

ECO LIFE and ACTION

VIVAT International

invites you to introduce a VIVAT spirituality of creation, provide concrete proposals for environmental conversion, and connect VIVAT members at the international level to promote the integrity of creation through awareness raising and advocacy.



**Ecological
Conversion**



**Awareness
Raising**



**Environmental
Advocacy**



Together for Life, Dignity and Human Rights

VIVAT International Contact Persons' Group 2019

The copy of this booklet and additional information are available on;
<http://vivatinternational.org/eco/>

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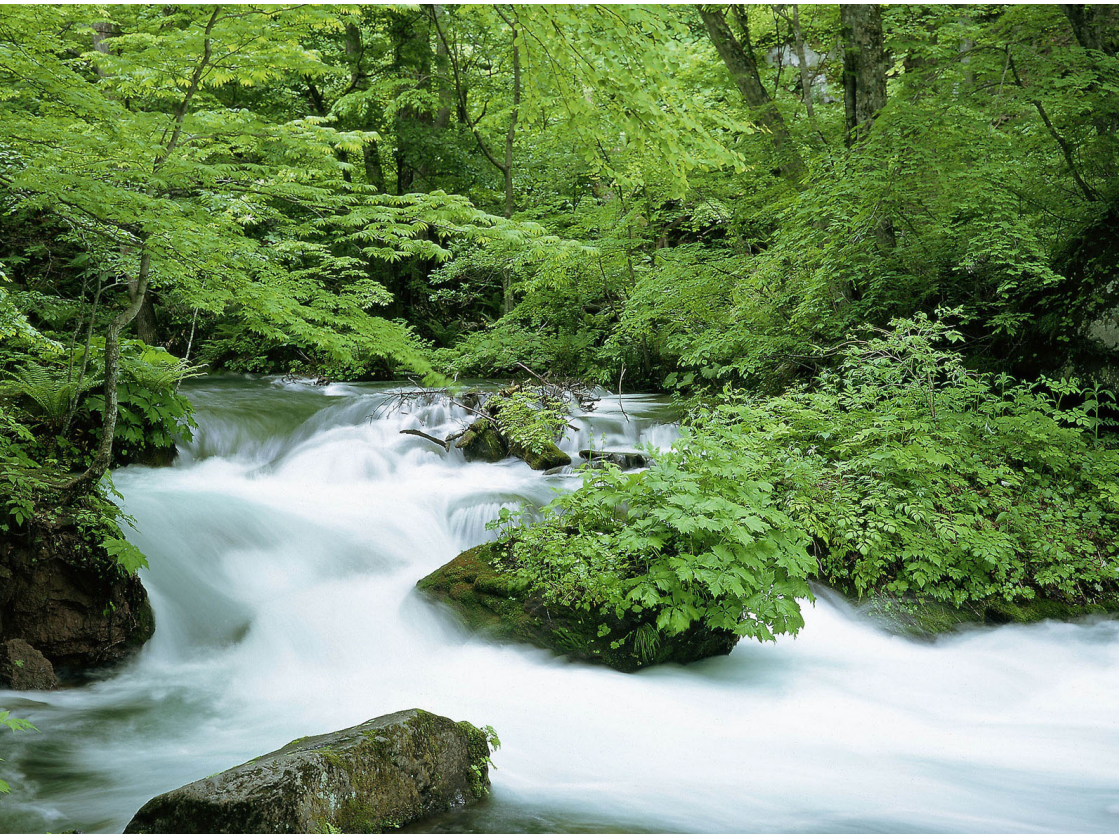
Introduction

“God saw all that he had made, and it was good.” (Gen 1: 31)

Humankind has been destroying mother earth, created by God, for centuries, and especially since the industrial revolution. It is just a moment in the long history of the earth, but it is enough time for us to wipe out many species, change the climate, and contaminate the land, water and air.

As VIVAT members, we cannot tolerate such destruction. We want to promote LIFE in harmony with mother earth.

The goal of this initiative is to introduce a VIVAT spirituality of creation, provide concrete proposals for environmental conversion, and connect VIVAT members at the international level to promote the integrity of creation through awareness raising and advocacy.



VIVAT Spirituality of the Creation

VIVAT International stands for “May all have life in its fullness and dignity”. This principle comes from our name “VIVAT”, which means “to live” or “let live” in the Latin word “VIVERE”. Even the logo of VIVAT, which is printed in the color green and contains sketches of olive leaves and three persons, tells us that VIVAT envisions the integrity of creation in collaboration with people.

One of the key concepts of *Laudato Si* is “integral ecology”. In using this term, Pope Francis reminds us that all creatures are connected. Each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another (42). He explains, “everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others” (70).

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which cover wide and diverse perspectives of human rights and the environment, are also interconnected. We cannot achieve one and leave out the other 16. The SDGs have 5 critical dimensions, namely people, prosperity, planet, partnership and peace, often called the 5 P’s. They invite us to work in partnership with others in promoting peace for all people, protecting the human dignity of all people and caring for our planet, so that all may experience prosperity.

By listening to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, we VIVAT members are more than ever urged to internalize our spirituality, “May all have life in its fullness and dignity”.



Context of Environment and Social Concerns

As missionaries working in different parts of the world we witness the acts of human beings destroying the environment, and how the impact of the destroyed environment affects poor people the most. *Laudato Si* mentions such human acts: polluting the air, water and soil; releasing greenhouse gases which cause climate change; deforestation which leads to loss of bio diversity; and destructions which are closely connected with our daily life, such as improper waste management and a throwaway culture. (Chapter 1)

Because everything is connected, we want to promote “integral ecology”. But how is it connected in the real life of people? For instance, agriculture and fisheries are highly dependent on the climate. Droughts, desertification, and change of weather patterns certainly damage agriculture. Changes in sea levels and temperature, as well as stronger storms, cause damage to fisheries and fish farming. The majority of people who work in the field of agriculture and fisheries are small-scale farmers or fishermen. A good number of them are poor, with no access to social security.



Once they are affected by such climate issues, they are forced to give up their work and easily become “migrants” to seek jobs. Often, they are from poor villages, and after those farmers and fishermen leave the village, people who work for small food processing factories lose their job. Climate change is happening and will continue, so everybody on the earth has to adapt to the change and adjust their life to the new situation. But those poor people have less information and support for adaptation.

Indeed, everything is connected. There are “climate refugees” forced to leave their home because of natural calamity or climate change. There are migrants who are forced to leave their home because of the contamination of the land and water caused by mining activities. There are migrants who are victims of land grabbing. Many of them end up as homeless or so called “illegal” in various situations. The impact of environmental degradation, such as pollution, water scarcity and over fishing could cause conflicts. “Environment issues” are one of the main root causes of so many social, cultural, economic, political problems. Why don’t we address the root causes?



Various Steps for Action

1 Reflect on our own lifestyle

We are invited to environmental conversion. Without being the witness of the richness of creation by ourselves, we cannot promote the integrity of creation.

So the first step of our action must be to review our own ecological lifestyle. Please see "VIVAT Ecological Life Style Check List" on page 8. This also includes continuous learning about environmental issues, including adaptation to climate change.

We know the reality of culture, environment, society and economy varies from place to place, so we hope you complement the actions with ideas which fit your local context.



© SSps

2 Raise awareness with mission partners

What you practice in your community should be a good model for others.

Spread the practice at churches, schools, clinics and neighbors where you work. It is also important to share your activities with VIVAT members in the different parts of the world for mutual learning.

3 Advocacy in different levels

As VIVAT members, we are invited to work on the particular goals of the SDGs. For example, under the SDG goal no. 6 “Water and sanitation for all”, target 6.3 says “improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals...” Our members encounter such cases in many different situations, including mines, mono-culture mega-farms and factories. We encourage you to take steps to advocate to protect the environment and the people. Please see “How can we work on Environmental Advocacy?” on page 9.



4 Share information

As is mentioned above, we hope to make our actions known to each other, and to use the information for advocacy. You can write a report, Facebook post, article for the provincial newsletter, video clip, etc. Please share them with your Provincial Contact Person, then s/he will send the summary report to the Congregational Contact Person.

Please include following information in your sharing.

- When, where, who did what for how much/many?
- What is the impact?
- Is it related to particular goals of SDGs?

A Prayer for Our Earth

Refrain: “May all have life in its fullness and dignity”

All-powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that
exists.

Refrain: “May all have life in its fullness and dignity”

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

Refrain: “May all have life in its fullness and dignity”

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not
prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.

Refrain: “May all have life in its fullness and dignity”

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each
thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly
united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.

Refrain: “May all have life in its fullness and dignity”

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

Refrain: “May all have life in its fullness and dignity”

Amen.

*Prayer is from *Laudito Si*, with the VIAVT refrain added.



Suggestions for VIVAT Ecological Life Style Check List

Add the points which fit to your situation!

In the House

- Do not use single-use products, especially plastic.
- For daily use of plastic bags, use biodegradable ones.
- Shut off lights, PC, TVs and appliances when not in use.
- Unplug cell phone and laptop chargers when not in use.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle for a less wasteful life style.
- Put the electricity, water, gas bills etc. on the bulletin board of your community.
- Print only when necessary. Print on both sides of the paper.
- Adjust your thermostat lower in winter, and your air conditioner higher in summer.
- Donate or recycle used clothing or appliances.
- Keep curtains closed at night to cut down on heat loss.
- Install solar panels for electricity or hot water.
- Get yourself removed from catalog and junk mailing lists.

In the Kitchen, Bathroom & Laundry

- Install a fuel-efficient stove where people use fire wood.
- Shut off the tap while brushing your teeth.
- Collect water from laundry to clean floors and flush toilet.
- Bring your water bottle, do not buy bottled water.

- Filter tap water for drinking.
- Use the microwave instead of the oven.
- Use bio-friendly soaps and cleaners.
- Wash laundry in cold water. Only run full loads.
- Keep the dryer filter clean. Hang clothes to dry if possible.

In the Yard

- Plant trees and vegetables.
- Collect rain water to use for watering the garden.
- Use compost and natural fertilizers instead of yard chemicals.

At the Store

- Do not get plastic bags. Bring your own bag.
- Purchase locally made products whenever possible.
- Buy items that are made from recycled materials.
- Buy fair trade, sustainable products.

On the Road

- Walk or ride a bike for short journeys.
- Use public transportation.
- Keep your tires properly inflated.
- Drive a high mileage or hybrid vehicle.
- Take direct flights instead of connecting flights if possible.
- When traveling, turn down your thermostat and water heater.

Social life

- Participate in elections.

This list was made in reference to "The monthly Checklist" by SMEAD.

For more information, visit: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction/>

How can we work on Environmental Advocacy?

1. Find environment related regulations

- 1.1. Identify local and national environmental regulations which allow damaging the environment.
- 1.2. Identify the regulations which protect the environment.
- 1.3. Identify if there is any regulation, law, amendment, or decree that guide procedures for sanctioning/penalizing companies or people who do not meet the environmental requirements and human rights.

2. Find international agreements your government signed

- 2.1. Check international agreements which have been added to the laws or special regulations of your country.
e.g.: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_international_environmental_agreements
- 2.2. Check if the country has signed international agreements.

3. Find bad impacts caused by companies

- 3.1. Inquire how companies are involved in environmental degradation in your area.
- 3.2. Check if a free, prior and informed consent had been made between company and community.

4. Check for environmental racism

- 4.1. Check if there is evidence of environmental racism against indigenous people and minorities.
- 4.2. Share your findings with your community and others.



5. Analyze the problem

- 5.1. Analyze the environmental problems, local development plans versus Sustainable Development Goals. Check page 11 Environment related SDGs.
- 5.2. Check the information on the environmental quality of your area published by government entities.
- 5.3. Gather research and analysis of environmental problems in your area.

6. Commit to advocacy

- 6.1. Look for previous advocacies in your area about environmental and social issues.
- 6.2. Organize fact-finding on environmental issues to give assistance and rehabilitation to the victims, to take legal actions, to monitor governments compliance with human rights treaty obligations, and to create awareness in the community.
- 6.3. Make known to the international community your concern through different means.
- 6.4. Network with organizations already fighting environmental problems in the area.

7. Be connected with VIVAT

- 7.1. Let VIVAT International know about your issues and activities. Inform VIVAT about your concern for international advocacy; write a short article for the VIVAT newsletter.



Environment related SDGs

1. No poverty

- Build the resilience of the poor and the vulnerable to reduce their exposure to natural disasters (1.5)

2. Zero hunger

- Develop agricultural practices which maintain ecosystems, strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change and disasters (2.4)
- Maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, plants, domesticated animals and related wild species (2.5)

6. Clean water and sanitation

- Improve water quality by reducing pollution of water caused by dumping, release of chemicals etc. (6.3)
- Protect water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes (6.6)
- Support the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management (6.b)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



7. Affordable and clean energy

- Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix (7.2)

11. Sustainable cities and communities

- Improve air quality and waste management (11.6)
- Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces (11.7)

12. Responsible consumption and production

- Manage the chemicals and wastes rightly to minimize their impacts on human health and environment (12.4)
- Reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse (12.5)
- Raise awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature (12.8)

13. Climate action

- Strengthen adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (13.1)
- Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning (13.2)
- Raise awareness on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning (13.3)

14. Life below water

- Prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds (14.1)

15. Life on land

- Conserve terrestrial freshwater ecosystems such as forests and mountains (15.1)
- Promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests (15.2)
- Combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil (15.3)
- Conserve the mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity (15.4)
- Reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity (15.5)

For more information, please visit: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

