

PROJECT: FOR AN ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURE IN THE COMMUNITY

Rationale

Cuban society is heading towards higher educational and cultural levels consistent with a society that has reached exceptional significant achievements in these areas, comparable to those in developed countries and on occasion even surpassing some.

To reach these goals all factors involved in education must collaborate in order to attain the formation of a multilateral and harmonic personality showing respect for Nature, which manifests itself by a responsible attitude that acknowledges that humans are only part of Nature and have no right to ill-treat or destroy their surroundings nor the creatures inhabiting it, but quite the opposite have to protect it to guarantee the development of their own life and that of society in general.

If by culture we understand all human doings of adaptation to Nature for which human relationships to all elements that make up the environment have been and are required, then it's essential to launch an offensive against general environmental lack of culture and go to the development of a moral conscience in relation to the principle of human commitment of respect to all forms of life.

Today a change in the city's appearance is seen showing the gradual recovery from the deep crisis that has affected the country since 1989. These positive changes are in conflict with some attitudes, such as cruelty to animals carried out by some citizens, deterioration of plants, and environmental and noise pollution that still persist today thanks to, in our opinion, the lack both of a specialized and mass education addressing the problem and the absence of a law for its control and sanction. All these daily images affect many sensitive persons throughout the country as well as visitors from other parts of the world besides being incompatible with a society such as ours in constant struggle against all expression of abuse and injustice and which is aspiring to be among the most educated in the world in the next few years.

For all the above, a number of university professors that know what violence towards the environment and particularly to animals (which sometimes is a symptom of family violence) can produce in children, and concerned with the preservation of our environment, is suggesting to begin an educational plan on environmental culture in coordination with the communities' organizations.

General Objective

To reach an environmental culture by educating children and adults in the care and preservation of the environment in which they live and in fighting all demonstration of negligence, destruction and cruelty toward it with activities in the community.

Specific Objectives

To induce the population to care for trees and plants in all public and working areas.

To induce the population to preserve the life of all animals, and avoid and fight against negligence and cruelty towards them.

At community level, to detect cases of cruelty by children and teenagers in order to treat them professionally, as many of these cases are an indicator of troubled domestic relationships and potential future antisocial, aggressive and destructive behaviors.

To contribute to a more effective and integral promotion by the media of environmental preservation.

To contribute to maximum reduction of the number of stray animals in the streets.

To work for the approval of a law against animal cruelty.

To have a bearing on the creation of habits that reduces environmental pollution.

Methodology

To select the community in which the project will be developed.

To study the social-economical and cultural characteristics of the chosen community, as well as its hygienic and epidemiological conditions.

Census of the animal population in the area and health conditions.

Study of the condition of the plant population.

Study of the environmental pollution.

A diagnosis of the area.

Activities

Carry out workshops, talks, exhibits, film projections, events, and other activities on:

- a) Importance of plants and animals for the preservation of human life.
- b) Characteristics of pets, their diseases and how to prevent them, hygiene and feeding habits.
- c) Specific characteristics of plants, their care and importance for persons.
- d) Importance of pet birth control and information on harmful consequences of pet overpopulation in the city's streets: deterioration of surroundings and environment, increase in zoonotic cases, and increase in animal cruelty and mistreatment, among others.

Mass animal vaccination and spaying campaigns in coordination with the veterinary services, and other associations.

To work in elementary and secondary schools together with teachers and professors in the area.

To actively collaborate with the police to avoid dog fights, that besides being an act of cruelty constitute illegal gambling.

To incentive children and teenagers, both morally and materially, to excel in the care of plants, animal love and beautification of the city.

Implementation of the Project

In order to implement this project collaboration from the Peoples' Council shall be requested. Also involved will be the mass organizations and schools in the area.

University students, such as social work students will participate in training. (The participation of students, not only university students but of all levels, in the project is seen as an essential part.)

A multidisciplinary team of university professors concerned with education of the population in relation to the environment will be in charge of designing the different plans and specific projects to be carried out, in coordination with the required factors and all those members of the community interested in collaborating.

Expected Results

The expected results in the pilot area are the following:

- a) Increase in green areas, clean, and cared for by the community's members themselves.
- b) Vaccinated and spayed and neutered pets.
- c) Streets clean of litter and animal feces.
- d) Introduction of elements that will change the education and psychology in cases of violence.
- e) Sound habits in children and adults towards their environment, a symptom of a more humane and thus 'civilized' society.

The project will be spread from one area to another in the city in order to obtain the following results:

Development of an aesthetic taste and sensitivity towards the environment in the population.

Beautification and cleaning up of the city, both from the physical and psychological points of view.

Needs

Literature related to the subject, including fiction, in order to be able to set up a small library.

Videos, CDs, DVDs films dealing with subjects such as training of pets, care of animals, behavior, etc.

PC or Laptop computer and printer.

Office supplies (paper, printing cartridges, etc.)

Television set (better large screen) and VCR for public projection of films related to the subject.

Supply of vaccines for pets; tickicides and flea control drugs, and wormers (i.e. external and internal antiparasitic drugs); antibiotics (also topical); scalpels, suture, gloves, bandages, etc. (surgical supplies, including disinfectants).

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