

World Legislative Act Number 26

Public Education within the Earth Federation

“Education Act”

We delegates of the Eighth Provisional World Parliament, assembled here in Lucknow, India, August 2004 hereby recognize the need for the emerging Earth Federation to create good laws regarding the vital area of public education.

Whereas, we recognize that Article 13 of the *Constitution* gives every citizen of the Earth Federation certain rights under the law regarding education. Among these rights are -- Number 2: “Full access to information and to the accumulated knowledge of the human race,” Number 3: “Free and adequate public education available to everyone, extending to the pre-university level; Equal opportunities for elementary and higher education for all persons; equal opportunity for continued education for all persons throughout life; the right of any person or parent to choose a private educational institution at any time,” and Number 12: “Assure to each child the right to the full realization of his or her potential.”

Whereas, even though the *Constitution* specifies that the rights under Article 13 are “without immediate guarantee of universal achievement or enforcement,” we recognize that the rapid implementation of quality global education is vital to the ability of the Earth Federation to (a) save the planetary environment for future generations, (b) widely activate sense of world citizenship that is vital to planetary democracy, and (c) to create rapid prosperity and basic economic equality for the majority of the Earth’s citizens.

Whereas, the world today has 120 million children who do not even go to elementary school. Only one in four children in the poorest countries goes to school and 50% of those denied schooling are girls. As structural adjustment programs are forced upon poor indebted countries under the current world system, public education is being dismantled and education is being privatized so that only those with money are able to attend school. The world illiteracy rate is approaching 20% of the Earth’s population and is rising, as is world poverty.

This shows that the global crises in poverty, population increase (80 million new persons on the planet every year), and living conditions are directly correlated with the global crisis in education. We recognize that the solution to all these crises must be an integrated one as described in *Century Twenty-One: the Manifesto of the Earth Federation* ratified at the Seventh Provisional World Parliament in Chennai, India, December 2003. Worldwide activation of education is an essential part of such an integrated solution. We recognize the need for immediate serious measures to create a quality world educational system integrated with efforts to create universal prosperity, save the planetary environment, eradicate poverty, and activate world democracy.

Therefore, the Eighth Session of the Provisional World Parliament resolves that:

1. The Earth Federation shall make the development of schools, the training of teachers, and the

integration of all children into the educational process (either in public or private schools) a basic priority of government.

2. The Earth Federation will give substantial lines of credit and such educational aid as the World Parliament shall determine necessary to fulfill the mandate under Article 13 of the *Constitution* to both existing public and private schools worldwide. This shall be done as described in Section 7 of *Century Twenty-One: the Manifesto of the Earth Federation*.

3. This aid shall be distributed insofar as these schools or school systems fulfill basic educational standards that Department of Education (created under Article 7, Section C, Number 6) shall determine, as approved by the World Parliament.

4. This aid shall also be contingent on the public and private schools receiving it to submit and implement a plan to integrate the following requirements into their educational agendas:

A. Teachers and administrators shall study pedagogies of human development, self-realization, and empowerment, pass examinations in these areas as determined by local and regional school boards. One example of such pedagogy is the “Montessori process of education.” A common theme of such pedagogies is the elimination of the “top-down” model of education where the teacher presents disconnected facts to students for memorization and repetition on exams to a model where the teacher is the facilitator of the child’s own drive to self-development and inquiry. We deem it vital to the survival of the planet that real educational development take place for the vast majority of human beings. Another brief example of such a pedagogy can be given in terms of the “four Is” of education: inquiry, interpretation, integration, and imagination advocated by Columbia University educator Betty Reardon and others:

Inquiry. Effective learning begins with good questions. The syllabus should address these central questions. Philosophy in particular is concerned with careful, critical thinking, and such thinking is developed in students by making it interesting and relevant to them. The questions should be fundamental and allow students to see clearly the dynamic of penetrating the surface appearances of things through their questions. You teach to the questions and let the students freely think about the issues and the possible answers. The students must be convinced to find out for themselves, not to accept the opinions of others, including those of their teacher.

Interpretation. One basic aspect of being human is that we are *discerners and makers of meaning and value*. One asks of an idea or text: “what does it mean to you?” What is your thoughtful, considered response to this issue? Through classroom dialogue (or the dialogue of citizens in a democracy), we work in this way toward deepening our understanding, towards discerning the dynamic of meaning and truth in human life through committed inquiry and mutual respect. Creativity and independence in both teachers and students shall be nurtured and rewarded, rather than punished and repudiated, as is most often the case in today’s public educational systems.

Integration. *Learning must become part of persons for whom education has been successful.* A person for whom teaching is a vocation has a life-long passion for knowledge and understanding and is a person for whom intellectual, spiritual and moral growth are everyday components of life. Learners, for whom teaching and learning has been successful, also become changed in the process of education. They don’t just pass courses, memorize disconnected facts, and receive formal degrees. They integrate their knowledge and understanding and activate their lives for a perpetual quest of greater knowledge and understanding. Real education is about lifelong intellectual, spiritual and moral growth. The emerging Earth Federation needs mature, thoughtful, and integrated human beings to participate in the successful development of a transformed world order at all levels and in all fields of human endeavor.

Imagination. Real thinking and real teaching cultivate the imagination (just as the arts and the humanities have traditionally cultivated the imagination). Do we want to leave a better world for our children? Can we be lifelong learners who have the capacity for critical thought, values and the vision to become active citizens within a democracy and a world leading toward a better future for humankind? Good teaching and learning cultivates the imagination (just as it cultivates careful questioning and critical thinking) as showing *the possibility of other states of reality*. A cultivated imagination activates good citizenship and prepares students to contribute creatively throughout their lifetimes to their society and their world. The emerging Earth Federation needs people who can imagine and act for a transformed world of peace, justice, prosperity, and freedom. So-called “realists,” who insist that we must settle down in the broken and fragmented world of the past, represent a failure of good education.

B. The following subject items shall be integrated into the curriculum of public education being introduced at an early stage and reintroduced at higher levels in progressively more sophisticated forms:

1) *Study of global issues.* The global crises confronting humanity at the outset of the twenty-first century are and should be everyone’s concern, including all school children according to their age and cognitive growth. The Earth Federation must make a tremendous effort, similar to that already begun in seminars held by the Graduate School of World Problems and the Institute On World Problems, to educate humanity concerning the astronomical costs of global militarism, global population explosion, global poverty, worldwide lack of healthcare, worldwide lack of sanitation and clean water, and the host of global environmental crises from global warming to global depletion of agricultural lands, fresh water supplies, grazing lands, and ocean fisheries. Every school receiving credit lines or other support from the Earth Federation will integrate study of these issues into its programs. This can be done easily in subjects such as biology, geography, geology, history, sociology, anthropology, physics, chemistry, management, engineering, business, government, medicine, or economics.

2) *Study of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth,* the history of its creation and ratification, transformation of the old world order to the new, and how it is designed to aid the people of Earth in dealing with global crises. The *Constitution* alone cannot save humanity from the cataclysms portended by the above named global crises without the active help of hundreds of millions of world citizens. The *Constitution* must be studied in every school with an eye to how its spirit and intent (of a peaceful, sustainable, and just world order) can be achieved by people working in their communities, regions, nations, and together worldwide.

3) *Development of a quality of life index.* Sustainable ecologists have repeatedly pointed out that the conception of “quality of life” promoted by commercial interests and believed by the “consumer society” is an illusion dispelled upon serious thought. It is not and should not be the role of government to dictate what constitutes a “quality life” for humanity other than fulfilling the basic rights of everyone to education, healthcare, social security, peace, security, a decent wage, safe working conditions, etc. However, if every school and educational institution encourages thoughtful reflection on what constitutes a quality life, it is certain that the unsustainable over-consumption and unnecessary consumption of throw away trash now promoted by the commercial interests of the world will rapidly evaporate. Every school and class should be encouraged to discuss what constitutes a quality life and how this can be achieved for the vast majority of persons on our planet. The process will empower people from below and rapidly convert consumption patterns to sustainable, durable, not polluting goods

without requiring a burdensome quantity of top-down regulations from the Earth Federation.

4) *Study of the requirements for world peace.* Every school curriculum shall integrate the concept of “world peace” into a variety of subjects and encourage students and citizens to develop a “world peace index” that will specify the conditions, attitudes, assumptions, activities, and processes that can result in world peace. Students may wish to study the self-justifying and self-perpetuating nature of the old war-system in the world and contrast this with the assumptions and requirements of a world peace system. As with the quality of life index, reflection on this subject and the construction of one’s own or one’s group’s index will empower people to implement the *Constitution* and the work of the Federation on the local, regional, national, and mundial levels in ways that foster peace, nonviolence, increase in toleration and mutual understanding, disarmament, communication, and world social solidarity.

5) *Development of a unity in diversity index.* The Preamble to the *Constitution* places the principle of “unity in diversity” into the spirit and intent of the Earth Federation. Curriculum shall study the many forms of diversity in the world, such as religious, cultural, gender, personal, linguistic, tribal, national, ideological, and racial diversities. Students shall discuss throughout their educational experience, at progressively higher levels, the forms of diversity and their relation to various kinds of unity, from cultural, to spiritual, to governmental, etc. Again, this will both empower students and allow them to see the mutual relationships and interdependence of many forms of unity in diversity without excessive governmental legislation from the top down.

6) *Development of a good government index.* Public education shall encourage students of all ages to reflect on what constitutes good and bad government and to develop a good government index. This index may specify a number of parameters that might constitute good government and ways by which such government may be achieved. Students will better understand the limitations and difficulties of good government. Through education, people shall be empowered to critically examine and participate in local, regional, national, and federal world government in order to make it as good as possible. Such study will lead many to become involved with government throughout their lives and should engage citizens in the process of global transformation toward a decent world order.

We conclude that, these open-ended pedagogies designed to empower people as individuals and communities will make possible the transformation of human life on the Earth before it is too late. The global crises identified in this bill can only be dealt with effectively with massive participation from and cooperation by people. For it is only through massive education and concomitant participation of the majority of humanity that the goals of world peace, prosperity, justice, and freedom can be realized.