

# Competences for a democratic culture: From onlookers to engaged and active citizens

The Council of Europe *Pestalozzi Programme Summer School 2016*, in cooperation with the Academy of Bad Wildbad

Dates: 25 June – 2 July 2016 (arrival 24 June, departure 3 July)

Venue: Bad Wildbad, Germany

## Introduction

Events and developments over the past few years put democracy, the values and principles of human rights and dignity at the centre of many reflections. On the one hand the lack of political engagement is deplored while at the same time we witness the appeal and the rise of engagement in violent radical movements based on different aspects of a populist agenda. We seem to be entering into a type of [post-truth](#) (see link for further reference) (post factual) era: An era where facts do not count any longer and truth is not the issue any more in political debate. An era which tends to focus more on stance, emotions, self-positioning and personal beliefs than on facts and arguments.

People express and experience frustration and dissatisfaction, loss of material security, lack of solidarity; they regret a perceived loss of fair and ethical production, just distribution of wealth and well-being in an overly competitive world. A loss of trust in politics, politicians and in the media does not help the understanding of democracy as a way of living together and organising one's life together rather than a mere lip service. Between a silent majority of onlookers and bystanders and the engagement in radical populist movements there is a space to invest, a space in which democratically-minded, active citizens uphold the values and principles on which the vision of an inclusive and peaceful Europe is built.

There is no question that these issues today possess a degree of urgency not experienced in the past decades. Many people turn to school and to education as an important part of the solution, in a medium-term perspective. In the short-term schools also must face up to the challenges brought about by the atmosphere and the changes in the wider society reflected in everyday school life.

The main question we want to address with this summer school will be the following: How can Council of Europe standards and principles and in particular the recently published [framework for competences for democratic culture](#) supported by the Ministers of Education influence the practice of teachers and other education professionals to promote a democratic culture throughout school and other educational settings? And how can the teaching and training resources developed by the Pestalozzi Programme and other Education projects of the Council of Europe help to develop the necessary competences in and with the learners? How does the chosen pedagogical approach influence the learning outcome?

The pedagogical approach of the Pestalozzi Programme (learning-by-doing, cooperative learning, peer-centered work) as well as the learning and training activities provide the basic resource for this work together with other relevant educational tools and documents of the Council of Europe. Participants will have the possibility to choose their personalised learning curriculum from a range of offers. Common activities throughout the eight days will allow participants to work together as a whole group, to learn together and to exchange ideas and experiences.

A round table discussion on the topic **“From silent onlookers to actors - competences for civic and social engagement”** will offer an opportunity to address and reflect on what schools need to do to promote public engagement and participation as well as to interact with a wide range of interested professionals.

## Expected outcomes

We expect that after the training course the participants will be in better position to:

- raise awareness for the key importance of educating for democracy within their professional context (school heads, colleagues, parents, learners);
- understand the crucial role that pedagogy and the relationship between teacher and learner play for a democratic school and the success of learning together in diversity;
- contribute in their teaching practice to the development of the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge necessary for living in diverse and democratic societies;
- use the Council of Europe framework for competences for a democratic culture and the offered resources in their day-to-day practice;
- take action to promote an appropriate teaching practice in their context.

The participants will also join the Community of Practice of the Pestalozzi Programme, a network of education professionals equipped to continue the training on an international, national, regional and local level with a shared view of the competences which need to be developed and of the appropriate methodology of training and teaching.

We also expect that participants contribute to the dissemination of the work results through online productions during and, above all, after the summer school, but also by sharing their learning with colleagues in ways which are promising and appropriate in their own professional context.

## Courses and activities

Common activities throughout the eight days will allow participants to work together as a whole group, to learn together and to exchange ideas and experiences: Open space, Socratic walks, daily reflection groups, soap boxes, public debate, excursions and social programme.

A number of intensive courses (9-15 hours) will be offered; these courses will take place mainly in the mornings. Shorter courses (2-6 hours) will take place mainly in the afternoons and will take up further aspects of the overall theme.

There is also time foreseen for ad-hoc activities in reaction to requests by participants to deepen certain aspects of the theme and/or share their practices.

## Application

Online applications will be possible as from January 2017 following the procedure for training activities of the Pestalozzi Programme (more information here: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/pestalozzi/how-to-participate>).

More information on the Summer School will be available soon. Watch the announcement on the web site of the Pestalozzi Programme [www.coe.int/pestalozzi](http://www.coe.int/pestalozzi) or on Twitter @pestalozziprog (#sumsch2017).