



## Does it matter?

### Crisis or coincidence?

Fill up the following questionnaire:

How many of the following symptoms of the global crisis are already part of your daily experience?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Abandoned farms	<input type="checkbox"/> Litter in streets	<input type="checkbox"/> Streams drying up
<input type="checkbox"/> Children dying young	<input type="checkbox"/> New sandbanks in rivers	<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic jams
<input type="checkbox"/> Heat waves	<input type="checkbox"/> Poisoned birds	<input type="checkbox"/> Tree roots exposed at the surface
<input type="checkbox"/> Dead fishes or seabirds	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduced fish catches	<input type="checkbox"/> Trees disappearing or dying
<input type="checkbox"/> Discoloured waves	<input type="checkbox"/> Runaway fires	<input type="checkbox"/> Unchecked weed growth
<input type="checkbox"/> High cost of food	<input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Widespread disease
<input type="checkbox"/> Falling water tables	<input type="checkbox"/> Scarce grazing	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of food
<input type="checkbox"/> Famine	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of safe drinking water	<input type="checkbox"/> Smaller harvests
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequent droughts	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortage of water for irrigation	<input type="checkbox"/> Smog
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequent floods	<input type="checkbox"/> Smelly rivers	<input type="checkbox"/> Soiled beaches
<input type="checkbox"/> High cost of petrol	<input type="checkbox"/> Gullies appearing on slopes	<input type="checkbox"/> Insect plagues
Try to links the symptoms you notice locally to one or more of the following global problems :		
<input type="checkbox"/> Air pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> Extinction of species	<input type="checkbox"/> Unrealistic standards of living
<input type="checkbox"/> Climatic change	<input type="checkbox"/> Deforestation	<input type="checkbox"/> Wastage
<input type="checkbox"/> Desert spreading	<input type="checkbox"/> Soil erosion	<input type="checkbox"/> Water pollution

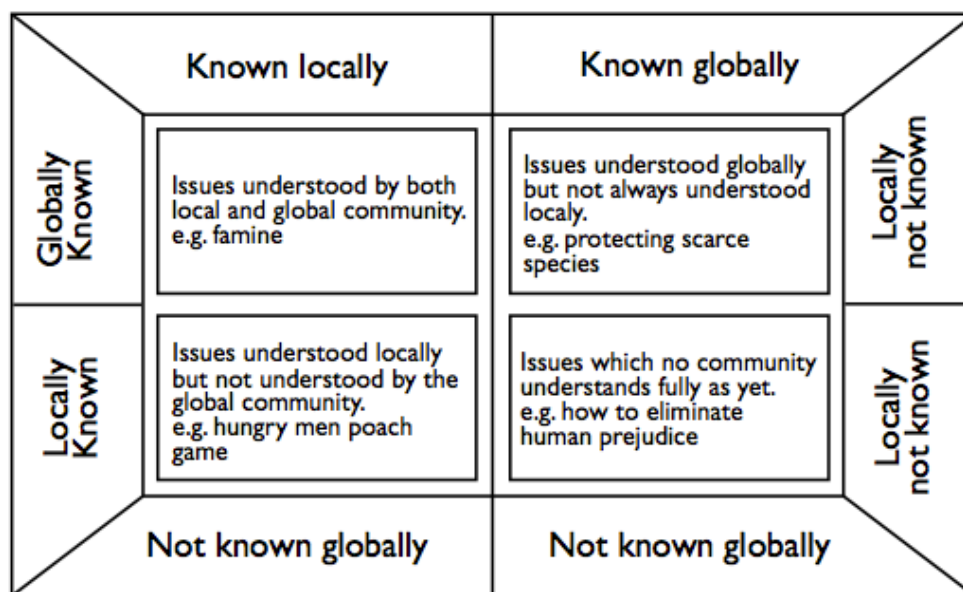
Sometimes we do not act because we do not see the danger: would you continue to camp in a forest if you knew it was on fire on the other side of the hill? Perhaps you fail to act simply because you have not yet seen the smoke.

Global problems become real only when we start to feel their impact on our own life.

Our concern is closely related to the comfort zone we live in. Someone who has enough food, shelter and water is more likely to think that next year is ample time to start changing things for the better. However, the time to act is now.

## Two sides of the same coin

Sometimes we know that we are ill, because it is obvious to us and others as well. Sometimes, it is not clear, and we need others to tell us. Sometimes it is hidden from all those involved. The same applies to the health of our planet. We tend to view problems from different perspectives, depending on our global vantage point.



The environmental window

So much depends on the comfort zone in which we live: certain basic needs must first be satisfied before wider issues become priorities. Example: African farmers seeing their crops destroyed by elephants do not understand why there is a need to protect them ; Japanese people used to eat the meat of whales do not understand why there is a need to protect them...

People concerned with satisfying their basic needs or with keeping their way of life are far more inclined to support environmental efforts that favour the survival of the human species rather than the perceived luxury of threatened animals or plants.

## Understanding that all issues are interrelated

What is less often understood is that there are not unrelated issues. Both are important and both should be addressed in the context of each community in an appropriate manner and within a proper timespan.

Of course it is unacceptable to place animal welfare above human needs, but it is irresponsible , on the other hand, to eradicate all species on the planet to make way for one species which has failed to control its number effectively.

## **A World ethic for sustainable development**

- Human beings are part of the community of life
- All human beings have the same fundamental and equal rights
- Every society is responsible for respecting and protecting the rights of others
- Every life form warrants respect independent of its worth to people
- Everyone should use resources in a sustainable manner
- The benefits and costs of the use of resources should be fairly shared by all
- The protection of human rights and those of nature is a world-wide responsibility which transcends all cultural, ideological and geographical boundaries

(Adapted from Caring for the Earth, UNEP, 1991)

Young people will readily identify with this global ethics.

It reflects their willingness to act as stewards of nature. It recognizes the necessity of using the riches of the earth in way that protect these riches, to ensure that they can continually be used by all future generations. It reflects what each community wants for itself.

Communities need the involvement of youth as never before. This implies a global involvement of young people which is able to work across the barriers that still divide so many, as well as a leadership role in caring for the global family and their world.

[Inspired by THE GLOBAL SCOUT, SCOUTING FOR NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT,  
Frank Opie, Maskey Miller Longman, 1993]