A concept paper on human security, the human family and human potential
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Human Security

A recent focus in the peace education field is the notion of human security, as opposed to national security. The latter is concerned with national defense, the war and peace keeping initiatives of a *nation*, while the former is concerned with the well-being of the *citizens* within the nation and within the human family. In more detail, national defense is traditionally concerned with protection of the nation-state, defense of territories and boundaries and the preservation of political sovereignty. After the end of the Cold War era in 1989, security expanded to include the personal well-being of individuals and their ability to feel secure in the basic needs that affect their day-to-day existence: food, health, employment, population, human rights, environment, education, etc. (Ayala-Lasso, 1996; Nef, 1999).

Security, simply put, is protecting oneself, other people or society from threats and challenges to safety and existence. Being secure means that risks (exposure to harm or danger) have been reduced or eliminated - feeling insecure means the risks, or the reality, of harm are still there (Nef, 1999). The concept of human security is multidimensional and these many dimensions are set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Multidimensional concept of human security (extrapolated from Nef, 1999)		
Dimension of Human Security	**Main theme of each dimension**	**Symptoms of insecurity (risks) for each dimension of human security**
Environmental	right to preservation of their life and health and to dwell in a safe and sustainable environment	- death of rain forests - thinning of ozone layer - air pollution and acid rain - freshwater contamination and depletion - land degradation and erosion - food insecurity - damage to oceans - epidemics and disease - threats to the genetic pool - dangers to the Green Revolution - hazardous waste

Cultural	preserving and enhancing the ability to control uncertainty and fear	- crisis (not crash) of civilizations - mindless incrementalism (short term fixes) - hegemony of neoclassical economics - crisis of learning and crisis of ideas - impractical pragmatism (short term fixes) - abandonment of politics (no voice, laws that favor transnational corporations) - lack of moral obligations and human responsibilities - Westernization - telecommunications, transportation, information technology, media control
Political	right to representation, freedom and autonomy, participation and dissent combined with empowerment to make choices with a reasonable probability to effect change. This includes protection from abuse, access to justice and legal-juridical security.	- spread of conflict - terrorism and counter terrorism - crime and counter crime - neoliberalism - neofascism
Social	freedom from discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity or social status. This means access to information, freedom to associate and access to safety nets. Access to integrated and strong communities	- population growth - migration - refugee flows - hyberurbanization - decline of communities and civil society
Economic	access to employment and resources needed to maintain one's existence, reduce scarcity and improve material quality of life in community	- persistent and expanding poverty - crisis of economic growth - debt crisis - deteriorating terms of trade - down side of global competition - unemployment and underemployment

Personal	cooperation, cohabitation and personal responsibility for own, and collective security, leads to continuity of individual lives, transmission of collective knowledge, and provision of food, medical, shelter as well as physical protection from injury or death	- weapons of mass destruction - family in crisis or transition - violence in the home - isolation and disconnectedness from collective - excessive consumerism - illiteracy

Using the human security label is a sign that governments have begun to recognize the importance of the well-being of citizens as well as the security of the state and the nation. Heinbecker (1999) elaborates further, noting that human security complements, but does not substitute for, national security; that individual human beings and communities, *rather than states*, are the measure of security; that the security of states is necessary, but not sufficient, to ensure individual well-being. This approach places individuals and families at the forefront of policy and government programs, dialogue and deliberations since their interest is now also in focus along with deficit, debts and military might. Nef (1999) uses the following 3 part model to discuss human security:

A. The concept of a world system:
1. core, semi peripheral and peripheral (edge)
2. governing structures (regime)
3. who is governing within that structure
4. their ability to influence outcomes (power)
B. Five major elements
1. context
2. culture (ideological perspectives)
3. network of actors
4. relationships between those actors as they try to reach goals
5. effects of the actions of these actors
C. All happens in a collection of spheres
1. ecological
2. economic
3. social
4. political
5. culture
technological???
See p. 18 in Nef (1999) for a matrices that shows the links between B and C in the context of A.

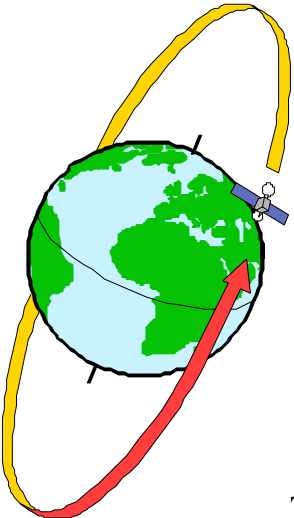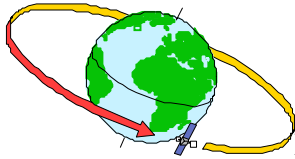**It is easy to see how readily this can all be thrown out of balance...**

National security of one state using defense	Collective human security using cooperation
Two central polarities: North/South East/West	Now have a Western Core, a Semi-periphery of Newly Industrialized Countries and those in Transition and a periphery of Developing and Poor, underdeveloped countries. This global system is interconnected but inherently unstable.

Zero Sum game One wins at the expense of another who loses	Negative Sum game Win together or lose together	Positive Sum game All move forward together

Table 1 provides a comprehensive summary of McGregor and Goldsmith's (1998) discussion of the seven dimensions of well-being. They expand the concept of well-being to include the spiritual, the environmental and personal autonomy - the political. These dimensions of family well-being are evident in Nef's (1999) conceptualization of global human security (Figure 1).

Table 1   <u>**Summary of dimensions of various aspects of well-being (extrapolated from McGregor & Goldsmith, 1998)**</u>

Economic	Physical	Social	Emotional	Environmental	Political	Spiritual

the degree to which individuals and families have economic adequacy or security.	*concern with or preoccupation with the body and its needs plus maintaining the integrity of the human body by protecting it and providing sustenance*	*the social space of the family as a group, the social needs of the individual played out daily in interactions via interpersonal relationships within the family group and with the larger community, including the workplace.*	*the mental status or space of individual family members versus the group as a whole*	*concern for our role in the earth's diminishing resources*	*family and individual's internal sense of power and autonomy based on moral and ethical freedom, concern for the welfare of the community and nation*	*captures a layer of well-being, a sense of insight and ethereal, intangible evolution not readily imparted by either social or psychological well-being as they are conventionally defined*

money income, transfers and in-kind income,
financial assets, human capital, community resources,
durable goods and services,
time,
deferred consumption, attitude toward money,
control over financial affairs and resources,

values,
insurance-risk management ability,
job security,
benefits,
ability to adjust to life transitions,
life style decisions,
loss of employment, illness,
bankruptcy,
bank failures, poverty,
destitution in old age,
unpaid labour in the home

unsafe and irresponsible personal conduct or the actions of a third party; illness, disease and malnutrition;
lack of or inappropriate exercise;
dangerous and hazardous products; adulterated foods; incompetent and irresponsible service delivery; environmental degradation (e.g., depletion of ozone layer),
managing physical impairments or disabilities as well as sleep, tension and stress,
adequate and affordable housing for protection against the elements or abusive partners;
safe, durable, and comfortable clothing and textiles,

interpersonal relationships and the dynamics of familial interaction,;
ability to form cooperative and interdependent relationships with others, to participate with others in society, and to learn the ways of daily life;
processes of cooperation and conflict, communication patterns and problem solving; conflict management, decision making and goal setting patterns;
resource management, stressors in and on the family;
any special needs;

self esteem,
self worth,
self image,
self identity
self actualization, self formation and fulfilment, self concept
self expression, sense of belonging
feeling connected with others,
status,
feeling superior,
self respect, prestige,
ego-defence, independence

waste and energy management, reduction and recycling,
reduced and more considered consumption habits;
depletion of the ozone layer, destruction of plant and animal species,
loss of oceans, growing deserts, soil erosion, deforestation.

protecting the integrity of the near environments (noise, water and sound pollution)

in control of one's life,
being able to and having the freedom to make decisions,
being aware of and able to anticipate the consequences of one's actions on one's self and others;
having the skills to act on one's decisions;
no longer accept unquestioningly those practices in society that are frequently taken for granted, those practices which reinforce inequality and injustice

joy and sense of completeness, holistic connectedness of the world,
pure joy of living,
peace, hope and faith gained from insights and moments of growth and enlightenment;
being and relating rather than having and doing

The Human Family

From the moment we are born, we are destined to be in relationship with others (Jackson, 1990). Many have always been concerned with relationships but have often focused on intra familial relationships leading to strong individual family units (spousal, sibling and parent/child relationships). This focus needs to be expanded to include the *human family* which refers to the relationships between people comprising the world population - the collection of beings called humanity. Jackson notes that people desire to bond together, not only at the family level but, at

the community level as well. Relationships with teachers, clergy, teams, co-workers, etc. build a sense of solidarity - an identity among members of a group. He takes this solidarity to a higher level, that of nations and cultures, urging us to extend it to the global level as well - the human family. Respect for the dignity of each person in the human family creates bonds between people. Jackson makes the interesting point that people tend to have less of a personal relationship with nationality and other cultures than they do with family members and close friends. It is this disconnectedness with the human family at large that needs to be mended if we are to nurture the human family as a whole. Our relationships with more distant members of the human family have to become personal because we all share a common destiny, that being to promote the common good. The common good is the totality of social conditions which make it possible for people to reach their full potential in a timely fashion. This common destiny means it is time for an ever-expanding sense of community so that all members of the human family can reach their fullest potential.

Figure 1 illustrates the creed for "The One Human Family" as set out on the One Human Family web site. This creed is especially poignant when one appreciates that "it is the diversity of the human family which gives it so rich a pattern of relationships. For every race and every culture has its own quality to contribute, its own note to sound, its own force to add to the whole of humanity's progress on the evolutionary path to completion of its destiny" ("The human family", n.d., web citation).

Figure - The One Human Family Creed

As a member of our One Human Family, I choose of my own free will to treat all people with respect and dignity. I recognize that every person is my brother and sister in our human family regardless of what they look like, what they believe, how they choose to live, and whether I agree with them or not. I will do my part to help all people receive fair treatment and reach their highest potential. I will have the courage to help people when they are down or in harm's way, and the wisdom to let them learn for themselves. I will show empathy to those who suffer, forgive those who have wronged me, and be a friend to those who will let me.
This is my promise to our human family. http://www.1HF.com

Human Potential

A trip to the dictionary begins this discussion of human potential. *Potential* is defined as something that can develop or come into existence; existing in possibility. *Possible* means within one's limits of ability, capacity and realization; able to become; something may or may not occur. To be *potent* (root of potential) is defined as having or wielding force, authority or influence to produce an effect. Taken together, these ideas suggest that to reach one's potential as a human being involves taking actions within one's ability or capacity, actions that bring "something" into existence making one capable of wielding a force(s) to influence one's life as a human being.

Human Enlightenment Movement

There is a groundswell of concern for human potential around the world based on the assumption that people are not realizing their full potential. Governments, businesses, NGO's etc are all concerned with the unrealized potential of the human race. A popular enlightenment author, Dan Millman, published a book called Everyday Enlightenment: The 12 Gateways to Personal [and spiritual] Growth. He claims that he has a map to offer so people can reach their human potential - their destiny. Millman (1998) advises readers to follow his 12 steps to arrive at the summit of their potential through personal and spiritual growth and transformation:

1. discover your worth
2. reclaim your will(power)
3. energize your body
4. manage your money
5. tame your mind/live in the moment
6. trust your intuition
7. accept your emotions
8. face your fears
9. illuminate your shadows
10. embrace your sexuality
11. awaken your heart
12. serve your will

The ideas embedded in Millman's (1998) model approach the common notion of what can get in the way of reaching one's potential: (a) low self esteem and sense of worth leads to devaluation of any contributions one could make; (b) lack of willpower and motivation lead to inaction and lack of dynamics in daily life (a rut); (c) immobility and lack of physical exercise leads to illness and dis-ease; (d) being too focused on past errors and mistakes leads to a crippling sense of failure and deficiency; (e) an inability to trust one's intuition about people or a situation leads to withdrawal and inaction; (f) inability to face one's fears and any uncertainties in life leads to risk aversion behavior (do not take any chances - play it safe); (g) unwillingness to reflect on one's life leads to a lack of appreciation of inner qualities that can hold one back or even move one forward; (h) lack of control over life's decisions (or lack thereof) means seeing one's self as a victim or martyr deserving of what one gets; (i) avoidance of intimacy and joy in one's life leads to denial of feelings and a stymied, stale existence, often camouflaged with indulgence in the form of excessive consumerism; (j) fear of loving someone and making any commitments results in isolation and loneliness; and, finally, (k) reluctance to open one's heart to serve humanity or even one's own needs, leads to disillusionment, disconnectedness, despair and lack of hope.

Human Potential Movement

There is a branch of the New Age Movement called the Human Potential Movement. For clarification, Spangler (1988) suggests that the New Age movement embraces the philosophy of "pragmatic efforts toward social change and betterment inspired by the spirit... based on intellectual activities, compassion, artistic sensitivity, good human relations, communication skills, business acumen and a sense of caring for the human community" (p.iv). He proposes that New Age is a redefinition of humanity's role within creation, emphasizing servanthood rather than mastery, and stewardship rather than domination. "It is each individual's effort to explore and implement values of empowerment and compassion in very ordinary, day to day settings,

that is the core of the New Age movement" (p.iv). Woodhead and Heelas (2000) position the New Age Movement within the Spiritualities of Life, one of three varieties of religion (the other two being Religions of Difference and Religions of Humanity). Spiritualities of Life - or inner spiritualities - focus on the intrinsic spirituality of the person, on the quest within.

Within this context, the Human Potential Movement is evolving and claims that humans have unlimited potential or infinite potential. Meaning is found in the journey as one strives to reach one's full potential. Once one becomes aware of who s/he *is*, of their true inner self, one can master one's reality and ask the hard questions,"Do we feel safe with each other? Can we be truly honest and open with each other? Can we say what we are feeling and thinking? How equal, fair and right are things? How do people relate to each other? How much hope is there that future generations will continue to address these questions related to the human condition?"

Those in the Human Potential Movement claim that finding out "who you are" leads to increased self esteem, self worth, to internal peace and external achievement, to a better appreciation of the mind-body-spirit connection, to inner meaning and outer expression of that meaning, and to stronger knowledge in how to live in the present and embrace the immense possibilities that are at the heart of what each person is capable of achieving ("Quest", 2000).

Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential

There is even an Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential (1995) focused on the problems of humanity (first edition was in 1976). The guiding premise behind this initiative is *the sustainable development of the individual*. Can the individual sustain his or her own development in the mental, spiritual, psychological sense at the same time that economic development indicatives unfold? Their answer is no, not if current world events pull out the roots of traditions of values and moral codes. This encyclopedia is comprised of three volumes. The first is an overview of the world's problems and the interdependencies among these world problems, the second is related to human potential, values and transformation, and the third deals with actions, strategies and solutions to the world's problems leading to enriched human potential and transformation. The Human Potential volume is divided into five sections: (a) approaches to human development concepts and modes of awareness and relationships, (b) integrativeness and interdisciplinarity as an approach to problem solving, (c) metaphors and patterns as ways to understand how to transform discontinuity and disagreements, (d) transformative approaches, and (e) a range of human values (positive and destructive or negative values) as well as value polarities (Union of International Associations, 1995).

Sustainable Human Development - Example of A Government Initiative

On a final, but not conclusive not, I want to mention a site I found on the web as I was searching for information on human potential. In its 1999 plan for national economic and social development, the government of Thailand actually has an entire chapter on development of human potential. The government argued that the development of the individual has been ignored in favour of the development of the economy. The government notes that "it has become apparent that there is an urgent need to make it possible for all people to develop to their full potential in physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual terms, while improving their technical and productive skills..." (Web citation - Thailand National Economic and Social Development

Board, 1999). Five strategies were built into the development plan to ensure that people have the capacity to adjust to changing circumstances, to maintain a satisfying livelihood and to participate fully in sustainable economic and social development. The full development of the people's potential was the key focus of this part of the development plan, especially the creation of an enabling social environment; the ability to be better citizens, parents and family members; the empowerment of disadvantaged populations; and the fostering of spiritual development (in conjunction with conventional economic, labour, education, health, technological and environmental development initiatives).

Concluding Thoughts

Being unable to reach one's full potential means being unable to achieve all one is capable of as a human being. The short term, micro results of unfulfilled potential are low self-esteem, unhealthy relationships, mismanagement of life's resources, lack of career advancement, illness, lack of inner peace and the proliferation of a sense of not belonging and being disconnected. The long term, more macro implications, of unrealized individual potential include sick families, unsustainable communities, a general malaise of society, and government and economic institutions focused on money, greed and profit rather than people, nature and the human family. The global human condition deteriorates if its citizens are not provided the means or opportunity to reach, or at least strive for, their full human potential. All of security, well-being and quality of life and potential have to be realized if the human condition is to be improved and transformed.

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