Global citizenship education in primary school: a comparative analysis of education policy documents in Portugal and Spain

Educación para la ciudadanía global en educación primaria: un análisis comparativo de los documentos de política educativa en Portugal y España

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Abstract

In this study it is investigated whether, to what extent, and how the education policy documents of Portugal and Spain aimed at the first years of schooling are responding to international calls to educate critical and responsible citizens. To do this, a qualitative methodology was adopted in the analysis of the documents that regulate the six to ten years old curricula in both countries. Data was analysed using content analysis, with categories deriving from the UNESCO (2015) framework on global citizenship education (GCE) dimensions and key learner attributes. Results suggest that the curricula for the first years of schooling of both countries are compatible with the principles of GCE. Yet, strong additional efforts are required for a successful implementation of this educational perspective in the long run.

Keywords: global citizenship education, curriculum development, primary education, comparative policy analysis, European countries.

Resumen

En este estudio se investiga si, en qué medida y cómo los documentos de política educativa de Portugal y España dirigidos a los primeros años de escolaridad responden a los llamamientos internacionales para formar a ciudadanos críticos y responsables. Para ello, se adoptó una metodología cualitativa en el análisis de documentos con los que se regulan los currículos de seis a diez años en ambos países. Los datos se analizaron mediante análisis de contenido, con categorías derivadas del marco de la Unesco (2015) sobre las dimensiones de la educación para ciudadanía global y los atributos clave del alumno. Los resultados sugieren que los planes de estudio de los primeros años de escolaridad de ambos países se muestran compatibles con los principios de la educación para la ciudadanía global. Sin embargo, se precisan grandes esfuerzos adicionales para una implementación exitosa de esta perspectiva educativa a largo plazo.

Palabras clave: educación para la ciudadanía global, desarrollo curricular, educación primaria, análisis comparativo de políticas, países europeos.

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1
Introduction

Global citizenship education (GCE) has become a relevant issue for today's societies, which are facing challenges that require responsible and collaborative action (Bourn 2015, Gaudelli 2016, Torres 2018). A clear example of the relevance of this concept is its inclusion in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations 2015), which stresses the need to develop a global citizenship linked to the objectives of sustainable development and, therefore, with a transformative design. In Europe, worth highlighting is *The Maastricht Global Education Declaration* and the subsequent publication of guides to assist educators in better understanding and successfully implementing actions in the field of global education (Council of Europe 2002, 2012, 2019). These documents have been influencing the policies and curricula of various countries, including the two that are at the heart of this study.

Spain and Portugal are neighbouring nations located in Southern Europe that share some common features. In recent years, they have become the destination of various waves of migration, namely from African, Middle Eastern, Central and South American countries. This has had tremendous effects on both societies, which are visible in the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of student population and in the worrisome rise of discrimination, xenophobia and far-right ideologies and beliefs (Bäckström *et al.* 2016, Capucha *et al.* 2016, Criado 2019, Martínez 2017). These features are also placing additional demands on national education systems, making it increasingly important for policymakers and teachers to define clearer, bolder, and more appropriate educational goals and approaches to contribute to the education of respectful and engaged citizens from the first years of schooling onwards (Lourenço 2018b).

In this context, the main aim of this study is to understand how the education policy documents of Portugal and Spain, aimed at students from six to ten years old, are responding to international calls to educate critical and responsible citizens that are capable of respecting others and the environment. The decision to focus our research on this age group is twofold. Firstly, it derives from decades of research that shows how children's social experiences are highly influential and offer transformational opportunities (see, for instance, Piaget 1950, Vygotsky 1978, Bronfenbrenner 1978), and from more recent studies, that suggest that educating children for global citizenship early on can develop children's empathy and collaborative skills and contribute to raise individuals who are aware of their own responsibilities (Silva & Andrade 2018, Delacruz 2019, Krepelkova *et al.* 2019). Secondly, a practical reason was in place. Considering that early childhood education is not mandatory in both countries, we have chosen to focus our attention on primary education. In Portugal, primary education (also known as the «first

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cycle of basic education») corresponds to ISCED level 1 and is aimed for pupils aged six to ten. In Spain, primary education consists of six years and is aimed at pupils aged six to twelve. Considering these differences, we have opted to analyse the documents pertaining to the education of children aged six to ten in both countries.

To address this aim, a qualitative study was conducted supported by document analyses of the official guiding documents for teaching and learning in primary education in both countries that were in force in March 2020, the time of data collection. All documents were analysed according to a deductive approach which drew on the UNESCO (2015) theoretical framework on the three GCE dimensions —cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural— and on the corresponding key learner attributes.

The paper is organized in the following way: it begins with a theoretical background focused on the concept of GCE and on the profile that is expected of «global citizens». This is followed by a brief overview of the development of GCE in Portugal and Spain. Then, the study is described, namely the methodological procedures that were used for data collection and analysis. The following sections focus on the presentation and discussion of the results. The paper ends with some concluding remarks, stressing the relevance of the results and suggesting avenues for future research.

2
Global citizenship education and the profile of the global citizen

In recent decades, GCE has emerged as a «framing paradigm» (UNESCO 2014, p. 9), a new educational perspective that allows theoreticians, policymakers, and practitioners to reconceptualize old issues, providing new meanings for the problems of citizenship and agency in multilingual and globalised societies. Yet, defining GCE is not an easy task, as the concept is open to many different interpretations. Oxley and Morris (2013), Pais and Costa (2017) and, more recently, Pashby *et al.* (2020) have found that there are multiple ideological constellations overlapping and even contradicting one another within the field of GCE. Starting with Andreotti's (2006), «soft» versus «critical» dichotomy, GCE has been pushed and pulled in a continuum ranging from a neoliberal discourse, privileging self-investment and enhanced profits, to a critical democracy discourse, highlighting the importance of ethical values and social responsibility.

In this study, it is taken as reference the definitions proposed by authors such as Andreotti and Souza (2012), Bourn (2015), Lourenço (2018b), or Santamaría-Cárdaba (2020), who understand GCE as a transformative process whose purpose is to educate

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«global» citizens to be autonomous and think critically so that they can understand the existing social inequalities and act in a committed way seeking to transform society into a more just one. According to the UNESCO (2015), this entails the development of three core conceptual dimensions, which are based on, and include, aspects from all three domains of learning: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioural (Figure 1).
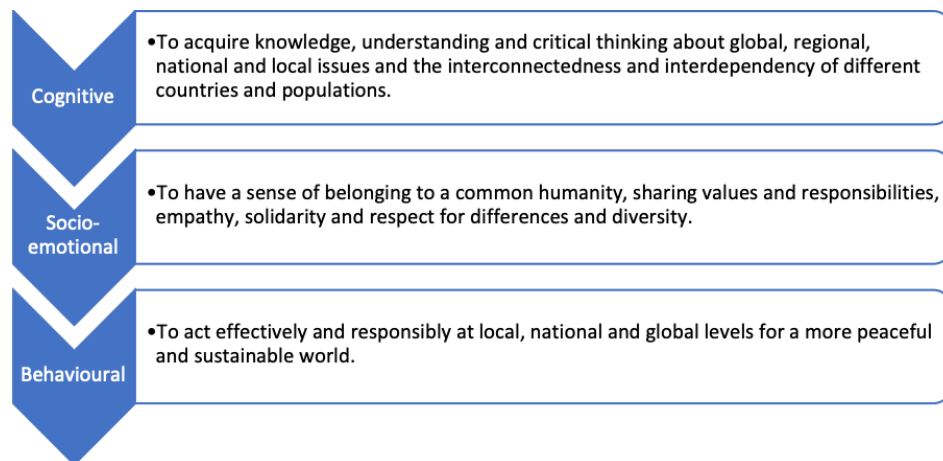

Figure 1
Core conceptual dimensions of global citizenship education
Source: adapted from UNESCO (2015, p. 15).

Based on these dimensions, the UNESCO (2015) goes on to propose key learning outcomes, which describe the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that learners can acquire and demonstrate as result of GCE, and key learner attributes. These are: *informed and critically literate*, *socially connected, and respectful of diversity,* and *ethically responsible and engaged.* GCE, therefore, should aim to enable learners to develop an understanding of global issues, governance structures, rights, and responsibilities; develop and apply critical skills for civic literacy; appreciate difference and multiple identities; examine beliefs and values; develop attitudes of care and empathy for others and the environment; and contribute to contemporary global issues at local, national, and global levels as informed, responsible, and responsive global citizens.

Oxfam's *Education for Global Citizenship: A Guide for Schools* (2015) offers a similar take on GCE. The document shows the global citizen as someone who is aware of the wider world and has a sense of his/her own role as a world citizen; respects and values diversity; understands how the world works; is passionately committed to social justice; participates in the community at local and global levels; works with others to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place; and takes responsibility for his/her actions. Oxfam conceptualises a tripartite approach to GCE that includes the knowledge and understanding, skills, values, and attitudes that learners need both to participate fully in a globalised society and economy, and to secure a more just, inclusive, and sustainable

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world than the one they have inherited. These include, for instance, knowledge and understanding of social justice and equity, critical and creative thinking, and respect for people and human rights.

What is striking about both the UNESCO (2015) and Oxfam's (2015) frameworks is a conceptualisation of GCE as a lifelong learning path that begins in early childhood and continues through all levels of education, requiring both formal and informal approaches, as well as curricular and extracurricular interventions, and even conventional and unconventional pathways to participation (Argibay & Celorio 2005, Celorio & López 2007). The frameworks also emphasize the need for GCE to be integrated in a systematic and gradual way throughout the curriculum, thus providing a valuable tool for curriculum design.

3
Global citizenship education in Portugal and Spain

It is impossible to tell the story of GCE in Portugal and Spain without reference to Development Education (DE). The concept of DE was born in the 1960s from the convergence between theoretical perspectives and intervention agendas focused on fighting structural inequalities of power and wealth between the «North» and the «South». This process, which originated in Europe, was mainly carried out by NGOs who operated to raise awareness of those inequalities and draw attention to everyone's responsibility in overcoming them.

Throughout the years, countries such as Portugal and Spain have witnessed a shift in DE from an initial focus on charity, in which attention was paid to assisting impoverished areas through specific actions to collect donations, to an approach of cosmopolitan DE with which it is aspired at developing a global citizenship that seeks to transform society into a more just one. The model proposed by Spanish pedagogue Manuela Mesa (2000, 2014) is often cited as a reference in the historical development of DE, suggesting a sequence of five stages or «generations»: *a)* the charitable-assistance generation (1940-1960); *b)* the developmental generation (1960-1970); *c)* the critical-solidarity generation (1970-1980); *d)* education for sustainable human development (1980-1990); and *e)* education for global citizenship (1990-2010). Authors such as Calvo (2017), Sainz (2016), or Santamaría-Cárdaba *et al.* (2019) are currently talking about a sixth generation of DE, focused on social transformation and on the development of a critical GCE, that is not only aware of but acts to change inequalities in favour of social justice.

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In Portugal, the history of DE is a long one, dating back to the 1980s, although there were already some isolated actions in the 1970s conducted by NGOs, students and groups of progressive Catholics supporting pre-independence liberation movements and denouncing human rights violations (for a review, see Coelho *et al.* 2019, Inguaggiato & Coelho 2017, O'Loughlin & Wegimont 2014). As in other European countries, DE also faced a discursive transition towards GCE (Coelho *et al.* 2018), although both terms coexist and are still often used as synonyms or in conjunction as «Development Education and Global Citizenship» (Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD 2018). According to a recent review of the literature published in Portugal in the last ten years, GCE has gained momentum after 2015 (ANGEL 2020). The expansion of the field is particularly visible in the number of scientific events that have started to include GCE as a strand, as well as in the growing number of master dissertations on GCE developed mainly within the scope of pre-service teacher education courses. Resources and guides for teachers have also been produced to help integrate GCE in the classroom, some of which specifically addressing primary education (AIDGLOBAL *et al.* 2015, Neves & Coelho 2018).

At a national level, there are several key institutions involved in supporting and facilitating DE/GCE. Apart from the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NGDOs, civil society organisations and academic bodies have also been playing key roles in the introduction, growth, and support of DE/GCE. They have been involved too in the development of a National Strategy for Development Education, which was in force between 2010 and 2016 and has started a second cycle in 2018. One of the main goals of this Strategy is to promote global citizenship by raising awareness of the Portuguese society to development issues in a context of growing interdependence and acting towards social transformation. In 2017, within the scope of the Project for Autonomy and Curriculum Flexibility in schools, the Portuguese government approved a National Strategy for Citizenship Education, which aims to develop competences for a culture of democracy and learning, with an impact on individual civic attitudes, interpersonal interactions, and social and intercultural relationships. This document instituted the curricular component of «Citizenship and Development», as a cross-curricular or stand-alone subject at all levels and cycles of compulsory education, thus opening the door for the integration of GCE in the curriculum.

GCE in Spain has also evolved from DE over time (for a review, see Carrica-Ochoa & Bernal 2019). The first activities related to DE can be traced back to the 1940s when, within the charitable-assistance approach, religious organisations started collecting donations for African and South American countries where they were building hospitals and schools (Celorio & López 2007). It was not until the year 2000 that GCE started to be mentioned in scholarly publications (Mayoral 2011), mainly as a response to the globalisation

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phenomena. As in Portugal, both GCE and DE terms are currently used, although GCE has been gaining increasing attention in scientific publications, particularly those conducted in formal education contexts by NGDOs and individual teachers (ANGEL 2020). Apart from formal contexts, GCE has also been promoted in non-formal (cultural centres or extracurricular activities) and informal (media or awareness campaigns) educational spheres. Still, GCE has not yet acquired the desired presence (Argibay & Celorio, 2005), since clear and specific policy measures are lacking.

4
Methodology

As stated in the introduction, this study aimed to understand how Portugal and Spain have been responding to international calls to educate critical and responsible citizens that are capable of respecting others and the environment. To address this objective, a qualitative study framed in an interpretative paradigm was conducted (Denzin & Lincoln 2017). We opted for a descriptive-interpretative strategy of an exploratory nature, assuming, from the outset, a concern with describing patterns and characteristics related to the key learner attributes of pupils that emerged from education policy documents in the two countries. Considering the research objective, document analysis was used as a preferential research method to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Frey 2018). This implied a four-step process which entailed finding, selecting, appraising, and synthesising data. Therefore, initially, a search in official governmental websites was carried out to identify and collect the documents that would constitute the corpus of analysis. These consisted of the official guiding documents for teaching and learning in primary education in Portugal and Spain, which were in force at the time of data collection. These are presented in Table 1 preceded by a code for easier identification.

Portugal		Spain	
Code	*Name*	*Code*	*Name*
DLP	Decree Law 55/2018	RD	Royal Decree Law 126/2014
STP	Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling (2017)	ECDO	ECD Order/65/2015 (Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling)
NSC	National Strategy for Citizenship Education (2017)	DCYL	Decree Law 26/2016 (Curriculum for Primary Education in Castile and León)
ECC	Essential Core Curriculum for Primary Education (2017)		

Table 1
Documents analysed for each country
Source: the authors.

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In the case of Portugal, the documents were identified through a search on the website of the Directorate-General for Education of the Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science (https://www.dge.mec.pt). The documents selected for analysis consisted of generic reference documents and regulatory documents specific to primary education, namely *Decree Law 55/2018,* where it is established the curriculum for Basic and Secondary Education; the *Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling,* a guiding document published in 2017 where it is described the principles, vision, values and competences Portuguese students should possess by the time they finish compulsory schooling; the *National Strategy for Citizenship Education,* which was launched in October 2017 to reintroduce citizenship education into the curriculum by creating mandatory teaching areas, such as sustainability or human rights; and the *Essential Core Curriculum,* a series of documents published in August 2017, and updated in the following years, which identify the competences/essential learning that students should master per subject and school year, in line with the *Student's Profile.* For primary education, there are 27 documents that list the essential learning for each subject and for school years one to four (Appendix A). Hence, for the Portuguese case, a total of 30 documents were identified and selected for analysis in this study.

In the case of Spain, two types of documents were collected: state-level documents and documents that are specific to the autonomous community of Castille and León. Two reasons justify this choice: firstly, an examination of the curricular documents of all the Spanish autonomous communities was considered too demanding for a single person to carry out; secondly, the first author is based in this autonomous community and, therefore, acquainted with the specificities of this region. Although we are aware that this can bring bias to the data, we feel that by combining state-level and regional documents we can get a more comprehensive picture of the situation in Spain.

The documents for analysis were identified by searching the websites of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and of the Junta of Castile and León. These were: the *Royal Decree 126/2014* of 28 February, establishing the curriculum for Primary Education; *Order ECD/65/2015* of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, describing the competences, contents and evaluation criteria of Primary Education, Compulsory Secondary Education and the Baccalaureate (Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling); and *Decree Law 26/2016* of 21 July, establishing the curriculum and regulating the implementation, evaluation and development of Primary Education in the Community of Castile and León. In this last document, analysis focused on the assessment criteria for each subject and for school years one to four (Appendix B).

All documents were analysed according to a deductive approach with codes deriving from the UNESCO (2015) theoretical framework

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on GCE dimensions and key learner attributes (Table 2). The reason for choosing UNESCO's (2015) multi-dimensional framework of learning domains is supported by the fact that this is consistent with the theory and practice of transformative education, which shows that effective learning needs to go beyond the cognitive to also develop learners' socio-emotional and behavioural competences. These competences, together with a critical understanding of issues and problems, enable learners to engage in personal and social action for transformation. Nonetheless, the authors acknowledge the limitations of using a framework that, in a certain way, attempts to crystallize the meaning and purposes of GCE, as well as to instigate a global reform in education politics and practice (Mundy *et al.* 2016). As Bamber *et al.* (2018, p. 205) sustain, frameworks may be regarded as «reductive and somewhat hegemonic "regimes of truth" encouraging an unreflective and performative attitude, antithetical to the deeper intentions of transformative education». Despite these criticisms, the authors embrace the holistic approach of the UNESCO framework, regarding it merely as an axis to access the phenomenon under study and as a guide for the application of content analysis (Krippendorff 2013).

Categories	Sub-categories
C1 Cognitive – informed and critically literate	C1.1 Know about local, national, and global issues, governance systems and structures C1.2 Understand the interdependence and connections of global and local concerns C1.3 Develop skills for critical inquiry and analysis
C2 Socio-emotional – socially connected and respectful of diversity	C2.1 Cultivate and manage identities, relationships, and feelings of belongingness C2.2 Share values and responsibilities based on human rights C2.3 Develop attitudes to appreciate and respect differences and diversity
C3 Behavioural – ethically responsible and engaged	C3.1 Enact appropriate skills, values, beliefs, and attitudes C3.2 Demonstrate personal and social responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable world C3.3 Develop motivation and willingness to care for the common good

Table 2
Categories and sub-categories of analysis
Source: the authors.

Content analysis was performed using the webQDA software (www.webqda.net) and it was proceeded as follows: each researcher read through the documents specific to their own country and selected relevant passages, consisting of sentences or paragraphs, coding them as instances of a category and, within this, of a sub-category. Validation of the categorization process was achieved after a peer-debriefing process between the two researchers. Then, frequency counts of the relevant categories and sub-categories were obtained, as well as of the number of coding references in each document.

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This provided a crude overall picture of the material being reviewed. Finally, the researchers proceeded with the interpretation of content, focusing on the intersections between the data, thus identifying similarities, differences, and general patterns.

5
Results

In the following two sections, the results of the document analysis in each country are presented. In the third section, a comparative account of the results is given. Statements are illustrated by quotations from the documents, which were translated from Portuguese or Spanish into English for purposes of clarity.

5.1. Results in the Portuguese documents for primary education

In the Portuguese context, all key learner attributes proposed by the UNESCO (2015) framework are mentioned in the documents under analysis. The document with the highest number of references in absolute terms is the *Student's Profile* (STP), with 71 references, followed by the *Essential Core Curriculum for Environment Studies* (ECC_ES), with 69 references in Year 4, 63 in Year 2, 55 in Year 3 and 52 in Year 1 (Figure 2).
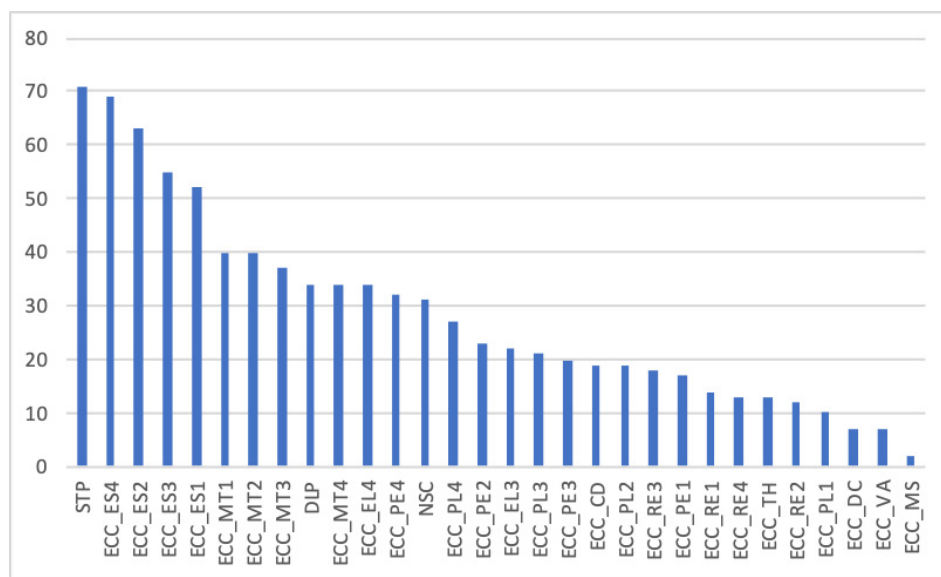

Figure 2
Number of references per document in the Portuguese context

These results are not surprising. Indeed, the STP, apart from being the longest document of the list, with 30 pages, focuses precisely on the knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions learners should possess after they finish compulsory education. These were defined after extensive consultation and analysis of reference

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documents on teaching and learning from the European Union (EU), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the UNESCO itself. In what concerns the ECC_ES, it addresses areas of knowledge and dimensions easily associated with GCE, such as Society, Nature and Technology. Indeed, when analysing the general aims for Environment Studies in all four years of primary education, one can easily find examples of the core conceptual dimensions of GCE, as the following examples show: «identify natural, social and technological elements of the environment and their interrelations» (p. 2) (cognitive dimension); «value one's identity and roots, respecting the territory and its order, other peoples and other cultures, and recognising diversity as a source of learning for all» *(ib.)* (socioemotional dimension); «assume attitudes and values that promote civic participation in a responsible, supportive and critical manner» *(ib.)* (behavioural dimension).

The documents with fewer references are the ones related with Artistic Education, namely Music (2 references), Dance, and Visual Arts (7 references each). In all cases, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learners are expected to develop are mostly content-related and there are very few references to what could be deemed transversal competences such as communication skills, critical thinking, and respect for diversity. In an interesting note, the *Essential Core Curriculum for Citizenship and Development* (ECC_CD) yields a surprisingly low number of references (only 19). However, it is worth explaining that, in the document, it is made explicit references to specific competences to be developed by the learners, drawing attention to what is already inscribed in the *National Strategy for Citizenship Education* (NSC) and the STP.
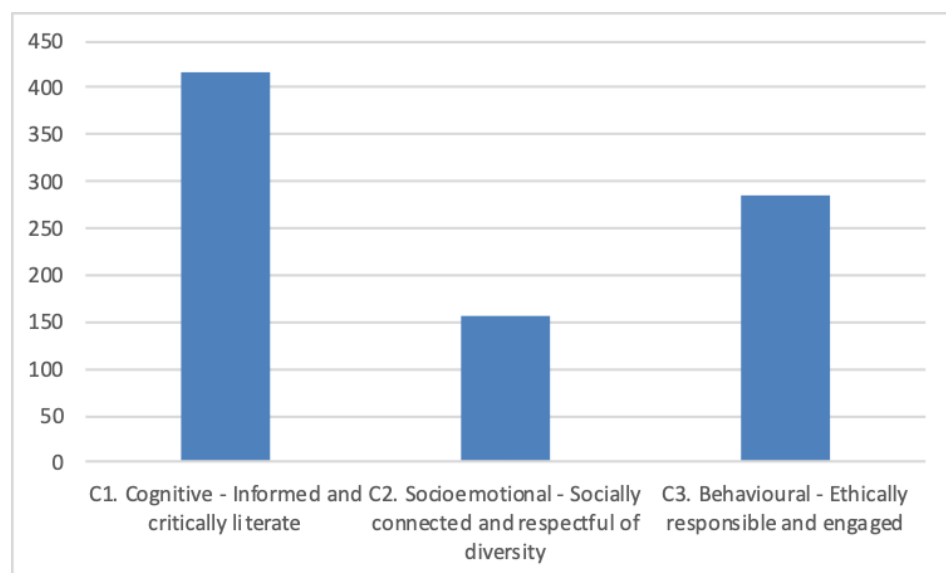

Figure 3
Number of references per category in the Portuguese context

Moving on to the analysis of the categories related to learners' key attributes, the most relevant in the Portuguese context was found

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to be *C1 Cognitive – Informed and critically literate,* with a total of 416 references, followed by *C3 Behavioural – Ethically responsible and engaged* with 285 references. Category *C2 Socioemotional – Socially connected and respectful of diversity* was the one with the lowest number of references totalling to 157 (Figure 3).

Regarding the number of references per sub-category (Figure 4), the one with the highest results was *C1.3 Develop skills for critical inquiry and analysis,* mentioned 289 times in 26 out of the 30 documents. In *Decree-Law 55/2018* (DLP), for instance, it is stressed the need for all learners, regardless of level of study, to develop «competences that allow them to question pre-established knowledge, integrate emerging knowledge, communicate effectively and solve complex problems» (p. 2928), while the STP highlights learners' ability to «use and master diversified instruments to conduct research, evaluate, validate and mobilise information, in a critical and autonomous manner, checking different sources and their credibility» (p. 22). Specific references to the development of critical thinking and communication skills in primary education are also paramount, namely in the *Essential Core Curriculum for Portuguese Language* (ECC_PL), where emphasis is given to «expressing and defending one's opinion» (p. 2) or «separating fact from fiction and explicit from implicit information» (p. 10), and in the *Essential Core Curriculum for Mathematics* (ECC_MT), which underlines the ability to «solve and formulate problems» (p. 2) and «describe, explain and justify, both orally and in writing, ideas, processes, results and conclusions» (p. 3).
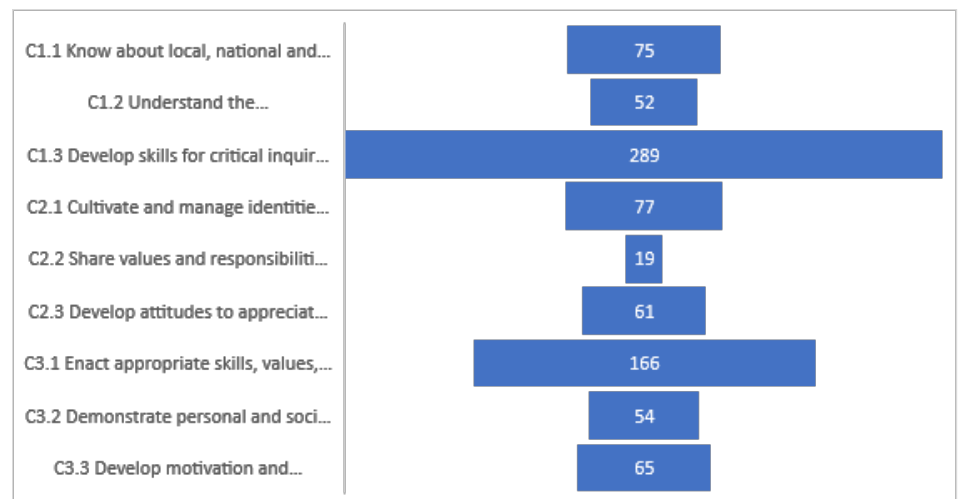

Figure 4
Number of references per sub-category in the Portuguese context

In what concerns the other sub-categories under the cognitive dimension *C1.1 Know about local, national, and global issues, governance systems and structures* and *C1.2 Understand the interdependence and connections of global and local concerns,* results are more modest, staying below the three-digit figure. References to developing knowledge about local, national, and global themes add up

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to 74 in 18 out of the 30 documents analysed. These appear mainly in the ECC_ES, related, for instance, with learning about relevant dates and events in the History of Portugal, getting acquainted with European member states, and acknowledging the relevance of human rights and children's rights for building a fairer society. The recognition of the interdependence of local, national, and global issues and structures is mentioned 52 times in 11 documents. The most striking examples are, once again, from the ECC_ES, where it is drawn attention to the need to «promote an integrated approach to knowledge» (p. 3), in order to understand the interconnections that exist between society, nature and technology; «to recognize the way in which environmental changes (deforestation, fires, silting, pollution) cause imbalances in ecosystems and influence the lives of living beings and society» (p. 9), or «to understand that living beings depend on each other, namely through food relationships, and the physical environment, recognizing the importance of preserving Nature» (p. 6).

Regarding the socioemotional dimension (C2), the sub-category with the highest number of references was *C2.1 Cultivate and manage identities, relationships, and feelings of belongingness,* with 77 references in 23 documents. The DLP stresses the need to value the Portuguese language and cultures, as well as foreign languages and cultures, as vehicles of national, global, and multicultural identity. These attitudes are also underlined in the ECC for Portuguese Language (ECC_PL) and for English Language (ECC_EL). In the first case, the focus falls on getting acquainted with the Portuguese literary tradition, understood as a heritage and a source of identity, while in the second case attention goes to «recognising elements of the Anglo-Saxon culture» (p. 7), in addition «building an identity of a global citizen» (p. 1). In a similar vein, the ECC_ES emphasises the recognition of «multiple belongings in the community and as part of a group» (p. 5), also highlighting the need to getting acquainted with events related to personal, family, and national history.

As for *C2.3 Develop attitudes to appreciate and respect differences and diversity,* it yields the second highest number of references in the socioemotional category (61 in 20 documents). Most references appear in the foreign language curriculum (ECC_EL), where it is mentioned the need to «respect others, the Anglo-Saxon culture and other cultures» (p. 2), and in the *Essential Core Curriculum for Catholic (or other confessions) Moral and Religious Education* (ECC_RE), which highlights the importance of seeing differences as beautiful, embracing others for their differences, and promoting equality and dignity for all. Other noticeable references appear in the *Essential Core Curriculum for Physical Education* (EEC_PE), which accentuates the following competences: «respect different characteristics, beliefs and opinions»; «accept the options, failures and mistakes of others», and «accept different points of view» (p. 6).

In what concerns *C2.2 Share values and responsibilities based on human rights,* it is the sub-category with the lowest number of

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references (only 19 in 7 documents). The STP and the NSC draw attention to respect of human dignity and of the principles of human rights, valuing the concepts of democratic citizenship, solidarity, cultural diversity, and sustainability. The ECC_ES signals that learners should acknowledge the importance of the Human Rights Declaration and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in the construction of fairer societies and be able to recognise cases of disrespect for these consecrated rights, knowing how to act in situations like these. The ECC_CD also draws attention to these issues namely by highlighting the relevance of the subject in «contributing to the development of attitudes and behaviours of dialogue and respect for others, based on ways of being in society that have human rights as a reference, namely the values of equality, democracy and social justice» (p. 6).

Finally, in what concerns the results for the behavioural dimension (C3), sub-category *C3.1 Enact appropriate skills, values, beliefs, and attitudes* was the one with the highest number of references (166 in 24 documents) and the second highest overall. By its very nature, the STP is the document that best describes what is expected of learners in these domains: by the end of compulsory schooling, students should be self-aware and aware of the world around them; able to deal with change and uncertainty in a rapidly changing world; think critically and creatively; work with others; respect the fundamental principles, rights and freedoms of democratic societies; respect others and human and cultural diversity, and reject of all forms of social discrimination. These competences appear in nearly all the curricular documents aimed for primary education; for instance, the ECC_MT expects learners to «develop a critical citizenship and participate in society, with autonomy, responsibility and in collaboration with others» (p. 2), while the ECC_RE and the ECC_PE add examples such as helping those in need, collaborating in family life, valuing friendship, or respecting colleagues and teachers.

While staying in line with the above, *C3.2 Demonstrate personal and social responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable world* is more specific, putting an emphasis on reflection and action related to ethical issues of social and political nature (climate change, consumerism, fair trade, or migration), and on the wider impact of personal decisions. With 54 references in 11 documents, this sub-category appears more prominently in the ECC_ES, with references to «identifying situations of risk behaviour for health, as well as for individual and collective safety, proposing appropriate measures for prevention and protection» (p. 6), «identifying environmental or social issues in the community (urban waste, pollution, poverty, unemployment, social exclusion…) and suggesting solutions» (p. 9), «producing technological solutions through reusing or recycling materials» *(ib.),* or «adopting individual and collective measures that minimize the negative impact of overpopulation and consumerism in the quality of the environment (destruction of forests, pollution, depletion of resources, extinction of species, etc.)» (p. 10).

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Regarding sub-category *C3.3 Develop motivation and willingness to care for the common good,* it appears 65 times in 20 documents. Remarks to the «common good», understood as something that is shared and beneficial for all or most members of a given community, and achieved through collective action and active participation, are frequent in the Portuguese documents, particularly in the STP. Reflecting on the role of schools in a global age, the STP states that «the school should empower young people through developing the knowledge and values they need to build a more just society, centred on the person, on human dignity and on the world as a common good to preserve» (p. 6). Then, the document specifies the values learners should develop: «consider their own actions and the actions of others in relation to the common good» (p. 17); «show autonomy centred on human rights, democracy, citizenship, equity, mutual respect, free choice and the common good» *(ib.),* and «reveal environmental and social awareness and responsibility, working collaboratively for the common good, with a view to building a sustainable future» (p. 27). Other references appear, for instance, on the ECC_RE, which states that leaners should «promote the common good and care for others» and «act with truth for the common good» (p. 5).

5.2. Results in the Spanish documents for primary education

In the Spanish context, the learner attributes proposed by UNESCO (2015) are also mentioned in all documents analysed. The document with the highest number of references in absolute terms is the *Decree Law 26/2016 – Curriculum for Primary Education in Castile and León,* with 147 references in total in all the subject and levels analysed; followed by the *Royal Decree Law 126/2014,* with 48 references, and the *ECD Order/65/2015 – Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling,* with 25 (Figure 5).
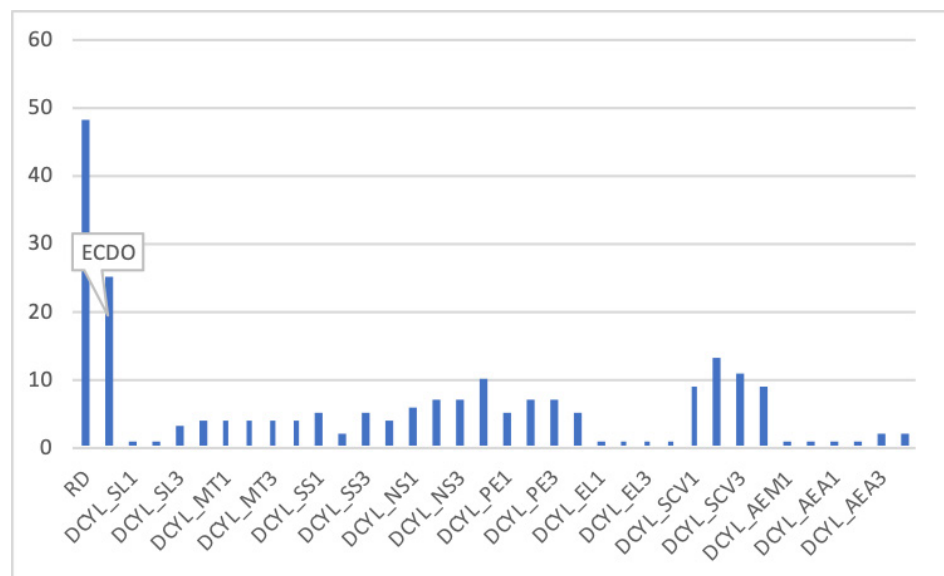
Figure 5
Number of references per document in the Spanish context

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These results are easily explained by the fact that the *Decree Law 26/2016* (DCYL) is the longest document analysed, with 563 pages. In this, it is defined the curriculum of each subject divided according to the academic course, and the contents, evaluation criteria and learning standards are included. For this study, we have opted to analyse the evaluation criteria of the different subjects, detailed in Appendix B. The subjects that have a more remarkable presence of the categories under analysis are, in descending order, Social and Civic Values (DCYL_SCV, with 42 references); Natural Sciences (DCYL_NS, with 30 references), and Social Sciences (DCYL_SS, with 16 references). The subjects with fewer references are Music (DCYL_AEM, with 2 references); Spanish Language and Literature (DCYL_EL, with 4 references), and Plastic Arts (DCYL_AEA, with 6 references).

Moving on to the analysis of the categories related to learners' key attributes, the most relevant in the Spanish context was found to be *C3 Behavioural – Ethically responsible and engaged,* with 83 references, followed by *C1 Cognitive – Informed and critically literate,* with a total of 77 references. Category *C2 Socioemotional – Socially connected and respectful of diversity* was the one with the lowest number of references, totalling to 59 (Figure 6).
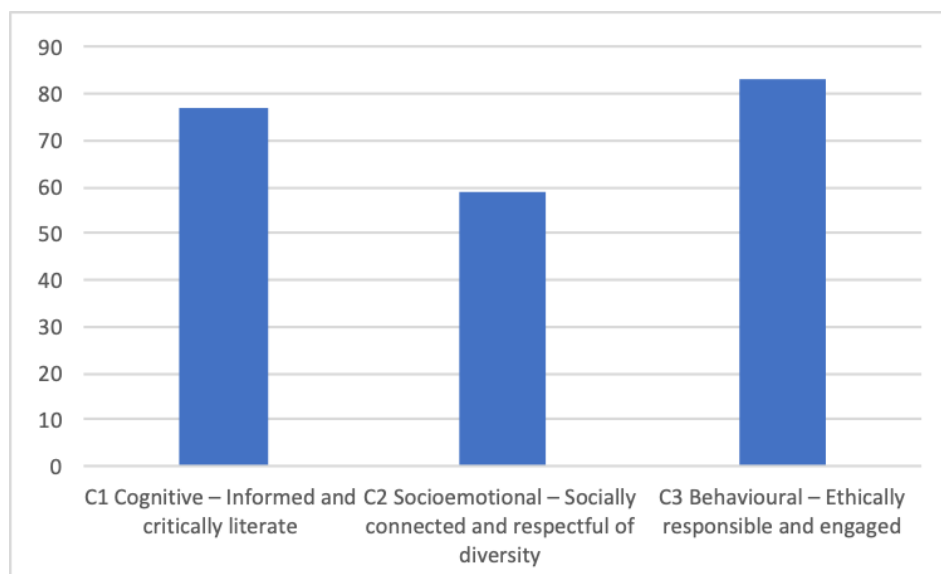

Figure 6
Number of references per category in the Spanish context

In terms of the number of references per sub-category (Figure 7), the one with the highest results was *C1.3 Develop skills for critical inquiry and analysis,* which is mentioned 63 times. It appears often in the *Royal Decree Law (RD) 126/2014* and it is included in the following objectives of primary education: «To be initiated in the use of Information and Communication Technologies, developing a critical spirit in the face of the messages received and produced» (p. 7). This sub-category is also visible in *Decree Law (DCYL) 26/126* namely in the assessment criteria; for example, the following from the area of

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Spanish language and literature: «understanding oral messages and analysing them critically» (p. 34322). In *ECD Order/65/2015* (ECDO), reference is also made to the development of critical thinking; for example, «competences in science and technology train responsible and respectful citizens who develop critical judgements on scientific and technological facts that occur throughout time, past and present» (p. 6994).
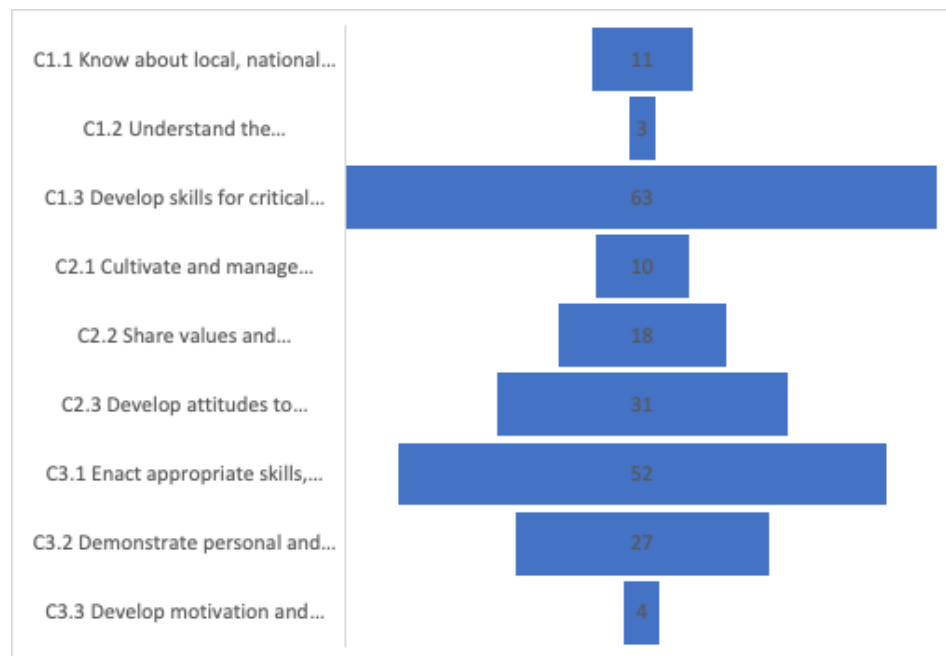

Figure 7
Number of references per sub-category in the Spanish context

Regarding references to sub-category *C1.1. Know about local, national, and global issues, governance systems and structures,* it should be noted that both RD and DCYL only refer to this attribute in the field of Social Sciences, while ECDO refers to these issues within the description of social and civic competence:

> Civic competence is based on critical knowledge of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship, and human and civil rights, as well as their formulation in the Spanish Constitution, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international declarations, and their application by various institutions at local, regional, national, European, and international level (ECDO, p. 6999).

Sub-category *C1.2 Understand the interdependence and connections of global and local concerns* is present in Social and Civic Values of all documents analysed. By way of example, the relations at local-international level appear in ECDO under Social and Civic Competence, which entails «critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in the activities of the community or the immediate and intermediate environment, as well as decision-making in the local, national or European context» (p. 6999).

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With regards to the socio-emotional dimension (C2), the sub-category with the highest number of references was *C2.3 Develop attitudes to appreciate and respect differences and diversity,* with 31 references. This sub-category appears in Social Sciences of the RD and in one of the objectives of Primary Education, namely «to value hygiene and health, to accept one's own body and that of others, to respect differences and to use physical education and sport as a means of fostering personal and social development» (p. 7). DCYL includes this sub-category in Social Sciences, Physical Education and Social and Civic Values. By way of example, one of the evaluation criteria of the Values area is: «acting with tolerance by understanding and accepting differences, understanding the importance of cultural exchange in our society and with a historical perspective» (p. 34686). Likewise, ECDO refers to respect for others under social and civic competence, for example, when it states that «people must be able to manage a behaviour of respect for differences expressed in a constructive way» (p. 6998).

Also, sub-category *2.1. Cultivate and manage identities, relationships and feeling of belongingness* is dealt with in the RD in the subjects of Social and Civic Values and in Social Sciences. As an example, within the area of Social Sciences, reference is made to feelings of belongingness in the following way: «Describes the characteristic features of Spanish society today, and values its democratic and plural character, as well as its membership to the European Union» (p. 26). Likewise, in DCYL this sub-category is present in the evaluation criteria of the area of Social and Civic Values. ECDO only refers to these aspects in the social and civic competence, specifically when it states that «it is essential to understand the intercultural and socio-economic dimensions of European societies and to perceive cultural and national identities as a dynamic and changing sociocultural process in interaction with the European one, in a context of increasing globalisation» (p. 6998).

It should be noted that sub-category *C2.2. Share values and responsibilities based on human rights* appears several times in the RD; for example, in the first objective of Primary Education, which is «to know and appreciate the values and norms of coexistence, to learn to act in accordance with them, to prepare for the active exercise of citizenship and to respect human rights, as well as the pluralism characteristic of a democratic society» (p. 7). DCYL deals with this sub-category in Social Sciences, as can be seen in the following evaluation criterion: «To value cooperation and dialogue as a way of avoiding and resolving conflicts, promoting equality between men and women and democratic values» (p. 34268). In addition, ECDO refers to this sub-category in the following competencies: linguistic competence, social and civic competence, mathematical competence, and basic competences in science and technology.

Finally, the results obtained in the category *C3 Behavioural – Ethically responsible and engaged* are presented. In this case, the

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sub-category with the greatest presence in the documents analysed was *C3.1 Enact appropriate skills, values, beliefs, and attitudes,* with 52 references. An analysis of this sub-category in the RD shows that it is present in two objectives of primary education, one of which is: «to know, understand and respect different cultures and differences between people, equal rights and opportunities between men and women and non-discrimination of people with disabilities» (p. 7). DCYL deals with this sub-category in the areas of Social Sciences, Spanish Language and Literature, Physical Education and Social and Civic Values. ECDO also refers to this sub-category, for example, within social and civic competence, when it states that «acquiring these competences implies being able to put oneself in the other's place, accept differences, be tolerant and respect others' values, beliefs, cultures and personal and collective history» (p. 14).

Sub-category *C3.2. Demonstrate personal and social responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable world* is mentioned in the RD in two areas: Social Sciences and Social and Civic Values. As an example, one of the evaluation criteria of Social Sciences is detailed: «to value cooperation and dialogue as a way to avoid and solve conflicts, promoting democratic values» (p. 23). DCYL deals with this sub-category in the areas of Social Sciences, Physical Education and especially in Social and Civic Values, as can be seen in the following evaluation criterion within the subject of Physical Education: «demonstrate responsible personal and social behaviour, respecting oneself and others […], accepting the established norms and rules and acting with interest and individual initiative and teamwork» (p. 34597). ECDO refers to this sub-category within mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, and in social and civic competence.

Finally, sub-category *C3.3. Develop motivation and willingness to care for the common good* appears only once in each document. RD names the following criterion for evaluating Social and Civic Values: «develop autonomy and the capacity for entrepreneurship, to achieve personal success by taking responsibility for the common good» (p. 56). DCYL only addresses this issue in the evaluation criteria of the Social and Civic Values area. ECDO refers to it under mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology:

> An essential part of this competence dimension is the knowledge of what affects food, hygiene, and individual and collective health, as well as the habituation to responsible behaviour and acquisition of values for the immediate common good and for the planet as a whole (ECDO, p. 9).

5.3. Comparison of the results in the two countries

The results obtained in the documents analysed for Spain and Portugal show that there are both differences and similarities between the two countries. While Portugal already has specific

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legislation that opens the door for the integration of GCE in the formal curriculum, such as the *National Strategy for Citizenship Education* (2017), Spain does not yet have this type of national strategy, with citizenship issues appearing only implicitly in education policy documents. Moving on to the categories analysed, it can be pointed out that, while in Spain the category with the greatest presence in the documents analysed is *C3 Behavioural – Ethically responsible and engaged,* in Portugal it is *C1 Cognitive – Informed and critically literate.* However, it is true that categories C1 and C3 are the two with the most references in both countries, while category *C2 Socioemotional – Socially connected and respectful of diversity* has less presence in both Portugal and Spain. Considering the challenges that both countries are facing, related to the rising levels of racism and xenophobia, these results send up a red flag and urge for a deeper analysis to ascertain whether children are being adequately equipped to challenge stereotypes and myths about migration. Regarding the sub-categories, the results were similar in both countries, since the ones with the greatest number of references are, in both cases, *C1.3 Develop skills for critical inquiry and analysis* and *C 3.1. Enact appropriate skills, values, beliefs, and attitudes.*

When analysing aspects of the curriculum of the different subjects that form part of primary education in Portugal and Spain, it has been found that in both cases the subject of Natural Sciences is the one that is more in line with the principles of GCE. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Music and Arts are the two subjects where the presence of GCE is less visible. This may be due to the Natural Sciences area tends to cover Sustainable Development issues, which are often treated in combination with GCE (see, for instance, Scheunpflug & Asbrand 2006).

6
Discussion

This study aimed to investigate whether, to what extent, and how the education policy documents of Portugal and Spain, aimed at the first years of schooling, are responding to international calls to educate critical and responsible citizens. After using a category analysis approach of the official policy documents for primary education, results seem to suggest that the curricula of both countries are compatible with the principles of GCE, namely with the key learner attributes proposed by the UNESCO (2015). In both cases, the most valued dimension in students' profile is related to the cognitive domain, particularly with the development of skills for communication and critical inquiry. This is followed by a behavioural dimension, associated with the development of skills, values, beliefs, and attitudes that may lead to ethical and active engagement. In the

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case of Portugal, attention is also paid to cultivating and managing identities and feelings of belongingness, while in Spain a stronger case is made for promoting attitudes of respect for diversity. In short, the main goal of primary education in both Portugal and Spain, when it comes to GCE, is to educate students that communicate effectively, presenting and arguing for/against different points of view, and that can enact skills, values, attitudes, and beliefs that are essential for life as global citizens.

These results are not surprising, if we consider that they are defined for pupils at an early stage of education. Regarding GCE as a lifelong learning path, one can expect that the development of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that are more in line with a committed and engaged participation towards more inclusive and sustainable societies will progress as students mature. Therefore, an analysis of the curricula in secondary education would be useful to clarify this issue.

With respect to the structural similarities between the two countries, both Portugal and Spain have taken a sound strategic approach to education reform, by envisioning the outcomes the education system should seek for its learners, based on evidence about 21st century conditions and on a more «humanistic» and less instrumental vision of education. Still, there are some considerable differences. Portugal has conducted a whole structural renovation of the essential core curriculum sustained in these outcomes and has developed a *National Strategy for Citizenship Education.* Spain, on the other hand, has not yet developed such a strategy and has not finalised updating its core curriculum to fit the students' profile. To some extent, this is due to political instability, as education programmes are modified each time a different political party leads the country. However, it is expected that the new reform being worked on by the current government (LOMLOE) will address aspects included in the Sustainable Development Goals. It remains to be seen whether the inclusion of these goals will be a mere declaration of intent that might lead to a «check-box approach» or contribute to effectively addressing structural inequalities and social injustice (Coelho *et al.* 2021, McCloskey 2019).

These results reveal that in both countries political attention has been given to GCE, which is undeniably a fundamental step towards its integration in the curriculum. Yet, this is not enough to ensure sustainable and successful implementation of this educational perspective. As stated by Tarozzi and Inguaggiato (2018, pp. 34-35),

> […] to integrate global citizenship education in primary schools is a complex endeavour, never neutral, and requiring a critical and progressive commitment towards human rights, peace, environmental sustainability, social justice and economic equality, and a positive attitude towards diversity. In this process, ministries of education and foreign affairs should play a fundamental role, but a pure top-down political approach is not feasible nor effective.

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In this vein, the UNESCO (2015) identifies crucial factors contributing to the successful implementation of GCE, namely: *a)* being embedded in policy with wide stakeholder buy-in, *b)* being part of long-term and sustainable action and *c)* providing pre-service and continuing in-service teacher education. The first two factors seem to be only partially met in both countries. Indeed, although there is some discursive mirroring of UNESCO's GCE principles in the documents analysed, this does not necessarily mean policy implementation. States can very easily (and often do for the purposes of legitimacy and aid flows) use the language of Global Education Governance in policy documents, but this does not mean that policy is implemented in practice (Mundy *et al.* 2016). Considering the third factor, GCE has only recently started to be included in teacher education programmes in Portugal and Spain (Lourenço 2018a, Martínez-Lirola 2019, Martínez-Scott *et al.* 2017, Pires *et al.* 2019). Still, efforts tend to be fragmented and dependent on individual teacher educators' commitment. GCE places considerable professional development demands on teachers to master its practices and to be sensitive to its tensions and complexities, as well as to its benefits and potentials. This implies the need to rethink teacher education and reflect on the competences required by teachers, so that they can open learners' eyes and minds to the realities of the world and help them recognise their individual and collective responsibilities as active members of a global community (Boni & Pérez-Foguet 2006, Lourenço 2017, Martínez-Scott *et al.* 2017).

7
Conclusions

In today's world, GCE is emerging as a possibility both for the education of engaged and responsible citizens, who can respect others and the environment, and the for the development of more democratic and inclusive societies and schools. Following the pressures that international organizations are exerting on national governments for the implementation of GCE in schools, many countries have been begun integrating this educational perspective into their curricula, as a trampoline to prevent the extreme nationalism that is emerging in some countries. Yet, little research has been conducted aimed to take stock of how GCE principles regarding key learner attributes are being enacted in official policy documents. Hence, this study fulfils a timely and practical necessity.

It is important, however, to point out its main limitations. Firstly, it is striking that only one document in Portugal (the ECC_EL) makes explicit reference to global citizenship. This means that the analysis conducted relies solely on the individual (and subjective) interpretation of the researchers. This is even more so, considering that, due to time constraints, it was not possible to ask for an external validation

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of the results. Yet, we consider this a first exploratory study that can be followed by more in-depth analysis, for instance of comparative nature between a larger number of countries and investigating other levels of study, namely considering the extent to which the opportunities to explore GCE from a cognitive and behavioural point of view translate from primary to post-primary education. This could help inform both the policy and practice of GCE.

Another avenue for future research would be to analyse whether, to what extent and how teachers are incorporating the GCE principles identified in this study in their teaching practice and professional identity. Indeed, as explained above, the inclusion of GCE principles in official policy documents and curricula is not sufficient to ensure successful practical results. Apart from policymakers, teachers seem to be the most influential agents of GCE, determining both the ways and the extent to which it is implemented in classrooms. Therefore, carrying out interviews or focus groups with teachers and conducting classroom observation might help shed light on the opportunities and dilemmas that teachers (and students) are facing when taking GCE from paper to reality.

8
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Appendix A. Essential Core Curriculum documents for Primary Education in Portugal

Code	Name
ECC_PL1	Essential Core Curriculum for Portuguese Language Year 1
ECC_PL2	Essential Core Curriculum for Portuguese Language Year 2
ECC_PL3	Essential Core Curriculum for Portuguese Language Year 3
ECC_PL4	Essential Core Curriculum for Portuguese Language Year 4
ECC_MT1	Essential Core Curriculum for Mathematics Year 1
ECC_MT2	Essential Core Curriculum for Mathematics Year 2
ECC_MT3	Essential Core Curriculum for Mathematics Year 3
ECC_MT4	Essential Core Curriculum for Mathematics Year 4
ECC_ES1	Essential Core Curriculum for Environment Studies Year 1
ECC_ES2	Essential Core Curriculum for Environment Studies Year 2
ECC_ES3	Essential Core Curriculum for Environment Studies Year 3
ECC_ES4	Essential Core Curriculum for Environment Studies Year 4
ECC_EL3	Essential Core Curriculum for English Language Year 3
ECC_EL4	Essential Core Curriculum for English Language Year 4
ECC_PE1	Essential Core Curriculum for Physical Education Year 1
ECC_PE2	Essential Core Curriculum for Physical Education Year 2
ECC_PE3	Essential Core Curriculum for Physical Education Year 3
ECC_PE4	Essential Core Curriculum for Physical Education Year 4
ECC_RE1	Essential Core Curriculum for Catholic (or other confessions) Moral and Religious Education Year 1
ECC_RE2	Essential Core Curriculum for Catholic (or other confessions) Moral and Religious Education Year 2
ECC_RE3	Essential Core Curriculum for Catholic (or other confessions) Moral and Religious Education Year 3
ECC_RE4	Essential Core Curriculum for Catholic (or other confessions) Moral and Religious Education Year 4
ECC_DC	Essential Core Curriculum for Artistic Education – Dance
ECC_MS	Essential Core Curriculum for Artistic Education – Music
ECC_TH	Essential Core Curriculum for Artistic Education – Theatre
ECC_VA	Essential Core Curriculum for Artistic Education – Visual Arts
ECC_CD	Essential Core Curriculum for Citizenship and Development

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Appendix B. Decree Law 26/2016, Curriculum for Primary Education in Spain (Castile and León)

Code	Name
DCYL_SL1	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Spanish Language Year 1
DCYL_SL2	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Spanish Language Year 2
DCYL_SL3	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Spanish Language Year 3
DCYL_SL4	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Spanish Language Year 4
DCYL_MT1	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Mathematics Year 1
DCYL_MT2	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Mathematics Year 2
DCYL_MT3	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Mathematics Year 3
DCYL_MT4	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Mathematics Year 4
DCYL_SS1	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Social Sciences Year 1
DCYL_SS2	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Social Sciences Year 2
DCYL_SS3	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Social Sciences Year 3
DCYL_SS4	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Social Sciences Year 4
DCYL_NS1	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Natural Sciences Year 1
DCYL_NS2	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Natural Sciences Year 2
DCYL_NS3	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Natural Sciences Year 3
DCYL_NS4	Decree 26/2016 assessment standards for Natural Sciences Year 4
DCYL_PE1	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Physical Education Year 1
DCYL_PE2	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Physical Education Year 2
DCYL_PE3	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Physical Education Year 3
DCYL_PE4	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Physical Education Year 4
DCYL_EL1	Decree 26/2016 assessment for English Language Year 1
DCYL_EL2	Decree 26/2016 assessment for English Language Year 2
DCYL_EL3	Decree 26/2016 assessment for English Language Year 3
DCYL_EL4	Decree 26/2016 assessment for English Language Year 4
DCYL_SCV1	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Social and Civic Values Year 1
DCYL_SCV2	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Social and Civic Values Year 2
DCYL_SCV3	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Social and Civic Values Year 3
DCYL_SCV4	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Social and Civic Values Year 4
DCYL_AEM1	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Artistic Education Music Year 1
DCYL_AEM2	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Artistic Education Music Year 2
DCYL_AEM3	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Artistic Education Music Year 3
DCYL_AEM4	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Artistic Education Music Year 4
DCYL_AEA1	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Artistic Education Arts Education Year 1
DCYL_AEA2	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Artistic Education Arts Education Year 2
DCYL_AEA3	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Artistic Education Arts Education Year 3
DCYL_AEA4	Decree 26/2016 assessment for Artistic Education Arts Education Year 4

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