
ESCUELAS SOLIDARIAS (SCHOOLS IN SOLIDARITY): A BID FOR EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN NAVARRE

Abstract

Education for Development (ED) about Global Citizenship (ECG in Spanish) is a process of individual and collective growth. It is a social practice. It is also a permanent preparation for life, in which acquiring operative and emotional skills in order to analyse and critically think about the real world makes it possible for students to become active social citizens. And therefore agents of social change.

Is it our duty as NGOs to work the ECG into formal education? It should at least be, like in the case of Escuelas Solidarias, slowly starting to leave the hands of public institutions, and fighting so that in the future the education system understands the concept of Global Citizenship Education, realizes that it must be part of the teaching staff's training, and has it integrated throughout the centres' teaching techniques and curricula throughout the education centres.

Key-words

Process, education, agents of change, critical, operational, emotional.

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In our autonomous community of Navarre we are unable to start talking about such a huge current project like "Escuelas Solidarias" (Schools in Solidarity) without first taking a little look back at the origin and constitution of our NGDO Coordinating Body and the Commission for Development Education and Awareness Raising.

During the mid 90s, when the work carried out in International Development Co-operation (IDC) and Education for Development (ED) drew more media attention, as a result of the campaigns involving the 0.7% target and the Great Lakes refugee crisis, more serious attempts at coordinating our community began to take shape, and were met with discussions of drawing up both national and regional laws for Cooperation for Development. Various organisations collaborated through joint efforts. This type of collaborative work was recognised when, in the first Cooperation Council of Navarre (1996), the Government of Navarre proposed for us to make our network of representatives from NGDOs. This preliminary work peaked in 1997 with the approval and submission of the Coordinating Body's statutes, which were signed during the corresponding assembly comprising 23 organisations. It was the following year, due to administrative reasons, when the Coordinating Body was born, as well as the Commission for Development Education and Awareness Raising. Nowadays, and despite the crisis of recent years, the Coordinating Body is made up of 56 organisations.

The road up until this point has been both long and sinuous, depending on the political and economic situation. By 2001 we were able to say that the Coordinating Body had been forged as a leader in the area of Navarre's social issues, as well as for the NGDOs themselves, carrying out more intensive work in order to be recognised as a go-to place for different local authorities. On the outside, this coincided with the consolidation of the different public administrations' cooperation policies, when in 2001 the Regional Law on Development Cooperation was passed and the Coordinating Body created a strategy plan, Lau Haizetara, also coinciding with the Government of Navarre's drafting of their Management Plan, in which we also took part. All of this gave way for the Coordinating Body to complete several intensely strategic years of planning.

The evolution of the ED Commission ran parallel to that of the Coordinating Body, taking shape from its beginnings into one of the most powerful organisations within this structure. In 2002 we took charge of an external project, the "colectivo ABRA", which was an analysis of the ED's projects carried out and material used in Navarre between 2000 and 2002 using public financing. Below, I have quoted the final paragraph of the general conclusions section of the report:

"There is a wide range of NGDOs and therefore a wide range of different projects and materials, and we have noticed that several of these could be signed by different NGDOs, as well as used to fulfil multiple objectives, methodological approaches, and criteria for the selected content... We believe that aiming towards greater coordination and cooperation between the different NGDOs when drawing up projects and material could lead to:

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- *Reducing the quantity of material or projects offered (education centres are sometimes faced with particular saturation of materials which remain archived without being used) but improving their quality.*
- *Saving staff, time and resources for planning the said projects.*
- *Increasing the distribution and dissemination of said projects.” (1)*

From that date onwards, the Commission focused all of its efforts on investigating the situation of ED and its needs in Navarre, as well as on attempting to coordinate the resources of the existing NGDOs in order to improve results. And then, in 2007 the research project *Atando Cabos* (~Putting two and two together) (2) was launched. Based on a project previously carried out by the NGDO *Medicus Mundi* on formal primary education, it takes a look at youths aged 12 to 18 in both the formal and non-formal fields of education. This project was financed by the then Development Cooperation Service of Navarre, Pamplona Council and the Navarre Federation of Municipalities and Councils.

The investigation had a double-ended objective:

1. To serve as a foundation for the development of ED projects by the different NGDOs.
2. A first step to initiating joint, coordinated action among NGDOs and the Coordinating Body in collaboration with the other education representatives.

It is an investigation made up of three independent parts:

- a. A qualitative study and a quantitative study on ED in Navarre among people aged 12 to 18.
- b. An analysis of materials and projects.
- c. A study on the situation of youth in Navarre

The conclusions of the investigation spoke of the need for joint, coherent, continuous and long-term action which was integrated throughout ED. Strategic action which would give meaning to the educational interventions, and which would multiply its effects, thanks to the concerted efforts among NGDOs and other educational representatives. These strategic courses of action made reference to

- the CONTENT
- the COORDINATION
- the METHODOLOGY
- and the PLANNING

The Coordinating Body was made responsible for bringing everyone to agreement, leading and following up on this strategy. The following COURSES OF ACTION were duly agreed upon:

1. Strengthen ED as a process which intersects all areas of education and is necessary for social change, making a special effort for a comprehensive project which will incorporate all representatives who participate in the educational process, whether it be in the formal, informal or non-formal field. In turn, it is necessary within the

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concept of education to pay special attention to the image which we convey of the south, placing particular care in what is real and accessible.

Process and content

2. Promote coordination among the different cooperative representatives –schools, education centres, free-time education organisations and NGOs– reinforcing this coordination on all levels and in all of its areas: in both the internal coordination of its own bodies and the coordination among external representatives, thus ensuring coherence in the creation, distribution and assessment of the different available resources: materials, training, organisation, financing.

Participating representatives, organisation and structure

3. Encourage work plans, programmes and actions which are dynamic, flexible and attractive, thereby consolidating analysis, reflection and action, with the aim of facilitating the road from reflection to agreement.

Methodology

4. Facilitate and boost continuous and long-term work which encourages feedback from its own programmes and process-based learning.

These conclusions coincided with the drafting of the ED Strategy in Navarre, under the wing of the Council for Development Cooperation in Navarre, with effect until 2012 (inclusive), but was taken on by the Second Master Plan for Development in Navarre (2011 – 2014, during which the Coordinating Body held an important advisory role.) The global objective of this strategy is to improve the quality of Education for Development in Navarre with respect to: the impact on our local community's knowledge about the situation of developing countries and global interdependency; the positive attitudes in collaborating with partnering countries; and the active commitment from citizens.

Within this framework and with three fundamental pillars –the Government of Navarre's Department of Education and Department of Social Policy, as well as the Coordinating Body– the programme for Escuelas Solidarias was born, and received support from the Felipe Finaldi Foundation of Navarre.

This programme emerged with the aim of influencing the quality of ED in formal, pre-university education, from infant schooling to A- Levels. It offers Education Centres in Navarre training, coordination and advice for the teaching staff, which will help them to put into practice the motions set out by the ED. The Escuelas Solidarias programme strives to incorporate ED into and throughout the curriculum and into the school-based education projects in a way which

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makes it constantly evolving, as well as creating a network of "Schools in Solidarity" who interact among and around each other.

As well as its own Escuelas Solidarias programme, the Education Commission for the Coordinating Body (made up of a technical secretariat and by volunteers from 13 NGOs: ALBOAN, SED, UNICEF, Paz y Solidaridad, OCSI, Médicos del Mundo, ACPP, Fundación FABRE, Medicus Mundi, Madre Coraje, FISC, Manos Unidas, Nakupenda África. It is from these that part of the Escuelas Solidarias group is formed (ALBOAN, SED, UNICEF, Paz y Solidaridad, OCSI, Médicos del Mundo, UNRWA, ACPP y Fundación FABRE), and with additional advice and material provided from other collaborative NGOs such as Oxfam Intermon, SETEM or Manos Unidas, many other operations, some of which are included below, are created:

- Coordination with the Education and Social Policy departments of the Government of Navarre.
- Coordination with the Cooperation Council and the ED Technical Committee.
- Coordination among NGOs. Annual conference.
- Projects with both the Coordinating Body of the NGOs, as well as external bodies.
- Setting up the **Education Advisory Service** of the Coordinating Body in February 2006 and its continuity up to now. With the following operations:
 - Knowing** the ED material which is being offered.
 - Collating** all of the material into a Resource Catalogue of the Education for Development.
 - Spreading** the initiative and offering materials to education centres, free-time education associations (ATL) and the Association of Fathers and Mothers.
 - Advising** teaching staff and educators from free-time education associations and NGOs about the development of the ED's projects.
 - Referral** of the material demands to the different NGOs.
 - Coordinating** between different bodies and education representatives.

And other activities:

- Creating the **Education for Development Resource Catalogue** directed at free-time educators and at dozens of Education Centres, which is updated every year and can be found on the website of the Coordinating Body, together with the resources of all the NGOs which work on ED in Navarre. <http://www.congdn Navarra.org/catalogo-de-recursos-de-educacion-para-el-desarrollo>
- Annually updating the **Assistance Itinerary, Activities and Calendar**. This is also found on the website of the Coordinating body. <http://www.congdn Navarra.org>
- Organising **training courses** for teaching staff and free-time educators. And taking part as a committee in **Workshops and Forums** (in recent years the Education Commission has presented its Escuelas Solidarias programme and has advised FONGDCAM, CONGDEX, FAS, among others, as well as taking part in conferences by Hegoa and JolasetaEkin in Vizcaya).
- **Advocating** and **coordinating** among public institutions.

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But we can affirm that the star project within all of this work is **Escuelas Solidarias**.

The programme is supported by three pillars:

a) Public administrations

The Education Department collaborates in organising training programmes for the teaching staff, including proposals on development cooperation and encouraging solidarity. It provides the registered teaching staff with training hours for working with Escuelas Solidarias, depending on what type of programme they have signed up for. There are two available programmes: one for seminars in centres with a simple online registration via the Education Department website or one via a *conference in which the centres belong to a NETWORK of Escuelas Solidarias* and agree to three years within the programme with a specific project. The department also monitors and assesses the programme. It is organised with other institutions and with the Coordinating Body, which helps to spread word of the project.

The Social Policy Department is used for Development Cooperation within our regional community. It is another one of the organisers of the programme, working to motivate the ED, finance its activities, supervise and assess this financing and spread word of the programme. It attends coordination meetings and check-ups with the other representatives.

During this academic year the councillors of both departments signed an agreement in which they affirmed their joint participation in the Escuelas Solidarias programme.

b) Non-Governmental Development Organisations

The **Coordinating Body** of Navarre's NGOs is the third and final representative, and assumes the responsibility of managing the programme. Its function is to coordinate the NGOs which train and advise the staff in the education centres. Moreover, it directly advises different centres; organises the training and activities of the programme and broadcasts the experiences on its website, to name but a few.

The NGOs advise the education centres and their teaching staff, proposing ED activities and work resources.

These NGOs must adhere to the following features or promises:

- As well as having experience in ED projects, its educational material must be included in the Resources Catalogue.
- They must offer training and advice, and cooperate with teaching staff so that the said staff apply their learning proposal in the classroom (as a general criterion the NGOs do not carry out classroom activities).
- They must carry out check-ups of its learning proposal in the centres.

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- They must attend meetings with the different institutions and the Coordinating Body, as well as the final meeting.

c) The Education Centres

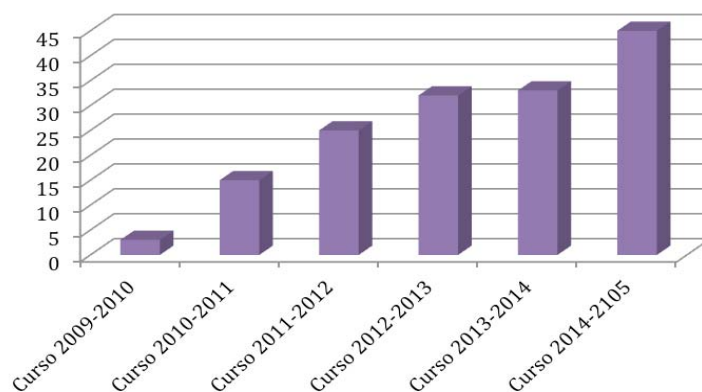
The teaching staff play the leading role in the programme; they receive training and advice, and encourage the projects on development education so that they can be carried out at the centres. They seek to involve the whole educational community and to encourage relations with their immediate surroundings. They must create a work team of at least 3 teachers and if the entire network is called into a meeting they must ensure at least 25% of their teaching staff and student body are involved.

In whichever of the two ways of signing up, the centres must follow several requirements:

- Attend the first informative meeting about the Escuelas Solidarias project.
- Receive advice and a minimum training period of 10 hours.
- Fill out and return the evaluation form and the signature sheets.
- Present an annual report following the format recommended by the Coordinating Body.
- Attend the final meeting to share their experiences.

Escuelas Solidarias also works at universities, collaborating with the Humanities Faculty so that ED is part of the curriculum for certain degrees such as Education where there are already internships available for the students at Escuelas Solidarias. Taking into account other proposals such as in the Basque Country or in Valencia (3).

The first experience of Escuelas Solidarias started during the 2009-2010 academic year with 3 education centres. Nowadays we are made up of 45 centres, evolving in the following ways throughout the years:



Graph 1: Evolution of participating education centres

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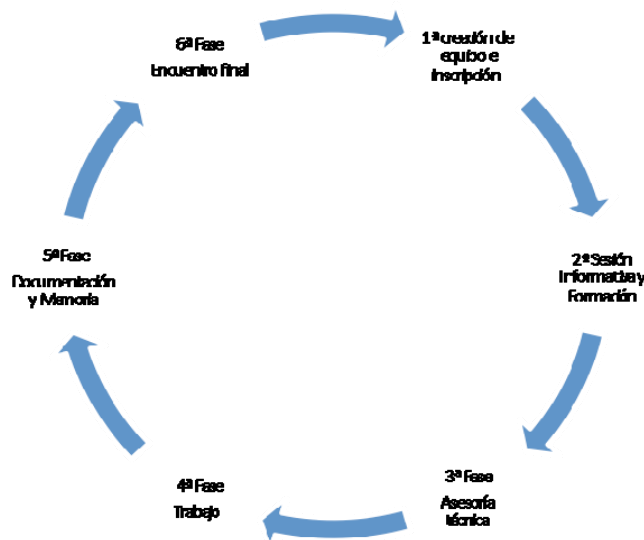
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2009-2010 year: 3 education centres
2010-2011 year: 15 education centres
2011-2012 year: 25 education centres
2012-2013 year: 32 education centres
2013-2014 year: 33 education centres
2014-2015 year: 45 education centres

In the most recent academic year around 10, 000 students and 370 members of the teaching staff took part in the programme.

The process of the Escuelas Solidarias programme contains the following phases:



Graph: Process of participation in the programme.

1st Phase

Creation of the work team. First, the Coordinating Body and the NGOs spread word about the project among all the education centres in Navarre. In this phase, once the work teams are founded, the centres begin to register. Later we will explain the two ways of registering through the Department Education of the Government of Navarre. Escuelas Solidarias is directed at all of the education centres in Navarre. In this phase the Coordinating Body acquires a very important role, for if a centre has not been allocated an NGO or an NGO does not have a centre, it must then coordinate the corresponding parties. By the end of September each centre must be allocated an NGO with which it wants to work and which will be an example of development and act as advisor, and will connect the centre with the programme and its management through the Coordinating Body.

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2nd Phase

Firstly an **information session** takes place at the beginning of the school year about the Escuelas Solidarias programme, followed by **training** which tries to tackle the need to update the professional skills used in Education for Development and its corresponding teaching topics. It aims to guarantee a link between theory and practice, and reflects on its own professional activity. The training is organised by the Education Commission, which works to not only define the aims and content, but also to plan how it will be carried out and to search for speakers.

3rd Phase

Technical Advice and Accompaniment The process of Technical Advice consists of supporting the planning of the project with which the teaching staff decide to work, and helping to define contents, methodologies and activities. The advice is carried out according to what each centre and its teaching staff are like. The projects are carried out in a way to meet the specific desires of each centre. Education for Development advice and teaching material from the NGOs are offered both in Basque and Spanish. Throughout the project we have been able to check that the centres are using a lot of material and carrying out activities other than those offered by the NGOs. The teaching staff are, at different points during the meeting, given the opportunity to share the activities that have been carried out at their centres.

4th Phase

Implementation of the programme in the centres. This work corresponds to the teaching staff. It is the teaching staff who set the education project in motion, working directly with their student body.

5th Phase

Collating all of the work conducted and writing up the annual report. This phase involves systematisation and assessment. The participating centres must assess their experience and systematically collate the work carried out and include this in an annual report. The Coordinating Body writes up an online publication with all of the annual reports, which summarises all of the experiences in order to share them with the public.

<http://www.congdn Navarra.org/la-coordinadora/escuelas-solidarias/>

6th Phase

As a final activity the Escuelas Solidarias programme organises a meeting to share experiences. Its purpose is to ensure that it has had a social and political impact as well as public recognition from the Department of Education, the Department of Social Policy, and the Coordinating Body. Attention will be paid to Best Practice standards during the meeting so that more education centres and NGOs take part. This conference is made up of two parts; firstly a workshop in which the centres share their experiences and evaluate the activities carried out, and in which the NGOs and institutions analyse and plan the programme with a future perspective. And secondly, a workshop in which the institutions officially promote the programme and hand out certificates to the participating centres.

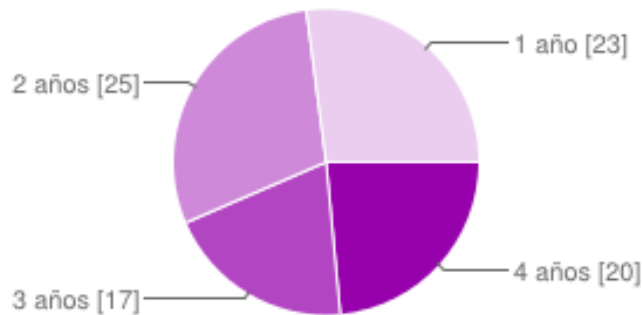
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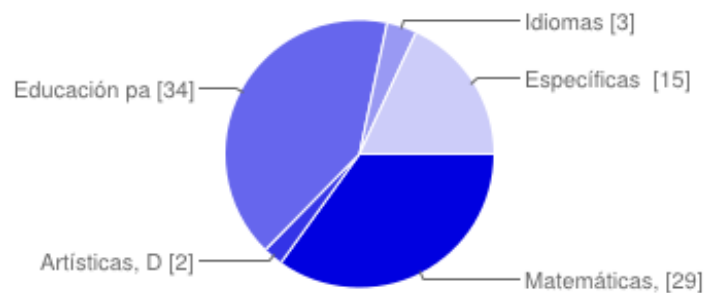
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We understand the Concept of ED as a PROCESS which must lead to awareness of the GLOBAL INEQUALITY which exists in the share of wealth and power, of its CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES and which seeks to promote ATTITUDES OF SOLIDARITY AND OF SOCIAL COMMITMENT working towards a fairer world. We want to opt for a global education- one which is eye- and mind-opening to the realities of a globalised world, and is awakening in a way which makes people strive for a world with greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all.

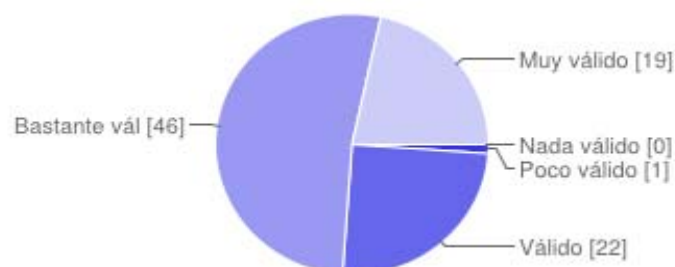
Together with the teaching staff, we ponder on what education centres must do to teach their student bodies about the times in which we live. It is both a challenging time and a controversial world that we live in. How can we prepare society to take on such challenges? (6)



Graph 3: How long have you been working as an educator in the Escuelas Solidarias programme?



Graph 4: In what subjects do you work with ED at your centre?

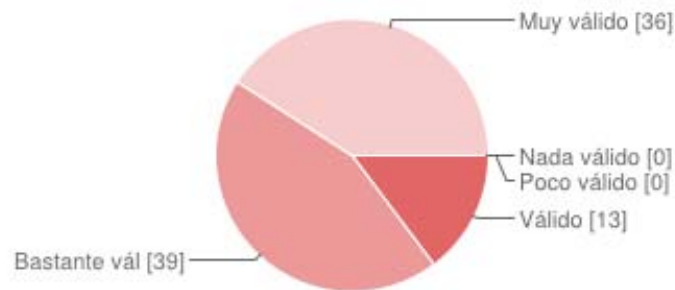


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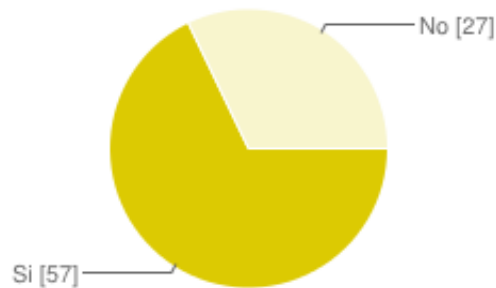
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Graph 5: Do the topics which are taught with ED feature in the curriculum?



Graph 6: Do the teaching staff find the Escuelas Solidarias programme as something positive for the development of their students?



Graph 7: Do you find the educational reality and education laws of ED to be out-of-touch?



Graph 8: Do you believe it is necessary or even possible to increase the impact of Escuelas Solidarias to improve education laws?

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With this assessment, together with those which the Government of Navarre carries out each year, we can extrapolate the following conclusions.

83% of the teaching staff who take interest in Escuelas Solidarias do not know in great detail what ED is and how to use it in the classroom. Once the teaching staff have been trained in ED, 78% feel interested and continue being part of the programme for at least three years. The data is still nevertheless varied because the programme has only been running for 6 years. 34% of the teaching staff incorporate ED into specific subjects such as Citizenship Education, but there are still 66% who incorporate ED into other subjects (mathematics, Spanish language, social sciences, foreign languages, etc.) and 87% think that these topics have a place in the curriculum and should be transversal. 100% of the teaching staff at Escuelas Solidarias think that the programme is worthwhile and positive for the overall development of their student body and that the students feel more motivated in the classroom. However, 57% of the teaching staff see the educational reality and the current education laws as being out-of-touch and 71% think that Escuelas Solidarias should work more on advocacy to improve them.

Table 1
We have included some positive comments from the assessment written by the teaching staff
<p>[- This is necessary information for starting up projects focused on ED in the classroom and within centres, as well as for encouraging as much of the teaching staff as possible to take part. ↔ - Contacts established with the Coordinating Body and the NGOs.] – [Useful for exchanging experiences.] ↔ Knowing what the Centres are working on encourages you to work with this project]. ↔ Putting into practice activities designed from the very beginning. . -it improves the personal development of the students ↔ - it makes them aware of other children's situations, of caring for the planet and the need for responsible consumption.] – [WE HAVE LEARNT ABOUT OTHER COUNTRIES, THEIR WILDLIFE, VEGETATION, CULTURE, HOW THEY LIVE...] – [The speaker helped us to structure and organise activities which we were already doing in the centre but which we did not duly organise in a document.] – [It has helped us with a global vision which is needed by a solidarity project in order for our students to be successful, as well as spreading other existing problems across the globe. It has taught us how we can raise awareness among our students of serious problems in other countries and what we ourselves can provide as an educational community – [It is very important to educate in solidarity, both in schools and colleges].</p>

Table 2
Comments on how to improve
<p>[Providing spaces and time for meeting ↔ Some relief from teaching load] – [Improve the work within the network, create more collaboration tools.] – [Nothing special.] – [More continuous contact with the NGDO responsible for each centre. ↔ -</p>

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If people already have training on certain topics which are being discussed in the training sessions, they should be exempt from attending the sessions, so that they can be more efficient and dedicate that time to other topics. ↔[The coming and going of the teaching staff makes it difficult to continue the programme] [Difficult to motivate the entire staff and the senior management of the centre] [Training sessions should incorporate ways of using material and suggestions of activities in the classroom] They could give examples of how to deal with certain topics in the classroom. ↔] [Clash in the schedules of different centres] – [- lack of time to develop the themes in greater depth. ↔]

Using the words of Paulo Freire, we think that we must pursue this project because of the necessity of "overcoming our oppressive reality and creating a society which is less unpleasant, less evil and more human" (7). For us, it is not always clear whether we must be the NGOs which have to work towards getting the ED into Formal Education because the education system does not work. It should at least be, like in the case of Escuelas Solidarias, slowly starting to leave the hands of public institutions, and fighting so that in the future the education system which, at a European level, continues to be full of contradictions (see Eurydice (8)), understands the concept of Global Citizenship Education, realises that this must be part of the teaching staff's training, and has it integrated throughout the centres' teaching techniques and curricula. "We allow crucial problems, particularly problems which are provoking change within our culture, and our way of thinking about them, to be a part of what goes on at schools and in the classroom", writes Bruner. (9)

What contributions do we think we are able to highlight from the work of Escuelas Solidarias?

- The fact that we work in a team with institutions who choose and defend the concept of Global Citizenship Education. Always remembering that it is a vision of the south which distinguishes us from other school networks.
- The fact that, from the Coordinating Body, there is a person who manages the project and coordinates the NGOs, as well as the centres which are treated with professionalism and are given free choice, without multiple organisations calling on their doorstep unaware of the centre's project. This project manager is at the services of any centre when it does not have an NGO and will be so until it has one: no centre is left unattended.
- The fact that the NGOs (ALBOAN, UNICEF, SED, OCSI, Paz y Solidaridad, Fundación FABRE, Médicos del Mundo, ACPP, El Salvador Elkartasuna and UNRWA) work among themselves with maximum coordination.
- The fact that, through the Resources Catalogue, the centres can request an NGO to coordinate the use of other materials from other NGOs, and the Coordinating Body will ensure that they are provided with such.
- The fact that we do not set foot in the class room, since it is the teaching staff who are trained.

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- The fact that our organised structure allows people to accommodate other projects into the programme. During the 2015 academic year, Navarre has been, thanks to Escuelas Solidarias, one of the communities to participate in the European Programme for Commemorating the Year of Development 2015, organised by the AECID.
- The fact that we are advocating our mission in order to work for a future in which the education system adopts Global Citizenship Education as its own.

There is no need to give up the fight towards impacting general legislation, even if being part of projects such as Escuelas Solidarias allows us to begin collaborating in offering alternative learning models and real-life spaces which reconcile students with social activity.

Notes

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