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# The Global Forum for Environmental Education

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*Frontpage:* Lions against global warming or just looking for shade? Images from South Africa, site of the 2001 CEI conference.

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*Notes for contributors*

We welcome contributions in the form of articles, poetry, art work or reports related to environmental education in the broadest sense, as long as they are at least of interest to teachers and/or students at the upper secondary school level.

*Text*

Text should be in WORD format for windows or else without format in plain text or rtf. An article can have a maximum length of 750 words. Footnotes should be avoided. Please accompany each article by a short summary and an address for further information. If you are unable to use a computer, we still welcome your contributions!

*Tables, figures and illustrations*

Do not include tables, figures and illustrations as part of the text. Gather them together in a separate file or on paper. In the text you can point out the approximate position of tables, figures and illustrations. We would also like to receive captions to the illustrations you send us. We always welcome pictures and photographs!

*Deadlines*

Global Forum appears twice a year in June and in December. Contributions for the June issue have to be received before May the 1<sup>st</sup>. Contributions for the December issue before October the 1<sup>st</sup>.

Please send your contributions to:

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**15<sup>th</sup> Annual Caretakers of the Environment  
International Youth Conference 2001**  
1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2001

Venue: University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg)  
KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa  
<http://www.caretakers4all.org/conf2001/>

**Background:** In terms of Chapter 25 of the Agenda 21, it is the prerogative of each country in consultation with its youth:

- to establish a process to promote dialogue between the youth community and government at all levels,
- to establish mechanisms that permit youth access to information,
- to provide them with the opportunity to present their perspectives on government decisions

The perceptions of this conference, will be addressing the status of youth involvement and will address the needs of the report to be tabled at the preparatory meeting of the United Nations at the end of February 2002.

The theme of the conference is "**Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Tourism**" which will be discussed by reviewing current approaches, strategies and activities with the interaction of Environmental specialists in various sub-fields of the theme through the following topics:

- Sustainable Development (as it links to the World Summit on Sustainable Development - WSSD 2002)
- Eco-tourism and Community participation (Tourism Council)
- Cultural Diversity and Heritage (Biodiversity, Cultural Heritage Sites)
- People and park (S. African National Parks)
- Arts in the Environment
- Waste management (Recycling Forum, Institute of waste management)

This conference will link in perfectly with preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002.

This will be done as follows:

World Summit on Sustainable Development:

In relation to the preparations for the World Summit On Sustainable Development 2002, the Directorate for Capacity Building will be working on the following activities, which are in line with the three initiatives indicated by the UN Secretariat i.e.

- Development of Children's Agenda 21 Poster
- 101 Ways to Sustainable Development
- Sustainable Development Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Bill Stapp: an obituary

On May 21, having struggled for years with a rare lung disease, my mentor, PhD-supervisor and good friend, Bill Stapp passed away. Bill has been an inspiration for environmental educators and young people from around the world. He received his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He taught at Cranbrook School for Boys, Audubon Camps of Maine and Dayton. He created the Outdoor program and was Conservation Coordinator with the Ann Arbor Public Schools before becoming a professor at University of Michigan where he taught until retirement in 1993. Considered by many the founder of environmental education in the United States, Bill helped plan the first Earth Day. His special interest was international environmental education and he was the first Chief of UNESCO's Environmental Education Section. His environmental education program was the first to be unanimously accepted by all of the 135 member nations at UNESCO.

Throughout his career he sought the root causes of environmental issues and helped educate students and adults to find solutions to issues affecting their communities. Concerned about world peace, he founded the Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GREEN) in 1989. He was recently working on a UNEP sponsored GREEN rivers project between North and South Korea. He was recognized with numerous national and international awards and nominated for the Noble Peace prize in 1993. The thought that the seeds of change that Bill planted in the lives of so many will continue to grow and blossom in the many years to come, is a comforting one.

Arjen Wals

(President of CEI)

## What is happening in Cameroon?

The following report from Caretakers Cameroon outlines how their organisation is set up and some interesting Biodiversity projects. These represent the best of voluntary work carried out in the spirit of co-operation and a genuine concern for the environment between all the partners, with youth to the forefront.

Caretakers of the Environment International/Cameroon (CEI/CAM) is a national network of students, teachers and jurists who are active in environmental education, environmental law and ecotourism.

CEI/CAM has been involved in activities geared towards the establishment of a national network. They have set up environmental clubs in schools and colleges referred to as "Caretakers Club". These clubs are not only limited to schools but they include other interested groups of young people who as a result of their activities, meet up with some of our objectives. These clubs are presently engaged in varied activities and projects which are supervised by the national board. In order to promote environmental law in the country, Caretakers Cameroon is in the process of establishing a national network of environmental lawyers. This group of lawyers will be working in collaboration with the Network of African Environmental Lawyers (NAEL) which is co-ordinated by the Network of Environment and Sustainable Development for Africa (NESDA) based in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Caretakers has also been active in putting in place a platform of collaboration and co-operation with other organizations and governmental institutions. As part of measures to promote environmental education in Cameroon, Caretakers Cameroon has been able to endorse the Earth Charter Initiative. The Earth Charter is a manifesto supported by the Earth Council and Green Cross International which absorbs all new knowledge on the interactions between environment and development. This manifesto will be submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2002 for approval. It is supposed to become one of the fundamental documents, together with the Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Company Chart, containing the principles regulating the relationships between countries, communities, religious, economic and cultural groups, single individuals and nature.



This photo shows patches of eucalyptus forest near a farmland in Tobin.

Caretakers Cameroon has created clubs in parts of the Center, North West, South West and Littoral Provinces of the country.

Caretakers Cameroon has created clubs within the ranks of youth groups in some localities. In such localities, Caretakers students are sensitised in such a way that they in turn educate their parents and other friends who are out of school settings on issues pertaining to environmental protection and management. This has so far triggered the creation of Common Initiative Groups (CIG) which serve as extensions of Caretakers clubs without institutions of formal education. The students together with their parents and other youth groups work concretely as a team. A vivid example of this can be seen in Kumbo-Bui Division in the North West Province where Caretakers Cameroon is presently carrying out a project on "SEEDS OF BIODIVERSITY".

Examples of projects include: the Shumelin Njavyuy Multipurpose Tree Planters, the Ngondzen Young Farmers Tree Nursery; the Samengo Agro-Forestry Ndzen, the Sharon Natural Tree Nursery/Planters/Bee keeping Wvem.

The seeds of biodiversity project carried out by Caretakers Cameroon in Kumbo involves the gradual replacements of the "eucalyptus trees" with natural trees.





A fertile farmland in Bui Division after some eucalyptus forest has been cut-off; market orientated crops such as maize, beans, plantains and bananas are planted in these farms. CEI/CAM supervises these activities through Caretakers clubs in this area.

The eucalyptus tree is very dangerous in areas which are primarily for agricultural purposes because their roots go very deep in the soil thereby rendering the soils very dry and thus infertile. This leads to environmental degradation and consequently poverty. The seeds of biodiversity therefore involves the clearing down of these harmful trees and replacing them with natural and enriching trees.

As part of Caretakers activities since creation, there is also the idea of working in collaboration with other groups of related concerns and objectives. As a result, Caretakers Cameroon is collaborating with a number of organisations including the following: Green Cross International (GCI) specifically Green Cross Italy and Green Cross Burkina Faso; The Earth Charter International Secretariat in Costa Rica; The German Development Co-operation (GTZ); a number of Ministries in the Cameroon; The National Commission for UNESCO Cameroon; The Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development (FIELD).

Caretakers Cameroon is participating in the Earth Charter Youth Contest. This is a drawing contest organised by GCI and GC Italy in collaboration with FAO, UNESCO, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the frame of the initiatives that are being carried out in support of the Earth Charter. The contest is reserved to all pupils of primary, secondary and high schools, private and public, for the academic year 2000/2001. This initiative gives the teachers the chance to plan educational multidisciplinary paths so to deepen the environmental issues provided by the ministerial programmes. The theme of the contest is "Trash, Wastes and Lifestyles". Caretakers Cameroon is therefore organising this contest at our national level in collaboration with the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, the Cameroon National Commission for UNESCO and other potential Co-sponsors.

Caretakers Clubs are already engaged in this contest and national prizes shall be awarded to up to Fifteen winners and the first three will represent Cameroon in the international contest in Rome, Italy in November, 2001.

After the endorsement of the Earth Charter by Caretakers Cameroon, there has been a constant and smooth working relationship between Caretakers Cameroon and the International Secretariat on the Earth Charter based in Costa Rica. Caretakers Cameroon together with Nouvelle Afrique, a local

NGO based in Douala are presently acting as focal points for the elaboration of the Earth Charter in Cameroon. To this effect, Caretakers Cameroon has incorporated the philosophy of the Earth Charter in its mission and position statement. Caretakers Cameroon in collaboration with Nouvelle Afrique is working ways towards the creation of a national committee charged with the promotion and elaboration of the Earth Charter in Cameroon.



Trees with economic value such as *Prunus Africana*, *Accasia*, and *Calliandra* are being transported from the nursery by some Caretakers members to the planting site

Together with the German Development Co-operation (GTZ) and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MINEF), Caretakers Cameroon is involved in a project geared towards the creation of a national observatory known in French as "Observatoire National de la Dynamique des Ecosystemes" (ONDES). The Observatory is supposed to act as a clearing house mechanism on the environment and also to help identify, analyse, and reflect on the controversies surrounding environmental problems. Caretakers Cameroon is in the process of defining the platform of collaboration with some ministerial departments of common and related interests. This includes amongst others, the ministries of National Education (MINEDUC), Culture (MINCULT), and that of Youths and Sports (MINJES).

In collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Caretakers Cameroon is charged with the promotion of tourism in secondary, high schools and universities all over the national territory of Cameroon. The details as to this will be provided in the platform of collaboration between Caretakers Cameroon and the Ministry of Tourism (MINTOUR). In a nutshell, as part of their activities linking up the environment and tourism, Caretakers clubs are charged with the identification of a good number of tourist sites in their respective localities. In Cameroon today there is the problem of abandoned tourist sites therefore there is need for Caretakers clubs after identifying these tourist sites in their various localities to come out with projects based on the rehabilitation of these sites.

Such projects when realised will lead to an improvement on the sites thereby promoting tourism. For instance Caretakers club GHS Wum is in the process of rehabilitating the Menchum Fall which is one of the greatest waterfalls in West Africa. This waterfall has been abandoned for close to forty years. Caretakers Cameroon together with MINTOUR will be organizing before long school debates on tourism and environment. This will lead to radio quiz in collaboration with the Communication Department of MINTOUR. In order to establish a culture of tourism and the environment as important tools in sustainable development, Caretakers Cameroon is working towards the development of a school curriculum pertaining to tourism and other related disciplines. Caretakers Cameroon works on a voluntary basis with little equipment to realize their objectives.

#### **Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Tourism project**

The role of traditional laws, myths and taboos on environmental protection and education in Cameroon. This project is done at the level of all the official Caretakers Clubs of the country in preparation for the 15th International Caretakers of the Environment Conference in South Africa on July 1st - July 5th 2001.

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### **The North meets the South to discuss environmental issues**

*By Siri Norden (Sweden, age 14)*

We went to Indonesia between 20<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2001. The reason why we were invited to Surabaya, was that we were going to give some presentations about environmental education and nature in Sweden, and participate in an environmental conference for teachers and high school students. We would also support the creation of the Indonesian branch of "Caretakers of the Environment" and help establish their network.



We went by flight to Indonesia, me and Birgitta Nördén, my mother, and Eva Dessborn, a colleague of hers. The journey took about 20-24 hours. We made a longer stop in Singapore, a small country which is a city lying on an island no bigger than half of Öland, a Swedish island in the Baltic Sea. 3 million inhabitants live in Singapore, mostly in skyscrapers.

From there we went to Surabaya, the second largest city in Indonesia, where 2 million of their 200 million people live. Indonesia is the fourth biggest country in the world when it comes to the number of citizens. It consists of 13,000 islands in an area similar to that of Australia. Indonesia has more volcanoes (400 in total) than any other country in the world. When we arrived in Indonesia, it was very hot. The temperature was close to 30 degrees and it was also very humid, because of the tropical climate there. We were transported by car to a monastery for conferences in Surabaya. There we got our rooms.

During the conference, I was asked to give two workshops. In the first one, 60 teachers from mainly Indonesia, but also from Canada and Netherlands participated.

Some teachers translated between English and the Indonesian language, because not all participants were well trained in English. In the second workshop, 25 high school students from eight schools visited, and we had very good discussions and shared our experiences of environmental education in Sweden and Indonesia.



We presented many examples and I told about everything from "Mulle" (3-5 year old children) to experiments in upper secondary school. I told about "moss" (=mossa), which is a common plant in Sweden

and about some experiments we have done at school. They said a lot about their studies of nature, medical plants, erosion and energy among other things.

We visited many different places and there were lots of lizards and frogs everywhere, and we saw many beautiful birds in different colours. For example they had green pigeons!

My impression is that there are many environmental problems in Indonesia, and both water and air are often very polluted in the cities, but the Indonesians I have met seem to be a people, who love Nature and want to take care of it. They are very friendly and laugh a lot, so I think they will find positive ways to rescue their country.

Some of the Conclusions from the students in the workshop were:

- that it gave them many things, but the most important for them were the knowledge and experience exchange about forests as they are very useful for our life, so don't destroy them!
- we must protect our world's nature
- we know a lot about environmental education but how to think of the environment in all subjects i.e. religion
- we are very glad to learn something that we did not know before
- we may have different ways to protect the nature, but we still have the same goal for "our nature"

My summary is: *"By working together with friendship, we can save the planet!"*



Good luck with the network of Caretakers of the Environment in Indonesia!  
Siri Nordén, Lerbackskolan 8a, Lund, Sweden

#### Two articles from Indonesia UNITY IN DIVERSITY

High school teachers in Indonesia have decided to form an environmental education network. That is the result of all the friendly sharing and discussion during the "International Workshop on Environmental Education Primarily for Teachers of High School" that was held in Surabaya from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2001.

The strategies in integrating environmental education into school subjects are not new to us. Realisation in using a network as a podium for teacher and students for exchanging information, ideas, strategies and actions and environmental education activities/programs have been active since 1995.



Students: East Java students made some healthy traditional drinks. One of the result of EE in extracurricular activities.

Since then, several meetings and sharing experiences have been done by teachers in Java, Sulawesi, Bali and Irian Jaya. The teachers who were supported by the environment conservationist have decided to plan and work together as a team. The most impressive event, that we (6 students and 3 teachers) got, was an opportunity to met overseas colleagues whom have similar vision and mission in the wonderful CEI annual meeting in GEYC 2000 - Sweden.

That wonderful moment encouraged us to establish CEI/Indonesia. We realised that the development of this activity is not an easy thing. The centralised education system is one of the big obstacles. Luckily, there are still teachers who find ways to trick the national curriculum and creatively create efficient and effective steps/ways without ignoring the national curriculum's requests.

Another factor that should be considered is geographic condition. As a country with 17,508 islands that stretch out along the equator for over 5,000 kilometres and filled with 300 ethnic groups and speaking an estimated 583 languages and dialects. Indonesia has, perhaps the most diverse flora and fauna in the world. Thus, each way of integrating environmental education in an island may not suit another island.

Rubbish, water and air pollution are central issues in Java island that need a different strategy for Irian Jaya where 80% of the area is made up of tropical rainforest. Exploitation of biological varieties and actions to protect it are important issues in Irian Jaya that should be considered.

Caretakers of the Environment Indonesia (CEI/Ind) has been formed,



50 Indonesian teachers and environmental conservationists, together with the students are committed to take care of the earth, by trying to implement environmental education in our daily life.



All thanks to CEI/International, Birgitta, Eva and Siri (Sweden), Catherine Graves (Canada), Loes and Ellie (Holland) and Swammy (India) for all of your effort which helped us make our dreams come true, also for our overseas colleagues who have supported this network. May we work together to save our lovely planet.

Kind regards from a warm country.  
Stien Matakupan/David Gunawan  
Sekolah Ciputra – Surabaya, East Java



#### The Implementation of EE in Extra Curricular Activities

One of the impressive ways to trick the national curriculum and creatively create efficient and effective steps/ways without ignoring the national curriculum's requests is to implement EE in school extra curricular activities.

In those activities, the teachers create a project in which students are involved in making 1 year of research. The result of the research is then presented in front of the teachers and his fellow students. After that a poster is designed and displayed.

Some examples of student's research or activities are:

1. Measuring pH of rainwater: it is based on the assumption that the water in Surabaya is no longer

pure and introduces the issue of acid rain

2. The use of natural colouring agent
3. The use of recycled paper for writing : the students try all kinds of writing supply to discover which one suits the best
4. Ecang Gondok (swamp plant) as a water purifier : to see whether it really works as the plant is plentiful
5. Alternative waste management in Surabaya : the result of this research was competed in a competition organised at Merdeka University in Malang and Jawa Pos (leading newspaper in Surabaya). WE did make it to the final.

Besides research, the other extracurricular activities are nature lovers groups, which started in 1995. This is a continuous activity. The ultimate goal of this activity is to make the students aware of the significance of the environment and the future.

Here are some of the research projects :

1. research on cigarettes : investigating kinds of cigarette brands based on the literature. We had collaboration with the Faculty of Pharmacy of Widya Mandala Catholic University
2. Tomato sauce research : investigating it from a vendor, disseminating a questionnaire, investigating natural or unnatural colouring agents
3. Research on bottled drink water : the students are interested in investigating this as more people are consuming it. The research would like to discover why people prefer to buy bottled water rather than boiling it. After that, we investigated the mineral content by titration (done by Widya Mandala University), and drop method ( done at school)
4. Research household waste : to discover whether some waste can be reused or not. The volume of liquid and concrete waste produced by household every day was measured. It depends on the assumption that households have also got an influential role in polluting the city

Elisabeth Ambar  
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## Musings on Indonesia from Vancouver

Suddenly in the swirl of another culture is how I remember it. Steaminess, heat and red tiled roof are vague memories of the first day. Soon onto buses and off to visit high-schools which are involved in Environmental Education. Caretaker's work has encouraged some of the ideas and practices. Children and teenagers can be found sharing a desk with another and might have the same desk-mate for 3 or four years. There is a steadiness in all I witnessed. Nothing changes too quickly in an old agrarian society although the past 20 years of industrialisation is making some serious demands on the place.

I loved the rice-paddies in the morning for their mistiness of watercolour like qualities. Photo's should catch the feeling of quiet and humble beauty. The 7 days spent in these surrounds allowed me to organise and re-organise my Environmental Education programme in peace. It was offered in Surabaya.

Surabaya, can be found in East Java and is the second largest city in Indonesia. It exists at 15 cm. Above sea-level at low-tide. Consequently it was not only day that I was pitched into flooding conditions. The rain cannot easily drain-off at high tide and a flood might last for some 20 hours although the rain finishes in an hour. I found fish in the university washroom. The city was in the midst of a garbage boycott as the near-full rancid landfill was temporarily closed by the community that suffers it. The community was petitioning for acceptable housing and amenities as a trade off for keeping the dump open a few more years. When will we ever learn to make products that are more cyclical? I enjoyed the banana leaves as plate, often offered there. I was gifted with a two-tiered stainless-steel food carrying pot, another reusable. Crouching with feet flat on the floor was how the participants of the training program worked in groups. All equal, all engaged in preparing programming for a sustainable society. It was a vital group from the NGO sector, university as well as business. We had fun and worked well together for 12 days. They are a people of laughing eyes as befits those from a culture of literature and high drama.

Offered life's fullness...even got to see a local Chinese-Javanese artist and merchant sketches of his place, Surabaya. He sketches the common people and as a result has documented the changes in an old and tropical city. His drawings reflect a sense of place and allow for discussion not just on business but on society as well.

Kate Graves (Canada)



## Defenders of the Environment in the Dominican Republic

We are the group who participated at the convention, in Lund, Sweden, where we presented an environmental education proposal. Now we want to present the development experience of it. In Haina, Dominican Republic, we have formed a youth environmental group that is called Defenders of the Environment, who have the neat slogan "The planet is unique, let it live". We are completely conscious about the environmental situation that the world is confronting nowadays.

Due to this, we have organized this environmental group which has the goal of protecting the ecosystem and, as its main objective, the efficient management of water.

Actually the group is made up of fifteen young people who are serving as environment educators in the community of Cabon, whilst another group of 20 students have been selected for their efforts in school. We think the best improvement in this educational project is that young people and their families are changing their behaviour and are creating an ecological footprint in balance with the environment.

The group has a great acceptance in Haina municipality, because it's the unique youth environmental group in the municipality that most pollutes the Dominican Republic. We think the group is rebounding positively because the municipal leaders are taking into account that the young people are very worried about the problems that happen in our municipality, in the country, and in the world. We think that we, like the young people can mark the difference in environment protection, and why not, in other areas of social life.

Although we are being accepted as an environmental group, we have not received enough help for developing the project with the efficiency that we had hoped for. The project is a focus for development in five schools, but due to the small amount of help that

we are receiving, we are only developing the project in one school (Cabon Community).

Until now, the economic help we have received from the Foundation pro-development of Haina, has been RD\$500.00 monthly for paying the transportation of the young environment educators that travel every week to the community of Cabon. As well, we are receiving transport help from the Dominican Harbour Authority. This transport is for the activities like visits, talks, meetings, etc. And we received a little help from industry too. From the beginnings of the educative preparation of the young that represented our country in Lund, Sweden at the Convention 2000 until now, we have obtained moral help from the institution which represents us, "EPCA", and also with the limitation, we have been receiving some economic help too.

Important to get opportunities to discuss ideas and experiences on the environmental education in favour of youth and on future actions.

Our environmental education project comes within the framework of the programme of information and sensitisation of actors about problems of the environment ...PSIDA, in short, of which the author is the chairman.

To know more about the association:

Burundi solidarity for good environment or Bursoles in short.

Libère Nkurunziza

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GEYC delegation in Sweden

All the time we have been working, our goal has been very clear "Educate young people for protecting the environment" and we are completely sure that our goal will continue being that.

As young people we identify with the work we are doing, because we feel commitment with the environment. We have programmed that for next year we will have ten environmental educators, working in five schools and so we will develop more and more feelings for the care of the environment.

### Burundi sets up BURSOLES

A non profit making organisation has been set up in Burundi in East Africa. They have some objectives such as to contribute to the mobilisation of population for rational management of natural resources through training, information, sensitisation and participation in order to promote lasting development.

Among many activities done is the creation of environment clubs in schools. It is therefore very

### Environmental Education: a medium for a lasting peace and development

*Libère Nkurunziza writes about peace and development because of war and poverty in Burundi.* Environmental education sets itself ahead for a lasting development. Its main goals and objectives are to educate a conscious population, devoted to the environment and its problems. It aims at a population which has a knowledge, competence, motivation and engagement; which would make it possible to work either individually or in a group so as to solve the actual problems and prevent new ones from arising. In other words, the word "development", meaning enterprise and of initiative spirit, is quite the opposite of stagnation, passivity and resignation; and the word "lasting" embodies all the areas of the participation and solidarity with others. It is just the opposite of indifference and despising of the other. So then, in

order to get at or sum up both aspects, which are somehow complementary, the self-conscience, the knowledge, the skills and competence, the evaluation capacity and mass participation must help in environmental education.

The environmental adviser must have in mind a realisation about wars all over the world and show how far he can work for peace and development. His activities have roots in education which can prevent the positive moral values from collapsing.

The values which must be emphasised are: unity, dignity, tolerance, respect, righteousness and the social order. The means provided are numerous: one can recall his own history or background (his ancestors), the reference to other people's history, religion and mainly science.

All over the world, all religions advocate one thing: the respect of life. As the Creator is the giver of life, therefore He is the only one can take it away. Furthermore, to all Christians and many other religious people, man is the only being created in the image of God, the Creator, if his intelligence is taken into account. It is then nonsense for people to fight and kill one another whereas even animal societies just show quite different realities.

#### **The value of unity in diversity sums up all the other values.**

This means that to welcome the other, despite his differences, is to respect him and tolerate everything that is different from you, to sit down together and accept to share...

This value needs to be deeply analysed because diversity points at three main areas: the ecosystems, the species and genes.

The educator, who has some knowledge in the environment points out that, the ecosystems must be preserved since they are source of life comfort. Species are either complementary, symbiotic or source of food and products for the other. He must then explain to his followers that life is to be respected and protected within the possible limits of an harmonious development.

The genetic diversity in general, and the human kind in particular, provide more advantages to people than they can themselves imagine. The diversity gives richness to the species and consequently more chances for survival, resistance and to man, in particular, much more flow of ideas and arguments. All in all, to have in mind the idea of eliminating race or one ethnic race implies to destroy oneself, a self-destruction because, for instance, one can ask himself what will the Tutsi or Hutu ethnic race look like after 15

centuries. Those who have studied the genetic populations can tell us a word about it.

Yours sincerely  
Libère Nkurunziza

## **Cultural diversity and tomorrow**

This article was prepared for publication by Peter Musa (Cameroon) in the June 2001 edition of The Global Forum on Environmental Education to coincide with the Caretakers of the Environment (CEI) 15th annual conference in Pretoria, South Africa under the theme "Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Tourism."

As a cultural heritage administrator I was particularly happy when I learnt of the conference theme. Having come in contact with CEI as far back as in 1994 through the Amateur Horticulturists Association (AHA) and as a recipient of the Global Forum on Environmental Education since 1996, I decided to reach out to CEI members worldwide through this short contribution in which I state that the world's cultural diversity just like its biodiversity needs to be protected. I went further to illustrate in simple and practical ways what cultural diversity is and what could be done especially by students in promoting it not only today but also for tomorrow's generations.

Actions to preserve the world's biodiversity have become a focal point in sustainable development. This is quite laudable. Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, humankind has better understood how delicate our earth is and with this understanding has been more than ever before very cautious in every action she takes which can be dangerous to the environment, man and to mother earth. The results so far have been a great success for our environmentalists, activists, campaigners, politicians, scientists and to all committed citizens of the world, united in the struggle for a cleaner and safer environment. Due to these concerted efforts both individually and collectively, humankind, plant and animal life and every other living organism including mother earth, her land masses and waters are now at least saved from environmental hazards.

Almost everyone across the globe today knows that we must work towards protecting our environment. *What Cultural Heritage Shall we Pass on to the Next Generation?*

This is a question which needs to be answered today especially as we are leading future generations into the third millennium. Just take a minute to reflect what peace could have been in our turbulent world of today if all humankind were to recognise the existence of each human



being, tribe, ethnic group, nations and the different regions of our world, their peculiarities, traditions or customs, way of life, indigenous knowledge and skills as a prime contributor to our global heritage and our global wealth. Also ponder on what damage violence, human abuse, discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance, human unrest, conflict, torture and war causes to countless individuals each day across the globe.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we must take up the issue of also protecting the world's cultural diversity very seriously. We also need to start looking for strategies to protect the world's rich cultural heritage as was done in Rio for our earth. Individually and collectively as the world's citizens while implementing strategies to preserve our biodiversity we should in no small way start contributing in protecting and safeguarding our cultural diversity. It is cultural diversity that makes me to be a Cameroonian, a black African and for this reason makes me to be different from a European, American, Asian or an Arab.

As often said, cultural diversity strengthens us all and with globalization we are all bound to live together as a family. We should therefore learn to love one another and live peacefully with each other, irrespective of our cultural origins, customs or differences. This is the heritage we must pass on to posterity. Where love and peace reigns, humanity shall develop positively and this will be the yardstick on which our cultural heritage will be measured tomorrow.

#### *Challenge to Youth - Students*

Young people especially those attending school can also contribute greatly in building a peaceful society. A society where friendship and love reigns, a society where respect is paid to each human being, a society where there is equality between a black man and a white man, a white man and a coloured man, a society where there is no nigger and discrimination is considered outdated.

Schools must not breed violence, hatred or racism. Interact with that Arab boy, Chinese girl, Tuareg boy, Masai or Zulu girl in your school. Making friends with a stranger makes you learn from each other. That is cultural diversity being manifested. When we get closer to people from other countries, we experience other cultures. Students can enormously contribute towards a multi-racial society by interacting with their schoolmates from other countries and continents especially those in metropolitan settings. This, once practiced at a local school will normally be extended to families, neighbourhoods, communities, towns, cities, states,

nations and the world at large. If we do this, it will definitely prepare upcoming generations to be fully integrated in tomorrow's global society where colour, language, nationality shall no longer constitute a barrier.

Now that the world community is conscious of the dangers of environmental hazards and is striving at proper management of our natural resources, the world of tomorrow should no doubt be a wonderful place for upcoming generations to live in. The tourist industry shall be bound to grow as the tourists of tomorrow shall not only be highly interested in ecotourism as has been the case in recent years but shall equally become very much involved in cultural tourism which entails knowing more about the different and diverse peoples of the world. This should in no small way promote a culture of peace, harmony, friendship and brotherhood amongst our future generations.

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### **CEI/Kenya: CATEK**

The following material has been submitted by our long time friend from Oyugis, Kenya ... Odhiambo O. Rapemo. We wish him well in his heroic efforts.

With the intention of achieving the long term objective of a good environment for better eco-life Catek have taken to the following activities.

- **Birds Sanctuary restoration and Preservation (PELICAN)**

Pelicans are large white beautiful birds. They feed on fish and are quite environmental friendly. Their only home in this region is RAKEWA in Oyugis (Kenya). They stay here during their breeding period which is between April and August. They build their nests on trees growing by the riverside. Fig trees and the local 'Tido' tree are their favourite for breeding. Other times they go to the Lake Victoria to feed and enjoy swimming in the water. The Pelicans here were surviving on sixteen trees in the early seventies. At present, only six trees are remaining. This implies that this home of the birds is facing extinction.

To save the situation CATEK has resorted to:

- a) Educate the neighbouring community on the need to help preserve the trees hence the birds.

- b) Encourage the people whose farms border this sanctuary to plant more fig trees.
- c) Distribute fig seedlings for planting here at Rakewa.
- d) Plan to hold world environment Day 5/6/2001, plant fig trees to mark the occasion to distribute agroforestry, shade and fruit trees to the local farmers for planting to support the birds inhabit - a show of concern for the birds.
- e) Studying the life pattern of the Pelicans with effect from January 2001.

• **Poverty Eradication**

To help alleviate poverty the organisation undertakes the following:

- 1. Educate members on gardening for better nutrition and income generation.
- 2. Encourage self sufficiency through use of what natural resources are available locally.
- 3. Planting trees as a means of renewable sources of energy (wood, fuel) all of which are aimed at Conserving our environment for better living.

• **Biodiversity (School Based)**

CATEK is carrying out sample studies to establish the effects of Man's interference with nature on identified areas. The study involves:

- a) Identifying plants in a small marked area of 3 x 10 m
- b) Naming the plants
- c) Finding possible uses of each of the plants
- d) Recording the information
- e) Drawing conclusion
- f) Diversifying rate of the plants.
- g) Suggesting correction and prevention measures.

• **Cultural Exchange**

Catek got involved in the exchange programme in 1997. The project is school based, locally and abroad. It is enabling students to learn more about their counter parts at a cheaper cost. At the moment 22 schools in Oyugis area are collaborating with Catek for the exchange, locally and abroad.

Most of our links abroad are from U.K. e.g Scotland-Bankhead Academy & Dyce Academy, and England - Philips High etc. By getting involved in the Science education Across the World project, many schools are getting linked all over the world.

**Library Establishment:** Stocked with relevant books donated from U.S and local acquisitions on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2001. Individuals, schools, and community are welcomed to use the Library.

- **Domestic Waste Control and Management:** A committee elected during the CATEK Annual General meeting on 21 December 2000 to be in-charge of the Domestic waste control and

management in Oyugis town by CATEK has completed their baseline study and production of a ten year action plan (2001 - 2010).

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Picture from the Biodiversity Project taken in March 2001. Students from Bonge school.

Updated information can be found at the following url:  
<http://www.iol.ie/~newtownw/caretakers/photographs.htm>

(This site is maintained by the editor as part of a link between Newtown School, Waterford, Ireland and Oyugis, Kenya.

**Caretakers India in action**

Mr Ravi Dutt (Chairman of CEI/India).

On the occasion of Children's Day on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2000, an "on the spot" children's Poster Painting Competition was organised by CEI/India. The Rotary Club-Delhi South West also associated in the competition which was co-ordinated by Mr Rakesh Gaur, Director of Projects. The topics were related to the problems facing Delhi, the capital of India such as the environment, pollution, and a vision for Delhi in the year 2010, etc. The topics were chosen in view of

Delhi's dubious distinction of being the 4<sup>th</sup> most polluted city in the world and to see children's perspective and vision of these problems and their ideas to overcome them. The competition was in three different age groups: 4-8, 8-12 and 13-17 years old. The response of the children was overwhelming. More than 470 children participated in the competition and the Posters painted by them and slogans given for the posters were amazing. The scene of the competition was like a riot of colours and ample proof of sensibilities of these young citizens which is going to shape our future.

The competition was witnessed by senior politicians, government functionaries, policy makers, planners and eminent citizens. The Posters and slogans were evaluated by eminent artists and environmental activists. All the participants were given certificates of merit. The three best entries in each age group were awarded shields. Not only this but the best entries on each topic in each age group were further awarded to encourage the children. The posters were displayed in an exhibition which people from all walks of life visited. The organisations such as UNICEF, CRY and HELPAGE India were invited to see the posters and select for use in their Christmas greeting cards and other literature. It is hoped that the poster painting competition will go a long way in creating awareness amongst the young citizens about the Environment and Pollution.



Mr Manoj Raghuvarshi congratulating a prizewinner.



### The 16<sup>th</sup> Caretakers of Environment International Conference & Global Environmental Youth Convention

Will be held in Turin, Italy from June 29<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002. The main theme will be:

**"Sustainable mobility, design and I.C.T."**

It will be organised by a number of bodies including :

CEI/Italy <http://www.caretakers4all.org>

IIIEE

[www.global-environment.org](http://www.global-environment.org)

COREP:

[http://www.lamp.polito.it/versione\\_uk/default.htm](http://www.lamp.polito.it/versione_uk/default.htm)

SAW

<http://www.scienceacross.org>

The Conference sub-themes are likely to be:

- Why mobility? What mobility?
- Car-free cities (Global warming, Zero-emission cars, Re-cycling cars)
- Transport and design
- Car factories and the Environment (Scrapping)
- International conventions /national laws about mobility (Road safety)
- On the road (roads and landscape)
- Roads and biodiversity
- Mobility and cyberspace
- ICT in developing countries
- Transport, art and history

More information? Contact: Luisa Viglietta  
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The 16<sup>th</sup>  
Caretakers of the Environment  
Conference



See page 14 for details!