

Delfinariul Constanța – educația de mediu și ariile protejate

Constanța Dolphinarium – Environmental Education
and Protected Areas

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Abstract

In current conditions, the environmental issues are undeniable reality, environmental education is essential in approaching and resolving them. Is the mean by which can be developed skills and abilities for understanding, approach, dealing and taking decisions needed to act responsibly to environmental issues raised. Environmental education involves the provision of reliable information, well documented, by all citizens, regardless of social status. Constanța Dolphinarium, part of the Natural Science Museum Complex Constanța (CMSN) is a focal point on the Romanian Coast for education and dissemination of conservation and environmental protection and in particular for the dolphins fund in national marine waters.

To achieve this goal our institution specialists, in collaboration with NGO "Mare Nostrum" and experts from INCDM "Grigore Antipa" Constanța, carry on activities as:

- *Lectures supported by complex staff or guests from other institutions approaching current environmental issues (exp. waste management, coastal erosion, water pollution, climate change, introduction of exotic species control in local ecosystems, etc.);*
- *Informing and public education on protected areas and their management;*
- *Promote education and dissemination to the public to participate in the conservation and protection of natural resources within the protected areas.*
- *Participate in pilot projects – for example achievement of educational paths both within the dendrological park and zoo-park of the institution as well as within protected areas.*

Dissemination of the results of these activities shall be carried out both directly, by presenting them to the public who participates in each demonstration, as well as in the training campaigns carried out in local fishery communities, lectures at the complex conference room or in schools from the county, by distribution of leaflets, flyers, etc.

The aim:

- *Raise the awareness of nature and increasing responsibility for issues concerning protected areas by informing the public;*
- *Thorough knowledge of key issues related to the status of protected areas and the impact of various human activities on them;*
- *Training of skills and abilities of observation, experimentation and research;*
- *To form an environmental ethic (attitudes, principles, beliefs).*

Target groups:

- *Secondary and high school students from Constanța and Tulcea counties;*
- *Universities students from Constanța, but also from Arad, Galați, Timișoara, Bucharest, Iași, Chișinău/ Moldova, Naples/ Italy;*
- *The visiting public during the summer season.*

Keywords: environmental education, protected areas, Constanta Dolphinarium

Introduction

Environmental protection, global problem of humanity is today a prerequisite in the development of modern society, mandatory in the development of future.

One of the fundamental aspects of environmental education is interdisciplinary generated by the environment. For us is a complex structure that intertwines both natural and social elements with an important role in people's lives.

There have been given many definitions for the environmental education. Among these are:

- "a learning process that increases people's understanding and awareness of the environment and associated trade, develop the necessary skills that challenge, encourage these attitudes, motivations, involvement to make informed decisions and to act responsibly" – National Council for Environmental Education Congress report (1996);

- "...the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness among man, his culture and his biophysical surroundings. EE also entails practice in decision-making and self-formulation of a code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality. International Union for the Conservation of Nature" (IUCN, 1971).

Environmental education involves providing relevant and well documented information by all citizens, regardless of social status. Most researchers agree that environmental education is not separate discipline.

Results and Discussion

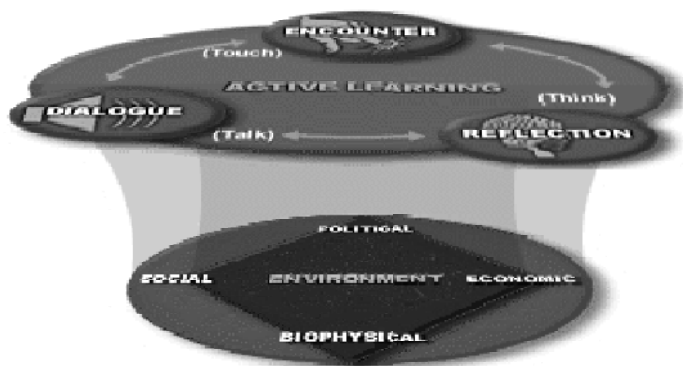
If we compare the goals of environmental education throughout the world we find that they are similar: to maintain and improve the environment, to prevent environmental problems in the future, to create a value system that incorporates the human component in exploring environmental issues and finding solutions.

These goals can be achieved if:

- Through our activities we help people to be aware of environmental issues and changes that occur with them, meaning **TO UNDERSTAND**;
- We create the possibility that individuals or groups to be actively involved in exercising their skills at various levels in environmental issues, meaning **TO BE INVOLVED**;
- We help in acquiring skills and abilities to be able to identify and even anticipate the environmental issues, work in teams to solve them and if possible to prevent them, meaning **SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**;

- Development of attitudes necessary for understanding the impact and effects of behaviour or lifestyle, both locally and globally, short term and long term, the assessment of the interrelationships between people, their culture and the environment, meaning the formation of an ENVIRONMENTALIST ETHIC.

R. O'Donoghue (1995) named this "Active learning within a systems thinking approach".



Active learning within a system thinking approach (O'DONOGHUE, 1995)

As a direct consequence consist the responsibility of natural sciences museums, through the specifics of their work, in assuming the responsibility in the importance of educational mission of public awareness.

Through the activities performed in the museum, it proves to be a dynamic institution, modern, one of the most important links in the chain of institutions that are in charge of environmental education and the environment.

In order to sustain a permanent, systematic and effective environmental education and nature protection specialists from Museums of Natural Sciences have the task to organize the activity studies and systematic research in the areas concerned so that such may come to meet public needs, ensuring the necessary database information, guidance and last, but not least, a field event.

One of the objectives of environmental education in the CMSN Constanța is to explain the need to protect nature in general and biodiversity in particular, and the best examples are protected areas. According CNPPA President, IUCN Adrian Phillips "*World of the protected areas is the most important legacy we can leave to the future generations to ensure and continued access to nature and spiritual values that it has (...). A world without protected areas, deprived of natural wildlife sites, would become an extremely poor environment*". The protected area is a term used for what the public generally know as the nature reserve, national park, Natural Park, biosphere reserve etc.

To achieve the above mentioned goals, the specialists of our institution started from traditional educational activities:

Essays submitted by students:

- in the classroom



Photo 1, by A. Curlișcă

- at the headquarters of our institution (Photo 2)



Photo 2, by A. Curlișcă

- lectures sustained by the complex staff and guests from other institutions, approaching issues related to the protected areas (Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Vama Veche - 2 Mai Marine Reserve etc.) (Photo 3);



Photo 3, by A. Curlișcă

- Information and public education on the protected areas and their management at round tables conducted during various environmental events (Water Day, World Environment Day etc.) (Photo 4);



Photo 4, by A. Curlișcă



Photo 5, by A. Curlișcă



Photo 6, by A. Curlișcă

Recently the specialists from our institution attended together with Mare Nostrum NGO to the project "Nature means everything" in the social responsibility program "Heineken for Communities" to achieve an interpretive trail in the arboretum and zoo park institution (Photo 6).

This trail provides visitors, using the interpretation method, a new vision on biodiversity. Also with Mare Nostrum NGO the institution specialists were part of the first work teams who participated in the launch of interpretative trails made in Canaraua Fetii nature reserve and Cheile Dobrogei (Photo 7).

In order to meet the objectives mentioned above, we benefited from assistance of the teaching staff from collaborating schools for which we organized a special course.



Photo 7, by A. Curlișcă

Conclusions

After having performed these activities we have found a growing interest among students about participation in activities that approach the subject of the protected areas, whether they were carried out in the classroom or in the field. Activities and projects submitted to your attention, point out that the current museum is a dynamic institution, a living organism that can perform a set of scientific, cultural

and educational functions with a complex nature, thus representing an important link in the social, education and science with an important role in permanent public education, regardless of age and social class. It is a systematic process in which learners are empowered to critique environment issues, through direct experience and the communication of information. They are also encouraged to involve in practical activities that ultimately benefit the biophysical environment.

References

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Image source: O'DONOGHUE, R. AND JANSE VAN RENSBURG, U. eds., 1995- 'Environments and Methods'. Howick: Share-Net.

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