

RFCDC – LEARNING ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Comparing perspectives on Covid-19



Target group:
**Learners in primary
and secondary schools**

**ADDRESSING
CONTROVERSIAL
ISSUES**



ADDRESSING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES



Comparing perspectives on Covid-19

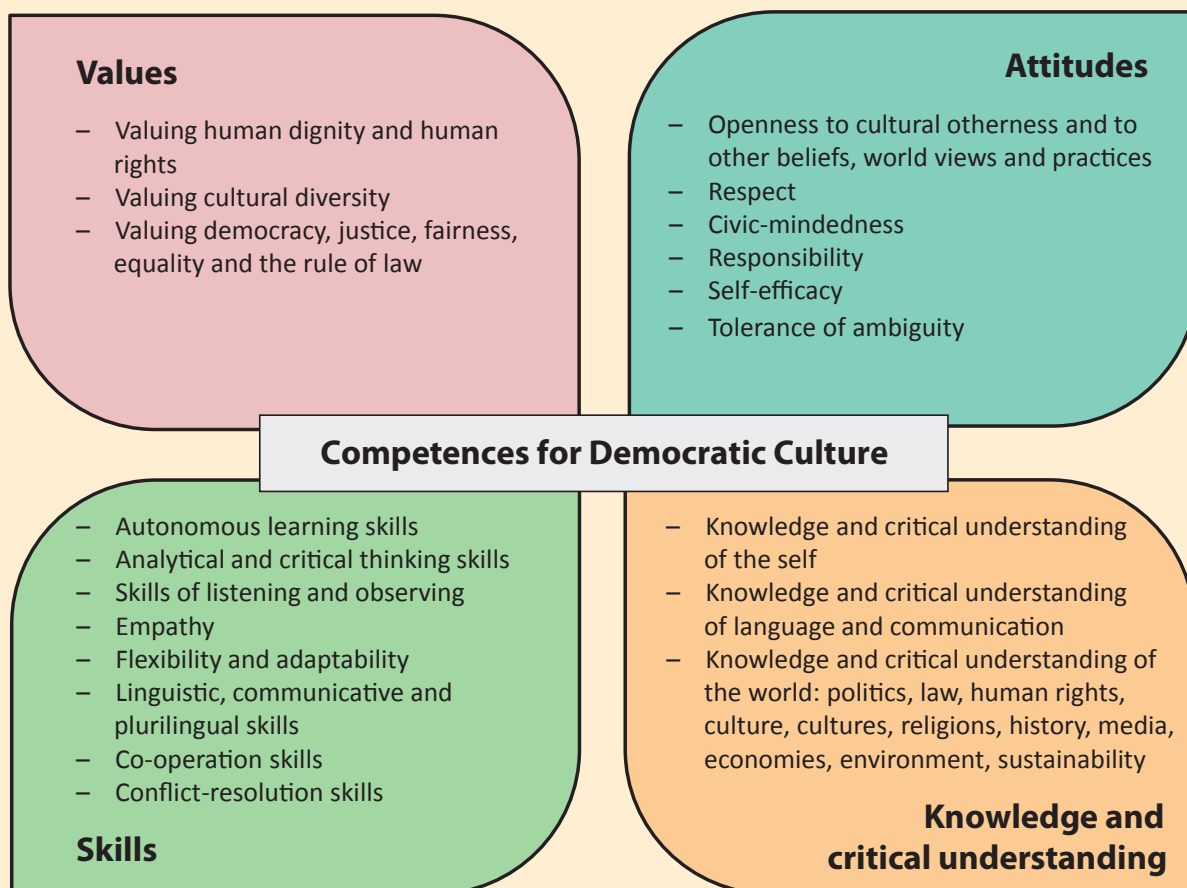
RATIONALE

— The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the whole world. This provides learners with the opportunity to discuss the pandemic with their peers from other countries. In this activity, learners compare their own country's government actions with those of other countries and create a list of good practices for tackling the pandemic. Understanding other perspectives

on a situation such as a pandemic enriches learners' views, especially in cases where controversial actions might have been taken by a country's government towards the pandemic. Co-operation with learners in other countries also promotes learners' linguistic and communicative skills, understanding of other countries, and can also generate novel ideas.



THE RFCDC COMPETENCES



COMPETENCES PROMOTED BY THE ACTIVITY

— Valuing cultural diversity; Openness to cultural otherness, other beliefs, world views and practices; Skills of listening and observing; Linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills; Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: cultures, media, economies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

— Completing this activity will help learners to:

- ▶ Seek contact with other people in order to learn about their culture;
- ▶ Listen carefully to differing opinions;
- ▶ Understand other people positions;
- ▶ Appreciate that there may be different perspectives on important social issues in different cultures.



DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

1. Identify and establish contact with a suitable school in another country with which to collaborate. Interactions can take place through online means such as Skype or Zoom. If the learners do not share a common language, they can communicate either through a language that they are learning at school as a second language, or through a lingua franca.
2. Pair each learner with a peer in the other school, or pair small groups of learners in each school with each other. Ask them to discuss the current Covid-19 situation in their own countries, and to compare the actions that are being taken by their respective governments for dealing with the pandemic. They can also be asked to identify any differences between their governments' responses, while older learners may be asked to research whether any of the actions that are

being taken by their government are controversial. They should consult the Covid-19 response pages on the official websites of the learners' national governments for information, and other authoritative web-based resources. The following questions may be given to the learners to stimulate their discussion (these questions may be simplified for younger learners):

- ▶ Is the Covid-19 pandemic progressing in the same way or in different ways in the two countries?
- ▶ What actions are being taken by the governments in the two countries for dealing with the pandemic?
- ▶ Are the actions in the two countries being properly presented on international websites (such as the World Health Organization website)?

MATERIALS OR RESOURCES REQUIRED

- ▶ A partner school in another country – the Council of Europe's Democratic Schools Network is a suitable place for finding partners:
 - <https://www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/school-projects>
- ▶ Access to an online means of communication such as Skype or Zoom:
 - <https://www.skype.com/>
 - <https://www.zoom.us/>
- ▶ Advice about online collaboration, for example:
 - <https://rm.coe.int/collaboration/16809e45bc>
- ▶ Tools for online collaboration, for example:
 - Google Slides <https://www.google.co.uk/slides/about/>
 - Tricider <https://youtu.be/dvLuwL9Quzw>
- ▶ World Health Organization Covid-19 picture dashboard:
 - <https://covid19.who.int/>
- ▶ National responses to the Covid-19 pandemic:
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_responses_to_the_COVID-19_pandemic



- ▶ What differences exist between the two countries' responses, and what are the reasons for those differences?
- ▶ Are any of the actions that have been taken by the governments in their countries been controversial, and if so, why are they controversial?
- ▶ Can the learners identify some actions from the other country which could be implemented in their own country?

The online collaborations can be conducted using Google Slides or Tricider.

3. Ask learners to discuss the actions that can be taken by national governments, and to develop a list of the actions which they think that national governments should be taking.
4. The learners (or groups of learners) make presentations on the outcomes of the activity to the other learners in their own class. They may also make presentations to learners in the other school.

The international contacts created by this activity can also be used for other joint activities and collaborations between the learners in the two schools in the future.

REFLECTION ON THE ACTIVITY AND THE LEARNING OUTCOMES THAT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED

— Ask the learners to reflect critically on what they have learnt through the activity. They should also be asked to comment on and discuss the learning process and the results of collaborating with learners from other countries. The following questions may be used:

- ▶ What did you learn about your partners in the other country?
- ▶ What challenges or difficulties did you encounter during the communication process, and how did you overcome them?
- ▶ How has your understanding of people in other countries, and your ability to communicate with them, been changed and enriched by this activity?
- ▶ What have you learned about government responses to the Covid-19 pandemic?

www.coe.int/education

www.coe.int/en/web/education/covid-19

www.coe.int/free-to-speak-safe-to-learn

www.coe.int/rfcdc

PREMS 04/6/21

ENG



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