

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PROGRAM “SCIENCE IN THE MUSEUM” FOR THE FORMATION OF CITIZENS.

Science Museums have contributed for scientific knowledge spread, informal science education, and formation of more awareness-and-critic-oriented citizens by stimulating the formation of professional, scientific and professional leaders. In Brazil, Science publications are often restricted to formal education, what reduces the amount of Brazilians who have access to scientific knowledge as well as its validity and quality. There is a lack of low-cost wide-range scientific publication means as well as the increase of Science Clubs and Centers in Brazil. During school time, the contact with Science and technology is mainly restricted to the Natural Science teaching usually without practice activities pertaining theoretical activities which are not often directly applied to daily life and is not interesting to children. The theoretical bases of Science teaching is because of the lack of proper laboratories, and skillful professional who could perform ludic and practice activities. Museums of Science facilitate the structured and proper to learning access to scientific knowledge by communities. The Interdisciplinary Museum of Science of the Universidade Paranaense, located in Paraná State, South of Brazil, has been developed activities concerning the support of informal Science teaching for the past five years. In 2006, the program Science in the Museum was developed by introducing interactive and thematic workshops to an audience of students from elementary public schools surrounding the city. Cells were one of the topics approached through the development and observation of vegetal and animal tissue slides. Another topic was the respiratory system as the building of maquettes and the observation of the morphophysiology of the organs which compose such system by emphasizing the smoking prevention and its related diseases. The third workshop approached an endemic disease in a geographical region of the Museum – Dengue – by presenting the virus which causes such disease, its life cycle, and its ways of transmission, developing the awareness regarding the importance of prevention through games and the identification of its carrier. All the workshops were evaluated through the stimulated feedback method as images from the performance of the practice activities were used to base the answers of these students. The result observed was the learning regarding the discussed topics verified through the increase of right answers and the ability of asking them. After the workshop, each group which participated acted as a multiplier in its own school community by repeating the workshop, or part of it, among its colleagues. We realized that the students who participated in the program had an opportunity of broadening their scientific knowledge, reinforcing their concepts regarding the scientific method and their awareness related to environmental and health issues. The development of citizenship and leadership could be observed throughout the multiplying activities performed by them. It was demonstrated through such practices that it is necessary to redesign the Brazilian Science teaching as well as broadening access environments to citizens in order to popularize Science.