

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROMOTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION POLICIES OF BRAZIL AND COLOMBIA

### *A EDUCAÇÃO AMBIENTAL PROMOVIDA PELAS POLÍTICAS DE EDUCAÇÃO AMBIENTAL DO BRASIL E COLÔMBIA<sup>1</sup>*

### *LA EDUCACIÓN AMBIENTAL PROMOVIDA POR LAS POLÍTICAS DE EDUCACIÓN AMBIENTAL DE BRASIL Y COLOMBIA*

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**ABSTRACT:** This work aims to understand the path of environmental education (Sauvé, 2005) that is mobilized in the environmental education policies of Brazil and Colombia, as well as the disputes that took place for its elaboration. We analyze institutional documents, for Brazil Law 9,975 of 1999, decree 4281 of 2002 and the National Program of EA (ProNEA 2003, 2005, 2014); and for Colombia the general guidelines for an environmental education policy (1995), and law 1549 of 2012 that consolidates the environmental education policy (2002). Present a history of the construction of these programs, and an analysis of the concept of Environmental Education present in their discourse. We highlight the predominance of critical perspective in Brazil and a Systemic one in the case of Colombia, in addition to the presence of other currents of the area as a political strategy and negotiation with other political and ideological sectors.

**KEYWORDS:** Environmental education. ProNEA. PNEA. Discourse analysis.

**RESUMO:** Este trabalho visa compreender a corrente de educação ambiental (Sauvé, 2005) que é mobilizada nas políticas de educação ambiental do Brasil e da Colômbia, bem como as disputas que ocorreram na sua elaboração. Analisamos documentos institucionais, para o Brasil a lei 9.975 de 1999, decreto 4281 de 2002 e o Programa Nacional de EA (ProNEA 2003, 2005, 2014); e para a Colômbia as diretrizes gerais para uma política de educação ambiental (1995) e a lei 1549 de 2012 que consolida a política de educação ambiental lançada em 2002. Apresenta-se o histórico da construção desses programas e uma análise do conceito de Educação Ambiental presente nos discursos. Destaca-se a predominância da corrente crítica no Brasil e a corrente sistêmica na Colômbia, além da presença de outras perspectivas da área no discurso, como estratégia política e negociação com outros setores políticos e ideológicos.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Educação ambiental. ProNEA. PNEA. Análise do discurso.

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**RESUMEN:** Este trabajo tiene como objetivo comprender la corriente de educación ambiental (Sauvé, 2005) que se moviliza en las políticas públicas de educación ambiental de Brasil y Colombia, así como las disputas que se dieron para su elaboración. Analizamos el discurso de los documentos institucionales, para el Brasil la Ley 9.975 de 1999, el decreto 4281 de 2002 y el Programa Nacional de EA (2003, 2005, 2014); y para Colombia los Lineamientos generales para una política de Educación Ambiental (1995), y la ley 1549 de 2012 que consolida la política de educación ambiental de 2002. Presentamos un histórico de la construcción de estos programas, y un análisis sobre el concepto de Educación Ambiental presente en su discurso. Se destaca una predominancia de las corrientes crítica en Brasil y Sistémica en Colombia, además de identificar otras perspectivas del área como estrategia política y de negociación con otros sectores políticos e ideológicos.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Educación ambiental. ProNEA. PNEA. Análises de discurso.

## Introduction

Environmental Education (EE), as a public policy becomes a reality in Latin America, first in Brazil, law 9,795/1999 (BRAZIL, 1999), supported by the National Environmental Education Program - ProNEA (2003, 2005, 2014); then in Colombia (2012), vindicated by law 1549/2012 and recently by the "National Alliance for the formation of responsible citizenship: A more educated country and a sustainable environmental culture for Colombia"; then in Guatemala, 2003 instated by decree 38/2010; later, Paraguay establishing its policy with resolution 04/2005; El Salvador in 2006; Chile with the 2009 National Policy on Education for Sustainable Development and the National Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development Strategy 2012-2014; Venezuela in 2012 reaffirming an earlier 2003 proposal; and recently in Peru 2016-2021 with a version to its 2012 policy proposal. In other countries of the region, the EE is not configured as a National Public Policy, but it has found other ways to establish itself in the territories, either as national strategies and programs, or linked to their educational or environmental laws and policies.

These national policies and strategies define guidelines and orientations that help EE processes. A public policy designates one or several collective objectives considered necessary or desirable and the means and actions that guide the behavior of actors to solve situations considered of interest or problematic (ROTH, 2008). In this sense, to think of a public policy or national EE strategy means to think of the references that governments propose to their citizens in order to undertake environmental education processes.

Considering the above, some researchers have studied the case of Brazil and Colombia, pioneer countries and protagonists in the development of a national EE policy. (ALVES, 2017;

MEJÍA-CÁCERES; MARTINS; FREIRE, 2017; FUNBEA, 2015; MUÑOZ, 2015; MORAIS,

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2014; SOUZA; NASCIMENTO, 2014; TREIN; CAVALARI, 2014; PIEPER; VERAS; MACHADO, 2012; KAPLAN, 2011; SOTERO; SORRENTINO, 2010; PÉREZ, 2007; SORRENTINO, 2005; LAYARAGUES, 2002, among others). These works analyze the implementation of EE in each country, as a response to what is proposed in these policies and to the needs of each context. Very important works that differ in the ways in which EE is understood and done and likewise in the perception of it in the policy (MEJIA, 2018).

In order to understand the possibilities of doing environmental education, from the governmental perspective, it is necessary to understand what tools governments have placed in the policies for this action and which referents have inspired these processes. Thus, in this work we take as an object of analysis the processes of decision making and construction of the policy itself, as well as its discourse, with the objective of understanding the framework that inspires these proposals when categorizing the type of EE that is mobilized in these documents. Determining this referential allows us to have a more critical perspective on the policy itself and with this, a better understanding of the disputes and challenges faced by EE in each context.

### **Environmental education, a diversity of understandings**

In the midst of the diversity of the EE field, some authors have characterized the lines of work in an attempt to group and understand the existing trends (SORRENTINO, 1997; REIGOTA, 1999; ANDRADE, 2003; CARVALHO, 2001; GUIMARÃES, 2001; GAUDIANO, 2001; LIMA, 1999). One of these categorizations is the one made by Sauv e who describes 15 EE currents: Naturalist Stream, Conservationist Stream, Resolute Stream, Systemic Stream, Scientific Stream, Humanist Stream, Moral and Ethical Stream, Holistic Stream, Bioregionalist Stream, Praxical Stream, Social Critical Stream, Feminist Stream, Ethnographic Stream, Eco-education Stream, Sustainable Development Stream (2000, 2005 e 2009).

This diversity implies some debates, one of which is the proposed separation between environmental education and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Gaudiano (2001) explains how, in response to the conclusions of Agenda 21, ESD was born as a strategy to overcome the conservationist visions that EE had assumed. But today it can be seen that, in its development and implementation, it has become a controversial idea because it responds to different interests and motivations, ranging from those who understand this project from a critical socio-environmental analysis to those who align development with economic principles and neo-liberal globalization. (GAUDIANO; PUENTE-QUINTANILLA, 2011).

The 2009 Unesco report highlights that all the countries studied refer to EE, but at the same time some include EE for sustainability, EE for sustainable development or EE for sustainable development indistinctly in their discourse. In spite of the above, it should be noted that, in all cases, EE is placed as a means to achieve development. Meanwhile, for advocates of EE, the term is more integrative, as it includes the ideals of EE, without ignoring the road already traveled and integrating the proposals and challenges of ESD (UNESCO, 2009). For others, renaming all EE as EE seems to go against the very experience and diversity of the field. Moreover, because in the same diversity and complexity that EE proposes, the plurality and diversity of discourses are integrated, including ESD as one of them. It is not possible then to speak of a single way of doing EE, since it is constructed according to the needs and conditions of the context in which it is integrated, oriented to fulfill its commitments and deeper guidelines.

In the face of this diversity of understandings and approaches, this paper highlights the importance of recognizing the discourses used in public policy documents as an expression of the principles and purposes of EE for each country. This understanding also allows us to perceive how decisions are made, the possibility of reaching agreements in the midst of the conflicts and interests that may be found within the field, and the possibility of reaching agreements in the midst of the conflicts and interests that may be found within the field.

## Methodology

Studying the national environmental education policies of Brazil and Colombia implied a detailed work of approximation to the discourse of the governmental documents proposed by these nations. This included, an analysis of the official policy documents for each country: Brazil's national public policy, law 9.795 of 1999 (BRAZIL, 1999), instituted by decree 4281 of 2002 (BRAZIL 2002) and supported by the National EE Program (ProNEA), with its four versions (2003, 2005, 2014). In the case of Colombia, the national EE public policy of 2002, and the 2012 document enacting law 1549 consolidating the approaches made years before emphasizing the importance of participation.

In order to make a deep and detailed reading of these documents, we sought to identify and select extracts in which, tacitly or explicitly, the concept of environment and EE was related. By visualizing the textual references in the speeches of the official documents, as well as evidence of tacit ideas grouped together, it is possible to access a more complex understanding of the speeches, identifying affinities, confirming postulates or contradictions. For the analysis of these documents, we used the qualitative and mixed analysis software,

NVivo 10 for Windows, in which the categories proposed by Sauv  (2005) were converted into NODES, allowing the grouping of paragraphs and moments of the text in which information is described or presented that link the discourse with one of the categories analyzed. This integration by affinity allows a global vision of the information offered by the texts on the definition of EE and environment described and present in the Brazilian and Colombian policies.

### **Environmental education in Colombia's environmental education policy**

Colombia's environmental education policy was based on the experience of a group of academics who, observing what was happening in the country, began to think and build a framework for Colombia's EE. This group was formed in preparation for the 1992 Rio Summit and continued its work, giving rise to discussions on environmental education in the country. Thus, in 1995 Colombia consolidated Decree 1743 of 1994 (COLOMBIA, 1994), which nationally instituted EE in formal education through the strategy School Environmental Projects PRAE, a year in which the educational reform was also presented in the General Education Law (1995), where EE took an important place in national education. This scenario not only highlighted the importance of an EE policy, but also marked the beginning of the definition of the conceptual references that guide EE in the country. This work resulted in the document "Guidelines for a public EE policy" in 1995.<sup>4</sup>, and later the policy document of 2002 and 2012.

The policy text, editing and editorial coordination were the responsibility of Dr. Maritza Torres, and was prepared within the framework of the project: "Incorporation of EE in Basic and Secondary Education in Rural and Urban Areas of the Country", with the support of the Universidad Distrital Francisco Jos  de Caldas. There are two versions of this document, the one published in 2002 and one published in 2012 for the 10 years of the National Environmental Education Policy. The 2012 version is a reprint of the first edition with the incorporation of Law 1549 of 2012 - an instrument to strengthen the institutionalization of this policy in the national territory, as Annex I.

In a cross reading of these documents, some ambiguous positions were found between the policy discourse itself and the strategies for its implementation. The abandonment of more traditional currents of EE that appeared timidly in the 1995 documents, are completely replaced

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<sup>4</sup> There are 2 editions of this document, referenced with the same year, 1995. The difference between these versions is only in the presentation of the document: The first edition is presented by the Minister of Education of the outgoing cabinet, Arturo Sarabia Better; in the second edition it is Mar a Emma Mej a V lez, Minister of the new government.

in the documents that followed, where only evidence of the currents were found: Critical, Systemic, and Sustainable Development.

The systemic current, openly defined by the policy referents as orienting the understanding of environment and EE (COLOMBIA, 2002, p. 18-19 and p. 21), is clearly the one that is most marked during the text. Already the current of sustainable development, although widely present in the text, was even linked to some more critical positions of EE. For in the policy is placed a reinterpretation of the ESD position with a more critical proposal of understanding and implementation. Redefining the concept of ESD for a more contextualized interpretation, in a section in the document, is very important in the profile assumed by the EE program discourse. And in this path, there even appear positions that may indicate the emergence of a critical EE movement (COLOMBIA, 2002, p. 22).

We found a related reference as a naturalist current, in one of the few paragraphs that were extracted from the guidelines for an EE policy of 1995 in its passage to the national EE policy document of 2002. In this part, the dichotomy between man as the center of relations with the natural environment, which he observes and of which he is not a part, is observed. This text would have been inspired by the natural resources code published in 1974 by the country's Institute of Renewable Natural Resources, INDERENA; but even in the 1995 document, the EE program presents in its document a vision of the environment and environmental education that goes beyond this vision of resources. It is reflected here how at the national level the way of understanding the environment was also changing.

References to the sustainable development of the territory appear in the policy principles and in the definition of EE (COLOMBIA, 2002, p.7-8), as well as in other moments in which there is recurrent use of the word resource, and resource management; the competency-based training model represented in knowing, knowing how to be, and knowing how to do, and problem solving (COLOMBIA, 2002, p. 6; COLOMBIA, 2012, p. 21). Even when more critical perspectives of thought are raised, such as the critical reflection of the development model, it is thought in terms of a sustainable environmental model. The idea of sustainability in the policy may also be aligned with the changes undergone by the Environment portfolio, which in 2002 was called Ministry of Environment and Territorial Development and in 2012 is Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development.

The risk of assuming ESD as a current of EE to be followed by a country is the interpretation and use that has been given to this concept. Sauvé (2003) points out how, thanks to economic interests, the ESD discourse has limited education to generating a culture of caring for resources in order to guarantee their maintenance in the future. This idea reinforces man's

dominion over nature, which would be at his service. Being aware of this situation, the EE program includes, in the policy, a section to explain the understanding of EE in the policy (COLOMBIA, 2002, p. 31), placing it from the importance of understanding the relationships established in the trilogy nature - society - culture. Thus, maintaining the ESD category but giving it a new perspective. By not finding within the text other marks towards this category we can conclude that its entry has been part of a political strategy that made possible the acceptance of this policy by more sectors.

For example, in the second specific objective of the EE policy (COLOMBIA, 2002), a conceptual discussion on the type of development and society that is required is proposed, as well as questioning the role of the school. In addition, in some parts of the text, the inclusion of ethnic minorities, other knowledge, and the gender perspective are promoted, issues that still deserve full attention, in order to guarantee the necessary conditions for participation (COLOMBIA, 2002, p. 23 and p. 52). This approach remains subtle, especially if it is considered that in spite of defending the dialogue of knowledge and the cultural diversity of the country, these documents do not include diverse cosmovisions of the territory.

Muñoz (2015) also highlights a critical tinge that is evident in the possibilities of implementing what is proposed in the EE national policy document and the documents that preceded it bring to the country: emancipation, empowerment, appropriation and social inclusion from collective mobilization. The policy is always presented as a reference and not as a norm or dogma. It is an invitation to generate management and concentration mechanisms in the territory with all the factors that affect the territory, and from there to think about how to do EE.

In the midst of this diversity of possible understandings, a discourse that remains permanent and up to date is striking. The relevance of the concepts found in politics, despite the time, people and political movements that the country has undergone, may have two origins: on the one hand, an advanced discourse, with long-term and non-specific goals; and, on the other hand, a political convergence that gives a certain group an importance and prominence that gives it the power to manage to perpetuate these discourses. In Colombia, these two factors have been present in environmental education policy. The figure of the environmental education program and Maritza Torres in her command in the portfolios of the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of the Environment, as well as her work group managed to provoke a debate around a topic of interest such as the environmental movement, using known referents such as development, complexity, systemic, among others, and setting goals that defined not only the feeling of the environmental education field but also that of the country's project. In

the case of Colombia, the proposal for a national environmental education policy was risky, even naïve for some. But the figure of a strong working group and the power of consensus building made it possible to propose future scenarios (in some cases ideal), which would begin to be projected and built with small steps. The way to implement this policy was by linking it to concrete actions, strategies that, although they did not promise to achieve these goals, did set the stage for people to build the paths to achieve them.

Presenting the systemic current of EE, participation and contextualization as keys for the development of educational-environmental processes in the country, places the responsibility on the territorial agents for the execution and achievement of the scopes proposed in the EE policy. Financing, execution and management are the responsibility of the organization of the communities in their territories, as well as the inclusion of all the actors that interact in each region, with their natural and cultural diversity. The EE program is in charge of accompanying these processes as advisors and referents and not as the main actors of this process. To this end, the EE Inclusion project in rural and urban areas of the country has started training and support processes for community and school projects in some regions of the country.

### **Environmental education in Brazil's environmental education policy**

Law 9.795 of 1999 (BRAZIL, 1999) is the result of Bill 3792/93 presented by deputy Fábio Feldeman after 6 years of debate and modifications. This bill would have been socialized with the community in public hearings, seeking a participatory construction of the law (SOTERO, 2008). Although some authors, such as Pedrini (2002), criticize these processes for the lack of dissemination of these hearings, which did not guarantee a real process of participation. The National EE Program, ProNEA, was presented in 2003 by the Ministry of Environment in support of the Ministry of Education. The versions of ProNEA, subsequent to the policy, (2003, 2005 and 2014)<sup>5</sup>, are very similar to each other in terms of the proposals and guidelines proposed. Each new version of the ProNEA presents an expansion of some ideas and the inclusion of concepts and references, as a result of advances in the field of EE.

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<sup>5</sup> The appearance of the National Environmental Education Program dates back to 1994 with a first publication, recognized by the acronym PRONEA. This earlier version of the policy is differentiated from the following ones by significant differences in the way of understanding environmental education, which is why after the policy the program is recognized with the acronym ProNEA (ProNea, 2005, p. 13). Among authors working in the area of Environmental education it is possible to find the forms ProNEA, ProNea and even PRONEA without identifying this differentiation.



Temporarily, a change can be perceived between the definition presented for EE in Law 9.795 of 1999 (BRAZIL, 1999) and the one proposed in the ProNEAs. The proposed EE, as defined in this law, is centered on man and his education, with the aim of improving his quality of life (BRAZIL, 1999, chapter 1, article 5). This definition is of a humanistic or anthropocentric current of EE, with a moral and ethical orientation, which focuses its object on man, leaving aside the interactions with the natural and the social in the processes it proposes. Furthermore, when presenting the EE proposed for non-formal education, (BRAZIL, 1999, articles 4 to 17) the description responds to an orientation towards the sensitization of the community for its participation in the defense and conservation of the environment, a description that could well be related to a conservationist current. In this same discursive line, there is also a tendency towards ethical and moral work, as one of the expected objectives of EE (BRAZIL, 1999, chap. 1, art. 3, IV; art. 5, VII). In the text, in turn, the word sustainability appears, although its relationship with this current of EE would be very diffuse, since its orientation is towards the quality of life of man and not only to the maintenance of resources as is clear in this type of perspective (BRAZIL, 1999, chap. 1, art. 1).

The appearance of education for sustainability is much more explicit in the ProNEAs; the 2014 ProNEA document is entitled: EE for a sustainable Brazil: ProNEA, legal and regulatory frameworks; and this trend is assumed since its 2005 version, in which the EE Treaty for sustainable societies and global responsibility (BRASIL, 1992) is presented as the maximum reference for the program. In these programs, EE for sustainability takes on a co-protagonism with a critical interpretation, since in its proposal there is a reinterpretation of this perspective, which is called socio-environmental sustainability.

In Brazil's EE Policy, since the 2003 ProNEA, the expression Socio-environmental Sustainability is used, which is justified in a footnote, emphasizing the idea of a sustainability thought beyond the development and maintenance of resources, surpassing the idea of sustainable development presented by several authors (PRONEA, 2003, p. 9). This clarification is especially important to establish in what sense sustainability is understood within the policy proposal. Previously, the term sustainability was used in Law 9.795/99, and although the clarification that appears in ProNEA was not made, this expression was always accompanied by other factors such as solidarity, equality, democracy, social justice (BRAZIL, 1999, chap. 1, art. 5, V). This interpretation of sustainability and EE is also a scenario that allows the entry, very subtly, of the critical current of EE in the law. Despite the fact that the Policy offers a framework for a critical EE, its entry is only positioned textually when it raises the need for a

critical awareness of social environmental issues (BRAZIL, 1999, chapter. 1, art. 5, III; art. 4, II).

A tendency that appears more timidly in the law, but that takes on importance in the policy discourse, is the relationship with the systemic current. Some paragraphs of the law emphasize the nature-society-culture triad and complex thinking for understanding environmental realities. But it is in the ProNEAs that this current takes on greater force in Brazil as one of the axes of policy implementation. (ProNEA, 2005, p. 34).

Beyond the presence of a characteristic of temporality in the construction of an idea of Brazilian EE, what is most striking in the analysis was the possible ambiguity or multiplicity of EE currents in the policy described by Sotero (2008), Furtado (2009) and Janke (2012). This possibility of interpretations has its origin in the very text of the policy. The coexistence of EE referents is a reflection of the very complexity and diversity of the field and the implications this has on its implementation in the country. The EE currents of which there are more traces in the texts are the sustainable development current and the critical current. Both have appeared in official documents even before the definition of the policy, responding directly to the movements that were taking place worldwide, and to the discourses that were entering the national scenario due to the context of struggles, resistances and transformations that Brazil was undergoing in that period.

A context of social changes was the scenario for the arrival of a proposal such as EE, and it was established as a policy, with the clarity of being a broad path to follow until the consolidation of the transformations it proposed was achieved. The policy for Brazil is dynamic and changing, and it is through the programs that emerge from it that it remains in force. The challenges proposed by EE include transformations in the social, cultural, political and economic bases that have been dominant and therefore its emergence and establishment implies a process of struggle and resistance that has to be consolidated gradually. This is evident in the evolution of the institutional proposal of the policy for Brazil, its theoretical bases and proposals; from the elaboration of the draft law, the projection of the ProNEA and other programs that have been generated from it, to the development of the new policy.

## **Political disputes in the definition of environmental education for a country**

The analysis of the discourses and discussion processes that marked the elaboration of the policies allows us to understand the context in which the national EE proposals were elaborated in Colombia and Brazil. The reading of policy documents and the exercise of categorizing their discourse proposed in this paper, revealed the type of EE presented by the two countries and the political strategies that are used for a proposal of this nature to be accepted and maintained for long periods of time in the political scenario of a country.

In the case of Brazil, it can be seen how the environmental educational discourse is presented ambiguously, apparently, by a political strategy that would allow the entry of EE in the national scenario, which involves, in the same text of the law, previous EE discourses, and, at the same time, opens the doors to the new discourses that appeared in the documents that followed the implementation of the law. Already in the case of Colombia, from the presentation of the policy, innovative currents for the country and EE were included, with the idea of long-term implementation. It could be said that with the idea of taking advantage of a political moment that allowed the entry of a proposal that posed a challenge for the country. But, despite taking that challenge the language in which the policy was presented included conventional phrases and words of more classical EE currents.

In the discourse of Law 9.975 of 1999, in Brazil, a definition is presented that is more in line with older currents within the EE field, but it includes in the development of the document, discourses that coincide with more critical currents of EE that appear more strongly and are consolidated in the ProNEAs (BRAZIL, 1999). This ambiguity was apparently the mechanism for the entry of the environmental discourse without much opposition. In the case of Colombia, the scenario of agreement between the two ministries would have allowed the EE policy to be a slightly more ambitious discourse, which has even been maintained in the 15 years that this policy has been in place. This discourse, although aligned with a systemic perspective of environment and EE, was a bit more idealistic in terms of the formulation of goals and objectives than in the implementation strategies.

In both Colombia and Brazil, there is a correlation between the EE current that leads the EE policy discourse, Critical Current in Brazil and Systemic in Colombia, with the inclusion of the sustainable development discourse. And although in both cases it is possible to evidence an attempt to reinterpret the way in which the ESD concept is assumed, highlighting, in both countries, a more social and critical vision of this perspective. Colombia and Brazil propose that the sustainable development sought in the two countries should respond to the needs and

characteristics of each context, that it is the community, from its diversity, who defines the type of development to which its community aims. In the case of Brazil, this is called EE for sustainable societies, although in the 2005 and 2014 ProNEA, in addition to this consideration, the title of this document is expanded to include EE for a sustainable Brazil: ProNEA legal and regulatory frameworks. In the case of Colombia this is presented in a section in the EE policy guidelines chapter and is reinforced in Law 1549/2012 and the 2012 policy reprint.

This inclusion would correspond to two origins: first, the incidence of development bodies such as the IDB and UNESCO leaders and funders of ESD programs in Latin America, which in turn mobilized and sponsor various education programs in the two countries. And second, to the naturalization of some concepts since EE is aligned to a widespread and dominant idea of knowledge in these two countries. The use of dominant knowledge, as if it were widely accepted by all the inhabitants of these countries, is linked to the colonial process in Latin America, which is even prior to the policy; but it also responds to the fact that even though EE proposals are based on the dialogue of knowledge and participation in the construction of these proposals, there is no evidence that this dialogue is taking place in the construction of referents for understanding the national EE policy.

The social and critical component of the interpretation of ESD in the policies is reinforced by the text of the Colombian and Brazilian policies, at specific moments as in the case of Colombia, or in the development of the text in the form of emphasis as in the case of Brazil. There are even some clarifications that accompany the text to reinforce this social component even in more controversial issues. But the persistence of expressions such as development, economic growth, quality of life, among others, can reinforce the economic perspective of sustainable development by starting from hegemonic concepts, recognizing their validity and relevance as if they were accepted by all the inhabitants of each country. The lack of reflection on these concepts may allow the use of discourses for purposes alien to a systemic and less critical current of EE, which, although reinforced in the idea of context and participation, is not evident in the forms of dialogue and insertion of the cultural, natural and social diversity of these countries.

In the cases of Brazil and Colombia, the national EE policy discourse included a discursive game that presents the policy proposals without entering into conflict with more conservative movements. In both cases, although this strategy guaranteed political approval of the proposals, no guarantees were offered as to their interpretation and use. The ambiguity in the discourse and the lack of concrete strategies for the implementation and monitoring of what

is proposed therein makes possible multiple uses of the discourse for objectives that are even contrary to the EE proposed in these policies.

### **Final remarks**

The leaders and theoreticians of EE propose transformations that allow us to be more aware of the relationships that occur in our territories so that we can reconstruct the forms that affect the social, natural and cultural balance of our home. The environmental education movement proposes to educate with the objective of guiding critical thinking that questions and empowers current and future generations. The transformations proposed from this discourse and those placed in the EE policies of these countries, involve political disputes that take time, as they do not seek to repeat exercises of imposition, but rather to raise awareness and gradual transformation of realities, dialoguing with the ways of thinking that allow and dialogue and leaving behind those that do not allow to be questioned.

The experience of elaborating these policies can teach us about the political, discursive and negotiation processes necessary to include new perspectives and discourses. This implies from the beginning a great challenge for the EE policy, since participation, concertation and management need conditions for their real appearance in the territories. Guarantees must include from physical and technical resources, to conditions of dialogue and equality that allow the freedom of the actors, and so that all knowledge has the same place at the conversation table. The invitation that is common to both policies, as well as to the environmental education movement, is to participation, to the empowerment of our territories and to the appropriation of the political scenarios and tools that already exist in order to mobilize the transformations that are needed in these territories and to provoke changes and new ways of doing EE.

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