

EDUCATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE USE OF NATIVE FORESTS IN THE ANDEAN COMMUNITY ACHIBUENO DRAWER, LINARES PROVINCE, CHILE

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Background

A widespread socio-cultural transformation is occurring in the world regarding to environmental knowledge and practice. Six decades ago human started changing their attitude towards the value of natural resources and today various governments, private and public organizations are adopting measures that promote equilibrium between economic and social growth and environmental care - in a balance called "Sustainable Development".

This project evaluates the change in culture regarding to the importance attributed to natural resources specifically among children and adults of a ruralforest community, in the province of Linares, Chile.

Results

The researchers realized informal environmental education workshops to study the evolution of the learning process regarding to abiotic and biotic components of the environment. They applied a participatory methodology and children and adults were evaluated and quantified through tests.

- 100% of the children increased their knowledge about biotic and abiotic components.
- 80% of the adults, in a team, took the responsibility to apply for reforestation programs and government support for ecotourism. 40% of the group increased their knowledge about biotic and abiotic components.
- Socio-cultural change in the community: development of 2 new environment related groups: Green Brigade (Children) and one group of adults with juridical personality.

Conclusion

The methodology, applied to promote cultural change and to assess the environmental attitude, demonstrated effectiveness. Both groups, adults and children, improved their knowledge about physical and biological components. Arising from the consequences of cultural change in the valuation of the landscape resource, a socio-cultural impact could be observed: the creation of a group with legal personality and the formation of a children group, the "Kids Green Brigade". The research activities demonstrate that well directed environmental education can lead to cultural evolution and positive changes. Future research activities could focus in establishes a rural network of environmental education and can arise promoting a gradual replacement of intensive forest use towards environmental services and rural tourism.