

Lesson 5: The Treaties

PURPOSE

Time to go back to the issues we explored in Lesson TWO. For – though there are five excellent treaties drafted in the script – and five committees set up in Scene TWELVE to create them, the purpose of this lesson is to enable you to review the issues and choose those ones which you feel need to be addressed in your UN scene.

The cast always re-write the treaties: it puts their stamp on the show. Even if you choose the same issues that we have done (*- and, naturally! – we believe those are crucial issues!*) – you should re-write the language around them.

Should they be the same issues that you chose for the Polar Bear's speech? They could be – but it would be better if they are not! We'd like to think that the young people of this story had learned some new things along the way – and were addressing new issues.

How many issues? The same question that we raised in Lesson TWO: five is fine – Six is probably OK – seven and you almost certainly will lose some of your audience on the issues. You may lose some at five: many people say that 3 x messages is the most you can expect any audience to go away remembering. So – less is more! BUT – this lesson is another opportunity to re-visit the critical challenges facing our planet and the human beings that live upon it but, crucially this time: to **come up with some solutions to them:**

- Population Growth
- Uncontrolled Consumption
- Climate Change
- Global Warming, Polar & Glacier ice melt
- Poverty and hunger
- Fresh Water Shortages
- Depletion of Fish stocks
- Rain forest destruction
- The Rise of China
- War, conflict and a Weak UN
- War and instability in the Middle East
- Religious Conflict
- Crimes against humanity going unpunished
- GM Foods
- Pension Funds
- Resource Depletion (oil, minerals, coal)
- Failure to build renewable energy generation
- Extreme Weather
- Sea Level Rise & Coastal Flooding
- HIV-AIDS & other global disease pandemics
- Desertification
- Ocean Acidification
- Biodiversity Loss and Species extinctions
- The Decline of the United States of America
- Nuclear weapons
- Terrorism
- Religious fundamentalism
- Widening injustice and Human Rights Abuse
- Youth Unemployment
- The power of the Advertising Industry

BACKGROUND READING

You should read up the history of the Rio+20 Summit, and about how the United Nations system works.

Here are some sources:

- **Basic Facts about the United Nations** – <http://issuu.com/unpublications/docs/basicfacts>
- Rio+20 Youth Blast: <http://uncsdchildrenyouth.org/pages/youthblast.html> - though they, of course, do not talk about the Youth Walk-out from the Rio+20 summit. They would very quickly lose their privileged status within the UN system if they did! That's why, PCI's World Youth Congress process is completely independent of any UN or Government process:
- **Only One Earth: The Long Road via Rio to Sustainable Development** by Felix Dodds: Felix, more than anyone else, was responsible for the Rio+20 Summit. He believed in it, dreamed it, and made it happen through his superb networking genius. That it didn't work out as he had hoped, he would not deny – but this is the best history of the process, seen through the eyes of a true-believer. Here is the official summary of the book:

Forty years after the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, the goal of sustainable development continues via the Rio+20 conference in 2012. This book will enable a broad readership to understand what has been achieved in the past forty years and what hasn't. It shows the continuing threat of our present way of living to the planet. It looks to the challenges that we face twenty years from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, "The Earth Summit," in Rio, in particular in the areas of economics and governance and the role of stakeholders. It puts forward a set of recommendations that the international community must address now and in the future. It reminds us of the planetary boundaries we must all live within and what needs to be addressed in the next twenty years for democracy, equity and fairness to survive. Finally it proposes through the survival agenda a bare minimum of what needs to be done, arguing for a series of absolute minimum policy changes we need to move forward.

- Daily Reporting on Rio+20: See - <http://www.ips.org/institutional/ips-activities-and-impact-at-rio20/> - and -
- <http://www.sustainabilityprofessionals.org/summary-reporting-about-rio20-2012-conference-issp>
- http://www.nrdc.org/international/rio_20/files/rio-20-report.pdf
- The World Youth Congress “20 Solutions”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9d-GhTsrcPw> - to see the delegates reading these 20 solutions:
 1. Put sustainability at the center of education
 2. Let youth lead governments, corporations and society into sustainability
 3. Make it easy for youth to start businesses by providing capital, tax-breaks and reducing administrative bureaucracy.
 4. Redesign our economy to be sustainable and to make people happy by moving away from insatiable consumption practices.
 5. Shift to the use of renewable resources, and effectively make use of non-renewable resources to make this happen.
 6. Make the best use out of energy - be efficient.
 7. Reduce your footprint, soundly manage the waste you leave.
 8. Sustain what all life is based on - water.
 9. Enforce regulations against pollution, exploitation and degradation of our oceans.
 10. Recognize the realities and impacts of climate change, take responsibility, demand accountability & act to reduce emissions.
 11. Recognize the links between development and vulnerability to natural disasters and integrate place-based disasters risk reduction and sustainable development.
 12. Demand biodiversity conservation, the ending of mass species extinction and habitat degradation.
 13. Recognize ecocide as a crime against humanity and nature.
 14. Respect the right to healthcare.
 15. Produce food for people and the planet, not just for money.
 16. Restrict transnational corporations power over food systems.
 17. Recognize gender empowerment and freedom of sexual and gender choice in a society free of discrimination.
 18. Promote democratic youth representation amongst societies' decision-making processes.
 19. Make the world a non-conflict zone lead by youth peacemakers.
 20. Acknowledge that the respect of human rights is integral part of sustainable development.
- Rio+20 Education Website: <http://rioplus20education.info>
- World Youth Congress & Rio Earth Summit Videos: check out the following to give you a sense of the atmosphere:
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE11ADGQuQ8>
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3njNaMpdoq8>
 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9d-GhTsrcPw>
- Severin Suzuki’s inspirational speech at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZsDliXzyAY>
- And the one she gave 20 years later: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaT_s4mYVN8

*Do review the reading list we gave you in Lesson TWO to give you more background on the issues. Finally – after you have had discussed the Discussion Points (below) – and done the Improvisations – and you have decided which Treaties you are going to focus upon, then you have to do some internet searches and do some in-depth research on the treaty topics you have selected. Remember: it is **INDEFENSIBLE TO GET FACTS WRONG** in *Peace Child*. Check and re-check every statement. You will make yourself – and our name – look ludicrous if you start spouting inaccurate information from the stage.*

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. **Why are we doing this?** At the original Rio Earth Summit in 1992, there was a Citizen’s Summit in Flamingo Park – where NGOs met and drew up some NGO treaties. PCI was involved in them – but, when I came to look for them for the Rio+20 meeting – I couldn’t find them. Every one had forgotten about them – and those hours of work we put in went absolutely nowhere. BUT – it was a great educational exercise. And perhaps some elements of the NGO Treaties filtered into official government consciousness. For us – and for the purposes of this play – we need the Treaties to form the basis of the UN scene that closes the play. But is there a wider purpose? Discuss.
2. **Kids Alone?** – where is Tim in this scene? Shouldn’t he – and industry – be a part of the Youth Discussions? We know that did not happen in reality at Rio+20 – but wouldn’t it have been better if it had? Read the Monbiot articles about the wickedness of the corporate-directed state – and films like *“The 11th Hour”* which demonise big business as the enemy of the environment. Then look at the Environmental Commitments of big companies like Virgin, Chevron, Shell, BP – and reach your own conclusions about the wisdom of the young people of Peace Child getting into an alliance with Big Business. And if you agree with us that they should, at what point in the story should we introduce the transformed character of Tim – the oilman? And – should we bring back

the character of his younger assistant who appeared on the TV Chat show and sang/danced “*Petroleum Energy Complex*”?

3. **Groupings:** Look at the 30 issues listed above and try to think how you can address multiple issues under a single heading. In the ‘Base Script’ – the youth do this:
 - Energy & Climate Change - water, minerals, fisheries: the general sustainability of all Resources.
 - Education + Training for the Green Economy! - and Education for All!
 - Environment: World Legal Protection of biodiversity, the forests, oceans
 - End Poverty: achieve sustainable development; provide nutrition, health, jobs, welfare safety nets
 - Peace: Human rights, R2P, good governance, ending corruption, Democracy, Rule of Law... All that good stuff which the UN has passed and governments prefer to forgetTake a look at those 30 issues: can you group them into five? Can you group them into three? Could you group them into ONE?
4. **UN Issues:** The Government of Costa Rica took a decision in 1953 to abolish its army: it felt it had no need of it. In 1984, the government of Iceland made a deal with the USA to insure itself against external attack – thus obviating the need for a national army: if any one attacked it, the US army would protect it’s borders – like an insurance company steps in to protect you if your house burns down. Might the UN develop in this way – enabling most countries to dismantle their military infrastructure and subscribe to an international insurance protection scheme that allows them to save millions of dollars on military budgets? Also – the UN is forbidden to collect taxes – even taxes raised by international activities like currency transfers, airline travel, shipping etc. If it were, it would have the finance needed to deliver on its promises of R2P, education for all, health for all, food for all, sustainable energy for all etc. Can you foresee a time when the human family comes together and works together like this for the good of every one? For the survival and prosperity of everyone? How bad does it have to get before we do this?
5. **Enforcement:** How do you see the sequel playing out? If there was a Peace Child Pt. II – starting at the point of the final scene, how would the diplomats and the young people sort out their differences and achieve the political accommodation that the Story-teller explains happens at the end? Discuss it – research it – do a homework exercise on it and write down some answers. And then move on to Improvisation “A” below....

IMPROVISATIONS

- A. **The Street Hawker:** In the UK, there is a bizarre tradition of the Street Hawker – a salesman who stands on the street selling household goods for very low prices, often in bulk. Their sales patter goes something like this: *“This box of soap powder sells for £5 in the supermarket – but for you, this morning, I am selling you TWO boxes AND a washing-up brush, not for five pounds, not for four pounds, nor three, but TWO pounds. Yes – two pounds only for two boxes of soap and a brush that you would pay TWELVE pounds for in the Supermarket! Come and buy before they all go!”*

Get 5 or 6 of your cast to imagine that they are street hawkers selling the Treaty of their choice – and persuading the rest of the cast to stand behind their priorities. Like the Street Hawker, each cast member should group issues together, so they are giving the cast an even better deal.

Purpose: to get the cast more familiar with the issues
- B. **The Editorial Meeting:** Get the cast to sit around a table like journalists at a morning meeting – deciding on tomorrow’s headline: the purpose is to communicate – to a wide, general audience the key issues of the treaties. You can be the managing editor, throwing out questions like:
 - What’s the headline?
 - Give me an opening line and paragraph for the story?
 - Why should any one be interested in this story?
 - Where’s the drama? What’s the excitement? Why should it be a lead story?
 - “If it bleeds – lead!” A popular journalistic slogan meaning, if there’s blood and gore in the story, lead with it: put it on the front page. Where’s the blood in this story? Where’s the gore?
 - Summarise – crystallise – each treaty or grouping of issues into a 10-word, or 15-word sentence – to capture the gist. Then give every Treaty a headline.

Purpose: to get the cast articulating each treaty articulately, briefly and compellingly;

DROP-IN FOUR

Page 55 – 57: Depending on the treaties you have agreed, re-write these lines, awarding the best lines to those that thought up the ideas.