

"A Learning Society..." was accepted for publication in *Resurgence*, a magazine on sustainability, art and spirituality distributed in more than 20 countries. The article will be published later this year in "The Handbook of Sustainability Literacy: Skills for a Changing World," Green Books, UK.

An abridged version is published here.

C3 ... a vibrant collaborative of students, alums, staff and faculty committed to creating positive change in the world.

A Learning Society

The next step in human evolution depends on developing a society that can learn to live sustainably on the Earth.

Human evolution has always depended on the ability of communities and groups to learn. In prehistoric times, bands of early hominids survived by learning how to work together to find food. The Agricultural Revolution was only possible because hunter-gatherers shared information about how to cultivate seeds and domesticate animals. In the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution was built on a partnership between scientists and capitalists. These and many other advances depended on collaborative learning. Now, in our time, we need to develop an entire learning society so humankind can take the next step in its evolution.

To continue our evolutionary journey, *Homo sapiens* needs to learn how to live sustainably on the Earth. We are facing an ecological crisis of unprecedented proportions that threatens our well being, and perhaps our very survival. Created by western culture's addiction to economic growth and consumerism, it is comprised of many interconnected facets including climate change, the depletion of natural resources, the loss of biodiversity and increasing pollution and toxic wastes. Looking at the whole picture, it's easy to see that human and ecosystem health are in jeopardy. Unless our species can learn to think and act sustainably, the future appears grim.

Learning to think and act sustainably requires a fundamental reform of the education system. Today's schools, colleges and universities emphasize theories over ethics, detachment over relationship, and immediate answers over thoughtful inquiry. Based on a worldview that asserts the superiority of our species above all others, mainstream education perpetuates the very patterns of thinking and behaving that cause the ecological crisis.

It will take human society as a whole to learn how to live lightly on the Earth. No one person or group of people has all the answers. We need the knowledge of indigenous peoples, the expertise of people who work on the land, the curiosity of children and the wisdom of the elders. We need artists, scientists, poets, engineers, spiritual leaders and film stars. In short, we need everyone's creativity and ingenuity in order for humankind to become capable of evolving into a truly sustainable society.

Active listening and authentic sharing are essential, not only because they encourage the exchange of ideas, but because they make collaborative learning possible. Like a synergistic chemical reaction in which substances interact to create new ones, collaborative learning is a powerful way of creating new knowledge. Recognizing that "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts," collaborative learning views learning as a social process, too. As a social phenomenon, learning becomes a lifelong process that can occur anywhere, any time, with anyone, no matter their age. Understanding education as a lifelong, collaborative process is at the heart of a learning society.

The idea of a learning society was first proposed by American educational philosopher Robert Hutchins. In a 1968 book called *The Learning Society*, he advocated a society whose primary goals were continuous learning, active citizenship and social well being.

How can we develop a learning society to assist humankind's evolution towards sustainability? Let me suggest six strategies:

Create Learning Communities

Collaborative learning happens best in communities, so it makes sense to create learning communities for sustainability throughout society. There are already many learning communities studying sustainability. The Northwest Earth Institute, which organizes community-based discussion courses in the US, is a terrific example. Conversation Cafes and World Cafes are other forms of learning community that are being used to explore sustainability.

Learn from Experience

Experience is the surest guide to living sustainably. Through experimentation and critical thinking we can learn what works and what doesn't. This active form of learning is obviously very different from conventional educational practices which deliver a pre-determined body of information to passive learners.

Foster a New Cultural Worldview

Developing values and beliefs consistent with sustainability will require a shared understanding of the destructive consequences of the old worldview, as well as a widely-held desire to create a respectful, long term relationship with the Earth. Organizations like the Center for the New American Dream are helping to do this.

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ILEAP International Fellows



ILEAP International Fellows are in Seattle until June 23, 2009. Read more on page 2 about **Britt Yamamoto**, ILEAP's executive director and C3 core faculty.

From left to right: **Emmanuel Dolo, Liberia**, a former refugee working to foster peace and reconciliation in Liberia among formerly warring tribal factions; **Betty Kagoro, Uganda**, working to foster collaborative public health and HIV prevention and education programs among various community and faith-based organizations; **Paul Samba, Zambia**, director of a farm college that is focused on training a new generation of sustainable farmers in Zambia; **Juliet Thersita, India**, a strong advocate for marginalized and vulnerable fishing communities in southern India.

Photo by Peter Zdrojewski

C3 Faculty: In Practice Around the Region and Around the World

■ **B.J. Bullert, Ph.D.**, C3 strategic communication core faculty, recently was awarded a \$6,000 4Culture grant from the Heritage Special Projects program for her film, **Fisherman's Terminal: A Sequel**. She also has applied for a grant for her forthcoming documentary about waltz and community, **Seattle Waltz**. She plans to compete both projects during summer 2009. Bullert is the executive producer of **Antioch Now, a half-hour monthly program on SCAN TV** (www.scantv.org), Channel 77, produced with strategic communications master's program students. The program airs on the second Monday of the month at 5:30 p.m., featuring the work of AUS students. In February, she conducted an on-camera interview with Larry Paros, the executive director of a



unique educational experiment – the Yale Summer High School 1968 – which is the subject of a feature-length documentary currently in production.

■ **Kate Davies, D.Phil.**, C3 director and environment and community core faculty, was invited to teach a week-long course in February on **Roots of Learning: Strategies for Creative Social Change at Schumacher College in Devon, England**. Schumacher is a private, international college named after the economist E.F. Schumacher (*Small is Beautiful*). Davies opened the Whidbey Institute's 2009 Lyceum lecture series in March with a presentation on **Healthy People, Healthy Environment, Healthy Economy**. In March, she spoke at the Washington State Psychological Association 2009 Spring Convention on **The Costs of**

Neurodevelopmental Disorders in Washington State. She recently completed an article for *Resurgence* magazine on **A Learning Society**. See article above.

■ **Betsy Geist, Ph.D.**, C3 whole systems design core faculty, participated in a panel presentation at an Association of American College & Universities conference that addressed **Improving Faculty Worklife by Conceptualizing New Faculty Roles**. The presentation grew out of her work as part of the central University's Blue Book Commission, working on faculty roles, contracts and development.

■ **Shana Hormann, M.S.W., Ph.D.**, C3 organizational psychology core faculty and Associate Academic Dean, is a member of the leadership team for a new project now underway

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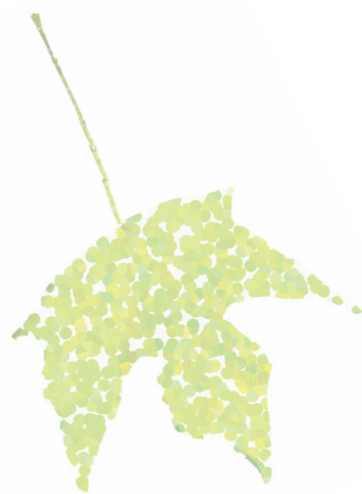
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Antioch University
Center for Creative Change
Seattle, WA 98121-1814
2326 Sixth Ave.
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– a collaboration on behalf of **Native Education** among five higher education institutions: Antioch University Seattle, The Evergreen State College, Northwest Indian College, Muckleshoot Tribal College and Grays Harbor College. This two-year project is designed to increase postsecondary success and college readiness of Washington's Native American students by strengthening and aligning the programs offered by the five partners at two reservation sites (Muckleshoot and Tulalip), where they offer complementary programs. The project is co-funded by **Lumina Foundation for Education and the Gates Foundation**.



■ **Jonathan Scherch, M.S.W., Ph.D.**, C3 environment and community core faculty, and **Lobsang Tsering**, a former Tibetan Fulbright graduate student who studied permaculture and other themes of sustainable community development with Scherch during 2003, recently received a third invitation from Prime Minister Kalon Tripa of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile for more collaborative work **Tibetan refugee settlements in south India**. They will travel in July. The work will involve an assessment of **sustainable agriculture** and community development efforts across the settlements and preparation of a report to the parliament in Dharamsala. A team led by Scherch

was also a finalist for the prestigious **2009 Buckminster Fuller Challenge** that identifies "comprehensive, integrated strategies to tackle the world's major problems." He and past and current C3/AUS students **Todd Ellis, Rick Archuletta, Travis Green and Mark Rozema** submitted **A Proposal for Bamboo Resource Systems for Social, Economic and Environmental Benefits in the Pacific Northwest USA**, an extension of his work on bamboo resource systems in China and with Pacific Bamboo Resources, of which he is executive director.

■ **Farouk Seif, Ph.D.**, C3 whole systems design professor emeritus, led a successful cross-cultural study in **Egypt** March 11-31. The 20-day journey included exciting excursions to the Mediterranean Sea and major oases in the Western desert, as well as several



visits to families and communities along the Nile Valley. In April, Seif was the keynote speaker and co-facilitator of an all-day workshop held in Friday Harbor. **Water in San Juan County** was designed to assist real estate professionals better understand and communicate the science, policy and practical application of water quality and quantity issues in San Juan Co.

■ **Britt Yamamoto, Ph.D.**, C3 environment and community core faculty and executive director of iLEAP (www.ileap.org), was a facilitator for the **2009 Continuums of Service** conference sponsored by the **Western Region Campus Compact Consortium**, which works to build a regional network of service-learning practitioners. In April, he welcomed the new iLEAP Fellows (photo and article on page 1). The **iLEAP International Fellowship** is one of iLEAP's main programs. It brings leaders from civil society organizations working for progressive social change in Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America to Seattle for a three-month intensive program. Visit the Fellows' Blog at ileap.org/blog. ■

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Think Systemically

Within a learning society, systemic thinking would focus on understanding the interactions between human and ecological systems and restructuring human systems to be more sustainable.

Embrace Diversity

... not only different cultures and ethnicities, but also different ideas and beliefs. A diverse learning society is important because it demonstrates a commitment to a democracy based on inclusion, equality and respect and because differences are a source of learning. If we only interact with people like ourselves we are unlikely to learn or change.

Whole Person Learning

A learning society should foster the development of whole human beings, who can think critically, respond compassionately and act ethically. We need a learning society that engages and integrates peoples' hearts, minds, hands and spirits.

These six strategies are a beginning, but there is not much time. Given current trends, our species will need to learn and change more in the next 50 years than it has in the past 50,000. The Agricultural Revolution took thousands of years and the Industrial Revolution took 200. We have so much less time to achieve the massive social changes needed for survival. Let us hope that the urgency of the situation catalyzes the creation of a learning society for sustainability, thereby dramatically enhancing the ability of Homo sapiens to evolve.

Kate Davies, director

In Memorium

Carmina R. Fuller, graduate of the M.A. in Organizational Psychology program (2002-04), died February 27, 2009, in Seattle. Carmina was born in Bogata, Columbia. She proudly shared her rich heritage and stories with her peers and instructors. After graduating, her strong commitment to providing health and human services to Latino peoples led her to accept a supervisory position with Sea Mar Community Health Center, a community based organization committed to providing quality, comprehensive health and human services to diverse communities. Reflects Shana Hormann, "Carmina, I miss you deeply. The world is more beautiful because you were here."



Global Issues PERSPECTIVES

■ The Future of Grass-Roots Development in the Majority World April 29

An audience of more than 100 joined this moderated conversation with the **2009 iLEAP International Fellows** as they debate the promise, problems and future of development in the Majority World. The Fellows hail from Uganda, Zambia, India and Liberia and are leaders in their respective organizations where they are committed to working for change at the grass-roots. The iLEAP Fellowship programs works to expand and deepen their understanding of social change through an integrated curriculum built around the methodology of reflective practice and the concept of critical service. The event was co-sponsored by Pangea, Global Washington and the World Affairs Council.

■ Negotiating a Seat at the Table: Indian Nations, the State and the United Nations May 7

Rudolph Rýser, Ph.D., founder and chairman of the **Center for World Indigenous Studies**, spoke to the emergence of Indian nations as local, regional and international players in the climate change debate.

Rýser, a member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, has developed and conducted tribal and intertribal workshops and seminars on health, community organization, self-government, law enforcement and natural resource management. He has led these programs in the US, Canada, Australia, Mexico and in Peru. Rýser also has been a liaison and facilitator for diplomatic links between indigenous spokespersons and representatives of states' governments and international organizations. He is the leading exponent of Fourth World Geopolitics.

■ June 16, 17 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Student Symposium

Students graduating from the Center's programs present findings from their community-focused change projects. Antioch campus.

■ July 30, 6 p.m. C3 Open House for Prospective Students

Invite friends and colleagues to come meet faculty, students and alumni for the program that interests them. Antioch campus.

Center for Creative Change

Kate Davies, D.Phil., Director
kdavies@antioch.edu
206-268-4811

CCC brings together five degree programs and seven graduate certificates in an integrated model of graduate education.

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This newsletter is published by the Center for Creative Change at Antioch University Seattle for current and prospective students, alumni and friends of the center.
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