

PART II, SECTION VII

PROMOTING EDUCATION, PUBLIC AWARENESS, AND TRAINING

Introduction

Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 emphasizes the importance of building education, public awareness, and training for sustainable development. Efforts to realize these objectives in Canada are building on more than twenty years of domestic experience.

Education

Because elementary and secondary school education falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces in Canada, no national sustainability education strategy exists. Nonetheless, educators, education organizations, students, and interested groups have taken a wide variety of actions to build networks and to create and provide environmental education materials. Some of these actions are described below.

In October 1992, only four months after UNCED, the World Congress on Education and Communication on Environment and Development (ECO-ED), took place in Toronto. One of its key objectives was to increase the potential of environmental education to meet the challenge of UNCED by forming new partnerships and exchanging information and perspectives. ECO-ED brought together more than 260 key presenters and 4500 participants from eighty-four countries.

In 1992, thirteen national education associations agreed to form a Coalition of Education Leaders to promote environmental citizenship in their respective communities.

In 1993, the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) was formed to help educators from the formal and the nonformal sectors. It helps them network and better coordinate environmental education activities. EECOM also facilitates the identification and sharing of resources.

FEESA—An Environmental Education Society in Alberta has involved business, government, and environmental community groups in a consensus-based approach to education supporting sustainable development for ten years.

In Quebec, more than 200 schools have earned the status of "école verte Brundtiland" for their success in meeting certain conditions regarding environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable development.