



ROADMAP TO EDUCATION POLICY MAKERS

FOSTERING A DEMOCRATIC CULTURE IN SCHOOLS IN MONTENEGRO

Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey

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SUMMARY

“Fostering a democratic school culture in Montenegro” is an educational action co-funded by the European Union and Council of Europe as part of the mentioned Horizontal Facility European Union/Council of Europe programmatic framework “Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey” (Horizontal Facility).¹ It is implemented by the Council of Europe Education Department in partnership with the Ministry of Education, while involving a wider group of relevant stakeholders, including Bureau for Education Services, education policy and research institutes, selected pilot schools, local communities, media, NGOs, and other organisations in Montenegro.

The aim of the action is to improve the quality of education in Montenegro by fostering a democratic culture in the formal education system, based on the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDCs). The Reference Framework sets out the competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies.

The action is being implemented through a network of 26 pilot schools. The network includes 18 secondary general and vocational schools and 4 elementary schools. In addition, four selected schools serve as mentor schools. Four school co-ordinators have been recruited to provide direct field support and, in co-operation with national and Council of Europe experts, trainings to the pilot schools in their clusters.

In the project teachers were introduced to the Reference Framework and selected specific competences to work on with their students, with a view to promoting tolerance and inter-ethnic dialogue as basic educational principles in their schools’ future development plans. With the support of their school co-ordinator and the national and international experts, they devised and implemented a range of learning activities, drawing on the principle of the ‘whole-school’ approach.

The purpose of this present ‘road map’ document is to scale up from the experiences of the pilot schools in the project to the level of policy as a contribution to the development of quality education across the Montenegrin education system. It’s recommendations and proposals are based on a questionnaire survey, focus groups and face-to-face interviews with local stakeholders, including pilot-school teachers, national policy-makers and NGO representatives.

The findings of the consultation are set out in the central section of this report. On the basis of this a phased educational strategy, or ‘road map’ of educational reform is developed, building on the experience of the project. Key elements in the ‘road map’ include the development of new heuristic tools for use in the training process, a train-the-trainers programme, a system of school-based training focusing on the establishment of small expert teams and the development of whole-school policy, an enquiry into the assessment and accreditation of learning, a proposal to reintroduce Civic Education into schools as a separate subject or elective, and a short module for use with new teachers.

¹ <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/horizontal-facility/home>

INTRODUCTION

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 The beginnings of a democratic culture in Montenegrin schools

The appearance in 2001 of the **Book of Changes of the Education System of Montenegro** signalled a new direction in the development of education policy and practice in Montenegrin schools. It promised both wider access to, and a greater equality in educational provision, based on the principles of democracy and respect for all. Its goal was the creation of a 'multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-confessional and multi-party society'², an aim which was to be highly influential on subsequent education legislation in Montenegro³.

At the time the **school culture in Montenegro was predominantly authoritarian in nature and generally antipathetic to democratic education:**

"... school pupils have no opportunity to acquire democratic life experience in the school as an institution because the school as such is not a democratic institution."⁴

A subject called Constitution and Citizens' Rights had been taught in secondary schools for many years before, but it was largely a dry, facts-based exercise.

There were attempts to introduce elements of democratic or human rights education into schools from time to time, mainly NGO-led with Ministry co-operation:

"... almost all attempts to promote civic education, democratic and human rights in Montenegro through education came from the NGO sector, either through national/local initiatives or at the initiative of the international NGOs"⁵

However, these tended to be sporadic and short-lived.

Nevertheless, they succeeded in **raising the awareness and interest of a number of Montenegrin teachers in the introduction of democratic processes in education:**

"Democratic processes have started and a considerable number of teachers and students accept them as valuable."⁶

1.2 Civic education as a separate subject

Civic Education is no longer a mandatory element in the curriculum in Montenegrin schools. For a while, however, it was taught as a separate subject.

The subject called Civic Education was introduced into primary schools in 2004/5 and secondary high schools in 2006/7, as part of a general process of curriculum development in which European standards of education became gradually incorporated into the Montenegrin system.

Civic Education became an obligatory separate subject in primary schools for 6th and 7th grades, where it was intended to build on subjects in earlier grades, such as Nature and Society, Nature and Technology and Society. It was supplemented by elective subjects, such as Study of Humanitarian Law in the 8th and 9th grade, and a project called "We the people ... I a citizen" (Project Citizen) as an extra-curricular activity.

In general secondary schools Civic Education became an obligatory elective subject. It could be chosen in any or all of the four grades, depending upon the demand from students in the previous grade. While its

2 Harrison & Baumgartl (2002)

3 Micanovic (2014)

4 Harrison & Baumgartl (2002) p33

5 Ibid., p59

6 Ibid., p66

elective status made it ineligible for the *Matura* examination as a separate subject, it could be used by students to supplement the *Matura* standard for similar subjects.

Civic Education was not introduced into vocational schools. The nearest subject to Civic Education in terms of content in the vocational school curriculum was Sociology.

1.3 Civic education as an elective subject

Although Civic education is now no longer a mandatory subject in primary schools, it continues as an elective subject in primary and secondary, including vocational schools. In primary school it can be chosen as an elective in any of the grades from 6th to 9th where it sits alongside other electives, such as History of Religion. In secondary schools, it is an elective in the first grade, alongside other electives such as Healthy Lifestyle, French and German.

Numbers of students choosing Civic Education as an elective vary from school to school. In some schools choice may be limited by the setting of electives into groups, however it is unusual for there not to be sufficient students choosing it for the course to run and it is not unknown for it to be chosen by a whole year group.

1.4 Strategy for Civic Education in Primary and Secondary Schools 2007-2010

The Strategy for Civic Education 2007-10 represented a major overhaul of policy and practice in democratic education and lay the foundations for **a new concept of civic education** as both:

“a separate subject and as a principle in the education process as such.”⁷

The strategy focused on **5 key areas**:

- *The Status of Civic Education and Education for Democratic Citizenship* – with a view to applying democratic principles to overall school life, including democratic values in other subjects, introducing Civic Education as an elective in vocational general schools and defining teacher competences
- *Teaching, Curricula and Methodologies* – with a view to better linking democratic content and principles with other subjects, introducing new elective subjects, e.g., media literacy, and providing access to teaching materials
- *Teacher Training* – with a view to enhancing training, creating a roster of trainers and introducing democratic principles into the undergraduate curriculum
- *Quality Monitoring, Assurance and Improvement* – with a view to monitoring teaching quality, developing evaluation and self-evaluation models
- *Use of Additional Resources* – with a view to clearer criteria for selecting NGO programmes, providing information on programmes for teachers, co-operation with other organisations, strengthening the Association of Civic Education Teachers.

1.5 Legal and strategic framework for inclusive education

The **education of children with special educational needs (SEN)** is based on the law on education for SEN children (“Official Gazette of Montenegro”, no. 45/10, 47/17). This applies across the education system and operates on **the principle of including SEN children in mainstream schools**.

The term SEN is used at the pre-university education level and it includes children with: developmental disabilities (physical, intellectual, sensory, autism and combined) developmental disabilities (physical, intellectual, sensory, autism and combined) and development difficulties (speech and language difficulties, behavioural, learning, serious chronic and long-lasting illnesses, difficulties due to emotional, social, language and cultural deprivation).

The **Inclusive Education Strategy (2008-2013)** laid the foundations for the integration of SEN children in

7 Bogojevic (2007) p14

schools. The **2014-2018 Inclusive Education Strategy** further emphasizes the role of schools in **meeting the developmental and educational needs** of SEN children and enabling them to **lead independent lives**. The overarching goal of the Inclusive Education Strategy is to enable SEN children to progress both developmentally and educationally in a rational and operational way through **individualised additional support**. The basic goals of this Strategy are as follows:

Task 1:

Carry out early detection, intervention, learning, development and psycho-social support for children and their parents,

Task 2:

Provide SEN children with access to and continuity of good quality education enabling them to work and live independently,

Task 3:

Provide support for the teaching process on all levels,

Task 4:

Improve basic education, specialist improvement and professional self-improvement for the teaching and vocational staff,

Task 5:

Improve monitoring and evaluation of children's educational and development achievements.

The **2019-2025 Inclusive Education Strategy (draft)** sets the direction for the further development of education for SEN children. It focuses on the implementation of the measures outlined in the 2014-2018 Strategy, and relies on the binding international principles, standards and recommendations of the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. It has as its guiding principles the promotion, protection and insurance of **full and equal participation of all SEN children in inclusive education**, without discrimination and exclusion, based on **the principle of equal rights**. The overarching goal of this Strategy is to provide SEN children with access to good quality inclusive education on all levels. The goal is to be reached operationally through three tasks:

Task 1:

Provide for and apply *accessibility and equality* of education for all children,

Task 2:

Provide for and apply *continuity* of inclusive education from the moment of detecting a disability/ difficulties in order to ensure the child's full and effective inclusion in society,

Task 3:

Support and improve the *quality* of inclusive education.

The government has also developed a number of **policies on increasing inclusion for Roma and Egyptian children** and preventing these children from dropping out of compulsory education. Strategy documents included: **Action Plan for the Implementation of the "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015" in Montenegro (2005)**; **Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Population in Montenegro (2007)** and **Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro (2012)**.

1.6 Vocational education

The role of vocational schools in developing tolerance, teamwork respect for cultural diversity in future citizens has been boosted recently through the introduction of new modularized education programmes based on **key competences**. A special emphasis is placed on **civic and social key competences, cultural awareness and expression** and **entrepreneurship**. Teachers are being trained for the implementation of vocational modules in which they need to achieve key competences.

In addition, dedicated **elective modules** have been developed to reach key competencies that relate to the **democratic culture**:

1. “Contemporary growing up” – including challenges of growing up and adolescence, the importance of family as a socialization factor, the role and content of young subcultures, the impact of mass media on young people, the importance of applying healthy lifestyles, youth risk behaviours and prevention mechanisms,
2. “Social networks and globalization” – including the position of young people in the process of globalization of society, the characteristics of basic human rights and freedoms, the social context of gender roles in culturally diverse societies, the importance of developing political awareness and achievement of sustainable development goals, opportunities and demands of the global labour market, literacy in everyday life, the features of cyber culture as a social phenomenon,
3. “Business culture” – techniques of successful communication, rules for resolving conflict situations, the influence of cultural differences among peoples on their mutual understanding, bon-ton rules in various areas of personal and professional activity,
4. In all educational programmes, there are compulsory general education subjects that meet the relevant key competences: Montenegrin / Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Literature, Mathematics, English, Informatics, as well as a professional module in all educational programs, Entrepreneurship.

1.7 Student parliaments

Student parliaments have for a number of years been required by law in Montenegrin schools. At primary school each class has one representative from grades 6 to 9. The 5th grade is regarded as too young to be involved, but they are informed about the work of the parliament and consulted on issues. Class representatives get together at the beginning of the school year and make a plan for the year, giving feedback to teachers about problems as the year goes on. This is usually mediated by two adult staff, rather than the school leader.

2. EUROPEAN STANDARDS

The idea of a democratic school culture has its ultimate origins in the concepts, policies and practices developed through the **Council of Europe’s programme of education for democratic citizenship and human rights**, and the common values, rights and obligations underpinning the **European Union *acquis***.

2.1 European Union

Membership of the European Union depends, among other things, on candidate countries achieving

“stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities”.⁸

Candidate countries are required to adjust their administrative and judicial structures in line with these fundamental values which are set out in Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon, 2009.

In response to challenges of globalisation and the shift to more knowledge-based economies, the European Commission has identified eight key **competences for lifelong learning in Europe**, building on the 2000 Lisbon Objectives in education and training. One of these eight competences is ‘**social and civic competences**’. These include:

“personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary.”⁹

8 See www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/default_en.asp

9 European Commission (2007)

Under the auspices of the European Commission's Europe for Citizens programme (2007-13), a composite indicator has been developed to measure the 'civic competence' of European citizens, based on 63 basic indicators, as a first step towards measuring outcomes in education.¹⁰

2.2. Council of Europe

The notion of 'civic competence' has since been given concrete expression in the **Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture**.¹¹

At the heart of this Framework is **a model of the competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies**. The 20 competences in the model are sub-divided into 4 groups: **values; attitudes; skills; and knowledge and critical understanding**. The Framework provides a list of graded competence descriptors, statements of learning outcomes.

Preparing young people for life as active citizens in democratic societies is conceived in the Council of Europe's vision as **one of four major purposes of education** (alongside preparation for the labour market; personal development; and the development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base).¹² It is the vehicle through which education systems can respond to pressing social and political issues, such as social exclusion, and prejudice and discrimination against minority groups.

The Reference Framework was developed under the auspices of the Council of Europe programme '**Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education**' (EDC/HRE) which began in 1997. In this programme, EDC/HRE is defined as:

"A set of practices and activities designed to help young people and adults play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities in society".¹³

The programme received political legitimacy in the adoption of the **Council of Europe Charter for EDC/HRE** in 2010. The non-binding Charter defines key terms and sets out **standards of policy and practice for all member states**. These standards have important practical implications for the implementation for the Framework competences for democratic culture, particularly in relation to pedagogy and the organisation of learning. The two most relevant in the present context are **active learning** and **a whole-school approach**.

3. THE ACTION

3.1 Fostering a democratic school culture in Montenegro

Fostering a democratic school culture in Montenegro is an education anti-discrimination action implemented by the Council of Europe Education Department and in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Montenegro, involving a wider group of relevant stakeholders, including Bureau for Education Services, education policy and research institutes, selected pilot schools, local communities, media, NGOs, and other organisations in Montenegro. The action is co-funded by the European Union and Council of Europe as part of the mentioned Horizontal Facility. The duration of the action is set at 30 months, ending on 31 December 2018.

The overall objective of the action is to 'improve the quality of education in Montenegro by fostering a democratic culture in the formal education system through applying anti-discriminatory approaches based on Council of Europe standards and practices'.

The first specific objective is to 'enhance knowledge and awareness on the concept, policies, practices and benefits from inclusive education and a democratic school culture among teachers, staff, students and local communities'.

10 Hoskins et al.

11 Council of Europe (2018)

12 Ibid.

13 Olafsdottir (2008)

This objective is to be accomplished through the 'identification and promotion of good practices for democratic school culture' throughout Montenegro, and the development of a 'road map on how to upscale the experiences from pilot schools to the policy level'.

The second specific objective is to enhance the capacities of schools to 'remove prejudices and discriminatory approaches towards vulnerable and marginalized students, including Roma and Egyptian children'.

This objective is to be accomplished through improvement in the 'inclusive environment' in a number of the pilot schools and the introduction of 'specific measures to promote tolerance and inter-ethnic dialogue'.

3.2 Implementing the action

The action is being implemented through a network of 26 pilot schools selected by the Ministry of Education according to criteria developed in connection with previous regional initiatives on inclusive education. The network includes 18 secondary general and vocational schools and 4 elementary schools. In addition, four selected schools serve as mentor schools.

The idea was to use schools which had already participated in the European Commission/Council of Europe project 'Regional Support to Inclusive Education' on account of the professional skills and expertise they had developed through that project. Thus the mentor schools include: central region: Gimnazija "Slobodan Škerović", Podgorica; northern region: JU Gimnazija "Tanasije Pejatović", Pljevlja; coastal region: SMŠ "Ivan Goran Kovačić", Herceg Novi; and group of vocational schools: SMŠ "Bećo Bašić", Plav. The pilot schools each established a team composed of respective representatives of school management, pedagogical service, teachers, students, and local community representatives. Mentor school teams received an additional training on how to spread the knowledge on democratic culture in the group they are mentoring. The mentors school teams provided many initiatives including specific trainings aimed at better understanding of CDC implementation.

In addition, four co-ordinators were selected to work with the pilot schools. These school co-ordinators were responsible for training pilot school teams in their groups. Based on a regional and "train the trainers" approach, they are trained and learned of the methodology for developing a democratic culture in the schools.

The training programme undertaken by the pilot schools is based around the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDCs). The Reference Framework sets out the competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies. It is intended for use in all sectors of education systems from pre-school through primary and secondary schooling to higher education, including vocational education. It is implemented through a 'whole-school' approach, including through curricular and extra-curricular activities, the quality of life and relationships in school, school decision-making and links with the surrounding community.

During the training programme teachers are introduced to the Reference Framework and selected specific competences to work on with their students, with a view to promoting tolerance and inter-ethnic dialogue as basic educational principles in their schools' future development plans. With the support of their regional co-ordinator and the national and international experts, they devise and implement a range of learning activities in the form of an action plan designed to help their students acquire these competences, drawing on the principle of the 'whole-school' approach.

The action is fully based on a "peer learning" concept, whereby mentor schools, in co-operation with the school co-ordinators and Council of Europe experts, led the peer exchange in terms of knowledge, experience and good practices and jointly created recommendations on how to promote principles of democratic culture and inclusive education within schools' development plans.

A number of capacity building activities (national and regional conference, workshops, seminars, meetings etc.) took place within the action. In addition to teachers, students, and local community representatives, training was provided to the students of the Teaching Faculty. Emphasis was put on the training of teachers in implementing democratic competences during teaching process and cross-curricular, with attention to including them into annual and daily lessons planning. Moreover, a multitude of awareness raising activities

have been organized, “Inclusive day” being the most visible and effective.

3.3. Inclusive Day

The Action led to new opportunities in terms of awareness-raising nation-wide following the decision taken by the Ministry of Education to set an official “**Inclusive day**” aiming at promoting the concept of inclusive education as a reform principle – that will be celebrated in the Montenegrin schools on 11 October. In 2017, “Inclusive days” were celebrated throughout Montenegro in 17 cities and 23 Schools, with the involvement of a large number of communities’ members including pupils, teachers and parents, that organised workshops, roundtables, debates, thematic classes and art exhibitions, all of them aiming at promoting and learning how to live together, as democratic citizens in diverse societies.

In 2018, the celebration took place at the Central Square in Podgorica and involved around 200 students, teachers, and parents, members of the teams from the pilot schools, together with volunteer students from the Teaching Faculty. A children’s choir performed songs on friendship and childhood, and the school students delivered a performance with posters, dressed in four colours to symbolise the four types of competence for democratic culture.

METHODOLOGY

The recommendations and proposals made in this document are largely based on a **stakeholder consultation** which took place over a five-month period from May to September 2018. This was supplemented by a **desk-based study** of background documentation relating to recent history and developments in policy and practice in education for democracy and human rights in the Montenegrin education system.

The consultation consisted of a **written questionnaire survey**, several **focus groups** and a number of **face-to-face interviews** with individual stakeholders. **Two questionnaires** [Appendix 2] were used, one for teaching practitioners involved in the project, and the other for NGO representatives, policy-makers (including representatives from the Ministry of Education, Bureau of Educational Services and University of Montenegro), and all other project stakeholders. The two questionnaires were identical, with the addition of extra items in the teacher version to capture the practitioners’ experience of implementing the action in their schools. The design of the questionnaire templates questionnaires was agreed with the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro. Practitioner questionnaires were sent to a sample of schools from the pilot group, selected by the Faculty of Philosophy to be representative both geographically and in terms of type of school: elementary, secondary and vocational. In total **61 completed questionnaires** were analysed, of which 44 were from pilot-school teachers, 10 from NGOs and 7 from policy-makers.

The **focus groups** targeted different populations of stakeholders: **pilot schools, including teachers, head teachers, school students and parents’ representatives; school co-ordinators; NGO representatives; and initial teacher training university students**. School-based focus groups were held on individual school premises, with the exception of a more mixed group convened at the Becici conference.¹⁴ In addition, there was a small focus group from a non-pilot school. There was some variation in the composition of these groups at different schools. Typically, each consisted of 6-10 members and lasted 45 minutes or more.

Face-to-face interviews were carried out with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Bureau of Education, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, UNICEF and individual teachers and school leaders.

The questionnaire survey, focus groups and face-to-face interviews focused on **5 main areas** in relation to policy and practice on democratic school culture:

- democratic school culture
- competences for democratic culture
- training
- policy development
- challenges.

¹⁴ Regional conference “Fighting discrimination in the education system” that took place in Becici, Montenegro on 16-17 May 2018.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

In this, the central part of the report, we outline the major findings of the stakeholder consultation and consider their strategic implications for educational reform. The topics covered and the order in which they appear reflects that used in the questionnaire survey, focus group and face-to-face interviews. Coverage of each topic follows the same pattern: first, the main findings of the consultation; second, a commentary on the implications of the findings; and third, a series of practical recommendations made on the basis of these.

1. The purpose of democratic school culture

There was **universal agreement** among the participants in the consultation that **creating a democratic school culture in Montenegro is an important educational task**, with many saying they think it is very important.

Typically, **teacher responses on this issue were shorter, more general and less well-rehearsed than those of policy-makers or NGO representatives**. Some teachers justified the practice of democratic school culture in terms of **personal development** or **improved school performance** rather than in relation to any wider societal benefit. Thus, for example:

“It is very important to create a democratic culture in schools because it is a good prerequisite for all future interpersonal relationships, both in school and outside”. (Teacher)

“It is very important. Through democratic culture, students are given more space to express opinions and attitudes, and the professor then has a better insight into the interests and work of students.” (Teacher)

More frequently, however, **personal development was linked to societal benefits, or societal benefits alone** were mentioned. For example:

“Creating democratic culture is extremely important for the formation of a mature person who is able to make decisions independently, but also accepts the decisions and attitudes of others, and therefore respects diversity”. (Teacher)

“It is extremely important, since the basic principles of democratic culture must be learned from the very beginning of schooling, in order to create the basis for a healthy society in which diversity is respected.” (Teacher)

In most cases the idea of a “healthy” society was expressed in terms of **social inclusion, respect for (especially ethnic) diversity or tolerance, rather than democracy as such**:

“It is very important to create a democratic culture in schools. It is needed in order to help develop critical thinking in the pupils. All of this will help contribute to the peaceful coexistence of different peoples in a culturally diverse environment.” (Teacher)

“When you work in a mixed school attended by students of different religious beliefs, where classes are conducted in both Albanian and Montenegrin, and everyday you notice a large degree of uncertainty among these students, which often culminates in a battling difficulty, then you realize that professors as a model for our students, a huge role in creating a democratic culture in school.” (Teacher)

In a few cases the need for a more democratic school culture was linked to **recent incidents of anti-social and discriminatory behaviour** both in school or in society more generally, including in relation to **social media**:

“In the recent past there were many examples of violence among children and youth ... Hate speech on the internet is also increasing, especially among youth. Conflicts between teachers and students are common in recent years.” (NGO)

While the discourse of “multi-ethnic harmony”, “respect for diversity” and “acceptance and understanding of multi-culturalism” was equally prominent in the responses of policy-makers, there was also an awareness among many in this group of the **wider implications of incorporating European standards into**

Montenegrin schools, for example:

“It is important as well having in mind Montenegrin process of joining EU, NATO and to make Montenegrin young people to become citizens of the World.” (Policy-maker)

“It is very important, for any society, not only for Montenegro. For Montenegro, being a young democracy, it is of a particular importance. The educational system in Montenegro is undergoing many improvements which aim at achieving the standards of the best European practices. Montenegro is on the way to join the EU, and strives to introduce standards of a respectable democracy in all the fields of life.” (Policy-maker)

On the whole, **little was said about the relation between democratic school culture and other educational priorities**. However, there were suggestions in the comments of some policy-makers to the effect that it should be seen not simply as a timely initiative but as **an essential thread running through all educational activity**:

“Democratic culture is not a new school subject or academic discipline. It is not something students and teachers should think about two hours a week and forget about the rest of the time. Democratic culture cannot be learned unless it is practised any more than we can learn a foreign language just by reading a dictionary and a grammar. It must be supported by the education policies, curriculum development, new school ethos, and recognizable in all teaching subjects.” (Policy-maker)

Comment:

There is strong support from everyone involved in the consultation for the development of a more democratically-based culture in Montenegrin schools. In the case of teachers, this was after a period of training with international and national experts and considerable support from local co-ordinators. It cannot be assumed that teachers who have not had this level of training or support will feel the same.

The many references to respect for diversity, living in a society of equals, etc., suggests a concept of democratic school culture which leans heavily on the notion of inclusion. In contrast there is much less reference to participation or the democratic process. Active participation in democratic society is as important to the Council of Europe definition of a culture of democracy as inter-cultural understanding. It is important for schools to have comprehensive understanding of the concept of democratic culture, one that places on emphasis on active citizenship as well as inclusion.

With one or two notable exceptions, there was little evidence of a sense of the relation between democratic school culture and other educational imperatives. ‘Preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies’ is regarded by the Council of Europe as one of the four ‘major purposes’ in its vision of education. [Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6]. It is important for school practitioners to have a clear idea of where democratic culture fits in with the rest of their responsibilities, and for school leaders where it fits into the overall purpose of the school. One way to make this explicit would be the publication of a ‘big picture’ map of education showing how education for democratic culture fits in with the other main purposes of education.

Little mention was made of the European Union ‘competences for lifelong learning’, either generally or more specifically in relation to the ‘social and civic’ competences. These competences are central to current European Union policy on young people, in their lives both as citizens and as workers. School leaders, in particular, need to be familiar with them and able to show where they are implemented in their school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Further attention should be paid to the **clarification of the concept** of democratic school culture as a multi-purpose activity. The broad areas with which it is concerned should be defined more explicitly, including both **inclusion** and **active citizenship**.
2. A **'big picture' map** of education should be designed, showing the **role of education for democratic culture in the overall purpose of education** and its relation to the other main purposes of education.
3. Democratic school culture should be **recognised as one of the fundamental areas of educational purpose** in a school, integral to all activity in all schools – not as a useful 'add-on' or secondary activity.
4. Its different benefits should be made plain and **arguments justifying its importance in education made explicit in clear and simple language**.
5. Democratic school culture should be recognised as the **main vehicle for the development of the EU lifelong 'social and civic' competence**. School leaders should become familiar with this competence and enabled to assess how their own school stands in relation to it.
6. Instead of or in addition to **"Inclusive day"** it should be explored to introduce **"Democratic culture day"** in order to promote its somewhat broader concept. Namely, democratic culture entails both inclusion as a socio-educational principle but also an active citizenship.

2. Competences for democratic culture

As a part of their training pilot-school teams were introduced to the Council of Europe competences for democratic culture and how they might be implemented through a whole-school approach. These competences are regarded at the governmental level as central to the development of inclusive education. Teams selected specific competences to develop in their schools. During the consultation they were asked their opinions on the competences in general, about the specific competences they had chosen to work on and the activities they had undertaken to develop them, the need for any further training or guidance material on their use and whether they thought the competences ought to figure in national legislation in some way.

Most teachers simply listed the competences they had chosen without any explanation. So it is difficult to know why they chose the ones they did. One can only assume they felt there was a particular need for those competences in their schools. In one school, however, the competences deemed to be most age-appropriate were chosen:

'In our school, we have chosen the competences we consider crucial for every child at this age'. (Teacher)

All competences were chosen at least once and it is **difficult to detect any pattern in the choices made by different schools**. It is also difficult to get any real sense of how teachers actually understood the competences they picked. It is not clear whether they all had access to the initial Council of Europe booklet on the competences at the time of their action plan. The three-volume Council of Europe Reference Framework was not available until May 2018, so there was no access to the competence indicators until that point.

A **wide range of activities** were reported as having taken place in the pilot schools in order to develop the competences. The majority, it would seem, took place outside formal lessons. These fall into different categories, and include

- *Celebration days*, e.g., International Day Against Poverty, International Volunteer Day, UN Day, Sunday of Children, Tolerance Day, Open Days of Science Festival, Safe Internet Day, International Day of People with Disabilities, Council of Europe Day, Earth Day
- *Exhibitions*, e.g., Different Under the Same Roof, Democracy,

- *Workshops*, e.g., on mental health and inclusion, problems of gaming, isolation of DNA, biodiversity, ecology, prevention of corruption, Chinese culture
- *Plays and films*, e.g., on cultural diversity, conflict resolution, e.g. short documentary “Educative excursion – Diversity connects us” aimed at providing contra-narrative to religious extremism,
- *Clubs*, e.g., Volunteer Club, Natural History Club, Youth Club,
- *Competitions*, e.g., Young Eco-Reporters Competition, Photo competition of democratic culture in the school environment, International Debating Competition, Open a Book-Open the World,
- *Humanitarian action*, e.g., for under-privileged children, in relation to blood donation, for a student with cerebral palsy, visit to an elderly day care centre,
- *School linking and visits*, e.g., inviting children from another school for karaoke,
- *Positions of responsibility*, e.g., students serving food and drink to attendants, supplementary catch-up lessons run by peers.

In each case the teachers **matched the activity to a specific competence or set of competences**, e.g., a humanitarian action involving the collection of clothes and footwear as part of the International Day Against Poverty was matched with the competence of empathy; student organisation of a celebration to mark the opening of a new school gym was matched with the competence of co-operation; a workshop on mental health and inclusion was matched with the competence of respect.

Interestingly, in referring to extra-curricular activities hardly any mention was made in responses to the survey of the **student parliament** or its potential contribution to democratic culture in a school. One exception was a school where the student parliament was given the responsibility of devising activities to mark Valentine’s Day as a way of developing the competence of co-operation. When specifically asked it in focus groups or interviews, individuals expressed **contrasting views** about the workings of their own student parliament. University students undergoing teacher training tended to report negative experiences, especially those had been educated in rural schools:

“... they establish the student parliament and they do nothing”. (University student)

One, who had been a student representative at a secondary school in Podgorica described mainly discussing excursions and football tournaments, but occasionally being involved in humanitarian actions:

“... donating to the poor”. (University student)

On the other hand, there were reports of highly active and engaged student parliaments. These tended to come from students and teachers in specific pilot schools where activity in democratic culture is particularly advanced.

Similarly, little mention was made of the possibility of **home-room teaching** for implementing the competences in primary schools. It seemed to be regarded more as a child-minding exercise, or an opportunity to catch up on homework or play games. One NGO representative, however, spoke in some detail in a focus group about the potential of this part of the school day, and of examples of activities he was experimenting with.

In contrast to the wide range of activities reported outside lessons, **very little was said about teaching and learning** in the survey. Although a number of teachers reported incorporating competences into their lessons – including, for example, in Science, History and Sociology – with a few exceptions little mention was made of how this was done. A Physical Education teacher in one of the school focus groups, for example, described organising a football tournament in which children with special needs acted as referees and officials. A Biology teacher described introducing new content into the subject:

“As far as the subjects I teach – biology are concerned, these were short films that show the state of our Planet, our neglect of resources, endangered species and conservation biology, I did not use this kind of activity earlier.” (Teacher)

In the main, however, what was said amounted to a few terse references to using paired – or small-group work, and discussion and debate in lessons.

A slightly different picture was painted by subject teachers in focus groups. A number described how as part of the project they had **adapted their teaching style** to implement particular competences in certain of their lessons, but not across the board:

“In 5 or 6 classes ... I work in Chemistry... we talk about how to use healthy food in our everyday life students ... they work in groups, three groups, every group has another exercise ... they have to make a pyramid of the diet they use in their life and compare it with the regular one in the area”. (Teacher)

An experienced primary-school teacher, whose teaching included Civic Education and History of Religion electives, expressed her **difficulty in helping colleagues to incorporate the competences into their subjects**:

“Before the training I had a problem putting those competences into simple Science lessons, because it was very hard to choose and put them in the subjects [they were] connected with. With social subjects it was easier to implement them. After the training I had a clear idea of how to implement all of the competences in all subjects.” (Teacher)

Interestingly, this teacher appeared to have acted as an **informal mentor** for her pilot-school team. She is not the only example of a teacher or former teacher of Civic Education to have been playing this role in her school.

Overall, there was **considerable variation between schools**, evidenced both in responses made to the questionnaire survey and by focus groups, in the level of detail in which teachers spoke about the experience of implementing the competences their schools, whether in or out of the classroom. In some schools information about actions taken and the associated competences was reproduced in some detail and at length, whereas in others it was fairly general and quite brief. The local co-ordinators and mentor schools in general tended to give the more detailed, and apparently more thought-out, accounts.

As with attitudes towards the idea of democratic school culture, there was a **tendency amongst teachers to associate the competences more with inclusion than active citizenship as such**, particularly in multi-ethnic schools:

“Everything we do at school, every manifestation, performances, involves Egyptian children and Roma children and all others ... All the children are equally involved in everything”. (School leader)

Several schools did cite attendance at one the Barbara Prammer democracy workshops in the Montenegrin parliament as an example of democratic school culture, however.

Significantly, many teachers **did not regard many of the activities they described as new**, but said they similar to things they were already doing or had done in the past. What was new, they said, was associating the activities with democratic culture: Thus:

“Most of the activities were previously done in school, however, they did not think in terms of linking those activities with democratic competencies.” (Teacher)

“Almost all the aforementioned activities were realized in the previous period if they did not represent a complete novelty in the work of the School, with the difference that they did not have the character of promoting a democratic culture in the school.” (Teacher)

On the other hand there were **some teachers for whom the whole process was innovatory**:

“All democratic competences were a novelty in school work through classes.” (Teacher)

“For the first time in our school, in this way, a program for developing a democratic culture in school is being implemented, which is aimed at improving and accepting democratic competences.” (Teacher)

Comment:

A number of teachers were already familiar with the kind of practices they experienced in the project training. The fact that they did not previously think of these practices as vehicles for implementing the competences for democratic culture suggests a need for guidance on how they need to be implemented to be effective for this purpose. For example, group work in itself does not necessarily help with the development of students' co-operative skills. It is the manner in which groups are put together and run, the division of tasks, etc., that makes the difference. The same with humanitarian action and empathy, for example. This may go some way to explaining why the potential of the school parliament or home-room teaching seems to have been overlooked in many cases.

In the absence of information on the competence-indicators teachers are thrown back on their own interpretations of the meaning of individual competences, and thus on their own interpretations of the meaning of the competences taken as a whole. The evidence of the consultation suggests that teachers tend to lean towards inclusion than active citizenship in their understandings of the competences' overall purpose.

Overall, teachers seem to be more confident about the role of extra-curricular than curricular activities in delivering democratic culture outcomes. For one thing, activities like Roma Day or the meetings of a debate club are easier to 'see'. To a certain extent, incorporating the competences into classroom teaching is a matter of how rather than what one teaches.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Developing the competences for democratic culture through **classroom-teaching** and the **role of student parliaments in democratic school culture** should be made priority topics for training.
2. Schools should be made aware of and have access to training in the use of the Council of Europe **competence-indicators**.
3. Training should be given to help schools make **cultural events, humanitarian actions and other kinds of extra-curricular activity** more effective vehicles of democratic-competence learning, e.g., in relation to activities designed to help under-privileged children, by students investigating the underlying causes of the situation the children are in and taking simple actions with regards to these.
4. Practical guidance should be issued on how **home-room teachers** can use this part of the school day as a vehicle for implementing the competences.

3. TRAINING

During the consultation pilot-school teachers were asked about the quality and content of the training they had received, and also for their opinions on how and where further training should be targeted. Policy-makers and NGO representatives were also asked where in the education system they think the main training needs are.

3.1 Training received by pilot schools

Pilot-school school teachers **commented highly positively on the content of and methods of the regional training (peer learning) seminars**. Nothing essential was omitted, most said. They felt able to return to school equipped to put what they had learned into practice. For example:

"There were no missing elements ... The seminar covered everything we need to work." (Teacher)

Over and above the general sense of satisfaction, a number of respondents said that had the seminars been longer they **would have liked to access more practical examples**. In particular, they would have liked to see **how schools in other countries or regions implemented the competences**. Thus:

"I would like to get more information about democracy competences in foreign countries. Examples of good practice from countries around the world." (Teacher)

Others were interested in learning more specialised aspects of the implementation of the competences, such as the **implications for staff-student relationships**, or in relation to different **sub-groups of school students**:

“More elaborated ideas, activities for the lessons with children of different age group and for the children with special educational needs”. (Teacher)

3.2 Groups targeted for future training

When asked whether more training should be provided in this field, pilot-school teachers were overwhelming **in favour of more training both for themselves and for colleagues in schools who were not in the pilot**. There was, however, a slight regional difference in this. While teachers in some areas were strongly in favour of more training (scoring mainly 1s out of 4), others in other areas felt less strongly about this (scoring mainly 2s out of 4).

One argument for providing more training for the pilot schools was that it would **equip them for training other schools in the neighbourhood**:

“I suggest to go on educating the teachers who already have the basic training, to strengthen them more to make the able to hold training in their own and neighbouring schools”. (Teacher)

Policy-makers and NGO representatives, when given a choice of groups which might be targeted, were generally strongly **in favour not only of more training for teachers, but also for school leaders, school students and parents**. One commented that in developing a whole-school approach it is not enough to train just one group of stakeholders. There was some difference, however, as to where the priority should lie. For one respondent it lies with **school leaders**:

“All four target groups are equally important for development of democratic school culture, but probably the most important are school leaders who should provide all necessary preconditions for creation new school ethos and atmosphere of continuous professional development of teachers.” (Policymaker)

For others the priority lies in **engaging the local community**. A form of training should be found, it was suggested which will help **teachers and parents work together on joint activities**:

“Most important is for the teachers and parents, and especially in a way to find a model for their joint activities.” (Policymaker)

In addition, one respondent proposed, **policy-makers** should have training in this field, too:

“Education policy makers at the state level, as well.” (Policy-maker)

3.3 Content of further training

There was general **agreement among the pilot-schools on the importance of a number of specific areas for future development** in Montenegrin schools. These were:

- **how to incorporate the competences into different subjects,**
- **how to plan lessons using the competences,**
- **how to assess students’ learning of the competences,**
- **how to link competence learning in different subjects and with learning through extra-curricular activities and the student parliament,**
- **how to encourage other school colleagues to engage with the competences,**
- **how school leaders can incorporate the competences into whole-school policy,**
- **how parents and the community can contribute to students’ learning of the competences,**
- **how to develop the competences in schools with different types of children, e.g., Roma, Egyptians.**

The strongest needs were felt to be in the areas of **lesson-planning, incorporating the competences into the teaching of different subjects**, and **encouraging colleagues to engage with the competences in their own practice**.

Speaking of her colleagues, one teacher summed up the situation thus:

“The most difficult thing is how to implement those in lesson plans. That is something that is still a problem for them. That is why it would be a good idea to have some where they [can see] good practice and examples, especially for the Science subjects, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, etc. ... where they could see the concrete example, how to implement in the lesson plan”. (Teacher)

Policy-makers and NGO representatives when asked to rate more general areas of training need were generally **agreed on the importance of training in the following**:

- **classroom teaching and learning**
- **extra-curricular activities**
- **student parliaments**
- **assessing pupils/students’ democratic competences**
- **developing whole-school policies**
- **the contribution of parents and the local community to the learning of the competence**
- **the inclusion of minority groups, e.g., Roma, Egyptians.**

Among these, the strongest needs were felt to be in the areas of **classroom teaching and learning, assessment of student learning, development of whole-school policies** and **inclusion of minority groups**.

In addition, there was view in vocational education that teaching on issues relating to democratic culture needs to be **grounded in ‘real life’ examples**, and that teachers specialising in education for specific professions need more help in relating these to democratic culture:

“Since it refers to the teachers of economics, electrical engineering, buildings, etc., it is important to organize a large number of trainings for them for the development of democratic culture in schools, as well as to make a manual or instruction that would help them consider it better.” (Policy-maker)

3.4 Quality of training

During the consultation concern was expressed about the formal nature of some of the training and training resources currently available to Montenegrin schools. This concern came mainly from NGO representatives:

“One more thing which is very interesting is that they are used to ‘trainings’ during which they get a lot of theory and at the end they do not feel competent to apply things in practice. Very narrow discussions and no real analyses or possibility to experiment, exchange ...” (NGO representative)

“ ... it is very important that these things are done by international experts or independent national experts.” (NGO representative)

On the other hand, a number teachers from the pilot schools said how much the experience of being involved in the project, especially in working collaboratively with colleagues and participating in peer learning activities with other schools, had given them confidence in their own abilities as trainers. This was expressed in the desire to have further training themselves so as to be able to carry out training in neighbouring and other schools:

“I would also like to participate if possible in a concept known as training for trainers where we could be directly involved in making impact.” (Teacher)

Comment:

The desire for further practical examples and case studies may simply reflect the fact that designing new learning activities is difficult and demands imagination. It is usually easier to emulate what others do than develop new ideas from scratch oneself. In this case, however, it may also indicate that although the rhetoric of democratic school culture may have been accepted its implications for policy and practice at school level may not be fully understood. It is one thing to copy specific activities modelled by a trainer in the seminar room, but another to generalise from these back in school. Either way, access to a range of exemplar activities and case studies can only enhance practice in this field.

It may also be helpful for schools to have guidance on the design of written lesson plans and how this can help subject teachers consciously incorporate the competences into their lessons.

There is wide agreement among stakeholders that improving practice in democratic culture in Montenegrin schools will require the involvement of a range of agents – school leaders, teachers and other school staff, and students as well as parents and community representatives. The concept of a whole-school approach suggests that this involvement should be a collaborative one. It would seem important, therefore, for the different stakeholders of a school to come together in teams for joint training activities.

Though school leaders are busy people with many commitments, if they are to take preparation for active citizenship seriously as one of the basic aims of education, they need to be at the heart of the training and development process. As leaders they need to be able to offer a vision of and provide leadership for the development of democratic culture in their schools. In practical terms, this means working in conjunction with school stakeholders to develop whole-school policy on democratic culture, and being able to implement, monitor and evaluate that policy. It also means incorporating democratic culture into the school's annual policy development cycle.

In order to do this school leaders will need some mechanism for mapping and evaluating the quality of provision in their schools: a self-evaluation process which will allow them to audit their school's existing strengths in this area, identify and prioritise areas for development, and indicate the kinds of action, including professional development, needed for this.

The knowledge and expertise accrued by some of the pilot-school teams during the project and their willingness to participate even more actively in future training, suggests the value of further skilling these teachers to act as trainers in their own right. Their grass-roots experience of team-building and whole-school working in their own institutions will stand them in good stead for this. A 'training-the-trainers' programme for these teachers could be an important next step for the project. Selected NGO personnel may also make good candidates for such a programme.

Policy on the assessment (as well as the accreditation) of student learning in this area is, in general, not well advanced in Europe. There are organisational difficulties associated with assessing learning which occurs across the whole school, including through the quality of relationships and learning climate as well as in a range of formal school subjects. There are also difficulties, including ethical ones, of assessing a students' personal values. But school improvement does depend on being able to make judgements about student learning. It is important, therefore, to 'grasp the nettle' in this difficult area and try to develop some effective, yet school – and student-friendly approach to the assessment and accreditation of student learning. It is more than likely that some kind of multi-layered model is to be preferred, involving self-assessment, measurement of collective as well as individual outcomes and an element of student choice in terms of accreditation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The methods used in future training in this field should follow those used in the pilot project, including **peer learning**, **active learning** and **collaborative learning**.
2. Schools should be provided with a range of **practical exemplars** and **case studies** from other schools, including, where possible, from other regions or countries. These should cover all the different areas of provision included in a whole-school approach, such as celebration days, humanitarian actions, subject-teaching, school parliaments etc., and the whole-school approach itself. The activities should be **easy to implement** and represent **best practice** in the field, including showing how existing practice can, when organised appropriately, make a significant contribution to democratic culture, e.g., involving students in the planning and running of a celebration day, rather than just taking part.
3. Schools should have guidance on how the **form and use of written lesson plans** can contribute to the development of a more democratic culture in the classroom
4. **School leaders** should be made a priority group for new training.
5. Training should be a **school-based**, with school leaders taking part alongside staff and other school stakeholders in **joint activities**.
6. Training should aim at the development of a **whole-school approach**. This should include the creation of both **whole-school policy** and a **small team** of teachers, staff, students, parents, and others who will be **responsible for actioning** it.
7. A **model of a whole-school approach** to democratic school culture should be created. This should identify the **generic elements** in a whole-school approach, e.g., subject-teaching, agreeing and enforcing codes of behaviour, staff-student relations, etc., together with the **kinds of activities** which characterise them.
8. A **school self-evaluation matrix** should be created. This should be capable of being used to **evaluate progress in policy and practice** in democratic school culture in a school, to **set priorities** for carrying forward the agenda and **identify areas of need** for further development, including through professional training.
9. A **'training-the-trainers' programme** should be set up. This should focus on the training of individuals from the most successful pilot-school teams to facilitate training in other schools.
10. **NGOs** working in the field of inclusion and citizenship should be encouraged to participate in training to facilitate training in schools alongside pilot-school teams.
11. A **national working group** should be set up to consider issues relating to the **assessment of student outcomes** in democratic school culture.
12. Special attention should be given to the **need of specialist teachers in vocational schools to relate democratic culture to the specific professions** for which they are preparing their students.

4. POLICY INITIATIVES

During the consultation stakeholders were asked to rate a number of hypothetical national policy initiatives in terms of the extent which they contribute to the development of a democratic culture in Montenegrin schools. There was **general support across all groups of stakeholders for the following:**

- **new teaching resources relating to democratic school culture,**
- **the creation of a national/regional group or association of teachers who wish to specialise in democratic school culture,**

- **the creation of national/regional groups or associations of teachers who wish to promote a democratic culture through their subject,**
- **mandatory training in school democracy for all new teachers,**
- **Civic Education as a mandatory school subject – instead of just being an elective**
- **opportunities for schools to collaborate with each other in fostering a democratic school culture,**
- **having the Council of Europe competences for democratic culture written into national legislation.**

The strongest support among all groups was for the **development of new teaching resources, training in school democracy for all new teachers** and **opportunities for school linking**. As regards, initial teacher training it was instructional to see the amount of interest show in this topic in the focus group of university students training to be teachers, yet the almost complete ignorance about what it might involve in terms of policy and practice in schools. The same was true of the young teachers who formed a small control non-pilot school focus group.

Support was less strong for the idea of forming a national association of teachers specialising in this area, or an association which was subject-related. **While there was considerable support for a policy of writing the competences for democratic culture into national legislation, there was a small handful stakeholders who were strongly against this.**

One respondent spoke about the need to **build policy and practice on a sound academic footing** and called for the development of **a research base** in this field:

“Development of university textbooks, manuals on democratic school culture etc. More research-based teaching at the university about different issues of democratic school culture.” (Policy-maker)

A proposal to **make Civic Education a mandatory school subject once again** was also **slightly contentious**. While a large majority was in favour or strongly in favour of this, it was the policy in the survey which also received the most objections. At the root of the objections was the danger that **schools might mistake the part for the whole**:

“Democratic culture should include all aspects of the school system I do not think that only through an object such as Civic education can be properly understood principles of democratic culture.” (Policy-maker)

Those in favour of re-instating Civic Education were often teachers who had taught it as a separate subject in the past or were currently teaching it as an elective. A major argument was that Civic Education provides students with **information or skills which they would not otherwise get**:

“It should be a mandatory subject. To live your rights you have to know your rights. I think it should be studied again for 6th and 7th grade.” (Teacher)

“Yes. In Civic Education they will learn about the basic competences. In other subjects like Maths they will learn specific competences, like how to respect the language barrier.” (Teacher)

There was also a view that access to Civic Education **improved students’ level of participation in democratic processes in school** in general, especially in the student parliament:

“When they choose their representatives in school parliament, they don’t think about the person they choose. I think Civic Education is important ... to make some criteria when they choose their President, representatives in school parliament also.” (Teacher)

However, there was a warning from secondary-school students about the **quality of teaching on offer** in their primary school, contrasting this with how they are currently by their high-school teacher, a participant in the project

“The whole class, the whole generation took it – as an elective ... They’re not very interested but they think it is easier. We had it in our primary schools ... When we came to high school with our teacher it was really interactive. [In primary school] it wasn’t that interactive, it was boring. We didn’t like it in primary

school, but when we came to high school it was all different, it was interactive.” (School student)

Comment:

Contrasting opinions were expressed on the idea of writing the Council of Europe competences into national legislation. This, of course, could be done in different ways. A way which might attract more general support among teachers would be to write a short supplement in the legislation of each mandatory subject and elective suggesting how the competences apply to that subject. This could include examples of different content or of different ways in which existing content could be taught, together with a list of the kinds of competences that are most relevant to that subject and how they can be applied.

The demand for new teaching resources reinforces what was earlier said about the need for practical examples and case studies. Pilot schools have been working largely from an abstract list of competences thus far. The need for a user-friendly guide to best practice in this area is fairly clear.

Given that they will all have a role to play in the democratic culture of their schools, it is important that new teachers are acquainted with this role before they enter into the teaching profession. This is especially so if active citizenship is to be regarded as a basic aim of education. There would clearly be value in introducing an element of study, perhaps short module, on this topic into the curriculum for initial teacher training. This could be the beginning of education for democratic culture as an area of academic study and research in higher education, which in turn would contribute to improved provision and more effective forms of practice in schools.

The interest in schools linking up with each other and working together on aspects of democratic culture has grown out of the peer learning methods used in the project training. Schools are, of course, free to link up in this way when they wish, but the benefits and ways of doing this should perhaps be encouraged in official guidance on this area.

Civic Education as a mandatory separate subjective or elective has opportunities to offer which other subjects or extra-curricular activities don't. There is a good argument, therefore, for reintroducing it in some way. A number of issues arise, however. Firstly, about the kind of content and teaching methods which are appropriate: information about government and the democratic process must be integrated into the discussion of current social problems. Secondly, about integrating it into other forms of provision in a school to form a unified whole, including how they might be assessed and accredited. Better to get general provision for democratic culture right before a return to Civic Education?

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. A short supplement should be **written in the legislation of each mandatory subject and elective school subject** suggesting **how the competences for democratic culture apply** to that subject. This should include examples of different content or of different ways in which existing content can be taught, together with a list of the kinds of competences that are most relevant to that subject and how they can be applied. This should apply across the school system, including primary, secondary and vocational schools.
2. A simple, user-friendly **best practice guide** to applying the competences should be written. It should be capable of use across the school system and be based on the concept of a whole-school approach.
3. A short **module on democratic school culture** should be developed and included in the initial training of all new school teachers.
4. **Civic Education** should be reintroduced as a **mandatory separate subject** in primary schools in **grades 6 to 9**, and as an **obligatory elective subject** in secondary and vocational subjects. The curriculum should focus on the **study of democracy and the democratic process through the discussion of topical social issues and problems**. The **assessment and accreditation of learning in the subject should be co-ordinated with other aspects of a school's provision in this area**, including extra-curricular activities and active citizenship through other subjects.

5. CHALLENGES

Stakeholders were asked to **rate five factors** in terms of the extent to which they thought they work against the development of democratic culture in Montenegrin schools:

- lack of teacher time
- resistance among teachers and/or school leaders
- uncertainty about the concept of democratic culture
- emphasis in schools on the labour market to the detriment of students' development as citizenship
- the complexity of the competences.

A majority of pilot-school **teachers agreed that lack of teacher time was a significant factor**, by a ratio of 3 to 1 but **policy-makers and NGO representatives were evenly split on this**. The **dominance of an educational ethos based on the needs of the labour market** was rated as equally significant by teachers. Teachers were **evenly split as to whether teacher or school leader resistance was a factor or not** but policy-makers and NGO representatives tended to rate it more strongly. More stakeholders than not said they thought uncertainty about the concept of democratic culture itself was a challenge to development in schools. A large majority of the teachers **reacted strongly against the idea that the complexity of the competences was a problem**, but policy-makers and NGO representatives tended towards the opposite view.

The general question stirred a number of additional comments expressing a range of other challenges to democratic culture in schools. For example, **not understanding the benefits of democratic culture:**

"Insufficient insight of teachers in the benefits of applying democratic culture." (Teacher)

Or **training that is too theoretical:**

"Too formal and sometimes boring approach to democratic school culture training without life/practical connections and instructions how to implement that in the classroom." (Policy-maker)

Or the **continuance of traditional forms of teaching and learning:**

"The main challenge [is that] the application of traditional lessons must disappear. Students from this type of teaching learn nothing, develop [no] creativity, and can not express themselves in a way that would show them that they have developed into independent individuals." (Teacher)

Or **opposition or lack of support from students' families:**

"In traditional and conservative families, parents have a lot of prejudices about their own children, as such they come to school and often find it difficult to accept the democratic rights of others. It is in the mentality of the people in this region, so that school is often the only place where young people feel that they are treated in accordance with the democratic principles of equality, equality and the right to choose. Therefore, the adoption of democratic competences is a wider social problem, which the school itself can not fully, without the support of the wider community and, naturally, families as the basic cells of society." (Teacher)

Or **lack of incentives for or motivation on the part of teachers:**

"Teachers are not happy with their status in the society (low salaries), and most of them are pretty much preoccupied with basic existential problems and needs, and have no wish for any kind of more engagement at their work. Beside of that the teachers are busy, they are not motivated and not satisfied, as well. They would consider that as an additional job, not as an extended non-formal method of education that they need to use on a daily basis." (NGO)

Comment:

Many of the pilot-school teams were high motivated and convinced of the importance of democratic school culture. This is not necessarily true of teachers in all schools in Montenegro. Some form of incentive would probably

help more teachers to engage seriously with this issue. Another approach might be to begin by focusing on those aspects of democratic culture which have clear benefits for everyone in the school, and especially for the teachers themselves. These could include initiatives in which students could contribute to the improvement of school physical environment, help solve problems of bullying or violence (e.g., through peer mediation), induct younger students into school life (e.g., buddy schemes) or help organise parents meetings. The student parliament could have an important role in researching the kind of activities that might be relevant, e.g., by asking teaching staff to suggest simple things which would make life as teachers in that school better and easier.

The warning about the danger of too-theoretical and over-formal professional development activities chimes with other comments made in the consultation about the quality of training sometimes on offer to schools in the past. It reinforces the need for an approach to future training based on experiential and collaborative learning – trying out activities with colleagues, reflecting on the experience together and adapting them accordingly.

Reference to negative family influence in some situations reinforces the importance of engaging parents or carers in the life of the school as an aspect of democratic culture. It also reminds us of the role they can play in creating a more democratic culture in school.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Guidance on democratic culture should clearly **identify the benefits** to the school, to teaching and other staff, to students and their parents and families.
2. Training for schools should begin by **focusing on activities which have clear benefits for the running of the school** as a working organisation, e.g., improvements to school's physical environment or solving problems of bullying or violence.
3. Students' **parents or carers should, wherever be possibly be included in training activities** relating to democratic school culture.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

In the previous section we described aspects of the current situation in Montenegro following the implementation of the action 'Fostering a democratic school culture in Montenegro' from evidence collected through a consultation with local stakeholders. A number of concrete recommendations were made on the basis of this situation analysis. In this next section we consider how to **scale up from the experiences of the pilot schools** to the policy level by developing **an educational strategy** based on those recommendations.

Proposals

The most important strategic assets arising out of the project are a number of **trained school teams** with experience of developing policy and practice on democratic culture in their schools, **trained local co-ordinators** with experience of advising and supporting schools in this, and **a large bank of practices**, including the Ministry-instituted **Inclusive Day**.

In the situation analysis, however, we also noted that **some of pilot schools were significantly more advanced** in their policy and practice than others. The **concept of a democratic school culture and the meaning of the Council of Europe competences for democratic culture did not appear to be grasped as well** in some places as others. Existing familiarity with some of the terminology and practices as a result of other educational interventions led in some cases to an element of confusion about, or over-simplification of the role of democratic culture in quality education. For example, over the term 'active learning'. In these cases it meant that teachers were unlikely to incorporate new practices into the teaching of their subject because they felt their existing approach was already achieving the competences. Similarly, they might fail to see the opportunities for competence acquisition in other aspects of school life – for example, through the student parliament. It is for this reason we propose that **clarifying the concept of democratic school culture and identifying its far-reaching implications for school life and decision-making should be one of the first steps in the strategy**. To do this it is proposed that a **'model' of democratic school culture** be developed, a short user-friendly text outlining the different opportunities available for the acquisition of democratic competences in a school and the methods that can be used to effect this, including in diagrammatic form.

While a number of **school leaders** were closely involved in and supportive of the work of their school teams, school leaders were not as such targeted for training by the project. The evidence of the consultation suggests, however, that school leaders should have a central role to play in taking the project to its next level. This is because of the 'whole-school' nature of democratic culture: to be effective it needs to **pervade every aspect of school life**. For school leaders to be able to develop policy across their school, they need a comprehensive understanding of what is involved in this dimension of schooling, some means of assessing their school's present level of provision and a way of identifying areas of need for further development. For this reason we propose the **development of a school self-evaluation matrix** which will enable school leaders to do this.

To help school leaders and other stakeholders get some sense of the importance of education for democratic culture in relation to other school activities, we propose the design of a **'big picture' map**. The map would be designed to show the **role of education for democratic culture in the overall purpose of education** and its relation to the other main purposes of education.

Again on the basis of the whole-school nature of democratic culture it is important that all school stakeholders have access to training and that training should be a joint or collaborative enterprise, involving students and parents as well as school leaders, teachers and other staff. Similarly, the development and implementation of policy requires **school stakeholders working together to provide a whole-school experience for learners**. For this reason, we propose that the next round of training should be **school-based**, and involve a range of stakeholders including the school leader. Its aim should be the creation of a **small expert team in each school, capable of developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policy across the school over time**.

To deliver the kind of training needed to achieve this it is proposed to invite the **local co-ordinators and other lead teachers from the more advanced pilot schools** to take part in a **train-the-trainers programme**.

It might also include members of local NGOs who have experience of work in this area. The training will focus in the first instance on the need to set up the kind of **small expert teams** proposed above, working with the school leader and other stakeholders **to develop their capacity for policy-making and delivery within the school**. In the pursuit of this it is proposed they **use the new tools** already suggested: the 'model' of democratic culture and the school 'self-evaluation' matrix. For the best results the training programme should be led jointly by the kind of national and international (Council of Europe) trainers involved in the first round of training and employing the same kind of experiential learning, interactive learning and peer learning techniques.

In the light of demand for new resources and the desire expressed by pilot schools for more practical examples and case studies, it is proposed that a **'good practice guide'** be developed. This would be a user-friendly guide to **implementing democratic competences across the school**, focusing on how the different values, attitudes, skills and forms of critical knowledge are learned, and illustrated with simple activities and approaches any school can develop. It is expected that **examples of practices designed and used by the pilot schools** would contribute substantially to its creation, and that would be used alongside the other new tools in the school-based training.

It is proposed that the new cohort of trainers would also be able to deliver training in **specific topics** like **teaching the competences through formal subjects, lesson-planning, the inclusion of minority groups, use of student parliaments, engaging parents**, etc. Elements of these may be covered in first meetings with schools, but it is envisaged they might also become topics for **'bespoke' training** identified as a specific area for action by schools further down the line.

The **assessment and accreditation** of learners poses a number of problems in the case of whole-school policy and practice. Nevertheless, some element of judgement on outcomes is essential for future policy development. It is proposed, therefore, that a **national working party** is set up to scope possible approaches that might be used in Montenegrin schools.

As regards the possible re-introduction of **Civic Education** as a mandatory separate subject in primary schools and obligatory elective elsewhere, the message from the stakeholder consultation was to proceed with caution. However, we believe that Civic Education has the potential to offer opportunities for learning which are not available elsewhere in the school – providing it is integrated into wider school policy and practice, and is taught using appropriate methods. So it is proposed that a reconsideration of the curriculum for such a subject be left till a later phase in the up-scaling process when schools should be in a better position to handle it.

Finally, we propose that a **short module** on democratic school culture be designed for use with beginning teachers in **initial teacher training** in higher education. It should be based on an experiential learning approach and structure round the democratic competences. The idea is give university students a taste of what is involved in this aspect of education both as learners and as facilitators of learning in preparation for their lives in school.

THE 'ROAD MAP'¹⁵

It is envisaged that the proposals made here are implemented over time in a number of phased stages following the kind of logic alluded to above:

Phase 1:

- 'Big picture' map
- 'Model' of democratic school culture –
- School 'self-evaluation matrix'
- 'Good practice guide'

Phase 2:

- Training-of-trainers programme

Phase 3:

- School-based training
- Module for initial teacher training

Phase 4:

- School-based training – continued
- Working party on assessment and accreditation

Phase 5:

- School-based training – continued
- Curriculum regulations for Civic Education

15 See Appendix 1

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Horizontal Facility for Western Balkans and Turkey

<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/horizontal-facility/home>

Council of Europe Programme Office in Podgorica

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/podgorica/home>

APPENDIX 1: ROAD MAP

PHASE 1:	PHASE 2:	PHASE 3:	PHASE 4:	PHASE 5:
'BIG PICTURE' MAP 'MODEL' OF DEMOCRATIC CULTURE 'SELF-EVALUATION MATRIX' 'GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE'	TRAINING OF TRAINERS PROGRAMME	SCHOOL-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMME MODULE INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING	SCHOOL-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMME WORKING PARTY ON ASSESSMENT & ACCREDITATION	SCHOOL-BASED TRAINING PROGRAMME CURRICULUM REGULATIONS FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire 1 (Pilot Schools)

This questionnaire asks you about your experiences of participating in the project Fostering Democratic School Culture in Montenegro, and for your opinions on implementing the competences for democratic culture in your school and in other schools in the country.

The more detail you can put in to your answers, the more helpful they will be.

If you are able to answer in English, please do.

A. YOU AND YOUR SCHOOL

- Your job, e.g., Science teacher, school director _____
- Your school, e.g., primary, secondary, vocational _____

B. TRAINING SEMINAR ON COMPETENCES AND DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE

- What things did you find helpful in the training seminar?

What things were missing from the seminar that you wanted to learn more about?

C. FOLLOW-UP IN SCHOOL – AFTER THE SEMINAR

1. Which of the competences for democratic school culture were chosen as priorities for your school?

2. What activities have you done in your school to develop these competences? Write as many as you can.

3. Which of these activities were new to your school? Which are developments based on what you were already doing before?

4. How successful have these activities been in your school? How can you tell?

5. In your opinion, how important is it to create a democratic culture in schools? Why do you think this?

D. WHAT NEXT?

What do you think should happen next? Please rate the following by circling the answer nearest to your opinion:

1. More training about democratic school culture for the pilot schools? YES NO

2. Training about democratic school culture for other schools? YES NO

If you have another answer, write it here:

E. TRAINING NEEDED

What kinds of training do you think are most needed in Montenegrin schools in relation to the competences for democratic school culture? Please rate the following by circling the answer nearest to your opinion:

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. How to incorporate the competences into different subjects? | YES | NO |
| 2. How to plan lessons using the competences? | YES | NO |
| 3. How to assess students' learning of the competences? | YES | NO |
| 4. How to link competence learning in different subjects and with learning through extra-curricular activities and the student parliament? | YES | NO |
| 5. How to encourage other school colleagues to engage with the competences? | YES | NO |
| 6. How school leaders can incorporate the competences into whole-school policy | YES | NO |
| 7. How parents and the community can contribute to students' learning of the competences? | YES | NO |
| 8. How to develop the competences in schools with different types of children, e.g., Roma, Egyptians? | YES | NO |

If you have another answer, write it here:

F. POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

What policy developments do you think would help schools to develop a democratic culture? Please rate the following by circling the answer nearest to your opinion:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. New teaching resources relating to the competences, e.g., guides, planning tools, lesson materials? | YES | NO |
| 2. The creation of a national/regional group or association of teachers who wish to specialise in democratic school culture? | YES | NO |
| 3. The creation of national/regional groups or associations of teachers who wish to promote a democratic culture through their subject, e.g., Maths, History? | YES | NO |
| 4. Mandatory training in the competences for all new teachers? | YES | NO |
| 5. Civic Education as a mandatory school subject – instead of just being an elective? | YES | NO |
| 6. Opportunities for schools to collaborate with each other in fostering a democratic school culture? | YES | NO |
| 7. Having the competences written into national legislation? | YES | NO |

If you have another answer, write it here:

G. CHALLENGES

What do you think are the main challenges to creating a democratic culture in Montenegrin schools? Please rate each of the following by circling the answer nearest to your opinion:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Teachers are too busy and do not have enough time? | YES | NO |
| 2. Resistance to the idea among some teachers and school leaders? | YES | NO |
| 3. Uncertainty about how to assess the competences? | YES | NO |
| 4. Too much emphasis on schools on preparing young people for the market, and too little on preparing them for life as citizens in society? | YES | NO |
| 5. The competences are too complex? | YES | NO |

If you have another answer, write it here:

H. ANYTHING ELSE?

If you want to add something else, please write it below.

THANK YOU!

FOSTERING A DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE IN MONTENEGRO

Questionnaire 2 (Key Stakeholders)

Fostering a democratic culture in schools is a growing policy response to challenges posed by increasing migration, diversity and support for violent extremism in European society. This questionnaire asks you for your opinions on this policy and how it might be implemented in Montenegrin schools.

The more detail you can put in to your answers, the more helpful they will be.

If you are able to answer in English, please do.

A. YOU AND YOUR ROLE

- Your role, e.g., Ministry, University, NGO _____

B. DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE

1. How important do you think it is to create a democratic culture in Montenegrin schools? Why do you think this?

2. In your view, what are the main elements in a democratic school culture?

3. Are you aware of any practical initiatives which Montenegrin schools have undertaken with a view to creating a school culture that is more democratic? Can you give examples?

C. TARGETING TRAINING

Which school stakeholder groups do you think would most benefit from training related to democratic school culture? Please rate the following by circling the answer nearest to your opinion:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|----|
| 1. Training for school leaders? | YES | NO |
| 2. Training for classroom teachers? | YES | NO |
| 3. Training for pupils/students? | YES | NO |
| 4. Training for parents? | YES | NO |

If you have another answer, write it here:

D. TRAINING FOCUS

Where do you think the main training focus should be in schools? Please rate the following by circling the answer nearest to your opinion:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Classroom teaching and learning | YES | NO |
| 2. Extra-curricular activities | YES | NO |
| 3. Student parliaments | YES | NO |
| 4. Assessing pupils/students' democratic competences? | YES | NO |
| 5. Developing whole-school policies | YES | NO |
| 6. The contribution of parents and the local community learning of the competences? | YES | NO |
| 7. The inclusion of minority groups, e.g., Roma, Egyptians? | YES | NO |

If you have another answer, write it here:

E. SUPPORTING POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

What other policy developments do you think would help schools to develop a democratic culture? Please rate the following by circling the answer nearest to your opinion:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. New teaching resources relating to the competences, e.g., guides, planning tools, lesson materials? | YES | NO |
| 2. The creation of a national/regional group or association of teachers who wish to specialise in democratic school culture? | YES | NO |
| 3. The creation of national/regional groups or associations of teachers who wish to promote a democratic culture through their subject, e.g., Maths, History? | YES | NO |
| 4. Mandatory training in the competences for all new teachers? | YES | NO |
| 5. Civic Education as a mandatory school subject – instead of just being an elective? | YES | NO |
| 6. Opportunities for schools to collaborate with each other in fostering a democratic school culture? | YES | NO |
| 7. Having democratic school culture principles written into national legislation? | YES | NO |

If you have another answer, write it here:

F. CHALLENGES

What do you think are the main challenges to creating a democratic culture in Montenegrin schools? Please rate each of the following by circling the answer nearest to your opinion:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Teachers are too busy and do not have enough time? | YES | NO |
| 2. Resistance to the idea among some teachers and school leaders? | YES | NO |
| 3. Uncertainty about what school democracy means? | YES | NO |
| 4. Too much emphasis on schools on preparing young people for the market, and too little on preparing them for life as citizens in society? | YES | NO |

If you have another answer, write it here:

G. ANYTHING ELSE?

If you want to add something else, please write it below.

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX 3: SCHOOLS AND ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

The following individuals and organisations took part in the stakeholder consultation, by completing questionnaires or participating in focus groups or face-to-face interviews:

Ms Olivera Nikolic, Head of the Department for Primary Education, Ministry of Education

Ms Tamara Milic, Head of Unit for Preschool and Inclusive Education, Ministry of Education

Ms Anita Maric, Advisor for Inclusive Education, Bureau for Educational Services

Mr Radoje Novovic, Head of the Department for Research and Development of the Education System, Bureau for Educational Services

Ms Vidosava Kascelan, Senior Adviser, Education, Bureau for Educational Services

Ms Aleksandra Popovic, Adviser, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights

Mr Sokolj Beganaj, Adviser, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights

Ms Sandra Brkanovic, Head of Department for Research and Development of Qualifications, Centre for Vocational Education and Training

Ms Dubravka Drakic, Quality Assurance Centre, University of Montenegro

Mr Sasa Milic, Department of Pedagogy, University of Montenegro

Ms Bojka Djukanovic, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro,

Ms Dijana Vuckovic, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Montenegro

Mr Dragutin Scekcic, School Director, Primary School "Veljko Drobniakovic", Risan

Ms Maja Kovacevic, Education Officer, UNICEF

Ms Marijana Blecic, Local School Co-ordinator

Ms Sabra Decevic, Local School Co-ordinator

Ms Aleksandra Radoman-Kovacevic, Local School Co-ordinator

Ms Nejl Muric, School student, Gymnasium "30 September", Rozaje

Ms Ajna Dacic, School student, Gymnasium "30 September", Rozaje

Youth Office, Department for Social Affairs, Budva Municipality

Elementary School "[Božidar Vuković Podgoričanin](#)", [Podgorica](#)

Elementary School "Njegos", Cetinje

Elementary School "Vuk Karadzic", Berane

Gymnasium "Cetinje", Cetinje

Gymnasium "Miloje Dobrasinovic", Bijelo Polje

Gymnasium "Panto Malisic", Berane

Gymnasium "[Petar I Petrović Njegoš](#)", [Danilovgrad](#)

Gymnasium "Slobodan Skerovic", Podgorica

Gymnasium "25 Maj", Tuzi

Gymnasium "Stojan Cerovic", Niksic

Vocational School "Braca Selic", Kolasin
NGO Centre for Civic Education
NGO Pedagogical Centre
NGO Young Roma
NGO Forum MNE
NGO Education and Training Centre Montenegro
NGO Red Cross of Montenegro
NGO Help, Njemacka
NGO Juventas
NGO Pruzite nam sansu
NGO Roma Education Fund
NGO Children of Montenegro
Students of Teaching Faculty, University of Montenegro, Niksic



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ENG

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