

Injecting learning experience into geoethics for human and natural sustainability

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Our early life experience has a strong influence on our actions in later life. Humans today are just starting to re-learn, collectively, how to treat Earth with the respect that it deserves and that is needed for our offspring to inherit a decent home. However, we still have a long way to go to instill in people at large the ethics, knowledge and skills necessary to ensure a healthy journey for humanity on spaceship.

The experience of early upbringing, of schooling and of everyday life is probably the only path strong enough to develop in people a strong desire for ethical behaviour towards their environment. The problem is that the measures taken today to ensure the development of ethical behaviours in the population at large are woefully inadequate. At best, western school programmes contain a few lessons devoted to the environment, and even then they usually just pay lip service to the basics of the environment; they rarely aim to instill skills and knowledge in order to understand and care deeply for the environment.

My presentation will suggest some practical ways to help communities build ethical frameworks and strategies to guide and generate tools, methods and activities that guide young people (pupils, students, scholars, researchers) to toward more ethical behaviours regarding their environment and their communities. Examples might include:

- Developing geoethical dimensions of internships, in all areas;
- Designing, testing and running simulation/games+debriefing providing a rich affective-cognitive context for grappling with geoethical problems- eg, FISH BANKS, KEEP COOL.
- Pressuring governments to make geoethics, environmental care and climate change understanding central components of (almost) all educational programmes (in, eg, history, language, business, law, medicine, etc).
- Subsidizing environmental-care summer schools for families and teachers at all levels.
- Etc.

One of my actions is founding a academic journal in the area, maybe with the title Interdisciplinary Journal of Environment, Experience and Development (Learning). From my 26 years at the helm of another prestigious journal, I will bring considerable editorial expertise, as well as content knowledge. Ideas for articles might include:

- “Citizen experience of the Nepalese earthquake and what it taught us”, written by a small team of citizens who actually lived through the earthquake, and of geomorphologists and geoethicists.
- “Adapting to a new life after Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)”, written by villagers and scientists.
- “Comparing climate change models: Using critical review techniques for more reliable interpretation”, written by climate change modellers.
- “Companion modelling: How to help communities help themselves”, written by experts in role-play, agent-based modelling and local stakeholders.
- “Translating environmental internship experience into transferable learning”, by a group of students shortly after the end of their internship.

I welcome expressions of interest in the journal. We have an ethical obligation - to science, ourselves, the earth and our offspring (future generations) - to help the planet’s passengers learn about safety on spaceship earth.

Time will be made available for questions.