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How to give visibility to soil: attractive and innovative educational initiatives of Spanish Society of SoilScience (SECS)

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The Spanish Society of Soil Science (www.secs.com.es, SECS) was founded in 1947 by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) with the main objective of promoting the study and knowledge of Soil Science. To achieve the slogan of 2015 International Year of Soils, Healthy soils for a healthy life, taking into account our long experience working with the concept of soil as a living system, we planned several projects and activities to promote the knowledge of this living and non-renewable natural resource among the different sectors of the society. Educational programs and cooperation agreements with different Educational Centers and the Administration as well as collaboration with Universities, Ecology and Nature Associations, National and International Parks, Museums and others Institutions related with the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems, were established in order to get them involved in the Educational Projects (organization, participation, financing). One critical point in the success of the projects was the elaboration of diverse, innovative educational materials to stimulate, in an attractive way, the knowledge of this non-renewable natural resource among different sectors of society as well as the level of implication of persons involved on the projects.

In this contribution we will show some examples of these materials and initiatives concerning different aspects of Soil Science which result to be of interest to the general public: the comic Living in the Soil in different languages (Galician, Spanish, English, Italian and Catalan) and its corresponding Lesson Plans; Vivere nel Suolo: Giornata di Legalità Ambientale; Vivere nel Suolo: Giornata Mondiale del Suolo; Would life on the planet be possible without the soil?; Nature in the family; The game of soil; The elaboration of an Artificial Reproduction of a Soil Pedion and its inclusion in different centers related to soil; the creation of a Permanent Soil Room in the Museum of Natural History of Santiago de Compostela University (MHN); temporal exhibition Soil:Art Painting with soils; Pictures of José Caballo; group visits to the MHN and hence to the Permanent Soil Room; Soil Courses and Conferences; participation in Competitions. Our experience indicates that the inclusion of these innovative and attractive materials is very useful in the planning of activities related to soil to give visibility to this non-renewable resource hidden under the vegetation, the soil. We consider that these successful initiatives can be used as a prototype to transmit the message of importance on this natural resource, the soil, and the need of its protection all over the world.

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