

Schooling for Sustainable Development in South America

Schooling for Sustainable Development

Volume 2

Series Editors

John Chi-Kin Lee

Michael Williams

Philip Stimpson

This book series addresses issues associated with sustainability with a strong focus on the need for educational policy and action. Current attention and initiatives assume that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) can be introduced successfully and gradually into schools worldwide. This series explores the issues that arise from the substantial and sustainable changes to be implemented in schools and education systems.

The series aims to counter the prevailing Western character of current research and enable cross-cultural comparisons of educational policy, practice, and project development. As a whole, it provides authoritative and comprehensive global coverage, with each volume providing regional/continental coverage. The volumes present data and insights that contribute to research, policy and practice in ESD-related curriculum development, school organization and school-community partnerships. They are based on ESD-related project experiences, empirical studies that focus on ESD implementation and teachers' perceptions as well as childhood studies that examine children's geographies, cultural characteristics and behaviours.

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Editors

Schooling for Sustainable Development in South America

Policies, Actions and Educational
Experiences

 Springer

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ISBN 978-94-007-1753-4 e-ISBN 978-94-007-1754-1

DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-1754-1

Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011935370

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Printed on acid-free paper

Springer is part of Springer Science+Business Media (www.springer.com)

For Michael Williams, John Chi-Kin Lee and Philip Stimpson who, trusting us, invited us to organise this book without imposing anything or compelling us to think outside the pleasure of thought.

For those who we invited to write their chapters and who articulated a set of arguments that turned inside out education for sustainable development in South America.

For our readers who, when they respond to the question “What can I do?”, may have as their goal the importance of life, freedom and creativity in the world.

*Maria Lucia de Amorim Soares
and Leandro Petarnella*

Acknowledgements

Writing and co-editing a book is a risky task. You do this and present the ideas, concepts and inconveniences that involve a certain area giving concreteness to what is transitory in daily life. For this to happen, in this book many people were involved and we would like to thank everyone who took this risk with us.

Special thanks to Emeritus Professor Michael Williams, formerly of the Faculty of Education and Health Studies from Swansea University, in the United Kingdom, who besides believing in our work, worked hard in reviewing all of the chapters in this book. Also thanks to Professor John Chi-Kin Lee of the Hong Kong Institute of Education, who, with Dr Philip Stimpson, formerly of the University of Hong Kong and Professor Michael Williams, together have offered this challenge to us: the mission of bringing together the research findings, experiences and political debates taking place in universities in South America about the environment, education and sustainable development.

We also thank all the authors who together helped make this work: Vânia Regina Boschetti, Fabián Araya Palacios, Ubiratan Silva Alves, Maria Beatriz Rocha Ferreira, Cláudia Marcela Polimeni, Rosa López de D'Amico, Maritza Loreto and Orlando Mendoza who, contributing the chapters in the first part of this book, helped us draw a general overview of educational programmes and policies that have been adopted in South America, showing that sustainable development can become a reality in the countries they represent.

Our thanks go also to Sergio Luiz de Souza Vieira, Carmen Lucia Artioli Rolim, José Damião Trindade Rocha, Paulo Alexandre Adler Pereira and Eduardo de Campos Garcia, who, in the second part of this work, enabled us to understand the work that is being developed in Brazil involving sustainability.

Finally, we are grateful to Nara Silvia Marcondes Martins, Ivo Eduardo Roman Pons, Petra Sanchez Sanchez, Eliete Jussara Nogueira, Luiz Fernando Gomes da Silva and Paulo Celso da Silva who, in the third part, have called on their educational experiences, to reveal how an education for sustainable development can go beyond the curricular discourse.

Series Editors' Introduction

Education for sustainable development (ESD) has rapidly become part of educational discourses worldwide. Within its global attractiveness lie both its strength and its weakness. Its strength lies in its capacity to alert educationists, broadly defined, to a shared concern for the future of both the planet and local communities. Its weakness lies in its lack of shared meaning and, stemming from this, the enormous difficulties encountered in trying to bring ESD into the mainstream activities of educational institutions.

In designating the period 2005–2014 as the International Decade of Education for Sustainable Development the United Nations sought to bring to the fore the need for politicians, policy-makers and practitioners to seek ways by which ESD can become part of the fabric of formal and informal education. At the heart of the numerous initiatives that have been stimulated by this designation is the assumption that ESD should be introduced and can be introduced successfully into schools world-wide. It is assumed that children, older students and adults can be educated formally to act now in the interests of a sustainable future and to act internationally.

What is evident is that different nations have adopted different approaches to ESD, sometimes interchanging the term with environmental education, another term subject to a wide range of interpretations. These differences are evident in educational practice in regions, districts and individual schools as well as in academic studies and commentaries. Obviously, this is not to say that there is some common ground in policies and practice, it is simply to keep to the forefront the recognition that, even when nations make pronouncements about aspects of ESD, these should not be treated as authoritative statements about what is happening at the school and classroom levels. Broad statements have a value in highlighting issues and trends but they need to be treated with caution. The same caution needs to be applied to pronouncements emanating from academic sources. Academics have their own agendas and care must be taken when reading what appear to be authoritative statements about developments in ESD occurring within their own communities and nations.

Our series addresses the array of issues arising from attempts made to convert assumptions about, and definitions of, ESD into substantial and sustainable changes

principally in schools. Underpinning the series is a concern for identifying those cultural forces that impact on national, regional and local adaptations to approaches to ESD that have international currency. In this, the editors of the books in the series, each based on experience in a single continent or extensive region, seek to counter the strong Western (Australian, North American, European) character of much research and writing in the broad field of ESD. Research and scholarly studies are commonly underpinned by values and assumptions derived from Western culture, broadly defined. The design of the series as a set of broadly continent-scale books seeks to bring together experts from various countries in each continent. The books bring out contrasting experiences and insights with a range of explanations of policies and practice.

Within the broad cultural contexts of the continents and regions included in the series authors provide evidence of policies, formal curriculum developments and innovations and informal school-related activities. Some authors have paid close attention to policy making at various levels, others have addressed whole school organisational issues and others have provided detailed case studies of localities and individual schools.

Children and young people live in distinct worlds of their own. They have very distinctive cognitive and affective characteristics that vary from one culture to another, at whatever scale that culture is defined. They are also often targets for environmental campaigns that wish to promote particular behavioural changes. ESD is often construed as an attempt to change habits, to encourage children and young people to “think globally and act locally”. This series demonstrates how this and other slogans are translated in education systems and schools world-wide.

For this volume *Schooling for Sustainable Development in South America: Policies, Actions and Educational Experiences*, the co-editors Maria Lucia de Amorim Soares and Leandro Petarnella have brought together an array of chapters highlighting the recent developments and issues related to ESD in selected South American nations. The book is divided into three parts. Part I gives an overview on schooling for sustainable development in South America. Part II focuses on schooling for sustainable development in Brazil while Part III depicts the trends and challenges in educational provision for sustainable development. ESD is emphasised with a socio-political orientation in the context of developing countries in South America and in particular in Brazil where many scholars locally and internationally draw upon the inspiring ideas of Paulo Freire who called for social and educational actions in eradicating social injustice. In some countries like Bolivia and Brazil, as described in Chaps. 6 and 8 respectively, while environmental education or ESD is still an emerging and important field, perhaps the fundamental challenge of ESD remains whether or not to make an overhaul of the whole education system the top priority as an attempt to reduce illiteracy rates and help students ensure their own survival. There are important lessons for the governments in South America for future improvement and calls for international attention and co-operation.

John Chi-Kin Lee
Michael Williams
Philip Stimpson

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