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# How to solve environmental proble Propositions from children of the 6th gr

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### INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS

How do children, after six years of schooling, understand great environmental problems? How do childre embrace environmental issues?

This study considers a standardized Portuguese literacy test (PASE LINGUA PORTUGUESA) that all children in the Azorean Archipelago (Portugal) complete once they finish sixth grade. The 2007 test included a composition focused on their perspectives on the environment, global warming and other major problems and potential solutions.

From 3400 tests, 203 were analysed, including those from two classrooms for each of the nine islands of the Azores Archipelago (110 girls & 93 boys; age: 12 years old, average) The texts produced by the children were submitted to descriptive-interpretative content analyses that explored the identified problems and the scope of the proposed solutions.

Did not refe

Many environmental problems were described by the children and a variety of ideas for sólutions was advanced.

The referred problems and solutions were then analysed by us and classified in different categories.

| issues                                      |                         |                     |    |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|----|
| sion  | Sub-dimension           | Category            |    |
| Facing<br>Environmental<br>Problems         | Climatic Changes        |                     | 41 |
|   | Pollution               | Garbage production  | 2  |
|   |                         | Garbage management  | 7  |
|   | Unsustainability        |                     | 7  |
|   | Resources<br>management | Vanishing resources | 2  |
|   |                         | Waste               | 2  |
| Ensure the<br>Maintenance of<br>the Systems | Natural systems         |                     | 10 |
|   | Sustainability          |                     | 1  |
| Improve the<br>Systems                      | Environment             |                     | 15 |
|   | Environment at school   |                     | 11 |
| Did not refer                               |                         |                     | 2  |

All the children identified problems and solutions.

Two thirds of the children focused on existing problems, the rest on prevention and maintenance of systems

Almost two thirds of the referred problems are connected with global warming

Children from Faial, Pico and Terceira Islands. identified more problems connected with their near environment (school).

was large redundancy around elementary solutions.

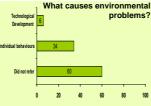
There was a naive assumption that

behavioural changes are easily attained. Almost two thirds of the children did not refer likely causes or identified a responsible for the environmental problems stated.

Many proposed measures show a clea disarticulations between the ways and the ends which suggests an indiscriminate incorporation, mediatised or not, of the pro-environmental rhetoric

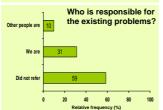


Keep contact with nature



0.2

0.9



# CONCLUSIONS

A reflection of these results may be useful in order to help define the purposes and the ways to incorporate environment education in schools.

We believe that environmental education needs to focus on a higher awareness of the environment including the development of critical thinking and fuller inclusion of diverse perspectives, especially those of children.

ÁVILA, SÓNIA. Em defesa do ambiente! Uma análise de conteúdo das medidas propostas por alunos do 2º CEB nas PASE de Lingua Portuguesa 2007 nos Açores. Mestrado em Gestão e Conservação da Natureza. Departamento de Ciências Agrárias. Universidade dos Açores.

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