

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: TRAINING METHODS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AT HIGH SCHOOL

ACTIVITĂȚILE EXTRAȘCOLARE - MODALITĂȚI DE FORMARE A EDUCAȚIEI ECOLOGICE LA NIVEL LICEAL

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Abstract. *The extracurricular activities can be carried by pupils guided by teachers outside the classroom, in various forms: excursions, hiking, cleaning actions in some areas, competitions, etc. Some of these activities can be performed to mark certain days dedicated from the environmental calendar. Based on these considerations and taking into account the profile of high school we have designed a set of activities to mark several events from the environmental calendar. Three of these activities are the subject of this paper: „Black Sea needs us”, „Botoșani - City of my childhood” and „The Wetlands and their importance”. All these activities aim to stimulate awareness and motivation for environmental protection, capacity for observation, exploration and understanding of the surrounding reality, developing a positive attitude towards the environment and environmentally appropriate behavior.*

Key words: extracurricular activities, environmental education.

Rezumat. *Activitățile extrașcolare pot fi realizate de către elevi, îndrumați de profesori, în afara orelor de curs, sub diverse forme: excursii, drumeții, acțiuni de igienizare a unor zone, concursuri, etc. O parte din aceste activități pot fi realizate pentru a marca anumite zile consacrate din Calendarul ecologic. Pe baza acestor considerente și ținând cont de profilul liceului am conceput un set de activități care să marcheze mai multe evenimente din Calendarul ecologic. Trei dintre aceste activități „Marea Neagră are nevoie de noi”, „Botoșani – Orașul copilăriei mele” și „Zonele Umede și importanța lor” fac obiectul prezentei lucrări. Toate aceste activități vizează stimularea motivației privind cunoașterea și protejarea mediului înconjurător, dezvoltarea capacității de observare, explorare și înțelegere a realității înconjurătoare, formarea unei atitudini pozitive față de mediu și a unui comportament ecologic adecvat.*

Cuvinte cheie: activități extracurriculare, educație ecologică.

INTRODUCTION

The extracurricular activities can be carried out by pupils guided by their teachers outside the classroom, in various forms: excursions, hiking, visits, cleaning actions of the green areas, debates, competitions, Eco Patrol etc. The extracurricular education has its precise role and place in forming the pupils'

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personalities. The education by means of extracurricular activities focuses on identifying and cultivating the optimal correspondence between the pupils' abilities, talents, research and teamwork abilities development, analysis and data communication abilities, interest in cultivating a healthy life style, as well as the stimulation of the creative behaviour in different fields.

According to Costică Naela et al., (2007), some habits formed by the educational activities involved in the environmental protection can contribute to the general development of the pupil. A part of these activities may be carried out in order to celebrate some special days in the environmental calendar.

Based on these considerations and taking into account the high school focus on natural resources and environmental protection, we conceived a 2010-2011 activity program that mark several events from the ecologic calendar. Three of these activities: "*The Black Sea needs us*", "*Botosani – the city of my childhood*" and "*The Wetlands and their importance*" are the subject of the present paper work. They mark three important days of the environmental calendar, which are "The International Black Sea Day" (October 31st), "World Town Planning Day" (November 8th) and The World Wetlands Day" (February 2nd).

In the continuation, few synthetic information referring to the importance of those three events from the environmental calendar, are presented.

On October 31st 1996 the six Black Sea riparian countries - Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine – signed the Strategic Action Plan for the Rehabilitation and Protection of the Black Sea. This day designated "the International Black Sea Day". The Black Sea is the world's most isolated sea connected to the Oceans via the Mediterranean Sea through the Bosphorus, Dardanelle and Gibraltar straits and linked with the Sea of Azov in the northeast through the Kerch strait (www.mmediu.ro). The coastal areas of the Black Sea include a diversity of habitats, with vegetal and animal species of national and international importance, designated as Ramsar sites, reason for which a project entitled the Ramsar Regional Initiative for Black Sea coastal wetlands (www.ddbra.ro; www.blackseawet.org).

To the initiative of the Professor Carlos Maria della Paolera from the University of Buenos Aires the "World Town Planning Day" has been celebrated since 1949, in over 30 countries. The aim of the activities carried out for celebrating this day is to take into attention the town planning problem and its effects over the sustainable development of the society (www.ecomagazin.ro).

This year, we celebrate the 40th anniversary from the day the Ramsar Convention (Iran, 1971) was signed, which aims the conservation and sustainable use of the wetlands and their resources (www.rowater.ro). "The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, mostly for the aquatic birds" is the first international environmental convention to which Romania adhered (by means of Law 5 of 1991) (www.apmgr.ro). In the Ramsar Convention list there are over 1600 international importance wetlands; 5 wetlands were designated as Ramsar sites in Romania (www.rowater.ro). In Botosani County, three wetlands (the Stâncă Costești Lake, the ponds on the valley Bașeu-Podrigăi-Ibăneasei and the Lozna peat bog)

were declared Protected Natural Areas of Community Interest because they are biotopes for birds that are protected in the UE. (www.apmbotoșani.ro).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

A series of special activities that resulted attractive and accessible to the high school pupils were organized between October 2010 and February 2011. Pupils from 9th to 11th grades from "Petru Rareș" High School from Botoșani and students from the Faculty of the Biology of Iași University participated to these thematic actions.

By carrying out these activities, we tried to mark the three international events on the above-mentioned environmental calendar.

Objectives: knowing the characteristics and the importance of different types of ecosystems (marine, urban, wetland specific); developing the team working abilities, the environmental documentation, investigation, and research abilities, the data communication abilities; awareness of pupils on: problems of the marine ecosystem, urban areas and wetlands, the role of green spaces; identifying applicable solutions from the perspective of pupils on protecting the marine environment, urban environment and wetlands; the formation of a positive attitude towards the environment.

Didactic strategies: heuristic conversation, Power Point presentations, research papers, posters, on field research displacements, case study; debates, didactic games, teamwork activities, problematisation, brainstorming, photo competition.

Operating place: according to their specific theme, the activities were carried out in the classroom (the ecology laboratory), in various areas of Botosani city.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Carried out activities:

1) *"The Black Sea needs us"*. The activities carried out under this title were very diverse. They consisted in Power Point presentations, research papers, posters, publications, booklets, the Children's Encyclopedia and fliers over the Black Sea marine life; debates regarding the Black Sea: general information, the flora, the specific fauna, the coast of the Black Sea, the tourist area, the port cities of the Black Sea, the pollution sources and the anthropic impact over the marine ecosystem as well as the importance of marine environment conservation (figure 1).

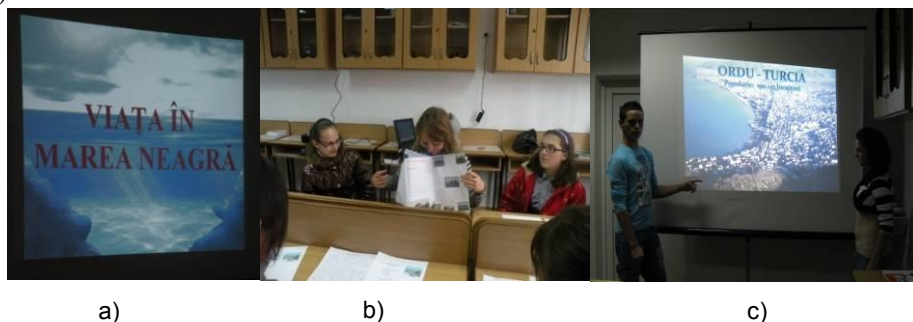


Fig. 1 - Images from these activities

The final part of the activities was represented by an active creational game named “the skilful housemaids” that stimulated the pupils to cook, observe and taste some of the marine fauna alimentary products (fish and fry cans). The figure 2 show images from the final part of these activities.



Fig. 2 - Images from the final part of these activities

2) “Botosani – The city of my childhood”. The activities consisted in:

- Power Point presentations of the city – seen as human settlement, the city of Botosani - past, present and future; the importance of the green areas in the city: case study – green areas in Botosani.
- Debates regarding the urban pollution (urban pollution sources, the effects of the pollution over the environment and the human health) and the measure to be take in order to reduce it; green spaces categories and their importance.
- On field practical activity in downtown area of Botosani city and in various neighborhoods in order to observe the cleanness degree of the city and to get to know the main parks and tourist sites of the city.
- Photo competition: the pupils organized in three groups had as a task to take some photos of Botosani on the following themes: city administrative buildings; cultural sites; historic and cult sites; beautiful versus less beautiful (less clean) areas of the city.

The figures 3 - 5 present images from these activities.

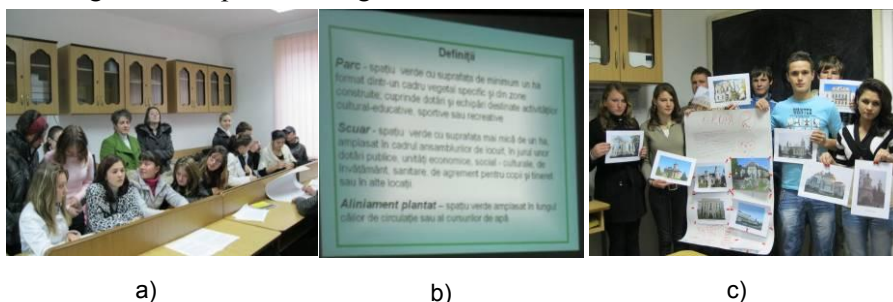


Fig. 3 - Images from these activities - in the ecology laboratory

At the end of the activity the pupils that involved themselves intensely in carrying out the activity, the ones that actively participated on debates and took the most beautiful photos were rewarded.



Fig. 4. - Mihai Eminescu County Library



Fig. 5 - Park Hall

3) *“The wetlands and their importance”*. The theme related activities consisted in:

- a presentation of documentary materials referring to the wetlands: fliers, booklets, magazines, specific field articles, the Children’s Encyclopedia – the wetlands animal life.
- debates over the type of wetlands, their importance, the specific flora and fauna; the wetlands in Romania and more specifically in Botosani County (characteristics, plant species, specific animals), wetlands protection measures.
- Power Point presentations, research papers referring to: Romanian wetlands and more specifically those in Botosani County (characteristics, plant species, specific animals), wetlands protection measures.
- designating and rewarding the most accomplished presentations the pupils made.

The photos from figure 6 show images from these activities.



Fig. 6 - Images from these activities

CONCLUSIONS

The activities carried out by the pupils brought positive changes in the pupils' behaviour and contributed to the improvement of their communication, enriching their vocabulary with terms from biology, ecology and environmental protection fields, as well as assuming some individual and group responsibilities and the development of creativity.

Also, these activities stimulated the curiosity and the interest for knowing the different aspects of the environment (local, national and international environmental problems; measures and initiatives to reduce the environmental pollution to protect the environment factors, the biodiversity and the human health).

The pupils were enthusiastic and showed an eager desire to accomplish more such activities in the future.

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