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A REPORT ON EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE IN SIX EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

Promoting Human Rights
Education and Democratic
Citizenship in Eastern
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A REPORT ON EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE IN SIX EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

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INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

This report has been produced within the framework of the EU/CoE Joint Programme “Supporting Education Policies in Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in 6 Eastern Partnership countries”. The Programme embraces the six countries of the EU’s Eastern Partnership (EaP): Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Its aim is to support integration and/or further develop of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in national education systems (including school curriculum) in the Eastern Partnership countries, in accordance with the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

MAPPING EXERCISE

The report draws on the results of a research exercise designed to map the most important initiatives and priorities in the area of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) in the six countries. The research exercise was carried out 2015-16 by local experts within each country. It resulted in six individual country reports outlining the current situation in relation to the integration of the principles of EDC/HRE within the national education system, and identifying opportunities for further development.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report provides an overview and analysis of the six national reports. It summarises current policy and practice in each country in relation to EDC/HRE, outlines national needs and challenges, and highlights possible areas for future development. In doing so, the report is intended to act as a basis for the selection and targeting of capacity-building activities and the creation of tailor-made training programmes both within countries and the region as a whole, with a view to strengthening educational policy and practice in the six EaP countries in line with European standards.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CHARTER

The concept of EDC/HRE used in the report is one set out in the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The Charter defines EDC/HRE not simply as a component in the formal curriculum, but as embedded in the whole life of the school as an institution: in school governance and climate, and in the links between a school and its community as well as in formal teaching and learning – and in the education system as a whole.

COUNTRY REPORTS

ARMENIA¹

Developing an **active citizenry** is one of the formal goals of Armenian education policy. The State Programme of Educational Development for 2011-15 states that the objective of the education system is to:

“develop an active citizen, who will be a bearer of national values and a progressive culture in civil society.”²

School-community engagement is regarded as important in this process, with the state encouraging

“community activity in public education and other educational institutions, [and] learners’ participation in solving community problems”³

School curriculum

In terms of the formal school curriculum, EDC/HRE-related content is largely to be found in the teaching of **Social Studies subjects**. In 2001-02 Human Rights was introduced as a curriculum subject in grade 8, Civic Education in grade 9 and The State and The Law in grade 10. With the reform of secondary education in 2006, similar subjects were extended into grades 11-12. Programmes of study are set out in the State Standard for Secondary Education and accompanied by teacher manuals and student textbooks. Key topics covered in these subjects include: equality; rights and responsibility; tolerance; rule of law; civil, social, political, economic and cultural rights; children’s rights; minority rights; gender equity; civil society; democracy, the constitution; and human rights protection in Europe.

In 2008 the community-based civic education learning programme **Project Citizen** was launched in Armenian schools, and later integrated into the mandatory middle school Social Studies courses as a way of incorporating real-life learning into civic education.

In addition to these mandatory subjects, aspects of EDC/HRE are integrated into the **manual for homeroom teachers** of grades 1-5 & 5-9, **Diversity and Tolerance**, including issues related to diversity, tolerance, human rights, citizenship, and the culture of peace.

EDC/HRE themes are also covered in the **textbooks of other school subjects**, e.g. Me and My Surrounding Environment for grades 2-4, World History for grades 6-12, as well as in English as a Foreign Language.

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1. Based on Karine Harutyunyan: Promoting Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship in Armenia, 2015
 2. State Programme of Education Development for 2011-2015, Article 3
 3. State Programme of Education Development for 2011-2015, Article 101

School governance

Schools and other institutions of public education in the Republic of Armenia are required to have in place a number of **self-governing advisory bodies** whose purpose is to inform school decision-making and hold school leaders to account. These bodies exist to inject an element of democratic participation into school decision-making and culture. Thus, **school boards** elect the head teacher who is then held accountable to the board with regard to certain of her/his responsibilities. **Student councils** give a voice to learners and help to protect their rights. **Parent associations** contribute to the efficient running of the school and serve as a link between the school and the outside world.

Projects and initiatives

Prior to the introduction of Social Studies subjects into the mandatory curriculum, a number of **human rights education teaching manuals** were circulated in the Armenian language with the support of international organisations. Teaching Human Rights: Practical Activities for Elementary and Middle Schools, supported by the National Endowment for US Democracy Support, was one of the first such manuals. Among the manuals later translated into Armenian were: Human Rights, published in 1997 with the support of the Norwegian Refugee Council and Catholic Relief Service; a draft of A Child Meets another Child. Convention and Rights of Children, translated with support from the Norwegian Refugee Council; and Hello, It's Me: My Rights and Responsibilities, for elementary school teachers (grades 1-3) published with the support of the Norwegian Refugee Council, and approved by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2000.

Further progress in human rights education took place with the implementation of a UN Children's Fund programme which aimed at incorporating a **'lifeskills' curriculum** in elementary and middle schools. This programme also included the **development of textbooks and school and teacher training**, and was supported by the Norwegian Refugee Council, OSF, Armenian Constitutional Right-Protection Centre, Project Harmony, Junior Achievements of Armenia and other organisations.

Current reforms began in 2009 and are now carried out primarily through the second Education Quality and Relevance Project funded by the World Bank. Under the World Bank Loan programme Improvement of Education, **subject standards, programmes of study and textbooks for the Social Studies discipline** are due to be revised in the period 2015-19.

Challenges

The last twenty years or so have seen important developments in the integration of EDC/HRE-related ideas and methods into the Armenian education system, including through the formal curriculum and school governance. However, there remain a number of important challenges. These include:

- ▶ Although it is mandatory in the school curriculum, **the Social Studies discipline is not regarded as a specialist subject**. There are **no Social Studies departments in pedagogical colleges or universities**. Courses in schools are **mainly taught by History teachers** who do not all have expertise in the subject.
- ▶ Though regarded as having responsibility for certain aspects of EDC/HRE, **teachers of other subjects, homeroom and elementary teachers often lack expertise in this field, and do not always have access to relevant training**. This applies equally to **school leaders and managers, who, in consequence, often lack leadership skills in EDC/HRE**.
- ▶ **The rhetoric of democratic school governance is not always realised in practice**. In spite of the existence of legislation, **school boards are not always effective** in holding their head teachers to account. The formation of boards is not always transparent, and board members can lack commitment. **Student councils have a number of shortcomings**: student participation is not always encouraged, staff may interfere in elections, and student councils are often severely limited in the topics they can discuss in the decisions they can take. **Parent associations lack effectiveness**. Parent members are often hand-picked by the head teacher, and some of them are interested only in the education of their own children.

Conclusions

To deal effectively with these challenges and to implement state policy on active citizenship and stakeholder engagement in education, it will be important to build on what has been achieved to date through the various initiatives which have already taken place, i.e., the translation of resources, provision of training, inclusion of curriculum subjects and establishment of new decision-making bodies in schools. In particular, it will be important to identify ways of:

- ▶ **raising awareness of the idea of EDC/HRE as a 'whole-school approach' across the education system, and how it is not incompatible with but can complement existing forms of teaching**

- ▶ **putting educational professionals who already have some experience of EDC/HRE-related resources or practices at the heart of reform – school leaders as well as classroom teachers - to act as ‘multipliers’ in their own schools, and possibly more widely through ‘training of trainers’ schemes**
- ▶ **strengthening EDC/HRE in the formal curriculum by including age-appropriate courses on democracy and human rights in earlier grades, thus extending formal provision across the whole age range**
- ▶ **raising awareness among school leaders and managers of the benefits of involving students, parents and community members in everyday management and decision-making in their schools, and of simple and practical ways of making student councils and similar bodies more effective**
- ▶ **raising awareness among teachers of the different ways in which they can contribute to the development of active and responsible citizenship in their students – including Social Studies teachers, teachers of subjects which include explicit EDC/HRE elements, teachers of other subjects and homeroom teachers – so that each has a better understanding of their potential contribution and the skills they need to deliver this**
- ▶ **translating and introducing Council of Europe EDC/HRE resources - especially the teachers manuals and the tools on democratic school governance, teacher competences and learner competences for democratic culture – not as replacements for existing textbooks or official guidebooks, but as sources of ideas for professional development across the education system.**

AZERBAIJAN⁴

In the years since independence in 1991, **education in democratic and human rights values has become one of the formal goals of education policy** in the Republic of Azerbaijan. State Strategy on Educational Development (2013) says:

“The key objectives of the education system are: to develop a citizen and a character who understands his/her responsibility, is committed to democratic principles and the cultural traditions of the nation, is respectful of human rights and freedoms, is committed to the ideas of Azerbaijan, is an independent and creative thinker.”⁵

This goal is one of a number of objectives in a wide-ranging programme of educational modernisation currently being undertaken in Azerbaijan with a view to unifying educational standards nationally and bringing these in line with wider European developments.⁶

School Curriculum

Topics relating to EDC/HRE are represented in the national curriculum in the form of **two mandatory school subjects**: Lifeskills in grades 1-9, and Human and Society in grades 10-11. Human and Society is being replaced by a subject called Citizenship Education in 2016. These subjects are generally taught for one period a week, with two periods per week for Lifeskills in grades 3-4.

Lifeskills focuses on different aspects of personal development - physical, psychological social and spiritual – and covers a wide range of issues, such as health and safety, human reproduction and environmental education. Aspects of citizenship, including human rights and freedoms, independent thinking, expression of opinion, and defending one’s rights and the rights of others are covered in the theme ‘Individual and Society’. Teaching is conducted in line with a dedicated set of textbooks. Specified learning outcomes include: understanding one’s rights; respecting the rights of others; knowledge of relevant legal documents; awareness of current affairs; the ability to express personal opinions and participate in discussions and debates; reflection on personal values; and the development of key moral values such as honesty and fairness.

Teacher Code of Conduct

Of particular significance to EDC/HRE are the **mandatory ethical norms set out in the Teacher Code of Conduct**, adopted in 2014 by the Ministry of Education. The Code requires teachers to adopt human rights and democratic principles in their practice. They must not differentiate between learners or other participants in the educational process on grounds of race, ethnicity, language, gender, and religion or attitude towards religion, beliefs or social identity, and must always remain politically neutral. They are required to help students become active citizens and encourage them to develop respect for universal as well as national values. They are also required to work with colleagues in a spirit of collaboration and develop good relationships with parents and the community beyond the school.

4. Based on Ulviyya Mikayilova: Mapping Report of the systems of EDC/HRE existent in Azerbaijan

5. State Strategy on the Education Development, 2013. E-resource: <http://www.president.az/articles/9779>

6. Ibid.

Textbook Evaluation Criteria

Also of significance to EDC/HRE is the state **policy on school textbooks** adopted in 2007. Textbooks are assessed for suitability in terms of a number of factors, including sensitivity to gender, race, ethnicity, religion and other socially sensitive issues. Ones given an 'excellent' rating are those which use examples related to the students' experiences; take full account of the diverse cultural experiences and genders of students; develop critical thinking skills systematically through problem-solving exercises; actively promote understanding between groups and individuals; raise issues relating to and encourage discussion on the environment, pollution and public health; are sensitive to controversial issues and avoid stereotyping.

Projects and initiatives

The last twenty years have seen **a wide range of EDC/HRE-related projects and initiatives** in Azerbaijan, many of which would not have been possible without the devotion of considerable resources, technical assistance and expertise by international donors. These include: Citizenship Education Programme (1998-2003), human rights education teaching materials, and pre- and in-service teacher education; Human Rights Education Project (1998-2004), run by the Norwegian Refugee Council, teacher professional development, teacher manuals and student textbooks; IFES Education Project (2004-06), civic consciousness among school-age children, student action committees run by school students; Civic Education Curriculum Development and Teacher Training Project (1999-2005), Montana State University, a new civics curriculum for secondary schools 'Human and Society'; and teacher training in student-centred, interactive methodologies – including the creation of teacher and student manuals and resource centres; Civic Education Coalition (2003), local and international NGOs, civic education in formal and non-formal education; Regional Human Rights Education Centres, a network of training and resource centres offering professional development programmes; Deliberating in a Democracy (2003-09), Chicago-based, professional development in the facilitation of classroom deliberation on public issues, including on-line discussions and a teacher exchange; Child-Friendly Schools (2000-10), UNICEF, teacher training in developing student-centred classrooms and whole-school culture; Children's Tolerance Education Project (2004-11), Save the Children, using story and theatre to promote education on children's rights; Life Skills Based Education (2006-11), Ministry of Education, UNICEF and the Global Fund, development of the Lifeskills subject; Centre for Civic Education (2000-12), NGO co-funded by the Polish Foundation for Education for Democracy and OSI-AF, teacher training in civic education and human rights, interactive methods, lesson plans, a civic education course and teacher manual; Regional Children Action for Participation (2009-11), Save the Children, engaging high school students in peer outreach on children's rights through community projects; Peer to Peer Project, Ombudsman Office and Ministry of Education, children's rights education in school, including the creation of youth centres, a teacher manual and student textbook, teacher training and an annual campaign.

Monitoring Study

Evidence of the success of these development projects and initiatives can be seen in the findings of the Monitoring Study for the period 2009 to 2015, convened by the Ministry of Education and World Bank. These indicate **a significant increase in the use of interactive teaching methods, students feeling their teachers encourage them to think and form their own views, and student collaboration in the classroom.**

Challenges

Overall, curriculum and professional development activities appear to have made good progress in introducing EDC/HRE-related content, teaching methods and resources into secondary schools in Azerbaijan. Nevertheless, there remain a number of challenges. These include:

- ▶ Though successful in their own terms, **EDC/HRE development activities and programmes have largely been implemented in isolation from each other.** Results have not always been disseminated widely, and schools and individuals have not had as many opportunities as they might to learn from or build on each other's experience.
- ▶ As a result, **EDC/HRE-related ideas and practices are still found only sporadically in schools and not fully integrated into the education system.** In particular, they tend to be lacking from the training provided by pre-service and in-service teacher education institutions.
- ▶ Educational curricula and practices still often **reflect the centrally-designed ones of the Soviet period, with Soviet values of patriotism and loyalty simply replaced with the Azerbaijani equivalent.** Policymakers and educators with little experience of democratic and participatory approaches to schooling,

or of ownership of the teaching and learning process do not always find it easy to understand or adapt to the whole-school approach to EDC/HRE.

- ▶ This difficulty appears sometimes to be compounded by **an apparent lack of clarity about the overall concept of EDC/HRE and its practical implications for school life**. Terminological variations between different initiatives can leave policymakers and practitioners unsure about the goals of EDC/HRE, how they can be achieved and evaluated.
- ▶ The content of **the subject Lifeskills reflects a range of disciplines and the specific nature of the EDC/HRE element and its goals is not clearly spelled out** - either to teachers or students.
- ▶ While the learning of civic and human rights values is a central aspect of civic education in the curriculum, **the planning of opportunities for students to learn how to put these values into practice in everyday life as democratic citizens is still in its early stages**.
- ▶ While it is possible to find examples of human rights and democratic principles being integrated into the school as whole – e.g., through school parliaments and student unions - **practical opportunities for students to practise active citizenship are few and far between in many schools**. The learning value of student participation in school governance, or in social action and problem-solving in school and the local community is not always recognised.
- ▶ Similarly, the **value of involving parents and community organisations in developing a human rights and democratic ethos and culture in school is also often overlooked**.

Conclusions

To counter these challenges and build on the successful developments which have already taken place in Azerbaijan with regard to EDC/HRE it will be important to identify ways of:

- ▶ **continuing to raise awareness of the idea of EDC/HRE as a ‘whole-school approach’ throughout the education system, especially at the level of pre- and in-service professional development, and an understanding that the goals of EDC/HRE are not incompatible with but can complement traditional civic education goals of love of country and respect for national traditions**
- ▶ **putting the core of teachers who are already experienced in EDC/HRE practice at the heart of reform, to act as ‘multipliers’ in their own and other schools through ‘teacher mentor’ or ‘training of trainers’ schemes**
- ▶ **providing opportunities for teachers to share EDC/HRE practice, both through collaborating in their school and with other schools, including schools in other countries**
- ▶ **strengthening the EDC/HRE component in the Lifeskills course in grades 1-9 and making it more explicit, and ensuring that the new subject of Citizenship Education for older students covers real-life issues of democracy and human rights problem-solving as well as more factual content**
- ▶ **raising awareness among school leaders and managers of the potential benefits of involving students, parents, community members and other school stakeholders in everyday school management and decision-making, and providing them with simple and practical methods by which they can achieve these, e.g., on how a student council can be most effective**
- ▶ **making available Council of Europe resources, especially the teachers manuals and tools on democratic school governance, teacher competences and learner competences on democratic culture as aids to professional development and a stimulus to the creation of ‘home grown’ resources on the same themes.**

BELARUS⁷

Civic education is **an important element in formal education policy** in the Republic of Belarus. Priorities for national education set out in the Concept of continuous upbringing of children and youth, approved by the Ministry of Education in 2015, include:

“civic and patriotic education aimed at formation of active civic position, patriotism, legal and political information [and the] culture of personality.”⁸

7. Based on Irina Fursa: Promoting Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in the Republic of Belarus, 2016

8. Ministry of Education: The concept of continuous upbringing of children and youth, 2015

The Concept document sets out a number of **key goals** for the education of young people, including the development of: 'citizenship' - the inclination of a person to perform his or her social duties respectfully and responsibly; 'legal culture' – knowledge of the law and the inclination to act in accordance with it; and 'patriotism' – valuing the cultural and moral traditions of the Belarusian nation and Belarusian state ideology.⁹

The document also sets out **the methods schools should use to achieve these goals** – among which are: paying explicit attention to students' rights and obligations; an effective system of student autonomy; legal education; prevention of illegal activity; creating an atmosphere of mutual respect and responsibility; selecting appropriate teaching techniques and resources; and engaging a range of stakeholders, including family, educational, executive and judiciary law enforcement authorities, and public associations and organizations.¹⁰

School curriculum

EDC/HRE-related content is **integrated into a number of mandatory courses in the school curriculum**. The most significant are Human and the world, (grades 1-5) and Social Science (grades 9-11). The former includes teaching about the Republic of Belarus and children's rights and responsibilities, the latter focuses on human culture and society, interpersonal communication, human rights, the law, representative democracy and the constitution.

In addition, **topics relating to EDC/HRE can also be found in a number of other subjects**, for example: Introduction to school life (grade 1), basic rights of the child; Visual arts (grades 1-4), national cultural heritage; Music (grades 1-4), Belarusian folk songs and the national anthem; Geography (grade 10), Belarus; Belarusian language (grades 1-11), civic awareness; Literature (grades 1-11), national consciousness; History (grades 5-11), formation of national identity and awareness of citizenship; Physical culture and health (grades 1-11), development of social values; Labour training (grades 1-9), traditional folk craft; Pre-conscription training (grades 10-11), personal responsibility, patriotism and mutual respect.

Extracurricular activities

In addition to the formal curriculum, there are **a number of approved extracurricular programmes which focus on the development of civic awareness and legal understanding in the context of real-life situations**. These include My Fatherland (grades 1-4), Preparing the student-leader and student-organizer of the children and youth public association (grades 9-10), Exploring humanitarian law (grades 9-11), Rules of my life (grades 2-4), Learning to live in peace and harmony (grades 5-8), We are the future (grades 3-4), Democracy in everyday life (grade 11).

To these should be added a number of **other school practices which relate to EDC/HRE**, such as producing newspapers and disseminating legal information through school information boards, access to a legal awareness website (<http://mir.pravo.by/>) dealing with children's rights, and Months of Legal Knowledge – involving debates, contests and competitions.

Projects and initiatives

In the years following independence and the ratification of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and other international documents in the sphere of children's rights, a number of developments took place in connection with **the promotion of children's rights in schools**, largely undertaken in cooperation with international organisations in the field.

A **textbook on human rights** was published by the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education in collaboration with the UN Office in Belarus, UNICEF and the Belarusian Helsinki Committee, along with seminars for specialists teaching human rights. The National Plan of Action on the Protection of the Rights of the Child, approved in 1995 introduced **a special course**, Rights of the child, into all schools - **a course**, Human Rights, was introduced in the 1998-99 school year. The University of the Child's Rights project was run by the Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs in 2003-05 to raise children's awareness of their rights, creating **a training school coaches system** and an **annual international summer event**. **School textbooks and teaching resources** were published, including About international humanitarian law for students (2003), About human rights for students (2005), and I am a citizen of the Republic of Belarus (2007). An Action Plan on Legal Education of Citizens, approved for 2011-15, introduced **extracurricular activities** for general secondary schools, such as 'Basics of legal knowledge' in grades 5-11 and 'ABC of rights' grades 1-4.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

Over the period there have been a number of **training programmes for educators**, mainly on the subject of children's rights, but more recently specifically on the Council of Europe concept and practice of EDC/HRE. The Academy of Postdiploma Education is currently running a **Council of Europe pilot project Training of teachers on the programme EDC/HRE**. This involves initial training relating to, among other things, the democratic management of education institutions, teaching democracy and human rights, new teaching methods and learning activities in EDC/HRE, and the preparation and distribution of new publications. In 2015 the Academy held a **teachers seminar on media and social network literacy** for students, a workshop on **teacher competences in multicultural education**. It also ran a **Council of Europe Pestalozzi programme Training and retraining of teachers and educational leaders in the environment of diversity**.

Challenges

While there have been many positive achievements and important steps taken in Belarus in relation to the incorporation of EDC/HRE ideas and practices into the country's education system, a number of challenges still need to be met. These include:

- ▶ **EDC/HRE-related content is distributed between a number of different subjects and courses in school, including extracurricular programmes. It is not always easy for teachers or students to get an overall picture of what EDC/HRE is or what it is for.**
- ▶ **Some of the terminology used in Council of Europe documents on EDC/HRE has different connotations in Belarusian practice. Local policy makers have the difficult task of working out a common approach to EDC/HRE terminology, integrating Council of Europe concepts into the Belarusian experience.**
- ▶ **Few of the teachers currently teaching the mandatory courses relating to EDC/HRE, or who are responsible for teaching elements of EDC/HRE in their subject-teaching, have received sufficient special training for this.**
- ▶ **School leaders lack training in how to incorporate EDC/HRE into the daily life of their schools** – such as through the school's ethos, pupil-teacher and teacher-teacher relationships, and links with parents and the local community.
- ▶ **Although EDC/HRE training programmes and initiatives are currently on-going, it has not yet been possible to implement these systematically across the whole country, or to cover all the important areas of practice in this field, e.g., how to assess progress in EDC/HRE learning.**
- ▶ **While the promotion of the values of patriotism and loyalty to the state is clearly flagged up in policy documents as an important educational goal, the importance of also promoting universal values, such as those underpinning democratic and human rights principles, has not always had the same emphasis.**
- ▶ **Similarly, while there is a strong emphasis on teaching about the rights of children, not as much time is given in schools to teaching about human rights in general, or about the concept of democracy and the democratic process.**

Conclusions

In order to build successfully on the progress that has already been made in introducing EDC/HRE into the school system in Belarus, it will be important to identify ways of:

- ▶ **raising awareness of the idea of EDC/HRE as a 'whole-school approach' across the education system - including among policy makers, teacher trainers, school leaders, classroom teachers, parents and wider society – how EDC/HRE relates to the everyday work of a school and the benefits it can bring**
- ▶ **raising awareness among policy makers and others of the distinctive aims of EDC/HRE and how these aims are not incompatible with but can contribute to existing educational goals, such as promoting respect for the law and love of one's country and its cultural heritage – e.g., through reference to the Council of Europe learner competences for democratic culture**
- ▶ **strengthening the EDC/HRE element in pre- and in-service teacher training, so that teachers are able to develop a better understanding of what EDC/HRE involves in school, the skills to put this into practice and the confidence not to shy away from trying new teaching methods or tackling challenging controversial issues when they arise in the classroom**
- ▶ **providing more opportunities for teachers, head teachers and other education professionals to share ideas and practices on EDC/HRE, both within and between schools**
- ▶ **providing teachers, head teachers and other educational professionals with access to a wider range of EDC/HRE materials and resources, e.g., Council of Europe EDC/HRE manuals and tools**

- ▶ **strengthening and coordinating the EDC/HRE elements in the formal curriculum and making them more explicit, so that they can be clearly identified by everyone involved – students as well as teachers**
- ▶ broadening the content of EDC/HRE in the formal curriculum to include more teaching about human rights in general, and about democracy and the democratic process
- ▶ raising awareness among school leaders and managers of simple, practical ways of involving students (also parents and community members) in everyday management and decision-making in their schools.

GEORGIA¹¹

Citizenship and human rights learning lies at the heart of formal education policy in Georgia. The National General Education Strategy, adopted in 2004, stressed the importance of raising:

“independent, progressive citizens able to determine national political, economic and cultural priorities, respect and protect rights and liberties of individuals.”¹²

On leaving school young people should be able to demonstrate that they are capable of being “law-abiding and tolerant citizens”, equipped with “the skills of mutual respect, understanding and mutual cognition”, the “skills for human rights protection and respect for individuals”, and the ability to “apply knowledge on human rights and live by them.”¹³

School Curriculum

In the current National Curriculum, adopted in 2011, EDC/HRE-related topics are covered in **Social Sciences**, one of 8 mandatory subject-areas. Courses on **Our Georgia** (grades 5-6,) **Civic Education** (grades 9-10), sit alongside History, Geography, Civil Defence and Road Safety.

The **professional competences required to teach Civic Education** are set out in the Teachers Professional Standard adopted in 2008. This comprises a detailed list of prescribed teacher skills, knowledge and applied methodology.

In addition, **social and civic competence is included as one of 13 common competences which are to be reflected across all subjects**. Social and civic competence is defined as a compilation of knowledge, skills and attitudes which enables young people to assess their own abilities, manage their emotions and realize themselves. It implies the capacities of communication, creativity, tolerances towards the rights and liberties of others, and knowledge of social values, norms and rules, and respect for them.

A **new EDC/HRE-related course for younger students**, Me and Society, was launched in 2016, to be formally incorporated in the revised National Curriculum.

Non-formal Education

The part played by non-formal education in citizenship and human rights education in Georgia is particularly significant. Several youth organisations use **Council of Europe EDC/HRE teachers manuals** in training programmes for youth leaders, volunteers and pre-service education professionals – encouraging the latter to use the manuals in their future work in schools. They also promote the use of Council of Europe EDC/HRE resources more generally in non-formal education. For example, the organisation Youth Space, with the support of the European Youth Foundation has run training programmes for young civil society actors entirely based on these manuals. The Youth and Children’s National Centre under Ministry of Sports and Youth has also frequently used EDC/HRE resources in its educational projects.

Projects and initiatives

Following the introduction of Civic Education into the school curriculum in 2006 the Teachers Professional Development Centre, in some cases alone and in other cases with the help of international organisations, has sought to improve the training of teachers of Civic Education. With the help of different international donors and non-governmental organizations such as the European Commission, USAID, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, PH International and IFES, a number of **civic education training programmes have been offered to teachers of social sciences, primarily to civic education teachers**.

11. Based on Shorena Gharibashvili: Study on Integration Perspectives of EDC/HRE Systems in the Georgian Education System, 2015

12. N84 Decree of Government of Georgia on “National General Education Strategy”, 2004

13. Ibid.

In 2009 the **Council of Europe manual on teacher competences for EDC/HRE was translated into Georgian** and copies distributed to all schools in the country. Since then **all six of the Council of Europe teachers manuals, the manual on democratic school governance and the Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE and related documents have also been translated and disseminated to schools.** The translation and dissemination of Council of Europe tools has been accompanied by **a number of in-service training programmes for teachers and other education professionals.** For example, in the framework of the EU Co-funded project Democracy Starts with You – Improving Civic Participation of Youth from Minority and Rural Areas of South Caucasus Countries in 2010-2013, 60 civic education teachers from different regions of Georgia were trained in experiential methods of teaching civic education.

Through these programmes, the dissemination of Council of Europe resources, the establishment of civic education clubs in schools and democracy engagement centres around the country, state authorities in cooperation with international organisations have created **a significant pool of educational professionals with knowledge and experience of EDC/HRE ideals and practices.**

Challenges

Through the translation and use of Council of Europe resources and associated training activities, including through informal education, many education professionals in Georgia are aware of the basic ideas and practices of EDC/HRE, and have integrated these into their work in school. However, there are number of factors still preventing this approach to citizenship and human rights learning from becoming better integrated into Georgian schools. These include:

- ▶ While it has provided a whole range of new and more appropriate tools both for classroom teaching and school governance, **training in the use of the Council of Europe manuals has not always been sufficiently widespread or rigorous to guarantee general take-up of these resources in schools.** More substantial induction is needed for teachers to be able to grasp the new teaching methodologies promoted in these resources, and for many head teachers to be able to understand the practical implications of democratic school government.
- ▶ **There is a shortage of teachers qualified to teach Civic Education.** Civic Education lessons are mainly taken by History teachers. There is little take-up for certification in Civic Education as the course is not always popular with teachers who sometimes feel it is not taken seriously by schools. There is also a lack of professional development opportunities and materials, or opportunities for professional networking for Civic Education teachers.
- ▶ **The idea of EDC/HRE can be difficult to grasp for educational practitioners who received their own education in the Soviet period or from teachers who were educated at that time.** This includes the idea of democracy as a 'way of life'; the role of critical thinking and analysis, discussion and debate in learning; and of the culture of the school, the relationships of its members and its decision-making structures being as important a vehicle for democratic citizenship and human rights learning as classroom subjects. The view that **learning is just about subjects and consists largely of the memorization of facts from books** is still a salient one in some Georgian schools.
- ▶ As a result, **school students are not always familiar with active learning methods of the type recommended for EDC/HRE or used to expressing and discussing their opinions freely in class,** making it more difficult for teachers to introduce such approaches.
- ▶ **How students' social and civic competences are to be developed is not made explicit in the Teacher's Professional Standard.** In the absence of any specific cross-curricular teacher competences in this field, it is difficult for many staff to understand what this means in practical terms
- ▶ Until recently much professional development has, rightly, focused on the curriculum subject of Civic Education. In comparison, **the role of democratic school governance, including partnerships with parents and organisations in the local community, in the promotion of EDC/HRE learning has been less well explored** in Georgian schools.
- ▶ **The work of youth organisations in EDC/HRE, although important in its own right, has tended to be piece-meal and uncoordinated, and not always linked to needs and practices in schools.**

Conclusions

Georgia has made significant steps towards promoting education for democracy and human right in schools and in non-formal youth education. To build on these and meet the challenges facing further development, it will be important to identify ways of:

continuing to raise awareness of the idea of EDC/HRE as a ‘whole-school approach’ throughout the education system, including in higher education, and of understanding how the goals and methods of this approach are not incompatible with but can complement traditional styles of teaching and educational objectives - such as promoting love of country and respect for national traditions – including, perhaps, through use of the Council of Europe tool on competences for democratic culture

strengthening the EDC/HRE component in the formal curriculum and making it more explicit by linking the different courses to create a distinctive thread running through the curriculum from grade 1 to 10, and giving this the same professional and specialist status as other subjects in Social Studies, such as History and Geography – beginning by embedding this status in pre-service training at higher education level

utilising the pool of educational professionals who have already received training in aspects of EDC/HRE – both in formal and non-formal education – by putting them at the heart of educational development in the country, to act as ‘multipliers’ in schools by creating more opportunities for sharing good practice, professional networking and taking on mentoring or training roles, e.g., through a ‘training of trainers’ scheme

using translated Council of Europe materials, not necessarily as school manuals but rather as sources of ideas and practices for professional development and the future collation and development of locally-produced resources and guidelines, and considering the translation of more recent Council of Europe tools, such as on the teaching of controversial issues

including EDC/HRE in the Teacher’s Professional Standard so that all teachers are aware of their potential contribution to the social and civic development of students and ways in which they may achieve this - the Council of Europe manual on teacher competences being a useful guide on the kind of standards to include

raising awareness among school leaders and managers of the benefits of involving students, parents and community members in everyday management and decision-making in their schools, and of simple and practical ways of establishing student councils and forms of parental and community involvement which stakeholders can clearly see as working.

MOLDOVA¹⁴

The right to free access of information and **education about rights and responsibilities** is enshrined in Article 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova.¹⁵

In the last few years, there has been growing interest in the contribution of education to the development of Moldovan society, particularly within the context of democratization and the development of wider European values. This interest has been translated into policy through the adoption of the Education Code which sets out the kinds of **new social and civic competences** needed by today’s citizens, including a sense of initiative, capacity for self-development, the knowledge and skills needed for independent opinion and action, and openness to intercultural dialogue in the context of national and universal values. The Code also establishes new **requirements for democratic rule in schools** and provision for the involvement of children, parents and school personnel in school decision-making processes.¹⁶ The National Action Plan in the field of Human Rights makes the quality of human rights education a national priority, in particular in relation to the modernization of curricula, provision of teaching materials, and teacher training.¹⁷ The Education-2020 Strategy emphasises the importance of education for life, and teaching for **active citizenship** and **social cohesion**.¹⁸

School curriculum

Currently, EDC/HRE-related content is mainly delivered through **Moral-Spiritual Education** in primary schools (grades 1-4) and **Civic Education** classes in secondary (grades 5-9) and high schools (grades 10-12). These are both **mandatory**.

14. Based on Cezar Gavriluc: Mapping of the EDC/HRE system in the Republic of Moldova, 2016

15. Constitution of the Republic of Moldova, adopted 1994

16. Educational Code, adopted 2014

17. National Action Plan in the field of Human Rights 2011-2014, adopted 2011

18. Strategy on development of education for 2014-2020 “Education-2020”, approved 2014

Moral-Spiritual Education is taught for one lesson per week. It deals mainly with orthodox religion and national traditions and celebrations, but also covers norms and rules, children's rights and responsibilities and community activities.

Civic Education is taught one lesson per week at secondary level. It consists of four modules: Human – social being; Democratic society; Life and health – personal and social values; Personal development and careers guidance. At high school level the modules are: Human – social being; The law – tool to protect the human being; Life and health – personal and social values; Personal growth and careers guidance. At both levels it is recommended that teachers use active and interactive methods.

In addition to the mandatory curriculum, students choose **optional subjects** which are intended to contribute to the development of transversal competences. Included in the approved list of optional subjects in primary schools are Intercultural Education and Education for Community Development. At secondary school level the EDC/HRE option is Human Rights Education.

The intended outcomes for all these subjects are laid down in the form of **specific learning competences**.

Tournament on children's rights

One important extracurricular activity which relates directly to human rights education is the Tournament on children's rights. This started in 2013 and is organized yearly by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Child Rights Information Centre. Guided by teachers, **children promote human and children's rights by monitoring individual rights and reporting to duty bearers**. All interested teachers are offered a training course. Children in groups identify a specific right, study it in depth, develop rights-based indicators to monitor its implementation, collect data from different sources, and compile and present a report.

Democratic school governance

The Education Code adopted in 2104 stipulates that the administration council of the school should include, besides a school manager and representative of local administration, **three parents, two teachers and one pupil**.

Quality Standards for Primary and Secondary Schools include **3 explicit criteria referring to democratic school governance**: children participate in the decision making processes of all school aspects; school communicates systematically and involves family and community in the decision making process; school, family and community prepare children to live in an intercultural society based on democracy.

A recent draft of the Professional Standards for School Managers includes **establishing and encouraging efficient relationships with the community as one of 8 competences for school managers**. It includes promoting an inclusive school culture and a climate of mutual respect, and modelling and promoting open dialogue.

Schools are encouraged to foster student participation by setting up **student councils** and taking part in the **National Pupils Council**.

Projects and initiatives

NGOs have played an important role in laying some of the foundations for the development of EDC/HRE in schools in Moldova. They have been **responsible for most of the provision of in-service teacher education in the field, and for the distribution of guidebooks and other materials**. For example: the Society for Education and Human Rights supported the Ministry of Education to develop and implement the course We and the law in 2001-05; the Child Rights Information Center (CRIC) has developed tools, teaching and other materials for Civic Education and run training programmes; Amnesty International Moldova developed and piloted the optional course for secondary schools, Human rights.

NGOs and youth organizations have also had an important part to play in the running of **extracurricular activities and projects** – including facilitating the National Pupils' Council, the National Tournament on Child and Human Rights and ad-hoc groups consulting on specific issues, such as compulsory school uniform and the form of the final examination.

Challenges

At a formal level schools in Georgia have many of the key structures in place for the integration of EDC/HRE into the education system – including mandatory and optional EDC/HRE-related subjects across the age-range

(apart from pre-school) as well as a range of opportunities for the incorporation of democratic forms of decision-making into school life through student councils, parental engagement and links with the community. In practice, however, there are a number of important challenges currently facing this integration process. These include:

- ▶ **The time devoted to EDC/HRE topics in the mandatory curriculum varies, but is generally limited and, at primary level, very limited.** Only 4 out of 32 units in Moral-Spiritual Education (grades 1-4) could be said to relate to EDC/HRE. In Civic Education (grades 5-9, 10-12) there is a great deal of non-EDC/HRE-related content, such that children's rights are frequently covered only superficially, and sometimes reduced to lesson per year or skipped all together. Typically, children's responsibilities get more coverage than their rights.
- ▶ Despite the efforts of different organisations in the field, **many Civic Education teachers still receive little pre- or in-service training relating to EDC/HRE, and teachers of other subjects even less.** There is a general lack of knowledge about children's rights and a shortage of teachers skilled in participatory forms of teaching, discussion and debate, active learning through real-life problem-solving or engaging with the community beyond school. Many teachers continue to rely on the traditional 'lecturing' styles of teaching into which they were originally inducted, disseminating facts rather than developing competences.
- ▶ **There is a general lack of teaching materials and resources on children's rights education and other aspects of EDC/HRE.** A few useful guides have been produced by NGOs with Ministry approval, but they do not yet cover the whole subject.
- ▶ **One particular area of difficulty is the evaluation of student learning in Civic Education.** While they go some way towards covering this topic, existing Ministry tools do not yet offer a comprehensive framework for assessing EDC/HRE-related skills or the development of EDC/HRE-related attitudes. There is no shared understanding of this yet, either among inspectors or within the teaching profession.
- ▶ **The framework for democratic school governance is still very new and the ideas behind it not well understood.** There are few good models of participatory democracy elsewhere in society. Educational professionals are often uneasy about the idea of giving students a say in decision-making: many see children's participation purely in terms of theatre or music shows. Thus mechanisms for participation, such as student councils, often remain relatively undeveloped and student participation restricted and sporadic. Much the same applies to parental and community engagement in school life and decision-making.
- ▶ There is a suggestion that **inappropriate forms of policy and teacher behaviour in some schools is militating against the teaching of EDC/HRE values**, in particular, lack of respect for children's rights, e.g., discrimination, labelling and even violence on occasions.¹⁹

Conclusions

While national policy aims and recommendations in the field of EDC/HRE are clearly ambitious and much progress has been made in reforming school structures, the mapping exercise shows that there is still a significant gap between policy aims and the capacity of schools and teachers in Moldova to deliver these. In further closing this gap, it will be important to identify ways of:

strengthening provision in the formal curriculum by increasing the size of the EDC/HRE component in the mandatory Moral-Spiritual and Civic Education courses and making it more explicit – such that a distinctive thread of EDC/HRE can be seen running through the whole curriculum, clearly identifiable by teachers and students alike

reviewing the social and civic competences in the light of the Council of Europe tool on competences for democratic culture

raising awareness of the idea of EDC/HRE as more than just another subject, but as a 'whole-school' approach in which teacher- and teacher-student relationships and the wider school culture contribute as the transmission of subject knowledge in the classroom – not only in schools, but at all other levels in the education system, including the National School Inspectorate and District Departments for Education

providing school leaders and managers with simple and practical ways in which they can begin to involve students, parents and other stakeholders in school management and decision-making in an active and meaningful way, based on an understanding of different ways in which the school can benefit from this – so that children's rights and student participation is not limited to 'window-dressing' activities at the school level

¹⁹ CIDO, Study report on discrimination against children in the school system of the Republic of Moldova, 2014

recruiting school leaders and teachers who already have some interest and experience in aspects of EDC/HRE to act as ‘multipliers’ both in their own schools and beyond, by creating opportunities for them to share and explore practice with others, e.g., through in-school collaboration, teacher mentoring, professional networking or involvement in ‘training the trainers’ programmes

translating and disseminating Council of Europe resources for use in professional development activities, especially the teachers manuals, and the tools on democratic school governance, teacher competences and learner competences for democratic culture.

UKRAINE²⁰

The years following the gaining of independence in 1991 saw **a new interest in the development of democratic values and practices** in Ukraine. The **role of civic education in the democratic development of the new generation was confirmed in state legislation**. The law *On general secondary education* (1999), for example, required that education be “aimed at providing civic upbringing”. What this might mean in practice for schools and teacher training has since then been explored in a wide range of civic education-related projects and programmes, undertaken mainly at the instigation and with the expertise of international organisations.

However, the gradual development of new approaches to civic education in schools has, to some extent, been disrupted by the **outbreak of conflict in 2014**. With the creation of large numbers of refugees and internally displaced people, a propaganda and information war, and a negative perception in some parts of the population of the democratic process, the promotion of democratic citizenship and human rights in schools has become not only more controversial, but also more urgent.

Curriculum

Currently, EDC/HRE-related topics are represented in the formal school curriculum through a number of **optional courses** which come under the heading of **Social Studies**.

These courses include: History of Ukraine (grades 5-11); Ethics (grade 5-6); Fundamentals of Law (grades 9-10); Economics: An Individual and the World (grade 10); An Individual and Society (grade 11); Fundamentals of Philosophy (grades 10-11); Street Law (grades 8-9); Law: Practical Course (grade 9); Human Rights (grades 10-11); We (grades 9-11); Fundamentals of Economics (grades 10-11); Humanitarian Law (grades 10-11); European Choice of Ukraine (special course, grade 11); History of the Native Land (special course, grades 8-11); An Individual and the World (grade 11); Philosophy (grades 10-11); and Fundamentals of Consumer Knowledge (grades 1-11/12).

At primary and secondary level, the choice of which optional courses to teach is made by the school. In high schools it is made according to a system of ‘profiling’.

Beyond the curriculum

A broad range of different EDC/HRE-related activities can be seen taking place **at the interface between schools and the local and national community**. The incidence and pattern of these activities varies with the school. They include: student social action in liaison with local community members through school clubs; student councils; links with local government committees and services; student volunteering, e.g., in children’s homes, kindergartens or the army; youth organisations; ethnographic/ folklore outings; meetings with state officials or law-enforcement bodies; competitions, e.g., letter-writing to politicians, posters with a civic theme or commemorating important dates or events; cooperating with the community to improve public parks and gardens; walking tours to get to know the locality; conflict resolution; themed discussion evenings; summer community service; working on a school/ local newspaper; carrying out school or community surveys; school radio; exhibitions; civic education clubs. Some of these kinds of activities are run by the schools themselves, others by non-formal educational organisations.

Projects and initiatives

From the 1990s onwards **a wide range of EDC/HRE-related projects and initiatives** have taken place in connection with schools in Ukraine. Although **mainly led by international organisations**, they have left **an important legacy at the local level in terms of new curricula, resources and traditions of practice**. They include: a pilot programme of public legal education, run by Street Law, an American organisation, which

20. Based on Polina Verbytska: Report on the EDC/HRE system in Ukraine

resulted in the present grade 9 course with that name; a network of debating clubs set up by the International Renaissance Foundation; Education for Democracy in Ukraine, an EU-US supported training programme for teachers, pedagogical university lecturers and other specialists in civic education at grades 9-11, including the development of a manual; Civic Education – Ukraine, an EU-financed project which in 2005-08 piloted civic education as an optional school subject, and included a framework of student competences, resource manuals and courses for pedagogical universities; Promoting Development of Education for Democracy in Ukraine, a Swiss initiative (2005-10), involving the adaptation and publication of three of the Council of Europe EDC/HRE manuals; Providing Quality of Education for Democratic Citizenship (2007-2010), run by Teachers for Democracy and Partnership; Consumers' Community and Public Institutions, an EU-UNDP project (2008-10) resulting in the grades 1-11/12 optional course in consumer education; Civic Competence of School Youth, resulting in a manual on the development of civic competence in young people; Action Plan of the Council of Europe for Ukraine (2011-14) on reforms relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Ukraine, including with the Ministry of Education and Science a project on strengthening children's rights.

Challenges

Clearly, there has been much educational activity in Ukraine in the area related to EDC/HRE – including the development of new curriculum courses, educational materials and active and interactive teaching methods. There has also developed a tradition of out-of-lesson and out-of-school activity involving youth volunteering and participation in local and national civic life through formal and informal education. Together these would seem to form a favourable environment in which to begin create in schools the kind of consistent and systematic approach to EDC/HRE needed to re-ignite faith in democracy and the democratic process in Ukraine today.

In addition to the problems posed by the present conflicts, however, there would seem to be a number of challenges facing the further integration of EDC/HRE into school life. These include:

- ▶ There is as yet **no separate or mandatory common core curriculum in civic education** in schools in Ukraine. The optional 'Social Studies' courses are not all taught in all schools and, where they are, generally do not receive a great deal of timetable time. The courses themselves do not always relate clearly to each other and, were they to be mandatory, would be unlikely to provide a sufficiently broad and balanced coverage of EDC/HRE issues. Furthermore, the content of these courses tends to be structured around factual knowledge rather than democratic concepts and competences.
- ▶ There is **no clear policy on how aspects of EDC/HRE can be integrated into everyday life and relationships in schools or in the links between schools and their communities**, e.g., through formal opportunities for student voice or student social action. Although a variety of out-of-class activities may take place in different schools, it is not clear how far these are seen as opportunities for learning about *democracy and human rights*. There is a suggestion that more often such activities are conceived merely in terms of the development of patriotism and respect for the nation and national history.
- ▶ **Many teachers do not have access to good quality, up-to-date EDC/HRE teaching and learning resources.** While a variety of resources have been produced through different development projects and certain Council of Europe manuals introduced, these are not always known about or readily available to practitioners. Even where they are available, **practitioners do not always possess the theoretical knowledge to understand how these resources can be used to best effect.** This applies particularly to secondary subject teachers who may not see EDC/HRE as their particular responsibility.
- ▶ **Social Studies teaching is often failing to make EDC/HRE learning real for students.** Research evidence seems to show that many students have difficulty applying civic knowledge in day to day situations, analysing social and political issues, or discussing and debating problems.²¹ Similarly, there is a view that **out-of-class activities are not as effective as they might in developing active citizenship and participatory skills.**
- ▶ While the range of EDC/HRE-related school development projects and initiatives has been impressive, these activities have largely been uncoordinated, each one reflecting the particular interest of a different (mainly) international sponsor. There seems still to be **a lack of a common understanding at policy level of the practical implications of implementing EDC/HRE as a whole-school approach in schools** – of the type outlined in the Council of Europe Charter. This applies both at the national level and in individual schools.

21. I.Ivaniuk, O.Ovcharuk, A.Tereschenko. Modern State of Civic Education in Ukraine: Research in the framework of the project "Modern State of Civic Education in Ukraine and European Countries"
The report on the results of the project "Research on the civic education discourse and its influence on political culture of the youth".

Conclusions

To begin to deal with these challenges and work towards a more effective and sustainable approach to EDC/HRE in the education system, it will be important to identify ways of:

- ▶ **raising awareness of the distinctive ideals and practices of EDC/HRE throughout the education system, including at policy level, and in particular of an understanding of how the goals of EDC/HRE are not incompatible with but can complement traditional civic education goals of love of country and respect for national traditions**
- ▶ **strengthen the EDC/HRE component in the formal curriculum by transforming current optional Social Studies courses into a unified mandatory subject with distinctive content and methods, clearly identifiable by teachers and students at every grade**
- ▶ **raising awareness within schools of EDC/HRE as more than just another subject, but as a whole-school approach in which teacher- and teacher-student relationships and opportunities for student participation in everyday life and decision-making contributes as much to learning as the transmission of subject knowledge in the classroom – through the dissemination of ideas for simple and practical actions schools can take in this area**
- ▶ **recruiting educational professionals who have already participated in training programmes and have an interest and experience in aspects of EDC/HRE to act as ‘multipliers’ both in their own schools and beyond, by creating opportunities for them to share and explore practice with others, e.g., through in-school collaboration, teacher mentoring, professional networking or involvement in ‘training the trainers’ programmes**
- ▶ **using Council of Europe tools and resources more effectively – including more recent publications such as on learner competences for democratic culture - not necessarily as official school manuals or guidebooks but rather as sources of ideas and a stimulus for the production of ‘home-grown’ resources and guidelines.**

GENERAL COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

While there are clearly important differences between the structure of and influences on the education systems in the different Eastern Partnership countries, there are enough similarities between them to draw a number of general conclusions which have application across all six countries.

Each country in a different way is living with the legacy of former Soviet influence in its education system - including the centralization of educational decision-making, traditional 'lecturing' styles of teaching and learning, and moral and civic education as a means of promoting state ideology. At the same time, each country sees education as a way of transforming society, of creating a new generation of active citizens needed to nurture the development of a more democratic and outward-looking society. Formal policy documents stress the role of education in creating active and socially responsible citizens who take pride in their country and its national heritage. They often also prescribe the steps schools need to take to help create such citizens, e.g., including a children's rights component in the curriculum, using active and interactive learning techniques, and setting up student councils.

In many cases, however, there is a significant gap between the rhetoric of these formal policy pronouncements and the reality of practice within schools. There are a number of reasons for this:

- ▶ **The European concept of EDC/HRE with its emphasis on participatory democracy and whole-school involvement is still relatively new to many educational professionals and does not always sit easily with traditional approaches to civic education.** The idea of democratic school governance can be difficult to reconcile with authoritarian methods of school management, and active and interactive learning techniques with 'lecturing' teaching styles.

Raising awareness of the 'big picture' of EDC/HRE, and its implications at all levels within the education system will therefore be central to future development in this field.

- ▶ **The idea of a 'whole-school' approach can be particularly difficult to grasp.** Civic education lessons are often seen as the only vehicles for democracy and human rights learning in school. The potential for learning the skills and concepts of active citizenship through the way things are taught, everyday relationships with staff, student participation and engagement in real-life school and community problems can frequently be overlooked – along with its implications for school leaders and managers and teachers of all subjects.

Raising awareness among school leaders and managers of simple, practical methods of involving students (also parents and community members) in everyday school management and decision-making, along with an understanding of the potential benefits of such involvement in terms of improved student behaviour and motivation is a key task – as is raising awareness among teaching staff of ways in which how they relate to and interact with students in the classroom can contribute to the learning of active and responsible citizenship in its own right.

- ▶ The teaching of international values is still in certain situations seen as a threat to the development of national values, or even as some kind of competing ideology.

It is important, therefore, to be able to show educational professionals that the goals of EDC/HRE are not incompatible with but can actually contribute to traditional aims of building respect for the law, and love of one's country and its cultural heritage.

- ▶ **For various reasons, including financial, it has not been possible in any country to attempt through ‘top-down’ means to achieve the kind of unified and coordinated approach to civic education reform needed for the systematic dissemination of EDC/HRE ideas and practices in schools.** There have been many successful EDC/HRE-related capacity-building exercises and programmes in each of the countries, but these have tended to be piece-meal, short-term, uncoordinated and dependent on the individual interests and philosophies of the international NGOs and organisations which have provided most of the training. The numbers trained have been relatively limited and the recipients of the training have more often than not been school teachers rather than school leaders, teacher educators, inspectors, advisers and officials who would also have benefited.

It is important therefore to try to find cost-effective ways of approaching civic education reform in ways which are more coordinated, sustainable and system-wide, and which have a cumulative effect on schools.

- ▶ The situation varies with the country, but **there has been a tendency for EDC/HRE content to be marginalised (sometimes almost hidden) in the formal curriculum.** In some cases it has been spread in a fragmented way across different subjects in ways which make it difficult to identify by teachers or students. In other cases, it has been included alongside (sometimes almost confused with) History, Geography and other courses in Social Studies, or with aspects of personal development such as careers education. Either way, explicit EDC/HRE topics, such as democracy and human rights have often had little dedicated curriculum time and been taught by unqualified staff, with the result that they have become less popular with many students.

Where possible, therefore, it will be important to ensure that formal teaching of citizenship and human rights has the same profile and is valued as much as other subjects, such as History and Geography; is clearly identifiable in the curriculum; and is taught throughout the age range – primary to high school.

- ▶ **Teaching, especially at primary and lower secondary levels has sometimes focused almost entirely on children’s rights, and then on child protection rights rather than liberties.** While there are very good reasons for teaching children’s rights, there other important aspects of EDC/HRE and is important to get a balance.

In reviewing the curriculum, therefore, serious thought should be given to broadening the content of civic education to include teaching about democracy and the democratic process in age-appropriate ways from the earliest grades.

- ▶ **It can be difficult making changes to the education system when society beyond the school does not always reflect or is antipathetic to the values inherent in these changes.** It is only just over twenty years since the Eastern partnership countries gained their independence and in different ways they are each facing many of the challenges which new democracies face, e.g., challenges relating to freedom of the media, the rule of law, independence of judiciary, human rights and political and civic participation.

It is an important principle of EDC/HRE that schools open up for their students the issues which society finds difficult and gives them an opportunity to explore and discuss these issues in a non-threatening environment – for today’s students will be the citizens of the future who have to deal with these issues.

Ways forward

How the challenges outlined in this report are approached will vary from country to country. Some developments require changes in legislation or official regulations and cannot be activated without governmental or state support, but others do not.

In taking these forward, it is important not to forget the progress which has already been made, but to build on this. Ways to do this include:

- ▶ **putting the educational professionals who have already taking part in EDC/HRE-related training programmes at the heart of future development – school leaders and teacher educators as well as classroom teachers, to act as ‘multipliers’ in their own institutions, and possibly more widely through ‘training of trainers’ schemes**
- ▶ **planning forms of training and professional development based on the needs of individual schools and and their communities** – so that school leaders and their staff and communities are able to work together on new approaches which they can ‘own’ and see as beneficial to themselves and to their stakeholders
- ▶ **providing opportunities for professionals to share practice** – both by collaborating within school and with colleagues in other schools, or even other countries

- ▶ **translating Council of Europe manuals and other tools, such as the teaching pack on teaching controversial issues and disseminating them more widely, not as replacement textbooks or guidebooks, but as sources of ideas for local developments and the creation of 'home-grown' resources with which to stimulate EDC/HRE reform**
- ▶ **considering ways in which the Council of Europe competences for democratic culture can be used to clarify thinking about the goals of EDC/HRE and aid planning, both of capacity-building in individual schools and throughout the education system as a whole.**

This report has been produced within the framework of the EU/CoE Joint Programme “Supporting Education Policies in Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education in 6 Eastern Partnership countries”. The Programme embraces the six countries of the EU’s Eastern Partnership: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Its aim is to support integration and/or further develop of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education in national education systems (including school curriculum) in Eastern Partnership countries, in accordance with the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

The report draws on the results of a research exercise designed to map the most important initiatives and priorities in the area of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE) in the six countries. The research exercise was carried out 2015-16 by local experts within each country. It resulted in six individual country reports outlining the current situation in relation to the integration of the principles of EDC/HRE within the national education system, and identifying opportunities for further development.

The Council of Europe is the continent’s leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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The European Union is a unique economic and political partnership between 28 democratic European countries. Its aims are peace, prosperity and freedom for its 500 million citizens – in a fairer, safer world. To make things happen, EU countries set up bodies to run the EU and adopt its legislation. The main ones are the European Parliament (representing the people of Europe), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission (representing the common EU interest).

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