

Civic Parliament. SPAIN

Started in January 2010

Objectives

The aim of this project is to help define the appropriate educational needs in terms of social communication and cooperation (for social action), that are required to motivate and contribute to maintain such processes. Therefore, the following questions are addressed:

1. To establish what social action is, how is it manifested as social cooperation and communicated, and what is its drives force;
2. To find out what knowledge, attitudes and social and civic abilities are essential in education for social action;
3. To determine the roles that the family, school, University and the media might play (including information and communication technologies) in cultivating this knowledge, attitudes and abilities.

Justification

There are many signs that Western society has taken a growing interest in education in the last two decades, especially with regards its civic dimension. As an example, we could highlight the initiative, which the European Parliament and the European Council took in 2006, declaring 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. These same institutions the approved the “Europe for citizens” programme for the period running from 2007-2013, a program that was intended to promote active European citizenship (cf. Decision no 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the European Council).

There is a growing tendency to consider education as an appropriate way to promote better coexistence among citizens and on occasion, it has even been proposed as a way of solving the social problems facing the world today.

The interest that has been awakened in the last few years responds to certain needs, of which the following stand out:

- 1) The desire to maintain the stability of democracies, consolidating and regenerating them, as well as promoting participation and political commitment, especially among young people.
- 2) The need to solve the problems and challenges facing society: multiculturalism, diversity, migration and globalization; to integrate unity and diversity; to take on the challenges of inequality and injustice; to stop violence in schools and on the street, or to stop racist movements, etc.
- 3) The project of creating a European identity that implicates the countries of the old continent.

It is generally accepted that the foundations of a democracy are well planted when they rest on the concept of civic participation as far as social issues are concerned. Participation is the basis of democracy, and it is an essential element for democracies to be viable, sustainable and healthy.

However, participation is a concept that is not merely of a procedural nature and what is important is to participate not just for the sake of participating, as if it were a game but rather, what is important is to know what one is participating in and why, and to understand what is the point of taking part in activities that affect the whole of our society and in which our personal collaboration is not just important but absolutely indispensable.

In this sense, all social institutions, and as the main institution that can channel the participation of its citizens, parliaments, have an important role to play in the shaping of democratic values and in addressing what might currently be considered a neglected issue in our society: the understanding of what constitutes a social action and how to become involved, that is learning to participate.

There are many challenges but we shall highlight two: that of adequately raising the democratic consciousness among citizens; and that of generating unity within the diversity that constitutes the social foundation for coexistence.

With these aims in mind, and in collaboration with the Parliamentary Forum, we have organized a programme of activities within the framework of this initiative.

Relevance

The relevance of this proposal resides in:

The phenomena of individualism, and the lack of social communication and co-operation, which are relevant issues in the modern world that currently pose a challenge for social education. These issues are further compounded by the challenges of globalization and immigration, making it necessary to redefine the social actions and educational strategies to address them.

The development of this proposal offers interesting opportunities to design programmes to intervene in different areas of social action (both in terms of communication and cooperation).

Now is a particularly appropriate time to set up these programmes, as 2010 was declared the European year for combating poverty and social exclusion.

Project Leader

This proposal is led by Professor Concepción Naval, at the Department of Education, University of Navarra, who has been working for more than fifteen years in this field and is currently the main researcher of the consolidated “Education and Citizenship Research Group” (<http://www.unav.es/educacion/investigacion/lineas/ciudadania/default.html>). One of her projects, recently financed by the Spanish Ministry of Education, is titled “Education for communication and social cooperation” (R+D Projects, MEC, Directorate General for Research. Ref: SEJ2007-63070.) This project was carried out by the research team, collaborating with the Parliamentary Forum at the University of Navarra.

More about the Project Leader:

cfr. http://www.unav.es/adi/servlet/Cv2.ara?personid=22243&cambia_idioma=2

Research Team

<http://www.unav.edu/evento/parlamentocivico/projectleader>

Activities

<http://www.unav.edu/evento/parlamentocivico/activities>

Teaching guide

http://www.unav.edu/evento/parlamentocivico/teaching_guide

Publications

<http://www.unav.edu/evento/parlamentocivico/publications>

Contact us

To learn more about our project, please contact us:

By post to the following address: Parlamento Cívico, Edificio Central, Campus Universitario, 31009 Pamplona, Spain.

By email at: parlamentocivico@unav.es

By phone at: (+34) 948 425 600; or by fax at: (+34) 948 425 62