



# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

## KEY PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS



### PRINCIPLE I

**Humans depend on healthy, balanced natural systems for their well-being and long-term survival.**

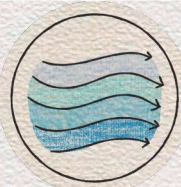
Human dependence refers to the needs of individuals, communities, societies, and civilizations; additionally, it relates to the viability and functioning of complex infrastructures that support human-social systems.



### PRINCIPLE II

**Human activities influence the functioning and health of natural systems and can be a determining factor in their continued existence.**

The complex structures, compositions, and functions of natural systems are affected by human actions. The effects can be short- or long-term and may positively or negatively influence the continuity of natural systems and the human social systems they support.



### PRINCIPLE III

**Human activities can influence the natural cycles and processes that provide the energy and matter that human social systems and natural systems depend on.**

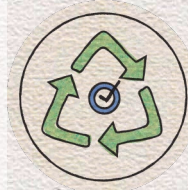
Human actions affect the movement of energy and matter between natural systems and human social systems by changing both cycles and processes through consumption and altering natural patterns of transfer and flow. The characteristics, quantities, and types of matter determine if it is beneficial, detrimental, or has no effect on humans.



### PRINCIPLE IV

**Human decision-making about natural systems is influenced by many interacting factors and considerations, including ecological, economic, and intrinsic values.**

Human decisions and actions can be based on: individual, community, and societal short- and long-term needs (e.g., food, water, shelter, health, safety); a wide variety of concerns and considerations (e.g., economic, political, and governmental functions); beliefs and points of view; and available scientific information.



### PRINCIPLE V

**Humans can identify, assess, develop solutions, communicate about, and implement and evaluate solutions designed to prevent, reduce, or mitigate the impacts of human activities on natural systems.**

Depending on the types of interactions and impacts, there are many different approaches for preventing, reducing, or mitigating impacts and restoring the healthy functioning and viability of natural systems and their ability to support human lives and social systems.