European Network for
Environmental Citizenship
Cost Action CA16229

Spanish SWOT analysis for EEC

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On behalf of the Spanish team

Overview

- Collaboration of the Spanish team

- Selecting and engaging experts for the SWOT analysis

- Brief overview of results

- Recommendations

Collaboration of the Spanish interdisciplinary team:

Five academics with expertise in research on:

- Science Education, Environmental Education (woman)

- Geography and Sustainability (man)

- Ecology and Environmental Education (woman)

- Social Science Education and Citizenship Education (woman)

- Architecture and Sustainability (woman)

Face to face and regular meetings for collaboration and exchange:

- Contribute from our own expertise

- Optimise strategies

- Distribute tasks and responsibilities

- Complement efforts and enhance results

Selecting and engaging experts for the SWOT analysis:

Steps

- Initial email exchange with **proposal of representatives** for any of the fields of expertise (researchers, teachers, policy-makers, professional associations, NGO)

- Skype and face to face meeting to **analyse and select** potential experts and discuss the best way to approach them.

- Discussion on **challenges/risks** (language barriers, low return rate…) and **mitigation strategies**.

- Distribution of responsibilities and future steps.

Strategy applied:

- **Not to discard** any potentially interesting contribution (**address more** than 6 experts).

- Keep in mind the **low return rate** and use personal contacts.

Experts taking part in the SWOT analysis:

Experts in **Science Education** (SE), **Citizenship Education** (CE), **Environmental Education** (EE) and **Education for Sustainable Development** (ESD).

3 men and 3 women; aged 30-70, were selected to represent expertise as:

- researchers (1 participant),
- educators (2 participants),
- decision-makers in:
    - professional associations (1 participant),
    - national NGO (1 participant),
    - educational policy (1 participant).

Additionally:

- 2 extra decision-makers in professional associations.
- 4 extra researchers in the previously mentioned areas (SE, CE, EE, ESD).

Results

from the content analysis of experts' response

Conceptualisation of EEC

- Necessary approach **to face current societal challenges.**

- Individual and collective **responsibility**; caring for future generations.

- Including **key features of other approaches** such a SE, CE, EE and ESD.

- Special emphasis on:

  - Behavioural aspects
  - Social dimension and political influence
  - A new concept of citizenship

- Going beyond classical teaching and learning approaches and intended at shaping citizens' values and habits: promoting individuals' engagement and commitment.

Conceptualisation of EEC

Responsibility in tackling societal problems and thinking of future generations

*"The Education for Environmental Citizenship is the best alternative that we, as individuals and educators can offer society to try to counteract the self-destructive process in which Humanity finds itself. Only **new generations can reverse the planetary emergency situation** that we live"* JP, researcher.

*"It prepares young citizens to **face the serious environmental and social problems** of our world"* and it has *"the potentiality to educate young citizens in the collective responsibility with respect to the planet"* FG, researcher.

*"It raises awareness about environmental issues, and the need for respect and **conservation of the world in which we live**"* IB, teacher.

*"It fosters **solidarity** through **thinking of future generations** with a strong component on social justice"* MLL, researcher.

Conceptualisation of EEC

Emphasis on behavioural aspects

"*It allows connecting environmental problems with daily life and individual and community problem and generates awareness of the environmental **implications of our life style**"* JL, decision maker in educational professional society.

"*Environmental health depends on **the citizens/costumers behaviour**"* GS, decision maker in an educational professional association.

Environmental Citizenship has to do with "***knowing how to behave** as responsible citizens in the environment*" IB, teacher.

"*It allows **modulating consumption habits** in terms of environmental impact*" JL, decision maker in educational professional society.

"*It is a way of **changing personal habits** and it helps to strengthen the civil society, because people are invited to participate in social organizations*" FVC, decision maker in educational professional society.

Conceptualisation of EEC

Emphasis on citizenship and the social/political dimension

"*Starting from the idea that the exercise of **citizenship** should permeate the different spaces of public and private life, education for environmental citizenship implies a social pedagogy, which develops competences **to live in a way that implies** in the subjects the deliberate capacity to know how **to choose between several options, based on ethical considerations and community interests**, that is, political ones*" EG, policy maker.

"*It will focus on citizen responsibility on environmental aspects. The **citizen** must be **responsible in many other social areas, but especially in the environmental** contents*" IB, teacher.

"*According to Dobson, citizenship education (CE) is the most appropriate option. The starting point must be education for science (SE) and the educational curricula must contain ESD and EE in a transversal way. But the **ultimate goal is to train future generations in a broader and deeper notion of citizenship, which assumes ecology** as a necessary ontological condition*" SG, decision maker in national NGO.

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What is unique of EEC or better than others

Education in/on/for the environment and a better capacity of integration:

….*"specifically the themes that drive and lead to **educate in the environment, on the environment and for the environment**; those that contribute to build a citizenship of what is knowable about the biophysical environment and its associated problems, with **awareness of how to help solve those problems** and motivated to work towards their solution"* EG, policy maker.

"an educational orientation with **greater integration capacity** than Environmental Education or Education for citizenship, separately considered" FG, Researcher.

What is unique of EEC or better than others

Stronger emphasis in particular aspects:

"*The **transversality of pro-environmental behaviour is clearer** than from classical environmental education (naturalistic approach)*" JL decision maker in educational professional society.

"*Environmental education could be very personal. Instead, EEC includes **a social point of view***" FVC decision maker in educational professional society.

The main difference from the other options is "*the **social dimension of the action***" JP, researcher.

"The environmental **responsibility of everyday acts at the community level** is assumed in a more evident way" JL, decision maker in educational professional society.

What is unique of EEC or better than others

Bringing about a new model of citizenship:

"*EC should be the basis for creating a **new model of citizenship**. The other types of education help to sensitize, raise awareness or promote a more ecological way of life*" SGS decision maker in national NGO.

"*You will see that educating for environmental citizenship involves **fighting against** a series of **contradictory elements** that exist in everyday life in which we perform **as social subjects**, and that brings us **changes in the relationship with the environment**"* EG, policy maker.

"*The exercise of environmental virtue can be the **seed for a new society**"* SGS decision maker in national NGO.

"*Education for citizenship environmental could contribute **to improving new forms of environmental and cultural policy**; understanding it as a process where the formation of citizens fecunda the gestation of appropriate relationships between us and the environment*" EG, policy maker.

In relation to school

A more active and interdisciplinary education, better connected to students' lives and promoting environmental minds and habits

It promotes "**environmental minds** in our students" LM, teacher.

"*Allows introducing concepts and **habits of sustainability in schools**" GS, decision maker in an educational professional association.

"*It allows integrating **content from various school subjects** to achieve better educational objectives, **better connects the school** context **with the social contexts**, develops the responsibility and civic commitment of the students and offers the possibility to **make more active school** education*" FG, researcher.

Not very well known or widespread on a national level, easily confused with other approaches with longer tradition

"I´m afraid that "environmental citizenship" education is **not widespread** enough in order to compete with other "environmental" education and its **not still well** perceived or **known** by public in general (people)" SG, researcher.

Environmental Citizenship "is **easily confused** with the other categories" SGS decision maker in national NGO.

"It is very wide. **Educative programs are devoted towards the environmental education. There is more experience in this last subject**" FVC, decision maker in educational professional society.

A complex construct with ambitious objectives

"*EC is a theoretical construction, which needs to be implemented correctly*" …"*requires an internal transition that forces to change values, beliefs, attitudes and individual and collective behaviours*" SGS decision maker in national NGO.

"…requires both the ability to learn to solve problems or to appropriately handle the terms of public debate, as well as the ability to learn to interpret and to commit oneself to values that promote an emancipatory form of citizenship oriented towards new sensibilities and social relationships" EG, policy maker.

A complex construct with ambitious objectives

"*It is a **way of being**, not a style of consumption or language*" SGS decision maker in national NGO.

"*It is **a personal effort to follow good practices** on environmental issues*" MLL, researcher.

"*EC requires a committed educational community**. It is not an academic subject, but a way of life harmoniou**s with the environment and society*" SGS decision maker in national NGO.

"*It is a very **long process that requires the participation** of the family, the teaching staff, the students, the Administration and the rest of society*" SGS decision maker in national NGO.

"***Too ambitious** for a carefree or uninformed citizen*", "***too complex** for a very busy citizen*" JL, decision maker in educational professional society.

Challenges

"*The* **difficulty to imitate models** *of social behaviour of other countries much more committed to the environment*" JL, decision maker in educational professional society.

"*The* **difficulty to modify mentalities and habits** *consolidated since childhood*" JL, decision maker in educational professional society.

"**People are very lazy** *in working on environmental issues*" MLL, researcher.

"*It requires a lot of* **intrinsic motivation to overcome the inertia** *of a selfish and anthropocentric consumer society*" SGS, decision maker in national NGO.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Higher levels of public information and concern** (negative effect are becoming more evident through media dissemination…)

- **Increasing political and educational interest** in the topic

- Existence of specific programs and **public funding** in this line

- Particular **pedagogical trends and useful tools** (ecological rucksack, ecological footprint…)

- Opportunities offered by **technology** to enhance communication and to facilitate the study and dissemination of environmental problems.

THREATS

- Predominant **economic model** and consumerists and hedonist **social values**, repeatedly reinforced by media.

- **Lack** of political or educational **leadership**.

- Difficulties to integrate education for Environmental Citizenship in the current Spanish educational system due to **time, schedule, syllabi and lack of preparation** and recognition by teachers.

Recommendations by experts

What should be avoided:

- being too catastrophic.
- asking for unattainable commitments & political utopia.
- environmentalism or activism without enough reflection.

It is important:

- Drawing on current scientific knowledge, as well as on previous experiences in closely related fields

- Balance of key components knowledge/action; theory/practice; individual/collective; local/global
- Empower citizens/students to argue about current issues and conflicts
- Create networks of people sharing the same values and goals
- Make the most of technology for studying, communication and collaboration.

Recommendations from our experience

- Useful approach to get an interesting overview of the state of the art from **purposeful selected key stakeholders**.

- Rich contributions, **wealth of information**.

- Allows systematic **content analysis** (categories & frequencies).

- **Low inference conclusions** based on quotations.

- Complemented with **literature background** (national studies on the evaluation of specific programs, curriculum, teachers beliefs and practices) may be the basis of interesting scientific publications.

- Possibilities of **cross-national studies**.

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