

# Lesson I: Imagining the Future

## PURPOSE

To fully experience the magic of *Peace Child*, each member of the cast must carry in their mind an image of what a peaceful, green sustainable world will look like. This lesson will help them develop that image.

## BACKGROUND READING

1. **The World We Made** – by *Jonathon Porritt*; Phaidon, Oct. 2013 – the world in 2050 as seen by Alex McKay, a history teacher who has watched the world become a more sustainable, happier place in his lifetime. Written by Britain’s leading environmentalist, it replaces the gloom and doom scenarios for one in which the green economy has been created – and everyone is better off as a result.
2. **Picturing a Sustainable Society** by *Lester R. Brown, Christopher Flavin and Sandra Postel*; 3 x top environmentalists picture the world of 2030 as they would like it to be. Read about it at: <http://www.studymode.com/essays/Picturing-a-Sustainable-Society-1640632.html>
3. **The UNEP Green Economy Initiative** – the main UN initiative driving the transition to the Green Economy. Good policy ideas and political background: <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/greeneconomyreport/tabid/29846/default.aspx>.
4. **The Future we Want** – the slogan employed by the UN for their Rio+20 Summit. Now a website full of ideas you can use to help young people be inspired by the future they are heading towards. <http://futurewewant.org>
5. **Reinventing Fire**. By Amory Lovins of the Rocky Mountain Institute. Brilliant book about the Post-Carbon society which, he argues, can be created by dedicated entrepreneurs without the intervention of governments. The Video alone is brilliant: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT-g\\_\\_695Go](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IT-g__695Go)
7. **The Post Carbon Institute** – the other PCI! It is California’s leading sustainability think-tank working on accelerating the transition to a green, more resilient, equitable and sustainable economy. <http://www.postcarbon.org>
8. **Kids ' Whole Future Catalog by Paula Taylor**: Intriguing vision of the Future from 1982 – but still getting good reviews from parents who first knew it when they were a child, and are now showing it to their children. <http://www.amazon.com/Whole-Future-Catalog-Paula-Taylor/dp/0394850904>
9. **Andrew Winston’s Blog**: Andrew is the sustainable business guru. His two books, *The Green Recovery* and *Green to Gold* – define what business can do to help the transition to a green economy. Immensely practical, economically viable, Winston will give your students the facts they need to combat skeptical business leaders. <http://www.andrewwinston.com>
10. **Sustainable Energy for All**: the UN’s brilliant programme – which the oilman goes to work for – which aims to bring sustainable electricity and mobility to everyone by 2030. Led by UNIDO and the President of the Chase Manhattan bank, it has, already raised more than half the funds needed to make their goal. See: <http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org/>

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1. The story teller quotes the Gandhi line: “*The World has enough for every one’s need, but not for everyone’s greed!*” True? Can you draw the line between **Need and Greed**? How much do you actually *need* to live?
2. Before the era of fossil fuels began in the 18th Century, human life across the planet was pretty sustainable: people rode horses, used water power, and sailed the seas. Is the **transition to a green economy** thus a step backward for humanity, or could it be a step forward?
3. What gives you **hope and determination**? What is the single thing that makes you feel that humanity will solve the massive problems threatening our survival at the beginning of the 21st Century?
4. **The UN’s Our Common Future Report of 1987** promised that - “*sustainable development would meet the needs of today’s generations, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs...*” Has it? Do you think that politicians and democratic societies can stop people today

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs – when those future people don't vote, don't have any stake in today's society – don't exist!! How can we protect their interests? Their future?

**5. Imagine Peace Day 2050:** the biggest celebration of the year – a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, intergenerational celebration of diversity and prosperity. How would you celebrate such a day? What icons or traditions would you use to identify Peace Day and make it special? (Like the Christmas Tree, or the Hannukkah candles)

## IMPROVISATIONS

*All improvisations are designed to tease out ideas for inclusion in the revised script – so scribble down lines, and ideas for lines as the improvisations are happening and/or record them on video or audio tape.*

### **A. Stream of Consciousness:**

Play some gentle music; maybe get the group to hold hands in a circle and have someone guide a meditation on the Green Cross slogan: “Give Humanity a Chance – Give the Earth a Future!” Think about what that means: question – Does the Earth have a future without Humanity? Does Humanity have a future without the Earth? How can a family of 10 billion human beings live comfortable, interesting lives on a small fragile planet? What has to happen in our minds for that to happen....?

### **B. The Insoluble Problem Quiz Show:**

Set up a Quiz show – with your very own Noel Edmonds quiz master. The game is for a Panel of Questioners to pose problems that will NOT have been solved by 2050. If some one in the ‘audience’ comes up with a convincing answer as to how this problem will be solved, they get the point. If no one does, the questioner gets the point. This is a game that can be played at several points during the study period – as, the more they learn about solutions, the more questions will be answerable. But it is good to play it in this lesson – to show up how few answers most young people have to the major challenges that will confront them in their lifetimes.

### **C. “Remember the good old days...”**

Imagine you are your parents age in 2050: they will be in their 70s or 80s by then. Imagine you are sitting in a pub, in your favourite corner, reminiscing about the good old days of your youth back in the 1990s – think about what you have lost, and what you have gained by helping to build a sustainable world – and how you (their children) pushed and persuaded them that electric cars were good, meat diets were bad, bicycling and walking were good, gas-guzzling Chelsea Tractors are bad etc. Come up with a load of ideas about what – even your parents – might like about a green, sustainable world!

### **D. What is Peace Day all about?**

This is like the audition improvisation. You set the scene – there has been a race riot in your town and the Mayor is all set to cancel the Peace Day party / Celebration. Two kids come on – one adamant that the celebration must be cancelled (“*We cannot celebrate while some of our brothers and sisters are lying wounded in hospital!!*”) - the other is equally adamant that the party must go on, (“*At a time like this, it's even more important for our community must celebrate its diversity!*”) Keep changing the kids who are doing the improvisation – and have them switch roles.

## DROP-IN ONE

### **1. Drop-in on State of the Planet:**

The Storyteller says: “**That's what Peace Day is all about: taking the temperature of the world, and finding out if our world is getting healthier or sicker? What are our findings today?**” Drawing on the results of your Improvisations and research, decide what your findings are? If you are working with a younger children's Storytellers' Group, remember: your answers have to be fairly simple and basic – as per the script. But – if you want to mix in the older core cast, you can have more detailed answers. In the Paris show, at UNESCO, we invited the audience to come up with ideas for what they think will be right / wrong about the planet in 2050 – typing their ideas up on a big screen in a real-time ‘State of the Planet Report.’ It went down really well – and got the audience engaged in the story from the very start. (*We couldn't do that in Geneva as we were woefully short on time! – and the tables did not have microphones on as they did in Paris.*) Take time to make this a fun scene – with a few jokes, and a general light-hearted, wittiness in the reporting.