

## **ETHICAL CHARTER ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

The Charter has been drawn up by the Departments of Environment Education of the Province of Parma (DEE) and is one of the main features of the project “**Environmental Ethics: a Resource towards Sustainable Development**”. Funded both by the Emilia Romagna Region, as part of the 2003-4 INFEA (Information and Environmental Education) Program, and by the Department of Environment of Parma Provincial Council, the project is being carried out under the leadership of C.I.R.E.A. (Italian Centre of Research and Environmental Education) of the University of Parma.

### **Environmental Ethical Charter**

- 1) Biodiversity (genetics, species, ecosystems, landscape as well as culture) is the world’s heritage and, as such, it must be preserved.
- 2) Nature, in which human beings fully and totally partake, must be protected against further damage operated by the same human race who, so far, has proven itself capable of damaging, altering and destroying the environment, its resources and balance, thus impoverishing it and making of it an inhospitable place not only for human beings but also for all other living species.
- 3) The “precautionary principle” should always be adopted, taking all the necessary time and steps required to gather adequate and useful information so as to make conscious decisions.
- 4) In trying to define the concept of “natural” environment, we should include also built-up areas while assessing, at the same time, their impact on the environment; moreover, the utmost attention and care should be placed to respect and preserve the wilderness and areas not yet affected by human activity, thus acknowledging their naturalistic, ecological, representative and symbolic value.
- 5) Human wellbeing and the quality of life are priority objectives which cannot however be pursued without considering the welfare of the whole biosphere; the maximization of individual welfare cannot in fact coincide with the utmost wellbeing of both the human species and nature. Every member of the human race should behave in such a way as to minimize, directly or indirectly, and in every single act, the level of physical or mental suffering of all the beings belonging to the human species as well as to other ones; all non-environmentally-sustainable activities should be gradually abandoned; among these, war activities first and foremost.
- 6) In the relationships network connecting the various species the human concept of solidarity will have to be called for in order to overcome all limits of place, time and species. Individual as well as social models of solidarity are to be favoured, while reducing, at the same time, antagonistic relationships which seem to be prevailing nowadays.
- 7) Each single person, in order to be able to act in full awareness and sense of responsibility, must be made acquainted with how natural processes work and with their dynamics. And

since the “repression” process is an inherent part of human nature, we are convinced that historical memory, scientific research, humanistic knowledge and education are activities to be constantly developed, funded and spread.

- 8) Nature could produce balanced relationships both between same-species individuals as between different-species ones, because it contributes to a balanced development of the individual “self”. That is why the natural environment should become a kind of “training” place where you can experience all levels of human sensory, emotional as well as cognitive learning.
- 9) In order to achieve the necessary and desirable consistency between the abovementioned ethical principles and our daily actions, we will need the courage to democratically face all possible conflicts, avoiding gender, racial and all other kinds of discrimination possibly related to other individual features.