

2BParks Environmental Education

E-paper by RCDI – Network for Development and Innovation

Ana Maria Felício

Within the activities of 2Bparks there is a key phase dedicated to experimental actions of environmental education. The main objective is to increase the students' knowledge and awareness on the environmental and cultural values of the protected areas and foster their responsible attitudes and actions.

This article summarizes the concept of the on-going environmental education programme in the Nature Reserve of Santo André and Sancha Lagoons. The programme started in October 2012 and will end in mid June 2013.

The environmental education programme supported by 2BParks at the Nature Reserve of Santo André and Sancha Lagoons involves 388 students from 4 kindergartens and 10 primary schools. All of the participating schools are neighbouring schools, thus allowing for the creation of a strengthened relationship between the children and the Nature Reserve.

The theme of the experimental education programme is "The environment throughout the year". The objective is that the children learn the major features of the four seasons in the Nature Reserve.

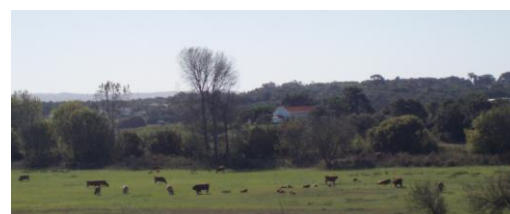
The programme combines field and classroom activities. The students are organised in 10 groups (including two different schools together) who visit the Nature Reserve once every month. This means that every week there are two days dedicated to environmental education within the

premises of the Nature Reserve, at the Monte do Paio Environmental Interpretation Centre. In each visit the children typically arrive around 10 a.m., have outdoor activities in the Nature Reserve during the morning, then have lunch all together and spend the afternoon mostly indoors to develop activities related to what they have seen in the field. They leave the Nature Reserve around 3.30 p.m.

After two field days, each group meets again, at the third month, at the Nature Reserve to present to the students of the other school the materials they have developed in class and to share experiences.



The Santo André Lagoon at Monte do Paio



The countryside at the Nature Reserve

There is a total of 21 teachers and kindergarten educators engaged in the programme, who accompany the students during the visits. The visits are assisted by a 2BParks educator, within

the scope of a collaboration agreement with a local NGO. The staff of the Nature Reserve is also involved in the visits.

The municipality of Santiago do Cacém is also involved and provides transportation for the students.



One of the 10 groups at Monte do Paio

Parents and family are also invited and welcome to attend the field activities at Monte do Paio at any point.

As to the cultural values of the protected area and surrounding region, the educational programme provides opportunities for the inhabitants of the neighbouring communities to meet the children and share the local traditions and its stories.

Some of the participating schools are rural schools and those children usually have more practical knowledge on the regional environment and on its fauna and flora than their schoolmates attending urban schools or belonging to urban families. However, the rural schools students' are not always aware of the intrinsic value of what they "naturally" know. They sometimes are the ones who experience learning difficulties and it is then particularly important to highlight and recognise the value of their traditional knowledge.

Grândola, October 2012

RCDI – Development and Innovation Network

Centro Empresarial de Grândola
Fracção E - Incubadora de Empresas
Estrada da Aldeia do Futuro - Quinta Velha
7570-272 Grândola Portugal
info@rcdi.pt
www.rcdi.pt