



## The Voice of Children and Teenagers



### Declaration of Principles

- Environmental education is not a privilege, but a right.
- Society (politics, economy, and culture) is inseparable from the environment. All species, including humans, are part of nature in a nonlinear web of interdependence. Cooperation and mutual respect are imperative for the survival of all species.
- All living things are entitled to equal opportunities and resources to live a healthy and fulfilling life.
- There is a need for a shift in consciousness concerning the relationship among societies and environments.
- Humans live in a finite world. Resources must be used sustainably with future generations in mind.
- Interdependence involves giving to and receiving from the environment in which one lives. Therefore, all life has the right to use resources responsibly and wisely, while also contributing to the healthy maintenance of the living system.
- Wealthier people disproportionately impact the health of ecosystems. Yet, the poor and vulnerable disproportionately suffer the consequences of environmental problems.

### Guidelines for Education

- Ecological literacy—understanding the source of one's food, water, and other materials as well as the impacts of their procurement—should be considered foundational curriculum, the same as numeracy and literacy.
- Each student's unique interests should be cultivated in a loving and caring environment, thus planting the seeds of socially and environmentally compassionate people.
- Schools and families must be examples of sustainability. Teachers, to begin with, should be models for inspiration. Education of the educators is a requirement.
- Develop new approaches of teaching students about sustainability and climate change, based not on the concept of fear and feeling powerless about future situations, but based on love and respect for living beings, and balance between humans and their environment.
- Provide children with simple actions that they can practice every day, to make the world more sustainable and build habits from these experiences.
- To truly understand the world, students should understand the interconnections of society and nature through an interdisciplinary education that does not create artificial boundaries between subject areas.

- Students must understand that sustainable development is related to science, as learning to solve problems from a scientific point of view is the first step to understanding the problem.
- Children should be given the opportunity to learn through a variety of experiences inside and outside of classroom. They must see with their own eyes the degradation of nature but also the wonders of nature to understand its fragility.
- Anxiety provides a motive to act, but this must be balanced with hope.

*Chair:* **Courtney Sale Ross** (Founder, Ross Institute, USA)

*Student Participants:*

19 total (10 female, 9 male; ranging in age from 12-19 years)

Youth representatives from 12 nationalities: China, France, Germany, Italy, Nepal, Nigeria, Palestine, Philippines, South Africa, Syria, Ukraine, United States of America

*Facilitators:*

Jennifer L. Chidsey & Carrie Clark (Ross Institute, USA)

*Educator Participants:*

Béatrice Bachmann and Caroline Nicole (Collège-Lycée Charles Peguy, France)

Prof. Kieran P. McNulty (University of Minnesota, USA & REACHE Program, Kenya)

Anna Pascucci (Italy)

Prof. Emanuele Piccioni (Liceo Scientifico annesso Convitto Nazionale, Assisi, Italy)

Natasha Tourabi (United World College, Fribourg Germany)