



Understanding students visions about environmental global problems. Experience and lessons learned of teaching in Lithuania.

Paulo Pereira (1), Hanna Siarova (2), Ieva Misiūnė (3), Artemi Cerda (4), and Xavier Úbeda (5)

(1) Mykolas Romeris University, Environmental Management Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania (paulo@mruni.eu), (2) Public Policy and Management Institute, Gedimino av. 50, LT-01110 Vilnius, Lithuania, (3) Mykolas Romeris University, Environmental Management Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania (paulo@mruni.eu), (4) Soil Erosion and Degradation Research Group (SEDER), Departament de Geografia, Universitat de Valencia, Blasco Ibàñez, 28, 46010 Valencia, Spain, (5) GRAM (Mediterranean Environmental Research Group), Dept of Physical Geography and Regional Geographic Analysis, University of Barcelona, Montalegre, 6. 08001 Barcelona, Spain (xubeda@gmail.com)

Nowadays, environment is accepted to be an important element of our welfare. Our activities and societal status are strongly related with the quality of the environment where we live. On the other hand historical and cultural backgrounds shape importantly our views about the environment and how we act towards it in our daily life. In a context of globalization and increase of competition at international level, knowledge appears to be one of the key components for the advance of the world. Most of the knowledge produced comes from high level education institutions and research centres, which have responsibility to create and encourage critical thinking. Individuals aware of the problems can be more active and can push things forward. We think that environmental knowledge and awareness are fundamental for the future of the society. In order to develop better methodologies are developed if we have a better perception of students understanding of environmental problems. The objective of this work is to study the Lithuanian university level student's perception about some environmental challenges of our society. We selected several questions for the students rate according the relevance of the question, as "Air Pollution", "Waste Management", "Resources overexploitation", "Biodiversity reduction", "Human Overpopulation", "Poverty", "Global Warming/Climate change", "Natural disasters", "Terrorism", "Economical crisis", "War and armed conflicts" and the "Spread of infectious diseases". We ask to the respondents to rate the importance using a likert scale (1=Not Important, 2= not so important, 3=important, 4=very important, 5=the most important). Among all the questions, the most rated where the Water pollution, the Spread of infectious diseases and Air Pollution and the less important where Biodiversity Reduction, Human overpopulation and climate change. These results helped us to identify where some efforts should be taken to raise student's awareness about global environmental problems. The awareness is different according to the gender. Normally females are more concerned than males about environmental questions. Students between the age of 18-24 are more concerned problems related to the Spread of infectious diseases and war and armed conflicts, while the respondents between the age of 25-39, rated higher Air pollution, Water pollution and Poverty. These preliminary results allowed us to identify potential topics that could be more explored at university level and increase the environmental awareness.