

Pestalozzi Website Programme

**"Pestalozzi" In-Service Training Programme for Education Professionals**

**CoE 2014 1007-1010 Finland**

**Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights  
in Basic Education**

**Dates and place: 7 – 10 October 2014, Helsinki Finland**

# **FINAL REPORT**

## Pestalozzi workshop: Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights in basic education

### General approach and framework:

The general aim of the training activities of the Pestalozzi Programme is to train education professionals to become multipliers for Council of Europe standards and values in education.

The work was based on three main pillars:

- ❖ Content : standards and principles as well as project results of the Council of Europe
- ❖ Methodology: learner-centered, peer-training, collaborative work on issues of common concerns to find fit solutions for diverse contexts
- ❖ Four-fold concept of competences development: developing sensitivity and awareness, knowledge and understanding, individual practice, societal practice.

### Related Council of Europe Project:

- ❖ Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education
- ❖ **Recommendation 1849 (2008) of the Parliamentary Assembly for the promotion of a culture of democracy and human rights through teacher education**
- ❖ 'Learning and Living Democracy For All'.

The workshop focused on the best practices and activities in teaching and learning about democracy, the different forms of democracy in every day's schooling life especially from the following points of views:

- ❖ Children's rights and participation in school's operational culture
- ❖ Different cases on how the Rights of the Child are promoted all around Europe
- ❖ The role of student boards and student associations in basic education.

Participants commit themselves to actively participate in all phases of the work:

- ❖ preparatory tasks before the workshop
- ❖ active participation throughout the whole duration of the workshop
- ❖ reporting, follow-up and dissemination after the workshop.

### Expected results were:

- ❖ To strengthen democracy as a basic value in education
- ❖ To implement the participation practices and activities in everyday school life in basic education
- ❖ To get innovative ideas and share best practices between the participating countries concerning child activating philosophy and appropriate methods on active participation in school's operational culture
- ❖ Co-operation on fostering democracy and child participation with NGO's and other out-of-school networks.

The programme consisted of introductory lectures and visits to a local lower secondary school. Co-operative learning was the working method throughout the workshop: the participants shared their experiences and professional practices with peers from other participating countries.



# Programme

## Tuesday 7 October

### **Arrival of the participants**

Check-in at Hotel Cumulus Hakaniemi (address: Siltasaarenkatu 14, 00530 Helsinki)

18.15

**Meeting** with Mr Matti Pietilä at the hotel reception. **Walk to the restaurant.**

18.30 – 21.00

**Warm-Up dinner at restaurant Bridges** (address: Stenberginranta 4)

During the dinner there will be a possibility to get to know each other.

## Wednesday 8 October

9.00

**Meeting at hotel reception.** Walk together to the course venue:

Finnish National Board of Education (address: Hakaniemenranta 6, 00531 Helsinki)

9.15 – 9.30

*FNBE (Hauki)*

### **Workshop opening**

Mr Matti Pietilä, Counsellor of Education (FNBE), Pestalozzi NLO/Finland

9.30 – 10.30

### **Introduction to the Pestalozzi programme, the Council of Europe and the Finnish Education System**

Mr Jorma Kauppinen, Director, General Education, Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE), Chair of Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Education and Practice (CDPPE)

10.30 – 10.45

### **Break** (*coffee+tea*)

10.45 – 11.45

### **Rights of the child**

Mr Tuomas Kurttila, Ombudsman for Children in Finland

11.45 – 12.00

### **Reflection and discussion of Mr Tuomas Kurttila's presentation**

12.00 – 12.45

### **Lunch at restaurant Lasiranta** (FNBE)

12.45 – 13.30

### **Democracy and human rights in Finnish Basic Education**

Ms Kristina Kaihari, Counsellor of Education (FNBE)

13.30 – 13.45

**Reflection and discussion of Ms Kristina Kaihari's presentation**

13.45 – 14.30

**KiVa: a research-based anti-bullying program**

Ms Kristiina Laitinen, Counsellor of Education (FNBE)

14.30- 14.45

**Reflection and discussion of Kristiina Laitinen's presentation**

14.45 – 15.00

**Refreshments** (FNBE)

15.00 - 17.15

**Experiences in Module training and the objectives of workshop working and the Workshop**

Ms Najat Ouakrim-Soivio, Counsellor of Education, Ministry of Education

19.00 -

**Departure for dinner from Hotel reception**

19.15

**Dinner at restaurant *Graniittilinna*** (address: Säästöpankinranta 6)

### Thursday 9 October

8.30

**Departure from hotel**

9.00 - 10.45

**Visit to *Töölön yhteiskoulu*** (*basic school with grades 7-9*)

- Arriving to *Töölön yhteiskoulu*-school
- Welcoming words (principals Marja-Leena Ruha-Tuomola & Ukkopekka Hyvönen)

9.45 – 10.45

**Mediation in schools**

Ms Maija Gellin, Project Director, School mediation

10.45 – 11.15

**School lunch**

11.15 - 15.00

**School visit continues**

- visit to classes & teachers' lounge
- KiVa – pupils & teacher
- Pupil's association
- Support & tutor pupils

Reflection and discussion of school visit

15.00 –

**Free time for shopping** etc.

18.00 –

**Meeting** with Mr Matti Pietilä at the hotel reception. **Walk to the restaurant.**

18.30 –

**Finnish evening at restaurant Saaga** (address: Bulevardi 34)

### Friday 10 October

9.00 – 11.30

*FNBE (Hauki)*

#### **Workshop**

Ms Najat Ouakrim-Soivio, Counsellor of Education, Ministry of Education

#### **Democracy and participation across Europe**

- Group work continues
- Summary
- ➔ Groups presentations on fore-mentioned topics

11.30 - 12.30

#### **Presentations and conclusions**

Ms Najat Ouakrim-Soivio, Counsellor of Education, Ministry of Education

#### **Feedback of the European Workshop**

Mr Matti Pietilä, Counsellor of Education (FNBE)

#### **Closing of the seminar**

12.30 - 13.30

**Farewell lunch** / FNBE

#### **Departures**



## List of participants and workshop organizers

### Participants



Belarus

Mr Vasiliy Borisik



Croatia

Mr Jurica Botic



France

Ms Murriss Pascale



Finland

Ms Päivi Turumäki



Finland

Ms Elina Vanamo



Georgia

Ms Maia Tkemaladze



Greece

Ms Ioanna Theodoropoulou



Italy

Ms Maria Cristina Bevilacqua



Lithuania

Ms Ausra Storozenkiene



Malta

Mr Stephen Camilleri



Norway

Ms Christine Hope



Poland

Ms Malgorzata Sadowska



Slovenia

Ms Ursa Posavec



Turkey

Ms Kiymet Gultekin



### Trainer

Ms Najat Ouakrim-Soivio, PHD, Ministry of Education / Finland

### Finnish National Board of Education -staff

Mr Jorma Kauppinen, Director, General Education, Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE)  
Member of Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE)

Ms Kristina Kaihari, Counsellor of Education, FNBE

Ms Tiina Tähkä, Head of General Upper Secondary & Basic Education in the Arts Unit, FNBE

Ms Jaana Järventausta, secretary, FNBE

Ms Inkeri Gröhn, secretary, FNBE

Ms Mirja Kuorttinen, assistant, FNBE

Mr Hannu Ylilehto, Head of Information, FNBE

Ms Kristiina Laitinen, Counsellor of Education, FNBE

Mr Matti Pietilä, Counsellor of Education, FNBE (Pestalozzi NLO of Finland)

### Visiting lecturers

Mr Tuomas Kurttila, Ombudsman for Children in Finland

Ms Maija Gellin, Project Director, School mediation

### School visit / Helsingin Normaalilyseo

Principals Marja-Leena Ruha-Tuomola & Ukkopekka Hyvönen



## Pretasks

### Pretask for participants

The pretask needed to be sent to the trainer Ms Najat Ouakrim-Soivio before the participants came to Finland.

The pre-task were to be written in English (word–document, font: Calibri 12), and the optimal length of the work was 1 500 words.

**Participants were to choose from one of the three following pretask options:**

#### Option number 1:

Give us some examples of the best practices and activities in teaching and learning about school democracy. You can also bring out a project that you have been involved. You can also describe the best practices from your country.

**OR**

#### Option number 2:

How the children's participation or the children's rights are shown in practice in your school's or your country's everyday life? You can also bring out a project that you have been involved or you can describe the best practices from your country.

**OR**

#### Option number 3:

The role of student boards or student associations in your school or in your country. Bring us some examples or your personal experiences how the student boards works in everyday schooling life and give some examples how the student board encourage to act as a democratic and active citizenship.

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#### Option number 1:

Give us some examples of the best practices and activities in teaching and learning about school democracy. You can also bring out a project that you have been involved. You can also describe the best practices from your country.

PASCALE MURRIS, France



*The specificity of my contribution to this workshop is that I am working with very young pupils.*

#### **The Pre-primary school in France**

Schooling in France is compulsory and free of charge for all children from six to sixteen but France also has free of charge pre-primary schooling for children aged three to six. Therefore almost all children begin their schooling at the age of three. This pre-primary school is called " école maternelle " . The teachers who teach in these schools have the same training as those who teach in primary schools.

These teachers must follow a curriculum which prepares kids for primary school. Therefore, this pre-primary school is not at all a kinder garden but a real school.

I teach in a pre-primary school to pupils from 4 to 6 years old.

The notion of democracy is included in the French curriculum THROUGH THE "living together" aspect. However this vital aspect "living together" is a big problem in the French educational system. Indeed due to a lack of citizenship values a lot of teachers cannot teach anymore. The problem begins at the pre-primary school level because children learn less and less about citizenship at home. So, most children discover matters of citizenship at school and we can say the earlier they learn about it, the better it is for their future primary schooling.

For pupils from 3 to 6 coming to school, it is the first time in their life that they will live in a small community (about 25 or 30 pupils in a classroom) and teachers must help them to live together in mutual harmony and respect.

For teachers it is a fantastic opportunity to set up a little democratic system.

But a lot of teachers think pupils are too young and must learn everything from adults.

In the new French school programs it is written that teachers have to teach pupils the rules for living together.

But from my experience I disagree with this idea.

Young pupils can think together and decide how to build the foundations for the class life if with the managing of the teacher. If the rules for living together come from the group of peers (the children themselves), they are much more effective than if they are imposed by adults. If means

are put in place to enforce the class rules then the children themselves are allowed to use these tools to ensure that the rules are respected.

Teachers are often afraid of losing their authority and that is why pupils are not really involved in the decisions. Previously, I have done very ambitious European projects with my young pupils who were as involved and enthusiastic as older students. Some years later, parents have told me how what they did in my class really opened their children's minds to Europe.

In my experience, I have noticed that the younger the pupils, the more they can be totally involved in the situations as long as they have chosen them themselves and as long as they make sense for them. They are naturally aware about what is good and right.

So teachers can begin to set up a democratic class together with their pupils from the age of 4, 5 and 6. But at this age the way to do it is not by learning about democracy but by "living" the democracy.

### **Democracy through looking at children's rights all over the world**

In my experiences in European projects, I have noticed that young pupils are fascinated by discovering other cultures even though it is difficult to understand concepts of geography. They are able to realize that others children live in other countries go to different kind of schools, talk other languages.

I am used to setting up a democratic class environment. After attending many European Comenius projects and with particular pertinence to this workshop, I have decided to teach democracy through looking at children's rights all over the world. Knowing that all over the world the same rules exist to protect them is a good way for children to really feel secure at school and outside of school. It is also a good means for children to feel free to express their opinion which is the basis of democracy. I have noticed in my previous teaching about democracy that children are often afraid of expressing their opinion.

### **Examples of how children built a small democratic community:**

#### **FIRST STEP**

From day-to-day experiences, together we build a democratic environment based on a universal children's rights concept.

That means that we generally begin with

#### **How can we live and learn all together?**

Pupils arrive at school after long holidays and must face a big group of peers (classmates) and be separated from their family. The first thing to learn is how to live, work and play all together. Firstly we work on education rights. At the beginning of the year I set up some talks about why pupils go to school. I write a list of what my pupils want to learn and together we think about how this can be set up in the classroom.

**We make rules for working all together.**

We want to:

- \* work in a quiet classroom
- \* not be disturbed by a class mate.
- \* not disturb the teacher when she is helping a child.

.....

**The management of the class helps effective communication.**

We sit down in a circle where pupils can see each other. It is a good way to include everyone. Even some pupils don't want to participate, they are in the group and can observe and listen.

Throughout the school day, there are alternately individual activities chosen by the pupils themselves (Montessori teaching and organization), activities in small groups monitored by adults but often build with the children and activities with the whole class .

This organization allows children to progressively discover "community" life without feeling "threatened" by the group.

If some pupils don't want to participate in the meetings and decisions, the teacher respects this. The aim is to respect the differences between children and present democracy in an attractive way and not in a restrictive one.

We also build together **some means**:

- playing a maracas as a signal that there is too much noise.
- whispering rather than loud talk.
- going close to a class mate or to the teacher to talk to him or her.

....

After a few weeks of practice, we think about how to act if the rules are not respected, by one kid or by all the kids.

## SECOND STEP

**A meeting about how to live together** takes place on the last day of the week.

Of course, the teacher must supervise but pupils must really be involved in the decisions.

After this point I teach about Children's rights using some material: a book about children's rights, a Planisphere make children to realize how many countries are concerned and a documentary video about children and schooling in different countries. Pupils discover that RIGHTS also mean DUTIES all over the world.

Now we can begin to decide what we can do if the rights are not respected. This means built deciding on " laws", but also sanctions. If the aim is that the rights must be respected, children will understand the rules. In this way democratic citizenship really exist in the classroom.

## **Example of pupils participation**

My class is part Montessori class and part "normal" class.

From the Montessori pedagogy and environment, pupils learn to do a lot by themselves for themselves and also for the community (clean the class, help their mate). Each day there are **two**

**“special helpers** “who have some responsibilities .

At the start of the year, they have only material responsibilities like "holding the door", watering the plants.

But after some weeks, **the specials helpers assist the adults in monitoring the rights and duties of pupils. They draw attention to the teacher if any violation of children's rights occurs. They can propose improvement to the living environment, organization of school (playground, canteen ...).** The teacher writes down at the end of each day. On the Friday **class meeting** the whole class discusses what has happened. During this meeting we also decide about the outings, the stories they would like and so on.

Some decisions could be voted but from my experience pupils are too young and they often copy each other.

### THIRD STEP

During the end of week meetings, pupils and teacher discuss about the **living together in the all school** and how to make it better. That means proposing ideas eg. for the playground , new games. Choosing events: parties for Christmas (what kind of party?), end of year spectacle ....  
-Some pupils choose to go with their teachers who has written the proposals, to a **bigger meeting with others representatives and the head teacher.**

As parents are very important for pupils, we also do a **meeting (once a term) with the class representative of the parents.**

Others parents are informed by the "cahier de liaison" by a speech done both by teacher, parents and children representatives.

### FOURTH STEP

**Participation of some representative children to the "school council"** where are present teachers, representatives of the parents **visit of the townhall and the council room** where decisions about education are taken. It is possible because the school is in a village and two teachers are also counselors.

Here are what we can do with young pupils. Of course all these steps depend on the children. Sometimes it could be difficult but everyone know that democratic citizenship is a big challenge even for adults!

IONNA THEODOROPOULOU, Greece



Democratic values and practices are always in a process of change and they have to be learned and relearned by each generation in order to live together especially nowadays when societies turn to be more and more diverse. It is not about studying and learning but about acquiring skills and changing attitudes to meet the challenges of our society in a diverse environment following a communicative and peaceful way.

In the field of education schools are seen not only as institutions where certain skills and knowledge are acquired by students but also as environments that socialize young people. From that point of view teaching democracy's values at schools should be on top priority in education because there students should learn and practice –by building an inclusive environment- the principles of human rights and democracy. Schools are always at the centre of community life and they ought to prepare students to be active participants in all aspects of democratic life. The need of skills to actively participate in democratic citizenship is equal to those of being able to read and write in modern societies.

The first step is students to have a significant voice in school based- decision making- in secondary schools. In everyday school life they rarely do so despite the fact that the teaching of democracy is a stated goal in the curriculum, in most European countries. There has been a small effort for years to prepare young people for their role as critical, responsible and active citizens, at schools where most teachers focused on learning instead of practicing democratic and human rights. Schools are the perfect place democratic citizenship to be taught and practiced because they function like a social microcosms where a face to face training is offered, where projects are developed and implemented to school curricula in order to manifest tolerance and understanding in practice. We are able to produce the tools to make a change as far as we are able to recognize the need for it.

Someone could teach effectively democracy by enrolling students to a democracy model and teach them how to be actively engaged citizens. In a democracy, those most affected by decisions should have a voice in making them. This principle is included in the United Nations convention of the Rights of the Child. There are many secondary school students whose insights and intelligence could make a substantive difference in school reform, helping changes to happen faster and more effectively. Their participation in decision making improves students' outcomes. It makes them more devoted to school, builds self- esteem and improves tolerance and respect of the others.

According to the learner- centered education the knowledge and experiences in all learners' backgrounds should be respected, and learning seen as a dialectical process between the learner and his/her own context. The focus is thus on learner centered education where educational processes take participant's needs, abilities and interests as their starting point, with the teacher as facilitator of learning. What the learners are to learn should be meaningful to them and should take an active part in learning and be empowered to act. We always have to remember that our student's interest and their ability to understand and apply what they have learned increases when examples are close to home and their view of reality. For this reason the examples are used should be relevant to the learners social context so they can connect them to themselves, their families, communities, countries etc.

Modern pedagogical approaches, more than the traditional ones, promote interactive learning methods, with a focus on dialogue and personal experiences to help them seek information and solutions for themselves. Through a variety of conducting methods both formal and non formal like lectures, power point and moviemaker presentations and videos, discussions, checklists and questionnaires, group work and workshops, role play and case studies students gain ability to see a situation from different points of view, to search for more answers and apply their new knowledge to real life situations. Although there is a strong disadvantage in most of the methods

mentioned above : they take a long time to prepare, to find , to develop, or to carry out what have planned , there is a big advantage as well that students can recall better what they have learned when they follow interactive or participatory methods.

Nowadays at most of European schools, head teachers, teachers, parents, students and representatives of civil society, supported by national or European organizations are on the process of applying new knowledge. In many cases head teachers and teachers attend in service training courses or summer schools intending to improve their skills in Human Rights Education. They begun by assessing their colleague's existing knowledge and understanding and working together they develop ways of incorporating elements of education for human rights and democratic citizenship into their specialized subjects. The implementation of active learning techniques in democracy and human rights teaching helps to improve the working atmosphere in the classroom.

Organizing workshops at school where students could realize the importance of individual and social values. In the same framework they can rank what is necessary for their survival and what for their development, thus they can set priorities and define wishes and needs in order to understand in what ways human needs are connected to human rights. Another aim to be achieved is making students aware of the importance of communication and dialogue as a means to conflict resolution. Clearly expressed opinions and attitudes help people to understand each other and avoid violence, instead they help to achieve a peaceful conflict resolution and create a positive environment for cooperation. Applying non formal methods to formal education is always a pleasant change and students are interested to be asked about their opinions, to listen to their classmates and make decisions together.

Before we start a democracy and human rights teaching at school we have to ensure a democratic governance there, that means the participation of teachers, parents and students at least. Active involvement of all would improve the quality of democratic school governance but most important is to motivate parents by giving them an active role at school's daily life. Cooperating with parental organizations there could be set some goals that will improve school life and create strong ties between the members of the school community. A parents day, a parents training school, or a workshop where parents students and teachers could participate would help everyone to observe the school work from a different scope.

Another step to teaching democratic values and practices at school is set mutual trust among teachers –students and parents. Sometimes it seems difficult because neither teachers nor students have much faith to each other that they can work together on decision making and school governance. With time they learn to be more tolerant to each other and work together in a productive and positive way. Students should be able to speak about their problems and learn how to find solutions supported by their teachers and their parents.

Facing the bullying threat at school, teachers students and parents have to be informed about the rights and duties every single member has in democratic school governance, to indentify the real school problems and challenges. After that they should take initiatives in order to prevent hate and violent expressions at school. Through workshops and role play activities students learn to cooperate, understand the school legislation system, become tolerant and respectful to the others and learn how to deal with such kind of problems together. In some cases volunteer students



create a team of mediators with the participation of teachers they organize activities to disseminate ideas about tolerance and non violent interaction and they help other students to come to a peaceful conflict resolution.

The effective realization of a culture of Human Rights and Democracy Education depends on people knowing their rights. That's why schools have a key role to disseminate those values and rights among the youngsters. The human rights culture is guaranteed by people first knowing their rights and then being prepared to struggle for them.

URSA POSAVEC, Slovenia



### ***Option number 1&3***

As a Slovene citizen and therefore a European citizen I feel myself extremely proud to be a part of such a democratic union, a union of many states, so unique and compelling yet integrated and accessible. Being able to belong to a fairly democratic society I consider a privilege. Throughout my life I have noticed many changes in the society as well as stagnation. Activism is becoming more noticeable and heard, thus improving the situation in the country. I believe many influential people often turn a blind eye, but there are a few exceptions along with the non-governmental organizations which put a lot of effort into making our country a better place for marginalized groups who do not fit the social norms.

As an English teacher in a reputable high school in Ljubljana, the Slovene capital, I must say students are definitely the ones who have benefited from the changes. They have gradually been gaining more influential roles in the school governing over the years. Their voices are heard and considered as much as possible. The laws and the school regulations allow them to participate actively in school life, all in accordance with the annual work plan. Cooperating with the *school governing bodies*, the student body co-organizes extracurricular activities and attends to educational, organizational and administrative issues. It also makes proposals, delivers opinions and evaluates the work of the *school governing bodies*. *It connects the students and protects their rights.*

All the students in our school are members of the student body, which in turn is a member of the national student body. Publicity is ensured with school notice boards, circulars and school internet site. Further publicity is provided through the school annual report, school publication and student body meeting records. Each class selects two members to represent the class interests on the school level, the two often being the most popular, and not the most efficient students I must say. The downside of democracy as I see it in such cases is silencing of the class minority since the two members are selected by voting. Therefore, the majority prevails. These two representatives from each class then form the Student Council of our school, who meet regularly under the guidance of a teacher representative i.e. a mentor. The Executive (Student Council President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) manage the Student Council and are democratically elected by the student body. Student Council representatives report Student Council news to their classes, get ideas from their classmates to bring to Student Council meetings,

work on school related projects, nationally and internationally, and organize fundraising events to support good causes, locally and globally.

It is to most extent a fairly democratic system allowing students to participate actively. Yet I notice many students exert no desire to participate or at least try to contribute. Some show no interest believing they have no real role and no real power to make a difference. Some are so uninterested they appear oblivious to their surroundings. On the other hand, one can also see some teachers clinging to their authorial role, the I-am-always-right norm, unwilling to adjust. Thus, non-participation of the students may also lie in the fact some teachers claim authority and power where there is no place for student participation. It may also be their former experience that they have no influence, therefore why bother? In Slovenia, which is an ex-Yugoslav republic, the authorial approach is still often present in the educational system. Additionally, Slovenia as a mainly mono-cultural, mono-racial and mono-religious country has started to open its borders to diversity with its membership in the European Union. A mix of cultural, religious and other influences are becoming visible throughout the country, especially so in the capital. One can hear many foreign languages on the streets. One can see the society becoming more susceptible to changes. One can notice colour, gender and sexuality norms being broken. The capital truly is a melting pot. Unfortunately, it is primarily the capital that is the melting pot in Slovenia. So is this really the country's diversity being revealed or is this assigned to tourism, to foreigners who enter our country and leave? Is it that the real diversity is not as visible as it is stigmatized in the form of people who do not fit in? The fact that many students who identify themselves as being of Balkan nationality or of minority group are often stigmatized and subjected to discrimination shows exactly the invisibility of diversity in our country.

Yet still, certain norms are very much present in the Slovene society, especially those determining power and influence. These norms as unwritten rules are present in all areas of our lives, many of my students being unaware of them, many never questioning them. During English classes, when discussing a specific topic, I encourage critical thinking. I try to get my students to question the norms and normalcy standards, rather than blindly following them. I reassure them no harm will come to them if they speak openly and participate. We try to find a common ground, understanding that school is not oppression. I find democracy is not placing myself in the position of power, but rather encourage the students and make them feel equal. I try to use teaching approaches that boost student engagement, motivation and achievement. Student contribution is what I aspire. There are no right answers but I will not say there are no wrong answers when discussing a topic. Issues such as sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc. are not overlooked, but addressed and discussed professionally. Such issues must and will be dealt with in my classroom. So, together with my students we create successful strategies for their thinking and contribution. Considering that individually we have many identities that define us, each showing in different social context, it is extremely difficult to leave our comfort zone and break the proper norms, especially since the norms become visible when one breaks them (RFSL Ungdom 2009). It demands time and energy my students are fortunately willing to invest. Taking small steps, we build a trustworthy and diverse environment. As a teacher, I encourage students to offer their opinions, justify their ideas, debate and consider alternative perspectives. I try to make my classroom as democratic as possible. When considering decision-making, we try to negotiate and compromise. Rather than suggesting a solution or strategy in problem-solving situations, I respond with more norm critical questions. Integration of students can also be done to some extent when planning the lessons by them initiating the themes, some of which are still often considered a

taboo in Slovene schools, such as sexuality, violence, death, immorality, racism, sexism and poverty.

Another form of democracy at our school is reflected in the treatment of children with special educational needs, the term generally used for students who encounter barriers to learning. The Report of the Special Education Review Committee (SERC) from 1993 defines areas of special educational needs under four broad headings, which embrace a wide range of special educational needs and include: general learning disabilities, emotional and behavioural disturbance, language and communication difficulties and disorders, and physical and sensory disabilities. Special education is defined as any educational provision which is designed to cater for students with special educational needs, and is additional to or different from the provision which is generally made in ordinary classes for students of the same age. Schools provide support and assistance to students with special educational needs and/or students with additional and significant care needs. Such support is provided in order to facilitate their attendance at school and with a view to developing their independent living skills. (NCCA, 1999).

On the basis of a Personal Student Plan (PSP) issued by the Ministry of Education, our school puts in place detailed, individualised programmes of work including curriculum guidelines for all the students who have a general learning disability. In practice this requires all the teachers in our school to provide extra lessons for the students in question, extra lessons including lessons of the subject in matter, most frequently Slovene, English and Maths. Occasionally there are also students whose PSP ensures not only extra lessons, but also consultations with the school advisory. Extra lessons and expert assistance aim to ensure equality and fairness as every student is entitled to a free and appropriate public education. The students with special educational needs in our school have the following adjustments and modifications within the subject: extended time on tests and *assignments*, verbal, visual, or technology aids, adjusted class schedules or grading, etc.

The benefits of such a system are clearly visible, but there are also a few downsides that show themselves in practice. Often we as teachers have had superficial or no training in the field of special learning needs, either due to lack of personal or administrative interest or the assumption of being qualified enough to handle the situations. It is my belief that additional training in the form of experiential workshops or module training would build our confidence and prepare us more efficiently for the task.

Another downside in my opinion is the workload, meaning extra lessons are not included in the teacher schedules and are not pre-assigned. Speaking from experience, the teachers are unaware of the number of extra lessons they will be required to provide till the beginning of the school year. However, the reason for this might lie in the fact that extra lessons are not mandatory (though officially assigned), thus the students attend them based on their own judgement and choice, establishing in turn a form of democracy based on responsibility.

The biggest downside, however, I see is creating otherness, creating categories for those who do not fit the norm. These students with special learning needs might have nothing in common when considering their needs, yet they are all put in the same basket. They differ. They have learning needs and are classified according to the norm of a "proper" student. Their needs are included, considered, yet they are the others, those who do not fit, which is a form of discrimination in

itself. We try to better them instead of changing the norm. We try to adjust them instead of changing the norm.

I would like to finish by using a quote: *Maybe it's wrong-footed trying to fit people into the world, rather than trying to make the world a better place for people.* We all belong to a society where certain norms are being created and expected to be followed, meaning we as individuals either fit or deviate from the norm. Considering things are never as black and white as they seem, I believe there are many other ways of living, close or distant to the dominant, superior norm. Depending on this remoteness, a person is defined and positioned in the society. People who are most distant to the prevailing norm are often unheard and ignored, having the human rights frequently violated. As I see it, the universality of human rights means everyone is born with and possesses the same rights, regardless of where they live, their gender or race, or their religious, cultural or ethnic background. Who then is entitled to dominate? A straight white able-bodied man who lives in west Europe? Even if we treated each individual as they are within their cultural environment without the need for inferiority and superiority, could the world come together and really be a place of equality and diversity at the same time?

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KIYMET GULTEKIN, Turkey



#### **DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BASIC EDUCATION IN TURKEY**

The schools are the most important places for DEMOCRACY EDUCATION.

#### **THE LAWS ABOUT DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN TURKEY**

**The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey,**

**Qualifications in the title of Article 2 of the Republic;**"Republic of Turkey, public peace, national solidarity and justice, in the spirit of human rights respectful, loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, initially on the basic principles based, democratic, secular and social state of law. "

- **The Council of Ministers Decision No. 2000/684 dated 06.06.2003** whether the acceptance Turkey Grand National Assembly submitted to the Eighth Five-Year Development
- **In Article 675 of the Plan** "The main purpose of the educational system; Depending on Atatürk's principles and revolutions, thinking, detection and advanced problem-solving skills, committed to democratic values, new open to ideas, have a sense of personal responsibility, national culture have been assimilated, different cultures interpret and able

to contribute to civilization, science and technology tend to produce high levels of skills and knowledge to people age is to educate ... "

- **1739 National Education Basic Law ' 14/6/1973**

## **Objectives of National Education,**

### **I - General objectives:**

Article 1 of the Basic Law on Education defines the general goal of the national education system as follows: To raise all individual as citizens who are committed to the principles and reforms of Atatürk and to the nationalism of Atatürk as expressed in the Constitution, who adopt, protect and promote the national, moral, human, spiritual and cultural values of the Turkish Nation, who love and always seek to exalt their family, country and nation, who know their duties and responsibilities towards the Republic of Turkey (MEB 2001).

### **VIII - Democracy education, Article 11 of the** - (Amended: 16.6.1983 - 2842/3 md.)

Strong and stable, free and democratic society and the realization of the order for more democracy, citizens need to possess consciousness, domestic management's knowledge, understanding and a sense of responsibility and behavior respect for moral values, students in all educational activities to acquire and are introduced; However, in educational institutions in the Constitution contrary to Atatürk's nationalism finds expression in the political and ideological indoctrination daily political events of this nature to be made and to be interfered with and discussion can not be challenged in any way.

### **Democracy Education and School Councils Project - September, 2004**

#### **Aim of the Project**

Democracy Education and School Councils Project (DESCP)' geared toward creating a democratic culture by promoting democratic principles and values at schools initially our children, then our democratic way of life.

Four main objectives have been identified to be gained. They are;

1. Built-in creation of a democratic culture and consciousness,
2. Gainining tolerance-tolerance, pluralism, peace and security of the people despite differences can coexist in discussions manners, thinking, questioning, analyzing and individuals with the ability to synthesize, Great Atatürk's idea of "free, wisdom free, liberty of conscience, "which he described as the cultivation of the citizens of the republic,
3. Embracing their culture, their feet stepped on the soil of their country, but open to the world and the global value upbringing of generations,
4. Selection of the culture is to provide for election and to vote.

#### **The project revealed three distinct forms of the council;**

- a) Turkey Student Assembly
- b) City Student Assembly
- c) School Student Council.

School Student Council consists of representatives of each school enough council, elected by the students managed and represented by the President. This President, an upper management unit, the "City Student Assembly" represents the school he is in. Students choosing a president in his own City Council of National Sovereignty Specified day of the week the "Turkey Student Assembly" meeting represents all students in the province. And representation of the entire election process; in a democratic environment, be elected and vote using the creation of awareness and culture are carried out within the framework of the principles. The decisions taken at the meeting are advisory.

### **Activities in the project**

By the Ministry of National Education requirements reflected in the curriculum, extracurricular activities, with a substantial democracy training has been provided. Rather than training the rhetorical size, democratic examples of the culture must be done with efficiency and behavior models are preferred.

In this context, attention to artistic and cultural activities benefited from are shown.

- ▶ All selection procedures, created by teachers polls Boards are maintained by the necessary support from election-related institutions.
- ▶ Selection Rules, setting the ground for the creation of all kinds are prepared. In this context, the period of propaganda; the use of posters and exchange are dispensed in critical environments.
- ▶ "Parliament TV" by; informational meetings, propaganda and election step is carried out for news and publications.
- ▶ Turkey Grand National Assembly by the Presidency, "Democracy Education and School Assembly Project Charter "and Turkey, Student Council, Student Council and the City School Student Council elections for the "Electoral Rules and Procedures entitled" Preparation and reproducing publications in coordination with the Ministry of Education is distributed.
- ▶ Selection with the aforementioned statutes to determine the principles and procedures, ballot boxes appropriate to use, and all other work necessary for the coordination and planning of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey with the Supreme Election Board are prepared by the Chair.

Studies at school level, county-level district national studies Department of Education, Provincial-level studies Provincial Directorate of National Education in general Turkey Grand National Assembly and the Ministry of National Education participants are as observers. Observers; to the decisions of parliament, meeting way, members and management decisions such as the creation of units every activity or have rights like the right to vote but will not be providing logistical support; will also supervise the work.

School Student Council Student Council of the City collection, the decisions of council happen within the framework. However, the number of meetings in a calendar year cannot be less than 2.

Student Assembly of Turkey, from 81 provinces "City Student Assembly" and the participation of the heads of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey are collected. At meeting morning and afternoon session are done in two sessions. In the morning session, President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey manages. Here, Executive Board and Turkey Student Council

President is finalized, mazbata is prepared and is distributed. In the afternoon session, the President of the Student Council manages the meeting. At the annual meeting of the Assembly, the province of democracy education is evaluated.

Turkey Student Assembly meeting and National Sovereignty is performed in the week once a year.

### **Citizenship and Democracy Education course in the Turkish curriculum.**

This course has been introduced as a mandatory subject in grade 8 per one hour a week in the 2011-2012 academic year. Following the comprehensive 2005 curriculum reform, Citizenship and Human Rights Education courses had been abolished and these themes had been distributed to the curriculum of different courses. However, recommendations of academics and international bodies such as the Council of Europe on the advantages of having a distinct course on citizenship and human rights have led the Ministry of National Education to reintroduce a compulsory course covering these themes. The new course seems to be a human rights education course with its emphasis on rights and responsibilities. It could be considered a progressive step in this regard. It draws attention to the necessity of the development of a new political framework and a related citizenship course that would allow for peaceful coexistence of cultural differences.

**Citizenship and Human Rights Education** courses Turkish education history that aimed to redesign the whole curriculum on the basis of constructivism and student-centered learning. New programmes have been developed at all grades, and new textbooks (and, for the first time, teacher's guides and students' workbooks) have been introduced in primary and secondary levels. As part of this reform, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) decided to teach citizenship and human rights not as a distinct subject but distribute these themes over the curriculum of other courses in different grades. Recently, however, the MoNE has announced the reintroduction of a distinct Citizenship education course as part of a new project. This project, titled "Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education" (DC/HRE), has been launched in 2009 to be conducted in collaboration with the Council of Europe.

This 3-year project aims at revising educational regulations and developing new materials for DC/HRE principles. The project also involved development of a new, distinct course covering citizenship and human rights themes. The programme of the new course, named "Citizenship and Democracy Education," has been developed and piloted during the 2010-2011 academic year. A new textbook, student's workbook and teacher's guide have been developed to be taught as mandatory in grade 8 (13-14 years old pupils) in the 2011-2012 academic year. "Adopting, protecting, and enjoying human rights have been a necessity for people.

Human rights have been an important measure of a country's level of development" (MEB 2010). Therefore, raising citizens who respect and protect human rights requires the inclusion of human rights in the educational processes. This course is the result of an attempt to revise and renew the educational programmes in order to raise "conscious citizens who make sense of the changing world" (MEB 2010).

Board of Education 7th and 8th grade students (13 and 14 years old) taking the former Citizenship and Human Rights Education course, to understand their views on the course and their perceptions of human rights. As mentioned above, these courses were mandatory before 2005



and involved, as their title says, many topics related to human rights. Particularly the 7th grade curriculum included several progressive elements regarding human rights education. They acquired some human rights knowledge, particularly those directly attracting their interests (such as “nobody can enter into my house without permission.”) However, the knowledge of human rights they acquired in school did not empower them in their daily lives. They repeatedly noted that “the real life was outside [not in textbooks].” And what they saw in real life, mainly through the media, was a world where nobody “respects human rights.” Students were well aware of internal problems

Contemporary Turkey has been undergoing a major social and political transformation regarding its political, social and educational structure. Youth are interested in both the practice and the underlying values of democracy and human rights in a rapidly changing world. This course has several new progressive objectives compared to the former programmes. Regarding its content, this course focuses on human rights themes and seems to be based on the assumption that human rights education all by itself and necessarily promotes civic engagement and democratic citizenship.

#### Option number 2:

How the children’s participation or the children's rights are shown in practice in your school’s or your country’s everyday life? You can also bring out a project that you have been involved or you can describe the best practices from your country.

VASILY BORISIK, Belarus



#### **Following the Principles of Democratic Citizenship in Porechye basic school**

The future of any country, human society and nation is determined by the state of education and learning, by quality of training young generation for life and work. The main role in society is given to a new type of personality that should be free, creative, harmonically developed, capable of participating in social process. The system of education in the Republic of Belarus is aimed at upbringing such a person, developing all necessary qualities and fulfilling social order of the country.

Reorientation from the formal level to the level of a personal knowledge suggests humanization of educational and learning at schools. Richard Emmerson stressed that the true figure of civilization is not in the amount of richness and education, not in the size of cities, not in plenty of crops, but in human’s appearance grown up by the country.

The staff of *Porechye basic school* try to create conditions for development students’ abilities to self-education, self-regulation, humane interaction with other people, with nature, with cultural

environment, i.e. for development a humane personality that will be able to realize themselves in our competitive world.

It should be mentioned that the following democratic principles are implemented within educational and learning process in our school:

- Integration of children who have problems in learning (such kids are taught together with the other students);
- Education of migrants from Ukraine (such kids are taught together with the other students);
- Creation of optimal and equal conditions for all participants of educational process (everyone has equal rights to study);
- holding public reports from the Chairman of the school council to parents, students four times a year, to the public district - twice a year;
- activation of student self-government on issues of the organization of students' leisure time (hiking, trekking, sports, contests, quizzes), out-of-school activity, "Veterans around us" during which students assist veterans of labor, arrangements of the school canteen( setting tables), monitoring the quality of food, independent work of student government on the prevention and resolution of conflicts at school;
- introduction of alternative forms of evaluation of student achievement based on the portfolio;
- edition of school newspaper "School Bulletin";
- participation of students in various competitions aimed at promoting the democratization of education (contests of social projects of students);
- development of tourist routes to study the cultural heritage of the region;
- holding shares of the Environment together with high school №1 Slonim and with the support of Minister-Counsellor of the Embassy of Finland in the department of the Republic of Belarus (Lauri Pullola).

PÄIVI TURUMÄKI, Finland 

### **Second chances in 'The House of Opportunities': implementing democratic citizenship and human rights in the everyday life**

I am a teacher at Töölön yhteiskoulu, a school that provides education for both young people and adults. I teach social studies and ICT beginners' courses. The school consists of two departments, the 'day school' and 'the 'night school'. At present, I have a position in the night school. In this paper, I will make a brief introduction to the school and have look at the ways in which Töölön yhteiskoulu, from my own point of view, implements democratic citizenship and human rights in everyday life.

#### **Töölön yhteiskoulu – the 'day school'**

The day school consists of the lower secondary level (forms 7 to 9, 'junior high school') and the upper secondary level (forms 10 to 12, 'high school'). Pupils usually enter the 7th form at the age 13, and the 10th form at the age of 16.

The lower secondary level is part of basic education, compulsory for all children under 17 years. Most children finish their basic education before their 16th birthday. The lower secondary studies provide the pupils with the 'peruskoulun päättötodistus', the basic education certificate. By

receiving the certificate, the pupils earn their right to apply for upper secondary education or vocational education.

The upper secondary studies provide the students with the 'lukion päättötodistus', the high school leaving certificate. The majority of students go on to sit the final matriculation examination. By passing the exams, the students receive their 'ylioppilastodistus', the Finnish high school diploma, and gain the much desired 'valkolakki', the white hat of high school graduates. Only a few students opt out of the matriculation examination as it is commonly considered the only proper way to finish high school. More importantly though, passing the matriculation examination entitles the student to sit entrance exams at university and continue his or her studies as an undergraduate.

The day school schedule runs from 8 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday.

### **Töölön yhteiskoulun aikuislukio – 'the night school'**

Although the word 'aikuislukio' stands for 'high school for adults', the night school provides both lower and upper secondary level education. The students' age range is wide – from teenagers to pensioners – and they come from all walks of life.

The night school offers different types of education for different people:

- Adults and teenagers who for one reason or another have not received their basic education certificate, are provided with lower secondary education (basic education).
- Adults and teenagers who have not received their high school diploma and/or passed the matriculation exams, are provided with upper secondary education.
- Adults who wish to brush up their skills in one particular subject may attend courses of upper secondary education (for instance, couple courses of French or history).

The night school also offers different ways to study: attending courses in a classroom, or finishing assignments at home and sitting the exam at the end of the course. The night school schedule runs from 4 pm to 8 pm, Monday to Thursday.

### **'The House of Opportunities'**

In many ways Töölön yhteiskoulu is good example of implementing democratic citizenship and human rights in education. The night school in particular offers a 'second chance' for many an adult who for one reason or another has not been able to finish his or her studies in due course – or has never been given the chance in the first place. The Headmaster of the school, Marja-Leena Ruha-Tuomola, often refers to the school as 'The House of Opportunities'. The door is open to more or less anyone who is interested in educating himself further, regardless of one's age, gender, or background.

In social studies and ICT, the idea of democratic citizenship is present at every class. Obviously, in social studies the themes of democracy, citizenship, human rights, and education are included in the curriculum itself, but I have come to realise that ICT classes is where I truly am involved in reinforcing the democratic citizenship as well as human rights.

Nowadays, In order to become a full member of society, a citizen, and to fully enjoy the rights that have been granted to everyone in a democratic state, one needs to have basic skills in ICT. Without the ability to use a computer, in today's society a person can be quite lost. Information is

becoming more and more openly available to everyone, but in order to reach that information, one has to know how to switch on a computer and how to use a mouse, know how to make a double-click and preferably a right-click as well, know how to copy-paste (and understand why it is such a handy thing to learn), not to mention the importance of locating the @-sign on the keyboard – and so on! Those of us who have already acquired these skills, can consider themselves very fortunate.

The students in the beginners' ICT courses are people who have either completely or partly missed out on the rapid technological development and the 'computerization' of society. For them, computers are not a practical tool for the everyday life. The mere thought of switching on a computer can be intimidating, and some students have not even used a mouse before. For them, computers are a reminder of the fact that they are not able to take part in the functions of a democratic society like everyone else. They are not able to go online to search, share and utilize information that enables the rest of us to fully enjoy the rights we have been given, such as freedom of speech, the right to petition, or the right to vote. Even if you do not necessarily need to be computer literate to vote for your candidate in an election, you most certainly are not able to find out as much information on you options as are the people who know how to work an online voting advice application.

In 'The House of Opportunities', I try to do my very best to give every one of my students some of the skills they need to fully embrace their human rights and reinforce democratic citizenship. In the hustle and bustle of an ICT evening class those goals may sometimes seem a bit idealistic: with a classroom full of students enthusiastically playing online solitaire and word games (brilliant for practising dragging and clicking!) reinforcing democratic citizenship is not exactly on the top of my list. But every click takes them a little closer to achieving computer literacy, and at the end of the day, the ability to click and drag is essentially a human right.

MAIA TKEMALADZE, Georgia 

I chose the topic: the role of students' boards or students associations in your school or in your country. The reason why I picked this topic is that democratic school for me means students' active participation and involvements in school affairs. "Democratic school – is a place in which young people have the freedom to organize their daily activities and in which there is equality and democratic decision-making among young people and adults." I fully agree to this quote from AERO's Directory of Democratic Education.

Students' board is a great way for students to feel as an important part of educational system or of their school community. It is a guarantee of protecting their rights and in general students' board is a voice of students and the evidence of a democratic society. Students' and in general, children's involvement and participation in decision-making process is one of the most crucial aspects in protecting children's rights and interests.

Students have the right to contribute to school life and its achievements. They must be actively involved in decision-making and express their views on different issues. They must be listened to and encouraged. Students must work in partnership with school management and staff and

parents to benefit the school life. Students' involvement must be well-organized and in this case students' boards give opportunity to students to gain communication, planning and organizing skills which will benefit them during school time and in future as well. Working in Students' boards enables students to take responsibility for projects and to demonstrate and implement the projects to successful conclusion. While working in the boards, students share responsibilities. They acknowledge the importance of active citizenship, collaboration, problem solving and democracy since Students' Board is a mini democratic society.

The fact that Students' Boards exist in every school in Georgia, promotes the development of non-formal education in our schools as students are more motivated to initiate ideas and implement projects. According to the Georgian Law of Secondary Education, at schools there must be functioning Students' Boards so called students' self-government, the aim of which is to organize and implement interesting projects.

Students' self-government consists of 2 levels, elementary – VII-IX grades and secondary levels – XI–XII grades. Students' self-government takes care of students' problems and tries to improve school life and make it more appealing to students. Students' self-government is elected based on election poll. Students from elementary and secondary levels elect their governments. Students elect their representatives based on equality, secret vote and the principle of equal representation. The elections are held within one month after school starts. The election dates are set by the chairperson of School Board. Each grade nominates several but elects one representative for the government until the next years' elections. Every student has the right to participate in the election. Students, who want to be elected in the self-government, have to register with their class teacher three days before the election. Students have to hold election campaign. The newly elected members of each level elect their president within seven days after the election. The president of the secondary level becomes the member of School Board.

Students' self-government works on recommendations on creating school rules, produces ideas to the School Board, creates school clubs and elects its representative in a disciplinary committee. Their duty is to resolve problems, inform school administration about the ideas students have. Students' self-government has monthly meetings and appointments.

I must mention here that president of the secondary level of students self-government is also a member of School Board, which also consists of teachers, parents and community members. So, the president's duty is to bring to the School Board students' problems and to collaborate with them on different issues.

I have been a member of the School Board and one of my duties was to collaborate with the Students' self-government and its president, to help to organize elections, plan and share my ideas and experience. It was a voluntary work I was doing, but I think that Students' Self-government must have an official coordinator teacher to help and advise them in every issue.

As for the work of the Students' Self-government at my school, I can proudly say that they are very active. Within these past years, they have organized picture and artifacts exhibition, a fund-raising event for disabled children, collaborated with "Save the Children" for a fund-raising event to help the poor children in developing countries. The event was called "Fun Game", through playing fun games students raised money. For the same reason, Self-government also organized an auction. I

can mention here a cycle of meeting called “The Wall”, again organized by the Self-government of the secondary level. It was meant for both students and teachers to meet and discuss the problems which exist at our school, and to find ways together how to solve them.

Students’ Self-government members, both from elementary and secondary levels were trained for Life Skills and they trained their peers in skills of a healthy life-style. The project was called “Big Brothers, Big Sisters”. I can also mention the concerts and holiday celebrations, organized and held by the members of students’ self-governments. I am proud with the achievement the presidents of students’ self-government made this year. She won a competition and together with other European youth participated in Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic fellow’s program in the USA. She returned with a lot of valuable ideas to carry out and help the newly elected students’ self-government.

In 2011 with the support of PH International an Alliance of school students' self -government was founded in one of the schools of Georgia's capital, Tbilisi. Now it is NGO, called the Alliance of Georgia's school students which unites the students' self -governments throughout Georgia. Under the work of the Alliance students carried out numerous educational, sporting and other projects, which also became the source of creating students clubs, such as NATO, UN, European integration, environmental protection and others. The aim of the Alliance is to provide communication and joint projects among different self-governments and clubs and strengthen partnership, to involve Georgian school-students in civic activities and promote their initiative. My school is a member of this Alliance and our self-government has actively participated in some trainings organized by the Alliance.

The reality in many Georgian schools is different. In some schools students’ Self-governments do nothing, they just exist on paper. And the self-government at my school also needs to learn more to be more effective.

A survey was held throughout Georgia in 2013. It was initiated by the National Centre of Children and Youth. The aim of the survey was to evaluate the existing situation of students’ self – governments, to find out how much young people know about their duties and responsibilities, civic society, the level of students’ involvement and decision- making in school life. The survey showed that it was difficult for most percentage of students to recall even one fact that students’ self- governments participated in protecting children’s rights. The survey also showed that students don’t possess complete information about the functions of the self-government, that they think that the only function of self-government is organizing entertaining events, that the only responsible person for school is the director, that they also have the right to participate in school management and in reviewing school budget.

Within the project, trainings were held for students’ self-government where they were taught how to organize elections, how to write project proposals, work on school rules and review school budget. Under the project, sample elections were held in five schools in order to raise the awareness of election culture among students.

Strong students’ self –government means healthy and democratic environment at schools. But I think that without the support from school administration, encouragements from the society and without enough resources, students’ self-governments’ work won’t be effective.

In the end, I can say that the existence of students' boards, councils, self-governments or associations is very important, since it is the body which gives students such skills which could be developed at school simultaneously with formal education. This means development of non-formal education, involvement in civic activities, acknowledgment of rights and duties and analyzing them, forming ideas and implementing school small projects, taking part in decision making and collaborating with school administration. I am sure the above mentioned activities will promote the formation of a responsible, active and democratic citizen with strong leadership, social and managerial skills.

AUSRA STOROZENKIENE, Lithuania



In nowadays rapidly changing world education plays a vital role in our lives. Children spend the major part of their time at school that operates as a community under its laws, rules and regulations. Therefore, it is very important how children feel being members of that community. And this is where the importance of the participation in organizing educational process comes in because participation means giving children a say in their education, listening to them and involving them as much as possible in school life. It means valuing their opinions and ideas and giving them control of their learning.

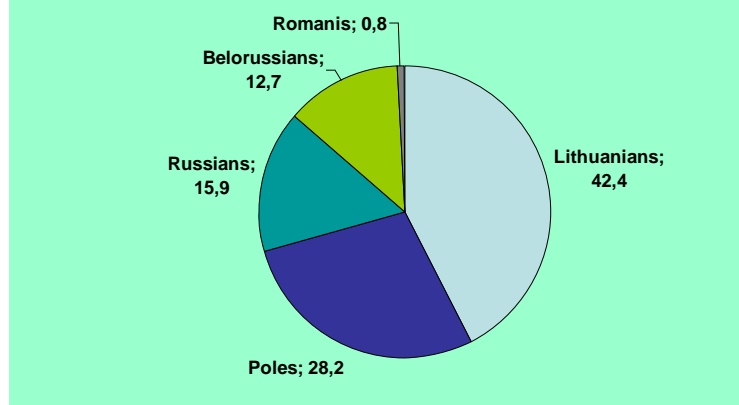
It is worth mentioning that the smaller community, the closer the relationship among its members is. Comparing to other schools in Lithuania, our gymnasium is quite small. There are about four hundred pupils and forty teachers. The story of the school began in 1991 when the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania founded a Lithuanian secondary school in the region densely populated by national minorities.

The founders of our gymnasium wanted the pupils of different nationalities to study together in a school where teaching language was Lithuanian. Since its foundation, the school's mission has been to provide a high quality primary and secondary education to students with various educational needs, fully integrate pupils who come from different national and cultural environment and to ensure equal rights to all pupils both in formal and informal education. In recognition of the high quality of education offered, in 2009 "Silas" secondary school was awarded „gymnasium" status.

**Thus, our gymnasium stands out from other schools in the country by the national diversity of its pupils.**



## Minority statistics in Silas gymnasium



Needless to say, that if we want our children to become equal members of the school community, we have to ensure that they have the possibility to play an active role in their school life. Adults should work with children in an inclusive way so that their views are heard and valued in decision making which affects them. For children knowing that they have a say boosts not only their sense of security but also their self-confidence.

As everybody knows, the school for a child is the environment in which he or she experiences and applies emotions. If we can successfully work children to navigate through certain emotions, our students can apply those techniques to any troublesome situation or problem. However, leaving children aside from organizing school activities and especially from making decisions which to their opinion are vital for their education, prevents them to perceive the message, makes it difficult to express their own feelings, opinion or judgment. Very often it may lead to miscommunications, endless rounds of argument and even frustration.

To avoid all the problems and troubles mentioned above, children should be involved in different activities that would ensure their participation in the decision making process which leads to the protection of their rights as equal members of the school community.

The best solution of this situation is democratisation of educational institutions (*creating of self-government institutions*, creating of informational system, initiating of surveys in this field)

In Lithuanian education conception it is stated, that the school in cooperation with parents, educates the independent, free person able to take responsibility for his or her own life. The school seeks to raise the young person with strong moral values, a self-dependent world outlook, to be well-educated, able to communicate and cooperate, a conscious citizen, responsible, with a strong character, ready for further education, cultural and ecologically aware.

The Lithuanian Secondary school statute states, that the highest school government bodies are the school council and administration. In our gymnasium the *school council* in equal parts consists of *teachers, pupils and parents*. Thus, pupils have an opportunity to take part in making decisions regarding the most important issues, such as teaching curriculum, after school activities and others.

The main pupils' self-government institution of our gymnasium is Pupils' Council.

**It is the regular working pupils' self-government institution. The *objectives* of the Pupils' council are as follows:**

- to consider and affirm plans of pupils' activities, to coordinate them with school authorities;
- to coordinate work of all Class Monitors' Committees, plan and organize free time and after school time;
- to organize pupils' social work activities, care about keeping order and discipline;
- to consider questions of protecting the rights of pupils at school and out of school;
- to initiate the publishing of a school newspaper;
- to call together extraordinary pupils' meeting.

As a rule, the Pupils' Council consists of Class Monitors and has a Chairperson. The Chairperson's main function is to represent the interests of pupils in school level. He or she is elected by secret vote, in which pupils from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> classes (11-19 years old) take part. The members of the Pupils' Council gather twice a month and discuss various questions.

However, there is a threat that usual meetings very easily can become not exciting or, even worse, boring. In order to make the meetings of the Pupils' Council more fruitful and constructive I recommended using the method of debate, since most members of the Pupils' Council are also the members of the school Debate Club which trainer I am.

Debating is one of the best ways to discuss different issues because the participants in debate have to think critically about the questions that are important at the moment of discussion. Participating in debate students learn to discuss research and study important issues.

In Lithuania there are some strong non-governmental organizations, which support pupils' self-government institutions and make common projects. One of them is Lithuanian Educational Debate Center. **Our school Debate club is a member of Lithuanian Educational Debate Center which aims are:**

- to involve high school and university students as well as the teachers (including the Russian and Polish minorities) into the debate program
- to foster tolerance and understanding while discussing such issues as censorship of the media, human rights (including children's rights & rights of minorities), environmental problems, youth problems, integration of Lithuania into European Union, etc.

We have participated in various national and international projects for youth (e.g. "Youth Against Corruption", "Youth Against Violence & Substance Abuse", "Youth Parliaments", "Youth School of Democracy", "Youth for Active Citizenship & EU Integration").

In a democratic school pupils have a right to take part in organizing the educational process. They can discuss openly and make decisions regarding important questions, defend their truth, rights and interests. Democracy means the freedom of speech. The possibility to speak and be heard is very important for all pupils. However, having in mind the ethnic diversity of the pupils of our gymnasium, it is not as easy as it might seem. Our pupils come from different national and cultural environment which has an unquestionable impact on their life style, thinking and behavior. **Thus, debate is a very useful way to discuss various questions from different points of view because it:**

- teaches to understand that there cannot be one opinion
- teaches to think and speak presenting arguments, explain and support one's opinion with facts and one's own life experience
- develops critical thinking and independence
- encourages to listen to the opponent and respect different opinion
- develops speaking skills
- teaches to listen and hear what other people have to say
- develops team work skills
- arouses pupils' interest in current school affairs.

In a more general way, pupils who participate in debate learn how to think critically. Thinking critically does not mean finding fault with things. It means analyzing and synthesizing ideas. Critical thinkers learn to go below the surface of an argument. They learn how to discuss and argue in a polite way which helps them to avoid becoming too personal regarding the questions that are discussed. Again, it is very important for young people who come from different backgrounds.

Therefore, the thinking and argumentation skills acquired in debate are important in many school activities. Debaters learn how to think on their feet, and to express themselves clearly in front of an audience. It is very important for pupils who are the members of the school self-government and have to deal with questions that are important for all school community.

In this pre task work I wanted to emphasize that pupils' self-government is directly modeled on government outside the school. In a very real sense, pupils who participate in different fields and areas of their school life are preparing themselves for citizenship. They are preparing themselves to participate in the life of the society they live. That does not mean that they will necessarily become politicians or civil servants, although they may. It means that they will have a better understanding of important contemporary issues and conflicts that they read and hear about in their daily lives.

CHRISTINE HOPE, Norway



**The convention on the rights of the child was incorporated in Norwegian legislation in 2003, and the conventions' principles are a part of legislation and policies in schools and social services. The right to school participation is stated in the Education Act, in the quality framework and in the curriculum.**

In this presentation, I want to discuss challenges and possibilities within the school structure in fulfilling children's right to school participation. There is often a gap between legislation and intentions in the curricula and real life practice in different schools. I will present a project aiming to investigate barriers for child participation in schools and provide resources and methods to overcome such barriers.

Participation and involvement of pupils in school core activities is not only a right-based claim, but also a pedagogic principle believed to have positive effects on learning, motivation and involvement in school activities. Child participation can be related to development of citizenship and democracy, empowerment and enhancement of self-esteem.

Democracy and influence in decision-making processes in schools can be divided into formal and informal contexts. Pupil councils are examples of formal settings while the daily interaction between teachers and pupils is a more informal context. Research shows that children have limited influence at the classroom level (Furre, Danielsen, Stiberg Jamt & Skaalvik 2006; Monsen, 1997), and that children's influence in school in general is entirely dependent on teachers and headmasters willingness to involve them (Børhaug, 2008). With the strong focus on learning results, international comparison (PISA, TIMMS, etc.) and competition, there is an increasing concern that themes such as democracy, participation and intercultural issues are becoming less prioritized in schools – and that the space that allows child participation in school is becoming increasingly constricted.

## **Article 12 in practice; how can children influence the school system?**

### **Formal committees**

The Education Act states that pupils have a right to voice their opinion about and be involved in teaching methods and learning outcomes and assessments in subjects and all matters concerning the psychosocial school environment. The Education Act also states that each school must have a pupil council and a school environment committee, and that all pupils through their education should develop democratic understanding and the ability of democratic participation. The purpose of the school environment committee is to ensure that pupils can influence and be engaged in efforts to improve the learning environment. Common areas for such engagement are rules, social events, new equipment, bathrooms and issues related to exclusion and bullying. Pupils and parents have the right to participation in school board committees at the primary and lower secondary level.

### **The Pupil Survey**

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training is responsible for the Pupil Survey, a mandatory survey for 7th and 10th grade which covers teaching, learning, assessment, participation, bullying and well-being at school. 400 000 pupils participated in the survey in 2013. This is one source of information on how children perceive school and their learning environment and provides adults answers and information from children about their experiences in school. However, as the survey is quite formalized some children can find it challenging to answer specific questions and there are also limitations on the degree of honesty children express in these types of surveys. It is still an example of how children are entitled to provide their opinion on important areas of the education system.

In the survey, pupils are asked questions such as: (i) Are you involved in planning how to work with the subjects? (ii) Do teachers ensure and facilitate for your participation in pupils councils and as pupils representatives? (iii) Does the school listen to your suggestions? (iv) Are pupils involved in making classroom rules?

The municipality and school authorities follow up the results from the Pupil survey. In some municipalities children are invited to have their say about the result alongside with teachers, headmasters and parents. This is not a formalized right, but is dependent on adult willingness and invitation. Representatives from the school councils are usually the ones participating in these formal meetings. Children are invited to workshops in advance of the discussions and receive training in how to solicit information from their peers and how to present their findings. This is

seen as a way of empowering pupil's councils and strengthening democratic structures in schools. The survey allows children to directly provide their opinions to the authorities and is thus a tool for improving quality and children's rights in school.

### **Informal contexts**

Pupils have the right to participate in dialogues about teaching content, methods and assessments in schools. Research shows that the relation between pupils and teacher is crucial for learning, and that cooperation and mutual respect are important qualities in this relation. However, in spite of clear rights, many children are not involved in discussions about the core activities in schools and are merely left with tasks such as deciding what toys to buy or tidying the school yard (Holte, 2009; Børhaug, 2007).

The level of participation in the classroom is in reality defined by each teacher, and pupils have few means of complaint or objection to the level of participation set by the teacher. Results from the Pupil Survey find that most pupils have a good relationship with their teachers and that they experience influence and possibilities to have their say about issues of importance to them at school. In the International Civic and Citizenship Study, a good relationship between teacher and pupils is considered important in order to fulfil the democratic mandate schools have. 82 % of Norwegian pupils get along with their teachers, and 90% experience interested and involving teachers. Norwegian pupils participate more than pupils in other Nordic countries, particularly in decision processes and discussions (Fjeldstad, Lauglo & Mikkelsen, 2009).

### **Participation project – No1Out.**

I worked in Save the Children from 2004-2013. No1out is a program for inclusion and participation, and was implemented in over 60 schools in Norway. Save the Children found that schools were reluctant to use activities to raise child participation. Schools were enthusiastic about activities related to inclusion, friendship, rules and solidarity – but less willing to open up for child participation on areas like teaching, methods and content in education. We wanted to learn more about obstacles for child participation in schools and how to overcome these; what does teachers need in order to change their practice? Is it practical or organizational reasons for not opening up for pupils, or are the reasons based on values and perception of children that limits participation? In 2010 Save the Children initiated a pilot project in three schools in Norway with an aim of contributing to child participation on all levels in school; individual, group and formal participation in all matters important to children. A research group from the University College in Hamar followed and evaluated the project.

The schools were visited once a month and we engaged with the administration, teachers and pupils. In order to find out what leads to a change in practice, we offered theory on participation, discussed values and visions, methods and activities, and organized teams of cooperation amongst the teachers. We also demonstrated the activities with different age groups. Teachers were asked (in interviews and at meetings) what they needed to make participation a part of their daily teaching and routines in the classroom. At the end of the project we filmed activities and conducted interviews with the headmaster, teachers and pupils and made these available on a web site.

## Experiences

Most of the teachers viewed child participation as positive and an important part of the cooperation and relationship between teacher and pupils. Participation as a right and a pedagogical “tool” was not controversial or issue for debate. Time was mentioned as the biggest obstacle, and the school management has a very important role both in setting clear goals and to provide time and (organizational) space for participation on different levels. Teachers also mentioned conflicting pressures as an issue – with high expectations and demand for academic results, time and resources are limited for other themes. Other teachers didn’t perceive subjects (knowledge) and participation as opposites or contradictory activities, they felt like one contributed to the other. Time for pedagogic discussions, values, planning and evaluation was mentioned as key to succeed with participation at all levels of the school structure.

## Knowledge about participation

To define the term participation and discuss different levels and aims of child participation was an important opening of the work. We used Harry Shiers (2001) five levels of participation, inspired by Harts “ladder of participation” (Hart, 1992).

1. Children are listened to
2. Children are supported in expressing their views
3. Children’s views are taken into account
4. Children are involved in decision-making processes
5. Children share power and responsibility for decision-making.
- 6.

## Results

The project resulted in a website with resources for pupils, pupils’ councils, teachers and school management. The website offers activities, advice from teachers and pupils, theory, research and resources for implementation and evaluation. The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training has provided 400 000 NOK (50 000 euro) to distribute and make the webpage known amongst schools and pupils.

### Option number 3:

The role of student boards or student associations in your school or in your country. Bring us some examples or your personal experiences how the student boards works in everyday schooling life and give some examples how the student board encourage to act as a democratic and active citizenship.

JURICA BOTIĆ, Croatia



Through reflection on the role and the importance of student councils in the development of democratic standards in the educational process, both in Croatia and in Europe in general, inevitably raises the question of the level of democratic standards in these societies in general. Specifically, comparing democratic standards in education among particular European countries, it is important to take into account the different levels of democratic traditions among them, which

are often a reflection of the different socio-political circumstances in which a particular society developed and formed the social relations. Croatia is one of a number of countries in transition which, in the last twenty years of independence, except the change of the social and political system, had the experience of the war and post-war period as additional unfavorable circumstances. Therefore, the development of democratic standards, as well as any successes or failures in this area, should be evaluated in a particular way in relation to similar processes in countries that did not have similar historical experiences.

Of course, it is important to note that in the last two decades there were made a series of steps forward in raising the standard of education in the Republic of Croatia, especially in the design of the curriculum or in the field of standards of textbooks. Furthermore, related to the transparency of decision-making, as well as the democratization of such processes, in recent years in Croatia, the role of collegial bodies of schools in different segments of the responsible work of educational institutions has been increased, starting with the process of adopting the curriculum and the plan and program of a school institution, or with the procedure for the elections of the principles or the headmasters. Although the collegial bodies do not have the same role or capacity for action, it is certainly important that such bodies exist and that they participate in different ways in the work of school institution and decision making as the result of this work.

Yet, despite all of the foregoing, it is hard not to notice that among all collegial bodies active in educational institutions, the students councils have precisely the smallest role. Specifically, the student council, in the form we know it today, is a relatively new phenomenon in educational institutions in the Republic of Croatia, and therefore its role and the eventual meaning were not fully recognized or evaluated both by educational workers, nor by the students themselves, and most interestingly, neither the responsible decision-makers. Of course, in the context of this debate, there should also be remembered that in the former communist system various students' organizations existed as a particular form of self-organizing of the students (pioneers, youths, etc.) within the ideological platform idea of workers' self-management, which was a fundamental ideological paradigm of Tito's the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, although previously stated clearly proves that the forms of student organization in the Republic of Croatia are not completely newness and that there exist the traditions functioning student organization in this country, it must be remembered that at the time we are talking about, such organizations are not primarily organized for the development of democratic standards, but primarily as a form of initiation of individuals into collective structures of clear and, in that time, the mainstream ideological form.

But, let us go back to the current situation of the Republic of Croatia and to the existing legislation which govern the role and importance of the students' councils. The Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Education / Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi (Official Gazette / Narodne novine, 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12 and 94/13) (in the following text: the Law), as the most important regulation that regulates the activity of primary and secondary education in educational institutions in Croatia, explicitly defines the role and importance of the student council in only one article. Specifically, Article 71 of this Law states that: "There is the student council founded in the school, consisted of the representatives of students of each grade. The representative of the student council participates in the work of the school bodies when it decides on the rights and obligations of students, without voting rights. The selection and scope of work of the student council is determined by the statute of the school."



Analyzing previously stated, we can come to the obvious conclusion that the legislator did not provide more specific legal provisions related to the operation and jurisdiction of the student council, but generally defines its composition, while in the competencies, the role of this council is reduced to formal participation in the work of school bodies without concrete possibilities of influencing on decision-making which is directly or indirectly related to students' rights and obligations or to any other issues that affect the student standard. Furthermore, from the cited legal solutions, it is clear that the Law authorized the educational institutions that, through their own acts (school statutes), regulate the competence of the student council, but still within the limited possibilities of transferring a part of the competencies to this body, especially if we take into account the fact that the Law explicitly states that the student council is not entitled to vote when participate in the work of the school bodies.

Of course, without intention to access to the issue of competence of student councils from maximalist positions that would exceed the framework of objective possibilities of this council, there is an undeniable fact that the practice of the acting of the school bodies, as well as the similar bodies outside the education system, that the bodies that have absolutely no authority over the resolution of certain issues, usually do not have the possibility of taking into account their suggestions or opinions by the competent authorities about the issues dealt with. In other words, to be completely honest and without any traces of self-deception, in general, the perception of the work of advisory bodies without any power or competencies, in our society has not yet reached the desired level of respect for democratic thinking, so the decisions are still made mainly related to the dominant opinion of the ones who are authorized to make those decisions. Furthermore, if we all previously expressed copy to the experience in educational institutions in Croatia, we can come to the conclusion that the role of the student council also remains at a symbolic level, but without any real influence on decision-making related to the students' issues.

On the other hand, we can agree with the opinion that it is not practical, nor possible to transfer a specific part of the competencies to the student council, especially if that competencies in their content exceeds the objective capacities of the students to participate in resolving such issues. However, the transfer of at least minimal competence to this body would certainly be a stimulating effect on the development of civic consciousness and social responsibility among students as the members of a generation that in the near future will participate in the creating of social relations through the adopted values and democratic habits that could build in such a way. In the other words, the work and role of the student council are not necessarily considered solely within the competence of that body, but also as a kind of training of adoption of the democratic standards in preparation for responsible citizenship in the near future.

Finally, it would not be fair to omit successful examples of participating of the students in decision-making related to their immediate interest, so I mention examples of common practices of participating of the students in the processes of selecting the tourist agencies for the student' excursions or in the processes of organization or the students' parties. Such examples demonstrate and prove the ability of students that, in the framework of the issues of their immediate interests, can actively participate and be a support to their teachers and other educational professionals. It remains to hope that such examples and experiences there will be more and more, all with the aim of developing democratic standards in the educational system of the Republic of Croatia.



### **Democracy and Citizenship in School – from nothing to something real**

None of the three pre-task options suit my situation or experience. I therefore decided to write about Student Boards – from the perspective of building democratic participation in an environment which lacks it completely. Let's imagine a school which has been founded only recently and which doesn't have any functioning Student Board. How should one proceed in order to create something worthwhile and inspiring, something valued by all members of the school community – a truly effective Student Board that encourages pupils towards active citizenship?

#### **Description of a zero-democracy school:**

There is a Student body, a Teaching Staff body, an Administrative body and a Parent Association. These don't interact much when it comes to extracurricular matters. There are not many activities organised which would enhance school spirit and the sense of a community. The school rules have been decided by the direction or by one small group of core teachers. There might be, on paper, a Student Board (SB) working, meaning that even SB elections are annually held in September but most of the people at school don't know what the SB is meant for and who sits in it. In other words, it's a practically non-existing, invisible club of young ones meeting from time to time, skipping lessons. These SB members themselves have no clue of what they should be doing. It is a useless organ and its members gradually become unmotivated to meet. Every year it becomes more and more difficult to get enough volunteers for this task, leading to the situation where one student is appointed by the teacher or is the sole candidate, thus chosen without voting. In other words, this single student does not carry a real mandate for representing his/her class and nobody goes to him/her when issues arise. Instead, whenever there are problems related to for example teaching, to discipline or to canteen arrangements, individual students complain in a loud voice or small groups of students grumble among themselves, spreading negative attitude. In worst case scenario, the student body becomes convinced that the school staff doesn't care about their opinions and feelings – that the school is even against them.

#### **Step 1: Goal setting by motivated staff members**

As under-aged students cannot be expected to solve the lack of organisation described above on their own, some adult input is required. The school needs a teacher – or preferably two or three teachers forming a tight team – interested in democratic values and ready to work in order to make a change. These teachers should first set their goals and then get their hands on material produced by national student associations such as SLL in Finland (Upper secondary student association). This organisation was founded in 1985 and has published among others a booklet of advice for SB's, in 2011 (unfortunately only in Finnish). Another way of discovering the extent to which students can influence decision-making is getting into contact with SB's from other schools and see what they do there.

The goals set by the motivated teachers (and possibly eager students) should be realistic; the short term goal – to be achieved within one semester – would simply be to successfully launch the project, to meet on a regular basis and to make the objectives known by the staff and students. The mid-term goal would then be achieved within the first 1,5 years, namely having the first truly committed SB in place and having made an impact in at least one issue related to the school

environment, whether it be of recreational kind or organising for example a discussion panel. Finally, the long term goal would be having established a smoothly functioning SB within three years time.

### **Step 2: Getting the direction to commit to the project**

Careful background work needs to be done before the “Birth of the SB” can be presented to the students. One important phase in this is getting the direction interested and committed to supporting the efforts of the young ones. This requires explaining the project thoroughly, achieving a common understanding on the scope of action granted to the SB and discussing finances. Otherwise there is the risk of promising too much to the students or making the direction suspicious about the preparations. The commitment of the direction is crucial, because that only will ensure that the whole staff from administration to single teachers maintains the same vision – that a well functioning SB is a priority. Students will feel encouraged and their reform requests will be dealt with rapidly.

### **Step 3: Making students aware**

Information sessions are organised in each class in the following manner:

- 1) A short introduction on the history of activism, with examples such as Spartacus, trade unions, political parties, civic associations. The idea is to show that people can make a difference if they unite, and that there are plenty of ways to influence one’s society if people only take the trouble of sitting and thinking together.
- 2) A briefing on what a SB is made for (things a SB can and can’t do) and on what it can achieve at best, giving examples of other schools’ SB actions. Here we get to the concrete level and hearing what happens elsewhere makes students hopefully interested.
- 3) A casual brainstorming on what a new, real SB could do in the school. The purpose is to stir a small amount of excitement and giving students the opportunity to dream a little, exchange even silly ideas and giving them a sense of empowerment.

### **Step 4: Organising the elections**

In order to conduct worthwhile SB elections, students must possess sufficient knowledge about the whole process and the actual elections need to be preceded by a real electoral campaign battle. The teachers involved explain (separately to each class) the tasks and the responsibilities that a SB member has to carry. Students will also hear about the requirements: what are the necessary qualities for fulfilling the task thrivingly. Last but not least, the advantages of SB participation will be pointed out clearly – learning about lobbying, about oneself and about the complexity of politics and decision making as well as getting the chance to practice presentation and oratory skills.

All of this is needed to put across because it’s the only way for enthusiastic students to know whether they would be up for the job and for the electors to be able to evaluate the candidates. Following the setting of candidates, two weeks of campaigning should then take place. During this period, there would ideally be at least one debate organised on a given topic within each class, enabling a confrontation between two or more candidates. These events will reveal the potential, the level of argumentation and the quick-wittedness (or lack of) of the candidates to the electors. If this proves difficult to organise, then at least a short “choose me because”-speech should be delivered by each candidate on the day of the elections.

### **Step 5: Starting the engine**

Once the SB is in place, the first task is to instantly design an internal procedure: at what intervals does the SB meet, who becomes the chairman, where are the minutes of the meetings kept, how will the SB work through its members. Different assignments can be allocated to the members and added to that, each of these “deputies” are to inquire from their classmates what their most burning concerns are to start with.

Then the SB draws a realistic action plan. It should include a) an outline for possible partnerships; b) a list of the student demands to tackle first c) schemes for fund raising and d) at least one school event to be organised during the year. The board can be composed of several committees, according to the needs. In these initial meetings, the presence of a teacher is compulsory in order to ensure the right kind of outset. The students might have no idea on how to do the work in practice, how to write the minutes, how to deal with money etc. If SB trainings exist in the country, the whole group could be sent to such an induction or else a couple of visits to see the SB's of neighbouring schools could do the trick. The important thing at this stage is to build a tight cooperation among the SB members, to create the sense of things happening.

### **Step 6: Making the student board visible**

The new organ and its members need to become “famous” in the school. The SB must have its own display board for diffusing information, which in the beginning equals to presenting the SB members themselves: their photo, name, class, interests and SB tasks. A logo contest can be launched, if deemed catchy. The meeting dates and meeting agendas need to be public, so that the crowd knows what the SB is up to. The keywords here are visibility and transparency.

The SB should become known also by the Parent association, right from the start. A joint meeting is a good way to get familiar with each other and the aim is naturally to forge an alliance; if the PA realises that the SB is composed of sensible young people, it can offer sponsoring, management of a bank account as well as counselling and support in the endeavours. Parent involvement can prove very valuable in the long run and should be beneficial for the whole school community.

### **Step 7: Answering the expectations**

When the SB has acquired a meeting routine, it's time to show what it is capable of. Its members should take an active role in the school, putting the student requests in writing, informing the teachers about these wishes by suggesting brief interventions at teachers' meetings, and asking for audiences with the directors. To put it simply, the SB must work as the voice of the students. Moreover, it should manage to mobilise some regular students for the organisation of a first social event, which should witness success in order to give the Student board a nice reputation. These are the foundations for establishing a well working SB – a one which is reliable and which in time will grow into an institution within the school; an institution that works as a synonym for something both useful and fun. When that stage is reached, the advising teachers can step back and let the SB manage itself autonomously.

### **Step 8: Ensuring continuity**

At the end of the school year, the SB members are to be rewarded by the staff for their enterprises. If the SB has worked properly, it has automatically contributed to a better school

atmosphere and the students involved have become active citizens in the miniature society that a school provides. The thanking can be done for example by granting a certificate, which can become handy for these students when applying for their first summer jobs.

In order to consolidate the role of the SB in the school, teachers would be wise to solicit the SB opinion as often as possible, making the SB feel useful and respected. In spring, the very last task of the SB is to plan the next school year ahead, which will make the start easier after the summer. Another way of ensuring continuity is to set the mandates in the following way: the first SB is elected for a period of one year, but at Christmas, half of the members must resign and new elections will bring replacements. These new members will continue until the following Christmas, while the original members will resign in June. That way, at least some of the members will always be acquainted with the job when September comes, and there's no need to start all over again. Also, this model is good if one is looking for a dynamic structure, without stagnating "rulers".

I'm a firm believer in good will and am very optimistic about the youth. Since we have mass media, representative democracy has become somewhat distorted and many students realise that real life politics can be closer to a joke than to authentic democracy. Therefore school politics is so interesting – it can combine both representative democracy and direct democracy on the model of Ancient Greece. Everyone *can* truly participate, since it is small scale. If pushed far, a truly democratic school would set the SB members by lottery, meaning that any student could be appointed "deputy" and every student should be prepared for such a responsibility.

To finish, I'd say that I can't think of a better way to introduce students to active citizenship than by nurturing these student boards. It offers a great opportunity to understand how society works and may, at best, reassure a youth that feels helpless, undermined and not important. Positive experiences will prove valuable when these young people shift to adulthood; they might in the future be involved in all sorts of civic associations, carrying the belief that influencing is a matter of doing, that everyone can make a difference, that change is possible.

MARIA CRISTINA BEVILACQUA, Italy



The role of student boards or student associations in your school or in your country. Bring us some examples or your personal experiences how the student boards works in everyday schooling life and give some examples how the student board encourage to act as a democratic and active citizenship.

School is part of the society, maybe the fundamental part, in which different actors live and act to reach the same goal, at different levels and with different roles.

The Italian Ministry of Education has always considered the students' participation in the school life a real priority, the only way of asserting the principle of citizenship in the school community; this principle translates into the dignity of the person (in this case the student), the ownership of rights and obligations that characterize the new legal status of the young man who learns, the right to a qualified training in the right and duty to take responsibility of one's actions.

Since 1974, in upper secondary schools, two representatives for each class are elected among students in the class council for a year term ; four students are elected in the school board for a three years term and two provincial representatives are elected among all the schools. Then, they in turn elect among them the presidents of the provincial student organisations who meet together in the National Council. This choice has the aim to enhance the actual and whole integration of young citizens in the society by letting them experiment the tools of democracy in the communities in which they are members, together with the parents, the teachers and the school staff and management. They can thus learn and manage all the knowledges, skills and competences they need to act as sensible and reliable citizens. It's real « learning by doing ».

By adopting in 1998 the Students' Statute (modified and integrated in 2007), the Ministry has implemented this « training to democracy », through the creation of an educational alliance between the school, students and families, with a view to co-responsibility of education that allows real growth paths. The Students' Statute wants to support a dual idea of citizenship: as the democratic participation of the student in the school life and as part of the curriculum for each student.

The Statute creates a culture of rights and duties, respect of rules of coexistence developed and shared by the members of the school community. The logic used is that of autonomy: the Statute lays down the principles, fundamental rights and duties, mechanisms to ensure the implementation and compliance with the rules, but it's the regulation of organization of each school to transpose and translate specifically in context what the statute provides in general.

The Statute assigns to the students, together with a series of rights (about twenty), also relevant obligations. It is important that the rights have been joined duties because, if on one hand, they represent the essential and natural extension of rights, on the other hand they play an important role in the student's inclusion in the school community. The duties play the role of making a person an integral part of an empowered community. As part of the list of the rights granted to the students, great importance is given to the role of the right to participation, or the right to be able to carry out activities directly and in a broader sense, the right to elect (or be elected in ) representative bodies. This ambivalence of the right to participation is a dual boost to the practice of representative and participatory democracy.

The practice of democracy, within a community that has as its purpose the training of tomorrow's citizens, is charged with a broader meaning, namely of an educational value. The active participation within a framework of democratic rules, the full operation of a system of representations, the ability to independently perform certain activities in which you assume the responsibility, the exercise of rights and the respect of duties within the school are moments of citizenship education, legality, democracy.

According to the Statute, the students can practice citizenship not only in a democratic dimension (by voting and being elected), but also in the field of education and training. If the purpose of the school is to focus on each student's achievement of educational success, there must be his/her conscious and active involvement in training programs. The student is a learning subject and not just a user : he/ she owns the right to learn and the whole school organization must strive towards the realization of this right.

Nowadays school professionals can focus on a new centrality of learning and learner, thanks to a new flexibility of curricula that would help highlighting the attitudes and abilities of each student and to stimulate the desire to learn, even in the most refractories, thanks to forms of individualization and differentiation of learning and training. This kind of individualisation of learning imply the involvement and participation of students in training.

For instance, effective teaching that aims to enhance the capacities and inclinations of each student, which tends to mature learners' sense of responsibility, self-judgment and self-assessment, must be based on the transparency of the evaluation criteria and the ability to listen to the needs of the learner, establishing a relationship of dialogue and mutual respect between teacher and student.

In my school the student board is very active : it promotes charity events, it helps first years students in understanding how our school « works », it suggests to the teachers board a wide range of initiatives that could be engaging or necessary for the students and their families. It's a link between the real world of the students and the academic world of the school professionals and it helps them to be sensitive to students' needs and demands. But it's also a connection between the context in which the school acts and the school itself, as an institution. An example of how the student board in my school encourage its members to act as a democratic and active body was given by the project « Libera », actuated by the representative of students schoolboard, according to the values of the N.G.O. « Libera », dedicated to encourage and coordinate the civil society against all mafias and to foster the creation and development of a community alternative to gangs themselves.

This N.G.O. urges the civil society in the fight against the mafia and the promotion of democratic legality and justice, even through meetings and projects with schools , the *Day of the Memory*, day of remembrance and commitment to remember the victims of all mafias, an important opportunity to switch paths and reflections with male and female students of all levels, from elementary schools to universities. The project carried out by my students aimed to help students to know their socio - cultural context surrounding, the places that they live every day and to learn to recognize the signs of a Mafia presence as the first step towards a greater awareness and activation of a genuine process of change.

All Mafias have developed their pedagogy, with rules and specific objectives; for this reason, the fundamental task of educators is to provide a culture that returns the historical memory of the country, which gives the right values and that puts students in front of an open window on the world.

Our students made a survey on some victims of mafia and interviewed one of their classmates, a Romanian girl who escaped from her country and from a life of violence, decay and deprivation, to find a new life in our hometown. They discuss on how legality can enhance democracy. Then they illustrated their work in the school assembly, in a Seminar in our town and during the Libera National meeting "Roots of memory, the fruits of commitment," the title of the nineteenth day of remembrance and commitment .



One of the projects to celebrate the Millennium was the setting up of Student Councils in schools. In 1999 a booklet entitled *Democracy in Schools, Setting up of Students' Councils and Class Committees* was sent to Maltese schools to help Heads and Link Teachers in the setting up of these Councils. This fulfils Objective 2 of the National Minimum Curriculum – The Development of Citizens and a Democratic Environment.

Gradually both Heads and Teachers decided to embrace the idea of power-sharing and embarked to support students in this process. They started training them to represent their school mates and to make their voice heard.

In 2003 the then Education Division embraced the idea of the student councils and the Assistant Director – Humanities became responsible for supporting schools in the setting and running of Student Councils by means of Professional Development Sessions in the area.

Student Councils are now mandatory by law, according to the 2006 Education Act. Every two years a questionnaire is sent to all State and Non-State Schools to compile information on the progress of Student Councils in our schools.

The role of a student's council in Malta is that of bringing together nominated students and a school staff representative ( in the case of Primary PSKD peripatetic teachers and in the secondary a designated teacher) to give a voice to students and help them develop the necessary skills to be part of a council and organize different activities.

As an Education Officer of Personal, Social and Career development (PSKD) subject I work closely with the primary peripatetic PSKD teachers who are responsible of delivering lessons regarding democracy and on how elections are run both on a local and on a national level. These lessons are the preparatory lessons carried out before the actual student's councils elections are held in all primary schools. During these lessons students learn how to represent themselves verbally in front of their classmates and in the form of a poster. The students need to identify the positive things about themselves and use creative ways on how to influence other students to vote for them.





This exercise helps students develop different skills that will eventually help them become responsible and active citizens. Some of the skills developed are; communication skills, presentation skills, planning and organizational skills and good interpersonal skills. The students understand that students' councils are there for the students and should be led by the students themselves (under the supervision of an adult teacher).

The election process itself gives students the opportunity to experience how an electoral campaign and election takes place and gives them the opportunity to select the students they want to represent them. Therefore students are practicing their democratic rights within a school environment and are being empowered to make decisions based on who they think would be the right person to represent them on the students' council. This will help students get accustomed to the idea of elections and choosing persons not only on their political affiliation but also on his or her qualities skills and personality.

The election itself helps students to also deal with success and disappointment an important aspect in the development of student's characters.



The student's councils help students:

- a) become aware of the different responsibilities a committee or board members have
- b) become accustomed to the terminology and the different responsibilities different members of the council have (for example; the chairperson, the secretary and the treasurer)
- c) become accustomed to the idea of preparing an agenda, of reading and writing minutes and/or of how proposals are made and voted for
- d) voice their ideas and views during meetings and how to come to a common agreement developing democratic skills
- e) build good relationships skills as they discuss and collaborate together as a team developing democratic skills
- f) promote good example and positives attitudes among their peers developing active citizenship skills

- g) give their valuable contribution in planning and organizing various activities related to educational activities, recreational activities, fund-raising for the school and fund-raising activities for charity.
- h) develop altruistic ideals
- i) develop good money management skills
- j) develop leadership skills
- k) take responsibility for the activities carried out
- l) advertise and promote the activities with their classmates.



Every two years the students' councils participate in a national event. Last scholastic year 2013-14 the students who formed part of students councils participated in a day event organized by Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity in collaboration with my department (PSCD), with the Education officer (ART), the Ministry of Education and Employment and the. During this seminar the students had the chance to share and discuss their views about the qualities, skills and knowledge the Commissioner for Children should have.

The 'A Voice For Your Voice' consultation seminar was an innovative process since it was the first time that students from different schools and localities were consulted for the appointment of a public figure. Its main aim was that of giving importance and value to the needs and desires of children especially when it comes to important decisions which involve them, such as the selection of the Commissioner for Children. The consultation event was also aimed at setting the scene for similar events. Such events would have the aim of empowering children to express their views and opinions about matters that concern them. Their involvement would also help them gain a better understanding of their needs and encourage them to become active participants in other areas in their lives and thus help them become responsible and active citizens.

The rationale behind this seminar was that of putting into practice what the Commissioner for children' act Chapter 462 art. 9(b) states: *The commissioner is to ensure that the children are given the opportunity to express their opinions and that these are considered*'. Through this event the children and young persons have been given the opportunity to voice their visions, ideas and desires about qualities they think would make their ideal Commissioner for Children. Involving children in the selection process facilitates shaping the services offered to them so that these make a positive impact on their lives. The process also helped students and young persons understand the importance of contributing in different ways to shape their society and their country.

There were different workshops, these were either facilitated by the PSCD teachers or by the Art teachers, in fact children and young persons also used illustrations to voice and depict how they imagined the role of the Commissioner.

The Consultation seminar was held on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November at Maria Regina College. The event was opened by the Minister of Education, the Hon. Evarist Bartolo. This was followed by a talent show. The children and young persons were then given the opportunity to interview and ask questions to the past and present Commissioner of Children. Three commissioners for children were present for the event and all had the chance to express and explain to students how they felt a commissioner for children should operate. The students asked a lot of questions and were interested in various aspects of the commissioner's work. This event gave students the opportunity to be assertive and not be afraid to ask questions in front of an audience. This event also gave students the opportunity to get to know the persons behind the role of commissioner for children. The event was closed by the then minister for Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity.

During one of the workshops students were asked to give their feedback about the consultation event. One of the most common comments from the students was that through this event they learnt more about the role of the Commissioner for Children and the importance of this role in their lives. The older students described the event as an experience of what democracy means and felt proud of their contribution during this event, a 16 year old student wrote *'This experience has helped me become a better and well informed and active citizen'*. The students also felt a sense of responsibility because they felt that what they were saying and writing was going to influence not just them but also other children in the future. They felt they were voicing themselves in the name of others. The students showed appreciation to the fact that the past and present Commissioners shared their experiences with them and answered all their questions and queries and felt that the meeting was a good preparation for the subsequent workshop.

The suggestions made by the students were compiled into a document and presented by the students themselves to the Prime Minister who kindly accepted to host the event.

This event has managed to incorporate different aspects of democratic citizenship by giving students and young persons a voice to express themselves about issues that concern them, by giving them the chance to make a positive contribution to the local society and giving them the opportunity to develop self expression and self. This event will hopefully be a catalyst to produce motivated and responsible students and young persons who are not afraid to participate in community life and play their part in the democratic process on a local and on a national level.



**The role of student boards or student associations in your school or in your country. Bring us some examples or your personal experiences how the student boards works in everyday schooling life.**

I come from Poland, Krakow, where I was born and went to school. That time was stigmatized by WWII and our parents as well as teachers were brought up in quite another world. A cold civil war influenced many aspects of education.

Even then we had student board in the primary and secondary school. The first one was rather a body designated for helping the teacher and declaim a poem during the school celebration. On the contrary, in the secondary school our board was elected by us. It helped to our class-teacher in some organizational tasks, but the fellows discussed some difficult problems with him, they pleaded and negotiated. They were not afraid to express their own or ours opinions.

Many years later I am a teacher and have very good possibility to observe students' behavior in a lower secondary school. It is situated in the village, near Cracow, what is really important. Most of the parents go for a work to Cracow every day, some of them work abroad. Lower secondary school in Poland lasts 3 years and our pupils are 12-15 years old. We have on average 130 – 150 students and about 15 teachers.

Each year they choose their representatives for student board, one week earlier starts a campaign. Sometimes happens that one is elected for his or her outfit, but in most cases candidates are responsible, vigorous and active. Our student board consists of five or six members. The Chairperson has many duties and privileges. Each of school celebrations is conducted by him, he coordinates the activity of his team. As they are still children, they have a liaison teacher, which is a one chosen by them.

Some expectations from young people are unrealistic as a disco party every week on example, but the board members have the right to negotiate with headmaster every project or initiative. They are proud of it and sometime make a use of their legitimate requirement.

Student boards activities are:

- planning and executing annual events and issues
- co-operating with management and teachers on the development of school regulations
- working with the parents' council in school
- integration of youngest colleagues into school community
- each help and support for those who have educational difficulties
- initiating of charity actions and carrying them through
- carrying for the inside of school building
- giving opinion to the headmaster concerning the school year plan
- co-organising the school sport competition

- keeping a student notice board.

Good results of the student board activities were the main reason for establishing the Young Communal Council, what happened last year. The representatives chosen by their age-mates are invited to the debate of the “adult” Council concerning sport and education.

Schooling is preparation for adult life. Many years polish citizen were passive because of the system, they didn't like. Now we have to change our conviction that nothing is to rearrange, on the contrary, everything is to be done better.

This is the main idea we shall bring our students.

## Workshop -results

### Workshop on Wednesday 8.10.2014:

***This workshop will focus on the best practices and activities in teaching and learning about democratic citizenship in basic education especially from the following points of views:***

- *Children's rights and participation in school's operational culture and*
- *The role of student boards and student associations and*
- *Democratic and active citizenship.*

### **Goals:**

***Childhood experiences seem to have a very important role in terms of one's predisposition to become an active citizen. Hence it is important:***

- *To notice that the **social involvement** of young people strongly influence their willingness for participation and direct the future of democracy*
- *That the actors who work in order to increase the democratic participation of young and children are aware of the **key findings of recent studies on civil education***
- *That the **good practises of children's and youth civil education** are presented and later spread out*
- *To **offer inspiration** to educators and other practitioners who face the challenges of youth participation.*

### **Working:**

***1) Every group member will present their pre-task to the other members of the group.***

***2) While presenting your work tell the others at least:***

- *The them/ subject you were working with,*
- *Why did you choose this theme/subject?*
- *What kinds of experiences you have had in your school and/or in your country?*
- *What would you think that'll be valuable to the others to know and to understand about your school/ your country about democratic school?*

***3) While discussing and listening the presentations the group will raise at least three similarities and three differences they have found.***

***4) According to your discussions, how would you define as a group the term "democratic school"?***

***5) How the democratic citizenship and/ or human rights are taken into the consideration in your context?***

- ⇒ *Do the poster that will also present either the identity of your group or its' members.*
- ⇒ *Present the group work for the other participants. (Tasks 3, 4 and 5).*

*...And finally we will discuss together about the similarities, differences and experiences, which appeared also in your pre-tasks and the group work.*

## **ANSWERS WERE:**

### **Differences**

#### **Group 1**

- ❖ the age of the students
- ❖ the topics
  - ICT's beginners courses
  - student boards
  - legality
- ❖ social and cultural context.

#### **Group 2 (The role of Student's boards)**

- ❖ in Georgia student's councils President (at secondary level) is the member of school board of trustees and votes for electing school principle
- ❖ different start (in Turkey they form councils beginning in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- ❖ trainings for student's councils are held throughout Georgia.

#### **Group 3**

- ❖ in France, there are no Student boards, but there Conseil de classe (3 times/year) which are composed of the teachers of the group, 2 students, 2 parent reps and head teacher. They discuss about the grades and failures of the bad students. Their role is to observe.
- ❖ no student rep in the School Admin Board in France.
- ❖ in France, primary schools, there's no director. Instead, there's one of the teachers that applies to become the manager, without being the supervisor. No power to organize the staff -> mess, self-direction is lacking.

#### **Group 4**

- ❖ voluntary/paid/duty responsible
- ❖ elections / chosen proposal by teacher
- ❖ fund raising
- ❖ council (different functions + members).

### **Similarities**

#### **Group 1**

- ❖ the need for democracy
- ❖ the role of the teacher
- ❖ the importance of student's background.

#### **Group 2 (The role of Student's boards)**

- ❖ there are student's councils
- ❖ not all schools/teachers show interest how councils function
- ❖ teachers and students meet and discuss problematic issues.

### **Group 3**

- ❖ in Slovenia and Finland, there are Student boards, but they are often invisible or ineffective. "Democracy on paper".
- ❖ in Slovenia and France, some teachers aren't ready to give up their position of authority, to become "equal" with students
- ❖ these demands on active citizenship are given to teachers, but there's no training, no help for implementing them.

### **Group 4**

- ❖ student councils
- ❖ civic education
- ❖ parliament debate
- ❖ self promotion
- ❖ organization of activities – informal
- ❖ commissioner of children
  - student's representative with commissioner of children
- ❖ non voice about subject (curricula etc.)
- ❖ roles of Student councils.

### ***According to your discussions, how would you define as a group the term "democratic school"?***

- ❖ a place where everyone feels needed and appreciated and gets help in growing as an individual and as a citizen
- ❖ democratic school is a place where everybody's rights are respected, everybody is heard and listened to, where there is equality, where young people are free to decision-making and expressing their own ideas.
- ❖ everyone has their own voice, for real. The school's decision-making process is transparent. Democratic values are taught since beginning, pupils awareness of their rights and duties. Teachers have been trained accordingly.
- ❖ democratic school: A school that gives space to students to develop
  - critical thinking
  - decision making
  - debating
  - voice their ideas + views
  - mutual trust
  - contribution in planning + organizing
  - leadership & skills.

### ***How the democratic citizenship and/ or human rights are taken into the consideration in your context?***

- ❖ the countries which are on the way of democratic development need citizens who possess the democratic values and skills to make democracy stronger. In this point Student's councils are a great way to prepare such citizens, young people, who become decision makers, who already know how to implement projects to help their communities and country.



## Final workshop session 10.10.2014: Democratic School in Basic Education

***“During two days we have been working, discussing, listening and visiting how democratic citizenship and human rights are taking in consideration in everyday school life.***

***Now is the time for reflections!”***

***Try to think and reflect the questions bellow at first individually:***

- 1) Would you take some Finnish or other countries practices at home with you? Which ones and why?***
- 2) Which of your own practices might be valuable to the other countries/schools/participants? Why?***
- 3) Summary of what is left on the trip.***

***Then with your group:***

- 4) Discuss with your group members of your reflections.***
- 5) Team discussion from previous issues.***

## **Answers on the final session were...**

### **Group 1:**

***Would you take some Finnish or other countries practices at home with you? Which ones and why?***

- ❖ cosy, homey atmosphere in class (structure without artificiality, without compulsory framework)
- ❖ home economics lesson
- ❖ support students.

***Which of your own practices might be valuable to the other countries/schools/participants? Why?***

- ❖ student members in school's Admin board (Lithuania, Croatia)
- ❖ having positive audits, auditors addressing the kids (Poland, Lithuania)
- ❖ community service in supervision tasks => rise the level of responsibility among students (Poland, Lithuania)
- ❖ volunteer “sixth school day”, for free (either sports/arts club or for exam preparation) too, on Saturday (Belarus)
- ❖ voluntary donation from income taxation: each citizen can decide to which organization this 2 % goes: school/charity (Lithuania, Poland)
- ❖ school sponsors (Belarus).

### **SUMMARY OF WHAT IS LEFT ON THE TRIP:**

- ❖ learning about the intake to Universities in Finland: very strict exams in order to enter the faculties => very motivated teachers
- ❖ seeing the trust, the freedom in Finnish school
- ❖ realizing that we share so much, in each country teachers are very much alike and must tackle the same kind of challenges
- ❖ student exchange programmes should be encouraged.

**Group 2:**

***Would you take some Finnish or other countries practices at home with you? Which ones and why?***

- ❖ KiVa
- ❖ Mediation
- ❖ 15 minutes recess
- ❖ tutors
- ❖ learning for the sake of learning, not just grades.

***Which of your own practices might be valuable to the other countries/schools/participants? Why?***

- ❖ Croatia substitute system
- ❖ French lunch break
- ❖ Lithuanian theme days
- ❖ Georgian anti-bullying lessons.

***SUMMARY OF WHAT IS LEFT ON THE TRIP:***

- ❖ the influence of social studies on democracy in curriculum
- ❖ meeting other pupils in the school.

**Group 3:**

***Would you take some Finnish or other countries practices at home with you? Which ones and why?***

- ❖ more wellbeing of students and less focus on subjects
- ❖ a positive relationship between teachers and students
- ❖ the use of students to help other students (supporting students)
- ❖ open discussions about teaching human rights and democratic values
- ❖ democratic practices when selection of student councils takes place.

***Which of your own practices might be valuable to the other countries/schools/participants? Why?***

- ❖ anti-bullying policy
- ❖ the Greek practice of changing the core-curriculum would be a perfect example to be avoided, because it is a top to bottom practice and no teacher or students is being consulted
- ❖ involvement of parents on school boards and their activities.

***SUMMARY OF WHAT IS LEFT ON THE TRIP:***

- ❖ prevention (KiVa and Mediation as methods)
- ❖ relaxed time-table
- ❖ be more supportive and encouraging to both teachers and students.

## Feedback

Feedback of the workshop was asked on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October on workshop summary by the following questions. Participants marked their opinion by the following scale:

5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = below average, 1 = poor

	<u>Average mark</u>
The pretasks were	4,5
Did the content of the workshop meet your expectations	4,6
Did the content of the workshop meet your needs	4,8
Overall planning	4,8
General quality of lecturers	4,3
General atmosphere of the workshop	5,0
Documents and teaching materials	4,8
Accommodation	4,9
Food	4,9
Social activities	4,2
Organization of the workshop	4,9

**On feedback participants were also given the possibility to express their 'roses and twigs' of workshop. Personal comments and opinions of Pestalozzi Helsinki 2014 workshop:**

- ❖ Only roses! KiVa, Mediation, school atmosphere were a great suggestion. The chance to exchange infos and best practices with other professionals from different countries.
- ❖ Thank you. Very good.
- ❖ The workshop was organized really very well. It was great to meet people from other countries and to share ideas about democracy at school. I liked everything. And I am very proud to be selected as a participant and having an opportunity to be heard and listened to. I wish all the best to all Pestalozzi group. You are the best! Thank you!
- ❖ My first Pestalozzi-workshop was far over my expectations. Very good qualification process (a representant from each country) and very helpful staff. Absolute highlight – visit at

school and meeting with school board. My dream would be to organize such workshop in Cracow.

- ❖ I've learned a lot and go back to school with a lot of ideas. I've discovered programs I didn't know before (Mediation & KiVa). I will try to spread these ideas. It was so much interesting to share with colleagues from such different countries. Once again, I go back to France with the feeling of being an European teacher. I feel more open-minded and will try to open my pupils to other cultures. It was great!
- ❖ I was pleasantly surprised at the warmth and openness of the Finnish I have met. I always felt welcome and considered. It was an enjoyable stay and experience, therefore I will surely be returning to Finland when opportunity. Thank you for your effort and time, special thanks to Matti, Elina, Päivi and Najat.
- ❖ I can congratulate you for the pleasant atmosphere, but also for high standards in the educational system and in this workshop. I found out a lot of useful knowledge and experience that I would like to share with the other educational experts in Croatia. Also, I would like to be free to comment that some of the presenters should improve their didactic methods, although they were excellent in their profession and very competent.
- ❖ The workshop and my Finnish experience exceeded the expectation. Yesterday night when I opened my Facebook-page there (we have teacher's page) was an article "Finnish school system is superb" and there was a big discussion on this system's pros and cons. I, on my side, and just returned from a Finnish school, had much to write and explain. I am waiting at least 5 calls. So, I am expected to explain the situation here and the democracy in your schools. Thank you Matti and Najat for your great effort to make this workshop very fruitful and the warm welcome.
- ❖ Very friendly and relaxed leaders of the workshops, extremely encouraging and caring attitude. Schedules and programme carefully planned, it was smooth and pleasant. Somewhere there was quite some repetition (such as emphasizing the trust-aspect of Finnish system) and overlapping in the speaker presentations, which could be removed easily with some forward co-operation.
- ❖ During the Helsinki in training programme for education professionals I was given the opportunity to take a close look of Finnish educational system. That is very useful for me since I live in a country where its educational system is rather old-fashioned. Besides the context of the workshop that was quite well organized and defined to its aims, we all met a very warm and relaxed atmosphere and enjoyed the participants' friendship. It was a really good experience.
- ❖ Over all the training programme was an interesting experience that gave us a general idea of the democratic processes adopted within the Finnish educational system. The highlight of the programme was the school visit which allowed us to see first hand the life in a Finnish school. I expected a bit more theory about the theme in question and maybe how the different themes (like bullying & rights of children) relate democratic citizenship & human rights education. Thank you for your patience, support and input.

**Thank you all!**

**Pestalozzi Helsinki presentation materials on Finnish National Board of Education web-pages:**  
[http://www.oph.fi/english/sources\\_of\\_information/conferences/pestalozzi\\_workshops\\_in\\_helsinki](http://www.oph.fi/english/sources_of_information/conferences/pestalozzi_workshops_in_helsinki)

**Let's keep in touch! We are active in Facebook by the name of PESTALOZZI HELSINKI**



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