

GREEN CROSS SWEDEN AND PARTNERS

Nature Academy
Sustainable Leadership Laboratory
The Ekskäret Foundation



Introduction

Green Cross Sweden is working with six European organizations in Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Portugal, Spain and the Netherlands in the Networking of European Education Initiatives Dedicated to Global Sustainability (NEEDS) program. This transnational initiative is inspired by the Earth Charter (EC). The NEEDS program links these seven European institutions working within adult Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) with the purpose of exchanging methodologies. Green Cross Sweden has under two decades successfully utilized the Earth Charter as an inspirational learning tool for Business and Leadership circles.



Chief Oren Lyons, who has inspired Green Cross and many other networks

The Swedish NEEDS initiative is in partnership with **Nature Academy**, **Sustainable Leadership Laboratory**, and **The Ekskäret Foundation**, working with Sustainable Business Models, the Circular Economy, and Corporate Management, etc. The Earth Charter is an inspirational strategic tool and ethical guideline in helping business leaders align with Sustainable Development through a holistic perspective. Nature provides the classroom and helps leaders to connect within themselves, to reflect on ethical values and the natural environment.

Methodology

Holistic methods and techniques are used throughout this project to raise awareness and inspire value change for a sustainable future in decision making as leaders and CEOs. The learning takes place within nature or in open spaces that inspire dialogue.

Nature Academy, Sustainable Leadership Laboratory, and The Ekskäret Foundation alternative methodologies include:

Open Dialogue and Learning Circles

- Reflective discussions on the Earth Charter principles, where challenges in business and sustainable development are discussed in relation to nature.
- Using parallel scenarios, for example protection of biodiversity and corporate supply strategy.

Nature as the Classroom

- Reflective mindfulness, walks and meditation
- Inspiration from the Indigenous Peoples and their wisdom
- Nature Quests, connecting to nature
- Biomimicry, using nature's blueprint in the context of business cycles



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Aspirations of the NEEDS program

- ✓ **Respect** all life, or even the seed
- ✓ **Connect** via our senses, nature talks to you via these sense
- ✓ **Reflect** over what there is in common with the Self (deeper self), we (human partners), wider we (all life)
- ✓ **Direct** your actions to benefitting all of life and future generations

The Value of the Earth Charter

The Earth Charter is a strategic guideline with a holistic perspective that can empower decision-makers to a broader understanding of their relationship with the Earth - as the source of all life, the nature world, society, community and economy. With the many challenges of today the Earth Charter inspires solutions and a cultivation of deeper ethical values, creating a middle ground to come together. The Earth Charter is utilized as an educational tool in the NEEDS program to inspire sustainable development:

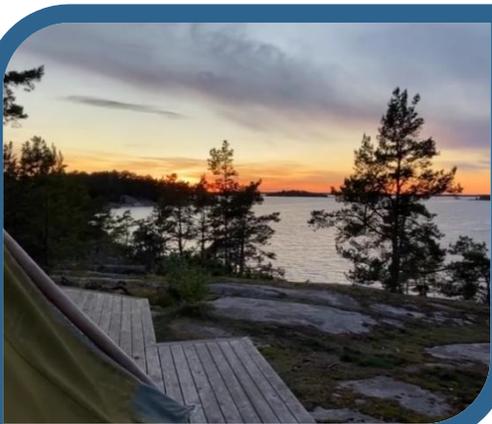
- Understanding the necessity for Change
- Awareness of humanity's relationship to the planet
- Institutional approaches with Solutions to inspire Action
- The Core Values bring all parts of society together
- Functions as a base to holistically empower other guidelines within corporations or in civil society
- Integrated perspectives motivate co-operation
- Value Change for Survival — the key to a sustainable future

Results

- ✓ Inspiring Swedish municipalities to work within principles of the Earth Charter
 - Falun, Västerås, Borlänge, Åre, Lerum, Haninge, Nacka, Örebro, and Karlshamn Municipality
- ✓ Motivating Swedish businesses to include the Earth Charter in their Articles of Association
 - Example: Ericsson, Nature Academy, Plantagon
- ✓ Incentivizing Resource Effectiveness within corporations
 - IKEA, an internal program, "People, Planet, and Profits."

The Earth Charter as a Tool to Empower the Sustainable Development Goals and Other Guidelines

The Earth Charter is a powerful means to strengthen other sustainability guidelines, such as the SDGs, with its inclusiveness and holistic perspective. The SDGs focus on specific targets, areas, and goals, instead of the bigger picture. The EC provides a timeless roadmap that is practical and can be implemented in businesses, daily



lives, households, etc. The NEEDS program combined with the Earth Charter empowers the guidelines by:

- Providing an integrative foundation to all kinds of SDGs and guidelines.
- Presenting the important relationship of diverse sectors of society.
- The EC is applicable to any groups and generations, inspiring other guidelines.
- Inspires other guidelines to highlight indigenous communities' and their knowledge.

The Earth Charter as a Tool to Inspire the Business Community Toward Sustainable Development

The Earth Charter acts as a guideline for the Business community's progress to bring forth Sustainable Development. The NEEDS program is pushing boundaries and the learning process by incentivizing Value Change. This can be seen in diverse areas:



- Inspire Businesses to **include the Earth Charter** principles in their **Articles of Association**
- Serves as a **framework** to structure **business models**
- Include **Core Values** in **assessment committees** reviewing performance
- **Corporate leaders** taking steps to inspire **sustainable change** by **resource efficiency** and **climate friendly production**
 - *Example: IKEA's project People, Planet, Profit*
- **The Circular Economy** gaining more traction, **changing company values**
- Prominence of **dialogue** between **corporate leaders** and **employees** to incorporate **Sustainable Development** in **business strategies**

Our Team



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