

Training the Trainers: in Values Education

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Introduction

The Valores Foundation (Fundación Valores) has designed and developed courses and workshops for training educators in Values Education using the Earth Charter within the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Our primary objective in creating these courses is to prevent the Earth Charter from going down in history as just another document filled with good intent. Rather, we want to turn the Charter into an instrument for the growth of human beings, and one that will encourage personal transformation – thus becoming the embryonic tissue that will be the basis for a more just, sustainable and peaceful society. Our activities are focused in two complementary areas: workshops for teachers at training centres, and workshops for teachers in elementary and secondary schools.



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Workshops for teachers at training centres

Throughout the 2006–2007 school year (to be continued during the 2007–2008 school year) the Valores Foundation offered intensive 40-hour workshops that took place over several weekends. These workshops were aimed at pre-school, primary school and high school teachers, as well as the directors of teacher training centres, representatives of Students' Mothers and Fathers Associations (AMPAs) and social agents in each autonomous community. These workshops were organised in close collaboration with the Teachers' Training Centres and were presented by María Pinar Merino, the person responsible for education outreach at the Valores Foundation.

The objective of this effort has been to further values education from early childhood onwards, and to make people aware of the Earth Charter as a useful instrument in developing education on universal values (a priority objective of Spain's Ministry of Health). Approximately 120 people took part in the workshops; the first one was held in Elche (in Alicante, Spain), and subsequent others in Seville, Granada, Madrid and Barcelona. It was estimated that approximately 2,000 students benefited indirectly as pupils of the participating teachers.

Activities and impact

Once the training was completed, a 'working group' was created in each city, and these groups took it upon themselves to generate and disseminate information on actions within the student communities, as well as to serve as the central distribution point for materials, and consultation services. This model of having workshops and follow-up work groups yielded very broad results, encompassing all the students from the different schools through the initiatives generated by the participating teachers, and reaching large geographic areas within the different provinces.

At each school, every teacher put forth the recommendation to the academic staff committee and the school council that the Earth Charter should not be

considered simply as another subject or activity, but rather as a cross-cutting topic permeating all disciplines. Using the materials produced in the 'training the trainers' workshop, several activities intended for students were carried with the teachers, covering many areas, **such as:**

- Creative (Drawing, painting, craft making, poetry competitions, literature, composition, theatre)
- Technical (Construction of solar stoves)
- Scientific (Experiments with recycled seeds and seedlings)
- Sports (Participation in games, creativity, mutual trust, cooperation, and problem-solving)
- Social (Participation in recycling campaigns, responsible consumption, peace culture, and multiculturalism)

Workshops for teachers in primary and secondary schools (high schools)

Training of pre-school and primary school teachers took place from December 2006–April 2007 (to be continued during the 2007–2008 school term) in two schools selected from within one municipality of the Madrid Community. These schools were singled out as priority because they serve underprivileged populations, such as migrant populations, ethnic minorities, and gypsy populations.

The objective of these 26-hour workshops, held for 2 hours each week, was to promote education on universal values, to familiarize the academic staff of each



Workshop at CEFIRE de Elche- a center for professor training.

of the schools with the Earth Charter, and to help them generate ideas and projects to explore its 16 principles. The workshops were followed by additional hours of consultancy and assistance in preparing initiatives and projects for the 2007–2008 school year. Lectures were also shared with families in the area in support of the sustainability education carried out with students. Thus the families and staff also became involved in the activities being developed by the children.

We, the parents, have to become more involved with the school, but teachers also have to understand that the transfer of values is not restricted to the religious, political or family realm, but that the school plays an essential role for the future; they can teach the children from a more universal perspective.

– *Father representing the Association of Mothers and Fathers of Students in Madrid.*

The teacher trainings ended with two-hour workshops for the 440 students in both schools, which set an example of the training in action, and further motivated the participant teachers. The children's workshops were replicated so as to reach 500 more children from other schools in the same municipality. These workshops were organised in close collaboration with the Town Hall of Torrejón de Ardoz. María Pinar Merino presented the training workshops, and teachers from the municipality presented the children's workshops.

Activities and impact

This experience generated rich and rewarding collaborations. It enabled the Valores Foundation to work in close contact with the entire teachers' community, as well as gain the participation of the Town Hall, through the Consumers' Council, which supported **the following activities to help disseminate the Earth Charter values:**

- An itinerant exhibition of the Earth Charter in schools, visited by all students and AMPA.
- Citizens' awareness conferences comprising

several events, organized around important UN dates, such as: the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights signing, World Peace Day, and Working Women's Day.

- Intercultural conferences on gastronomy, folklore, customs, culture, and music.
- The formation of a working group with individuals from the two participating schools, to share projects and collaborate on actions within the municipality. The Town Hall offered its facilities and logistical support to enable this working group to hold regular meetings, so that they may continue to generate initiatives throughout the 2007–2008 school term, and more easily facilitate the involvement of people in the surrounding areas.

Methodological aspects

As outlined in Appendix I, one important methodological moment from the workshop is the distribution of a questionnaire for teachers aimed at generating reflection, analysis, and debate on human relations, social reality, intercultural challenges, ecology and peace, among others. The questionnaire seeks to raise awareness among participants about their own values. The following are examples of questions used for reflection and self-knowledge: What are the things I believe to be important? What should I know about



Activities carried out by a policeman of Novelda- Alicante.

values? What are my values? What values do I expect to find among others? How do they affect my behaviour? Which values encourage sustainable development? What rules are essential for peaceful and humanitarian cohabitation? How should I relay these values so they are better understood by children?

Subsequently, theoretical and practical sessions take place: Exposure; Dynamics; and Exercises. The IDC (Information-Discussion-Creation) model is used in a dynamic, cooperative, recreational and participative manner, with everyone sharing their personal experiences and delving into real-life cases. The workshop is eminently practical and has a learn-as-you-go design, using an open approach. Theoretical knowledge is consolidated through the active participation of the attendees in the dynamics developed throughout the sessions. The learning process followed is knowledge-action-reflection-action.

I hadn't realised there was such a fracture between the social reality and the school microcosm. The Earth Charter has allowed me to look at my work with children from a new perspective.

– High school teacher in Seville

The facilitator makes use of multiple strategies and innovative educational methodologies, such as: world dances, preparatory games, games involving action, creativity, mutual trust, cooperation, investigation, sharing ideas and feelings and affection. Also, the facilitator might use exercises for breathing, meditation, creative visualisation, tuning, inner silence, neuro-linguistic programme. Communication and problem-solving is facilitated through debates, meetings, and critical-thinking; while artistic expression is shared through music, acting, storytelling, drama, and role-playing.

Initial goals and accomplishments:

- To inform participants about the foundation values of the Earth Charter, in a pleasant and participative manner. To this end, we gave presentations at the Town Hall for school principals and School Councils of selected

schools. We also selected workshop participants and scheduled workshops for the school year.

- To incorporate into the 'Centre's Annual Project,' the Education on Values and the Earth Charter as a cross-cutting axis, recognizing the latter as the ideal educational instrument to promote individual and collective responsibility, a sense of belonging to the community of life, responsible environmental, technological and social advancement and relationships of tolerance, respect and care among human beings.
- To use the Earth Charter as an instrument to provide Education for Sustainable Development, whose goal is a world in which everyone has the opportunity to benefit from a good education, to learn about the values, attitudes and lifestyles necessary for a sustainable future, and to make positive changes within society.
- To encourage the creation of networks through which to share materials and information between the different centres in the municipality and autonomous communities.
- To achieve greater citizens' participation by involving different administrative departments of Town Councils in the projects generated by the schools.

In summary, the steps of this training process are: raise awareness; get to know; single out values; identify attitudes; and participate.

Lessons Learned

The workshops prompted three main observations from the reflections of participants. The first observation was the discovery of a profound crisis affecting the teachers' guild. This was related to many factors, including the lack of social recognition of teachers' work, the lack of in-service training, the lack of support from the administration and students' families, teaching fragmentation, pressures by the Ministry of Education to comply with curriculum, constant change in the Education Legislation, and the decentralization of educational competences to the autonomous communities.

The second observation was the acknowledgement by the teachers of the critical situation that society is facing, and its bearing on the school environment. For instance, over half a million foreign students enrolled in the 2005–2006 school term, precipitating multicultural clashes, crises concerning values, overcrowded classrooms, and curriculum fragmentation.

The third observation was that teachers acknowledged they did not have the necessary tools and specific training to respond to the requirements of their daily work in the classroom, nor to the challenges posed by situations that were new to them.

Despite these troubling reflections, we noticed a remarkable attitude and openness among participants towards using new teaching techniques, which they experienced when playing the role of students during the workshops. The goal was to assist teachers in using all the materials, exercises, games and practices in their classrooms, once they were adjusted to the different age groups of their students.

Upon evaluating the final results, we noticed important differences between: Training in Teachers' Centres, and Training in Schools. In the first case we achieved a greater dissemination of ideas and reach because teachers from many schools participated. The disadvantage was that we did not attain 100% involvement of teachers from the same school. Hence, the participant did not always have the ability or conviction to return from the workshop and involve the teachers' guild in his/her school. In the second case the outcome was more concentrated, in that we worked with one school per workshop and managed to delve deeper into the experience by involving the whole school community, and sometimes even the social environment surrounding the school.

Another important lesson learned from both cases was to find the common denominator among all the participants, which can be expressed as: "their concern about the current situation and their desire to stop being spectators and do something to shape a better world." From this standpoint, the participant is simply one person, speaking from his/her own point of view, without regard to title or line of work. The Earth Charter's content can then be expressed with all the force of its nature. As such, the message is addressed to the individual, and they can experience the Charter as a dynamic and powerful tool for personal transformation.

To further this lesson, workshop facilitators should adjust the language they use to the specific group being addressed. They should also use such accompaniments as music, audiovisual materials, and documentaries, when sharing the text of the Earth Charter in order to make it more appealing. Because the concepts are theoretical and sometimes expressed in intricate terms, using music and images can help engage people's emotions, make it easier for people to become personally involved, and moved to action.

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APPENDIX I. Outline of a session:

- Welcome speech. Presentation of the participants.
- **Basic group agreements:** consequences, open-mindedness to change old mental patterns and develop trust.
- Greeting dance. (e.g. Kos Greeting Dance, Ena Mitos)
- Collecting expectations from participants (hopes and fears) about the workshop.
- **Key words:** brainstorming a list of words representing participants main concerns, initially within their particular contexts and subsequently on a more global level.
- Presentation of the Earth Charter.
- Becoming familiar with the Earth Charter. Each participant is provided with four cards of different colours, each one with a different principle of the Earth Charter (I. Respect and care for the community of life, II. Ecological integrity, III. Social and economic justice, IV. Democracy, non-violence and peace). They are asked to collect articles from the media, related to each principle (whether in support or violation of the principles). In the following session, participants share in groups the material gathered.
- Reflection exercise on one's own set of values.
 1. Participants make a list: MY SET OF VALUES, listing their most important values.
 2. Participants engage in a brief visualizing-reflection exercise consisting of travelling back in time (to the ages of 7 or 8 years old) in order to make a connection with the values with which we were brought up since childhood. Then we draw up 2 lists, one with dad's values and one with mom's. An optional fourth list may also be drawn up to include the values from a teacher that made a significant impression on us when we were in school. (This exercise has two objectives: it helps identify the hidden curriculum, and makes us reflect upon the importance of the learning process during our childhood. Psychology shows that the personality is shaped during the first 12 years of one's life).
- Handing out a questionnaire for evaluating the different areas in your line of work to determine the most important problems each person has to confront when carrying out his/her teaching or educational work. This questionnaire yields the main topics of discussion in the workshop during the weeks ahead. (A consensus-based list of objectives will also be drawn up, prioritized, and each objective will be matched with one of the 16 principles of the Earth Charter; then a solution to each objective will be sought in a recreational manner, such as by playing a game called 'Let your ideas fly.' Paper planes are built; on one wing you write the value, principle or action you would like to promote; the planes are flown while the music plays and when the music stops, each person picks up the plane nearest him/her and writes a proposal or suggestion to achieve that objective... the music starts once again and is repeated several times until all the planes have been written all over. The planes are gathered and a list of the ideas is drawn up. They are innovative, bold, creative... A plan can be designed (with a schedule) for these activities to be carried out in the centre.
- **Exercise:** Learn to see the other person. Shift your view of yourself, first, and to the other person, second, and finally to the world around you.
- Farewell dance. Canon by Pachelbel.