Environmental education in conditions of National Parks of Slovak Republic

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Abstract

In this paper we focus on planning, environmental education in the National Parks in the conditions of Slovak Republic. As a very consequential and primary role would be realized not only National Parks, but also other protected areas in Slovak Republic to support environmental consciousness and improve environmental edification appears implementation of expertly processed Conception of environmental education and training of the protected area or National Park. This strategic document will account all the constitutive legislative documents of national and international significance relevant in Slovakia. This constitutive document today in several protected areas in Slovakia absent. Suggestion of Conception should be based on assessment of environmental consciousness and needs of the aggrieved groups population living around the National Park, but also other public. Also that have to account objectives of relevant Management plan of a protected area and to assist to their fulfillment.

Keywords: environmental education, National Park, protected area, conception of environmental education, Slovak Republic;
1. Introduction

The current system of protected areas of Slovak Republic according to the Act No. 543/2002 Coll. About Nature and Landscape Protection consists of 9 National Parks, 14 protected landscape areas and 1,094 small-scale protected areas, 1 protected landscape element, 172 protected areas, 388 nature reserves, 219 national nature reserves, 254 natural monuments, 60 national natural monuments. Total area of specially protected areas of nature which is in the protection level from 2nd to 5th is 1,222,839 hectares, what represents 24.94% from land of Slovakia (Klinda, Lieskovská et al., 2010).

2. Environmental education in National Parks globally in Slovakia

National Parks as areas to ensure preservation of the original nature of the Slovak Republic have also informative and educative function about natural values. A particularity of environmental education is mostly that it is happens in concrete environment. Uses specific conditions of this environment for its protection, but also to influence the public with its values, aiming at increasing its environmental consciousness. In this meaning environmental consciousness can be understand like the ability of an individual to realize and perceive phenomena and problems of the environment. In context of his own set of values orientation, personal experience also knowledge of wider sequences, but even is expressing in willingness optionally correct their behavior in behalf of conservation biodiversity of nature and ecological stability of landscape. In protected areas environmental education have to take in consideration targets of protected areas as well as global environmental problems. It should effectively use as natural heritage of protected areas for a direct contact with nature. Another task is to bring nature near to people as something esthetically pleasurable, what inevitably needs protection. Environmental education of the protected area have to be organized by the visitors and target groups, to whom are adjusted methods and language. To participants are presented concepts of implementation new attitudes into their daily lives and therefor there will be the change in their behavior. Important document in the environmental education in the Slovak Republic is the Conception of environmental education, which must be worked out in line with Management plan of a protected area. This task is clearly formulated also in Aarhur Convention, which says, that the management of protected areas and public authorities should promote environmental education and environmental consciousness. Management of protected areas and public authorities should assist and advise to the public in environmental matters. The recommended procedure for management of protected areas is to take on long-term concept to assist and advise to the public. This will encourage people in their efforts to connecting to decision-making process and help them develop their skills and knowledge, which simplify them all. Good application of the conception should lead the public to greater interest. Working out Conception of environmental education brings necessity of material and technical assecuration in the form of development or purchase of tools for individual program offers as well as necessary equipment.

Environmental education is also non-violent and suitable form of promotion (contacts with citizens in communities, students in school) and through leaflets and promotional materials. Editorial and publication activities are the main source of information for various age groups or target groups. Also promotion of the National Park through exhibitions, permanent exhibitions for example in information centers is an important source of information for the public. One of the important role of the National Park is its active involvement to the process of environmental education in the region where
is the National Park is situated, but also outside it, and encouraging the finding of new and to deepening old partnerships with other institutions in the region and outside it. The National Park should work out a shoal program, which results from the Conception of environment education and it elaborating individual topics correspond with the content of curriculum and emphasize the importance of National Park’s propagation and system of protection of nature (for example with its topics like National Parks, forest, flora, fauna, water, human influence, adventure-experiences). Very important is the form of a presentation prepared topics, where as necessary selected a process of presentation in school field or in areas of the Management National Park and in providing adequate time setting to providing from the school especially in place in National Park’s area. To these topics are in - process practical activities depending up target group and conditions accordingly pupils and students start working more effective with given topic. Environmental education should be performed according to the local competency individual workplaces of National Park, where will be chosen lecturers for environmental education. In addition to the protection of unique natural ecosystems, plants and animals would be in the National Parks should primarily bring near to public, to people living in the region, visitors, owners and other their value. Without their involvement, understanding and active cooperation is threatened concrete target of the National Park and that is its protection (Tvevad, 2004; Hass, Ondrová, Švajda, 2008).

Impressed visitors requires developing interesting programs allowing interested not only learn a lot about the National Park, but mainly to get a lot of experience and the know and support them in changing their thinking and subsequent actions, that will be in behalf of nature. It is necessary focus on lifelong learning ensuring obtain certain environmental knowledge, which can affect the society-wide action aimed at every social and age group in society. An important aspect is our understanding of nature. Nature is not only individual objects, trees or natural heritage, which we protect. It is a complex system of mutual relations, is an inseparbl part of our physical and mental existence (Demo et al., 2007).

Feelingful of nature and living out the experiences that offer National Parks to visitors and support holistic understanding of nature (complicated and complex interconnected relationship between nature and people). This built perception of the National Park is a very powerful tool for converting values and visitor behaviour, which in themselves by fulfilling their emotional needs, deepen their love of nature (Kyöstilä et al., 2001).

The environmental education (EE) in National Park, we should focus on:

Environmental education (EE) at schools – to schools should be distributed offer list where will be offer with themes and forms of environmental education activities. Based on the offer letters to contact the representatives of the school staff and arrange a schedule and form. Education of children and youth can be implement by primary and secondary education. By primary education is systematically influence the formation of personality of student impact through knowledge, skills, but also effect of creating his attitudes and lifestyle. Is creating conditions for lifelong learning for each individual. Secondary education by children and youth can be achieved by the action of the general public, including parents and other family and contribute to increase the level of environmental consciousness throughout the population (Švecová, Sásiková, 2008).

(EE) at non school settings – through after-school clubs, where one can attend the Circle of Nature’s Protection or Circle of Hiking, for instance once a week which can aim at using unconventional forms of nature’s protection. There is very necessary to work out the content of activities in cooperation with the after-school clubs.
(EE) aimed at visitors – there is a need to work out the offer list for group excursions aimed at various themes about protection of nature and National Park. Promote them in public places (hotels, cottages), where usually move big groups of people and such a form and this way speak to and give the opportunity to this target group hear about the National Park and its activities.

Other supporting activities include:

The organization of events aimed at promoting conservation and its importance – such as events and excursion on the occasion on the European Day of National Parks, Rangers Day, Days of nature protection etc., it is appropriate to organized entertainment – educational event to promote the work of personal connected with competitions and games.

Organization of voluntary jobs – like cleaning and garbage collection in the National Park, animal transfer (transfer of amphibians), repair of cultural monuments in the National Park.

Organization of competitions – for children and youth of different ages aim to the level knowledge of competing about the National Park and biodiversity in park and its promotion in local media.

Using information centers – for environmental education and raising environmental edification during the high tourist season.

Building nature trails - with a focus on the physically disabled people, reconstruction and updating of existing nature trails, construction of educational sites, green way and infokiosks.

In consequence of insistency of the changes caused by anthropogenic activities is necessary to implement environmental education in all of the socio - educational and training levels. In the family, at school, in various institutions, in the media (Fazekašová, Manko et al., 2007). Very important is creating of partnerships that help improve the quality of environmental education of national park. Also that it is assistance in the area of acquiring new abilities and skills of employees and last but not least is here making room for assistance in he area of financing individual activities and functions within Environmental education, which is not always able to finance management of the National Park independently. Environmental education and activities as well as their implementation is an area of not only creating partnerships with local schools, but also other organizations functioning in the region, where is the national park (a hunting association, hiking clubs, etc.). Partnerships are supposal not only implementation of common projects, but above to increase duty and capacity of management of the national park.
3. Methodology

Important part about creating of any strategy document are the input data. This condition seems to be very significant in the design and subsequent facture of the Conception of Environmental Education. As a highly adequate tool for obtaining input information such as identification of all the strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats in this area in the national park help a lot by the SWOT analysis method, which aim is detailed knowledge of conditions. To interpretation the real state of environmental consciousness and edification in the region in which the national park, is appropriate to use exploratory method through research tool, which will be a questionnaire. This survey will help us suggest the measures and activities that will solve concrete inadequacies in environmental consciousness and edification ascertained by questionnaire survey and to which we will also focus on developing the conception of environmental education. This will lead to strengthen and upgrading the environmental edification and consciousness of the general public. Consequently is necessary to work up a suggestion of potential partners and their salutation, which will be able to participate in the implementation of the Conception of Environmental Education and fulfilling its goals through various activities, movements and common projects.
4. Conclusions

National parks are places where is realize important functions of ecosystems, which are result of various spectrum natural, semi-natural, but anthropogenic ecosystems which through their products and parallel processes allows to fulfill human needs (De Groote, 1992). In developing countries, poverty and low educational level in the area of environmental education main drive power of exploitation resources and destruction of nature. Citizens of developed countries of the world where education is accessible to all and its level is relatively high, leaving their ecological and environmental feeling at the expense of its comfort (McKeown, 2002). It is very important that institutions such as national parks and protecting areas strive to development the internal feelingful of nature as such because, where else is it possible authentic nature feelingful the as fully as in herself? It is therefore very important that giving out to renewal of relations between man and nature, what will help environmental education in the national parks, whether theoretical or experiential.
References


