DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN EUROPE

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Abstract

The European Education Area should include, among other things, increased cooperation on curriculum development to make recommendations to ensure that education systems promote the acquisition of all knowledge, skills and competences that are considered essential in today's world. We consider it pertinent to identify the characteristics of citizenship education aimed at the digital age in the national curricula of European countries, and to compare them with the official documents issued by the Ministry of Education in Portugal. The study aims to highlight the importance and actuality of the various literacies, based on human rights, and grounded in responsible digital citizenship practices. Therefore, it is integrated in the scope of an Education for Development and Global Citizenship, exploring national and European theoretical references. In the empirical study we resort, then, to a mixed research paradigm, in the form of multi-strategy research. In other words, we will use a multidimensional matrix that allows us to collect as much data as possible from the research context. The data collection will follow a documental analysis. We believe that the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data obtained in the research on the theoretical frameworks will provide us with the necessary support to outline a profile of competences aimed at the training of qualified citizens, endowed with competences referenced in various national and international studies on digital and citizen literacies.

Keywords: digital literacy, citizen literacy, development education and global citizenship.

1 INTRODUCTION

Governing societies worldwide and, consequently, our citizenship practices, we have the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (date of first publication: 26 August 1789) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (approved by Resolution 44/25 of the United Nations General Assembly, 20 November 1989), which act as normative references. We can also list other documents, namely the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination and the Convention for the Equality of Women and Men at Work. With less force of expression, in social terms, there is also the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, which back dates to 1997. It is an international document, drawn up collectively by allies from five continents and expresses a new social pact between human beings in the form of a charter dealing with individual and collective responsibilities in human interrelations and with the biosphere. It is a proposal to be adopted by citizens all over the world and which, in parallel with the affirmation of human rights, also speaks of responsibilities at the various levels of civil society, with a view to building more sustainable communities. Other declarations such as, for example, the Porto Charter resulting from the 4th International Meeting of the Paulo Freire Forum, which took place in 2004, ended with the collective production of a text that points to the need to consolidate a "multicultural planetary citizenship", sustained by a "critical transcultural dialogue as an instrument, as a liberating practice and as a strengthening of knowledge processes" and, consequently, of the public character of education. Recently (26 November 2019) emerged the Ministerial Declaration Citizenship Education in the Digital Era, resulting from a meeting, held in Paris, between the Ministers of Education of the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention of 1954, with the intention of confirming the shared commitment to the education and training of informed and responsible citizens in the digital era. In this meeting it was considered that education for digital citizenship has become a determinant aspect for education and initial and continuous training, together with the development of digital skills in children, consenting on the following aspects:

- Allows pupils to acquire social intelligence, confidence and personal fulfilment, as well as the digital skills needed to ensure that digital technology is used for the benefit of society;

- A responsible use of the internet should incorporate education in critical thinking with regard to the content delivered, produced and shared by digital tools;

- Enables pupils to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to understand the information given, through critical and reserved reading, to be capable of publishing and producing information and informing themselves responsibly, as well as to be able to shield themselves from any enterprise or attempt to manipulate them. It should enable pupils to use and create digital content, to explore opportunities for their personal and professional development, and to engage positively as actors in the digital environment;

- Should contribute to raising awareness of discrimination and bias based on gender stereotypes and thus contribute, inter alia, to creating greater educational opportunities and ensure that all citizens benefit fully from the digital revolution;

- Will thus enable learners to better understand, respect and protect their fundamental rights and guarantee the well-being of individuals – including themselves [1].

In the education system, at the beginning of the 21st century, the emphasis is on citizenship education. Citizenship education is a component of the curriculum which aims to promote harmonious coexistence and foster the mutually beneficial development of individuals and the communities in which they live. In democratic societies, citizenship education helps students to become active, informed, and responsible citizens, willing and able to assume their individual and community responsibilities at national, European and international levels [2].

We constantly hear about "citizenship practices", but the citizenship deficit is also insisted upon to justify the scarce participation in civil society. What has been, then, the responsibility of education in Portugal and European countries to reduce this lack of participation?

The study presented here is part of a broader work aimed at identifying the characteristics of citizenship education aimed at the digital age in the national curricula of European countries and comparing them with the official documents issued by the Ministry of Education, in Portugal. The study intends to underline the importance and actuality of the different literacies, based on human rights, and grounded on practices of a responsible digital citizenship. Therefore, it is integrated in the scope of an Education for Development and Global Citizenship, exploring national and European theoretical references. In this article the official documents of Portugal and Spain are analyzed.

2 METHODOLOGY

The research method used to obtain meaning, understand, and develop empirical knowledge was documental analysis. The process was developed in four steps: finding, selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing data. Therefore, initially, a search was conducted on official government websites to identify and collect the documents that constituted the corpus of analysis. These consist of the official guiding documents for teaching and learning in basic education in Portugal and Spain, which were in force in August 2022, the time of data collection. The selected documents are presented in Table 1. The treatment of the data obtained in the research followed an interpretive-descriptive analysis.

Table 1. Country documents analyzed.

Portugal	Spain
Decree-Law 55/2018	Organic Law 3/2020
Development Education Framework (2016)	Royal Decree 157/2022
Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling (2017)	
National Strategy for Citizenship Education (2017)	

3 RESULTS

The results of the documental analysis of the official documents from Portugal and Spain are presented in the following sections.

3.1 Results in Portugal's official documents

Regarding Portugal we can highlight the Action Plan of the National Strategy for Development Education 2018-2022, approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 94/2018, as well as the official

reference documents of the Directorate-General for Education, namely the Development Education Referential and the National Strategy for Citizenship Education (NSCE), the latter being a reference document [3].

The NSCE lists different domains of Education for Citizenship organized into three groups and with differentiated implications. That is, "the first, mandatory for all levels and cycles of schooling (because they are transversal and longitudinal areas), the second, at least in two cycles of basic education, the third with optional application in any year of schooling." [4]. The domains of Education for Citizenship proposed by the NSCE are:

1. Human Rights (civil and political, economic, social, and cultural, and solidarity); Gender Equality; Interculturality (cultural and religious diversity); Sustainable Development; Environmental Education; Health (health promotion, public health, nutrition, physical exercise).

2. Sexuality (diversity, rights, sexual and reproductive health); Media; Institutions and democratic participation; Financial literacy and consumer education; Road safety; Risk.

3. Entrepreneurship (in its economic and social aspects); World of Work; Security, Defense and Peace; Animal Welfare; Volunteering.

Education for Citizenship began to be implemented in public and private schools, in the initial years of the cycle and in the continuity years for schools that integrate the Project for Autonomy and Curricular Flexibility (PACF), in convergence with the Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling (SPECS) and the Essential Learning, in the 2018/2019 school year.

It should be noted that in 2012, with the framework for the organization and management of the curricula of basic and secondary education in Portugal, the Decree-Law No. 139/2012 of 5th of July, citizenship education, as a cross-cutting area, is "likely to be addressed in all curriculum areas, not being imposed as a mandatory isolated subject, but allowing schools to decide its offer in terms of its autonomous disciplinary materialization" [5].

Since the approval of this diploma, other benchmarks have been designed by the Directorate-General for Education in collaboration with other public bodies and institutions and with various partners from civil society [Camões - Institute for Cooperation and Language, I.P., CIDAC - Centre for Intervention for the Development of Amílcar Cabral and the Gonçalo da Silveira Foundation]. We are taking as an example the Development Education Reference Manual - pre-school education, primary and secondary education that can be used in the following contexts:

I. Of the transversal dimension of education for citizenship, in the context of teaching and learning and any subject, in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd cycles of basic education and in secondary education and also in the scope of pre-school education, taking into account the curricular guidelines in force for this level of education;

II. The offer of complementary curricular components in the 2nd and 3rd cycles of basic education, provided that they are created by the school, according to the management of teaching credit, in accordance with the stipulations of decree law no. 139/2012, of 5th of July, in its current wording;

III. Of the complementary offer of the 1st cycle of basic education, under the terms of decree-law 139/2012, of July 5, in its current wording;

IV. The development of projects and activities that aim to contribute to the personal and social formation of the students, in articulation with the educational project of the school grouping/ungrouped school [6].

The document also identifies six global themes: 1. Development; 2. Interdependencies and Globalization; 3. Poverty and Inequalities; 4. Social Justice; 5. Global Citizenship; and 6. Peace.

The year 2017, in Portugal, is marked with the strengthening of Education for Citizenship, especially in Development. Thus, the PACF, established by Order No. 5908/2017 of July 5 (in pedagogical experimentation in the school year 2018/2019), supported in other documents, including SPECS (approved by Order No. 6478/2017 of July 26) and NSCE which was based on a proposal prepared and submitted to the Government in January 2017 by the Working Group on Education for Citizenship created by joint order (Order No. 6173/2016, published in the D.R., Series II, No. 90, May 10, 2016) of the Secretary of State for Citizenship and Equality and the Secretary of State for Education, with the mission of designing an Education for Citizenship strategy to be implemented in schools. The intention of SPECS and NSCE is that they become references for the "curricular development and for the work

to be done in each school, responding to the social and economic challenges of today's world, aligned with the development of 21st century skills" [4].

SPECS is structured around its Principles, Vision, Values and Areas of Competence. The principles and vision reflect our educational action, based on humanism and democratic citizenship. The values and skills to be developed define what it is intended that students achieve by the end of compulsory education. The values to be developed and put into practice are: Responsibility and integrity; Excellence and demand; Curiosity, reflection and innovation; Citizenship and participation; Freedom. The competencies to be developed "presuppose the development of multiple literacies, such as reading and writing, numeracy and the use of information and communication technologies, which are foundations for learning and continuing to learn throughout life" [7]. The skill areas considered are: Languages and texts; Information and communication; Reasoning and problem solving; Critical thinking and creative thinking; Interpersonal relationships; Personal development and autonomy; Well-being, health and environment; Aesthetic and artistic sensibility; Scientific, technical and technological knowledge; Body awareness and mastery.

3.2 Results in Spain's official documents

In the Spanish context the documents analyzed are aligned with the educational goals of the European Union and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Spain has carried out a legislative reform to adapt its education system to the challenges posed by the 2030 Agenda. Thus, the Organic Law No. 3/2020 on Education, of December 29 (which modified Organic Law No. 2/2006, of May 3, on Education), incorporates for the first-time explicit references to Education for Sustainable Development and Education for Global Citizenship [8]. This Law expresses the construction of open learning environments, the promotion of active citizenship, equal opportunities, and social cohesion, as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills that allow the development of the values of democratic citizenship, life together, the desire to continue learning and the ability to learn for themselves. It also stresses that education must increase its involvement in society and the productive sector, as well as consider the personal and social impact of technology in its ethical relationship between technologies, people, the economy, and the environment, developing both the digital competence of students and teachers. Therefore, the education system must respond to this new social reality and include a broader and more current focus on digital competence. Therefore, play a prominent role in the digital shift by developing students' digital competence at all educational stages, both through specific content and from a transversal perspective.

To this end, this document, in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda, recognizes the importance of incorporating education for sustainable development and global citizenship education into compulsory education plans and programs. "Education for sustainable development and global citizenship includes education for peace and human rights, international understanding and intercultural education, as well as education for ecological transition, without neglecting local action, which are essential to address the climate emergency, so that students learn about the consequences of our daily actions on the planet and thus generate empathy for their natural and social environment." [8].

In the pedagogical principles of this law, it is stated that reading comprehension, oral and written expression, audiovisual communication, digital competence, promotion of creativity, scientific spirit and entrepreneurship should be worked on in all areas of knowledge, thus taking a holistic perspective. Likewise, gender equality, peace education, education for responsible consumption and sustainable development, and health education, including affective-sexual education, are to be worked on. Emotional education and education in values and the promotion of meaningful learning for the development of transversal skills that promote autonomy and reflection are also contemplated.

In 2022, the Ministry of Education and Professional Training, to adapt the education system to the challenges of the 21st century, established changes in the organization and minimum learning outcomes of basic education, through Royal Decree No. 157/2022, March 1. It is in this document that the key competences and the students' profile by the end of compulsory schooling are established in its article 9. The key competences of the curriculum are the following: a) Language communication competence; b) Multilingual competence; c) Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering; d) Digital competence; e) Personal, social and learning to learn competence; f) Citizenship competence; g) Entrepreneurial competence; h) Competence in cultural awareness and expression [9].

The Students' Profile identifies and defines the key competences that students should develop by the end of basic education and introduces guidelines on the level of achievement expected at the end of basic education. The transversality is inherent to the Profile, in the sense that the acquisition of each of the key

competences contributes to the acquisition of all the other competences in different areas or subjects in a sequential and progressive way. The disciplinary contents are fundamental for the student to understand the world around him/her and know how to respond appropriately, articulating personal well-being with the collective good. In addition, they demand a move beyond the local perspective to analyze and engage with global problems, assuming values of social justice, equity, and democracy, as well as developing a critical and proactive spirit in the face of situations of injustice, inequality, and exclusion.

4   CONCLUSIONS

Education for citizenship in Portugal and Spain has received special attention, guiding national educational policies with European and international strategies. However, given the fluidity and evolution of the concept and the specificities of each country, we find distinctions and similarities. In Portugal, citizenship education is an integral part of the curriculum and has a reference document. Spain does not have this reference document and citizenship only appears in education policy documents. Nevertheless, they establish guidelines for global and digital citizenship to be promoted in schools in conjunction with subject content and skills development.

In both countries (Portugal and Spain), there is a concern in training responsible, committed, and critical citizens, with multiple skills, values of social justice, equality, equity, environmental sustainability, but also with ethical, democratic, and intercultural principles, essential to meet global challenges, in an increasingly digitally connected world, and to promote the development of more just, free, democratic, and inclusive societies.

In the digital age, citizenship education is a priority at the European and international levels. In 2022, UNESCO, through the Section on Global Citizenship and Peace Education, has been preparing several thematic papers to inform the Revision of the 1974: Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. These papers focus on topics that are not currently covered in the 1974 Recommendation, but which require further attention in the revised version to ensure that it addresses contemporary challenges to lasting peace. One such document is entitled Citizenship Education in the Global Digital Age [10] which examines the importance of forms of education oriented around the skills needed in the digital age, arising from approaches in media and information literacy [11], digital citizenship [12] and global citizenship education [13]. Therefore, new approaches to digital citizenship education are presented that aim to link global citizenship education, media and information literacy and digital literacy. Thus, "in integrating capacities of digital literacy and global citizenship, education provides opportunities to develop skills in mastering digital tools and their uses, framing those around a broader set of values of international understanding, human rights, equality, social justice and the common public good" [10]. In this sense, the following recommendations were listed: 1- Importance of education as a key site for developing capacities necessary for the global digital era; 2- Investing in digital citizenship education; 3- Supporting educators. We believe that the educational policies of the different European countries will also take these recommendations into consideration, but we are still in a phase of analysis.

In closing, we highlight the enormous relevance of education in the contemporary global challenges we face and the need to "build individual and collective capacities to transform the world together." [14].

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