

2000



COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 15 November 2000



EDUCATION
FOR DEMOCRATIC
CITIZENSHIP

DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 40

COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

PROJECT ON "EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP"

**Resolution adopted by the Council of Europe
Ministers of Education at their 20th session
Cracow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000**

**Resolution on Results and conclusions of the completed projects in the 1997-2000
medium-term programme (excerpts)**

(adopted at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe, Cracow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000)

The European Ministers of Education, meeting in Cracow for their 20th session,

DRAWING ATTENTION to:

- the adoption at their 19th session, in Kristiansand (1997), of a medium-term work programme comprising three projects: Education for Democratic Citizenship, Learning and Teaching about the History of Europe in the 20th Century, and Language Policies for a Multicultural and Multilingual Europe;
- the decision at the same session to set up permanent dialogue on educational reform with a view to democratic security and social cohesion;

[...]

Having discussed on that occasion the conclusions of the three projects and the Legislative Reform Programme in Higher Education and Research at the present session:

1. STATE first of all that the themes chosen are, in the present European context, still essential factors in the development of policies aimed at achieving democratic security, mutual understanding, tolerance, pluralism and harmonious and peaceful relations within the member states and throughout Europe;
2. NOTE with satisfaction that at the Strasbourg Summit (1997) and the Committee of Ministers session in Budapest in 1999 on the occasion of the Organisation's 50th anniversary, the main components of the medium-term programme were endorsed as matching the Council of Europe's general lines of action and priorities;
3. CONSIDER that the three projects are positive examples of multicultural co-operation as they concern all educational systems beyond national specificities and CONGRATULATE the Council of Europe on having completed them within the agreed time and in compliance with the objectives that were set;
4. WELCOME the quality of the results, which have made it possible to conduct:
 - detailed study of the chosen themes and adaptation of them to new circumstances;
 - preparation of proposals and guidelines for education policies which serve member states as a reference for their educational reforms;
 - production of teaching materials and resources which can be used directly for both formal and non-formal education;
 - introduction of innovative working methods in keeping with the new requirements resulting from the greater diversity of situations in an enlarged Council of Europe.
5. WELCOME the conduct of these projects in co-operation and synergy with various Council of Europe bodies as well as with other international organisations, in particular UNESCO and the European Union and non-governmental organisations;
6. STRONGLY RECOMMEND that the results and conclusions of these projects be widely disseminated by all appropriate means, not only to government bodies but also to all players in the education system;
7. REQUEST that these results be taken into consideration in future in the drawing up, implementing and adjustment of national educational reforms;

8. OBSERVE that the results obtained strengthen their belief that such intergovernmental and pan-European projects provide the necessary basis for responding to assistance and requests for advice from states or regions that are encountering particular difficulties;

a. as regards the Education for Democratic Citizenship project

9. NOTE that the project has developed a common approach to education for democratic citizenship, responding to the needs of today's Europe from the standpoint of concept, approach, practices and methods, and in particular:

- enlarged today's understanding of democratic citizenship in the education dimension as well as the ethical, political, legal, cultural, socio-economic and psycho-sociological dimensions;
- shown how education for democratic citizenship can contribute to social cohesion through leaning to participate in the life of society, to assume responsibility and to live together;
- identified methods of learning, training, teaching, and school organisation which are in keeping with participative education strategies and non-formal education;
- analysed and networked a number of practical experiments (citizenship sites) illustrating innovative approaches in action;
- produced studies, teaching materials and new educational tools (Internet sites, a compendium of good practices and so on);
- identified the elements of the common guidelines for education for democratic citizenship (appended to this resolution), laying down a comprehensive, integrated approach to policies and practices in this field;

10. RECOMMEND that the Council for Cultural Co-operation's Education Committee:

- finalise and disseminate the draft common guidelines for education for democratic citizenship as an instrument for framing education policy;
- prepare in accordance with the Budapest Declaration a draft Committee of Ministers' recommendation based on the achievements of the project and especially on the appended draft common guidelines (Appendix);
- ensure that the results are disseminated by all appropriate means, in particular through an interactive Internet site and a European campaign promoting democratic citizenship based on citizens' rights and responsibilities;
- apply the results in implementing support and partnership activities in response to special situations or needs;
- develop the networks of citizenship experiments and sites;
- strengthen co-operation in this field with other international organisations, non-governmental organisations and regional initiatives such as, in particular, the enlarged Graz Process;
- accentuate, in their future work in this area, aspects more directly linked to educational policy and practice;
- in this context, further develop elements linked to organisation, content and methods of both formal and non-formal human rights education provision.

[...]

APPENDIX

Draft common guidelines for Education for Democratic Citizenship

The draft common guidelines identify the core elements of education for democratic citizenship (EDC) and provide a comprehensive and integrated approach for policy and practice in this area.

Definition and objectives

Education for Democratic Citizenship:

- is based on the fundamental principles of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- refers in particular to rights and responsibilities, empowerment, participation and belonging, and respect for diversity;
- includes all age groups and sectors of society;
- aims to prepare young people and adults for active participation in democratic society, thus strengthening democratic culture;
- is instrumental in the fight against violence, xenophobia, racism, aggressive nationalism and intolerance;
- contributes to social cohesion, social justice and the common good;
- strengthens civil society by helping to make its citizens informed and knowledgeable and endowing them with democratic skills;
- should be differentiated according to national, social, cultural, historical contexts.

Democratic citizenship

Education for democratic citizenship is based on a multifaceted and process-focused approach to citizenship which includes:

- a political dimension – participation in the decision-making process and exercise of political power;
- a legal dimension – being aware of and exercising citizens' rights and responsibilities;
- a cultural dimension – respect for all peoples, fundamental democratic values, both a shared and divergent history and heritage, and contributing to peaceful intercultural relations;
- a social and economic dimension – in particular, the fight against poverty and exclusion, considering new forms of work and community development, and how the economy can foster a democratic society;
- a European dimension – being aware of the unity and diversity of European culture, and learning to live in a European context;
- a global dimension – recognising and promoting global interdependence and solidarity.

Skills and competencies for democratic citizenship

Democratic citizenship skills and competencies:

- are part of social and life skills;
- give equal importance to knowledge and values, and attitudes and the capacity for action and participation in a democratic society;
- imply that citizens should learn to be free, autonomous and creative, to think critically, be aware of their rights and responsibilities, and be able to participate in teamwork, peaceful dialogue and negotiation;
- are constituent elements of educational strategies for democratic citizenship;
- need to be learned, maintained and renewed constantly, at all age levels.

Learning approaches for democratic citizenship

Education for democratic citizenship:

- is a lifelong learning process;

- is social learning, that is, learning for, in and about society, and learning to live together;
- implies the democratisation of learning by focusing on the learner and her or his autonomy and responsibility in the learning process, hence implying the reciprocity of teaching and learning;
- is achieved through multiple, interconnected, transversal learning approaches, for example through civic education, human rights education, intercultural education, education for peace and global understanding and media education;
- is based on experience and practice;
- requires an open curriculum which includes participative and interactive approaches based upon learning through experience, action and co-operation;
- takes place in a broad range of formal and non-formal education settings, which increasingly need to converge, such as the family, schools and universities, adult education, the workplace, enterprise, NGOs, local communities, the media, cultural and leisure initiatives;
- is reinforced by continual evaluation, in particular learners' self-assessment.

The democratic learning environment

Education for democratic citizenship:

- promotes and is promoted by a democratic learning environment in schools and universities and a whole-school approach, in terms of school ethos, learning and teaching methods and the participation of pupils, students, educational staff and parents in decision making and, as far as possible, in determining the formal and informal curriculum;
- requires that pupils and students be recognised as subjects of rights on the one hand, and as holders of rights on the other;
- involves complementary educational actors, such as teachers, parents, NGOs, local authorities, social partners, as well as leaders from the business community;
- is enhanced and sustained by a creative and supportive interaction between educational institutions and the community, implying co-operation between formal and non-formal learning
- requires the necessary legal and financial provisions for autonomous development at all levels.

Sites of citizenship

Sites of citizenship:

- are new or innovative forms of management of democratic life;
- are initiatives rooted in civil society, in schools, communities, youth and cultural centres, NGOs;
- practice participative and representative democracy at local level, where citizens speak up, express their needs and interests and respond to different aspects of social life, such as exclusion and discrimination, as well as foster communication between different ethnic groups in a multicultural setting;
- provide learning opportunities, in formal and non-formal learning environments, in the context of lifelong learning;
- constitute a network for action research, linking theory and practice, training, exchange and twinning arrangements to strengthen mutual support;
- are enhanced by effective partnerships between EDC actors and support institutions.

Educational policies

Policies to strengthen education for democratic citizenship should:

- focus on both formal and non-formal education and enhance synergies and mutual support;
- consider the values and principles of education for democratic citizenship as an essential goal of the entire curriculum and as criteria for quality assurance of education systems;

- adopt a holistic approach to skills and competencies and apply learner-centred and participative methods to all areas related to school, teacher training, adult education curricula, and evaluation and assessment;
- include education for democratic citizenship as part of social learning in vocational education and training;
- encourage the recognition of skills, qualifications and training in education for democratic citizenship, which have been acquired in both formal and non-formal contexts;
- support the production of learning resources by authors from different sectors of society, which focus on learning processes and are accompanied by training in their use;
- draw-up legislation for education for democratic citizenship.

Support systems for education for democratic citizenship

Education for democratic citizenship should be further promoted by:

- establishing partnerships among the actors in education for democratic citizenship;
- placing value on democratic youth cultures and lifestyles and on young people's self expression and aspiration to be heard, and making this a basis for education for democratic citizenship;
- carrying out participatory basic and applied research and development in education for democratic citizenship, thus contributing to the monitoring of EDC initiatives and innovations and to EDC training and curriculum development;
- promoting information and communication technologies in education, paying particular attention to the selection and critical assessment of information, and to supporting access to and initiatives in ICT related to EDC;
- developing the awareness and the practice of corporate social responsibility;
- creating conditions in which business and the social partners may support education for democratic citizenship.