

CASE STUDY: CRA EL PIZARRAL. (SIGLO22)



CLIMATOPIA



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Case Study: “Climatopia Project Pilot Testing at CRA El Pizarral”.

The Climatopia project, which aims to develop habits and values related to the fight against climate change in educational environments, has been implemented in Spain through a pilot phase carried out at CRA El Pizarral.

CRA El Pizarral is a rural grouped center located in Segovia (Spain). In Spain, rural grouped centers exist because in some rural areas there are limited numbers of habitants, so students of different ages are grouped together in the same classes. In this case, the CRA El Pizarral is a center divided into three buildings. Each building was in a different village (Juarros de Voltoya, Santa María Real de la Nieva and Bernardos), so the pilots were carried out on three different days.

Participants.

The evaluation involved 89 Spanish participants aged between 3 and 12 years old. The pilots have been divided into three days; each day dedicated to a different village:

- The first day in Bernardos involved 18 students from all grades of Primary Education and 12 students of all ages from Preschool.
- On the second day in Juarros de Voltoya, 8 children from both educational stages took part.
- The last day in Santa María la Real de Nieva, 51 children from 3 to 12 years old participated.

In addition, 12 teachers were involved in this implementation phase. All the teachers were very aware of the fight for the environment and

sustainability, so most of the students were knowledgeable about this topic.

The testing phase.

Throughout the pilot phase, the pupils showed motivation and curiosity about the materials and the subject matter. This was due to a number of factors that contributed to the smooth running of the pilots. The interactivity of some of the materials and the use of ICT made the pupils enthusiastic about the activities and interested in learning more about the project. On the other hand, some materials such as the comic book were attractive to them because they were interested in the way the reading was presented. In addition, the teachers helped a lot in this process by monitoring the students' participation and increasing the motivation of the students in the days before the pilots.

Teachers impact.

After the implementation of the materials created for the Climatopia project, teachers incorporated some of the methodologies proposed by the project in their classrooms. They focused on implementing Education for Sustainable Development in their classrooms thanks to Climatopia's Theoretical and Psychological Framework, where they were also able to use some activities to develop sustainable thinking, such as conducting interviews or talking about change.

On the other hand, although the teachers already had extensive knowledge about climate change issues, the Self-Training Manual helped them to increase their environmental competences in order to be able to transmit this knowledge to their students in a clear way. Other materials, such as the comic book or the simulation and decision-making game,

allowed them to develop new sustainable learning activities related to these resources.

The Climatopia project did not contribute to generate values of respect for the environment, nor to increase the willingness of teachers to educate on sustainability. Teachers already had many competences related to sustainability and the environment. Due to the fact that it is a rural school, they are all aware of this issue. However, the project has helped the teachers to acquire ways of teaching these topics in their classrooms. In other words, through the active methodologies proposed by Climatopia, teachers have greater facilities for their students to acquire and develop different competences for personal and professional development on a permanent basis.

Pupils impact.

The pilots were conducted in different classrooms during the three days of implementation of the materials. In all the classrooms, there was a mix of pupils of different ages, as this is how grouped rural schools work. Therefore, in the pre-school classrooms, the materials were directly related to the school curriculum, as the pupils had worked on some basic concepts such as recycling and pollution. In addition, these pupils were also involved in the projects mentioned above.

In relation to primary school pupils, there was a wide variety of situations. In one of the villages, all pupils were grouped in one class and coincidentally were dealing with climate change topics at the time of the pilots. The materials helped them to review the knowledge they had already acquired and to increase their environmental skills and habits.

On the other hand, in the other two buildings, the primary school pupils were divided into three classrooms: 1st and 2nd grade classroom, 3rd and 4th grade classroom and 5th and 6th grade classroom. The materials presented were directly related to the school curriculum, as all classrooms had already learnt about concepts related to climate change. However, in the classrooms with younger students, the materials served to clarify some concepts as the students had several doubts about them. On the other hand, in the classroom with 5th and 6th grade students, this also allowed them to review the knowledge they already had for an upcoming exam on this topic.

Teachers and students provided positive feedback on the materials developed for teaching about climate change. They highlighted their usefulness and also their direct link to the curriculum, and asked to be able to access the materials for use in their classrooms on a regular basis.

In conclusion, from the implementation of the Climatopia project, students were able to develop different skills such as decision making, respect for the environment, responsible use of resources, critical thinking and decision making. The students showed a positive response to all the activities and materials presented, increasing their awareness of sustainability and care for the environment.

School impact.

As mentioned above, the center already had values in favor of sustainability and care for the environment. The institution participates in different programs and projects that, after the implementation of Climatopia, they decided to give them the greatest possible importance. Some of the programs in which the center participates, related to climate change and nature protection, are:

- The school participates in the Programme for the renaturation and adaptation to climate change of school playgrounds, a programme funded by REACT-EU. [REACT-EU](#) is an initiative that aims to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to prepare for a green, digital and resilient recovery of the economy. Specifically, this programme aims to encourage the development of educational activities outside the classroom, using outdoor spaces as learning scenarios.
- They also collaborate with a company called [TerraCycle](#) that recycles and reuses waste that is not usually recycled and accumulates in landfills. Each school has bins in the classrooms to deposit used items such as pens, markers and liquid paper. At the end of each trimester, the collected waste is weighed and sent to the company TerraCycle, who give a financial reward. The centre donates the money to an association for the rehabilitation of native animals ([GREFA](#)).
- The school has carried out a project together with families to encourage the acquisition of recycling and waste reduction habits. Each classroom has bins to recycle paper-cardboard, organic and plastic waste. Weekly, the older pupils collect these bins and take them to large containers. Each month, the waste in each bin is weighed and the data is recorded. The pupils reflect on the waste generated and how to improve the results each month.

In addition, the school carries out other strategies related to the environment. CRA El Pizarral is now participating in an eTwinning project to promote environmental care through the resolution of challenges and videoconferences with other countries. Families are also collecting plastic caps to facilitate access to medical treatment for children with severe illnesses.

Therefore, the review phase of the Climatopia project allowed CRA El Pizarral to take the projects and programs in which they participate out of the classroom and beyond the educational community. Based on the materials presented, the teachers carried out different ecological workshops and proposed different ways of learning about the environment.

As mentioned above, one of the school's values is the need to care for the environment and to create a sustainable mindset in its students. Therefore, the Climatopia project has allowed students to learn why they participate in these projects and what is the need to take care of the environment. In addition, the center has promoted some internal programs in which families and students are included so that in community they can develop competencies related to sustainability and, thinking and reflecting on the environment.

Family participation.

The families of the pupils at CRA El Pizarral were already involved in some of the school's activities and projects, such as the collection of rubbish and bottle tops. Some activities developed after the implementation of the project involved families directly. It is essential that families participate in the teaching-learning process of their children and help them to develop their awareness of important social issues such as the environment and climate change.

Educative innovation.

The Climatopia project uses methodologies that put students at the centre of learning. The activities proposed by the project are carried out in such a way that the student is the protagonist of the teaching-learning process through practice. This also increases student

motivation and their involvement in increasing their knowledge and skills.

Overall Community Impact.

The Climatopia project aims to act in the educational field, but also seeks to influence the whole community by emphasising the importance of Education for the Development of Sustainability and the fight for the environment. Therefore, by including the participation of families in different activities after the implementation of the project, the project has had a positive impact on the surrounding community. As the school is a rural school, it is easier to influence the community in such a way that the locals are involved in the fight against climate change and develop skills related to sustainability and reflective thinking about the environment.

In this way, Climatopia not only aims to develop environmental care habits and raise awareness about the fight against climate change among pupils. Climatopia aims to help pupils to develop competences and skills for personal and professional development and, in turn, to be able to share the knowledge acquired during the project with their families and colleagues.

For this reason, many of the projects and programmes in which the school participates involve the entire rural community surrounding the school. This is done in order to get everyone actively involved in this issue.

Conclusion.

The implementation phase of the Climatopia project has been successful due to the involvement of all educational agents in the testing process and the later implementation of measures and programmes related to climate change and the environment.

Both teachers and pupils responded positively to all activities and materials presented during the pilots. Moreover, their involvement has gone beyond the moment of the pilots and, the school, teachers and students have developed competences and skills that they have subsequently used in their participation in different environmental programmes and projects.

For all these reasons, the Climatopia pilot at CRA El Pizarral had a positive and enriching impact on the school, teachers, students and the rural community. The results after the pilots show that the implementation of the project allows to raise awareness about the environment and to carry out actions in order to fight against climate change.



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