

If we defend
EDUCATION
 we sustain the
WORLD

By 1st August 2018, humanity had already consumed all the natural resources that our planet is able to regenerate in an entire year. This means that we are living as if we had 1.7 planets at our disposal, and if everyone lived as we do in Spain, we would need 2.4 planet Earths for the whole of mankind.



WE ARE LIVING IN AN EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION

This is just one of many statistics that give us an idea of the emergency environmental situation we are living in today, and the extent to which human activities have affected and continue to affect our surroundings, triggering a chain of processes with, in some cases, irreparable effects. These are deeply-linked phenomena with highly complex interactions.

The production and use of energy, transport, agriculture and livestock are the driving factors behind **greenhouse gas emissions**, which in turn are one of the main causes of the increasing temperature on the Earth: the infamous **global warming**. Between 1880 and 2017, the planet's global temperature increased by 1°C, and if serious measures are not put into place, it is likely that by the end of this century the planet's temperature will have risen by up to 3.5°C. This would have serious environmental, social and economic consequences and would put our very survival at risk. For example, if we continue as we are, by 2010 the coral reefs may have completely disappeared.

Global warming, in turn, is the main cause of a more complex process: **climate change**. This concept refers to the long-term modifications of our planet's weather conditions, and has been called the **greatest environmental crisis that humanity has ever faced**. The **effects of climate change** are already noticeable in many areas, and **it has an extremely high human cost**. For example, a high level of pollution is already a major cause of illness



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and death in urban areas, leading to more deaths than AIDS and malaria. Despite the majority of deaths occurring in developing countries, the problem has serious effects on **European cities, where calculations estimate that 432,000 premature deaths are brought about by pollution each year**. In Spain, estimates indicate that over 38,000 premature deaths each year are attributable to pollution¹.

For example, the loss of ecosystem diversity, the reduced fertility of soil and the intensification of drought caused by climate change, all have a direct impact on our capacity to produce food. It is estimated that by 2050, climate change will have reduced wheat, rice and corn production by 10-25%, which would generate an increase of food prices and food insecurity. This would have a particularly resounding effect on poorer countries in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Another example is the **increase in extreme weather phenomena** and the subsequent natural disasters (which as well as causing massive destruction), are also one of the main causes of a large number of internal and external migratory movements. In 2008, 20 million people were forced to displace as a result of extreme weather phenomena, compared to the 4.6 million people displaced internally due to conflict and violence in the same period.

The phenomenon of **climate migration** is increasing. It is estimated that by 2050 it will affect approximately 200 million people. Moreover, it is envisaged that between 2030 and 2050, 250,000 more people will die each year due to climate-related factors, such as an increase in malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress. It is worth highlighting that **women and girls are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change**, for a variety of reasons, such as their greater involvement in agricultural tasks, the roles traditionally assigned to them and the discriminatory attitudes that they still face in most countries

As well as being a phenomenon caused by humans, climate change and the complex processes that it has triggered, constitute a global challenge that does not recognise borders. Its effects are already noticeable, both in Northern and Southern countries. However, it is important to highlight that, despite



COUNTRIES WITH A HIGHER LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT AND INCOME – MAINLY IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA – ARE THOSE WITH A LARGER ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

¹ European Environment Agency (EEA) Report 2018, <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/air-quality-in-europe-2018>

developed regions having contributed and continuing to contribute the most to climate change because of their production and consumption models, it is **poorer countries and their people that suffer the most consequences**, as they usually live in more vulnerable areas and their subsistence depends more directly on access to natural resources. In fact, economic growth, reduced poverty and environmental sustainability are closely linked. It is calculated that, depending on how ecosystems and the economy adapt, by 2030 climate change could take 122 million people into poverty.

This complex link between **environmental sustainability and social and economic sustainability** also brings us face to face with the challenge of **decoupling the link between economic growth and the ever-increasing consumption natural resources**, so that we are able to ensure environmental sustainability whilst improving the wellbeing and quality of life of poverty-stricken people and countries.



COUNTRIES THAT HAVE UNDERGONE RAPID DEVELOPMENT IN QUALITY OF LIFE, HAVE SEEN THEIR ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINTS ALMOST DOUBLE AS NATIONAL CONSUMPTION INCREASES

THE SOLUTION IS IN OUR HANDS AND EDUCATION IS THE KEY

The international community has shown its desire to address climate change and its effects with the so-called Paris Agreement on Climate Change² (December 2015). In this Agreement, the countries involved resolved to adopt the measures necessary to limit the Earth's temperature rise to a maximum of 2°C by the end of the 21st century, though the ideal rise would not exceed 1.5°C.

This commitment also features in the **Sustainable Development Goals³ (SDG) 2030 Agenda**, as they are practically all directly (SDG 11⁴, SDG 12⁵, SDG 13⁶, SDG 14⁷, and SDG 15⁸) or indirectly linked to environmental and social sustainability, including SDG4 concerning education⁹.

As such, our future and that of our planet depends on our ability to **urgently transform our economic model and our production and consumption models**, using solutions based on sustainable development, social justice and equity, ensuring we are able to share the impacts of climate change more equitably. Furthermore, we must also consider sustainability from a social perspective, guaranteeing a balance between the economy, the environment and the wellbeing of people and communities, especially those that are most vulnerable.



Therefore it is vital to ensure that human activities evolve in such a way that they do not harm the communities they affect, undertaking actions that allow the economic, political and cultural rights of all people to be respected whilst promoting equality.

² https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/spanish_paris_agreement.pdf
³ <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible/>
⁴ SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
⁵ SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
⁶ SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
⁷ SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
⁸ SDG 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
⁹ SDG 4: ("Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning") target 7 ("By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development").



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FOOD WASTE SPIRALS TO 1.3 BILLION TONNES EACH YEAR, REPRESENTING 30-40% OF ALL FOOD PRODUCED GLOBALLY

Although this depends on the coordinated efforts of different players (Governments, companies, civil society), citizens also fulfil a fundamental role when it comes to stopping this spiral of destruction of our planet, particularly developed countries, as our consumption and ecological footprint are greater.

Education plays a vital role in this necessary individual and collective change of attitude, behaviour and lifestyle.

- Education can contribute by enabling people to understand environmental problems, and to give them an answer, the chance to adapt and reduce their vulnerability to their effects.

For example, studies show that if educational progress stagnates, the number of natural disaster victims would increase by 20% over the next decade. However, universalising secondary education by 2030 would prevent 200,000 deaths caused by natural disasters over the next twenty years¹⁰.



FOOD WASTE GENERATES 8% OF THE ANNUAL TOTAL OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

¹⁰ UNESCO 2017. Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. Education for People and Planet. Creating Sustainable Futures for All. UNESCO 2017.

- Education is an **essential tool for creating citizens that are aware of the causes and consequences of climate change and of other environmental problems**. It also gives people the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to find solutions from an economic, social and technological perspective, and above all from an ethical point of view. When people have the knowledge, skills and aptitudes they need, they are more able to analyse their own behaviour and exercise their power as consumers and citizens concerned for the planet's survival and mankind's wellbeing.



**WE NEED
INCLUSIVE AND
QUALITY
EDUCATION**

- Environmental education can also **contribute to improving academic performance**, as participation and involvement drive people to find solutions to environmental challenges. It can also be useful when calling on political leaders to adopt the measures necessary to protect the world we live in.

However, for **education** to work effectively as a tool to promote environmental and social sustainability, it must be **truly inclusive and of a high quality**. That is to say, among other things, educational systems should not be designed with the objective of preparing young people to work and consume for their whole lives in the pursuit of economic gains; this would perpetuate an unsustainable economic model that is already not working. Rather, **citizens should be taught autonomy, responsibility, and critical sense, awareness and competence**, with more initiative to face complex sustainability problems, such as, for example, creating a sustainable school.

Other key aspects in this regard include **teacher training** in environmental and social issues, **lifelong learning** and the valuing of traditional knowledge, taking environmental education to other public spaces and communities outside the classroom. Finally, **the education sector can be used as an example of environmental management** through an "integral approach" to environmental education, which not only considers the educational programme, but also after-school activities and teacher training, and everything related to infrastructure, management, operations and processes.

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE TEACHING PROPOSAL

1. Promote awareness of the importance of ensuring the right to a fully inclusive and equitable education for all and lifelong learning, and improving knowledge of existing challenges to achieve this objective.
2. Raise awareness of the different environmental and social challenges faced by humanity today, the interconnection between them and how these challenges affect the wellbeing of all people, and the exercising of their rights.
3. Improve knowledge about the determining role played by education in the empowerment of citizens to construct a sustainable social and environmental future together for the benefit of everyone.
4. Promote a shift in attitude and people's behaviour in order to advance in constructing a sustainable future from a social and environmental perspective.
5. Take on, as active citizens, the shared responsibility against unfair situations, as everyone can do something to change them or make a difference to them.

VALUES, COMPETENCIES AND CAPACITIES

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

- Respect people, human rights, diversity and points of view that are different to our own.

- Develop emotional abilities and attitudes that favour dialogue, active listening and negotiation to reach agreements.

- Develop values based around solidarity and social commitment.

- Participate proactively in the activities proposed.

- Acknowledge education as a public asset and as a right of all people, and also as the means needed to lead a dignified life, and as a driver for sustainable development.

- Demonstrate sensitivity towards situations and people whose rights are being violated.

- Acknowledge mechanisms to participate and campaign for the right to education.

COMPETENCIES

This teaching proposal has been designed to work on a series of key crosscutting competencies that are needed by everyone, though adapted to the different educational levels and ages. These key competencies make it easier for people to develop the mechanisms and tools needed to face the complex challenges of today's world and to advance constructively towards a more sustainable future.

Linguistic competencies

Strengthen the ability to express oneself and to interpret thoughts, feelings, opinions, experiences and facts both orally

and in writing. It implies the ability to put oneself in another's position, and to listen to opinions that differ from our own with respect and sensitivity.

Social and citizenship competencies

Recognise the equality of rights of people. Learn to understand and reflect upon the rules and values that underlie our actions. Use empathy to be able to analyse and accept differences and to understand why people have certain points of view, taking into account their particular situations and circumstances.

Reflect upon the concepts of equality and solidarity. Understand the social situations that others are experiencing, cooperate, live together and establish commitments to contribute to improving these situations. Understand the terms "co-responsibility", "participation" and "active citizenship", and put this knowledge and these attitudes into practice in activities that go on around you.

Cognitive competencies

Learn to analyse complex systems, how they appear in different settings, and how they are interconnected. Learn to deal with uncertainty.

Learn to analyse and understand things that happen in the world and their consequences, and take action to improve the living conditions of both yourself and others.

Forward-thinking competencies

Learn to understand and evaluate a range of future scenarios (possible, probable and desirable); learn to create your own vision of the future; learn to evaluate the consequences of our actions and to stand and face risks and changes.

Strategic competencies

Learn to develop and implement collective, innovative measures that promote sustainability on a local, regional, national and global level.

Cooperative competencies

Develop the capacities needed to learn from other people, as well as to understand and respect their needs, points of view and actions (empathy); learn to relate to others and to be sensitive towards their problems (empathetic leadership); learn to manage conflict within a group and to resolve problems in a cooperative and participative way.

Critical competencies

Learn to question established rules, practices and opinions, and to reflect on your own values, points of view and actions.

Autonomy and personal initiative competencies

Learn to reflect on the role that each of us has within our communities or societies on a local and global level; learn to manage feelings and desires. Strengthen the acquisition of values and personal attitudes.

Complete problem-solving competencies

Learn to apply different problem-solving mechanisms to the complex challenges in today's world from a social and environmental point of view, so as to develop possible viable and inclusive solutions that promote equity and sustainable development.

CAPACITIES

Learning to think and communicate: Expressing how they feel and value various concepts related to the issue in hand (sustainability, respect, camaraderie, accepting diversity, cooperation) in different languages.

Learning to relate to other people: Seek out other people that are different in our communities, and identify principles that help us live alongside them. Demonstrate respectful attitudes towards other people and towards ourselves.

Learning to have personal balance: Develop and strengthen positive feelings towards the people around us and show respect for ourselves, recognising our own possibilities and limitations.

Learning to construct: Identify situations of discrimination, lack of respect and inequality in our surroundings and around the world, understanding them and taking a position against them, engaging to improve and/or resolve them. Strengthen the capacity to imagine, pursue and develop critical individual or collective projects with both responsibility and meaning.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the World Campaign for Education website (www.cme-espana.org) to find different resources to discover more about the issues dealt with, with films and documentaries, a full reading list and references to other complementary teaching materials.

For more information, we recommend consulting the teaching units of previous years.

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