

Civic Competencies in the Relaciona T Dimension of the Construye T Program

Las Competencias Ciudadanas en la dimensión Relaciona T del Programa Construye T

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Abstract

This paper shows the importance of training citizens, specifically to young people in High School Education in Mexico. For this purpose, a systematic review of the Construye T Program was carried out, which includes a dimension called Relaciona T, focused on skills development of social awareness and collaboration. The objective is to classify citizenship competencies from a theoretical perspective in the aforementioned dimension. For this purpose, the steps proposed by Torgerson (2003, cited in Flores-Crespo) for a systematic review were used. The main results indicate that it was possible to classify citizenship competencies in social awareness and collaboration skills. Even though these competencies are not explicit, they can be promoted through the lessons offered by the program.

Keywords: youths, citizenship competencies, construye T program, systematic review.

Resumen

En este trabajo se muestra la importancia de formar ciudadanos, específicamente a la juventud escolarizada de Educación Media Superior en

México, para ello se realizó una revisión sistemática del Programa Construye T, el cual incluye una dimensión llamada Relaciona T, enfocada en el desarrollo de las habilidades de conciencia social y colaboración. El objetivo consiste en clasificar las competencias ciudadanas desde una perspectiva teórica en la dimensión mencionada anteriormente. Para ello se utilizaron los pasos propuestos por Torgerson (2003), para una revisión sistemática. Los principales resultados indican que sí es posible clasificar las competencias ciudadanas en las habilidades de conciencia social y colaboración, aun y cuando no están explícitas dichas competencias, pueden ser promovidas a través de las lecciones que ofrece el programa.

Palabras clave: juventud, competencias ciudadanas, programa construye t, revisión sistemática.

1. Citizenship education

The development of citizenship in individuals is an important factor for their academic, personal, and socio-emotional formation, as it allows them to be informed about events affecting society, the economy, the environment, education, and more.



Moreover, it is expected to foster critical thinking when analyzing and making decisions that impact themselves and others. Citizenship education in young people, specifically, is crucial for their personal development and the social impact they can generate. Youth are considered the most globally interconnected population group, which enables immediate interaction with what happens both in their place of residence and in other parts of the world. Furthermore, they benefit from international organizations that propose programs and projects where they are included as key actors. In particular, young people in education stand out, as they have the opportunity to experience and develop these programs.

1.1 *Since when have citizens been educated?*

Citizenship has gained increasing relevance due to changes in global systems. Over 100 years ago, some universal benefits for people began to be consolidated. The upper classes were the first to receive them; later, and with much effort, these benefits gradually reached more marginalized groups.

Citizenship models contribute to individuals' development by enabling and guaranteeing certain benefits. Some contemporary models of citizenship include: liberal citizenship: characterized by the defense of liberty, the instrumental use of public morality, and individualism; republican citizenship: focused on correcting inequalities, based on the idea that citizens are made rather than born, it emphasizes their education; communitarian citizenship: the community is prioritized over the individual; multicultural citizenship: emphasizes disadvantaged social groups such as women, migrants, or minorities (Horrach, 2009). Marshall's model of citizenship (1949) promotes equality and highlights citizens' rights, usually grouped as follows:

- Civil rights: consist of the rights necessary for individual freedom—personal liberty, freedom of expression, thought and religion, the right to property, to enter valid contracts, and the right to justice (the right to defend and assert one's rights on equal terms with others through legal procedures). Institutions associated to courts.
- Politic rights: guarantee the right to participate in political power as a member of a politically authoritative body or as an elector of its members. Parliaments and government councils.

- Social rights: every citizen has the right to a minimum level of economic welfare and security, and to live the life of a civilized being according to the current standards of society. Education systems and social services.

Additionally, Marshall postulates that there is a basic type of equality associated with the concept of full membership in a community (or citizenship), which is not inconsistent with the inequalities that differentiate various economic levels in society.

The global aim of educating citizens aspires to democracy. According to Sartori (2012), "the people who decide by the principle of absolute majority are, most of the time, a body that represents the people and generally reflects the popular majority that elects it. In the end, it is still valid that the people, as counted by the principle of absolute majority, are divided into a majority that takes all and a minority that loses everything. Which allows the majority, if it so desires, to reduce the minority to impotence. This must not be allowed" (p. 9).

However, attempting to achieve this at a global or national level with every citizen may be complex, which is why this work emphasizes educated youth, specifically in upper secondary education. Bolívar (2016) states: "A democratic education, in the dual sense of educating for democracy and in democracy, is both a goal and a means of education. In a democratic society, it is the obligation of public education to prepare future citizens to actively participate in civil and political society without the risk of exclusion, which implies ensuring that the entire population acquires the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation and social inclusion" (p. 71). He also notes that citizenship education should not be limited to a single subject but should be a task of the entire educational institution. Bolívar highlights the importance of classroom processes, school climate, and community service in citizenship formation, for example: teaching values such as honesty, responsibility, and freedom, and promoting participatory processes: critical reflection, debates, cooperative learning, among others. The school should be organized democratically, which builds a sense of belonging and the use of methodologies that lead to the practical application of democratic values and service-learning as an ideal methodology for civic practice. This combines participation with

community service and the teaching of knowledge and values.

1.2 Citizenship education programs

To provide a current overview of citizenship education worldwide, Table 1 presents some programs implemented in various countries, as published by the Inter-American Development Bank (2019). While these programs are categorized under citizenship, they also address topics such as emotional skills, youth employment, violence prevention, gender, and the environment.

1.3 The Construye T Program

In Mexico, the Construye T program focuses on

the development of socio-emotional skills, while also addressing other areas such as citizenship education. This program began in 2008 under the name Programa de Prevención del Riesgo en la Educación Media Superior (PPREMS), with its main goal being to combat school dropout. However, a year later, the program was renamed Construye T, and the Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (PNUD) joined to provide logistical, financial, and organizational support, among others. The main objective remained the same. It was not until 2014 that the program underwent a favorable transformation with the integration of socio-emotional skills, aiming to strengthen schools' capacity to develop these skills in students

Table 1. Citizenship programs

Program	Objective
Programa de ciudadanía y liderazgo (Paraguay)	The program develops in three stages. In the first, youth identify problems in their community. Then, over seven days, they detect solutions through fieldwork, reconnecting with their surroundings, family, school, and community. In the second phase, they are trained in art, sports, technology, etc. In the third phase, they apply what they have learned by supporting primary school teachers with programs in sports, art, programming, etc. Developed by Fundación Scholas Ocurrentes de Paraguay (cited by Mateo, 2019, p.180). Competency: Citizenship to develop leadership.
TransFórmate (Colombia)	Offers young victims of armed conflict (ages 16–29) opportunities to strengthen their abilities for social, productive, and income-generating activities. Includes a module on socioemotional skills and technical training leading to a vocational title over 12–18 months. Developed by the Ministro de Trabajo Colombiano (cited by Mateo, 2019, p.181). Competency: Citizenship for youth victims of violence.
Sácale tarjeta roja a la violencia (Perú)	Aims to encourage students to stand up to bullying, support victims, and report violent acts. It includes theoretical workshops, practical activities, and informational materials. A digital platform was also developed for anonymous reports by students, parents, and friends (Gutiérrez et al., 2018, cited in Mateo, 2019, p.182). Competency: Citizens against school bullying.
Aulas para la paz (Colombia)	Combines several components: in-class sessions for 2nd to 5th grades on civic competencies (aggression, conflict, empathy, anger management, assertiveness); a family component with home visits to teach parents the same skills; and mixed groups combining aggressive and prosocial students (Chaux et al., 2017, cited in Mateo, 2019, p.183). Competency: Citizens against school bullying.
Súbete (Uruguay)	An environmental education program that encourages children and youth to use creativity and energy to participate in community sustainability projects (cited by Mateo, 2019, p.183). Competency: Environmental citizenship.
Amor del bueno (México)	Aims to promote a critical stance against gender violence, fostering inclusive, egalitarian, and non-violent coexistence among youth. Includes student workshops and improvements to school climate (Sosa Rubi et al., 2016, cited in Mateo, 2019, p.184). Competency: Citizenship for gender equality.

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (2019).



and thus improve the school environment in public upper secondary education institutions participating in the program (PNUD, 2019). Table 2 presents the conceptual framework of Construye T. The program is structured into dimensions, each comprising general skills that are further broken down into specific skills.

Table 2. Conceptual framework of Construye T.

Dimension	General skills	Specific skills
Conoce T	Self-awareness	1. Self-perception
		2. Self-efficacy
		3. Recognition of emotions
		4. Emotion management
	Self-regulation	5. Delay of gratification
		6. Tolerance to frustration
		7. Achievement motivation
	Determination	8. Perseverance
		9. Stress management
Relaciona T	Social awareness	10. Empathy
		11. Active listening
		12. Perspective taking
	Relationship skills	13. Assertiveness
		14. Interpersonal conflict management
		15. Prosocial behavior
Elige T	Responsible decision-making	16. Generation of options and consideration of consequences
		17. Critical thinking
		18. Consequence analysis

Source: Own elaboration based on PNUD (2019). Desarrollo (2019).

The general skills listed in the table above are distributed throughout the three years of upper secondary education. Additionally, an extra skill is included under the Elige T dimension: Perseverance, which addresses topics related to life planning. Figure 1 shows how the skills are distributed by semester, each with 12 classroom lessons.

The previous figure shows the six skills covered during the six semesters of high school. As can be seen, each skill has 12 lessons, which in turn have 6 sessions. This is designed so that one session is worked on each day, with a duration of 20 minutes. For this work, only the lessons on social awareness and collaboration corresponding to the “Relate

T” dimension were taken. The results section will show the sessions in which the civic competencies were classified.

Until 2018, the Construye T Program was implemented in 9,729 federal and state public upper secondary education institutions (PNUD, 2015). As mentioned earlier, this program does not directly address citizenship; its main focus is on the development of socio-emotional skills. However, it aims to identify the elements of citizenship it includes, information that is even implicitly found within the program.

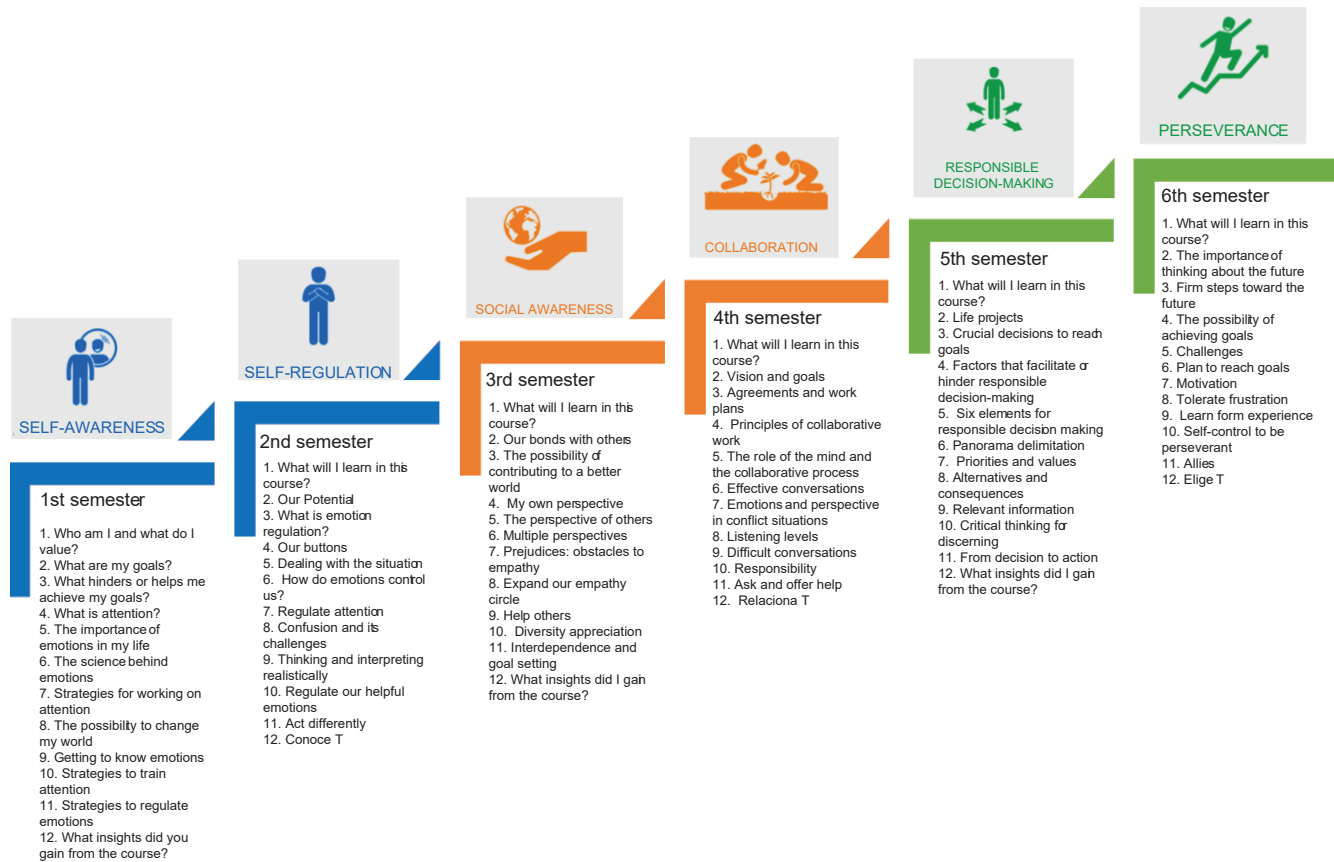
Therefore, the objective of this research is to classify the civic competencies contained in the Construye T Program within the Relaciona T dimension, specifically in the lessons on the skills of social awareness and collaboration.

2. Civic competencies

To identify civic competencies, the perspective of Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004) was adopted. They propose a civic education based on five principles: 1) covering all the competencies necessary for civic action; 2) providing multiple opportunities to practice the competencies; 3) integrating civic education transversally in academic areas; 4) involving the entire educational community; 5) evaluating the impact.

Ruiz and Chaux (2005) define civic competencies as the “set of integrated cognitive, emotional, and communicative capacities and skills related to basic knowledge (contents, procedures, mechanisms) that morally and politically guide our civic action (p. 32)”. It is important to highlight that citizenship must be exercised autonomously and not imposed by others; this would be the fundamental goal of civic education. The components of civic competencies are defined below.

- **Knowledge (CO):** refers to the “understanding of information, procedures, strategies, and contents that people need for the exercise of citizenship” (Ruiz and Chaux, 2005, p. 44). The author proposes that the knowledge to be learned at school should include: fundamental rights, the Constitución Política, mechanisms, procedures and instances of democratic participation, strategies and mechanisms for conflict resolution, among others.
- **Cognitive Competencies (CCG):** the “capacity to carry out various mental processes, in this

Figure 1. Lessons per semester in the Construye T program.

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Construye T (2021)

Figure 2. Distribution of the Construye T Program.

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Construye T (n.d.)



case, to exercise citizenship". Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004, pp. 21-22) propose some cognitive competencies:

- * Perspective taking: achieving agreements that benefit everyone.
 - * Interpretation of intentions: properly evaluating the intentions and purposes behind others' actions.
 - * Generation of options: imagining many ways to resolve a conflict.
 - * Consideration of consequences: the effects that solution alternatives may have.
 - * Metacognition: the capacity to reflect on oneself.
- Emotional Competencies (CE): "capacities necessary to identify one's own emotions and those of others and respond constructively" (Ruiz and Chaux, 2005, p. 40). The following emotional competencies are proposed by Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004, p. 23)
 - * Identification of one's own emotions: recognizing and naming emotions.
 - * Management of one's own emotions: ability to control emotions.
 - * Empathy: ability to feel or understand what others feel.
 - * Identification of others' emotions: identifying what others may be feeling.
 - Communicative Competencies (CCM): "skills that allow constructive dialogue with others, communicating our viewpoints, positions, needs, interests, and ideas in general, and understanding what other citizens seek to communicate" (Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez, p. 24). The authors also propose the following communicative competencies:
 - * Active listening: paying attention to what others say and showing that one is listening.
 - * Assertiveness: expressing needs, interests, positions, rights, and ideas clearly.
 - * Argumentation: the ability to express and support a position.
 - Integrative Competencies (CI): "these are

broader and more encompassing competencies that, in practice, articulate knowledge and cognitive, emotional, or communicative competencies" (Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez, 2004, p. 24).

According to Ruiz and Chaux (2005), the exercise of citizenship in and from the school entails three challenges: 1) living peacefully and constructively with others, 2) building agreements and rules collectively for the common good, and 3) building society based on differences, not despite them.

Although the Construye T Program does not have an integrated reference framework on civic education, its reference framework.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology

To meet the objective of this research, a comprehensive methodology was developed based on a systematic review of the existing information about the Construye T Program.

According to Sánchez-Meca (2010), the systematic review "is a type of scientific research through which the scientific literature on a topic is reviewed based on a question that is clearly and objectively formulated, using systematic and explicit methods to locate, select, and critically assess the relevant studies related to that question, and applying systematic protocols to collect data and information from those studies in order to reach valid and objective conclusions about what the evidence says regarding the topic" (p.54).

To carry out the systematic review, a series of steps proposed by Torgerson (2003) were followed. These consist of: 1) designing a protocol to establish the theoretical, empirical, and conceptual foundations of the topic. This also involves establishing the research question, objectives, search methods, validation, summary, quality, and synthesis; 2) defining the criteria for inclusion or exclusion of materials, specifying whether only experimental studies written in a particular language will be considered; 3) the protocol must be peer-reviewed to begin the literature search in key specialized journals; 4) mapping, which involves describing and classifying the studies found in the initial review. This step refines the search for the definitive bibliographic material to be used in the systematic review; 5) once the

material has been identified, the relevant information must be extracted using a data sheet; 6) after extracting information from the selected studies, a “synthesis” is conducted. This can be qualitative if the data do not allow for numerical synthesis; 7) the final phase of the systematic review involves interpreting the synthesized information.

4. Results

Throughout the research process, the steps of the systematic review were followed; however, this paper only presents step seven of the systematic review, which consists of interpreting the synthesized information. What follows is the identification of citizenship competencies within the Relaciona T dimension: social awareness and collaboration. For this purpose, the citizenship competencies proposed by Chaux (2004) were used as a reference: 1) knowledge (CO), 2) cognitive competencies (CCG), 3) emotional competencies (CE), 4) communicative competencies (CCM), 5) integrative competencies (CI).

As mentioned in Figure 2, each socioemotional skill (social awareness and collaboration) contains 12 lessons, and each of these includes six sessions. To perform the identification, a random session from each lesson was selected, and its objective and content were compared with the definitions of one of the citizenship competencies proposed by Chaux (2004). Table 3 shows which citizenship competencies are found in the sessions related to both social awareness and collaboration.

As shown in Table 3, the selected sessions could be identified with citizenship competencies, except for lesson 12 of Social Awareness and lessons 10 and 12 of Collaboration. The most frequently found competency in the sessions was Knowledge (CO). This suggests that young people are expected to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, their rights, duties, and human values, but also gain tools to resolve conflicts and solve problems. Cognitive competencies (CCG) were found in three sessions. According to Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004), this would allow students to take perspective, interpret intentions, generate options, consider consequences, and develop metacognition. Emotional competencies (CE) were also identified in three sessions. In addition to recognizing their own emotions, students will be able to identify the emotions of others, develop empathy, manage their

emotions, and handle situations (Chaux, Lleras, & Velásquez, 2004).

Similarly, communicative competencies (CCM) were found in three sessions. This would enable young people to argue their ideas, communicate assertively, and listen to others. On the other hand, integrative competencies (CI) were identified in four sessions. According to Chaux, Lleras, and Velásquez (2004), these competencies integrate knowledge, communicative, cognitive, and emotional skills. Therefore, it can be inferred that the sessions where these were found offer students a more comprehensive education.

Although Construye T focuses on socioemotional skills (HSE), it also achieves other objectives, such as promoting citizenship competencies. The program has significant reach in terms of institutions, students, teachers, and administrators. For this reason, it was chosen over other programs to explore the elements of citizenship education it may contain in. It is unknown whether the actors involved in the program truly develop both HSE and CC in their daily lives. This would represent an important area of research for further monitoring the program's outcomes.

5. Conclusions

For the identification of citizenship competencies, the Construye T Program was chosen because it represents one of the most comprehensive interventions that can be applied to young students in Upper Secondary Education in Mexico. The objective of classifying socioemotional skills within citizenship competencies from Chaux's (2004) perspective was achieved, which indicates that students can develop communicative, cognitive, and emotional competencies when completing Construye T activities, specifically in the Relaciona T dimension. However, to determine whether young people apply these competencies in daily life, further research would be necessary.

The relevance of this lies in the fact that, although the reference frameworks of Construye T and Citizenship Competencies are different, both aim to foster the integral development of young people. That is why it is said that citizenship competencies are implicitly addressed in the program. So far, no similar studies have been found that attempt to

Table 3. Citizenship competencies found in Relaciona T lessons

Lessons	Social awareness (3rd semester) Sessions	Competencias ciudadanas
1. What will I learn in this course?	1.5 We are a community	CCG
2. Our bonds with others	2.4 Living together with empathy	CE
3. The possibility of contributing to a better world	3.6 Plan to foster constructive relationships	CI
4. My own perspective	4.3 And the other's perspective?	CCM
5. The perspective of others	5.5 Loving is: speaking and listening	CCM
6. Multiple perspectives	6.3 My perspective and others	CI
7. Prejudices: obstacles to empathy	7.5 Do I have prejudices?	CO
8. Expand our empathy circle	8.5 Others' point of view	CE
9. Help others	9.2 If you fall, I'll help you up	CCG
10. Diversity appreciation	10.3 Inclusion promoters	CO
11. Interdependence and goal settings	11.3 Solving problems as a community	CO
12. What insights did I gain from the course?	-	-
Lessons	Collaboration (4th semester) Sessions	Citizenship competencies
1. What will I learn in this course?	1.3 Collaborating at school	CO
2. Vision and goals	2.6 Let's create a collective work plan	CI
3. Agreements and work plans	3.5 Let's reach agreements	CI
4. Principles of collaborative work	4.4 Responsibilities and commitments	CO
5. The role of the mind and the collaborative process	5.2 My attitude makes an impact	CE
6. Effective conversations	6.1 Solution proposal	CCM
7. Emotions and perspective in conflict situations	7.4 Thinking differently	CCG
8. Listening levels	8.6 Listening at work	CCM
9. Difficult conversations	9.6 Building agreements	CCG
10. Responsibility	-	-
11. Ask and offer help	11.3 Helping helps me	CCG
12. Relaciona T	-	-

Source: Own elaboration

compare, classify, or identify whether any emotional education program includes aspects of citizenship education.

It is very important to clarify that classifying citizenship competencies within the Construye T Program and arguing that they are integrated into its lessons does not mean they are put into practice. When we speak of competencies, it is assumed that the individuals involved must carry them out. In this case, the competencies are only identified within the structure of the program. There is not enough evidence to state that young students in Mexico apply citizenship competencies (CC) and socioemotional skills (SES) in their daily lives. What

can be confirmed is that, at the very least, young Mexican students have a program that guides and supports them in developing such competencies and skills so they can put them into practice.

In 2020, the Construye T Program published a new implementation guide on *Práctica y Colaboración Ciudadana*, for the development of citizenship competencies. It focuses on civic and socioemotional education for sustainable development. The relationship it describes between SES and citizenship is that socioemotional education is a key factor for civic practice and collaboration. For example, respect, recognition, and appreciation of diversity can be promoted through social awareness



and collaboration skills. Likewise, social awareness can be developed through empathy to understand others, while collaboration enhances assertive communication and teamwork.

The guide proposes a methodology for developing projects that includes participatory diagnosis, planning, monitoring, and evaluation (Construye T, 2020). This guide considers the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals; therefore, it seeks to integrate elements of the international context and bring them closer to education. So far, the projects that may arise from this guide are unknown, as it is relatively new and was released during the COVID-19 pandemic. It would be interesting to see and participate in future projects that may emerge.

In summary, the Construye T Program offers a wide variety of resources for school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the school community, among others. So far, the development of socioemotional skills remains its main objective. To this end, innovative content has been added that responds to the current needs of young people in Mexico. It is worth noting that it would be important to take advantage of the program's promotion and coverage to ensure its implementation in all public schools and offer it to private schools as well, since all students have the right to receive socioemotional education. Regarding citizenship competencies, it would be advisable to follow up on the proposed activities for their development. Incorporating more specific aspects such as democratic environments, citizen participation, and knowledge of certain rights and obligations could further equip young Mexican students for success both in school and in their broader social environments.

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