

THE STRATEGY BEHIND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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The awareness that certain human activities, particularly those connected with energy production, have a negative feedback on natural ecosystems, has in the last decades found its way into educational systems. Like the science of ecology, so too does ecological education suffer from fragmentation and numerous and often contradictory methodologies. There is no doubt that environmental education in the developing nations of Africa and Asia does not face the same problems as that in Europe or the U.S.A., and this should be kept in mind when teaching the unitarian holism in survival. The methodology for environmental education and for environmental studies should be telenomic, establishing common standards.

Regarding education, the B.I.O. International University for the Bio-Environment (I.U.B.E.) should begin with two steps: the first and immediate one will be workshops and summer courses, bringing young people from various countries together with prominent environmentalists. Such courses will produce the immediate spread of sound concepts and philosophies to various countries, revealing unifying methods of teaching environment at various levels of education. The second step will be the organization of normal university courses with an international body of students and teachers. As we know today, the impact of humankind on the biosystem is integrative, and therefore our analytic tools must be interdisciplinary. This demands the need for team work of various professions and specialists in different fields. Such teams will provide diagnostic methodologies, able to study entire ecosystems or their components, and thus provide an Environmental Health Assessment of the study area, terrestrial or aquatic. This should include man and animals, cultivated and natural plants. Such methodology will include assessment of toxic substances, heavy metal, air photochemistry, levels of enzymology and cytochrome deviations.

The goal of the B.I.O.-I.U.B.E. should be to prepare young and able scientists to take part in such joint endeavors that at a later stage will form a mosaic map of Environmental Health Files (EHF), to be stored in Environmental Data Banks (EDB) of regional and worldwide capacity. Integrating such findings with data on the habitat, human activity and climate will, in the long-term planned system, enable predictions and scientifically serve the decision-makers. The unifying methodology will from the beginning enable inter-regional or inter-habit comparisons of collected data. The environmental analysis performed during the last four years in the Akko valley will serve as an example for each EHF.

To establish the strategy of activities for the B.I.O.-I.U.B.E., we must conceptually recognise that the future legacy of the world lies in the minds of men and its destiny in their action. Although we are of the present generation, our right is to speak out for the generation to come, for we are living alongside it. The time has come when knowledge should be a way of life, environmental awareness a way of acting, and bio-social ethics a basis for decision making. We must pave the way for this by educating the public and establishing the right type of environmentalist at this crucial time of changes.

Close cooperation of eco-researchers, eco-educationalists and environmental political bodies will firmly ensure the recognition and implementation of the facts and data collected. There is no single road in this struggle for a healthy bios, and to achieve its goals one must climb varied and difficult pathways.

Professor **Lev Fishelson's** areas of expertise include zoology, marine biology, parasitology and botany, on which he has published extensively. A recipient of many academic and professional awards, he has held academic posts in Israel and the USA and currently teaches at Tel Aviv University. A long-standing member of the International Ecological Society, the Israel Ecological and Zoological Societies, the European Union of Ichthyologists and the Japanese Ichthyology Society, Professor Fishelson is also founding member of "Life and Environment," an umbrella organisation of NGO's. He has been advisor to the Israeli government and member of the Environmental Quality Steering Committee to the Prime Minister.