

The Development of Environmental Education Materials

Efforts to define environmental education as a specific endeavour began as early as the 1960s. At the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, participating governments recommended that environmental education be recognised and promoted on an international scale through the United Nations.

One of the first tasks was to develop some consensus on what environmental education could and should become, and to assist governments in implementing relevant programs.

Two major conferences were hosted by the newly formed UNESCO-UNEP International Environmental Education Program. The purpose of the first conference in Belgrade in 1975 was to draft concepts of, and a vision for, environmental education. An Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education in Tbilisi in 1977 approved the scope and an action plan was put forward.

The contents of the Tbilisi Declaration on the role, objectives and characteristics of environmental education remain in wide international use and have sustained their role as a guiding influence over the past two decades. These goals, objectives and guiding principles for environmental education are as follows:

Awareness: to help social groups and individuals acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.

Knowledge: to help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experience in, and acquire a basic understanding of, the environment and its associated problems.

Attitudes: to help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.

Skills: to help social groups and individuals acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.

Participation: to provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels in working toward the resolution of environmental problems

Reference

UNESCO-UNEP. 1978, *Connect*, Vol. 3, pp 1-9.

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