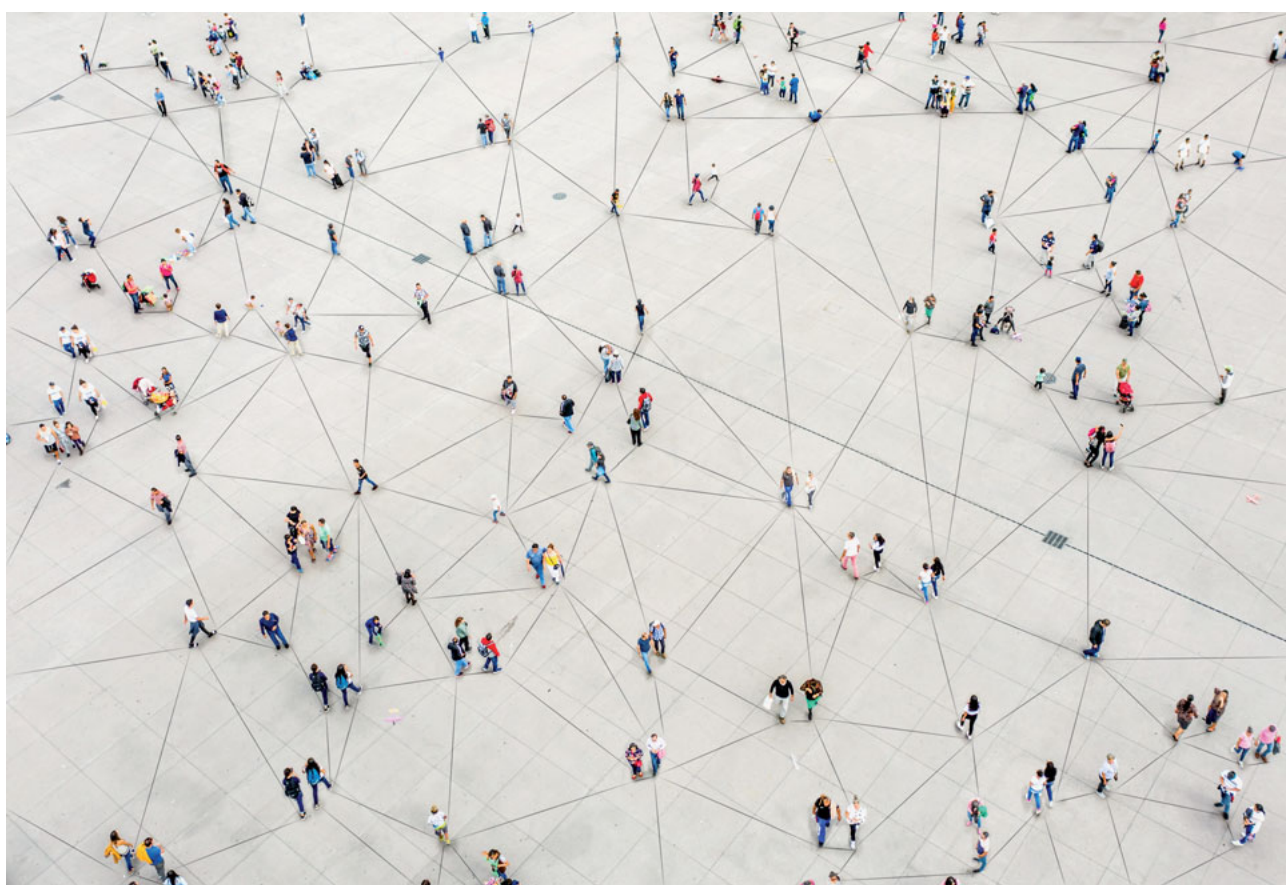


Mapping Non-Formal Civic Education in Spain



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MAPPING NON-FORMAL CIVIC EDUCATION IN SPAIN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In collaboration with:



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MAPPING NON-FORMAL CIVIC EDUCATION IN SPAIN
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Fundación Europea Sociedad y Educación (EFSE)

IN COLLABORATION WITH
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Edition 2023

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José Abascal, 57 - 28003 Madrid
www.sociedadeducacion.org

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FULL REPORT IN SPANISH

ISBN: 978-84-09-51379-6

Depósito legal: M-17599-2023

ABSTRACT

This executive summary is a synthesis of the report *Mapping non-formal civic education in Spain*¹, a novel study, probably the first to address a classification of this nature. The European Foundation Society and Education, which was responsible for the research, has relied on a solvent research team specialized in qualitative analysis in collaboration with Porticus, a global philanthropic organization.

The implementation of this project is a concrete example of how many initiatives in the field of non-formal education favor the development of civic competences. The authors of the study have created an original work, using the technique of social mapping, by which they draw up a map of civic associations that they classify and analyze and whose activities they order by areas of work, by the type of civic competence they promote and by the plausible effects they generate in the innovation and quality of democracy of our country. In addition, the study is accompanied by an online

dashboard that allows the reader to become familiar with the main data, categories and taxonomies defined by the research team.

The mapping analysis, the main section of this study, is based on information obtained from 156 institutions. It is preceded by two general research frameworks, one theoretical and the other methodological. The report then provides the results of ten in-depth interviews and four case studies, synthesizing the judgments, thoughts, perceptions and opinions of the people involved in the research topic. Finally, the section devoted to conclusions and recommendations, the main synthesis of this summary, describes the state-of-the-art study and invites others to carry out future work for a better understanding of the role of civic education in non-formal settings.

¹ Full report available in Spanish:
https://www.sociedadeducacion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/CARTOGRAFIA_IG_WEB.pdf

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the elaboration of this social mapping and within the framework of this project, the notion of non-formal civic education is understood as those structured activities and programs organized by non-regulated educational institutions that favor the acquisition of civic competences. Thus, in order to be considered non-formal civic education, such activities must meet a threefold requirement: first, it is considered non-formal when it is carried out for the most part — there may be mixed formulas — by a civil society organization or a public body other than the school or university². The second requirement is that the activity carried out must be of a structured nature. Finally, it must have an educational purpose and, specifically, an educational purpose referring to matters concerning citizenship.

In line with the above, a "civic association" would be an organization that carries out at least one non-formal civic education activity according to the proposed definition. Thus, of equal interest are the specific activities carried out and the institutional context in which such organizations operate. The present work considers both aspects, which makes it a novel and relevant contribution.

FRAMEWORK METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted to carry out this project is of a qualitative nature. It consisted of a 156 non-governmental organizations' mapping study located in Spain, 4 descriptive case studies for which the information collected was expanded and reflected upon (with special attention to the most relevant non-formal civic education programs), and 10 interviews with the aim of delving into the type of work they carry out and the challenges they face for its implementation.

The methodological tools used have been descriptive (documentary analysis and interviews), i.e., they seek to delimit the scope and audience of the actions they carry out; the areas of work related to citizenship they address; the type of non-formal civic education activities they develop; and the impact they generate in terms of fostering civic competences of individuals.

² Keep in mind that for this study we have only analyzed what comprises the third sector sphere in Spain (associations, interest groups, NGOs, etc.), leaving out public intervention programs (state, regional, local) that could also be classified as non-formal civic education.

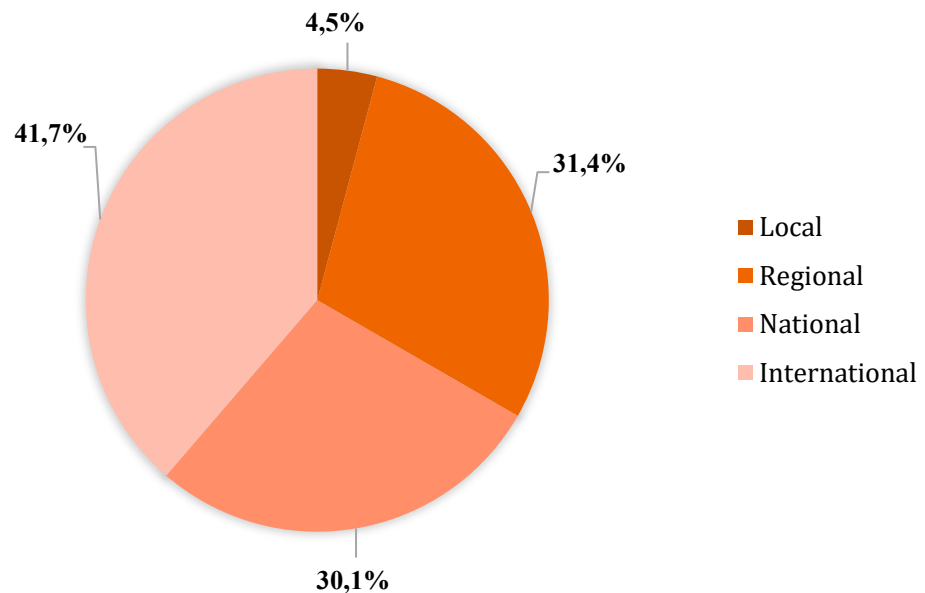
Exploratory techniques have been applied to inquire which good practices can be considered as such in the field of non-formal civic education; and, finally, evaluative and prospective analyses were addressed on the challenges and opportunities faced by civic associations when carrying out non-formal civic education actions.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main findings of the mapping study are summarized as follows:

1. 41.7% of the mapped organizations carry out at least one project that transcends national borders. This suggests that there is an opportunity to promote cooperation between organizations as they internationalize and to access international funding for such projects, something that did not occur so often just a few years ago.

Figure 1. Scope of the institutions studied.

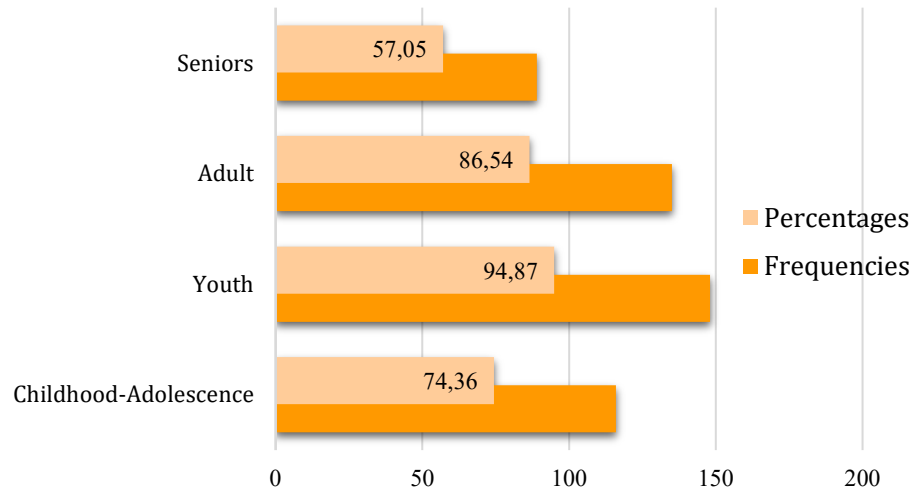


Source: own elaboration.

2. Most organizations focus their activity on childhood-adolescence (74%), young people (94%), or adult citizenship (86%). It is emphasized that the

organizations studied look at youth as the main agent of change, hence their interest in promoting the development of civic competences.

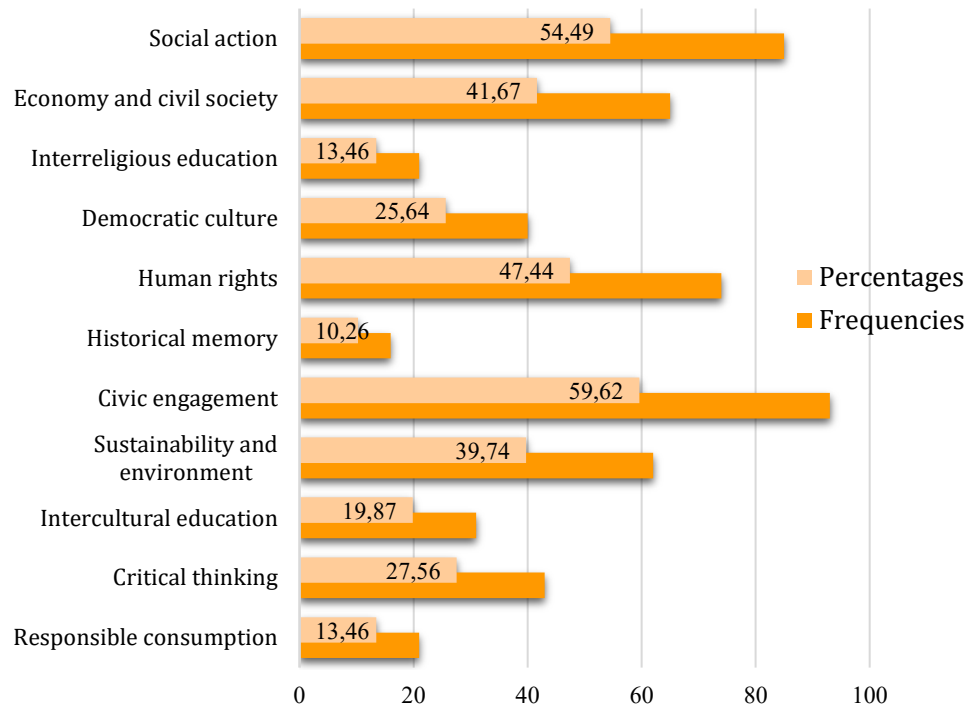
Figure 2. Audience and beneficiaries.



Source: own elaboration.

3. The areas of work most served by organizations are civic engagement (58%) and social action (54%), followed by human rights (47%), economy and civil society (41%) and sustainability and environment (39%). It should be noted that there is a great opportunity to facilitate access and dissemination of the work carried out by the mapped organizations, and thus generate cooperation networks that increase the impact of the actions analyzed. On the other hand, the considerable attention to human rights and environmental issues reinforces the thesis of a greater tendency to pay attention to global issues among such organizations.

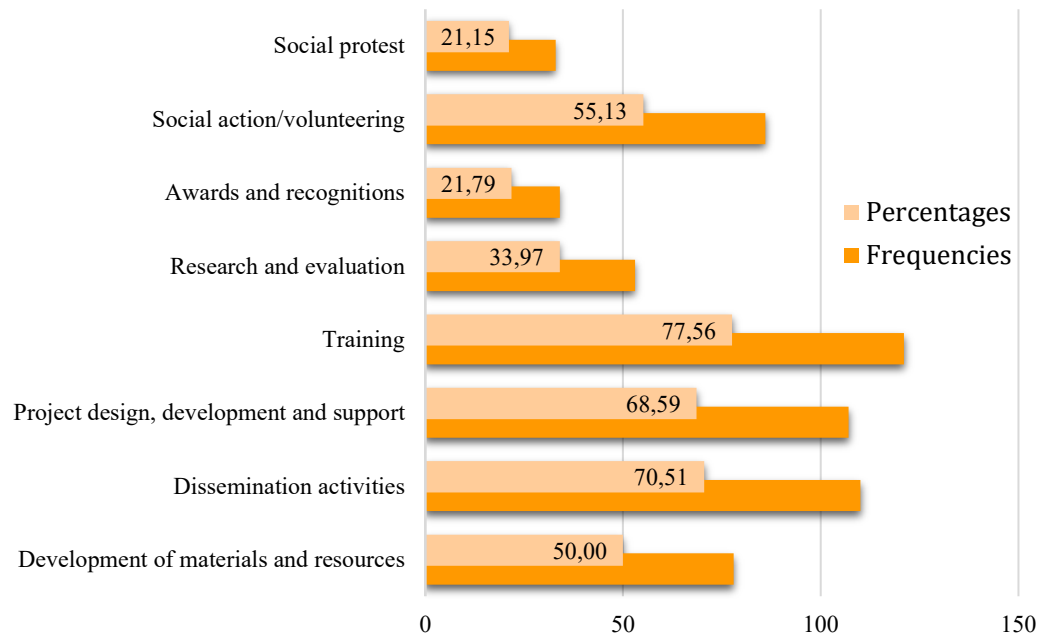
Figure 3. Areas of work.



Source: own elaboration.

4. Training (77%), dissemination (70%), project design, development and support (68%), social action/volunteering (55%) and development of materials and resources (50%) are the most common activities within the work of these associations. This typification of the activities carried out by organizations in the field of civic education is a novel contribution of this study to research in the field of non-formal civic education, that could be useful in defining objectives based on successful outcomes; in addition, it opens a window of opportunity to generate synergies, establish cooperation networks, create joint communication plans and expand not only the scope of the programs but also the resources allocated to them.

Figure 4. Type of activities developed by the institutions.



Source: own elaboration.

5. Opportunities to promote non-formal civic education actions are related to addressing lines of action that constitute a social need. These include recognizing young people as agents of social change, the Covid-19 pandemic as a context for generating new strategic objectives, and the social recognition and prestige of civil society entities.
6. One of the most significant findings regarding the contribution of the mapped programs to the development of individuals' civic competences is the limited presence of evaluations that demonstrate the impact on any of the studied domains of the civic competence. However, it is evident that well-grounded program design (especially if based on scientific research) is the most effective strategy for generating greater impact (top-down actions). This is in addition to the possibility of fostering existing or newly created programs (bottom-up) by offering them specific support.
7. The possibility of promoting a "program of programs" to maximize the impact of civic education activities could facilitate resource acquisition, design

actions with greater international scope, apply impact evaluation techniques, and better raise awareness about the contributions of civic competencies to social progress and development.

Finally, it should be noted that the mapping study carried out has shown numerous examples of how it is possible to develop civic competences, from areas of work and activities as diverse as those considered, which opens the door to future work and exploration. In any case, this work has sought to highlight the magnificent work being done by the organizations studied in a field as important as civic education.

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