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Social Policies as subsidy for Environmental Educação: A citizen behavioral change tool

In the context of environmental crisis, emphasized by Global warming concerns, aspects relevant to environmental education and public policies are very important in the search for mitigating environmental problems. The prospect of environmental education content involves social, economic and political aspects. Governmental socioeconomic structure should be capable of subsidizing the implementation of programs and policies, in that environmental education is included in.

According to Almeida (1999), to have the improvement of quality of life and conserve the planet, only education can prevent a collapse of the economic system and others trying to sustain society that is coming around. Professionals of education are a strategic position in the replication of knowledge with interdisciplinary practices that should be inserted in a comprehensive and continuous way in schools and in all aspects of social life (Leonardi, 1997; Reigota, 1994). Although the environmental education has a fundamental role in the formation of individuals to improve the quality of life, little attention has been done to this important instrument. A recent research that I had done in schools from two cities of the northeast region of Brazil, I could see the necessity for better implementation of the postulates that are in the National Environmental Education Act. Although this Act regulates the implementation of Environmental Education as requirement, few things have been developed on education institutions.

First of all, it is because professors training are deficient when it comes to environmental issue, once it is still considered a recent theme. A government strategy would involve public policies to ensure access to environmental education. In United States, for example, the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) regulates the National Environmental Education Act of 1990 to provide national leadership to increase environmental literacy, and they provide and support environmental education training for teachers and other educational professionals through the National Environmental Education Training Program.

We know that sometimes it is a challenge to the government pointing out new paths against ecosystem collapse within a context of commodification of nature and its consequent degradation. Strategies of educational policies must develop a conception of ecology that not only establishes a link between the social and the natural world, but also to create awareness that human belongs to the nature as well. Therefore, I propose a new conception of the policies, on an ethical and political dimension, with regard to costs and benefits of governmental policies, taking into account the satisfaction of all stratum of the population. The government must begin to understand that beyond the direct sources of environmental degradation, the citizens need to be aware of your daily actions that directly affect the well-being of others. These externalities may not seem significant, but when you think about the actions of each single person on the planet, such actions generate consequences that affect all the population.

As the major regulator of the competitive market is the society, the social benefit of implementing such policies are extremely compensatory in terms of cost generated by the government. In fact, the population while taxpayer should be the main beneficiary of such policies. We know that the private market already has such subsidies to reduce emissions for example, though the population should also enjoy the benefits of environmental

policies. Subsidy such policies must be considered as an investment in the education of the citizen generating social benefit that perhaps is not visible right the way, but it will achieve significant changes to future generations that would be most affected by environmental collapse.

This can be explained by the concept of giving back what we receives, in other words, when we learn that our actions will produce positive results in every sense, social and economic, citizens have the commitment that is considered the ecological consequences of their future actions.

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