LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

Council of Europe Report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe

2017

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

THE STATE OF CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN EUROPE

2016 – 2017

FACTSHEET #1: WHAT AND WHY?

WHY THE REPORT?

- ▶ The Council of Europe promotes human rights and democracy through education as a means of building peaceful societies where the human dignity of all people is respected.
- ▶ With the adoption of the Charter on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7) in 2010, the member states committed to "the aim of providing every person within their territory with the opportunity of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education".
- ▶ The report takes stock of the achievements and gaps in EDC/HRE in Europe, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Charter, since the first review cycle in 2012.

40 countries participated in the survey for governments organised by the Council of Europe Education Department.

Almost **100 responses** from civil society organisations in **44 countries** were received in the survey organised by the Council of Europe Youth Department.

KEY DEFINITIONS

"Education for democratic citizenship" (EDC) means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.

"Human rights education" (HRE) means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

PREVIOUS MILESTONES

1 The Charter was adopted in the framework of the Swiss Chairmanship as one of the decisions intended to provide follow-up to the Declaration and Action Plan adopted unanimously at the Committee of Ministers' conference at Interlaken in February 2010 on the future of the European Court of Human Rights.

2 The first review conference on **"Human Rights and Democracy in Action - Looking Ahead: The impact of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education"** was held in the framework of the Andorran Chairmanship in Strasbourg on 29-30 November 2012, in cooperation with the European Commission and the European Wergeland Centre.

3 Finland hosted the **24th session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education** (Helsinki, 26-27 April 2013), which called on the Committee of Ministers to "consider developing descriptors and a refer-ence framework to assist member states in implementing a competence based education for democracy and intercultural dialogue".

4 At the **25th session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education** (Brussels, 11-12 April 2016) Ministers of Education undertook to support the development of a long-term strategy for a more coherent and comprehensive approach to EDC/HRE at European level. Furthermore, the Ministers endorsed the **Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture** and requested the Council of Europe to consider ways of increasing the impact of the Charter.

5 The **3rd Compass Forum on Human Rights Education – Learning Equality, Living Diversity** (Budapest, 5-7 October), provided an initial input and proposals from non-governmental partners and governmental experts active in the field of youth.

FACTSHEET #2: CHALLENGES

78% vs **17%**
of government respondents
of civil society respondents

↑ ↑

Claimed there is a shared definition of EDC/HR in their countries

▶ **All 40 countries** that took part in the survey reported that concrete measures were taken to promote EDC/HRE, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Charter.

▶ **There is an increase of over 30%** in the number of countries where action has been undertaken or is foreseen to evaluate strategies and policies in this area **in the last four years**.

▶ **Almost all countries** have the Charter **available in their language**.

90% vs **30%**
of government respondents
of civil society respondents

↑ ↑

Are aware of any measures or activities planned to promote EDC/HRE in their countries

According to government respondents

96% at national government level
91% at educational institution level
87% to supporting training about EDC/HRE for teachers and school leaders

Priority is given to EDC/HRE to a fair or to a large extent:

According to civil society respondents

29% at national government level
33% at educational institution level
41% to supporting training about EDC/HRE for teachers and school leaders

FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE

!

66%
of government respondents reported **inconsistencies** between EDC/HRE policies and their implementation

The most salient implementation issues are related to the lack of resources, **lack of a long-term approach, lack of evaluation tools, and lack of awareness among key partners.**

▬ **EDC/HRE must be given further political and pedagogical priority in a long-term perspective.** This can potentially entail the mandatory provision of EDC/HRE at least in formal education in an effort to essentially prioritise it considering that **the number of countries where EDC/HRE is not an obligatory subject at any age has remained unchanged in recent years.**

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES?

▶ Country respondents considered that **lack of awareness/interest/support among education professionals, media and the general public were the most important challenges to the promotion and development of EDC/HRE.**

▶ Civil society organisations pointed to the **lack of priority among decision makers.**
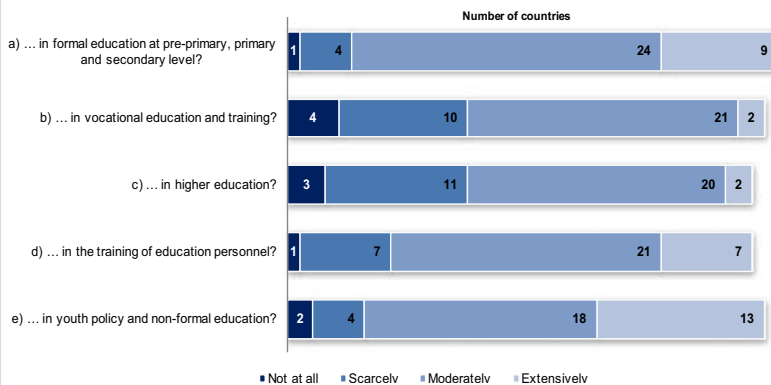
▬ While these issues are very closely inter-linked, what is clear is that it is essential to demonstrate the relevance of democracy and human rights for everyday life.

USEFUL RESOURCES

▶ Council of Europe educational video **"Beat Bullying"**, available in English, French, German and Russian.

▶ **Compass:** Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People.

▶ **Bookmarks** - A manual for combating hate speech online through human rights education.

▶ **Teaching controversial issues:** A professional development programme for teachers.

FACTSHEET #3: PROVISION AND ASSESSMENT

Figure 6: Q11. In your country, to what extent do education laws, policies, and strategic objectives explicitly refer to EDC/HRE

Number of countries

	Not at all	Scarcely	Moderately	Extensively
a) … in formal education at pre-primary, primary and secondary level?	1	4	24	9
b) … in vocational education and training?	4	10	21	2
c) … in higher education?	3	11	20	2
d) … in the training of education personnel?	1	7	21	7
e) … in youth policy and non-formal education?	2	4	18	13

■ Not at all ■ Scarcely ■ Moderately ■ Extensively

- EDC/HRE appears to be **less present in laws, policies, and strategic objectives, in vocationally-oriented education** (where many disadvantaged and minority groups are found) and in **higher education**, as compared to general education (from pre-primary to secondary level) and youth policy and non-formal education.
- Further, **only seven government respondents** pointed out that EDC/HRE **is promoted extensively in higher education institutions.**

> ⊘ **The ethos of democracy and human rights needs to be more present and explicit both in vocational education and training and in higher education.**

☑ EVALUATION

▬ There has been an **ongoing debate as regards the assessment of EDC/HRE** and the evaluation of the effectiveness of programmes therein. Evaluation of the effectiveness of programmes **often helps enhance such effectiveness** and secure relevant resources. **However, it is often pointed out that EDC/HRE** – like any other values education - is a sensitive area, and that **there are certain dangers and concerns with respect to state involvement** in this area.

2/3

In almost two thirds of the country respondents no criteria have been developed to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes in EDC/HRE

▬ **Clear and meaningful criteria and appropriate assessment tools are needed in order to evaluate the effectiveness of EDC/HRE.** A systematic, formal, national assessment for the effective implementation of policies in the framework of EDC/HRE using appropriate evaluation tools and instruments, can help **ensure adequate assessment, reinforce the status of such education, and give it a solid position in the curricula.**

▬ **Collecting information from various actors is often difficult,** as established channels for such communication are lacking and the data is not collected on a regular basis. On the other hand, **the evidence suggests that including the perspectives of different stakeholders is essential** for the development of EDC/HRE; it enhances **shared ownership and commitment;** it contributes to **improved quality** and strengthens the **effectiveness**.

1/2

Only about a half of the country respondents stated that evaluations of strategies and policies have been carried out or are foreseen.

FACTSHEET #4: WHAT'S NEXT?

A majority of the country respondents felt that the review process provided an **encouragement for stronger action and higher quality,** an opportunity to **promote good practice,** a support tool for **dialogue with other countries** and within their own country and **access to expertise** from other countries and from international institutions.

While the promotion of the Charter is not an aim in itself, **its endorsement by the Council of Europe member states,** as well as its appreciation by civil society organisations (74 respondents claim that it is useful or very useful) **make it a powerful tool for lobbying, advocacy and policy dialogue**.

80%
of respondents from civil society organizations

Claim that **young people in their countries have very limited or no knowledge** of the Charter

According to **the conclusions of the civil society** survey, many of the recommendations developed through the first review in 2012 were taken on board by the youth organisations and NGOs. **They mainly co-operate in the promotion and implementation of the Charter** with other civil society organisations by organising common educational activities and advocacy campaigns or actions.

Youth organisations and NGOs also continue networking and **sharing good practices at regional, national and European levels** to promote the Charter's implementation and ensure dissemination of the Charter to target groups and empower them to take action for the promotion and development of EDC/HRE.

The Report is expected to be a support tool for further development of EDC/HRE policy and practice.

Its findings will be used for the organisation of the **Conference on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe (20-22 June 2017),** for the development of the **Council of Europe cooperation programme 2018-2019** as well as for fundraising with other donors for relevant projects and programmes.

It will be important to further improve the methodology of future Charter reviews, in accordance with the substantial feedback received from the countries. The respondents provided the following recommendations:

▶ Further specify some topics and definitions and provide guidance well in advance for both qualitative and quantitative data collection;

▶ Include questions that allow the development of comparative indicators among countries;

▶ Conduct quality EDC/HRE studies in the countries to provide a more in-depth analysis of the situation;

▶ Focus on more thematic questions.

COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL!

73%
of government respondents reported cooperation activities with other countries

Cooperation happens to a large extent through initiatives driven by the Council of Europe and European Union.

Although co-operation among countries in the field of EDC/HRE **has increased,** the current **opportunities for such cooperation remain rather limited** and do not meet the existing demand. Such **cooperation ought to be further reinforced** as it can be instrumental **in addressing the current, serious challenges to democracy and human rights in Europe**.

The Joint Programme of the European Commission and the Council of Europe on **"Human Rights and Democracy in Action"** supports cooperation projects between 3-8 countries with view to explore a topic of shared interest, collect and analyse relevant data and to produce practical tools for use in their respective education systems. The projects cover a broad range of themes from teaching controversial issues and addressing violence at school, to digital citizenship and curriculum development.

FACTSHEET #5: KEY CONCLUSIONS

1 **Inconsistency** between policies and their implementation is reported by **66% of government respondents in 2016** compared to 20% in 2012

2 **Over a third of government respondents stated there is scarcely to none at all reference to EDC/HRE** in laws, policies and strategic objectives, in vocational education and training, and higher education (14 out of 40 respondents).

80%
of government respondents

3 felt that greater awareness the relevance of EDC/HRE for addressing the current challenges in our societies is needed in order for such education to receive a greater priority in their countries

2/3

4 **In almost two-thirds of the countries no criteria have been developed** to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes in the area of EDC/HRE.

5 **Only half of government respondents stated that evaluations of strategies and policies undertaken** in accordance with the aims and principles of the Charter **have been carried out or are foreseen.**

6 **An overwhelming majority of government respondents** felt that the **Council of Europe provides an encouragement / motivation for stronger action and higher quality as well as opportunities for sharing and cooperation with other countries**. More needs to be done take into account specific needs and priorities of the countries.

7 **The Charter is a useful tool for non-governmental organisations both as a guideline** for their internal policies and programmes, **and as a tool for advocacy towards national and local authorities**. However, the **Charter appears little known to young people**. The manuals on human rights education with young people and children, **Compass and Compasito**, remain central to the EDC/HRE work done by civil society.

8 **The Charter needs to be further developed as a shared framework for policy dialogue among and within the countries.**

USEFUL RESOURCES

- Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education
- Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People.
- Bookmarks - A manual for combating hate speech online through human rights education.
- Teaching controversial issues: A professional development programme for teachers.
- Living democracy manuals for teachers