The contribution of the environmental education for the preservation of the human heritage

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Introduction

The environmental view of geology is necessary nowadays because of the ecological crisis, and is called for to contribute to the citizens' formation. The environmental education is a process of granting of
- knowledge
- development of abilities
- recognition of values, and
- formation of attitudes (or changes of attitudes)
in order to comprehend the interdependent relation between Man and Nature.

The environmental education demands also participation on the receipt and execution of the decisions about the conservation of the ecological equilibrium of the Biosphere (UNESCO, 1987).

This is a process that is a) interscientific (Felice et al., 1985) — concerning the research and the acquisition of knowledge, which are considered as necessary for the better comprehension of the Environment and b) holistic (Greig et al., 1987), because emphasizing on the relation and not on isolated individuals — it understands that these relations are truly dynamic.

The creation of the environmental education (UNITED NATIONS, 1972, 1973, 1977, 1978) has a rapid and large acceptance, due to the complexity and the direct importance of the environmental problems, which require an education not only for the Environment and into it but mainly in favour of the Environment (Muthoka et al., 1985, p. 4).

This means not only learning from and about, but also for the Environment.

Orientation of the environmental education

It is evident that the targets of the Environmental Education are not limited only at learning but also at the sensible section (attitudes and individuals' values) as well as at the psychokinematic section (kinematic abilities, Bloom et al., 1986) of the individuals.

These targets for individuals and social groups are as follows:
- Information awareness: to make aware and sensitive them about the environment and its problems;
- Knowledge to understand the environment through various experiences, its problems, as well as the interaction between man and nature;
- Attitudes to form worthies and feelings of interest towards the environment as well as disposition for an active participation on its improvement and preservation;
- Abilities to obtain the necessary knowledge and techniques for the definition and the solution of the environmental problems;
- Participation: to have the opportunities to undertake action for the solution of the environmental problems.

Actually the facing of the ecological crisis cannot be a subject of specialists but also of the citizens' society; that means that individuals and social groups must possess the suitable knowledge and the value code (Caduto, 1985) to use the knowledge acting into the frame of a not dominated relation between nature and society (Norton, 1982; Fensham et al., 1983; Trepl, 1989; Brennan, 1988). Here the role of the school and the Geology is very important (Pepper, 1987).
The Environmental training must use the following forms:
- Fieldwork, field trips
- Methods to solve problems
- Method of Project
- Utilization of regional resources
- Methods of analysis, elucidation of worthies, facing of moral dilemmas
- Discussions with participation of the larger community, etc.

On the basis of the above mentioned components, we can define the environmental education as a citizens' education concerned to the creation of the personality (like military service) and a social offering in order to form an ecological concept for the life. Thus, the environmental education is enrolled into a large social effort about the formation of new concepts and civilisation values. It is a subject of learning that concerns the human personality in its whole totality and complexity.

The role of the geoscientists

Geology, as Science of the Earth, is asked under the aegis of the environmental education to update and analyse the complex environmental problems. It is requested to give its own answers thus contributing actively to the formation of a new and modern learning of the society. It shall be able to form a harmonious relation between the industrial development and the function of the nature (Vassala, 1994; Vassala, Marcopouli-Diacantoni, 1991).

The geologists all over the world are obliged to preserve not only the physical (geological) environment, but also the technical one, that means their heritage of civilisation. There is the necessity of the environmental education. Every effort should be made to preserve the famous site of Pikermi (27 km from Athens) with a great interest about its vertebrate fauna well-known from the Pontian (Tourolian) Stage. Another important proposal concerns the preservation of several very beautiful caves of Greece.

Contribution of the environmental education to the preservation of monuments

The world monuments include every human construction, both personal and collective, the study of which enables us to know the past, to discover a given era and the society which realised the said construction (tool, tomb, statue, castle, church etc.). Each monument incorporates elements of form, technique and ideology reflecting the culture level of the society. It is a source of information on production processes, economic structures, technical means, social structure and organisation, mental apprehension and ideological tendencies. Through the knowledge of monuments, we recompose the life and the activity of man in earlier times.

The environmental problems of modern societies, and particularly the pollution of the atmosphere and the abandonment of the countryside, constitute threats to the monuments. Therefore, the preservation of our monumental heritage is a matter of priority significance. An important contribution to this effort in the role of environmental education. The Environmental Education, as defined in the International Conference of Tbilissi (14-26 October 1977, UNESCO-UNEP) can contribute to:
- information awareness, i.e. to help social group and citizens to realise the importance of monuments, and to care about the problems threatening them,
- knowledge, i.e. to help social group and citizens to acquire a global understanding of monuments and problems threatening them,
- attitudes, i.e. to help social groups and citizens to become interested in their monumental heritage to the extent to desire to participate actively in their preservation and protection,
- abilities, i.e. help social groups and citizens to acquire the abilities necessary for identifying and solving environmental problems associated with monuments,
- participation, i.e. allow social group and citizens to participate actively at all levels in view of the monuments' preservation and solution of environmental problems associated with them.

The preservation of our monumental heritage through environmental education can also be combined with strategies aiming at the social and economic development of each area (e.g. the development of alternative tourism such as cultural tourism etc.). Thus, it will contribute to the promotion of a relation between Man and Nature.

Proposals

The geoscientists must undertake some projects in order to contribute to the environment concerning.
- a) the ECOTOURISM, i.e. to create guides for the environment addressed to all the social groups and to inform them about the proposals of the Environmental Education.
- b) the PRESERVATION of the human heritage (monuments).
References