

Promoting emotional, social and civic competencies: Educational policies in Spain

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Abstract

This article analyzes Spain's educational policies in terms of emotional, social, and civic competencies. The need to teach these competencies at school is justified socially and pedagogically, and the way in which these competencies are implemented in Spanish and European school curricula is described. Spain's main political actions to promote social-emotional education are then described. The article concludes that for these programs to be effective, they must overcome a double challenge related to the practical implementation of competence-based curricula and transversal competencies assessment. Consequently, Europe as well as Spain must redouble their efforts (economic, instrumental, and in terms of assessment) to achieve their educational goals.

Keywords: comprehensive education, social-emotional competencies, civic competencies, learning for well-being, educational policy

Introduction

School and the activities carried out within it are meant, *in theory*, to promote a person's development as a whole. From its very origin, school was conceived as a social institution in charge of educating younger generations in a comprehensive way. This training was meant to foster human development by educating people intellectually, morally and civically. That is to say, comprehensive education was meant to cultivate personal and social maturity in young people.

School is influenced by other social systems operating at various ecological levels. These include direct agents, such as family and teachers, and more indirect agents, such as the State, with its political actions. Also influential are social networks, media, and new and evolving means for accessing information.

While school assumes responsibility, *in theory*, for promoting and structuring learning opportunities that will lead to the social and personal maturity of children and young people, today's schools are limited in their ability to satisfy this educational objective due to cultural changes in 21st Century society. This means that comprehensive education, *in practice*, is often reduced to a mere declaration of principles, and political-educational objectives are not easily translated into something practical. A clear example of this is learning to become humanized in the modern sense of the term. That is to say, to ensure all students are provided with the types of learning that are most closely related to the construction of individual, social, and moral character, which is the goal of social, emotional, and civic development (SECD), or, using the terminology that is becoming more common in Europe and Spain: "learning for well-being" (L4WB) and "emotional, social and civic competencies" (ESCC).

Traditionally, Western schools have not delved into or focused enough on educating moral feelings and human emotions, mostly due to cultural reasons. On the contrary, education in Western countries has focused more on a person's intellectual and academic training, following the scholastic model of Western European culture.

School as a Western institution has been faithful to rationalism. It comes as no surprise that the education model that has been practiced in Europe from modernity onwards has prioritized the education of reason over and above emotion or feelings. Likewise, it comes as no surprise that by being faithful to its rationalistic logic, it has prioritized logical intelligence over and above intuitive intelligence. In the same way, in accordance with the values of Western culture, it has prioritized personal autonomy and responsibility values in the education of character, while underestimating the values of cooperation and co-responsibility. Thus, the way comprehensive education has been carried out since the onset of modernity has neglected affective and moral education in favor of intellectual education. Paradoxically, it has also reinforced individualism by focusing excessively on the "subject" at the expense of inter-subjective and relational experience, which is so important in terms of a person's social and civic maturity.

The sphere of social, personal, and moral development has always been present at school as an educational objective. Likewise, educating the character as a whole is an educational goal that has been mentioned explicitly in education legislation. Nevertheless, putting this into practice has often been left to the teachers and the school's good will. Thus, comprehensive character education has been more of an intention than a reality (Darder Vidal & Bach Cobacho, 2006; Núñez Cubero, Bisquerra Alzina, González Montegudo & Gutiérrez Moar, 2006). However, comprehensive character education is now a

necessity, due to the educational and other challenges posed by today's society. These challenges arise from the new social dynamics in our Society of Knowledge, which affect teaching and learning, well-being, lifestyles, civic life, and the labor market. These challenges more than justify the need to systematically incorporate an education model that promotes human development by focusing on emotional, civic and moral education (Ten Dam & Volman, 2007).

ESCC/L4WB and social outcomes

According to various International and European reports, we need to pay more attention to this other form of education that deals with young people's volitional, moral, and emotional dimensions. The Delors Report (Delors, 1996) by UNESCO proposed an holistic and integrated vision of education, based on the paradigms of lifelong learning and the four pillars of learning:

- Learning to know, by combining a broad knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects.
- Learning to do, to acquire occupational skills and the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams.
- Learning to live together, by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence, learning to manage conflicts, in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace.
- Learning to be, by being able to act with autonomy, judgment and personal and social responsibility.

The relevance of emotional, social and civic learning to compulsory schooling also was highlighted by the OECD in 2003 as a positive way to increase the sense of belonging and engagement of students towards school and learning. The OECD, through the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) concluded that in every country, there was a substantial number of youths who were disengaged from school at the critical period when they were completing their final years of compulsory schooling (OECD, 2003). Some disaffected students are disruptive in class, and exert a negative influence on other students. To the extent that a sense of belonging and participation is important to schooling and positive social outcomes, OECD suggested different ways that school policy and practice could reduce student disaffection, such as through stronger practical literacy skills, school-based prevention programmes based on emotional skills, and school policies and practices that increase the sense of belonging and participation of disengaged students (OECD, 2003).

In 2010, the OECD published the International Report "Improving health and social cohesion through education" (OECD, 2010). The report found that education has the potential to promote health as well as civic and social engagement. Education may reduce inequalities by fostering cognitive, social and emotional skills and by promoting healthy lifestyles and participatory practices and norms.

More recently, the OECD has insisted on the importance of education in promoting well-being and social progress (OECD, 2012a, 2012b). It noted, "education empowers individuals by increasing their knowledge and their cognitive and emotional skills, as well improving attitudes towards lifestyles and active citizenship" (OECD, 2012a, p. 93) and foundations skills have a profound relationship with

economic and social outcomes across a wide range of contexts and institutions” (OECD, 2012b, p. 4).

That requires curricular reform based on essential competencies, such as basic cognitive skills, positive attitudes, healthy habits and personal attributes like patience, self-efficacy and self-confidence (OECD, 2012a, p. 93).

In Europe, the “Learning for Well-being Consortium in Europe” (<http://www.eiesp.org/site/pages/view/60-learning-for-well-being-consortium.html>) encourages educating for wellbeing. The L4WB Consortium workplan includes three main activities (L4WB Consortium of Foundations, 2012, p. 3):

1. “Development of indicators for measuring the personal perception of well-being by children and young people.
2. Draft a policy glossary to provide a conceptual and strategic framework as well as the basis for a common language for policy makers at all levels in Europe.
3. Design and organize conferences for European and international institutions, national governments, foundations, business and NGOs to support the EU agenda towards the well-being of children.”

In general terms, the ESCC or L4WB proposals fall within the new paradigm based on human flourishing. They argue for comprehensive education based on a person’s distinctive strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), educating a person’s character, and teaching interpersonal skills (Cohen, 2006; Elias, 2009; Howard, Berkowitz & Schaeffer, 2004), as well as teaching the attitudes and skills people need to lead their own lives and become active citizens, having a positive influence on their social and political environments (Nussbaum, 1992, 2011).

According to these International and European reports, education plays a significant role in social progress as well as psychosocial well-being. Moreover, these reports create an imperative to strengthen social-emotional and civic competencies starting at a young age, especially during schooling. There is empirical evidence of the close relationship between education, quality of life, happiness, vital satisfaction, and psychosocial well-being (Banati & Alexander, 2012; Bywater & Sharples, 2012; Sklad, Diekstra, De Ritter, Ben, & Gravesteyn, 2012), and the close relationship between education and mental health (Stengard & Appelqvist-Schmidlecher, 2010).

Consequently, these reports encourage policy makers to redouble their efforts, particularly regarding this other education (ESCC/L4WB), since we have scientific evidence of its impact on social and personal progress (Bywater & Sharples, 2012; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, Schellinger, 2011). We now have unprecedented favorable conditions for the effective incorporation of social-emotional education at school, especially in Europe, as we will now explain.

ESCC in European countries: The education policy framework

There is now impetus for promoting the alignment of educational and training systems in all the countries in the European Union. The strategic framework for European cooperation in the field of education and professional training for 2020 (ET2020) (EU Council, 2009a) establishes four strategic objectives for Europe to face the educational challenges posed by the Society of Knowledge and to make the principle of permanent learning a reality. Two of the four objectives are particularly relevant because

they deal with social-emotional and civic competence. These are “promoting equality, social cohesion and active citizenship,” and “increasing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all educational levels” (EU Council, 2009a, p. 2).

With these strategic objectives in mind, by the year 2020, the educational and training systems in Europe aspire to achieve “personal, social, and professional fulfillment of all citizens” and “sustainable economic prosperity and employability, while at the same time promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and inter-cultural dialogue” (EU Council, 2009a, p. 3).

The concept of “key competencies” has gained a lot of support in Europe, at a political level as well as in schools. National and regional educational European policies have been developing and implementing key competences in coordinated ways through the KeyCoNect project (<http://keyconet.eun.org/welcome>). This is a European Policy Network focused on identifying and analyzing emergent strategies in implementing key competencies into European education reforms. A number of initiatives related to Key Competence Development (KCD) are being implemented in various national contexts across Europe (<http://keyconet.eun.org/project-results>). Recent reports have been published about KCD in school education in Europe (Gordon, Rey, Siewiorek, Vivitsou, & von Reis Saari, 2012) and with regard to assessment of key competencies (Pepper, 2012).

The European Reference Framework on Key Competencies for Life-long Learning (EC, 2007) describes the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to succeed in a society of knowledge. Achieving the goals of European education and of the two strategic objectives we have pointed out depends, among other things, on the level of social-emotional and civic competence that European citizens manage to attain. Europe has an active interest in creating reformed plans to improve competencies (Halasz & Michel, 2011). With these reforms, Europe encourages schools to incorporate educational programs and actions that explicitly promote personal as well as collective health and well-being. Promoting active involvement in social and political life beginning from a young age is also part of the European agenda for educational policy.

The European Reference Framework also explicitly includes social and civic competence (EC, 2007). The European Commission defines social and civic competencies as “the entire set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior that enable a person to participate effectively and constructively in social and inter-personal life, and when necessary, to resolve conflict” (EC, 2007, p.9). These generic competencies include personal, inter-personal, and inter-cultural competencies. Elements of social and civic competencies according to the European point of view are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Social and Civic Competencies

Social Competencies	Civic Competencies
Communicating constructively in different environments.	Interacting effectively in the public sphere
Showing tolerance, expressing and understanding different points of view.	Showing solidarity and interest in resolving conflicts that affect the community (local or wider)
Negotiating constructively inspiring confidence.	Critical and reflective skills
Empathy.	Creative abilities
Dealing with stress.	Participating constructively in neighborhood or community activities
Tolerating frustration.	Decision-making skills in the local, national, or European sphere, particularly by voting
Positive emotional expression.	

In most official European documents, emotional competence is not explicitly listed as a key competency in its own right. This does not mean that it is not valued enough to be part of Europe's education policy agenda, since the European Commission has prioritized certain key competencies to meet its educational goals. In official documents on key competencies for permanent learning (EC, 2006, 2007), social competence is more closely linked to the personal and interpersonal sphere and connected to educational goals of personal, social, and professional fulfillment. This competency is more directly geared towards the development of personal resources (attitudes, values and skills) that allow a person to function optimally in the sphere of personal and interpersonal development. Civic competence, on the other hand, is linked to the public sphere and connected to the educational goal of socialization because it contributes to social cohesion, active citizenship, inter-cultural awareness, and democratic values. This competency is more directly related to mobilizing personal and interpersonal resources for a person to function optimally in a community. For example, the new Education Organic Law recently approved in Spain (LOMCE, 2013) includes in the explanatory memorandum that:

This Organic Law considers essential preparing young people toward active citizenship and the acquisition of social and civic competencies contained within the European Parliament Recommendation of 2006 on key competencies for lifelong learning. (Section XIV)

In a similar way, OECD (2012b) highlights the importance of educating people in social and civic competencies throughout their lives. These competencies contribute to the improvement of social and economic progress, quality of life, and human development. There is evidence of a strong relationship between the mastering of these competencies and the quality of a person's social and personal life. As OECD (2012b) points out,

Skills affect people's lives and the well-being of nations in ways that go far beyond what can be measured by labor-market earnings and economic growth. For example, the benefits of skills to an individual's health are potentially great. Skills also relate to civic and social behavior as they affect democratic engagement and business relationships. Institutional trust, for example, is vital for the functioning of democracies; and without trust in the rule of law and in others, business relationships function less efficiently(p. 11).

Emotional competencies and learning for well-being (L4WB): An alternative European theoretical framework for policy makers

Emotional competencies appear explicitly in more recent European documents linked to Europe's third strategic objective for 2020: "promoting equality, social cohesion, and active citizenship" (EC, 2009). The European Council published a report in 2009: "Well-being for all. Concepts and tools for social cohesion" (EC, 2009b). In this report, the European Council described well-being as a universal human right (termed, "Well-being for All"), meant to encompass individual well-being as well as social and global well-being, extending to future generations.

Europe's discourse and political strategies are gradually incorporating a preventive philosophy that encourages human development. Additionally, its discourse is starting to emphasize the relational and participatory nature of well-being and to consider it a strategic objective for attaining social cohesion.

In 2009, a group of European foundations decided to establish the “Learning for Well-being” Consortium of Foundations (Learning for Well-Being’ Consortium of Foundations, n.d.), in partnership with other agents of society. This Consortium appeared at the same time as the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in the field of education and training. The L4WB Consortium’s general objective was to inspire and engage people to make all environments more conducive to L4WB for children and young people (Kickbusch, 2012).

The creation of Learning for Well-being was inspired by resolutions adopted by major international organizations. The World Health Organization (WHO) described well-being as a state to be achieved by defining health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1986, p. 2). The United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) emphasized in article 12 that all member States need to guarantee certain conditions during childhood, such as children’s rights to form their own opinions, to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and to ensure that those views and opinions are taken into consideration (UNCRC, 1989). UNICEF has focused on the responsibility to advocate for the protection of children’s rights and to help meet their basic needs and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential (UNICEF, 1946). The Delors report (1996), which was supported by UNESCO, established as basic educational pillars for the 21st century, “learning to be and learning to live together” together with “learning to know and learning to do” (p. 37).

The Consortium sees L4WB as a new educational paradigm whose prime objective is “to ensure that education and health lead to well-being. It emphasizes the need for a change in mindsets and, particularly, a fundamental paradigm shift in the way we educate and care for children and young people” (Gordon, 2010, p. 29).

This new paradigm assumes a holistic view of a person, the educational process, and the systems with which a person interacts in a dynamic way throughout his or her entire life. According to this movement, L4WB is the educational philosophy that should inspire European reforms aimed at children and young people in terms of education, health, and social cohesion. Thus, this is a systemic and positive approximation to human development that prioritizes all the processes and contexts that promote young people’s distinctive strengths, enabling them to lead autonomous and civic lives, and that recognize each person’s potential in a personalized way.

The L4WB Consortium has drawn up the first policy glossary on young people’s education for well-being, and it is developing a powerful line of research to create a system of indicators that will assess their subjective well-being (Kickbusch, 2012). The studies they are undertaking will provide rigorous information on the distribution and development of well-being in youth at a global and European level, as well as facilitating political decision-making in the future.

Based on the *capabilities approach* and Nussbaum’s core capabilities (2011), the Consortium and the Universal Education Foundation (UEF) have proposed a core capabilities framework that has allowed them to carry out international assessments on different well-being dimensions (individual, interpersonal, and civic) 18-24 year olds (Awartani, Vince, & Gordon, 2008). Furthermore, as an associate member of KeyCoNet, the L4WB Consortium also analyzes approaches to the implementation of social and civic competencies in school education. As noted earlier, it is implementation that ultimately must be addressed successfully if policy is to become standard practice.

Social and civic competencies in Spain: Curriculum policy

Spain has been one of the first European countries to include in its education legislation the key competencies proposed by Europe. The timing of the recommendations on European cooperation regarding key competencies (EC, 2006) and the new Organic Education Law approved in Spain that same year made it possible to include these competencies in the basic mandatory education curriculum from the very beginning (Tiana, Moya, & Luengo, 2011).

As we have pointed out earlier, emotional competencies are not reflected explicitly in European recommendations and policies, which does not mean that they are not taken into account. Rather, they are integrated within Europe's social and civic competencies. Consequently, their incorporation into the Spanish school curriculum will follow the same logic. Emotional literacy will appear in the Spanish school curriculum as part of social and public competence. We perceive that, in Spain's case, emotional competence is reduced to learning social skills and learning to deal with emotions that are tied to harmonious coexistence and the constructive resolution of conflict. Although these are important things to learn during the school years, it is a restricted interpretation of emotional competence, associated with a limited number of contexts (interpersonal and school) where school children normally coexist and where they carry out active citizenship (community).

However, learning emotional competence also occurs in personal situations and is an inherent part of building a positive sense of self. It is closely linked to self-conscience, psychological well-being, and personal fulfillment, which is mentioned explicitly in European policies and Spanish education legislation as an educational goal.

Again, "learning to be" is not able to rise above the level of political intention; therefore, in our opinion, its implementation in schools will remain deficient due to its low visibility. This statement is confirmed by the low weight carried by content related to self-knowledge and self-esteem, assertiveness, autonomy, and personal responsibility, compared to content related to understanding social reality and the values and attitudes held by democratic societies. This is probably due to the lack of experience assessing "soft," or non-academic, competencies in Europe, as well as in Spain. The underlying philosophical affinity toward rationalism will not be quick to depart.

Social and civic competencies in Spain's core curriculum: Elements and dimensions

The Royal Decrees (RD) that regulate educational matters corresponding to Elementary School (Ministerio de Educación [MEC], 2006a), Junior High, and High School (MEC, 2006b), describe social and civic competencies as:

[The capacity to] understand the social reality one lives in, facing conflicts and dealing with others using one's ethical judgment based on democratic values and practices, and participating in active citizenship by acting according to one's own criteria, contributing to peace-building and democracy, and maintaining a constructive attitude, fulfilling one's civil rights and obligations with solidarity and responsibility (MEC, 2006b, p. 688).

Spain's Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports implemented a territorial cooperation program to

bolster the integration of basic social, emotional, and civic competencies in the curriculum. Known as the Curricular Integration of Basic Competencies (COMBAS) Project, it was started in the 2010 school year with the purpose of consolidating basic competencies as an essential element of the school curriculum at all levels. Since the Spanish school system is widely decentralized, this program allowed different regional education administrations to work in a coordinated way to achieve a common reference model regarding the elements and dimensions of the eight basic competencies. The COMBAS Project concluded in 2012. The Organic Education Law recently approved in the summer of 2013 in Spain (Ley Orgánica de Mejora de la Calidad Educativa [LOMCE]) has built upon this work and will bring about important changes in Spain's educational system. Two basic objectives of this educational policy are to contribute to the acquisition of key skills by reinforcing the learning of core subjects at all stages and to reduce the drop-out rate. Its strategy for practice is based upon these elements:

- Simplification of curricular development to provide sound knowledge of contents, guaranteeing the effectiveness of basic skills
- Interdisciplinary vision of the contents
- Greater teaching autonomy and a more personalized education

During this academic year (2012), Spain is developing, within the Development of General Competencies (Centro Nacional de Innovación e Investigación Educativa [CNIIE], 2012) and building upon the previous COMBAS Project, a component with the object of ensuring and improving basic competencies for learning, as well as recognizing them and assessing them. The first diagnostic assessments for social competence and citizenship in elementary and secondary education were organized at a national level in 2009 as a specific activity of the COMBAS Project (MEC/Instituto de Evaluación, 2010). These diagnostic assessments were developed at a regional policy level once a year, but COMBAS has concluded. Therefore, one of the biggest difficulties of a curricular approach based on competencies-the difficulty in determining indicators of assessment and developmentally linked levels of progress reached by school children when mastering basic competencies-remains unresolved. This difficulty is even greater when we refer to social and civic competencies.

Large and small policies of Emotional Competencies Education (ECE) in Spain

As we have pointed out in previous pages, teaching and learning emotional competencies is present in the Spanish school curriculum as part of social and civic competencies. These competencies are streamlined transversally in the school curriculum. Spain's de-centralized educational policy allows regional governments to develop their own instruments according to their political priorities. Thus, ECE pilot programs in Spain have not been established on a national scale, although there are some on a regional and local scale.

The main government actions that deal with emotional education on a regional scale rely on positive action policies. They are strategies based on a capacity building approach (Vesely, 2012), mainly aimed toward teacher-training and educational innovation. Nevertheless, there are regional initiatives that have developed pilot programs that are being applied in numerous schools in different Spanish autonomous communities. Such is the case of the Responsible Education program designed by the Botin Foundation in cooperation with Cantabria Government's Education Council. This program is

being carried out in 100 schools in that region, with 900 teachers and 20,000 students and families participating. The program has been carried out in Cantabria (Spain) since 2004. It is based on a comprehensive process (research, formation, training, implementation, maintenance and evaluation) offering educational resources and techniques to facilitate and foster emotional, cognitive and social development from childhood, using a plan of action that engages families, schools and communities (Botin Foundation, 2012).

In a similar manner, other regional governments have designed guidance programs that can be used by school teachers to work on emotional competencies in different curricular areas. Guipuzcoa's Regional Government, for example, has designed an emotional intelligence guidance program for all pre-university education levels, the *Emozioak* Program, which was launched in 2004. It was inspired by intervention approaches that rely on the holistic view of Social-Emotional Learning adopted by The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2013).

Other regional education administrations have chosen to foster emotional education through innovative education projects. In doing so, the regional government's role is to offer financial and logistical support to enable communication and information exchange, as well as good practices between the educational centers and the teachers who participate in the programs. For example, the Network of Emotional Intelligence Schools in the Extremadura Region is a social support and innovative education network composed of more than twenty schools that are committed to developing Social-Emotional Learning programs that will be sustained over time. Being a member of the Emotional Intelligence School Network is very prestigious for an educational center.

In Spain's case, it is convenient to distinguish between political actions promoted by government policy-makers (Policy) and the actions carried out by other social agents (policy) to achieve state or regional educational objectives (Vesely, 2012, p. 327). In Spain's map of emotional competence education we can see both types of policies, although the latter are more common.

Regional governments are frequently the promoters of the design and assessment of emotional education programs through their education administration, by providing financial support and by asking university research groups or NGOs to assist. In this sense, the broad experience of Málaga (Spain) University's Emotional Laboratory, headed by Fernández Berrocal, merits highlighting. Since 1996, they have been promoting lines of educational research and intervention on Emotional Intelligence in childhood and adolescence funded at the state level. They are responsible, on a regional level, for a project on preventing classroom violence and psychosocial imbalance through emotional intelligence education, which was conducted from 2009 to 2011, based on the work of Salovey and Mayer (1990). Approximately 2,000 Andalusian students between the ages of 12 and 18 have spent 12 hours a year participating in this project. One thousand of them received an emotional intelligence training program designed by this research team (Andalucía Innova, 2011). The program has recently been published (Ruiz Aranda et al., 2013).

In other cases, schools request the cooperation of university research groups directly, and the help of NGOs for counseling, stimulation, intervention, or assessment of their Emotional Education practices. The University of Barcelona's Psycho-pedagogical Research Group (GROP), led by Rafael Bisquerra, promoted a research and educational intervention line on emotional education in 1997. They were pioneers in Spain in terms of the theoretical foundations for emotional education. This group collaborates with a wide number of educational centers and education administrations in matters of consulting and research, and by spreading information on emotional education.

Likewise, University of Seville's Research Group on Emotional Education and Drama (GRIEED), led by Luis Nunez, is developing its own work on emotional education (<http://grupo.us.es/grieded>). GRIEED has signed cooperation agreements with various educational centers in Seville, which allow it to carry out its line of work on emotional education over time. They have designed a Pilot Program called Integral Education, which is a program for teaching social, emotional, and creative competencies in junior high (see Marcelo Spinola Jr. School, n.d.) and high school (see Preuniversity School, n.d.).

The first phase of the program began in the 2012 school year, and is geared towards students. This program provides training on emotional, social and creative competencies and takes place as an extra-curricular activity outside of school hours, throughout the school year. More than one hundred students are participating. This Integral Education program has also been conceived as a collaborative research program with teachers and as a program for developing parents' competencies. These other two lines of intervention will be implemented during the next academic year in the two schools that are acting as pilot centers. The working philosophy of the "Integral Education" Program is inspired by L4WB philosophy and a whole approach. GRIEED normally uses experiential and role-play methodologies to work on these competencies.

Inspired by the CASEL approach, Saint Estanislao Kotska educational institution (SEK) is soon going to implement an emotional management program in its classrooms using Resolving Conflicts Creatively (RCC), in cooperation with Camilo José Cela University (Madrid). CASEL collaborator Linda Lantieri will lead the RCC program in Spain.

Thus, policies characterize the bulk of emotional education programs and initiatives in Spain. Fortunately, there are many on emotional education. University research groups, Foundations, and NGO's are normally responsible for these policies. Other non-governmental social institutions also stimulate educational programs on social and emotional competencies and educating in values. The Children's Villages NGO (Aldeas Infantiles) has been collaborating since 1998 with various Spanish regional education administrations by implementing their emotional education programs and educating in values programs. More than 3,750 public schools and 256,000 children from different Spanish cities and regions have participated in these programs. The programs focus on self-esteem, school bullying, emotional control, altruism, social justice, tolerance and participation.

Conclusions and recommendations for policy

This article has described the general guidelines and strategic lines of European educational policy in terms of teaching emotional, social, and civic competencies. Likewise, it has outlined the national and regional strategies developed in Spain to improve the teaching and learning of these competencies.

The recent Eurydice Report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2012) on the development of European key competencies in the school context shows that, despite significant achievements, there are challenges still pending related to the practical implementation of competence-based curricula. The challenge is greater when we refer to transversal challenges (such as digital, personal initiative, and entrepreneurship), to say nothing of social and civic competencies.

In effect, despite these competencies being present in the school curricula of all European countries, not all have developed a national strategy to implement them in their schools. Digital competencies and

basic academic competencies (reading, math, science, foreign languages) are an exception, because most European countries have national strategies for dealing with these.

The first conclusion we can reach from this information is that those responsible for educational policies at the national and regional level must face this challenge. For a transversal approach to put into practice the strategic and curricular objectives that have been formulated in policy, additional political instruments are required. One of the most effective instruments is teacher training, as well as creating instruments and resources for teaching these competencies.

An additional need is comprehensive approaches for assessing students' competence. The Eurydice report (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2012) points out that competence assessment represents a political challenge in itself. To assess in a rigorous and objective way how competent their students are, teachers need clear and precise assessment tools. Educational institutions could lead the assessment process by developing internal mechanisms, with the support of the regional and national evaluation agencies and researchers. There are a wide variety of assessment methods, such as standardized tests, attitudinal questionnaires, performance-based assessment, portfolio assessment, and teacher, peer and self-assessment practices (Pepper, 2012). Both, national and regional assessment agencies, together with educational institutions and teachers in collaboration with researchers, could design specific assessment tools according their summative or formative purposes.

The second conclusion we have reached is related to implementing educational programs on emotional, social, and civic competencies in schools. Currently, there are ESCC programs available to develop these competencies, which have been empirically verified. We have mentioned some of them, created by Spanish research groups. However, as Bywater and Sharples (2012, p. 404) point out, "choosing a programme that works is not enough to guarantee success: implementing the programme with fidelity takes time and resources." And this statement is valid for both Policies and policies.

The evidence, as well as our own experience as counselors and educators in the realm of emotional development, shows us that time and available resources are the Gordian knot that now constrains the success of these programs. Social-emotional education programs and character education programs, as opposed to "academic" programs, deal with "non-instrumental learning." They deal with "education for life," which leads to attitude and axiological changes not only in students, but also in teachers and schools. These types of learning promote systemic changes in classroom culture and in the classroom environment. We cannot educate students emotionally without educating teachers emotionally, as well. Likewise, we cannot educate in civic commitment without bolstering community experiences within the school itself.

These programs are more effective if they continue through time, if they adopt a whole school approach (Stoiber, 2011) and if they take place in environments where school children "learn by doing," as John Dewey (1938) supported. Thus, the second challenge faced by educational Policies and policies is to achieve the continuity of these programs, to foster the relationship between schools and the local community, and to adopt a mid- to long-term political approach.

Finally, since time is money, according to political and economic ways of thinking, and an investment, according to educational rationale, these programs must also be assessed from a cost-benefit point of view (Bywater & Sharples, 2012). The effectiveness of ESCC programs has been demonstrated by strong evidence, so a cost-benefit assessment related to social, educational and health outcomes could contribute to investment in the wellbeing of youth and societies in Spain and Europe by bringing well-thought out policies into widespread and systemic implementation.

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