

N° 5, May 2026

# MULTI Letter FIMEM

International Federation  
of the Modern  
School Movements



Caring for the earth  
means protecting children

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# NOTES FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

## Communication Commission - FIMEM

Countries at war, peoples under attack, lands overexploited and polluted. Humanity is currently creating an atmosphere that is particularly suffocating. News reports, distorted by media outlets that have ceased to be impartial and ethical, no longer make it easy to build a solid understanding of the world and the challenges facing society.

In our classrooms, pupils are worried, anxious and find it very difficult to envisage their future lives. Because it is essential to enable them to imagine a 'desirable future' ((as our comrade from the MCE, Giancarlo Cavinato, puts it in the anthology "Quale mondo quali futuri") to help them live the present as serenely as possible, teachers and educators have a role to play. Through the study of the local environment, experiences, discussions and investigations into the environment (both near and far), we help build a concrete understanding of the world and guide students towards an emancipatory knowledge.

In this new Multiletter, we have sought to bring together various courses of action within our schools and movements, to enable children to develop a sensitive relationship with the environment and the world, so that tomorrow, as the citizens they will become, they may act and participate in restoring a planet that is more breathable for everyone.

Many thanks to Commission 13, which works to protect the planet, for sending us their contributions, as well as to all the contributors from the Freinet movements for their articles, which help us better understand the issues at stake and offer us ideas for taking action with the children!

**The Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's  
needs, but not every man's greed! M. Gandhi**

Feel free to send your contributions to:  
[multilette@ridef-fimem.com](mailto:multilette@ridef-fimem.com)

**Cooperatively  
Editorial team**

# GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Juan Fernández Platero - Spain  
Karim Kaboré - Burkina Faso  
Juan Carlos "Pato" Lira - Mexico  
Cheikh Makhfousse - Senegal  
Gabriella Varaldi - Uruguay

## Dear colleagues

The FIMEM Board of Directors wishes to express its sincere congratulations to the "Communications" committee for the production of the fifth issue of the Multiletter. It particularly commends the dynamism, the quality of the work accomplished, and the unwavering commitment demonstrated by the committee, which contributes significantly to the influence and vitality of our movement.

This issue is dedicated to a theme that addresses the challenges related to environmental protection, environmental education, and the activities carried out in schools for this purpose. It tackles a subject that is currently at the heart of concerns and rests on a fundamental question: how can we preserve the planet while meeting the needs of current and future populations?

This theme stands out for its relevance, importance, and perfect alignment with the current global context. Faced with the major environmental challenges that concern all societies, this issue reinforces the collective awareness that the survival of the planet depends primarily on the behavior of human beings today. To achieve this, environmental education is essential for bringing about lasting changes in attitudes and behaviors, fostering responsible citizenship. The core values of Freinet pedagogy are perfectly aligned with this vision, as they integrate the concepts of environment, citizenship, and responsibility.

The FIMEM Board of Directors therefore invites all those involved in Freinet pedagogy to read the content of this issue of Multiletter, to draw inspiration from it in their practices, and to widely disseminate it within the community, especially among fellow teachers, as schools play a key role in shaping citizens and creating conscious and engaged generations.

The FIMEM Board of Directors would be remiss if it did not reiterate its sincere thanks to all member movements, committees, the network of delegates, and all partner organizations who, every day, continue their work and actions to promote popular pedagogies. Convinced that the Multiletter is a privileged space for the dissemination of important information, he encourages all member movements to become more involved in its operation.

**Together, let us continue to make our pedagogy an instrument of  
fraternity, freedom and peace.**

**Cooperatively**

**CA-FIMEM**

cafimem@gmail.com

# WHEN WILL GOVERNMENTS STOP DISREGARDING CHILDREN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS ?

Catherine Chabrun  
ICEM  
France

The Convention on the Rights of the Child should serve as the primary guiding principle for all public policies, both at the national and international levels. No reform, law, decree, circular, or similar measure should be adopted without taking into account the best interests of the child. To this end, listening to children, consulting with them, and ensuring their active participation are essential prerequisites.

## All human rights are at risk of being affected by future climate change.

The signatory states to the Paris Agreement (2015) were aware that

*“that climate change is a matter of concern to all humanity and that, in taking measures to address such change, the Parties must respect, promote, and take into account their respective obligations regarding human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities,*

*and people in vulnerable situations, and the right to development, as well as gender equality, women’s empowerment, and intergenerational equity.*

Although the Paris Agreement has sent a strong message, encouraged countries to invest in new sectors such as renewable energy, and established a collective goal to address the climate crisis, it will soon reach its limits.

In July 2025, the International Court of Justice issues an advisory opinion in which it notes that the 1.5°C target is not merely a political goal, but constitutes a legal obligation for the States that have ratified the Paris Agreement.

From November 10 to 21, 2025, during COP 30, the 194 Parties to the Paris Agreement (193 countries and the European Union) were required to submit their new greenhouse gas emission reduction plans prior to the conference; however, just a few days before it began, only 64 countries had submitted their “nationally determined contributions.”

Not even Brazil has presented its timeline for phasing out fossil fuels, and China has submitted some interesting targets, though they could be more ambitious.

The other countries are watching and analyzing one another, but many of them are waiting for the European Union's proposals to set the optimal limit for their climate ambitions.

There are significant disparities among countries, regions, and cities: GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions are proportional to a country's level of development and the wealth of its inhabitants. The richest 10% are responsible for approximately 40% of emissions—that is, 15 times more per person than the poorest 50%. The human and natural systems that have contributed the least to climate change are the most affected, leading to forced migration from Africa, Asia, and North America.

As for cities, the intensification of weather events causes damage to infrastructure (transportation, sanitation, water, and energy), which will further affect socially and economically marginalized residents.

And by 2026, no country can claim to guarantee everyone the same protection and opportunities, or the full exercise of their fundamental rights—not even those considered the richest and most developed.

Although today's children and young people are deeply affected by the impacts of global warming—which are linked to past and present political and economic decisions—their interests, opinions, and perspectives are rarely taken into account in national and international debates on climate change.



**However, it would be enough to implement the International Convention on the Rights of the Child \***

In the first part of Article 3:

*In all decisions concerning children, whether made by public or private social welfare institutions, courts, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.*

As for young people's participation in policymaking, including at the local level, it is very rare. Their opinions are rarely taken into account, although Article 12:

1. *States Parties shall ensure that a child who is capable of forming his or her own views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the child's age and maturity.*
2. *To this end, the child shall be given the opportunity to be heard in any judicial or administrative proceedings affecting him or her, either directly, through a representative, or through an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.*

However, involving children and young people in policy initiatives—whether in the areas of health, education, food, or the protection of children, young people, and families—would be essential to securing the future and the empowerment of all human beings.

And these projects would be full of new ideas for using renewable energy sources, for strengthening environmental education in schools and other educational settings, for supporting people whose livelihoods are at risk, and for improving disaster prevention and protection measures against events such as storms, floods, and droughts.

The need to curb climate change, limit the effects of global warming, and create protective systems and livable environments requires the participation of children and young people in their development, implementation, and monitoring.



Today's children are tomorrow's adults; let's start this cycle of participation as soon as possible so that humanity might have even the slightest chance of survival.



Children are the future of the Earth and of humanity!

# A PROPOSAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Giancarlo Cavinato  
MCE  
Italy

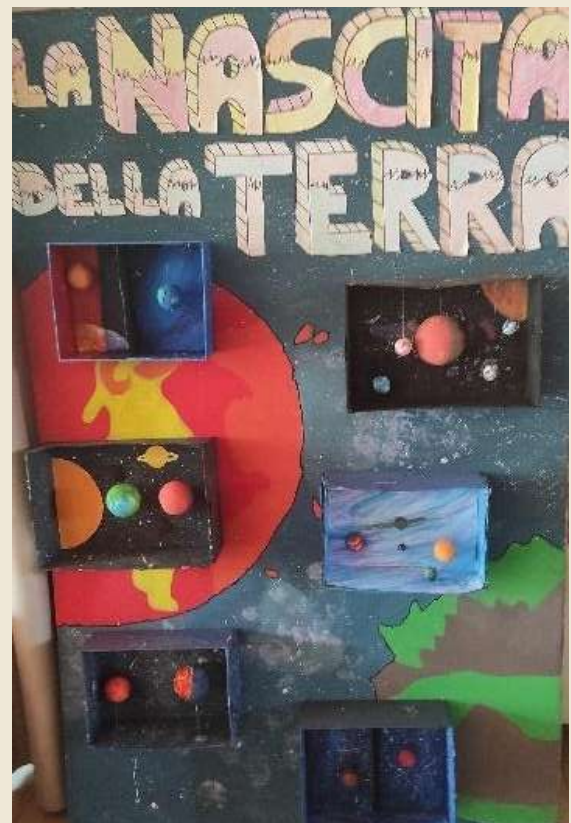
We often wonder what place environmental education should have in our schools. In some countries, it is a 'discipline' included in civic education, but each institution organizes courses in its own way. There is a great difference in content and methods. It is often given one hour per week. When it isn't even offered as an alternative hour to religious education. Or relegated to an ecological week for cleaning up an environment. Undoubtedly a positive action, but it does not address the real problem of training people to see themselves as part of the planet's issues, to feel responsible for possible resource depletion, and for the need to care for and respect the rights of future generations.

As FIMEM, we have written a manifesto 'DEFENSE OF THE PLANET'

<https://www./fimem-freinet.org>

emphasizing that environmental education must be a cross-cutting issue across all school curricula.

But what kinds of proposals could we circulate within our cooperative groups and movements?



High School Exhibition on Climate Change:  
Causes and Consequences, Milan



## Charter of actions of the educational activist educator to train in the defense of the environment

1. Develop a social, ecological, planetary identity, by not considering oneself above and outside of nature, but by making it understood that we are part of it.
2. Expand the perception of reality, the use of the senses, through bodily and manual activities, play, planning and construction with natural materials (clay, earth, water, rushes, branches and leaves, reeds, floral arrangements) for a global education of the person (whole part).
3. Train empathy towards all living beings through observation, experience, the construction of small ponds, herbariums, land, vegetable gardens; make people appreciate all aspects and natural elements by overcoming disgust and prejudicial rejection.
4. Observe the effects of its interventions (ecological footprint) on the environment (consumption, uses, conservation, transformations, etc.).
5. Study/propose actions and activities for an ecological reform of education through the production of texts, flash mobs, manifestos, public meetings for a global eco-citizenship.
6. Stimulate knowledge of natural environments and their regulatory mechanisms through visits, outings, and the management of micro-environments in the spaces around school buildings.
7. Ensure the establishment of constant attention to what is happening and which is not positive both in the immediate environment and in the wider world, accompanied by the ability to be indignant whenever values are flouted and places are degraded or an injustice is committed through observation and research of articles and information; it is necessary to promote the organization of initiatives to denounce these situations of injustice and destruction and dissipation of the environment, to protect and safeguard common goods by setting up a documentary watch and by disseminating information for example.
8. Build critical analysis tools by comparing the plurality of sources, documentary research in relation to the various environmental situations.

9. Do not hide or avoid addressing "thorny" subjects such as real estate speculation, arms production, discrimination, destruction of environments by highlighting the links between the environment, peace and war, the economy.

10. A pedagogy of resistance: after having aroused indignation, try to organize concrete initiatives in compliance with the laws; passive resistance, boycott of products, denunciation, individual and collective agitation inside and outside school buildings.

11. An attitude to develop is to never give in to failure or to the counter-actions and oppositions of those who are responsible for environmental damage and abuse, continuing to work constantly to change the situation and develop confidence in a more just and sustainable future.



High School Exhibition on Climate Change: Causes and Consequences, Milan



"Siembravida" Association, Torrelavega (Spain)

These are ‘flagship actions’ that every educator can have in their practical values notebook to guide communication with students. We propose them to our Movements to stimulate the collection and exchange of experiences and practices in this field as well as in other actions in which our Federation is engaged, such as the protection of children's and human rights and the search for best practices in various fields of knowledge.

We may not perhaps save the Amazon rainforest, but we are trying to keep concerns alive and share experiences among ourselves and in schools.

Let us keep in mind that only a profound shift in our cognitive paradigm—as recommended by Edgar Morin\* when he emphasizes the need to connect different bodies of knowledge—can make us, as well as children and young people, aware that we belong to a single community with a shared destiny.

That is to say, being part of nature and not above it, as recommended by action n°1, and that each of our choices produces effects of disturbance or improvement. In an attempt to make these actions, as well as the small rules to be observed and the strategies to be implemented such as waste sorting, organic farming, school gardens, recycling, and reuse, more effective as they are integrated into a system of shared and co-constructed behaviors and attitudes.



The story of the colibri: “I’m doing my part”

\* Morin, E., The Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future.

## A CONSCIOUS SCHOOL

María Jesús Sanz Anaya  
MCEP  
Spain

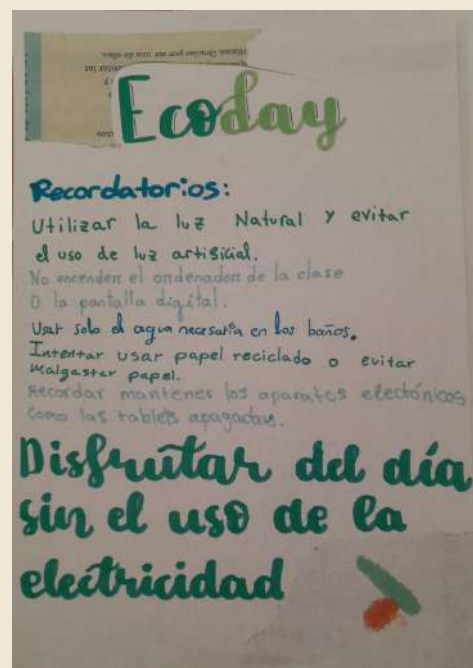
Creating a school that is mindful, reflective, and transformative is a wonderful endeavor, but it requires motivation, effort, and cooperation. I would describe my school, the CEIPSO (Center for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Compulsory Secondary Education) “Ángel González,” as one of those schools that aims to improve the world we live in, knowing that there is still work to be done but that we are on the right track.

In school, we must recognize that we are living in a time of eco-social crisis. We are ecologically dependent and interdependent, but we have forgotten this. We depend on nature and other human beings to survive, yet we view them as something separate from ourselves.

Today, in our educational communities, we can see that climate change is happening, that oil reserves are running out, that there are inequalities, and people who have to migrate from their places of origin because they cannot

survive... but we must go further; we require a clear understanding on how to act.

We urgently need to change our perspective, understand the Earth's limits, and acknowledge that we are vulnerable. It is imperative that schools address these issues and promote profound changes.



I'm going to tell you about the journey we're on as an educational community and what we're doing to contribute to that transformation. First, I'd like to mention that we've drawn inspiration from a variety of sources from an educational perspective. Some of them include:

- The Freinet pedagogy. Among its principles is promoting environmental stewardship through “experimental exploration” and direct connection with the natural environment. It employs techniques such as environmental research and encourages activities like school gardens. It views the school as a space for fostering environmental awareness.

<https://www.mcep.es/>

- The New Culture of the Earth by Ecologists in Action. “This book synthesizes in seven regenerative ideas, nearly, everything we need to understand and what must be done so that humanity can coexist fairly and peacefully with the planet in all its diversity. Other bases are required to illuminate a possible and desirable future. We need a “New Culture of the Earth”.

<https://www.ecologistasenaccion.org/302036/documentos-nueva-cultura-de-la-tierra/>

We began our journey at “Ángel González” several years ago, back in 2009. From the very start, we established clear educational guidelines, including the democratic participation of the entire school community, a natural approach based on each child’s individual level of development, and the use of activity and motivation as the driving force behind learning, inclusion, equal opportunity,

and a commitment to caring for the environment and people. Today, we continue to believe in these principles and have carried them forward, improving and expanding our educational program.



To give you a better sense of this journey, here are some of the activities, projects, and initiatives we've undertaken:

1. Our school is part of the Eco-Schools Program. This program was created in response to the environmental education needs identified at the United Nations Earth Summit held in Brazil in 1992. In Spain, it is run by ADEAC, and its goal is to promote sustainability in schools. The program awards the "Green Flag" to schools that successfully integrate environmental education and improve their ecological management. To achieve this, we carry out various initiatives, including:

- Creation of an environmental committee that proposes specific actions throughout the year and it is formed by representatives from every classroom and the entire school community. This committee serves as the driving force behind the program. It organizes the playground eco-monitors, awards the monthly certificate to the quietest classroom based on the eco-monitors' records, organizes the annual Ecoday celebration, and more.
- Development of a code of conduct. This is a statement that reflects the Eco-School's commitment to the environment and is reviewed annually.

- Conducting eco-audits to identify the environmental impact of certain actions and make recommendations for improvement.



As an eco-school, we also recycle in classrooms, playgrounds, and the cafeteria. We reduce our use of plastic and our consumption of water and electricity, we run a materials cooperative and reuse materials for workshops and school activities. We promote healthy, plastic-free, breakfasts, we are restoring the playgrounds to their natural state and we are creating new spaces for biodiversity.

2. The School Vegetable Garden is an integral part of school life. It is organized by a committee made up of parents and teachers, and we are part of a network of other schools with vegetable gardens, with whom we share experiences and learn from one another. Each classroom has its own vegetable garden bed, and students participate in every step of the process, from preparing the soil and planting, to nurturing crops and harvesting. Additionally, cross-curricular activities are organized: measuring garden beds, drawing the plants, researching what we plant, creating posters, and more. We approach the vegetable garden in the same way that Élise and Célestin Freinet did.

<https://www.mcep.es/el-huerto-escolar/>

3. The Eco-Social Curriculum. Two years ago, taking advantage of changes to the Education Law—specifically the drafting of Universal Design for Learning and the development of Learning Situations—we developed an eco-social curriculum. In this way, we incorporated the eco-social dimension into the elementary school level in a cross-curricular manner.

Each grade in elementary school focuses on one of the seven goals of the New Earth Culture: living off the sun's energy, closing material cycles, preserving biodiversity, downsizing in the material sphere, building equity and community, and putting life at the center. In every grade, a monthly activity related to the theme for that grade is carried out. This is addressed during homeroom (at the assembly) or in other subjects.



In September, the topic is introduced with a thought-provoking question and the creation of an eco-social corner or area in the classroom, to which information, artwork, research findings, and other materials are added over time.

The activity for June involves creating a final project that brings together everything learned throughout the course. This project can be for the school, to share with other classes, with families, etc.

<https://site.educa.madrid.org/cp.angelgonzalez.leganes/index.php/enseanzas/programas/>

As I mentioned at the beginning, there is still a long way to go, and right now, at our school, it is up to us to broaden our perspective and systematically plan our course of action—from fostering greater family involvement to making an impact on both our immediate and wider communities. That is why “service-learning,” a highly effective methodology for transformation, will be an integral part of our collective future.

<https://www.aprendizajeservicio.net/ques-el-aps/>



As Yayo Herrero says, it is urgent,

*“An education built on the pillars that sustain life. An education that places life at the center of reflection and experience, that fosters connections to the local area and the community, that exposes and challenges the current model of development, and that enables us to imagine, build, and experiment with alternatives.”*

May our journey as a school be a collective, cooperative one, committed to caring for LIFE in all its dimensions.

# FROM PLASTIC WASTE RECYCLING TO THE GARDEN

to promote financial independence for young people with visual impairments

Thierno Abdoujaye Ba  
ASEM  
Senegal

In a voluntary effort to protect the environment, visually impaired people in Saint-Louis, Senegal, have launched environmental initiatives. The first involved transforming plastic waste—which is considered a threat to a healthy environment—into works of art.

Thus, during the webinar held by Commission 13, a project was presented that now offers you the opportunity to participate in events focused on environmental protection and to be invited to share your experiences, such as at the Climats schools organized by the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.

For young people who are past school age or who have dropped out of school due to a disability related to visual impairment, the center has launched a garden project in the form of a workshop designed to introduce them to Braille and help them learn to read and write in Braille.



To ensure the project's success, adjustments were made, such as creating raised pathways with the help of teenagers to make it easier for blind people to navigate. A grid of tactile markings was installed to maintain the proper spacing between the pathways. A pond was built with the help of a local construction company to ensure there was enough water for irrigation.

The entire harvest, consisting of herbs and lettuce, is sold to local hotels and restaurants.

In addition to serving as an educational space, this garden helps blind people learn about sound financial management and functions as a solidarity fund.

This project is run by a blind adult who is a trained horticulturist.



## WHAT LIES HIDDEN BEFORE OUR EYES

Marie Triquenaux  
ICEM  
France

The children attending our schools today were born into an extremely distressing environment. This is true both literally—with extreme weather events becoming increasingly common (winds so strong they rip the roofs off schools, days of extreme heat that force us to stay indoors...)—and figuratively, with a widespread awareness of humanity's impact on this situation.



They can't do anything about it, and yet they will be the first to suffer the consequences of previous generations' recklessness. Throughout the day, they are passive and innocent witnesses to this unfolding ecological disaster. Meanwhile, at school, we ask them to sort their trash and make them sing cheerful songs about whales swimming through oceans polluted with detergents and other contaminants...



**How can we talk to children about environmental issues without making them feel guilty?**

**How can we convey to them the urgent need to protect the planet without overwhelming them even more?**

In FIMEM Commission 13, “Defending the Planet,” we have been reflecting for several years on how to carry out and share our ideas and actions in support of protecting life.

In my classes, I’ve decided to tackle this issue without irony or anxiety, but rather with curiosity and enthusiasm. And no, we won’t be going to the zoo or on a nature field trip to the other side of the country! There’s no point in going that far. In my opinion, it’s actually counterproductive. Instead, we’re going to discover unexpected treasures hidden right before our eyes—those living creatures we encounter every day. The schoolyard and the buildings we move through daily will be our fields of study, and they’ll be more than enough to satisfy our thirst for discovery.

A pair of redstarts nests under a beam in the covered patio, and for months you can watch the ceaseless dance of the parents as they build the nest and feed the chicks. What a joy it is to hear the eager chirping of the little birds every time their parents approach!

An ant? A miracle of biology. How can something so small be self-sufficient, move around, find food, and reproduce? And what a social organization! Could it serve as a model for us to follow? The life around us is wonderful; we just need to take a closer look.



[In Search of the Small Animals in Our Schoolyard - May 2024](#)

In May 2024, together with Commission 13, we decided to organize a webinar. Each group is invited to share with their class the environmental actions they have carried out through a video, a slideshow, a presentation, or an interview. Their contributions will be compiled into a webinar that will be broadcast live. This is the perfect opportunity to carry out this long-planned project of exploring the schoolyard with my students, with the goal of finding living creatures: snails, earthworms, and other insects became the stars of our film. Through this short video, they have regained their rightful place in the school’s ecosystem, where we have developed a sensitive relationship with them. The children were able to take the time needed to look for them, observe them closely, and overcome their tactile apprehensions by gently placing them in their hands.



These small, insignificant creatures have taken on a new significance in his eyes and have become precious treasures.

It would be interesting to share this project with children from other regions, both in France and around the world, since I imagine that every schoolyard and every corner of every building is home to its own wildlife, and that we surely share some common species as well.

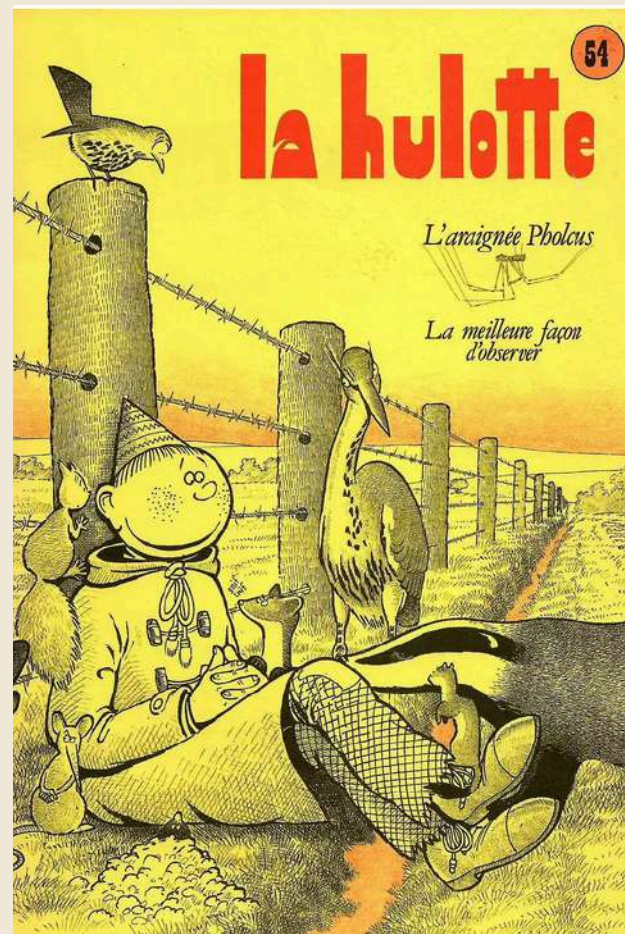
Right now, I'm working on another project that also involves protecting small animals—specifically, those that are often overlooked. I've noticed that children are often still afraid of certain insects they consider dangerous, and/or mistreat others because they're seen as insignificant and easy to kill. Is this due to the influence adults have on children, which the children then replicate? That's the question!

In any case, I decided to undertake a project on spiders after casually squashing yet another one and after reading a famous naturalist magazine published in France, \*La Hulotte\*, which recounts the lives of animals and plants in the French countryside with humor and scientific rigor.

Issues 54 and 55 are devoted to the Pholcus spider. While reading these issues, I first learned that

*"The huge house spiders you see scurrying across the floor and walls never bite."*<sup>1</sup>

This is truly essential information that we need to teach children!



Second, I've learned a great deal about this little Pholcus, one of the most common spiders found in French homes and one that can be found everywhere—especially in our schools! Its web is characterized by its

*"indescribable chaos"* <sup>2</sup>

and, therefore, easy to find. Ever since then, I've been eagerly searching every dusty corner of the house and looking fondly at my new friend.

La Hulotte had the great idea of offering, along with these two issues, a small terrarium specially designed for our beloved little one. (See attachment)

Through this exchange of educational projects, I hope I have encouraged you to go out and meet the non-human inhabitants of your school, build a meaningful relationship with them, and share your experiences with us. I would love to establish a dialogue—a connection—among all of us, living beings in schools around the world! Please feel free to contact me.\*



I believe this exploration reflects the values of Freinet pedagogy, because it simply requires looking down or up at the sky, observing our surroundings, and taking an interest in them. We will discover with wonder that all species are worthy of our attention, that each has its own complexity and rightful place, and this will make us even more eager to protect them and even defend them.

<sup>1</sup> La Hulotte n° 54, p 5

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p 19

\* [marie.triquenauxeicem-freinet.org](mailto:marie.triquenauxeicem-freinet.org)

## APPENDIX

*Excerpt from La Hulotte's online catalog*

*Charlie Pholcus is easy to find and catch: he lives in your basement, your attic, your garage, your broom closet...*

*He's the easiest animal in the world to raise. He can go weeks without eating. But be careful: as long as he has water to drink (La Hulotte has set up a small water tube for him).*

*Just think of all the observations you can make with him!...how he woos his beloved (and avoids being devoured during mating); ...how he becomes completely invisible in half a second; ...the nocturnal weaving of his diabolical trap; ...the touching care of Mama Pholcus for her little ones, etc., etc.*

*To capture Charlie, pamper him, and understand everything that happens to him, your Palais Vitré (Crystal Palace) will come with an informational booklet.*

<https://lahulotte.fr/boutique/boutique-nature/le-palais-vitre-de-charlie-pholcus/>



## SOWING LIFE

Beatriz Diez Rioz  
MCEP  
Spain

In a context marked by the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and the disconnection between people and nature, education is a key tool for sowing real change. This is the context in which *Semer la Vie* was born, an eco-social education project by Ecologists in Action Cantabria, subsidized by the Spanish Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, which encourages people to stop and observe, understand the cycles of nature, and reconnect with what sustains life.

Sowing Life focuses on education based on experience, emotion, and feeling. Its main objective is to teach children and young people about the importance of caring for the environment, understanding that environmental sustainability cannot be separated from social justice and the well-being of communities.

*Siembra Vida* offers experiential and participatory learning. Students experiment, investigate, observe, and reflect through practice: by touching the earth, cultivating, exploring the environment, or participating in group activities.

These activities help students understand the essential role of pollinators in ecosystems and food production, others that invite them to discover the origin of life and the importance of conserving biodiversity, and experiences where the soil ceases to be an invisible element and becomes a living system, full of microorganisms and processes fundamental to life, are some examples of the topics we work on.



These experiences not only share knowledge, but also generate emotional connections. Because caring for what we know is important, but caring for what we connect with is transformative.

## Leaving the classroom to understand the world

One of the fundamental pillars of the project is to take learning outside the classroom. Outings in the local environment allow students to observe the biodiversity around them and understand that nature is not a distant concept, but part of their everyday lives. This direct contact encourages a more conscious and critical view of the local area, raising questions and encouraging responsibility.



## School gardens: learning by cultivating life

Among all the proposals, working in school gardens plays an important role. The vegetable garden becomes a living classroom where students can directly experience the cycles of nature: sowing, caring, observing, waiting, and harvesting.

Through cultivation, we understand the origin of food, reflect on food sovereignty, and develop values such as patience, responsibility, and teamwork. The vegetable garden is also a space where each process has its own time.



In addition, support in the creation and management of these spaces enables educational institutions to generate sustainable projects over time, integrating the garden as a cross-curricular teaching tool.

## Working towards an edible forest

Beyond the orchard, some experiments are moving towards the creation of edible forests, spaces that mimic the functioning of natural ecosystems by combining trees, shrubs, and plants that produce food. This approach not only promotes biodiversity but also allows us to rethink our relationship with the land according to a more sustainable and regenerative logic.

## Planting life

Sowing Life is not just a set of activities, but an invitation to rethink the role of education today. In the face of eco-social challenges, it is not enough to simply convey information: it is necessary to raise awareness, encourage participation, and promote action.

The project aims to help students recognize themselves as agents of change, capable of influencing their immediate environment and being part of a broader transformation.

Because education is not just about teaching, but also about sowing. And every seed, when it finds the right conditions, has the potential to germinate and transform into life. So let's sow life!



# EL MORRAL VIAJERO

## TRAVEL TOTE BAG

Escuela Viva Texcaltetitla

Catalina Ixchel Santillán Flores  
 MMEM  
 Mexico

At Escuela Viva Texcaltetitla, we are committed to educating the children in our school community so that they grow up aware of their surroundings. We firmly believe that our role as educators goes beyond simply sharing knowledge with our students—whom we refer to as “coleguitas”—in accordance with the fundamental principle of horizontal relationships proposed by Freinet.



Texcaltetitla is an organism that evolves with our presence, an environment that allows us to flow and challenges us to seek best social and educational practices. It is there that, together with the children, we build, under Freinet’s premise, a “school for life.”



Since our founding in 2020, we have been reflecting on the topic of environmental stewardship. Some of the questions we have raised in our assemblies include:

- **How can we live in harmony with our environment without harming it?**
- **How can we ensure that our ecological footprint is as gentle and respectful as possible?**

- **How can we exist in harmony with our habitat, not with an attitude of possession but with an attitude of belonging and community?**
- **What actions can we take to transform our reality?**

The dialogues sparked by these questions have allowed us to build, together with children, our own vision of Environmental Care. Our perception of the environment we live in involves questioning and reflecting on our consumption habits; it goes beyond technical actions regarding waste management, water conservation limited to hygiene, or household energy reduction.



Our message today is an invitation for you, from your classrooms, homes, and communities, to join this critical perspective so that collective awareness continues to expand.

## Traveling Backpack

Among the activities we carry out in almost all Freinet schools is the “Field Trip Class.” This activity allows us to observe our surroundings and encourages us to question our practices as we venture into the field; to ask ourselves what our ecological footprint is as we walk through town, climb the mountain, or participate in an activity within or outside our community. As an example of this, we found that in Mexico, patron saint festivals or local fairs typically feature a wide variety of food that is often served in disposable containers, particularly Styrofoam plates and cups. This reality was identified and analyzed with the children as an issue that became apparent as we walked through our community’s central plaza and encountered mountains of accumulated trash, which led us to question the environmental cost of our consumption habits and the need to change them.

This is how the “Morrall Viajero” came to be—the result of reflection, dialogue, and ongoing efforts to improve it. Over the course of six years, it has evolved from a practical tool into a symbol of our identity and our commitment to environmental stewardship.



Currently, we carry our backpack on all field trips, which allows us to be visible to the community and fulfill one of our main commitments: to promote environmental awareness.

The “Morrall Viajero” includes: a dinner plate, a soup bowl, cutlery, a mug, a container for leftover food, a water bottle, a cleaning cloth, and a tablecloth. These are the basic items; however, as our “little friends” have grown, they have identified personal needs and added other items such as: books to read, a wallet, a reusable shopping bag, a change of clothes, fruit, or seeds.

Currently, the Texcaltetila educational community has set out to share the experience of using the Traveling Backpack as widely as possible. One of the tools we’ve chosen for this is our magazine, Tlaolli.



Tlaolli provides a creative space for children in Texcaltetila to express their thoughts on what they observe and explore in their surroundings. Through this initiative, we aim to continue raising awareness about various environmental issues while broadening our children’s perspectives.



Our magazine is built on contributions from children in Texcaltetitla; it features free-form writing and drawings, research projects, reports, games, and stories with environmental themes.

It is published every three months and distributed in print within our educational community and digitally on the website of the Mexican Movement for the Modern School ([mmem.org.mx](http://mmem.org.mx)), which allows us to share this effort with the whole world.

We hope our message is well received by everyone who reads this and that it spreads until, at some future RIDEF, we can see everyone with their travel backpacks.

This is our little flame, as Galeano would say, which aims to contribute to the creation of other possible worlds.



Magazine Tlaolli <https://mmem.org.mx/publicaciones/>

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## A SOCIETAL PROJECT?

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Françoise Diuzet  
ICEM  
France

In Freinet pedagogy, the 'walking class' fosters pupils' curiosity and questioning about the outside world. Freinet saw pupils' questioning of their environment as the authentic foundation for their relationship with knowledge. This was an emancipatory form of knowledge because it was constructed by the pupils themselves, whose questioning of the outside world brought to life in the classroom texts, research and investigations stemming from the walk to school.

The children lived mainly in rural areas and their way of life was naturally part of the cycle of life. In the last century... these observations and questions were sent by post to other classes, but also to distant countries: Georgia, Senegal etc.

We exchanged views on living conditions, differences in environments and landscapes, and sought to understand one another.

Nowadays, children have little opportunity to spend time outdoors in their daily lives. On outings, we often observe the immediate surroundings. We look at buildings and ask about their history. We look at the vegetation, the insects and the birds, and ponder the cycle of life. It is very much a study of the environment we are visiting. Knowledge becomes less liberating because the walk is often constrained by expectations. We seek less to understand others here and elsewhere than to understand the life cycles of living things and human history. Knowledge becomes formal.

In recent years, the reality of the world has challenged us to recognise the need to connect the local with the wider world, as well as the impact of humans on life on Earth. Human activities have caused global warming, which is leading to climate disruption across the globe. Wars are being waged to gain control of rare metals or fossil fuels. Economic consequences ensue. The planet's limits have been reached.

Children in every country are experiencing the consequences of the choices our societies make.

Comfort, overconsumption and technological ‘progress’ are at the heart of our lifestyles, and children are confronted with them on a daily basis. We are beginning to foster a critical civic mindset, but schools do not take into account children’s questions about the world.

Certain behaviours or attitudes are prescribed to promote ‘sustainable development’ without linking them to the production chains that cause the problems.

A third of children suffer from anxiety, and many are aware of the effects of climate change. Schools remain in denial. When we talk about greening the playground, it is usually to provide shade, without thinking about fostering genuine local and natural biodiversity there.

What role does emancipatory learning play in Freinet pedagogy today? Is children’s free expression of their curiosity about the world taken into account both inside and outside the classroom?



Does the opportunity to speak, ask questions, understand, experiment and create – whilst grounding learning in the changes taking place in the world – serve as a cornerstone in the classroom?

Reflecting on the outside world can serve as a basis for exploring the wider world in a way that is not only critical but also creative. Schools can become spaces where a different future is envisaged if this exploration of the world lies at the heart of pupils' experiences and learning.

Pupils need to understand the reality of their immediate surroundings, but they must also be able to draw comparisons with what is happening and being experienced elsewhere. Correspondence with other countries, which are bearing the full brunt of the consequences of climate change, fosters empowerment because it compels us to open up to other forms of knowledge and other effects.

To empower oneself is to build oneself free from all influence, to free oneself from domination of all kinds. A critical mindset is necessary, indeed indispensable, if we want societies to envisage a future that is not defined by wars and disasters of all kinds.

Schools can bring to life a different vision of society. When pupils become aware of their place and their potential in the world, they can commit to working cooperatively in the classroom on projects that take into account realities, limitations and possibilities.

This presupposes that teachers are aware of the challenges facing their society and the world. Through the devolution enabled by Freinet practices, pupils can work together responsibly and fulfil their need to be part of a sustainable future for all.

The 'walking classroom' must involve a comparison between 'here' and 'elsewhere' and take into account the impact of human activities on the earth.

Simply questioning the immediate environment is not enough for knowledge to be emancipatory in today's world. Democracy also comes at this price in a world that currently prioritises the stigmatisation of others and individual performance at the expense of a balanced quality of life for all.

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND CRITICAL THINKING

Paco Olvera  
MCEP  
Spain

The educational approach of Celestin and Elise Freinet posits that students should take the lead in constructing their own knowledge, drawing on their interests and contexts and developing techniques that foster creativity and inquiry. Furthermore, we define the techniques we use as natural processes or methods, insofar as they stem from the human need to communicate and understand the world around us.

## Environmental education

We can define environmental education as a multidisciplinary field of pedagogy that seeks to foster processes for building knowledge, values, and civic practices that promote ecological awareness in both formal and informal educational settings. There are many different methodological strategies used in environmental education, including the following:

- **nature walks**
- **school gardens**

- **recycling workshops**
- **research projects.**

Of these strategies, I would like to focus in this article on school research, as it is one of the most authentic and important techniques in Freinet pedagogy.

## School research

Environmental education should be grounded, in large part, in the research processes carried out in the classroom, which should be based on the students' interests and motivations.

When these are absent or not clearly defined, they should be supplemented by the teachers' own motivations, ideas, or suggestions. In such cases, the processes will be driven by two factors: student motivation on the one hand, and teacher motivation on the other, working together.

School research projects should follow the steps of the scientific method, though these should be adapted to the students' level of maturity. The first step is to choose a topic of study.

Next, we will gather the necessary information, whether it be from documents, interviews, or—in the case of a nature-based investigation—plotting locations on a sketch, taking measurements, and collecting samples. During this process of collecting, organizing, and analyzing the information, hypotheses will emerge, which will seek to answer the questions we had at the start of the investigation or any new ones that have arisen during the inquiry. That moment is the most important part of any research.

Once the various projects are completed, they can be compiled in different formats, most commonly as booklets that are added to the classroom library. Many of them are presented to the class as presentations. These presentations have many positive aspects, such as:

- **get used to public speaking**
- **open one's work to new input**
- **be evaluated as a group**

### From environmental education to critical thinking

I like to compare academic research with basic research, also known as pure or fundamental research.

As we know, basic research focuses on studying general and essential questions that will later serve as the foundation or starting point for more specialized research. Its aim is to generate theories and ways of understanding the world, even though its results will not be immediate.

Advocating for research-based approaches as the most appropriate way to build knowledge in environmental education implies the expectation that our students will construct and reflect on the knowledge that will be useful to them in their lives.

As I mentioned earlier, in school-based research, content emerges from students' motivations and interests, triggering processes of analysis and reflection that give rise to hypotheses and the beginnings of critical thinking. With the traditional, lecture-based approach that relies on textbooks, opportunities for students to reflect on and question their own contexts are quite limited.

If we teach in a way that makes school-based research the standard approach to building knowledge, we will gradually help our students develop greater autonomy in both their learning and their lives.

Just as basic research is often the starting point for applied research, the processes involved in school-based research can be seen as the foundation for the development of future critical thinking.

In today's world, where artificial intelligence can be used to distort reality, spread misinformation, or incite hatred, there is a greater need than ever for an education grounded in the analysis and reflection of academic knowledge—knowledge that can serve as the foundation for defending ourselves against artificial algorithms that prevent us from reasoning in an ethical and moral manner for the common good.

Today, reality shows us that while artificial intelligence can be very useful for improving humanity's well-being in many fields, it is also sending us clear signals that it could create a dystopian world ruled by billionaire technocrats who, directly or indirectly, would render democracy a hollow concept.



## CALL FROM COMMITTEE 14



- To the member movements of FIMEM
- To democratic educators who care about the future of humanity



### LETTERS FOR PEACE FROM SCHOOLS AROUND THE WORLD

In order to send messages to the representatives elected by the people, so that they are held accountable for their actions.

Dear friends in the FIMEM movements:

For some time now, the FIMEM Executive Committee has been inviting you to take part in the initiative “Letters for Peace from Schools Around the World”, proposed by the MCE in collaboration with Commission 14, “Peace Education”, in a spirit of cooperation.

To help everyone to understand and get involved, the Italian group has made various resources available, including a letter written by children, a letter written by teachers and a comic strip. All these documents have been distributed to all the movements.

In addition, reminders have been sent out to encourage more active participation in this initiative. With the same focus on inclusion and mobilisation, the deadline has been extended to allow as many people as possible to take part.

Despite the efforts made, participation in this initiative remains limited, a fact that has drawn the attention of the members of Commission 14 and the FIMEM Board of Directors.

It is now essential that we redouble our efforts, as the next deadline is fast approaching. We cannot afford to jeopardise this initiative. Every teacher committed to the Freinet approach is called upon to give their full support to ensure that its objectives are achieved.

The instructions given to each teacher are simple: 'As a teacher, encourage the pupils in your class to write a joint letter addressed to each of the recipients listed below – the authorities and opinion leaders in your country – condemning the war and urging them to redouble their efforts in the fight for greater peace and justice in the world.'

After writing the letter, each teacher is asked to create a digital copy (scan) before sending the original to the recipient. The digital copy must then be sent to the Freinet movement coordinator in their country, specifying the recipients to whom the letter is addressed.

Each coordinator of the movement is therefore asked to collect the electronic versions of these letters and send them directly to Commission 14 via the following email address:



[educationpaixfimem@gmail.com](mailto:educationpaixfimem@gmail.com)

Any teacher, whether or not a member of the Freinet movement, may write letters of peace to the recipients already identified, by the end of the current school year. Furthermore, classes may choose recipients who are geographically closer, such as local councillors or the mayor, and ask them what they are doing to promote peace.

Drawing on their experience, the members of MCE Italia are available for discussions and advice. In Italy, several hundred letters have already been sent by school classes to politicians and organisations such as the United Nations.

We are living through a crucial moment for all humanity, and FIMEM is committed, through its classrooms, to helping build a fairer world that respects human rights.

**«Peace is not an empty word; it is a way of life»  
Félix Houphouët-Boigny**

On behalf of Committee 14  
Roberto Lovattini y Aissatou DièYe

# THE VOICE OF CHILDREN

Mexico City

## Escuela Viva Texcaltetitla (EVT)

At EVT, every April 30th we provide a space for reflection on children’s rights. In April 2023, we focused specifically on the right to a decent place to live.

We believe that this right is not limited solely to having a home with basic services, but also includes the opportunity to enjoy and live in harmony with “El Monte”, just as our grandparents did.

For this reason, we drafted and signed a commitment that we renew every year, with the aim of caring for and preserving our Monte in Milpa Alta.



## “El Monte”

“El Monte” it reflects a closer connection with nature, as well as an understanding of it as a whole in which stones, bushes, branches, the wind, the rain, and animals coexist. It is understood as the self being the whole, or the whole being the self.

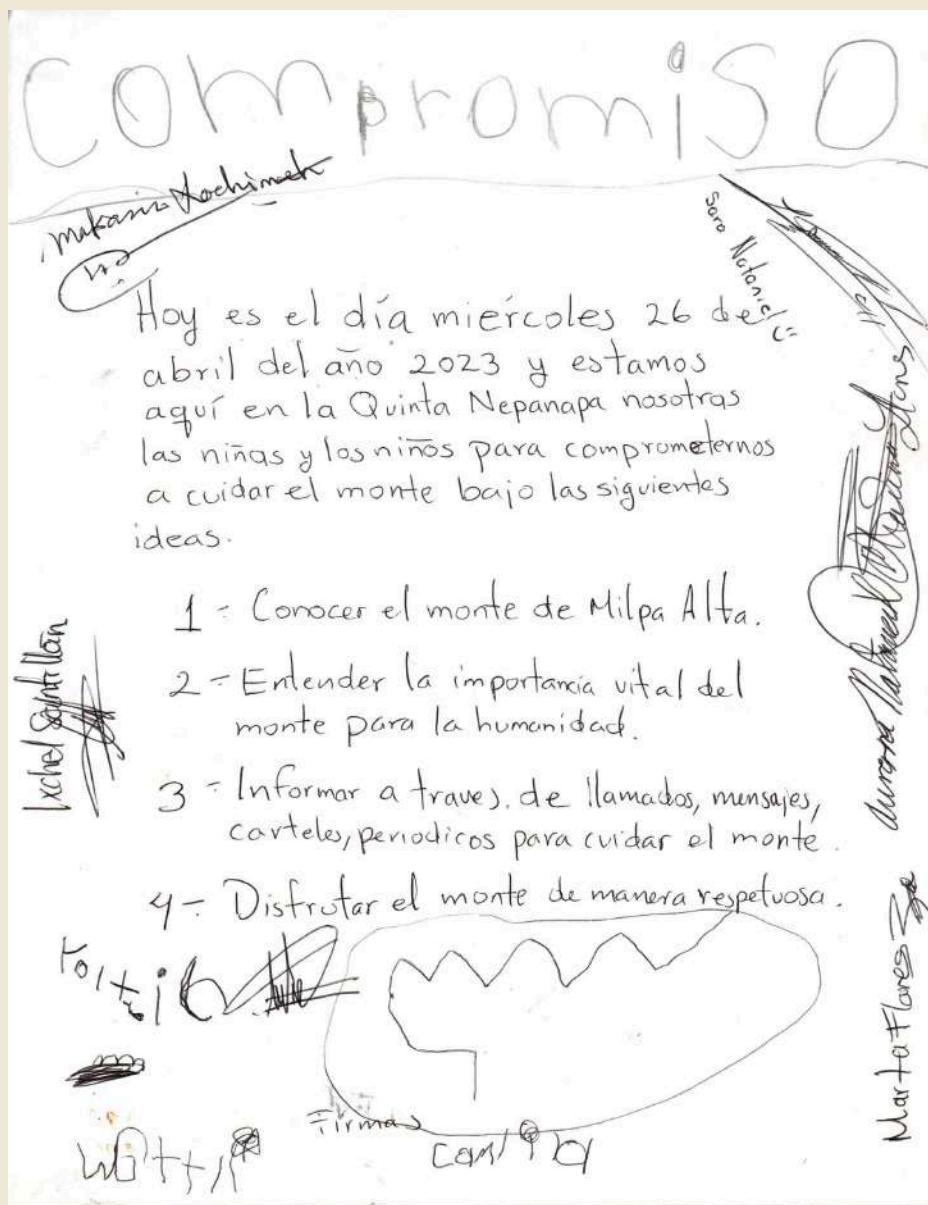
On the other hand, the forest is a concept that concerns scholars, who must break down their subject of study into parts in order to describe it for scientific purposes. The forest is a recreational space; it lacks spiritual life and is reduced to isolated trees in a landscape trampled by the urban need for contact with nature.



### Commitment (transcript)

Today is Wednesday, April 26, 2023, and we—the girls and boys—are here at Quinta Nepanapa to commit to taking care of the monte based on the following ideas:

1. Learn about “El Monte” of Milpa Alta
2. Understand the vital importance of “El Monte” to humanity
3. Report via calls to action, messages, posters, and newspapers to encourage “El Monte” conservation
4. Enjoy “El Monte” in a respectful manner



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## COMMISSION - 13

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### Environmental Protection

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We would like to summarize the work carried out by the FIMEM Environmental Commission in order to highlight the importance of environmental awareness today and, consequently, the need to expand the membership of this commission, which, in our view, should be more widely represented within the Freinet Movements.

We have addressed numerous issues that are essential to the aspiration for emancipation that drives our educational work.

- Is a superficial change enough to halt the ecological disaster in the face of the immense economic and political power of neoliberal forces, or are radical changes necessary?
- What are some meaningful educational experiences that fuel our critical engagement and, as a result, help change the world?
- What impact does the rise of tech giants have on the climate crisis?
- To what extent do geopolitical issues and wars also have environmental roots?
- We believe that defending biodiversity is not a matter of circumstance; it is intimately linked to a vision of solidarity, social justice, and fundamental humanity.

We have a blog:



Click here:



Here we publish updates on our committee’s activities. Here is an overview of the content:

- Projects carried out by our colleagues in their schools
- The Declaration for the Defense of the Planet, adopted by the FIMEM General Assembly
- The Decalogue we have developed, which can serve as a guide for teachers committed to combating the environmental crisis
- An analysis of Edgar Morin’s Seven Complex Lessons in Education, which we consider highly relevant for use in schools, as it clearly illustrates the complexity of learning and teaching methods, in line with our pedagogy of the Natural Method
- A link to the webinar organized by our committee:



It is impossible for us to detail all the activities of this webinar here. It was an experience that brought together many Freinet-style schools from different countries virtually and allowed us to explore the topic from various angles.

I would like to express my gratitude to our colleagues at MCE in Italy for their excellent organizational work.

Many activities come to mind: the charming “travel backpack,” tiny animals, projects using marine materials, strange machines... and above all, the direct interaction with children from different cultures, all working together to raise environmental awareness.

At the RIDEF conference in Mexico, our committee led a short workshop focused on a practical analysis of the positive and negative aspects—from an environmental protection perspective—of the conference’s day-to-day logistics.

For the RIDEF in Poland, we would like to organize another workshop based on the experiences shared in Multiletter and on our blog. We are asking for your help. You can send us your testimonials to this address:



[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14HBpNgwAC92IVLnOzY5W29DRNxTgIbIV?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14HBpNgwAC92IVLnOzY5W29DRNxTgIbIV?usp=drive_link)

We are very grateful to the Communication Committee for organizing Multiletter, as we believe it is an excellent way to share our thoughts and school projects with everyone and to encourage our colleagues to join our committee.

It is essential to understand that human beings are not separate from Nature; they are Nature. And we must use our intelligence and our humanity to feel like an integral part of it, to know it, to love it, and, consequently, to defend it. In the spirit of Freinet pedagogy and on behalf of this committee, we are committed to this cause. Join us!

Juan Fernández Platero, MCEP

# REGISTER FOR RIDEF 2026

Solidarity, Freedom and Democracy.

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To all FIMEM National Movements  
To all Delegates and Commission Members

RIDEF 2026 is approaching fast.

In just six months, we will welcome you to a charming region of Poland — Kashubia. The event will take place in Gniewino, in northern Poland, only 50 km from Gdańsk.

We chose a location near Gdańsk deliberately — it was in Gdańsk that the Solidarity movement was born, bringing freedom to Poland after years of communist rule. This symbolism perfectly reflects the idea of our congress as a space where solidarity, freedom, and democracy become part of everyday experience.

The main theme of the congress is:

**“Solidarity, freedom, and democracy in education as a force for social change in the face of global challenges.”**

During RIDEF 2026, we want to emphasize that education based on Freinet values is not an abstract ideal, but a real tool for social transformation. Solidarity, freedom, and democracy in education become a force through which schools can respond to global crises, build just and peaceful societies, and prepare learners to actively shape the world they live in. During this meeting, we want to clearly and collectively affirm the importance of these values — TOGETHER!

We are very much looking forward to your registration and your visit.

Many of you have surely already visited our website [2026.ridef-fimem.com](https://2026.ridef-fimem.com) and our Facebook profile, where you can find important information about the theme, fees, accommodation, meals, visas, and online registration.



[2026.ridef-fimem.com](https://2026.ridef-fimem.com)

We would like to warmly thank the first teachers who have already registered, especially from France and Spain.

Dear friends, we kindly ask you to register as soon as possible via our website, as we would like you to stay in comfortable, affordable accommodation close to the RIDEF center. We have reserved 250 places for you:

- Hotel Mistral — 170 places
- School accommodation — 80 places

The sooner we know how many of you will participate in RIDEF, the sooner we can confirm the reserved places with accommodation providers. Please visit the website and make your choice:



[2026.ridef-fimem.com](https://2026.ridef-fimem.com)

Please register as soon as possible.

We are flexible and will accept possible cancellations with understanding; unused places will be offered to other teachers. Initially, we estimated that no more than 250 participants would come to Poland. However, if more people register, we will do our best to accommodate participants near the RIDEF center and provide transportation if needed.

Gniewino is a tourist destination. In summer, it is lively and crowded with tourists. It will be difficult to make reservations, for example, in May. Guesthouse owners want to sell as many rooms as possible at the beginning of the year.

We are currently preparing a Pre-RIDEF program, which will take place on 28–30 July 2026, and a Post-RIDEF program on 10–12 August 2026. In our next announcement, we will provide program details and participation costs.



July 28–  
30

Pre-RIDEF



July 31–  
August 9

RIDEF



August  
10–12

Post-RIDEF

## Why is it worth taking part in RIDEF 2026?

During RIDEF, we will jointly seek answers to important questions — by sharing experiences, meeting new people, and developing our pedagogical practice:

- Why are solidarity, freedom, and democracy still the foundations of contemporary education?
- How can Freinet pedagogy respond to the challenges of today's education?
- How can we change education so that children and young people become leaders of social change, with a sense of responsibility for the world?

We deeply wish to share with you not only our pedagogical reflections, but also our everyday life, culture, historical heritage, landscapes, and delicious cuisine.

We will be delighted to welcome you to Poland, just as we did in 1996 in Kraków.

We will be happy to answer your questions. Please write to us at:

[ridef@freinet.pl](mailto:ridef@freinet.pl)

We invite you to co-create the space of the 36th RIDEF 2026.

Thank you for your cooperation and warm regards,

**The RIDEF 2026 Organizing Committee**

Joanna, Eliza, Marzena, Regina, Joanna, Ewa, Kazia, Magda, Małgosia, Martyna, Tomek



36.  
RIDEF  
2026  
POLSKA

# COMMISSION - 15 CONVERGENCES



JOIN US AT THE NEXT BIENNIAL IN VERONA!

The next biennial meeting of Convergence(s) for New Education will be held from 29 October to 1 November 2026 in Verona, Italy.

Each member association of Convergence(s) manages the registration of its own members on behalf of the collective.

We are currently conducting a pre-registration phase, which will run until 15 May 2026, to ensure that the necessary accommodation can be reserved.

As a member of Convergence(s), FIMEM invites you to submit your pre-registration requests to:



Anna D'Auria [daurianna60@yahoo.com](mailto:daurianna60@yahoo.com) et

Léonard De Leo [leonard.deleo@icem-freinet.org](mailto:leonard.deleo@icem-freinet.org)

who represent FIMEM within the Convergence(s) collective.

You will find all relevant information and pre-registration forms on the FIMEM website under the section "Commission 15 Convergence(s)":

 [www.fimem-freinet.org](http://www.fimem-freinet.org)

Convergence(s) for New Education regularly invites us to its biennial gatherings. These meetings are intended for all activists within educational and social organisations who identify with the principles of popular and emancipatory education.

These events provide an opportunity to share, debate, and develop new perspectives for evolution based on the specific issues and experiences of each association. Furthermore, they serve as a platform to challenge current educational and social policies that remain inequitable and exclusionary.

We hope to see many members of the FIMEM movements at the upcoming Biennale in Verona, where we look forward to showcasing our work and research inspired by the principles of Freinet pedagogy.

FIMEM Commission 15: 'Convergences'  
<commissionfimemconvergences@gmail.com>



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## NOTICES

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Next  
Multilettr  
theme

## “The Gender Dimension in Education Today”

We look forward to receiving your contributions for the months of  
May and June 2026!

Send everything to the address [multilettr@ridef-fimem.com](mailto:multilettr@ridef-fimem.com)

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We would like to thank everyone who helped us with proofreading  
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- Juan Carlos Lira