

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE FORMATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS CITIZENS

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RESUMO

Introduction: Environmental problems cause great damage to nature and are due to the inadequate action of man, which has contributed to the degradation of the environment. Environmental education is a participatory and continuous process of society, fundamental for critical awareness about existing environmental problems. The concern with the environment reveals that we are living in a moment of imbalance, caused by society itself. Thus, it is necessary that there is a search to achieve a balance between the relationship between man and nature, aiming to seek sustainable alternatives and change behavior in the face of this problem. From this, Environmental Education has a tool for behavior change, aiming to achieve sustainable development through actions and changes in habit, aiming at a more harmonious relationship with the planet. **Objectives:** This work aims to analyze the importance of environmental education in the school environment and show how it can be a tool for environmental awareness and mitigation of man-made damage by analyzing a random group of people. **Methods:** A questionnaire with 40 questions was applied to a population of 123 people, with different age groups, education and sex, living in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. Results: There was a good level of interest from respondents in environmental causes, where 93.2% classified themselves as very interested or interested in the topic. Regarding individual actions 81.6% say they save water and light, however only 70.9% separate the garbage for selective collection, 2.9% do not know what selective collection is, but 94.2% say they would separate the garbage of their homes to recycle in their municipality. However, 72.8% are unaware of the destination of waste in their municipality. Of these people, 37.9% believe that the solution to environmental problems depends on governments and large companies, and 59.2% believe that they depend on everyone's small actions in their daily lives, and 97.1% consider it important or very important. teaching environmental education in schools is important, so that students know how to contribute to sustainability. **Conclusion:** Environmental Education proves to be a permanent and modifying instrument, aiming to improve the relationship between man and nature, promoting reflections on environmental problems and showing that the quality of life and future generations depend on sustainable development. Therefore, the school space becomes an appropriate place for learning and disseminating knowledge about the environment, forming people who are critical and aware of the various environmental problems, capable of cooperating with environmental preservation. It can be said that awareness does not necessarily trigger changes, but self-responsibility in the face of environmental issues, which favor actions. It is important to implement actions that aim to incorporate environmental education as a cultural value to disseminate sustainable concepts, demonstrate the influence of each person in the environment in which they live and consolidate the need for preventive actions, aiming at the formation of an

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active environmental awareness.

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