

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Environmental Education for Sustainable Development: Exploring the Formal and Hidden Curricula in Jamaican Primary Schools**

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This study examines, with specific reference to solid waste, energy and water, the impact of the implementation of Environmental Education for Sustainable Development (EESD) in Jamaican primary schools, with a view to assessing the overall contribution of these institutions to children's environmental education.

Qualitative and quantitative methods are employed within a participatory methodological framework. Statistical techniques and content analysis are used to: explore the teaching and learning processes in relation to the content of both the formal and hidden curricula; investigate the impact of both the formal and hidden curricula on children's environmental learning; and examine how children are influenced by the relationship between these two curricula.

The findings indicate that although significant advances in EESD have been made in Jamaica since 1998, the implementation of EESD in the schools at the centre of the research has generally not impacted the non-academic dimensions of the operational life of these institutions. This has resulted in a dichotomous

relationship between the formal and hidden curricula, and has negatively impacted the overall effectiveness of the programme. A significant number of students were found to have limited understanding of local environmental issues, to be confused about appropriate environmentally sustainable behaviour, and to lack a sense of empowerment. Specific aspects of the hidden curriculum are also shown to be motivating some children to engage in environmentally destructive behaviour.

The study calls for a revision of the formal curriculum to address its current deficiencies, and improve its effectiveness. The study also advocates the development of a comprehensive ‘Whole School’ programme to address the divergence between the formal and hidden curricula in schools.

**Keywords:** Adonna Jardine-Comrie; environmental education for sustainable development; environmentally sustainable behaviour; environmental learning; formal curriculum; hidden curriculum.