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Ecological Education as an Antidote to Degraded Nature

Introduction – environmental education in selected teaching models

When preparing for professional work, educators are aware that the key aspect of education is to match appropriate teaching methods to achieve teaching effects. Ecological education is a special issue because one should become aware of the concept of education and compare it with the need to protect the environment due to the degradation of nature. Therefore, later in the article, teaching models are presented with a reference to environmental education.

Jerome Bruner pointed out that education is a “complex process of matching culture to the needs of its members and its members and types for the needs of culture” (Bruner, 2010: 69).

Therefore, it is worth paying attention to the need to protect the environment, which would be included in the culture of Polish society as an antidote to degraded nature.

In order for knowledge to consolidate, it is worth taking advantage of previous educational experience. E. Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, E. Zielińska (2005) pointed to the scripting of knowledge within the context of the environment. You can somehow implement these insights into issues related to environmental protection. The collected experiments, i.e. educational situations, constitute a script containing primary knowledge, which in turn may allow the implementation of changes in the way natural resources are managed. Teachers or other educator-animators, parents in home-schooling can enrich the experience of foster children, as part of individual experiences or on the basis of practical acquisition of knowledge by other peers. Situational contexts, props that will allow to understand social events – expectations can be repeated (Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, Zielińska, 2005: 72–73).

Thus, children looking at the surrounding reality (during trips, information about the polluted ecosystem), can better understand the need to protect the environment. Through experiments, learners can cope better in the new situation. In turn, being in a natural setting and being aware of practical forms of improving living conditions for plant and animal organisms (included in biodiversity), over time they may be able to take corrective and preventive measures. Adapting to the new situation, i.e. they will be able to understand and quickly recognize what activities can cause further

environmental degradation. Thus, the script can be a mental scheme that will be repeatable, and based on the personal constructions necessary to define reality, the right response will be possible to achieve the goal (Gruszczyk-Kolczyńska, Zielińska, 2005: 75).

With the help of some kind of a plan, it is possible to refer to the way of education about environmental protection, using the experience of other entities and possibly correct the script of other education and self-education. By the same little effort, it is possible to improve the current way of functioning in a world in which ecological education has so far been a theoretical lesson that has not been implemented in the practical dimension of everyday life among global society.

Therefore, eco-development, i.e. an ecological lifestyle, consisting in the protection of environmental resources (water, air, soil, other species), should be a routine activity that will be inscribed in the subconscious of every human being. Adapting to the new situation requires dosing information to consolidate knowledge and for recipients of education to be able to know and apply it accurately in their activities.

Fun can be a great way to bring new issues related to environmental protection. Perhaps physical activities, talks, and stories about nature protection will illustrate the need for equal involvement of each person, regardless of record age, as in the case of caring for a sick person.

Thanks to such metaphorical education, there is a chance that pupils will be able to understand the value of rebuilding nature so that all organisms can continually function. It will consist in stopping the extermination, i.e. better coping with important life situations related to environmental degradation.

According to Richard Louv (2014), “nature deficit syndrome” is a consequence, that people bear because they are separated from nature. This is manifested by a decrease in the frequency of using the senses, focusing attention on the environment, which in turn promotes the occurrence of physical and mental diseases.

The degradation of nature, and thus the occurring environmental crisis is noticeable in every living space. You can see, among others: desertification of soils, limited mineral resources, the state of famine caused by global warming and reduction of animal and plant species (biodiversity), as well as due to civilization diseases. All this is a reflection of the low level of environmental culture represented by the inhabitants of individual countries and the entire globe (Cichy, 2016).

There are several strands of ecological education. The conservative trend concerns the teaching of the Earth, i.e. the main theme is nature without extending knowledge to social and economic aspects. In turn, the radical current is an aspect of direct human contact with nature (so-called deep ecology) without popularizing knowledge about the environment. That is why moderate nature education is most often used, that is, including specialists in the field of environmental protection and educators, because knowledge is combined with education in accordance with the philosophy of eco-development.

This it is possible permanent learning about the environment while awakening sensitivity to beauty, the richness of nature, and environmental protection (Kiełczewski, 1999: 146).

There are several teaching models. Each of them reflects the most important values that are common in a given community. The subject of this article is motivating to reflect on the legitimacy of existing forms of ecological education in the face of increasing degradation of nature. Perhaps we should look at the characteristics of individual educational models and draw in some aspect inspiration to modify Polish ecological education. Below are selected models that could be used by educators tailored to the educational stages.

According to W. Lenart (2005) in the Swedish model environmental education should be the canon of everyday activities in every home, and the school only extends its scope. Participants very often, as part of educational programs developed by local educators, go on trips to understand the practical dimension of the laws governing and occurring in nature. It is a constant cooperation between pupils and teachers who, as part of voting, choose the thematic area they want to expand and also cooperate to reduce the waste of environmental resources. It is important to teach children and adolescents how to anticipate and see the changes that arise as a result of human activities. All activities are planned to develop respect for nature. In turn, in the Danish model, society generally accepts the principles of using the environment, therefore, residents control their attitudes to maintain a healthy lifestyle, reduce waste, and even make a renaissance, that is, return to traditional ways of farming.

Considering these two models, one could think about important elements of education, which consist in conversation, cooperation between pupils, teachers, their parents to develop long-term responsibility, and not only during one-off pro-ecological actions organized in educational institutions. Teaching aids can support, and above all, motivating recipients by educators to expand contact with nature, not only on holiday trips. Permanent discussion about the environment and the legitimacy of its protection would help unite the entire community in halting the degradation of nature. Maybe to unite children and their parents it is worth proposing taking pictures of nature, it will allow to strengthen family ties and to discover the beauty and richness of biodiversity hidden in nature, which passed without reflection. In addition, families can go on forest wandering and checking the directions of the world on GPS, find among the elements of animate and inanimate nature clues characteristic of the north and south (moss lichen on tree trunks, shape of crowns of trees lit or lacking light, and also pointing to the shape of the anthill's cone)¹. In addition, you can check the shape of the leaf and find the characteristics of trees in parks using mobile applications ("Czyj to liść" application can be used).²

Additional support can be websites with educational videos targeted at adults, as well as children and young people, which are available on the websites of the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, State Forests and the initiators of the campaign: Air without garbage, which show the legitimacy of conducting experiments among students and teachers to better understand the scale of environmental problems that surround us. In addition, you can use information

¹ www.geocaching.com [accesses: 25.10.2017]

² <https://www.lasy.gov.pl/pl/informacje/aplikacje-mobilne/czyj-to-lisc> (accesses: 04.05.2020)

campaigns dedicated to each age group to better understand the need for ecological education, prepared by: Polish Waters³, WWF⁴.

You can also prepare a coupon booklet with students that will cover outdoor activities. You can use the draw to choose the directions of class trips, because a fishing trip or a day trip ending with star observation will be an interesting alternative to modern IT technologies that do not allow showing the practical skills of a young scout or nature explorer (Louv, 2016: 29).

The initiator of educational initiatives may be an educational leader who would give a direction indicator for the education of children, adolescents and adults, so that the effectiveness of ecology is structured, and not just incidental.

The next part of the article will present the silhouette of an educational leader whose task at present should be showing direction towards eco-development, i.e. such development that will ensure the possibility of social, economic, economic and ecological development of the present and future generation (Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997 Art. 5, Art. 74).

Educational leader as a guide in the reconstruction of degraded nature – conceptual framework

Leadership development is possible when social life exists. Under the concept of social constructivism, man is seen as the creator of the world, so he shapes the meaning and significance of the environment in which we live, thanks to his own interpretation. Therefore, thanks to critical analysis and reflection, the world of values, structures and behavior patterns is crystallized. That is why a leader is defined separately by each local community that adheres to certain rules of life.

The educational leader should work together to ensure social change, i.e. focus on groups rather than individuals. First of all, it is a community learning that is emotionally supported and experienced (Mazurkiewicz, 2011).

Therefore, in present times which require ecological education, society should be included in the teaching process, so that not only the teacher occupies the main roles in the teaching process, but all members have equal positions, to educate responsible citizens and to counteract the environmental crisis (Mazurkiewicz, 2015: 21).

The implementation of the “civic education” principles will serve this purpose, which according to W. Okon, is a subject that provides knowledge about society, derived from scientific sources and everyday experience, and also integrates content from other subjects, such as history, geography, language and literature. Methodological values of civic education are associated with cognitive and educational values” (Wereszczyńska, 2010: 232).

The school plays a significant role in the educational process. As an internal organization, it has mutual relations between teachers, students and educational goals, the curriculum and the technology used. The proper functioning of the school

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D5f12dfbZQ&feature=share> (accesses: 06.09.2019)

⁴ Ekopatrioci <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K50G9fleuW4> (accesses: 06.05.2019)

is ensured by the transfer of modern culture resources on a mass scale (Perkowska-Klejman, 2016).

These above words are an introduction to getting to know the profile of the leader of ecological education, which should be appointed in each school in order to develop an appropriate model of education, tailored to the problems of civilization occurring in the 21st century.

Socio-cultural animation provides participants with a transformation of their interpersonal relationships and individual attitudes. It is worth emphasizing that animation is a form of education in action, so it is worth implementing the practice of organizing fun or free time for ecological education. In addition, animation enables the unification of the local community, because thanks to actions taken they can change the reality that surrounds them (Cyboran, 2012: 297, 299).

Local community can be organized thanks to community organizing, as part of social planning, i.e. planning the local community to educate the society through local government and other agencies. Community education provides stimulation of civic activity to achieve overall development. Each person submits his reflective actions. It is necessary to understand the relationship with the environment, to be able to demonstrate an intellectual attitude towards social morality and sensitivity on social problems (Gumuła, 2004: 23–24).

Referring to the above information, it is important to raise the level of ecological education not only at school, but also among adults. Educational leadership is an organizational culture that organizes relationships according to the needs and values of community members. Thanks to this, it is possible to strengthen social participation, servitude and competence, which are manifested in the empathic understanding of people's needs and doing good to others. Thus, it is also a form of orienting a person living in a specific environment, while affecting the general good (Mazurkiewicz, 2015: 29–30).

In view of the problems of nature degradation and current actions aimed at social change, the theory of transactional leadership should be considered, i.e. one that uses interpersonal skills to ensure that all its members identify with the principles of ecological lifestyle as part of transactions and achieving goals undertaken in organizations (Shields, 2009: 53–66).

In the school context, these should be activities that will allow teachers and the school community to develop an innovative education system to minimize existing inequalities in relationships and that everyone be open to the needs of all organisms, not only human but also other belonging to living nature. Thus, each member should be activated, i.e. take actions that will help them to change their degraded world into a better model of ecological management of the environment. This is called distribution leadership (Dorczak, 2015: 40–41).

However, the most suitable type of educational leadership that falls under the issue of environmental education in the face of current pedagogical challenges and inclusion leadership is facing environmental disasters due to the fact that different groups can participate in the educational process to achieve specific goals. In addition, this type of educational leadership is focused on improving curricula to improve its effectiveness. It is important to recognize the educational needs of all

teaching recipients to strengthen the need for the self-education process (Evans, 2009: 45–64). Therefore, educational leadership can act as a guide in actions taken to rebuild degraded nature. The most important is that society, regardless of record age, is ready to learn and improve, to limit the occurrence of ecological disasters, such as drought, floods, which are a consequence of the ecological education deficit. It is somehow aware of the need to change the mind structure so that social processes are open to the needs of animate and inanimate nature (De Corte, 2014: 7–8).

Several people can play the role of the leader of ecological education, but according to Alma Harris there are several reasons that prevent cooperation. This is, among others, the risk of a sense of threat to people sitting in managerial positions (directors), due to creative activities undertaken by lower-level employees, i.e. informal leaders. In addition, the organizational structure of the school limits the role of teachers so as not to fall within each other's competences. That is why it should support members of the school community and the local community, so as not to hamper, but inspire and motivate to increase the effectiveness of ecological education (Harris, 2004: 11–24).

Referring to the above features of an educational leader, the next part of the article should present the actions taken, on the initiative of top representatives who promoted ecological education. Selected documents were analyzed so that the reader could learn about and identify the differences or similarities of the policy makers of the Capital City of Warsaw.

Practical methods of ecological education – results of qualitative research

Solution-focused education is an approach initiated by Swedish teachers Kerstin Måhlberg and Maud Sjöblom, the author of the Lip-Focus program. This education model is about working with learning without being overly focused on the problem but on a positive change, in addition, the child's resources are strengthened its possibilities to achieve results in the future, apart from its deficits, because the child is an expert in his life (Berg, Shilts, 2004).

John Dewey, in turn, drew attention to the concept of “work school” as a promotion of “learning by doing”. It is important to conduct education in such a way which will enable the release of impulse for grassroots as well as top-down initiatives (Manz, Sims, 2001: 127–136).

As part of the author's own research, the author of this article conducted qualitative research, involving the analysis of documents – strategies for supporting government entities for educational institutions, residents of the capital city Warsaw, whose goal should be to deepen knowledge about nature protection.

Joining the program offered by City Hall representatives was voluntary. Representatives of the city financed materials dedicated to all educational institutions: kindergartens, primary schools, culture centers and housing clubs. The leading topics were: air protection, before the slogan, water protection with an emphasis on rational water management, soil protection along with transformation of the area around the educational establishment for education purposes and rest, protection and shaping of greenery, healthy lifestyle. The undertaking consisted in providing

information materials to the facilities, holding patronage at events and providing the local community with information on the progress of program implementation, e.g. in local media or district committee meetings. After notification teachers received topics from the district program coordinator and examples of ideas to implement the proposed scenarios. Materials with factual information and work cards for students were great convenience so that they would not have problems with consolidating knowledge (Warsaw City Hall, Environmental Protection Office, 2002: 2–4).

The need to conduct ecological education not only at school, but also for adults, has been specified in line with the principles of sustainable development in the City Strategy, which is to be implemented by 2030. Values such as strengthening bonds have been taken into account for strategic purposes and care for each other to jointly decide on the capital's management strategy.

By the same participation, residents could submit initiatives so that the quality of life could be increased in accordance with local needs in the district or neighborhood. Another goal was to enable active leisure time close to home while learning recreation or sport. Among the operational objectives was the point about living in a clean natural environment, i.e. the need to promote renewable energy sources and energy-efficient solutions that protect soil, air and water resources (Warsaw City Hall, 2018).

The need for universal education, including adults, and implementation of the principles of sustainable development, resulted from the fact that individual owners of single-family houses emit a very large amount of toxic substances into the air, that have a negative impact on the life, health and development of all residents.

Legal regulation regarding the type of acceptable fuel and boiler for heating, is specified in the amended Environmental Protection Law of September 10, 2010. Thanks to this provision, local governments decide how they fight for clean air. An additional source of the right to limit the size of the smog problem in Poland is the Anti-smog Resolution, introduced for the first city of the country – Krakow. The content of the resolution clearly states that it is strictly forbidden to burn solid fuels, further restrictions are dated September 1, 2019, and they apply to the elimination of coal and wood burning. Since July 2017, transitional provisions have been introduced to exclude the worst quality fuels. Each voivodeship in its territorial unit may, at a different date, undertake or have undertaken work on draft ratification of resolutions. In October 2017, a ban on burning the worst quality fuels was also introduced in Warsaw (Kropidłowska, 2017).

Educational leadership will be effective if education leaders ensure democratic standards of learning and teaching, and members work together in harmony with specific roles, with their competences. The European Council in 2013 drew attention to the need to improve the work of educational leaders as new career paths, as a dimension of social responsibility for the state of the environment.

Pro-environmental attitudes can be developed regardless of age: children, youth and adults, but it is necessary to provide recipients with: knowledge, skills, motivation and emotions for education to bring results (Kowalski, 2016). That is why it is necessary to appoint a leader of ecological education who will sort out any inaccuracies in the law on environmental protection, in the existing forms and methodology, as well as introduce into the canon principles favorable for ecology.

A synthetic summary of the qualitative research carried out is an invitation directed to educators to look for legal regulations, resolutions in force at the place of employment that allow obtaining additional educational materials in the field of environmental protection. In addition, practical examples of communing with nature among pupils and their families can be an antidote to the degradation of nature.

Practical advice – how to look for pro-health solutions and keep the environment clean?

There are several educational platforms to learn about the health effects of air pollution. Depending on the educational level of the recipients, it is possible to adjust the educational content as part of formal, informal and non-formal education.

For the youngest children, there are videos showing hydration experiments that show that smog is not fiction. An example can be videos on YouTube.⁵

Thanks to songs with rhyming content, it is possible to better remember information on how to protect the air and your health. One example is the Small Orchestra of Our Days – Smog (Stop the nightmare in time).⁶

For older children and young adults, it is possible to use infographics that illustrate the cause and effect sequence of the polluted environment. Making young people aware of the need to protect nature will allow future generations to stay healthy.⁷

In order to understand this information in practice, it is worth showing children and young people modern technologies in teaching – quizzes, thanks to which in the future they will be able to predict the consequences of irrational use of the environment.⁸

As part of the general social form of increasing one's knowledge on environmental education and the impact of the environment on health, there can be experiments dedicated to each age group to understand the negative effects of burning toxic substances in stoves in single-family houses. Organization "Air without garbage" is a YouTube channel created to show the scale of threats.⁹

Another great solution that facilitates joint intergenerational education is watching videos that show the impact of modern technologies on health – asthma, allergy and many other diseases. Here is an example of the basic information contained in the video: *Air pollution. Our air is polluted by cutting down trees, burning wood, burning fossil fuels, smoke from factories and industries, and smoke from vehicles. Due to air pollution, people suffer from a range of diseases such as asthma, bronchitis, and cancer. Air pollution also affects plant growth. Air pollution causes damage to our beautiful monuments. To reduce pollution, we should take some preventive measures:*

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baJQkO9G6uk> (accesses: 02.11.2020); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpmacdrzR0> (accesses: 02.11.2020)

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7w80AlDv70> (accesses: 02.11.2020)

⁷ <https://tuptuptup.org.pl/smog-vs-czysta-energia-rozmawiac-dzieckiem-o-ekologii/> (accesses: 31.10.2020)

⁸ <https://tuptuptup.org.pl/maly-quiz-o-smogu/> (accesses: 14.10.2020)

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhxtIiyW0Ms&t=234s> (accesses: 20.09.2019)

*Plant more trees. Avoid the exploding firecrackers. Use public transport more. Regularly service your vehicles. To reduce air pollution, establish factories and power plants away from residential areas.*¹⁰

Additional support in education and health protection is raising the level of awareness of the problem and the scale of polluted air. For this purpose, mobile applications can be used, which illustrate the state of polluted air in a given city, street with a recommendation, whether the air has sufficient parameters to maintain safety for children, the elderly or those suffering from upper respiratory tract diseases. The following applications are an example: Smok smog, Kanarek.¹¹

Using websites that publish the latest reports prepared by the World Health Organization allows you to systematize your knowledge and understand the need to take corrective actions towards the environment to maintain health in the future.¹²

Contemporary activities of education leaders

Nowadays, an education leader should be an important person in the modern world. every person has access to knowledge, but not every individual is aware of the practical actions that should be taken to protect the natural environment and the health of society. Therefore, the coaching courses addressed to teachers who would like to indicate a catalog of good practices for other educators, decision makers and the local community were verified. After verifying the available online courses in the last 6 years, it can be observed that the training organizers were most often non-governmental organizations, foundations, organizations and the State Forests.

In 2015, the State Forests offered teachers a course "How to teach about the forest, or workshops for leaders of environmental education". It was organized as part of the project entitled: Educational program to raise the environmental awareness of the inhabitants of the Bug and Liwiec River Basin, implemented by the Łochów Commune, Forest Inspectorate Łochów, Municipal and Communal Cultural Center in Łochów. The classes were free and the teachers were people employed by the Forest Research Institute. As part of the training, the teachers had the opportunity to reflect on the culture-forming role of the forest, which they expressed through art work. Then, the educators were educated in the field of methodology and educational aids, which should be used to teach how to understand the species of trees and flowers. The next educational block was of a workshop nature, it consisted in organizing theoreticians and movement games about the characteristics of animals that inhabit the forest. At the end of the leadership workshop, the tutor conducted experiments and research on the properties of soil, water and wood in order to awaken among educators commitment and real action for environmental protection. Only by referring

¹⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAKyhfxr7s&feature=emb_logo (accesses: 01.10.2020)

¹¹ <https://antyapps.pl/smok-smog-i-krakow-smog-aplikacje-za-pomoca-ktorych-sprawdzisz-zanieczyszczenie-powietrza-w-swoim-miescie-ios/> (accesses: 26.08.2020)

¹² <http://healpolska.pl/zanieczyszczenie-srodowiska-a-zdrowie/> (accesses: 12.08.2020)

to the pedagogy of experience, teachers were able to understand the need to lead children, parents, to protect nature and health.¹³

Another example of popularizing global education were courses organized by non-governmental organizations (Organizing Ecological Activities ODE “Sources”) in cooperation with the Center for Citizenship Education as part of the project “Bet on development! Sustainable”. Non-profit organizations have invited educators to participate in an online course at the School of Environmental Education Trainers. The aim of these trainings was to make the Leaders, and consequently the entire population living in the rich North, understand about the problems of the inhabitants of the countries of the Global South. These people will be driven by the consequences of consumerism and irrational resource management by economically developed countries. During the training, specialists in the field of global issues introduced the following issues:

- sustainable development in a globalized world: Global North and Global South; the world on my plate or access to food;
- life without water – causes and effects of reducing drinking water resources; the curse of resources – the natural resources of the countries of the Global South; intercultural education and education without stereotypes; human rights and the right development; access to education; causes and natural, social, economic and political effects of climate change; mechanisms governing international trade and their impact on the situation of the countries of the Global South; equality and development – how women change the world; responsible tourism; development and humanitarian aid; responsible consumption and fair trade.¹⁴

At the end of each training section, participants of the school of global education leaders completed a knowledge test to verify how the theory will be put into practice so that it can be passed on to students and their parents.¹⁵ The author of the article trained in one of the editions of training for environmental education leaders in 2019.

The above example of organized workshops for teachers may be a form of appeal to teachers to see the need to combine theoretical knowledge with current anomalies that occur in the environment. Unfortunately, not every person is able to motivate children, adolescents and parents to change the way of managing the environment in their immediate surroundings, which is why ecological workshops and ecological picnics have been prepared in Łódź, so that everyone can motivate people in their environment to take appropriate pro-ecological behavior. The recipients of the training include the community of educational institutions, educational centers, employees of private and state-owned companies.¹⁶

¹³ https://www.warszawa.lasy.gov.pl/rezerwaty-przyrody/-/asset_publisher/1M8a/content/jak-uczyc-o-lesie-czyli-warsztaty-dla-liderow-edukacji-ekologicznej?_101_INSTAN-CE_1M8a_viewMode=view#.X663eshKhPY [accesses: 10.11.2020]

¹⁴ <https://www.zrodla.org/aktualnosci/601/> [accesses: 11.11.2020]

¹⁵ https://globalna.ceo.org.pl/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA-rj9BRCAARIsANB_4ADt-JNG3A0tjo2r7BNgYi6sLJBDief6Cdc6BeFPHdNyj2Ej6zJn8vEaAjvAEALw_wcB [accesses: 10.11.2020]

¹⁶ <http://www.warsztaty-ekologiczne-lodz.pl/klienci> [accesses: 13.11.2020]

In 2019, for the Ministry of Environment, it was important to popularize a leading person – a leader who will indicate attitudes, skills, as well as motivate and change environmental awareness among the society in order to strengthen ecological culture among Poles. It was on the initiative of this institution that in 2019 the competition for the Leader of Environmental Protection was held, which was dedicated to Polish companies (products, services), local government units, and foundations to promote behaviors aimed at improving the quality of life and health of future generations. Among the competition categories, attention was paid to effective, modern, ecological and economical technological solutions that will contribute to environmental protection, which affects the quality of health. The competition was adjudicated in October 2019 during the POL-ECO SYSTEM 2019 environmental protection fair.¹⁷

The last example of a form of promoting the leadership of ecological education is the “Leader of Local Ecology” competition, organized every year since 2009 by the Communal Association of Communes “DolinaRedy and Chylonka”. The aim of the competition is to activate the local community and present in the form of a report the proposed tasks according to the standards of the educational offer in the school year. These are, among others: they conduct eco-interviews, meetings with parents or pedagogical councils, organize field trips, meetings within the facility with specialists in the field of project, leaflet and poster campaigns, school newspapers, prepare school performances, kindergarten environmental knowledge, as well as art and literary competitions. Additionally, the facility has the opportunity to carry out its own, original tasks, according to its own idea but always in accordance with the project theme. Winning institutions participating in the project receive the prestigious title of Local Ecology Leader and a statue and a diploma.¹⁸

To sum up, the leaders of ecological education play a very important role in the process of creating ecological culture. However, they will not achieve anything if people are not interested in their practical gift cards, which they provide during workshops and picnics. Perhaps, if an environmental education leader was appointed, who would indicate ways of solving problems that occur in a specific territorial unit, the local community would obey the proposed actions aimed at improving the quality of the environment. Thus, perhaps they would understand the need to protect the air we breathe in order not to get sick, the essence of good-quality water that we consume and soil, which is deprived of valuable minerals, will not provide people with sufficient food for bone building and proper development. Activities undertaken within the School of Global Education Trainers do not need to be updated. Rather, the optics of society should be transformed in favor of ecology. This will be possible thanks to the popularization of competitions (described above) for an environmental education leader, addressed to every inhabitant of the local society. Anyone can win, it is not about a statue. The most prestigious award will be life with the next generation in an environmentally clean and safe environment.

¹⁷ <https://ios.edu.pl/ogloszenia/konkurs-lider-ochrony-srodowiska/> [accesses: 09.11.2020]

¹⁸ <https://kzg.pl/edukacja/projekt-edukacyjny-lider-lokalnej-ekologii/> [accesses: 08.11.2020]

Arrangements for completion

There are various forms of implementing environmental education. Parents and educators can organize trips for children and young people to establish a bond with nature. You can close your eyes surrounded by nature together to listen to every sound coming from the forest environment and the various features that characterize bird species. It is worth conducting lessons outside, using the surrounding branches, trees, flowers to explain content about the Polish language or mathematics. This will also allow adaptation into the environment. Practical advice on how to conduct outdoor activities and attention of recipients, can be found on the websites of ecological organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy or the David Suzuki Foundation. By interacting with nature it will be possible to reflect on the need to protect the environment. This form of education is associated with the pedagogy of experiences, which is important for shaping the personality and development of each person, regardless of record age.

John Paul II called for action combining “social work ecology” and “family ecology” as a dimension of pedagogization of values from an early age and morals. The need to care for the state of the environment has already been mentioned by St. Pope John Paul II at the beginning of his papal pontificate, at the Encyclical Redemptor Hominis of March 4, 1979, admonishing the public that: “The Creator wanted man to associate with nature as its rational and noble master and watchman, not as a ruthless exploiter” (Dołęga, Czartoszewski, 2000: 163–164).

I encourage all readers of this article to actively look for ways to raise the level of ecological education in order to be able to survive in the world, which is degraded by the irrational and consumer activity of society against the natural environment.

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Ecological Education as an Antidote to Degraded Nature

Abstract

It is common knowledge that life on Earth depends on natural resources: water, air, soil. All organisms are dependent on each other, like in a trophic chain. The need to protect the environment is a necessary measure that can ensure further development in all activities of human activities. The article contains analyzes of qualitative research – verification of documents that presented selected actions undertaken in the Capital City of Warsaw to

show what has been done so far, which can be inspirational for environmental education for preventing degradation of nature by educators and decision-makers in other Polish cities. The publication contains information on teaching about ecology in the context of various educational models. It was important to verify the existing forms of teaching and presented the application of the basic principles of development by adults and children and adolescents. The sources of acquiring knowledge in the field of science education and examples of fun ones that will unite children have been included and their parents and will also help build a bond with nature to include environmental degradation. Community support can be an educational leader, which can be used in a variety of technologies, perhaps it will be able to support environmental policy to the culture of society living in the 21st century.

Keywords: nature degradation, ecological education, education leader, models and forms of teaching

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