

## SPAIN [3] - 2013

### EL HIERRO. COMPETENCES FOR LIFE: SCHOOL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

#### A. BASIC INFORMATION

<b>Country:</b>	Spain
<b>Title of initiative:</b>	<p>[ES] <i>El Hierro. Competencias para la vida: Escuela, Familia y Comunidad</i></p> <p>[EN] El Hierro. Competences for life: School, Family and Community</p>
<b>Coordinator/ Organization:</b>	<p><b>Organisation of the initiative:</b> The Island Council for Education and Culture, composed of representatives from all schools, family associations and the relevant politicians from the 3 councils and the Cabildo (local administration) of the island.</p> <p><b>General coordination of the initiative:</b> Araceli Castañeda, Inspection of Education Services.</p> <p><b>Pedagogical coordination of the initiative:</b> the Atlantida Innovation Group and the Valverde Teacher Training Centre.</p>
<b>Key competences addressed:</b>	<p>This initiative addresses the contextualisation in El Hierro of the eight key competences specified by the Organic Law of Education (LOE, 2006) for students at various educational stages, following the relevant European recommendations:</p> <p>[ES] <i>comunicación lingüística</i> [EN] linguistic communication          [ES] <i>matemática</i> [EN] mathematics          [ES] <i>conocimiento e interacción con el mundo físico</i>          [EN] awareness of and interaction with the physical world          [ES] <i>tratamiento de la información y competencia digital</i>          [EN] information processing and digital competence          [ES] <i>competencia social y ciudadana</i>          [EN] social competence and citizenship          [ES] <i>competencia cultural y artística</i>          [EN] cultural and artistic competence          [ES] <i>aprender a aprender</i> [EN] learning to learn          [ES] <i>autonomía personal</i> [EN] personal autonomy.</p> <p>In a complementary way, the initiative also addresses the development of professional competences and civic responsibility regarding obligations and rights related to the development of competences.</p> <p>A synergy of inter-connected actions between educational, family and municipal institutions in El Hierro (the Canary Islands) has facilitated the development of this complete group of competences.</p>

<p><b>Type of initiative and channels used for implementation</b> (e.g. curriculum reform introduced through legislation etc.)</p>	<p>The core of this initiative is focused on the curricular integration of key competences, with the intention of specifying, at a local level, the curricular design of the LOE. Its implementation is a result of a proposal made by the Inspection of Education Services of El Hierro and the team of head teachers of schools, to continue with the approach that had been prepared by the Atlantida Innovation Group with the support of the Department for Education of the Canary Islands. Therefore, in 2009 an ad hoc educational guidance service was created that, as the community as a whole grew, led to the creation of the post of Consultant of the Island Council for Education and Culture.</p>
<p><b>Partners:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Design and guidance of the initiative:</b> the Atlantida Innovation Group (headed by José Moya within the teachers sector and by Florencio Luengo within the family and community sector) with the support of representatives from the University of La Laguna (Víctor Hernández) and the La Gomera Teacher Training Centre (Nieves Alcalá), among others.</li> <li>• <b>Organisation and setting up of the initiative:</b> the Island Council for Education and Council of El Hierro, presided over by the Inspection of Education Services and with the participation of teachers' representatives, school head teachers, parents' associations, the Cabildo, councils, teacher training centres, educational guidance teams, cultural centres and the Atlantida Group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Scope:</b> (student/teacher/school level; local/regional/national)</p>	<p>The initiative has been implemented locally: on the island of El Hierro, the Canary Islands (approximately 10,000 inhabitants). The intention is to involve all students through the actions of teachers and families.</p>
<p><b>Learning context:</b> (formal or non-formal)</p>	<p>The following learning contexts have been identified: Ongoing teacher training processes (formal education) and, in a complementary way, training sessions for families and representatives with political responsibility (informal and non-formal education).</p>
<p><b>School education level/s:</b> (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)</p>	<p>Primary and secondary (compulsory education in Spain) and nursery (non-compulsory education).</p>
<p><b>Target groups:</b></p>	<p>The initiative is aimed at the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers from all schools (approximately 125), coordinated by their respective management teams and the Inspection of Education Services.</li> <li>• Representatives from family associations and from the general community.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Time frame:</b> (start and end date)</p>	<p>Start: October 2009 End: June 2013.</p>
<p><b>Relevant links:</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/cep_hierro/">www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/cep_hierro/</a> Valverde Teacher Training Centre <a href="mailto:acaspadh@gobiernodecanarias.org">acaspadh@gobiernodecanarias.org</a> Inspection of Education Services <a href="http://www.proyectoatlantida.es">www.proyectoatlantida.es</a> Material from the Atlantida Group about El Hierro and products</p>

## B. SUMMARY

All of the teachers on the island of El Hierro, the Canaries, followed a training process based on the inclusion of key competences in curriculum practices. This process, supported by the hard work of the educational supervision service and following the approach of the Atlantida model (see the **Case Study** presented by Spain), made it possible to identify major changes in the development of competences by students.

Based on these achievements in a population of approximately 10,000, a greater level of integration was sought for competences in children and young adults through the joint action of all the organisations in the educational community (schools, family associations, three councils and the Cabildo) and, consequently, a strategy that was consistent with this approach was designed. This was how the Island Council for Education and Culture came about. This organisation, with the objective of developing the *COMPETENCES FOR LIFE: School, Family and Community* project in turn generated conditions so that the community as a whole could design a draft of the *Citizenship Charter of Competences for Life* with the fundamental objective of establishing guidelines, rules and conditions that would promote sustainability and the educational and cultural improvement of the island. Various projects or teaching units in schools feed back into this process, as well as other complementary initiatives within the family or social sector.

### TO FIND OUT MORE:

[www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/cep\\_hierro/](http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/cep_hierro/) Valverde Teacher Training Centre

[acaspadh@gobiernodecanarias.org](mailto:acaspadh@gobiernodecanarias.org) Inspection of Education Services

[www.proyectoatlantida.es](http://www.proyectoatlantida.es). Atlantida material about El Hierro and products of the joint plan

## C. IN DEPTH INFORMATION

### Rationale/contextual background/motivation for introducing the initiative/reform:

The island of El Hierro was designated a biosphere reserve by UNESCO in January 2000, a situation that has motivated its institutions and inhabitants to conduct educational projects about environmental sustainability. Its educational community had previously carried out several innovation processes. The project *Competences for Life: School, Family and Community* was born within this context of experiences, with the objective of generating an alternative practice to the objective presented by the European Union regarding competences based on the DeSeCo report, which was incorporated in Spanish legislation via the LOE.

This initiative is based on the theoretical-methodological proposal that, in relation to the curricular integration of key competences at five levels, is provided by the Atlantida Innovation Group with the backing of the Secretariat of Education for the Ministry of Education (under Alejandro Tiana's team) and the support of the Department for Education of the Canary Islands (with the backing of Isaac Godoy). The first work for this proposal led to training experiences in various locations on the Canary Islands (seminars in La Laguna and Telde, 2006/08), and in Zaragoza (2008/09) and Huelva-Extremadura (2009/10). In 2009 the *Competences for Life* initiative began on the island of El Hierro with the intention of establishing shared reflection between schools, families and the community that would help to define the key competence practices to guarantee the sustainable development of students in particular and the town in general. To do this, regulated and institutional participative processes were set up, which were also self-managed by various sectors so that they would facilitate educational improvement. Therefore, the initiative was about reconstructing a competence model that would integrate both tradition and the cutting edge on the island, that is, that would recover signs of the island's own identity and that would, at the same time, re-launch its value towards the future through the recognition of advances and risks.

### Objectives:

#### The objective of this initiative is:

- To contextualise, into the community as a whole, the approach that the EU has assumed for key competences that are included in compulsory education curriculums in Spain (through the LOE) and their respective regional specification (in this case, of the Canary Islands).
- To define a public action model that will improve the development of key competences in various educational scopes (formal, non-formal and informal).
- To facilitate reflection and formal educational practice based on the five different levels of curricular integration proposed by the Atlantida Group.
- To define an alternative participative model for the public on the island of El Hierro by proposing an Island Council for Education and Culture that will have different voices representing school, family, cultural and other community sectors for the realisation of the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) for the development of competences for life and for the generation of a Citizenship Charter for the defence of sustainability and the educational and cultural improvement of the island (that would specify rights and obligations).

**Dimensions targeted by the initiative/reform** (e.g. student curriculum, assessment, initial/in-service teacher education, school autonomy etc.):

A specific working plan has been designed for this initiative for the island of El Hierro, which addresses the concept of a “global curriculum” with the participation and commitment of various social sectors (school, family and community), as specified below:

- **School sector.** Analysis of the legislative framework of Spain and its regional curriculum specification (the Canary Islands). Participation by teachers from all the schools on the island.
- **Family sector.** Analysis of the development of competences in family contexts and in various collaborative situations between schools and families. Proposals and actions. Participation by parents’ associations and the island Federation of Parents’ Associations (FAPA).
- **Community sector.** Analysis of the development of competences in various community sectors. Participation by political representatives and officers from three councils and the Cabildo.

**Overall approach** (e.g. holistic – existence of an overarching strategy, or targeted approach focusing on a specific dimension etc.):

The general approach of this initiative is focused on the curricular integration of key competences on five levels:

1. in real classroom situations as the fulfilment of tasks,
2. in curriculum elements as curriculum specification,
3. in methodologies as learning possibilities,
4. in evaluation as the monitoring of the process, and
5. in formal, informal and non-formal education as a vision of the development of competences.

That is, an approach that is certainly holistic insofar as it interconnects key competences with, on one hand, all of the elements of the curriculum, and on the other, with various developmental contexts in an attempt to avoid the linear perspective that was accepted in Spain for the implementation of previous educational reforms, including the Organic Law for the General Organisation of the Educational System (LOGSE 1990), in which the school curriculum values were accepted across the board. In this initiative, the inclusion of families and other members of the community with, among other points, joint responsibility for curriculum specification, guarantees its global and integrative vision. The actions of the Island Council for Education and Culture on El Hierro support this perspective.

## Detailed explanation of the key competence/s concerned:

The identity of the *Competences for Life: School, Family and Community* initiative is defined in the local contextualisation into the island of El Hierro of the key competences proposed by Spanish legislation for compulsory education (LOE, 2006) and its effect on the dynamic of the community as a whole. These competences are: 1) linguistic communication, 2) mathematics, 3) awareness of and interaction with the physical world, 4) information processing and digital competence, 5) social competence and citizenship, 6) cultural and artistic competence, 7) learning to learn, and 8) personal autonomy. In a complementary way, the initiative also addresses the development of professional competences and civic responsibility regarding rights and obligations related to the development of competences, these being understood as “for life”.

## Specific subjects concerned or cross-curricular approach:

This initiative includes various lines of action, assuming that they interact with each other in relation to the development of competences: a) basic lines of action by students, b) teaching lines of action by teachers and family members, and c) community lines of action by all those involved in ensuring that the community is competent and can be sustainable. That is, this initiative has meant the pedagogical development of the natural leaders of the community (teachers, family and municipal agents), a situation that has made it necessary to stimulate a process of pedagogical actions and reflections with the intention of preparing discourses, with the development of competences being at the core of any improvement.

**How the initiative/reform is being implemented** (e.g. process followed, political commitment, consultation with stakeholders and their respective roles, incentives for stakeholders, dedicated funding, teaching material, definition of goals and standards, assessment and evaluation mechanisms, impact on teacher training/professional development and school practices/leadership, scaling-up approach, based on research/evidence? etc.):

The phases of the initiative that have already been developed make it possible to see a process in progress with clear perspectives, as listed below:

### **2010-2011 Academic year: Awareness phase**

In this phase, information was published about the initiative, including its action plan, and the three working groups (school, family and community) were organised in various towns on the island. The first projects were prepared with the school and family groups, emphasising the advances made by the first group regarding the preparation of draft curriculums. The Island Council for Education and Culture was established and the initiative was presented to the Ministry of Education.

### **2011-12 Academic year: Training phase**

In this phase the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was carried out on the island, in an adaptation of problem solving regarding the development of competences for life. Each of the three groups made progress in their respective activities and reflections, especially the family group. The Island Council for Education and Culture provided support by taking the first initiatives and coordinating the preparation of integrated teaching units and various community projects.

## 2012-13 Academic year: Consolidation phase

The Citizenship Charter was initiated in this phase based on the contributions from the family group and preparing the first ten rights and obligations for the defence of sustainability and the educational and cultural improvement of the island. In this way the Island Council for Education and Culture has been strengthened, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Competences for Life* conference organised, presenting the KeyCoNet initiative and the possible dissemination of this experience, among other aspects.

## Present stage/phase of implementation:

The present stage of the initiative is as follows:

- The teacher groups have made progress in using the integrated curricular model of competences (top-down training via representatives from each teaching team), although they require more time for practice and reflection in order to consolidate it.
- The family groups have a bank of activities and a proposal for actions to be developed in partnership with schools, it being necessary to continue with the improvement plan in this regard.
- The groups of various community institutions have an initial project to improve the design of their cultural and educational programmes through projects based on the development of competences. They also require continuity in order to consolidate certain aspects: the training of experts and monitors regarding the incorporation of the competence approach into extracurricular activities and into the interaction between these activities and classroom activities and the specification of joint projects shared between schools, families and various cultural institutions.

In summary, all of the groups have a structure for participation, the Island Council for Education and Culture, as well as a *Citizenship Charter* that provides legislative guidelines regarding the participation of schools, families and the community as a whole in order to make progress in the plan of commitment to the sustainability and the educational and cultural improvement of the island.

In contrast, we should state that there is a certain lack of involvement both in terms of material, human and financial support from external entities to this initiative, which endangers its continuity as a meaningful initiative.

**Pedagogical issues** (issues related to how key competences are being taught to students and how are teachers being prepared to teach them):

Listed below are some of the pedagogical proposals that have helped teachers, parents and the various community agents develop an alternative, based around their respective experience of competences to teach children and young adults within the three sectors through a competence-based approach:

1. Understanding the proposal of key competences recommended by the European Union and integrated into the LOE, within the context of social and cultural changes.
2. Recognising the presence of key competences in the current classroom curriculum.
3. Analysing how to integrate competences into the current classroom situation.
4. Carrying out a curriculum specification, relating the various curriculum elements to key competences.
5. Defining teaching methodologies/models and their relationship with key competences.
6. Analysing how to evaluate from a key competence perspective.
7. Preparation of an integrated teaching unit (ITU) model, plus several examples.
8. Assessing the current situation of the educational project of the school and the possible consequences that the incorporation of key competences could have.
9. Designing the improvement plan for schools, which will give competences an essential value.
10. Defining a community reflection model including participative methodologies, about problem solving for the island (SWOT adaptation), a search for shared alternatives and legislation or a charter that can facilitate this, with projects that involve the three sectors (school, family and community) in one way or another.

It should be noted that the resolutions of these proposals had different intensities and perspectives, depending on the groups that carried them out (teachers, family members, monitors of extra-curricular activities etc.) but that, in any case, they always represented the result of a cooperative process.



## What works well (to identify enablers):

It could be considered that the following aspects have facilitated the specification of the defined objectives in the *Competences for Life: School, Family and Community initiative*:

- The teacher training actions, with the support of the Inspection of Education Services, promoted the preparation of curriculum specifications and teaching units integrating key competences (the former at an institutional level and the latter at classroom level).
- The creation of the Island Council for Education and Culture, as a self-management organisation, made it possible to define a plan for sustainability and the educational and cultural improvement of the island with the support of key competences.
- Work in the family sector and in the community, although still in its early days, is driving the first projects.

This group of actions is expressed in the specification of two cases, which are certainly original and interrelated:

1. the SWOT analysis of El Hierro.
2. the *Citizenship Charter* specifying the rights and obligations of the inhabitants of El Hierro for the development of competences for life. The preparation of this document will make it possible for the current draft to take shape and consistency in accordance with the improvement plans initiated by each sector (school, family and community) or as a whole.

Below is an example of the proposals put forward in these documents, which has been taken from the draft of the *Citizenship Charter*: (see the complete document on the links online indicated in the Additional Information section of this case note).

### CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCES FOR LIFE

I S L A N D O F E L H I E R R O	SUB-TOPIC Analysis Competences...	Our strengths and weaknesses  SWOT ANALYSIS	Proposal of regulations and principles to be included in the CITIZENSHIP CHARTER Competences	ITU/Project Schools Ideas	Family and com- munity plan Ideas
		<b>The environment and sustainability</b>  3, 5, 8...	1.-Improve commitment to a sustainable island.  2.-Use the envi- ronment and our cultural herit- age as the basis for the island's identity.  3.-Stimulation of environmental/ civic regulations in the three sectors (school, family and com- munity).	The people of El Hierro and its visitors commit themselves to the defence of the environment and the cul- tural heritage, through respon- sible use of the cultural herit- age and respect for the environ- ment. 3.6	ITU: responsi- ble consumption and recycling of materials.

## Challenges and how these are being addressed (to identify obstacles and solutions):

Clear progress has been made in this initiative, although it has been necessary to overcome major challenges, as listed below. If this situation continues, the initiative could continue to make progress:

1. The decision to integrate key competences as the central hub of curriculum planning for each school has required two types of support: a) internal, represented by the management team, and b) external, provided by the institution that organises and endorses the proposal as a whole (in this case, the Inspection of Education Services).
2. The teacher training and evaluation process in order to strengthen commitment to the criteria-based evaluation of students, as well as the design of contextualised plans, has been facilitated through the support of families and the community.
3. The *Citizenship Charter* represents, within the framework of the Island Council for Education and Culture, an innovative context for the development of projects based on the development of competences. Its beginning in El Hierro has meant a complex integrating process of proposals and actions by the various agents (schools, families and the community). It is believed that its consolidation and continuity will depend, given the voluntary participation that these actions require, on the convergence of a set of circumstances: a) on one hand, the degree of commitment of all those involved to the project itself, and on the other, the organising institutions (in this case, the Inspection of Education Services, management teams, family associations and responsible politicians on the island), b) recognition of this commitment by all the sectors and authorities involved, and c) having the material, human and financial resources provided by the organisations and administrations.

## Monitoring & evaluation so far/planned, and which methods are being used (e.g. internal/external quality assurance, inspection, national assessments, international tests, self-evaluation, formative or summative evaluations):

The training of teachers, families and other social agents, focused on the dynamic of conferences, as happened in this initiative, now makes it possible to introduce improvements during its process. Also, the participative method used in the Island Council for Education and Culture makes it possible to adapt the actions to the proposals put forward, taking the data from the SWOT analysis as a reference. This meant that, to carry out the necessary improvements and adjustments, continuous monitoring was organised of all occurrences in said contexts of training and participation, triangulating the information provided by the various agents through: a) evaluation surveys at the end of each training session, b) records of participants' reflections about the improvement of the process, and c) evaluations in sessions about the level of satisfaction.

## Impact (e.g. any planned impact assessment?):

Various pieces of evidence allow us to consider the impact and influence that the initiative has had as a whole and in relation to each of its actions, as listed below:

- In relation to the work carried out by the school groups: The Department for Education of the Canary Islands expressed its approval and gave its support to the specific designed proposal for curricular integration and to the curriculum specification prepared with the support of families and other community institutions.
- In relation to the work carried out by the family groups: Their cooperative participation methodology is used as a reference for other organisations with similar objectives, such as the Spanish Confederation of Parents' Associations (CEAPA) nationally, and some of its productions comprise part of the calendar for the implementation of key competences that this institution has been preparing for several years in order to support this process in Spain.
- In relation to the work carried out by the community groups: This is a pioneering experience in Spain in terms of the large variety of alternatives regarding the inclusion of key competences in formal, informal and non-formal education, which promotes democratic participation and joint responsibility between institutions to meet various community objectives.

As a whole, the achievements of the three groups within the framework of the Island Council for Education and Culture are, despite being embryonic projects, a reference of good civic functioning for other towns that wish to generate social commitment within the implementation process of key competences. This is also true of the *Citizenship Charter*, insofar as it give information about the objectives of this initiative.

## Communication of the initiative/dissemination of outputs and activities:

The Island Council for Education and Culture, and the Atlantida Innovation Group disseminate the characteristics and the scope of this initiative in various forums. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> “Competences for Life” conference, held in El Hierro on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013, various members of each of the three groups that promote this initiative (family, school and community in general) presented their productions and their evaluations of their work. There is a summary of the final days of the conference.

## Next steps/follow-up:

The continuity of the initiative is aimed at the consolidation of all the lines of work developed to date. To do this, it is necessary to give feedback to external support organisations and to also increase the capability for self-management of the Island Council for Education and Culture so that it can lead when meeting new challenges.

## Additional information:

The following materials are available online:

1. Example of the *Citizenship Charter*.
2. Example of an ITU for formal education.
3. Example of a workshop with families.
4. Example of a workshop with leaders from the community.
5. Other materials regarding key competences, provided by the Atlantida Innovation Group.

Valverde Teacher Training Centre: [www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/cep\\_hierro/](http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/educacion/cep_hierro/)

Inspection of Education Services: [acaspadh@gobiernodecanarias.org](mailto:acaspadh@gobiernodecanarias.org)

Atlantida (national): [www.proyectoatlantida.es](http://www.proyectoatlantida.es)