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# Children's narratives on migrant refugees: a practice of global citizenship

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## Abstract

Globalisation has brought about great social and economic impact, as well as great challenges. Major developments have taken place in the mobility of capital and, to a lesser extent, of goods; not so in the mobility of people seeking asylum due to persecution and war. This article approaches the phenomenon of migration, particularly of refugees, as learning content for early childhood. The research is presented from a qualitative approach based on the results of a project on this topic implemented in a rural school in Spain. The results of the data analysis reveal that children attribute external reasons, of survival, to the refugees' forced departure from their country of origin. The children's imaginary reproduces the social construction of adults on the status and situation of refugees, and they also show a critical attitude towards the violation of human rights and the abuse of fellow children. Finally, respect, cultural empathy and social commitment in the face of injustice are presented as fundamental values for education in global citizenship from the earliest stages of schooling.

**Keywords**: citizenship education; refugees; student experience; intercultural education; values

## Introduction

The mobility of people is part of their history and identity. Migration is not only a phenomenon of our time; it has been part of human history for millennia (Bauman, 2016). The mobility of people affects every person and every territory in an increasingly globalised world (McAuliffe and Ruhs, 2018). We are currently experiencing one of the most important moments of massive human movement since the Second World War (Espinar, 2010). However obvious it might be that the mobility of people through territories is not a novelty, this must be restated, given the emergence of discourses that attempt to justify the adoption of measures against migration that go against human rights based on territorial and nationalist criteria (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002).

From a perspective focused on capital and market rules, people who migrate tend to be associated only with negative issues and problems (van Dijk, 2007). These discourses of exclusion are materialised through language (Zavala and Back, 2017). Prejudices towards migrants are causing the rise of extreme right-wing parties whose approaches are based on restricting aid and support to migrants ('them'), in favour of the nationals ('us') (Osler and Starkey, 2018). This discourse has tangible and dreadful consequences on people's lives. The rhetorical connection between the mobility of people and decline in the security of nations has devastating

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consequences (Simpson, 2018). In opposition to these discourses of nationalism and territorialism, new languages have emerged that attempt to highlight the complexity of the situation and the interconnectedness of realities, without criminalising the person who migrates. The European Union's response can be read in the *European Agenda on Migration* (EC, 2015), which includes among the challenges for the future: reducing incentives for irregular migration, a firm asylum policy, saving lives, making external borders secure and creating a policy on legal migration. However, there are no references to pedagogical actions from which to address issues such as coexistence or participation. These elements could contribute to the construction of a more inclusive and just model of society, which would provide arguments to respond to hate speech through global or cosmopolitan citizenship (Starkey, 2012; UNESCO, 2015).

The growing diversity in schools gave rise in the 1990s to the global citizenship approach (Banks, 2017). This educational process involved learning to live together in increasingly complex, diverse and democratic societies that aim for the promotion of justice and peace, social responsibility and the development of critical awareness and civic engagement (Reysen and Katzarska-Miller, 2013; Stoner et al., 2019). UNESCO (2015) proposes a model of global citizenship education that involves: (1) learning critical thinking and developing understanding and reflection on local and international issues; (2) developing a sense of belonging and the fostering of values such as empathy, solidarity and respect for diversity; and (3) forming responsible, tolerant and peaceful citizens. Schools must become spaces for civic education. They must be places for learning about rights and responsibilities, for learning about justice through the analysis and debate of situations of injustice, and, above all, for learning how to create a better world in which to coexist in harmony (Gasoi and Meier, 2018). At a pedagogical level, learning about global citizenship can be done through questions and reflections that foster discussions surrounding social issues that are interesting to students (Martínez Rodríguez, 2005). In this way, they will learn to interpret information, as well as to argue and reason critically with their peers. In this sense, Osler and Starkey (2018) remark upon the importance of working from students' experiences when we want to work on interculturality and diversity, through the analysis of situations with which they are in direct contact, and the rethinking of their own actions, or those of others, which place human rights at risk, and the search for real problems and solutions in our world.

In reality, citizenship can only be learned in practice. One of the fundamental dimensions of global citizenship education is behavioural, which implies taking action through school proposals (Bourn, 2015). According to Pérez-Pérez (2016), this is the best method to create good citizens. Nussbaum (2015) speaks of the creation of a 'decent democratic citizenship' characterised by the capacity for self-criticism and critical thinking about one's own traditions, by the understanding that one belongs to a diverse nation state and world, and, above all, by the capacity to think critically and put oneself in another person's shoes. The exercise of citizenship should begin at an early age (Peinado Rodríguez, 2020). However, we should not make the mistake of considering children to be 'potential citizens' – they are citizens in their own right (Sanz et al., 2020). In this way, we will ensure that the value of social responsibility is developed in all its dimensions, making the students aware that they are people not only with rights, but also with responsibilities (Tonucci, 2020).

Global citizenship education programmes are being implemented around the world due to the recent emergence of problems arising from the migration crisis and the consequent emergence of populist policies (Dryden-Peterson, 2020). The challenge of

education lies in overcoming apparently simple and quick solutions to these complex problems, which are sources of discrimination and great social inequality, in order to create an educational project for the construction of critical, high-quality global citizenship in new generations (Peach and Clare, 2017). As Hartmeyer and Wegimont (2016) argue, for this to happen, educational systems must also be truly democratic in practice.

Inclusive as well as exclusionary discourses permeate the lives of communities through public policies or the media. These discourses infiltrate the school context, even when it comes to communities not directly involved in the migratory reality. It is worth asking how the youngest children are constructing meaning around this reality, and how their world view can be made visible through processes of communication that are sympathetic to their age and development (Pahl, 2002). Westheimer (2020) asks whether education can transform the world through practices of democratic participation in which citizenship is oriented towards social justice. For this to happen, Westheimer (2020) goes on, teaching responsible citizenship is not enough: students should also learn how to ask critical questions, share diverse views and address controversial issues. In this process, it is crucial to address participatory practices that give children and youth a voice. This view was adopted more broadly with the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989) and is supported by extensive research that sheds light on the importance of the participation of children in making decisions on matters that affect them (Cussiánovich and Márquez, 2002; Fielding, 2012, 2016; Hart, 1997; Rudduck and Flutter, 2004; Tonucci, 2020). In this regard, research that generates knowledge in relation to childhood has been called into question. In traditional research, children are used to provide data. However, a protagonist perspective places children at the centre, transforming research in which the participation of children is fundamental (Ritterbusch et al., 2020), and challenging conventional forms of knowledge construction, support and control that involve children (Cuevas-Parra and Tisdall, 2019). The influence that children have will largely depend on the level and type of participation provided (Fielding, 2012; Hart, 1997; Lundy, 2018). In any case, the inclusion of childhood in the research process requires the use of creative strategies (Collins et al., 2020; Albon and Barley, 2018) that might not be exclusively verbal and that support safe communicative exchange and horizontal deliberation between children and adults, beyond the level of their language skills. However, participation through children's voices has also received criticism because of the danger of representing a single hegemonic childhood experience, disconnected from the experiences of minority, marginalised or impoverished children (Twum-Danso Imoh and Okyere, 2020).

In this article, we advocate for school-based education from a child participatory approach to develop socially just citizens who can critically evaluate multiple perspectives, examine social, political and economic structures and explore strategies for change that address the causes of problems and promote the common good. We no longer educate from a nationalist perspective, but from the perspective of citizens living together in a globalised world. We are not only training people who are qualified to work, but also educating people in respect, tolerance, cooperation, coexistence, participation in democratic life and interculturality. We present the results of a qualitative research project on the construction of the imaginary and the concept of refugee, based on the analysis of an educational project developed in a rural classroom of an infant and primary school in Segovia, Spain, through the children's own understanding of this phenomenon.

# Research design

The project took place in a school, La Losa, which is part of the El Encinar group of rural schools in the province of Segovia, Spain. These schools are educational centres far from urban centres, with a small number of students, and with single classrooms where groups of children of a range of ages share the teaching and learning process. The teacher in charge of the third grade of primary education at La Losa decided to begin a process of research and reflection on her practice through a participatory methodology that would give her pupils a voice in the process of knowledge construction. This process was carried out with all the students in her classroom: 16 boys and girls, aged 6 and 7.

With this background, the teacher implemented a project on migration with the entire class of third-grade children. This subject is highly topical and socially relevant (Martin, 2016), and it integrates the perspective of the children. For this reason, it is considered an appropriate setting for research with the following objectives: to identify pedagogical strategies with which to involve children in the phenomenon of forced displacement, and to define the values that shape the construction of global citizenship in children. Based on this educational project, we propose a research design with a qualitative approach, as this is the most appropriate way to understand the particular reality that underlies certain behaviours (Bautista and Nelly, 2011) and to offer a response adjusted to the needs of the teachers involved. From this perspective, we value context-based research so that we can 'obtain the structures of meaning that inform and testify to the behaviours of the observed subjects' (Torres Santomé, 1988: 15).

Given that the information would be contributed by young children, we decided to diversify the data collection instruments in a way that ensured the inclusion of various forms of expression and communication through criteria that allowed for diversity and creativity (Albon and Barley, 2018; Collins et al., 2020). The data set obtained was diverse, and it appears disorderly to an untrained eye. However, the data acquired coherence and global meaning in the shared school context, and under the professional gaze of the teacher (Pahl, 2002). Through this strategy, the research design was adjusted to the participation of children based on the recognition of the diverse languages with which they are able to communicate, as expressed by Malaguzzi (Edwards et al., 2011). The research began with the design of an educational project by the teacher, who was advised by the research team of which she was part. The decision that the teacher herself would be in charge of a research project with her pupils ensured a secure, trusting environment conducive to a positive communicative exchange with the children (Molina-Fernández et al., 2017). At the same time, it allowed the teacher to investigate and reflect on her own practice with the mediation of the other researchers (Cerecero Medina, 2018; Perrenoud, 2001). This project proposed engaging in conversations with the pupils based on activities that were both appropriate and diverse. The activities were sufficiently common in the school context for the students to feel comfortable doing them, but they were also sufficiently diverse to cover a range of types of communication (body language, verbal, visual and so on). In addition to videos, images, conversations and questions, another activity was the original story 'Nadie' (Nobody), which tells of a refugee child, known by everybody under that name, who is forced to leave several countries for various reasons until he reaches a place which is peaceful, but which is far away from his friends and most of his family.

The teacher was in charge of collecting the data during a three-month period while the activities of the educational project were taking place. The following

instruments were used in this task: (1) a teacher journal comprising 30 entries related to the research questions; (2) observation records of the learning productions derived from the activities, which evidenced the children's thoughts about migrants; (3) artistic representations, understood as symbolic images where feelings and themes about the phenomenon emerge from the formative experience, which promote the participation of the subjects in the research process (Johnson et al., 2012; Kearney and Hyle, 2004); (4) 35 photographs taken by the teacher during the activities (Mannay, 2016), conceived as photo-elucidations (Collier, 1957), where the images taken led to longer and more in-depth interviews with the children (Cook and Hess, 2007; Harper, 2012); (5) 18 video recordings made by the teacher as a tool for a more systematic observation of everything that took place during the implementation of the activities; (6) 30 group interviews with the pupils in the class – understood and implemented as 'conversations with children' – in a context of egalitarian dialogue during the daily meetings, conducted by the teacher as a shared evaluation of the activities (Molina-Fernández, 2013); and (7) an interview with the teacher herself conducted by another researcher from the team.

The variety of information-gathering techniques used in this research not only acknowledges the need to recognise that communication in childhood goes beyond the verbal and includes myriad other languages (Edwards et al., 2011), but it also aims to overcome the idea of a unique experience of childhood, and to take into account in the design of the research the diversity of children and their preferences when it comes to finding how to communicate in each case and each context (Christensen and James, 2000). Three categories emerged from the analysis: refugee status, human and children's rights, and the shaping of global citizenship. The information obtained was triangulated twice. First, triangulating researchers (Díez-Gutiérrez, 2020) and then, triangulating techniques (Flick, 2018). The clear power relationship established between the person investigating and the person under investigation is especially relevant in the case of children (Powell and Smith, 2009). The research addressed this situation from various perspectives. In this case, the influence is mitigated by the fact that the teacher is in charge of observing and compiling the information (Kucharczyk and Hanna, 2020). Furthermore, the use of a range of research techniques also reduced the role of the person doing the research and minimised possible interference. In turn, the qualitative design included a comprehensive perspective capable of offering improvements to the teaching and learning process.

Table 1 shows the coding system designed to identify the data collected in this study.

**Table 1: Data encoding system**

| Instrument | Encoding | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Classroom journal | Type of document-page-date | D.A-1-25/04/2019 |
| Evaluation scales | Type of document, time of completion | E.E., final |
| Visual documents (photographs and students' creations) | Type of document No.-date of completion | F1-25/04/2019<br>C.A1-25/04/2019 |
| Audiovisual documents (video) | Type of document No.-Date of production-length | V1-25/04/2019-0:03 min. |
| Interviews or direct quotations | Type of document (person or entity) | E. teacher<br>D.Q. student |

# Analysis and discussion of results

## Refugee status

The story 'Nadie' elicited verbalisations from the children regarding the concept of a refugee. Why would someone leave their country?: 'Because you are kicked out', 'Because there is a nuclear bomb', 'Because there is a war', 'Because of the floods', 'Because they have no food or money', 'Because they are poor', 'Because of a tornado', 'Because their family is somewhere else' (see Figure 1). These ideas are all aligned with the causes that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2017) considers to be the reasons for the current increase in migratory movements. But if what the children say is interesting, so is what they do not say. None of their answers describe a superfluous, banal or even individual reason. On the contrary, they all assume an external reason that puts survival at risk (Doval, 2017). It is also interesting to assess the role that family has in their daily lives, and how keeping up with their loved ones becomes a situation just as critical as ensuring survival.

Why would someone leave their country?:

- Because you get kicked out
- Because you are not wanted
- Because your family is elsewhere
- Because there is a nuclear bomb
- Because one is about to give birth to a child
- Because a planet is going to explode
- Because there is a war
- Because of the floods
- Because they have no food or money
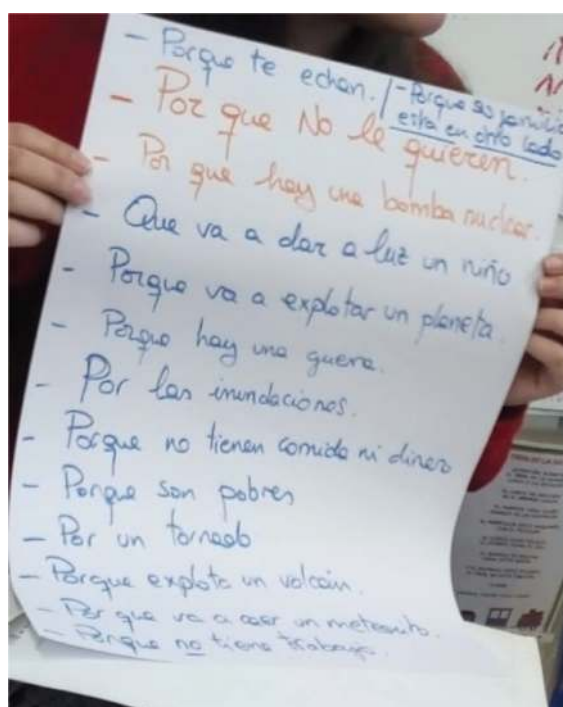- Because they are poor
- Because of a tornado



**Figure 1: Answers given by pupils to the question of why they thought a person would leave their country (Photograph: Author, 2021)**

- Because a volcano explodes
- Because a meteorite is going to fall
- Because they have no jobs

By the end of the project, the children were asked what a refugee is. Some of their answers appear in a video sequence: 'It's a person who, if there is a war, has to leave his country and go to a refugee camp'; 'It's a person who because of the war has to leave because if not he will be dead'; 'It's a person who has lost their family at home and has to go somewhere to be safe'; 'It's a person who leaves because they are thrown out'; 'They are people who leave because there are many wars and they have to go to a refugee camp'; 'It's not like you're going to explore another place, it's that you have to leave because if you can't, you die'. Indeed, a refugee is a person who is 'persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion', as set out in the United Nations *Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* (UN, 1954). The children agree that seeking refuge is not a matter of choice for these people, and they opt for constructions such as 'have to'. They understand that refugees have no other option and express that 'you are leaving because you are being thrown out'. These expressions align with the way of understanding the situation that they had described before: a situation that puts one's survival at risk, in the face of which fleeing is not an option but a forced necessity.

To learn more about the children's ideas about the refugee camp, we analysed the drawings that the children made as part of this activity. Some of them drew the tents of the camps, while others defined the camp as 'a place where there are many tents, where many people who are fleeing from the war live, and sometimes they receive water in trucks'. Figure 2 shows a drawing made by a first-grade student, graphically depicting the tepee-shaped tents of a refugee camp amid silhouettes of bombs dropped in a war. This drawing was made entirely in black, which is associated with emotions of fear, dread and anguish. The drawing includes a medieval castle, a symbol of the struggles and conflicts that took place during the Middle Ages.

In the drawings of the refugee camp, the provisional nature of the housing and its precariousness are emphasised, in contrast to other housing constructions that the children have drawn at other times, which are represented not only as being made of sturdy materials such as brick, but also include complete rooms and furniture.



**Figure 2: Drawing of a refugee camp made a pupil (Photograph: Author, 2021)**

Furthermore, the drawing of the refugee camp as a medieval castle is a criticism of the current situation, which, from this child's point of view, is similar to another historical moment where resources, communications and well-being were quite different from today. Further, the child's choice of black and the representation of the bombs emphasise that the decision to live in camps is not an individual choice, but a forced and necessary path to survival.

Through the game 'What am I?', it was possible for a child to describe, and for another to recognise, that the drawing represents a refugee camp. The primary school pupil gave clues to the infant school pupil through descriptions such as: 'It is a place where there are many tents like for camping, where there are many people, and sometimes food and water is brought to them in trucks.' Along with the empathy that the children showed for refugees, they also constructed an imaginary of possible solutions. In this case, their answers reproduced current 'adult-centred' schemes (Duarte-Quapper, 2012; Petr, 2003), such as the refugee camp. However, they do not express creative ideas or alternative proposals. We do not interpret this as a lack of initiative on the part of children, but rather as a consequence of the educational (Gardner, 2011) and social model that overestimates the contributions of adults and underestimates those of children (Hirschfeld, 2002). Nevertheless, this warns us about how socially constructed realities permeate children's thinking and build up social realities as if they were natural. As we can see, the diversity of educational strategies reveals different ways of learning and thinking. This is what happened after the role-playing activity proposed by the teacher, which is recorded in the journal:

> The activity was intended to raise awareness of the need for help faced by many people fleeing their country, and of how it is in our hands to help them or leave them to die. It is a human rights issue. And it worked! After the activity, I held an assembly to listen to the children's opinions, and they came up with interesting answers such as: 'It's as if some people have more than others, and those who have less need the others to flee from war and poverty. We need to help each other so that we don't drown'.[1]

After role-playing people trying to flee their country who were stopped at the border at random, one of the girls tried to define the game as 'many people who had to flee their country because of a war, and only some of them were allowed to cross the border'. She criticised this as unfair. Similarly, the children became aware of the traumatic situation suffered by refugees in the process of fleeing.

## Child rights and human rights

In the second category of the educational project, we reflected on the universal rights of adults and children, and the damage that the violation of these rights does to the construction of a just society (Osler and Starkey, 2018). Figure 3 shows a drawing made by an infant school pupil and a primary school pupil, representing the right to health. In this drawing, we can highlight two things. First, the image is accompanied by text which specifies that a child 'cannot go to the doctor because they don't let him go to the doctor'. Alipui and Gerke (2018) highlight the vulnerability of children in relation to the absence of fundamental rights such as health and education. Second, in the image, the pupils have decided to paint the boy's skin 'black'. The drawing reflects the frames of construction of the identities of excluded people, which reproduce images in which Black or non-White people are considered marginal (Correa, 2017).

**Figure 3: Drawing by a primary school student and an infant school student explaining what the right to health means for them (Photograph: Author, 2021)**

In the case of other rights, such as the right to play, the right to housing, the right to education, the right to have a family, the right to equality and the right to asylum, the children were quite clear, and they tried to draw representative elements such as schools, playgrounds and a house. These drawings, alongside the children's thoughts, were collected in an illustrative document called 'The Book of Rights'. It was also possible to observe that the students continuously responded to injustice. This is how the teacher describes it in the class journal:

> The students have remarked, for instance, that the boy was sad because they did not help him, he was afraid because he did not know if he was going to live to see his destination, they even said that if they were the president, they would tear down all the walls in the world. When asked about the refugees' situation, they answered that it was not fair and that their rights were not being respected.[2]

After several of the activities, the children discussed in an assembly the violations of refugees' rights when they leave their country of origin without a definite destination. At this assembly, one of the girls from the infant school explained the activity as a group of people who had to flee their country because of war and only 'a few' were allowed to cross the border. Her colleagues added comments such as that it was unfair that 'someone' random (in this case, the laws and policies of a nation state) decided who could and who could not pass through.

## Global citizenship

This third and final category involves the values that will allow students to become future citizens of an increasingly globalised and multicultural world (Boni-Aristizábal, 2011). The proposals addressed the awareness of global citizenship through reflections on the diversity of citizenship, equal rights and co-responsibility in the face of inequality.

In the activity 'A flag for all people', students were asked to make a flag that identified them as citizens of the world and not of a particular country or continent, as recorded in the class journal:

> Some drew two people holding hands; others wanted to make all the flags of the world together (obviously, they didn't have enough time); others drew different people, hearts and scribbles. Once they finished, I asked two of the primary school children who had participated the least to write down the title: 'A flag for everyone'. Then, together, we hung it on the classroom door, together with the two representations of Nadie and the motto. The truth is that everyone who passes by looks at it and it catches their attention, so at least we managed to get the concept of a global world represented in a certain way in an image.[3]

We also addressed the concepts of respect for difference and equality in diversity. Figure 4 shows an assessment that we carried out with infant and primary school pupils. It shows how one of the pupils wrote the word 'respect' when asked if they believed that a change was needed to improve the situation of refugees. In this regard, Banks (2017) and Starkey (2012) support the idea of the need for change, not only in migration policies, but also in values of diversity and attitudes towards migrants as a basis for achieving change, from global inequality to a more just society.

| | |
|---|---|
| Are there people who go from one country to another out of necessity? | Yes. |
| Are Syria and Venezuela the countries from which most refugees come? | Yes. |
| Do human rights exist? | Yes, the right to play. |
| Are there people who do not have many of these rights? | Yes. |
| Is it bad when you can't enter another country? | Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. |
| Do you think a change is needed to help these people more? | Yes, feed them. Respect. |
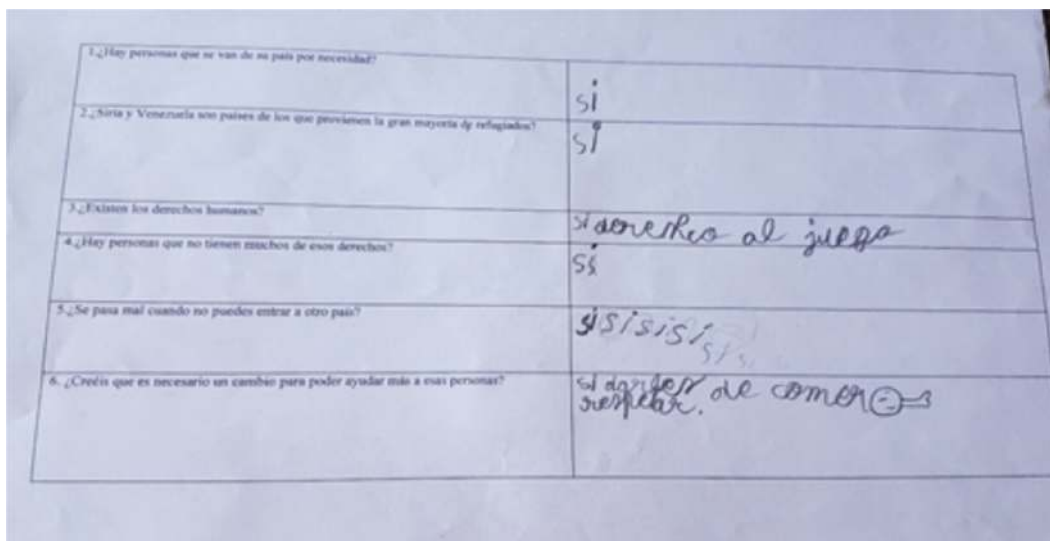


**Figure 4: Evidence of the students' learning through a self-assessment table of items completed by the learners themselves, in which the word 'respect' was written by a student (Photograph: Author, 2021)**

Pupils also expressed cultural empathy and social commitment (Green, 2012; Osler, 2008). Figure 5 shows one of the children looking at an image of a refugee camp; he said that he felt sad and that the refugees must be feeling the same way about the harsh situation they are experiencing. The children tried to show their discontent by saying that it was not fair, and that refugees live in the same world that we do and have the same rights that we do. In this way, the pupils not only empathise with the situation of the other, but also assume their responsibility in the inequality (Nussbaum, 2006).

The aim of citizenship education is to raise awareness in new generations so that they become capable of living together, participating and understanding the situations of global society. Citizenship education intends to create critical citizens with clear ideas, capable of helping and relating to anyone who needs it, regardless of their cultural, personal or religious background. Based on these ideas, this project on migrant refugees has been the starting point to create an early social awareness of the rights and responsibilities of these pupils as global citizens.

## Discussion and conclusions

In this article, we have approached the mobility of people from a humanist and humanising outlook that aligns with human rights legislation (Zetter and Ruaudel, 2018). Therefore, we welcome the language of the UNHCR, which in its 2017 report refers to a 'forcibly displaced population' due to persecution, conflict or generalised violence. Although some theorists assert the need for political and diplomatic dialogue (Palomares-Lerma, 2017), and others warn of the impossibility of the current European Union opening a calm discussion on issues of migration (Pinyol-Jiménez, 2019), as educators we cannot wait to do so, and to accompany children as citizens of today and tomorrow (Dryden-Peterson, 2020).

Using different languages, children express creative thoughts that are coherent with the international community's discourse on human rights (Osler, 2014). Listening to what they have to say is an exercise in responsibility, but also a practice of recognition of children as a collective with its own voice. To reduce their role to an expectation of internalisation and reproduction of the official discourses of adults is to limit the real exercise of their citizenship, and is a reduction in the concept of the global citizen.

Any pedagogy that aligns with the construction of citizenship according to a model of social justice (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004) must not forget the earliest educational stages. Even at the earliest ages, we must use teaching strategies that incorporate the diversity of children's languages to ensure that they can express themselves freely, creatively and authentically (Edwards et al., 2011). As a



**Figure 5: A student observes one of the images showing a refugee camp (Photograph: Author, 2021)**

consequence, adults must necessarily opt for a role of sincere listening, and must consciously renounce the reproduction of 'adult-centred' ways of thinking as a single discourse. In this project, we introduced strategies with which to transform a space of formal education into a context of reflection for the construction of a global citizenship that can overcome stereotypes through authentic knowledge (Ndemanu and Jordan, 2018). We understand this process as the response to the new inevitable demands of a world in flux, which reconfigures societies and challenges our educational priorities and democratic principles. Education for global citizenship allows us to shift the focus of attention away from criminalisation, and to humanise migration (Dryden-Peterson, 2020). Crime is not caused by the people who move, but by the policies that dehumanise them (Suarez-Orozco, 2019). An education for global citizenship must be located within the spectrum of a critical pedagogy that equips children with the skills to question the images that attempt to build a reality that abstracts the humanity of migrants (Parejo et al., 2020). But it is not only the construction of reality that must be questioned and reflected upon. The legislation that legitimises the dehumanisation of our societies, and goes so far as to criminalise aid must also be challenged. However, legislation that protects human rights is not enough, because in itself 'it does not create permanent humanising behaviour, it does not increase people's humanity, if the subjects of human life do not *understand and feel* that the law, if there is a law, comes from within – that it is their own law' (Cortina, 2009: 16, emphasis in the original), and it is here that education for global citizenship acquires a crucial role.

## Acknowledgements

## Notes on the contributors

**José Luis Parejo** has worked as a researcher in the UNESCO Chair in University Management and Policy at the Polytechnic University of Madrid, Spain, and as a lecturer in the Department of Pedagogy at the University of Valladolid, Spain. He has been a visiting professor at several universities in Rome and Lisbon, and a postdoctoral researcher at the UCL Institute of Education in London, in the Centre for Education and Democratic Citizenship. His research interests include civic education, teacher training, and educational innovation and pedagogical renewal.

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**Ainoa González-Pedraza** is a teacher of early childhood education, with a degree in artistic expression, communication and motility from the University of Valladolid,

Spain. She is also a camp monitor and kindergarten assistant. In 2017, she served as a development worker with the non-governmental organisation ADEPU in the village of Larabanga in northern Ghana. Currently, she is a coordinator and bilingual monitor at a farm school in Segovia. She also performs in children's entertainment and social theatre.

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## Declarations and conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflicts of interest with this work.

## Notes

All three notes are original text in Spanish. Translations into English in the article are the authors' own.

1 Con esta actividad se quería concienciar de la necesidad de ayuda que tienen muchas de las personas que huyen de su país de origen y que está en nuestras manos apoyarlas o dejarlas morir. Es una cuestión de Derechos humanos. ¡Y funcionó! Al finalizar, realicé una asamblea para conocer las opiniones de los niños y niñas y salieron respuestas tan interesantes como: 'es como si algunas personas tuvieran más que otras y los que menos tienen les necesitaran para huir de la guerra y la pobreza o necesitamos ayudarnos para no morir ahogados'.
2 Los alumnos han hecho comentarios como que el niño estaba triste porque no les ayudaban, tenía miedo porque no sabía si iba a llegar vivo o no, incluso llegaron a decir que si fueran presidentes de gobierno mandarían derribar todas las vallas del mundo. Al preguntarles sobre la situación de los refugiados contestaron que no era justa y no tenían muchos derechos.
3 Algunos dibujaron a dos personas de la mano; otros querían hacer todas las banderas del mundo junto (evidentemente no les dio tiempo); otros dibujaron a personas distintas, corazones y garabatos. Al finalizar, a dos de los chicos de Primaria que menos habían participado les pedí que escribieran el título: "una bandera para todos". Después, juntos, la colgamos en la puerta de la clase junto con las dos representaciones de *Nadie* y el lema. Lo cierto es que todo el que pasa se queda observándola y les llama la atención, así que por lo menos hemos conseguido que el concepto de un mundo global en cierto modo quedara representado en una imagen.

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