



A Project for a
New Eco-
Sustainable
Civilization

International Handbook
of Ecopedagogy
for Students, Educators & Parents



Edited by Stefan K. Grigorov

With the special participation
of Jennifer M. Gidley &
Richard V. Kahn.

And more than 20 other
authors...



Water and air make life possible and beautiful. We are powered by them and we do not need to pollute them!



The International Handbook of Ecopedagogy is designed in a special pedagogical format that makes it perfect for professional educational *courses* and *programs* in schools, whether universities or kindergartens, as well as for *self-education*. Its messages are simple and deep, expressed in an original ecopedagogical form. They are comprehensible and appropriate for children and at the same time for adults.

Bulgarian Centre for Sustainable Local Development and Ecopedagogy with the cooperation of Ecoinstitute of Dolomites, Italy



Edited by Stefan K. Grigorov

***International Handbook of
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for Students, Educators and Parents***

A Project for a New Eco-Sustainable Civilization



Bulgarian Centre for Sustainable Local Development and Ecopedagogy

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**If you decide to print out this book, PLEASE PRINT OUT DOUBLE-SIDED
AND ON RECYCLED PAPER**

As a psychologist, educator and futurist, I am only too aware of the short-termism that pervades our culture. Yet we urgently need to think of the long-term consequences of our lifestyles. As parents rush their children from one activity to the next to ensure they remain ‘competitive’, how much quality time do they actually spend with their children? An alarming number of parents today believe they ‘don’t have time to tell their children stories’. Many affluent parents have subscribed to the advertising myth that they can buy their children’s happiness with the latest computer and mobile phone, and that ready-made screen images are as good for children as their own imagination and creativity.

Because of the fragmented or over-intellectual style of education most of us have received, what we ‘know’ is often disconnected from our hearts, thwarting our courage and thus our ability to make creative changes. We need to bring the heart and soul back into education. This International Handbook of Ecopedagogy has the power to reconnect what we know in our heads with what we feel in our hearts; it can inspire, encourage and empower us to take the actions we need to take to make this world a better place for future generations.

Professor Jennifer M. Gidley



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Acknowledgments

When many people believe in something good – it starts to exist.

When many people wish something good – it comes and changes their life.

When many people work for something good – they become different people in a different world.

What do we want? What is the life we are living? What are the values we are transmitting to young generations and the futures we are creating?

The International Handbook of Ecopedagogy was born of the dreams of many people from many countries who dedicated their life, imagination, work and voice to educating and organizing a New Possible World uniting the principles of Ecopedagogy.

My most sincere and profound thanks to all of the authors of this Handbook, listed on the next pages, for their unbelievable contributions. Especially, to Prof. Dr. Jennifer Gidley for her special contributions that inspired and renewed my work on the Ecopedagogy Handbook in a key moment. To Prof. Richard Kahn, the person who turned ecopedagogy into an international planetary project, and who gave this manuscript a final reading and corrections. To Prof. Douglas Kellner and his works that excited and motivated me from the times I was a student. To Mr. Roberto Bombarda, Ms. Aneta Nikolova and Mr. Matthew Hengesbaugh, all internationally recognized in the sphere of green politics, for their great support for this project. To Ms. Aneta Nikolova again, for her unique underwater photos you can enjoy in the handbook! To Prof. Barbara Ongari and Prof. Dora Marinova who supported the idea of this handbook in various ways. To Prof. Moacir Gadotti for his afterword essay that says and means so much!

Finally, to my family and my love – my flor di maracuja, who all supported me in most difficult times, who made my work on ecopedagogy possible, and who read and advised me for each part of this handbook.

I would like to say that the way forward, the way of ecopedagogy, is the way of cooperation, of people who freely and unselfishly cooperate, and I would like to specially thank to all those who in one or another way have cooperated and

made this International Ecopedagogical Handbook a reality. In this regard I would finish my acknowledgement with the fable of cooperation, La Fontain's fable of "The Dove and the Ant".

The Dove and the Ant

A dove came to a brook to drink,
When, leaning over its crumbling brink,
An ant fell in, and vainly tried,
In this, to her, an ocean tide,
To reach the land; whereat the dove,
With every living thing in love,
Was prompt a spire of grass to throw her,
By which the ant regain'd the shore.

A barefoot scamp, both mean and sly,
Soon after chanced this dove to spy;
And, being armed with bow and arrow,
The hungry codger doubted not
The bird of Venus, in his pot,
Would make a soup before the morrow.
Just as his deadly bow he drew,
Our ant just bit his heel.
Roused by the villain's squeal,
The dove took timely hint, and flew
Far from the rascal's coop;--
And with her flew his soup.

Jean de La Fontaine, 1668

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22 September 2012, Sofia



Stefan K. Grigorov has spent the last 5 years on developing Ecopedagogy in Europe as a project for a new sustainable planetary civilization. His major works in this line are “Let Education Save the Earth!” and “Re-imagining and Re-constructing University and Schools in Trentino for 2035 and Beyond” where he offers the creation of a Global Ecological University and a new Sustainability Faculty with 7 new sciences that would be relevant to the current hi-tech cultural, socio-economic and environmental changes.

Mr. Grigorov is founder and president of the Bulgarian Centre for Sustainable Local Development and Ecopedagogy and has obtained a M.S. degree in Sociology and Social Research from the University of Trento and a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the Sofia University. He is also certified as a “Trainer of Trainers on the Fundamentals of Green Growth Policies” from the United Nations ESCAP and the Asian Institute of Technology.

His contribution to this book is as editor, designer and author of Introduction, Part 1, two sections in Part 3 and Conclusion.

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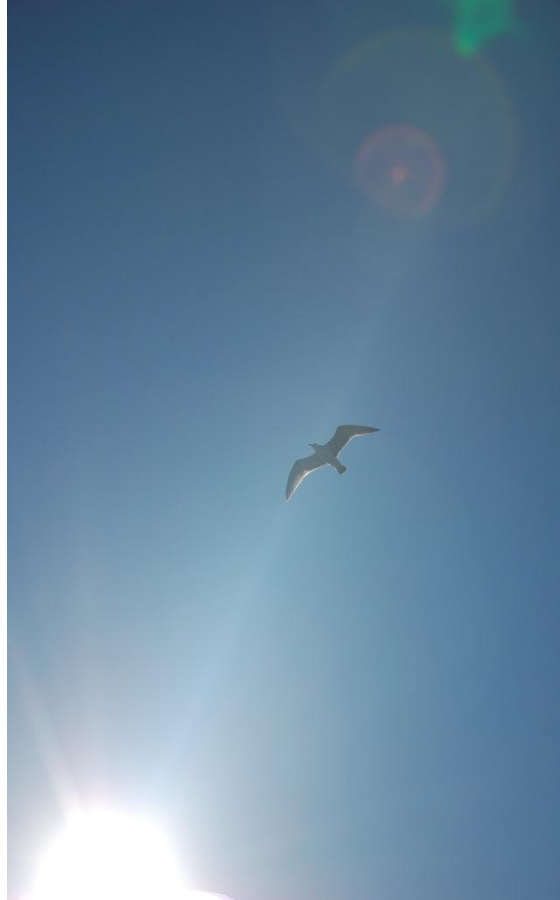
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Introduction



“What my grandmother taught me...

She used to explain to me how important water is. We can make a lot of things out of that water... “The trees” she said, “you cannot cut down for no reason. You have to talk to it first and explain why you’re taking the tree down and taking the life of that tree. It’s got a life like we do”.

By Corbin Harney, “The Nature Way”

What is Ecopedagogy?

We are living in a more and more complicated and environmentally degraded world in which human relations, thoughts, feelings and dreams are very often conditioned and shaped by extreme economic inequality, “media spectacles” and hyper-technologization of life. The planet and its ecosystems suffer from dehumanizing technology. This oppressive technoculture itself is becoming a parallel system of life designed to dominate and replace the world of nature¹.

In this situation, people are becoming more and more separated from nature and from natural, biological rhythms of life. New mass phenomena such as “stress” and “consumerism” have appeared in our everyday life and have become a major source of mental, emotional and physical problems. Now more than ever, for all of us and especially for the young people, there exists the risk of living indifferently as passive and lazy consumers instead of living fruitfully as creators and transmitters of values, love and active life.

Ecopedagogy, or “Earth’s Pedagogy”, as Moacir Gadotti calls it, emerges now as a project for a New Ecologically-Sustainable Civilization that *children* and *young people* can undertake...with the help of educators and people everywhere. There are many sciences – mathematics, history, economics...but ecopedagogy is a new kind of scientific inquiry into how we can best produce a more just, more ecological and peaceful sustainable civilization.

Ecopedagogy aims to provide *children* and *students of all ages* with the knowledge of how to cope with the most serious contemporary and future problems, among which are the destruction of Nature – of air, water, food, forests, animals and plants; climate change; fracking (hydraulic fracturing) and geoengineering; ozone layer depletion; urban decay; the crisis of human communication; technological dependency; the protection of children who use the Internet; endless war; and many others...For the last 20 years, educational systems and sciences all over the world have dismally failed to address these problems! We can’t afford to allow this mistake to continue!

Ecopedagogy comes in the right moment to fill the gap that exists in the current educational systems as it deals in details with the alarming problems

¹ I suggest you check the works of Lewis Mumford: “The Myth of the Machine: (volume 1) Technics and Human Development” and especially (volume 2) “The Pentagon of Power” as well as “Art and Technics”, “The Transformations of Man”, and “The City in History”.

humanity has created. It does *not specifically* target kindergartens, primary or secondary schools, and universities, but rather aims to assist generally with the most severe problems facing the young and future generations.

History of Ecopedagogy

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published its report “Our Common Future” in which it recognized the destruction of Nature as our human problem. The report underlined the fact that “*the problems of resource depletion and environmental destruction arise from disparities in economic and political power*” and gave rise to the idea of “sustainable development”. Sustainable Development means that human societies must live in a way which does not destroy Nature and which will preserve our Planet Earth livable for future generations too.

Some years later, after the First Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992, Ecopedagogy appeared as an education that includes in itself an *ecological ethics*, and was initially called “pedagogy of sustainable development” (Kahn, 2008, pg.8, Gadotti, 2008, pg.17). Today, Ecopedagogy is a project that strives to transcend the educational, institutional and organizational limitations of the concept of sustainable development (Gadotti, 2008).

The works of world-known pedagogues and educators on ecopedagogy, among which are Paulo Freire, Moacir Gadotti, Francisco Gutierrez and Cruz Prado, Patricia Abuhab and Guilherme Blauth (in a Latin American context), Richard V. Kahn (in a North American context), Stefan K. Grigorov (in an European context) have turned ecopedagogy into a planetary educational project and “a new model of sustainable civilization from the ecological point of view” (Antunes & Gadotti, 2005), into a new science that is based on the respect for all life and that integrates the wisdom and the worldview of traditional cultures of all latitudes (Gutierrez & Prado, 2000).

The Ecopedagogy Handbook you hold in your hands is the fruit of the common efforts of educators, young researchers, scientists, artists, activists and children from all over the world to create a world and a future born of love for life than of fear. It represents a new type of *participatory and creative, love-based education*. As Angela Antunes and Moacir Gadotti write, “Ecopedagogy is a pedagogy

centered on life”. Its aim is to create new ecopedagogical relationships in the life of people themselves and to make children, parents and educators *conscious creators* of a new more beautiful possible world.

An Ecopedagogy Message to Educators

Dear Educators,

Education is a fundamental activity and this century “ascribes education a central role in every aspect of life” (Kellner, 2003).

In the contemporary situation of planetary crisis caused by “radical economic inequality and rampant environmental destruction” (Jones, 2009), we *educators* have a historic role in our societies! We must rethink and renew education as a humane organizational force, as a way to create a new ecological, sustainable and social future.

As *educators* today we must not require children and students to “patiently receive, memorize and repeat information”, to be “depositories” in which we will simply “deposit” information.

On the contrary, our duty is to teach students to reflect, to understand, and to critically and consciously raise their voice (Freire, 2000, pg.71-87)! It is crucial to teach them that what is important are not their grades but their lives, which fundamentally includes the world which they are creating together!

And we *educators* must learn to see and understand the world in which children live and grow, the problems, needs and fears which this world poses to them. We could learn this best from dialogue with the children themselves, looking at them as our own kids.

We must show to children that they are the future, that the world is in their hands, in their dreams, and that miracles are possible!

As *educators* we should teach also that human life, human inspiration and power come from the contact with Nature, from the respect and love of Nature which remains our Mother Earth and which can help us with everything!

An Ecopedagogy Message to Parents

Dear Parents,

You should know that children love you and need your smiles, messages and love. They deserve and desire all that, regardless of appearances.

They have a great need for something very simple and pleasant – for their *parents* to be with them – in face and mind, to be with their emotions, to think about them and listen carefully to them. It is important that you show them with all your enthusiasm the miracles of life that love makes.

Children do not need anything as exigently as your love, your words and the moments you will spend and remember together with them.

Doing so, you can give them the most precious present – the hope, the will and the love with which children themselves will enjoy their life and which they will bring into the future with them.

All the money and toys you might present them with, are not worth even a small part of the look of tenderness, a smile of welcoming, a thought of them or the feeling of love that you might otherwise gift to them. These are the things children will remember, with which they will grow up and which will make their lives complete.

Show the children, not only your love, but also the love with which the planet surrounds us – the miracles of nature that abound. It is through nature that children can enrich their souls and personalities and feel especially happy. Playing and staying in nature helps them to best understand the world and life, to grow physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Nature teaches us to love and live, to support ourselves and one another.

Often, many beautiful ideas that could be realized in children's lives do not find their place in schools and school curricula. It is important for you – parents – to participate in the schools of your children and to bring there your ecopedagogical ideas for an education and science full of love, sanity, and ecological future attuned to our human situation and all of life.

An Ecopedagogy Message to Children & Students

Two Small Swallows Fly in a Blue Blue Sky

Fly, fly, fly!

It is a nice sunny summer day,
with a warm rain. Two swallows play
happily in the blue sky, a sky – beautiful such
as the sea – clean and blue.



A third swallow came with her lovely mate
and they 4 started all to play. They all came
from South Africa, where they had spent the
winter. Now they are 16 000 km away,
in Bulgaria – in the other hemisphere of the Earth.



They come to Bulgaria every spring, in
March or April, to lay their eggs which will
give life to new little swallows and to mark
the beginning of the Bulgarian spring.

How is this possible?

How can our gentle swallows come each
year to the same place – the same town, the
same street, the same beautiful garden and
the house in which they make their mud
nests exactly above the front door? The
route is so long and they are so small and
tender!

Imagine now that you are one of these swallows and you are playing joyfully in
the sky. The autumn in Bulgaria is coming, these are the last days of August, the
weather is getting colder and you need to go to Africa again together with the

other swallows and with your babies – already young swallows! It is such a long way – passing through so many countries – Greece, Tunisia, Algeria, Niger, Chad, Congo....

How will you know the right way? How will you arrive exactly at your house in South Africa? We humans need to take one airplane, then another one, then a bus, and then a car, to reach South Africa, Cape Town.

And swallows do all this by themselves! They fly, fly and fly from Europe to Africa and from Africa to Europe. In this journey they see so many places and so many things; they gain so much knowledge and wisdom. It must be a difficult trip full of surprises, of sun, of wind, of storms!

But every swallow has her partner – her love with whom they always stay wing to wing. And our swallows live without going shopping, without watching TV. If they go to ‘school’, it is a different school where they observe, practice and learn by doing. Nature is their school – giving life and freedom. They just live and enjoy all of life! Live and fly – so happy, strong and playful. How do they succeed?

Nature is their mother as well as our mother, she feeds them, gives them force, makes their life as well as our life possible and beautiful!

And *our school* is where we must understand and protect Nature, where we, together with our teachers and professors, must assist Nature when it is being obliterated. In Nature we can best learn, we can find solutions of problems and difficulties; we can find the strength we need.

The sun, the sky, the trees, the butterflies on the grass and bushes, the river in which we were bathing as kids, the forest fruits and the clean waterfall nearby, together with the swallows that enjoy all these beauties of nature – this is our life – this is our heart – and we must not lose it!

Part One:
Thirteen Topics in
Ecopedagogy



1. Sense of Life - A Smile Doesn't Cost Anything, a Kiss Makes Us Happy

I am here to give, a piece of my Heart to all of Life,
With Love to warm the Air and the Sky,
The most wonderful things, they are always for free!
The Love, the Beauty, the Happiness, the Spirit of the Liberty, and the Dignity of man...

Don't make the mistake again,
True things cannot be bought, neither sold,
The Smile of a Baby, the Eyes of the Mother, the Songs of Birds,
The Spirit of the Wind, the Health and the Wisdom, the Family...

No money matters,
A heartfelt Smile gives sense to Life,
A kiss from Love and feelings go to Stars,
And I am here to give, to create, to draw and dream...
Something new that the world a better place will make.



Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Express yourself through a collective activity in which you understand and explore life's sense

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- Paint a picture with all the colors you find in nature, see the diversity of life.
- How do the birds live, and how perfect are the beauties of nature?
- Which are the most important things in life, what do you think?
- Stars see everything; ask them about the sense of life.
- When do you feel happy and how does nature make you happy?

From the eminent Brazilian educator Paulo Freire

“In Jabotao, when I was ten, I began to think that there are a lot of things in the world that are not going well; and, even if being a child, I began to ask myself what I could do for helping people and improving the world” (Freire, 1977).

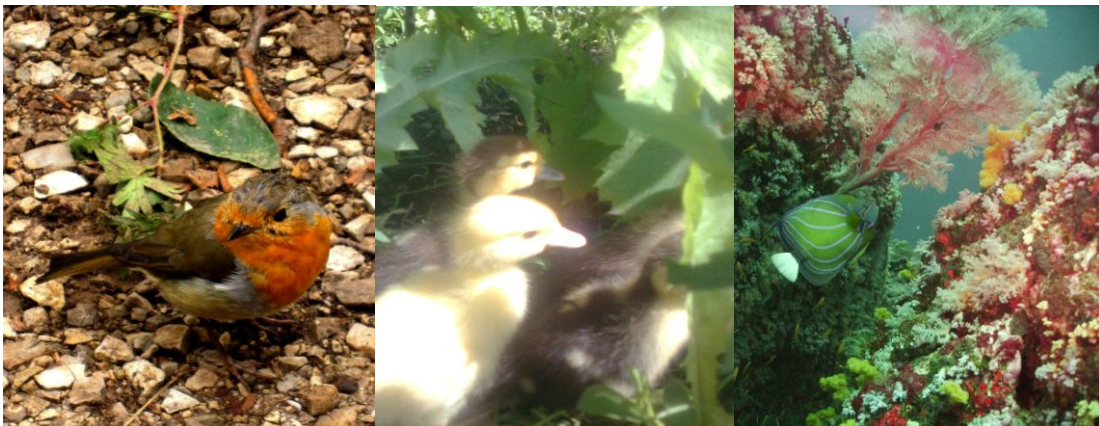
2. The Civilization of Nature

We are Human beings, we are part of Life, and Life is part of Nature!

Birds, Ants and Bees; Trees, Waterfalls and Seas, Oceans and Rivers,
Living together in harmony, beauty and peace – it is all one civilization of Nature, its Societies,
With its Life and Music.

Our Life is part of the Life of Nature, when Nature suffers – we cry, for we are all of one Soul.
When we are divided from Nature – we are divided from the Spirit/Spring of Life, from our
Heart, and We can't see anymore the true Sense of Life.

Birds are singing lovely their song of Love,
Under the Sky, under the Sun, and under the Stars,
No roof exists for the melody of Life.



Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Express yourself through a collective activity in which you understand and support the nature's civilization

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- Discover together the life and the societies in a Tree: ants, beetles, fungus, woodpeckers...
- Notice how ecosystems support one another: the flowers - bees, the bees – trees, the trees – birds, the birds sing for all.
- How can we support the Civilization of Nature: can you plant a tree?
- Can you meet a new friend from the Civilization of Nature?
- Who can you tell better history? Many trees live to more than 2000 years, bowhead whales to more than 200 years, some parrots up to 80 – 100 years.

Attributed to the Indian chief Seattle

(There is significant controversy surrounding the origins of this speech; however it holds powerful environmental messages for the present and the future.)

“All things are connected. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons and daughters of the Earth. Man did not weave the Web of life; he is merely a strand of it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

What is man without the beasts? The beasts are our brothers... If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of the spirit. For whatever happens to beasts happens to man, for we are all of one breathe.

The Rivers are our brothers, they quench our thirst. The Rivers carry our canoes, and feed our children.

If we sell you our land, you must remember, and teach your children, that the Rivers are our brothers and yours, and you must henceforth give the Rivers the kindness you would give any brother (Seattle, 1854).



3. The New City - Nature's City for Children's Steps!

We are here and happy now,

Beautiful things ready to create, in people's stories to remain,
It is Our city that we will challenge and change.

With our Bikes, with our Friends,
Trees, Gardens, Rivers, Animals and Birds,
Our Nature's City is for all designed to Play, to Smile, to Live,
Nature to Enjoy and Love.

Many Roads with Fruits and vegetables will be,
Making the city a World full of Life,
With Parks and Gardens everywhere – Work, Water and Food there will be for all,
And for Children to Plant, to Learn and Grow happy and strong.

Space and Liberty for Us will be – the Cars will not pass here anymore!

The Air – only fresh and clean, so to Play,
Always the ball in Sky to see and Birds to fly Free.
The Noise of Machines that wakes up and stresses,
We will Remove and Forget, together with all that is Bad.

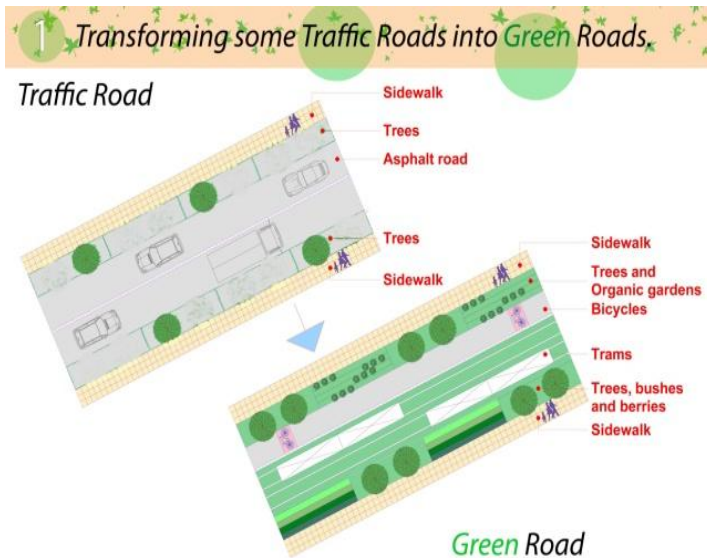
We will live lovely in Harmony,
In Nature's City, there Peace will be,
With Fruits and Nature in every Street,
Music will come from Trees,
Quietly to sleep.



Creating Nature's City in four Steps

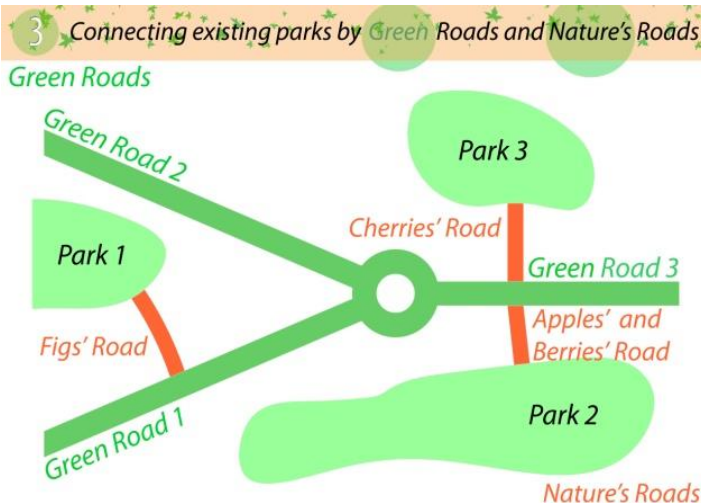
Step 1- Transforming Traffic Roads into Green Roads

1. Adding more Trees and Bushes, Small Gardens and Bike Trails
2. Replacing Cars with Trams and Bikes



Step 3- Connecting Existing Parks by a Network of Green Roads and Nature's Roads

1. Creating a Nature-City's Network of Green Roads and Nature's Roads
2. Connecting existing Parks by a Nature City's Network



Step 2 – Creating Nature's Roads (Apple's Roads, Cherries' Roads, Berries' Roads, etc.)

1. Planting fruit trees on both sides of the street, creating organic food gardens and Kids' Gardens
2. Making roads/streets only for pedestrians and bikes



Step 4-Completing Nature's City

1. Creating new Sustainability Garden Parks and expanding existing Parks
2. Connecting all the Parks in the Nature-City's Network



Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Express yourself through a collective activity in which you start to create Nature's City

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- Which are the main elements of Nature's City? Consider them carefully.
- In which of the 4 steps towards creating Nature's City can you participate most actively?
- Try to create new small models of a clean and pleasant city or village in your class! Draw, compare and then construct the models in small variants and organize a school exhibition!



“Nature's City – a city that is full of ecosystems, fresh air, clean water and natural life. Parents are not afraid for kids to play free or to cross the street since there is no dangerous traffic anymore. Instead there exists new “Nature's Roads” (roads-gardens), where you can find many fruit trees, organic gardens and animals.

“Cherries' Street” is my favorite street – full of cherry trees, with so many people enjoying it – eating, laughing and playing together in its gardens.

Sustainability Garden Parks are huge parks where many children from kindergartens, schools and university go to study and participate most actively in the parks' Creation. They plant trees and vegetables, help different ecosystems and animals to settle, and enjoy the beauties and fruits of their natural life. Sustainability garden parks provide a plenty of green jobs for all people.

The City Nature's Network of green roads and nature's roads makes Nature's City the biggest achievement of the 21st century.

Nature's City is promoted to replace the “concrete jungle” of “Machines' Cities” where people were stressed, sick and tired of life, and no places existed for children and animals to live free. A sociable city of nature, where the spirit of life and happiness is for every human and non-human being.

4. *Our School – Dialogue, Critical Thinking and Creative Wisdom*

The world is in our Hands, the world is in our Dreams,
The world is our Steps.

Our Hearts are our School – our Smiles, the Sparks in our Eyes,
Our Hearts are the Soul of Education – our Needs and Problems, our Ideas and Hopes!

We go to School to understand the World and Ourselves,
To understand the place of Man under Planets and Stars,
Our Questions to Pose and answer, Our Voice, Thoughts and Doubts to express,
We go to School to create Knowledge and Wisdom which to People and Nature will help and
our problems will solve!

We go to School to learn to communicate and understand each other, to dialogue...
To learn how to Change and improve our Situation, our Life,
To learn how a beautiful Society to build by taking up together Collective Actions for Social
Justice, Freedom, Democracy and Peace.



Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Express yourself through a collective activity in which you achieve democratic and sustainable forms of education

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry

Do Together Suggestions

- What is *dialogue* and why is dialogue in education so important?
- Why is it essential that in education teachers have a dialogue with students and learn from them, i.e. to be teachers-students?
- Educational programs must be created in a dialogue with the people in order to protect their common interests. Do you participate in determining the curricula at your local school?
- Very often education and universities are connected to activities such as wars, chemical industries and big technologies that pollute and obliterate our planet and our life.
Should the *young* people try to change these *educational programs* now and transform education into a new planetary humane project for the Earth?
- Many problems appear to be *individual* and private but are in fact *social and common for many people*. They demand us to *get together* and through dialogue and collective action resolve them. Can you think of such problems?

From John Dewey, American democratic philosopher and pedagogue

“Everyone should have access to education for democracy to work (Dewey, 1987, 1916).

From Paulo Freire

Dialogics – the essence of Education as the practice of Freedom

“This view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this *program* dialogically with the people”.

“The dialogical character of education as the practice of freedom does not begin when the teacher-student meets with the students-teachers in a pedagogical situation, but rather when the former first asks herself or himself what she or he will dialogue with the latter about. And preoccupation with the content of dialogue is really preoccupation with the *program content* of education”.

“As we attempt to analyze dialogue as a human phenomenon, we discover something which is the essence of dialogue itself: the word. But the word is more than just an instrument which makes dialogue possible... Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action”.

“Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love people—I cannot enter into dialogue” (Freire, 2000).

Reconstructing Education as a New Planetary Humane Project for the Earth. Our Future – We are the History!

Step 1

Seeing and recognizing the potential of education as a new humanizing public power in the hands of students, educators and citizens (in our hands).

Step 2

Opposing vigorously *economic exploitation* and including all people in the project, assuring access to everybody!

Step 3

Organizing one participatory educational global project of students, educators and people everywhere for achieving some fundamental Earth-based values:

- Peace in the world!
- Protection of all existing nature!
- Stopping the sources of big pollution!
- Sustainable re-planning and reconstruction of current cities and modes of transport!



5. *Traditional Ecological Knowledge - Grandma taught me...*

My grandma was teaching me: Don't eat apples with pesticides; throw out genetically modified products in the trash bin...

And she took me to the village,
Where I saw how the delicious and healthy fruits from
Centuries grow, without poison,
Without chemicals...and so...

My grandma showed me then the mountain – the best
Doctor, keeping a remedy for everything...
Medicinal plants and herbs for us as well as
For all creatures living on the Earth.

From our own Garden now, from our mountain,
Without hurry and with love,
We are going to cook our own food...

And so I saw,
How life naturally goes,

From day to day, from hour to hour,
Through the Rivers, through the Mountains and Woods,
Through the Trees and the Leaves...

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is the knowledge that people obtained in the process of their *direct contact* with *nature* over hundreds, even thousands of years. It is knowledge that is passed from *generations* to generations; *Knowledge* about how to live *together* with nature, how to enjoy it and use *reasonably* its resources, how to prepare our best food... *TEK* gives importance to *quality* of life, to *interconnection* between all things. It is *moral* and *emotional* knowledge reflecting *life itself*. *TEK* treats the Earth as our *home*, animals and plants as part of our *family* and tries to preserve the *land*, *rivers* and *air* for our children and for all living creatures.



Let's Create Together

Students, Educators and Parents: Express yourself through a collective activity that demonstrates TEK and explores its significance

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- Do you remember traditional means and recipes that your grandparents used?
- How does TEK teach us to respect and conserve nature and everything connected within it?
- How does TEK address the problems of climate change?
- Why did Corbin Harney – spiritual leader of the Western Shoshone Nation, write that we have “one air, one water, one Mother Earth”?



From Corbin Harney – “The Way it Is: One Air... One Water... One Mother Earth...”

“The Mother Earth provides us with food, provides us with air, provides us with water. We, the people, are going to have to put our thoughts together, our power together, to save our planet here. We have only got one water, one air, one Mother Earth”.

“There are many good things to be done for our people and for the world. It is important to let things be good and it is important to teach the younger generation, so that things are not lost” (Harney, 1995; also in Kahn, 2010, pg.108).

Declaration of the First International Forum of Indigenous Peoples on Climate Change

“We, the Indigenous Peoples, have historically played an active role in the conservation of eco-systems crucial to the prevention of climate change such as forests, wetlands and coastal and marine areas. Long ago, our sciences foretold the severe impacts of Western "development" models based on indiscriminate clear-cutting, oil exploitation, mining, carbon-emitting industries, persistent organic pollutants and the insatiable consumption of the industrialized countries. These unsustainable models threaten the very life of Mother Earth and the lives of all of us who are her children.

The scientists of Western society have dismissed us as sentimental and superstitious and accused us of being an obstacle to development. Paradoxically, those that previously turned deaf ears to our warnings, now are dismayed because their own model of "development" endangers our Mother Earth” (FIFIPCC, 2000).

6. Health, Physical Development and Media – TV, Computer, We Are Not Friends Anymore!

I am sound in my body and I am sound in my mind... when
Nature is sound, for we are part of it – its air, its water, its food...,
We are happy – when we are outside – and play, and sing and laugh,
Wrestle and turn head over heels...

I don't like to be inside and for my mom to tell to me: "Keep quiet, just watch TV" or
play the dumb videogames on the PC – it's such a bore –

I don't want to spoil my eyes and to get a headache,
Neither do I want to wear glasses or visit the doctor...

Mommy, Daddy... come with us to the Forest, leave the TV and shut off the PC,
Come on, outside – Let's go and throw ourselves in the snow, to run, to play...

It is time to be happy, strong and sane.



Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Express yourself through a collective activity that enhances your real and active life, your health and creativity!

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry

Do Together Suggestions

- Why do the TV and PC damage human development: physically, emotionally, mentally, socially... and impoverish children's life?
- TV, DVDs, video games, Internet, MP3 players, and cell phones offer only virtual forms of life and entertainment while *depriving* real life, real experience and emotions. Try to increase your real life!
- The TV and other media also often turn people into *passive consumers* and reduce their influence over the world... By spending more time outside *in action* you can influence more the world and your life! Can you do it?
- Information on TV and the Internet as a rule creates an *artificial world* of many illusions and wrong beliefs, as well as lies! This information determines the actions, aspirations and lives of many children and adults. Can you give examples from your personal knowledge?
- Try to create your own ecopedagogical media at school. How would it differ from the existing media?

From Susan Linn, Harvard Medical School

Campaign for a Commercial-free Childhood. Reclaiming Childhood from Corporate marketers

"No TV is good for babies: The escalation of allegedly educational TV targeted to infants and toddlers is perhaps the most troubling trend in a commercialized culture fraught with troubling trends!

A generation ago, parents concerned about commercialism worried mainly about television. Today, children are also targeted through DVDs, video games, the Internet, MP3 players, and cell phones.

In a world of marketing without borders, brand licensing and product placement prevail, marketing in schools escalates, Babies are targeted, and friendships are exploited as companies increasingly rely on children to do their marketing for them" (Linn, 2006, 2010, 2012).



Children – Defenseless Victims of the Internet!

An Ecopedagogical Call for Action to Parents and Educators

We need to urgently protect the basic rights of the Child and act immediately to end the Internet content that can inflict an irreversible life-long damage to children's mental development and health.

How can we talk about sustainability if we do not take the future of children seriously? And how we can take the future of children seriously when we allow, as human beings and as parents, the existence and free unregulated distribution on the Internet of highly demoralizing videos and other disgraceful material that exploits children and young people for the most intolerable purposes?

Because this is allowed children are becoming the victims of insanity.

A new sustainable civilization means a new culture, a new cultural foundation organized around a new morality. Demoralizing and commercializing human beings go hand in hand. If we are to seriously make a change to a better possible world we must educate for a new morality.

It is a crime against our children and future generations and an abuse of their basic human rights if we continue to allow *unregulated* distribution of intolerable cynical Internet content that makes them defenseless victims and seriously affects their mental health and future. It is a crime if we do not act to stop this.

Ecopedagogy calls for us to globally organize in order to prohibit and cancel all inappropriate videos, movies etc. which represent a violation of human

dignity and viciously affect defenseless minors and young people. The Internet is used to liberally disseminate intolerable material that represents a crime against minors and young people. Ecopedagogy demands that we consciously fight against the culture of demoralization and create an alternative sustainable culture for children and new generations!

A worldwide Ecopedagogy Parents Campaign and corresponding organization are needed to internationally ban, cancel and end all material on the Internet, and other media, that insults human dignity and represents a major threat to the psychological health and development of children. We cannot seriously engage with sustainability if we do not firstly address this!

7. The Planet and Its Resources – Property and Life for All

Sky is home for birds,

Soil is home for plants and animals, Sea is home for dolphins...

And nobody can govern the Oceans,

And nobody can buy the Air and the Sun...

Our Earth is our spring of life – it is made of all the living creatures,

It belongs to all the living beings, i.e. – it is a “common good”!

And nobody can privatize this life and sale it.

Because the Earth can breathe,

And it can feel, it can be angry, it can punish...



Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Express yourself through a collective activity to protect the Commons

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- The sky, snow, mountains, water – rivers and seas – they are all “common goods”. How can we protect them as common goods at school and outside the school?
- Describe the Commons in your city?
- Start creating a network with other schools to protect the Commons in your region from privatization and destruction.

From Donald M. Nonini

“The Global Idea of the Commons”

“What is now at stake at this point in world history is control over ‘the commons’ – the great variety of natural, physical, social, intellectual, and cultural resources that make human survival possible. By ‘the commons’ I mean those assemblages and ensembles of resources that human beings hold in common or in trust to use on behalf of themselves, other living human beings, and past and future generations of human beings, and which are essential to biological, cultural, and social reproduction...

However, during the last three decades, corporations allied with Northern scientists and universities, national and regional governments, and international financial institutions (IFIs) have, through a variety of mechanisms associated with neo-liberal globalization (international treaties, adjudication tribunals, structural adjustment policies, etc.), acted to ***dispossess*** large proportions of the world’s population of their commons’ resources and enclose them for *profit making*” (Nonini, 2007, pg.1,2).

8. Climate Change Today



White lines of toxic chemicals devastate sky and fracturing chemicals fill land,
Left by airplanes and drilling – and Climate changes so fast,
The Earth dries, rain no longer we see,
Neither the blue blue sky still exists.

Geoengineering – a large-scale toxic deliberate *business* modification of
Earth's climate – it can destroy our Earth, or, rather it is on the way²,
Rain we will no longer see, neither a Forest neither a Tree...
If it continues...

If we care – for our Climate and for our Life, for our forest and for our Kids,
Let's take care! And save the Climate, Sky, Land and Life from Geoengineering and
Fracking.

² We perceive geoengineering as ***the attempt of human civilization to subordinate, dominate and re-engineer the planet Earth***. For the contemporary dimensions of geoengineering please check the GeoEngineering Watch www.geoengineeringwatch.org as well as The Guardian, Geoengineering www.guardian.co.uk/environment/geoengineering for the irrevocable mega-consequences of geoengineering over the planet Earth.

Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Let's change something and stop the ways human beings oppress and destroy the planet Earth

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- Learn more about fracking or hydraulic fracturing from "Gasland: A film by Josh Fox". Available at: www.gaslandthemovie.com
What do you think about this documentary?
Why fracking is so dangerous?
- Check and think about how geoengineering affects ecosystems and how it can completely destroy the balance and the climate of our planet Earth? Take an action to stop geoengineering!
- Get acquainted with the Environmental Modification Convention and Cold War geoengineering practices.

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Moratorium on Geoengineering

18 - 29 October 2010 - Nagoya, Japan

(The USA, Andorra and the Vatican are the only UN members that have not ratified the UN Biodiversity Convention.)

COP 10 (2010) Decision on Geoengineering

"Ensure, in line and consistent with decision IX/16 C, on ocean fertilization and biodiversity and climate change, in the absence of science based, global, transparent and effective control and regulatory mechanisms for geoengineering, and in accordance with the precautionary approach and Article 14 of the Convention, that **no** climate-related geoengineering activities that may affect biodiversity take place, until there is an adequate scientific basis on which to justify such activities and appropriate consideration of the associated risks for the environment and biodiversity and associated social, economic and cultural impacts, with the exception of small scale scientific research studies that would be conducted in a controlled setting in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, and only if they are justified by the need to gather specific scientific data and are subject to a thorough prior assessment of the potential impacts on the environment..." (CBD, 2010)

9. Work Human Activity and Climate Change

My work gives meaning to my day, to my life,

It makes my heart happy... I like it,
Much money I don't take, but the Job itself, the things I do are full of Sense,
They are so needed, and not the money makes me happy, no, not the money,
But the Work itself!

There are many professions in the world,
And there is not probably a better one; each has its Magic, its Dignity,
Each one is a different World.

The man that builds the homes – so strong, so serene, so true,
The farmer that every morning wakes up so early and brings the milk – always
with a Smile, and I feel that...

I don't want to spend my life working closed in a room!
I feel that...

The work in Nature makes me Happy, makes me Strong, makes me Free,
A look at the Sky, a gulp of Fresh air, and I feel...that I am new,
I call it “green jobs” – a work that preserves and restores Nature,
A work that is in Healthy environment... and
Builds healthy environment.



Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Let's change something in our school, in our job and mitigate climate change

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- The predominant part of industrial human activity has caused climate change and ozone layer depletion. Think about human activity and jobs that will not have such negative effects.
- Many people buy things they don't need, and often their production destroys nature. Think about products you bought but you don't need...
- Can you think about a "green job" that will be the perfect job for you: "decent – in a healthy environment –building a healthy environment"?
- What ideas come to you when you read both texts in the right column?

From Richard B. Lee, in "Limited Wants, Unlimited means..."

"In all, the adults of the Dobe camp worked about two and a half days a week. Since the average working day was about six hours long, the fact emerges that !Kung Bushmen of Dobe, despite their harsh environment, devote from twelve to nineteen hours a week to getting food. Even the hardest working individual in the camp, a man named =oma who went out hunting on sixteen of the 28 days, spent a maximum of 32 hours a week in the food quest... Around 10 percent of all population are at more than 60 years age" (Lee, 1998, pg. 52).

From the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights"

Article 23.

- (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24.

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

10. *Liberty, Democracy, and Oppression*

In a Democracy I live – where people all have the same rights,
Everybody feels free to express their thought, their opinion, their joy, and nobody
dares Just to mock; Democracy – the place where We people will decide our
Future, will Decide in what direction our Society should go,
The place where our Life is in our Heads, in our Hands!

Referendum is our big friend – from children we know that,
When we have a good idea and project to fulfill, all people vote for it to be so!
When we want to prevent something bad and for it to end forever, again our
friend
Referendum is here to help us!

And so, our country is free, our town, we don't have slaves here,
Nobody is subordinated to anyone else, nobody is oppressed,
We are all ready and able to think, to dialogue, speak bravely, to do,
And together to enjoy life.



Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Express yourself through a collective activity to make society more just and democratic

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- Do you use “referendum” in your town? And if you do, on what questions?
- Referendum is the means of people to realize their will! Think about a topic on which you need to hold a referendum in your town, province or state?
- According to Rousseau, the person who wants to be the master of others is a greater slave than them. Why do you think this is so?
- Can you give examples of powerful people or big *rich companies* polluting/destroying nature at your locality, but staying unpunished?

From the major French philosopher of Liberty and Love to Nature, Jean Jacques Rousseau

The Social Contract

“Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they.”

“As long as a people is compelled to obey, and obeys, it does well; as soon as it can shake off the yoke, and shakes it off, it does still better; for, regaining its liberty by the same right as took it away, either it is justified in resuming it, or there was no justification for those who took it away” (Rousseau, 1762).

From the Brundtland Commission, 1987

“Our Common Future”

Equity and the Common Interest

“Many problems of resource depletion and environmental stress arise from disparities in economic and political power. An industry may get away with unacceptable levels of air and water pollution because the people who bear the brunt of it are poor and unable to complain effectively. A forest may be destroyed by excessive felling because the people living there have no alternatives or because timber contractors generally have more influence than forest dwellers” (WCED, 1987).

11. Peace – Life for Tomorrow!!!

PEACE CAN BE – sung by chorus Trentino “Notemagia”,

Authored by Lodovico Saccol



“Peace can be called by name,
If you call strongly it will respond to you,
Wherever you are, bring it in your heart,
Dreaming that the world will want peace,

Peace can be given to a friend,
Who asks for forgiveness, who asks for
mercy,
It is the step you make, the hand you take,
If you really believe, peace will come!

Peace can be sung, it is a dream to realize,
Peace can be seen, Peace can be

understood, Peace can be nurtured, it is a world that can heal,
It is the sweetest sound that resounds within us.

Peace can oppose war, It is the weeping of those who land don't have,
It starts from us, from the small things, In our smile, peace will be!

It is like the ring of a bell, That begins slowly and then gets free,
Like water that springs from a fountain,
Like a chorus from the silence it will rise, Will rise!

Peace can be touched, it is air to breathe,
Peace can be hoped, peace can be prayed for,
Peace can be invented, it is a flower to give,
It is God's face at peace with us!

Peace can be, Peace can be
Peace can be”

Let's Act Together for a Planetary Peace



For a tree to be,
The dream of Sustainability is nothing else but the dream of world Peace,
The struggle for Sustainability is the struggle for Planetary Peace.

Peace with ourselves;
Peace with the “civilization of Nature” and all of its life;
Peace between us humans and our peoples, because the planet Earth cannot only be
for one Person or one nation to live and enjoy.

War nowadays is like a ‘way of life’ that penetrates and structures everything:
Economy, Culture, Entertainments, Technology & Science, Globalization –
All are centered on war and organized around the economic notion that it is
profitable and Progressive, Military spending is Top 1 – the world’s budget goes for
completely destructive ‘dreams’.

Sustainability is a way of life based on Piece,
It is economies and states’ budgets that go for world Peace,
It is an entertainment and everyday culture based on Cooperation and Peace,
It is science and technology that are not destructive but peaceful,
It is a new humane globalization based on Peace –
It is a new civilization of Planetary Peace!

Sustainability must start with Peace; it mustn’t finish with it;
It is hypocritical bluffing and window-dressing to talk about sustainability when
World’s budget and world economy goes for Planet Earth’s destruction.

And Children are the Hope – the Future,
The ones that might become consciousness, and one day, when ahead of
Governments, redirect world’s military spending to Planetary peace,
For life to be

Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Express yourself through a collective activity for peace

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- Why do wars become reality? Who makes them and why?
- How do TV and other media stimulate aggression in children and adults, and make war to be a "fashionable" spectacle? Why?
- War destroys nature and causes climate change and ozone layer depletion much more than other industries and polluters. Large lobby groups try to hide this truth in order to legitimate war. It is now urgent to stop wars in order to save our Earth and the life of young generations!
- "War is over if you want it!" – this means that all people together can stop any war. Why don't we try?
- The world is in our hands, peace is in our actions, it is time for everybody to change something in this world! What are you going to change?

From Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The time is always right to do the right thing... Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.

We must build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear... That old law about "an eye for an eye" leaves everybody blind..."

From John Lennon and Yoko

"War is over, if you want it!"

From Anwar Sadat

"Peace is more precious than a piece of land."

From Benjamin Franklin

"There never was a good war or a bad peace."

(In: Peace Quotes, 2012)

12. Morality for Family, Family for a Better Possible World



A better Today, means a Better tomorrow,
A Better Possible World means a Moral change,
It opposes drugs, alcohol, demoralizing movies or any other forms of Demoralization,
Addiction and Dependency,
It demands a conscious Morality for a Planetary Mobilization!
And here is my Family.

Family is my dream, before “any career”,
It is the base of Life, of Freedom,
The nucleus that opposes the Slavery and Exploitation
Of people...

And No money you need to make a family,
It is the love of a man and a women; it is the feeling in your heart,
And it is all for free,
Just you need to wish...

And if you do not have your family, you know:
You have a family – it is Nature,
She is a mother, a father for all; the animals – brothers and sisters,
The trees and flowers – children...

Let's Create Together

**Students, educators and parents: How important are morality and family?
We always have a family!**

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- Reflect on the Riccardo Ravagni's passage: "Nature could be a father, a friend, an aunt, whoever. The joy is to share the experiences with the persons and with our environment that loves us". (pg. 106).
- How important is family and why might it be better in your life to firstly create a family and then think about a "career"?
- Why can "the career path" enslave us?
- If the world is not as good as it could be, and if we are not able to "love the world", then we need to change it for sure. How can we do this?

From Stefan K. Grigorov

Morality supports Family, Family makes the World

Today we face a new type of slavery based on individualistic alienation and voluntary self-exploitation. The myth of the "career path" is destroying the essence of human life – the family.

This myth deprives women and men from the most precious experiences living beings can have in life. Instead, a new commercial type of "monomial family – human with a computer" is being promoted as a most economically competitive model of hi-tech capitalism.

But let's never forget that slavery was possible in human history because of the fact that slaves did not have families, and community, and then – an army" (Grigorov, 2007)

From Paulo Freire

"It is urgent that we assume the duty of fighting for the fundamental ethical principles, like respect for the life of human beings, the life of other animals, the life of birds, the life of rivers and forests. I do not believe in love between men and women, between human beings, if we are not able to love the world" (Freire, quoted in Kahn, 2008).

13. Our Situation – Let's Stop and Reflect for Awhile!



Let's now stop and think for awhile,

About our situation and about everything;

About what we eat and how it grows; about the job we have;

About the school we go to; about the music we listen and the TV shows we watch;

About our dreams...!

About how the Mass media shape today our day and our life

With the “false needs” and myths they create in us and advertize.

Let's think about what we buy, what we don't need and what we really need;

About yesterday, about today, and about the time ahead...

About Love and Nature.

Let's always stop and reflect – what we do and why?

Why something is in the way it is, if it can be better – Yes – let's make it better.

If our school, our university, our society can be better – more socially responsible and

Ecopedagogical – Yes – let's come together and make it better.

If the world can be better – Yes – people, let's all stop for a year or two, and make it be better!

Let's Create Together

Students, educators and parents: Let's reflect and act to change our situation and create a better possible world

Do Together Methods

- *Tell a Story * Draw a Picture
- *Invent Natural Art *Play with Nature
- *Sing Together *Support and love
- *Observe *Create Photo-poetry
- *Collective Bread-Making (see pages 126-137)

Do Together Suggestions

- How do you imagine the world you wish to live in, the job you want to do, the time you want to spend in nature?
- Reflect on your influence over the world. How can you change your school, your city, your community and your country?
- How does the future of the economy, multinationals, local producers and ecosystems depend on you?
- Think about how many things depend on you, how the world in which we live is constructed by our everyday actions; how our actions after mere seconds become our future.

From Paulo Freire

The problem-posing education

“The form of action people adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the world.

In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation.

Problem-posing education sets itself the task of demythologizing.

Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality” (Freire, 2000).

From Herbert Marcuse

One-Dimensional Man

In 1964, Herbert Marcuse wrote the “One-dimensional man”. He argued that the advanced technological civilization creates one-dimensional consumer life and one-dimensional men.

For Marcuse, the “one-dimensional” type of person is a product of the “false needs” – needs that are artificially created by Mass media in order for people to buy products they will never otherwise buy and do things they will never otherwise do. Marcuse saw the “false needs” as a new form of technological control over individuals, based on one-dimensional universe of information, thoughts and behavior.

Part Two:

Ecopedagogical Narratives and Fables



From
Austrasia



Futures of Education: Re-evaluating Love, Life, Wisdom and Voice

Dr. Jennifer M. Gidley

About twenty years ago, I was trekking with my family in some reasonably remote Himalayan villages in the mountains of Nepal. Some of the local children discovered that I was at that time a teacher. They took me by the hand and excitedly ran away with me to show off with pride their new school. It was a dark little square room with straight rows of seats, a black-board, and some white chalk with each child having a little piece of black slate so they could “learn to write.” I tried to look happy for them. But inwardly I was wondering how it is that only the driest crumbs of the industrial educational model, already failing Anglo-European children in droves, could be being offered to these lively Nepalese children. Having been involved for 10 years in founding, pioneering and teaching in a radically contemporized Steiner school in rural Australia, I knew learning could be otherwise. As a responsible participant in their (and my) joyous learning of every imaginable subject through stories, drawing, painting, singing, movement, drama, music, poetry, mythology and play, I have guided numerous children from the age of five or six to puberty. And... perhaps as a surprise to many mainstream teachers, the children also became literate in the process. But instead of just developing a narrow, functional literacy, they developed rich and broad literacies. They learned to read for meaning, to write creatively, to share, to respect Nature, to imagine worlds beyond their immediate one, to have social confidence, a passionate love of learning and the courage to be the ones to change the world.

The 21st century is a time of great challenge and uncertainty. What can we offer our children and young people to prepare them for such uncertain futures? The current pace of change is hard to cope with, and we can easily feel we are living in a ‘time pressure-cooker’. As a psychologist, educator and futurist, I am only too aware of the short-termism that pervades our culture. Yet we urgently need to think of the long-term consequences of our lifestyles.

As parents rush their children from one activity to the next to ensure they remain 'competitive', how much quality time do they actually spend with their children? An alarming number of parents today believe they 'don't have time to tell their children stories'. Many affluent parents have subscribed to the advertising myth that they can buy their children's happiness with the latest computer and mobile phone, and that ready-made screen images are as good for children as their own imagination and creativity.

Because of the fragmented or over-intellectual style of education most of us have received, what we 'know' is often disconnected from our hearts, thwarting our courage and thus our ability to make creative changes. We need to bring the heart and soul back into education and stories have this power. Stories help to create an attentive, listening heart space in us, where we rediscover living values and reconnect with our deepest concerns. In the pages that follow I share a few of my own stories.

A Brief Personal Narrative

My first involvement with what I call evolutionary pedagogies was over thirty years ago when I first encountered Rudolf Steiner's futures-oriented writings on education. The 1970s were exciting times intellectually and culturally as there was an influx of new ideas and cultural movements. As a young psychologist-educator, I was influenced by theories from humanist and transpersonal psychology and critical pedagogy, e.g., Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. There was a powerful shift of consciousness breaking through at this time. In my professional work in educational psychology I worked with teachers of young people who did not "fit into" mainstream education.

As a professional psychologist-educator, I was aware of serious limitations of the factory-like model of mainstream education and, as a mother, I decided to found a Steiner school. I sought to transcend the conservative, cobweb-covered, 19th century version of Steiner education by creating a contemporary, creative interpretation adapted to late 20th century, sub-tropical, rural Australia. I became aware through experience what a powerful and positive educational approach it can be, but was frustrated by how marginalised it is by academics and educators alike.

In the 1990s I decided to re-enter the academy, with the aim of both testing my intuitions and finding appropriate language to create dialogue between Steiner's

evolutionary pedagogy and mainstream education. My Masters research indicated that Steiner-educated students, while holding similar fears and concerns about the future to other students, felt empowered to envisage and create their positive preferred futures. Over the next ten years I continued my reading, researching and writing about educational and youth futures, post-colonial alternatives to the factory model of schooling, the impact of globalisation on young people, and the evolution of culture and consciousness.

My Educational Philosophy of Love, Life, Wisdom and Voice

Over four decades of working as a psychologist, then educator and later academic researcher, I have distilled my educational philosophy into four core pedagogical values: love, life, wisdom and voice.



Through being loved children learn to care for other sentient beings.

The significance of *love* in ‘classroom’ relationships

My educational vision begins with love. The educational value of care, relationships and community is expressed in all the major religions and spiritual traditions. In most such traditions human love is a reflection of the Divine Love or God, and thus is an important way to bring spirituality into education. As such, love should not be underestimated as a significant developmental and

evolutionary force. Contemporary educators such as Nel Noddings, Parker Palmer and Arthur Zajonc have emphasized its importance in transforming education.

The significance of bringing concepts to *life* through the imagination

There are two central aspects to the art of cultivating *pedagogical life*. My primary interest is to promote the underappreciated notion of bringing concepts to life—to create living thinking—through developing the imagination. The second aspect honors life through ecological, environmental and sustainability education. In practical terms the healthy development of imagination can be cultivated through painting, creative writing, poetry and story telling. Such an enlivening of education may even assist the urgent resuscitation of a dying planetary ecosystem.

The significance of multi-modal learning modes in developing *wisdom*

The most recognized path to wisdom in adulthood is through the cultivation of multi-perspectival, versatile standpoints. Numerous learning approaches can be explored by engaging with multiple intelligences, creativity and aesthetics as steps to wisdom. There are also important ways of knowing that have been even more subjugated in educational discourse. In the ‘serious business’ of high stakes testing, such concepts as laughter, play, dancing and happiness seem remote. These broad human literacies need to take their place at the table of educational offerings.

The significance of how we *voice* our language with children

In this electronic age of ‘voice’-mail, ‘chat’-rooms, and ‘talking’ computers, perhaps the least valued is the human voice itself. Yet the education of voice and speech as expressions of *living* language is actually that which potentially integrates all the others. No matter how caring, imaginative and interesting our approach to children may be, unless we can convey all this to them through our choice of words, our tone of voice, the timing of our silences, and how we transmit our authentic *presence*, we may not communicate with them at all.

In summary, the educational integration of love and reverence, with life-giving conceptual imagination and creative multi-modal methods, transmitted through an authentic human voice, lays a strong foundation for the emergence of

new consciousness. In these pressing times of global distress, it is imperative that we begin to facilitate the awakening of ecological, integral and planetary consciousness through nurturing love, life, wisdom and authentic voice in education.

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Swinging for Light: Playing for Science

Dr. Jennifer M. Gidley

In the new design of the Daystar Steiner School playground, in rural Australia we decided to introduce the idea of “playing for science.” This was back in the mid-1980s when alternative energy was still a relatively new idea. The school was centered in a community of new rural settlers, mostly urban refugees from a city lifestyle they did not support. The idea of encouraging the children to learn about alternative energy was appealing to both teachers and parents alike. The school was creatively designed and built out of stone and timber to create a natural, organic environment for the children.



The playground was vast and set within kilometres of farmland and natural bushland. The children had free spirits like their parents and were full of energy. It occurred to us that we could harness some of that bursting childish energy, which can sometimes create chaos for teachers in classrooms, to create alternative energy. This way even the young, primary school children could learn some very important lessons in physics through their bodily kinetic activity, which they would only later on, in high school, learn about in a more conceptual way when they studied physics theories.

With the help of a low-impact alternative energy expert from the local region, a swing set was designed and built which was like no other. When the

children swung on the swings, once their kinetic energy built up to a certain degree, a light bulb fitted into the frame of the swing set would light up. To the children, this was pure magic. And yet it was a magic that they had created with their own energy, while they were playing!

In a second project, we built a large stone structure with a water wheel at the top and a series of sculpted clay-fired flow form basins through which water flowed down the structure like a waterfall, into a pond at the bottom, nestled into a sandpit beside a see-saw. When children rode the see-saw, the kinetic energy of their weight moving the see-saw up and down pumped water up, turning the water wheel and pouring water down through the flow forms. The children were again empowered to experience the force of their own energy transforming into another kind of energy.



The Sun-Juice Cave: Nurturing “Radical Amazement”

Dr. Jennifer M. Gidley

One of the richest memories from my teaching career was the Winter Solstice festival in the mid-eighties where I worked the miracle of turning oranges into sunballs full of Sun juice. Along with other teachers, I had created an inspired environment for our festival that included turning our small classroom into a simulacra of a mystical cave made of a draped parachute and other cloths which could only be entered by crawling into a tunnel made of increasingly darkly-coloured silk (violet, indigo). Our school was young, small and intimate and the children were aged between around 5 and 8 years old.

Once the children, led by a teacher, ventured inside the room-sized ‘cave’, their eyes grew large as they witnessed pockets of crystals lit by live, flickering, candle light (carefully guarded of course). After they had explored the cave and the crystals with their eyes and hands, tangibly, sensually, experiencing what the mystics of all traditions know: that the ‘Light can be found in and through the darkness’, they were led out of the cave back into the ‘Sunlight’ through another tunnel, this one made of red, orange and golden colored silks.

As each child was re-entering the outside world of their classroom, after this communion with mystery, arriving at this new place of Sun renewal on the other side of darkness, they were reverently handed something magical – a bright, half-spherical, golden-orange cup—with the words “Would you like some sun juice?”

Each child carefully took this mysterious object in their hands, held it to their lips and squeezed the sweet ‘sun juice’ into their mouths. I will never forget the expressions of wonder and awe on the faces of the children, who were so transformed by this experience they would never eat an ordinary orange in the same way again.



A critical, pragmatic voice might ask: “What is the point of deluding children into thinking they are drinking sun-juice? Don’t they need to learn scientific facts so that we can measure what they know in order to grade them?” My response would be that this creative, imaginative gesture, one that fills the child’s soul with wonder, can make a great contribution to developing their respect for Nature and indeed for developing their evolving, ecological consciousness.

From Brazil



To Study in the Paradise of Santa Catarina, Costa da Lagoa

Raquel Dotta Corrêa

How beautiful it is when we see beautiful natural landscapes on TV or in photos! Imagine now that you are living in a large city in the midst of nature. I've got this pleasure. I am presenting to you my Brazilian island Florianópolis. With the brilliant sunshine and a serene breeze on a calm sea and the eyes watching the horizon.



The bliss that our children from Costa da Lagoa have – to live and study in the midst of so much green – is incredible! There are those who have never been in the downtown, have never entered into a bus or a car, neither watched TV or talked on the phone.

"But will there be fish this morning?" - says one of the children of the fishermen. We leave early with them to get a nice shoal of fish from the ocean. "The boat is full." "We have enough fish for this week!" And so continues the day of the fishermen from this region and their children who still live there – on the edge of the sea.

What would be the view of the world of these children when they have never been out of that beautiful little region where you can reach only by boat or on foot for about 30 minutes along a track in the midst of the forest?

The challenge for the teachers in this small community in the city of Floria-

nópolis is to promote to these 7- and 8-year-old children a vision of the world that aims to highlight the values of their culture and preserve it, therefore – to value and preserve their nature! And to make a comparison with the culture and nature of other countries, with their similarities and differences.

Some students of our pedagogy course have done a good job with this. They have proposed a new anthropological perspective: Make what is familiar strange and become familiar with the strange. For that purpose they wanted to present faraway countries to children in Costa da Lagoa – such as China, Britain and Egypt!

The first thing was to ask students to prepare their passports. With a paper and a pencil they created their own passports and drew pictures of themselves as if these were their photos. Here it is!!! Now the journey could begin!

Egypt

Chairs and tables were all put together in the middle of the room – here was their mode of transport to Egypt. Students then went over in that big "ship" and travelled in the midst of huge waves up to their first destination. When they got to Egypt, a beautiful song, typical of the country, began to play in the class and everyone started dancing. Some pictures and some books of children's literature were distributed to the children while this was happening. So everyone got to know a little of the culture, of the nature, of the tourist places and the food of that country.

China

Now the tables are one behind the other and are actually a big "airplane". All students rose at once to begin the other trip to China. One student said he would like to be the pilot of that airplane, and so they were all in place. During the first aerobatics they all shouted "Waaaawwww yee"! After that, a storm came along with a great turbulence. Finally, having arrived in China, the first thing to do was to present the passports at the airport. Waiting there for the children was a character named Lyn who was created by a teacher to be the guide of children in China. So, they experienced a bit of that culture, were practicing Tai Chi Chuan, got to know the great mystical Chinese dragon, the famous Chinese fabrics – always drawing a comparison with the culture and the reality of their region Costa da Lagoa. What's different, what is similar?

England

The last trip was to England. The first thing was to learn some words in English, such as *hello*, *goodbye*, *water*, *food*, *help*, so as to ask for information while playing rock n' roll in the classroom. Through the photos they saw the Big Ben clock and the Buckingham Palace, the bridges, English castles, and red double-decker buses. Also they got to know of King Arthur and his sword Excalibur as well as the main museums of England.

At the end of the imaginary journeys that the class made, students wrote a little booklet telling of their adventures in those three countries, what they got to know through them, what they learned and what is different from the place in which they live.

They are girls and boys, with their skin color, with the structures that you see on their bodies, with the knowledge and skills they carry with themselves, with the sorrows and joys they have experienced, with the curiosity to learn and to resist the weird.

Children bring with them many stories, much knowledge, unique ways of being, of observing and resisting the world, of playing and inventing! We, the educators, must not see students as "containers" to fill with information, as so many "teachers" do and who unfortunately do not even want to understand the ideas of Paulo Freire for a better education.

We must listen to children with an open heart and learn from them, we must find in them this wisdom and knowledge that we can not find in any book in the world – this is the greatest good of our walk as educators.

Raquel Dotta Corrêa



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An Ecopedagogical Experience in Elementary Schools in Brazil

Tiago Dalapicola & Welton Pinotti Rovetta

“Until a few years ago, when peasants faced the most terrible droughts in Espirito Santo, a Brazilian state, children used to be taken by Ms. Zilma Kelfer from the classes to go to pray to the cross located in front of the church of Saint John of Barra Seca”. Such a statement, made by Luzia Burgaleri, a former teacher of the community, represents the way by which people normally dealt with environmental problems, using their faith.

The most usual problem in that region is, doubtless, the serious droughts that at least once in the year affect the whole area. Peasants have often lost their crops and the livestock have been threatened without green grass to eat.



The region about which is this story, Saint John of Barra Seca, has been populated recently, since the beginning of the 20th century. The very conception of colonization has been based on deforestation. The exuberant Atlantic Rainforest was replaced by coffee plantations and pastures.

For generations people have lived in a little harmonic mode with nature. Trees and forests were not seen as friends of the colonists, or in a more realistic thinking, useful. Instead, they were seen as hindrances which were there to disturb the expected development of the territory. It is unnecessary to discuss about the historic context of colonization which has shaped such a way of thinking in the local people. In the same way, it is useless to say that people were already

accustomed to the environmental constraints originated from impacts that they helped to create.

Since 2000 something has started changing. As a result of the added efforts of the Colatina Municipality, the Rural Workers' Union, the Association of Small Peasants and the two elementary schools of the community, there was conducted a study which has identified beyond other things, the main environmental problems. This study brought out, at the same time, a range of practice actions to be taken in order to reach the established goals.

One of the main actions put in practice was the sensibilization of children that were attending classes at the local elementary schools. They were involved through fieldwork and other praxes typical to ecopedagogy.



Making responsible the children of today is a big step to reach a more aware people tomorrow. The picture above shows children while having their coffee-break during a hike in the Atlantic rainforest.

Many other actions were taken thanks to the commitment of local people. One of them, the waste collection has allowed the community to give a safe destination for it. Before, the waste produced generally was burnt or thrown away somewhere, bringing risks of contamination or attracting diseases. Students of the elementary schools were very important, working as agents of awareness among their own families.

Other important action was the reforestation of degraded areas. The recovered vegetation helps in conservation of water resources, promotes the

increase of biodiversity and stabilizes the soils. Therefore, the environmental quality is strongly related with the forest existence.

From the point of view of the sanitation, now, more than before, the sewer has a correct destination. Risks of contamination are lower than in the past. This was one of the simplest and less expensive actions taken in the sense to improve the general conditions of life of the community.

Moreover, awareness about the reduction in the pesticides use was enhanced. The quality of agricultural production has improved and the health, not only of farmers, but also of customers has been appreciated.

In all these actions taken, we could notice the significant role attributed to school and teachers, acting in a new and more sustainable way to ensure that schooling children will become agents of the required changes in our society. Making possible such changes has involved also another important field which can be treated in classrooms – the valorization of local traditions.

Edilza Scalzer and Marta Zanotelli, the teachers in the two elementary schools of the community are unanimous in stating that by knowing and valuating the local customs and traditions, children are more likely to develop a new way of thinking, understanding easily the necessity of more sustainable changes.

Nowadays, thanks to the efforts done, people are more aware than before, and they have hope that environmental problems will gradually decrease.

Thanks school! Thanks children – the future of the world!





Tiago Dalapicola,

was born in the rural community of São João da Barra Seca, municipality of Colatina, state of Espírito Santo, Brazil. He graduated in Geography at the Federal University of Espírito Santo in 2007. A teacher of Geography at elementary and secondary schools, in 2009 he moved to Trento, Italy, where he graduated with a masters degree in Society, Territory and Environment at the Faculty of Sociology, University of Trento. Now, he just returned to Brazil and was appointed as a Teaching Professor of Environmental Education at a post-secondary education. He is especially interested in the issues related to population, land use and development.

Welton Pinotti Rovetta,

was born in the rural community of São João da Barra Seca, municipality of Colatina, state of Espírito Santo, Brazil. He graduated in Pedagogy from the University of North Paraná, with specialization in Psychopedagogy. He is living in the same community where he was born and is responsible for managing a project of Community Libraries that in 2008 was awarded by the Ministry of Agrarian Development as one of the top 5 initiatives to encourage the practice of reading in rural areas of Brazil. His interests are mostly in the fields of education, culture and literacy.

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A Drop of Life

Guilherme Blauth & Patricia Abuhab
Instituto Harmonia na Terra

A seed like a drop. He came from far away, no one is quite sure how. Planted by nature, he was born strong, vigorous. In an instant he opened his arms in the forest. The other trees noticed that he grew rapidly and soon surpassed his older sisters. There was some discomfort with this young tree that was developing with breathtaking speed. His beauty caused envy.



The green stem became woody and in a few years he reached the top of the forest. “What is your name?”, asked the others. “Guarapuvu”, he said. And he began to talk about the happiness of being alive, growing and doing photosynthesis. He spoke about the pleasure of the company of others, the joy of being different and the wisdom to be a tree that learns by observing the lives of others. He said that his sap was sweet, his flowers expressing love. He loved animals, bees and was delighted with the singing of birds perched on his

branches. Ants, hated by many other trees, were protected by him. He awakened a desire for existence. And he was so beautiful and so sincere that the feeling of envy which the other trees nurtured turned into admiration, the wind blew and it seemed that all her companions blessed him for his beauty and presence.

Guapuruvu was big, tall and strong and was in his most splendid time.

One day his leaves began to fall, all, one by one. It wasn't autumn. They asked him what happened, but he remained silent. Disturbed by the Guapuruvu's catatonic state, his companions asked the monkey, a specialist in diseases of trees, to come.

The monkey came, looked at that bare tree and said, "his life is over, he will die soon".

Nobody believed, how such a strong tree, still young, an example of strength and power to the entire community, was to die. It should be only a passage to adulthood. Once the leaves come back and his example of pride would reign again.

But two weeks later the sky was full of black clouds, a dark day fell. A very severe storm was coming. The strong wind caused the tree branches to swing vigorously from side to side. Suddenly Guapuruvu's twigs snapped and fell on the forest, opening a gap.

He was so huge that many trees that lived beneath his branches also had their limbs broken, crushed, causing cries in tears mingled with the raindrops.

The fig tree, which was a big and experienced tree, decided to make a speech, because everyone was shocked by the young death.

"One day we're all going to die", began the fig tree, some die sooner and others live longer, this is the law of life. To live more or less is not what matters, but wonder why you came, what is your function in the world. Our friend Guapuruvu had a short life, I know, but his life was extremely happy, his joy influenced everyone, is it not true?

“What I mean”, continued the fig tree, “is also that his death has a meaning for us, who stayed within this community. The broken branches opened up light and gave possibilities to other brothers who can now develop and grow. Our friend died to help many of us”.

After a storm here, the sun comes. These cycles are extremely beautiful processes, so we see how lives are all interconnected.

The fig tree ended his speech by saying “someone must die so that others can live. We live in cycles within cycles. You may know your cycle in details but you may not and nevertheless be happy”.

The Guapuruvu is a native Brazilian tree of the Atlantic rainforest that is born in sunny environments. Its sleek shape with the crown on top and its striking yellow flowers are very beautiful. It reaches a height of 30 meters and lives barely 40 years.



The Instituto Harmonia na Terra is an environmental NGO headquartered in Cotia, São Paulo, Brazil. It was founded in 2004 by Patricia Abuhab and Guilherme Blauth.

Its mission is to promote educative actions that contribute to the ethical and ecological transformation of the human being in direction to sustainability. Since its foundation it acts in the accomplishment of courses and workshops of Ecopedagogy (within more than 250 Brazilian public schools) and the production of pedagogical materials with environmental contents. Among them, Instituto Harmonia na Terra has produced the Agroflorest Game and the Earth Charter Game.

Website: www.harmonianaterra.org.br

I Want to Live Even More!

Ivanize Maria Bragaglia & Sara Dotta Corrêa

I'm young, very
happy and proud of
myself. I have been
watching the sunrises
and sunsets all my days
and I would like
to share this joy with you.



Unfortunately, you came to visit me only a few times. You used to remember me especially during rainy days, for I used to offer you shelter and rest, and under my great arms you felt heated. I always asked you for a hug, but it seemed that you never wanted to caress me. Perhaps you thought that your arms were too small to reach me. When you are near me I feel more alive, when you come to play and I can listen to the birds singing, I see – that is when I am truly happy. In this moment our senses are all mixed together and vitalize themselves in a blink of an eye in perfect synchrony.

I offer you life, rest, and I'm source of inspiration for many of your poets and artists, I caress you with my shades of green color and gold and I do not ever get tired of being here to give you peace. I am lucky because your presence is always the arrival of new emotions. From my childhood I was put here in this large garden. Every day the shining sun greets me and I stretch myself enjoying freely its rays. Everyone feels me... children, young people, adults and also lovers that allow me to be a part of their memories of love.

But ... not all days are made of rejoicing and celebration, there are days which seem like anxiety. They get my heart overwhelmed, are polluted, and the dirty air

hurts. The island wind then blows intensely on me and bashes me heavily with the garbage left by chance around me. Most importantly, I feel more fragile at this time, when even very small parts of me are cut off.

But – it is not only me.

I have my brothers and sisters. I feel it every time something happens to them – the small and the big trees of the forests – my family that supports my spirit and my life, although distant from me. I feel it because the air is no longer the same if some of them are cut down, and because of the clouds too. I feel it because the water is no longer the same and cannot continue on its way. I feel it because nothing stops the rain and it comes to flood the villages of people who didn't do anything bad and have a great respect to my family – the forests.

I always know if some of my brothers or sisters have been removed – the birds come to me and tell me – “we are homeless now”.

Every time when something bad happens to forests I feel it, and I become very sad about you humans and your machines, for what you are doing and why.

That is why I want to ask you now here to keep alive the secret of my life and my longevity – my family – the forests, the water, the birds... I wish to believe that your respect and your help, which have been supporting me through my one hundred forty-one years of life, will support also my brothers and sisters which are the reason for this life.

From the moment my leafy branches expanded themselves upward, and you started looking to the sky, you left your mind to fly – and there – you still can find yourself and your dreams. Thus, if I have become the symbol of the city – “The Centennial Figueira” located in downtown “Praça XV de Novembro”, in Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil, please remember my words:

Do not forget me and my brothers and sisters – the forests! My life depends on them. For more than a hundred years, who knows ... to be honest.... now time only depends on you...



Ivanize Maria Bragaglia, Florianópolis, SC,
has graduated in Italian Literature from the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC). Currently she is a Teaching Professor at the Colégio de Aplicação/CA/UFSC, Brazil.

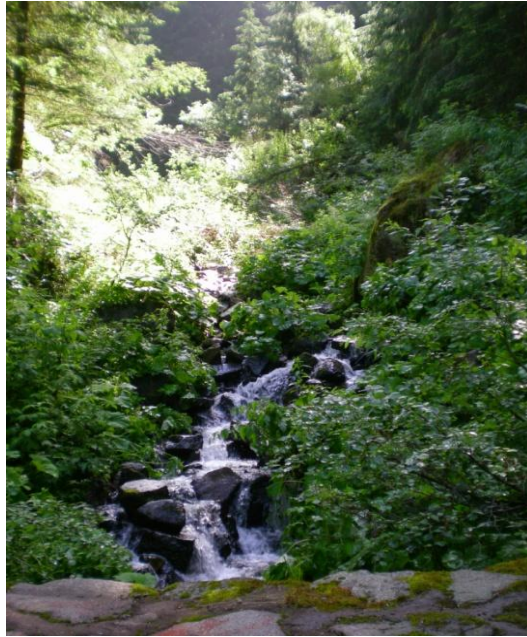
Sara Dotta Corrêa, firstly graduated in Italian Literature at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) is now completing a degree in Architecture at the UFSC, Brazil.

From
Bulgaria



Much and Less

Kiril K. Grigorov



Now, more than ever, children tend to receive what they don't need and desperately lack the simple things that are so essential for their well-being.

You can see some students in the schoolyard showing off with their brand-new gadgets. Among them there is a boy who is watching two little sparrows that hop around the benches in search of food. They remind him of the good old days when his family lived in the countryside.

For a moment, the gorgeous sceneries of a cascade, colorful forests and fields spring in front of his eyes. These remind him of the clean fresh air and the moments of joy when he returns home on the road surrounded by blossoming chestnut trees. Unfortunately, these fragrant memories last only for an instant, as one of the other boys hurls stones at the tiny birds making them escape. It was done just for fun, to prove his courage to hurt the weaker. As short was the boy's experience of his magic home place. Too early in his life, too fast, industries came

near the villages. They first polluted the water, then the food and the air. Families were forced to leave as illnesses became usual and tragic.

There is something in common between the chasing of the two birds and the establishment of the industries. Both didn't respect nature, they jeered at it. In the latter case, however, a few people also made enormous profits at its expense and at the expense of the health and happiness of hundreds of families who were exploited or forced to leave home.

The boy wakes again in his current reality among his classmates who taunt the others for not having the latest computers, cell phones, brand name clothes ... and he doesn't have any of these. He has only a few memories of the nice moments spent together with his family, the joy of his parents every time when they see him, their affection and support. This is all he now has, no computer, no phone, and no brand clothes... only a heart filled with love and capable of loving.

Is this enough to make him survive in a world of competition, greediness and obsession with the material? He doesn't know the answer. Yet, he sees the future reflected in the once crystal water of the cascade, in the loving eyes of a yearning parent, in the joyful flight of the two birds.

He also sees how many students at school use drugs and damage their health, get drunk and bully the weaker. Often their parents come to pick them up with luxury cars, hoping to have satisfied their children's needs with a new gadget.

But many needs remain unmet. Inexperienced feelings get replaced with drugs and aggression towards the others.

In his sympathy and sadness for such young people the boy sees that the little he has is a lot. It challenges the reality of inequality, exploitation, forced slavery, toxic living environments that many more human beings than you may think suffer today.

What is the name of this boy? He has many names as there are millions like him, he can be found in every country, in every town.

He also has many angels, the ones who have helped him grow up despite all miseries; the ones who help him have his fair share in society, protect him from

bullying and exploitation; the ones who fight for the land against dishonest industries.

He wants to be one of them when grows up. Someone who would try to make people love each other and nature more, listen more to each other, help each other more, understand better what really matters in relations, and fear less about the future.



Kiril is currently completing his Master's Degree in Psychology at the Honours College "Bernardo Clesio", University of Trento, Italy. His major research and practical interests range from early childhood development to eco-therapies and human resources. In particular, he is doing practical research on ecopedagogical therapeutic gardens, possible ways of promoting social integration and reduction of aggression. He is also engaged in the transformation of human resources practices for the creation of sustainable organizations in terms of social, economic and ecological responsibility. Kiril is author of the "*Ecopedagogy Message to Parents*" and co-author of some sections of Part 1 and 3 of this Handbook.

The Magic Kingdom of the Little Mermaid

Aneta Nikolova



My home town, Bourgas is cuddled by the Black Sea and I grew up with the mystical stories this black giant with white-foamy curls was telling me all year long.

The most exciting time was when in the summer, the sea was revealing to me its deepest secrets and colorful realms.

Each year, the anticipation of the next summer adventure was growing and was coloring my winter dreams with the rainbow of the underworld kingdom. Every summer was bringing me closer and closer to the most secret corners of this kingdom. At day, I was spending hours in the bitter-salty water, learning to master my fear and to keep my breath longer and longer. At night, I was dreaming that the Little Mermaid was my sister and was teaching me how to follow her in her wild underwater pursuits.

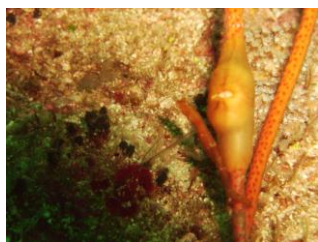
Little did I know during those happy childhood days that one day the dreams will become real and that the sea will open to me the chests of its ancient treasures? And perhaps I would meet my dearest friend – the little mermaid. In the 90s, and thanks to the latest evolution of the aqua-lung³ – originally invented

³ The Aqua-lung was actually invented in Paris in 1943 by the engineer Emile Gagnan and the lieutenant Jacques-Yves Cousteau <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aqua-lung>

by Dr Jacques-Yves Cousteau, the underwater world became also accessible to everyone who can swim. And with the little help from my friends, I became one of the lucky converted free-divers to master the scuba-diving equipment and techniques.

One beautiful sunny afternoon, while lazily snorkeling in the break between two dives in the blue lagoon somewhere in the Andaman Sea along the stretch of Similan Islands, I strolled happily following a school of barracudas, I met her at last.

Well, she was disguised into a playful young green sea turtle, which with amazing agility swam towards me and started playing with me underwater. I thought she wanted an afternoon snack and swam back to the small ship to get her some bananas. The turtle appreciated the snack indeed, while also posing charmingly for a couple photos. Then, as if wanted to say "thank you for the food" it quickly poked me on the hip and waived a fin while diving further down to the sparkling sandy bottom. I followed with excitement, frantically pushing the buttons of my underwater camera. When we reached the bottom, a magnificent view of colorful corals full of the rainbow of millions of fishes was revealed to me.



And there on the sea-fan coral leaves I saw a lovely yellow seahorse, gently curling his one leg around the silver coral branches. This was the magic tiny yellow fellow whom we have been searching for the last three dives.

His belly was swollen and the birth time of the young seahorses must have been approaching. So, enchanting the view was, so magic the world revealed in

front of my eyes was, as an old, forgotten and re-discovered book, which does not let you close the worn out pages with its spell. I felt like I am in paradise – light as a feather, agile as a moray eel.



And then somewhere from the depth of my brain, a thought started swimming towards me and swirling around my neck as an old wise octopus. A panic thought rang as thousand bells in my ears – “Air – no more air to breathe”. Yes, I suddenly realized I was skin-diving and all that was left there to breathe was in the narrow tube of my snorkel. Panic was gleaming from my eyes and streaming through the surrounding water as giant invisible waves. Then a gentle stroke from below – from the beak of my darling sister mermaid – the young green turtle, pushed me up as a balloon. Another little game with graceful playful moves, and this time she is bringing me with her spell safely to the surface.

Later on, once on board of our ship, I learned from the wise diving books, that the seahorse I saw was a male one, who literally swallows the eggs of his offspring from the mother and keeps them warm until they hatch in a pocket in his belly. One day, very soon, the eggs of this little fellow will swim away to discover the sea world on their own⁴. Who says that green turtles are not the little mermaids we all dream to meet, and who are able to show us the magic of the underwater kingdom of the wide, wide seas. Keep dreaming and cherish the sea. One day you will also be able to meet and play with your little mermaid.

⁴ You can learn more about the beautiful underwater seahorses you can read on www.kidcyber.com.au/topics/seahorse.htm from Sydenham, S & Thomas, R. *Seahorses* [Online] www.kidcyber.com.au (2001); Updated © [2008] kidcyber

17 September 2012



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Ms. Aneta Slaveykova Nikolova is born on 14 June 1963 in Sofia, Bulgaria. While taking stock of her broad educational background with degrees in Scientific Information Management, Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology (Engineer) and European Politics and Administration, Ms. Nikolova has been fully engaged in the sustainable development agenda for the last 20 years.

Ms. Nikolova has a rich professional experience in sustainable development policy analysis, development and advocacy, as well as providing capacity development, institutional strengthening and technical advice to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in Europe, Africa and Asia and Pacific, through projects and programmes funded by European Union, United Nations and bilateral donors.

She has been actively engaged in developing and promoting the environmentally sustainable economic growth “Green Growth” (see also www.greengrowth.org) approach toward sustainable and inclusive development for Asia and the Pacific, adopted at the 5th and 6th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development (March 2005 and October 2010).

The Most Interesting Film

Stefan K. Grigorov



For some weeks I have been waiting for this day! The new movie that was advertised for months is going to be shown on TV today. I am so excited that all morning I have been playing games on the computer, counting the minutes to the beginning of the film. It has started; all the actors are famous movie stars, and it is an intriguing story... No, suddenly the electricity and the Internet has stopped. Oh no, I missed the best part of the movie, the finale... and I become really crazy.

In my anger I took my bike and my dog Bianca - who was so bored because nobody was paying attention to her - and we went out for a walk. Bianca was so happy and was running so fast... but I was absorbed and preoccupied thinking about the end of the film... I lost the way and we appeared to be in a place outside of town, which I had never seen before. It was close to the river (not a surprise considering that Bianca loves to swim and play with other dogs).

But what a surprise, there were children playing on the banks of the beautiful riverside. Some of them must have also brought their dogs because Bianca vanished. I called her, but it seemed she didn't want to hear. Other kids were looking and smiling at me, and they invited me to come and play together with them. Among them there was an extraordinarily pretty girl. She smiled at me more than the others. Her eyes were so bright... and she was smiling at me in such a nice way... It was wonderful, we played all the afternoon until the evening, and we arranged to meet together again the following Saturday.

Bianca and I went happily home, where Mom and Dad were watching TV as usual. They asked me how the new movie was. Movie... I couldn't think about any movie right now, the eyes of the girl I had met earlier filled all of my mind and my heart, and the other children, they were so kind and nice, it was a wonderful day... Anyway, I often sit with my parents and watch TV and so I did again and we watched another new movie. It was interesting, but there was something wrong...

Every time while playing computer games or watching films I began to feel that there was something wrong, that there was something missing in all the films and computer games... The film was nice, but where was I in the film, where was my story, and my great afternoon...? Now I realized that the thing missing in the films was me, it was my day, it was my life, it was my own actions, my ideas and dreams. My heart was always trying to tell me that... the most interesting film is in fact my life.

The following Saturday Bianca and I went happily together to meet our new friends again - especially the girl with the wonderful eyes. We arrived at our amazing riverside place, but what a surprise, it was now all fenced. It had become a part of some stage for a new super action thriller that was being filmed. All the enormous machines, the noise, shootings, fire, crime and violent scenes, and all those actors and movie stars – oh, no, they destroyed every part of our beautiful riverside playground and the possibility of reliving our magic day.

We were very sad, nobody was smiling this time, the movie stars also looked different, neither exceptional nor beautiful or smart... probably this is the reason why they need to advertise movies so much...

Listening to our hearts, we asked ourselves – where are we in this movie?

*The story is based on a real case in which for the filming of the movie “Expendables 2” (with Sylvester Stallone, Jet Li, Chuck Norris, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Bruce Willis, and Arnold Schwarzenegger) an environmental protected area of world importance (the Devetashka Cave in Bulgaria) was damaged in a **barbaric way** despite the fact that it is protected by the Bulgarian, European Union and the World legislation, and despite the many protests of Bulgarian civil society: www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=133901*

A Poor Child, a School and a Bee Today

Stefan K. Grigorov



A girl went to school, but her family was poor,
They gave her all their love and all the hope in their hearts,
But at school children were making fun of her for she was poor,
She was always afraid and stressed about what she would hear the next
day...

A small heart was trembling and beating in the child,
Suffering all the offenses of modern children's life.

Once, all the children came to her and said:
You don't even have the Internet, you cannot be our friend;
And she was wondering how life, how school can become hell,
And every day she was counting the days to get away from school that
remained.

Having a garden with animals and trees,
She was always speaking to the bees,

One day a bee came to her and said: WiFi Internet and cell phones are bad.

They kill us bees, and then the plants and trees...

Please hear me and you will save our life and our planet!

And what's life without bees? – No fruits to give plants and trees!

The bee was sad, suffering the *electromagnetic pollution** of the cell phones and the WiFi networks, many of the brothers and sisters bees have died, Because they couldn't survive the electromagnetic radiation of so many cell phones and WiFi devices.

“And nobody told us about this at school” – said the poor girl to the bee.

She now lived her life well, strong and sane,

Always in love with her family and in a warm hug with nature,

And always the most knowledgeable in school and life...

But the other children, they were consumer victims – parents, of the

Internet, cell phones, TV, videogames, MP3 players...

Addicted to technology and deranged by it, they stopped to feel neither life nor the love, and you see...

They dream only of money, for they thought “everything in life can be advertized, commercialized and bought”.

And the poor girl was not guilty, for life was such and the school was so...

And this fable is to you educators and parents and people to know...

That poverty is not as dangerous as monetary abundance and is the apathy of the rich,

To know that an affluent, consumer society is in no way compatible

With the life of nature and with normal, psychologically and physiologically sane people.

In a world of extreme poverty, and extreme richness, an overall environmental crisis exists one next to the other. “**Bread Houses**”, as the ones created and promoted by Nadezhda Savova in this handbook, can become places for bridging the gap and preserving nature; places that educate for love, peace and cooperation.

* Some years ago, 2 cell towers were installed in my town, as well as wireless Internet, and nothing else changed in the town nor in the lands around it. My yard was then full of bees but they all started vanishing, dying because they were getting disoriented and lost because of the electromagnetic fields of the cell towers and the constantly increasing number of cell phones. The same happened in all the other places where cell towers were installed, many beekeepers are now considering dismantling them in order to save the bees. You yourself can conduct experiments on how the use of cell phones disorients the bees. See how they suffer, cannot find their way home and finally die. There is evidence that the electromagnetic radiation produced by cell towers, cell phones and wireless networks has similar effects on birds, affecting also their heart rhythm:

www.mastsanity.org/health/research/269-the-birds-the-bees-and-electromagnetic-pollution-by-dr-andrew-goldsworthy-may-2009.html

I graduated from a 4-year high school in Audio, Video and Telecommunication Technologies, and specialized in Telecommunication Systems and Technologies. I still remember how from all the experiments we conducted confirmed and re-confirmed the detrimental effects of cell phones and wireless networks on the health of human and non-human beings.

I am exceptionally grateful in this regard to our teachers who constantly were warning us about the highly dangerous and negative effects of cell phones on our health and that we shouldn't put them too close to our body.

I want to thank also the 7-year old Ines Veselinova for the great picture painted and provided by her.

Humans and Civilization

Stefan K Grigorov

To live in the epoch of a civilization means, willy-nilly, that your aspirations, your identity, and all that makes up your everyday life are part of the material contributing towards the status quo environment of the society.

People are far more complex than the civilization in which they live, work, and make wishes. As a wonder that creates wonders, the human being has eyes and can look not only under his/her feet, but also in the sky. Watching there in the sky and in nature, she/he sees far beyond the settings of her/his civilization.

But once humans take on a particular function in the maintenance of civilization, they can see predominantly only through the prism of this function. One's function in the civilization provides one's social allotment and one's 'role fiction'. But humans can receive their portions, and can notice their role in both civilization and nature. Some people, as Diogenes, made their own choices and had their own opinions. We can remember the episode when Alexander the Great visited Diogenes and said: "I would like to do something very important for you Diogenes. I know you chose this kind of solitary life, but I think that sometimes in your life you want something better. Ask me, what do you want and it will be a pleasure for me to give it to you". Alexander stood in front of Diogenes while hiding the sun, and Diogenes gave him the following answer:

"I want only one thing Alexander. You stand in front of me, and you are hindering the sun, so *don't take from me the thing that you cannot give me!*"

Civilization and its masters cannot always give ordinary people what nature can give them. Civilization can give people so many things but it can also take away their wholeness at the expense of its order.

In brief, civilization means order, arranging reality according to some interests and necessities. The order of civilization is built by people at the

expense of their everyday activity, experiments and experiences. Lewis Mumford examined that in civilization people trade their harmony for order, and sacrifice their wholeness for building order, and it often happens that such people become deprived of their balance and wholeness (Mumford, 1964, pages 10-52).

Each civilization means order, order of some kind. To build a civilization of a commercial kind, people have to trade off a certain specifically human share of their wholeness; to create a civilization of an exploitative order, people have to completely forget their wholeness; while for erecting a civilization of a surveillance order, people have to surrender the freedom aspects of their existence and wholeness.

People's wholeness is synonymous with people's humanness. It is the distinctive characterization of humans.

The wholeness of people and the limited order of civilization are observably existing phenomena. Human wholeness stems from nature, living ecosystems, and human striving to manifest the full range of natural abilities and anatomical potentials available to them. For Foucault, civilization, limited in its order and its "*regimes of truth*...in a general way constitutes a milieu favorable to the development of madness" (Foucault, 1961).

And everybody, no matter in which civilization they live, at times, feels the lack of their wholeness, their full value and potential at the expense of the ampleness of certain civilizational orders or fetishes. Nowadays, it is the hi-tech consumer civilization which Herbert Marcuse rightfully described as a society in which "the organism is being preconditioned for the spontaneous acceptance of what is offered" (Marcuse, 1968, pg. 74).

I want to finish this short essay, with a brief excerpt from Lewis Mumford's work "Art and Technics" as it describes well our civilization:

"More and more, from the 16 century on, modern man patterned himself upon the machine. In a mood of submission and self-abnegation, people began to worship the machine and its masters. We had created a

Topsyturny World in which machines had become autonomous and men had become servile and mechanical: that is, thing – conditioned, externalized, de-humanized – disconnected from their historical values and purposes. And so it has come about that one whole part of man's life, springing from his innermost nature and his deepest desires and impulses, *his ability to enjoy and bestow love, to give life to and to receive life from his fellow men*, has been suppressed...

Man has become an exile in this mechanical world: or rather, even worse, he has become a *Displaced person*. He has not merely lost confidence in himself; he has made his proper life insignificant, and so he finds the rest of the world equally empty of values, equally insignificant...

External order: internal chaos. External progress: internal regression. External rationalism: internal irrationality. In this impersonal and overdisciplined machine civilization, so proud of its objectivity, *spontaneity too often takes the form of criminal acts, and creativeness finds its main open outlet in destruction*. If this seems like an exaggeration, that is due only to the illusion of security. Open your eyes and look around you!

The great problem of our time is to restore man's balance and wholeness: to give him the capacity to command the machines he has created instead of becoming their helpless accomplice and passive victim; to bring back, into the very heart of our culture, that respect for the essential attributes of personality, its creativity and autonomy, which Western man lost at the moment he displaced his own life in order to concentrate on the improvement of the machine" (Mumford, 1964, pages 8 - 12).

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From Italy



Miriam and the "Good Wind"

Laura Battisti & Lucia Buffa

"How beautiful it is and how good this place makes me feel!" the boat, Miriam, was thinking before going to the open sea along with her friends. She liked bringing people with her sails who loved this angel of paradise in the way she loved it. All of them were afraid however that some change might come. It was too nice to think that everything could remain so unique and enchanted.



The sea – so crystalline and full of life, the clean terrain – housing all the plants and flowers characteristic of the marine climate, the air – clean and fresh, the wind that spread all its fragrances, playing and leading the way of the boats around the bay.

It was all too good to last!

In fact, one day a few entrepreneurs came and wanted to utilize the closeness of this angel, untouched till the present moment, for a commercial harbor – an important means of communication for their industry. There they wanted to build an enormous factory grumbling with smoke from all its chimneys with an intent to produce the motors for boats. In no time everything changed! In the small harbor of the bay there was an invasion of motor boats, which dispersed the sailboats – the only respectful means of transportation in that environment...

Thus, the air was no longer the same. It was getting so polluted that the wind had to blow out of control in order to be able to clean it. The plants withered and

ceased to follow the rhythm of nature, the birds flew away and the fish moved in search of cleaner waters.

"How can we stop this ruin?" Miriam was asking herself together with all of her friends, who in the meantime were forced to drift further and further away from the coast. It was then that they suddenly remembered their friend, the wind, now gone mad, who was blowing left and right with increasing force. They called to him and together they finally discussed finding a solution to their common problem.

The wind directed himself toward the factory. He blew and blew so much and for so long that he made it impossible for workers to continue their work. The entrepreneurs were forced to temporarily close the factory and, finally, they realized that this angel of paradise was turning into a place void of life, a polluted and awfully noisy place. At that point the wind made them realize what they could do in order to correct their mistakes. With Miriam he arranged for them a boat trip in the bay on board the sailboat. Caressing the little boat, the wind pushed to and fro in perfect harmony with her. The entrepreneurs realized that the factory would have to switch production from engines to sails. And they did!

Although at first it was very difficult, gradually nature returned to its initial colors and scents, the air was clean again and even some fish and birds that had left previously came back. Unfortunately, not all of them, but the major part of the species did. Above all, however, the wind – their dearest friend, came again regularly to blow, showing the way of the sails in that angel of paradise.

Laura Battisti



My name is Laura, I'm 29 years old and sailing is my favorite sport. I have practiced it since I was 13. When I'm on the boat I feel one, whole with nature. I'm carried by the wind and slide on the water, I become a friend with the animals and the sun warms my days – that's why I like it. I have travelled around the world and have come to know so many people, so



many races and so many ways of living. I feel I am a citizen of the Earth and that ecopedagogy is the ethical path that I want to live with my life every day. I try to convey this to the people dear to me and to all those with whom I deal.

Together with other persons who think like me, I founded the association H2O + (www.h2opiu.org) which aims to share this message with many people, with a particular focus on children who are still pure and innocent. Sometimes they can teach us a lot more than we think. Lucia is my mother, with her I wrote this story for children. She knows the infant universe very well as she has been a teacher for more than 30 years. Thanks to her, I came to know sailing and then continued with it. Today we enjoy taking care of the garden together and growing the fruits that the earth offers us.

Back into the Alps: How the Brown Bear Bruno-Osvaldo Educates and Helps Children for the Future

Alessio Hueller,
Ecoistituto delle Dolomiti



His name is Bruno-Osvaldo and he is a young bear. Not a toy, not a hero of a comic book, he is a bear in the flesh. A real bear, who, with his life and his deeds, has contributed and continues to contribute to educate the residents and guests of the *Adamello Brenta Nature Park*, the largest protected area in Trentino (Italy) and one of the largest in the Alps.

The Park was established in 1967 and includes the mountain groups of Brenta Dolomites (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and part of the massive mountain Adamello Presanella.

The Park faces an ambitious challenge: one of re-establishing the ancient bond between human beings and nature. This would mean that humans can use the resources of nature, but in a respectful manner that does not cause depletion or devastation of environmental goods.

This area is home to a rich collection of flora and fauna that also includes the last *brown bear* (*Ursus Arctos*) population remaining in the entire Alps. The brown bear is an animal symbol of the park. It reached the brink of extinction, but now slowly and steadily has increased thanks to the special intervention of its reintroduction.

Majestic and fascinating, the brown bear has always been one of humanity's interests, especially as its history has repeatedly intertwined with that of our species. For centuries, the West has pursued the bear by all means with devastating results.

Finally, the Alps, one of the largest mountain ranges in Europe, were poised to maintain not a single brown bear, as only a few bears remained confined to a limited area of western Trentino – the area which became the Adamello Brenta Nature Park in order to protect the plantigrade animals of the region.

To prevent the impending extinction of the species, in 1996, the Park began the reintroduction project Life Ursus. Between 1999 and 2002, 10 brown bears were translocated to Trentino from Slovenia. They are now well adapted to the new environment of life and have given rise to a population that today consists of more than 40 bears, mostly inhabiting the Central Alps.

“In June 2006, the young bear, called **Bruno**, born in the Park Adamello Brenta, dispersed from Trentino through Austria and became the first bear that after *150 years* of absence returned to Germany. Unfortunately, at the end of the month, Bruno was shot in Bavaria, Germany.

Bears also returned to Switzerland, after *100 years* of absence. All the immigrants are brothers or half-brothers of Bruno” (Molinari, 2011).

As the life of the young bear Bruno has proven, the definitive return of the bear species in the Alps is still far away: despite the environmental suitability of a large part of the Alps, the bear's future is strongly linked to the development of a culture of co-existence between people and bears.

For this reason, the commitment of the Park Adamello Brenta in this direction continues determinedly thanks also to the scientific research done and

the awareness raised by the Group for Research and Conservation of the Brown Bear in the field of the Bear Project.

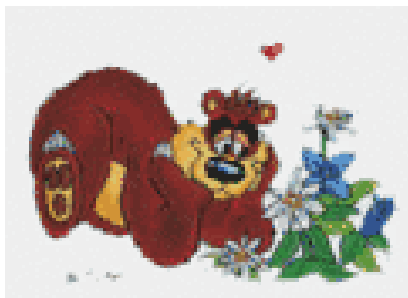
In order to further leadership on this matter, the Park is partnering with other European projects, such as “Life + Arctos”, an initiative to promote in a coordinated way the protection of brown bear populations in the Alps and the Apennines, and to support their expansion.

The Adamello Brenta Natural Park has launched an ecopedagogical campaign for the reintroduction of the plantigrade animals in the Central Alps, which is directed mainly to children and youth, making them familiar with the relevant existing programs and ways for protecting bears.

The young bear Bruno, who was shot, was in this way resurrected as Osvaldo, a character created by the cartoonist Fulvio Bernardini (Fulber).



Now, Osvaldo is here. He is here to change human beings and the way that they think about future. He is here to change human society, underlying that the future of human beings is the future of nature – the future of all animals, trees and plants.



Osvaldo speaks to children about nature and life, about how to understand, respect and protect it, while enjoying the environment, because he remembers – when he was alive – children were those who loved and helped him. And now, he has come back to life to help them in turn.



Osvaldo believes that what must be done is to *wake up the hearts* of people, so that they can start feeling, and understand that they are not the only beautiful thing on the planet Earth and that they must not grow and live as such egoists.

He believes that if people are educated in the concrete jungles of the city and its buildings without nature, they will never feel their hearts or rather; they will support the concrete jungles of the city and the destruction of nature.

But Osvaldo believes in children, and children believe in Osvaldo. He has got back in life to take them and educate them outside, in the parks, in the forests... where they can feel alive and feel their hearts...

Together with nature.

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Alessio Hueller



I'm attending the Faculty of Environmental Engineering at the University of Trento. I have always been actively involved in initiatives of youth associations in my valley, the "Val delle Giudicarie". The active collaboration of young people for the valorization of the territory, I think, is a key element for the sustainable growth of the local community. I would especially like to thank the Nature Park Adamello Brenta for their cooperation for this work.

A Day of My Diary.

In the Mountain!

Riccardo Ravagni

Today has been a really wonderful day, I will try to tell you about it. It is Saturday, the first day of the summer. Last night I found it difficult to fall asleep. It was a little bit hot, but maybe the emotion was what didn't let me sleep.



I kept thinking: “Tomorrow I am going in the mountains with my father.” After half an hour, however, I was already in the world of dreams. The alarm sounded at 7 o’clock. It was strange but I didn’t feel sleepy, on the contrary, I couldn’t wait to wake up and call my father. Running, I went to open the shutters of the window: “There is sun!” I went out of the room and was surprised: I saw that my father was preparing the breakfast, something that happens only rarely. We had breakfast together and once having taken the backpacks that we had carefully prepared the previous evening, we departed immediately.

Now our destination is a mountain refuge where my father has constructed a small turbine for providing needed electric energy. To get to it you first have to take a bus for about 20 minutes, that brings you to a parking lot exit and then with a walk of a couple of hours you arrive. We get off the bus and start walking. After a few steps you cannot see the asphalt any more. We are finally walking on earth. The path firstly passes through the forest. There are a lot of pines around us. When breathing I don’t feel the smog, it is a wonderful sensation, the air is good and scented. “Dad, look” – I say – “there are lichens!” Dad answers me that you

can find them where the air is clean. The birds are singing, the wind whistles delicately among the trees. Slowly, we are getting higher in altitude, always more and more. The forest is getting thinner. In even higher elevation there are two hawks. They are flying in the blue sky almost without moving the wings. It should be very exciting to know how to fly. We fly with airplanes, but it is not the same.

“What a deep scent”, I am thinking to myself. There are mountain pines, starting to bloom. The mountain pines grow where the forest ends, here in Northern Italy, at about 1800 meters elevation.

Walking with dad is nice and exciting. In the meantime, we sometimes talk, sometimes we listen to each other, sometimes we stay in silence and enjoy the scents and observe. These are true and profound sensations that are experienced together in a natural and wild environment. This environment is not bad but on the contrary, it surrounds us and allows us to live. As I see it, we are connected to nature and nature is in turn connected to us.

The ascent is now a little more difficult. We don't speak, we are panting. “It is around 11 in the morning, isn't it, dad?” I ask. “Yes!” he answers looking at his watch. It is exciting – I have learned to know what time it is looking at the sun. I was taught that it rises in the east and sets in the west, and that at noon it is exactly above us. So, through the position of the sun you can know the time with a certain precision, it is only required to observe it attentively. While walking, however, almost always I look at the path and only when I stop do I observe the things around me. That is because I don't want to fall over or trample the ants or other small animals in front of me. We have arrived in one of our favorite places.

After the steep path we arrive in a plain crossed by a torrent of cold and crystal water. The noise is pleasing, it brings tranquility. In the east part of the plain the torrent is divided in two by a big pine and in this way there is created a small islet. My dream has always been to spend a night on this islet. The view is marvelous, the mountains rise in the west and the north, and in the south is the valley.

We refresh ourselves with water from the torrent and after a short rest we resume. There remains only one last ascent and we arrive to the refuge after a little more than twenty minutes. It is maintained very well. In the large square outside there are some tables, some flowerbeds with colorful flowers and a wood fountain from where there flows very good and cold water. I drink a little. In the distance there can be seen some ibexes.

A few meters from us, well-disguised, stands the turbine that produces clean and renewable electric energy. We go to see how it functions. It is in fine shape! At about one o'clock we eat some soup and pieces of bread that I cut with my knife. We pay attention not to leave any litter around. I see a napkin on the earth, it is not mine but I pick it up. I don't like it when the place we live in gets polluted and ruined!

We talk for a moment while the wind caresses us. In no rush, we leave in the early afternoon to return home. In the autobus back home I continue to think that I can't wait to write all this in the diary. Here it is, I have described my first day of the summer that I spent together with my father in nature and with nature.

Before going to sleep, however, my thought goes to the ones that don't have a father, although not knowing well what would it be like. I can say that the important thing is to seek to experience these emotions, immersed in nature, together with other persons who could be a father, a friend, an aunt, or otherwise. The joy is to share the experiences with other people and with a land that loves us. For being good and honorable, we should love it.

My thought goes also to the ones who live in closed spaces separated from all of this. I hope that one day these people might touch the grass again. I always hope that adults understand that it is not possible to live without nature, and that we must not harm it. One day I too will be an adult and then I will continue to commit myself to respecting and protecting the environment where we live and which permits us to live.

Riccardo Ravagni



Hi, my name is Riccardo, I am 27 years old and live in Cadine, a village near Trento. The importance of the relationship between persons and the significance of their sense of belonging to nature, for me, is the incipit of every thought, action, and artifact.

I have graduated in Sociology and have specialized in labor, organization and informational systems. My interests are in Participatory Design and Futures Studies. I am fond of mountains; I often climb the Dolomites in Trentino. I also play the guitar, I like music and animals very much.

The Eagle's Peak

Giulia Gelmi & Francesco Peretti
Ecoistituto delle Dolomiti



That early morning the village woke up wrapped in gloomy silence. Neither bleating nor blowing in the air. Silence. That night there had fallen an enormous avalanche from the Eagle's Peak, and there was no tree to stop it. Down in the village all the animals had escaped from their stables out of dread. They had disappeared.

Immediately, the wise men in the village called to a gathering all the inhabitants at the foot of the Old Oak. Under the tree, in the dim light of the lantern, there was great anxiety. No one could find a remedy.

"It is the fault of the woodcutters, they didn't have to cut all these trees!" said Nando, the shoemaker. "It is not true! It is shepherds' fault, they are who have need of all meadows up in the peak" said Bepo, the woodman. While all searched whose guilt it was, the voice of a dairyman, Berto, was heard. "It was the Wild Man!" he said in a profound tone. Everyone fell silent.

It was said that the Wild Man was a gruff loner, but one with a good heart. He lived in the forests of the mountains far away from villages. He loved and

defended nature, and if people weren't equally respectful, be sure that he would act.

So it was true. The avalanche was his deed. That night, snowflake after snowflake, the Wild Man had created an immense snowball and flung it over the sleeping village. It had been since the previous summer that he wanted to do so. Finally, all the snow that he needed had fallen. Once having flung the avalanche, the Wild Man crouched in a shelter over the Eagle's Peak. From there he heard the worried voices of the villagers that echoed down in the valley.

But why? Why had he come to do such an evil thing? What had they done to roil him so much?

The wise men were the first to understand. Since the previous spring a magnificent eagle had soared from her peak to a valley in search of food, approaching the village ever more threateningly. Her size struck fear into everyone. When snows melted the village organized a hunting to trap her. Many took part: ones in order to end their fears, others to show off their courage.

The hunting was endless but in the end the most skilled hunter, Giovanni, succeeded to seize the eagle. So the destiny of the eagle became the most discussed thing in the village. The burgomaster got the better of convincing all. The eagle would become the living symbol of the village. So they constructed a big cage in the middle of the square where the eagle was locked. It was their pride. Everyone came to see the biggest eagle of the peak.

But they all were careless of the pain that they were inflicting on her, separating her from her children and from the mountain. The heat in the valley and the narrow space sickened her, rendering her a shadow of what she had been. In the course of time people began to jeer at her and in the end forgot her.

The Wild Man saw everything from the far forest and became sad. Then he took action as he nurtured the young eaglets and protected them from predators.

But with the winter came the snow and the nest was even more inaccessible, finally leaving the eaglets isolated. They were in a grave jeopardy.

Driven by desperation and rage, that night, the Wild Man amassed all the snow that he could. Furious, he flung with his last forces the avalanche towards the village.

In this way, the villagers remembered the eagle of the Peak and repented of their insult. They hastened to the square and freed the eagle among the screams of apprehension of the crowd. Filled with life, the eagle fluttered for first time after months in confinement, powerfully whistling towards the mountain. She was free to return to her nest.

It was in this moment that a great roar came from the avalanche. All ran from the square to that place, and as if magic, the avalanche disappeared. Instead, in its place there was a long line of cows and sheep that were already returning home to the stables.

The first people who arrived to see this sight swore that they had seen the Wild Man move with the gigantic avalanche towards the river in the valley with the help of the animals. Others saw the Wild Man moving it alone, by himself... Whichever, it was the last time that the villagers ever saw him. They never offended him again.

Giulia Gelmi



I graduated in Sociology in Trento. At the beginning I was more occupied with analysis of European public policies, then I specialized in Sociology of environment and local communities. Presently, I am in Brussels (Belgium) with the intention to deepen my competences in the mechanisms of European Union projects. I'm interested in interdisciplinary collaboration for valorizing the historical memory of places as well as in the research of instruments for collective management of common goods.

Francesco Peretti



I work for my territory in the field of valorization of cultural heritage and landscape. My competences are mainly humanistic and sociologic, and when possible, I apply them through the techniques of facilitation. I'm currently doing an internship with a local agency abroad, with the intention of returning to my country better trained in order to work in the field of European policy for culture and tourism. I studied Music in Vicenza, History in Venice and Sociology in Trento.

From
USA



My Bicycle Speaks: *"No Fracking"*

Peter Buckland



I do. Some think. Some feel. Some do both.

I think and feel in action. Through the apprehensions, sensations, thoughts, and feelings I experience, I discover purpose. Through action I uncover and reacquaint myself with myself in the world in a way that liberates me. Few things have liberated me so much as engaging, almost relentlessly, in self- and public ecopedagogy. The greatest tool to my ecological learning besides other creatures' gifts and the printed word have been the bicycle.

The bicycle stands as our most amazing machine.

As a boy, I rode a banana-seated Schwinn Stingray. I went fast, pedals whirling like blender beaters, and pointed at a pile of dirt to launch me high into the air. Recently, I rode to awaken others.

On March 9th, 2011, I rode more than 120 miles from my home in the village of Pine Grove Mills, Pennsylvania to the state capitol building in Harrisburg to meet our conservative Governor Tom Corbett. He was undoing

rules that would protect our state's forests from horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing – what we call “fracking.” When I read it, I shook. My whole body, mind, and soul reacted with pain and anger.

My deepest sense of good for the world – the world to which my every breath for life and health and whose every draught of water brings reprieve – called from my depths like the psalmist crying out to God, “De profundis clamavi ad te Domine.” “Out of the depths I call to you Lord.” Nature called me, through me. I had to respond. That response, though, required an intimate relationship with bicycles.

Most people's response to Corbett's and the oligarchs' actions was to stew in their anger or despair. Maybe they signed petitions or called a legislator. A few drove to Harrisburg on March 9th, the state's budget day. I rode. I acted.

The bicycle connects us to our path in a way both mechanical and human. It is still largely under human power. But with gravity and no brakes, I can descend at 50 miles per hour down mountains, giving me the sense of diving like a merlin, a kestrel, or an eagle. On my mountain bike, I ride trails at speeds my feet cannot, and yet I feel the trail in my whole body. On our sandstone-lined ridge tops in central Pennsylvania, the slabs of rock bring challenges for my body and brain, liberating both from their limitations because the technological marvel of the bicycle brings me to Nature in novel ways. Being in those moments sets me free. I am with the simple human-powered machine, the broken stone, the mountain laurel, rhododendron, white pine, hemlock, chestnut, white oak, and maple.

Were it not for six-hour rides steeped in mind-body, machine, and nature, I'd have no sense of the incredible ecological injustice fracking causes.

Without experiencing freedom and elation I would not know constriction and despair when I saw it. Fracking imperils that relationship by poisoning the minds of corporate executives, our politicians' allegiance, our neighbors' water, our forests' lungs and hearts, and our climate.

Before I rode to Harrisburg to try to meet with Governor Corbett and join the rallies opposing his ecocidal policies, I contacted people across the state. They joined me in solidarity. Some of them gave me letters to deliver to Mr. Corbett.

About a dozen of them joined me after the budget day rally and we walked to the governor's office. Sadly the governor was not in.

We met with an undersecretary for legislative affairs working with the state's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Though our group and the undersecretary could not agree on the risks, costs, and benefits that fracking causes, we made one thing very clear. We the people of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania know, intimately know, that we are tied to the Earth and it is tied to us. We are one. That meeting is, to my knowledge, still the only meeting between a member of the Corbett administration and a group of citizens.

As I did it, I viewed it as a form of ecopedagogy. It is about the liberation of humans and the creation from the shackles of spiritually impoverished economic domination. The ride connected human and machine in the simplest way to show that we can tread more lightly on Earth.

What's an Education for?

Peter Buckland



In the fall of 2007, I started a teaching certification program for social studies education at Penn State University. That semester, rather than taking an Introduction to American Education course I took Philosophy of Education. I expected John Dewey, Rousseau, Aristotle, and other dead white men. I was mostly wrong.

We read Dewey. But the rest of the assigned materials came from things that seemed at best tangential to education or schooling. It was mostly about food, ecological literacy, and our responsibilities to others. The “other” could be my

son, women working in *maquiladoras*, hummingbirds, or phytoplankton in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. By the course's second week, students grumbled. They had no idea what this class was really about. By week three discontent emerged as we were barraged with articles that seemed to tell us we are bad people for the clothes we buy, the food we eat, the products that line our store shelves. We fill our homes and stomachs and eyes and in the process clutter our selves.

What educated people would do such things to themselves?

Our professor, Madhu Suri Prakash taught this class. When I say teach, I mean she invited each of us to see ourselves in the world and the world in us. "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" Question after question floated up to invite us to wonder about why we wanted to become teachers.

To whom am I grateful? Why? My son Sacha because he reawakened my curiosity and invigorated my sense of connection. My wife Jessica for her love. My mother Joyce for stroking my ears to help me sleep. My dad. Charles Darwin. Gustav Mahler. Stephen Biko. Ursula LeGuin. Thich Nhat Hahn. My evolutionary ancestors. The willow tree in my childhood backyard. Slab Cabin Run and the brook trout at the spillway. My old dog Oliver. Even if it is not a person or organism, I thank my bicycles.

What is the purpose of society? What can it be in a world where the most educated people in the world patent life, feed one another waste, fill the oceans with plastic, repurpose the wild into highways, inject Earth with toxic chemicals at 14,000 psi to extract natural gas, and spend more time in front of screens in synthetic chairs than we do cultivating, caring for, or wandering the unpaved earth. I cannot answer this question without considering the next one.

What is Nature and who am I in it? Nature is the integrated system of matter and energy in total. I am a piece of it, conscious of some parts of it through the evolved capacities the evolving system has created. My consciousness in my society and my particular set of circumstances has gifted me and cursed me with my identity. That identity – that sense of self in the whole world – believes he owes the creatures around him some good relationship, and one more convivial than the one the industrial revolution and the boom of development has brought.

Society's purpose must be to liberate us from our industrial demons and transform our ways of being and doing toward conviviality.

Madhu told me I was awakened when I came into her class. She merely did me the favor of affirming that I was not deranged for understanding that I owed something to others. Compassion is neither archaic nor misaligned. It is a virtue. She confirmed my belief that humans are very limited middle-world capacities of limited senses, memories, abilities of identification, and our woefully bad ability to predict events. The great social and ecological crises around us today attest to human limits, including a lack of respect for these limits.

The last question, "What is Nature and who am I in it?" occupies me almost every day now. I explore it in all of the courses I teach, courses I teach to bring students and me into more convivial relationships.

So what is an education for? Education must, in large part, embrace ecopedagogy for our own liberations and the more-than-human environment's partial liberation from us.

Onward.

Peter Buckland



Peter Buckland is the Director of Sustainability at the Kiskiminetas Springs School in Saltsburg, Pennsylvania, a boarding high school for 200 boys. For several years, Buckland championed environmental justice and sustainability causes including educating for ecological literacy, pushing for sustainability policy changes from waste to water, fighting climate change disinformation, and most notably collaborating with other activists to combat the Pennsylvania's despoliation from "fracking" for natural gas. Buckland has also had a consistent media presence through a radio show and blog, Sustainability Now Radio. His commitment earned him numerous teaching, service, leadership, and conservation awards from Penn State University where he is completing his Ph.D. in Educational Theory and Policy with an emphasis on sustainability and ecological literacy.

Multiple Ecologies: Early Lives in Small Town, Urban, and Suburban America *(Childhood Reflections)*

Douglas Kellner



I was born in the Chelsea Medical Hospital on May 31, 1943. My parents had been married for about three years and had been working for the U.S. government in Washington. My father then joined the Navy, took some courses in economics and business administration at Harvard, and prepared to go to war. My mother gave birth to a child who turned out to be a writer and philosopher, and then she organized a trek across the United States with a six-week old baby. In a well-documented train ride, my mother and two of her sisters took me from Harvard to Berkeley and then to Carpinteria, California, south of Santa Barbara where the familial unit lived in a paradise overlooking the Pacific Ocean, if one can trust the documentary evidence of home movies of the same on a hillside in a small house.

The family idyll was short-lived as my father was sent to Hawaii where he served as pay-master in the Navy, roamed the beach with my Uncle Carl, and seemingly avoided trauma or mutilation. With the defeat of German and Japanese fascism, my father returned home from war, and got a job with Addressograph-Multigraph business machines as a salesman. My parents rented an apartment in

the modest building where my grandparents lived in downtown Los Angeles on South Hope Street.

And so my young and impressionable body was transported from an ecological paradise to urban Los Angeles. For the next few years we lived in downtown LA, and family stories and photographs have my grandfather walking me everyday through Bunker Hill, later bull-dozed to build the Bonaventure and other high-rise corporate buildings. According to family legend, my Bunker Hall regime included a daily walk through the neighborhood to the Biltmore Hotel lobby where my grandfather would buy a cigar, buy a newspaper and read to me the current events of the world. Later, I would get sick every time my grandfather would visit and it was discerned that I was allergic to cigars, creating a life-long aversion to tobacco products, although I evidently received an early positive exposure to newspapers that have been a constant feature of my life evidently from childhood.

My brother John was born in 1947 and the nucleus of the typical American middle-class family was emerging, although we were outgrowing the small LA apartment. My urban flaneur existence came to an end around 1949 when my parents bought a house in Temple City in a new housing development for about \$4000. My artistic proclivities at that time were crushed when I decorated the freshly painted downtown LA apartment by drawing pretty pictures on the white walls with crayon. My parents and grandparents were horrified with my aesthetic creations, and for the first-time I can remember I was physically disciplined with my grandfather taking out his belt, putting me across his knees, and spanking out any artistic aptitude I may have had.

And so it was off to Temple City, a small town east of LA, where Alfred Hitchcock's Shadow of a Doubt was set the year of my birth, and which was quickly becoming suburbanized. At that time, the suburbs were relatively new, but I was there and would continue to pursue the horrors and delights of suburban living. Suburban ecology involved long streets of similar box houses, one of which my family moved into. With no more walks through the streets of downtown Los Angeles, I threw my energies into sports and my brother and I spent hour throwing baseballs and football, shooting basketballs, and running,

which eventually led to my playing football and running track in high school, as well as playing Little League and Babe Ruth League baseball.

Apparently, I started going to church and Sunday school at an early age, and my most traumatic memory of the period is coming home from Sunday school, finding my house full of neighbors, and my grandmother crying, and the terrible news conveyed that my grandfather had a heart attack and died, cutting grass on our front yard with a lawn mower. This was my first memorable encounter with death and family tragedy, as my grandfather was planning on building his own house, starting the next day, and I learned then the sad fact that one cannot always realize their dreams.

In the following years, I would successively live in Fall Church, Virginia, Valley Stream, New York, Glen Ellyn, Illinois, and Larchmont, New York. After selling business machines for several years in California with Addressograph-Multigraph, my father returned to work for the U.S. government in Washington (1952-1956), and then went back to work for Addressograph-Multigraph again on Long Island (1956-1958). He switched to Arbitron in New York City, a firm that did TV and radio-ratings around 1958 and was transferred to their Chicago office (1961), and then returned to New York, where my parents bought an up-scale house in Larchmont in 1965. Some years later, in the late 1960s, my father was fired in a merger acquisition, and my family learned of the challenges of corporate downsizing. I remember the day he was downsized well as I received a phone call from my father late afternoon from a bar in midtown New York and he told me to meet him there, an event that had never previously occurred. I saw that he had had a couple of drinks and was in the philosophical and reflective mode, telling me that he'd just been fired and decided he would follow my path, choosing an academic career.

Hence, renouncing the corporate rat-race, my father decided to become a professor, finishing his Ph.D. in communications and teaching at Marshall University in West Virginia, where, coincidentally, my brother had settled after some years in hippie communes, supporting himself and his family by renovating homes, businesses, and public buildings, skills he had learned in country-side hippie communes in Iowa and West Virginia, the only one of our family to live a non-urban existence (he is still living in the mountains of Appalachia).

My mother had been a high-school Latin and English teacher and there were always books around the house. I was a systematic and scholarly reader, starting with all the Golden Books, and moving up to Classic Comic Books, of which I had an entire collection. I discovered the library in Temple City and read all of the Winnie the Pooh books and then Doctor Doolittle series; I also remember reading and owning a full series of the Hardy Boys mystery books. Later summers, while in high school and then college, I would systematically read Poe, Hemingway, Melville, Fitzgerald Steinbeck, dos Passos, Dreiser, and whoever else caught my literary fancy.

My first kiss was from Linda Vickers, daughter of a famous film noir actress, who often sipped drinks on her patio, as Linda and I played and ate peanut-butter sandwiches and drank lemonade when we were in grade school in Temple City, California. At that time, my parents were socializing me to be a good capitalist and protestant, to work hard, and to save money. Family friends and relatives would deposit loose change and an occasional bill in a giant glass piggy bank that I proudly displayed, and one day when friends were over we took my grandfather's hammer and smashed the pig. With the money in hand, we romped through the neighborhood, invited all the neighborhood kids to a party in the candy store, and had a great time until my mother and some neighbors appeared to crush our communist insurrection. I was "disciplined" by my father, locked in my room, and told not to share the wealth with my little friends.

This California adventure also came to an end as we moved to Falls Church, Virginia and I learned about race and the South. Many of our neighbors were Southerners who were horrified that my brother and I did not hunt or fish and tried to properly socialize us into approved masculinity. I tolerated fishing, but abhorred hunting and cannot to this day understand why grown men would want to shoot animals. I could also not understand the prejudices of my neighbors against blacks.

At this time, around 9 or 10 years of age, my literary career began when my parents bought me a hectograph for Christmas and I started printing out a literary journal, Ye Olde Courthouse Digest, an amalgam of my serialized adventure stories, school gossip, and, so I would like to think, social and political commentary. I was active in the community, making Eagle Boy Scout as our local

military folks trained us in survivalism and counterinsurgency. I also played Little League baseball, Church basketball, and was an ace in ping pong, badminton, miniature golf, and other sports. I went to Bible Studies in the summer, was head of the Methodist Young Fellowship, and went to church three times a day on Sunday. I also became a young capitalist, waking up every morning to deliver the Washington Post, invested my earnings in the stock market, and eventually saved enough to later finance a year in Paris.

Once again suburban bliss was disrupted when I was around 12 and approaching my teen years, as my parents moved to Valley Stream, New York. Here, I was quickly initiated into multiculturalism and racism when I discovered that the Jews, Italians, Swedes, Irish, and other ethnicities all hated each other and invented a variety of names to call each other that I had never heard of before. I myself was interested in cultural difference and cultivated friends from all of these groups. I was, however, a bit of a freak myself with a southern accent which I quickly lost and assimilated myself by joining the football and track teams (which saved me from having to get into fights everyday after school in rough and tumble Elmont High School).

I discovered New York City at this time and regularly took the bus and subway to Times Square for movies, to the Village to walk around and take in the scene, and to Chinatown to buy fire crackers (I later bought my first ounce of grass in Little Italy). In high school, I read existentialism, liked the beats, and was trying to be cool. I don't remember any teachers or classes that influenced me in high school, except the typing class in the ninth grade, where, the only boy in the class, I learned speed-typing, clearly my most valuable high-school asset. I remember when I was one of ten to win a New York State regents scholarship all of my friends howled with glee and the smart kids were surprised.

My senior year in high school my parents moved to Chicago, and I stayed with family friends to finish up and graduate. In the confusion, all of my college acceptance letters got in too late and I was facing my senior year in high school without a college to go to. My parents had gone to Doane College in Crete, Nebraska, my father was on the Board of Regents there, and I got a full athletic and scholastic scholarship, beginning an academic career that was fully subsidized (although my father made me work in Chicago factories during the

summers where I discovered the dubious joys of proletarian existence). I had a philosophy teacher at Doane, Robert Browne, who included Erich Fromm and Martin Buber in his curricula, and the beginnings of a philosophical orientation marked by existentialism and critical social theory that would make the Frankfurt School project sympathetic to me were sewn. I consequently read Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and the like in college, and began to self-consciously study philosophy and imagine myself becoming a philosophy professor.

The most eventful college experience was pulling my ankle tendon and ending my track career. The existential void was overwhelming and could only be filled with heavy doses of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, and existential philosophy. A year in Copenhagen in 1963-64 aided my Kierkegaard studies and I also discovered socialism at the foreign student club where my attempts to defend U.S. capitalism and democracy were soundly thrashed. A bad flu and free medicine taught me the rationality of socialized medicine and I also learned the emancipatory possibilities of love and I have been a partisan of socialism and liberationism since then.

After a Junior year abroad in Copenhagen during the summer of 1964 I made a conscious choice to become a philosophy professor. Living with my family in Glen Ellen, Illinois during the summer, my Uncle Bob got me a job at Cinch Manufacturing with one of his corporate law clients. I thus had my first 9-5 job in which everyday I went to work in a factory on the Southside of Chicago and toiled in the mailing room, sorting out and labelling packages. This experience made it clear that I did not want a 9-5 job, but gave me a sense of working class life, as I spent many evenings and some weekends with my fellow workers. This same summer, Uncle Bob told me that he could get me into Michigan law school, would support my law studies, and would then give me a position in his corporate law firm. I politely declined, however, knowing that I wanted to go into a graduate philosophy program and teach philosophy. The same summer, my next door neighbor gave me a stack of rightwing books to read and invited me to join AT&T's Junior Executive Program after I graduated from college, and he was astounded when I said that I want go to graduate school to study philosophy (this was the Goldwater era and I did not tell him what I thought of the books he had given me).

During my senior year in college, I was nominated for a Woodrow Wilson fellowship and went to the interview in Kansas City, obviously charming the interviewers with my tales of studying Kierkegaard in Denmark and interest in Heidegger and existential philosophy. I was awarded the Fellowship which meant that I could receive a full scholarship to any program that accepted me. At this time, I was focused on living in New York City and had an appointment with James Walsh, the Chairman of the Columbia philosophy department who informed me that with the Woodrow Wilson, Columbia would happily accept me, and so I decided to go to Columbia to study philosophy.

In the meantime, my parents returned to New York, and in the summer of 1965 I took courses at the New School, reading Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. I was now well on my way to becoming a philosopher, and New York was increasingly capturing my imagination as the place I wanted most to live with its museums, films, theatre, and bohemian subculture. I entered Columbia in Fall 1965 and moved to the upper West Side, going to the West End bar almost every night after classes, and learning as much philosophy in the West End as I did from my readings and seminars.

For the next several years, I experienced the joys of New York life in the '60s, and then in the 1970s went to study in Germany and France, accruing cultural capital that would make my academic career. Yet I suppose I was also lucky in having a secure middle-class family life and experiencing various sectors of the United States from the great urban cities to suburbs and small towns. I have early recollections of the beauties of nature and in particular the ocean, deserts and flora and fauna of California. Then living in Los Angeles and the suburbs I became aware of differences between urban, suburban, and natural ecologies, and the loss of contact with nature in the cities and 'burbs. I must confess, however, that I also gained an appreciation of urban and suburban ecologies, and want to conclude with the thought that although we tend to associate ecology with Oikos and the natural world, our social and urban environments are also forms of ecology. Indeed, human beings evolve and are shaped by our ecological situation in mysterious ways that we will perhaps never fully understand.

Los Angeles, August 27, 2012

Professor Douglas Kellner

George F. Kneller Philosophy of Education Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

Part Three:

What Can We Do, What Can We Not Do? Actions for a New Civilization!



One Oven, One Table, One Bread: How Bread is Changing the World Through the Bread Houses Network

Nadezhda Savova



This is a story about a tiny house from a tiny town in a tiny country...and how the house became world-famous, inspiring many more to look, smell, and feel like it...



Imagine you are walking down a narrow, snow-covered street in the town of Garbovo, Bulgaria, nestled in the bosom of the Bulgarian Balkan Mountain. The street is lined with houses, and the smallest one of the houses exhumes puffs of fragrant wood-burning smoke that disperses the snowflakes. You stop in front of that house, and it is so tiny that it seems like it has just one room with a few

steps that lead straight onto the street. The house's simple exterior, however, completely belies its intriguing interior. In fact, it often reminds me of the way my mother used to teach me as a child: "Never judge a person by the appearance, always try to look inside (the heart)!"



As soon as you cross the threshold, you gasp with surprise: you find yourself inside a house that looks and feels like an enchanted ship, with fishing nets hanging as hammocks off the huge beams supporting the roof rising 5 meters above a communal space where the warmth of a domed wood-fired oven embraces you and draws you immediately to the big round wooden table in front of the oven, where people of all ages and colors are talking, laughing, and singing as if old friends with no divides among them. What creates such natural, immediate bonds across such diverse individuals, you'd wonder?

The answer is that they have all come together united by perhaps the most simple and innocent yet perhaps also most passionate and beloved activity that anyone can do: kneading bread, and kneading it together! Indeed, we all *need* joy, so the simple vision is to *knead* dough and thus *knead* joy!

The place feels so magical because it was, indeed, a bizarre blessing but indeed a blessing that the old rooftop of this hundred-year-old house built by my great-great-grandmother collapsed in 2009, and I was pressed to take action. My dream to animate the house as a communal space was inspired by my childhood memories how kids from around the neighborhood would rush to our house drawn by the aroma of my great-grandmother Raina frying dough dumplings on the steps of the house! I imagined how aroma, taste, and warmth could be, indeed, the

magnetic factors to bring diverse people in unity and fellowship at the cultural center. And there came the name: a Bread House - a house that would breath into the street the joy of bread aroma – inspired by the word “Bethlehem” which means “House of Bread” (something I had recently discovered with amazement while visiting the Holy Land)!

The Bread House became a community cultural center in December of 2009 and it has been since then operating fully due to the love and efforts of local volunteers of all walks of life. There you would find kneading bread shoulder to shoulder plumbers and professors, homeless and businessmen, farmers and bankers, hip-hop fans and grannies, kids from orphanages and people from elderly homes, craftsmen and sight-impaired people, physically disabled and athletes, people of all colors, ethnic backgrounds, education, language, and culture.

As you join the table at the Bread House, you’d hear people sharing their personal stories, so diverse and so fascinating, some very personal and painful, yet shared as if among friends even for people who see each other for the first time. It is the soothing light of the fire and the candles (no electric lights), the shared rhythm of kneading, and the gentle touch of the dough – like baby bottom, as my great-grandma used to joke – that immediately ease and open people’s hearts, no matter how many barriers they have built around them, and no matter how much pain or fear they might have locked in.

Some people have shared how therapeutic these evenings are, especially since they occur regularly weekly or monthly, and this is how the method started evolving with the name “*Bread Therapy*”, and we can hope that one day it would be something people would regularly do at hospitals, clinics, and rehab centers around the world, just like there are various kinds of art therapy.



Some of the stories told around the table are stories about Nature and its beauty, about the vegetables and fruits that people used to grow and the traditional foods they used to cook, and often these stories are narrated with nostalgia because we have lost many of these traditions and more and more we are losing the traditional plant varieties. This is true due to huge multi-national corporations, which develop genetically-modified grains and other plants, which kill the organic varieties and destroy the soil by depleting its humus layer.



At the Bread House you can learn a lot about these questions of organic farming, traditional foods from around the world, and ways to develop urban gardening and farming. Through the baking and breaking of bread, which accompanies any other food, we inspire people to return to the old recipes and growing their own food, in their house garden or in shared village plots of land, or in an urban garden.

The Bread House model inspired and got spread as community-building programs to more than 12 countries in only two years, thus becoming a Bread Houses Network (BHN), and giving rise to a global movement we called the *BREAD Movement: Bridging Resources for Ecological and Art-based Development* meant to inspire and connect groups of people around the world wishing to use the bread and art methods to nurture social transformation⁵ This is how the Bread House Network joined the global *Slow Food Movement*, which recognized the BHN as one of the best global models of nutritional and environmental education, centered on bread and bread as an art form but touching on all other foods, nature, and ecology in general, creating innovative approaches to the issues at the heart of ecopedagogy.

Around the table at the Bread House you would learn about various grains and flours from around the world, and be able to mix various flours and experiment with them yourself. You will also be able to touch, smell, and use a

⁵ You can learn more about the Bread House methodologies and model in the tables at the end of the text.

sourdough starter (*pasta madre*) more than 200 years old given as a gift to the Bread House by the Bulgarian monastery on Mount Athos in Greece, and a more recent starter from a Greek monastery in the heart of the Arizona desert, USA. You will be amazed at what a complex beauty and true art it is to use sourdough for its sensitivity to water, air, humidity, and even the temperature of the kneading hands!



Then you can also decorate your breads and start thinking about the artistic, cultural, and spiritual meaning of food. You can apply geometric designs or favorite motives, whatever expresses your personality or culture and interests, or you can chose like many people who come to the Bread House to learn about the old, traditional bread stamps typical for the Orthodox Christian breads.

The Bread House has a big collection of these bread stamps gathered from around the world, and they tell the beautiful story of how people, only a century ago mostly farmers, centered their whole life around the core values of home, family, farming, and nature all cherished as a gift of God and, for this reason, much valued and used to express gratitude as people decorated their breads with symbols as a language to communicate with the Divine. Before the machine production of bread in Bulgaria, women used to put on the bread a wooden stamp with a cross engraved into it according to the Christian Orthodox tradition and take the breads to bake in a communal oven (*furna*), a tradition spread across the Mediterranean rim. My great-grandmother Raina often had the dream that the streets of Bulgaria would smell like warm bread again as they did before Communism was imposed. Back then, at every corner there were ovens, where people could go and bake their homemade bread using also their delicious locally-milled flour. There, people did not just bake; they kneaded acquaintances, friendships, and the act of mutual help between people from different occupations

and backgrounds, whose paths would hardly cross (and nowadays they cross even more seldom) without the oven as the place of these meetings.

Nowadays, unfortunately, most people are used to the factory bread, even if it is made of unhealthy bleached white flour and not using the traditional sourdough starter but artificial, chemical yeast. Similar to the old pure, organic materials and sourdough recipes, the old stamps were emptied of purpose and forgotten in drawers. Before, the bread stamp was been passed from generation to generation, one of the most valuable sacred objects and as a symbol of accepting the family values. The people stopped kneading homemade bread with the stamp of the Holy Spirit since it was forbidden during Communism, and more rarely they tasted the bread of the Holy Eucharist. Eventually, they forgot about the real bread - the everyday bread and the sacred one. And it was the Bread House that helped revive this tradition and bring to people's lives new meaning and love for natural foods and life!



From the walls of the Bread House you will find the smiling faces of people from across countries, cultures, and ages, all different but making the same thing: breads of all colors and shapes! These are people I have gotten to know and make

bread with throughout my travels – across 76 countries as of 2012 – in my work and life as an anthropologist (doing dissertation research), a traveler, and a pilgrim. I was amazed to discover how bread can be made of unexpectedly enormous variety of grains and nuts, thus producing breads very different in taste, texture, color, size, shape, and meaning as I made, bake, and broke breads with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and religions, from big cities to distant tribes with almost lost languages. And the same time, I was also amazed to discover the same bread in many places, where it would be used in sacred rituals: it had the same Orthodox Christian stamp, because of the common thread of the shared faith, from straw hut-churches in South Africa to the centre of Tokyo, and the floating villages of Kerala, India.

You can come to the Bread House every week, and every week the experience will be different! One time someone brings a guitar and plays while the bread is baking, another night people decide to bring poems and recite, yet another there is a wood-carving lesson for bread stamps, or people use the pottery studio, or yet it is a Theater of Crumbs night. The *Theater of Crumbs* is one of the favorite events at the Bread House. It is a transformative puppet theater building on the methods of Brazilian August Boal, in which children of all ages (2 to 102) come together to make puppets out of bread, as they develop themselves and improvise the plot of the play (sometimes based on a popular fairy tales, parables, or real-life situations and issues, which are then transformed through imagination).

That winter night when you visit the Bread House, you are all making puppets on the theme of home: where do we feel at home in this globalized world? What cultures do we belong to or transcend? Is home connected to nature and place, how and in what ways? Is it connected to food and family? Everyone makes different puppets based on his or her unique life, but many seem to depict something linked to food.

I do not know what puppet you would make, but this is food for thought! What is key is that no one keeps their dream or their trauma, their pain or their joy to themselves, but rather we all play out the stories with the baked puppets using the kneading table also for a stage, and once we see the stories outside of our

hearts and onto the table, it is much easier to forget or to make them come true. Because we all eat together the bread puppets as a way of “digesting” the stories and in many ways, both literally and figuratively, solving them and feeling empowered to change our community, society, country, and world...*one step at a time, one person at a time, one grain at a time!*

Although the Bread Houses are established amongst diverse cultural traditions, what always connects them is *one oven, one table, one bread*, and people’s shared *need to knead joy* together!

Ultimately, I think that what makes the concept of collective bread-making so successful is, in fact, its simplicity. Hot bread is loved by all, bread-making can be enjoyed as a form of sculpture, kneading does not require special skills or knowledge and bread-making is not limited to gender, age, profession or ethnic background. It unites young and old, rich and poor, strangers and friends, and people with disabilities.

May everyone take from the breads of the world crumbs of inspiration to help you always find the way home along the winding path of life.

THE BREAD HOUSES NETWORK METHODOLOGIES

The methods developed within the Bread Houses Network over the years are applicable to various contexts outside a Bread House and at a Bread House that can be a community cultural center as well as, but not necessarily, a social enterprise bakery.

1. **Bread Therapy or Psichatherapy** (*Psichatherapy, employing the Greek word “psyha” meaning the interior of the bread, sharing a root with the word “psyche” meaning “soul”*) is a method similar to art therapy employed in hospitals engaging doctors to make bread with their patients and infuse the hospital with the aroma of hot bread (developed in cooperation with Patch Adams and his humor therapy methods during a WHO seminar in Peru in 2009 and launched at the National Russian Children’s Hospital in Moscow in 2010)
2. **Theater of Crumbs**: socially transformative puppet theater for all ages, as people together make puppets out of bread, develop themselves and improvise the plot, and finally eat together the bread puppets as a way of “digesting”, as solving, literally and figuratively pressing problems in their lives
3. **Granary of Gifts**: method for discovery and development of talents and for their combination in collective, co-creative civic action
4. **Bread Breaking Boundaries (BBB)**: team-building method centered around interactive role games and story-telling experienced in collective bread-making as a way to explore relationships through the metaphors of the elements and processes of bread-making)
5. **BREAD+ Program**: ways to combine bread-making and other cooking and food preparation with various art forms: poetry, music, dance, singing, story-telling, pottery, painting, paper-making, sewing, knitting, quilting, and various particular local crafts and cultural traditions
6. **TOUCH Project**: The project is a an international partnership between Bulgaria (I3C and the Bread House Cultural Center in Gabrovo, and the FabriC Regional Cultural Center, Gabrovo), Spain (University of Design, Barcelona), and Denmark (Cultura 21 Nordic) funded by the European Cultural Foundation. TOUCH spreads from 2011 to 2012, aiming the involvement of sight-impaired people in the creation and experience of visual arts together with professional artists and art students, co-creatively developing art pieces that will also in the future become part of a mobile tactile art gallery. The potential of the methodology is to spread among the I3C associated networks and through various other cultural and social institutions, from museums and galleries to schools and old people’s homes, as a good practice and guidance for approaches towards social inclusion of various ages and people with various abilities through the arts
7. **Color Flour**: methods of preparing colorful breads with herbs employing both the dying and healing qualities of herbs from around the world

The main elements of the Bread House (BH) model include:

- BH is a physical space which allows for group interaction – normally, BH takes over a disused or underused space in the community and using volunteer labor and material contributions, it gets transformed into a creative and welcoming space, suitable for various activities.
- BH attracts professionals willing to volunteer and share their skills in running various activities, including bread making, cooking, drawing, applied crafts, etc. In addition, professionals facilitate discussions and workshops on different topics, including traditional values and rituals related to bread making, restoring the culture of tolerance and social inclusion in our communities, and the importance of volunteering and civic engagement.
- BH serves various groups in the community – it provides suitable space and activities for children with disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds; it brings together adults from very diverse backgrounds and encourages relationships across ethnic and religious origins and social status.
- BH increases the social capital in the community by increasing the connectedness among people and their positive experiences in working and creating together.
- BH increases skills and employability of people by providing training and skill development in various vocational fields.
- BH offers healthy and high-quality products to the community – past experiences show that BH products are highly appreciated and sought after by the people in local community as bread is the staple of the Bulgarian diet and home-made bread is hard to come by.
- BH is self-sustainable – BH's social role could be sustained by developing social enterprise components.

Nadezhda Savova



was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, completed her BA in International Relations and Spanish Language and Literature at Furman University (USA) and is completing her PhD in cultural and social anthropology at Princeton University (USA). Her research is the theme of comparative cultural policies for social development examining as case studies the similar networks of community cultural centers in Bulgaria (the community centers), Brazil (points of culture/ pontos de cultura), and in Cuba.

While working as a consultant-expert for the sector for Intangible Heritage of UNESCO in Paris in 2008, Nadezhda founded a global network of community cultural centers and organizations, called the International Council for Cultural Centers (I3C), www.international3c.org, which currently unites over 50 countries and it helps the development of projects and exchange programs between them.

In December, 2009, Nadezhda created a unique kind of a community culinary-cultural center called the Bread House (www.bread-art-house.org), all established by volunteers at her great-grandmother's house, where collective bread-making was first introduced as a group art form and community-building method. In only two years, the first Bread House inspired a growing international network of sister centers in 12 countries on six continents called the Bread Houses Network, BHN (www.breadhousesnetwork.org), whose simple but innovative method of "Bread and Arts for Social Transformation" complements the method started in South America that promotes art for social change (Latin American Network of Arts for Social Transformation, www.artestransformador.net, member of the International Council).

On December 9, 2009, at the UN World Summit on Climate Change in Copenhagen BHN launched the BREAD Movement: Bridging Resources for Ecological and Art-based Development to inspire and connect groups of people around the world wishing to use the "Bread and Arts for Social Transformation" methods, further distinguished at the UN Global Ecology Summit RIO+20 in Brazil with bread-making events and a big

photography exhibit of the Bread Houses Network. In the field of social entrepreneurship and organic farming, the Bread House develops its own unique model of a “social franchise” of organic bakeries offering the “Breads of the World around the World”, being a member of the world movement “Slow Food” (www.slowfood.com) and the European Network for Social Entrepreneurship (www.isedenet.com).

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For more information, please visit:

www.international3c.org and www.BreadHousesNetwork.org

The Earth Charter Game – Putting it into Practice and Experiencing a New Just and Sustainable Civilization

As children, we were educated to compete, to fight for marks, for a position, for a job, for money, for power, for property, for territory... and now we are tired and sick of all this!



In schools and universities, we have competed to get better marks, to show “who is the better one” and who is the “looser”, to feel the “victory” on the Olympic games...

At home, if watching TV, we most of the time see people who fight or kill one another or are in a conflict or in a war. On the News we see the same. Everywhere we look we see a culture full of aggression that stems from competition, competition for money, for power, for glory...

All this makes our everyday life terrible and all this destroys our only Home that provides us with Air, Water and Food, Beauty, Happiness and Love – our real mother Earth.

But one day I bought and played an amazing Brazilian game – the “*Earth Charter Game*”, created by Instituto Harmonia na Terra. But is it just a game? Or is it a way to a new better civilization of humans who live happily and quietly in harmony with themselves and with their home – nature?

And the Earth Charter Game asked me:

- What if you were educated in school to cooperate instead to compete?
- What if you were taught how to create beautiful things together and how to enjoy life together?
- What if everyday you saw people helping one another and living together in peace and harmony on the TV?

Would life be so different and would you feel differently?

Every time I play the Earth Charter Game I do feel quite different and I see how to make life different – more sustainable, full of opportunities and beauties. Maybe the time has come to put all this into practice!



The Earth Charter Game is not just a “game”, it is a model of a different sustainable world in which we all act in COOPERATION and help one another in order to live well and feel well.

The Earth Charter Game does not produce “losers”, it teaches us how to cooperate, how to think and act together, how to unite together in order to fulfill our dreams. How to dream together.

It looks just a game, but it is something that can change you, the way you think and the life you live!

It looks just a game in which all participants must cooperate and play together. This is so nice, and the feelings of players so great, but this is not so simple to achieve, really!

This is the way forward, the way to one humanity free of aggression and destructive greed, and full of free and cooperative people.

Gratitude

With thanks to Ariel and Daniel

Dora Marinova and Talia Raphaely



This was Ariel's and Daniel's favourite time of the year – school holidays and the town fair was on! Their mother would take them to the fair early in the morning and they would spend the rest of the day on all the rides, check out the shops and their fancy merchandise, eat yummy food, participate in games and competitions, and watch the fireworks at the end of the day.

At the Fair

This year things were looking better than ever before – the Ferris wheel was gigantic, the turbo mountain roller coaster was amazingly fast and the water splash at the end of the Big Tower was absolutely fantastic. Ariel and Daniel gave their mum a goodbye kiss, promised to behave and ventured into the day which promised joy, excitement and endless fun.

Daniel looked at his sister and said: "Ari, let's go our separate ways and meet in front of this juice kiosk in two hours". "Fine with me, Danny" – replied Ariel. Being the older of the two, she was very happy to be spending some time on girly things, such as having her hair braided and her nails painted. Daniel couldn't wait to try the solar powered race-car on the speedway where the queue was already forming. They both checked they had their mobile phones with them

in case they needed to talk to each other, then they headed off in different directions.



The fair was so big this year! So much to do and so many people around! It was going to be a day to remember!

Ariel decided to try the chair lift first, she couldn't wait to get away from Daniel. She loved him deeply but he was still too young to understand certain things – why her hair was so important to her or why she wouldn't let him look into her handbag. “I wish this chair lift was longer” – she thought as she was descending at the other end of the fair. By that time Daniel had already done several laps in the bright red race-car. The speed was intoxicating and he managed to overtake several other cars.



There were music and loud conversations everywhere and hardly anybody

heard the news that there has been yet another failure in UN's negotiations for reductions in the global greenhouse gas emissions. The town was already used to the *national carbon tax* and many businesses had to switch off their power to save energy.

Ariel and Daniel never thought about the power cuts but it was always annoying when this happened. All of a sudden the music stopped! “Oh, no!!! Yet another power cut” – thought Ariel. “Luckily I am driving my solar powered car” – Daniel enjoyed his luck. “Ah, well... I can go

and have a look at the farm animals while the power is off” – decided Ariel and soon she found her way through the crowd to the little enclosure where the ducklings, little lambs and the baby donkey were.

With the Animals

“How cute!!!” – exclaimed Ariel when she picked up a tiny little chick in her hands. It was nice, soft and warm. She could feel its little heart beating. Wasn’t it delightful to offer love and protection to this little creature in this big and scary world?! “Do you want to be my mum?” Ariel thought she was dreaming. “Do you want to be my mum?” – the little voice asked again. Yes, it was the chick talking! “Don’t be stupid. I cannot be your mum – I am human and you are a chick” – replied Ariel all confused and amazed.



“But I do not have a mum; none of us has a mum”. “No, you have mums; what about the hens?” - exclaimed Ariel trying to show off her knowledge – “I’ve seen them, they lay eggs, keep them warm and then you chicks are born”. “No, this is not true... When I was born there were no hens around, there were only little chicks like me. It was very hot and crowded...”

I like it here. It smells so nice. I can see the sky, it’s blue and I can gaze at the tree leaves, they move with the wind... Please, can you be my mum?” – the chick could not stop talking.

Ariel has never experienced anything like this before. She reached for her mobile and wanted to call Daniel but the power came back and the loud music resumed. “Little chick, will you come with me to my house?” – Ariel asked. There was no answer. “Little chick, I want to be your mum. Will you come with me to my house?”. The chick was trembling in her hands and its heart was beating even faster. Ariel turned around and saw the farmer who said to her: “Hey, you’ve been holding this chick for too long. It needs to go inside the cage. I will get another one out.” “But the chick likes to be with me...” – Ariel was still attempting to argue while the farmer took the chick away and locked it inside the

cage. Ariel felt tears rolling down her cheeks. “Luckily Danny is not here” – thought she but there was very little consolation in this observation.

In the meantime, at the other end of the fair, Daniel’s time on the electric race-car was over and he resentfully had to leave his favorite ride. “I wish they gave me more time” – he felt a bit angry, he was such a good driver, much better than the rest. “It’s not fair!” – exclaimed Daniel. “It’s not fair!” – he heard somebody repeating. Daniel looked around. There was a pig enclosure and a cute little face with a cute little snout was protruding between the bars. “It’s not fair at the fair! It’s not fair at the fair!” – it sounded like a silly song. “Is that you talking, piggy?” – asked Daniel in disbelief. “Yes, it’s not fair that I have no toys to play, I want to go for a run and say ‘hello’ to the baby donkey but I can’t do this either! It’s not fair at the fair!”



“Do you really play with toys? Is the donkey really your friend?” – asked Daniel. “Yes, of course! My mum knows this very well but I can’t even talk to my mum... They took her away” – the piggy started sobbing. “Hang on, little piggy! Do you want to be my friend? I’ll take you to my mum and you can play with me and my sister? I have a box of new tennis balls and we can play with them. That would be such fun!” “Really?! I have never seen tennis balls. How do you play with them?” “I throw the ball far away and you bring it back to me” – Daniel felt embarrassed that he had to explain such a basic game.

“Where I live there are bars and I can’t go between them, I can’t run and the hard cement floors and the metal grills hurt my feet when I try to walk... It stinks where I live... I like the way it smells here. Does your house smell the

same?” “Yes, piggy”- Daniel reached for his mobile but as he was calling his sister the farmer chased the piglet away from the bars and towards the inside of the enclosure. “But piggy wants to play with me!” – Daniel felt something big choking his throat; he felt his eyes getting wet. “Luckily Ari is not here” – he thought but his heart was hurting.



The rest of the day was predictable; there were no more power cuts. Daniel and Ariel met in front of the juice kiosk, had some refreshing drinks and then parted again. The rides were good, Ariel’s braided hair and painted nails looked exquisite; Daniel managed to get another ride, this time with the super solar motor car...

Yet despite the usual excitement something was strange. Ariel did not tell Daniel about the chick; Daniel did not tell Ariel about the piglet. Neither of them mentioned anything to their mum when she picked them up at the end of the day.

At Home

“What’s for dinner, mum?” – asked Ariel and Daniel. “Can you wait until your father comes back? He wasn’t feeling very well and had to go to the doctor. Something’s wrong with his blood pressure again, I guess” – replied their mother. “I am very hungry” – said Daniel. “I can’t wait” – added Ariel. “OK, we’ll have chicken soup and pork mince balls with salad as soon as we get home” – replied their mother.

Ariel and Daniel helped set the table. It looked beautiful; Ariel even lit a couple of candles and put some freshly cut flowers from the garden in a vase. She placed the big salad bowl in the middle. Daniel arranged the cutlery, plates and glasses. He even remembered to bring napkins. The mother brought in the pot with the chicken soup from the kitchen.

“Sorry, I don’t want to eat this soup” – said Ariel, there was pain in her voice which only Daniel noticed. “I’ll bring the mince balls then” – said the surprised mother. “Sorry, I don’t want to eat the mince balls” – said Daniel, there was pain in his voice which only Ariel noticed. “What do you guys want?” – asked the mother perplexed. “Just a lot of salad with some bread, avocado and olives. Could you please also cook some lentils, mum please?” – said Ariel. “Yes, mum, you make them so nicely and so quickly” – said Daniel – “we can wait”. “Something has changed” – thought their mother – “what a strange day...”

Father Comes back

Fifteen minutes later as she was replacing the soup with the pot of lentils, the door opened and the father came in. “Daddy, daddy, we missed you!!! Let us tell you about today” – both children rushed towards him. “Let’s have dinner first” – replied the father – “Oh, lentils! This is exactly what the doctor said I should eat! He told me that it is very bad for my health to eat more than 400-500 grams of meat per week. How delicious! And the salad! And the bread with avocado!”

Ariel and Daniel looked at each other. They were so close that they often read each other’s thoughts. Ariel saw a mischievous little flame rise in Daniel’s eyes: “Daddy, isn’t it better if you don’t eat meat at all?” “I guess so...” - replied the father – “The doctor says that *the way we raise animals in factory farms* we create enormous environmental problems and that more than half of the pollution in the air is caused by the livestock industry...” “Yes!!!” – exclaimed Ariel – “Does this mean that if we stop eating meat, there will be no power cuts, Daddy?” “I suppose so...” – replied the father – “they definitively will be less often and we will all be better off”. “It would be so much easier to cook and shop” – added the mother.

Dreams Come True

Later that night, Ariel dreamed that she was back at the town fair and was holding the little chick again. Daniel dreamed about running after piggy and the ball. Strangely Ariel could hear the chick singing; Daniel could hear piggy singing too... Their little hearts were singing as well...

Ariel never became the chick's mum and Daniel never shared his new tennis balls with the piglet. However, they saved the lives of so many chicks and piglets. Their father and mother lived long healthy lives; in fact, they are still alive! That special day at the town fair changed their lives forever.



Next time you see a little chick or a little pig or other animal, please listen carefully – they may talk and sing to you too.



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1. Raphaely, T., Marinova, D., Crisp, G., Panayotov, J. (2012) “Flexitarianism: A User-based Dietary Choice for Improving Personal, Population and Planetary Wellbeing”, *International Journal of User-driven Healthcare* (forthcoming, acceptance date 22 October 2012)
2. Raphaely, T., Marinova, D. (2012) “Flexitarianism: A More Moral Dietary Option”, *International Journal of Sustainable Society* (forthcoming, proofs received 31 August 2012)

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2017 - Ecopedagogical Economy: People no Longer Belong to Markets, Markets Belong to People



Now it is the summer, the year is 2017, and we enjoy biological fresh foods and clean fresh water as never before. Bees got back again to life. Most of big chains and supermarkets no longer exist, they just couldn't be sustained. The idea of an ecopedagogical economy has changed the world by introducing the "Sustainable Community Marketplace" uniting local producers, kindergarten gardens, primary and secondary school gardens and university-gardens into a new sustainable economy. Now I would like to tell you the story of this change.

When we are going through our grandmother's garden, we see that everything is different there. All tomatoes on a tomato stem are of different size, different shape, different taste, because differently illuminated by the sun and stroked by the wind. The same with the peppers, cucumbers, apples...

On a tree with hundreds of apples
I cannot see even two apples that
are the same and taste the same way,
instead they are all smiling at me in
a different way.



This is not the case in supermarkets and multinational chains, where there is plenty of standardized vegetables and fruits overly laced with hormones, pesticides or just simply genetically modified.

Cucumbers may be transgenic and taste like zucchini or potatoes; tomatoes may not have a taste at all; apples may stay for a year on the window and not spoil because they are full of chemicals. It is so pitiful, isn't it that there are so many people who consume these, people estranged from the real gifts that nature offers to people?

Around 2015, a serious economic change was triggered by a crisis across many supermarkets and multinationals, a crisis born of global hyper-consumption and the social damage it brought to many people's lives and to nature – psychological, physical and environmental damage that simply couldn't be endured any longer.

Firstly, parents and local communities became critical of what their children consumed and the effect the food appeared to have on their development, noting that many children grew disproportional bodies and became technologically-addicted. The parents became concerned about the epidemics of “childhood obesity, eating disorders, youth violence, sexualization, the erosion of children's creative play, materialistic values, and family stress that are all linked to the commercialization of childhood”⁶. They began to see these as problems resulting from the influence of the supermarkets and multinationals behind them.

Then the parents became critical of the fact that much of what is offered in big grocery chains is produced so far away, often by enslaved and exploited people from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe ... even though we are in the 21st century. Outrage grew against the “false needs” manufactured by the corporate media – that much of what is advertized and offered is not needed and makes our life worse rather than better.

So parents and local communities introduced legislation to have kindergartens, schools and universities develop their own organic gardens. A law banning genetically modified seeds and transgenic products, pesticides, and chemical-based foods and beverages accompanied this. With this law the local organic farmers and their land were saved from the big corporations waiting to destroy local ecosystems with their chemical-based industry.

⁶ Susan Linn. Campaign for a Commercial-free Childhood.
Reclaiming Childhood from Corporate marketers.
<http://commercialfreechildhood.org/issues/materialism.html>



Now, each kindergarten, each primary and secondary school, each university has its own ecologically sustainable gardens in which children, students and educators are enjoying action-based education and transforming the world and its future. The fast junk food has been replaced by real food and the chemical-based beverages have been replaced by organic fresh juices that make children strong instead of sick – everywhere.

The Community Marketplace

The surplus vegetables, fruits and crops from the primary and secondary schools, kindergartens and universities go to the community marketplace. The community marketplace supports only small organic farmers and producers.

As you come to have products from the community marketplace in your hands you see that all of these are from local producers, organic and free from genetic modification and cloning.

Every producer from the community can offer her/his products to the marketplace which controls its quality and safety.

Local farmers here are no longer forced off their land and out of business because of the competition of big multinationals. Here is a community marketplace to help them and, respectively, here they are – the small local producers – who provide food of quality to the whole community.



As you go to pay you see the real miracle of this place. There are no enormous delivery, advertising and other expenditures previously associated with the supermarkets. One doesn't see the commercialization of farm products because it doesn't exist.

Instead, when you pay for your goods, you see that a percentage of the money goes directly towards the maintenance of the marketplace, for decent salaries for the employees and to ensure great working conditions.

A just share of the price of the products you pay for is distributed honestly to the local producers. Another percentage goes to the community fund. A certain amount of the money additionally goes to support the whole community in ways that you can also propose and help to decide – to support local initiatives, projects, activities; improve community infrastructure and schools; and help persons in need. And the rest of the money you pay goes back to you! You receive the help you need for the things with which you cannot cope alone.

This marketplace is a safe and pleasant place where community life blooms. It is an arena for cooperation, mutual help and respect. And it is just as possible as were the sparkling profits of big supermarkets – but this time the ones that profit is you, your community, the people who produce and labor honestly, and not least – nature, that is protected from the gas emissions of unnecessary long food transportation, from pesticides, from chemicals and from the transgenic beings that can destroy its ecosystemic balance and diversity.

The society profits as it grows more cooperative and less commercial. Just and equal, the society ceases to exploit the people who produce its food and ceases to destroy nature. The community promotes such marketplaces. So think about your community, about your children, about your future. Hope and courage in and for people! Let's organize community marketplaces in our cities and worldwide. Let's make sure kindergartens, primary and secondary schools and universities work to provide decent and ecologically livable futures for the children.

Let's start now, we are the history being made!

For a Better Possible World: Some Ideas and Proposals from Trentino. “A Child, a Tree, a Forest”

Roberto Bombarda



Trentino, located in the heart of the Italian Alps, occupies an area of over 6,000 km² and has a population of over 500 000 inhabitants. More than half of the area is occupied by forests and about a third of the territory is protected through various forms of management (parks, nature reserves, etc.), which is confirmed by the new law for the protection of Nature, born following the motto “A third of the Future”. The low human pressure and the high environmental quality, as is the presence of some mountain ranges of the Dolomites, UNESCO World Heritage Site, attract millions of visitors in Trentino each year.

One of the major concerns of Trentino is to educate the young generations to know and respect the territory so that they may understand that they are an integral part of Nature. For this purpose, environmental education takes place in many ways and is conveyed mainly through the work of the schools and in schools, but also through the work of natural parks (Stelvio and Adamello-Brenta Paneveggio-Pale di San Martino), museums (in particular the MUSE-Science

Museum), research institutes and numerous associations for the protection of nature.

Trentino's Network of Environmental Education for Sustainable Development, part of the Provincial Agency for Environmental Protection, is a network of around forty environmental educators that promotes the adoption of good practices with the goal of forming an "active citizenship" capable of conscious daily living and undertaking positive behavior towards the environment. It is a system of territorial knots divided into 12 Territorial Laboratories of Environmental Education and 11 Centers of Experience managed by the Network with the primary objective to make possible an active collaboration between public and private entities, schools, the world of associations and research organizations.



This broad partnership is aimed at spreading, in a far-reaching capillary way, environmental education for sustainable development and "good practices" in order to recognize and emphasize the values of the natural landscape and cultural heritage of Trentino, as well as the resources necessary to ensure its sustainable future.

It seeks to organize an operational system that collaborates with other realities at the local, national and international levels in order to establish new professional figures in the fields of environmental education, information and sensibilization.

Each year the Network offers to the school world a series of courses, activities and exhibitions. For the school year 2012-2013 there were over 100 such proposals, all available and bookable online at: www.appa.provincia.tn.it/educazioneambientale/, among which:

- Educational courses in schools: 33 proposals that address major environmental issues articulated in terms of school level. Each proposal can

be developed by environmental educators in up to a maximum of 4 meetings per a class, including the possibility of outdoor education and practices;

- Activities at the Centers of Experience: 66 educational projects lasting a half or a full day that the class can fulfill together with an environmental educator at one of the 10 Centers of Experience;
- Six Interactive exhibitions, which may be requested by schools to develop under the guidance of the Environmental Educators, in a playful and interactive way, one of the following topics: waste, climate, ecological footprint, environmental certifications, sustainable energy.

But the environmental education for schools is not limited to the objectives and activities of the Provincial Agency for Environmental Protection. Many schools, as part of their organizational management autonomy, promote and offer hundreds of initiatives. Many are also those initiatives that are developed on the basis of proposals discussed and approved by the Provincial Council of Trentino. Here are some of them:

- Initiate and fund a project for the growth and proliferation of organic gardens in community spaces and in schools, thereby triggering a virtuous cycle of knowledge and respect for the land, the agriculture, the virtues and the consumption of local products;
- Promote educational courses and diffuse information in order to raise the awareness about environmental goods as “commons”, and in particular to make each school, or individual class or classes together, take an action for a protected environmental good (a park, a nature reserve, a mountain, a forest, a cave);
- Promote courses and stays in direct contact with mountains in order to offer to all students a curriculum that includes both the knowledge of the mountain as well as education of norms of behavior, of safety and rescue therein.

The impact of/on Trentino is not only considered within its borders, but also in a planetary dimension. It is called “Towards a Zero CO2 Trentino” and this is a multi-year project that aims to reduce the climate impact of Trentino through initiatives of solidarity and international cooperation. The Province of Trento supports reforestation projects and environmental education in

impoverished countries in South America, Africa, and Asia – where the creation of forest nurseries and the reconstruction of areas of forest can restore the original ecological function. Thus, saving CO₂ helps to reduce the ecological weight of Trentino. On the one hand, therefore, international solidarity and cooperation is developed, on the other, local and global environment is supported.

Among the developments of the grand program for a “Zero CO₂ region”, a target set by provincial law n. 5/2010 called “Trentino for Climate Protection”, there is also a project-maxim, called “Elzéard - A Child, a Tree, a Forest”.

Elzéard was the name of the shepherd from a story by Jean Giono, a “hero” who, in the silence of the years, has planted thousands of trees in a semi-deserted region, bringing it back to life. A humble action, without contemporary recognition, intended for the benefit of future generations, but worthy of God's work. Today, with the “Spaceship Earth” that approaches about ten billion passengers, in the midst of climate change and on the verge of a crisis of resources without precedent in human history, the simple and silent gestures of Elzéard are much more needed than many roaring words.

Today, the most precious goods of humanity are, perhaps, Children and Forests. Today, children should be taught, beyond the use of computers and foreign languages, how to plant a tree and care for it. If a child plants a tree, many children create a forest, for them and for their descendants.

This is something extraordinarily useful here for the air, water, and for feeding humanity. The Elzéard project was born in the Dolomites, mountains that are considered “World Heritage”, and is addressed to all the continents, to regions, areas or places where the Dolomites people's centuries-old traditional ecological knowledge of forest cultivation can be useful to local populations. It is a form of international cooperation with mutual benefits, where each partner of the “open network” can learn from the others and educate the others through mutual understanding and exchange of information and good practices. All this is possible through the “information heart” of Ecoistituto delle Dolomiti, creator of the project.

“A Child, a Tree, a Forest” is a project that aims to train novel Elzéards, young people who learn to create, possibly near their school, small “forest nurseries” and to plant new trees in many contexts: deforested areas, protected areas, urban parks, driveways and parking areas, wetlands, desert areas ... because every place is good for a tree, and each tree is good for a place.

And where there is a tree, there is life, with hope for the future that each child brings in herself/himself.

A lot of confidence in future is also contained on the website www.perunmondigliore.net, launched on the occasion of “Earth Day” in 2008. Following the slogan “another world is possible”, it offers dozens of actions within the reach of all citizens. One doesn’t need to be a hero to change the world, rather, many small daily actions and a constancy of transmitting good practices from person-to-person are enough.

As Leonardo Boff writes,

“We must come back from exile to take care of the home we all share, which is the Earth, so that all humans and other beings, our brothers and sisters in this great terrestrial adventure, can all live happily in this home. There is too much unnecessary violence, injustice, suffering and poverty in our world.

We must take a new course of action.

It has become urgent that we find new patterns for civilization, where technical and scientific schemes are reinvented and where there exists a dynamic balance between having and being, resting and working, production and reward, development and conservation, unity and diversity, consumption and shared responsibility” (Boff, 1998).

A message that the ecologist Alex Langer had skillfully translated into the motto “slower, sweeter, deeper” (in Latin “*lentius, profundius, suavius*”), in opposition to the trends of our contemporary consumer society, destructor of human relationships and the natural bases of the planet.

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Since 2003, Mr. Roberto Bombarda is a counselor at the Autonomous Province of Trento and the Autonomous Region of Trentino - Alto Adige/Südtirol and since 2008 he is a member of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union.

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A House Made from Earth. Searching in the Past We Find the Future

Margherita Salvadori and Alessandro Ranavolo



We see cement, wood, metal and glass all around us. It has not always been so. More and more we are asking ourselves how to live in a friendly way between ourselves and towards the planet Earth: to live in a pleasant way without ruining the place where we live in great numbers.

In Trento, a group of children accompanied by a group of adults have built a house out of earth just for one week. How come?

The adults sought to realize a nice workshop with the children in order to get to know the materials of earth, water and clay: what are their properties, how do they behave and how can they be used for constructing? So they called architectural specialists on the Earth.

How are the houses where we live made?
How do we heat them? And refresh them? What energy do we use?
These and other questions are posed today when a house is constructed and inhabited.

To construct with cement and iron is not the only way. In fact, it has been in use for only 200 years. Many people have found diverse solutions in the different places where they lived (and still live): tents, huts, stilt houses, stone and

clay houses. It has been discovered that constructing with clay is a very interesting technique that humanity has employed for millennia, that the clay houses keep fresh in the summer and hot in the winter. How is it possible?

The earth is not all the same. The discovery of clay.



The exploration of different types of earth brought by the architects provoked much interest. The children put their hands in the pots and made a lot of comments: the clay looks like talc, it has different colors, it can be tasted and spread over the skin.... *The earth is not all the same. There are “earths” with different properties and colors.*



For sifting the earth you first have to take it from the pile with a shovel. The first thing to see is that shoveling is tiring, that not everyone can use the same tools, and that persons should be arranged in a rational way over the field in order not to hurt one another and for everyone to be active. There are two sieves: one tilted to the earth and a round one, but if you shovel a lot of earth the round sieve cannot be raised and the tilted one stops sifting. It is necessary to learn to measure the quantity of earth for sifting and to agree with the others as regards carrying the heavy materials. One must learn to measure the water to put in the mixture and regulate the tap differently when filling the bucket or even just washing one's hands.

The kids discover rapidly what should be done for preparing the ingredients of the mixture and work without stopping. In the late afternoon they feel exhausted. In this way they discover that working is a little bit different from playing, that it requires time, teamwork, a division of tasks, turns, and the ones who direct the work.

The discoveries and the comments of the kids



From the conversations with the kids there emerges a lot of observations. Comments are put on a board so that all can see them.

The first observation concerns “how do we come to know these things?” It emerges that the senses are our instruments of knowledge: the eyes, hands, the mouth (when the dust of the clay is tasted), the nose (the scents released from the materials), and also the rest of the body, even the hair (when covered in mud). Through these tools we interact with and modify the material: we dig, sift, mix, carry and knead it.

The work of construction



The making of the mixture gives very strong sensations. Mixed with water and chopped straw, the earth produces strong impact and sensations. The difference in the behaviors of the materials generates surprises and great interest.

Kids' reactions are diverse: some immerse their hands and arms with pleasure in the soft pulp resulting from mixing water and clay. Others are dedicated to shovel the mountain of earth. Others don't hesitate to follow the architects who demonstrate how to blend the mixture with feet.

In the twentieth century the earth has been marginalized in all fields of work, from architecture to the games, following the modern trends people have started to prefer new materials like cement or synthetic resins.



It is only recently that the earth has been appreciated again in architectural, medical and pedagogical fields.

Children have always used earth and wood in their play but only recently has modern science been rediscovering its various helpful qualities.

Diverse research has, in fact, found correspondence between the tactile stimulation (but also of the other senses) in a child under 4 years who molds the earth and the growth of his synaptic neural networks, which means that perceptual and creative stimuli of this kind can increase the cognitive and evolutionary capacities of children. Obviously these kind of activities are beneficial also for adults, convalescent persons, those with nervous disorders and the elderly.

In ancient times the use of earth in architecture didn't result from scanty knowledge of more appropriate technologies, as thought in beginning of the 20th century.

The earth possesses the specific properties that make it the perfect involucre for humans. It provides:

- Capacity to retain the humidity of the air when it is excessive and release it if the air becomes dry;
- High qualities of thermal and acoustic isolation;

- Excellent protection from *magnetic fields and radiation* depending on the thickness of the plaster or the earth wall.

In Italy there is a great heritage of houses in earth, as is in Europe and all over the world. These are everywhere, but above all in Sardegna, Abruzzo, and Piemonte. The regulations for the restoration is unclear and the one for the new constructions – impassable. It is a great part of knowledge left to forgotten. With the cement boom, also in the so-called third world, people are being rapidly brought to forget what means to have feet rooted in earth.

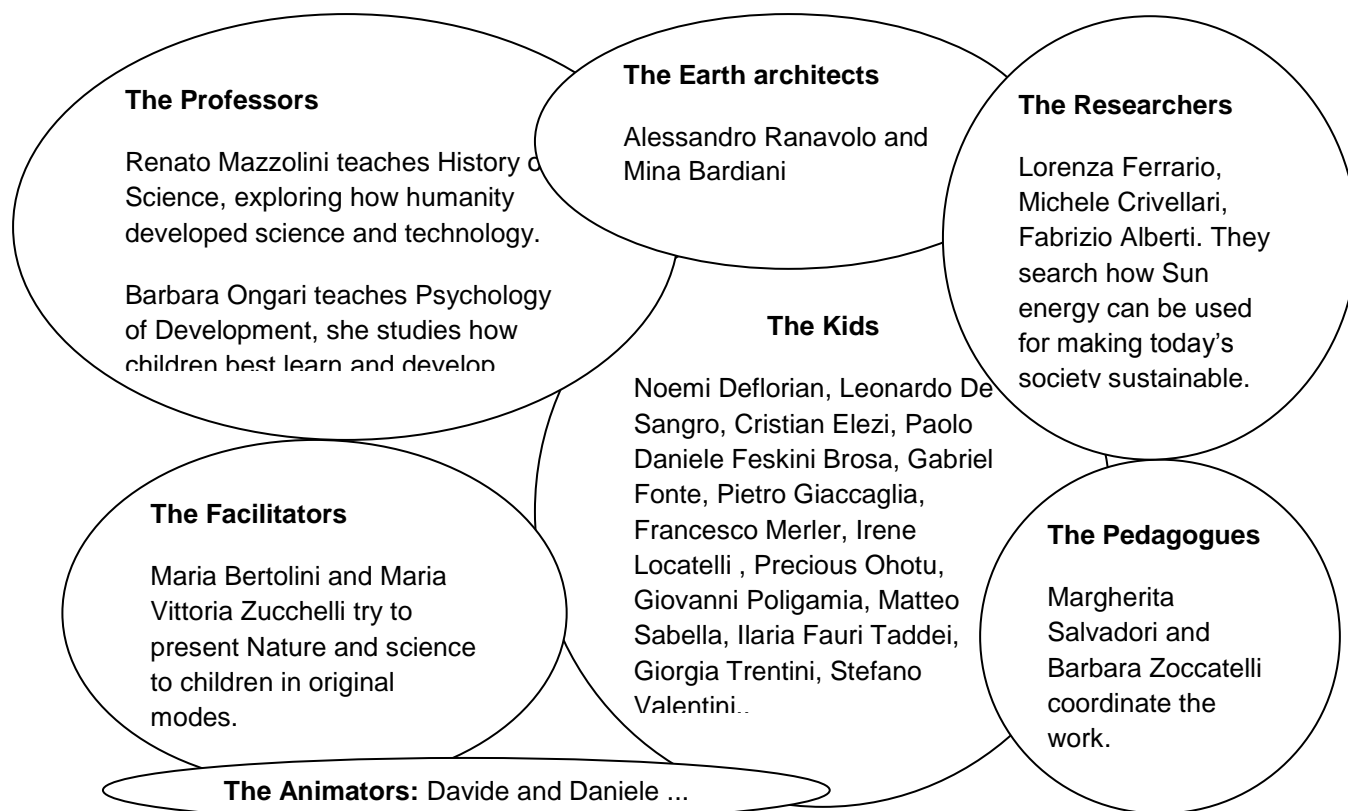
In India I have met some European researchers committed to retrieve ancient technologies from the elderly people that still remembered. These architects then focused on the technology of construction compressing to a great degree the earth in the phase of work and created earthquake proof buildings of more levels for a ridiculous price and for a short time.

This current of bio-architecture in which walls literally “breathe” is well represented in Germany by Gernot Minke, in France by Satprem Maini, in Austria by Martin Rauch and is also making way in California and New Mexico.

Finally, having been "initiated" by the characteristics of the oldest material in nature, we begin to understand why earth was generator of myths. The link "Earth - Water - Life" attributes to the earth the primal origin of human life in the legend of creation.

Now, we would like to present you (in a picture and in a table) our team together with the Earth house we have built.





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Alessandro Ranavolo is a Bio-architect and scholar working globally on earth and eco-sustainable architecture, author of many projects and materials on Ecological earth constructions. He is recovering ancient building traditions from all over the world and the way they can be now used for building a sustainable future.

Especially innovative are Alessandro's projects and work on thermo-acoustic electromagnetic protection as well as protection from radiation through bio-plaster in clays and sand.

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Conclusion:

*Planetary Society and Planetary Legislation for
2015!*



Ecopedagogy is Action, it is the Future, it is the Life and the Civilization of New Generations



In 2009, I started designing and organizing the International Handbook of Ecopedagogy with the idea that it could assist the beginnings of an education for a new sustainable civilization. Every day I wrote a piece and imagined how life could be in a new more ecologically harmonious and humane civilization.

Now I hope that this handbook will lead to concrete planetary actions to be taken in every part of the world, *“an action through which to usher in a qualitatively different form of reality and social perspectives”* (Grigorov, 2009, pg. 94). Let me start with a story and finish it with a call to all educators, students, people who care, who attend schools and universities... for this action to be taken.

Every morning while passing around a small river I see very small green birds called “*phylloscopus collybitus*” playing joyfully there. It seems that this river provides a lot of life to many creatures. It seems like a different world in which I wish to live and spend my time.

My father’s generation used to swim and play in the river, to go fishing there, even to drink water from the river. They spent their childhood playing around and in the river, observing different turtles, crayfish, fish species, while making tools and small playhouses from and in the many willow trees around it.

Before World War II, the river belonged to the people. The community took care of it and preserved it. The river was a symbol of life, food and happiness and a subject of many stories.

In the 1950s, when capitalism and socialism brought the boom of mass industrialization to the region, everything changed. All the dirty remnants from industry started going right into rivers, and now “rivers are no longer rivers”. They became instead a place where the poison from commercial activities goes.

In 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed along with the idea of international socialism, because they didn’t give power and voice to the people but instead long concentrated and centralized it into the hands of the few, everything changed again.

After more than 50 years of “Cold War” based on the so called doctrine of “mutual assured destruction” (**MAD**), many people hoped instead for world peace and participatory democracy accompanied by progress toward a planetary ecological consciousness. Instead, the world became reorganized around the neo-liberal globalization of greediness, war and environmental obliteration, around multinational corporations increasingly free to operate more or less unregulated all over the planet as they shape also post-Soviet Bloc nation-states’ policies and their future.

These multinationals have wrought a global consumer society that unites developing, post-state socialist and capitalist countries into an unsustainable and dangerously conglomerated whole that destroys our ultimate home – the Planet Earth, and its diverse resources, by every means and to the utmost degree.

But our life depends on nature, not them. We depend on nature in every relationship, in every step, in every day of our life. We breathe the air every second, we drink the water, we eat, and we need something beautiful that can make us feel happy and alive.

Nature is one united living organism that is much bigger and much more powerful than all states, multinationals and military industries taken together – it is exactly here that the idea and roots of a planetary society lay.

United together with nature, we need to move the center of the world that is now organized around states, multinational corporations and military industries, towards the organization of a new form of human society that is both *humane* and *planetary*.

As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o writes in "Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom", we need a new planetary language – which is not English – but the language of Sustainability. A language of the future, one diverse language of human beings that live in peace and harmony with the world of nature and so with themselves.

We need our rivers and in the same time we are these rivers. We need to create *the first planetary legislation* – new planetary laws for protecting our life and nature.

If we don't do it, who will? This can be done by us now – young people, educators, students, everyone who cares, because our life literally depends upon this. The future depends upon it. Everything now hinges on our actions taken together as a conscious planetary society.

And I suggest you to start this planetary legislation from "the commons" – from our rivers, our lands and our sky. Let's bring life back to them as we stop those who destroy and poison them. To make rivers again a foundation for forms of local organic sustainable economics that belongs to the people and which represents a "sustainable commons" protected from new industrial developments such as geoengineering and fracking.

Let's unite primary and secondary schools and universities all over the world on behalf of the ***"Students Planetary Law for the Rivers, Lands and Sky"***. Let's draft, institute and assure that this law will be kept all over the world. Every school at every level can contribute to it – preventing companies and industries from enclosing "our commons," polluting our rivers, fracking our lands, devastating our sky through geoengineering. We want to live, and so we want a livable and sustainable future free from their profiteering on the commonwealth. **Let's create our own Planetary Just Bank for our financial independence!**

A normal school week is 5 days and on average a person spends more than 10 years in school and possibly another 4 years at a university.

Isn't it possible for schools and universities to commit one day per week toward sustainability practices – a day in which students could check if industries pollute the rivers, if the quality of air is good or is too poisoned, if the water we drink is potable, if the food we eat is toxic, if the consequences of contemporary wars are global and how we might build peace instead?

It could be a day in which to work on designing and creating new *decent green jobs* that would offer sustainable labor prospects for people and at the same time restore local ecosystems. This is how schools and education could help society and local communities create a just and sustainable economy predicated upon keeping natural resources in the hands of local people to empower them.

Today, what is more important than this? What is more important than the creation of a sustainable and livable future – abstract theories or formulas, or calculations of virtual realities, or learning foreign languages?

Today, apart from the global military insanity, nuclear power, and other conventional poisons such as pesticides, humanity and life on Earth face **new major anthropogenic disasters**: *geoengineering, hydraulic fracking and genetically modified proliferation*. These three are co-constructed together and represent a major form of total devastation of Earth and life, supported by some governments and multinationals and made possible *only* by the complete insanity of atomized alienated scientists that sell life for money.

In 2012, the youth, together with thousands of children and their parents, in more than 22 cities of Bulgaria, together with Bulgarians in Paris, Copenhagen, London and many other cities all over the globe, started a nationwide struggle against the multinational and governmental plans to frack the beautiful Bulgarian land called “Dobruja” and destroy its underground aqua-ecosystems.

All the nation, triggered by students from schools and universities, together with small children and their parents, all over the country, took to the streets to protect land and life.

The result was a complete victory that must be re-assured in time but that now gave real hope to other people suffering fracking in Europe, the USA, Africa and in Australia that preserving life and sustainability **is possible** and happens when people wish it and say together “**Do NOT Touch Our Land**”.

Ecopedagogy, radically opposes the insanity of contemporary forms of devastation of Planet Earth such as geoengineering and fracking that have originated and *intensively* taken place already in North America and all other parts of the “First World”. I hope that the consciousness of Bulgarian youth and children, who have already said **no** to genetic modification, fracking and geoengineering, also exists in other parts of Europe and the “First World” where people still must prove they value life more than money. It must develop there because the planetary crises and the possibility of destruction of our Planet are exactly the fruit of the European and Western *anthropocentric culture of war, money and domination*, as Moacir Gadotti has many times emphasized.

Gadotti writes, “In this light, Ecopedagogy is not just another pedagogy, beside other pedagogies. It only acquires meaning as a **global alternative project**, where concern is not merely about the preservation of Nature (Natural Ecology), nor on the impact of human societies on natural environments (Social Ecology), but rather on a new model of sustainable civilization...” (Gadotti, 2000).

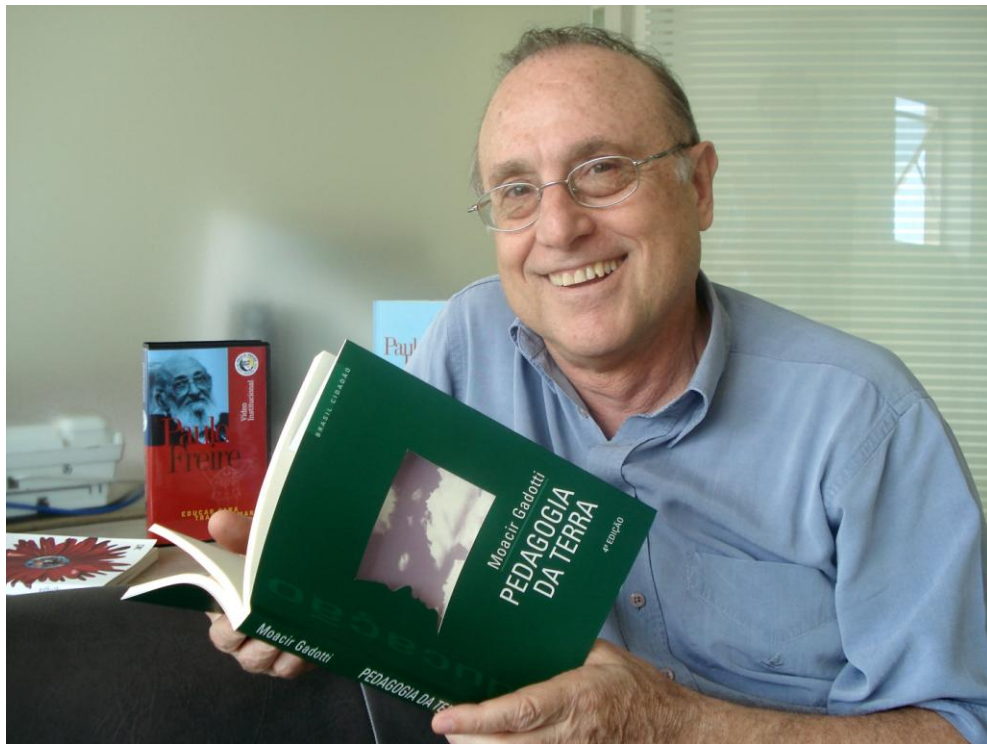
That might be the first step, a step that would trigger a new type of planetary legislation – a guarantee for which we (the young) will be educators together with the schools and universities and all people who care, united by and with nature. This would be real progress. This would be a step for sustainability.

Ecopedagogy is hope, it is the future. It is life that will oppose and fight against the insanity and greed that commercializes and destroys human life as well as our local landbase and the larger planetary ecology.

Ecopedagogy is the action and the victory of a new civilization, the victory of **new generations** to preserve natural life on the Earth. And it is namely the **World Social Forum** that is its beginning, a type of organization that can now grow into this new sustainable civilization. The step forward for ecopedagogy would be to organize the World Social Forum, or something akin to it, into a new planetary civilization whose roots come from all over the world.

Instead of Afterword: Earth's Pedagogy

Moacir Gadotti



One of the last writings of Paulo Freire was on ecology. A little essay published posthumously in the book *Pedagogy of Indignation*. He said that his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* missed a chapter on the Earth, a living organism in evolution that is also oppressed. It missed an *Earth's Pedagogy*.

In this little essay I will try to answer Paulo Freire's concern, exemplifying what would this pedagogy be and what its presuppositions are.

We live in the *anthropocene*, a new era of the planet's evolution that started around 1750, with the so-called "industrial revolution". The human influence strongly influences the behavior of the environment. Humanity's walk through the Earth is leaving too many trails and tracks behind, jeopardizing our own species. We've moved from the production mode to the destruction mode. From now on we'll have to live in confrontation with the permanent challenge of rebuilding the planet. To do that, we'll need a *new paradigm* that has the Earth as principle, understanding the Earth not only as an astronomical phenomenon but also as a historical phenomenon. The Earth is also a living being that has a history. We need *Earth's Paradigm*.

On the other side, we live in an age of exponential growth of new information technologies and communication. The amazing development of information, in regard to the sources or the potential of its diffusion, generates a true revolution, not only affecting production and work, but mainly education and information formation.

Consider the scenario: *globalization* triggered by the advance of technological revolution, characterized by the internationalization of production and the expansion of cash flow; *regionalization* characterized by the formation of economical blocs; *fragmentation* that splits globalizers and globalized, center and suburbs, the ones that die of starvation and the ones that die because of excessive consumption, regional rivalry, political confrontation, ethnic and confessional, terrorism.

In this context, we should think of the future's education and start interrogating ourselves about the *categories* that can explain it. The classical Marxist categories – *determination*, *contradiction*, *necessity* and *possibility*, which structure the book *Capital* – are still valid. That's why they are still an obligatory reference to understand educational phenomena nowadays. However, the complexity of contemporaneous reality demands of the other pedagogical categories such as *planetarity*, *sustainability*, *virtuality*, *communicability*.

The concept *sustainability* may not be very appropriate to define this new pedagogy unless we redefine it. Sustainability is, for us, the *dream of well living*. Sustainability is the dynamic balance with oneself, with the others and with the

environment; it's the harmony between different people. We can say that sustainability represents a big hope. It opposes everything that's unsustainable. Unsustainability is the greed, the misery, the violence, the war, and illiteracy that pervade the present. That's why there seems to be an incompatibility of principles between *sustainability* and *capitalism*.

Nowadays, when speaking of *sustainability*, our mind pictures green forests, unspoiled rivers, beautiful landscapes, young people tracking, peace and serenity. *Common sense* is not deceiving us when these images are triggered, because these images are connected to moral principles, values and cultures, but sustainability is more than this all the same. It's about a *central category* of a new cosmovision and is one of the bedrocks of the new civilizational paradigm, which seeks the harmonization of the human being, with moral progress and the Earth itself. Sustainability represents a *concrete answer* to the damage humankind is inflicting to itself and the planet, more to itself than to the planet, because the Earth has a much better potential of regeneration. What's jeopardized is the living community of the planet.

Sustainability is about an economy that respects the boundaries of each ecosystem. It's about the social and individual responsibility of protecting and healing the Earth. It's about a change in humanity's lifestyle, one by one. It's about a new pattern of human relationship with nature and about a certain way of being in the world with others.

It's not only about changing our lifestyle. We need to change – parallel and simultaneously – the *system* that produces and reproduces it. Changes of individual behavior must be associated with *structural changes* in the mode of production.

Education is essential to achieve sustainability, to create a new and more sustainable future. Sustainable schools can add to the creation of more sustainable societies. Every subject and every teacher can add to education and sustainability: mathematics can deal with the data referring to environmental pollution and the growth of poverty and social injustice; linguistics can analyze the roles of the news, media and advertising in the formation of consumption habits; history and the social sciences can debate ethnocentrism, racism and gender harms.

The more we live in a sustainable way, the more we get the chance to build sustainable societies. When talking about *sustainable living*, it's understood as a lifestyle of well-living for everybody: a fair, productive and sustainable lifestyle. Let's widen our point of view from an *anthropocentric view* to a *planetary consciousness*, to the practice of a planetary citizenship, to a new social and ethical reference: the *planetary civilization*, which considers the Earth as a single and manifold community.

Sustainability is a powerful concept, a tool, an opportunity for education to freshen its old ways, built over competitive and predatory principles and values. To introduce sustainability and peace culture into schools – not only – is essential to make them more cooperative.

To educate for a sustainable life is to educate towards *voluntary simplicity* and *stillness*. Our lives must be guided by *new values*: simplicity, austerity, stillness, peace, serenity, listening, cohabitation, sharing, learning and doing together. We need, on the one hand, to take a more responsible stand in the face of the dominant culture, that is a war culture, and on the other hand, to take personal and social responsibility, practicing sustainability in our daily lives with our families, at work, at school and on the streets.

Education can play an important role in this context, questioning the consumerist lifestyle imposed by the dominant economical model. Schools have a great mobilizationist approach that's not being fully utilized. They can educate to help students understand the *risk consciousness* that we live with today. This way, they'll be educating for "another possible world", as supports the World Social Forum. Education for sustainability is to educate for another possible world, to educate for the emergence of what's not yet, the not-yet, the utopian. It's also educating to *rupture*, for *defiance*, for *refusal*, for saying "no", to yelling, to dreaming of possible worlds, to facing that with *human diversity* there cannot be only one fair, productive and sustainable way of living.

The world cannot be transformed without transforming people: changing the world and changing people are interconnected processes. Changing the world depends on us all: everyone must become aware and organize themselves. Educating for other possible worlds is education to overpower the merciless logic

of capital, grounded on individualism and profit, and to educate so as to radically change the current political and economic model in order to achieve social and ecological justice.

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