

Ethical Award 2021

Shortlisted Initiative

Colegio Los Nogales, Columbia

Overview of the school:

Colegio Los Nogales is a private, non-profit, Calendar B, co-educational, bilingual Spanish-English educational organization with a third language (French or Portuguese) requirement. Colegio Los Nogales is Colombian with a global perspective and is open to diversity in all forms, offering courses from k4 through 12th grade. Since 1982 the school has been a leader in Colombia in offering a high quality education -Colegio Los Nogales is listed as the top school in Colombia in the Col-Sapiens ranking-.

Summary of initiative:

Life today requires that students develop not only skills in thinking, content and knowledge, but also skills to manage information, life and their profession. That is why Colegio Los Nogales -the number 1 School in Colombia because of its academic quality- developed FINES, a character education initiative. It is a curriculum whose main objective is to develop character and life skills in an explicit and intentional manner. This curriculum is: priority for the School, Simultaneous and parallel to the work done in academic areas, Rigorous, Flexible, Time allotted-status.

The target audience are students from 4 to 18 years old (K4- 12) The FINES curriculum is aimed at developing character and life skills explicitly and intentionally. It is developed alongside the school's academic curriculum and permeates all activities at Colegio Los Nogales with great educational relevance. Before FINES character education and life skills, as in the majority of the schools in the world, were in a hidden curriculum. This means, they were not explicit and intentional alongside the school.

How the initiative has resulted in the implementation of values across the school that nurture students as global citizens and/or critical thinkers:

The FINES Curriculum allows students to develop 4 core concepts in a visible way and at the same time to develop the core values of the school (respect, honesty and responsibility):

- Self-awareness: Awareness of the characteristics that define oneself, as well as the values, strengths, weaknesses, goals and an awareness of how we learn from other people and a recognition of the significant experiences that have influenced our lives.
- Self-control Awareness that you are not alone in the world. Organization, time management, self control, discipline and behavioural regulation.
- Reading the context / Building relationships Ability to read different contexts, recognize others and develop empathy and understand that the attitudes that one assumes have an influence on interpersonal relationships in different spaces, groups and communities.
- Self-management Awareness that everyone leads their own life and is capable of taking action, changing the course of their life and the context. Do not give others to responsibility to do, work and act for the things you want to happen.

How the initiative has encouraged students to develop and articulate a clear grasp of how ethical perspectives and conventions can differ both within and between societies:

This program has been design for us. It is unique. For us character education and like skills are recognized at the same level as the academic curriculum. One is not more important than the other and that comes from the structure of the School. We have an Academic Director and a Character Education Director at the same level and both with a curriculum being offered to the students. Teachers are trained not just in the academics but also in how to teach character education and life skills. Teachers have the responsibility of implementing the two curriculum. Regularly, schools offer just an academic curriculum and the character education and life skills are not explicit, not intentional, they are hidden in the curriculum. Besides, the curriculum, even though is targeted to our students, it makes that the whole community is involved. From general services, bus drivers, teachers, financial services, parents, we all have been trained and we all have the responsibility to model character education to the students. Is it not that we just give the students theory. Our actions need to be modelled so our students can learn from us.

How the initiative has involved students in developing and owning ethical values:

In a survey made to 123 high school students of the year 2019-2020, 43% said they have improved their self-awareness, 11% have improved their self-control, 27% their reading of the context and building relationships and 19% their self-management. About the level of empathy, 89% said they have improved in this ability. Besides, 59% considers that today almost always they are able to assume an emphatic attitude in a conscious way when they relate to others, 38% said always and 3% said some times.

How the initiative has addressed a challenge and how does it demonstrate the potential for longer-term development as a sustainable initiative for the school:

We can see that projects made by the students from K4 to 12 most of the times have introduced FINES core concepts. They are aware of the importance in everything they make to include the concepts of character education. For example, if they are participating in a basket ball tournament, they are aware they are representing the school and their values, so the way they relate to other teams, the way they behave as spectators at a coliseum, etc., reflect the FINES Curriculum. If they are participating in the school elections, their campaign messages are connected with FINES messages. If they are planning a project outside the school they are aware of introducing FINES concepts so they can go beyond Nogales. They are very proud of FINEs. Parents report that their children at home ask them if they have made something good for someone during the day. Even when parents from other schools visit our school because of a tournament, they congratulate the students for their behavior "We can tell you care about others and your school because you pick the trash you leave, you don't say bad words to other teams, you let older people seat in your chair". Marvin W. Berkowitz, Ph.D., Professor in Character Education at Missouri University has worked with us in the implementation of FINES Curriculum and is doing a research about our work.

Sharing beyond the school community:

Since Colegio Los Nogales is part of an organization that manages 11 public schools in Bogota, so the quality of the education in Bogota rises, this curriculum has already been shared so the 11.000 students attending those schools can benefit from it. This means that we have impacted more than 1.000 directly and 11.000 indirectly. Besides, since all the grown ups around the students have to model the character education, we all have been trained and been impacted with the program as well. (250 employees, near 2.000 parents). Besides, this initiative has been shared in Round Square, a network of more than 200 schools of 50 countries around the world, and we are an example in that network in the implementation of character education in schools.