

# **Concepts and principles of environmental education for sustainability**

## **Interdependence**

Humans are an inseparable part of the environment and we are part of a system that connects individuals, their culture and their natural surroundings.

## **Resource management**

The natural world contains a range of renewable and finite resources that humans can develop to satisfy their needs and wants, according to the lifestyle choices they make and with regard to long-term sustainability of these choices.

## **Diversity**

Variation and variety can take several forms—biological, cultural, social and economic. We need to understand the importance and value of each of these forms of diversity to the quality of human life.

## **Natural environment**

The natural environment comprises ecosystems which include the plants and animals of an ecological community and their physical surrounds, forming an interacting system of activities and functions regarded as a unit.

## **Cultural environment**

The cultural environment comprises all the tangible and intangible evidence of human activity, including buildings, traditions and beliefs. Significant elements of the environment have cultural and historic values that may require protection from unplanned or unwise human activity.

## **Values and lifestyle choices**

The balance of natural ecosystems and cultural heritage can be affected by unplanned or unwise human use of resources. Sometimes the resulting problems are so severe that changes in management practices and human lifestyles are necessary to protect the cultural environment or to allow ecosystems to, if possible, rebuild their ecological balance. Poor choices may affect the wellbeing and lifestyle of future generations.

## **Social participation**

Attitudes of concern for the quality of the environment are required to motivate people to develop the skills necessary for finding out about the environment and to take the necessary actions for environmental problem-solving.