

TRIP REPORT

First World Conference on Environmental Education

Espinho, Portugal, May 20th – 24th, 2003

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REPORT FOR CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Primeiro Congresso Mundial de Educação Ambiental – FWEEC (www.1weec.net)
[First World Conference on Environmental Education]
20 - 24 May, 2003: Espinho – Portugal

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The main objective of the FWEEC was to offer an international platform for educators, scientists, researchers, students, politicians, technicians, activists, media, and professors to debate key topics associated with environmental education. Representatives from all continents participated in the Scientific Committee. Representatives from South America, specifically Brazil, came from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul and the State University of Rio de Janeiro. The variety of themes and locations represented (see program) gave the participants an opportunity to view a great variety of contemporary environmental questions.

The paper that I presented, as a poster entitled *Memórias de um rio: caminhos para a Educação Ambiental* [*Memories of a river: pathways for Environmental Education*], came from a study carried out together with Dr. Norma Felicidade Valêncio, in the project "*Bases para a conservação e restauração dos recursos pesqueiros do Alto-Médio São Francisco* [*Support for conservation and restoration of fisheries resources of the High-Medium São Francisco*]", which was pursued from 1999-2002, with support from the Program for Assistance to Scientific and Technical Development (PADCT) /Ciamb of the Science and Technology Ministry. In this study, life along the river is reconstructed from the memories of women. Representations were sought of the river, the fisheries, the work of the fisherman, the house, the family. The case study was carried out in 2000, in the cities of Três Marias, Pirapora and Januária, cities of the High and Medium São Francisco, in the state of Minas Gerais. In this presentation, memories of the past and present were included, as well as expectations of the future. The contrast between old memories and the current perception of the river is that of a river that is dying, and while dying, causing the death of a livelihood. This reaffirms the value of respect for Nature and the possibility of a disinterested culture that is less individualistic. It thus provides, pathways to think about the contribution of memories and inter-generational relations to environmental education.

In this sense, the participation [in the conference] brought, for me, two important returns:

- 1) An opportunity to be integrated in discussions of Environmental Education at a moment that I am starting to work with the [CIDA] project;
- 2) [An opportunity to] publicize several questions on the São Francisco River, the area of interest to the [CIDA] project.

The costs of the trip to Portugal were covered by WFT World Fisheries Trust, partner with UFSCar in the Project Continental Fisheries of Brazil - Sustainable Livelihoods and Conservation. UFSCar paid conference costs and costs of ground travel and living expenses were covered personally.