or coined to serve the hegemonic liberal rationality. Each community can see and feel beyond words and semantics, while maintaining its course towards the planetary union, tracing its own history.

Retake and to appropriate locally of these concepts under the force of the Planetary Identity empower learning communities, from the practice of dialogue, the sense of belonging and manifestations that are necessary to Well Being and individual and collective happiness. In these practices the essence of the spiritual dimension emerges as a radical practice of ethical valorization of life, respectful care to all living things, connecting hearts and minds through love. It is a process that empowers the individual to the practice of dialogue with oneself, with others, with the planetary community as a whole, restoring a sense of citizenship and overcoming the separation between society and nature.

It must then ask: where is the role of Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility? The answer in the XXI century can be only one: in the center. In the center of daily life, of education management, policy management, economic and environmental management. Thus, environmental education is consolidated into another world, with environmental and social justice, ensuring the development of an effective participatory democracy that can assure the social, cultural and spiritual development of communities, as well as its social control.

We want to establish and strengthen local and planetary action plans, which focuses an education able to unravel the structures of class and power between people, nations and institutions that currently exist on our planet Earth.

Educating ourselves for Sustainable Societies means situate ourselves in relation to the current global system, to reshape our presence in the world, leaving the comfortable position of neutrality. Because education is always based on values, there will never be neutrality in education, whether formal, non-formal, informal, face or distance learning.

Educators from all over the world agree that the way to real sustainability can be done by various currents or tracks which are based on values and principles that link to sustainability. Transformative Learning, Ecoliteracy, Popular Environmental Education, Ecopedagogy, Gaia Education, Environmental Educ-Action are some of them. All these currents have in common to bring contributions to the construction of new models of society, and all remind us of the need to develop knowledge, awareness, attitudes and skills necessary to participate in the construction of these new models, integrating them into our way of being, of producing, of consuming and belonging.

More than ever we claim for an education able to arouse admiration and respect for the complexity of life support, with the utopia to build sustainable societies through the ethic of care to protect the bio and social-diversity. In making this educational process, the transdisciplinarity intrinsic to socio-environmental education leads to interaction between the various areas of science and technology and the different manifestations of popular and traditional knowledge. This allows the integration of existing knowledge and production of new knowledge and new social and environmental actions while carrying out the Dialogue between Wisdom and Care as High Technology in the Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility.