

Category: External report - Evaluation on Module A

Title: STRENGTHENING EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY (STED)

Introduction

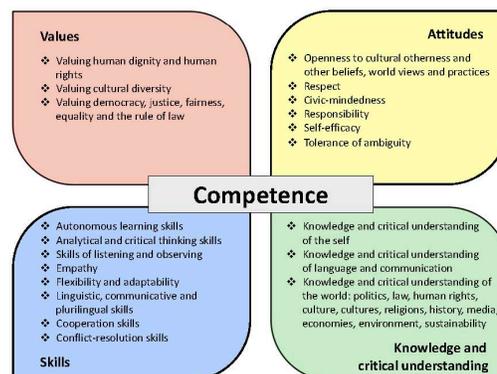
Through the history, democracies changed, they have come in many shapes and sizes as reflected by the different answers to questions of how, when, and to which people power is given. Despite of long history and many different versions of interpretation, in 21 century democracy is going through a difficult time. There is a need to discuss the concept of democracy and possible ways to sustain it in our everyday practices.

Module A was aimed to look at how to integrate the development of necessary competences in pre- and in-service teacher education. The outcomes of the project “Competences for Democratic Culture” (CDC) and the work results of the Pestalozzi Programme as well as relevant project results from other education projects formed the resources pool, presented for participants analysis and discussions, to help them to develop and to test ways of integrating these issues in their teacher education and development practice.

Expected outcomes of module A were to develop a clear conceptual framework regarding the development and assessment of CDC, to become aware of the challenges and fit solutions concerning the implementation of the CDC in everyday teacher practice. to develop awareness of one’s own practices with personal responsibility to be a reflective active practitioner and to create a shared view of the needed development of competences for education professionals regarding the implementation of the CDC.

During the module we used theories, strategies, tools and methods that exemplified personal and professional development, empowered education professionals to develop and test training formats and materials which are published afterwards and serve as examples of practice to be disseminated and developed further.

Participants reflected on values, attitude, skills, knowledge and critical understanding. Basically we focused on 20 competences, included in the model of document “Competences for Democratic Culture: living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies“ (Council of Europe, 2016):



The first module of the training course on Strengthening Education for Democracy (STED) took place in Strasbourg at the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe from 4th to 7th of October 2016. 36 education professionals from over 20 countries participate in this course guided by a team of three facilitators. The preparation started in spring 2016 with Skype meetings and online cooperation. At the end of March the preparatory meeting took place in Strasbourg where the team together with the Secretariat and the Pedagogical adviser developed the programme and discussed the main theme and working strategy. During the summer detailed program was developed. At the same time the team prepared, shared and discussed the plans for the individual sessions of Module A using the online cooperative working space of the Pestalozzi Programme.

The report mainly focuses on the ideas behind Module A while describing the process of training and learning throughout Module A, as well as during the online preparatory phase with the participants.

Preparatory task

Participants were invited and welcomed to the platform in July and invited to explore topic of the module, express their expectations and needs. All participants successfully joined Community of Practice - entered specific rooms, introduced themselves, their background etc.

Before coming to module they were asked to do a preparatory task- to read “Executive summary” of the book “Competences for democratic culture”. Participants also were asked to have a look at their national curriculum and bring 4 or 5 main guidelines reflected in the curriculum for providing competences for democratic culture in your educational system. Participants were invited to come ready for “Show and tell” session. During this session everyone had 5 minutes to show and tell whatever they prefer about their professional life.

Description of the Module A

The module was divided in 4 days - 4 steps: Day one – “Is reality real? Reality check”, day two – “What is democracy about? Getting into the topic”, day three – “Are we missing some controversy? Going deeper into the issue”, day four – “What are your plans? Looking forward to next steps between modules A and B”.

Most of the sessions were prepared cooperatively by the facilitators, ensuring variation within the activities. The emphasis was on participants professional and personal reflections on how to raise awareness in colleagues and students, in their peer groups and academic communities of the importance of the role of teacher education and professional development for the future of our democratic societies, how to integrate the development of the necessary attitudes, skills and

knowledge in their teaching and training practice in a structured way, how to take action in their institutions and peer community to promote the strengthening of education for democracy.

Value of face to face meeting

Module A was a 4 days face-to-face meeting. Scientific researches and reflections of participants on most significant outcome of their participation in the module shows undeniable value of such meetings:

- face to face meetings **clarifies meaning** (of topic, of issues addressed, etc). Online work usually leaves many unanswered questions or misunderstandings (either due to lack of communication, or shyness to be open with people we never met). During evaluation of module participants said it was “eye-opening, clarifying”.
- Face to face meetings **ensures engagement, participation**, and are the most effective way to capture the attention of participants, engage them in the efficient conversation, and drive productive collaboration. In evaluation one of participants wrote - “This module it was a new upgrade in my professional life, the first one was the summer school in Bad Wildbad 2015. After that summer school I was a new teacher, after this module I am new trainer for teachers”. Such deep transformations in such a short period is possible only in case of full concentration and involvement, which rarely happens in online settings.
- Face to face meetings **last much longer than working hours**. Decisions and insights happens during coffee breaks, common dinners, walks, or any time, spent together.
- Face to face meetings **helps to build trust, understanding, and sense of “a shared mission”**. When participants feel safe and free to discuss controversial topics and cases, go out of their comfort zone, it increases quality of work during the module. Face to face meetings **helps to build trust, understanding, and sense of “a shared mission”**. Working and living together in the same building creates an atmosphere of safe, trustable and encouraging community. Participants share the same values during the module, and feel more empowered to share the same values in their home communities.
- Face to face meetings **help participants to improve their professional practices not only during the meeting, but in further also**. Between modules A and B participants are asked to create Training units. To that process help and critical support of facilitators and especially of peers (other participants) is involved. The more participants directly interact with each other face-to-face, and the more they trust other participants, the more open, helpful, supportive they become. **Face-to-face meetings are key to successful long-term strong, supportive professional relationships**. It helps to achieve more creative and of higher quality result of their collaborative work and better quality of training units. Many participants in module evaluation pointed this or similar - “I met colleagues from different countries. We were able to share our experiences, ask questions. And, what is even more important, after meeting face to face in friendly environment I feel very comfortable to ask for their advices or any help while writing training unit and in my future work”.

- **Face to face meeting and active participation during the module encourages participants to be more motivated and stay active when they are back to their usual surroundings.** Participants said “I liked different styles of the facilitators - it made the perspective changing all the time, it was inspiring...I will try to apply their approaches in my work”. Or “Our facilitators provided us with support and necessary instruments in teacher training (literature, resources, supplementary materials, etc.) and stimulated the us to further professional development.It's great!”

Detailed description of Module A

- **We started with the session “What we would like to change in education to have more democratic schools?”**

The objectives of this session were to develop awareness about the changes needed in education in the 21st century and to make proposals to improve living democratically in our institutions. The session started with a discussion on the format of fish bowl about how learning was perceived by participants, how the new societal changes influence our work and what kind of changes should be made in our educational institutions in order to live democratically. They volunteered to give their opinion about those issues. The ones who participated in the discussion had clear ideas about learning and educational changes needed in our societies

PICTURE 1

After this long discussion participants were asked to sit at the tables in groups of 4. They were asked to write INDIVIDUALLY on a post-it a problem that they may have in their institutions or something that might be improved.

Then they had to draw a diagram like the one below, that they had on the screen, and put their post-its on the left hand side of the diagram.

PICTURE 2

Finally they shared their poster with another group and they put a red sticker on each column if they thought that their proposals would not be accepted by each one of the stakeholders represented in each column. If they thought that the stakeholders would accept their proposals they put a green sticker. You can see below some of the results of that activity.

PICTURE 3

The results showed that the students and the families are the ones who may accept and approve more easily the changes needed in education. The most reluctant would be the headmaster and the authorities and in some cases some teachers. The participants became aware that changes are needed in their institutions and that they must look for the complicity of the headmaster and some of the teachers if they want to make any change in their institutions starting with elaborating materials to be piloted in their institutions from Module A to Module B.

- **Session “The Island”** started with an introduction based on music and voice stimulation to sooth the senses (visual and auditory canal). Grouping of the participants was integrated in this phase and aiming random mixing. (Foto 1)

In the second part of the activity participants received their tasks and roles with the general aim of create their own island from scratch. During this group process they had the chance to experience the importance of democratic decision-making and democratic participation and reflect on their own values.

The Islands were presented in a Gallery Walk with fixed groups. Participants were free to choose how they present their results. Two groups wrote about their island in a thread opened for the session in the participants’ room for the Training on the Pestalozzi platform.(Foto 2/Foto 3)

Debriefing dealt with two main questions:

-As game based the activity includes conflict, which was in two of the six groups incremented by giving a person a special role: “disturbing two groups: the own one, leaving them after having being the leader and a second one, trying to boycott them and their decisions”. In the debriefing questions about privilege and discrimination arose.(Foto 4)

-The usability of the activity in the participants` contexts. Conclusion was that this activity is a useful one to put into practice competences for democracy based on the module and can be adapted to different situations for adults, children and youth. (Foto 5)

Debriefing left behind on purpose the organisation of societies (talking about islands themselves), although some of the statements heard served as starting points to negotiate meanings and discuss in the final session Discussion Line by Josef Huber.

A challenging activity in which participants did reflect on their own values, analyse interactions and participation in societies, understand the notion of co-responsibility and experience the process of decision making.

Participants reported the use during this activity of following competences of the Model:

Values

- valuing cultural diversity
- valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

Attitudes

- tolerance to ambiguity
- civic-mindedness
- responsibility

Skills

- Cooperation skills
- Conflict resolutions skills
- Analytical and critical thinking skills
- Flexibility and adaptability

Knowledge and critical understanding

- Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability.

Some of the participants found this activity “surprising but tasteful”. Others were just pointing the fact that they were not having control during the whole activity. Actually a big part of success of the activity is based on the surprise factor and the practice of our competence to tolerate ambiguity. We were exploring together the limits of our comfort areas. The activity explores a lot of areas in which a wide range of competences are used.

- **Another activity we used, titled “Neighbourhood Yard”**, is a whole group activity based on non-verbal communication, emergent leadership and categorisation. The aim of the activity is to raise learners’ awareness of the psychosocial dynamics of inclusion/exclusion, co-operation/competition and discrimination/prejudice. We developed a reflection on our own attitudes, beliefs and values, and intercultural competence.

the debriefing brought out issues of identity, discrimination, otherness, empathy, diversity, co-operation and interdependence.

This activity is described in detail in [TASKs for democracy. 60 activities to learn and assess transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge](#) (p. 44).

- **Activity, used in the session “Democratic Classroom Cultures”**, can help develop CDC as a daily praxis in the classroom. The aim is to tend to the establishment of democratic cultures and not only to a variety of isolated activities which have to do with

democracy. The classroom ergonomics as a model to reflect on. Democracy as an attitude.

A task-based, problem-based session, inspired by Augusto Boal's Games for Actors and Non-Actors, whereby through the use of interactive frozen poses, group work, dialogue and reflection, participants formulate classroom strategies that target enhanced democratic practice in the classroom setting.

Three groups acting the frozen poses, one pose which describes a classroom as democratic as possible, (Foto6) a second one as a classroom as anti-democratic as possible (foto 7) and a third pose coming from a "discriminated" group, which should choose whether they want to act the democratic or the anti-democratic one (foto8).The discrimination consisted on not having clear instructions, having to deal with ambiguity more than the other two groups and conflict within the group.

Debriefing dealt with three main issues:

- The description of the poses tried to clarify if what participants witnessed was what the group aimed. (Negotiation of meanings)
- How to enhance democratic attitudes and elements in both clear poses.
- Discrimination (felt by group three). No clear instructions from facilitator and no feed-back for this group. Afterwards group one and two were invited to give their feedback on group three on the session thread in the platform.

Participants reported the use during this activity of following competences of the Model:

Values

- valuing human dignity and human rights
- valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law

Attitudes

- tolerance to ambiguity

Skills

- Cooperation skills
- Autonomous learning skills
- Skills in listening and observing

Some of the participants found this activity useful in order to explore how different concepts of what democracy consists on, influence our perception of what elements for democracy we can find in our classrooms and their influence in the learning processes. Others were just pointing the fact that they were just stereotyping during the activity, which was easy. That is why, this activity works with frozen poses, because they show the skeleton under the skin, they show how stereotypes work. When thinking about the presence of democratic elements in the classroom (or about how to enhance them) most of us agreed on the point that democracy is something to

be lived by our daily praxis, something not to achieve, but something which we have to look for constantly. Nobody can help us better as ourselves. We are all in a path to walk.. Actually a big part of success of the activity is based on the stereotyping and the reflexion which arrived afterwards. Our competence to tolerate ambiguity was also one of the main worked one with this activity.

Games for Actors and Non-Actors is the classic and best selling book by the founder of Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal. It sets out the principles and practice of Boal's revolutionary Method, showing how theatre can be used to transform and liberate everyone - actors and non-actors alike.

We are all actors: being a citizen is not living in society, it is changing it. Augusto Boal

- **Session “Valuing values”** aimed to help participants reflect on their own values by engaging them in a game where they had to make choices and explain their choices. Participants have 6 cards on their hands that they try to exchange some of their cards with the others if they want to have better cards. After trading they make groups of 4 and draw a poster and each member of the group has to answer with two replies each the following questions: “Which attitudes and actions helped you to solve the task successfully?”, “How did you chose your values? What was your idea of a best hand?”

They had to read the sentences they had written individually in his/her own corner and they had to write four sentences that represented the group consensus deriving from their individual findings and that could explain the teachers' democratic behaviour in their educational institutions or in their own classrooms.

We hold a debriefing discussion based on some of the following questions.

What kind of values did you end with? Can you classify your values?

Can we change values? Is there something in our experience that causes our values to change? Is it possible to force values on individuals?

What was the main purpose of this activity?

Do you think that your values are reflected in your work in the classroom?

How should we work with values in the classroom?

How might you follow up these issues in your teaching?

What other questions are raised by this activity?

What are the implications for your teaching?

What will be the challenges for your classroom?

The results of the discussion showed some relationship with the competences for democratic culture. The participants insisted in the human rights that should be valued and showed in our institutions through our behaviour. They also said that attitudes such as openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs should be fostered in our institutions as well as personal and

community development based in human values. The competence model for democratic culture may inspire educators how to deal with values in our institutions. The participants will develop teaching units where those values will be taken into consideration.

PICTURES 1 and 2

- **Activity “Facing Challenges in Education”** was based on bringing our personal unconscious bias. Through a task done in small groups participant were invited to deconstruct images of ‘the other’ they they had collectively formed in a first step of the session. Participants could experience the consequences of personal stereotyping by the means of applying conceptual models to their own statements. They faced with their own possible racist stereotypes as a critical reflection to reach a higher understanding of others and themselves.

Participants reported the use during this activity of following competences of the Model:

Valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law:

1. support for democratic processes and procedures (while recognising that existing democratic procedures may not be optimal and that there may sometimes be a need to change or improve them through democratic means).

Knowledge and critical understanding of self:

3. knowledge and understanding of the assumptions and preconceptions which underlie one's perspective on the world.
4. knowledge and understanding of the limits of one's own competence and expertise.

Knowledge and critical understanding of the world:

6. knowledge and understanding of contemporary threats to democracy.

Each day we had **“Base groups”**. This was independent participants time for learning together with direct reflection. They meet every day to discuss what they have learned during each day of module. They shared their experience and build up with new knowledge and understanding.

Community of Practice (CoP)

Participants got familiar with the Stewards of the CoP through the treasure hunt activity. They got to know the platform and its technology and how it can be used for their own professional

and personal development. With the help of the stewards they learnt to appreciate the difference between the Community of Practice and the tool (platform) itself.

Coaching groups and preparation of Action Plans

The last day of the module was reserved for evaluations, reflections, and projections to action plans and training units. The participants suggested having more time for the exchange of experiences and expertise. They were all eager to start writing their Action plans. The 3 coaching groups started working, pairs or trios were organised according to the theme and interest of the participants. An intense time of cooperation and exchange among participants and different experts (facilitators, pedagogical consultant, responsible of Pestalozzi project).

Evaluation:

Participants appreciated the diversity in the group and the very important opportunity to exchange, learn about and understand the very different European contexts in which they operate. They particularly liked the *small group structures* that we're offered for the cooperative learning during the module, and especially the base groups that allow for participants to support each member's self-reflection, self assessment and supporting each other's individual learning goals.

They expressed their feeling of being engaged in a *complex process* towards the inclusion of the competences for a democratic culture in their practice, and said they had a good notion of 'where they are at' today, and what/where they need to develop further to be ready to include the CDC in their teaching and assessment practices.

"This is a fluctuating process with a lot of consideration on my own competences for democracy"

"I feel I am engage in a process that is non-linear; I move forward 2 steps then go back one. but I feel I am going forward"

"I felt many times confused, but "yes, we can!" I know it now.'

"It was a whirlpool, but i feel ready to disseminate the CDC!"

“I thought I was an open-minded person before I came. Now I know that I’m not so much open-minded as I thought.”

Many voiced that they will need a lot of *support to ‘internalise’ the competences* first, even before anything else.

All said that they are confident that with their coaches and peers they will get all the support they need to start development educational materials for the application of CDC in schools.

Furthermore, the platform for collaborative work and the Community of Practice of the Pestalozzi Programme as well as the individual actions for educational changes are presented.

Looking forward

After active participation in Module A, participants are invited to stay involved in development and piloting phase for next 6 months. They are asked to elaborate educational training activities in connection with the theme of “Strengthening education for democracy”. During all process active exchange of information and reporting back via an online working platform will be ensured. The activities proposed by the participants will receive feedback from facilitators and other members and be piloted by the authors in their professional context.

During face to face meeting in Module B in late spring 2017 participants will exchange experiences on the challenges faced during the piloting phase and to find personalised solutions to their common challenges. After the module participants will have few months to finish the drafting of their educational training resources. The materials will then be selected, formatted and made available via the website of the Pestalozzi Programme.

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STRASBOURG, France

ANNEXES

Foto 1



Foto 2

Replies to This Discussion

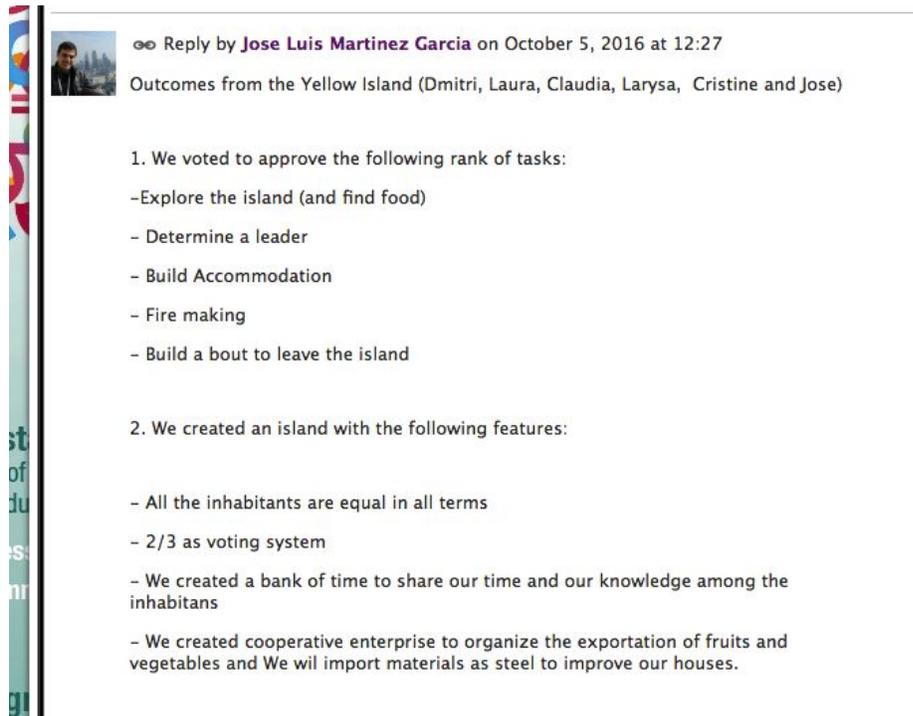
 Reply by **Pilar Santos** on October 5, 2016 at 11:30

Anar, Natalia, Evelyn, Velina Inge and Pilar in the group.

So now, to sum up:

1. We have agreed on the following rules (random orden, no ranking below):
 - Work cooperatively
 - Build accommodation
 - Exploring the island
 - Find food resources
 - Be organized for fire making
2. We will make decisions after discussing the issues. If consensus is not possible we will take a majority vote.
3. Our island would look like this:
 - Tropical island, palm trees, only friendly animals, plenty of water but there are also champagne, wine and beer springs.
 - There are also geysirs and other sources of energy.
 - Small population but growing. We live in a village. Only our potential partners are allowed to stay. The rest of the people can only stay for the day.
 - We believe in happiness, in cooperation, in free love...
 - English and body language.
 - The challenges are: different cultural backgrounds, how to preserve our lifestyle in this paradise, the influence of outsiders.
 - No social structure. We are a very small community. Free religion.
 - Our political system with be based on social democracy and it will be called "dialogalism".
 - Our currency is called "smiley".
 - Health and education will be provided by the state. The

Foto 3



Reply by **Jose Luis Martinez Garcia** on October 5, 2016 at 12:27

Outcomes from the Yellow Island (Dmitri, Laura, Claudia, Larysa, Cristine and Jose)

1. We voted to approve the following rank of tasks:
 - Explore the island (and find food)
 - Determine a leader
 - Build Accommodation
 - Fire making
 - Build a boat to leave the island
2. We created an island with the following features:
 - All the inhabitants are equal in all terms
 - 2/3 as voting system
 - We created a bank of time to share our time and our knowledge among the inhabitants
 - We created cooperative enterprise to organize the exportation of fruits and vegetables and We will import materials as steel to improve our houses.

Foto 4



group is collaborating together while disturbing element is doing his job.

Foto 5



Foto 6



Foto 7

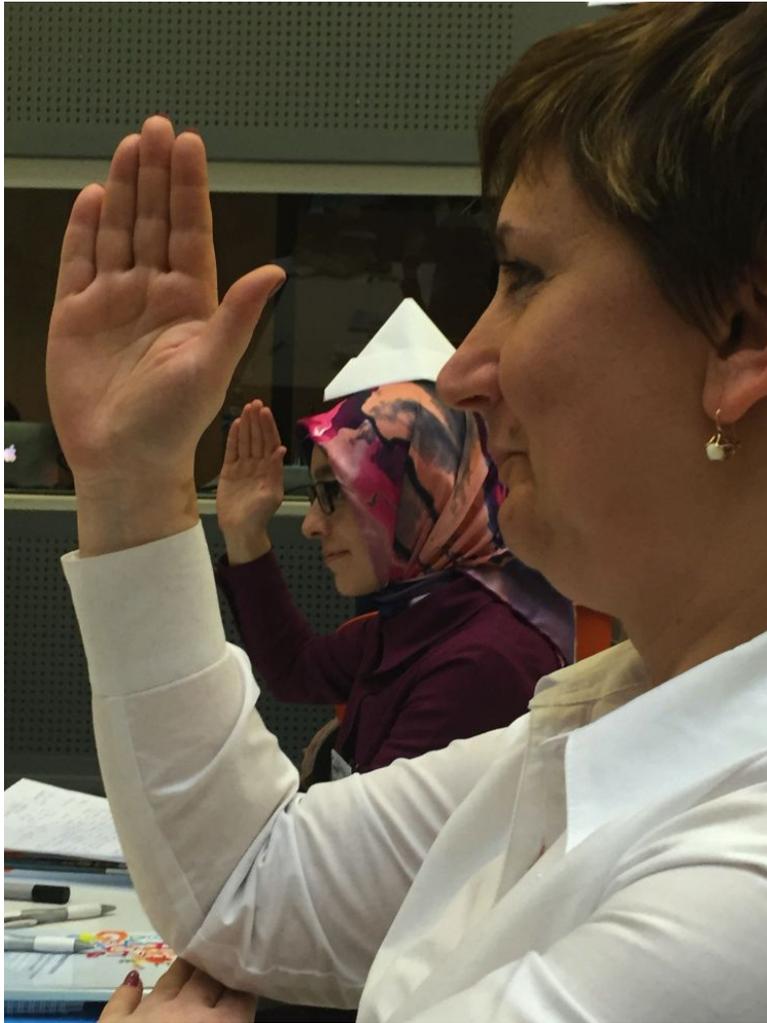


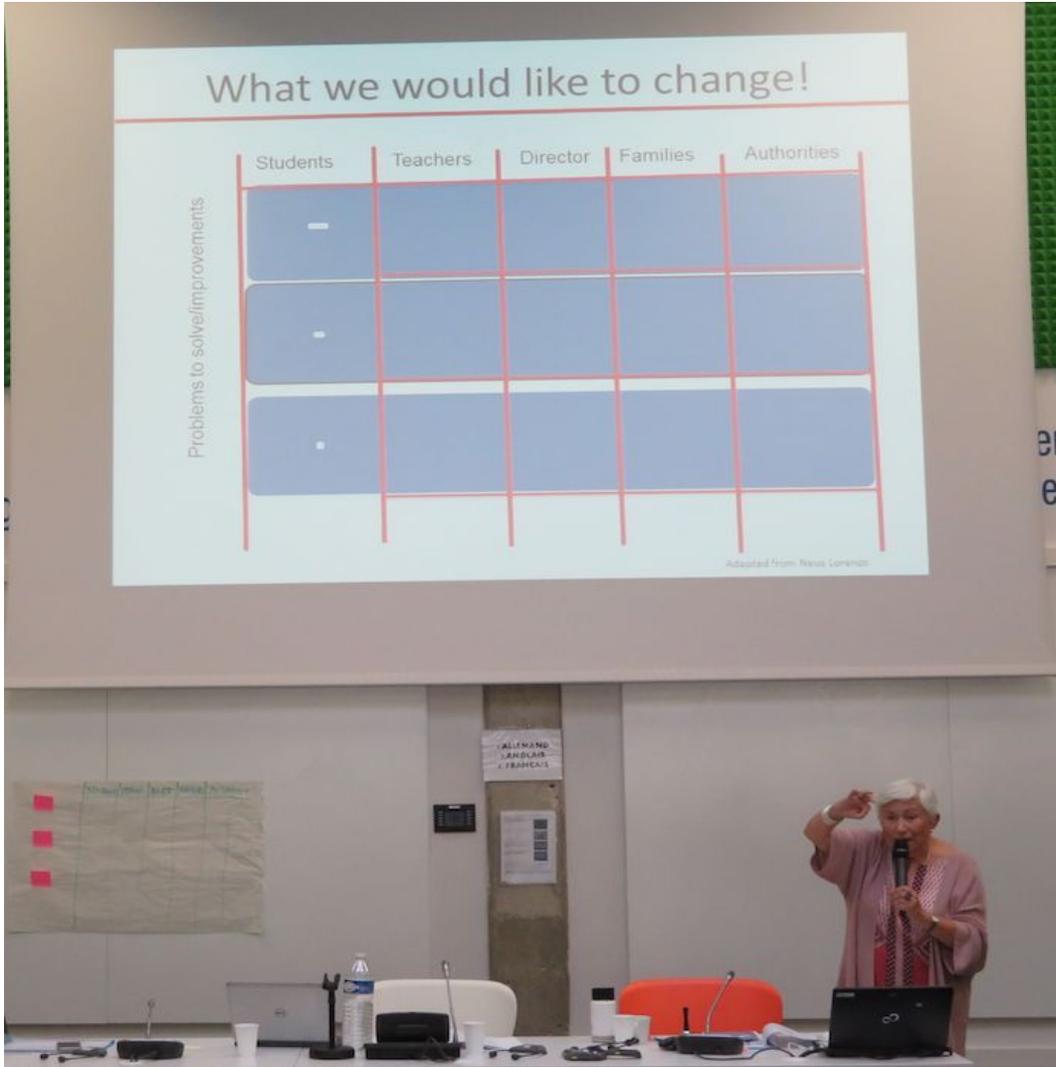
Foto 8



Pictures on **“What we would like to change in education to have more democratic schools?”**



picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

- **Session “Valuing values”**



Picture 1



Picture 2