

*This profile is part of the EU Study on Supporting School Innovation Across Europe. It presents one of the 24 schools in the study, giving an overview of the changes and experiences in that school. Find the rest of the materials from the study at:*

[www.schooleducationgateway.eu/innovation](http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/innovation)

## Integrating key competences into curriculum in the Clara Campoamor Infant and Primary School



### About our school

- ◆ **Location:** Atarfe, Granada
- ◆ **Established:** 2006
- ◆ **Status:** Public school that provides early childhood and primary education for children of 3 to 12 years old (grades 1-6)
- ◆ **Number of pupils:** 229 (in 2016/2017 school year)
- ◆ **Website:** <http://ceipclaracampoamor.esy.es/>
- ◆ **Contact person:** Francisca Higuera Martinez



### Why did we innovate?

The Clara Campoamor school serves as a compensatory education centre (Educación Compensatoria<sup>1</sup>) due to high percentage of children coming from families at a risk of social exclusion. Due to this status, the school receives additional basic financial support from Andalusian government and participates in a number of programmes coordinate between similar centres, aimed at school improvement and innovation. Most of these programmes are driven by the centres themselves, or initiated by the education advisors and the City Council of Granada. To address the needs of the children at the risk of social exclusion, provide equal opportunities for all children, ensure equity and respect for diversity and that all children obtain key competences regardless of their background, the school engaged in a number of innovative projects, designed either by the school or by the state.

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<sup>1</sup> Being a center for Compensatory Education involves financial incentives from the Andalusian government. However, these are minimal. In the year 2015-16 this incentive was 1,800 euros per year.



## What were our innovations?

To achieve its main goal (ensuring that all children gain basic skills and competences), the school has engaged into curriculum innovation and joined the state-run project 'Consolidation of Basic Competences as a central element of the Curriculum (COMBAS)<sup>2</sup>'. In 2009, the school proposed a methodology that would foster the acquisition of competences by substituting conventional subjects with integrated thematic whole-school projects (combining elements from different subjects, such as social and natural sciences with languages and focusing on values (equality, peace education, sustainability, human rights, etc.). In the year 2010-11 the school has been chosen by the Andalusian government to participate in the COMBAS state-wide project, coordinated by the IFIIE (the Institute of Educational Training, Research and Innovation).

The COMBAS Project helps participating schools to integrate key competences into school curriculum through a series of tasks. The project also helps re-design the traditional assessment practices at school, emphasising the importance of formative on-going assessments, including self- and peer-assessments. Every month, the project coordinator of the school participates in the project meetings in Madrid and receives guidance and supervision in the implementation of each of the tasks. To ensure effective implementation of the projects, the school has created a Base Team, composed of teaching staff and other external professionals, which oversees the development of the school education plans in line with the new curricula developments. The school also provides induction and training for the new teachers joining the school, therefore, making this project a whole-school initiative.

The school participates in several other projects, including the Ecoescuelas project (promoting environmental education, such as the recovery and recycling of electrical and electronic waste) and the inter-school projects in the city (CREECE, Escuela Espacio de Paz, Hargüeta project). CREECE focuses on the residents of Atarfe and fosters participation of the local community in school activities, involving families and the local council, the University of Granada, the Teachers' Development Centre of Granada, and NGOs. 'School, a space of peace' (*Escuela Espacio de Paz*) network connects schools that develop peace projects in Andalusia and has 1897 schools working on bi-annual projects focusing on equality and 'learning to live together'. Hargüeta project is a state-run project that unites schools in promoting initiatives in teaching reading, coexistence and science. Participation in projects have promoted students' research activities, work in groups and peer-to-peer collaboration.

The Clara Campoamor school was the first school in the district to integrate bilingual education (Spanish – English) from the age 3.

Besides abovementioned projects, the school is committed to the development of inclusive learning and working environment and promotes shared leadership, encouraging evaluation and reflection in search of continuous improvement. These internal evaluations are carried out by the commissions consisting of members of the teaching staff. The school also promotes engagement of school community, families in particular, into education process – through regular contacts and discussions with parents.

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<sup>2</sup> The COMBAS Project webpage of the Ministry of Education is no longer active. However, it can be accessed through an old web of the school where the schools selected for the Project were announced.: <http://competenciasbasicascordoba.webnode.es/news/materiales-del-proyecto-combas/>. Also on the website: <https://sites.google.com/site/picbaccbbandalucia/> information about the COMBAS Project can be found, as well as about its Andalusian version called PICBA (Programa de Integración de las Competencias Básicas en Andalucía, that is, Programme for the Integration of Basic Competencies in Andalusia), which was developed during schoolyear 2011/12 and 2012/13.



## What have we achieved?

### Pupils

According to the teaching staff, students became more engaged into a learning process and the learning became more dynamic and motivating with the help of the project work and multi-disciplinary subjects.

According to the school staff, students and teachers are happier about the learning process and school climate.

### Teachers

Networking and collaboration among teachers have increased as they feel more supported and secure in their tasks, encouraged to get involved in community projects with parents, organisations and local authorities.

Staff meetings became more productive and are focused on discussing pedagogical approaches. Teachers work collaboratively in groups to solve pedagogical challenges together.

### School as a whole

The school received el Premio a la Acción Magistral (the Award for Teacher Action) 2013, an initiative organized by the FAD, the Spanish National Commission for Cooperation, together with UNESCO and the BBVA bank, for the "Hargüeta project results. It has also received first prize from the Junta de Andalucía in 2016 for its involvement in the recovery and recycling of electrical and electronic waste, an initiative that seeks to promote environmentally-friendly behaviour in the educational community (under the framework of the Environmental Education project launched by the Junta de Andalucía and Ecoescuelas).



## The process of change: what helped us succeed?

### School level

Strong, shared and collaborative leadership was a keystone for the success of innovations. It was further enhanced by the training for the base team, during which the team received necessary guidance and developed the share vision on how the project activities can be effectively implemented in the school.

Trust of the management team of the school in its teachers. The management team considers the teachers to be agents of change able to reinvent the school and has created collaborative working environment to share responsibility for the innovation processes.

Clear teaching and organisational plan developed by the management team and the teaching staff, focusing on responsible and continuous progress, significantly contributed to the success. Collaborative work between teachers in delivering the curriculum, the support of the management team to the methodological changes in pedagogies, the distribution of responsibilities among all the teaching staff and the continuous evaluation for improvement involving all the stakeholders greatly improved the implementation process of innovative practices.

The commitment of the teaching staff of the school has been strong and the resistance some teachers might have had at the start has been overcome because of the achievements and a prominent role given to teachers as the owners of their innovations.

## Municipal level

The active role of the regional education counsellor in connecting district schools with local education community and supported the implementation of the project on the key competences.

## National level

The commitment of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport to the importance of integration of key competence education into school curricula and the design and support of the state-wide project on Basic Competence (COMBAS), which was the key support for the school in improving its curricula.

The training provided by IFIIE (Institute of Training, Research and Education Innovations) to the school base team was an enabling condition for effective implementation of the project goals.



## The process of change: what limited us?

### School level

The inclusion of skills in the pedagogical discourse is one of the challenges and implies the promotion of profound changes in teaching methodology. In this light, resistance and lack of confidence from teaching staff were the major barriers in the beginning of the project. These challenges were addressed by internal trainings, consultation and creation of collaborative and supportive environment with feeling of shared responsibility.

The instability of the staff and turnover of teachers because of transfers and temporary contracts hindered the development of projects. To prepare newly arriving teachers for the school innovation, the mentoring course was prepared by the school project coordinator.



## Sustainability of change

The school acknowledges that the sustainability of innovations depends on the constant reflection and understanding the needs for potential improvement of school practices. The monitoring of innovations at school is done through internal and external evaluations. School has developed a SWOT approach and a School Improvement Plan. Each term student achievement is assessed through the indicators formulated by the teaching teams. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation reports are also made available to the regional Educational Inspectorate.

Although COMBAS project is not implemented in each school in Spain, education authorities of different autonomous regions promote competence-based learning model, following the recommendation of the government and example of the COMBAS project. In this light, the staff members of the Clara Campoamor school regularly train teachers in other schools and these trainings are accredited by autonomous region education department and teachers' professional development centres.

The sustainability of the projects mostly depends on the effort of teaching staff and the embeddedness of the processes into school organisation. Projects can stay sustainable if teachers

have a chance to learn about diverse experiences and different perspectives on the pedagogical tasks through networking and partnerships with other schools.



## What did we learn in the process? Key messages

A well-designed state-level project can be a trigger to promote change in schools. Such top-down innovation needs to be accompanied by implementation support and guidance, as well as professional development opportunities for school leaders and teachers and aimed at the creation of the culture of innovation in participating schools, rather than simply focusing on the short-term project results.

Regular monitoring and evaluation are integral elements of innovative processes at school. It allows to better understand the effects of innovations on the school community and identify directions for improvement so that the innovation helps enhancing students' learning experiences.

Networking opportunities through projects, dissemination events, joint trainings, etc. are crucial for the development and sustainability of innovations at schools.

### Further reading

- **A full report** 'Supporting School Innovation across Europe' explores the conditions in the school education system that can enable or constrain positive change in schools.
- **12 case studies** explore the national approaches and individual school innovations. They include the perspectives of key national education experts and stakeholders who were interviewed and took part in workshops.
- **24 individual profiles** give a quick view of the changes and experiences in each school.

Available here:

[www.schooleducationgateway.eu/innovation](http://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/innovation)

- The school profiles also feature as part of the [European Toolkit for Schools](#), alongside a range of materials and many other inspiring examples of practice from European countries.

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