

The All-Win Principle and the Global Commons

The All-Win Principle

*Since each of us and nature are parts of one integrated whole,
the well-being of all people and all of nature are essential to us all.*

People across the world are increasingly realizing that each of us is interconnected with every other person through the air we breathe and the systems of waters, soils, and life in all its forms. Together we form one organism. We are cells both in the body of humanity and Mother Earth.

The more we can empower one another to flourish in our own chosen ways without harming others, the more we will create an all-win universe.

We are also interconnected in many other ways including through inter-subjectivity, shared experiences, the Internet, the news media, other tele-communications services, and our systems of roads, air and waterways.

These services and systems are in part regulated by standards set out by the United Nations and its approximately 30 Specialized Agencies. This UN System connects all governments of the world and thousands of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). We believe the power of the United Nations depends heavily on its ability to build consensus and implement the all-win principle by promoting the interests of each of its Members.

When any part of this global unity is harmed it affects all other parts and weakens the whole. For this reason the well-being of everyone and everything is important to each person.

The All-Win Principle and the Global Commons

Each of us depends on the fruits of nature and society to survive and prosper. It is therefore in the interest of everyone and of the various organizations – including, of course, commercial enterprises and governments at all levels – that we safeguard the well-being of this *global commons*.

The fruits of nature and society can therefore be seen as *commons goods*. Each person and each community (whether geographic, professional or community of interest) is responsible to care for these common goods and thereby has the position of *commoner*.

In addition, the system of communication between them while caring for these commons goods can be referred to as *commoning*. Most importantly, it is in the interest of these communities that such communication be open, transparent, participatory and inclusive.

Some analysts have divided commons goods into two categories: depletable commons goods – minerals, natural systems, biodiversity – and commons goods whose value increases with use – for example, culture and information. Energy can be included in both categories.

The All-Win Principle therefore lies at the very heart of the global commons.

The Challenge

In recent times, we have largely seen ourselves as separate both from one another and the natural world. There has been an intense effort to maintain our individual well-being in competition with others as well as to control nature.

Our challenge is to:

- **Transcend** both the *win/lose* consciousness we use to gain power over others in a hierarchical society and the *win/win* consciousness where people win by working together but nature is left out of the equation.
- **Adopt** an *all-win* approach to life where the well-being of people *and* nature are seen as being in the best interests of both.

The all-win approach is fundamental to recognizing the central role of the global commons to the well-being of everyone and the recognition of our responsibility to find ways to meet the unique needs of nature and each of our fellow human beings.

The All-Win Strategy in regard to Governments and the United Nations

The strategy consists of three steps:

Step One. To arouse interest both in the all-win principle and the global commons by showing their usefulness in bringing about sustainable development; their indispensability to human survival itself; and how these approaches relate specifically to the topics under discussion at the United Nations. (The specific points we make are outlined in other briefs.)

Step Two To build partnerships with CSOs who are dedicated to an all-win approach, including those that are brought together at the United Nations under the heading “Major Groups.” Even though some of these CSOs are unfamiliar with the concept of the commons they tend to be in agreement with its elements through their dedication to the all-win principle.

Steps 1 and 2 must take place concurrently. Here the emphasis must be to build support.

Step Three Once a critical mass of both Governments and CSOs support the indispensability of both an all-win and global-commons approach to resolving the diverse global crises which are threatening our survival – and once a critical mass of CSOs are working closely together – then we can begin to take specific actions to ensure respect for the commons and implement the all-win principle.

Your help is needed to forge this movement.

*Please contact Lisinka Ulatowska at: info@worldcitizensaction.com
For more information: www.globalcommonstrust.org; www.worldcitizensaction.com*