

## Environmental education and the school curriculum: some reflections

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1

### Summary

The awakening of citizenship is one of the most liberating moments in the lives of children, young people, and adults. It is when the notion of rights and duties transcends mere individual interests to translate a new worldview that reflects the responsibility of each person in the construction of full, plural, and democratic collective values that ensure human welfare and respect for all forms of life in its most varied manifestations. In the search for solutions that change or subvert the current order, the theme proposes new models of more harmonious relationships with nature, new paradigms, and new ethical values with a holistic view, adopting a posture of integration and participation. A comprehensive, critical, and problematized education. To support the study, the methodology we used is supported by the concepts of Minayo (1999), when he says that when preparing a research project, the researcher will be dealing with at least three dimensions: technical, which are the scientific rules for the construction of the project; ideological, which is related to the researcher's choices, always considering the historical moment; and scientific, since it goes beyond common sense through the scientific method. We can characterize our research as exploratory and bibliographic, since we sought theoretical foundation with authors such as Brasil (2018; 2001), Epagri (2014), Figueiredo (1999), Gil (2002), Minayo (1999), among others.

**Keywords:** Environmental education. Curriculum. Nature.

### A educação ambiental e o currículo escolar: algumas reflexões

#### Resumo

O despertar da cidadania é um dos momentos mais libertadores na vida das crianças, dos jovens e dos adultos. É quando a noção de direitos e deveres transcende meros interesses individuais para traduzir uma nova visão do mundo, que reflecte a responsabilidade de cada pessoa de construir valores colectivos plenos, plurais e democráticos que garantam o bem-estar humano e o respeito por todas as formas de vida nas suas mais variadas manifestações. Na procura de



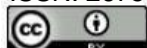
soluções que alteram ou subvertem a ordem actual, o tema propõe novos modelos de relações mais harmónicas com a natureza, novos paradigmas, e novos valores éticos com uma visão holística, adopta uma postura de integração e participação. Uma educação abrangente, crítica e resolutiva dos problemas. Para apoiar o estudo, a metodologia que utilizamos baseia-se nos conceitos de Minayo (1999), quando afirma que ao conceber um projecto de investigação, o investigador tratará pelo menos de três dimensões: técnica, que são as regras científicas de construção do projecto; ideológica, que está relacionada com as escolhas do investigador, sempre tendo em conta o momento histórico; e, científica, uma vez que ultrapassa o senso comum através do método científico. Podemos caracterizar a nossa investigação como exploratória e bibliográfica, uma vez que procuramos base teórica com autores como Brasil (2018, 2001), Epagri (2014), Figueiredo (1999), Gil (2002) e Minayo (1999), entre outros..

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Ambiental. Currículum. Natureza.

## 1 Introduction

The awakening of citizenship is one of the most liberating moments in the lives of children, young people, and adults. It is when the notion of rights and duties transcends mere individual interests to translate a new worldview that reflects the responsibility of each person in the construction of full, plural, and democratic collective values that ensure human welfare and respect for all forms of life in its most varied manifestations.

Among these collective values is the right we all have to a healthy environment and, equally, the ethical, moral, and political duty to preserve it for the present and future generations. The consolidation of this principle as an act of citizenship, an essential condition for building a sustainable society in our country, imposes an urgent and primordial task that brings information closer to the citizen, from the earliest age, encouraging him to manifest himself as a force capable of leading changes, which are urgent and necessary in the nation's development patterns. Unfortunately, the myth of the abundance and inexhaustibility of natural resources still survives among us. We must recognize that consumerism has acquired a dangerous and mistaken condition as a social value, whose dimension takes on worrying proportions in a society that has not yet learned to relate its individual or collective consumption attitudes to production, environmental degradation, and the consequent loss of people's quality of life.





The rapid changes in society and in the world today have intricate relationships with the growing scientific and technological production. These relationships - historical, political and cultural - determine the quality of life of the people and the instruments of their critical consciousness. They are part of the democratic debate for a more just world, focused on sustainable development, overcoming inequalities, dignity and solidarity.

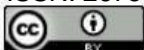
The purpose of this article is to focus on the problematization and understanding of the consequences of changes in the environment and to understand them as something produced by the human hand, in certain historical contexts, and which involve different ways of overcoming them. In this aspect, the research question arises which is: "What is the importance of environmental education for the school curriculum?". In view of this, the work brings as a general objective, to verify the importance of environmental education for the school curriculum.

As specific objectives, we tried to conceptualize and contextualize the specificities of environmental education; discuss its importance for schools as a potentiating object of change; and verify how transversality can be a tool for school education.

The solution to environmental problems has been considered increasingly urgent to ensure the future of humanity and depends on the relationship that is established between society/nature, both in the collective and in the individual dimension.

We need an education that responds more and more to the appeals of our times. Times of deep and significant changes, we truly live in a time of profound changes and transformations in all spheres, never before has human action had so many repercussions, including on the environment. With each passing day our planet suffers from our actions. The awakening of citizenship is one of the most liberating moments in the lives of children, young people, and adults. It is when the notion of rights and duties transcends mere individual interests to translate a new worldview that reflects the responsibility of each person in the construction of full, plural, and democratic collective values that ensure human welfare and respect for all forms of life in its most varied manifestations.

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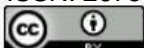
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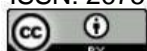
Thus, thinking about a change of mentality is too much, given the urgency of our times. The school, in turn, is the space for the construction of these changes. Therefore, this paper aims to understand and explore the relationship that environmental education can have with education in the regular curriculum of schools and how it can contribute to the emergence of a scenario of change.

## 2 Methodology

To support the study, the methodology we used is supported by the concepts of Minayo (1999), when he says that when preparing a research project, the researcher will be dealing with at least three dimensions: technical, which are the scientific rules for building the project; ideological, which is related to the researcher's choices, always taking into account the historical moment; and scientific, given that it goes beyond common sense from the scientific method.

In view of its objectives, a research can be classified, according to Gil (2002), as follows: exploratory research - aims to provide greater familiarity with the problem, in order to make it more explicit, and may involve bibliographic research, interviews with people experienced in the researched problem. It usually takes the form of bibliographic research and case study; bibliographic research - is developed based on already elaborated material, consisting mainly of books and scientific articles. It is not advisable that texts taken from the internet constitute the theoretical framework of the monographic work.

Marconi and Lakatos (2003) say that in order to do research, it is also mandatory to read what is most current on the subject, using periodical magazines, monographs and theses. The question is to know where are the articles that interest us among the tens of





thousands that are published every year. The authors also say that in this type of research we can use the available sites, as long as they are credible.

Therefore, we can characterize our research as exploratory and bibliographic, since we sought theoretical foundation with authors such as Brasil (2018; 2001), Epagri (2014), Figueiredo (1999), Gil (2002), Minayo (1999), among others.

6

### 3 Literature review

Environmental Education has emerged as a new way to understand the role of human beings in the world. Insofar as it starts from deeper reflections, Environmental Education is quite subversive. The most internationally accepted concept for environmental education is the one established by the Tbilisi Intergovernmental Conference (1977 apud Epagri, 2014, p. 9), which asserts the following condition:

Environmental education is a process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts, aiming at developing skills and changing attitudes towards the environment, to understand and appreciate the interrelationships between humans, their cultures and their biophysical environments. Environmental education is also related to practical decision-making and ethics that lead to the improvement of the quality of life.

In the search for solutions that change or subvert the current order, the theme proposes new models of more harmonious relationships with nature, new paradigms, and new ethical values with a holistic vision, adopting a posture of integration and participation. A comprehensive, critical, problematized education.

Paraphrasing Figueiredo (1999), environmental education must be recognized in all its amplitude, involving historical, anthropological, social, cultural, and of course ecological aspects, and finally, political aspects, as political decisions define the actions that affect the environment.

It is not a special kind of education, but a continuous and long learning process, a work philosophy, a state of mind in which everyone, family, school, and society must be involved.







The goal of environmental education does not conflict with the goals of the school system; on the contrary, both are directed toward the integral formation of the individual, as a citizen inserted into society and the environment. In summary, the educational process, in general, is not complete if people are aware, but are not used to externalizing their awareness.

Culture is an essential dimension of human beings, however, a deeper understanding of our condition implies the recognition that we are also part of nature. Human beings are capable of transforming the natural world, but they are still subject to its cycles: to days and nights, to life and death, for example. Culture, in short, is the way we relate to the nature around us and to our own nature..

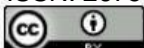
The relationships of human beings with themselves, with others and with the environment where they live, which involves all beings and natural and cultural elements, have been profoundly modified throughout the development process, especially in the last fifty years, from the modernization of agriculture, the industrialization process and the urbanization of cities. This process has disconnected people from nature, intensifying environmental problems and triggering competitive relationships between people and between people and nature (EPAGRI, 2014, p. 9).

Throughout history, humanity has profoundly altered its natural space. If in the past nature could be seen as an inexhaustible source of resources to be exploited, today we all know that indiscriminate and predatory exploitation can lead to the depletion of vital resources and that, therefore, economic development must be planned in a way that takes into account the preservation of the environment.

Therefore, we understand that the school is a place of great significance for working with environmental issues and their specificities, requiring, for this, a curriculum that brings within it something innovative and at the same time that is of great public utility..

## 4 Environmental education and the school curriculum: some reflections

If we are to conceptualize environmental education, we can say that we understand that all practices, whether school or not, come together for the construction of social values, capabilities and specific skills in individuals necessary for awareness about the





preservation of the environment and its importance to human life. This education is responsible for the construction of ideas such as sustainability, preservation, collectivity, and others that are indispensable for coexistence and survival of individuals. As explained in the national policy of environmental education.

8

Environmental education is understood as the processes through which the individual and the collectivity build social values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies aimed at the conservation of the environment, an asset of common use of the people, essential to the healthy quality of life and its sustainability (BRASIL, 2018, p. 1).

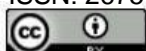
Thus, the teaching of environmental education is conceived in an interdisciplinary way and needs various knowledge, whether from the natural sciences or the human sciences, in order to achieve its goals.

Considering that the work in environmental education should be developed by a multidisciplinary team (environmental, human, and exact areas, etc.) whose members should be able and aware of environmental problems and also be convinced of the importance of the educational process as a tool and participation in environmental management, it is necessary that they go through a training process for the standardization of content and language and to know the philosophy of the work developed (BRASIL, 2001, p. 33).

Thus, the teaching of environmental education engenders great efforts, since it is necessary a set of measures in order to achieve its objectives that often in its subjective character, become fluid and little understandable in the formal education grid. But even though implicit, they are fundamental for the development of a society that is more aware of its responsibilities towards the environment.

Therefore, the following objectives become guidelines for the teaching of environmental education: Awareness, Understanding, Responsibility, Competence, Citizenship; all of these are essential for the teaching of Environmental Education.

By sensitization, we understand that it is a fundamental part, since part of the process of alerting about realities is to make individuals sensitive to the facts so that they themselves can build judgment about situations and how these structures affect them, whether directly or indirectly.







Understanding is the process of building systemic and scientific knowledge about problems and their direct relationship to human or natural action and how these influence the environment.

Responsibility is based on the principle that the individual takes responsibility either for the damage already caused or for the preventive attitude towards environmental problems, and is fundamental to changing attitudes and mentalities.

Competence is the ability to act and evaluate the practices available in the system and how their application is relevant to problem solutions.

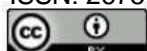
Finally, citizenship is the ability to act and interact actively in the various segments of society, aiming at the principles of ethics and using the knowledge previously acquired for a healthy living with the environment.

In view of the above, the exercise of environmental education is configured as an important instrument for changing human realities, given the transforming and liberating power that education has over human realities.

There are several changes in human realities and over time, there are many issues that end up interfering in the ways we learn and teach, each time has its own unique specificities that raise their own issues, so knowledge is something changeable, subject to the action of time and human realities, therefore, throughout humanity, issues and questions are raised from which we can not escape, nor can we exempt ourselves, since, as educators, we are responsible for the arduous task of forming people.

Thus, the importance of the school in the social and environmental education process of its students is evident. Environmentally correct behaviors should be assimilated early on by children and should be part of their daily lives when they start living in the school environment. For this, it is important to have the example of those who exert great influence on them: their teachers (NARCIZO, 2009, p.35).

The real meaning of education for the formation of the human being is often discussed, and it is essential and fundamental that the educational processes build values and meanings, which are often indispensable for life in society.





The knowledge built within the walls of the classroom has dimensions that go beyond the classroom, so it is hoped that the education offered to our students can reflect in a true and concrete way on the way they live in society and relate to the world.

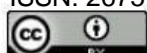
Environmental Education should be worked in school not because it is a requirement of the Ministry of Education, but because we believe it is the only way to learn and teach that we, human beings, are not the only inhabitants of this planet, that we do not have the right to destroy it, because just as we inherited the earth from our parents, we should leave it to our children (NARCIZO, 2009, p. 28).

In this context, we open space here for discussion that revolves around environmental education and its implications in the lives of our students, are our schools ready to offer knowledge and build values capable of changing mindsets and realities? In other words, the ways in which our students relate to the world, and when we refer to the world, we want to broaden our view that this world is no longer people, life in society, or citizen awareness.

Therefore, one must be sure that local actions can lead to global results, besides gaining more supporters by example. Because of our culture, many see the concern for the environment as a secondary issue, unimportant, something of those who have nothing to do, as they used to say in the past when referring to environmentalists (NARCIZO, 2009, p. 42).

Nowadays, there is a constant call for environmental issues and their importance for human life on earth. The proof of this is how nature itself has given back to human abuse, whether in the climate that is becoming more different every day or in the quality of life of human beings that is becoming more complicated; every day we are victims of questions about what direction human life will take and how to stop this series of changes, since many of them cannot be reversed.

Today, in the face of serious climate disasters, such as hurricanes and storms that are becoming stronger and more frequent, and of an increasingly unstable climate, with less defined seasons, the world seems to wake up and realize that there is no more time to lose. Nature can no longer bear so many aggressions (NARCIZO, 2009, p. 21).





But the question is: are our schools ready for this challenge? Are our teachers able to use pedagogical tools capable of fostering change? There are many questions to be answered so that we can reach a common denominator on the difficulties of working on environmental education in harmony with the existing curriculum..

It is common to see teachers who talk about the problem of wasting water in science classes and exhibit totally opposite behaviors when they leave the classroom, wasting water still at school and even at home, with taps and hoses that remain open while the water runs down the street, when washing their cars or the front of their houses (NARCIZO, 2009, p. 32).

We are sure that we educate for life and if it is for life that we prepare our students, we have to stop and reflect on what has been done so that these students are ready to deal with these issues and their implications in their lives, either individually or collectively in society.

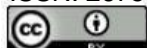
Narcizo (2009, p. 24) points out that "It is important that children learn that responsibility belongs to everyone, that the actions of each one reflect on the future of all humanity. This is important even to reduce the feeling of helplessness that sometimes affects people.

Therefore, we cannot ignore the relevance of issues such as environmental education and how to include it in the curriculum, as something fundamental to the experience of our students and our practice as builders of values and knowledge..

## **5 The importance of environmental education for schools as a potentiating object of important changes**

In view of the above, we know that school, in turn, ends up being a place for the construction of values and not only of curricular knowledge. School is the time to build and socialize experiences that will last for the individual's entire life, even more so nowadays, when we have a more plural vision of school as a space for multisciplinary experiences.

Therefore, it is in this space where the teacher must be a facilitator of significant knowledge to the lives of his students, it is necessary to learn for life and for this knowledge





to have a liberating and modifying force for realities. It is the role and duty of the school and of all those who are part of its body to make these manifestations of life possible, whether they are scientific and plural family members from the most diverse realities.

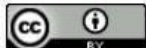
Therefore, the educator's role becomes more arduous with each passing day, since he or she has to contemplate the most diverse dimensions of life, in the context of a plural and transforming school, where the call for an environmental education that forms people aware of their responsibility to preserve or even guarantee the future of the planet for the next generations is inserted.

It is clear how great this challenge is for several reasons that we can list here, but one of them, perhaps the most difficult to overcome is our culture, aspects closely linked to mentalities, has in turn a greater interference in the change of attitude of our students or even teachers, in short, the whole community.

We cannot perceive and understand environmental education as something merely secondary, but as an emergency proper to the context of the present time, and for this reason it must be debated, discussed, and taught to everyone so that we can, little by little, foster a more conscious and active world society in the defense and preservation of the environment. Thus, environmental education escapes the curricular dimension or the legal requirement of schools to gain a scope of larger dimensions.

And despite the many difficulties, it is the school that is the space and instrument for changing mentalities; when one day we have a serious concern with the formation of people who are environmentally aware of their duties and responsibilities, we will be taking the right steps towards building a future.

This culture must be changed at school, through Environmental Education, showing children and young people that conserving the environment is not a luxury, but an urgent need if we want to continue to live on this planet. In order to try to make environmental issues a constant presence in classrooms, Environmental Education was inserted in the school curriculum, as a cross-cutting theme (NARCIZO, 2009, p. 36).





Thus, the exercise of transversality is something important and salutary for the construction of more effective and concrete pedagogical practices in the formation of an environmental conscience. This is such a relevant theme that we will discuss it and its uses.

## 6 Transversality as a tool for teaching environmental education at school

13

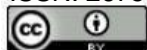
In what concerns the discussion raised so far, we cannot fail to address pedagogical aspects as important in teaching practices as the transversality between contents and knowledge taught by the teacher in the classroom. In this way, the Ministry of Education offers subsidies so that this dialog between the knowledge can be established and the spheres discussed in the classroom can be expanded.

The demands of our times make it necessary for educational processes to be more global, broad and open to absorb in the curricula issues such as the environment. This modern appeal serves to re-signify the knowledge, considering that what is learned in the classroom makes sense in everyday life, since much of the knowledge produced is not incorporated by the students, thus becoming something null and void, and at the same time does not fulfill its formative role.

And today, the globalized and plural context in which we are inserted makes appeals that, in turn, are very particular to our needs. One of them is to preserve and learn to live in a sustainable way with the existing natural resources, and this call is becoming closer every day to the education we offer, since we are responsible for the formation of people, so the construction of an environmental awareness has been increasingly demanded of the education offered to our students..

It is in this context that Environmental Education emerges in the face of the global and local panorama, from a differentiated appropriation of knowledge in which the subject is conceived as a part that is part of an extremely complex whole, thus taking into consideration not only the sum of the parts resulting in the whole, but the whole complex system that surrounds it, and the interrelationship of its multiple factors (ARAÚJO, 2009 p. 45).

This, in turn, is a great challenge, since the construction of the school curriculum today is still too fragmented and content-based, which is a reflection of the evaluation





mechanisms used to assess the students' knowledge or even of the context in which the subjects and their functions in the formation of the students' basic aptitudes for life were consolidated..

Breaking with the fragmented educational ideology means being able to meet the needs of students, facing a new world reality, contemplating not only content aspects, but cognitive, social, historical, economic, biological, affective, etc. aspects.).

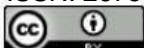
14

The paradigm of the student as a mere receiver of knowledge, even if many educational theorists consider it something already outdated by time, is still something too pertinent to conventional education, something that is ingrained in the teaching processes by countless factors, historical, social and cultural. This scenario, in turn, only makes it more difficult to build an education that is increasingly plural, and that can cover the appeals of our present time, which is configured as something essential today, again falling into the old and already known speech that schools must train their students for life.

Although we are the fruit of a banking education that persists until today, imposing a passive attitude on students, both in terms of the didactic and pedagogical methods adopted, and the physical configuration of the spaces and learning conditions, in the current context, there are needs and competencies that depend on the understanding of processes and the development of languages, which are the responsibility of the subjects that, in turn, should be treated as dynamic fields of knowledge and interests, and not as lists of official knowledge (ARAÚJO, 2009, p. 17).

But one of the questions that motivate this discussion is: How can environmental education find its place in the curriculum in the face of the overvaluation of content? One of the paths that are offered to break this situation is the exercise of transversality, the effort to establish dialogue between the disciplines and their spheres of action. Well, moreover, to establish a reliable relation between what is learned in the classroom and what is lived outside it. This is not possible when a fragmented vision of teaching does not privilege this situation.

The fragmentary, simplifying and reductionist view of reality limits the possibility of a comprehensive education, capable of perceiving in social relations, causes and effects that destroy and actions that can rebuild or minimize the impacts caused by







the development of society in its accelerated movement of urbanization and industrialization (ARAÚJO 2009, p. 35).

The exercise of transversality is not only the effort to work school content in parallel or complementary to the systematized knowledge offered in the curriculum, the formal knowledge that, in turn, is intended to learn about reality; more than that, transversality proposes to evoke issues relevant to the life of individuals and include them in discussions and teaching practices.

Thus, the National Curricular Parameters (PCN) recommend that the transversal themes can establish concrete and valid meaning to the knowledge already existing in the curriculum, which makes teaching a real transforming object of realities.

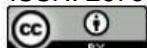
## 7 Environmental education and science teaching

It is all too common for science teaching to be related to the practice of environmental education. It is very common that in schools these associations are frequently and constantly used, which is valid for the construction of values and environmental awareness, which can be a great opening to consolidate new paths for an education capable of leveraging values and mentalities whose interest in preservation and sustainability are the north for a better life and future on the planet.

Science Teaching, associated with Environmental Education, presents a way to generate reflection around the problems that currently afflict humanity and the environment in which students live, allowing an opening for meaningful learning, thus having great educational functionality between scientific knowledge and the common for the deconstruction and social construction of students, making possible the exercise of citizenship, so primed and aimed by current education (ARAÚJO, 2009, p. 41).

Thus, it is common that science teachers have the responsibility to create a dialogue between the normal curriculum and the needs to form environmentally conscious citizens, since the content of science classes often offers better connections and openings to explore and problematize environmental issues.

Teaching must be focused on reality and on the demands not only of the market, of the economic sector, but also permeate, above all, everything that the human





being needs, because he is not only physiological, but also social-cognitive-emotional-historical, and this is not simple and involves areas of several orders (ARAÚJO, 2009, p. 44).

It is often in science classes that we have the opportunity to study the climate and other aspects of the environment. And why not, during these same classes, ask questions about the changes the environment is going through?

16

Thus, the teaching of science, little by little, asks for a more critical character in which the student's thinking is elevated to perceive and question his or her own reality, to be aware of how it is and, more than that, to imbibe the desire to change and transform these adverse conditions.

The big issue is that much is known about the needs, but little is seen of concrete action for change on these issues. It is necessary, however, to start breaking old paradigms that have been dragging along the history of teaching and education so that, in fact, we can take solid steps towards change.

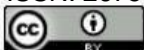
Another point to emphasize in this new teaching perspective is the necessary training of science teachers in a transversal thinking, where the National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs) highlight that the transversal perspective points to a transformation of the pedagogical practice, because it breaks with the confinement of the performance of teachers to pedagogically formalized activities and expands the responsibility with the students' training (ARAÚJO, 2009, p. 40).

Perhaps one of the biggest impediments we find today in the classroom to better explore environmental issues is the lack of minimum conditions for the exercise of teaching with quality, we realize that the conditions of teachers every day become more precarious and this influences significantly on the quality of their practice.

We could list a number of these factors that range from intrinsic issues such as lack of motivation or even of another personal nature, to extrinsic issues such as the lack of conditions or support for the development of better teaching policies.

These teaching policies are increasingly demanded by our society, which longs for significant changes in the degradation scenario that is being established around the planet.

The exercise of transversality is the duty of all members of the school community and of all those who make up the mystical body of education and of that which we have





established as the center of knowledge: the school. It should be the duty of all teachers, each one within his or her respective area or making use of interdisciplinarity to be an agent of change formation.

Breaking with the fragmented educational ideology means being able to meet the needs of students, facing a new world reality, contemplating not only content aspects, but cognitive, social, historical, economic, biological, affective, etc. aspects, starting with a new conception of the student, who ceases to be a mere receiver to be an active subject in his learning and of the teacher who goes from being a transmitter to a knowledge mediator (ARAÚJO, 2009, p. 47).

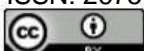
So, we see that teaching focused on environmental education is increasingly configured as a challenge of great proportions for all those involved, whether teachers, coordinators and all others who make up the school community, parents, students and others. Thus, the need arises to program more public policies that enable the success of this arduous journey to build environmental awareness in our students.

## 8 Final considerations

Most of the inhabitants of large urban areas, especially in poor countries, believe that the problem of environmental pollution is the fault of industry or the government, which does not impose - or does not effectively enforce - rules and regulations, such as industrial filters and sewage treatment, to decrease the pollution of the environment in which one lives.

It is interesting to note that ecological awareness tends to manifest itself in a collective way, supporting demands and actions proposed by others. Most people support, for example, the reduction of emission of pollutant gases into the atmosphere. However, individual action that contributes to the reduction of pollution levels and waste is not considered or if practiced eventually.

The problems of the big cities are not restricted to the environmental area. There are others of socio-economic origin that affect modern metropolises, even in rich countries, such as violence, problems like traffic. It is clear that in poor countries these problems are more serious, because social inequalities are more blatant and investments in





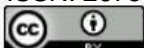
infrastructure services are lower. The degradation of urban spaces, pollution, poverty, unemployment, and precarious transportation are problems that worsen with urban development and exponentially in large cities.

Technological progress allows man to dare to intervene in nature in proportions that are disturbing, to say the least. In the face of this overwhelming intervention, numerous questions are raised. One of the most frightening is the one that puts into question the responsibility and autonomy of governments who - basing their speeches on possible short or medium-term benefits and invoking progress, economic development and the welfare of their subjects - may cause decisive changes in the environment, causing effects that are impossible to pinpoint and that go beyond the territorial limits where they exercise their political power..

Environmental education comes in the sense of reworking this perception of the world that has justified a collective act of disengagement with the other living beings that inhabit this planet. Recovering the unity that exists in the whole universe and that has been lost means regaining cooperation, solidarity, and peace. Acting to recover this unity requires the awareness that it begins inside each individual, and then expands to others and to nature. In this way, environmental education plays an important role in sensitizing people individually and collectively to build new relationships that allow the recovery and preservation of natural assets, strengthening cultural ties, providing opportunities for solidary and cooperative coexistence (EPAGRI, 2014, p. 10).

The environmental issue is a call for a new attitude towards consumption, the awareness that we need to get involved personally and in collective movements of transformation in society. In this sense, knowledge is fundamental for a critical reading of reality and for seeking concrete ways to act on environmental problems, thus avoiding decisions made in the heat of the discussion.

We know that access to information, participation, and debate enable our joint search for alternative ways of life, in which caring for the environment also means respecting, loving, and revering life. However, without the personal and solidary commitment to the sustainability of life on the planet, in our daily lives, we will have to repeat the phrase "the more things change, the more they stay the same or get worse.





Environmental education must enable the full exercise of citizenship, starting with the formation of a comprehensive conceptual, technical, and cultural base that is able to overcome the obstacles to the sustainable use of the environment. The right to information and access to technologies capable of making sustainable development feasible are thus one of the pillars of this process of forming a new consciousness on a planetary level, without losing sight of the local, regional, and national perspectives.

The revitalization and improvement of the environment and of everyone's quality of life requires the inclusion with social and environmental justice of all living beings on the planet, without distinction of any. We must become aware that the world we are part of must be preserved not only in the present, but also for future generations, thus aiming at an integration between the environment and the human race.

Dreams today have been exchanged due to the capitalist relationships that permeate today's society. What matters is the exacerbated profit for companies, to the detriment of the human beings who occupy a place in society and in the environment.

Today, with the survival of a single economic system - capitalism - the world has been forced to follow this model, setting aside the desires and dreams of a more fraternal and solidary society, and only going on to exercise an unrestrained quest for profit, even if this means destroying the environment.

The only two true facts in the lives of rulers, businessmen, workers, rich, poor, men, women, young and old, are that we are all born on one day and will die on another. What happens in between those two dates depends on your way of life.

After this research, we can conclude that environmental education is a modern challenge of modern education that aims to add new values and that aims to build new mentalities about the preservation of the environment.

But we also understand that it is here, even with its limitations and difficulties, that great steps towards the formation of a new citizen of the world have been built, and that it cannot be denied that in face of this whole scenario, even if limited, we are taking steps towards a better future in which there are still natural resources for those who will come tomorrow.





Perhaps, with the increasing appeal that spreads everywhere and that we see on TV and in other media, little by little it will sensitize even more the larger managers and that they can think of alternatives to finance or support the greater appreciation of this model of education, an education that enables concrete change in people's lives that can be plural and only add more and more ways of thinking and perceiving knowledge.

Although it is necessary to implement a more active educational policy to bring about change or that the government itself, in its various spheres, develops actions with more impact on the realities of schools and, above all, makes available material, financial, and human resources so that these actions can have a greater dimension and reach in people's lives.

We don't want to despise the normal curriculum, but we have to understand that changing the way the curriculum is presented can and is a path to change, that a more transversal or even more flexible curriculum to add this knowledge is, in fact, the path to change how we perceive and understand environmental education today.

In the community, it would be necessary for another generating force to move beyond the school, which could be an association or others that could join forces from the efforts already undertaken in the school and that, in fact, could mobilize the community in a more direct and dynamic way.

This discussion does not end here, since this research only shows a sample of a much broader reality, but we hope that this work can be a starting point for countless other discussions in order to build an education more focused on values of environmental preservation.

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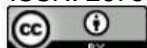
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22

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