

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN PORTUGUESE SCHOOL PROGRAMMES AND TEXTBOOKS IN TWO PERIODS: 1991-2000 AND 2001–2006.

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**Abstract:** Environmental education (EE) is seen as a key instrument contributing for changing values, mentality and attitudes. This study intends to examine how EE addresses environmental education in the Portuguese school programmes in two periods, Time I: 1991/1992 – 1999/2000 and Time II: 2000/2001 – 2005/2006. We used the grids of analysis constructed within the BIOHEAD-CITIZEN project (CIT2-2004-506015). The analysis covered the national programmes and textbooks since the 1<sup>st</sup> grade (5/6 years-old pupils) up to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade (17/18 years-old pupils) by looking at the four pre-selected sub-topics: *Pollution, Use of Resources, Ecosystems and Biodiversity and Cycles*. Biodiversity is the sub-topic that had little presence in Time I but is nowadays (Time II) more present all along the school levels. In earlier years (1CBE) the textbooks follow the national programme very tightly. Major differences between the national programmes and the textbooks examined were found in the Secondary school (10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

**Keywords:** Textbooks, Programmes, Environmental Education

### Introduction

The concept of Environmental Education (EE) has had a remarkable evolution in meaning over time. In the beginning the concept of Environmental Education assumed a naturalist concept whereas currently it means a balance between the natural and man, with a view of building a future of sustainable development. Thus, environmental education should be seen as a key instrument contributing for changing values, mentality and attitudes to create a deep and abiding awareness in society of the problems associated with environmental issues (Morgado et al., 2000). According to Raposo (referre by Palma, 1997), In Portugal, only in 1986, with the entry into force of the Law of the Education System (Law n°46/86), were established school programmes for the implementation of environmental education in schools. Since then, some environmental education practices and consequent development of school projects were implemented: the School Area (allowed to carry out school overall projects), the Complementary Activities (gave the possibility to create clubs where pupils could experience the development of cross-curricular activities) and the discipline of Personal and Social Development.

The Law n°46/86 states that students' literacy skills must be analysed at the end of Basic Education (2001) and it focuses on the knowledge, reasoning, communication and attitudes. For the development of these skills science teaching was organized in the three cycles of basic education (Law n°46/86), around four organizing themes: (i) Earth in space, (ii) Land in transformation, (iii) Sustainability on Earth and (iv) Live better on earth. From these four themes, it is Sustainability on Earth and Live better on earth those that skills on environmental education in formal education are better expressed. Although the Portuguese school programmes address the skills development for the Environmental Education (EE), its implementation often collides with the dominant traditional curriculum. Some authors Stevenson (1987), Robottom (1987) and Bowers (2001) (referred in Adams, 2007:22) have described several reasons for the schools difficulties in developing pupils' skills towards the environment:

- *EE is supposed to be a holistic and cooperative learning, while school curricula tend to be atomistic;*
- *EE emphasizes the analysis of real problems, whereas traditional curricula emphasizes the abstract problems and pre-determined issues;*
- *EE aims at mobilizing knowledge for immediate implementation, which contrasts with the idea of knowledge for future use implicit in traditional curriculum;*
- *EE involves working methods and develop skills that require time, which makes it difficult to reconcile with the need for rapid acquisition of knowledge standard to be tested;*
- *EE tend to conduct activities outside school, which is difficult to reconcile with the regular and financial constraints of schools as well as traditional teaching;*
- *EE proposes a model of school open to the community, creating partnerships, which is often discarded by the traditional school;*
- *EE seeks to alter the dominant values in society, while the purpose of schools is to maintain the existing social order.*

These issues raise the problem regarding the implementation of EE in the curricula of schools not only in Portugal, but also in other countries, although the schools try to overcome these and other difficulties they face. The aim of the present study is to examine how EE addresses environmental education in the school programmes and textbooks in two different periods, **Time I:** 1991/1992 – 1999/2000 and **Time II:** 2000/2001 – 2005/2006, separated by a national program reform occurred in 2000/2001.

## **Methodology**

This study took place under the research Project European BIOHEAD-CITIZEN (STREP, priority 7 of FP6: Knowledge-based Economy and Society, CIT2-2004-506015) entitled "Biology, Health and Environmental Education for better Citizenship" attended by the following 18 countries: five from the "old" EU (Portugal, France, Germany, Italy, Finland), who recently joined seven (Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Romania) and six countries of the International co-operation (INCO) (Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mozambique and Senegal). In the case of this investigation we focus on the results of the analysis of Portuguese textbooks which was performed by content analysis, through the use of grid constructed within the BIOHEAD-CITIZEN project. The initial grids were tested earlier in the participating countries, thereby verifying the difficulties that entailed. After application and further discussion, these grids were modified to create an improved grid, which was tested in at least one of the manuals for each level of education. The final EE grid was divided into four sub-topics, allowing carrying out extensive analysis (Caravita et al, 2007). These four topics are Pollution, Use of Resources, Ecosystems and Cycles, and Biodiversity. Each grid has two main parts:

**Part A** is a cross-grid, similar to all BIOHEAD-CITIZEN grids of textbook analysis, covering the general characteristics of the textbooks;

**Part B** encompasses the four axes of analysis – “linear vs. Complex”, “global vs. local”, “individual responsibility vs. social responsibility”, “humans as owners vs. human as guests” - which are specific for each sub-topics discussed.

Initially, this study focused on the content of school national programs to identify which school years treat the sub-topics of Environmental Education in both primary and secondary levels (5/6 years-old pupils up to 17/18 years-old pupils). The four sub-topics of EE were identified in each school level. They could be found in several disciplines such as Environmental Studies, Natural Sciences, Biology and Geography. For the selection of textbooks to be analysed, the Project-CITIZEN BIOHEAD had stipulated that in countries where there is no single book, as in Portugal, the choice of textbooks should comply with the criterion of "most used" in each school year in which each the sub-topic is taught. For this, the list with the books more used in the years 1991/2000 and 2000/2006 was asked to the Ministry of Education. Apart from the textbooks during the ongoing development of this study (2003/2006) we also looked for previous textbooks to have an historical approach. Since there was a curriculum change in 2001, we divide the historical analysis in two phases: **Time I**: 1991/1992 - 1999/2000 and **Time II**: 2000/2001 - 2005/2006.

**Table 2.1: Portuguese textbooks analyzed in the Time I (1991/1992 - 1999/2000).**

Environmental Education						
School year	Students year	Discipline	Editors	Textbook	Author	Year
1°	6/7	Environment Studies	Porto Editora	Bambi 1	Pinto, A. M. & Carneiro, A.	1995
2°	7/8	Environment Studies	Porto Editora	Bambi 2	Pinto, A. M. & Carneiro, A.	1997
3°	8/9	Environment Studies	Porto Editora	O Bambi 3	Pinto, A. & Carneiro, M.	1996
4°	9/10	Environment Studies	Porto Editora	Pequenos Curiosos	Marques, C. & Timóteo, N.	1999
5°	10/11	Natural Sciences	Porto Editora	Bioterra	Motta, M., Viana, M.A. & Isaías, E.	1996
6°	11/12	Natural Sciences	Porto Editora	Vida Mágica	Peralta, C.R. & Calhau, M.B.	1996
7°	12/13	Natural Sciences	Porto Editora	Planeta Vivo – Ciências Naturais	Silva, A.D., Gramaxo, F., Mesquita, J., Santos, M.E. & Cruz, O.	1996
7°	12/13	Geography	Lisboa Editora	A Europa	Lemos, E.S., Pedrão, M.A. & Pinheiro, M.C.	1995
9°	14/15	Geography	Areal Editores	O Mundo em Contraste	Ribeiro, I.J., Costa, M. & Carrapa, M.E.	1997
10°	15/16	Earth and life Sciences	Porto Editora	Terra, Universo de Vida	Silva, A., Gramaxo, F., Santos, M. & Mesquita, J.	1993
10/11°	16/17	Geography	Porto Editora	Geografia 10° Ano	Pimentel, M.A. & Almeida, C.R.	1996
12°	17/18	Biology	Porto Editora	Terra, Universo de Vida (Biologia) – 2ª parte	Silva, A.D., Gramaxo, F., Santos, M.E., Mesquita, A.F. & Baldaia, L.	1996
12°	17/18	Geography	Lisboa Editora	Introdução ao Desenvolvimento Económico e Social	Lemos, E.S., Gonçalves, F., Costa, I.A., Silvestre, M.M. Moinhos, M.R.	1995

**Table 2.2: Portuguese textbooks analyzed in Time II (2000/2001 - 2005/2006).**

Environmental Education						
School year	Students age	Discipline	Editors	Textbooks	Author	Year
1°	6/7	Environment Studies	Porto Editora	Eu e o Bambi	Pinto, A. M. & Carneiro, A.	2003
2°	7/8	Environment Studies	Porto Editora	Eu e o Bambi	Pinto, A. M. & Carneiro, A.	2005
3°	8/9	Environment Studies	Porto Editora	Bambi 3	Pinto, A. & Carneiro, M.	2003
4°	9/19	Environment Studies	Gailivro	Estudo do Meio do João	Monteiro, J. & Paiva, M.	2004
5°	10/11	Natural Sciences	Porto Editora	Magia da Terra	Peralta, C., Calhau, M. & Sousa, M.	2004
7°	12/13	Geography	Texto Editores	Novas Viagens: Atividades Económicas	Rodrigues, A.	2005
8°	13/14	Natural Sciences	Porto Editora	Bioterra: Sustentabilidade na Terra	Motta, L. & Viana, M.	2005
9°	14/15	Geography	Texto Editores	Novas Viagens: Ambiente e Sociedade	Rodrigues, A.	2003
10°	15/16	Biology	Porto Editora	Terra, Universo de Vida – 2ª Parte	Silva, A., Gramaxo, F., Santos, M. & Mesquita, A.	2004
10/11°	16/17	Geography	Texto Editores	Geografia A	Rodrigues, A. & Barata, I.	2003
12°	17/18	Biology	Porto Editora	Terra, Universo de Vida	Silva, A., Gramaxo, F., Santos, M., Mesquita, A., Baldaia, L. & Félix, J.	2005

## Findings

The analysis of documents related to the national programmes of basic and secondary education showed that Environmental Education (EE) runs through the Portuguese education system, since the 1<sup>st</sup> grade (5/6 years-old pupils) throughout the 12<sup>th</sup> grade (17/18 years-old pupils). The Educational system is divided into the Basic Education and the Secondary School. The former is composed of three cycles: the 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle of Basic Education (1CBE), including the initial four grades; the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle of Basic Education (2CBE), including the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle of Basic Education (3CBE), including the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. The Secondary School (SS) has three grades: 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Distribution of the four topics in the programs of the Elementary and Secondary Education

In a first approach we examine, in the school program of the Ministry of Education in which years of schooling are considered, four pre-selected sub-topics: *Pollution, Use of Resources, Ecosystems and Biodiversity and Cycles*. This was performed taking into account the two-period study, Time I (1991/1992 - 1999/2000) and Time II (2000/2001 - 2005/2006) as shown in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Addressing the four sub-topics in the programs of basic and secondary education at Time I (1991-2000) and Time II (2000-2006).**

A: Relation between the sub-topic <i>POLLUTION</i> and years of schooling, at Time I and II.												
Time	1 <sup>o</sup> CEB				2CEB		3CEB			Secondary School		
	1 <sup>o</sup>	2 <sup>o</sup>	3 <sup>o</sup>	4 <sup>o</sup>	5 <sup>o</sup>	6 <sup>o</sup>	7 <sup>o</sup>	8 <sup>o</sup>	9 <sup>o</sup>	10 <sup>o</sup>	10 <sup>o</sup> /11 <sup>o</sup>	12 <sup>o</sup>
<b>T. I</b>			X	X	X	X	X (G; S)		X (G)		X (G)	X (C;DES)
<b>T.II</b>			X	X	X		X (G)	X	X (G)	X	X (G)	X
B: Relation between the sub-topic <i>USE OF RESOURCES</i> and years of schooling at Time I and II												
<b>T. I</b>							X (S)		X (G)		X (G)	X (C;DES)
<b>T.II</b>			X				X (G)	X	X (G)	X	X (G)	
C: Relation between the sub-topic <i>ECOSSYSTEMS AND CYCLES</i> and years of schooling at Time I and II												
<b>T. I</b>			X		X		X			X		X
<b>T.II</b>			X		X			X		X		
D: Relation between the sub-topic <i>BIODIVERSITY</i> and years of schooling at Time I and II.												
<b>T. I</b>	X	X	X									X
<b>T.II</b>	X	X	X				X	X		X		X

**Note:** S= Science; G= Geography; **ESD**= Introduction to the Economic and Social Development

Table 3.1 shows that the sub-topic most frequently mentioned in both times is the *Pollution*, followed by the *Use of Resources*, *Ecosystems and Cycles*, and eventually emerges *Biodiversity*. At the level of the **1CBE** (primary school), *Pollution* appears in textbooks of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years for both Time (I and II). The sub-topic *Use of Resources* is not present in any textbook of the primary school of Time I (T.I) but it appears in textbook of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in Time II (T.II). *Ecosystems and cycles* only appears in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year (in both T.I and T.II), and *Biodiversity* in the first three years of schooling (T.I and T.II), as shown in Table 3.1 (A, B, C and D). In **2CBE**, only appear two sub-topics: *Pollution* and *Ecosystems and Cycles* appear in the textbooks. At the 6<sup>th</sup> grade *Pollution* is the only sub-topic that appears in textbooks from Time I, as it is shown in table 3.1 (A, B, C e D). In **3CBE**, *Pollution* and *Use of Resources* are the sub-topics that appear in the three years of this Cycle of studies, except in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade of Time I where none of the topics appear (Table 3.1-C). The sub-topic *Ecosystems and cycles* only appears in textbooks of 7<sup>th</sup> grade (T. I) and 8<sup>th</sup> grade (T. II). Finally, *Biodiversity* is not present in any year of schooling in Time I, however it appears in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade of Time II. In the **Secondary School** all the sub-topics appear in the textbooks analyzed. *Pollution* appear in the textbooks of all the grades except in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade of Time I (Table 3.1-A). The *Use of Resources* does not appear in the textbooks of grade 10<sup>th</sup> of Time I, or in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, Time II (Table 3.1-B). However, *Ecosystems and Cycles* and *Biodiversity* are absent in the textbooks of 10/11<sup>th</sup> grade (Table 3.1-C e D). At 12<sup>th</sup> grade, at Time II, the discipline called Geography, was called Introduction to the Economic and Social Development - ESD, in Time I (1991/1992 - 1999/2000). In the Geography

textbooks the sub-topics referred are only *Pollution* and *Use of Resources*, which are present in 3CBE and Secondary School in both Time I and Time II.

### **Analysis of the school programmes and textbooks of Basic Education and Secondary School**

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle of Basic Education (1CBE)

Confronting the school programmes with the analysed textbooks, we found that, in general, there is conformity between what appears in the current programme of primary education (1CBE) and what appears in the current corresponding textbooks. Comparing the Time I (1991-2000) with Time II (2000-2006) we found that both sub-topics *Pollution* and *Ecosystems and Cycles* appear in both periods, at 3<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. However, the sub-topics and *Biodiversity* and *Use of Resources* only arises in Time II (Table 3.1-B and -D), indicating the intention now (Time II) of treating these topics earlier in the education system than before (Time I).

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle of Basic Education (2CBE)

The analysis of national programmes of 2CBE showed that the programmes of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade (Time I) refer the three sub-topics: *Pollution*, *Ecosystems and cycle*, and *Use of Resources*. However, the *Use of Resources* does not appear in the analysed textbooks, showing a discrepancy in relation to the national program. In contrast, *Pollution* as well as *Ecosystems and Cycles* appear in the textbooks in a tight association to what is prescribed in the national programmes.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle of Basic Education (3CBE)

Some discrepancy was found between the national programmes and the textbooks for the 3CBE of studies (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade) in Time I. This discrepancy was detected at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, where there was no reference to the *Biodiversity* sub-topic in the textbook, but it is referred in the programme for this school level. Today (Time II) the syllabus of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, deals with environmental issues only, therefore the entire textbook is dedicated to the four sub-topics mentioned above (Table 3.1).

#### Secondary School (SS)

Major differences between the national programmes and the examined textbooks were found in the SS, particularly in Time I (1991-2000): (i) Although the 12<sup>th</sup> grade programme does not refer *Pollution*, it appears in the analysed textbook; (ii) in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade Science textbook the two sub-topics *Biodiversity* and *Use of Resources* appear but they are not mentioned in the programme; and (iii) the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Geography textbook refers *Pollution* but it is not mentioned in the programme. For the Time II there is agreement between the syllabus and the analysed textbooks. The four sub-topics are treated in the secondary school textbooks (Table 3.1).

## Discussion/Conclusion

Environmental education should be mainly driven by and for the promotion of values, the environmental ethics. Should have an inter-and transdisciplinary approach to promote critical thinking and developing skills that allow teachers to decision making in order to have an equilibrium with the environment in which the individual falls is. In Portugal, it was only in post-revolutionary period of 1974 that EE was introduced in the curriculum of the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of basic education, the area of Physical and Social Environment with the aim of encouraging the development of responsible attitudes to create respect for life and for the conservation, protection and improvement of the environment (Teixeira, 2003). Our study shows that EE is currently addressed throughout schooling, from the 1<sup>st</sup> year up to the 12<sup>th</sup> years, over the areas of Physical and Social Environment (1CBE), Natural Sciences (2CBE), Natural Sciences (3CBE), Biology and Geography (SS). This study also showed that the national programme makes the external didactic transposition (Clément, 2006) along the Time I and Time II periods. Thus, through the efforts of the National Environmental Commission and the publication of the Law of the Education System in 1986, EE was recognized to be a school matter with the new goals of training students at all levels of education. The national guidelines and teachers' training have been better assured, and the institutionalization of the 'School Area' and 'Complementary Activities', became spaces for opportunity used by teachers to implement EE in actual living experiences of school communities (Teixeira, 2003). We may say that we went from a preoccupation with the natural systems for a work focused, for example, to food security, urban quality, climate change, desertification, green consumption, biodiversity and environmental ethics (Teixeira, 2003). These situations are reflected in the syllabus studied and textbooks for the periods 1991-2000 (T.I) and 2000-2006 (T.II) where, as we found in this study, it gives a greater emphasis on *Pollution*, followed by the *Use of Resources, Ecosystems and Cycles* and finally *Biodiversity*. We noted also that the topic of *Biodiversity* is addressed in most textbooks of T.II. In fact, the 2000/2001 reform met the growing concern for biodiversity conservation of our planet, thereby helping to pay attention to resource use and sustainable development, which Teixeira (2003:66) expressed as follows: "... everyone should take responsibility for their impact on natural systems, not affecting the biodiversity or ecological processes or over-exploiting renewable resources." An interesting aspect when analyzing the subject of EE in all the textbooks in our study is that there is an over-identification between EE and the Natural Sciences or between EE and Ecology which is in agreement with those found by Almeida (2007) in their studies. Dias (1998) in turn, argues that we should distinguish between EE and Ecology, considering that the latter was initiated at an earlier stage, when there was an overlap between EE and nature conservation, an idea that Dias (1998:23) considers passed out, stating that: "[However] the textbooks continue torturing the teachers and students with the tedious



*and inefficient approach to the biological sciences related to Ecology.*" In this sense, the EE cannot be limited to addressing the content of Sciences, or ecological knowledge it is needed to improve the knowledge of Economics, Sociology and Psychology to help us understand the causes of the environmental crisis, as well as to develop individuals' and companies' attitudes and behaviours (Almeida, 2007). The school curriculum does not simply make a selection from available content in a particular historical period, should also make them actually transmitted, so converting them into subject teaching. In addition to textbooks and other educational resources, it should be emphasized the importance of teachers' work in the classroom, making the process of internal didactic transposition (Gazzinelli, 2002). One aspect that has marked the Portuguese education system is the several curriculum changes that have occurred over the years. The latter curriculum revision led to the establishment of three new curricular areas - *project area*, *study skills* and *civic education*. The reorganization of the curriculum in the 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle of Basic Education focused on skills known as "knowledge in action" and was intended (DEB, 2001:15): *"to build an identity and awareness of personal and social participation free, responsible, critical solidarity and civic life, respect and appreciation of diversity of individual and group (...), construction of an ecological awareness which leads to the appreciation and preservation of natural and cultural heritage, the enhancement of relational dimensions and ethical principles that govern the relationship with others."* Environmental education is seen as cutting across all disciplines and with the globalizing features of the entire school, as advocated by Menezes (2003:146): *"the effectiveness of an environmental education project depends on the involvement of the whole school as an area where acquisitions in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills can be put into practice, contextualized and reinforced by all players in the educational process.* This curriculum reorganization, which occurred in 2001 and 2002, assumes a more active role of the student in the classroom and a different teaching way, where the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning and not only as a transmitter of knowledge (Freire, 2005). One of the inconsistencies that we found in our study was the discrepancy between what is advocated in the program and what is stated in textbooks analyzed in some disciplines, with respect to the Time I (1991-2000), but not at Time II (2000-2006). It is important that textbooks meet the goals and objectives, but with no need of being restricted to the national programmes. Rather, the way they are and develop the content and activities, the textbook provides the acquisition of basic knowledge and skills, exceeding the programmes. They are also important means of strengthening, deepening and integration of several acquisitions as well as pupils' personal development, social and cultural development (Bárrios *et al.*, 2000). Textbooks are still the dominant teaching tool in the classroom, and teachers are usually very dependent on them (Duarte, 1999). Indeed, textbooks, as the main reference in the classroom, represent the current curriculum since they determine the selection and sequence of topics to be taught and help teachers to implement the several subjects.

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