



Community Education and the Earth Charter

A Snapshot
of Work in Progress

Alan AtKisson
International Transition Director

THE EARTH CHARTER INITIATIVE



A Brief History of the Earth Charter Initiative

- 1987 -
1992** **Origins - Brundtland Commission** calls for “a universal declaration” and “new charter” (1987) to set “new norms” and “guide state behavior in transition to sustainable development.” UN Earth Charter process is stopped at **Earth Summit**; Rio Declaration adopted instead (1992)
- 1994 -
2000** **Phase 1 - Development and Global Consultation**
Maurice Strong and Mikhail Gorbachev relaunch Earth Charter as a civil society initiative; drafting and consultation process begins (1994); **Earth Charter Commission** created (1997); 5,000 people contribute comments
- 2000 -
2005** **Phase 2 - Launch**
Final text approved and launched, and endorsement campaign begins (2000); Earth Charter promoted strongly at WSSD in Johannesburg, but not formally adopted (2002); local and grassroots action grows, important international endorsements continue (such as IUCN, 2004)
- 2006 -** **Phase 3 - Expansion**
Strategic review conducted (2005); decision taken to expand the Initiative, with new international centers and programs, and intent to greatly increase awareness, impact, and ***active commitment to sustainable development***



The Earth Charter Commission

Responsible for the Text of the Charter

CO-CHAIRS

Mikhail Gorbachev, Russia

Mercedes Sosa, Argentina

Maurice Strong, Canada

Amadou Toumani Touré, Mali

A.T. Ariyaratne, Sri Lanka

Princess Basma Bint Talal, Jordan

Leonardo Boff, Brazil

Pierre Calame, France

Severn Cullis-Suzuki, Canada

Wakako Hironaka, Japan

John Hoyt, USA

Yolanda Kakabadse, Ecuador

Ruud Lubbers, The Netherlands

Wangari Maathai, Kenya

Elizabeth May, Canada

Federico Mayor, Spain

Shridath Ramphal, Guyana

Henriette Rasmussen, Greenland

Steven Rockefeller, USA

Mohamed Sahnoun, Algeria

Awraham Soetendorp, The
Netherlands

Pauline Tangiora, New
Zealand/Aotearoa

Erna Witoelar, Indonesia

Kamla Chowdhry, India (*In
memoriam*)



The Earth Charter and ICLEI

- ICLEI was the **first major international organization to endorse** the Earth Charter (2000)
- The Earth Charter was made a part of the **ICLEI constitution** (2003)
- The Earth Charter Initiative and ICLEI are forming a **strategic partnership** to promote and support sustainability in local communities (2006)



The Earth Charter ... a Global Consensus and *Ethical Call to Action*

Core sustainability values + *Responsibility to act* =

**I. *Respect for
nature***

 *Protect ...*

 *Care ...*

 *Transmit ...*

**II. *Universal human
rights***

 *Adopt ...*

 *Support ...*

 *Reduce ...*

III. *Economic justice*

 *Require ...*

 *Eliminate ...*

IV. *Culture of peace*

 *Honor ...*

The Earth Charter



PREAMBLE

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

Earth, Our Home

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

The Global Situation

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, and a massive extinction of species. Communities are being undermined. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance, and violent conflict are widespread and the cause of great suffering. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems. The foundations of global security are threatened. These trends are perilous—but not inevitable.

The Challenges Ahead

The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.

Universal Responsibility

To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.



... and an inspiring common vision for the future

The Earth Charter

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The Earth Charter

Preamble, cont'd

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The Earth Charter

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The Earth Charter

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The Earth Charter

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The Earth Charter

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Principles

- 1. *Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.***
- 2. *Care for the community of life ...***
- 3. *Build democratic societies ...***
- 4. *Secure Earth's bounty and beauty ...***
- 5. *Protect and restore ... Earth's ecological systems ...***
- 6. *Prevent harm ... apply a precautionary approach***
- 7. *Adopt [sustainable] patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction ...***
- 8. *Advance the study of ecological sustainability ...***
- 9. *Eradicate poverty ...***
- 10. *Ensure that economic activities ... promote human development ...***
- 11. *Affirm gender equality ... ensure universal access***
- 12. *Uphold the right of all ... to a natural and social environment***
- 13. *Strengthen democratic institutions ...***
- 14. *Integrate [sustainability] into formal education and life-long learning ...***
- 15. *Treat all living beings with respect and consideration***
- 16. *Promote a culture of ... peace***



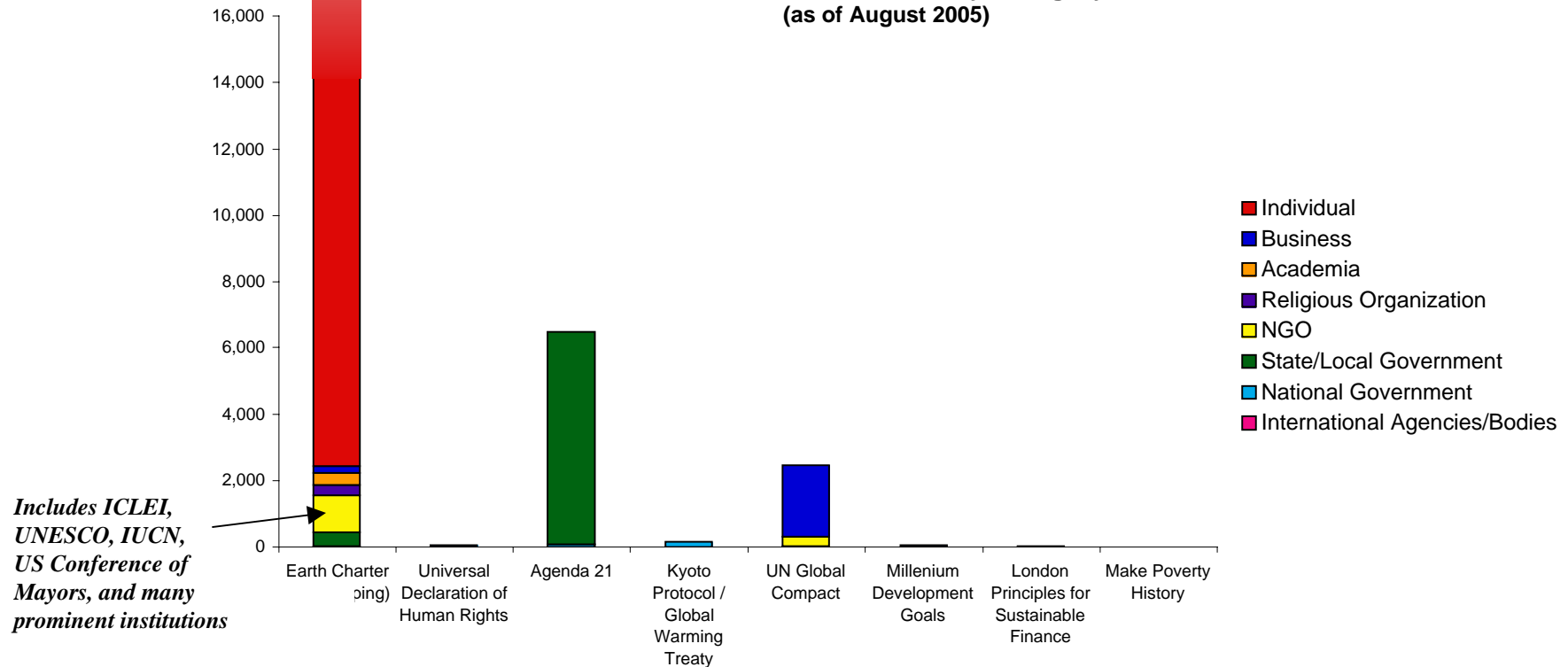
The Earth Charter is Comprehensive

Earth Charter Principles		Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Agenda 21	Kyoto Protocol / Global Warming Treaty	UN Global Compact	Millenium Development Goals	London Principles for Sustainable Finance	Make Poverty History
I. Respect And Care For The Community Of Life	1. <i>Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.</i>	(Human Life)						
	2. <i>Care for the community of life ...</i>							
	3. <i>Build democratic societies ...</i>							
	4. <i>Secure Earth's bounty and beauty ...</i>							
II. Ecological Integrity	5. <i>Protect and restore ... Earth's ecological systems ...</i>							
	6. <i>Prevent harm ... precautionary approach</i>							
	7. <i>Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction ...</i>							
	8. <i>Advance the study of ecological sustainability ...</i>							
III. Social and Economic Justice	9. <i>Eradicate poverty ...</i>							
	10. <i>Ensure that economic activities ... promote human development ...</i>							
	11. <i>Affirm gender equality ... ensure universal access</i>							
	12. <i>Uphold the right of all ... to a natural and social environment</i>							
IV. Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace	13. <i>Strengthen democratic institutions ...</i>							
	14. <i>Integrate into formal education and life-long learning ...</i>							
	15. <i>Treat all living beings with respect and consideration</i>							
	16. <i>Promote a culture of ... peace</i>							



The Earth Charter is Very Widely Supported

Number of Endorsers, by Category
(as of August 2005)





The Earth Charter is an Educational Tool for Communities

- Defines sustainability
- Covers all aspects
- Builds legitimacy
- Inspires and informs
- Links local to global
- Reaches from classroom to council
- Provides a common platform for action
- Sets the bar for performance very high





“EarthCAT”

Earth Charter Community Action Tool

- Integrated goal-setting and planning process
- Tied to the principles of the Earth Charter
- Supports systems analysis, indicator development, implementation strategy
- Workbook and website

*Developed as a partnership
between Earth Charter Initiative,
World Resources Institute, and
Global Community Initiatives
(Lead Partner on Application)*

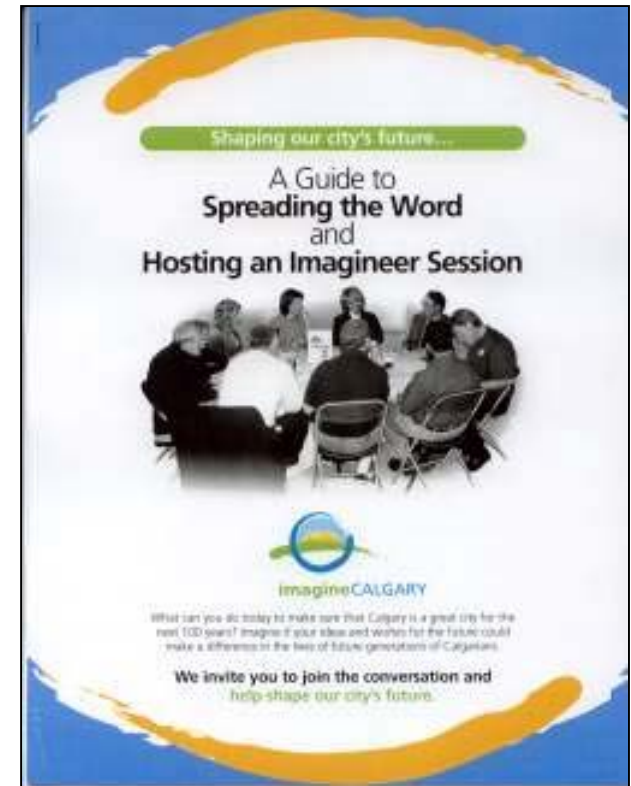


www.earthcat.net



*Now being used in
two North American Cities:*

*Calgary, Canada
“Imagine Calgary”
100-Year Planning Process*





City of Newburgh, NY, USA

Sustainable Master Planning Project

Using EarthCAT Online

a project of Global Community Initiatives

Gwen Hallsmith, Executive Director




EarthCAT - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites Media Print

Address <http://earthcat.whsites.net/> Go Links >>



EarthCAT

*The Earth Charter
Community Action Tool*

Welcome to EarthCAT!

The Earth Charter Community Action Tool is your guide to developing and implementing a community sustainability plan. Using EarthCAT, you will be able to learn from the experiences of other communities as you set goals and targets, develop strategies to achieve them, and select indicators for monitoring your progress towards a more sustainable future.

BACKGROUND

- [About EarthCAT](#)
- [The Earth Charter](#)
- [Useful Links](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

TAKING ACTION

Excerpts from [Taking Action: A Workbook for Sustainable Communities](#)

- [Community Systems](#)
- [Building a Community Vision](#)
- [Setting Goals & Targets](#)
- [Planning Strategies, Taking Action](#)
- [Developing Indicators](#)
- [Tracking Change and Reporting Progress](#)
- [Community Organizing](#)

GET STARTED

[Register Now](#)

Please login below:

ID:

Password:

Remember my ID on this computer

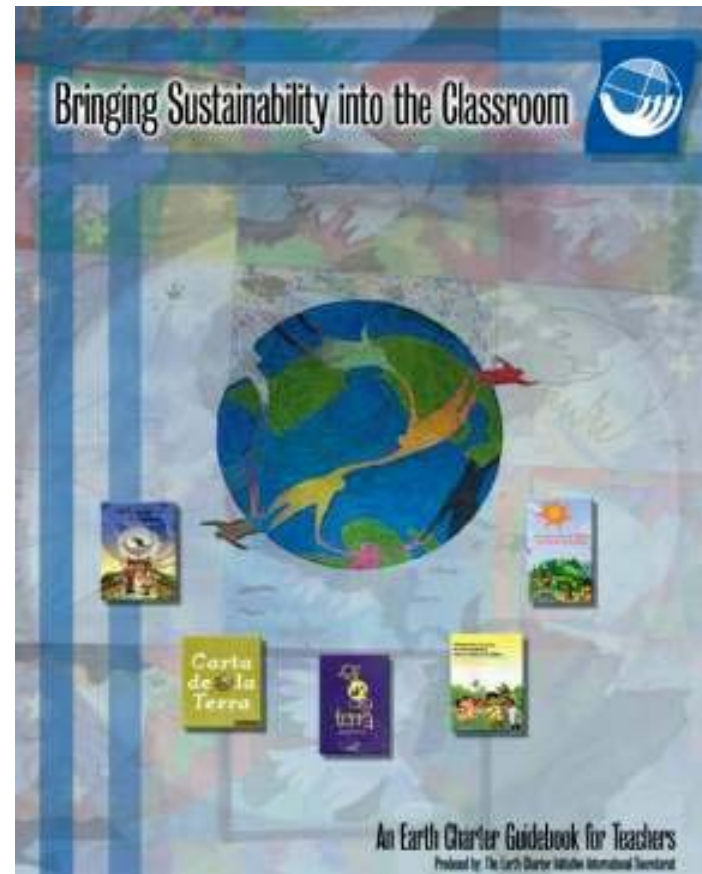
[Forgot your password?](#)


Internet



Earth Charter Teacher's Guide

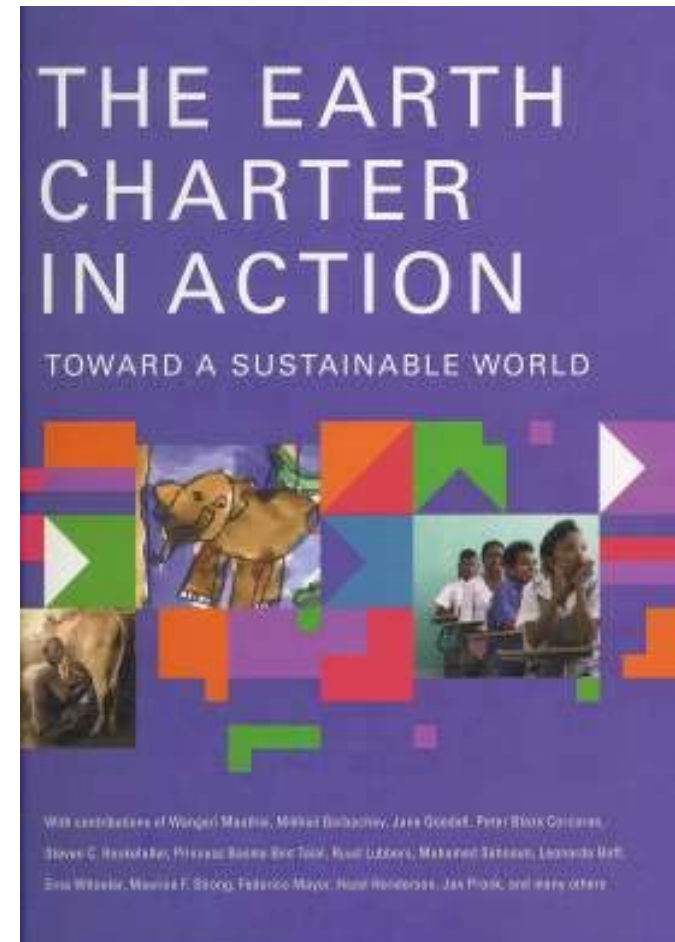
- Basic guidance on introducing and teaching sustainability
- Basic guidance on introducing the Earth Charter
- Free to download at www.earthcharter.org





Earth Charter in Action

- What sustainability principles mean in practice
- Examples from all over the world ... from biodiversity to rehabilitating child soldiers
- Authors include Mikhail Gorbachev, Wangari Maathai, Jane Goodall, Maurice Strong, Princess Basma Bint Talal ... *over 70 co-authors*
- Will soon be free to download at www.earthcharter.org





The Earth Charter Initiative

COMING ATTRACTIONS



Expanded Website with Ongoing Dialogues (“Blogs”)

Continuously updated resources, free downloads of educational materials, including *The Earth Charter in Action*.



Global Campaign to Support Education for Sustainability

Earth Charter Center in Costa Rica partnering with University for Peace to create materials and promote lifelong learning



Outreach to Sustainability Leaders ... of All Ages

Upcoming event in London on “The Value of Values,” with global leaders in business, politics, and civil society; Dynamic Earth Charter Youth Initiative



“Engaged Endorsement” Campaign

Turning *agreement* on the Earth Charter into accelerated *action* on sustainable development, with tools to support expressions of commitment, from the individual to the institutional level



The Earth Charter Initiative

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Only



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One



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Earth



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Please READ and ENDORSE
The Earth Charter

www.EarthCharter.org

THE EARTH CHARTER INITIATIVE