



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: critical reflection on urban waste disposal improperly in public places

### ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: A Critical Reflection on Urban Waste Improperly Discarded in Public Places

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#### SUMMARY

This text is an excerpt from the Master's Dissertation that addresses **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: A critical reflection on the problem of “fallen lands” on the coast of the municipality of São Paulo de Olivença-AM, and its main social and environmental consequences with students from the Calixto Ribeiro Full-Time Education Center.** Over the years, there has been an exaggerated increase in the amount of urban waste disposed of in inappropriate places in Brazil, such as rivers, streams, highways, public squares, forest parks and also forests, which influences the emergence of harmful damage not only to the environment but also to the quality of life of people, especially those who live near places saturated with garbage. This chaotic scenario further endorses the need for more consistent Environmental Education in Brazilian society and in school spaces for people's social and intellectual development, considering that article 1 of Law 9.795, of April 27, 1999, states that Environmental Education must be linked to the individual and collective context, since values, skills, attitudes and competencies aimed at the conservation of the socio-environmental environment, essential to a healthy quality of life and its sustainability, are constructed in the subjects.

**Keywords:** Environmental Education. Garbage. School.

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## INTRODUCTION

This scientific work, woven with the theme “Environmental Education: critical reflection on urban waste improperly discarded in public places”, aimed to analyze the main consequences that these actions bring to society and the environment, using as a theoretical framework the authors: Cavalcanti (2012), Dias (2000 and 2003), Santos (2009), among others who helped in the preparation of the research with their graceful value judgments.

Regarding the methodology used, bibliographical and electronic research on the proposed theme was used to better understand the subject. The materials collected were meticulously analyzed using the deductive method, which made it possible to conclude that educational institutions at all levels have a fundamental role in instigating, preparing and ensuring that future citizens are engaged in preserving the environment for future generations.

The work is organized as follows: Brief conceptions about environmental education, The problem of garbage discarded in public places and the role of society in combating the disposal of garbage in public places.

### 1. Brief concepts about environmental education

The emergence of the 1st Industrial Revolution in England during the 18th century brought not only an increase in the production and consumption of mass products but was also the “kick-off” for the industrialization of the world, generating two distinct scenarios, on one side “progress” and on the other “environmental pollution” in favor of development.

This philosophical duality of the capitalist world is much discussed today in public spheres, especially due to the Stockholm meeting in 1972, which brought together several important countries to discuss and deliberate future actions to protect the environment and mitigate the degradation of natural resources by human actions with a view to economic development.

In the opinion of Santos (2009), the Stockholm meeting in 1972 was of utmost relevance for the outline of Environmental Education that we have today, given that

which enabled the creation of important goals and political agreements that aimed to reduce socio-environmental damage through a concept called “sustainable development”, creating a safer path to a better world. In this regard, the researcher and philosopher in the area, Dias (2000, p. 41) adds that:

Environmental Education (EE) has been increasingly gaining ground over the decades, both internationally and nationally. For the simple fact that it works directly with future citizens on socio-environmental impacts, providing them with the incorporation of philosophical, ethical, moral and cultural paradigms that help to form individuals capable of dealing with the most diverse problems that surround them in their daily lives.

In view of the above, Cavalcante (2012) adds, explaining that the foundations of Environmental Education help human beings to rethink their everyday attitudes towards nature and its natural resources, as follows:

Environmental Education (EE) has made ecologically sustainable development possible, placing nature and its entire rich ecosystem, which is so important for the maintenance of animal life, on which we depend for everything, in the foreground. Thus, in order to sustain itself, it has to take into account the rules and limits of nature. Without neglecting human well-being, cultural values, and the full realization of citizenship (p. 36).

In this way, the writer's idea highlights the scope we must have with self-sustainable development and its importance, reinforcing man's moral and professional commitment to education, being adept at changes in society, in the environment in which he lives, advocating real improvements for "his" world. Therefore, we must think about and use even more the ideals of Environmental Education as a tool in the balance between man and the environment. Dias (2000) reinforces this by saying:

EA, because it is interdisciplinary; because it deals with reality; because it adopts an approach that considers all aspects that make up the environmental issue – sociocultural, political, scientific-technological, ethical, ecological, etc.; because it believes that school cannot be a bunch of people working with another bunch of paper; because it is a catalyst for education for conscious citizenship, it can and should be the optimizing agent of new educational processes that lead to

people along paths where they can glimpse the possibility of change and improvement of their total environment and the quality of their human experience (p. 196).

In accordance with what has already been found, it is understood that epistemological knowledge can and should be used in various facets of a given social segment, encouraging and establishing collaboration and construction of a more ecologically developed, fair and environmentally respectful society.

## 2. The problem of garbage discarded in public places

In the vast majority of countries in the world, especially in those considered underdeveloped, there is a greater occurrence of urban waste disposal in public places, such as riverbanks, streams, parks, public squares, among other inappropriate spaces, thus creating pollution and degradation of the environment, which will generate socio-environmental problems for man.

A reference in the field, Cavalcante in his book entitled “Sustainability: mantra or moral choice? (2012)”, understands that the increase in trash “thrown” improperly in public places will bring consequences for society itself, clogging sewers, contaminating water and soil, and spreading diseases that will affect humans and other animals, threatening the lives of both. The author, Santos (2009, p. 45), agrees and contributes to the author's vision by explaining:

Garbage thrown away in inappropriate places has a completely harmful effect on human health, and can be devastating and frightening. Excessive accumulation of garbage can cause dangerous diseases such as worms, intestinal infections, malaria, dengue fever and other diseases caused by viruses, which can be fatal to humans if left untreated.

And in Dias's view (2003), he adds, emphasizing that the melancholic scenario could be alleviated if the executive, legislative and judicial powers acted more severely and together to monitor and prevent the disposal of waste in irregular places. Also offering the necessary devices to collect, transport and correctly process the garbage, cleaning public places, promoting healthier work.

In relation to the above, it is understood that the vast majority of the population corroborates in the worsening of such problems, because even discussing Environmental Education in teaching environments, many people are still not

sensitized or made aware of the environmental impacts of their actions in terms of the pollution of the living space where they live and the socio-environmental consequences that this will entail.

### 3. The role of society in combating waste disposal in public places

After the rapid development of technology in symbiosis with society in all its instances, in particular the industrial sector with the vast production of products and mass consumption that will soon be discarded, creating increasingly absurd amounts of waste that will turn into garbage, often being left in inappropriate places.

Alves, in his work “International Relations and Social Issues, the decade of Conferences” from 2001, highlights that people’s “awareness” should be constantly and specifically focused on campaigns that combine theory with practice, being comprehensive in schools, on social networks, mass communication channels, radio, among other means to reach the largest possible audience, creating a mold, a mentality that truly wants to protect the environment, where people build their lives in a self-sustainable way.

In this line of thought, it can be added that it is the citizen's duty to act in favor of not only individuality but also the community, demanding within the law that political representatives implement cheaper and more effective mechanisms, such as: common and selective collection points everywhere for the disposal of food packaging, snacks, plastics, among others.

The researcher, Reigota (2001, p. 65) confirms what was said previously by saying:

It is extremely important to promote the circulation of more socio-environmental projects in cities that aim to work on the collection and recycling of the most varied types of waste, ensuring a reduction in the circulation of garbage in streets, rivers, beaches, etc. In addition, it will contribute to the creation of jobs and a source of income for the population.

In this way, it is clear that everyone has their rights and duties. It is up to each person to fulfill their role in seeking improvements in all sectors of society so that, as a collective, we can achieve a more just, conscious, prosperous and

self-sustainable, respecting the environment so that future generations have the opportunity to enjoy it.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

After reading and analyzing articles and periodicals with similar themes available on the internet, one can evaluate, together with theorists and researchers in the area, the great importance of not dumping garbage in public places, as this will culminate in a short period of time in disastrous consequences for the health of people who pass through these places.

Therefore, it is essential not only to work but also to discuss with learners/future citizens the concepts that Environmental Education offers in putting into practice its philosophy of self-sustainability between man and nature in favor of a balanced world.

Therefore, it is the duty of each person to use formal/informal education to work towards building a more just and prosperous reality for all. However, academic work may reach new developments under the conception of new researchers who may expand and deepen research, creating new knowledge, helping in a certain way to produce new paths towards an ideal world that everyone dreams of.

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