**USE OF BIOMONITORING WITH LICHENS AS A TOOL AND STRATEGY OF TEACHING FOR TEENAGERS**

Gustavo Gabriel da Silva Alves1, Andrezza Karla de Oliveira Silva1, Maria de Lourdes Lacerda Buril1, Juliane Barbosa Sales da Silva1, Eugênia Cristina Pereira1,2

Depto. de Ciências Geográficas, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Geografia1, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Biologia Vegetal2, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, Recife, Pernambuco, Brasil.

gustavoalves014@gmail.com; andrezzakarlaufpe@gmail.com; lou.lacerda@gmail.com; julianesales\_@hotmail.com; verticillaris@gmail.com

The use of lichens as biomonitors allows the application of techniques for evaluating the environmental quality, mainly in urban areas. In this context, it is also possible their application as a tool for teaching and acquiring knowledge. Basing on these premises, the objective of this study was to apply the method of Index of Air Purity (IAP) for environmental diagnosis in an area of Recife (Pernambuco, Brazil), through training of students from private middle and high school. The Farias Neves square, surrounded by intense flux of vehicles, and neighbor of a preserving area (Dois Irmãos State Park) was selected for IAP evaluation. Twelve students were selected for participating of 8 training workshops for knowledge acquiring, where topics for theory base and preparation for field studies through IAP were carried out. For field experiments, at first the presence or absence of lichens in trees of the square was mapped, where in 70 of 80 phorophites existents in the area, lichens were registered. In the sequence, the IAP was verified by using a net with 25 squares (5 cm x 5 cm), considering the climate factors as air humidity, luminosity and wind direction. The results allowed to classify the area in three IAP levels: low (0.16 – 3.44), medium (3.60 – 6.60) and good (8.18 – 10.56). Approximately 58% of the area showed low IAP, due to vehicle flux, whose pollutants are spreaded by wind and humidity. A preference of majority of lichens for palm trees as substratum was also verified. In conclusion, it was verified that the use of IAP by students allowed the analysis and their comprehension about the environment where they are inserted, through the identification of the environmental and urban problems that occurs in the space that surround them.

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