EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & THE WEAVING OF A CULTURE OF PEACE: COMPLEMENTARITIES AND SYNERGIES

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Introduction

The proclamation by the U.N. General Assembly of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) undoubtedly provides a major impetus for the promotion and integration of principles of “sustainable development” in all levels and modes of education worldwide. Indeed, UNESCO, as a leading agency for implementing the DESD, has identified it as one of the four global initiatives in education, the others being the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Education for All (EFA) and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD). As the UNESCO Education Sector’s Technical paper No. 1-2005 “Education for Sustainable Development in Action” clarified, these four initiatives, while different in focus and emphases, are interrelated and need to work together to fulfill a common agenda and overlapping goals.

However, drawing on my extensive and long-term role as a peace educator or in educating for a culture of peace, I feel it is meaningful to observe that several substantive and well developed innovations or movements in education are not identified as global initiatives in their own right. Apart from peace education, there are of course the long-standing fields of disarmament education, human rights education, multicultural or intercultural education, education for international understanding, citizenship education, and values education. In the UNESCO Technical Paper earlier mentioned, some of these initiatives are mentioned only in a subsidiary way when ESD is defined as emphasizing “aspects of learning that enhance the transition towards sustainability including future(s) education; citizenship education; education for a culture of peace; gender equality and respect for human rights; health education; population education; educating for protecting and managing natural resources; and education for sustainable consumption”.

It is important to recall that the international community, through the U.N., also affirmed the global significance of these other initiatives, such as the recently concluded Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), and the ongoing International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World (2001-2010). I have raised this observation principally because there are considerable complementarities and synergy of ideas and practices between and among all of these initiatives. Most importantly, we need to accord due respect to the commitment and tireless efforts of many individuals, communities, schools and other educational, social and cultural institutions or civil society organizations that are continuing to transform our contemporary realities of violence, militarization, injustices, human rights violations, ecological destruction and all forms of discrimination.

Specifically, in regard to the field of education for a culture of peace, the Mid-Term Report on the International Decade coordinated by David Adams and submitted in 2005 to the United Nations documented a broad range of programs and projects confirming that education can contribute creatively to the urgent goal of building a culture of peace. Indeed, as a lead agency for implementing the Decade, UNESCO has helped to facilitate some of these successful

programs in education for a culture of peace, through conferences, forums, teacher training workshops, curriculum development, ASP projects and UNESCO /UNITWIN Chairs. UNESCO Centres such as the Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding (APCEIU) has actively promoted EIU toward a culture of peace. Likewise, there are many exemplars of civil society movements (e.g. Hague Appeal for Peace, International Institutes on Peace Education) and universities worldwide (e.g. UN University for Peace, Costa Rica) that are doing valuable work in promoting peace education. Based on my personal experiences in South contexts, notably in the Philippines since 1986, when I collaborated in commencing the first graduate program in peace education, there is now extensive awareness and practice in education for a culture of peace from schools and universities to grassroots communities.

In sum, may I suggest that ESD and education for a culture of peace have much to share as well to collaborate in seeking to build a world that transcends violence, unsustainable relationships and systems, local/global injustices and a host of other conflicts that affect the well-being of humanity and our planet. I appreciate the opportunities during this meeting for exploring possibilities for dialogue on the complementarities and synergies between these global initiatives. A fruitful means of clarifying how ESD and education for a culture of peace (“ECOP”) inter-relates is to consider the role of sustainability in each of the multiple dimensions of ECOP. How do principles and issues of sustainability feature in the root causes of conflicts and peacelessness, and why they are essential in resolution or transformation of the conflicts toward a nonviolent, just, compassionate and sustainable world?

Figure 1: A Holistic Understanding of a Culture of Peace
Presented at the APCEIU Expert Consultation on EIU, Fiji, 2002 (Toh, S.H. & Cawagas, V.F.)

As shown in Figure 1 above, a holistic conceptual framework of education for a culture of peace may be articulated in terms of six major themes: Dismantling the Culture of War; Living with Justice and Compassion; Promoting Human Rights and Responsibilities; Building Cultural Respect, Reconciliation & Solidarity; Cultivating Inner Peace; Living in Harmony with the Earth.
Respect, Reconciliation, and Solidarity; Living in Harmony with the Earth; and Cultivating Inner Peace. The themes are represented by the metaphor of a flower to emphasize their interconnectedness as “petals” to form an organic whole. All the petals, representing the six themes, are equally important to the essence of the flower. Educators may choose to initially focus on any of the petals but to be holistic, due consideration will need to be given to all the other petals. Hence the order in which the six themes are presented in this framework does not imply a hierarchy of importance of the six themes. It is also important to note that this is only one framework, among several, that have been proposed for conceptualizing education for a culture of peace. However, experiences in implementing it in several South and North contexts suggest that the six themes actively resonate with and are perceived to be relevant with contemporary societal and global realities. For the purpose of this paper, the fifth theme “Living in Harmony with the Earth”, given its direct focus on environmental sustainability, will be weaved into the dialogue on the five other themes, rather than separately analyzed. In the concluding segment of the paper, the relevance of key pedagogical principles of peace education will also be clarified for ESD.

Sustainability and a Culture of Peace

(a) Dismantling the Culture of War

Tragically, the scourge of wars and armed conflicts underpinned by a pervasive culture of militarization, is still a major problem confronting humanity in this new century. The so-called peace dividend after the end of the Cold war remains very partially realized. Millions of peoples, including the very young, continue to suffer trauma, hardships, pain, and death., from internal armed conflicts, inter-state violence, militarized occupations, and a seemingly endless and complex cycle of “terrorism” and “counter-terrorism”. The problems of proliferation of “weapons of mass destruction” and conventional weaponry continues to escalate, perpetuating or threatening to ignite further armed interventions and violence. However, despite the odds, many civil society organizations and representative of some governments remain committed to the nonviolent resolution of armed conflicts and the generic problem of militarization. Efforts to abolish the arms trade, including the historic treaty to ban landmines; stop recruitment of child soldiers and provide for their rehabilitation and trauma healing; and post-war or conflict peace-building efforts are also integral components of education for a culture of peace. At a micro-level, dismantling the culture of war also applies to overcoming the problem of physical violence in schools (e.g., bullying, assaults, corporal punishment, “gang” fighting, and teacher victimization), and in homes (e.g. domestic violence). And the widespread cultural conditioning towards the “acceptability” of violence via media, internet, videogames, toys and even sport. Consequently, education for conflict resolution and critical media literacy are playing vital and constructive tools in peace education.

Turning now to ESD, there is now considerable evidence of the interconnections between these various dimensions of a culture of war and issues of sustainability (Renner, 2005). Wars, armed conflicts and militarization have caused or continue to deepen ecological destruction, whether from bombs, missiles, mines (even after hostilities have ceased) or toxic wastes of military production and activities. When military, industrial and even civilian infrastructure (e.g. oil wells, refineries, water, sanitation etc) are destroyed, or chemical agents and nowadays “depleted uranium” weapons are deployed, a host of long-term post-war environmental problems ensue, including increased incidence of diseases. Increasingly too, the link between competition over resources and conflicts (sometimes leading to wars) is growing stronger across the world (Klare, 2001). Other significant social and cultural effects of militarization globally include the diminished availability of resources for basic human development when trillions of dollars are monopolized by wasteful expenditures on armaments and militarized ‘security’. Where foreign military bases have been established, women in particular have been subject to sexual violence and exploitation, while millions of war-created refugees have placed great stresses on the environment. It is also meaningful to note that when nations or communities have engaged in
environmental cooperation (e.g. use and management of shared waterways and other environmental resources), conflicts and potential wars have been prevented while ensuring sustainable development that benefits all parties (Conca, Carius & Dabelko, 2005).

In conceptualizing a holistic paradigm of ESD, it is therefore essential to include issues and problems related to a culture of “war” from macro to micro levels of life. Perspectives and experiences drawn from disarmament education, education for nonviolence and education for conflict resolution or transformation all have considerable relevance to the theory and practice of ESD. Unless current and future generations of children and adults are challenged to overcome a collective consciousness and attitudes that violence is an acceptable strategy to confront conflicts, than the culture of war, with all its unsustainable practices and consequences, will remain strong.

(b) Living with Justice and Compassion

Another key theme in educating for a culture of peace is living with justice and compassion, which seeks to build local national, international and global relationships and structures that adequately meet the basic needs of all peoples based on values of dignity, freedom and justice. This vision is also implicit or explicit in the MDGs, EFA, International Literacy Decade and ESD as indicated in the UNESCO Technical Paper No.1-2005. Over several decades now, the concept of “national and international development” has been articulated as the vehicle for overcoming symptoms of poverty, hunger, ill-health and other economic and social deprivations experienced by a majority of peoples and communities.

The dominant paradigm of development, expressed in related concepts like modernization and of late, globalization, has argued that with rapid growth; reliance on the engine of free trade and the private sector, more and more wealth will be produced that will “trickle down” to all citizens. North (advanced industrialized and wealthy) nations can help the South catch up through aid, trade and investments via integration in the growth-centred globalized economy, marketplace, and political order dominated by the powerful nation-states, transnational corporations, and international agencies or regimes (e.g., IMF, World Bank, WTO, APEC, and NAFTA). However, as the countless voices of ordinary peoples in marginalized contexts worldwide have passionately revealed, such modernization and globalization have increased structural violence against the poor majorities. Structural violence refers to the unequal and unjust distribution of economic power and resources so. Internally and globally, the rich-poor gaps continue to widen.

Education for a culture of peace and indeed ESD must therefore face the challenges of world poverty and recognize that the root causes are inequalities and injustices. As the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan stated: “true peace is far more than the absence of war. It is a phenomenon that encompasses economic development and social justice.” The ILO’s World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization: A Fair Globalization has noted that “while wealth is being created ... too many countries and people are not sharing in its benefits.” The Commission therefore calls for globalization that is “fair, inclusive, democratically governed, and provides opportunities and tangible benefits for all countries and peoples.”

Worldwide, ordinary peoples, NGOs, CSOs, and some critical political and governmental representatives have consequently been educating and mobilizing for an alternative framework of development that one acronym PEACE refers to as Participatory, Equitable, Appropriate (in values and technology), Critically empowering and Ecologically sustainable. PEACEful development has the central priority of meeting the basic needs of all citizens. From rural to urban contexts, the poor and solidarity groups are empowering themselves through critical education leading to self-reliant, equity-led and sustainable projects.

Undoubtedly, the interdependencies between sustainability and living with justice and
compassion are very strong. To begin with, the dominant priority given to unlimited economic growth (what one UNDP report labeled as “ruthless” growth) and consumption places grossly unsustainable demands on planetary resources. If all human beings were to live with an over-heavy ecological footprint that a minority presently “enjoy”, we would need many more “planet Earths”. As mines gobble up ever more needed minerals and other raw materials needed for existing and aspirant industrial and consumer machines (e.g., China, India); as agribusiness convert ever large tracts of land into “monocultures” of cash/export-oriented crops; as other natural resources are depleted (e.g., forests, fisheries etc); as infrastructure like dams displace ordinary citizens from ancestral domains; as commercialization of the most basic of resources, water, is promoted by globalization and national policies; as the pace and scale of pollution of air, land and water intensifies; as elite-centred tourism causes more environmental damage; as the relentless pursuit of biotechnology threatens to undermine the ecological integrity of planetary systems; as environmental resources are depleted to repay the crippling debt burden - - so especially the poor and marginalized will have even less resources for their basic survival, while forced to bear the burden of pollution and human-made “natural” disasters (e.g. industrial accidents, toxic wastes, flooding, landslides, drought, chemical poisoning etc). (Worldwatch Institute, 2005; Anderson, 2000; Shiva, 2002). Moreover, in an interdependent world, the “rich” cannot also escape the long-term consequences of such an unsustainable development paradigm.

In sum, ESD needs to include within its paradigm and curriculum a critique of and a challenge to rethink the ideology of “progress” driving consumerist technologically advanced societies. ESD learners should be sensitized to the ongoing work to replace conventional and dominant indicators of economic “success” (e.g. GNP, GDP) with more holistic indicators such as human development index, “gross national happiness” (advocated by the nation of Bhutan), and the GPI (“genuine progress index”) that take into account principles of sustainability, justice and other dimensions of a culture of peace. Nowadays, the cult of advertising, which seeks to shape consumers’ tastes, has even tapped into the increasing public concern over the environment, by subliminally associating the latest unsustainable products (e.g. SUVs) with virtually pristine environment.

Most importantly, ESD that encompasses living with justice and compassion would strongly emphasize the concept of “green justice”. This means that sustainable development cannot only be for the benefit of one’s nation or community. If “sustainable development” is conditioned to serve the unchanged goals of growth-centred globalization, the roots of the ecological crisis will remain unshaken. Rather, ESD challenges each person to consider how he/she as well as their institutions or agencies (e.g. governments, transnational corporations, consumer lifestyles etc) may be as much a part of the problem of local and global injustices that are accompanied by ecological destruction. This challenge is as much applicable to the citizens of North societies that disproportionately benefit from unfair global trading and financial systems as the elites and middle classes of South nations. In catalyzing personal and social action for sustainability, ESD hence can draw on the inspiration of a broad spectrum of aid and development NGOs and community CSOs (now collaborating in the World Social Forum) that promote links of solidarity with marginalized peoples in the “global South” advocating for alternative aid, trade and other foreign policies. (International Forum on Globalization, 2002; ). Not least, a holistic ESD encourages learner to re-think unsustainable consumerist lifestyles As Durning (1992) aptly asks “How much is Enough?” This issue is revisited and elaborated in the fifth theme of educating for a culture of peace (“cultivating inner peace”) and relates the principle of justice with the ethics of compassion.

Furthermore, an ESD that fully integrates a concern to transcend structural violence also needs to be mindful of the emerging trend of “corporate environmentalism” and to help learners to understand its agenda of “co-optation” of the principles and values of sustainability and sustainable development (Karliner, 1997). While acknowledging that some corporations and organized entities such as the Business Council for Sustainable Development can and have helped to reduce certain aspects of environmental degradation and imbalances, critical ESD
also alerts learners to the existing and potential contradictions of corporate-led “sustainable development” policies. There is regrettably growing evidence of a kind of corporate “green-washing” whose co-optation of environment care need to be continually challenged by civil society groups worldwide. Citizens of a country also need to be mindful of conduct by their nations’ transnational corporations that follow a ‘double standard’ of environmental responsibility, so that business ethically do not cause ecological destruction and other social, political and economic negativities (e.g. corruption, human rights violations) because of the excuse that “laws” or monitoring mechanisms in another context are less “strict” then requirements at home.

(c) Promoting Human Rights and Responsibilities

The building of a culture of peace in all societies cannot overlook the fulfillment of the full spectrum of human rights (civil, political, economic, social, or cultural) as embodied in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. All persons deserve to live and to be treated as human beings each with inalienable rights, and human rights policies, laws and education need to be promoted and defended at individual, community, national and international levels. Human rights are better protected and promoted when ordinary peoples are educated and empower themselves to build a strong civil society to which agencies of state and private power must be accountable in the spirit of authentic democracy (Reardon, 1995; Symonides, 1998).

Since 1948, when the Universal Declaration was proclaimed, there is no doubt that varying rates of progress have been made in promoting human rights in various societies and the international community. However, as human rights advocates and educators will agree, considerable challenges remain in bridging the gaps between policies and legislative instruments and practice of human rights. In so many societies, powerful elites and agencies continue to engage in conduct human rights violations which inflict great suffering, pain and indignities to countless men, women and children. In international relations, militarized conflicts and interventions and as earlier noted, the structural violence of unequal economic structures have also perpetrated denial of the rights to food, healthcare, housing, clean water and a plethora of basic economic and social rights and entitlements of many citizens and communities. The geo-political “double standard” of condemning human rights violations by “unfriendly” states and leaders, while tolerating, or even abetting via aid and diplomacy, the violations of “allies” or “friends” need to be challenged in ESD. Ecological destruction in the pursuit of “ruthless” economic growth also leaves in its trail severe violations of a whole host of rights. The tragic and dehumanizing exemplars of industrial accidents like Bhopal or Chernobyl, or deforestation which ultimately led to catastrophic flash flooding that killed several thousand Filipinos on the island of Ormoc come to mind. To date, the global conduct of corporations and other business organizations, and even international financial institutions has also not been subject to the same level of monitoring and accountability as, example, repressive dictators and generals who commit crimes against humanity.

Another participant in this meeting, Jeff Plantilla, will be articulating in detail the relationship between human rights principles and instruments and ESD, and I look forward to the dialogue on his contribution. From the perspective of education for a culture of peace, I would like to highlight only a few issues. To begin with, the courageous and dedicated work of human rights advocates and educators who often face the daily risks of repression in some contexts, need to be fully supported. ESD should therefore provide opportunities for learners to learn about and be inspired by the work of grassroots organizations and individuals struggling to demand accountability from various powerful sectors within or outside their societies. In this regard, the cause of defending human rights is assisted when national or global media are willing to shine their light on violations, though this does not always happen since state or corporate media can often be a central part of power-structures that condone those very violations in the name of “national interests”, “national security”, or other self-interested geo-strategic agendas.
Secondly, ESD needs to help learners sort through the issue of “universality” versus “relativism” in understanding and implementing human rights. Although reference is made to recognizing cultural and social circumstances in the preamble of the Vienna Declaration and Frame of Action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, nonetheless this Declaration clearly affirms the universality principle. As human rights advocates and the numerous international conventions and instruments emphasize, cultural beliefs and practices cannot be used as a rationale to violate human rights. For example, in some cultures and communities, women can be subject to physical violence in their homes. Such domestic violence cannot be justified as a culturally specific norm or practice that overrides the universal rights to security and safety.

Thirdly, educators for a culture of peace and likewise many human rights educators, would suggest that ESD needs to be especially attentive to the human rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women, children, refugees and indigenous peoples. Unsustainable development and globalization from above have, for example, exploited women’s under-paid and socially controlled labour in the global assembly line and migrant worker sector, while subjecting them to greater hardships in accessing water and other basic needs. In patriarchal social and cultural systems, men enjoy a greater fulfillment of their human rights compared to women in almost every social, economic, cultural and political dimensions of life. Furthermore, ESD needs to highlight and acknowledge the vital role that women have and continue to struggle to play in enhancing the sustainable management of resources. Theoretically, ESD can usefully draw on the insights from the field called eco-feminism, which grounds sustainability principles in feminist worldviews and perspectives (Reuther, 1992).

Similarly, ESD needs to mobilize advocacy for the rights of children, a group which is increasingly serving as the most vulnerable and exploited underclass of the unjust world and national economic orders, whether as street-children, prostitutes or bonded labour. As earlier mentioned, many are also brutally recruited and traumatized as child soldiers. Another group whose human rights continue to be severely violated is the refugees and asylum seekers. In this regard, ESD in a nation like Australia necessarily challenges learners to critically reflect on the consistency of official policies (e.g. mandatory detention of asylum seekers, even children until recently) with the various human rights conventions to which Australia is a signatory. In the next theme of educating for a culture of peace, the rights of an often much marginalized group, namely, indigenous people, will also be examined for the links of education for a culture of peace with education for sustainability.

Not least, ESD which integrates human rights education also need to ensure that learners understand and develop commitment to human rights as much as a deep sense of responsibilities. Neglecting this task will likely lead to a self-centred and egoistic demand for human rights (“mine” or “ours”) with little self-critical acknowledgement of being responsible for not violating and helping to act in solidarity in promoting the human rights of others.

(d) Building Cultural Respect, Reconciliation, and Solidarity

In this theme of educating for a culture of peace, the focus lies on helping learners to critically understand conflicts between peoples of different cultures and ethnic/“racial” identities. Compounded by a culture of war and structural violence, these conflicts have included the outcomes of brutal violence even to the point of genocide and ethnic cleansing. While Samuel Huntington’s thesis of a “clash of civilizations” has often been cited to “explain” these conflicts, peace educators and critical multicultural educators would challenge the thesis as simplistic and dangerously leading to a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’. This simplistic argument overlooks the complexities of “civilizations” and ignores the evidence of intercultural cooperation and solidarity even when conflicts or even wars have occurred. Rather, conflicts involving communities and peoples of different cultures and traditions are not usually caused by
cultural difference per se, but by a complexity of root political, economic and social causes (e.g. contestation for resources or territories; struggles for justice and self-determination; political stereotyping in a fear-based post-9/11 national security paradigm).

This is especially exemplified by the situation of indigenous peoples worldwide. Victims of historical episodes of violent conquest and colonization, indigenous cultures and communities in contemporary times continue to face the violations of their rights under the dominant paradigm of unsustainable development under the agendas of modernization and globalization. Labeled as impediments to “progress”, indigenous peoples are displaced and/or repressed if they resist displacement or cooptation by dams, mining, logging, agribusiness, energy infrastructure or investments and ironically even some “environmental conservation” initiatives (e.g. national parks) (Bodley, 1988; Clad, 1985).

ESD clearly has a responsibility to cultivate among learners solidarity for the struggles of indigenous peoples in all continents for their human rights and cultural survival. However, this solidarity is evoked not merely because of the violations of indigenous people’s rights. It is also based on a deep appreciation and understanding that indigenous peoples hold within their cultural fabric and traditions much wisdom consistent with modern worldviews on sustainability (Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992). Echoing the environment and development document, “Our Common Future”, the 1995 Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, “Our Creative Diversity” also noted that

through centuries if living close to nature, indigenous people throughout the world have acquired detailed knowledge of their environment and its natural resources. Living in and from the rich variety of complex ecosystems, they understand the functioning of these systems, the properties of plants and animals and the techniques for using and managing the systems. Equally, ecological concerns are embedded in their very struggles for survival, identity, autonomy, and in many cases democratic rights and governance. Who decides the fate of tribal culture and nature? Do the people decide for themselves? Or does the state or the conservationists? That is why cries such as “Our rule is in our villages” or “Our rights over the forests” are being heard in forests around the world. (pg. 211).

Indigenous knowledge, practices and rituals in relating to “nature” are therefore increasingly being recognized and in some cases, revived by indigenous communities themselves, for their significant contributions to enhancing biodiversity conservation and planetary and inter-generational sustainability (Bennagen & Lucas-Fernan, 1996; IDRC, 1993; Hawthorne, 2001). Regrettably although not surprisingly, this recognition of the ‘wisdom of the elders” has also been cooped by powerful economic forces for profit (e.g. using indigenous knowledge to manufacture/patent new pharmaceuticals and even genetic material). ESD hence needs to bring to the attention of learners to the phenomenon called “biopiracy” which commodifies and privatizes indigenous knowledge for the narrow economic benefit of corporate elites and firms contrary to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Shiva, 1997). In sum, ESD has the challenge of catalyzing non-indigenous peoples’ commitment to authentic reconciliation with our indigenous sisters and brothers, for in reconciling, we are able to humbly accept the limitations and errors of our past and present thinking and action steeped in unsustainability.

Many societies have through colonization and migration also become highly multicultural. In building a culture of peace in such multicultural contexts, there is clearly a need to promote values, attitudes and social-cultural policies based on mutual respect, understanding, non-discrimination, and non-racism. As the Delors Commission on Education for the 21st century stressed, one key pillar of education is learning to live together based on the principle of unity diversity. The development of multicultural education or intercultural education is hence an essential dimension in ESD. However, care is needed in ESD not to reduce multiculturalism
and multicultural education to a superficial ‘celebration of diversity and harmony’ via a so-called festivals or 4Ds approach (dance, diet, dress, dialect) that avoids dealing with the root causes of intercultural disharmony (e.g., racism, discrimination, structural injustices, and historical oppression).

However, in looking at contemporary thinking and practices in multicultural education from an ESD worldview, it must be admitted that the theme of sustainability and sustainable development is often neglected. Awareness of and a willingness to challenge racism and other forms of cultural discrimination do not necessarily imply an appreciation of the problems of environmental destruction. Newcomers or citizens born in a multicultural society like Australia or Canada may be culturally respectful and sensitive, but continue to engage in unsustainable lifestyles or support government and private sector policies that favour unsustainable growth and economic development locally and globally. Some may even subscribe to the idea that as globalization is leading to a cultural homogeneity based on consumerism and globalized media and cultural goods and services, then the vision of cultural diversity, as a part of biodiversity, is increasingly less relevant. Clearly, how to encourage a rethinking of this view will be a major challenge for ESD.

Finally, in the promotion of multiculturalism in ESD, insights can now be drawn from the growth of what is called interfaith dialogue, as representatives of diverse faiths, religions and spiritual traditions are meeting to more deeply understanding each other’s knowledge and spirituality traditions while respecting differences. Exemplars of such interfaith dialogue movements include the World Conference on Religions and Peace, Parliament of the World’s Religions, United Religions Initiative and many local and grassroots community organizations. UNESCO has also been active in promoting such interfaith and intercultural dialogue initiatives (e.g. the Declaration on the Contribution of Religions to a Culture of Peace; the Dialogue of Civilizations). From dialogue and respect has emerged in many contexts a process of reconciliation and healing of bitterness, enmity and distrust. Most importantly, the different faiths are finding that they share many common values and ethical principles for guiding relationships among all peoples and culture nonviolent and just interfaith and intercultural relationship (Mische & Merkling, 2001). In turn, this common ground of shared values should hopefully lead to collaborative action among all faiths to resolve common societal and global problems (e.g., injustice, violence, human rights violations, discrimination, racism, and ecological destruction). This was affirmed in the International Symposium on “Cultivating Wisdom, Harvesting Peace” held at the Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, in Aug, 2005, with the support of UNESCO, various National Commissions of UNESCO, UNESCO centres and offices, and diverse faith, interfaith and educational institutions (Toh & Cawagas, 2006). As elaborated in the next fifth theme of educating for a culture of peace, the role of faiths and spirituality traditions in helping to develop a consciousness of sustainability should be tapped in ESD.

### (e) Cultivating Inner Peace

The four previous themes of building a culture of peace and the links with ESD have focused mainly on visible relationships and structures of human life. However, there is a growing recognition among peace educators that the inner dimensions and sources of peaceful values and practices should be equally cultivated, given the realities of feelings of alienation, loss of meaning, and an epidemic of depression and despair, especially in affluent societies. This education for inner peace draws deeply the insights and wisdom from the teachings of prophets, saints, and sages of diverse faiths and spirituality traditions. One increasingly practiced though not necessarily the only strategy for developing inner equilibrium and tranquility lies in diverse methods of meditation and contemplation. However, it is important to not reduce meditation to a ‘technique’, but rather as part of a holistic process of spiritual growth. Moreover, in educating for a culture of peace, the theme of cultivating inner is mindful
that inner peace should not be sought for by a self in a disconnected way to the search for outer peace or building a peaceful world. As the engaged Buddhists and basic Christian communities have, for example, emphasized, peoples of faith and spirituality also cultivate a strong responsibility to work for nonviolent, loving, compassionate and just relationships, structures and a world community. In Islam, while the greater “jihad” is to struggle for inner purification, Muslims are also called to practice social justice in society and the world.

Considering now the principles and values of ESD, and recalling the analysis made in the preceding pages of its linkages with other themes of educating for a culture of peace, it is not difficult to see how cultivating inner peace is also in accord with sustainability. Thus when faiths and spirituality traditions educate their followers to gently see through the illusions of excessive materialism, power, greed, unkindness, and violence, and other attachments (e.g. power, status, fame etc), they are more likely to reconsider the ideology of over-consumerism, fetish of “brands or logos or fashion, and the reduction of “happiness” to “quantity” rather than quality” of life. Through cultivating greater inner peace, a person is more inspired to consider what is referred to as voluntary simplicity based on lifestyles and interpersonal and social relationships that uphold sustainability, justice, nonviolence, respect and loving kindness for all beings and the planet (Burch, 2000; Thich, 1996).

Not surprisingly, there is now considerable interest in “green theology”, whereby different faiths are examined as inspirational sources of environmental values toward the vision of a shared global ethic. The ideas and work of Christian theologians and environmental advocates (e.g. Thomas Berry, Sean McDonagh, Matthew Fox ) and engaged Buddhists (e.g. Joanna Macy, Sulak Sivaraksa, Thich Nhat Hanh) are a few exemplars in this regard (McDonagh, 1994; Sivaraksa, 2001). This link between faith and ecological sustainability is illustrated by the following commentaries on various traditions:

Various texts and rituals extol the earth (bhu), the atmosphere (bhuvaḥ), and sky (sva), as well as the goddess associated with the earth (Prthīvī), and the gods associated with water (Ap), with fire and heat (Agni) and the wind (Vayu). The centrality of these gods and goddesses suggests an underlying ecological sensitivity within the Hindu tradition. [Source: Christopher Key Chapple, Loyola Marymount University, Forum on Religion and Ecology]

We are only tenants on this earth. The land belongs to God. We are given permission to enjoy the Creator’s abundant gifts, but we must not waste or wantonly destroy anything. The Jewish injunction known as bal tashit teaches us to live lightly, conserving earth’s abundance. [Source: Daniel B. Fink, Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel, Forum on Religion and Ecology]

Daoism has a unique sense of value in that it judges affluence by the number of different species. If all things in the universe grow well, then a society is a community of affluence. If not, this kingdom is on the decline. This view encourages both government and people to take good care of nature. This thought is a special contribution by Daoism to the conservation of nature. [Source: Alliance of Religions and Conservation http://www.arcworld.org/faiths.]

“The entire cosmos is a cooperative. The sun, the moon, and the stars live together as a cooperative. The same is true for humans and animals, trees and the earth. When we realize that the world is a mutual, interdependent, cooperative enterprise … then we can build a noble environment. If our lives are not based on this truth, then we shall perish.” (Thai Monk, Buddhadasa Bhikku)

Shinto tradition acknowledges a deep debt to the blessing of nature and the spiritual power which brings about life, fertility, and prosperity. This life-giving power was called Musubi (divine power of growth), and perceived in all the workings of nature. Since the Japanese people felt the divine within nature, they came to hold the ideal of a life that was in harmony with and united with
We affirm that the world, as God's handiwork, has its own inherent integrity: that land, waters, air, forests, mountains and all creatures, including humanity, are “good” in God's sight. The integrity of creation has a social aspect which we recognize as peace with justice, and an ecological aspect which we recognize in the self-renewing, sustainable character of natural ecosystems. [World Council of Churches]

Islam teaches that we will one day be judged by Allah for how we have discharged our responsibilities following the guidance of Islam. Have we been good trustees, and have we kept nature in harmony? So there will be a day of reckoning. [Source: Alliance of Religions and Conservation http://www.arcworld.org/faiths]

We are called to the vision of Guru Nanak which is a World Society comprising God-conscious human beings who have realized God. To these spiritual beings the earth and the universe are sacred; all life is unity, and their mission is the spiritualization of all. Sikhism [Source: Alliance of Religions and Conservation http://www.arcworld.org/faiths]

The world reflects the qualities and attributes of God, and should therefore be greatly respected and cherished. Baha’i Scriptures describe nature as an emanation of God’s will. Nature is God’s Will and is its expression in and through the contingent world [Tablets of Baha’u’llah p 142]

In the August 2005 UNESCO-supported International Symposium on “Cultivating Wisdom, Harvesting Peace” organized by the Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University and involving over 120 representatives of diverse faiths and cultures, recommendations made on the theme of “Enhancing Sustainable Futures” included:

“22. Educating for cultivating wisdom and building peace recognizes that the ecological crisis in the contemporary world is due to the worldviews and actions of individuals, institutions and systems that accelerate environmental destruction and humanity’s unsustainable use of planetary resources.

23. All educational programs need to draw on the values and wisdom of diverse faiths, cultures and civilizations to nurture the moral, spiritual and ethical commitment of human beings to relate with each other and our planet in ways that enhance ecological integrity and sustainable futures (Toh & Cawagas, 2006: 18)

In recent decades, this turn towards re-awakening the deep principles of sustainability across diverse faiths has therefore led to community and individual environmental care action on the part of religious or lay leaders and followers. As Gaza (2000) noted in her review of Buddhist environmental activism, the guiding principles of mindfulness, compassion and non-harming have catalyzed Buddhist communities and individual practitioners to challenge further destruction of wilderness, logging, chemical pesticide pollution, inhumane treatment of animals, and unsustainable consumption habits. In Christian schools worldwide, curriculum development and teaching has been moved by “green theology” to include core issues and principles of the integrity of creation and sustainability.

A further dimension of cultivating inner peace and its relevance to ESD lies in the field that Theodore Roszak and others (Roszak, Gomes & Kanner, 1995) have called “eco-psychology”, or alternatively as psychoecology, green therapy, ecotherapy, Earth-centred therapy and other parallel terms. In his words, “ecology needs psychology; psychology needs ecology”. Eco-psychology recognizes E.O.Wilson’s hypothesis of “biophilia”, “the innate emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms”, and argues for the idea of the ‘ecological unconscious’ as a “resource for restoring (humanity) to environmental harmony”. Rather than tactics of shock, shame, and contempt, eco-psychologists seeks to nurture this ecological unconscious. In a parallel way, though drawing on her Buddhist worldwide, engaged eco-
Buddhist Joanna Macy has designed and implemented educational programs to help people understand and overcome their ‘environmental despair’, which includes fears, pain, guilt, denial, and powerlessness. In her view, “unlocking our pain for the world reconnects us with the larger web of life”.

In sum, this reflection on cultivating inner peace as an essential theme of educating for a culture of peace suggests that a holistic paradigm of ESD should not shy away from ideas, principles and sources of spiritual knowledge and wisdom found in all cultures, faiths, and civilizations. Understandably, the rise in dominance and power of “secularism” has tended to marginalize as “irrelevant” or “superstitious” considerations of values and principles rooted in ancient wisdoms. While affirming that secular systems of knowledge and social practices have helped to build a culture of peace and sustainability, ESD needs to be critically open to other sources of understanding and sustainable living. Furthermore, by expecting this engagement to be critical, it also means that faith and spirituality should also be subject to critical examination for contradictions in theory and practice.

**Pedagogical principles for ESD**

A final crucial dimension of educating for a culture of peace and its fruitful collaboration with ESD relates to the issue of "how" or the "process" of educating peacefully. Across diverse fields of the educational initiatives mentioned at the beginning of this paper, there is a strong consensus that the desired goals and purposes of teaching and learning cannot be accomplished only on then basis of appropriate content, even if it be the most comprehensive. Equally important is how that content is taught and learned. Hence, in peace education, disarmament education, human rights education, multicultural education and ESD, it is vital to clarify what pedagogical principles needs to be weaved in the teaching-learning process. In this regard, may I share the following principles that have guided my work in educating for a culture of peace in both South and North contexts. Despite cultural, social, economic and other societal differences, my co-educators and I have found these principles to be perceived as relevant and helpful to many educators in formal or non-formal community sites. The underpinning philosophy of the educational process seeks to be critical, empowering and transformative (Toh & Cawagas, 1991; Toh, Cawagas & Durante, 1992; Goldstein & Selby, 2002; O’Sullivan, 1999; Hicks, 1988). No claim is made, however, about the level and degree of “success”, and many barriers and difficulties have also been encountered. I would suggest that these pedagogical principles can also be helpful to ESD implementation and practice, though as John Fien’s paper in this workshop has argued, there are challenges in working with youth in the Asia-Pacific region to promote active environmental citizenship.

**Holistic Understanding**

The first pedagogical principle is holistic understanding. As a culture of peace and similarly “sustainable development” encompasses diverse issues, it is not useful for learners to acquire only a fragmented understanding of conflict, violence, unsustainable development and ways to peace and sustainability. **Holistic understanding** means looking into inter-relationships between and among different problems of peacelessness, conflict and violence in terms of root causes and resolutions. For example, the symptoms of structural violence and ecological destruction are usually linked to human rights violations, militarization and over- and unjust consumption of the earth’s resources. Intercultural conflict will not necessarily be resolved through only enhanced mutual respect and understanding of each other’s values and traditions if, for example, the underlying roots causes of injustice and unsustainable exploitation of resources are also not addressed. Micro level conflicts like personal alienation and addictions may be rooted in macro level problems of poverty and inequalities, as well as in a lack of inner peace. It is therefore essential to draw a learner’s understanding of various conflicts into a holistic framework; otherwise, a partial analysis which overlooks the wider roots of a problem will only result in partial, unrealistic or ineffectual resolutions.
In a school context, an important dimension of holistic understanding lies in infusing education for a culture of peace and ESD across all curricular and extra-curricular areas. The world needs citizens in science, technology, business, and law oriented to sustainability and peace as much as in the social sciences and arts. Holistic understanding also advocates that the various levels and modes of education are equally important, whether formal or non-formal, whether educating children or adults or social, economic and cultural groups. Most importantly, all modes of education should complement, sustain, and support each other. For instance, formal ESD and peace education are strengthened by linking students’ understanding with concrete realities and practices of conflict, peacebuilding and sustainable development in the non-formal sectors. Furthermore, educating for a culture of peace and ESD needs to involve the very marginalized and oppressed as well as the non-poor, advantaged, governing and elite sectors of society, so that possible allies may be gained for transformation.

Dialogue

In the words of the well-known Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, contemporary educational systems have emphasized or continue to promote a “banking” approach where teachers assume the role of authoritarian “experts” and learners become passive imbibers of knowledge. Such a mode of teaching and learning would be inconsistent with any educational paradigm that seeks to be transformative and empowering, such as ESD, peace education and related initiatives. Alternatively a dialogical strategy however cultivates a more horizontal teacher-learner relationship in which both dialogically educate and learn from each other. In this regard, the community of transformative educators tends to rely on creative and participatory teaching-learning strategies. This mode of learning does not seek to “indoctrinate” and ensures that learners are exposed to a range of alternative perspectives on a problem. It also encourages learners to talk about their realities, experiences, understandings, biases, commitments, hopes, despairs and dreams. For example, a TV talk show format could be used in which small groups of students represent the views of a corporation, local elites, police or military personnel, villagers, and an NGO or CSO to discuss a conflict over an economic development project that is having an impact on the sustainability of the local environment. This simulation is then followed by a process of critical debriefing and analysis, with the educator sharing further knowledge and details of the various perspectives. In this way, learners are able to appreciate that there are various paradigms in environmentalism and sustainable development (Pepper, 1996). The learning process thus simultaneously surfaces the level of awareness and personal commitment of learners, as well as offer possibilities for dialogue within a “learning community.” In dialogue, the essential process of cultivating peace, as earlier discussed, is facilitated, so that, for example, learners as “consumers” are encouraged to self-reflect on their own “moral consciousness” and ethics in making consumer choices (McGregor, 2006).

In many societies, curriculum in formal educational systems tends to be purely academic and most often irrelevant to local, social, economic, and cultural realities. Education as dialogue should entail much closer linkages between learning institutions, the wider community and other living faiths and spirituality. If possible, representatives from the community and wider society can be invited to share their views and experiences. Learners can then be challenged to see how their more “abstract” academic knowledge can be applied to community problems. They could gain from exposure to traditional or folk wisdom in coping with daily problems. Learners should develop the humility to appreciate that people who may not hold any formal credentials also possess knowledge that may be valuable and relevant to people-centred social development and human survival.

Values Formation
Education for a peaceful and sustainable global community also emphasizes the crucial role of values formation through its pedagogical processes (Toh & Cawagas, 1991). Recognizing that all knowledge is never free of values, the peace or ESD educator constantly encourages learners to surface innermost values that shape their understanding of realities and their actions in the world. Peace education and ESD needs to be very explicit about their preferred values, such as compassion, justice, equity, gender-fairness, caring for life, sharing, reconciliation, integrity, sustainability, hope and active nonviolence. A strong indicator of peaceful pedagogy is that it stirs hopefulness, a faith that ordinary peoples can exercise patience, commitment, and courage in transforming their realities without falling into despair and a sense of powerlessness.

Finally, those educating for a culture of peace as well as ESD have to draw upon their inner strengths and convictions, which in turn are nurtured by a willingness to continually contemplate on personal values and motivations. Why are we educating for peace and sustainability? How can we educate and work for a peaceful and sustainable world without being unpeaceful in our thoughts and practices? In the Asia-Pacific region, diverse civilizations and cultures have, for thousands of years, emphasized the essential role of cultivating values or virtues through education. As earlier noted, in reference to inter-faith dialogue, there is a growing consensus among the world’s faiths and spirituality traditions that their core beliefs are infused with many common values and virtues such as nonviolence, justice, compassion, love, mercy, forgiveness, honesty, kindness, humility, generosity, courage, and patience. ESD in the region therefore can draw deeply in the essence of the various faiths and civilizations to help learners form or strengthen the values so essential in the building of a sustainable and peaceful world.

Critical empowerment

Dialogue per se is also limiting if it stops there. As Freire articulated, it needs to promote conscientization or what may be alternatively called critical empowerment. While dialogical, participatory, and non-banking pedagogies and methodologies are crucial, they are not sufficient. Thus if ESD or education for a culture of peace or human rights education and the like are not able to move not only minds but also hearts and spirits into personal and social action for peace building, it will remain largely “academic.”

In short, educating for critical empowerment need to help learners go beyond describing symptoms of conflicts and violence in their immediate contexts. It challenges learners to engage in a personal struggle to develop a critical consciousness that actively seeks to transform prevailing realities of violence, injustice and unsustainability toward a culture of nonviolence, justice and sustainability. One helpful pedagogical tool in this process of critical empowerment is to expose learners to inspiring role models of peoples and grassroots communities courageously and patiently building sustainable futures, such as the famous Chipko campaign among tribal Indians to save their forests and hence their social, economic and cultural survival, as well as other nonviolent actions taken by global and local environmental NGOs and communities to protect biodiversity, defend rights to basic resources such as water; protesting displacement by dams (e.g, Narmada in India) and challenging ecological destruction. From the role-modeling of human rights in their own school institution to advocating for release of political prisoners, abolition of the death penalty and improved rights of marginalized sectors, students will hopefully embrace a culture of human rights which in turn positively contributes to sustainability and a culture of peace.

Care, however, needs to be also taken in ESD or related educational initiative to go beyond “action” that does not address the root causes of unsustainability and violence. For example, in formal educational systems, environmental education has often become a regular theme in school curricula and pedagogy. While educating children to join in building a more environmentally friendly school and society (e.g., recycle, reuse, reduce, protecting endangered species) are positive steps forward, the students also need to be challenged here to dig deep into the roots of the crisis., such as questioning unsustainable development and exploring voluntary...
simplicity in lifestyle choices. Raising funds to ‘adopt’ a poor child based on an attitude of “pity” need to be contrasted with the alternative of solidarity assistance for specific community projects.

For those suffering in marginalized sectors of society, empowerment is a process of awakening to the roots of the structural violence and lack of sustainability in their daily lives. As apathy and hopelessness are replaced by self-confidence and hope, the poor themselves begin to struggle actively for changes to bring about justice and sustainable futures. For the elite sectors of society, critical empowerment involves a transformation that requires a commitment to personal and social action for a sustainable and just personhood and world order (Gaspar, 2005).

Concluding Remark

Hopefully, this exploration of the existing and potential linkages between ESD and education for a culture of peace has revealed some key complementarities and synergies between the two initiatives. Both share a common vision for a world that is nonviolent, just, and sustainable and respects all human rights for all peoples. Both have clear expectations on the need for individuals to go through a process of critical education that empowers them to engage in personal transformation as much as systematic societal and structural changes. However, a number of relevant contributions that education for a culture of peace can help to enrich a holistic paradigm of ESD have also been suggested, while ESD, by bringing sustainability to the foreground, challenges all the other multiple dimensions of a culture of peace to demonstrate their interconnectedness with the values, principles and strategies of building sustainable futures. As the Canadian environmentalist David Suzuki and his co-author Amada McConnell (1997) remind us,

...there is a joy in the companionship of others working to make a difference for future generations, and there is hope. Each of us has the ability to act powerfully for change; together we can regain the ancient and sustaining harmony, in which human needs and the needs of all our companions on the planet are held in balance with the sacred, self-emerging process of Earth.

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