



ESCAS

ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE
CONSERVAÇÃO AMBIENTAL
E SUSTENTABILIDADE

IPÊ'S CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY SCHOOL A Proposal to Global Giving Platform



Photo Gustavo Arruda

1. Introduction

Education is decisive to the quality of the development of any given country. It influences all sectors, including innovation and entrepreneurship that can derive from the mixture of different fields of knowledge. The quality of education and the understanding of interdisciplinary contents influence the outcomes that research and technology can produce, and the quality of what is made or the services that are offered.

Despite Brazil's apparent success as 8th economy in the world, its education quality is far from acceptable. It holds the shameful 53rd place among the 65 most developed countries in the world. This brings disadvantages in all aspects, including a gap between the number of high-level professionals available and the market needs. How can a country progress if almost 30% of its adult population is functionally illiterate and 34% of the students who get to the 5th grade are unable to understand what they read? Largely, education needs to be enhanced in all fields of knowledge if the country aims at achieving a development of quality and wishes to maintain promising rates in its social, economic and environmental realms.

In relation to the environment, this is especially important. Brazil holds one of the planet's largest biodiversity. This means from 10 to 20% of all plant and animal species that exist in the world are found in Brazil's territory. It holds the largest amount of tropical forests, around 1/3 of what still exists, and is home to around 20% of the fresh water available worldwide.

The results of a recent study conducted by IPÊ and a consortium of organizations led by IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature), indicate that the education that would be needed to turn all this richness into an asset for sustainability is far from being achieved. Brazil has scarce opportunities for students to learn in the formal education system. Conservation and sustainability are not popular fields of study and the best universities, which are normally the public ones, offer far less courses than would be adequate to the size of the responsibility and opportunity that the natural richness can represent.

The pressures on the natural environments are many, and occur continuously at an increasing rate. Today, many official protected areas are being impacted with projects that range from mining to hydroelectric powers, or

cattle and monocultures for exports. Besides, indigenous populations are being expelled from their territories in a variety of manners, all in the name of “progress and development”.

Environmentalists in Brazil are still seen as barriers for “progress”. Even with data indicating that in deforested and degraded areas the quality of life is worst than when the ecosystems were protected. But, the idea of having someone to blame seems to be more easily accepted and divulged, as it would require a more profound reflection and understanding to what is in fact to blame for the lack of development advances.

Brazil needs a mass of highly qualified professionals in the environmental field to revert the losses it has been suffering for the past decades. The environmental richness that it holds needs to reflect on the economic numbers, as well as in opportunities for a sustainable growth. That is what this proposal is all about.

IPÊ – Instituto de Pesquisas Ecológicas (Institute for Ecological Research) is a Brazilian NGO that has understood that without high-level professionals in a variety of fields related to conservation and sustainability a development that is worthwhile cannot occur. For the past 20 years it has dedicated a substantial portion of its operations to education in these fields. Now we have a School named ESCAS – Conservation and Sustainability School, and although it is today recognized as an education institution, having even acquired the accreditation from the Education Ministry to offer a Master’s program, it still needs to scale-up in all education areas that it has invested.

In this proposal, we will give you an overview of what IPÊ is, the ESCAS history and the reasons for being at the stage it is now. We will also offer you the opportunity to engage itself with ESCAS and thus give a significant contribution to sustainability education in Brazil. This can be done offering scholarships to ESCAS, so we could reach more 20 students, that otherwise would not attend the programs and put their talents and enthusiasm into action.

A. IPÊ and ESCAS’s Description

Established in 1992, IPÊ is considered one of the largest environmental NGOs in Brazil.

IPÊ started its activities with a project on an endangered primate species,

the Black Lion Tamarin Project, trying to save this species from extinction in the Western region of São Paulo state. Today the institution has more than 90 professionals responsible for about 40 projects spread across Brazil: Nazaré Paulista and Pontal do Paranapanema in São Paulo (target biome: Inland Atlantic Forest); Pantanal in Mato Grosso do Sul; and in the Lower Negro River in Amazonas and several Amazonian Parks (target biome: Amazonian Forest) (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Sites of completed and on-going IPÊ's projects in Brazil.

Wherever it operates, the institute adopts the IPÊ Conservation Model, an integrated action plan that includes research on threatened species, education, habitat restoration, community involvement, sustainable development for local communities, landscape conservation, and involvement in public policies (Figure 2). One of its goals is to conserve biodiversity, respecting the traditions of the communities that live around protected areas and where IPÊ conducts its research projects. Our agro-forest and income-generation programmes benefit nearly 500 families living around natural areas and reach

around ten thousand people annually by means of environmental education and other conservationist initiatives. Moreover, IPÊ is responsible for having planted more than 1.5 million native Atlantic Forest tree seedlings (Nazaré Paulista and Pontal do Paranapanema), and for the conservation of 15 animal species, most of which are threatened with extinction (examples: jaguars, black-lion tamarins, black-faced lion tamarins, manatees, titi monkeys). Our education programmes reach more than 400 people every year.

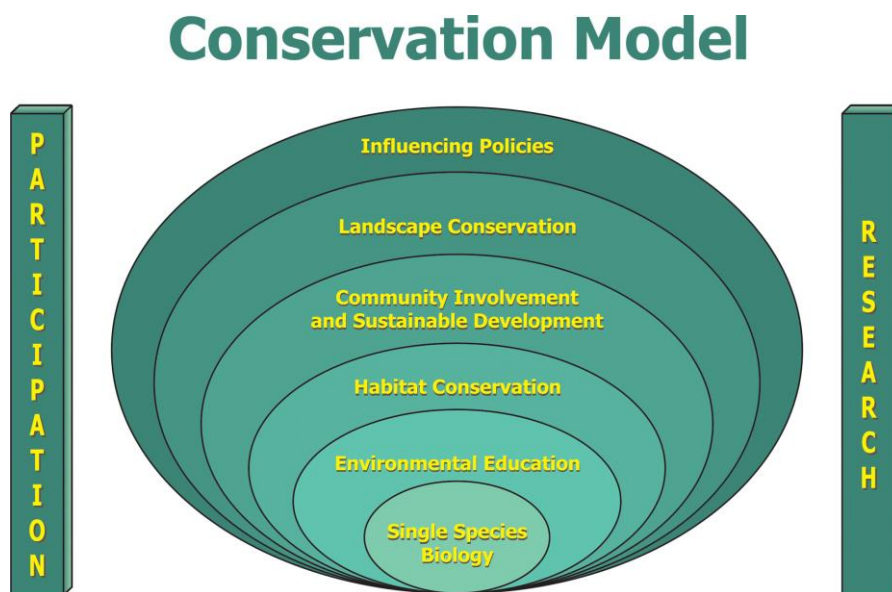


Figure 2: IPÊ's Conservation Model

IPÊ's mission is to develop and disseminate innovative models of biodiversity conservation that promote socio-economic benefits through science, education and sustainable business.

B. IPÊ's School

The Conservation and Sustainability School – ESCAS - subject of this project, is an old dream of IPÊ. The institution has always invested in conservation education, because it considers this an essential strategy to train the professionals that will confront the challenges of sustainability and the complexities of modern society. In 1996, IPÊ established a centre for short-term

courses. The basis has been the Institution's on the ground experience, as many of IPÊ's project coordinators had to learn by doing. We have always shared the ways in which people can better understand how to apply what works best in a given context. In addition to contents that have been incorporated into the IPÊ curriculum, new fields that emerge over time are also added, which is a way to keep professionals up-to-date with what is happening. IPÊ's education treats the social and the environmental needs as inseparable and sustainability is our pillar.

Over time, the institution's educational branch has expanded and we created a school named ESCAS – Conservation and Sustainability School. We received an accreditation to offer a Professional Master's programme on biodiversity conservation and sustainability and today the school offers this programme, short-term courses and a MBA on socio-environmental business management working with social entrepreneurs.

ESCAS's students learn not only to reflect systematically on several challenges, but also to transform ideas into action.

We believe that students today need to learn how to build and manage organizations, businesses, and projects, besides thinking with creativity in transdisciplinary and challenging ways. All this, of course, is based on research and participative actions, having sustainability as a goal.

The following list comprehend the main points of ESCAS's teaching model:

- Our school does not adopt the public or the private teaching model - we seek the best of both systems.
- Our students' thesis is not destined to library shelves alone, but to be put into practice.
- We encourage students to try out innovative and daring ideas.
- We are a school where theory and practice go hand in hand in search of a more sustainable world.
- Our pedagogical foundation is mentoring.
- Transdisciplinarity and fields that complement each other have replaced the usual charts with disciplines to be taught and learned.

- We seek entrepreneur students and teachers since the admission process.

We expect to expand the scope for our education programmes and consolidate what we are offering. We intend to increase the number of enrolled students (including higher numbers from other Latin American countries) through a Scholarship Fund.

IPÊ's educational programmes have influenced a number of professionals, many who now work in public agencies, conservation areas, and corporations with active "greening" initiatives. We hope to train stakeholders and create a critical mass in Brazil and Latin America, capable of influencing the countries's social and environmental conditions. Our school has shown itself to possess this potential, and that is why its growth will increase the scale of its influence.

C. Target Audience and Stakeholders

The IPÊ's education initiatives were designed to reach professionals from companies, government, NGOs and all students who are interested in joining theory and practice. The goal is to qualify a rare professional, which is able to create and disseminate innovative models for conservation and sustainable development.

The desired profile characteristics for our students are: entrepreneurship; leadership potential; dynamism; professional experience or newly-graduated seeking practice opportunities.

We have reached more than 6.4 thousand people since 1996, and we wish to add more 20 professionals, besides the regular ones, reaching those one that cannot afford to pay the training programmes

D. Key Project Personnel

We have a key team of permanent professors, including our field researchers, and several collaborators, professionals from the market, with proved experience. All those professionals act as instructors and advisors.

E. Sustainability and Budget

The school sustainability is maintained from distinct sources:

- An Endowment Fund from the main partners.
- IPÊs approved proposals to funding agencies (variable year to year).
- Course fees.

Most of our target audience are professionals from government and NGOs and they are not sponsored by their employers. Therefore, in order to take our courses, these professionals need scholarships to complement the fees.

F. Collaboration and Possible Support

Scholarships:

Funding scholarships can be a great way to contribute to IPÊ's overall goal, as many students have the wish to participate, but are not capable of paying for their education. The estimates are as follows:

- Master and MBA program: Total Course Cost (18 to 24 months): US\$ 17,502 per student

OBS: From the Global Giving we wish to raise a seed resource to start a continuous Scholarship Fund that allow the school to reach more 20 students for the training programmes.

Budget:

This budget represents the costs to add 20 students, and includes the costs of housing, meals, materials, teachers' salaries and office costs during the courses per student.

Itens	Valor Total/year(U\$)
1. Teachers	6,125
2. Meals and transportation	438
3. Housing	438
4. Office Costs (materials, print, etc)	1,750
Total per course (MBA or Master program)/student	17,502
Total per 20 students	350,040

G. Contacts

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