



# The Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University and its Commitment to the Young People of the World

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*Here is rather a different approach to education in the form of an open letter young people. The Covenant adopted by the University indicates its the commitment to young people, and its resolution to offer a programme of education that empowers them to be self-reliant and productive members of society, as well as effective architects of a world that is sustainable and peaceful, and free of the barriers and subordination that often constrain the lives and the opportunities of young people today.*



Giordano Bruno  
GLOBALSHIFT UNIVERSITY

*The Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University is the first online university to make high-quality fully accredited university education accessible to young people in all parts of the world. It held its Founding Congress at the Budapest Historical Museum in the Royal Castle of Hungary on the 9th of September 2011 and will open for enrolment on the five continents as of 2012. <[www.giordanobrunouniversity.com](http://www.giordanobrunouniversity.com)>*

## An open letter to the young people of the world

We are the music makers,  
And we are the dreamers of dreams,  
Wandering by lone seabreakers,  
And sitting by desolate streams;  
World-losers and world-forsakers,  
On whom the pale moon gleams:  
*Yet we are the movers and shakers  
Of the world forever, it seems . . .*

We, in the ages lying  
In the buried past of the earth,  
Built Nineveh with our sighing,  
And Babel itself in our mirth;  
And o'erthrew them with prophesying  
To the old of the new world's worth;  
*For each age is a dream that is dying,  
Or one that is coming to birth.*

(Arthur O'Shaughnessy)

You, the young people of the world, are the movers and shakers, the music

makers—the most privileged people who ever walked the Earth. For the first time in history, one generation—*your* generation—holds the key to the greatest challenge our species has faced since it proudly named itself homo sapiens. This is the challenge of change—of profound and timely, and *conscious* change.

Privilege entails responsibility. You have the privilege to meet the challenge of timely and conscious change, but you also have the responsibility that goes with the privilege: the responsibility of taking an active part in promoting this change.

To live up to this responsibility you need to understand the nature of the problem and its possible solution. Why do we, the human family, face the challenge of change? And what can *you*, your generation, do about meeting the challenge? There is a straightforward answer to both these questions.

We face the challenge of profound and timely change because the world your fathers and forefathers have created is not sustainable. 'Unsustainable' means that if the world doesn't change, it will break down. It cannot keep going as it is.

Take a look around you. Summers are getting hotter, winters milder, storms more violent, the extremes more pronounced, the variations more unpredictable. A little less cold could be a good thing in many climes, except that global warming also means that less rain is falling on productive lands; that forests are dying; that water-tables are dropping, and that, because ice is constantly melting into the Arctic and Antarctic oceans, sea levels are rising the world over.

How long before thousands of millions will be pressed below the level of bare subsistence? Before hundreds of millions will be driven from their homelands by hurricanes and floods? Before whole cities and entire islands will be submerged?

Global warming and the resulting climate change are just one of several 'unsustainabilities' in today's world. Urban overcrowding, the breakdown of the health of vast populations, violence born of intolerance, and war waged to secure short-term economic interests are among the many threats to life and wellbeing on this planet. We of the older

generations have impaired the vital balances of nature; balances that are needed to sustain your life, and the life of myriad other species. Now you, the younger generation, must correct our errors and repair the damage.

We are now seven billion humans on the planet. How many of us will survive the next ten years? The next five years, or the next three? And if some of us go under, how will the rest manage, given our interdependence and our proneness to resort to violence to assure our short-term interests? If the world continues its downhill slide, and if the mindset of the rich and powerful doesn't change while there is time, there will be a holocaust from which no one will emerge unscathed.

The answer to the question, why we must have timely and profound change in the world, should be clear. We either change, or we go under.

But what can you, today's young generation, do to create the required change?

### Einstein and Gandhi

The answer to this question is straightforward as well. You need to take to heart two wise sayings, by two of the wisest people who ever lived on this planet. Albert Einstein said, *you can't solve a problem with the kind of consciousness that gave rise to the problem.* And Mahatma Gandhi said, *be the change you want to see in the world.*

Take Einstein's insight first. You need to develop a new consciousness, adopt new thinking. This means not just acquiring more data, more information, mere additions to the current kinds of knowledge. It means new knowledge, a new way of thinking. Some call it a new *paradigm*.

The new paradigm is in active development. It is variously called the holistic paradigm, the integral mode of thinking, or the systemic view of the world. Its main and decisive feature is that it doesn't fragment the world in order to understand it. It doesn't reduce the diversity we experience to one or two factors for the convenience of analysing it. The 'analytic approach' can provide sound technical knowledge, but not true understanding. It's the knowledge of the specialist, who knows more and more

about less and less. Specialised knowledge, the knowledge of the technician, while good for specific applications, fails when it comes to copying with the whole in which that application occurs. It cures the illness, but loses the patient.

The knowledge of mainstream society is fragmented, and it's not only fundamentally incomplete; it's fundamentally misleading. Things in the world are not separate, independent of one another. As cutting edge scientists now realise, all things in nature are connected; and in the final count all things are what they are because of and through their connections.

Sound knowledge takes into account the connections. It perceives the forest and not only the trees. Trees are an organic part of the forest, and you cannot truly know a single tree in the absence of having an idea of the forest in which that tree is growing.

We live in an organic world, and our knowledge must be organic: whole and integral. Such knowledge is available. It's the knowledge you need to live up to the challenge of changing the world. Of consciously changing today's unsustainable, moribund world into a sustainable and viable world. The Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University is committed to gathering such knowledge, to bringing together the people who develop it and who can effectively deliver it.

Consider now Gandhi's advice. Why is it important to 'be' the change you want to see in the world? Is changing yourself the way to consciously change the world around you?

The answer is that it is indeed. In a critically unstable system even small 'fluctuations' can provoke major transformations. You have heard of the 'butterfly effect.' The popular story is that when a monarch butterfly flaps its wings in Southern California a storm develops in Outer Mongolia. The tiny air current created by the butterfly grows and grows, until it changes the pattern of weather on the other side of the globe. This is entirely possible, although the actual origin of the term is different. It refers to the shape of the 'chaotic attractor' that meteorologist Edward Lorenz discovered in the 1960s when he tried to model the world's weather. This attractor, a mathematically generated modelling device, has



two 'wings' where each wing models one path in the evolution of the world's weather. Lorenz found that even tiny alterations in the factors that influence the weather can make for a sudden, and initially unpredictable, shift from one of the wings of the 'butterfly' to the other—from one global weather-pattern to another.

The fact is that a chaotic system—and the world's weather is such a system—is supersensitive and inherently unpredictable. But not only the world's weather is chaotic: so is the world's economy, the world's financial system, and the world's natural environment. All these systems have now been pushed to the edge of chaos, and as a result they have all become supersensitive. Butterfly effects are coming about in them.

## The Crucial Butterfly

You, the young generation of our chaotic times, are precisely positioned to be the butterfly that creates the crucial effect. You were born at exactly the right time: at the time when the world around you is becoming open to change.

It's hardly possible to create real change in a stable society: it has powerful defences against it. There is a simple reason for this: those who hold the reins of power fear change—it may divest them of their privileges. Whether they are politicians, business leaders, or ecclesiastical, educational, or social authorities, the powerful, unless they are exceptionally open and wise, do everything in their power to maintain the status quo. They try to 'excommunicate' those who want change—not literally, as the Church did in the Middle Ages, but by modern means: by ignoring the agents of change, and if ignoring them is not feasible, then by discrediting, ridiculing, and isolating them.

This is not an insurmountable problem for you, today's young generation. The dominant forces in the world still resist change, but they no longer have the power to resist it effectively. Contemporary societies are no longer stable; they suffer from multiple crises—economic, financial, and ecological, even social and cultural crises. They are approaching a condition of chaos, and in a condition of chaos new thinking can spawn new behaviour and lead to effective innovation. Even small groups and seemingly minor initiatives can catalyse major change.

There was chaos in the human world in the past as well. But it was local. And the opportunity to change was likewise local. Today's chaos is global, and the opportunity it brings is also global. Failing to seize it would be not just the height of stupidity: it would be a crime against humanity.

The bottom line is this. The world needs timely and effective change: a global shift. Your generation is uniquely positioned to bring about that shift. The Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University is committed to make available to you the new-paradigm thinking you need to evolve your consciousness, develop new thinking—and change yourself so you can change the world.

## The Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University's COVENANT WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE WORLD

### Whereas

The world we and our fathers and forefathers before us have created is no longer sustainable; it either breaks down in chaos and anarchy or breaks through to a more sustainable, equitable and peaceful world;

### Whereas

The choice between breakdown and breakthrough is yet to be decided, and it is likely to be decided ultimately by the young people who are now reaching maturity and will soon be entering positions of responsibility in society;

### Whereas

It is the task of higher education to bring relevant information and knowledge to young people, and relevant information and knowledge embraces today the information and the knowledge on the basis of which young people—and people who are young in spirit whether young or old—can evolve the wisdom and the determination to become conscious and responsible architects of a new world;

### and Whereas

The Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University, being a global online university aspiring to reach young people and people young in spirit the world over, is in a unique position to provide the information and the knowledge on the basis of which people can develop the wisdom and the determination to become conscious architects of a more sustainable, equitable, and peaceful world.

### The Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University now resolves to enter into this covenant with the young people of the world

To do its utmost to provide the scientific and humanistic concepts and insights that can empower young people and people young in spirit to evolve the new thinking and the new consciousness Einstein said is needed to solve the significant problems of our time, so that they may become conscious and dedicated architects of a sustainable, equitable and peaceful world, as well as responsible and productive members of their family, their community, and the community of all life on Earth.

### In the fulfilment of this Covenant, The Giordano Bruno Globalshift University resolves to

challenge and put on trial the doctrines, the structures and the institutions that create artificial barriers between peoples, nations and cultures, and subordinate the great majority of the people to the economic, political and doctrinaire interests of a political, economic, or cultural minority, just as the ecclesiastical authorities and institutions of the late 16th Century had put on trial Giordano Bruno for refusing to subordinate his insights and his convictions to their authority.

The University pledges to implement this Covenant with the Young People of the World in all its educational offerings, including its degree - and continuing education-programmes, and the seminars and symposia associated with them.

Drafted by Ervin Laszlo and adopted by the Giordano Bruno GlobalShift University on the 19th of September, 2011

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*Laszlo received the Peace Prize of Japan, the Goi Award, in 2002, the International Mandir of Peace Prize in Assisi in 2005, the Conacreis Holistic Culture Prize in 2009, and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 and 2005. He is the author or co-author of fifty-four books translated into as many as twenty-three languages, and serves as editor of another thirty volumes in addition to a four-volume World Encyclopedia of Peace.*