

The International Institute on Peace Education

July 30 – August 6, 2006

University for Peace, Costa Rica

IIPE 2006 - Thematic Background

“Toward a Planetary Ethic: Shared and Individual Responsibility”

(The highlighted and underlined links below will guide you to the sponsoring organizations' websites for the various frameworks and educational initiatives. The supporting documentation can be downloaded at the bottom of the page under [resources](#).)

IIPE 2006 will explore the theme of **“Toward a Planetary Ethic: Shared and Individual Responsibility,”** recognizing that the global community has reached key areas of consensus regarding the challenges we are facing, the shared ethical frameworks of values, norms and principles for meeting them, and in particular the contributions that education should fulfill. In doing so, the IIPE will critically examine various interdependent UN based educational initiatives and normative frameworks that provide a global basis for an holistic approach to peace education: [the Millennium Development Goals](#), [the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World](#), [Education for All](#), [the Decade for Literacy](#), and [the Decade for Sustainable Development Education](#). It is assumed that these frameworks and related programs of action reflect not only commitments by governments but also of the citizens of their nations.

Through the coordination of UNESCO, the [Decade for Sustainable Development Education](#) in particular offers an opportunity to engage with the educational goals of all of these frameworks in an integrated way . It is also worthy to note that the UNESCO General Conference on October 16 th, 2003, adopted a resolution recognizing [The Earth Charter](#) as “...an important ethical framework for sustainable development, and acknowledge[s] its ethical principles, its objectives and its contents...[and thus] affirm our intention, as Member States, to utilize the Earth Charter as an educational instrument, particularly in the framework of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development...”

The vision of peace presented in the [Earth Charter](#) demonstrates the critical importance of a holistic ethical approach to peace education that integrates ecological integrity, social and economic justice, democracy and nonviolence. The main theme of IIPE 2006 is inspired by the principle of universal responsibility, stated in paragraph five of the ‘Preamble’ of [The Earth Charter](#), which is of fundamental importance in meeting the critical challenges of the 21 st Century. It provides a necessary complement to the [Universal Declaration of Human Right’s](#) recognition of each person as worthy of equal respect and dignity and with accompanying ‘duties’ to the international community. From an ethical perspective, ‘universal responsibility’ can be interpreted

as having two key implications: a) each and every person is equally responsible to the whole Earth community and b) the scope of our ethical responsibility impinges on our relationship to the Universe as a whole.

In inquiring into future possibilities key questions should be addressed: are the U.N. educational initiatives based on ethical principles actually shared by citizens? How can we educate within the related action programs such as the [Decade for Sustainable Development Education](#) recognizing possible tensions that may exist in balancing principles of cultural diversity and integrity, personal autonomy, national sovereignty, and universal norms? Is *The Earth Charter* a suitable ethical framework to meet our critical challenges? What pedagogies are required to foster a consciousness of universal responsibility?

The sub theme, *Shared and Individual Responsibility*, refers to one of the most significant challenges entailed in giving practical meaning to the principal of universal responsibility in a world of asymmetric real freedoms and power. These asymmetries lead to "differentiated responsibility," based on differing capacities to respond in meeting planetary challenges. This notion is stated in complementary principle 2b of the [Earth Charter](#): "Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good." Through interactive plenaries, practical workshops, reflection groups, and visits to community projects, *IPE 2006 will inquire into how education can foster responsibility, balancing respect for personal autonomy while at the same time addressing the need for meeting our common challenges as members of local, national, and planetary ethical communities.*

It is fitting that this global theme be emphasized with respect to its implications for intra-hemispheric relations in the Americas, given that the Institute is being jointly organized by the [Peace Education Center at Teachers College Columbia University](#) (USA) and the [University for Peace](#) (Costa Rica), a treaty organization established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1980, which will also act as its host. Moreover, in the 2006-07 academic year, the University for Peace's third cohort of its M.A. in Peace Education Program will engage in a unique educational opportunity: The first five months of the Program will be held in its headquarters campus in Costa Rica, the following five months will be held in its Toronto Center with a capstone period culminating in Costa Rica in July 2007. Thus the IPE will also provide an opportunity to establish and strengthen networks and partnerships for emerging peace educators, particularly in the Americas.

Resources

Click on the links below to download supporting documentation.

[The Millennium Development Goals](#)

[The International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World](#)

[Education for All](#) (Dakar Framework for Action Brief)

[Education for All](#) (Dakar Framework for Action Complete)

[The Decade for Literacy](#)

[The Decade for Sustainable Development Education](#) (fact sheet)

[The Decade for Sustainable Development Education](#) (complete)

[The Earth Charter](#)

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

[Linkages between the Global Initiatives in Education](#) (Millennium Development Goals, Education for All, United Nations Literacy Decade, United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development)