



**LEAVES, A Newsletter of the  
INTERNATIONAL  
ENVIRONMENT FORUM  
Volume 17, Number 3 15 March 2015**



**International Environment Forum** A Baha'i inspired organization addressing  
the environment and sustainable development

Website [www.iefworld.org](http://www.iefworld.org)  
Article submission [newsletter@iefworld.org](mailto:newsletter@iefworld.org)  
Secretariat Email [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org)  
President Email [ief@iefworld.org](mailto:ief@iefworld.org)  
Postal address 12B Chemin de Maisonneuve, CH-1219 Chatelaine, Geneva, Switzerland

**Article Deadline next issue 13 April 2015**

General Secretary Emily Firth  
Arthur Lyon Dahl Ph.D.

### **From the Editor, Request for information for upcoming newsletters**

This newsletter is an opportunity for IEF members to share their experiences, activities, and initiatives that are taking place at the community level on environment, climate change and sustainability. All members are welcome to contribute information about related activities, upcoming conferences, news from like-minded organizations, recommended websites, book reviews, etc. Please send information to [newsletter@ief.org](mailto:newsletter@ief.org)

Please share the *Leaves* newsletter and IEF membership information with family, friends, and associates and encourage interested persons to consider becoming a member of the IEF.

## **International Environment Forum 19th Annual Conference**

The **19th Annual Conference of the International Environment Forum** was held in association with the international conference of the **Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL)**



**the 10<sup>th</sup> PERL  
International Conference  
UNESCO, Paris  
10-11 March 2015**  
**Preparing, Engaging,  
Responding and Learning  
about Responsible Lifestyles**

at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, on 10-11 March 2015. IEF is a partner in PERL.

The theme of the PERL International Conference was "**A Decade of Responsible Living: Preparing, Engaging, Responding and Learning**".

The IEF organized a special symposium on ethical transformation and education for service, and IEF members were also co-authors on a research

paper about values-based indicators in education and the toolkits that IEF has contributed to developing. The IEF General Assembly was held at UNESCO Headquarters just after the end of the conference.



# CONFERENCE REPORT

About 120 participants from across Europe and around the world gathered at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, for the 10th International Conference organized by the Partnership for Education and research about Responsible Living (PERL), which is directed by IEF board member Victoria W. Thoresen of Hedmark University College, Norway.

The conference was opened on 10 March by the Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, representatives of UNEP, the European Commission, Hedmark University College, the Norwegian and Swedish Ministries, and a youth representative. There were a number of distinguished guest speakers, research presentations in parallel sessions, workshops, the IEF Symposium, and an International Roundtable. The full list of research presentations and abstracts can be downloaded at <https://eng.hihm.no/project-sites/living-responsibly/conference-paris-20...>



Opening plenary, with UNESCO ADG for Education Qian Tang, UNEP representative Fabienne Pierre, and youth representative Luis Zamarioli-Santos

IEF member Ismael Velasco performs

Nourishment for the spirit was provided at several points throughout the conference by the multi-talented IEF member Ismael Velasco who enchanted the spirits and touched the hearts of everyone with his mime and story-telling skills.



Keynote speaker Arjen Wals

The first keynote on **"From Cosmetic Reform to a Whole System Transformation"** was given by Arjen Wals, University of Wageningen, the Netherlands. He contrasted the push to consume, the manufacturing of doubt over climate change, and the erosion of trust in science in our present society, with the co-creation of sustainability and meaning. We need to go from transmissive learning to learning that is transdisciplinary, transboundary, transformative and transgressive (questioning the dominant paradigm). For Wals, sustain"ability" should include the dynamics of sustainable development (sustainability literacy, systems thinking and adopting an integral and

dynamic view); a critical dimension questioning hegemony and routines, analyzing normativity and considering ethics; a dimension of change and innovation (leadership and entrepreneurship, unlocking creativity, utilizing diversity, appreciating chaos and complexity, and empowerment and collective change); and an existential dimension connecting with people, places and other species, with passion, values and making meaning. To facilitate this, we need a curriculum with new content, research including practitioners and citizen science, connecting with the multiple stakeholders in society, schools and institutions that walk the talk, and a pedagogy based on systems thinking, social learning, integrative design, discovery, values and ethics.



Keynote speaker Arvind Singhal

A second keynote was on "**Positive Deviance: A Flipped Approach to Solving Problems**" by Arvind Singhal of the University of Texas and Hedmark University College. He described the positive deviance approach to social change, using mental flips to solve complex problems. Rather than focusing on the negative, the problems, the gaps, what is not working, we should look at what is working, and what we are for. The premise is that solutions to problems do exist, and stare us in the face, but we do not see them because we do not know where to look. Wisdom is widely distributed. He cited an example of child malnutrition in Vietnam, where a study of the few outliers, poor children who were healthy, uncovered a series of simple solutions without extra resources. Since added economic value is not improving

lives, we need education beyond personal growth as a commodity, more responsible and meaningful, combining learning and feeling, based on trust (including in young people, schools and teachers), co-creating in the common interest based on a joint vision and values.

Research presentations were given throughout the conference in parallel tracks on Advancing policy, Transforming learning and training environments, Building capacities of educators and trainers, Empowering and mobilizing youth, and Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level.

The research paper in which IEF was involved concerned the toolkits for values-based education prepared under the supervision of the PERL Workgroup led by Arthur Dahl, in collaboration with the research team at the University of Brighton behind the values-based indicators project (<http://www.esdinds.eu>).



Gemma Burford research presentation

Entitled "**Discovering What Matters": Designing a values-centered toolkit for Education for Sustainable and Responsible Living (EfSRL) in secondary schools**", the presentation by Gemma Burford (University of Brighton), on behalf of co-authors Elona Hoover, Arthur Dahl and Marie K. Harder, showed that disseminating knowledge about sustainability issues is rarely enough, in itself, to motivate long-term behaviour change. Focusing on global problems such as climate change, biodiversity loss and poverty often serves to increase people's sense of despair and helplessness, and may result in apathy rather than positive action. An alternative approach, however, is to help people to reflect on what is important to them in life - their core values - and to envision the type of future that they want on the basis of those values. This approach has already been found useful for closing "value-action gaps" in organisations promoting non-formal education for sustainability.

She described the collaborative research project with civil society organisations, funded by the EU FP7 programme, which constituted the starting point for PERL Workgroup 1. The Workgroup and affiliates developed values-centered toolkits for secondary schools. Different qualitative sources were used to explore the values underpinning Education for Sustainable and Responsible Living, and how they might be enacted in schools. These insights were translated into a set of engaging, participatory and fun activities - the "Discovering What Matters" toolkit. She related some experiences of capacity-building with prototypes of the toolkit in different schools, and shared a vision for the future.

The Tuesday afternoon programme started with the **International Environment Forum Symposium on Ethical Transformation and Education for Service at the Community and Institutional Levels**.



International Environment Forum Symposium

In the first paper on **A Multi-level Approach to Ethics, Service and Responsible Living**, Arthur Lyon Dahl (International Environment Forum) presented a systems perspective, showing that responsible and sustainable living cannot be achieved by each of us acting alone. Individuals are part of communities that can either reinforce or impede sustainable actions. Learning the pleasure that comes from serving others in the community can provide positive reinforcement and build hope in the future. Just as an ethical approach can motivate individuals to live more responsibly and devote their lives to service to society, so it is important to unite communities around a shared vision of ethical sustainability values.

He noted that many of today's sustainability challenges come from the irresponsible behavior of governments, businesses and other institutions, that are failing to provide a values-base for sustainable lifestyles. While governments are supposed to serve their citizens and often adopt lofty goals, the lack of ethical principles can easily lead them in other more self-serving directions. Businesses also consider too often that their ends of growth and profitability justify any means; if they are to contribute to a sustainable society and become socially and environmentally responsible, they also need to incorporate ethical principles and service to society into their institutional framework. If there is coherence between ethics and values at the individual, community and institutional levels, action at all these levels can become mutually reinforcing.



Presenters in the IEF Symposium: Onno Vinkhuyzen, Ismael Velasco and Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen

The second paper by Javier Gonzales Iwanciw (Nur University and IEF), Onno Vinkhuyzen (IEF), Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen (Wageningen University and IEF) and Fabiana Mendez Raya (Nur University and IEF) on **Valuing and Evaluating Leadership that Matters** was presented by Onno Vinkhuyzen. He noted that transforming society towards sustainable consumption and production requires more from leadership than what current leadership models provide due to the complexity of the enterprise and the value dimensions involved. Concepts and frameworks such as complexity, collaborative, ecological, and sustainability leadership have been proposed at the level of theory. In parallel many institutions provide leadership training aiming to both motivate and enable students to become leaders for sustainability. Many of them are however not sufficiently comprehensive and often do not cover the "inner" value dimensions essential to generate the necessary vision, understanding and motivation, or they lack tools to evaluate the impact on the value dimensions. The team seeks to bridge this gap by adapting the indicator framework developed within the *We Value* project (University of Brighton) to fit the training in the Moral Leadership Framework developed at Nur University in Bolivia. This leadership model has the potential to support individual and collective transformational change amongst others because it addresses the value dimensions comprehensively. The *We Value* indicators were adapted and expanded, and a pilot test of the indicators launched with students (midcareer professionals) who receive 80 (semester hours) training in moral leadership at Nur University, some before training, some just after, and a third group much later.

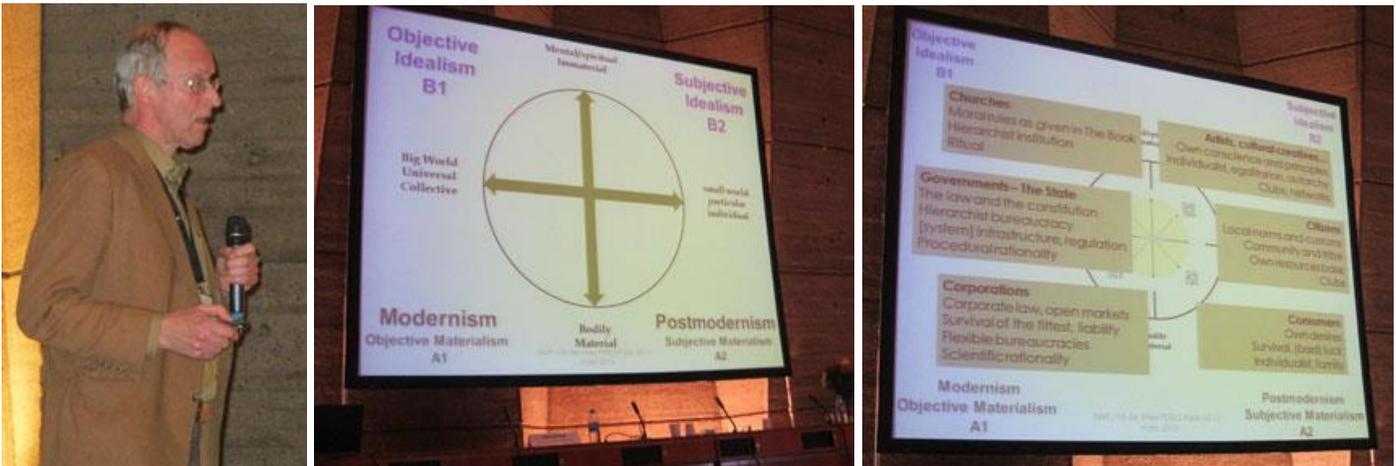
The third presentation on **An Evidence-Based Design Template for Effective Values and Behaviour Change Interventions** described the latest research by Ismael Velasco (Adora Foundation and IEF). In the context of the Millennium Development Goals, UNESCO identified the "knowledge-action gap" as a key challenge, where understanding what needs to be done is not followed by concomitant action. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as defined by the United Nations, aims to "encourage changes in behavior that will create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations." Yet even after 20 years, evidence-based interventions that measurably achieve this are rare. How do we change hearts?

Velasco presented the key design elements which, incorporated into a purposive educational intervention, can generate positive and sustained values and behavioural change. He proposed a generic design template that others can apply for successful Behaviour Change Interventions, with moderating human and institutional factors. This template has been "reverse engineered" from a research-established example of "best practice" in the International Federation of the Red Cross programme "Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change", delivering demonstrable values and behaviour change in a significant number and proportion of participants, replicated across over 100 countries and diverse social and institutional contexts, using non-cognitive methods.

In the last presentation on **Responsible Institutions - Responsible Individuals?**, Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen (Wageningen University and IEF) referred to the importance of personal choice and commitment for responsible living in order to transform societies towards more just and sustainable ones. It is undeniable that unless individuals bring those responsible choices with them into their institutional setting, the possibilities for individuals to live responsibly will be severely constrained; the physical, social and educational infrastructure required will not be created.

The paper focused on the role of institutions in enabling responsible living by proposing the way institutions relate to international norms. The international community of states has a good track record of agreeing on setting goals for what a "Future We Want" should be like and formulating obligations, albeit often vague, for what states should do to contribute to such a future. Currently only states are formally obliged to comply with international law in its different forms. In a situation when states do not take their responsibility for achieving these visions sufficiently seriously and when states are not able to achieve them without serious commitment from other institutional actors and individual citizens, it is time to reconsider what responsibility institutions beyond states have towards international norms, including in the domain of sustainability and justice. The paper first outlined the rationale for non-state institutional actors to take on responsibility towards implementing international norms. It then reviewed relevant normative theories for allocating responsibility in a governance system. Thirdly, it identified some practical strategies for how to facilitate such responsibility. Based on the culpability principle, the capacity principle and the concern principle, individual accountability and ethical responsibility can be facilitated by external accountability.

A parallel workshop on "**Global Frameworks for the Transition to Sustainable Lifestyles**" moderated by Jan Vandemoortele discussed the The Global Action Plan for ESD, the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Lifestyles and Education ([http://www.unep.org/10yfp/Portals/50150/downloads/10YFP-SLE\\_DraftConcept...](http://www.unep.org/10yfp/Portals/50150/downloads/10YFP-SLE_DraftConcept...)), and the Sustainable Development Goals.



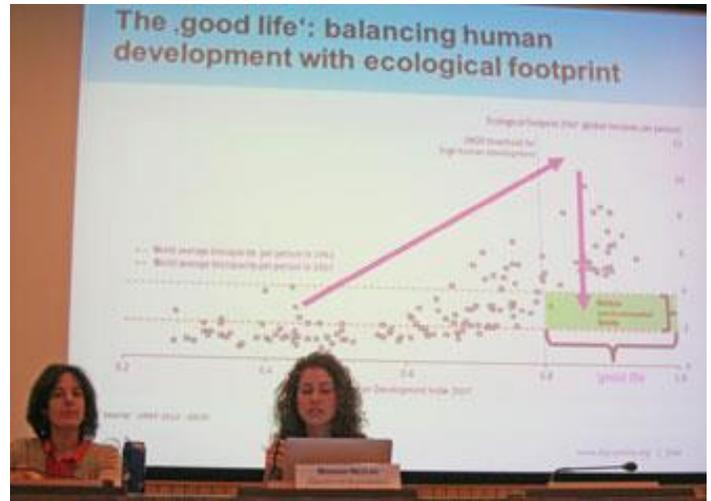
Keynote presenter Bert de Vries and some of his slides

The first day of the conference concluded with a final keynote on "**Integrative Worldviews and the Search for Responsible Living**" by Bert de Vries, Utrecht Sustainability Institute, University of Utrecht. He reviewed various worldview frameworks based on values and beliefs, in the search for responsible living. He ranked worldviews along axes from bodily material to mental/spiritual and immaterial, and from small world, particular and individual to big world, universal and collective, producing objective and subjective idealism, and objective (modernism) and subjective materialism (postmodernism). Six subsets of worldviews in this framework include, on the subjective side:

- **Artists, cultural creatives** favouring their own conscience and principles, individualist, egalitarian and preferring autarchy;
  - **Citizens** centered in local norms and customs, the community and tribe, and their own resource base; and
  - **Consumers** with their own desires, individualist, family-centered, with survival and (bad) luck as important.
- On the objective side, there are:
- **Churches**, with moral rules as given in The Book, hierarchist institutions and ritual;
  - **Governments and The State**, with law and the constitution, a hierarchist bureaucracy, [system] infrastructure and regulation, and procedural rationality; and
  - **Corporations**, based on corporate law and open markets, survival of the fittest, liability, flexible bureaucracies and scientific rationality.

He called for an integrative worldview that avoids extremism and the blocking of other worldviews, a middle ground of pluralism and diversity, with alliances of business and consumers, churches and governments. He referred to the 1972 study for the Club of Rome, "*The Limits to Growth*" and the lack of social dynamics to listen to the warnings. The predicted collapse may happen if vested interests continue to block progress and the extreme predictions of climate change and biodiversity loss are right. But all the seeds of change are also there. The financial system is extremely short-term and vulnerable, but the situation is too political and conflictual to face these realities.

Wednesday 11 March 2015



Keynote presenter Mariana Nicolau

The second day of the conference opened with Mariana Nicolau of the UNEP/Wuppertal Center for Sustainable Consumption and Production, speaking on "**Actor leverage points for engaging and empowering sustainable lifestyles**". She described many initiatives, from the SPREAD Sustainable Lifestyles 2050 project (<http://www.sustainable-lifestyles.eu/>) which ended in 2012, to the Global Network on Sustainable Innovation and Entrepreneurship (<http://scaling-up.net/>), and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's *Action 2020* (<http://www.wbcsd.org/action2020.aspx> and <http://action2020.org/>) to a recent European Environment Agency report on innovative business models for sustainable lifestyles ([http://scp.eionet.europa.eu/ETC\\_InnovativeBusinessModelsforSustainableLi...](http://scp.eionet.europa.eu/ETC_InnovativeBusinessModelsforSustainableLi...)). There are civil society leverage points that provide access to information on local innovations, promote social inclusion and raise awareness. We need to develop multi-stakeholder engagement, with actors supporting each other to rethink our models, develop collaborative consumption and build a circular economy.



The winners of the PERL medial competition were announced. Ninety-three entries were received.



International Roundtable; closing session; moderator Bernard Combes of UNESCO

This was followed by an International Roundtable on **"Responsible Living around the Globe"** with Victoria Thoresen (Europe), Sue McGregor (Canada); Luis Flores Mimica (Latin America), Robert Didham (Asia), and Carme Martinez Roca (Africa), moderated by Bernard Combes of UNESCO. Most felt that little real progress had been made towards education for responsible living around the globe. There were many good practices, but they were still going against the tide. Universities were very traditional, with disciplines in silos and narrow requirements for research publications. This works against action-based research, participatory learning and community-based projects. Educational change takes 40 years.

In the discussion, it was pointed out that traditional researchers are stuck in an old scientific paradigm that is no longer working. There is mobilization around networks, but a vacuum between networks, so a network of networks is needed. There was a need for methods to evaluate sustainability changes in a multidisciplinary way. The values-based indicators project (<http://www.esdinds.eu>) was a start, and had shown that the alignment of academics and civil society organizations was possible. It is important to reach beyond academic networking to tackling real issues. In the USA, NGOs are funded to find local solutions to local issues like renewable energy and changing diets.

The panel agreed that a huge paradigm shift in ways of thinking was needed, from university entrance examinations to teacher training in active learning to new learning environments in schools. The boundaries between formal and informal education for sustainable lifestyles should be eliminated. We should bring life into the classroom, and take the classroom to life. Traditional knowledge needed to be documented, used and shared in the classroom. Ethics should be brought into the classroom, empowering students and showing their value. Responsible living is not something new, but something many people already do. We need to go beyond the gap between aspirations (models) and reality. When people know and care for each other, their behaviour is completely different.

Victoria Thoresen concluded the roundtable by referring the recent draft *"Pathways to Sustainable Lifestyles: Global Stocktaking Report"* prepared by PERL for UNEP under the 10-year Framework Programme for Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), which provides a global and regional analysis of barriers and trends and showcases good practices ([http://www.scpclearinghouse.org/upload/publication\\_and\\_tool/file/408.pdf](http://www.scpclearinghouse.org/upload/publication_and_tool/file/408.pdf)). We see a two-fold process in the world, both a collapse and a new world emerging. We need understanding and dialogue among all the actors in their diversity, coming together to build empathy and to learn from each other.

Wednesday afternoon started with three parallel Workshops on: **"Systems Thinking and Education for Responsible Living"** by Guus Geisen, IRISZ and the Foundation for Sustainable Learning, which explored self-creation (autopoiesis) involving observation, pattern identification, critical questions, cause and effect structures, mental models, enduring change, action and reflection; **"Strategic Conditions towards Sustainable Living"** with Mariana Nicolau, The Center for Sustainable Consumption and Production, and "Positive Deviance" by Arvind Singhal, University of Texas/Hedmark University College, following up his earlier keynote.

Among the Research presentations on Wednesday, a couple were of particular interest. Marilyn Mehlmann described the work of Global Action Plan International (<http://www.globalactionplan.com/>) in "**Learning for Sustainability: A Systemic Approach to Behaviour and Beliefs**" with a methodology of learning for change through action and awareness, with constant experimentation and learning from experience.

IEF member Ismael Velasco of the Adora Foundation discussed *technology and social action*, based on field work in Bristol (UK), Greenland and Tanzania, involving a vision of where the world is going, connection and action. He also described a recent cloud conference for PERL, with story-based priming of crisis and solution to stimulate emotion, arts-based self-expression to build an emotional identity, and a choice of actions with sharing. This goes beyond a passive webinar to make the participants agents for change.

In the closing plenary, the conference approved a set of recommendations to continue the network of collaboration which the Consumer Citizenship Network and then PERL have built so successfully over the last 10 years, once the funding from the European Union for the PERL Erasmus Network ends late in 2015.

In her closing remarks, Victoria Thoresen, who created and has led the network since its beginning, said she was a doer and dreamer, with a vision of a world of peace without war, without prejudice, where people are not dying of poverty while others have extreme wealth. She had walked with Martin Luther King, and had tried to build a world where we can share more, and cry on each others' shoulders. She has been called utopian and naïve, but she feels empathy for the child soldier, the abused woman, and Mother Teresa's lepers.

The work of PERL has been timely, as we have been learning and sharing, and building bridges. Sustainability is changing, and the world is changing, so we should go with the flow. We have developed a vocabulary of caring, of integrity, empathy and moderation, values that we do not often see on television. We have not done enough about justice, although equity and distribution have been discussed in the conference. We need to reach deeply into our principles and values, curious for new solutions and new knowledge, and share the fruits of our knowledge with everyone.

## IEF General Assembly

The International Environment Forum held its 19th General Assembly at UNESCO immediately after the close of the PERL Conference.



IEF General Assembly

The members present reviewed and consulted on the IEF Annual Report. They participated in the election of the IEF Governing Board along with members voting by email. They also consulted on plans for the coming year. See the full report of the General Assembly.



IEF General Assembly; IEF representative at Rio+20 Erasmus Vinkhuijzen

## 19th International Environment Forum General Assembly

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France  
11 March 2015

### 1. Opening of the General Assembly

The General Assembly was opened by IEF President Arthur Dahl, who welcomed the members and visitors present.

### 2. Introduction of members present

Members present were Arthur Dahl (Switzerland), Roxanna Dela Fiamor (France), Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuijzen (Netherlands), Jamie Konopacky (USA), Zulay Posada (Colombia), Victoria Thoresen (Norway), Ismael Velasco (UK), Erasmus Vinkhuijzen and Onno Vinkhuijzen (Netherlands), and visitor Gemma Burford (UK).

### 3. Selection of officers of the General Assembly

Arthur Dahl presided, and Jamie Konopacky served as secretary.

### 4. Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved with a slight modification in the order (Annex 1).

### 5. Election of the Governing Board

Gemma Burford and Roxanna Dela Fiamor agreed to serve as tellers. A prayer was read and the eight adult members present completed their paper ballots, while nine ballots had previously been received by email, for 17 ballots in all. All ballots were valid. The elected members of the Governing Board for 2015-2016 are Arthur Dahl, Peter Adriance, Emily Firth, Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuijzen, Victoria Thoresen, Wendi Momen and Duncan Hanks.

### 6. Presentation, consultation and approval of the annual report

Arthur Dahl summarized the achievements of the International Environment Forum contained in the [Annual Report 2014-2015](#) which had previously been sent to all the members. The annual report was approved unanimously.

## 7. Consultation on activities and priorities for the coming year

There was a discussion of IEF engagement in the lead up to the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris in December 2015, including possible involvement in side events and general participation in the conference. Ismael Velasco suggested a cloud conference as method of generating greater participation. We need to determine how many members could come to Paris in December to support IEF activities. Jamie Konopacky will be there for the Baha'i International Community, and Arthur Dahl, Sylvia Karlsson, Gemma Burford and Ismael Velasco also volunteered to come to Paris.

The chair advised the General Assembly that the board had named a task force to review the IEF and its functions, coordinated by Jamie Konopacky. Jamie suggested that it would be very useful if Ismael could be added to the task force for his expertise in information and communications technologies.

There was a discussion of the possibility of holding the next IEF conference in Latin America in conjunction with the dedication of the Baha'i House of Worship in Chile. This would be an opportunity to mobilize and gain new IEF members in Latin America. The "Our Voices" campaign in which the American Baha'i community is participating would also like to extend its activities in Central and South America.

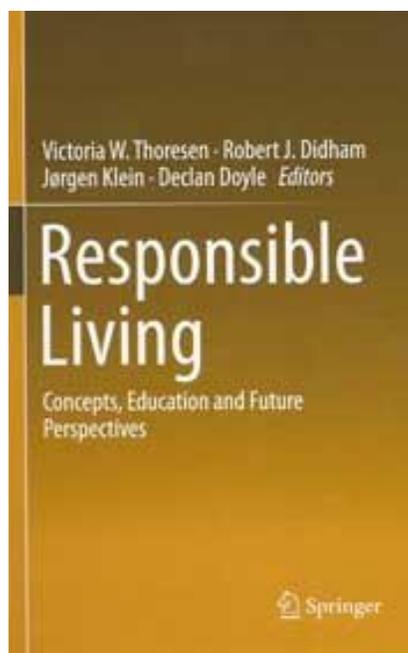
## 8. Other business

There was no other business.

## 9. Closing of the General Assembly

The chair thanked all those present and declared the General Assembly closed at 18:50.

# RESPONSIBLE LIVING: CONCEPTS, EDUCATION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES



Another academic book drawing on the work of the Partnership for Education and research about Responsible Living (PERL) and including IEF authors Victoria Thoresen and Arthur Dahl was launched at the PERL International Conference in Paris on 11 March 2015. ***Responsible Living: Concepts, Education and Future Perspectives***, edited by Victoria W. Thoresen, Robert J. Didham, Jorgen Klein and Declan Doyle, Springer, Switzerland, 2015. DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-15305-6 includes the following papers by IEF authors:

- Robert J. Didham, Declan Doyle, Jorgen Klein and Victoria W. Thoresen, ***Responsible Living: Concepts, Education and Future Perspectives***, pp 3-12.
- Victoria W. Thoresen, ***The Route to Responsible Living: Doubting, Discovering, Daring and Doing***, pp. 13-23.
- Arthur Lyon Dahl, ***Ethics in Sustainability Education***, pp. 27-40.
- Gemma Burford, Elona Hoover, Arthur Dahl and Marie K. Harder, ***Making the Invisible Visible: Designing Values-Based Indicators and Tools for Identifying and Closing 'Value-Action Gaps'***, pp. 113-133.
- Siri Wieberg Klausen, ***Reflections on a Dedicated Partnership: An Interview with Victoria W. Thoresen***, pp. 275-283.

# UNESCO CHAIR IN SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES AND UNITWIN NETWORK

A first step to extend and perennialize PERL is the establishment of the **UNESCO Chair in Sustainable Lifestyles** at Hedmark University College, occupied by Victoria Thoresen, with an accompanying Education for Sustainable Lifestyles UNITWIN network of 30 partners including the International Environment Forum. The UNITWIN network held its inaugural meeting at UNESCO on 12 March, the day after the PERL Conference, with Arthur Dahl representing IEF.

This UNITWIN partnership is a citizen-centered, evidence-based, policy-informed, action-oriented network of research and education connecting communities to catalyze responsible and sustainable lifestyles. It will contribute to the Global Action Programme of UNESCO which follows on from the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). One specific commitment already registered is for Hedmark University College and the International Environment Forum to continue the work on values-based indicators. Other potential activities include research on the barriers to implementation of education for responsible living and what works, development of climate change education, more translation of materials into video and images, on-line education through massive open online courses (MOOCs) and cloud conferences, and methods for evaluating the changes we intend through education.

The UNITWIN programme will also contribute to the launching of the Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme component of the 10-year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production approved at Rio+20, and will be looking ahead to education for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The present UNITWIN partners are: University of Agder (Norway), Lund University (Sweden), Uppsala University (Sweden), Aarhus University (Denmark), University of Helsinki (Finland), Technical University of Berlin (Germany), Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Carlow Institute of Technology (Ireland), VIVES University College (Belgium), University of Malta, Setubal College of Education (Portugal), Society for Life-skill Teachers in Upper Secondary Schools (Iceland), Consumer Protection Board of Estonia, Milano Politechnical (Italy), Rhodes University (South Africa), Rural Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Beijing Normal University (China), City of Dublin Education and Training Board Curriculum Development Unit (Ireland), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Consumers International Africa (South Africa), Consumers International Latin America and the Caribbean (Chile), Consumers International (UK), International Foundation for Interdisciplinary Health Promotion (South Africa), Institution for Global Environmental Strategies (Japan), French Institute for Consumer Affairs (France), Strategic Design Scenarios (Belgium), Free Consumers Association (Netherlands), International Environment Forum (Switzerland), University of Namibia, and Hedmark University College (Norway).

IEF members interested in becoming involved in the activities of the UNITWIN network should contact the IEF secretariat.

# International Environment Forum Annual Report

## August 2014 to February 2015

The 19th Annual Report of the International Environment Forum summarizes the events and activities for the six months from August 2014 to February 2015 between two annual conferences. The report was presented at the 19th General Assembly of the IEF in Paris, France on 11 March 2015.

### 18th ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM

The 18th Annual Conference of the International Environment Forum (IEF) was held in partnership with the Association for Baha'i Studies (ABS) - North America at its 2014 Conference on 7-10 August in Toronto, Canada. This was the second time that IEF has partnered with ABS after a successful collaboration in Washington, D.C. in 2009. The conferences of the Association for Baha'i Studies - North America attract over a thousand people, making them ideal to multiply the impact of what IEF can contribute.

The 2014 ABS conference theme was "Scholarship and the Life of Society", and the conference experimented with new formats in response to guidance encouraging the ABS to reflect on how to maintain coherence with the new processes at work in the Baha'i community. The IEF contributions to the conference included the following, described in more detail in the conference report at <http://iefworld.org/conf18>.

- IEF Board member Peter Adriance and IEF President Arthur Dahl facilitated a subject area consultation on Environmental Studies
- IEF member Elizabeth Bowen and Arthur Dahl participated in a plenary panel session with the theme 'Exploring the Natural and Life Sciences'. Elizabeth Bowen shared perspectives around 'Let Your Vision be World-Embracing' – Why Health Sciences and Bioethics? and Arthur Dahl presented on 'Natural Sciences and Society'
- Peter Adriance chaired an IEF breakout session which was opened by a keynote presentation by Arthur Dahl on 'Addressing Sustainability Challenges: A Framework for Material and Spiritual Transformation'.
- IEF members Arthur Dahl, Peter Adriance, Christine Muller then participated in a panel discussion on 'Contributing to sustainability discourse and action' with presentations on 'Introducing Baha'i Principles to United Nations Dialogues and Conferences', 'Approaches to Sustainable Development Issues and Climate Change in the American Baha'i Community' and 'The Wilmette Institute Course on Climate Change – an Impetus for Service and Action'.

### 18th IEF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 18th IEF General Assembly was held during the conference in Toronto on 9 August 2014. Nine IEF members and four visitors engaged in the discussions which included consultations on the progress as described in the 2013-14 Annual Report and on future activities and priorities for the coming year. In the lead up to the 2014 conference, IEF members had been invited to provide feedback to the Board on the functioning of the IEF via a questionnaire which was discussed briefly. Following a recommendation in the Universal House of Justice's letter of 24 July 2013 concerning the Association for Baha'i Studies - North America that smaller meetings among experts on more focused topics would be useful, a recommendation was made that the IEF should consider hosting online consultations on specific areas of interest.

The General Assembly and electronic voting elected the Governing Board for 2013-2014: Arthur Dahl (Switzerland), Peter Adriance (USA), Emily Firth (Australia), Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen (Netherlands), Victoria Thoresen (Norway), Wendi Momen (UK) and Duncan Hanks (Canada).

The 18th General Assembly full report is available on the IEF website at <http://iefworld.org/genass18>.

## IEF GOVERNING BOARD

The IEF Governing Board elected Arthur Dahl as President and Emily Firth as General Secretary. The Board held one electronic meeting and one face to face teleconference meeting during the six months of this report and has consulted on a variety of topics related to international and national events and dialogue on developments related to climate change and sustainability. The Board has approved 12 new membership applications since August 2014.

Following recent Board consultations on ways to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the IEF, the Board has invited a select group of IEF members to form a task force to review the IEF and make recommendations for its future development. It is expected that the taskforce will report back to the Board by mid-2015. The Board continues to welcome feedback and suggestions from all members on the functioning of the IEF to maintain our valuable contribution to the important public discourse on the environment and sustainability at global, national and local levels.

## 19th IEF ANNUAL CONFERENCE – 10-11 March 2015

The 19th IEF Annual Conference will be held in association with the international conference of the Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL) at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France on 10-11 March 2015. The conference theme is '**A Decade of Responsible Living: Preparing, Engaging, Responding and Learning about Responsible Lifestyles**'.

As part of its contribution to the conference, the IEF will be organizing a panel on ethical transformation and education for service at the individual, community and institutional levels, with other papers presented on values-based indicators in education and the toolkits that IEF has contributed to developing. The IEF General Assembly will also be held during the conference.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

In early January, the IEF submitted an official response to the UN Secretary-General's Synthesis Report on the Post-2015 Agenda '*The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet*'. The IEF response commended the Secretary-General's focus on youth, highlighted the importance of implementing a bottom-up process without relying solely on efforts of governments, and discussed the role of education particularly in terms of mobilizing youth whose actions are guided by moral and ethical principles. Specific reference was made to the efforts of PERL. The IEF response also called for the UN to reach beyond its traditional constituency of organizations and engage more with civil society, the media, youth and grassroots communities to build momentum for the necessary transition to a just and sustainable society. The full IEF response is available at <http://iefworld.org/node/714>.

In late January, the IEF responded to an invitation of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) to comment on the revised draft report of '*Indicators and a Monitoring Framework for Sustainable Development Goals: Launching a data revolution for the SDGs*'. The IEF response recommended that in order to improve communication and buy-in, a small selection of indicators be identified that can be calculated and used in local communities and provided specific examples of indicators that could be used. Specific mention was made of IEF's involvement in EU-funded research on values-based indicators of education for sustainable development and their application in secondary schools through the Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living.

## OTHER IEF PARTNERSHIPS AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

**Partnership for Education and research about Responsible Living (PERL)**

The IEF continues to be actively engaged with the Partnership for Education and Research about Responsible Living (PERL). PERL is an international network of over 150 partners around the world including universities, educational organizations and international agencies. PERL is coordinated by IEF board member Prof. Victoria Thoresen.

IEF has been leading the PERL workgroup to prepare toolkits on values-based activities and indicators for use in schools. The first editions of three toolkits are now available: '*Measuring What Matters – Values-based Indicators*', '*Discovering What Matters – A journey of thinking and feeling*', and '*Growing a Shared Vision – A toolkit for schools*'. The toolkits have been printed and distributed to 60 countries. More information is available at <http://iefworld.org/node/665>.

## ebbf

Our partnership with ebbf – Ethical Business Building the Future, the Baha'i-inspired forum for ethics in business, continues in support of its core value of sustainable development. IEF President Arthur Dahl, and Board member Wendi Momen are on the ebbf Governing Board, and several other members are active in both organizations.

## IEF INVOLVEMENT IN COURSES

In January and February, a five-week free internet course '**Pathways to climate change adaptation: the case of Small Island Developing States**' was offered by the University of Geneva in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme. As one of the faculty, IEF President Arthur Dahl prepared a module of eight lectures on the special problems of Small Island Developing States.

The IEF continues to co-sponsor the University of Geneva **Certificate of Advanced Studies in Sustainable Development**, which is offered each year from October to June. Arthur Dahl is a member of the scientific committee and teaches in three modules. From October 2015 the course will be reorganized into a shorter 10 unit course focused on systems thinking and the ethical dimension, in complement to other more specialized courses now being offered.

The Wilmette Institute **on-line course on Climate Change** led by IEF member Christine Muller and based on the IEF interfaith course on scientific and spiritual dimensions of climate change is offered twice a year in March-May and September-November 2014. IEF members serve as faculty for the course. A report was shared by IEF member Sue Blythe in the January 2015 issue of the *LEAVES* newsletter on the development of an interfaith climate group in Gainesville, Florida USA. This group was inspired through completion of the course in 2013. Over the past two years its members have been engaging people of various religious traditions in education, inspiration and action for a sustainable world.

IEF member Kadima Mpoyi Long'sha of Kanaga in the Democratic Republic of Congo organized a training course on **Sustainable Development and Climate Change** in late December and early January. The course was based on IEF materials from the website and attracted over 30 participants.

## IEF MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN OTHER EVENTS

On Sunday 21 September, the largest **People's March on Climate Change** in history was organized in New York City, with about 400,000 people participating, including IEF members Peter Adriance, Representative for Sustainable Development for the US Baha'i Office of Public Affairs, and Christine Muller, who wrote the IEF course on climate change, and is lead faculty for the Wilmette Institute course on climate change. Similar, if smaller marches were organized in 2,600 other places around the world, involving at least another 300,000 people. Arthur Dahl marched with hundreds of others in Geneva, Switzerland.

## European Center for Peace and Development (ECPD)

IEF President Arthur Dahl participated in the 10th ECPD International Conference on National Reconciliation, Religious Tolerance and Human Security in the Balkans in October in Belgrade, Serbia. The conference was followed by the Second ECPD Youth Forum, where Arthur Dahl chaired a session and presented a paper on "*Hope for Balkan Youth in the Contemporary World Reality*" available on the IEF web site at <http://iefworld.org/ddahl14g>.

In November, IEF President Arthur Dahl attended a presentation on the most important findings of the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s Fifth Assessment Report**. A commentary provided by Arthur Dahl on this presentation and the latest findings is available at <http://iefworld.org/node/705>.

IEF Board members Peter Adriance and Victoria Thoresen participated in the **World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** in November in Nagoya, Japan. More than 1,000 participants gathered for the three-day conference under the theme "Learning Today for a Sustainable Future." The Action Plan is a follow up to the UN Decade of ESD, and will generate and scale up ESD actions in each of five priority areas of policy support, whole-institution approaches, educators, youth, and local communities.

IEF Board member Victoria Thoresen is a member of the Multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee for the **10 Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Production and Consumption**.

## PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS BY IEF MEMBERS

Two academic books with contributions by IEF members were published in November 2014.

"**Transitions to Sustainability**", edited by François Mancebo and Ignacy Sachs (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), explores the challenges of putting sustainability into practice, especially in terms of governance and a new social contract. A number of chapters were written by IEF members:

- Jon Marco Church of the University of Reims on "Norms, Rules and Sustainable Planning: Who Said What About Norms"
- IEF President Arthur Dahl on "Putting the Individual at the Center of Development: Indicators of Well-Being for a New Social Contract".
- IEF Board member Sylvia Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen of Wageningen University on "The Legitimation of Global Energy Governance: A Normative Exploration".

"**Sustainable Development and Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Transformation of Learning and Society**", edited by Zinaida Fadeeva, Laima Galkute, Clemens Mader, Geoff Scott (Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Chapter 9 by Arthur Lyon Dahl is on "Sustainability and Values Assessment in Higher Education".

More detail on both these books is available at <http://iefworld.org/node/710>.

November also saw the publication of IEF member Paul Hanley's book '**Eleven**' which tackles the question of how we can manage the 11 billion population now projected for 2100. The recording of a webinar given by Paul Hanley in Washington DC on 1 February is available at <https://franciscanaction.adobeconnect.com/p1bjncqk0hr/>. Arthur Dahl wrote and posted a book review of *Eleven* on the IEF website at <http://iefworld.org/node/708>.

## IEF NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE

### IEF web site

The IEF web site (<http://iefworld.org>) continues to report on IEF events and statements, provides an on-line version of LEAVES, the IEF newsletter, and includes blogs, book reviews and papers by IEF members. It includes several recent reports on United Nations efforts to prepare a post-2015 agenda and to respond to climate change, including Small Island Developing States, Sustainable Development Goals and indicators, and

the Secretary-General's synthesis report "The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet"

## LEAVES newsletter

The newsletter team consisting of members Cynthia Diessner, Sarah Richards and Susie Howard continues to make invaluable contributions to the IEF by preparing and distributing the LEAVES newsletter each month. The newsletter shares news of IEF activities and other significant events of interest to IEF members. Contributions from members are always welcome.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the relatively short time covered by this Annual Report, due to the dates of our 2014 and 2015 conferences, the IEF and its members have continued to be active in the key environmental and sustainability issues on the international agenda, contributing Baha'i-inspired perspectives when appropriate. The Peoples' Climate Marches in September showed that there is increasing public interest in acting to address the challenges the world faces. 2015 will be a critical year for the world community, with a major UN meeting on financing for development in July, a summit at the UN in New York in September to agree on the Sustainable Development Goals for every nation, and the UN Climate Conference in Paris in December, which must agree on global action to reverse climate change before it is too late to prevent significant human and environmental impact. In addition to government action, the people of the world should mobilize and begin to transform their own communities and neighbourhoods. The need to encourage a transition to a more sustainable world society has never been greater, and becomes more urgent with every passing day. The strength of the IEF is in its membership combining scientific and ethical perspectives, and including members with significant involvement in the processes and discourses under way, and those bringing change in their own local communities. We encourage all of our members to explore what they can do to be agents of change, and to help IEF to reach out to others who can contribute to catalyzing that change.

## MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

IEF MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS, UPDATED: February 2015

### Full members

Argentina 2 \* Australia 15\* Bangladesh 1 \* Barbados West Indies 2 \* Belgium 3 \* Bolivia 4 \* Bosnia and Herzegovina 1 \* Brazil 2 \* Brunei Darussalam 1 \* Bulgaria 2 \* Cambodia 1 \* Cameroon 1 \* Canada 33 \* Chile 1 \* China 2 \* Colombia 3 \* Cook Islands 1 \* Czech Republic 3 \* Democratic Republic of the Congo 1 \* Denmark 2 \* East Timor 1 \* Ecuador 2 \* Ethiopia 1 \* Fiji Islands 1 \* Finland 1 \* France 6 \* Germany 10 \* Ghana 2 \* Greece 2 \* Guyana, S America 1 \* Hong Kong 1 \* Hungary 2 \* India 9 \* Israel 1 \* Kenya 1 \* Liberia 1 \* Malaysia 3 \* Namibia 1 \* New Zealand 7 \* Norway 3 \* Pakistan 2 \* Philippines 1 \* Poland 1 \* Portugal 2 \* Republic of Ireland 1 \* Republic of Macedonia 1 \* Samoa 1 \* Serbia 1 \* Singapore 1 \* Slovakia 1 \* South Africa 5 \* Spain 3 \* Suriname 1 \* Swaziland 2 \* Sweden 3 \* Switzerland 8 \* Tanzania 1 \* The Netherlands 9 \* Togo 1 \* Tonga 1 \* Trinidad 1 \* U.S.A. 117 \* Uganda 1 \* United Kingdom 36 \* Vietnam 1 \* Zambia 1

Number of countries 66 \* Number of members 354 (up from 344 in August 2014)

### Associate members

Australia 2 \* Canada 6 \* Chile 1 \* China 1 \* Czech Republic 1 \* Finland 1 \* France 2 \* Germany 1 \* Ghana 1 \* Lithuania 1 \* New Zealand 2 \* Pakistan 2 \* Portugal 1 \* Switzerland 1 \* The Netherlands 4 \* U.S.A. 21 \* United Kingdom 4