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Environmentally Conscious Character Building through Scouting Activities: A Case Study at RA Diponegoro

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Abstract
As the issue of environmental degradation grows, significant questions about how early childhood education may effectively and sustainably support the formation of environmentally sensitive character emerge. Despite the widespread discussion of the importance of environmental education from a young age, PAUD's teaching methods are still primarily verbalistic and do not provide children with real-world experiences. With the existence of Prasiaga Scout activities, formal and non-formal education becomes easier in carrying out environment-based learning, because the environment can be accessed by children in a real and collaborative way. The research method we use is descriptive qualitative by considering the objectives of constructivist learning in this research. Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation of Prasiaga Scout activities at RA Diponegoro, the data was reduced, presented, and conclusions were drawn. The results of the study show that via direct interaction with nature, Pramuka Prasiaga activities can raise environmental consciousness, cultivate compassionate attitudes, and develop tangible pro-environmental actions in young children. According to the study's findings, Pramuka Prasiaga is a useful and successful educational tool for helping young children form environmentally sensitive personalities.

Keywords: Prasiaga Scouts; environmentally conscious character; early childhood.

1. INTRODUCTION

Increasing and complex environmental degradation directly threatens human survival, therefore it is very important to take careful steps to foster environmental awareness from a young age. It is believed that education strategically shapes values, attitudes, and behavior patterns, such as environmentally friendly products and sustainable attitudes. This is especially true when education is carried out in a sustainable

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and contextual manner and helps to internalize these values. Because the preschool years are the foundation for character, habits, and basic personality traits, preschool education works within this structure. Learning about themes taken from everyday life is an appropriate way to teach children to be aware of their surroundings (Latief, 2020) Exploration activities, especially those related to Pramuka Prasiaga, focus on self-discipline, practical experience, and active interaction with nature and the social environment. Pramuka Prasiaga promises to develop into an effective method of instilling environmental values in children through effective hands-on experiences and leaving a lasting impression (Ali, 2020)

The implementation of environmental education in early childhood education institutions still faces a number of obstacles, even though the need to raise environmental awareness in early childhood has been widely recognized. Verbal and symbolic knowledge transfer is the main focus of current learning methods, which neglect significant real-world experiences that can influence conscious environmental and sustainable behavior. (However, early childhood education has not fully incorporated scouting activities as a non-formal educational instrument for character development. Currently, there is still minimal research on how scouting activities are planned, implemented, and understood in relation to increasing environmental awareness, particularly in terms of Pramuka Prasiaga activities. This situation highlights the need for additional studies on the types and approaches of Pramuka Prasiaga activities and how they influence children's behavior to foster environmentally conscious character from an early age (El Hajar et al., 2024)

Considering these factors, the purpose of this study is to determine how the strengthening of environmental awareness in early childhood is influenced by Pramuka Prasiaga activities. This study specifically seeks to characterize the various Pramuka Prasiaga activities used in early childhood education and examine how these scouting activities contribute to the internalization of environmental values. In addition, this study aims to ascertain how children's daily environmental behavior is influenced by Prasiaga Scouting activities. Thus, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the potential of Prasiaga Scouting activities as an important and relevant learning instrument for strengthening environmental awareness in early childhood.

Environmental education has been studied extensively in various educational contexts, especially at the elementary and secondary school levels, with an emphasis on improving students' understanding and attitudes toward environmental issues. However, studies on environmental education in early childhood education, with a focus on specific behaviors and character building, are still rare (Purwanti, 2017) In addition, studies on scouting usually describe this activity as a way to develop leadership, discipline, and national values; however, environmental awareness has not received much attention, especially in the context of Pramuka Prasiaga. Furthermore, most recent research is quantitative and focuses on evaluating outcomes, thus providing little insight into how scouting activities lead to the internalization of values (Ulfah et al., 2022). The lack of studies combining formal and informal educational approaches in the development of environmentally sensitive character from an early age indicates a research gap that needs to be filled.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to a number of previous studies, environmental education significantly influences students' environmentally conscious attitudes and behaviors. Children who actively participate in environmental activities develop long-term ecological awareness and responsibility (Chawla & Cushing, 2007) Similar findings were also observed by Ernst and Monroe, who concluded that pro-environmental views are more successfully fostered through environmental learning experiences than through cognitive methods alone. Palmer emphasizes that in the context of primary education, children's active involvement in practical activities such as nature exploration and environmental care can encourage the internalization of more substantial environmental principles. However, research on early childhood education is still scarce, and most of it focuses on school-age children (Palmer, 1998)

Meanwhile, research on scouting activities shows that the learning-by-doing approach, which is an important component of scouting activities, is effective in helping children develop the virtues of self-control, cooperation, and social character (Putnam, 2016). In addition, a study found that scouting activities improve the community's perception of social responsibility and character development. However, there has not been much research specifically linking scouting activities with environmental education, and existing research has often been conducted on children and adolescents in elementary school. The use of Pramuka Prasiaga as a tool to help young people develop environmentally conscious character has not been widely studied, indicating that more contextual empirical studies are needed to close this research gap.

3. METHODS

This research method uses a qualitative descriptive approach to obtain a factual description of the implementation of the research activities. The research subjects were determined purposively based on their direct involvement and suitability with the predetermined criteria. The research was carried out through the stages of planning, implementation, data collection, and analysis and reporting of results. The research materials included activity documents, implementation guidelines, and field notes, while the research instruments consisted of observation sheets, interview guidelines, and documentation formats that were systematically compiled in accordance with the research focus. The quality of the instruments was maintained through indicator adjustments and readability tests to ensure that the data obtained was accurate and relevant. Data collection was carried out through direct observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Data were analyzed qualitatively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with analysis criteria that emphasized consistency, repeatability, and the suitability of the findings with the research objectives, so that the research results could be scientifically accounted for.

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4. RESULTS

The results of the study show that the implementation of nature conservation-themed scouting education activities for early childhood students contributes significantly to increasing environmental awareness, basic understanding of nature, and the formation of contextual pro-environmental behavior. Children not only receive information, but are directly involved in real activities that allow them to understand the relationship between human actions and environmental conditions. This active involvement is evident in children's ability to recognize their surroundings, show concern for cleanliness, and express a simple sense of responsibility towards nature. These findings are in line with research in a Scopus-indexed journal which states that real-world activity-based environmental education in early childhood is effective in building ecological awareness and a sustainable attitude of caring for the environment because it is in line with the developmental characteristics of children who learn through direct experience (Ärlemalm-Hagsér & Sandberg, 2017).

Based on field observations, nature exploration activities such as observing plants, learning about animals, and simple practices such as disposing of trash in its place and planting plants can increase children's participation and enthusiasm in the learning process. Children show emotional and social involvement when activities are carried out in groups, which indirectly strengthens the values of mutual cooperation and shared responsibility for the environment. These findings reinforce the results of research published in SINTA and Scopus indexed journals, which conclude that nature-based learning not only has an impact on cognitive aspects but also on the social-emotional and moral development of early childhood, especially in the context of environmental education (Elliott et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that a learning approach based on direct experience in the outdoors is more effective in facilitating the internalization of environmental values than a verbalistic approach. Children tend to more easily remember, understand, and apply the values of nature conservation when they experience these activities for themselves in real situations. This reinforces the theoretical view in environmental education that experiential learning is a key strategy in shaping pro-environmental behavior from an early age. Research in reputable journals also shows that direct experiences in nature play an important role in building children's emotional attachment to the environment, which in turn becomes the basis for environmentally friendly behavior in the future (Chawla & Derr, 2012; Barrable & Booth, 2020). Thus, the results of this study not only confirm previous findings but also emphasize the relevance of scouting education as a strategic vehicle for strengthening environmental education in early childhood.

5. DISCUSSION

The increase in environmental awareness among RA Diponegoro students showed significant changes through qualitative descriptive methodology. Before the start of the activity, the profiles of a large number of students showed their level of awareness of the environment around them. Many students were unable to identify simple actions that could potentially damage the environment, such as throwing flowers away without

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purpose or littering in remote places. This passive attitude was a factor in their development, but it also posed a challenge for educators to promote the basic values of love for nature and compassion for humanity in the spirit of scouting.

After the children actively participated in a number of scouting activities centered on nature conservation, behavioral changes began to appear. The children began to develop emotional bonds with other living things by practicing planting their own mung beans and by carefully observing kapok, corn, and banana trees. Small but significant activities, including keeping the school environment clean on their own initiative without instructor guidance, are indicative of this change. As a sign that character values have begun to take root in them, students are now beginning to show social courage by boldly reprimanding friends who are caught littering.

The students' enthusiasm and interest in local flora and fauna increased at the end of the program. The phenomenon of kapok flower petals falling, which had previously been ignored, now became a learning tool that sparked their curiosity about the plant's life cycle. The strong emotional development shows the success of this activity more than its technical aspects. The young people now feel a sense of ownership of the mung bean plants they have grown, which directly fosters a sense of responsibility and respect for the universe. This shows how Prasiaga Scout character education can change passive behavior into proactive and caring behavior from an early age.

The results of field research, which show a significant increase in the ecological awareness of RA Diponegoro students, are very much in line with the basic ideas of constructivist learning theory. According to the constructivist perspective, knowledge is a structure that is actively created by students through direct experience and close involvement with their environment, not a set of facts that are passively conveyed from teachers to students. Children integrate and adapt new information into their cognitive schemas when they pick up fallen kapok flowers, examine the structure of corn plants, or touch banana tree trunks. Nature is now seen as a living laboratory that offers unlimited sensory stimulation, not just a static backdrop. Compared to simply looking at pictures in textbooks, children are able to create their own concepts of biodiversity through these empirical experiences, which are much more deeply embedded in their long-term memory.

Nature becomes both a channel and a primary source of holistic learning in the context of Prasiaga Scouting education. Children learn the complex cause-and-effect relationships between human behavior and the state of nature through direct observation and exploration, in addition to receiving one-way knowledge about the importance of protecting the environment. Children can directly observe how abiotic elements such as water and light affect the growth of living things when they plant mung bean seeds in cotton fields. This method deepens our understanding of how dependent plant life is on the care it receives. The knowledge that humans have a moral obligation to preserve ecosystems is fostered by this reciprocal relationship. This idea is difficult for young children to understand if it is only communicated through lectures or abstract verbal commands.

Furthermore, the success of this activity supports the basic premise that contextual learning, as opposed to a theoretical-abstract approach to learning, has a much stronger impact on the development of attitudes and character. Children can learn more effectively in the open environment of RA Diponegoro because they can understand how what they

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are learning relates directly to their daily lives. Scouting ideals such as "Love for Nature and Compassion for Fellow Human Beings" become habits or practices when applied through real activities such as maintaining environmental cleanliness. Children's affective domain is greatly influenced by this contextual learning, which fosters empathy for other living things and builds a strong foundation for environmentally conscious character. Therefore, the best pedagogical approach to raising a generation that is intellectually intelligent and highly sensitive to the environment from a young age is to combine unlimited nature experiences with the pre-school curriculum.

There is a clear similarity and consistency between the results of activities at RA Diponegoro and previous literature and studies on early childhood environmental education published in leading journals. Many international specialists in environmental education have concluded that the best way to increase children's ecological awareness is through outdoor education and exploration of the natural world. These findings confirm that children's curiosity and concern for ecosystem sustainability are greatly stimulated by direct contact with natural elements, such as corn plants and kapok trees experienced by students. Children who regularly interact with nature tend to have higher levels of empathy towards the environment as adults, according to previous research (Otto & Pensini, 2017). As a result, Prasiaga Scouting activities are part of an educational approach that has been recognized by academics for influencing pro-environmental behavior from a young age.

This activity report is unique because it systematically incorporates the concept of environmental conservation into the Prasiaga Scouting teaching framework, even though it is in line with generally accepted ideas. The RA Diponegoro activity summarizes the message of environmental conservation in distinctive Scouting techniques, unlike traditional school environmental programs that often focus only on knowledge transfer (cognitive aspects). Here, the value of loving nature is absorbed through ice-breaking activities that foster a sense of togetherness (social), marching exercises that develop discipline (physical), and contemplation of God's creation through observing falling kapok flowers (spiritual). Because it simultaneously addresses every aspect of child development, this integration produces a much more comprehensive learning model, making environmental protection an important component of a Scout's identity.

The main benefit of this integrated approach is its ability to combine spiritual, social, emotional, and physical elements into a logical series of activities. Through the natural order, children are encouraged to appreciate the majesty of the Creator on a spiritual level; they learn to cooperate and take responsibility for the mung beans they plant themselves on a social and emotional level; and they develop their motor skills by exploring the school environment. This contextual Prasiaga Scouting teaching model shows that engaging children with their five senses and emotions greatly enhances the development of environmentally conscious character. Beyond the limitations of traditional classroom teaching, this program offers practical solutions to environmental degradation through a comprehensive character education pathway that combines a disciplined yet entertaining Scouting framework with nature conservation issues (Nurhayati et al., 2024).

Additional analysis of the effectiveness of RA Diponegoro activities reveals that scouting education has a unique structural advantage in fostering environmental conservation values. These benefits stem from the application of the idea of learning by doing, combined with a collaborative mindset and a measurable educational framework.

The idea of environmental protection is no longer a boring theory in the Prasiaga format, but rather a concrete action presented as a game and adventure. Children do not follow mechanical instructions when they plant mung bean seeds or observe kapok trees; rather, they are engaged in an active learning process in which their hands, minds, and hearts work together. In addition to encouraging peer discussion, the scouting framework, which strongly emphasizes small group work (barung), helps environmental ideals become positive group norms, rather than mere instructions from teachers.

The consistent role modeling of instructors is an important element that stimulates behavioral change in these activities. In the Prasiaga environment, instructors not only lead in providing guidance, but they also actively participate in the field as facilitators and role models. Children are given concrete examples of how to treat nature when teachers help pick up trash along the road or show care when handling kapok flowers that have fallen as teaching tools. For young children, these examples are a very effective nonverbal communication tool. By caring for plants together with students, instructors foster an inclusive learning environment where students and teachers share the common goal of protecting the environment. It has been proven that the presence of adult role models who demonstrate integrity in both words and deeds greatly accelerates the imitation or copying of positive behavior by children.

Albert Bandura's socio-cognitive theory, which states that most human behavior is learned through observation and imitation of important figures around them, is theoretically supported by this phenomenon.(Tullah & Amiruddin, 2020) Scout leaders are seen as key figures in the RA Diponegoro ecology, who have authority and emotional intimacy with children. Through this modeling process, children observe environmentally friendly behavior, remember it, and then imitate it in their own behavior. Children learn that environmental conservation is important and emotionally satisfying through this imitation process, which goes beyond mere blind imitation. Thus, a highly supportive learning environment for character development is created by combining action-based scouting techniques with the reinforcement of role models(Apriani et al., 2025). These results highlight the need for an education system that not only offers quality content but also provides an authentic and sustainable ecosystem of role models to produce an environmentally sensitive generation (Bhoki et al., 2025).

From a moral development perspective, incorporating nature conservation activities into the Prasiaga scouting framework gives children a better understanding of the ideas of care and responsibility while remaining within reasonable limits. In the early stages, children's moral understanding is still highly dependent on observable outcomes, behaviors, and responses. Children are not forced to participate in abstract moral discussions about climate change or global ecological issues through Prasiaga scouting activities at RA Diponegoro, which are beyond their cognitive capacity. Instead, students are presented with concrete actions that have immediate results, such as watching the growth of the mung bean seeds they watered or the increased aesthetic appeal of the school grounds due to the absence of litter. This method successfully translates commendable moral principles into practical behaviors that children can learn, allowing a sense of responsibility to emerge as a natural reaction to their attachment to the things they care for.

Early moral development theory, which emphasizes that children's understanding of values must be based on real experiences, is very much in line with this method (Safitri

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& Dewantoro, 2025). Children's morality at this age is shaped by their active involvement with their surroundings and the feedback they receive from those surroundings. Children learn that being "kind" to nature produces positive results for life when they plant mung beans and observe kapok trees. This real-life experience serves as a basis for understanding the ideals of Scouting, teaching each child that they play an important role in maintaining peace in their community. For children, planting and harvesting mung beans becomes a concrete "moral reward" that reinforces their belief that being a good Prasiaga member means being someone who can truly improve their surroundings.

The results of this study provide a more persuasive perspective than previous studies that focused on delivering moral lessons through passive media such as picture stories, fairy tales, or visual media in the classroom. Although visual media has its benefits, this study shows that experiential learning, or direct action in the real world, has a much more lasting effect on children's character. Simply watching films about the environment cannot match the emotional connection created through activities such as tilling the soil, planting cotton in plastic containers, and watching the plants grow day by day. Children's emotions and muscle memory are greatly influenced by these sensory and physical experiences, so that the resulting environmental awareness is not temporary, but becomes an integral part of their identity. Therefore, Pramuka Prasiaga is more than just a playground; it is a moral laboratory where the quality of "loving nature" is developed through hard work, contact, and direct observation in the open air.

Teachers agree that Scouting activities focused on environmental conservation offer a high degree of flexibility, making them easy to integrate into the regular learning structure without significantly altering schedules or burdening school finances. These results show that children's daily lives can naturally incorporate the values of Prasiaga Scouting. The simplicity of materials, such as using used plastic cups to grow mung beans or using fallen kapok flowers as a medium for counting and exploration, is the main strength of this integration, rather than the need for expensive, mass-produced teaching aids or sophisticated digital devices. This shows that environmental character education can be applied anywhere and anytime, as long as the scouting curriculum and the creativity of teachers in seeing the potential in their surroundings are coordinated.

One of the highlights of this activity is the use of the school's surroundings or early childhood education facilities as a living "natural laboratory." In the world of education, it has long been believed that certain facilities, such as greenhouses, artificial botanical gardens, or fully equipped scientific laboratories, are necessary for effective environmental teaching. However, the procedures at RA Diponegoro clearly contradict this assumption. The school surroundings provide a much richer and more authentic learning resource than any artificial medium, including banana trees in the neighbor's yard, rows of corn in the nearby fields, and wild kapok trees. Children learn in a real-world environment using nature as a laboratory, where they can directly observe micro-ecosystems, feel the texture of the soil, and smell the scent of plants. This shows that inadequate physical infrastructure in schools is not an obstacle, but rather an opportunity to introduce children to the realities of their surrounding environment.

Therefore, by showing that the quality of the educator's role and activity design are more important in determining the effectiveness of early childhood environmental education than the availability of expensive facilities, this study substantially challenges conventional thinking. No matter how good the school facilities are, they will not have a transformative effect on children's character if they are not combined with creative

activity design and teachers who actively participate as motivating facilitators. The emphasis now is on the "methodological" aspect rather than the "material" aspect. The secret to effective environmental education is teachers who can create an engaging early preparation adventure that can turn the moment of kapok flower fall into a dynamic scientific debate. As a result, this study strongly suggests to other early childhood education programs that the secret to early environmental conservation is for teachers to dare to leave the classroom, utilize local knowledge, and take simple but significant steps outside the classroom.

The research findings on the activities of the Diponegoro RA Prasiaga Scouts significantly reinforce the idea of children as agents of change in environmental issues from an early age within the framework of educational philosophy development. Until now, many traditional ideas tend to view children as passive recipients of values who are only expected to follow adult instructions without having any impact on their environment. However, observations and field data from these activities reveal a positive anomaly: Prasiaga children have proven themselves capable of being proactive actors who bring about change at the micro level. This phenomenon shows that environmental education delivered through the Scouting approach goes beyond cognitive understanding in the classroom and instead instills in children an innate motivation to continue applying these ideals in various contexts.

By introducing a more comprehensive transformative dimension, these findings significantly expand the theory of children's role in environmental education. This implies that the use of Pramuka Prasiaga to engage in character development in early childhood has a significant effect that transcends the walls of educational institutions themselves. Children act as a bridge between ecological literacy in the classroom and practical application at home. Therefore, the extent to which these principles are able to "infect" the family environment must be considered in addition to changes in children's behavior in the classroom when evaluating the effectiveness of environmental education. These results support the idea that targeted character education will have a systemic effect starting from the smallest unit in society and confirm that early childhood is a potential catalyst for social change. Through small, sustainable actions, they can encourage the creation of a family ecosystem that is more concerned with the sustainability of the earth.

This comprehensive examination shows how the meaning of early childhood is significantly strengthened when spiritual ideals are integrated into nature conservation initiatives. At RA Diponegoro, maintaining cleanliness and caring for plants is no longer seen as simply following technical guidelines or school rules. Instead, children are taught to appreciate and love nature as God’s extraordinary creation. This method transforms tasks such as planting mung beans or enjoying the beauty of kapok trees into meaningful acts of devotion and gratitude. Because children’s motivation is built on deep conviction, it offers a much stronger affective foundation. This research is very different from previous literature, which is usually secular and focuses only on the ecological or functional aspects of environmental education, due to its theocentric perspective.

By adding a transcendental component as an internal reinforcement of children’s motivation, the integration of this spiritual dimension is intended to enhance and improve existing environmental education theory, not to reject it. The Prasiaga Scout approach adds a spiritual moral dimension, in which children feel a sacred commitment to be guardians of the earth (khalifah fil ardh), while standard ecological theory focuses on

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species survival and ecosystem balance. Because children feel loved and watched over by the Creator through their encounters with the environment, instilling these values is more successful in creating sustainable habits. Therefore, the spiritual dimension acts as an emotional anchor that ensures sustainable environmental awareness, not because of teacher supervision but because of an internal understanding to appreciate all of God's creations.

Practically, Prasiaga Scouting education can be a very successful approach to integrating sustainable education (Education for Sustainable Development) into early childhood education (PAUD) units (Prayitno et al., 2013), according to research findings. Supporting children's developmental achievements in accordance with their age stages and in line with the global sustainable development agenda are two key educational interests that this program has been shown to synergize. Without drastically changing the curriculum framework, educational units can promote ecological literacy through inclusive and simple nature-based activities. The effectiveness of this integration shows that environmental sustainability principles can permeate everyday activities, where children's interactions with nature contribute to the development of sustainable attitudes that they will carry into the next level of education.

These findings have policy implications, including the urgent need for institutional support to strengthen the status of early childhood education scouting as an essential component of the curriculum, not merely as an optional extracurricular activity. Unit- and regional-level education strategies should begin to consider scouting as a foundation for creating an environmentally conscious nation. More thematic and integrated curriculum requirements, competency training for teachers to help them supervise nature laboratories in the classroom, and green open spaces in every early childhood education unit are some examples of this support. By incorporating scouting into the curriculum, we are not only teaching children to be independent but also creating communities that value the environment for a better future for the planet.

The quality or innovation of these activities lies in the methodical combination of nature-based exploratory learning, disciplined yet enjoyable scouting teaching techniques, and comprehensive character development that includes cognitive, emotional, psychomotor, and spiritual elements. By demonstrating that integrated and contextual strategies can produce deeper and more lasting effects, these findings not only support the validity of established child development theories but also successfully transform them. The transformation of students from passive individuals to active agents of change in their home and school environments shows that a love of nature has been integrated into habits, not just a fleeting awareness.

This research opens up significant opportunities for the development of similar learning models in various other educational contexts, especially in areas with limited access to modern facilities, by showing that the use of "natural laboratories" around schools can overcome physical infrastructure limitations. The effective combination of spiritual and socio-cognitive principles in these activities serves as a model for non-secular character education that upholds a solid academic foundation. Ultimately, these results provide a basis for policymakers and educators to present Pramuka Prasiaga as a key tactic in producing a future generation with moral integrity, ecological intelligence, and a strong sense of social responsibility for the preservation of the planet.

6. CONCLUSION

The activities carried out by Pramuka Prasiaga at RA Diponegoro have effectively demonstrated that combining scouting education with environmental conservation is a successful method for creating comprehensive and environmentally conscious character. Students become agents of change with moral, social, and spiritual initiatives through a learning-by-doing approach and using the world as a natural laboratory. In essence, these results show that contextual activity design and consistent teacher role modeling are more important for the success of environmental education than expensive equipment. Hopefully, the small steps we have taken can become a solid foundation for the future and a blessing for all of us.

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