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## **University and Non-government Organisations: Indispensable Partners in Global Citizenship Education in Spain**

### **Abstract**

Global Citizenship Education at university has been developed in Spain with the continued support of the Official Development Assistance and collaboration of Non-Government Organizations. In recent years, this assistance is suffering a drastic decrease in funding. Due to this situation, Spanish nonprofits and the University must enhance their collaboration in order to make a better use of the resources available. This article details a method for determining the collaboration factors in activities of Global Citizenship Education at university through the prioritization of experts' preferences of collaboration. For this, it uses a quantitative technique called the Analytical Hierarchy Process on a sample of Global Citizenship Education professionals all over Spain. The results provide criteria that may help to establish a most suitable and collaborative action plan for Global Citizenship Education in the university space in the new changing reality.

**Keywords:** *Global Citizenship Education, NGO, University.*

### **Introduction**

Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in Spain has developed with a different rhythm to the evolution experimented in Europe and North America, while on the international arena this education, grouped under the general term of International Education (Kandel, 1955; Sylvester, 2002; Sylvester, 2005), existed prior to the twentieth century, in Spain this education began in the 1940s and 1950s. All these

kinds of education (education for world citizenship, education for international understanding, global education, etc.) emphasize understanding among peoples and cultures, and learning about international relations and global problems (global poverty, environmental issues, etc.).

The GCE in Spain has been strongly supported by the Official Development Assistance (ODA). In the Spanish University it has been developed in partnership with NGO, grouped in four basic dimensions which establish, in the National Strategy of Development Education (Ortega, 2008), awareness raising, training, research and social mobilization (Boni, 2005).

In recent years, Spanish ODA has experienced drastic cuts in funding (OCDE, 2012). This reality can undermine the activities of GCE developed in the University. To overcome this situation, it is of the highest priority to build synergies among NGOs and the University, in order to be more efficient. In this sense, it is necessary to find the factors that favor and enhance collaboration between these two actors in GCE activities.

The GCE activities normally depend on the priorities established by the development NGOs or the University. Each activity is conditioned by the immediate environment where it is developed, and this election is frequently done in haste without having time for global reflection. As the literature on collaboration between nonprofits and University is scarce (e.g. Siemens, 2012; Weerts and Sandmann, 2008; Nishide, 2002; Macduff & Netting, 2000), the presented study aims to overcome this, finding some of the priorities that he actors (expert professionals all over Spain) take into account when they do GCE activities in collaboration. With this intention, this paper shows an accurate methodology to contribute systematically to the analysis of these priorities through a method called the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), based on the opinion of experts.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. The following section explores the definition of Global Citizenship Education in Spain, showing the specific areas or dimensions of the educational process covered in this paper. The third section synthesizes the main characteristics of the methodological elements that have been employed in the AHP. The results of the study are displayed in the fourth section, and the main conclusions are presented in the final section.

## **Global Citizenship Education in the Spanish University**

GCE has four basic dimensions, but in the University, three of them are developed to a greater extent due to their being linked to the mission of the University. Awareness-raising refers to activities that last for a short time and that aim to arouse interest and increase social involvement in the promotion of sustainable human development, through knowledge and emotive elements (Celorio and López de Munain, 2007). These are usually informal activities, like short courses, fairs, congresses, conferences, exhibitions, etc. Training for development refers to an educational process that promotes global citizenship aimed at a clearly-identified target public, for whom specific educational methodologies are applied to develop cognition, procedure and attitude skills (Ortega, 2008). These are usually activities carried out in formal educational contexts, like Master's degree courses, post-graduate courses, specific subjects, career training, etc. Finally, the themes and practices of GCE must be founded on research and development. This activity uses social research techniques with a special emphasis on those favoring action-oriented research (Ortega, 2008).

The activities belonging to each dimension have general factors to take into account in a collaboration process between NGO and University; some of these factors are the "contents" of these activities, "time" to be developed and "levels of participation" (Rico, 2012; González et al., 2012). Some authors have pointed out that actors must take more responsibility according to their strengths, which are generated by their different expertise and knowledge (Camino and Heidrich, 2003; Macduff and Netting, 2000). For this reason the experts, based on their experience, were asked by the pertinent protagonist (NGO or University) of each factor at the different stages of the GCE activities (cf., Table 1). Thus, general factors ("contents", "time" and "levels of participation") were detailed in specific factors, taking into account the role of the actors.

### **Methodology Framework: The Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP)**

#### **Method**

The Analytical Hierarchy Process was created by Saaty (1977; 1988) as a structured but flexible technique for making decisions in a multi-criteria context. AHP models a decision-making problem using a framework that assumes a unidirectional hierarchical relationship among decision levels. The top element in the

hierarchy is the decision model goal. The subsequent levels model the criteria and sub-criteria.

The first step is to establish the hierarchical structure. Then the relative importance or weighting of each criterion or sub-criterion ( $w_i$ ) is obtained through pair-wise comparisons between each criterion and sub-criterion. Thus, in order to determine the weighting to be assigned to each criterion and sub-criterion proposed, respondents must make two kinds of comparisons: first, pairing comparisons between the sub-criteria in each generic criterion (three sets of pair-wise comparisons in the present case) and, secondly, pairing comparisons among criteria. In order to measure these comparisons, Saaty proposed the use of a 1–9 scale (Saaty, 1997; 1988)

In this case, the AHP was applied to the three dimensions of GCE, so three different hierarchical structures and analyses were generated, one for each dimension (Table 1). As can be seen, general factors (“contents”, “times” and “factors”) shape clusters of specific factors which relate to the lead actor.

**Table 1.** Hierarchical structure for each GCE dimension

Goal	CRITERIA (General Factors)	SUB-CRITERIA (Specific Factors)
Collaboration criteria in awareness-raising	<i>Contents</i> ( $w_{cont}$ )	( $w_1$ ) Most contents form part of NGO knowledge and work
		( $w_2$ ) Most contents form part of the graduate or post-graduate curriculum
		( $w_3$ ) Most contents have been identified as interesting by the University community
	<i>Actors' participation in follow-up</i> ( $w_{part}$ )	( $w_4$ ) NGOs must offer ways to continue the process after the Awareness-rising activity
		( $w_5$ ) University must offer ways to continue the process after the Awareness-rising activity
		( $w_6$ ) University community must offer ways to continue the process after the Awareness-rising activity
	<i>Time</i> ( $w_{tim}$ )	( $w_7$ ) Timetables and timing established by the NGO
		( $w_8$ ) Time afforded by the academic calendar as determined by the University
		( $w_9$ ) Time according to the students' time availability

Goal	CRITERIA (General Factors)	SUB-CRITERIA (Specific Factors)
Collaboration criteria in training for development	<i>Contents</i> ( $w_{cont}$ )	( $w_1$ ) Most contents form part of NGO knowledge and work.
		( $w_2$ ) Most contents form part of the graduate or post-graduate curriculum
		( $w_3$ ) Most contents are transmitted using motivational, activating and participatory methodologies
	<i>Actors' participation during the activity</i> ( $w_{part}$ )	( $w_4$ ) The NGO staff stimulates group dynamics, and trains and accompanies educational activity
		( $w_5$ ) Teachers stimulate group dynamics, and train and accompany educational activity
		( $w_6$ ) Students get actively involved in the development and implementation of the educational activity
	<i>Time</i> ( $w_{tim}$ )	( $w_7$ ) Timetables and timing established by the NGO
		( $w_8$ ) Time according to the academic calendar determined by the University
		( $w_9$ ) The training activity offered is inserted in the students' class time
Collaboration criteria in research and development	<i>Themes</i> ( $w_{them}$ )	( $w_1$ ) Most themes are part of the work areas and interest of the NGO
		( $w_2$ ) Most themes are consistent with University lines of research
		( $w_3$ ) Most themes are in the interest of citizens from the North and/or South
	<i>Actors' participation during the activity</i> ( $w_{part}$ )	( $w_4$ ) The NGO leads the research team.
		( $w_5$ ) The University leads the research team.
		( $w_6$ ) The citizens of the North and/or South contribute to the process with knowledge and reflection.
	<i>Time</i> ( $w_{tim}$ )	( $w_7$ ) In time for NGOs to make use of results.
		( $w_8$ ) In time for the University to make use of results.
		( $w_9$ ) In time for the results to be released among citizens of the North and South.

Elaborated by the authors based on Rico (2012) and Gonzalez et al. (2012).

The data obtained in the survey were treated with special software called “Expert Choice“, specifically designed for collaborative decision-making through AHP. This program assigned weights to the general factors (criterion) and the specific ones (sub-criterion).

### **Sample of Experts**

The selected sample equally represented the two actors involved in GCE in the university space: NGOs and University itself. It consisted of 21 and 24 experts for each of the three different analyses conducted, which means 66 surveys in total. Experts came from different Spanish regions and were fair representation of the NGO sector and the University. 92.4% of the respondents were professionals with over five years' experience in GCE in the University.

## **Results and discussion: prioritizing collaboration criteria in Global Citizenship Education**

The results are shown below for each GCE dimension. They show the importance of all the factors selected in order to define a GCE activity in collaboration between NGO and University. This can be seen in the results (cf., Tables 2, 3 and 4); because none of them received a value of total utility less than 1%.

### **Awareness-raising**

Among the three general factors defined for awareness-raising activities, the cluster most valued by the experts was that which deals with the "actors' participation in follow-up", which represented 45.3% of the total utility derived from all the criteria. The next most valued clusters were those dealing with the definition of "contents" at 32.5%, and the definition of "time" at 22.2% (Table 2). As can be observed in awareness-raising activities, the experts emphasized the importance of defining the actors' participation during follow-up, under the impression that the fulfilling of this factor creates conditions for carrying out the other criteria.

The experts stressed that although these activities were of short duration, the University must give continuity to the process once launched (Table 2). So, regarding the weights for the sub-criteria (Normalized Local Weights), the idea most highly valued was that "the University must offer ways to continue the process after the Awareness-raising activity" (19.6% of total utility). At this point, the experts stressed the responsibility held by the "University support structures" (associations, foundations, etc.) in this respect. It is important for the University to recognize its role in this point because this is probably part of the complementary strength (Camino and Heidrich, 2003).

**Table 2.** Results of collaboration criteria in awareness-raising

	Global Weights	Local Weights	Normalized Local Weights
<i>Contents</i>	→ $w_{cont} = 32.5\%$ →	$w_1 = 37.3\%$	$w_1^* = 14.0\%$
		$w_2 = 31.9\%$	$w_2^* = 12.0\%$
		$w_3 = 30.9\%$	$w_3^* = 11.6\%$
<i>Actors' participation (follow-up)</i>	→ $w_{part} = 45.3\%$ →	$w_4 = 26.1\%$	$w_4^* = 10.9\%$
		$w_5 = 46.6\%$	$w_5^* = 19.6\%$
		$w_6 = 27.3\%$	$w_6^* = 11.5\%$
<i>Time</i>	→ $w_{tim} = 22.2\%$ →	$w_7 = 16.8\%$	$w_7^* = 3.4\%$
		$w_8 = 46.9\%$	$w_8^* = 9.6\%$
		$w_9 = 36.4\%$	$w_9^* = 7.4\%$

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Other elements that the experts identified as being important refer to the content of these activities that “must be part of NGO knowledge and work” (14.0% of total utility) and “must form part of the graduate or postgraduate curriculum” (12.0% of total utility). Thus, both actors must have previous common knowledge for optimum results, which suggests that it would be recommendable to promote collaborative work between the NGO and the University, which are already working along the same lines individually.

**Training for development**

Of the three cluster factors selected for training for development activities, the collaboration in defining “the actors’ participation during the activity” was the cluster with the highest value, representing 50.9% of the total utility derived from all the criteria, followed by the cluster that deals with the definition of “contents” at 34.2%, and definition of “time” at 14.9%. The value obtained in “actors’ participation during the activity” was high because the experts thought that the actors must define, above all, their participation in GCE activities, because doing so guarantees their collaboration in defining the “contents” and “time”. The final results are shown in Table 3.

In these kinds of activities, the experts noted that the collaboration factors must serve to secure students’ participation (Table 3). So, among the sub-criteria (Normalized Local Weights), the respondents assigned the highest value to “students getting actively involved in the development and implementation of the educational activity” (26.1% of the total social utility). These activities should also promote “contents transmission using motivational, active and participatory

methodologies” (17.5% of the total social utility). Another issue identified as an important criterion by the experts is related to the University curricula, because the statement “most contents must form part of the graduate or postgraduate curriculum” was also highly evaluated (13.8% of the total social utility).

**Table 3.** Results of collaboration criteria in training for development

	Global Weights	Local Weights	Normalized Local Weights
<i>Contents</i>	→ $w_{\text{cont}} = 34.2\%$ →	$w_1 = 16.1\%$	$w_1^* = 6.0\%$
		$w_2 = 36.9\%$	$w_2^* = 13.8\%$
		$w_3 = 47.0\%$	$w_3^* = 17.5\%$
<i>Actors' participation (during activity)</i>	→ $w_{\text{part}} = 50.9\%$ →	$w_4 = 14.8\%$	$w_4^* = 6.9\%$
		$w_5 = 29.0\%$	$w_5^* = 13.5\%$
		$w_6 = 56.2\%$	$w_6^* = 26.1\%$
<i>Time</i>	→ $w_{\text{tim}} = 14.9\%$ →	$w_7 = 13.0\%$	$w_7^* = 2.1\%$
		$w_8 = 47.4\%$	$w_8^* = 7.7\%$
		$w_9 = 39.6\%$	$w_9^* = 6.4\%$

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Expert utility derived from the three most important concepts (involvement of students, 26.1%; participatory methodologies, 17.5%; contents part of the curriculum, 13.8%) represents over half the total utility. The first two results are consistent with one of the main GCE interests since, according to the Spanish Cooperation Strategy on Development Education, “Training for development must be a participative process, where the students are active and responsible subjects” (Ortega, 2008, pp.20). However, in the third one, the experts stressed academic parameters and, therefore, the role of the University. This last result notes the need for the nonprofit sector to recognize the expertise and knowledge of the University in these kinds of activities, as asserted by Macduff and Netting (2000).

### Research and development

Among the cluster of factors selected for research and development, the two most valued by the experts were those that deal with defining “themes” (45.4% of total utility) and the definition of “actors’ participation during the activity” (44.4% of total utility). The “time” factor in this case was almost not taken into account by comparison (10.2% of total utility). In contrast to previous results, collaboration in “defining the actors’ participation during the activity” in this dimension was not the main criterion assigned by the experts. Thus, they chose collaboration in



defining research content first because they thought that a broad consensus in contents must be reached first in this dimension (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Results of collaboration criteria in research and development

	Global Weights	Local Weights	Normalized Local Weights
<i>Themes</i>	→ $w_{cont} = 45.4%$ →	}	$w_1 = 31.7%$ $w_1^* = 14.3%$
			$w_2 = 23.6%$ $w_2^* = 10.7%$
			$w_3 = 44.7%$ $w_3^* = 20.2%$
<i>Actors' participation (during activity)</i>	→ $w_{part} = 44.4%$ →	}	$w_4 = 26.4%$ $w_4^* = 12.3%$
			$w_5 = 42.3%$ $w_5^* = 19.7%$
			$w_6 = 31.3%$ $w_6^* = 14.6%$
<i>Time</i>	→ $w_{tim} = 10.2%$ →	}	$w_7 = 27.2%$ $w_7^* = 2.2%$
			$w_8 = 17.6%$ $w_8^* = 1.4%$
			$w_9 = 55.3%$ $w_9^* = 4.5%$

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In these kinds of activities, the experts assigned the highest value to the fact that research activity takes citizenship into account. So, among the sub-criteria (Normalized Local Weights), the respondents assigned the highest value to the following statements: “most themes must be of interest for citizens of the North and the South” (20.2% of total utility) and “citizens of the North and the South must contribute with knowledge and reflection to the whole process” (14.6%). These results are fully consistent with the literature in GCE that holds that Research and development must be achieved mainly through Research into Participative Action (Ortega, 2008; Celorio and López de Munain, 2007). Another issue highly rated by the experts was the significant role played by the University in these activities, so the statement “the University must lead the research team” was highly valued (19.7%). Here there is a clear division of roles according to the previous experience of the actors (Macduff and Netting, 2000). Although the University has a leading role in research activity, according to experts the nonprofit sector must be consulted. In this sense, the experts also assigned a high score to the claim “themes must be part of NGO work areas and interest” (14.3%).

## **Conclusions**

This article has presented a way in which to use expert criteria to obtain the key elements that enhance collaboration between NGO and University in GCE activities in Spain.

These findings point to the need to view GCE activities as part of a larger process, consisting of previous stages leading to enhance stakeholders' participation, as well as institutional recognition and, later, the last stages to ensure the continuity of the process. NGO and University must previously design all these stages, not only the pedagogical or methodological aspects of the activity in question.

Another important finding is the importance of encouraging partnerships between the University and NGOs working in the same line. In this sense, e.g., NGOs that work with professional affiliations like "Veterinarians Without Borders" or "Doctors Without Borders" would find it logical and positive to collaborate with veterinary and medical schools, respectively.

All of these criteria shared by NGOs and University experts play a central role in defining a plan to implement Global Citizenship Education dimensions in the University, a plan that allows for collaboration "based on the differences" between institutions and that makes good use of the resources and abilities of the different stakeholders involved.

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