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# AN EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PEDAGOGICAL ROLE OF CINEMA IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

## Uma experiência no Ensino Superior e o papel do cinema na Educação Ambiental

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# Introduction

In the context of the Eco-school program in Higher Education, ESECS Portalegre decided, in school council, to carry out an initiative that concentrated the essentials of the program of activities in a single week – THE ECO-ESECS WEEK (now in its second edition).

This option did not neglect other gestures and initiatives related to assertive behavior towards sustainability and the environment.



# Theoretical Frame

- Without citizens aware of environmental problems, it is not possible to change behaviors towards a care for ecosystems and the sustainability of the planet.
- Only with solid environmental and ecological education and training is it possible to safeguard the planet from the present and future damage that human action causes to natural systems.
- Higher Education must constitute a space, not only for scientific knowledge, but also as a privileged place for criticism and plural reflection in the face of social, economic and environmental problems.
- The SDGs are the reference framework for sustainability and transformation of the planet into a true “Common Home” where the Human is in harmony with the Natural.



# ECO-ESCOLA-ESECS

The Eco-school project at the Higher School of Education and Social Sciences began in 2022/23 and is part of a strategy by the Instituto Politécnico de Portalegre to become an Eco-Polytechnic.

We implemented the recommended methodology (7 Steps), and since most of the procedures were relatively easy to achieve, we wanted to build a way of acting that could transmit sustainability messages in a critical and reflective way, in order to move away from the image, something “naïve”, which most students brought from the 2nd and 3rd cycles.



# ECO-ESCOLA-ESECS

The Eco-School Council decided, in addition to the mandatory aspects of the process, to organize a week of presentations and lectures by experts, to provide students with moments of learning and reflection on the environment and sustainability.

These moments were continued in classes - within each curricular unit, themes were developed and deepened, in accordance with the SDGs of each area of knowledge.

The idea was S.M.A.R.T.: we had a SPECIFIC and MEASURABLE objective, which was ACHIEVABLE and REALISTIC and within an achievable time, TIMELY.

This is how the Eco-ESECS Week came about, which this year had its second edition.



# ECO-ESCOLA-ESECS

In addition to the week:

Interventions at the school have always been conditioned by the building where it is located. Historic palace from the 17th century, with a limited outdoor space, which does not allow for profound changes. In the garden, which is almost 40 years old, the species are few and ornamental, containing only one native tree.

The actions proposed for the exterior - aromatic garden and placement of nests - are suspended as the building is undergoing major interventions, which involve works that will occupy the entire exterior area.

- Recycling campaigns (paper, electrical/computer plastic), solidarity at Christmas, reinforcement of recycling bins at school and a water consumption monitoring brigade (including attention to school equipment.

- As part of the activities of several Curricular Units, educational walks were carried out in the Serra de São Mamede Natural Park.

- Thematic exhibitions: Nests / Gardens of the World / Trees with History / Trees in letters / ...



# A SEMANA ECO-ESECS

The Eco-ESECS week is a week of seminars, lectures, presentations and cinema, which offers students, the school community and the city's population knowledge, reflections and deepening of topics related to sustainability, in a broad sense, taking as a framework the ecological and environmental aspects, as well as theoretical, critical and reflective development in relation to the SDGs.



## A SEMANA ECO-ESECS Allows:

- Train citizens and future professionals with solid training on environmental and sustainability issues in their various aspects.
- Develop pedagogical and didactic practices that make environmental messages accessible and effective.
- Develop spaces for reflection and debate, in a higher education context, that allow students to form and consolidate their vision of environmental sustainability. – Eco-ESECS Weeks
- Change behaviors, gestures and practices in order to safeguard environmental values.
- Integrate the content and message of the lectures and seminars of the Eco-ESECS Weeks into the curricula of the various ESECS courses.
- Use and develop the potential of cinema as a pedagogical tool, in order to awaken and train students aware of environmental fragility and the need for individual action to protect the planet.





# Cinema, Sustainability and Environment

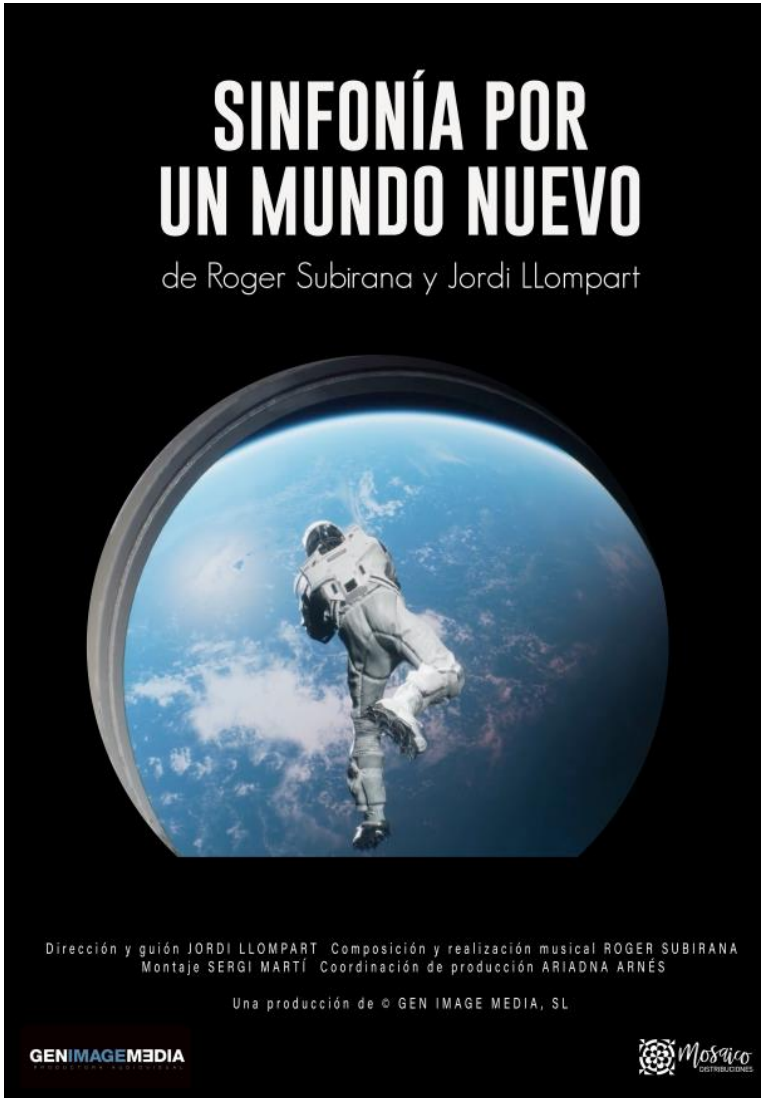
## Cinema Week

### Goals

- **deepen the topics analyzed and debated in the work sessions and raise awareness of other related issues;**
- **motivate students and mobilize awareness of ecological and environmental issues;**
- **present real-world examples of environmental challenges and possible solutions;**
- **think critically about the messages transmitted and the techniques used to transmit them;**



# Cinema Week



# Before the Flood

"Before the Flood" is a documentary directed by Fisher Stevens, produced and narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio. The film mainly addresses issues related to global warming and climate change.

## THEMES

Impact of human activities

Consequences of climate change

Politics surrounding climate change

Possible solutions to mitigate climate change



# Sinfonia para um Mundo novo (Symphony for a new world)

"Symphony for a new world", by Roger Subirana and Jordi Llompart. A work between documentary and experimental that offers a vision of the world with music by Roger Subirana.



## THEMES

Connection with nature

Biodiversity conservation

The impact of human activities on the environment

Positive initiatives to solve climate change



# Interstellar

"Interstellar", directed by Christopher Nolan, is a science fiction film that addresses several themes related to the environment, contextualized in the narrative of space exploration for the survival of humanity.

## THEMES

Dystopian future where Earth faces severe environmental disasters

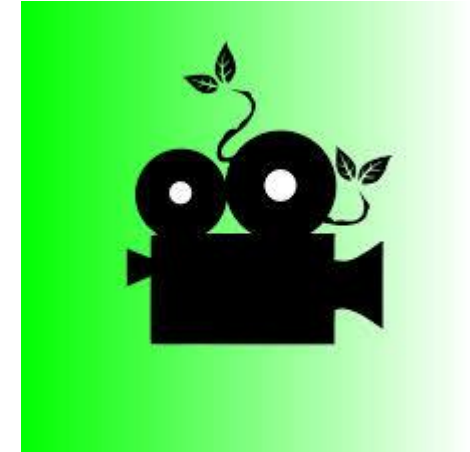
Humanity's ability to deal with environmental crises and find solutions

Space exploration as a possible solution to the environmental problems facing the planet

Preservation of life and the ecosystem



# Cinema and Education



[...] educates in contemporary times, in the issues that occupy and concern us; 2) activates knowledge, discovering in a lucid way what we had not noticed before; 3) establishes relationships with reality that are more immediate, but equally with those that are distant; 4) [... one obtains] instead of answers, a countless number of questions, being the reason to learn; 5) [enables] thinking and contributing to a new discourse inspired by dialogue and the need to continue learning through research.

Rodriguez, 2009, p. 139



# Cinema and social values present in human relations with the environment: Environmental Education

- 1) contents: the structure and internal constitution of information from different areas of knowledge about the environment, according to the specialties of these areas;
- 2) by methodology: the organization's point of view in teaching and EE activities is taken into account, the elements necessary and inherent to the act of learning notions/content about the environment/nature;
- 3) subject of learning: involving the subject's activity in the act of knowing according to a cognitive organization, subjectivity and personal history;
- 4) context: where the pedagogical practice takes place, the purposes of education, the historical-social character of the pedagogical practice and education;
- 5) logical: highlights the logical organization of the teaching-learning process in its most general aspects and of the historical production of knowledge itself;
- 6) values: the relationships, interests and needs of social man, captured in emphases and omissions.

Rosso, 2009



# Cinema and the Environment



Environmental impact cinema can present information that arouses students' interest and allows them to take actions that bring about environmental transformation in their own reality. The perception of the environmental problem and its possible forms of resolution can and should be taken by the students themselves, allowing them to become independent and critical, to be transforming agents in their environment.

Vieira e Rosso, 2011





# THE RESULTS OF THIS EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION:



# Our Partners:



Câmara Municipal de Portalegre



MESTRADO EM ENSINO DA GEOGRAFIA NO 3.º CICLO E ENSINO SECUNDÁRIO



**THANK YOU ALL  
FOR YOUR  
PATIENCE AND  
ATTENTION.**



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