

# A place for development education in the current Spanish and English curricula: Finding possibilities for practice

Patricia Digón Regueiro, Rosa María Méndez García, Renée DePalma\* –  
*University of A Coruña, Spain*  
Silvana Longueira Matos – *University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain*

## Abstract

Development education has a long and well-established trajectory in terms of initiatives promoted by international organizations, national governments and civil associations, accompanied by a growing awareness of the significance of global issues. Nevertheless, an analysis of the education policy reflected in the official Spanish and English curricula supports what Bourn (2015) has described as the current decline in development education. A comparative analysis of these curricula reveals interesting similarities and suggests a need for initiatives where teachers and schools take the lead in developing educational practice committed to prepare students for global citizenship. Our research project, entitled Investigating the Global Dimension of Development Education: A Pilot Study in a Galician School, was largely inspired by the work of the Global Learning Programme – England, in supporting collaborative networks to develop and implement effective teaching practices related to global issues. This participatory action research project aimed to design and put into practice a school-wide interdisciplinary teaching plan to embed development education into everyday school practice, where the teachers served as the principle designers and developers of the educational proposals. We include a section of this teaching plan to demonstrate that, despite the limited policy support, there are possibilities for incorporating development education into the existing curriculum.

**Keywords:** school policy; curriculum; participatory action research

## Introduction

This article is based on a research project financed by the Spanish Galician (autonomous) government. The research team comprises researchers at the University of A Coruña (UDC), a group of teachers from a rural unitary school (spanning early childhood, primary and obligatory secondary education), and representatives of the non-governmental development organization (NGDO) International Solidarity Galicia. The project is based on a participatory action research (PAR) approach, a collaborative methodology that aims to support school-based teachers in infusing the school curriculum with content and objectives relating to the global dimension.

We begin the article by presenting a brief contextualization of the history and current state of the art of development education (DE) in Spain, and then focus on the current Spanish educational law and the Galician obligatory secondary education curriculum, which is regulated by this law. We provide a review of the presence and

treatment of DE in these documents and establish correlations with the current secondary national curriculum in England in order to identify points of similarity. We also make comparisons with previous curriculum guidelines, which allow us to determine whether the emphasis on DE in school policy has suffered a setback over time. Finally, we describe a central task of the completed first phase of our research project, which involved correlating activities designed as part of a DE-based teaching proposal with curriculum guidelines. Inspired by the work of the Global Learning Programme – England (<http://glp.globaldimension.org.uk>), we wished to explore the potential of collaborative teacher networks for identifying possibilities for incorporating development education and the global dimension across the curriculum, despite the limits imposed by the current official curriculum.

## Contextualizing DE in Spain

In Spain, as in other European countries, the trajectory followed by development education has been closely linked with development cooperation. The various ways in which this has been interpreted have emerged from social, political and economic changes from the 1940s to the current time, processes that have resulted in the historical coexistence of overlapping old and new strategies (Cano Ramírez, 2014).

The Law for International Development Cooperation (Law 23/1998) helped to clarify concepts and promote initiatives. Article 9 outlines the kinds of instruments used in putting Spanish policy into practice. Along with technical, economic and financial cooperation and humanitarian aid, DE and social awareness raising are specified and defined as:

the set of actions carried out by government administrations, directly or in collaboration with non-governmental development organizations, to promote activities designed to improve social perceptions of problems affecting developing countries and to stimulate solidarity and active cooperation with respect to them. These actions may take the form of dissemination campaigns, information services, educational programmes, and support for fair trade and responsible consumption initiatives aimed at products originating from developing countries. (Law 23/1998)

In more recent years, specifically with the passing of the Spanish Education Strategy for Cooperation Development in 2007, DE has been defined as:

an educational process (formal, non-formal and informal) that constantly strives to promote, through knowledge, attitudes and values, a global citizenry capable of generating a culture of solidarity committed to the struggle against poverty and exclusion and the promotion of humane and sustainable development. (Ortega Carpio, 2007: 12)

This strategy establishes four elements of DE: awareness raising, social participation and political involvement, education and training, and investigation.

The currently active policy is the IV Plan Directing Spanish Cooperation 2013–16 (MAEC, 2013: 33), which establishes that ‘the ultimate aim of Spanish Cooperation is human development, the eradication of poverty and the full exercise of rights’. It also claims that:

DE is a key process in Spanish cooperation, whose objective is to ensure that citizens take responsibility and participate in an effective, high-quality development policy through knowledge and the development of

competencies, values and attitudes related to solidarity, social justice and human rights. (MAEC, 2013: 55)

This process is linked to particular agencies: the autonomous communities, local entities, schools, universities, NGOs, the private sector and other actors.

The provision of DE has been strongly supported by the establishment in 1988 of the Spanish Agency of Development Cooperation (AECID) within the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Carrica Ochoa, 2015). In accordance with Spain's territorial decentralization, each autonomous community has created its own administrative agencies for promoting and managing DE. As a result, Spanish DE is regulated by legislation related to cooperation development, which is in turn defined by foreign affairs policy.

AECID may, on a sporadic or more regular basis, create synergies with departments of education. The Ministry of Education, as well as autonomous and more local government agencies, may be more or less inclined to facilitate the permeability of the educational system to these issues. At the national level, the LOGSE (1990) pioneered a shift from a knowledge-based curriculum to a more child-centred, comprehensive education, with values education taking on greater importance. Curriculum topics related to DE included struggles against discrimination and inequalities, the eradication of stereotypes and prejudices, and responsible participation. The next national educational law, the LOE (2006), established further qualitative and quantitative advances in DE-related curricular content, for example with the introduction of citizenship education as a mandatory subject area. This progress has been largely reversed in the current education law, the LOMCE (2013), as we will describe in more detail in the following section.

While DE has been taken into account, to a greater or lesser degree, throughout the history of Spanish educational law and curriculum policy, the most important proponents of DE in our country have been the NGOs. There are new networks of schools that collaborate on a regular but periodic basis with NGOs. These are specific interventions of varying duration, but they share the common characteristic of being designed by the NGOs to be offered to the schools. To a lesser extent, teacher networks have formed, both within and between schools, to collaborate with other organizations in the co-creation of materials and projects. It is important to point out that the support of NGOs has always been crucial to teacher preparation and the development of classroom-based practices (Baselga Bayo *et al.*, 2004; Salinas, 2014; Carrica Ochoa, 2015). The leadership of NGOs has also had important implications for how DE has been conceptualized in school practice. As in England, the first experiences of many schools have been based on a "charitable mentality", of wanting to help poorer people, accepting and working within the dominant discourses on development' (Bourn, 2015: 32). Schools have uncritically adopted these perspectives from humanitarian and development-oriented NGOs (Mesa, 2014), whose main focus was on raising public awareness and support for international development. More recent years have seen two important shifts at the international level. On the one hand, NGOs have adopted more critical understandings of global relations. On the other hand, at the same time, schools and teachers have started to take a stronger leadership role, a process that has a clear precedent in the Global Learning Programme – England, which was dedicated to 'resourcing schools who then buy in skills and expertise from NGOs if they deem [them] to be of value and useful to them' (Bourn, 2014: 13).

In the Spanish autonomous community of Galicia, one such network of sporadic NGO-school collaboration has been led by the NGO International Solidarity

Galicia. Since 2002, this NGDO has carried out work in various secondary schools, addressing topics such as poverty, exploitation of women and fair trade. A group of researchers at the University of A Coruña conducted an analysis of projects that took place from 2002 to 2013, as well as a more intensive case study of one of these projects. This research has revealed the difficulty of extending such work throughout the school, and of sustaining it over time, despite encouraging evidence of impact on students' and teachers' perceptions of issues relating to global citizenship. Our research has also demonstrated a tendency to carry out this work in subject areas that are afforded less importance in the curriculum (Rodríguez Romero *et al.*, 2014a; Rodríguez Romero *et al.*, 2014b). This earlier research has guided the design of our current project, largely inspired by the Global Learning Programme – England, which seeks to embed DE into everyday school practice, placing teachers in a central role as designers and implementers. One of the early tasks of this project was to analyse the official curriculum and find places where teachers' DE initiatives could respond to curricular content. The results of this analysis and planning are described in the following sections.

## **DE in the current Spanish/Galician secondary education curriculum**

Given the particular legislative and policy context of Spain and its autonomous communities, in order to examine the secondary curriculum we need to consider both national law and the curriculum produced by the Galician autonomous government. Spanish education policy is encoded in national law, and the power to develop specific mandatory curriculum guidelines is devolved to the autonomous communities, Galicia being one of 17 such political/administrative entities. This semi-decentralized system, something between a unitary state and federalism, was established by the Spanish constitution of 1978 in order to accommodate regional diversity (Arbós Marín, 2013). The Galician secondary curriculum adheres strictly to the established national law (Act 86/2015), but specifies content in certain areas, such as Galician language and literature and political, social and cultural aspects of the region.

The difficulty, or perhaps lack of interest, on the part of Spanish politicians in reaching an agreement with respect to education, has meant that four different laws have governed the Spanish educational system over the past 25 years. Each of these laws corresponds to the ideology of the political party in power at the time. In this section, we analyse the ways in which principles of DE are present and addressed in the Galician secondary education curriculum, which is regulated by the current Spanish educational law, the LOMCE (Law 8/2013).

The LOMCE is the law that currently governs the Spanish school system, and it came into force amid a great deal of controversy and protests involving various sectors of society (political, academic and social). Actually, the supporting argumentation, situated in the preamble, has changed significantly with respect to the first draft, as a result of social pressure responding to the successive drafts that were made available before the final version came into force. This law is generally perceived to conceptualize education as a subsidiary to the economy and employability, and to the demands of the business sector. Indeed, critics argue that the law has embellished its original discourse to approximate more holistic understandings, such as equity, equal opportunity, democracy and social participation, but that these have failed to go beyond the realm of pedagogical rhetoric (Candedo Gunturiz, 2013).

In its final version, the LOMCE (2013) is presented as a law responding to concrete problems that have impeded social equity and Spanish international competitiveness. The high rates of school-leaving and low scores on international standardized tests are the main arguments supporting the need for a complete overhaul of the Spanish educational system. The priority of this new reform is to strengthen individual talents in order to improve Spain's international competitiveness, increase employability and foster economic growth. These are seen as crucial requirements for ensuring a better future. Nevertheless, successive drafts of this legislation were released and modified over time, so that by the time the final draft was passed into law, this fostering of individual talent was meant to take place in a democratic society where equality and social justice were also cited as goals for national well-being, goals that can only be achieved in an inclusive and rigorous educational system.

In this legal discourse, a concern for social exclusion is expressed in parallel with a concern for competitiveness, where full personal development is based on autonomy, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation and effective participation in social, cultural and economic processes. Students are expected learn to 'value the balance between effort and reward' (LOMCE, 2013, preamble, section IV: 97,860).

Of the 15 sections of the preamble to the LOMCE, only one makes any reference to DE, referring to the need to transmit and to put into practice values that promote:

... personal freedom, responsibility, democratic citizenship, solidarity, tolerance, equality, respect and justice, as well as those that help to overcome all kinds of discrimination ... [and the] preparation to exercise citizenship and participate actively in economic, social and cultural life, with a responsible and critical attitude, and with the ability to adapt to changing situations in the knowledge society. (LOMCE 2013, preamble, section XIV: 97,866)

Within the principles and objectives that guide the four years of secondary education, references to concepts related to DE have to do with the main aims of addressing diversity and avoiding discrimination. Among the specific objectives we find practising tolerance, cooperation and solidarity as preparation for democratic citizenship. There is an emphasis on the importance of avoiding discrimination on the basis of gender or any other personal or social characteristic, the rejection of stereotypes, and the value of sexual diversity. Emphasis is also placed on peaceful conflict resolution and the avoidance of any kind of violence, including gender-based violence. Students are meant to develop critical thinking and be able to participate and make responsible decisions, abilities that are linked with entrepreneurship. They should be able to evaluate social behaviours related to health and consumption critically, and learn to respect and preserve the natural environment.

Subject areas are divided into core areas, specific areas and those areas to be determined by the autonomous communities. Cross-curricular themes are also specified in the curriculum: reading comprehension, oral and written expression, audiovisual communication and IT, constitutional and civic education, and entrepreneurship. The document explicitly states that subject areas and cross-curricular themes are designed to promote acquisition of competencies, placing particular emphasis on the development of linguistic communication and mathematical competence, as well as basic scientific and technological skills. Analysing the content specified for these subject areas, we find that the clearest references to concepts related to DE can be found in the specific subject ethical values and in the description of these cross-curricular themes. We must emphasize that ethical values is offered as a subject

as an alternative to the subject of religion (Catholic Christianity) at every year level. To provide some context for this situation, it is important to understand that religion is offered throughout the Spanish curriculum, and it centres specifically on Roman Catholic doctrine, with content determined by the Church authorities. The contents for the subject ethical values are organized into six main topics, with a focus, perspective and depth that vary according to the year level. These topics are: personal dignity; understanding, respect and equality in interpersonal relationships; moral reflection; justice and politics; ethical values, law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international accords concerning human rights; and ethics in relation to science and technology (Act 86/2015). These topics could all be interpreted as related to DE. In fact, in the introduction to the subject area, there are some more specific references that include, for example, the importance of promoting respectful social relations that aim to improve social justice at a local and global level. Furthermore, active and participative methodologies are identified as the most appropriate for teaching this subject.

Some of the specific content that appears to be most closely related to DE includes ethical values as guidelines for interpersonal relationships in society, women's rights, economic and sociocultural processes that foment gender violence and inequality, children's rights, organizations that work for human rights, international institutions and NGOs, moral aspects of science and technology, democracy as the form of government that embodies the ethical principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the moral responsibility of citizens to participate in the exercise of democracy, the ways in which the Spanish Constitution and the statutes of the Galician Autonomous Community adhere to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the phenomenon of global socialization, democracy and justice, the danger of globalization without ethical values, and the right to peace and security.

Nevertheless, a review of this programme of studies reveals some contradictions. First, we must emphasize the breadth, detail and disciplinary approach of these contents (which we also find in all subjects of the curriculum guidelines). Second, an ethnocentric approach is evident in the importance paid to Western thinkers and their anthropological, political and ethical theories. Third, there is an inherent contradiction in placing the role of the Spanish army alongside that of human rights. Finally, it is important to point out that interdependence and aspects related to global citizenship have a relatively weak presence. There are fewer references to globalization processes, roles of international agencies, and connections between local and global issues in comparison to issues related to personal values or theories developed by great thinkers. In addition, there is no clear mention of the Global South, the relationship between politics, the economy and culture, the mechanisms of power and its unequal distribution, or the analysis of injustice.

As for the cross-curricular themes, our analysis identified several references to content related to DE. These include promoting equal treatment and non-discrimination on the basis of personal or social conditions and circumstances; preventing terrorism and other forms of violence; racism and xenophobia; promoting peaceful conflict resolution; promoting values related to freedom, justice, political diversity, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law; and developing creativity, autonomy, critical analysis and a spirit of entrepreneurship. In theory, there is considerable pedagogical value in distributing content across the curriculum, particularly these DE-related topics. Nevertheless, since subject areas are overloaded with disciplinary content, and emphasis is placed on instrumental competencies, it is likely that teachers will have little time left to address these issues. As Bryan and Bracken rightly point out:

It is both unfair and unrealistic to expect teachers to prioritize issues that are not recognized as important within the curriculum when the larger context within which teachers operate and upon which they, their students and their schools are judged is one of outputs, performance and points. (Bryan and Bracken, 2011: 258)

There are also some references to DE topics in other subjects of the curriculum, such as geology, physics, chemistry, technology, geography, history, Spanish and Galician language and literature, economics and physical education. These include: environmental issues and sustainable development; the causes of worldwide unequal development; the need to avoid linguistic and cultural stereotypes or discriminatory language; the importance of linguistic diversity, multilingual and intercultural awareness; economic globalization; and the necessity of eradicating stereotypes related to health.

## **Comparing the Spanish/Galician and English secondary education curricula in relation to topics related to DE**

Given this analysis of the Galician/Spanish secondary curriculum, how does the Spanish situation compare with that of England? As we have seen, the Galician secondary curriculum guidelines were established in 2015. The English secondary curriculum was approved in 2014, with a more recent update for science in 2015 (DfE, 2014). A comparison of the two with respect to topics related to DE reveals certain similarities. In the description of principles and objectives, both include references to the importance of educational inclusion and equal opportunities. Both also mention that students should participate in debates and develop critical-thinking skills. In both cases the strongest presence of DE is concentrated in a single subject area: ethical values for Spain/Galicia, and citizenship education for England.

For citizenship education at Key Stages 3 and 4, the stated purpose of study is to prepare responsible citizens capable of taking a full and active role in society, who can reason and debate social and political issues. To this end, they must understand the UK political system and how to participate in it, know how the judicial system works, take an interest in volunteering, and learn to manage their personal finances. At Key Stage 3, teaching content focuses on local and national aspects, including the role and functioning of the UK government, Parliament, citizens' liberties, courts, tribunals, police and public institutions, and volunteers. Students are expected to understand strategies for community improvement, and how to budget and manage financial risk. At Key Stage 4, we find references to content relating not only to the local, but also to international aspects. Students continue to explore issues related to the UK political system, focusing on key elements of the constitution that include the roles of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government and freedom of the press. At the same time, students are also expected to learn about the electoral and government systems of different countries, and international relations between the UK and 'the wider world'. We can see here some issues clearly related to DE, such as human rights and international law, the internal diversity of the UK and the importance of developing mutual understanding. As with Key Stage 3, reference is made to volunteerism and economic concerns, although here the focus on personal money management is broadened to include the organization of public funds.

There are similarities here with the ethical values subject area in the Spanish/Galician curriculum. Both include topics related to laws and political systems, democracy, human rights, freedoms and responsibilities, security forces, an independent media,

participatory citizenship and international organizations. Both make references to individual responsibility related to economic realities. We can also find similarities between English citizenship education and the cross-curricular themes specified in the Spanish/Galician curriculum, in topics such as respect for diversity and non-discrimination.

In terms of other subject areas, both curricula establish content related to DE for geography, history and science. Among the geography content, international development is included as a learning topic. In history, specific aims include understanding the connections between different historical scales of focus (local, regional, national and international history) and aspects (cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social). The science curriculum includes references to environment education in biology, chemistry and physics. Recalling the Spanish/Galician curriculum content described earlier, we can see some similar topics related to DE.

However, there are also differences between the two curricula. In England, citizenship education is compulsory for every student at Key Stages 3 and 4, while, as we have seen, the Spanish/Galician subject ethical values is only offered as an alternative to religion. Furthermore, constitutional and civic education are relegated to cross-curricular themes, which, as we have noted, are not likely to be addressed in practice. However, if we compare the number of references to concepts related to DE, as well as the range of topics mentioned in both curriculum guides, we can see that the Spanish/Galician curriculum makes more frequent references to these concepts and includes a broader range of topics (such as diversity, conflict resolution, social justice, sustainability, interdependence, values and perceptions, and human rights). We can see that there are fewer references to topics related to DE in the English curriculum, which places a stronger emphasis on concepts related to the UK political and legal system, for example 'the precious liberties enjoyed by the citizens of the United Kingdom' (Citizenship, Key Stage 3). Throughout the national curriculum, British culture, society and history seem to be prioritized over global perspectives. A similar tendency can be found throughout the Spanish/Galician curriculum – for example, in the emphasis on Western philosophies and Spanish geography.

In summary, both Spanish/Galician and English curricula seem to lose sight of the global dimension of education and society. Instrumental competencies, disciplinary content and local issues predominate in both cases, demonstrating the continuing tendency to exclude DE from mainstream curricula:

The continued challenges to mainstreaming Development Education are attributable in no small part to the low status of Citizenship Education as a subject within schools. Despite a growing awareness of the significance of global themes, Citizenship Education is likely to remain a 'Cinderella subject'. (Bryan and Bracken, 2011: 257)

## **Comparing previous and current Spanish/Galician and English secondary education curricula in relation to topics related to DE**

Having analysed the similarities and differences in the current Spanish/Galician and English secondary curricula with respect to DE, we now turn to an historical review of how these have changed over time. We focus here on the subject area of



citizenship education, since, as we have mentioned, this is where we find more explicit references to DE.

Starting with the previous official curriculum in England (2007), we find that key concepts for Key Stages 3 and 4 were organized into three main themes: democracy and justice, rights and responsibilities, and identities and diversity. Key processes included critical thinking and enquiry, advocacy and representation (defining and defending one's own arguments and representing the opinions of others), and taking informed and responsible action. Comparing this document with the current official curriculum, we can identify certain similarities, such as the role of law and order, parliamentary procedure, citizen participation, the diversity of the UK, international relations, and the ability to debate and formulate arguments.

On the other hand, we can also see important differences. Some content no longer appears in the current version, and some topics that were approached from a more global perspective in 2007, with a clearer emphasis on social justice, seem to have lost this perspective in the newer version. The 2007 curriculum included content related to analysing what is just and unjust; the value of tolerance, respect and liberty; the responsibility for guaranteeing equal rights; the existence of conflict; and changing communities and identities, which are not reflected in the current curriculum.

When we examine the current Spanish/Galician curriculum, the first thing that stands out in comparison with the previous curriculum (Act 133/2007) is the elimination of the subject citizenship education from the mandatory curriculum, relegating it to the role of an alternative to the study of (Catholic) religion, which means that not all students will take it. The curriculum developed under the previous national education law (Law 2/2006) introduced two subjects: citizenship education in the second year, and civic and ethical values in the fourth year. Both of these were obligatory for all students. The specific content areas assigned to the subject citizenship education were: participation and reflection, human dignity, equal rights, democracy, active citizenship, globalization and interdependence. Civic and ethical values explored in more detail issues such as identity and alterity, human rights and justice, democracy and participation, equality between men and women, multiculturalism, interculturalism, and global citizenship. The earlier curriculum also established civic and constitutional education as a cross-curricular theme. Therefore, topics related to DE were defined as content to be addressed throughout the curriculum, in addition to receiving specific treatment in the subject area of citizenship education. Furthermore, issues related to globalization, interdependence, and active and global citizenship had more presence in the 2006 curriculum content than in the current one.

It is also important to highlight that in the previous national curriculum there was a strong emphasis on social cohesion, defined as the objective of any democratic society. In contrast, the current curriculum awkwardly juxtaposes concepts such as individual effort, talent, competitiveness and standards with those of equal opportunities, democracy, tolerance and justice. In fact, as we have already mentioned, the preamble to the current national education law, which establishes its philosophy and aims, was released as a series of drafts that were rewritten in response to criticism from virtually every educational sector, with a discourse of social justice and equality emerging over time. If we look at structural aspects, such as the introduction of separate professional versus academic tracking in the fourth year, a heavier disciplinary content and an increasing emphasis on instrumental competencies, we might question the sincerity of much of the discourse related to DE in the new curriculum. It seems likely that such pedagogical rhetoric represents embellishment in response to social pressure, rather than a genuine statement of intentions.

We consider the current Spanish/Galician curriculum to constitute a major setback with respect to previous versions, providing another example of what Bourn (2015) describes as the current decline in DE. If we analyse the topics related to DE that we have identified in these curricula in light of the concepts that predominate in each of the five generations of DE described by Mesa (2014), we can conclude that the current curriculum demonstrates a certain affinity with understandings that correspond to Mesa's fourth generation. This model offers a structural-historical approximation of how concepts of DE have evolved over time, under the influence of various factors and actors. Each generation is characterized by the most influential visions of development and underdevelopment, principal goals, dominant strategies, influential actors, widespread values and attitudes, knowledge and topics that were considered most relevant, and common methodologies. While each generation is defined by characteristic variations among these elements, Mesa points out that the divisions between generations are not entirely clear, and that various elements may coincide in time.

Mesa describes the fourth generation in terms of an emerging emphasis on peace education, gender, environmental awareness and sustainable development, fair trade and responsible consumption, and intercultural education. In this sense, we can situate both the Spanish/Galician and English curriculum primarily within this generation because of the presence of these topics, particularly in the Spanish/Galician case. At the same time, other elements characteristic of the fourth generation are absent from these curricula, and the underlying philosophies evident in the discourse of these documents are at times clearly contradictory. These curricular discourses seem to clash, for example, with a questioning of the model of development itself. In fact, in terms of fundamental philosophies, we are more inclined to situate these documents within a charitable and assistance-based approach that characterizes Mesa's first generation, particularly in the English case.

Neither curriculum provides a clear emphasis on global citizenship, defined as an understanding of global interdependence in terms of structural links between the Global North and South, and between everyday life and more 'macro' processes; that is, what Mesa (2014: 52) defines as 'a global education in response to globalisation'. Recalling de Oliveira Andreotti's (2014) identification of objectives and strategies that define critical approaches to global citizenship education, it also seems clear that neither the Spanish/Galician nor the English curriculum meet these criteria. However, previous versions of both curricula seem to have provided more potential for promoting such critical perspectives.

As we have mentioned, this curricular analysis was carried out as part of our current research project. As part of a broader project aimed at incorporating DE and the global perspective into school practice, we analysed the official curriculum for ways to relate the activities designed by the research team to subject area content. In the following section, we will provide some specific examples of these relations established between innovative practice and the current Spanish/Galician curricular framework.

## **A DE-based educational proposal and its links with the Spanish/Galician curriculum guidelines**

The analysis described in this article formed part of an ongoing research project entitled *Investigating the Global Dimension of Development Education: A Pilot Study in a Galician School*. This participatory action research (PAR) project aims to put into

practice a school-wide interdisciplinary teaching plan incorporating DE. We believe that the PAR model is especially appropriate for research into DE practice. As Reason and Bradbury (2006: 2) explain, the primary objective of action research is to produce knowledge that is practical and useful for the people and communities involved, with a more ambitious goal of contributing to improving their political, economic and psychological situations through the establishment of more equitable and sustainable relations with the planet.

During the first (completed) phase of our research project, teachers developed a DE-based educational proposal in collaboration with university researchers and NGDO specialists. The school, situated in a rural area, provides education at early childhood, primary and secondary levels. We designed three global action plans, which were meant to include as many year groups and subject areas as possible. Therefore, the primary objective was to infuse the school curriculum with content and objectives relating to the global dimension, and a secondary objective was to provide a pilot study in a specific context that could later serve as an example of practice that might be adapted and applied to other schools.

Together, these three teaching plans formed an overall educational unit called 'The value of a cow' (in the Galician language, *A vaquiña polo que vale*). Each plan included objectives, content, activities, methodologies, resources, evaluation processes, relationship with existing school plans, participating teachers and year groups, and connections to the official curriculum. The planning in this first phase was designed to be put into practice in the second phase of the project, which we are currently completing. These plans were developed as a result of collaboration among school teachers, university researchers (most of whom are content area specialists) and an NGDO specializing in DE. Each group had a somewhat different role to play: school teachers took primary responsibility for the design, with university researchers facilitating methodological resources and establishing connections to the official curriculum, and the NGDO technicians reviewing the proposed activities to reinforce them, where necessary, with a stronger and clearer perspective of DE and the global dimension.

We provide here an example of part of this designed plan, specifically a selection of activities designed for secondary students, and their relation to the official secondary curriculum. The teaching plan that we have called 'Livestock production' has the primary objective of familiarizing students with the overall theme of the three interrelated teaching plans designed by teachers in collaboration with university researchers and NGDO advisers. The central idea is to promote the study and critical analysis of cattle ranching, which is an important part of the everyday reality of students living in this particular rural area, and which has suffered serious economic decline and depopulation in recent decades. The plan includes studying the characteristics and recent developments of this industry from a perspective of sustainability, analysing the causes and socio-economic effects of global tendencies, and investigating related situations in other parts of the world.

In Table 1, we can see how each teaching activity includes both topics related to DE and official curricular content for the four years of mandatory secondary education. In addition, the subject areas first foreign language (required for all four years) and second foreign language (required for Years 1 and 2, optional for Years 3 and 4) are addressed in all activities that involve research in these languages. Subject areas followed by an asterisk (\*) are optional, while all others are required for the year indicated.

Table 1: Learning activities with links to DE and the curriculum

Activity	Links to DE key concepts	Links to national curriculum subject areas (with specific contents)
<p><b>Farm visits</b> Students will visit farms representing different production types (intensive, ecological ...). They will conduct an in-depth analysis of the industry based on field notes and data collection concerning spaces, facilities, production methods, prices, transportation, consumption, feeding etc. They will use GeoGebra mathematics software (www.geogebra.org) to simulate conflict resolution in realistic contexts.</p>	<p><b>Sustainable development:</b> Understanding the need to maintain and improve the quality of life now, without damaging the planet for future generations. <b>Conflict resolution:</b> Understanding the nature of conflicts, their impact on development and why there is a need for their resolution and the promotion of harmony.</p>	<p><b>Mathematics (Years 1, 2 and 3): academic mathematics or applied mathematics (Year 4):</b> processes, methods and activities in mathematics; numbers and algebra; geometry; functions; statistics and probability <b>Biology and geology (Years 1, 3 and 4*):</b> scientific method (Years 1 and 3); biodiversity (Year 1); persons, health and health promotion (Year 3); ecology and the environment (Year 4); ecosystems (Year 1); the earth's surface and its development (Year 3); the land as ecosystem (Year 3); research projects (Years 1, 3 and 4)</p>
<p><b>Radio programme</b> The school has an established practice of producing and broadcasting on a local radio station. Students will prepare a special edition based on interviews and information collected about the social and economic consequences of farming and livestock-raising industries. They will investigate cattle ranching, fishing, and coffee and cocoa production, including an analysis of the role of women in these sectors. Methods include interviews with men and women who raise cattle and fish, and cultivate seafood, representatives of industry cooperatives, etc.</p>	<p><b>Global citizenship:</b> Appreciating the global context of local and national issues and decisions at a personal and societal level; understanding the roles of language, place, arts, religion in own and others' identity. <b>Social justice:</b> Understanding the nature of conflicts, their impact on development and why there is a need for their resolution and the promotion of harmony; knowing about different examples. <b>Values and perceptions:</b> Developing a critical evaluation of representations of global issues and an appreciation of the effect these have on people's attitudes and values.</p>	<p><b>Spanish language and literature; Galician language and literature (Years 1, 2, 3 and 4):</b> oral communication; written communication <b>Visual and audiovisual arts education (Years 1, 3 and 4*):</b> audiovisual communication (Years 1 and 3); audiovisual and multimedia expression (Year 4) <b>Ethical values (Years 1*, 2*, 3* and 4*):</b> dignity of the individual (Years 1, 2 and 4); understanding, respect and equality in interpersonal relationships (Years 1, 2 and 4); ethical reflection (Years 1, 2 and 4); justice and politics (Years 2, 3 and 4); ethical values, law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international conventions (Years 1, 2, 3 and 4); ethical values and their relationship to science and technology (Years 2, 3 and 4)</p>

Activity	Links to DE key concepts	Links to national curriculum subject areas (with specific contents)
<p><b>Radio programme (cont.)</b></p>	<p><b>Sustainable development:</b> Understanding the need to maintain and improve the quality of life now, without damaging the planet for future generations.</p> <p><b>Interdependence:</b> Understanding how people, places, economies and environments are all inextricably interrelated, and that choices and events have repercussions on a global scale.</p>	<p><b>Economics (Year 4*):</b> personal economics; economics, income and state spending; economics and types of interest, inflation and unemployment; international economics</p>
<p><b>Television news report</b> Based on research, students will prepare televised news reports about the environmental impact of products used in the cattle-ranching industry, including genetic modification and glyphosates, family versus industrial agriculture, genetically modified soy, the implication of palm oil production in deforestation processes around the world etc.</p>	<p><b>Sustainable development:</b> Understanding the need to maintain and improve the quality of life now, without damaging the planet for future generations.</p> <p><b>Global citizenship:</b> Gaining the knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts and institutions necessary to become informed, active, responsible citizens.</p>	<p><b>Biology and geology (Years 1, 3 and 4*):</b> scientific method (Years 1 and 3); biodiversity (Year 1); persons, health and health promotion (Year 3); ecology and the environment (Year 4); ecosystems (Year 1); the earth's surface and its development (Year 3); the land as ecosystem (Year 3); research projects (Years 1, 3 and 4)</p> <p><b>Physics and chemistry (Years 2 and 3):</b> scientific activity; materials; changes; movements and forces; energy</p> <p><b>Visual and audiovisual arts education (Years 1, 3 and 4*):</b> audiovisual communication (Years 1 and 3); audiovisual and multimedia expression (Year 4)</p>

Activity	Links to DE key concepts	Links to national curriculum subject areas (with specific contents)
<p><b>Technology in diverse contexts</b> Students will research and analyse the development of different agricultural devices, machines and technologies over the past fifty years, and their influence on local cooperatives. Students will compare the local context with other contexts with fewer resources. They will produce a written report and an oral presentation based on their research.</p>	<p><b>Global citizenship:</b> Appreciating the global context of local and national issues, and decisions at a personal and societal level.</p> <p><b>Interdependence:</b> Understanding the influence that diverse cultures and ideas (political, social, religious, economic, legal, technological and scientific) have on each other and appreciating the complexity of interdependence; understanding how the world is a global community and what it means to be a citizen.</p>	<p><b>Geography and history (Years 1, 2, 3 and 4):</b> physical environment (Years 1, 2 and 3); human spaces (Years 1, 2 and 3); history (Years 1, 2 and 3); the recent world – twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Year 4); technology and globalization at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries (Year 4); relation between past, present and future through history and geography (Year 4)</p> <p><b>Technology (Years 2, 3 and 4*):</b> systems and machines, devices and electronic circuitry (Year 2); machines and systems: electricity, electronics and control (Years 2 and 3); ICT (Years 2, 3 and 4); housing installations (Year 4); electronics (Year 4); control and robotics (Year 4); hydraulics and pneumatics (Year 4); technology and society (Year 4)</p>
<p><b>Simulation of a cooperative</b> Using computer modelling, students will simulate the creation of a production cooperative, paying attention not only to production and organization, but to fostering conscientious consumption and full participation, and eliminating barriers related to functional diversity in rural areas. Students will need to learn and implement computer programming languages to carry out this activity.</p>	<p><b>Diversity:</b> Understanding and respecting differences and relating these to our common humanity.</p> <p><b>Human rights:</b> Knowing about human rights including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p><b>Sustainable development:</b> Understanding the need to maintain and improve the quality of life now, without damaging the planet for future generations.</p>	<p><b>Ethical values (Years 1*, 2*, 3* and 4*):</b> dignity of the individual (Years 1, 2 and 4); understanding, respect and equality in interpersonal relationships (Years 1, 2 and 4); ethical reflection (Years 1, 2 and 4); justice and politics (Years 2, 3 and 4); ethical values, law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international conventions (Years 1, 2, 3 and 4); ethical values and their relationship to science and technology (Years 2, 3 and 4)</p> <p><b>Introduction to entrepreneurial and business activity (Year 4*):</b> personal autonomy; leadership and innovation; business planning; finance</p> <p><b>Science applied to professional activities (Year 4*):</b> basic applied techniques; science applied to environmental conservation; research, development and innovation (R&amp;D&amp;I); research project</p>

\* Indicates that the subject areas are optional; all others are required for the year indicated

As Table 1 indicates, the teachers strove to incorporate DE across subject areas and grade levels. The only subject areas that were not included in the plan were physical education, classical culture, religion and healthy habits. Participation in the project was voluntary for teachers in the school, so the areas involved in the PAR project reflected those taught by participating teachers.

This excerpt of activities from one teaching plan serves as testimony to the efforts of teachers to incorporate DE into their classrooms despite the regression we have demonstrated in our analysis of the current Spanish/Galician curriculum. Inspired by the Global Learning Programme – England, in particular the content area guidelines provided to help teachers relate their activities to the English curriculum, we looked for relations between our teachers' planned activities and the curriculum guidelines for their subject areas, taking a holistic and interdisciplinary approach. The idea was to show that this was possible, even in the relatively unsupportive current Spanish curricular context, with a particular emphasis on incorporating aspects of DE that, as we have seen, are especially under-represented. For this reason, we were especially interested in establishing global–local connections, so that, starting with local issues, students might arrive at a global perspective that reveals the relations between students' own lives and global politics and economy, raising consciousness and inspiring action aimed at addressing social injustices. We were also particularly aware of the need to use active and participative methodologies that provide opportunities to reflect on practice, as pointed out by de Paz Abril (2011). In this sense, we hoped to exemplify teaching philosophies that, while mentioned in the preamble of the current Spanish national educational law, actually fail to manifest themselves in structure and curricular content that reflect critical perspectives.

## Conclusion

The history of DE in Spain has followed a similar trajectory to that characteristic of other countries. It has always been closely tied to development cooperation, so that the conceptualization of DE has followed on from the way in which development has been understood. The current state of the art that provides a basis for cooperation planning has evolved in significant ways, shaped by considerations that have not previously been taken into account – new dimensions and new actors that include, for example, South–South cooperation. The influence of the sustainable development goals (SDG), recently approved by the United Nations, should lead to new expectations. The SDG are based on a commitment to struggle against the causes that generate inequalities, such as hunger and poverty. This represents a radical change in perspective rooted in a transformative impulse that was not present in the millennium development goals (MGD), which were more orientated towards alleviating the consequences of inequality. Nevertheless, the degree to which international accords influence conceptual evolution remains to be seen.

As we have mentioned, DE was incorporated into the Spanish political agenda in 1988, when the AECID was created. From this date, a series of laws and policies have been enacted regarding cooperation, always defined by foreign policy, which have in turn determined DE in Spain. During these years, the Ministry of Education, as well as the relevant autonomous and local government agencies, has been more or less willing to open the educational system to these issues.

In any case, it seems that, at least in the area of formal education, DE has had a longer history in the English school curriculum than in the Spanish. In both contexts, NGOs have played a crucial role in promoting such projects in schools, in training

teachers and in helping to form networks of schools interested in these kinds of issues. However, support from government agencies seems to have been stronger in the English context and, as we have seen, the global dimension was widely incorporated throughout the curriculum guidelines published by the Department for Education at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century. In Spain, there have been few nationwide or autonomous plans directly aimed at fostering DE in schools, or that have sought to help teachers embed related topics into their classroom practice and materials. However, in recent years some plans related to educational innovation have attempted to support teachers in addressing certain issues connected to DE. One such initiative is the *Plan Valora*, introduced and managed by the Galician autonomous government with the aim to 'strengthen education in democratic values by means of various spheres of action, including: education for equality between men and women; social cohesion, citizenship and a culture of peace; interculturality; the natural environment, sustainable development; ... responsible consumption ...' (Argibay Carlé et al., 2011: 90). This plan is no longer active.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that topics related to DE have been completely absent from Spanish educational laws. The currently valid law, LOMCE (2013), however, with the incorporation of a mercantile discourse, has meant a marked reduction in the presence of DE in the current curricular guidelines. Instrumentalist competencies and disciplinary knowledge take on a greater significance. Issues related to DE are now relegated to the non-mandatory subject of ethical values and to cross-curricular themes that lack any specification for how to apply them to the different subject areas. References to global citizens capable of understanding local–global relations have disappeared from curricular content. The current law represents a clear setback for DE in the Spanish educational system, as the global dimension of education is conditioned by the arguments of neo-liberal policy. In this sense, we have found interesting similarities between the Spanish/Galician and English context, where DE is no longer a priority for the government. The current English national curriculum makes relatively few references to DE at the secondary level, which amounts to a setback with respect to the previous (2007) curriculum. Instrumental competencies, disciplinary content and local issues predominate; as in the case of Spain, these reflect economic and academic perspectives.

The promotion of research into DE, the last of the four elements of DE established by the Spanish Education Strategy for Cooperation Development, is crucial for exploring possibilities for effective school-based practice. This is the central aim and inspiration for our current investigation. Following the participatory action research model, our next steps will be implementation of the collaboratively designed teaching plan described in this article, and evaluation of the experience, 'based on critical analysis with the active participation of the groups involved, that is oriented towards stimulating transformative practice and social change' (Eizagirre and Zabala, 2000: n.p.).

## Notes on the contributors

**Patricia Digón Regueiro** teaches at the University of A Coruña (Spain). Since 2013, she has participated in various projects related to development education. Her main area of interest is media literacy. She has carried out several action research projects on media education in schools, and has investigated the presence of media literacy competencies in educational policy and in Galician schools practice.



**Rosa María Méndez García** is an instructor in the area of curriculum design and school organization at the University of A Coruña (Spain). Since 2014, she has participated in a series of research projects into development education in pre-university schooling contexts that have been funded by the Galician autonomous government. Her main interests lie in school curricula, with an emphasis on democratic processes and the construction of an active, participatory and just society from an early childhood education perspective.

**Silvana Longueira Matos** is an instructor in the Department of Teaching and Curriculum Design at the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC). She belongs to the Third Generation Research Group. Her research centres on the relationship of education with the arts – music in particular – and education for sustainable development. In September 2015 she received the 'Honourable mention for merit in inter-Iberian teaching, research and intellectual production', awarded by the Inter-Iberian Teaching Network (REDIPE). She currently coordinates the USC's Sustainable Development Plan.

**Renée DePalma** teaches at the University of A Coruña (Spain), and is also an honorary professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. From 2015 to 2017 she was principal investigator of a participatory action research project to design and implement development education practice in collaboration with primary school teachers, which was funded by the Galician autonomous government. She is mainly interested in the social construction of marginalization within and beyond schools, and the design of counter-hegemonic institutional contexts and classroom practices.

## References

- Act 86/2015, of 25 June, establishing the curriculum for obligatory secondary education in the Galician autonomous community. (BOE 120, 29.6.2015).
- Act 133/2007, of 5 July, which regulates teaching at the level of obligatory secondary education in the Galician autonomous community. (BOE 136, 13.6.2007).
- Arbós Marín, X. (2013) 'The federal option and constitutional management of diversity in Spain'. In López-Basaguren, A. and Escajedo San Epifanio, L. (eds) *The Ways of Federalism in Western Countries and the Horizons of Territorial Autonomy in Spain*. Vol. 2. Berlin: Springer, 375–99.
- Argibay Carlé, M., Celorio Díaz, G., Celorio Díaz, J. and López de Munain Solar, A. (2011) *Educación para la Ciudadanía: Informe sobre la situación en ocho comunidades autónomas*. Bilbao: Hegoa. Online. [http://publ.hegoa.efaber.net/assets/pdfs/144/informe\\_ocho\\_comunidades\\_autonomas.pdf?1488539284](http://publ.hegoa.efaber.net/assets/pdfs/144/informe_ocho_comunidades_autonomas.pdf?1488539284) (accessed 15 August 2017).
- Baselga Bayo, P., Ferrero Loma-Osorio, G. and Boni Aristizábal, A. (eds) (2004) *La Educación para el Desarrollo en el Ámbito Formal, Espacio Común de la Cooperación y la Educación: Propuestas para una estrategia de acción integrada*. Valencia: Universidad Politécnica de Valencia.
- Bourn, D. (2014) 'What is meant by development education?'. *Sinergias: Diálogos Educativos para a Transformação Social*, 1, 7–23.
- Bourn, D. (2015) 'From development education to global learning: Changing agendas and priorities'. *Policy and Practice: A Development Education Review*, 20, 18–36.
- Bryan, A. and Bracken, M. (2011) *Learning to Read the World? Teaching and learning about global citizenship and international development in post-primary schools*. Dublin: Irish Aid. Online. [www.ubuntu.ie/media/bryan-learning-to-read-the-world.pdf](http://www.ubuntu.ie/media/bryan-learning-to-read-the-world.pdf) (accessed 15 August 2017).
- Candedo Gunturiz, M. (ed.) (2013) *A Educación: Dereito ou mercadoría?* Santiago de Compostela: Laiovento.
- Cano Ramírez, A. (2014) *Exploración de las Prácticas Docentes con Enfoque de Educación para el Desarrollo para la Ciudadanía Global: Aproximación diagnóstica en los títulos de grado de las universidades españolas tras la implementación del EEES*. PhD thesis, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.
- Carrica Ochoa, S. (2015) *La Educación para el Desarrollo: Conceptualización y estudio de su práctica en la Comunidad Foral de Navarra*. PhD thesis, Universidad de Navarra.
- de Oliveira Andreotti, V. (2014) 'Educação para a cidadania global: Soft versus critical'. *Sinergias: Diálogos Educativos para a Transformação Social*, 1, 57–66.

- de Paz Abril, D. (2011) 'Escuelas para la ciudadanía global: Un modelo de profesionalidad responsable'. In Celorio, G. and López de Munain, A. (eds) *Educación para la Ciudadanía Global: Estrategias de acción educativa*. Bilbao: Hegoa, 141–77. Online. [http://pdf2.hegoa.efaber.net/entry/content/988/Estrategias\\_EC.pdf](http://pdf2.hegoa.efaber.net/entry/content/988/Estrategias_EC.pdf) (accessed 15 August 2017).
- DfE (Department for Education) (2014) 'National Curriculum'. Online. [www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum) (accessed 15 August 2017).
- Eizagirre, M. and Zabala, N. (2000) 'Investigación-acción participativa (IAP)'. In Pérez de Armiño, K. (ed.) *Diccionario de Acción Humanitaria y Cooperación al Desarrollo*. Barcelona: Icaria/Hegoa. Online. [www.dicc.hegoa.ehu.es/listar/mostrar/132](http://www.dicc.hegoa.ehu.es/listar/mostrar/132) (accessed 15 August 2017).
- Law 1/1990, of 3 October, for the general organization of the educational system (LOGSE). (BOE 238, 4.10.1990).
- Law 2/2006, of 3 May, of Education (LOE). (BOE 106, 4.5.2006).
- Law 8/2013, of 9 December, for the improvement of educational quality (LOMCE). (BOE 295, 10.12.2013).
- Law 23/1998, of 7 June, for International Development Cooperation. (BOE 162, 8.6.1998).
- MAEC (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación) (2013) *Plan Director de la Cooperación Española, 2013–2016*. Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación. Online. [www.cooperacionespanola.es/sites/default/files/plan\\_director\\_cooperacion\\_espanola\\_2013-2016.pdf](http://www.cooperacionespanola.es/sites/default/files/plan_director_cooperacion_espanola_2013-2016.pdf) (accessed 15 August 2017).
- Mesa, M. (2014) 'Precedentes y evolución de la educación para el desarrollo: Un modelo de cinco generaciones'. *Sinergias: Diálogos Educativos para a Transformação Social*, 1, 24–56.
- Ortega Carpio, M.L. (2007) *Estrategia de Educación para el Desarrollo de la Cooperación Española*. Madrid: Dirección General de Planificación y Evaluación de Políticas para el Desarrollo.
- Reason, P. and Bradbury, H. (eds) (2006) *Handbook of Action Research (Concise Paperback Edition)*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Rodríguez Romero, M., Caride Delgado, M.J., Cotelto Guerra, M.D., Graña Varela, A., Iglesias Salvado, J.L., Lampón Gude, A., Longueira Matos, S., Paz Gutierrez, M., Pérez Crego, M.C., Serantes Pazos, A. and Zapico Barbeito, H. (2014a) 'Una investigación cualitativa sobre los proyectos de Educación para el Desarrollo de la ONGD Solidaridade Internacional de Galicia'. Proceedings of the 3rd Multidisciplinary International Conference on Educational Research (CIMIE), Segovia, 3–4 July 2014. Online. <http://amieedu.org/actascimie14/> (accessed 15 August 2017).
- Rodríguez Romero, M., Zapico Barbeito, M.H., Graña Varela, A., Digón Regueiro, P., Longueira Matos, S., Cotelto Guerra, M.D. and Pérez Crego, M.C. (2014b) 'Investigando en Educación para el Desarrollo II: Un estudio de caso del proyecto "O Tesouro de Acahualinca" de Solidaridade Internacional de Galicia'. In Celorio, G. and López de Munain, A. (eds) *Cambiar la Educación para Cambiar el Mundo... ¡Por una acción educativa emancipadora! Palacio de Congresos y Exposiciones Europa, Vitoria-Gasteiz, 9, 10 y 11 de Octubre de 2014: Comunicaciones*. Bilbao: Hegoa, 283–9. Online. [http://publicaciones.hegoa.ehu.es/assets/pdfs/270/Cambiar\\_la\\_educacion.pdf?1488539838](http://publicaciones.hegoa.ehu.es/assets/pdfs/270/Cambiar_la_educacion.pdf?1488539838) (accessed 15 August 2017).
- Salinas, K. (2014) *Acercando la educación para el desarrollo en la escuela: Una mirada internacional, una mirada local*. Pamplona: Konsue Salinas Ramos.