

# Education for Citizenship and Human Rights



**Project**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

**Education for Citizenship and Human Rights**, which is a new subject in the curriculum both in Primary Education (EP) and in Obligatory Secondary Education (ESO), springs out of the concern to promote democratic citizenship as part of the aims and activities of education as a whole. In the case we are dealing with, the part referring to Obligatory Secondary Education (ESO) is contained in the Act of Parliament published in the Official Gazette of the Basque Autonomous Community (BOPV) of 13 November 2007. The legislation refers to the bases of this subject, which consist, on the one hand, of the UNESCO programme «Learning for the 21st Century», coordinated by Jacques Delors, and on the other hand, of the programmes developed by the European Commission and other agencies in the sphere of the European Community that have put forward a number of competences that the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) has specified in an Act of Parliament.

These competences may be regarded as the specifying and expansion of the four pillars of education proposed for the future in the above-mentioned Delors report: to learn to know; to learn to act; to learn to live together; and to learn how to be. A further one of vital importance has been added by the curriculum of the BAC (Basque Autonomous Community) and it is “to learn to do and to be enterprising”, and like the other pillars, they imply a fresh, up-to-date vision of education understood as being at the service of citizens.

The Act states that it is a significant change which places the emphasis on what has to be learnt, rather than on what should be taught. So “Education for Citizenship” is particularly important because it undertakes to develop in a direct way the practice of citizenship from the specific to the general through practical exercises. The school and the classroom should be organised in line with democratic values and Human Rights in a way that will favour civic behaviour; this is part and parcel of participative democracy, for which we are educating the students. From this perspective, Education for Citizenship is more than just a subject, it is the hub around which school coexistence must be built. Reducing it to a mere subject could mean divesting it in practice of the necessary implications for the other areas of the curriculum and for the education community as regards the building of democratic models, both in the classroom and in the way the school is run and participation is fostered. This is why the components that make up the curriculum in the area of Education for Citizenship are basically in line with a clear and simple principle: a competence is achieved by exercising the capabilities that form part of it.

“Education for Citizenship” is right at the heart of the framework for education policy of the Department of Education, Universities and Research of the BAC Government, specified in the lines of priority of the Office for Innovation in Education, and one of its cornerstones is education in an inclusive school.

## 2 THE IBAIZABAL EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP PROJECT

Education for Citizenship in Secondary Education in the BAC is given mainly in the 2nd year of in ESO (Obligatory Secondary Education).

As we have pointed out in the introduction, its aim springs out of the concern to promote active citizenship in a democratic system; the aims are based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the European Union in the international treaties and agreements ratified by the member states, and to which the BAC also subscribes.

In this respect, the Ibaizabal Publishing House is **committed** toward **quality, values-based education**, and it does so from its own reality, which is rooted in our culture and language. We take the view that the Basque people has a number of distinct characteristics which need to be addressed, and this is why we have endeavoured to provide curricular materials that respond to this distinctiveness, by addressing not only the language, but also the social and cultural reality itself.

### 2.1. Aim of the Subject

The function of Education for Citizenship is to help students acquire processes or methods, social skills and basic attitudes to develop good coexistence and democratic citizenship. This will require:

- Fostering the development of autonomous, free and responsible people through the consolidation of self-knowledge and self-esteem.
- Getting to know and valuing universally accepted citizens' rights and obligations which, together with the development of the students' own lines of thought and life projects, will allow them to appraise personal and collective conduct and social realities in an ethical way.
- Developing capacities and attitudes in order to critically appraise rules, traditions, collective behaviours and organised knowledge.
- Getting to know and appraising the projects and problems in the vicinity closest to the students to enable them to understand and become integrated into a plural, globalised society.

## 2.2 Link with the other subjects

Insofar as Obligatory Secondary Education (ESO) is obligatory, it is of a comprehensive nature and aims to train citizens capable of participating in a critical and active way in the bosom of a democratic society. This requires providing the students with learning experiences that guarantee their all-round, personal development and, consequently, their intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and ethical and moral capacities. The subject Education for Citizenship is in line with this curricular approach of interrelationship between subjects. This will encourage the students to understand its significance and facilitate the learning of it.

### 3 HOW EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP CONTRIBUTES TOWARDS THE ACQUISITION OF BASIC COMPETENCES

As a school subject, Education for Citizenship covers all the basic competences included in the Secondary Education curriculum in the “social and citizenship sphere”.

- Both “Education for Citizenship” and “Ethical and Civic Education” contribute more than anything else to the acquisition of social and civic competence. The reference to personal identity and its relationship with other identities in order to forge positive coexistence, self-esteem, the commitment towards equal gender relations and participation, diversity understood as a value, the insistence on rights and obligations, as well as respect for Human Rights alone indicate the extent of the commitment towards that competence. If this is true, it is no less true that forms of collaborative work encourage a meeting of individualities and the concomitant emergence of social links, thus reinforcing their contribution towards acquiring the competence.
- Simultaneously, collaborative work, plus reflection and the personal appraisal of dilemmas, case studies and analyses, role plays as well as alternatives submitted to the rules of reasoning contribute towards the development of the competence to learn to learn. This is because they predispose the students to the systematic and rigorous use of thought in the exercise of feedback, and extrapolation towards other aspects of their daily activity; this allows them to become aware of what they know, and thus gain a broad idea of their personal competence.

Moreover, training in this exercise boosts the capacity for the self-regulation of learning, since it offers the students the possibility of referring this learning to the criteria constructed in dialogic confrontation in debates and collaborative work. This is a significant and valuable contribution for any area of the curriculum that gives this subject an outstanding role from the cognitive point of view as well.

- Worthy of mention as well is its contribution towards the competence in autonomy and personal initiative, insofar as it encourages personal initiative, especially with respect to decision taking and assuming of responsibilities. Presenting moral dilemmas, cases and other alternatives helps towards building well-expressed, personal, moral judgements, which is tantamount to saying that it collaborates in the growth of autonomy and personal initiative. These are social skills that are useful for coexistence and collaboration because they foster an equal relationship among autonomous, active people. The need to take a personal standpoint and to justify it foster, in the medium and long term, the building of autonomous judgement based on personal interpretations and reflections.

- On the other hand, the use of debate and rational discussion, as well as collaborative work, contribute towards competence in language communication, because training in listening, exposition and presenting arguments are required.

The communication of feelings, ideas and opinions, essential for achieving the aims in these subjects when spoken as well as written language are used, the critical appraisal of explicit and implicit messages from a range of sources and, in particular, in advertising and in the media also help towards the acquisition of this competence.

Finally, the knowledge and use of terms and concepts belonging to the analysis of social matters contributes towards vocabulary building.

- The methodological use of the digital tools of the Internet will make an outstanding contribution towards developing information processing, and digital competence. Bearing the demands of the knowledge society in mind, it is essential to cooperate with other areas in acquiring this competence, particularly when it is not just a single formal competence. In other words, training in use is one aim, but so is the new conception present in digital tools which is based on the idea of interactivity, open participation and knowledge sharing. The right complement to get as much as possible out of it is collaborative work and the use of horizontal digital networks and debates, which will help to deal effectively and selectively with the information on the basis of digital guidelines.
- The contribution towards competence in scientific, technological and health culture is guaranteed from the moment sustainable development in the social and natural aspect forms part of the aims and criteria for evaluation. Sustainable development means getting closer to the environment after having been provided with an advance conceptualisation that enables the students to act in it autonomously, interpret it with respect, and incorporate a series of ambits that are indispensable for citizens: health, consumption, production, science, technology, social values, etc.

Both “Education for Citizenship” and “Ethical and Civic Education” create tension between reflection and action that students need in order to relate to the natural environment. This tension helps them to reinterpret this same relationship constantly in order to place it within a framework that is appropriate for intervention based on civic values.

- On the other hand, the interpretation of information on the basis of scientific paradigms will help scientific thought to be developed, and then used to put forward technical solutions for resolving technical problems. It will also help in the taking of decisions based on a rigorous interpretation of the context, in order to put forward alternatives when trying to resolve problems of a non-technical nature. Likewise, the systematic analysis of lines of argument and opinions to reveal their elements as well as the synthetic task of composing starting with elements in line with logical laws will help the students to handle complex situations in everyday life and the process for resolving problems in general.
- Competence in humanistic and artistic culture has not been neglected. Sustainable development is also understood from the social perspective, so that cultural and artistic creations are turned into an object for reflection and action, and regarded as a heritage to be valued. Likewise, education in values and in communicative, interpersonal skills finds an exceptional field for action and improvement in culture and art, above all in the effect it has on the attitude towards the cultures and artistic manifestations of other peoples.

In addition to the above-mentioned competences and in accordance with the comprehensive approach of Obligatory Secondary Education (ESO) and the goal to try and get the students, by the time they complete their obligatory education, to realize themselves, to exercise active citizenship, to join adult life satisfactorily and be capable of developing lifelong learning, Education for Citizenship contributes towards achieving other basic competences through interdisciplinary work.

We have considered eight different ambits within the basic competences:

- a) Competence in scientific, technological and health culture.
- b) Competence in learning to learn.
- c) Mathematical competence.
- d) Competence in communication through language.

- e) Competence in information processing and digital competence.
- f) Social and civic competence.
- g) Competence in humanistic and artistic culture.
- h) Competence in autonomy and personal initiative.

#### 4 AIMS

«Education for Citizenship and Human Rights» sets out to achieve the following competences:

1. To appreciate the human condition in its individual and social aspect, by accepting one's own identity and that of other people with their corresponding private side in order to respect individual differences and the private space, and to develop self-esteem.
2. To identify oneself as Basque within a multicultural framework by valuing in a positive way not only the Basque language and culture, but also the languages and cultures of belonging and reference. This way, on the basis of multiple identities, each person can build his or her own identity in an inclusive way, as well as his or her common framework of reference that is compatible with respect for differences that in turn facilitates harmonious coexistence.
3. To express feelings and emotions as well as to develop intercultural and social communicative skills by using dialogue and mediation in dealing with conflicts aimed at facilitating participation in group activities with a supportive attitude.
4. To collaborate in peer activities by organising group projects designed to encourage coexistence and participation based on respect, cooperation and the rejection of violence.
5. To get to know the rights and obligations originating from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its form in State legislation (Constitution, Statute of Autonomy). This is achieved by identifying and accepting the interdependence, indivisibility and universality that characterize these rights and obligations, and by taking them as the criteria for forming judgements not only with reference to social events and situations but also with reference to personal and collective conduct.
6. To get to know the plurality of today's societies and the rights of people and the free exercise of these rights by identifying their characteristic elements in order to recognise diversity as something that enriches coexistence.
7. To defend equality of rights and opportunities for everyone by rejecting situations of injustice and discrimination that exists owing to gender, origin, ethnic group, beliefs, personal and social differences, affective-sexual orientation or of any other type to achieve fair and egalitarian coexistence based on human rights.
8. To recognise the rights of women, to value the difference of sexes and equality of rights between men and women, and to reject stereotypes and prejudices that imply discrimination between them by promoting an egalitarian attitude aimed at guaranteeing all-round, personal development and coexistence in which gender inequality and violence against women will disappear.
9. To get to know the structure of democratic systems and political institutions at different levels, including the European one, by proposing alternatives and improvements aimed at fostering responsible participation in the ones closest to the students: school and municipality.
10. To respect the bases of the democratic way of life and participate in it by assuming the obligations of citizens in the maintenance and improvement of the common good and respect for animals, in order to collaborate in the social, natural, sustainable development of the school and the vicinity.
11. To value the importance of participation in social and political life and in other forms of organisation like cooperation, the forming of associations and voluntary work by recognising the positive effects of them in encouraging involvement on the students' level in the process of social responsibility.
12. To get to know the causes that lead to the violation of human rights, poverty and inequality as well as their link with armed conflicts, while assessing actions channelled towards achiev-



ing peace, freedom and equality in order to promote participation as a means for achieving a fairer, more supportive world.

13. To recognise themselves as being members of a global citizenship by displaying critical respect for customs and lifestyles that are different, in order to act in a supportive way locally and globally with respect to underprivileged persons and groups.
14. To acquire critical thought and assess the reasons put forward by other people and sources of information, in particular digital ones, by developing their own criteria and reasoned dialogic skills so that they can defend their positions and incorporate those that are different into them.
15. To identify and analyse the main ethical theories while recognising the main social and moral conflicts in today's world, in order to develop critical thought with respect to the models that are transmitted through the media and other social institutions.

## **5 STRUCTURING THE SYLLABUS**

The official curriculum divides the syllabus of this subject into the following six blocks:

### ***Block 1. CORE CONTENT***

- Identifying the main ideas of a discourse.
- Classifying information according to criteria.
- Use of different sources of information; written, oral, audiovisual, digital.
- Handling criteria for filtering information, especially that which comes from the Internet.
- Picking out an argument behind an opinion.
- Producing personal discourses backed by reasons (information, interpretation, reasoning).
- Including the points of view of one's peers when producing discourses, either by arguing the points of view out with them or by incorporating them totally or partially.
- Use of simulation, communication techniques (survey, interview, etc.), mediation and others as a tool for dealing with conflictive situations.
- Use of dialogic skills that favour the recognition of one's own and other people's feelings and which help to establish effective communication.
- To collaborate in the design, organisation and development of projects involving group work.
- To self-regulate learning through self-appraisal techniques.

### ***Block 2. COEXISTENCE***

- Personal identity, freedom and responsibility.
- Intelligence, feelings and emotions.
- Interpersonal relationships in the new spheres of electronic communication. Private life and protection of personal details.
- Social skills and attitudes for coexistence. Rejection of violence as a response to conflicts. Rejection of prejudices and stereotypes. The ability to listen when faced with a diversity of opinions in the dialogue.
- Conflict and mediation.

### ***Block 3. PARTICIPATION***

- Coexistence and democratic participation. Participation at school and in the vicinity: school councils, classroom and school councils, Agenda 21 committees, Interschool forums, etc.
- Democracy and social and political participation. Rights and obligations. Democratic institutions and international treaties: Kyoto Protocol, Agenda 21, Social Forum. The forming of associations, cooperation, NGOs.
- Identification, appreciation and care of common property, the natural heritage and public services. Relationships between human beings and all the other animals.



**Block 4. A DIVERSE WORLD**

- Diversity, difference, inequality.
- Social and cultural differences in the bosom of today’s societies.
- Equality of rights and diversity. Respect and critical appraisal of the personal options of citizens.
- Diversity: assimilation, coexistence and interculturality. Ethnic minorities.
- Discrimination: factors and causes. Social, racist, xenophobic, sexist and homophobic prejudices.
- Appraisal of the plurality of today’s societies. Rejection of ethnocentric, androcentric, misogynist, homophobic attitudes, etc.

**Block 5. GENDER AND SOCIAL ROLES**

- Gender violence: physical and psychological ill-treatment, control behaviours.
- Housework. Social and sexual division of the work.
- Social strategies for transmitting roles and values: families, school, advertising, mass media, etc.
- Rejection of violent conduct generated by the sex/gender system.
- Development of a positive, active stance when faced with the co-responsibility of men and women in the work to sustain life.

**Block 6. THE ADVANCE TOWARDS DEMOCRACY**

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, international treaties and agreements. Condemnation of violations of human rights, civil legal action as well as that of international courts. Valuing of human rights as unfinished, historical conquests.
- Democratic institutions and citizens’ rights: autonomous Basque institutions. The [Spanish] Constitution. The building of Europe.
- Concept of global citizenship: political, civil and social.
- Globalisation (globalization) and citizenship. Hidden citizens and poverty: women, people without documents, the unemployed, etc.
- Citizens’ rights and obligations.
- Sustainable development: the new framework for democracy. The Basque Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002-2020 and Agenda 21.
- Global citizenship. Sustainable human development. Cooperation. Movements committed to defending human rights.
- Valuing equality as the necessary condition for genuine democracy, for development and for peace.
- Rejection of any attempt to justify situations involving the violation of human rights.

**6 OUR PROPOSAL**

Taking the six blocks of the syllabus as a reference and bearing in mind that the first one refers to “Core Content”, the proposal of this publishing house has been designed around the six didactic units. Basically, one for each thematic block, even though we have not taken into consideration the total content of a thematic block, in all the cases. So, for example, we have divided thematic block 6 into two didactic units. Furthermore, we have dealt with block 1, Core Content, throughout the six units by working on a process or method in each one of them.

Finally, we should like to point out that with respect to Emotional Education, mostly covered in block 2 of the curriculum, we have decided to work on it throughout the units by devoting a specific section to it, as we believe it is very important to deal in depth with the expression of feelings and emotions, so crucial at the students' age.

Another part of the proposal we are presenting is with respect to the reading load of the subject, amounting to little more than 30 units throughout the academic year. We have been keen to be realistic and this has led us to give priority to certain elements over others, while at the same time bearing in mind that much of the syllabus is revisited in the subject "Ethical and Civic Education" in the 4th year of Obligatory Secondary Education (ESO).

So our aim has been to approach the content of the curriculum from the elements that are closer and more important as far as the age of the students is concerned.