

# DEVELOPING A LOVE OF NATURE

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BECAUSE NO ONE SURVIVES ALONE



THE LAWRENCE ANTHONY EARTH ORGANIZATION

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## **1. INTRODUCTION - THE UNDERCUT TO ACHIEVE REAL CHANGE**

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The Lawrence Anthony Earth Organization (LAEO) has spent many years bringing the conservation message to all sectors of society. One of the biggest challenges that we have run into over our many years of working with people of all ages, is to develop a link between themselves and the natural world. The modern world has increasingly driven a wedge between people and nature. A fair amount of success has been achieved over the years, but we felt we could do better, and not just, by reach more people, but truly have impact on the people we reach.

This is how the seed was planted for new books for every age group. A book that did not only Create awareness but, changed the way people think, so that nature and caring for the environment, would move up the list of life's priorities. We wanted to builds character, personal integrity, and a better understanding of the importance of a balanced give and take, in every aspect of life, from one's relationship with one's parents, teachers, school and local businesses to the natural world.

It became clear that we need to undercut our messaging, we were talking to people about the environment but they were not up to the point of being interested in the environment.

At the heart of it all we found that people had a disconnect with the world, which, when restored, can change a person's whole attitude towards life. It was that disconnect that we wanted to restore, by creating understanding, love and responsibility for all of life.

THE UNDERCUT IS TO LOOK AT YOUR EXCHANGE WITH THE WORLD! BECAUSE NO ONE SURVIVES ALONE.

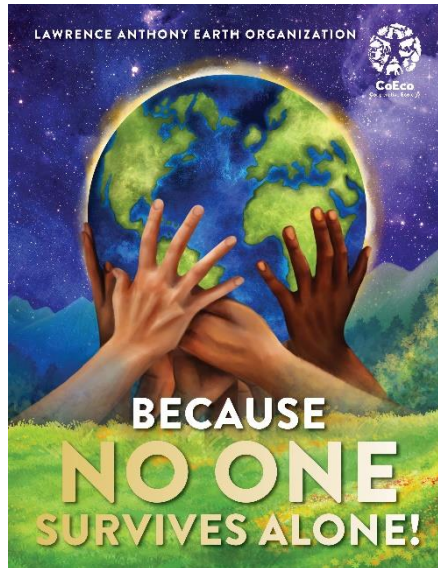
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## **2. WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT**

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After careful study of the issues, we designed a series of books for 3 age groups: 8 to 12 years old, 13 to 16 years old and adults. The book walks the person through a series of exercises, each aimed at getting them to look at the effect that they have in the world, and the potential they have to increase their own positive impact. For the young readers, there are simple but precise exercises that get students to look at the thing's family members do for each other to make their lives happier, healthier, and safer. Then they actively take steps to enhance the lives of their family members and then observe if their own life got better, in any way, as a result of doing that. The overall concept is to have them look at what others do for them and what they for other. But, this concept extends to teachers, their school, local stores, their church, a local park. All the courses have the same principles presented in an age appropriate way.

With this foundational understanding of how they can improve their own life through more constructive decision making and actions, they realize that they have a growing sphere of impact. The exercises then move them into nature and they gradually observe how the entire world operates on this principle. Through this activity, students gain a far better understanding of how the world works through balanced exchange, not entitlement, and they begin to take more actions to improve conditions around them and to safeguard and improve the natural world.



footnote<sup>1</sup>

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### 3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

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The Earth Organization works to find and implement logical solutions that work for all involved. We realized that no matter what projects we take on, if we didn't also work to raise humanity's awareness of each person's vital partnership for survival with the natural world, we, like many other groups, would be "saving the whales", and "saving the rhinos" and "saving the rainforests" ... until they're gone.

In studying these issues in some depth, we've found that the most fundamental concept that must be inspired back into society to truly reverse these decaying situations is how one's own survival is interwoven with, and interdependent upon, the health and survival of those life forms and things around oneself.

Most importantly, to live well, one must actively enhance the parts of one's own ecosystem and by so doing, one strengthens one's own potential for long-term well-being.

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### 4. EDUCATION TRACK RECORD

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- We have delivered numerous education all talks over the last 16 years, reaching hundreds of thousands of youth and adults.
- Working with local municipalities LAEO implemented recycling education in 20 South Durban schools.
- LAEO participated in the Sustainability Expo for 8 years, reaching approximately 120,000 people.

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<sup>1</sup> Cooperative Ecology – A term created by Dr. Lawrence Anthony to describe this principle: as no individual or species can survive without cooperative action with other individuals and species for their mutual benefit, the degree to which any individual or species is improving the health of the world around it, its own potential for a long and healthy life is increased.

- LAEO hosted 900 learners at the Climate Change Response Exhibition (CCR Expo COP 17) expo in Durban.
- LAEO participate in a 2-day learners experience at the botanic gardens in Pietermaritzburg annually, touring 1600 learners through various experiential environmental stands, over 4 years.
- As a member of Project Rhino, we attended and assisted on three World Youth Wildlife Summits, which hosted 160 learners from all over the world.
- LAEO took 1200 grade, 7 learners along with 60 teachers, from 20 underprivileged schools in KwaZulu Natal on a three-day environmental school camp at Nyala Pans in the Umkomaas valley. They were educated and empowered on environmental and conservation issues, as well as gaining leadership skills. The camp is a life changing for these young people, for many it instils a sense of pride, dignity and self-worth.
- We have trained a total of 125 unemployed woman and youth from the KwaXimba area in partnership with the Southern African Wildlife College. The training was both accredited and non-accredited. Courses delivered: National Certificate in Resource Guardianship, Conservation General Assistant, Nature Site Guide, Household Management, cattle farmers attended a non-accredited program on Wildlife-Cattle Interface and Disease identification and management.

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## **5. RESULTS**

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We have received rave reviews from teachers, students, and parents that the approach is unique, valuable and, once they have learned the basic principles of it, students are applying it to their lives – beginning to proactively enhance and take more responsibility for the world around them.

The goals are:

- Learners who fully understand how they fit into the natural world and the effect that their decisions have on it.
- Learners who are equipped to make decisions which have a positive impact on their family, community as well as the environment.
- An understanding of balanced exchange, “give and take”, with their family, community and the natural world.
- An understanding of key environmental principles and how they can be part of changes things for the better.

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## **6. BECOME A CORPORATE SPONSOR - PROJECT VALUE**

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- 100% black learners are empowered
- Donors get an opportunity to make grass roots changes in young lives, giving them a chance to really understand the environment, their impact and what they can do to preserve our planet.
- A great project to promote the good works of the company or donor
- Although this is a life changing experience for our youth it also means a better environment for us all.

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## 7. CONTACT DETAILS

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Our work is completely donor funded.

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*"Man's cultural and traditional links to nature that used to be passed down, generation to generation, have become lost in a sea of 'civilization', bureaucracy and technology. "*

***Lawrence Anthony***