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Our Environmental Update
EDITORIAL MASYESIEO NI

At this critical turning point in our country's history, there is, above all, one key quality that uplifts, protects and cushions us against the daunting adversities and challenges which assail us daily: hope - sustainable hope, heavenly twin of faith, close relative of self esteem, and all of these under-scored by human dignity, humility and a reverence for all of life. Without these, we are going nowhere that counts and we'll have nowhere to go, nowhere to be. "So how," asked a participant at a recent University of Cape Town interactive session, "do we go about finding hope when we feel so hopeless, so empty inside?" And that's when we need our Mother Earth's broad leafy shoulder to lean on and cry on. We need to "return home", "to let go" and to feel Nature's energising force heal and restore us back to balance, to calmness, to purposeful existence. Believe me, Mother Earth does just that, with magical swiftness. All we have to do is to seek her out - humbly- touch her tenderly with a sense of belongingness and leave the rest to her.

"In times of trouble, In times of despair, In times of hardship, Nature is there to heal the rent in Man's heaseit R (DerilckiMhliongey s it Criest o â\200\230the W Heartd)

Our near six year old EcolLink project has a great deal to be thankful for and especially do we feel gratitude for all your assistance - trustees, sponsors, friends, advisors. We thank you for your marvellous patience and understanding, your advice, your generosity, your inspiration. But for you, we would be nowhere. Please come and see us. There is always a place for you on the wooden bench under our welcoming Mahogany Ukuhlu tree, whose crown after these wonderful rains is like

52727 a huge crescent reaching for, the sky - or
White River 1240 3 - = -
S OTHRA perhaps, is it reaching Âf the stars?

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Ecolink's arms are spreading wide

EcoLink's influence is being felt further afield
than we ever dreamed possible.

One of our favourite resources,
"The Indispensable Honeybee",
is being used in Zambia and
East Africa and as far away
as Saudi Arabia.

The Philip Kushlick Cerebral
Palsied Primary School in Soweto
has been using our "Tree" teaching
resource for some time. It is used across the cur-
riculum for all levels of learning.

"Trees for Africa", a huge national tree-planting
project which involves the entire South African
community and is aiming to plant 5 million trees
within the next five years, is now also using Eco-
Link's "Our Tree World" series.

There are moves afoot for EcoLink, under the aus-
pices of EEASA (the Environmental Education Associ-
ation of Southern Africa), to compile a register of
facilities available for the disabled throughout
South Africa. This register has been initiated by
two disabled vyet active environmentalists: Rob
Filmer, Nature Conservationist at Blydepoort, and
Abre Steyn of the Department of Development Aid.

A quotation from the "Cries of the Heart - Poems of
Africa" anthology appeared reeEntly on the Dront
cover of the newsletter of the Ecology Centre of

Southern California Project of Educa-

A tion Communications:
i xggÃ©v "When you understand something,
2 %zi~\201 you will love it.
â\200\231 d{ & When you love something,

you walllll prekect dtsâ\200\235
Marshall Matsaoijeje

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With EcoLink's permission, the same quotation is also included in the newsletter of the Environmental Education programme for Saudi Arabia.

In 1990, EcolLink was involved with courses held by

Bilien'e (Thg English Lagguâ\200\224 s 5 age Teaching Information 2 Centre) and EEASA. We contribu-

ted to a teacher training course for 200 teachers at Kimberley; a Liberty Life conference for

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early learning, together 3w%i¬\201i¬\201=Â\$;
with Wits University; i¬\201%k;.1

and an EEASA Share-Net

conference in the Umgeni Valley. Suzie Ellis, #
our ecological _ A

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Environ-â\200\224
mental Action Foun-
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tee. More recently, in February this year, Â\$Â\$Â\$Â\$;af'
Sue Hart was invited back yet again to pre-
sent a series of "Back to Earth" lectures at
the Summer School at the University of Cape

Town, proof of the burgeoning interest in the world around us.

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We are now moving further into offering community skills training and upliftment, involving tuition in agricultural science, trench garâ\200\224dening, nutrition, recycling of litter, basic skills of management, etc. and shortly we hope to be able to offer courses in more practical skills, like carpentry, screen printing and cooking.

Gurriculum Development: Planning for Tomorrow

On 11 October 1990, EcoLink was launched as an Environmental Education Curriculum Development Centre by Professor S S Ripinga, Minister of Education and Culture of the KaNgwane Government.

In his opening address, Professor Ripinga said: "One must look at society, at the kind of Society one is trying to build. A curriculum does not develop in a vacuum; one must consider the values, the traditions, the beliefs, the whole culture, or way of life, of the society.... Curriculum development centres can take a leading role in the crucially important task of training and retraining teachers in their eV Ea S kS N involving the teachers closely in the curriculum development they are not forced to dance to a tune composed and played by people remote from their problems."

In spite of the fact that the long-awaited White Paper on Environmental Education, published by the Department of Environment Affairs, was finally adopted by Parliament in 1989, it is obvious that the implementation of such a policy will take many years, particularly in our vast and fragmented country.

The fact that the KaNgwane Government has recognised the need for teacher training programmes, and has given the EcoLink team full support in its vital development of this long term project, is very gratifying.

However, because there are no funds available from the KaNgwane Government for its implementation, we are presently seeking sponsorship for what we see as a "make

or break" phase of education. It is only by creating an awareness of the importance of the conservation of our natural resources, which are our very life line, that we can hope to achieve

the quality of life and harmony which stems from health of mind, body and spirit. If school is to be a preparation for life, then this concept must be accorded priority in the education process.

See to it that into the minds of children are put thoughts of value; for if attitudes are pure, then they

will grow up as tall as mountains.

g@.. THE GIVING TREE

EDUCATION SERVICE

Extracted from "The Giving Tree", part of the "Our
Tree World" Series, An Education for Life Programme
for Environmental Awareness

THE GIVING TREE
3D ACTIVITY GUIDE

DISCOVER & DISCUSS & DEVELOP AND DO

THE GIVING TREE poster has been designed as enrichment material for the development of practical, innovative and observational skills.

The poster can be introduced and linked with any subject you may be teaching. It contains a wealth of topics and themes and breaks down all subject barriers: the perfect teaching aid to integrate into the curriculum.

THE GIVING TREE 3D ACTIVITIES aim to improve and develop the following skills:

DOING: Designing, composing, writing, drawing,

copying, cutting out, assembling, displaying.

OBSERVING, Memory training, recording, researching,

RECALLING, gaining understanding, storing experiences,

USEROE comparing, assessing problems of the

LANGUAGE: environment.

COMMUNICATING, Expressing feelings through role-play, music,

INNOVATING: prose, movement, sharing experiences,

expressing needs, asking questions, seeking

answers, sharing and passing on findings,

planning, discussing, comparing & refer to Tree

Series | and Il for linking activities.

THE GIVING TREE programme draws our attention to the importance of trees in our lives. We walk past the same trees every day. Do we really look at them? Do we realise how much these trees provide? Then, suddenly, one day, they are no longer there! Do we notice? Do we care?

THE GIVING TREE PROGRAMME TEACHES US TO CARE! }

THE TRAINING CENTRE

The EcolLink Training Centre at Mhlalanyoni near White River is now in full use, providing an ideal venue for Curriculum Development focussed courses and workshops, for discussions, debates and demonstrations. Its bright airiness, with the purple-crested loeries and emerald spotted wood doves making their vocal contributions from the EORSENC e surrounding indigenous trees, is very conducive to the kind of environmental awareness and conscious-â\200\224ness we are trying to foster. With a /?\V recent gift of desks and chairs, wa WQ\â\200\230W\ are well and truly operational.)

Although we will still be conducting workshops in schools in outlying rural areas and community centres throughout the Eastern Transvaal

as we have done in the past, we

will be using our Training Centre more and more frequently. Students and educators agree that the benefits gained from the sort of facilities and resources we can offer "at home" outweigh the disadvantages of the extra travel involved for students.

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This year also sees the launching of "The Living Soil" series by KaNgwane Consultant/International Agronomist, Brian Anderson Beck, as an integral part of our Adult Education programme. Brian shocks us out of our complacency with some disturbing facts about our fragile Planet Earth - no soil, no plants, no life! With this series, we focus on the agricultural techniques of soil science, one way of encouraging conservation of our resources for future generations.

Another urgently needed - and constantly asked for - teaching resource, "Our Planet in Crisis", is in the capable hands of EcoLink researcher, Sally Sawyer. We need sponsorship immediately for this comprehensive, globally orientated teaching and learning aid, which explores past and present environmental hazards and perspectives of the state of our world.

SETRORE EEERSERCSES

The Senior Women's Advisory Group on Sustainable Development of the United Nations Environmental Programme has nominated Elsie Mpahlangane of our EcoLink Earth Care programme as a success story for the Global Assembly of Women and the Environment to be held in November MSCEEIANBorida, U.S.A. BRI STICE IS chosen, her U.S.A. safari is to be sponsored by the Assembly.

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Ecolink enters the Hi-Tech Age

As Ecolink grows from strength to strength, it is

evident we are fulfilling an urgent need for environmental education. But this broadening in outreach

goes hand in hand with a drastic increase in workload.

Recently, however, we were the delighted recipients of two new computers, one from the Anglo American Corporation and one from the Canadian Embassy. They will go a long way towards alleviating the workload. Every organisation and individual interested in our projects has been put onto the database. The printing and updating of relevant information, worksheets and mailing lists has been greatly simplified, not to mention the accompanying administrative duties, including the monthly budget and accounts. We will now be able to give our sponsors more detailed and accurate reports on how their money is being spent and we are also experimenting with the design and printing of graphic worksheets.

"A leaf of grass is no less than the
Journeywork of the stars.

Walt Whitman.

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Media Matters

EcoLink contributed
to SATV's Antenna
which was aired
on 0 October
I S0, Tnde
involved an
entire day's
filming at
the EcoLink
Ce Rt o RERNe
eight minute
segment. Good
MornTng*South*AFrica
are considering a
follow-up series and
a book based on the
poptifaiaiiNe bNo e R
programme which was serial-

ised in 1988.

Radio interviews concerning the environment
with David Holt-Biddle have been conducted,
as well as two series of radio interviews
about environmental issues and plans within
the EcoLink programme.

The latest newspaper article on EcoLink ap-
peared on 3 March 1991 in "The Green Decade",
a supplement to the Sunday Times. We also
contribute to such private publications as
the ELTIC Reporter.

The most recent 'Outlookâ\200\231 magazine is now in
print and is dedicated MESIEISAREOM N ORIk

| We have recently been informed that our ent-
Elessingthe #1990~91 M-Net/South African

5 Nature Foundation Environment Awards have
reached the finals and are eagerly awaiting

l the results which will be announced on 4 June.

Herbs are plants to serve and delight us, offering us an ever increasing rapport with Nature. There was a time when all plants were important to mankind; they were con-

sidered the children of Mother Earth, each marked by inity and worthy of respect. With industrialisation technology, our involvement with Nature has dimin-

ished. This change has led to a more limited con- {(\g

cept of the term "herb" and even today, herbs are considered by many people to be only a dozen or so seasoning plants.

Herbs are, indeed, useful and flavourful ingredients for any dish, as those who have sampled one of Lydia (the EcoLink housekeeper's) meals, richly aromatic with herbs freshly picked from the garden, will agree. An interest in one aspect of herbs, such as their culinary uses, will probably act as a catalyst for other related aspects, and may lead on to the study of the nutritious and health-enhancing properties of herbs, and their medicinal qualities. Others may be interested in growing herbs and, having created a herb garden, will find unexpected further pleasure in their fresh scents and their combination of beauty and usefulness. Even weeding becomes a , delight, as one brushes against a herb and releases its special fragrance.

Elsie Mpahlanyane is in charge of the upkeep of the Âf
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Herb Garden. She uses dried herbs in all her cook- 1 â\200\231

ing and nutrition demonstrations at community centres in the KaNgwane and Kanyamazane areas, part of our Earth Care programme.

WHAT IS ECOLINK?

EcoLink is a non-profit environmental education Trust with an 18A tax deduction facility for sponsors, formed in 1985 to fill the need for environmental awareness as a way of life. Its dedicated team is headed

by Dr Sue Hart, author, lecturer and environmentalist of many years' experience.

ECOLINK conducts grass-roots, urgently needed environmental enrichment and self-help development programmes, reaching educators, students and the communities of our neighbouring regions.

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bership costs and printing and mailing of "The Eco-Link" newsletter.

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