


EXTENSION PROJECT "HANDS OF LIFE": NATURAL SPIRITUALITY IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES IN CHILD CARE

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Vanderléa Ana Meller¹, Maria Glória Dittrich², Carolina Godinho Pahl³ and Carlos Roberto Praxedes dos Santos⁴

ABSTRACT

The extension project "Mãos de Vida" of the University of Vale do Itajaí (UNIVALI) develops practices with children in a transdisciplinary perspective and integrates education and health themes. Among the proposals, we highlight the eco-formative workshops on natural care and spirituality. The activities integrated therapeutic processes of health and social care with children from Lar Padre Jacó, located in the city of Itajaí/SC. The general objective of the study seeks to understand the promotion of care for children through educational practices that integrate natural spirituality in the Hands of Life extension project. This is a qualitative study, supported by the phenomenological hermeneutics method. It was carried out through workshops planned and developed weekly, between the years 2022 and 2023, with the participation of children between 6 and 11 years old. The results showed that in the educational practices the children recognized living nature as an expansion of themselves, involved in care actions that strengthened life and natural spirituality. The eco-formative backyard has become a place of contact and creative expression, of care for oneself and the other. The experiences with natural resources stimulated the sensory and reflective body, expressed in the art of modeling, the cultivation of plants and the construction of toys. The manifestations of care and healthy living occurred in the games that integrated human multidimensionality and enabled bodily and social well-being.

Keywords: Care, Natural spirituality, Children.

¹ Doctor in Education
University of Vale do Itajaí

² Doctor of Theology
University of Vale do Itajaí

³ Master in Public Policy Management
University of Vale do Itajaí

⁴ Doctor in Communication and Language
University of Vale do Itajaí

INTRODUCTION

The extension project "Mãos de Vida", from the University of Vale do Itajai (UNIVALI), develops educational practices with children in a transdisciplinary perspective and integrates themes of health and spirituality. The proposals involve therapeutic processes of care in structured environments at Lar Padre Jacó, located in the city of Itajaí/SC. The eco-formative backyard was a place organized in the institution for the children's experiences through play. In direct contact with nature, they learn about caring for themselves, others and the environment.

For Dittrich and Meller (2022), the proposition of the backyard, as an ecological space of beings and knowledge for playing and interacting, is part of a phenomenological installation for children's experiences and discoveries in the face of the phenomena that are presented.

The Lar Padre Jacó institution has a socio-educational purpose and is supported by public policies of social assistance and education, which enable security for community reception and coexistence, through programs and projects for social protection, in accordance with Law No. 8742/93, which provides for the organization of social assistance (Brasil, 1993).

We seek to establish relationships of care for oneself and others with children, because the strengthening of natural spirituality is a protective condition for human life. Being cared for and being a caregiver is part of relationships for the preservation of life and relationships. For Boff (2005, p. 1): "Care only arises when someone's existence is important to me. I then devote myself to it; I am willing to participate in his destiny, his searches, his sufferings and his achievements, in short, in his life."

In the proposed activities, the children who participate in the extension project "Mãos de Vida" exercise care and are the subjects of the teaching-learning process. They are recognized in the light of the ideas of Viktor Frankl (2011), in which the human being is inherently in search of meaning and purpose in life, in its spiritual dimension. From this perspective, in the eco-formative backyard, children actively interact, involved in the exploration of the environment and bodily sensations, attributing meanings to their experiences and contributing to the development of a deeper understanding of themselves and their relationships, in a multidimensional view.

Through experiences in the world of play, children have the opportunity to develop natural spirituality, "[...] considered as an authentic manifestation of the human being, of the

vital and creative force expressed in the relationships with oneself, with the other and with the environment, as an integral unit of nature" (Dittrich; Pahl; Meller, 2021, p. 284). It is a phenomenon that characterizes the conscious and responsible human being in his thinking, feeling and acting in coexistence, in the face of the constant challenges of existence.

From this, natural spirituality was defined as the profound dimension of the human person, distinguishing the human being from other living beings. Frankl (2011) expresses that the spiritual dimension is the most specific characteristic of the human being, and in it resides the creative force to discover the reasons for being-in-the-world. In this sense, we need to know how the environment acts on us, in order to form a healthy, viable and sustainable environment (Navarra, 2008). Active and conscious care for human, spiritual and ecological formation is a way to protect and strengthen human actions. For Boff (1999) we are cared for and without it we cease to be human.

Care goes beyond oneself, it encompasses practices of preservation of the other and the surroundings. Several resources are part of the environment and need preservation to promote health. In these perspectives, activities were developed with the children involving the cultivation of plants, the construction of toys and sustainable environments. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were integrated: 3 for healthy living and promotion of well-being for all and 4, for quality education with opportunities for acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development (UN Brazil, 2015).

The study is aligned with the Professional Master's Degree in Public Policy Management at UNIVALI, in the research line Institutional Dynamics and Public Policies. It is part of the area of studies and professional performance of researchers and was developed through the research of extension and dissertation projects. The problem question of the study consists of: How to promote care for children through educational practices that integrate natural spirituality in the extension project Mãos de Vida? The general objective seeks to: Understand the promotion of care for children through educational practices that integrate natural spirituality in the extension project Mãos de Vida.

This is a qualitative study, supported by the phenomenological hermeneutics method. It was carried out through workshops planned and developed weekly in the extension project "Mãos de Vida", between the years 2022 and 2023, with the participation of children between 6 and 11 years old. Data collection occurred through records in field reports, filming and photographs. In the transdisciplinary relations of practices and

knowledge, areas of Physical Education, Nutrition, Medicine, Philosophy and Psychology were involved. For the development of the thematic workshops, resources and structures were used to guarantee the educational purpose. The results were categorized into thematic units converging with the objectives of the study.

The educational interventions were planned and structured in environments to promote creative experiences in order to favor the relationships of care with/of the children, integrated with the environment.

RELATIONSHIPS OF CARE AND NATURAL SPIRITUALITY IN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Care is a fundamental principle that permeates different aspects of human life and interpersonal relationships, promoting physical, spiritual, emotional, social and environmental well-being. It is integrated with Frankl's (2011) spirituality, in the Being in a situation that seeks the meaning of life, around the challenges of the anguish that imply in the Being-there, in Heidegger's Dasein (2015), which integrates the notions of being-in-the-world and the established affectivities, in the search for possibilities for living and existing.

For Boff (2005, p. 1), care is part of the human way of being and living, "We are care. This means that care has an ontological dimension, that is, it enters into the constitution of the human being. It is a unique way of being of man and woman". And, in the interpretations we have made of the human being, care is the foundation, because "If we do not take care as a basis, we will not be able to understand the human being. It founds a new ethos, [...] the way we organize our home, the world we inhabit with human beings and with nature" (Boff, 2005, p. 1).

In the educational practices developed in the extension project "Hands of Life", there were activities that enabled notions of being-in-the-world, through the protection of life in various constitutions, human, environmental and social. Integration of children was promoted in actions that provided for the care and guarantee of life, with various contacts in the natural and built environment. The propositions were carried out in the eco-formative backyard, as a place of creative expression and understanding of individual and collective care, involving knowledge about the human being and its essence.

The structuring of the eco-formative backyard took place in several environments that enabled the integration of children with nature. Eco-training is "[...] a synthetic, integrative and sustainable way of understanding the formative action, always in relation to

the subject, society and nature" (Torre; Martin; Pujol, 2008, p. 21). Human formation involves self-formation, which occurs in the relationship with oneself; heteroformation, in the relationship with others; and eco-training in the relationship with the environment (Pineau, 2003). These dimensions are interdependent, so we are always integrated and learning in these relationships.

For the development of the eco-formative backyard, we built a deck with wooden pallets next to a tree and transformed the place into a place for meetings, dialogues, studies and expression of art. We structured a collective garden in the shape of a mandala with tires for care practices in the cultivation of plants. It was an environment that made it possible to recognize the processes of life and needs for its preservation.

Figure 1: Structured eco-formative backyard environment.



Source: Personal archive of the researchers.

We built toys with reusable materials and, with elements of nature, the children played games and learned about the preservation, production and consumption of resources suitable for the environment. The art was integrated through painting and adaptation of tires for planting, related to the reuse of objects and principles of sustainability.

Figure 2: Planting.



Source: Personal archive of the researchers.

The children carried out experiments to stimulate the sensory and reflective body in contact with the *natrurezza*, listening to the sound of birds, moving the land and water. They planted vegetables and teas integrating care for life and strengthening the dimension of natural spirituality, as a force that generates the meaning of life. In these dynamics, members of living nature were perceived. Games were developed that stimulated sensoriality with smells, colors, sounds, textures of plants, earth and water. Through clay modeling (image 3) we developed movements that transcended the connection with nature and perceptions about care, as they favored the construction of objects and the expression of life.

Figure 3: Clay modeling and care relationships.



Source: Personal archive of the researchers.

In this activity, it was possible to understand that the experiences of human beings in the world, in relationships with nature, with others and with themselves are part of their way of caring and being cared for. Boff (1999) discussed the emergence of care through the fable-myth of care, which is of Greek origin, and was reworked in Egypt by Hyginus (I century BC), and has influenced the idea of care in literature, philosophy, psychology and ethics, until the present day:

One day, while crossing a river, Cuidado saw a piece of clay. Soon he had an inspired idea. He took some of the clay and began to shape it. As he contemplated what he had done, Jupiter appeared. Care asked him to breathe spirit into him. Which Jupiter did willingly.

When, however, Care wanted to give a name to the creature he had shaped, Jupiter forbade it. He demanded that his name be imposed. While Jupiter and Care were arguing, the Earth suddenly appeared. She also wanted to give her name to the creature, because it was made of clay, the material of the body of the Earth. A generalized discussion then originated.

By mutual agreement, Saturn was asked to act as an arbitrator. He made the following decision that seemed fair:

You, Jupiter, have given him the spirit, and you will therefore receive this spirit back at the death of the creature.

You, Earth, gave him the body; therefore, he will also receive his body back when that creature dies.

But since you, Care, were the first to mold the creature, you will be under your care as long as you live.

And since there is a heated discussion about the name among you, I decide: this creature will be called Man, that is, made of Humus, which means fertile land (Boff, 1999, p. 46).

This myth brings the reflection that care is something sacred and central in the life of the human being, it is a purpose that keeps us attentive to the potential to shape the structure of the being. Care influences the way of acting in the world and in relationships, as it directly interferes in the way human beings see and behave in the face of life situations, from joys to suffering. The meaning of life is permeated by values that are created according to human understanding and "Always and everywhere the person is faced with the decision to transform his situation of mere suffering into an inner production of values" (Frankl, 2008, p. 50).

It is a narrative that illustrates the importance of attention and precaution in the face of potentially vital or harmful situations. The Caregiver, upon noticing the piece of clay, demonstrates that he is constantly attentive to the details around him. For education and health professionals, it demonstrates the importance of being aware and vigilant in all situations.

The care process is a state of alertness, from being sensitive-intelligible to the small things in life that impact well-being, as it influences our journeys and decisions. We understand the importance of valuing and appreciating the simplicity and beauty of the things around us, even when we don't realize their potential or significance. For Boff (1999) the human being can be utopian and historical-temporal, in a coexisting way he integrates the dimension of Saturn and the impulse to the sky, that is, transcendence. It is through care that polarities are united and contribute to existence in the world.

Care requires coherence in human actions that integrate interests, concerns and responsibilities in life. For Boff (1999), care is more than an attitude or a practice, it represents a fundamental orientation for human existence and its relationship with the cosmos. And it expresses that the myth of care is based on the notion that all beings are interconnected and interdependent, forming a web of relationships that requires constant attention.

In the educational practices developed with the children, health and life were present in the integration with the living environment, and enabled bodily and social well-being. The connections allowed the children to strengthen the spiritual dimension and the sense for a healthy life in care situations, with affection and creativity in interactions. As well as, they favored the multidimensionality of the human being, as its essence consists of integrative and balanced processes of its physical, biological, psychological, social, ecological and spiritual dimensions, in search of understanding and construction of deep knowledge, which justify the existence in their ways of being and living, driving life to meanings full of love and care.

Playing in the eco-formative backyard awakened sensations, intuitions and intentions for the preservation of life in the lived space. The planting and care of the plants were carried out, attributing to the children responsibilities for maintaining their healthy development, transmitting the essence of care with empathy, which arises when we care about the life of any species.

The children integrated knowledge and reflections on health and natural spirituality in the care of themselves and others, of living and preserved nature. They stimulated the desire to be and live that was presented in the relationships with people, plants, animals and other resources that were reused in order to preserve the environment. Playing with natural resources, in the construction of toys, enabled correlations with sustainable practices, revealing nature as a fundamental learning space.

For Frankl (2011) the various human experiences collaborate with the finding of the meaning of life, even those that cause suffering. Frankl (2008, p. 50), expresses that in suffering and pain there are many possibilities to give meaning to existence, "[...] the person inwardly may be stronger than his outer destiny [...] Always and everywhere the person is faced with the decision to transform his situation of mere suffering into an interior production of values". The values involve the self-preservation of life in a conscious way to live and be healthy. The work of health and education professionals can contribute to the search for meaning in life in coping with existential difficulties.

The finding of the meaning of life is a process of care,

Caring is basically a process and not a series of services aimed at achieving certain goals. Care favors devotion, trust, patience, humility, honesty, knowledge of the other, hope and courage (Zoboli, 2004, p.13).

Care is presented in the empathy of the human who cares about the life of the other, in the love that also enables the appreciation of one's own life, involves feelings-thoughts-actions of the human being in his essence of being-in-the-world. For Frankl (2011), the two most human phenomena are love and consciousness, which boost the capacity for self-transcendence, as it transcends oneself towards the other and in search of one's own meaning. "Love, I would say, constitutes the ability to apprehend another human being with his or her genuine uniqueness. Consciousness, on the other hand, contains the ability to apprehend the meaning of a situation in its total uniqueness" (Frankl, 2011, p. 29).

Caring for another human being is a task that involves more than assistance, because care is an exercise of love and awareness, it means recognizing the importance of dedicating time, attention and effort to ensure that the subject of care is safe, comfortable and healthy. In this process, "[...] it is not enough to guarantee and fight for survival, but also to discover why one wants to live, even in the face of adversity" (Meireles; Dittrich, 2021, p. 1199).

As health professionals, when we take care of another person, we are taking responsibility for their physical, psychological, spiritual, biological, social and ecological well-being. This involves taking care of basic needs and well-being in the face of needs and wants. For, "[...] comprehensive care should not be restricted to prevention and treatments in the pathophysiological sphere, but also special attention to the spiritual dimension of the human being" (Meireles; Dittrich, 2021, p. 1186).

Taking care of one's health is an act of love because it puts us in a place of concern and genuine care for the other, "[...] spirituality can be used as a concrete strategy in order to promote a more humanized care" (Meireles; Dittrich, 2021, p. 1186). By caring, we are demonstrating humanized commitments to ourselves and to others, to overcome difficulties and develop affective bonds, expressions of affection that bring us closer and promote trust and mutual respect.

INTEGRATIVE ACTION IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

The proposal of the extension project "Mãos de Vida" involves an integrated and comprehensive process of knowledge and practices in the area of health, of human formation in the expanded inter-transdisciplinary perspective, "[...] an interactive and dialogued look at reality, which comes to manifest itself in multiple forms and levels, based on the observer's capacity for understanding and intentionality" (Torre; Pujol; Moraes, 2008, p.13-14).

In the context of health and education, care involved inter-transdisciplinary attitudes of professionals, in order to favor children's play with postures that integrate and transcend knowledge and human multidimensionality. The practices required expanded and connected knowledge to perform complex thinking in the field of natural spirituality, in the broad integration of vital processes.

For the interconnection of activities, to promote natural spirituality, we involve the search for the meaning of life, based on Frankl (2008; 2011), permeated by values and attitudes for the care, thinking, feeling, doing and living of the human being, existentially speaking. We seek, through children's play, to expand experiences that favor natural spirituality in front of oneself, the other, nature and transcendence.

The integration of themes and professionals redimensioned ways of living and knowing that imply the phenomenon of natural spirituality, which is understood as something that characterizes the conscious and responsible human being in his purpose of healthy life. The cultivation of plants and their vital properties, the transformation of the earth into a work of art, the creation of toys with reusable materials favored play as an expression of the human who feels-thinks. Inter-disciplinary knowledge and practices were integrated, with a focus on care, on the strengthening of natural spirituality as an intrinsic dimension of the human being and that makes up the vital and profound force in the dynamics of care.

For the interventions, the professionals and scholarship holders of the project carried out plans that integrated knowledge and practices in search of collective actions and expanded knowledge. In this context, transdisciplinarity can be defined as "[...] the unity of the sciences through an effort of mutual understanding and a dialogue that takes into account the specificities of each discipline" (Nicolescu, 2002, p. 13). Transdisciplinarity transcends and integrates multiple disciplines to address complex and global problems more comprehensively and effectively.

One of the main challenges of transdisciplinarity is overcoming the disciplinary barriers that often separate professionals. As Morin (2000) observes, the interdisciplinary process is fundamental, because fragmented knowledge, according to the disciplines, makes it difficult to establish the link between the parts and the totality, so knowledge must enable to apprehend objects in their context, their complexity and their set. For Morin (2008), the complexity and interconnection between different systems are fundamental for understanding complex problems. Transdisciplinarity is an approach that allows the overcoming of fragmentation and excessive specializations, allowing a broader and more integrated view of phenomena. In this sense, it does not seek to deny the importance of individual disciplines, but rather to integrate them into a broader approach.

According to Nicolescu (2002), transdisciplinarity is an approach that seeks to transcend the boundaries of disciplines, integrating different perspectives and knowledge. It is not limited to interdisciplinarity, but rather seeks the articulation between different levels of reality and human dimensions, including the physical, biological, psychological, social, cultural and spiritual.

The themes of natural spirituality and care transcend the boundaries of knowledge, as they involve the being in the world who manifests his vital energy for care in all his actions. For Dittrich; Pahl; Meller (2021) natural spirituality contributes to human beings overcoming their limits and opening new possibilities for living with wisdom and empowerment around existential voids, phobias, fears, feelings of abandonment, and anxieties that often paralyze them.

The children in their play found in living nature the desire to care, expanding the awareness of relationships to maintain well-being. The environment of the eco-formative backyard has become a place of (self) organization of knowledge about plants, water, land, food with all the care involved. The transdisciplinary educational practices favored knowledge and reflections on care and integrated an educational and therapeutic living

laboratory, with sensory practices of aromas, flavors and textures. In particular, the spiritual and ecological human being was integrated in his existential multidimensionality and creative experiences.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS IN CONNECTION WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

During the interventions, we developed the application of the methodology of the Transdisciplinary Circle of Integral Health - CiTranSI, which makes up the care relationships, proposed by Dittrich, Bernardo and Barretta (2012) and complemented by Dittrich *et al* (2016). According to these authors, it is a transdisciplinary methodology for caring for people, promoting thinking and acting, in the experiences, in the complexity of the relationships between the various professionals, in their specificities and functions. "[...] enables proximity in welcoming human beings, aiming at an integrative, inclusive way of being in reflective dialogue" (Dittrich, *et al*, 2016, p. 177).

Next, we present the CiTranSI methodology for the development of workshops with children, according to Dittrich, Bernardo and Barretta (2012) and Dittrich *et al* (2016). The development of the organization took place in two movements:

- a) **Preparation of the environment:** it was energetically prepared with love and affection to welcome the children, the meeting place is organized in a circle, integrating objects such as cushions, chairs, demarcations on the lawn.
- b) **Integral Health Circle:** the reception of the children took place. All arranged in a circle, they carried out educational activities of comprehensive health care, with the performance of professionals in the transdisciplinary approach and interaction of children. Themes related to the human being, life, care, natural spirituality, play, nature, among others, were presented and developed. It aimed at practice and self-reflection for actions, feelings and well-being, in favor of the discovery of the meaning of life, with manifestations of the vital force enabled the awakening of consciousness for life, in confidence, hope, self-esteem and expression of the various meanings that the practices provided.

At CiTranSI, there is a dialogical, creative and reflective procedural posture between professionals and participants, which enabled the children to recognize the dynamics and problems experienced, of learning and acting, permanently seeking to discover new ideas and ways of knowing how to care.

The practices that integrated the children's play included art, ecology (contact with nature), various body practices, reading, music and poetry, among others, in harmony with the surrounding environment. The purpose was to strengthen the positive feelings that enrich creative learning and spiritual well-being. They involved deeper experiences of connection in the world. We present below possibilities of cultural and practical manifestations that have integrated the practices and highlight that there is openness to others, according to necessary adjustments:

Art: Artistic expression allowed children to channel their emotions, thoughts, and experiences in a creative way. The relationship between spirituality and art reflects the human search for meaning, transcendence, and expression of the spiritual dimension. Art, in its many forms, often serves as a universal language that transcends cultural and religious barriers, allowing for the exploration and communication of spiritual experiences. Artists, throughout history, have channeled their beliefs, concerns, and transcendental visions through paintings, sculptures, music, literature, and other forms of artistic expression. As Dittrich (2010, p. 119) states:

The work of art is a forceful expression of human creation, as a vital-spiritual process of the body-creator, which finds its reason for being in the love of the creator experienced in itself, outside of itself, and for itself. Only art creates the creative body that integrates the functions of life as the dynamic of the force of creative love that drives the human being to be and realize himself as a person in the world. In fact, experiencing this requires feeling the body-creator self-centered and open beyond oneself, in the sense of interacting with the other to discover new ways of living and knowing. Therefore, to self-transcend, thus overcoming physical, psychic and spiritual limitations.

From this perspective, artistic creation was a means of connecting natural spirituality, providing a space for contemplation, meditation, and the search for spiritual understanding. In artistic manifestations, the human being finds expression and enrichment of the aesthetic experience, inviting reflection on fundamental questions of existence and transcendence. Thus, the relationship between natural spirituality and art has become an ongoing dialogue between the material and the immaterial, between the earthly and the sacred, providing a rich space for the exploration of the deeper dimensions of the human condition.

According to Frankl's (2010) perspective, the human essence is marked by an incessant search for meaning, whether through love and appreciation of beauty (experiential value), creation (creative value) or the internal posture in the face of an inexorable destiny (attitudinal value). This meaning, far from being predefined, reveals itself as something to be discovered in the world, remaining latent in each situation, always

molding itself in a unique way for each individual and circumstance. Frankl (2011, p. 96) points out: "[...] it is life itself that asks the question of man. What man has to do is not to question, but to be questioned by life and life to respond." In this context, the meanings of human existence are revealed when confronted with the values inherent to life itself, thus establishing life itself as the primary source of meaning (Frankl, 1978).

Art contributed to the search for the meaning of life, in relation to the creativity of the being: "the understanding of creativity as a vital phenomenon in the human being, capable of dynamizing him in his way of being to discover something, a way of seeing, feeling and living, which would bring the discovery of a new meaning to life in the face of difficulties" (Dittrich, 2010, p. 65). Playing promoted artistic expression, because in the games the children expressed their creativity and the symbolic world loaded with innovation and autonomy.

In the artist, inspiration corresponds to the intuition, in itself irrational, of consciousness and therefore not at all rationalizable, and even has its roots in a sphere of unconscious spirituality. From it, the artist creates; therefore, the sources from which he creates are and remain in a darkness that can never be fully illuminated with consciousness (Frankl, 2011, p. 81).

In this context, art is perceived as revealing beauty and love, suggesting that this revelation can have beneficial and even healing effects (Dittrich, 2010). For, "art, as an expression of the creativity of the human being, can become a path of healing for pain and suffering, because it reveals beauty and love, and this only does good and can even cure" (Dittrich, 2010, p. 60). There is an intuitive and mysterious nature of artistic creation, attributing to it a healing power through the revelation of beauty and love.

The use of various artistic languages, such as plastic, sound, literary, dramatic and bodily, has expanded the range of possibilities of expression, allowing children to find a pleasurable way to communicate. The activities related to art had the intention of enhancing the spiritual dimension and care in children, as multidimensional human beings:

- Construction of a Clay Doll: Objective: To stimulate creative expression and care for oneself. Development: participants mold a clay doll, inspired by the concept of the care tale. During the construction, positive thoughts are stimulated in the process of constitution of that being, of the self projected in the work, promoting a constructive and optimistic approach. The free relationships of feeling and thinking are important for creative and sensorial expression, as a perceptual process, which enables the

vision of phenomena and their understanding. This doll is the concrete representation of desires for oneself, as a being-in-the-world.

- Paintings, poetry, literature, music and dance are other forms of art and expression that provide the organization and communication of feelings, which are often difficult to express with words. The objective was to promote awareness for the search and finding of the meaning of living through art, in care and health promotion. The connection with nature involved an ecological vision of care and integrality among living beings, with a feeling of belonging to the environment.

The intrinsic relationship between natural spirituality, care and ecology presents the cycles of life and the harmony present in biodiversity, made it possible to emerge in the children a deep appreciation, in each creature, in the leaves, stones... Consolidating a sacred bond that inspires care for each expression of life.

Since the beginning, human beings have established intrinsic relationships with nature. Faced with the unknown, he exploited natural resources, built cultural relationships and cultivated the land, giving rise to a fundamental interdependence. Boff (2008) highlights ecology as the study of the interdependence and interaction between living organisms and their environment, encompassing both organic and inorganic elements. By relating these concepts, we perceive the continuity of the Greek idea of interconnection, since ecology seeks to understand the relationships and mutual dependence between living beings and the environment, consolidating the holistic view of nature as an interdependent system in constant balance.

In the manifestations of the games, the experiences were direct with the complexity of ecosystems, of experience and appreciation, with the interconnection of all things. The children had the opportunity to develop a deep sense of responsibility for the preservation of the environment and the promotion of ethical values for harmonious and healthy living.

- Development of collective gardens: Objective: To connect participants with nature and promote sustainable practices. Development: Participants were involved in planting for practical experiences in nature, sustainable and therapeutic cultivation. There was an understanding of the medicinal properties of plants and the tasting of teas, stimulating sensoriality and well-being.

The educational practices were scientifically based and played a fundamental role in the formation of children, for a play based on knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that enabled deeper perceptions and understandings of the being-in-the-world and its human existence. Natural spirituality was integrated as a dynamic force for the care and achievement of the meaning of life.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The educational practices enabled the interaction of the children in living nature, as an expansion of themselves and involved in care actions that strengthened life and natural spirituality. The eco-formative backyard was an environment for sensory and reflective contact, with creative expression in the care of oneself and the other. The experiences with natural resources stimulated the body through art in modeling clay, growing plants and building toys. The manifestations of care and healthy living were perceived and expressed in the games that integrated human multidimensionality, enabling bodily and social well-being.

The stimulus of natural spirituality made it possible to expand consciousness to harmony in personal and collective experiences, revealed in the actions, feelings and thoughts of each moment lived. They were dynamics that integrate values and the desire to find meaning in life.

Natural spirituality is fundamental to the essence of human nature, it manifests itself through creative attitudes, feelings of love and attribution of meaning to painful and pleasurable experiences. The care of nature was essential for the children due to the integration of life and care in the daily process of playing.

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