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Schools By The Sea Program

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Schools by the Sea

Environmental literacy, in the climatic and oceanic context, is a new concept in Brazil, and only a few authors have introduced the topic since the 2000s (Prates et al. 2007 and Hadel, 2010).

According to Smythe (1995) there is a deep disconnect between nature and the daily life of people in urbanized areas. Humanity, through progress and technology, no longer embraces their ability to collaborate with nature, seeking instead to establish dominance over it. It seems as if humanity has lost the sensitivity to associate its behavior as harmful or beneficial to the ecosystem in which it lives.

In order to rescue the interrelationship between humanity and nature, and to make the younger population aware of the importance of their individual actions for a more sustainable planet, a project called Schools by the Sea was developed!

The Schools by the Sea project promoted environmental studies with high school students, so that they could apply the theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom to practical activities directly in coastal communities. For example, knowledge of chemistry was discussed using experiments which compared levels of dissolved oxygen in water from polluted streams, compared to water from coastal marine areas. The concepts of ecology and biological succession were discussed based on the observation of the plant and animal organisms of rocky shores in different rock strata. Concepts of geography and geology were also explored by focusing on a discussion of sedimentary deposits exposed in different coastal environments, and concepts of physics and mathematics were discussed based on the development of simple artifacts for wind and marine energy generation. All theoretical knowledge tested in practice during the study of the environment was discussed in an integrated way, in order to emphasize that physical, biological, chemical and geological processes are connected in nature and that man is an integral part of these processes, both benefiting and impacting these processes.

In this way, regardless of the professional area that the young participants of this project chose in the future, it was expected that they would be able to adopt more sustainable practices in an analytical and critical way in relation to the environment in which they live. The project was recurrent annually between 2006 and 2009, subsidized by the extinct Foundation for Aquatic Studies and Research of the Oceanographic Institute of the University of São Paulo (FUNDESPA-IOUSP).

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