

PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLEGES OF THE LA SALLE INSTITUTE

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INTRODUCTION

The present model of development does not provide solutions for the big problems of the world from which they have been derived; the interests that are being defended from it, which often confuse for “what and whom” we are developing, have disconnected the human being from the natural environment, converting themselves into a source of conflicts against justice and peace in the world. For example: the struggle for resources- the Amazon/water - climatic change-emigration- governments which are not democratic in the domain of resources- Congo/Coltán-illnesses caused by contamination , poverty, etc.

These problems, based on a globalized imbalance of development, lead to the urgent need to make society know and be aware of the necessity for re-orientating the individual and collective forms of life through environmental education. Therefore, today, the concept of environmental education is not just related to the natural environment but rather must take into account factors related to industrialization and socio-cultural aspects.

This focus situates environmental education within the optic of sustainable development, which has been dealt with in diverse summit conferences, talks, congresses, forums etc. on development and the environment. In all of these it has been pointed out that there is a need to incorporate environmental education, both at the individual level and at the social and institutional collective level, in order to promote a change of model to one of more balanced development which can satisfy the needs of the present generation without depleting the capacity for satisfying the needs of future generations.

OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the research is centred on **knowing, analysing and orientating environmental education in the La Salle Institute**. To achieve this, it has been broken up into the following specific objectives:

- To find out which projects, programs and transversal actions are being out in the educational centres of the Lasallian Family in order to fortify the concepts of environmental education.
- To analyse the level of participation of families, organizations and companies in the projects. Programs and environment activities in the Lasallian education centres.

- To observe how environment values are introduced in the Lasallian Education Mission.
- To analyse who environment policies are developed by the manager of the education centre.
- To know the efforts of the education centres to reduce their environmental impact and thus promote knowledge of environment sciences and green values.
- To know and observe the participation of the education centre in the social demand against the environmental consequences in society.
- To analyse what evangelizing perspectives are contemplated by environmental education.
- To know and observe how environmental education is developing within the Christian cult.
- To know and observe the participation and communication in environmental education between the centres of the District.
- To establish a strategy, starting out from the perception of the centres, in the road towards environmental education in the La Salle Institute.

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METHODOLOGY

This research is framed within the formal education limits, from the first grade up to the school leaving certificate and in the international, continental and local geographical context of the La Salle educational Institute.

At international level the research is centred on the La Salle Institute in the world; and in order to analyse environmental education within the Lasallian educational urgency, we carried out a methodology based on bibliography search, analysis of the contents of documents and critical evaluation of the present situation. The starting out basis for the research was the International Assembly 'Associated for the Lasallian Mission' which took place in Rome in 2006.

Moreover, research at local level is based on an empirical and contextualized methodology, with a quantitative character and exploratory results with explanations of the present situation. For this purpose a questionnaire has been designed with 46 questions (both open and with suggested answers and scope for evaluation) in which the sections of the questionnaire have been established according to the influence of La Salle Institute on formal education: plan/education mission, the environment of the college and their social demands. Likewise, this questionnaire has been included in a web page to ensure better distribution and completion by the education centres.

This questionnaire has been applied in the La Salle colleges situated in the District of Valencia-Palma (in the Comunidad Valenciana, Balearic Islands and the Province of Teruel) and in the District of Peru (which covers the geographical area of the Republic of Peru). In the research, the sample and the population (covered) coincide over a total of 26 education centres. Also it must be emphasized that the analysis of the results of the questionnaire maintained as its subject of comparison the geographical- political limit in Spain and, in Latin America, the differentiation between private colleges and national colleges (education centres situated in impoverished zones).

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Environment education has advanced from a position merely united to knowledge of natural sciences to establishing itself within the ethic of human development.

At present there is a need to introduce this focus into education for the economic and social processes of sustainable development, since our present model of development does not solve the great social problems such as poverty, inequality, injustice, wars, etc.

There is a need to introduce strategies of Environment Education into the field of social networks. This was explained in “The Decade of the United Nations of Education for Sustainable Development”(2005-2014); the 5th World Congress of Environment Education in Canada (2009) and at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development held in Germany(2009). 125

After the international research, the La Salle Institute, as a social network, can imagine a boost of Environment Education, because:

- it has nearly one million pupils and more than 70,000 educators.
- maintains multiple infrastructures of formal education in more than 80 countries.
- develops an awareness and sensitivity towards educational and pedagogical emergencies in social and egalitarian values.
- consists of a solid institutional organization (education network, District and Region among others).
- can rely on great support from associations of parents and past-pupils.

Doubtless, in this international plan it can be observed that the environmental aspect is not established across the whole Institute. This means that Environment Education is at the mercy of its actors in the different fields.

After the local/district research with the questionnaire it emerged in the interpretation of the results that:

- the perception of environment education is very different from one center to another although the majority of colleges mention that when they introduce environment education, they carry it from the charism of the Institute.
- the environmental vision and activities of the Peruvian private colleges are like those of the Spanish colleges, in which what stands out is the need to educate in a world which is more just and without tension over the exploitation of resources. In the same way they also value the implanting of clean technology and systems of environment management in the centres.
- environment vision of the national colleges (situated in poor areas) sees environment education as an economic opportunity and this means that their environment activities are more creative.
- the colleges with better environment technology are those situated in the Balearic Islands. This is due to their geographic situation which makes them more self-sufficient in obtaining and getting access to these resources.
- the colleges which have a greater involvement of families and organizations (companies, entities) in the environment programs and activities are the Peruvian centres, since their legislation establishes in a very clear and concise manner the social responsibility in attention to the training/learning needs of students.
- •There is limited participation between the education centres in working on environment education, due to the lack of environment “connection” and because of the different focuses which they have with regard to environment education. The only Lasallian link in the environment participation of the colleges, is provided by the NGOs of the Institute.
- In activities connected with worship, generally, the environmental value is introduced by the morning reflection although there are also efforts made through talks and debates which take place in faith groups, pastoral activities and social volunteering, the school schedule etc.
- The majority of the education centres claim that they have little environment influence on society.

- 85% and 100% of the colleges of the District of Valencia-Palma and the District of Peru respectively, establish the necessity for introducing some common lines of action for developing
- Environment education in the Lasallian education context.

PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION

After seeing the perception of the La Salle education centres through the questionnaire, in which the need was shown to establish some common lines which would promote Environment Education for Sustainable Development in the La Salle education Institute, a Plan for Environment Education for the La Salle Institute was designed, as a response to the educational aims projected by such international organizations as the UN-UNESCO, the Commission for Justice, Peace and the Integration of Creation, etc.

The focus of the Plan for this education institute:

- Environment education should be considered as an educational emergency, necessary for peace and justice in the world.
- To situate itself within the vision of environment education according to UNESCO and therefore, at the service of human environment education which is socially sustainable.
- Environment education will have to be introduced through eco-spirituality, since the Institute will be the mediator of curricular interests.
- Likewise, with environment education, the Institute will take the opportunity to empower intercultural and multi-religious education in the its centres.

Prior to designing the Plan for Environment Education, a study was carried out in the thesis on the application of plans for environment education in other Catholic Institutes. It is certain that we did not find plans for environment education on an international basis in the education networks of other Catholic organizations, although we have discovered three environment plans centred on the apostolate of the Sisters of Saint Marta of Antigonish (Canada), the Society of Jesus of the Province of Oregon (US) and in the churches of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

This means that the Plan for Environmental Education for La Salle turns into a reference point for the other Religious congregations, since we have not found semi-centralized international plans in other congregations. This Plan for Environmental Education relies on:

a. Diagnostics and Prognosis

b. 4 Specific areas:

- *Internal organization and financing.* Establishing the organization structure so that this plan reaches all the levels of Lasallian coordination as well as obtaining financial resources.
- *Formation.* Promoting the interiorizing of environmental problems and ethics among all actors of the education Institute, with the aim of having their decisions and attitudes affect the education of the students.
- *Transparency and good practice.* Introducing in the colleges actions and projects involving environment education, with the aim of having the habits of the colleges as a social model for sustainable development.
- *Internal and external participation.* To be a multiplying effect for environment education, combining responsible collaboration with the social demand of the Lasallian centres in response to the environment problems which hinder justice and peace among peoples.

- c. 19 strategic aims
- d. 45 concrete actions
- e. Criteria for evaluation.

Introducing this Plan for Environment Education within the framework of formal education in the La Salle Institute and reaching the criteria of the proposed evaluations, could give rise to continuing this thesis with future research.

Besides, this Plan for Environment Education will provide support for those education centres which have difficulties in consolidating “other pedagogies” for Sustainable Development (pedagogy of health, of values, intercultural pedagogy, pedagogy for peace, etc.) and also will help to continue the work of UNESCO beyond the Decade of the United Nations for Education for Sustainable Development.