Dear Editors and Reviewers,

Thank you very much for your positive reaction to our paper and for the positive feedback we received from the reviewers. By following their comments and suggestions, we have improved our original manuscript.

The revised version of our manuscript includes all the suggestions outlined in the reviews. We have highlighted in red all the modifications implemented with respect to the two reports received. We believe that we have been able to address each of the comments raised.

We hope that you and the reviewers will find our manuscript improved as a result of the review process and suitable for publication at “Sustainability”. Of course, we are open to incorporate any further suggestions that you or the reviewers may have.

Thank you again for your valuable comments and suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

The authors

Point 1. The theme is very interesting, the text is well written in general and the results are presented very well in a well-organized way.

Response:
Thank you for your positive general impression and for the ideas to improve the paper. We hope you find that the new version reflects your suggestions. Each of your suggestions is replied/commented below, and the changes have been highlighted in red in the text. When we refer to the line number in which the comment is done, we are referring to the initial version of the manuscript, while the page number refers to the pages in the new uploaded version.

Point 2. However, in the discussion of the results, the way the text is written, give the idea that there is a gap between the results obtained and the assumptions that were intended to prove. I.e., the way the text is written gives the sensation that there is a lack of explanation between the 450-459 paragraph and the following 460-462 paragraph.

Response:
Thanks for the comment. We have changed and improved the paragraphs indicated in order to make the discussion clearer.
Taking into consideration the findings of the Descending Hierarchical Analysis, regarding students’ reflections on their participation in the project and their daily guided reflection, six distinct themes emerge. Four of these themes were found among participants of both Group 1 and Group 2. These are (1º) reflections on different social realities, (2º) the work carried out in social projects, (3º) possible organizational, personal, and social changes that should be undertaken and (4º) the personal meaning of the experience. Two themes were found only among the participants of Group 1. These are (1º) reflections on the voluntary work carried out and (2º) the lived experience on the border. The reason for this may be because the students of Group 1 visited the border between Morocco and Spain, while those in Group 2 did not. In their reflections, the students ask themselves why the social and economic reality in a place so close to Europe is so different. They wonder about the social, personal and organizational changes that this type of societies require. In their reflections they show how they have become truly aware of the lack of sustainable development on the ground. If sustainable development has most often been operationalized through a triangular vision of sustainability, which includes ecological, social or socio-cultural, and economic aspects, the socio-cultural and economic elements leave much to be desired, and the ecological element is far from being present. One of the participants pointed out “how it is possible for so much rubbish to be visible on the city streets?” (Participant 1, Group 1), another points out “the number of unschooled children on the roads” (Participant 13, Group 1) and another was impacted by “the number of young people crowded on the border wishing to cross from Morocco to Spain in search of a new horizon of life” (Participant 9, Group 1).

Point 3. Also, it would be important for the authors to better articulate the results they obtained with the following statements that make: “The voluntary extracurricular activity developed in Tangier allows students to reflect on themes that help educate citizens to be aware of and committed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals”, as well as with the expression: “as this experience invites students to reflect on changes they can make to their own attitudes and actions from a perspective of responsibility, which contributes to an effective and well-founded grounding in sustainability” (line 463-466).

Response:

Thanks for the suggestion. We have changed and improved the paragraphs contained in lines 460-471 of the manuscript to make the discussion and conclusions clearer.

The voluntary extracurricular activity developed in Tangier allows students to reflect on themes that help educate citizens to be aware of and committed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals [2]. What elements of the economic, socio-cultural or ecological dimension come into play when witnessing so much inequality, poverty and misuse of natural resources? To what extent are these societies compromising the well-being of future generations? Many of these ideas appear in the reflection guided by the instructor who accompanies the group of students in their experience. This voluntary extracurricular activity gave both groups the opportunity to face situations of uncertainty which made them aware of the different social realities faced by people with special needs and minors at risk of exclusion on the other side of the European border.

These results are consistent with other research [15], as this experience invites students to reflect on changes they can make to their own attitudes and actions from a perspective of responsibility, which contributes to an effective and well-founded grounding in sustainability. Participant 14 of the second group claims “I have realized the importance of a society that cares for the elderly and the sick, which requires a degree of social justice awareness that I have not been able to see here”. And other participants state that the experience they have lived has made them change some beliefs “I have realized that schooling children is much more than preventing them from being idle in the streets and I wonder how much of the situation of this society is connected to the lack of education of children” (Participant 14, group 2).

On the other hand, in line with [22], students, placed in a destabilizing situation [21], have been able to examine their self-image. In particular, they have been able to examine their beliefs about who they believe they are and how they can undertake or continue to build a reality that increases hope and opportunity for people around the world.
Point 4. - Another aspect is if it is true if the envolved students in this extracurricular activity were confronted with "a destabilizing situation" (line 468). I’m not sure.

Response:

The destabilizing situations to which we refer are the following as stated in lines 149-15. Over the course of the experience, the students were introduced to three social projects in Tangier.

- The Dar Al Baraka project of Casa Nazaret, a foster home that has arisen to respond to the needs of 10 people with special needs and without families and/or economic resources. This institution provides assistance to people with intellectual and/or physical disabilities, mental illness, socially vulnerable groups such as immigrants, bystanders, drug addicts and prostitutes who do not have relatives who can assist them or resources to live on their own. The lack of funds and the state of the residents make the visit to the house hard for those who make it.

- The Dar Tika project, a reception center that aims to provide care, training and social insertion to underage girls at serious risk of social exclusion and/or lack of protection. This is a comprehensive intervention project that incorporates medical, psychological and social monitoring of underage girls. It is a project of great social value, due to the serious situation of women in Morocco added to the situation of risk and exploitation of street girls (a group of serious exclusion invisible to the Government and Moroccan society). They are girls between 11 and 14 years of age without a family, who have ended up living on the streets for one reason or another. Some of them have suffered mistreatment and many of them have been assaulted in any way. The experience of interaction between the young students and this group of girls makes the experience very shocking for the former.

- The Padre Lerchundi project (https://hogarlerchundi.jimdo.com/), a foster home for children that seeks to promote the integrated development of children aged 6- to 16-years old. The Day Centre is the main project of Hogar Lerchundi. It is an open centre from 7.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. in which children from 6 to 16 years old, enrolled in Moroccan public school, attend during the hours when they have no class to eat, shower, play and receive school support. The aim of the Day Centre is to promote the full development of children and facilitate education within the family through the provision of children’s schooling and comprehensive education processes. The parents of the children who come to the centre cannot take care of them due to economic and family precariousness, and this centre prevents children from falling into networks of malefactors or developing bad habits in the streets.

Point 5. - Is it not too strong to say that the results of this study come to bear to sure that: “The primary conclusion of this research is that deep and meaningful learning, carried out through guided reflection, makes a contribution to the integral human and professional formation of participants” (lines 487-489).

Response:

We’ve softened the conclusion drawn. We believe that it is possible to express the desired conclusions in a more appropriate manner. For this reason, we have modified the paragraph in lines 487-489.

"Extracurricular activities that expose the student to real experiences of inequality and precariousness are an interesting element to contribute to deep and meaningful learning. In addition, the role of guided reflection in those experiences is very relevant, contributing to the integral human and professional formation of the participants".
Point 6. Also, we can not infer so linearly the following issue: “With regard to the future implications of this research, the supply of quality and structured ECAs [47] in higher education needs to be expanded in order to encourage lifelong learning and promote reflection that enables students to enhance their skills to become better people and better professionals [56]” (lines 510-512).

Response:

Thank you for your remark. We have briefly altered the paragraph (lines 510-512) according to the commentary.

"With regard to the future implications of this research, we would like to point out how structured and quality ECAs [47] in higher education can be an adequate path for the integral development of students. ECAs contribute to promoting a kind of reflection that helps students become aware of realities and situations that can make them better people and better professionals [56]."

Point 7. If the authors can be more explicit I agree that the article will be a good text to be publicized.

Response:

We hope that the corrections and changes introduced (thanks to all previous comments) will be considered relevant. We believe that the new version has become more robust. However, we look forward to your additional comments, if you consider it appropriate.