

Pedro-DFC Spain
Design for Change Global Catalyst
As told to David Wygant

The Sweet Taste of Success RECIPE

What do creative thinkers do? They explore and experiment in what they can see around them, and inside the spaces of thought and thinking. Pedro is such a person. Supported by his experience managing international social and business projects he has found a natural outlet for his social innovation passion in his leadership of Design for Change (DFC) - Spain. Following his education and experience as an industrial engineer and EMBA (Comillas), he has travelled the globe to find programs in strategic intuition (Columbia), social entrepreneurship (Stanford) and NGO leadership (ESADE).

Listen to how Pedro describes his introduction to DFC.

"It was in the summer of 2010. I was in London when I heard about DFC through the HUB Network. I contacted my friend Adrian who was leading DFC in the UK. He put me in touch with Kiran. In the meantime, unknown to me, he also contacted Kiran about my interest in DFC. Adrian and I would later have dinner together in Madrid where he confessed that he had told Kiran she could expect great things from DFC Spain. Now, that was my challenge."

"Talks with Kiran were awesome. She made it very simple. Her enthusiasm and confidence were CONTAGIOUS."

"Now everything in my life seemed to align. I had recently reflected on and studied social enterprises. I had developed a passion to become a social entrepreneur. I had met and experienced Kiran's charisma and dedication. I had seen the opportunity to improve and reform the education system in Spain. I was ready to make the leap from an international corporation where I had been an industrial engineer for eight years to the social field that was my passion."

INGREDIENTS (What to Know)

Listen to your own convictions. Your experiences over time are the echoes of truth.

Go deeper into an understanding of any problem by listening to the experiences of others. Don't solve the wrong problem.

Personalize, collaborate and experiment by adding your voice and energy. Lead toward meaningful change through student I CAN initiatives.

Align cross sector collaborations. Through our efforts in Spain, we hope to become a relevant innovator in education.

Offer something different to students and the education program by demonstrating the effectiveness of design thinking through DFC projects.

Put it together. “Take one idea. Choose one week and put it into practice. Then reflect on your action.”

Align participation and cause with efficiency and impact. Combine the best attributes of business and social organizations.

Match volunteer skills and passions with the needs of the organization.

There is always money for good ideas and committed teams. In Spain, we have developed a funding method for the implementation of Design For Change projects at schools. Now we are focused on the core organization "Yo diseño el Cambio" Project.

COOKING INSTRUCTIONS (How to be a protagonist who changes the world)

First steps to forming a team. At first I used my own contacts to publicize the initiative, and the HUB Madrid Network to meet new people interested in the project. We formed a couple of teams and collaborated with a couple of design thinking organizations. Then we decided to launch our own association that is called Yo diseño el cambio. Today there are six team members in DFC-Spain (Miguel, Mónica, Natxo, Natalia, Nuria y Pedro). In addition, there are several practitioners who help us with creative processes for schools and teachers, and a few other technology and creative partners.

Spreading the design thinking virus. Currently, the team is considering a program in which kids would experiment with the basics of social entrepreneurship. Whether this fits into an existing module, or stands alone within a school program, hasn't been determined. It might fit differently in different schools and classrooms. In these schools and classrooms, new tools for teamwork and leadership become available, and empathy and collaboration become natural ingredients in the student learning process. The students will take their lessons learned outside the school to their communities and their lives.

"Who's going to tell this?" I needed someone to transform these experiences into amazing stories that could infect others. Miguel, who is a “Waker of Dreams” was that person.

"Where might we carry out the first pilot project?" Everything looked great. The next step was to build a first prototype. As the first step, we wanted to take DFC to the schools. So we created our first prototype for children and teachers. We knew

we needed to give project ownership to the children. Children should feel complete ownership of the project and the process. Then they would make the right decisions, and they would freely give the needed energy. The prototype also needed to help teachers understand how to facilitate this result.

“We wanted to reach out for best practices.” What were the other countries doing? How had they launched their project(s)? On one side, there was India and Mexico working with very large numbers, and on the other side countries like the UK where the focus was on one or several schools in the beginning. As it turns out, the major challenges to implementing DFC in schools were similar to those faced by the children in their projects.

“This is not about my idea.” This is the most common learning in children after their first DFC experience and one of the biggest challenges we (adults) face today. We are not used to teamwork.

“Be the Change.” This is Gandhi’s mantra and a challenging practice today. We can all change the world if we are aware that we are part of what we want to change.

“We can change the world.” Can we? Yes we can! It is very difficult to change the world just as one person, but we can do it if we work together.

SERVING THE FOOD (Feeding the Many)

Our first experience was in 2011 at The Quercus, a concerted school of Boadilla del Monte in the surroundings of Madrid, where Ana was a teacher in primary and secondary. There we held our first DFC program with almost 50 children. We launched the project telling the story of Kiran as a mother and how she started Riverside school.

During 2011, we sought to understand the DFC process and what it could bring to the educational world. We set out to perform five pilot projects with different centers of education. Our aim was to explore how to offer the opportunity to the largest possible number of children in Spain. To do this we explored variety of schools and different levels of support to teachers, and conducted the following experiences: Three formal schools (Madrid, Tenerife and San Sebastian), Cañada Real (Madrid) with a Social NGO as a Partner, and Casa San Cristobal, partnering with a cultural organization, as an extracurricular activity and facilitated entirely by our DFC Team.

From the beginning, we’ve thought that teacher support in the DFC process was key to success. So, we’ve designed three key elements:

A toolkit or teachers guide to facilitate DFC projects.

The I CAN LAB where teachers can explore and experiment one and a half days about how to facilitate projects with children.

A group of experts in the methodology to support schools that request our services.

Empathy (with teachers and children) is the central pillar of a project. Knowing that both “**learning by exploring**” and “**learning by doing**” are critical, we set up laboratory experiences. We don't teach. As practitioners we seek to build communities of teachers and sustainably expand the movement at the same time. In the future, we see an online platform that will support and facilitate the creation of a sustainable DFC Community.

Coffee and Conversation

There have been many high points during this first stage. However, the personal growth of the team has been the highest point of the project. Lessons have sometimes been “hard earned and well learned.”

What have been the important lessons learned?

- The project gives the leading role to children. This means that they take responsibility for their education, and their commitment to their community increases. They also can become different points from which the “virus” can spread. They become CONTAGIOUS.
- A DFC experience helps educators reposition themselves as they give the leading role to children. It helps bring diversity and a multi-cultural viewpoint to children and teachers. Teacher set the example of how to “BE THE CHANGE.”
- During the DFC Process children learn to trust themselves and their teams. They learn to solve real life problems. When they become more confident, they become more CONTAGIOUS.
- The quality of the projects, and their sustainability over time, depends on the level of support for teachers thereby increasing the amount of support teachers can give students. I CAN LABs for learning help teachers learn to better facilitate and sustain DFC in schools.
- Visual documentation is key to generating stories and holding attention in an exciting way. What they can see in their imaginations they can become in real life.

What do we in Spain aspire to do in the future?

- Work closely with DFC World in support of accelerating innovation and quality growth of the world movement.
- Continue creating new models that support teachers and parents as they facilitate DFC projects with Kids.
- Work toward bringing DFC projects and design thinking into schools on a permanent basis.

- Find a way to bring the "I CAN bug" to the employment sector to help create new jobs or offer people a process and program whereby they can reinvent themselves. DFC and the I CAN Lab have inspired us to design a new Lab that is aimed at those who are unemployed in Spain, or even in a process of professional change. A safe place where they can find support among their peers, and tools to help them explore new possibilities. A process that allows them to experience a different way of innovating, and pushes them to reinvent themselves professionally. We want to create opportunities for those who would like to make a difference in their lives. We'd like to help them build creative confidence and come up with creative strategies.
- Design activities among Schools that foster learning and collaboration among students by means of Design for Change.
- Promote and support "DFCx" in Schools. Through better storytelling (sharing) of DFC projects increase the amount and quality of SHARING.