

# Development, environment and education.

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## Abstract

During the last decades, “sustainable development” has acquired global interest and has become the key phrase for politicians, decision makers, development agents, academics and environmental groups. International organizations have conveyed the meaning to formal education systems of countries worldwide through the creation of “Education for Sustainable Development” (E.S.D.). The E.S.D. has not been forwarded as an entirely new concept, but as a result of the dialectic evolution of Environmental Education (E.E.). Considering the fact that some, more or less, authoritarian powers still continue to downgrade the role of education to a tool of imposition, maintenance and reproduction of the dominant ideology (Rokos, 2007), the issue of sustainable development should be approached with great attention.

The research line followed in this study, was based on a qualitative interpretive approach. The inquiring effort was focused in teachers that deal with E.E. Through the investigation of representations of development, environment, education and other relevant meanings, we have considered that our research has allowed us to conceive the dynamics of transmission, legalization, misappropriation, discussion, resistance, development and changes of these meanings. The aim was to point out representations as phenomena that reflect social dynamics and these have to be emphasized as objectively as possible. Development, as a concept, divided the educators. The reported ignorance of other developmental approaches such as Worth-

living Integrated Development (Rokos 2000: 2004), Social Ecology (Bookchin 1964: 1990: 1995) Eco-Socialism (Pepper 1993), Deep Ecology (Naess 1989), Ecological Modernizers (Beck 1992; Mol and Sonnenfeld, 2000) or Green Development (Elkington J and Burke T. 1987) limited the discussions about “sustainability” and “sustainable development”. While seeking the characteristics of life at the age of “sustainable development”, we realized that many of the expectations the educators had, did not agree with the dominated theory of “sustainable development”. The basic issues that sketched out the scenery of education about development and environment were the vague educational objectives, the different pedagogic approaches about the analysis of “sustainable development” in the classroom, the tight analytical program, the incomplete briefing of educators and the need for diffusion of the “development” and “environment” concepts, in the whole analytical program of the school.

**Keywords:** Development, environment, educators, qualitative interpretive approach

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