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NEW INITIATIVES  
IN COLLABORATION WITH

Association of Universities  
and Colleges of Canada  
Canadian Education Association  
The Canadian Institute for  
Advanced Research  
The Canadian Academy of Engineering  
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation  
Canadian Council of Professional Engineers  
Canadian International Institute of the  
Sciences, Humanities and Global Bioethics  
Canadian Science Writers' Association  
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International Board on Books  
for Young People  
International Federation of  
Consulting Engineers  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
McGill University  
McMaster University  
National Engineering Week  
National Film Board of Canada  
Natural Resources Canada  
Natural Science and Engineering  
Research Council of Canada  
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Queen's University  
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Science Teachers Association of Ontario  
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United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural Organization  
United Nations Environment Programme  
University of British Columbia  
University of California  
Université du Québec à Montréal  
University of Toronto  
University of Waterloo  
University of Western Ontario  
University of Wisconsin  
York University



# PUBLIC AWARENESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## OF THE SCIENCES & HUMANITIES – TECHNOLOGY & GLOBAL BIOETHICS

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Preparing Youth for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - Linking New Ideas and Knowledge for New Skills and Careers

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6 August 2006

Mr. Koïchiro Matsuura  
Director-General  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization  
7, place de Fontenoy  
75352 Paris 07 SP  
France

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**Re: New Initiative - International Youth Network for the Advancement  
of the Sciences, Humanities and Global Bioethics (IYNet)**

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Dear Mr. Matsuura,

As an NGO member of Forum UNESCO and UNEP, and in accordance with your urgent request of 5 April 2006 for international solidarity and mobilization against the destruction of Iraq's historical, intellectual, scientific and cultural heritage, we have shared your compassionate appeal with our national and international contacts. We urged them to help rebuild and restore.

The threats and violence waged against thousands of intellectuals and academics, including the assassinations of biologists, chemists, engineers, geologists, health workers (2000 physicians alone have been murdered after the 2003 occupation, according to the July 2006 Iraq Index of the Brookings Institution), teachers and even students, are intolerable to imagine. Some were our friends and collaborators in helping advance science and knowledge-building for our common humanity.

Half of Iraq's population of 28 million is under the age of 18. This war, having caused 2.5 million avoidable deaths of children under the age of five since 1990, up to 300,000 civilian deaths after 2003, and widespread maiming, terror and trauma is affecting the mental and physical health of millions more and will affect the spiritual, intellectual, scientific and material development of following generations.

History is our bridge from the past to the future. The destruction of Iraq and its knowledge base is an irreplaceable loss for the world of ideas, for world heritage, and for our common humanity. The disfiguration of eight thousand years of human history, science, and culture, is an irreplaceable loss for the people of Iraq, its youth, the Arab Nations, and the scholarship of Islam.

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This dehumanization and humiliation of Islamic civilization has caused inestimable harm. It is an impoverishment of the international community, its scholarship, the advancement of science and knowledge-building. The long-term consequences and intergenerational reverberations that Western civilization will be facing are beyond measure. It will affect the psychosocial and peaceful development of youth and will take generations to heal, to mend, and to rebuild trust.

In view of these realities, we deem it imperative to launch the **International Youth Network for the Advancement of the Sciences, Humanities and Global Bioethics (IYNet)**.

The project is a meeting of minds, science and human experience. The key objective is to advance youth as a value-creating resource. It builds on scholarship and intergenerational dialogue, incorporating the John Dewey/Tsuneshaburo Makiguchi concept of knowledge-building, *shiso no kagaku* or science of thought. By exploring new ways of knowing, it emphasizes the humanistic functions of science and knowledge-sharing for our common humanity in an interdependent world.

The IYNet project builds on the transdisciplinary, youth-oriented public awareness programs (est. 1979), incorporating the 1985 Collège de France educational principle of l'unité de science et la pluralité des cultures; the Canadian International Youth Forums of the Sciences and Humanities – Values and Society (est.1994), and the Global Bioethics Network (GBN, est.1999).

By correlating the sciences with humanistic learning, young women and men are encouraged to realize that their thoughts and actions are an important part of the meaning of this world. Youths are motivated to share their commitment to working for a sustainable world community and to laying the foundations for a better future.

Of paramount importance for the IYNet project is to work for and with youth, and to link the individual firmly to the guiding principles and goals of the United Nations and the universal values of UNESCO's Declarations towards the emergence of a Universal Code of Ethics for the Future.

A special series of the Canadian International Youth Letter under the theme, "A Meeting of Minds, Science and Human Experience" has been prepared to launch the IYNet project, 6 August 2006. Contributors include scholars, scientists, engineers, educators and students. The series also includes contributions by Kofi Annan, John Kenneth Galbraith, Edgar Morin, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Edward Said, Helmut Schmidt, and others. The emphasis is on gaining an improved understanding of our shared intellectual heritage for our common humanity.

Over the next 30 years, almost 98 per cent of global population growth is going to take place in developing countries. What this new generation does will largely determine the future of our planet, and influence how we advance science and knowledge-building. The hazards of youth at risk of exclusion in these regions is enormous, no longer threatening a minority but whole sections of society along with our collective destiny. To secure our common future peacefully, we need a new international vision and intergenerational dialogue that encourages the growth of civil society.

Of vital importance is preparing youth for the intellectual and moral responsibilities needed for a deeper understanding of interconnectedness and cultural diversity, safeguarding biodiversity, and for achieving equitable sustainability to ensure the quality of life and dignity of future generations.

As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the biggest challenge facing our next generation is to ensure that globalization becomes an insightful force for a shared humanity, a force that respects the common intellectual, cultural and scientific heritage of humankind and equitably provisions the world's people with the ecological goods and services they need to maintain and build their societies.

“Peace cannot exist without equality; this is an intellectual value desperately in need of reiteration, demonstration, and reinforcement,” Edward Said stated shortly before his death in 2003.

Since then, we have distributed worldwide your Tokyo Address, “Globalization With a Human Face – Benefiting All,” in the format of the Canadian International Youth Letter (CIYL) to students, educators, institutions and the public. It is accompanied by the CIYL entitled “Science and Civilization in Islam,” by Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who offers a timely presentation of the core spiritual and social values of authentic Islam and its enduring values for humanity: peace, compassion, social justice, and respect for the other.

Hans von Sponeck stated, “What has been done to Iraq in the name of democracy and freedom has no parallel in history.” It is an unwise and irresponsible example for millions of young people across the world, misleading their minds, education and development in a direction contrary to the global reforms needed for a peaceable and well-ordered international society.

Everyone has the responsibility to shape the future of humanity. Those of us who have experienced war and are cognizant of its devastation find ourselves deeply aggrieved and involved. We recognize that we are responsible not only for what we do but also for what we could have prevented.

In 1925 Albert Schweitzer coined the word “Lebensethik,” life-ethics or bioethics, meaning not only medical bioethics, but reverence for all life. In 1970 Van Rensselaer Potter (1911-2001) of the University of Wisconsin, and member of our Advisory Council, originally formulated “bioethics” and defined this comprehensive field of thought and action and respect for Nature as a bridge to the future. The concept of bioethics as a global integration of biology and values was designed to guide human behaviour and survival, ever mindful of preserving biodiversity and the environment.

As founder of the Global Bioethics Network, Dr. Potter and co-founding colleagues made invaluable contributions to shaping the development of global bioethics and dialogue for our common humanity. We are honoured to find our efforts reflected in the founding text of the 2005 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights.

PAEP is instrumental in developing and advancing the emerging discipline of Global Bioethics as an important principle in scientific education. To secure a strong position in the transformation from the production-consumption model of our industrial age to the new industrial age of sustainability, we must advance not only a scientific-technological, but also an environmentally and inter-culturally literate human resource base.

The new project of the International Youth Network for the Advancement of the Sciences, Humanities and Global Bioethics is a vital part of this objective.

We would greatly appreciate UNESCO’s acknowledgement and support of this key initiative for youth.

Sincerely,



Hans F. Schweinsberg  
President