

**UNEP Programmes and Resources**  
*for Environmental Education and Training*  
*An Introductory Guide*

*2004*



UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

Published in March 2004. © 2004 UNEP. ISBN: 92-807-2434-7.

Job number: DEP-0519-NA

Produced by the Division of Environmental Policy Implementation (DEPI)

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In addition to text prepared from available information in the UNEP library and UNEP webpage, the text was compiled and edited from material provided by focal points in Environmental Education and Training from UNEP Divisions, Regional Offices and Collaborating Centres.

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The photographs included in this guide are from UNEP's Regional Offices, Programmes and from the following sources: Lausanne Olivitt/WESSA, Marike Postma/WESSA, Vlado Russo/JEA, Kim Ward/WESSA, Hartmut Schwarzbach/Still Pictures.

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# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Environmental Education and Training in UNEP</b>	<b>xii</b>

## **Part 1 – Programmes and Networks**

### **Environmental Leadership Programmes**

● UNEP/UNESCO/BMU Postgraduate Course on Environmental Management for Developing and Emerging Countries	<b>4</b>
● UNEP/Watson International Scholars of the Environment Programme	<b>5</b>
● UNU/UNEP/Norwegian Government Global Virtual University project	<b>5</b>
● UNEP-WCMC Chevening Scholarships in Biodiversity	<b>7</b>
● UNEP-WCMC/IMO Training Course for Emergency Response Planners	<b>8</b>
● UNEP-WCMC Information Management Training course	<b>9</b>
● UNEP/GPA-UNESCO-IHE-UN/DOALOS TRAIN-SEA-COAST Training Course on Improving Municipal Wastewater Management in Coastal Cities	<b>10</b>
● University of Joensuu-UNEP Seminar on International Environmental Law-making and Diplomacy	<b>12</b>
● Global Training Programme on Environmental Policy Analysis and Law	<b>13</b>
● Environmental Management Course for Africa	<b>14</b>
● Partnership for Development of Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa	<b>16</b>
● Achieving Sustainability through Environmentally Sound Technologies	<b>17</b>
● World Environment Day	<b>18</b>
● Training Women in Managing Natural Resources	<b>19</b>
● Environmental Action Learning	<b>21</b>
● UNEP Internship Programmes	<b>22</b>

### Environmental Training Networks

- Environmental Education and Training Initiatives in the Asia-Pacific 24
- Environmental Training Network for Latin America and the Caribbean (ETN-LAC) 25
- Capacity-building in the Global Environment Outlook process 26
- Geneva Environment Network (GEN) 27
- United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) 28

### Environmental Youth Programmes

- Youth and Sustainable Consumption 30
- Global Environment Outlook for Youth 31
- Global Youth Retreat 32

### Reaching Out Through The Mass Media

- Tierramerica 34
- Earth Report 34
- Heart and Soul: A soap opera for Africa 35
- African Network for Environmental Journalists (ANEJ) 36
- EarthWire Africa 37

## Part 2 – Publications

### Information Resources

- Global Environment Outlook-3 40
- Africa Environment Outlook 40
- Global Environment Outlook Yearbook 2003 41
- Our Planet 41
- Protecting Our Planet, Securing Our Future 42
- Manual Comunitario de Saberes Ambientales 42
- Gestión Ambiental de Ciudades. Teoría Crítica y Aportes Metodológicos 43
- Ética, Vida, Sustentabilidad 43
- Justicia Ambiental. Construcción y Defensa de los Nuevos Derechos Ambientales, Culturales y Colectivos en América Latina 44
- Children in the New Millennium: Environmental Impact on Health 44

- Ecotourism: Principles, Practices and Policies for Sustainability 45
- Vital Climate Graphics 45
- Vital Climate Graphics Africa: The Impacts of Climate Change 46
- Vital Water Graphics: An Overview of the State of the World's Fresh and Marine Waters 46
- Global International Waters Assessment Reports 47
- Vital Graphics Package 47
- Review of Institutional Capacity-Building for Environmental Law and Institutions in Africa 48
- Compendium of Environmental Laws of African Countries 48
- Compendium of Judicial Decisions on Matters Related to Environment 49
- UNEP Studies of EIA Practice in Developing Countries 49

**Training Manuals and Resource Kits**

- Environmental Management System Training Resource Kit 50
- Environmental Impact Assessment: Training Resource Manual (2nd Edition) 50
- Training Resource Pack for Hazardous Waste Management in Developing Economies 51
- Capacity-building for Integrated Environmental Assessment and Reporting: Training Manual (2nd Edition) 52
- A Manual for Water and Waste Management: What the Tourism Industry can do to Improve its Performance 52
- Environmental Law Training Manual 53
- TSC-GPA Training Manual: Improving Municipal Wastewater Management in Coastal Cities 53
- UNEP/WHO/UN-HABITAT/WSSCC Guidelines on Municipal Wastewater Management (Version 3) 54

**Handbooks**

- CITES Handbook 55
- Handbook on Environmental Law 55
- Handbook on the Implementation of Conventions Related to Biological Diversity in Africa 56
- WCMC Handbooks on Biodiversity Information Management 56
- Handbook on Environment and Trade 57

### Atlases

- World Atlas of Seagrasses 58
- World Atlas of Biodiversity 58
- Atlas of International Freshwater Agreements 59
- World Atlas of Coral Reefs 59
- World Atlas of Desertification (2nd Edition) 60

### Resources for Children and Youth

- Global Environment Outlook Juvenil 61
- GEOactive 61
- TUNZA – Acting for a Better World 62
- TUNZA – A Magazine for Youth 62
- Pachamama: Our Earth – Our Future 63
- Pachamama Teacher’s Guide 63
- YouthXchange – Training kit on responsible consumption 64
- Water World – Children’s Voices 64
- Taking Action: An Environmental Guide for You and Your Community 65

### Part 3 – Online Resources

- Introduction 68
- UNEP web site 68
- UNEP Portal 69
- UNEP Library 70
- Global Compact Resource Package 71
- Youth for Sustainable Consumption Handbook 71
- YouthXchange Training Kit on Sustainable Consumption 72
- Teaching for a Sustainable World 72
- Environmental Education Network Publishing Programme 73
- UNEP-WCMC Interactive Maps Service (IMAPS) 74

# Foreword

## The challenge of education for sustainable development

How can we better understand the complexity of the world around us? How can we conserve precious natural resources for future generations? How are the problems of our world interconnected and how can we solve them? What kind of world do we want for the future, and can our visions be achieved within the limits of Earth's life support systems? How can we reconcile the requirements of economy, society, and the environment?

Such questions are not new and, in its capacity as the specialized agency for the environment within the United Nations system, UNEP has addressed them over a period of many years. However, inspired by the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), UNEP is working on such questions with renewed vigour.

Education for Sustainable Development places education and training at the heart of the quest to solve the problems threatening our future. Education in all its forms and at all levels is not only an end in itself, but is also one of the most powerful instruments for bringing about the changes required to achieve sustainable development.

This guide showcases some of UNEP's many programmes and resources that support the important work of environmental education and training. It contains details of courses in the UNEP Environmental Leadership Programme, UNEP networks for environmental training, our commitment to supporting environmental action learning activities that link schools with their communities, training programmes for women as managers of natural resources, and examples of our public education programmes in newspapers and television. These examples come from countries and regions around the world; from Finland to southern Africa, from Latin America and the Caribbean to Australia, and from the Himalayas to the USA.

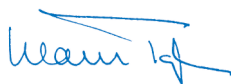
This guide also provides details of some of the many books, multimedia materials and web sites that UNEP has prepared to support environmental education and training. These include: the series of Global Environment Outlook reports (on global and regional environmental trends and perspectives), the Taking Action guide (for citizens and communities), Pachamama: Our Earth, Our Future and Water, World Children's Voices (educational books developed by



## Foreword

children and, young people). Tunza: Acting for a Better World and Tunza magazine (both written by and for young people), and Communicating Africa's Environment (a resource kit for African journalists). Among the web sites featured are youthXchange, which supports youth leadership programmes on sustainable consumption, the development of better and environmentally sustainable ways of transport, and the integration of the Global Compact principles at all levels of society.

I am proud to commend this publication to you as a guide to UNEP's programmes and resources for environmental education and training, but I am also humbled by the scale of the task ahead of us in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. We must all work together to make our planet a home not only for us today, but also for the many generations that will follow.



Klaus Toepfer

Executive Director, UNEP



# Introduction

The United Nations Environment Programme was established in 1972. Its mission is *to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.*

In working towards achieving its mission, UNEP has developed a number of environmental leadership programmes and resources, as well as playing a catalytic role in assisting in the development and strengthening of environmental networks. This has enabled UNEP to achieve many successes and to develop a series of good practices world-wide.

How can a programme such as UNEP's inspire nations and peoples to protect and improve our local and global environment for a sustainable future? By providing everyone with the opportunity to develop appropriate awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment.

For this UNEP has been implementing a number of training programmes and initiatives which focus on empowering women, involving youth in decision-making and assisting governments with policy analysis and enforcement.

What can UNEP do to inform nations and peoples to address environmental degradation and transform aspirations into realities? By sensitizing individuals, groups, communities and nations to their ecological, economic, social and cultural interdependence and developing general environmental and development awareness.

UNEP has also assisted nations and peoples to incorporate environment, development and population dimensions into the educational processes of all countries. This is visible in the number of networks, media programmes and information resources that UNEP has developed over the years.

Can UNEP continue to enable nations and peoples world-wide to play an active and pro-active role in promoting effective public participation in decision-making and training with respect to environment and development issues? UNEP's work in fostering public participation, developing information resources for environmental education and training programmes, and its efforts in assessing the state of the environment is visible throughout this publication.



This guide is not just a medium for highlighting the many UNEP achievements and parading its programmes and resources. It is dedicated to providing everyone with the opportunity to be part of our efforts to improve the quality of our lives without compromising that of future generations.

Furthermore, this publication strives to encourage people to develop new environmentally-friendly behaviour patterns for a sustainable future. It provides access to information on programmes, networks and resources which can be of benefit to many stakeholders working as government officials, involved in institutions of learning, the business/industry sector or part of community groups.

This guide is an outcome of many requests from government officials, teachers, students and other stakeholders for information on programmes and resources in UNEP, as well as a first step in UNEP's preparation for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

To achieve the goals of such an important decade, governments, United Nations agencies, institutions of learning and civil society have to work together.

Hence, this publication is part of UNEP's contributions to working together for a common goal: a sustainable future for everyone.

The guide has been formulated to share information about environmental leadership programmes and on-going training courses that UNEP offers as well as publications and websites relevant to environmental education and training. It is directed particularly at national governments, institutions of learning, public and private libraries, community groups, media, business/industry and people involved in education and training.

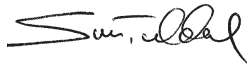
Putting together a publication such as this is not easy, considering the amount of work UNEP has done and is continuing to do in terms of environmental education and training. It includes the most recent programmes and resources as well as those being reviewed, redeveloped and updated.

Part 1 of the guide includes information on environmental leadership programmes and training courses offered by UNEP in partnership with a range of learning institutions. Programmes in both the formal and non-formal sectors of education are included. Relevant networks for the promotion of environmental awareness and training, programmes for youth as well as environmental media programmes are also included.

Part 2 includes summaries of UNEP's most recent publications which are pertinent to environmental education and training. It presents resources useful for information, research and planning purposes; training manuals and resource kits; a number of handbooks and atlases; and resources useful for children and youth.

Part 3 is a collection of relevant resources available electronically on the Internet, particularly in UNEP-related websites. These include resource kits; resource packages; activities and tips for action for a better world.

We are at the beginning of a century when achieving sustainable development is extremely relevant to the survival of our planet. We have much to do to turn development in a sustainable direction. To reach that turning point, knowledge is vital.



Svein Tveitdal

Director, DEPI

# *Environmental Education and Training in UNEP*

Over the past three decades, rising concerns about the unsustainable rate of resource consumption and the degradation of the environment have helped many people to become increasingly aware of the need for changes in our lifestyle choices and behaviours, notably our patterns of production and consumption. Along with legislative and economic tools, education and training have essential roles to play in motivating and empowering people to participate in working towards a sustainable future and better environmental management measures.

To effectively bring about the changes in lifestyles and behaviour needed to reduce human impacts on the natural world, and thus enhance the transition towards sustainable development, environmental education must integrate learning for the wise use of natural resources – conservation – with the equally important concerns of social and economic sustainability.

Directed towards sustainable development, environmental education develops the understanding, motivations and skills that can enable all citizens and, through them, governments and business institutions, to integrate conservation goals with appropriate forms and levels of economic development and social improvement.

Directed towards such ends, not just in the formal education sector, but in all educational settings, environmental education has a pivotal role to play in building a supportive social context for sustainable development and in empowering citizens to encourage business and policy-makers to hasten the transition towards sustainability. Indeed, without such education, even the most enlightened legislation, cleanest technology and most sophisticated research will not achieve the long-term goals of sustainable development.

In support of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), UNEP's goal is to provide continued and sustained support to ensure the protection of the environment and the improvement of people's quality of life by developing and strengthening environmental education and training initiatives which are responsive, culturally appropriate and locally relevant, and aimed at transforming people's visions and aspirations into reality for present and future generations.

To achieve this, UNEP works with all sectors of education and training in all countries and regions to provide direction and leadership in the advancement, co-ordination and improvement of environmental education and training policies, programmes and activities with the following objectives:

- To implement and support key priority areas as flagship programmes towards achieving UNEP's mission world-wide;
- To provide a focal point for advocacy and promotion of environmental education and training around the world;
- To act as a catalyst for innovation and the sharing of successful policy development and implementation practices in environmental education around the world;
- To provide innovative and responsive professional development and training for people working in the various fields of environmental education across all sectors of society;
- To support the development of high quality environmental education learning support materials for use in different sectors and contexts and as catalytic models for adaptation;
- To establish, maintain and strengthen mechanisms for facilitating networking and partnerships to advance environmental education and training around the world;
- To undertake ongoing research into environmental education and training, and evaluating existing approaches, particularly with respect to the integration of sustainable development principles across all educational sectors;
- To establish awareness-raising initiatives to increase people's understanding of the goals and principles of sustainable development and to contribute to the development of informed citizens in different parts of the world;
- To ensure that environmental information is easily accessible through mass media and public education initiatives in different mediums around the world.

For more details of UNEP environmental education and training, contact the UNEP Environmental Education and Training Unit, Division of Environmental Policy Implementation.



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