

## ISSUES IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

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### Environmental Education.

Serious preoccupation with environmental problems is a relatively recent phenomenon in contemporary society. While there have always been certain expressions of concern for issues relating to environment, only in the last few decades, as a result of extraordinary rapid scientific progress, as well as technological and social changes, have new problems emerged and others, which existed before, taken on entirely new dimensions.

The role of education in the face of environmental problems and opportunities is therefore a crucial one. Environmental education should be integrated into the whole system of formal education at all levels to provide the necessary knowledge, understanding, values and skills needed by the general public and many occupational groups, for their participation in devising solutions to environmental questions. Non-formal education also has an extremely important role to play. The full utilization of mass media for truly educational purposes would also help create wide-spread awareness and understanding.

The ultimate aim of environmental education is to enable people to understand the complexities of the environment and the need for nations to adapt their activities and pursue their development in ways which are harmonious with the environment. Environmental education must also help create an awareness of the economic, political and ecological interdependence of the modern world so as to enhance a spirit of responsibility and solidarity among nations.

This means that environmental education involves learning from the environment as well as about the environment.

### Strategies for the Development of Environmental Education.

- 1) Environmental education is an integral part of the education process. It should be centered on practical problems and be of an interdisciplinary character.
- 2) Environmental education is a lifelong process and should not remain confined within the formal system. The integration of environmental education with other forms of education, in particular with education concerning the working environment, for the pupil at the school,

the worker in the factory or in the fields, and for the consumer in his surroundings, and with education related to economic development, represents an urgent need.

- 3) In formal education, at all levels, account should be taken of all the ingredients of the education process (programmes and curricula, books and textbooks, teaching aids and resources, methods, etc.) and interdisciplinary gradually achieved.
- 4) Environmental education should not be just one more subject to add to existing programmes but should be incorporated into programmes intended for all learners, whatever their age. Environmental education should serve as a catalyst or common denominator in the renewal of contemporary education. Clear and functional relations must be established and maintained between needs, goals, objectives, the curriculum proper and evaluation methods.
- 5) The determination of bases for a strategy, at all educational and governmental levels, constitutes the first stage needed for the introduction of environmental education into education in general.
- 6) It may be considered that the success of environmental education will not lie merely in bringing about a number of changes in the system and methods of education. To this end, legislative measures may be taken providing the State with a legal framework in which to draw up an environmental education system for the entire community.
- 7) Special priority should be given to the various most disadvantaged social groups such as, in many nations, the illiterate, who are nevertheless producers. Educational resources should therefore be mobilized for them in the form of functional literacy teaching incorporating an environmental dimension.
- 8) Environmental education should not give rise to “Competition” with the various subjects at present on the curriculum; it should represent a means of introducing a certain unity into the education process in the minds of pupils and enable them to manage the environment in which they live through the judicious use of resources.
- 9) The basic training of all environmental specialists will need to include study of the principles of environmental education, sociology and ecology which are necessary to enable the learners to foresee the consequences of their environmental work and not simply make do with temporary expedients.
- 10) Although environmental education should constitute one single organic and continuous process, each stage of this process has its own particular educative value.
- 11) In primary school, for instance, a few useful directions for the promotion of environmental

education would be: programmes of visits, the use of free time for activities in close contact with the environment.

- 12) Secondary schooling should take the pupil on to a more ecologically, socially, politically and economically based application of ideas about the environment. University-level education should see the introduction, as a basis for all specialized courses (for Engineers, architects, planners, economists, etc.), of thorough knowledge of the functioning of ecosystems and an insight into the socio-economic factors governing the relations between people and the environment, together with knowledge of the characteristics, limits and possibilities of the scientific and technical revolution.
- 13) In non-formal, out-of-school education, strategies for the introduction, promotion and development of environmental education depend on particular situations. They should be based on channels of social communication, on the mass media and on the various movements or associations.
- 14) In the field of adult education, the mass media play an important role in the promotion of environmental education: press, radio, films and television. Which constitute ideal media for reaching the widest possible audience and thus stimulate their environmental awareness.
- 15) All these educational activities call for research on the use of methods of instruction that will facilitate the learning, teaching and assessment of environmental education.

#### References:

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