# Part 1

## Understanding democracy and human rights

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The idea of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education is not new. Civic or citizenship education has been present in various European countries for many years and has been implemented in many different ways. Mainly this has consisted of informing learners about the political system – that is to say, the constitution – in place in their country, using formal methods of instruction. The underlying model of citizenship has therefore been a passive and minimal one. Citizenship for the vast majority of ordinary people has consisted in little more than the expectation that they should obey the law and vote in public elections. These responsibilities have been prescribed by the legal and cultural environments that citizens live in. Some countries have also included human rights education in their curriculum. Increasingly, educators across Europe are becoming aware of the links between education for democratic citizenship and human rights education.

In recent years, however, events experienced and changes taking place across Europe have challenged this model of citizenship. They include:

- ethnic conflicts and nationalism;
- global threats and insecurity;
- development of new information and communication technologies;
- environmental problems;
- population movements;
- emergence of new forms of formerly suppressed collective identities;
- demand for increased personal autonomy and new forms of equality;
- weakening of social cohesion and solidarity among people;
- mistrust of traditional political institutions, forms of governance and political leaders;
- increasing interconnectedness and interdependence – political, economic and cultural – regionally and internationally.

In the face of challenges such as these, it has become clear that new kinds of citizens are required: citizens that are not only informed and understand their formal responsibilities as citizens, but also active – able to freely contribute to the life of their community, their country and the wider world, and actively participate in ways that express their individuality and help to solve problems.

# Unit 1
# What the concepts mean

## 1. Politics, democracy and democratic governance of schools

The goal of EDC/HRE, Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, is to enable and encourage young citizens to participate in their communities. The goal of democratic citizenship refers to a concept of democracy and politics. Democratic school governance plays a key role in EDC/HRE, as it offers students opportunities to learn how to participate in a community. This unit therefore outlines these three concepts, as they are crucial for EDC/HRE as it is conceived in this manual.

### 1.1 Politics

#### 1.1.1 Politics – power play and problem solving

Newspaper readers or TV news watchers will find that many media reports on politics fall into one of the following two categories:

- Politicians attack their opponents. In doing so, they may question their rivals' integrity or ability to hold office, or deal with particular problems. This perception of politics – as a "dirty business" – makes some people turn away in disgust.
- Politicians discuss solutions to solve difficult problems that affect their country or countries.

These two categories of political events correspond to Max Weber's classic definition of politics:

- Politics is a quest and struggle for power. Without power, no political player can achieve anything. In democratic systems, political players compete with each other for public approval and support to win the majority. Therefore, part of the game is to attack the opponents, for example in an election campaign, to attract voters and new party members.
- Politics is a slow "boring (of) holes through thick planks, both with passion and good judgement".[4] The metaphor stands for the attempt to solve political problems. Such problems need to be dealt with, as they are both urgent and affect society as a whole, and are therefore complex and difficult. Politics is something eminently practical and relevant, and discussion must result in decisions.

Politics in democratic settings therefore requires political actors to perform in different roles that are difficult to bring together. The struggle for power requires a charismatic figure with powers of rhetoric and the ability to explain complex matters in simple words. The challenge of solving the big problems of the day, and our futures, demands a person with scientific expertise, responsibility and integrity.

#### 1.1.2 Politics in democracy – a demanding task

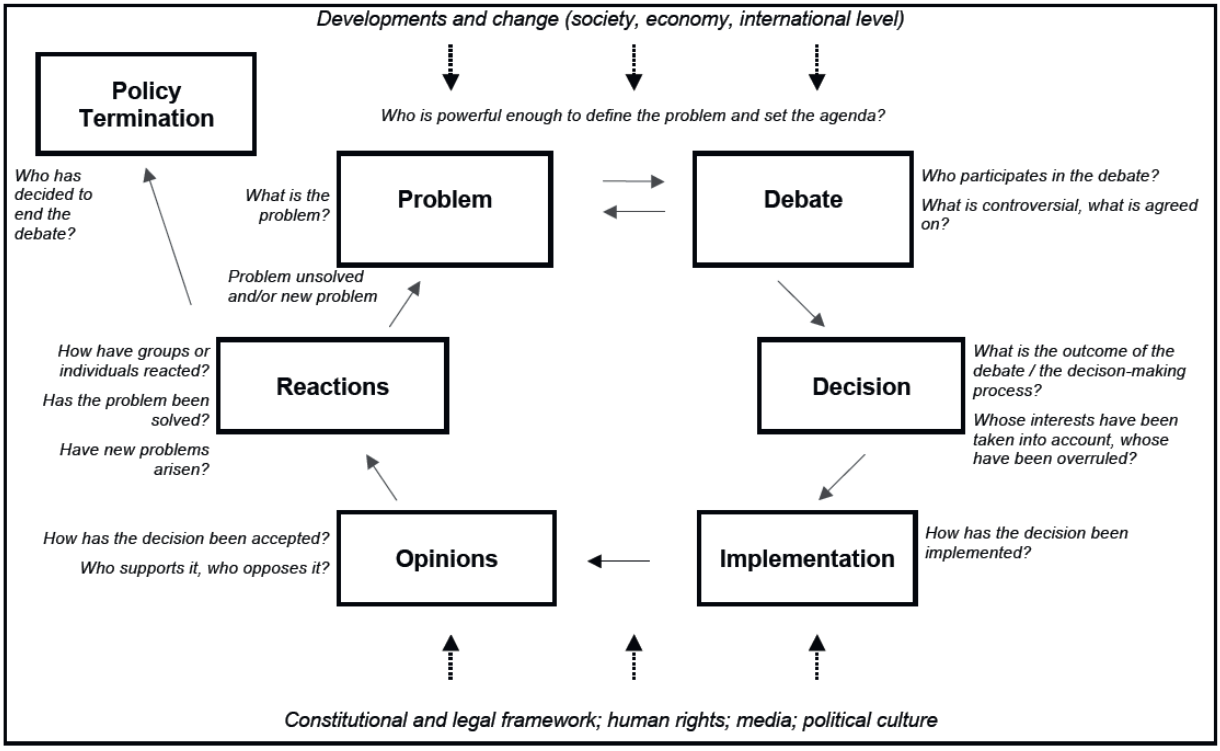
Of course, we first think of political leaders who must meet these role standards that tend to exclude each other. There are prominent examples of leaders who stand for the extremes – the populist and the professor. One tends to turn politics into a show stage, the other into a lecture hall. The first may win the election, but will do little to support society. The second may have some good ideas, but only a few will understand them.

However, not only political leaders and decision makers face this dilemma, but also every citizen who wishes to take part in politics. In a public setting, speaking time is usually limited, and only those speakers will make an impact whose point is clear and easy to understand. Teachers will discover that there are surprising parallels between communication in public and communication in school – the scarcity of time resources, the need to be both clear and simple, but also able to handle complexity.

4. Weber M. (1997), *Politik als Beruf (Politics as a vocation)*, Reclam, Stuttgart, p. 82 (translation by Peter Krapf).

Exercising human rights – such as freedom of thought and speech, taking part in elections – is therefore a demanding task for all citizens, not only political leaders. In EDC/HRE, young people receive the training in different dimensions of competences, and the encouragement that they need to take part in public debates and decision making. As members of the school community, students learn how to take part in a society governed by principles of democracy and human rights.

### 1.1.3 The policy cycle model: politics as a process of solving problems in a community




*The policy cycle model is a tool to describe and understand political decision-making processes; thus it primarily focuses on one aspect in Max Weber's definition of politics, the "slow boring of holes through thick planks".*

Politics is conceived as a process of defining political problems in a controversial agenda-setting process, and both in defining a political problem and excluding other interests from the agenda, a considerable element of power is involved. The model gives an ideal-type description of the subsequent stages of political decision making: debating, deciding on and implementing solutions. Public opinion and reactions by those persons and groups whose interests are affected show whether the solutions will serve their purpose and be accepted. Minorities or groups too weak to promote their interests who have been overruled may be expected to express their protest and criticism. If the attempt to solve a problem has succeeded (or has been defined as successful), the policy cycle comes to an end (policy termination); if it fails, the cycle begins anew. In some cases, a solution to one problem creates new problems that now must be seen to in a new policy cycle.

The policy cycle model emphasises important aspects of political decision making in democratic systems, and also in democratic governance of schools:

- There is a heuristic concept of political problems and the common good; no one is in a position to define beforehand what the common good is. The parties, groups and individuals taking part in the process have to find out and usually agree to compromise.
- Competitive agenda setting takes place; in pluralist societies, political arguments are often linked to interests.

– Participation is imperfect in social reality, with certain individuals and groups systematically having less access to power and decision-making processes, thus being a model that requires attention to increasing the access of less powerful.
– Political decision making is a collective learning process with an absence of omniscient players (such as leaders or parties with salvation ideologies). This implies a constructivist concept of the common good: the common good is what the majority believes it to be at a given time.
– There is a strong influence of public opinion and media coverage – the opportunity for citizens and interest groups to intervene and participate.

The policy cycle is a model – a design that works like a map in geography. It shows a lot, and delivers a logic of understanding. Therefore models are frequently used in both education and science, because without models we would understand very little in our complex world.

We never mistake a map for the landscape it stands for – a map shows a lot, but only because it omits a lot. A map that showed everything would be too complicated for anyone to understand. The same holds true for models such as the policy cycle. Nor should this model be mistaken for reality. It focuses on the process of political decision making – "the slow boring of holes through thick plants" – but pays less attention to the second dimension of politics in Max Weber's definition, the quest and struggle for power and influence.

In democratic systems, the two dimensions of politics are linked: political decision makers wrestle with difficult problems, and they wrestle with each other as political opponents. In the policy cycle model, the stage of agenda setting shows how these two dimensions go together. To establish an understanding of a political problem on the agenda is a matter of power and influence.

Here is an example. One group claims, "Taxation is too high, as it deters investors," while the second argues, "Taxation is too low, as education and social security are underfunded." There are interests and basic political outlooks behind each definition of the taxation problem, and the solutions implied point in opposite directions: reduce taxation for the higher income groups – or raise it. The first problem definition is neo-liberal, the second is social democrat.

Citizens should be aware of both. The policy cycle model is a tool that helps citizens to identify and judge political decision makers' efforts to solve the society's problems.

## 1.2 Democracy

### 1.2.1 Basic principles

In Abraham Lincoln's famous quotation (1863), democracy is "government of the people, by the people, for the people"; the three definitions can be understood as follows:

– "of": power comes from the people – the people are the sovereign power that exercises power or gives the mandate to do so, and whoever is part of authority may be held responsible by the people;
– "by": power is exercised either through elected representatives or direct rule by the citizens;
– "for": power is exercised to serve the interests of the people, that is, the common good.

These definitions can be understood and linked in different ways. Political thinkers in the tradition of Rousseau insist on direct rule by the citizens (identity of the governed and the government). The people decide everything and are not bound by any kind of law. Political thinkers in the tradition of Locke emphasise the competition between different interests in a pluralist society; within a constitutional framework, they must agree on a decision that serves the common good.

No matter how long the democratic tradition is in a country and how it has developed it cannot be taken for granted. In every country, democracy and the basic understanding of human rights have to be permanently developed to meet the challenges that every generation faces. Every generation has to be educated in democracy and human rights.

### 1.2.2 Democracy as a political system

Core elements of modern constitutional democracies include:

- a constitution, usually in written form, that sets the institutional framework for democracy protected in some countries by an independent, high court; human rights, usually not all, are protected as civil rights;
- human rights are referred to in the constitution and then relegated to civil rights as guaranteed constitutionally. Governments that have signed human rights conventions are obligated to uphold the range of rights they have ratified, regardless of whether they are specifically referred to in the constitution;
- the equal legal status of all citizens: all citizens are equally protected by the law through the principle of non-discrimination and are to fulfil their duties as defined by the law.
- universal suffrage: this gives adult citizens, men and women, the right to vote for parties and/or candidates in parliamentary elections. In addition, some systems include a referendum or plebiscite, that is, the right for citizens to make decisions on a certain issue by direct vote;
- citizens enjoy human rights that give access to a wide range of ways to participate. This includes the freedom of the media from censorship and state control, the freedom of thought, expression and peaceful assembly, and the right of minorities and the political opposition to act freely;
- pluralism and competition of interests and political objectives: individual citizens and groups may form or join parties or interest groups (lobbies), non-governmental organisations, etc. to promote their interests or political objectives. There is competition in promoting interests and unequal distribution of power and opportunities in realising them;
- parliament: the body of elected representatives has the power of legislation, that is, to pass laws that are generally binding. The authority of parliament rests on the will of the majority of voters. If the majority in a parliamentary system shifts from one election to the next, a new government takes office. In presidential systems the head of government, the president, is elected separately by direct vote;
- majority rule: the majority decides, the minority must accept the decision. Constitutions define limits for majority rule that protect the rights and interests of minorities. The quorum for the majority may vary, depending on the issue – for example, two-thirds for amendments to the constitution;
- checks and balances: democracies combine two principles: the authority to exercise force rests with the state, amounting to a "disarmament of citizens".[5] However, to prevent power of force to turn into autocratic or dictatorial rule, all democratic systems include checks and balances. The classic model divides state powers into legislation, executive powers, and jurisdiction (horizontal dimension); many systems take further precautions: a two-chamber system for legislation, and federal or cantonal autonomy, amounting to an additional vertical dimension of checks and balances (such as in Switzerland, the USA or Germany);
- temporary authority: a further means of controlling power is by bestowing authority for a fixed period of time only. Every election has this effect, and in some cases, the total period of office may be limited, as in the case of the US president, who must step down after two four-year terms of office. In ancient Rome, consuls were appointed in tandem, and left office after one year.

### 1.2.3 A misunderstanding of human rights and democracy

Democracy is based on the standards and principles of human rights. Human rights are sometimes misunderstood as a system in which the individual enjoys complete freedom. This, however, is not the case.

5. There is a notable example in which the principle of disarming citizens is modified, namely the USA.

Human rights recognise individual rights and liberties, which are inherent in being human. However, these rights are not absolute. The rights of others must also be respected, and sometimes there will be conflicts between rights. Democratic processes help to set up processes that facilitate the freedom of people, but also set necessary limits. In an EDC/HRE class, for example, a discussion is held. To give all students the opportunity to express their opinion, speaking is rationed, maybe quite strictly. For the same reason, speaking time is limited in parliamentary debates or TV talk shows.

Many rules in the highway code limit our freedom of movement: speed limits in town, having to stop at red traffic lights, etc. Clearly these rules are in place to protect people's life and health.

Democracy gives more freedom to the people, and also to individuals, than any other system of government – provided it is set in an order, that is, an institutional framework, and implemented as such. To function well, democracy relies on a strong state that exercises the rule of law and achieves an accepted degree of distributive justice. A weak state, or weak rule of law, means that a government is not able to carry out its constitutional framework and laws.

### 1.2.4 Strengths and weaknesses

Broadly speaking, the different types of democracies share some strengths and weaknesses including the following.

#### a. Strengths of democracies

- Democracy provides a framework and means for civilised, non-violent conflict resolution; the dynamics of conflict and pluralism support the solution of problems.
- Democracies are "strong pacifists" – both in their societies and in international politics.
- Democracy is the only system that facilitates an exchange of political leadership without changing the system of government.
- Democracies are learning communities that can accommodate human errors. The common good is defined by negotiation, not imposed by an autocratic authority.
- Human rights reinforce democracies by providing a normative framework for political processes that is based on human dignity. Through ratification of human rights treaties, a government can extend to its citizens "promises" that maintain personal liberties and other rights.

#### b. Problems and weaknesses

- Parties and politicians tend to sacrifice long-term objectives for success in elections. Democracies create incentives for short-sighted policy making, for example at the expense of the environment or later generations ("muddling through").
- Government for a people is government within the confines of a nation state. Increasing global interdependence, such as in economic and environmental developments, limits the scope of influence of democratic decision making in a nation state.

### 1.2.5 Conclusions

Democracies depend on their citizens to what extent the strengths of democracies are unfolded and their weaknesses are kept in check. Democracies are demanding systems, depending on their citizens' active involvement and support – an attitude of informed and critical loyalty; as Winston Churchill (1947) put it, "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

Both in established and in young democratic states, EDC/HRE contributes decisively to the political culture that democracies must be rooted in to thrive and survive.

## 1.3 Democratic governance of schools

### 1.3.1 School – a micro democracy?

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) is based on the core principles of teaching through, about and for democracy and human rights in school. School is conceived as a micro-community, an "embryonic society"[6] characterised by formal regulations and procedures, decision-making processes, and the web of relationships influencing the quality of daily life.

Is school then to be conceived as a miniature-size democracy? A glance at the list shows that schools are not small states, in which elections are held, teachers enact like governments, head teachers resemble presidents, etc. Therefore the question may be dismissed as rhetorical. So what can schools do for EDC/HRE?

### 1.3.2 Democratic school governance: four key areas, three criteria of progress

Elisabeth Bäckman and Bernard Trafford, head teachers in Sweden and the UK and authors of the Council of Europe manual "Democratic governance of schools",[7] have explored this question in depth. Schools, they argue, require both management and governance. School management is school administration – for example, the implementation of legal, financial and curricular requirements. The relationship between the head teacher and students is hierarchical, based on instruction and order. School governance, on the other hand, reflects the dynamics of social change in modern society. Schools need to interact with different partners and stakeholders outside school, and to answer problems and challenges that cannot be foreseen. Here, all members of the school community, including first and foremost the students, have an important role to play. The members of the community interact, negotiate and bargain, exercise pressure, make decisions together. No partner has complete control over the other.[8]

Bäckman and Trafford suggest four key areas for democratic school governance:

- governance, leadership and public accountability;
- value-centred education;
- co-operation, communication and involvement: competitiveness and school self-determination;
- student discipline.

Bäckman and Trafford apply three criteria based on the Council of Europe's three basic principles of EDC/HRE, to measure progress in these key areas:

- rights and responsibilities;
- active participation;
- valuing diversity.

### 1.3.3 Teaching democracy and human rights through democratic school governance

Bäckman and Trafford provide a detailed set of tools to meet the task of teaching and living out democracy and human rights in the whole school. Students experience democratic participation in school, but schools remain institutions for education; they are not turned into would-be mini-states although they are mini-societies.

6. See Dewey J. (2007), *The School and Society*, Cosimo, New York, p. 32.

7. Bäckman E. and Trafford B. (2007), *Democratic Governance of Schools*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.

8. Ibid., p. 9.

## 2. Children's rights and the right to education[9]

Children's rights are comprehensively protected by a wide-ranging set of international and regional instruments spanning human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. Children benefit from the rights contained in general treaties. In addition, a number of specialist instruments have been created to accord extra protection to children given their particular vulnerabilities and the importance to society as a whole in ensuring the healthy development and active participation of its young members.

The European Convention on Human Rights ("the Convention") contains many provisions to protect the rights of children, for instance Protocol 1, Article 2, the "right to education". However, the overarching framework for children's rights is the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This was the first treaty specifically concerned with the rights of children and marked an important shift in thinking towards a "rights-based approach" which held governments legally accountable for failing to meet the needs of children. The CRC created a new vision of children as bearers of rights and responsibilities appropriate to their age rather than viewing them as the property of their parents or the helpless recipients of charity.

Children's rights cover every aspect of the lives of children and adolescents and can be broken down into the following main categories:

- survival rights: the right to life and to have the most basic needs met (for example, adequate standard of living, shelter, nutrition, medical treatment);
- development rights: the rights enabling children to reach their fullest potential (for example education, play and leisure, cultural activities, access to information and freedom of thought, conscience and religion);
- participation rights: rights that allow children and adolescents to take an active role in their communities (for example, the freedom to express opinions, to have a say in matters affecting their own lives, to join associations);
- protection rights: rights that are essential for safeguarding children and adolescents from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation (for example, special care for refugee children and protection against involvement in armed conflict, child labour, sexual exploitation, torture and drug abuse).

Education is viewed both as a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realising other human rights. An educational system that embraces a rights-based approach will be better positioned to fulfil its fundamental mission to secure high-quality education for all.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) stipulates:

> (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
>
> (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
>
> (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

9. Author: Felisa Tibbitts (2009). Remarks of Felisa Tibbitts, prepared for the Council of Europe's Evaluation Conference of the European Year of Citizenship through Education, 27-28 April 2006, Sinaia, Romania.

As an extension of some of the ideas first articulated in the UDHR, Article 28 of the CRC defines education as a right and Article 29 comments that education should assist the child in developing her or his "personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential".[10]

Both the CRC and the UDHR recognise that one of the purposes of schooling is to develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Certainly, to truly understand and promote human rights, one has to live them out in relation to others. This involves not only learning about human rights, but also to live in and through human rights. Thus a human rights-based approach (HRBA) to schooling includes the opportunity to learn about and practise human rights values and framework in the classroom. Schools that are reflective of children's rights are centred on the human dignity of children.

The right to education is intended to be implemented and enjoyed by all – regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, nationality, sexual preference, class, or any other identifying factor. In addition, such an education – as defined by the CRC – must be structured in a way that respects the dignity and fundamental human rights of students.

A key principle that is central both to human rights and the HRBA is non-discrimination. In the schooling sector the ramifications are manifold, including equal access to quality education with special attention to vulnerable or marginalised groups.

UNESCO's Child Friendly Schools initiative and HRBAs to schooling want to implement the CRC in and through education. To be able to use an HRBA we need to know more about human rights and child rights, as well as the implications for educational thinking, planning, and evaluation. It forces us to ask questions such as:

- Who is not getting educated? Where are they, and why are they excluded?
- Who should do what to protect, promote and fulfil the right to education?
- Whose capacity, in what, needs to be developed to ensure the right to education?
- Who has to do what to ensure this right and how can partnerships assist in this process?

Principle 1. Express linkages to rights

Questions for us: Are our educational efforts linked expressly to human rights? Do these efforts include the full range of human rights? Do the human rights that are explored in depth have genuine relevance for needs and issues in our communities, or can these connections be made? Are we willing to move beyond our personal "zone of comfort" in linking our work to human rights values?

Principle 2. Accountability

Do those of us who are government representatives or are employed by the state see ourselves as accountable for ensuring education for human rights? In what ways are we accountable? How can children and their guardians ensure such accountability?

Principle 3. Empowerment and participation

Let us think for a moment about those we feel responsible towards in terms of guaranteeing education for human rights. Have we incorporated the ideas of all those who are affected by our policies and activities? Who is absent during our decision-making meetings who has a stake in our conversation? If they are not here, or not involved in conversations back home, how can we bring them to the table? How can we facilitate their points of view on the when, how, who and what of education for democracy and human rights?

10. The right to education is referenced in numerous United Nations and human rights documents including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 14) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Articles 28 and 29). Other key declarations, general comments and documents have expanded on the right to education, including the World Declaration on Education for All (Articles I, III, IV, VI, VII), the Dakar Framework for Action, and Education for All.

Principle 4. Non-discrimination and attention to vulnerable groups

Finally, and in relation to the last point, who are the groups that are least likely at the present time to benefit from our educational programming, and how can we help to ensure their participation? The very groups that have their human rights denied on a daily basis – the marginalised, the vulnerable, the discriminated against – are the ones who will benefit most from our educational efforts. How can we identify them, reach out to them, and create educational programmes that are genuinely meaningful for them?

# Unit 2
# The key to a dynamic concept of citizenship[11]

## 1. Challenges to the traditional model of citizenship

Since the end of the Cold War, several processes of modernisation that shaped our history for a long time before (see the box below) have accelerated and intensified, taking on a new quality. The events experienced and changes taking place across Europe have challenged the traditional model of citizenship:

- The globalisation of free trade and competitive market economies has brought a higher level of welfare to many people in many countries – but not to all. The gaps of unequal distribution between rich and poor have increased, both within and between societies, threatening social cohesion and solidarity among people.
- Competition drives enterprises to permanently increase their productivity to lower their costs of production. This has given rise to a permanent process of innovation, directly affecting products, technologies and jobs, and indirectly affecting our whole way of life. Joseph Schumpeter called this permanent process of innovation "creative destruction".[12] The transformation of whole economies in eastern Europe may be considered as a particularly striking example of such creative destruction.
- Economic growth has produced increasing welfare, but also increasing consumption of natural resources. Rising $CO_2$ emissions make it increasingly difficult and costly to avert, or to adapt to, climate change.
- New information and communication technologies have provided new ways to increase productivity, to exchange and obtain information, and to deliver entertainment, to name but a few. We live in a media culture, and media literacy – how to use the new media both for producing and receiving messages – is becoming an elementary skill like reading and writing.
- Due to economic growth and the achievements of modern medicine, the population in many European countries is ageing, while it is growing in the world as a whole. Both developments pose serious problems for the 21st century.
- Nations have the right to sovereignty and self-determination. But the concept of nations is both inclusive and exclusive. Since the end of the Cold War, we have seen the emergence of new forms of formerly suppressed collective identities.
- Modern societies are typically secular, pluralist societies. Migration across Europe – particularly within the European Union – has contributed to this development. Pluralist societies are more dynamic and productive, but also are more demanding in terms of social cohesion in order to integrate people with different beliefs, values, interests, and social and ethnic backgrounds.
- Democracy offers the best chances to meet these challenges, as any attempt to solve these and other problems by authoritarian rule will fail to take the complex reality of society, economy, environment, conflict resolution, etc., into account on a national, let alone a supranational level. On the other hand, democracy stands and falls with the pledge of equal participation. The more complex our world and the challenges that define our future become, the more difficult it is for the "ordinary citizen" to understand and take part in decision making. Mistrust of traditional political institutions, forms of governance and political leaders are rooted in the feeling of being

11. Based on Huddleston T. (2004), *Tool on Teacher Training for Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, pp. 9f., revised by Peter Krapf.

12. Schumpeter J. (1942, 2008), *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy,* Harper and Brothers, New York, p. 83.

left out and not listened to. Democracy and human rights are precarious projects, and their survival depends on whether their heritage can be passed on to the younger generation.

These lines of development can only be briefly sketched out here. They are man-made, not natural, processes, linked to each other, mutually influencing and reinforcing each other. Because they have been "made", they can also be influenced and changed in their direction and outcome, but not in their complexity.

**Modernisation**

Modernisation is a sociological category referring to the multi-dimensional process of social change. It has increased in speed, scope and complexity in the last two decades, but in a historical perspective, its sources include the Reformation, the invention of the printing press, the era of Enlightenment, the English, American and French revolutions, and the industrial revolution. Modernisation has changed literally every aspect of human life, including the following: how we work and what we do there, where we live and how (often) we travel, our level and distribution of welfare, the development of human rights, globalisation, technology, the values and beliefs we adhere to or abstain from, and how we take part in society and politics.

Modernisation is an ambivalent process, but we cannot avoid it, it is our "fate", for good or for bad. Scientists and philosophers hold controversial views as to whether modernisation is, on the whole, to be considered a burden or a blessing. We judge modernisation as a challenge, holding both risks and opportunities. Challenges must be met to keep the risks under control.

For many people in many societies, modernisation creates potentials and opportunities to enjoy a higher level of welfare and liberty. On the other hand, citizens and their leaders face higher demands to stay abreast of the increasing risks and dangers involved in processes of modernisation.

Education plays a key role to equip people with the competences they need to achieve a positive balance between increasing gains and increasing demands.

In the face of challenges such as these, it has become clear that new forms of citizenship are required: citizens should not only be informed and understand their formal responsibilities as citizens, but should also be active – able and willing to contribute to the life of their community, their country and the wider world, and actively participate in ways that express their individuality and help to solve problems. Mounting challenges require strong societies, with competent – and therefore adequately educated – leaders and citizens.

Educators are optimists. They believe that through adequate education, young people, but also lifelong learners, can acquire the understanding and the means to influence the development of their communities and the planet. Active citizenship, however, is best fostered by learner-centred instruction, rather than instruction emphasising rote and passive learning.

## 1.1 A new kind of citizenship requires a new kind of education

Rote-learning oriented models that are simply reduced to instruction are insufficient in creating the kind of active, informed and responsible citizenship that modern democracies require.

What is required are forms of education that prepare learners for actual involvement in society – forms of education that are as much practical as theoretical, rooted in real-life issues affecting learners and their communities, and taught through participation in school life as well as through the formal curriculum.

The role of the active citizen corresponds to that of the active learner. The concept of constructivist learning provides support for learners who face problems that are new to them. In school, the teacher may already have found an optimal solution. Later, when dealing with the challenges addressed above, the future generation will act as pioneers.

The need to provide such learner-centred teaching presents important challenges for the teaching profession. It means learning new forms of knowledge, developing new teaching methods, finding new ways of working and creating new forms of professional relationships – both with colleagues and with learners. It emphasises teaching based on current affairs over the understanding of historical systems, critical thinking and skills teaching as well as knowledge transmission, co-operative and collaborative working rather than isolated preparation, professional autonomy instead of dependence on central diktat. It requires a change in how we perceive learning, from an idea of learning as teacher-centred to learning through experience, participation, research and sharing.

A didactic, teacher-led, textbook-dominated, knowledge-based orientation has to be replaced by one emphasising student involvement, a broader range of teaching methods and a more skills-based approach. That is what this EDC/HRE edition attempts to contribute to.

# 2. Political culture

## 2.1 Democracy comes to life through its citizens

An example:

Parliamentary elections produce winners and losers. The majority forms the new government, the minority the opposition. The former government may lose office, and a new government with a different political outlook replaces it.

The rules are clear, but this is not enough. The election system will only work if we can rely on the losers, the minority, to accept the result. If they do not, an election can spark off violent conflict, tearing a society apart, instead of strengthening cohesion among its members.

An election campaign gives parties the opportunity to communicate their ideas to the citizens. But what happens if parties that take part promote a racist, fundamentalist or antidemocratic agenda?

For elections to function as one of the most important ways for citizens to participate in democratic decision making, a society apparently needs more than just a framework of laws that put the election system into place. There needs to be trust in the political process and ways of ensuring that these processes have been carried out properly.

The example shows that democracy depends equally on a set of rules and on the citizens' attitudes towards democracy. They must understand and appreciate the system, and they must feel responsible for its stability. Parties must treat each other as competitors, but not as enemies. Only then can democracy show its strength as the only system in which a change of government is possible without changing the political system.

Democracy consists of a system of institutions and processes that include general elections, parliamentary representation and control of power through checks and balances. Some constitutions include direct participation through referenda or a constitutional court. This is the stage, and the citizens are the actors. Literally, the citizens must therefore be willing and able to play their part, and they must identify with the political system of democracy.

Democracy is a system of institutions rooted in a political culture. The institutional system can set the framework for this culture, but cannot create it or ensure its stability. The same principle applies to autocratic government. An autocrat also depends on a suitable political culture, based on politically docile subjects rather than active and committed systems.

## 2.2 The cultural dimension of human rights

Human rights that are civil and political in nature spell out what democratic processes are in practice, including freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of the media (that is, the prohibition of censorship), the right to vote, and the principle of equality and non-discrimination that applies to the enjoyment of every human right. When countries ratify a human rights treaty, they promise to harmonise national laws and practices so that they are consistent with these international standards. They do so out of free will.

What happens if the state fails to uphold its human rights promises? There are different mechanisms of protection that have been established by the UN and by regional human rights institutions that have promulgated regional human rights laws that governments can sign up to. For example, in Europe there is the European Convention on Human Rights, which concentrates on civil and political rights. Governments can also sign up to the European Social Charter, which specifies economic, social and cultural rights. If a government has signed up to the Convention but acted in a contrary manner, citizens (and, indeed, any person within the state's jurisdiction) of the member states of the Council of Europe can ultimately refer a complaint to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

In most cases, the enjoyment of human rights takes place within governments organised as constitutional democracies through the usual mechanisms of democratic processes. These mechanisms involve evolving laws but also a culture of participation and engagement by citizens.

Democracy and human rights depend on an institutional framework that consists of two components: a set of rules and principles established in the constitution and legal system, and a political culture. Democracy and human rights are embedded in a set of principles, values and responsibilities. Democracy and human rights allow dissent on issues, but they can only do so if there is strong consent on the framework that allows and protects, but also limits liberties. You may disagree on almost anything, but this works only if all identify with the system that allows disagreement.

## 2.3 Teaching through democracy and human rights – democratic culture in school

There can be no democracy without committed democrats.

Each generation receives its democratic heritage, and will hopefully understand and appreciate it, and learn how to make active use of it. It is the task of EDC/HRE, and education as a whole, to support and encourage the young generation to become active and committed democrats.

The cultural traditions that are favourable for democracy develop slowly, as the historical experience in many countries has shown. Nation-building projects in post-civil war societies face their most serious obstacles in the absence of a democratic cultural tradition. A blueprint of a democratic institution can be imported, as it were, but the cultural roots of democracy cannot – they must literally stem from the society's cultural heritage.

Political culture can therefore be conceived in constructivist categories. It is acquired through processes of learning and socialisation. Therefore it makes a difference whether schools are governed democratically or autocratically, as the students may be expected to learn how to live in, or under, the form of government they experience in early life.

School as a micro-society can support its students to acquire and appreciate key elements of a democratic and human rights culture, including the following:

- The students are able to know and express their interests and views with confidence and self-esteem.
- The students treat each other with mutual respect, including listening and empathy, that is, the willingness and ability to switch perspectives.
- The students are able to settle conflict through non-violent means, that is, negotiation and compromise.
- The students appreciate the function of institutional frameworks that protect and limit their individual rights of liberty. They add the "soft", informal element of political culture to the "hard", formal element of rules.
- The students appreciate politics as a practical effort aiming to solve problems that require attention and a decision.
- The students participate in the process of electing representatives and in formal decision-making processes.
- The students engage in non-prescribed ways to influence decision making, such as through awareness raising, activism, lobbying and by handling problems on their own.
- The students take responsibility for their decisions and choices, considering their impact both for themselves and for others.
- The students are aware that if they do not participate in decisions that affect them, others will make them, and the outcome may be unfavourable for them.

Political culture is strongly linked to the attitudes and values that young citizens acquire through processes of socialisation, including their school experience. There are other agents that also strongly influence the socialisation process of young people, particularly the family, peers and the media. On the other hand, the school community offers children and adolescents the earliest opportunities to experience interaction in society and in public; we may therefore assume that school has a decisive influence on how the democratic heritage is passed on to the young generation. Through their learning and experience in the school setting, young people can develop the habits and skills for lifelong engagement with democratic process and human rights values, both through formal decision-making processes as well as through everyday interactions.

# Unit 3
# Educating for democracy and human rights

## 1. The three dimensions of EDC/HRE

Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education (EDC/HRE) focuses on what students should be capable of doing rather than on what teachers should teach them. The three basic principles that govern this student- and outcome-centred approach may be best illustrated by an example.

- Freedom of opinion and expression is a basic condition of democratic participation and is a fundamental civil and political right. In EDC/HRE, students know, understand and appreciate the right to free opinion and expression and they know how it is protected by their national constitution. This is the cognitive dimension of learning (knowledge, concepts and understanding).
- Students learn how to use this fundamental human right. Precisely because the active use of this right is essential for participation in a democratic community, students are also encouraged to reflect on their point of view and to be able to express this through a variety of ways, including the ability to make a public argument (skills-based dimension of learning).
- To exercise their freedom of expression, students need courage to express their views even when they are in situations where they are facing a majority opposing them. And they listen to the opinions of others in a spirit of tolerance and personal respect. By confining disagreement and controversy to the issues and not to personalise differences of opinion, conflicts can be resolved by non-violent means (attitudes- and values-based dimension of understanding).

What this example shows may be generalised, not only to what students should be capable of in exercising any other human right, but also to learning and education in general. To be relevant and to add to a person's competences, learning must unfold in these three dimensions that mutually support each other – knowledge, concepts and understanding; skills; and attitudes and values. For several decades, educators and teachers have agreed on this concept of learning.

If this is how students learn, what must EDC/HRE teachers do to provide adequate opportunities to learn? Briefly, the answer is as follows.

In EDC/HRE, the goal is to support students to be young citizens who:

- know their human rights and have understood the conditions they depend on (learning "about" democracy and human rights);
- have experienced school as a micro-society that respects the freedoms and equality of its students, and have been trained in exercising their human rights and respecting the rights of others (learning "through" democracy and human rights);
- are therefore competent and confident to exercise their human rights, with a mature sense of responsibility towards others and their community (learning "for" democracy and human rights).

### 1.1 The cognitive dimension of EDC/HRE: learning "about" democracy and human rights

EDC/HRE at secondary level requires students to study key documents such as the UDHR and the Convention. To summarise the example given above, they need to know that every person enjoys the right of free thought and expression, and free access to information through uncensored media, with exceptions possible only for good reason and in limited circumstances (Article 10 of the Convention). The state's constitution and legal environment should reflect and protect these human

rights standards, and can be studied by students from this perspective. In doing so, they can understand how important, indeed indispensable, just this one right is to make democracy come to life.

It is also necessary for students to understand Article 14 of the Convention, which addresses the key principle of equality and non-discrimination: women and men, rich and poor, young and old, nationals and immigrants – we all equally possess these rights. The enjoyment of these rights is an evolving process and one of the agendas of democratic systems of government based on human rights.

Finally, the students need to understand why liberties require a framework of laws and also carry responsibilities (UDHR, Article 29). Freedom of expression allows citizens to promote their interests in a pluralist society, and in such a competitive setting, there will be winners and losers. A constitution, rules and laws must provide a framework that limits the liberties of the strong and protects the weak – without legalising differences. However, rules cannot take care of every problem, so the members of a community must share an attitude of responsibility towards each other.

Human rights is a legal framework but it is also a normative one. This requires students to recognise to what degree human rights principles are actually realised within their school community as well as society at large.

**European Convention on Human Rights (4.11.1950)**

**Article 10**
**Freedom of expression**

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.

(2) The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or the rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

**Article 14**
**Prohibition of discrimination**

The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10.12.1948)**

**Article 29**

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

In short, these three articles outline the tension between individual liberties and the need to balance the rights of individuals through a framework that both limits and protects these liberties.

Students who can explain this have learnt a lot “about” democracy and human rights; this is the cognitive dimension of EDC/HRE.

## 1.2 The participative dimension of EDC/HRE: learning "for" democracy and human rights

To be able to take part in democracy, the students should learn how to exercise their rights and freedoms – for example, their right of free access to information and of free thought, opinion and expression. They should also have active experience in interacting with others – such as promoting their interests, negotiating for compromise, or agreeing on how to define "the general welfare" (UDHR, Article 29). They should be able to act in a framework of rules and accept the limits they may impose on them. They should have developed an attitude of responsibility for the welfare of others and the community as a whole.

In short, they should not only have understood the implications and links between the three human rights articles addressed above, but also appreciate their underlying values and act accordingly. In doing so, through democratic decision-making processes that do not result in a violation of human rights, they must be able to balance their interests with those of others and their community as a whole.

Students who have been trained in this way have learnt how to take part in democracy. This is the action-based dimension of EDC/HRE – learning "for" democracy and human rights, that is, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

## 1.3 The cultural dimension of EDC/HRE: learning "through" democracy and human rights

Knowledge and skills may enable a person to take part in democracy in technical terms, but they do not turn that person into a democrat. In the hands of racists, for example, this kind of expertise could be abused as a weapon to attack a democratic, human rights-based community. In a very literal sense, knowledge and skills that are not supported by human rights values are worthless for democracy.

EDC/HRE therefore includes a cultural dimension. The culture of teaching and learning must reflect the message of EDC/HRE.

While students acquire knowledge through instruction (listening to a lecture, reading) and competences through training (demonstration, practice and coaching), they develop values and attitudes through experience.

For example, young people build their self-esteem through encouragement by their parents and teachers. Only students who have experienced and enjoyed respectful treatment by their teachers may be expected to behave likewise toward their peers. Human rights values are acquired through a process of socialisation in school – teaching "through", or in the spirit of democracy and human rights.

Human rights values have been defined by the United Nations, the Council of Europe and other organisations, and include the principles of equality and non-discrimination; participation and inclusion; and accountability.

While teaching "about" democracy and human rights may be assigned to special subjects (such as social studies, history, civic education), the cultural dimension of EDC/HRE, teaching "through" democracy and human rights, is a challenge for the whole school – human rights and democracy become the school community's pedagogical guideline and the lens through which all of the elements of school governance are judged.

## 2. HRE and its connection with EDC[13]

> Education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are closely inter-related and mutually supportive. They differ in focus and scope rather than in goals and practices. Education for democratic citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation, in relation to the civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society, while human rights education is concerned with the broader spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of people's lives.
>
> *Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, adopted in the framework of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers on 11 May 2010.*

The following section looks at the connection between HRE and EDC more closely.

Decades ago, the United Nations and its specialised agencies formally recognised the right to human rights education, that is, the right of citizens to be informed about the rights and freedoms contained in the human rights treaties ratified by their countries. Governments are accountable for the implementation of these human rights standards through laws, policies and practices. They report on their progress by making periodic reports to treaty bodies. Monitoring organisations such as human rights groups also help to keep track of progress.

It is self-evident that citizens should know and value their human rights and respect those of others. We need to understand the legal responsibilities of our governments to fulfil our rights. We should appreciate the ethical responsibilities of citizens to cherish and uphold human rights in everyday life. The knowledge and disposition to know and responsibly uphold one's rights and those of others begins early in life: in our families, in our schools and in our community.

UN agencies such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNESCO and UNICEF, along with intergovernmental organisations such as the Council of Europe and national human rights agencies, have referenced HRE, proposing specifically that the treatment of human rights themes should be present in schooling.

Human rights education has both normative and legal dimensions. The legal dimension incorporates sharing content about international human rights standards as embodied in treaties and covenants to which our countries have committed. These standards encompass civil and political rights, as well as social, economic, and cultural rights. In recent years, environmental and collective rights have been added to this evolving framework. This law-oriented approach recognises the importance of monitoring and accountability in ensuring that governments uphold the letter and spirit of human rights obligations.

At the same time, HRE is a normative and cultural enterprise. It is a value system that helps everyone to reflect on the degree to which their daily experiences are consistent with human rights norms and values. The infusion of a human rights-based approach to schooling is addressed later in this volume.

In terms of classroom learning, interactive and learner-centred methods are widely promoted in HRE, as they are with EDC. The following kinds of pedagogy are representative of those promoted in HRE:

- experiential and activity-centred: involving the solicitation of learners' prior knowledge and offering activities that draw out learners' experiences and knowledge;
- problem-posing: challenging the learners' prior knowledge;
- participative: encouraging collective efforts in clarifying concepts, analysing themes and doing the activities;
- dialectical: requiring learners to compare their knowledge with those from other sources;
- analytical: asking learners to think about why things are and how they came to be;
- healing: promoting human rights in intra-personal and inter-personal relations;

13. Author: Felisa Tibbitts (2009). Original source: Tibbitts F. (2008), "Human Rights Education" in Bajaj M. (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Peace Education*, Information Age Publishing, Charlotte, NC.

– strategic-thinking-oriented: directing learners to set their own goals and to think of strategic ways of achieving them; and
– goal- and action-oriented: allowing learners to plan and organise actions in relation to their goals.[14]

Human rights education in the curriculum of many countries intersects with democratic or global citizenship education, by taking the core concepts of citizenship education and applying them both more universally and more critically. Knowledge about key concepts and facts, and issues of civic disposition and civic skills are applied to the areas of global social responsibility, justice and social action.

In addition, human rights education explicitly fosters social responsibility and action among students. HRE moves beyond the promotion of participation as an element of representative democracy, however, by casting such actions along a spectrum of rights. Taking action can be intrinsically valued as an exercise of one's rights. Such actions can also be instrumental as a means of overcoming oppression or injustice.

The broad normative framework of HRE and the wide spectrum of potential learners have resulted in a great deal of variation in the ways in which HRE has been implemented. Although HRE is defined by the universal framework of international (and sometimes regional) standards, the specific topics and their applications depend upon local and national contexts. Moreover, human rights education in school settings is adapted to the age of learners and the conditions of national/local educational policies and schools.

Human rights themes and content in school curricula can take the form of cross-cultural themes mandated by educational policy or they can be integrated within existing subjects, such as history, civics/citizenship education, social studies and humanities. HRE can also be found in arts programmes and non-formal clubs and special events that take place in school settings.

As the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education recommends, these educational areas are closely interrelated and mutually supportive. They differ in focus and scope rather than in goals and practices. Education for democratic citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation, in relation to the civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society, while human rights education is concerned with the broader spectrum of human rights and fundamental freedoms in every aspect of people's lives.

Where HRE and EDC coexist in a school setting, they are mutually reinforcing. The International Education Association (IEA) Civic Education Study was published in 1999, and used data collected from 88 000 14-year-olds in 27 countries.[15] An analysis was carried out in order to examine country differences in students' knowledge pertaining to human rights compared with other forms of civic knowledge, and students' attitudes towards promoting and practising human rights.

This analysis showed that students' experiences of democracy at school and with international issues had a positive association with their knowledge of human rights. Factors that might be called "democracy at school" mattered for the human rights attitudes of individual students. The analysis of IEA data corroborated that students who have the most exposure to the practice of democratic ideals in their classrooms and schools are the most likely to hold positive human rights attitudes. Moreover, students with more knowledge of human rights had more frequent engagement with international topics and held stronger norms for participatory citizenship and were more politically efficacious.

Schools that offer EDC and HRE in tangent to one another are equipping learners to be empowered and responsible citizens who know and cherish their rights and freedoms.

14. ARRC [Asia-Pacific Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education] (2003), "What is Human Rights Education", *Human Rights Education Pack*, ARRC, Bangkok.

15. Torney-Purta J., Barber C. H. and Wilkenfeld B. (2008), "How Adolescents in Twenty-Seven Countries Understand, Support and Practice Human Rights", *Journal of Social Issues*, 64: 1.

# 3. Competences in EDC/HRE

## 3.1 "I would like my students to be able to ..."

"After we practised techniques of presentation, I would like all my students to be able to address the class without reading out their notes."

"After we have spent six lessons on the basics of our constitution, the least I would expect from all my students is that they can explain how our election system works, and what parties are running the government at the moment."

"A few months ago, we had problems in our class with students who wouldn't listen to each other in discussions and interrupted students they disagreed with. We have talked a lot about our right of free expression and that this only works for all of us if we treat each other with respect. By the end of the year, I hope most students will have understood this and know how to behave in discussions."

These examples show the kind of thoughts that an EDC/HRE teacher has in mind when planning lessons: they define objectives. They decide what their students should be able to do, and what is in their reach if they make an effort: they decide what objectives they would like their students to achieve, and then look at the process of learning and the students' learning needs at the starting point – their difficulties and abilities, their strengths and weaknesses.

This way of thinking is nothing new for teachers – it is a common practice. Most teachers do not only think about the topic and subject matter – "I've got to finish the 19th century before the next holiday break" – but also have in mind what kind of performance they want to see from their students.

Objectives that focus on the students and what they should be enabled to do refer to students' competences. In adult life, all students will have to cope without a teacher, coach or monitor beside them. The traditional teaching model – formal instruction, delivering a tight curriculum of knowledge – does too little to support students to become independent, confident and competent across the dimensions of skills and values/attitudes.

The three examples also point to different dimensions of competence development:

- The first – establishing eye contact with the audience and speaking freely – refers to skills that are not content-specific, but provide the tools that students permanently need to make use of any piece of knowledge and information. This is skills training, or teaching "for" democratic citizenship and human rights – to enable students to exercise their human rights and take part in democracy.
- The second – understanding the basics of the election system and who has won the last election and therefore formed the present government – is a case of teaching "about" democracy and human rights. Young citizens must know what human rights – for example, taking part in elections – have been integrated as a civil right in their country's constitution and what effect their vote has in their country's election system.
- Finally, the last example shows the importance of values and attitudes. Democracy relies on a political culture that is formed by the attitudes and values that citizens adhere to, in this case mutual respect and tolerance for views that they may disagree with. Students must be willing to accept that their right of liberty must take into account the rights of others. Therefore freedom carries responsibilities. A human rights culture reflects both the empowerment of individual learners and their teachers but also an understanding that we share mutual responsibility to respect the human rights of others. Values are learnt though experience and convincing role models – teaching "through" democracy and human rights.

## 3.2 Competences – a general definition

Competences refer to what a person is able to do, in three respects that form the core of a person's identity:

- what a person knows and has understood;
- the skills enabling a person to use her or his knowledge;
- the awareness and appreciation of the knowledge and skills that a person possesses, resulting in the willingness to use them both with self-confidence and responsibility.

The last point is of particular importance. Not only should the teacher know what the students have been enabled to do, but even more so the students themselves. They must know what they have in their mental toolbox and what tasks or problems those tools can be applied to. Above all, they need self-confidence to accept the risk of failure in their processes of lifelong learning.

## 3.3 How can teachers find out what competences students have? Competence and performance

Competences refer to abilities and potentials "inside" us. They are therefore invisible. Then how can teachers find out what competences their students have?

Here is an example. Noam Chomsky, a linguist, described the language competence of a native speaker. Native speakers permanently create and understand sentences that they have never spoken or heard before. We cannot see the language competence, but we perceive the native speaker's performance, and we must assume that the competence to communicate fluently must be there.

There is no competence without any visible performance, but also no kind of action without competences. Teachers assess their students' competence development by judging their performance – what they are capable of doing. Task-based learning enables students to train their competences, and teachers to assess their students' learning achievements and identify their learning needs. This applies not only to EDC/HRE, but to teaching and learning in general.

## 3.4 A model of student competences in EDC/HRE

We assess a student's competence development through our perception of the student's performance. Competences are invisible, and we can only gain access to them by designing models that support us in defining learning objectives and guiding our assessment of learning achievements.

In this EDC/HRE edition, we have adopted the following model of competences. It corresponds to the key principles of EDC/HRE – teaching through, about and for democracy and human rights.

In EDC/HRE, student competences include the following:

- political analysis and judgment;
- skills (See Part 3 of this volume);
- taking action and political participation;
- personal and social competences.

### 3.4.1 Competences of political analysis and judgment

Democratic citizenship requires citizens to understand the issues under discussion, which requires citizens to be informed and capable of analysing problems and lines of argument and conflict. This is the cognitive dimension of competence development (learning "about" political issues).

Without this level of understanding a citizen is easy prey for demagogues, lobbyists and populists, and will not be able to identify and negotiate his or her individual or group interests. We depend on media as sources of information, and we must be able to use them critically.

Taking action in politics, as elsewhere in life, is only possible if we know what we want to achieve. We must be able to define our interests and objectives, balancing wants and needs, values and responsibilities. Politics is a process of decision making to solve problems and settle conflicts; there is no option not to make a decision, and decisions are not possible without judgment.

Increasing complexity in our modernising societies tends to overstrain the "normal citizen's" competences of analysis and judgment. Personalising – trust or distrust towards political leaders – is one way of reducing complexity. Education, not only in EDC/HRE, is the key to enable citizens to keep abreast of the decisions that affect them.

### 3.4.2 Skills

Students need a set of mental tools – skills or techniques – to acquire and use information and to form their opinions independently and systematically. These tools enable students:

- to acquire information both through media and first-hand experience and research – techniques of using print and electronic media, interviews, research, reflection, etc.;
- to select and study information (constructivist learning) – techniques of planning, time management, reading, thinking, recording;
- to determine, present, share, and argue their views – techniques of creating handouts, posters, papers, PowerPoint presentations, lecturing, discussing, debating, etc. (joint constructivist learning and deconstruction);
- to reflect the outcomes and processes of learning and application.

To a considerable extent, these skills are necessary not only in EDC/HRE, but in school as a whole. They prepare students for more advanced academic studies and for qualified jobs. Cross-curricular training of these formal, content-unspecific skills is therefore both necessary and possible.

### 3.4.3 Taking action

In EDC/HRE, formal skills training supports learning for democracy and human rights, but is not sufficient. EDC/HRE conceives school as a micro-community in which the students learn how to take part in society and politics by practical experience. The competences they train in school include the following:

- reflecting their wants and needs, clarifying and promoting their interests;
- voting, taking part in elections as voters and candidates (class representatives);
- negotiating and decision making;
- influencing decision-making processes through awareness raising, lobbying and collective action;
- understanding and appreciating the need for a framework of rules and sanctions.

EDC/HRE, and school as a whole, play a decisive part in providing the learning opportunities for students to contribute to their communities. However, in assessing their performance and competence development, school has its limits. The decisive area of transfer lies beyond school, in society as a whole, and extends into adult life. It then becomes difficult, if not impossible, to link learning outcomes to inputs in school.

### 3.4.4 Personal and social competences

Perhaps the concept of competences is somewhat overstrained when it is extended to the dimension of values and attitudes. On the other hand, it is the performance, the way students behave, that counts, and the disposition to behave can be conceived as competence. This dimension of competence development corresponds to learning "through" democracy and human rights. It includes the following:

- self-awareness and self-esteem;
- empathy;

- mutual respect;
- appreciation of the need to compromise;
- responsibility;
- appreciation of human rights as a collectively shared set of values to support peace, justice and social cohesion.

## 3.5 Teacher competences in EDC/HRE

In EDC/HRE, teachers require specific competences to offer their students adequate learning opportunities.

The toolbox for teachers includes a tool to support teachers in defining competence-based objectives in EDC/HRE, very much along the lines that the introduction to this unit referred to. For further information, please refer to the Council of Europe publication *How all teachers can support citizenship and human rights education: a framework for the development of competences* (Strasbourg, 2009).

# 4. "We create the world in our minds": constructivist learning in EDC/HRE[16]

When we read a story in a book, we create something like a movie in our minds. We add details and scenes that the author hints at or leaves out, and we may even imagine the faces of the characters. Some novels appeal so strongly to our imagination that we are disappointed if ever we watch a "real" film based on the story. Our imagination had produced a far better one, and it is unique, as every reader's mind produces a different "film".

This is an example of our capability to "create the world in our minds". The world that we live in is the world as we perceive it – it consists of the images, experiences, concepts and judgments that we have created of it. As learners, people want to make sense of what they hear or read – they want to understand it. A brain researcher characterised the human brain as a "machine seeking for meaning". Things that do not make sense must be sorted out somehow. If information is missing, we must either find it somehow, or fill in the gap by guessing.[17]

With some experience, teachers find out that when they give a lecture, each student receives and remembers a different message. Some students will still remember the information when they are adults because it appealed to them so strongly, others may have forgotten it by the next morning because it did not relate to a knowledge or value structure that they had. From a constructivist perspective, it is important what happens in the students' minds.

Constructivism conceives learning as a highly individualised process:

- Learners construct, reform or create structures of meaning. New information is linked to what a learner already knows or has understood.
- Learners come to an EDC/HRE class with their individual biographies and experiences.
- Gender, class, age, ethnic background or religious belief and other identities can influence learner outlook.
- We possess different forms of intelligence that go far beyond the conventional understanding of being good at maths or languages.[18]
- There is no absolute standard for personal or political relevance.

Constructivist learning can be further differentiated into three sub-categories, and the teacher plays an important part in supporting them.

## 4.1 Learners "construct" meaning – they discover and create something new

Teachers can support their student by, among others:

- creating learning opportunities;
- designing challenging tasks;
- providing instruction through media and inputs (lectures) that represent the objects of learning;
- providing encouragement and support for the learner's self-esteem.

16. For a fuller treatment of this topic, see Volume IV in this edition.

17. See Gollob R. and Krapf P. (eds) (2008), EDC/HRE Volume III, Unit 1, *Stereotypes and prejudices. What is identity? How do I see others, how do they see me?*, Strasbourg, pp. 19-38.

18. See Howard Gardner's work on multiple intelligences.

## 4.2 Learners "reconstruct" what they have learnt – they apply it and put it to the test

To a large extent, we all create such applications ourselves, but in school, the teacher provides them by, among others:

- giving opportunities for sharing, presentation and discussion;
- formal testing and assessment;
- offering or demanding portfolio work;
- designing challenging tasks, for example in projects.

## 4.3 Learners "deconstruct", or criticise, their own results or each other's

Without this element of critical reviewing and testing any learning effort would become irrelevant for society, and for the individual learners themselves. Here, learning also has a social dimension.

# 5. Professional ethics of EDC/HRE teachers: three principles

If students come to an EDC/HRE class with their own opinions, and all of them come away from it with the teacher's point of view, this usually points to a problem. EDC/HRE teachers must take care not to press their students to adopt certain views or values that teachers personally adhere to. Schools are public institutions, and parents, and society as a whole, expect teachers not to abuse their power to indoctrinate their children.

The professional ethics of EDC/HRE teachers are therefore crucial to the success, and even the justification of EDC/HRE as part of the school curriculum. They may be summed up under the following three principles, originating from a debate on this issue in Germany during the 1970s.[19]

## 5.1 Principle of non-indoctrination

The teacher must not attempt to indoctrinate the students in any way to make them adopt a desired opinion, for example in terms of political correctness. Therefore the teacher should not silence or "overwhelm" any student by superior arguing. Rather, the students should judge freely without any interference or obstruction. Any attempt by the teacher to indoctrinate her or his students is incompatible with EDC/HRE and its objective of educating citizens who are capable and willing to participate in an open society and a free, pluralist democracy.

### 5.1.1 Practical implications

The teacher should therefore chair discussions in EDC/HRE classes, but not take part in them. On the other hand, if students ask their teacher for his or her view on a matter, we advise the teacher to express it. The students know that as a citizen, the teacher has a personal political standpoint like any other citizen, and quite often they are interested to hear it. Then the teacher should make clear that he or she is speaking not in a professional role, but as a citizen. Indeed the student may consider it somewhat strange if their EDC/HRE teacher remained a kind of political neuter, while the students are permanently expected to express their views.

A teacher committed to human rights may well suffer if a student expresses views that show leanings to racism, nationalism or any kind of fundamentalism. The teacher should refrain from overwhelming such students by superior argument, but rather try to understand why a young person has adopted such a line of thought and find ways to challenge the students to think differently and in non-conventional ways.

## 5.2 Principle of controversial discussion

Whatever is a controversial issue in science or politics must be presented as such in EDC/HRE classes. This principle is closely linked to that of non-indoctrination: if differing points of view are omitted and alternative options are ignored, EDC/HRE is on the way to indoctrination. EDC/HRE classrooms should allow for complexity, controversy and even contradictions. For example, even though human rights are universal, individual rights can actually be in conflict with one another.

In a pluralist society, disagreement, differing values and competing interests are the rule, not the exception, and therefore students must learn how to deal with controversy. In democracy, debate and discussion are the medium for solving problems and resolving conflicts. Agreement and a certain degree of harmony through compromise is the result of negotiation. Enforced harmony without open discussion simply suggests suppression.

### 5.2.1 Practical implications

In EDC/HRE, the teacher must therefore at least present two points of view on an issue. An equal balance (for example, in the length of texts) is important.

19. See "Der Beutelsbacher Konsens" (www.lpb-bw.de).

In plenary discussions, the teacher should welcome differing points of view among the students. If one position is voiced only by a minority – or even no student at all – the teacher should adopt this view for argument's sake, clearly stating that she or he is enacting a particular role, not expressing a personal opinion. The teacher should take care to adapt his or her power of argument to that of the students.

## 5.3 Empowering students to promote their interests

Students must be able to analyse a political situation and to identify their interests, and to find ways and means to influence such a situation in favour of their interests. This objective requires students to be well trained in skills and competences of taking action and participation. It may only be achieved if the two other principles of non-indoctrination and controversial discussion are observed. This principle must not be misunderstood as encouraging egoism and neglect of responsibility. Every community relies on these values, but the point here is that the teacher must not discourage students from promoting their interests by confronting them with calls to observe their duties and responsibilities.

### 5.3.1 Practical implications

School is a micro-society where the students learn how to participate. This can be done in many ways, beginning in class, allowing students to choose topics that interest them and to participate in lesson planning, and include more advanced forms like democratic school governance (teaching through democracy and human rights) and taking action.

Task and problem-based learning support students in developing their powers of independent judgment and decision making.

# 6. Key concepts in EDC/HRE

## 6.1 Why do we need key concepts in EDC/HRE?

We conceive EDC/HRE as a process of constructivist learning.[20] Learners create or construct meaning and understanding by linking information to concepts. Learning and thinking takes place on the levels of the concrete and the abstract. Abstract thinking is based on concepts. Without reference to a shared set of concepts whose definitions we understand and have agreed on, no sharing and exchange of ideas, or debate, discussion or judgment would be possible.

Concepts are therefore indispensable, both for constructivist learning and ultimately for political decision making. Which concepts should we therefore choose? We live in pluralist societies, which means that individuals and groups promote different or even competing interests and values. Moreover, philosophy and social science comprise different, including controversial approaches. Therefore it is impossible to draw a set of key concepts from any one source. In constructivist learning, focusing on competence development, concepts are indispensable, and concept models in citizenship education are under discussion. We believe our model is one possible approach.

We have chosen the following set of nine key concepts because they refer both to the students' experience in a micro-society and the political community as a whole:

- identity;
- diversity and pluralism;
- responsibility;
- conflict;
- rules and law;
- government and politics;
- equality;
- liberty;
- media.

The key concepts create a spiral curriculum, as the volumes shift in focus from the school community (elementary level, Volume II) to the political community (upper secondary level, Volume IV), with Volume III including aspects of both (see Part 1, Unit 4, in this volume). The concepts of democracy and human rights – the core concepts of EDC/HRE – permeate all nine key concepts; they have been addressed in separate units in this manual. All key concepts can and must be linked to further concepts and categories, depending on the learners' age level and the subject matter. All three volumes include nine model units of four lessons each that address the same set of key concepts. They do so in different ways, showing how the same concept can be adapted to the level of understanding of students and to students at different age levels. If two or three volumes are combined in this way (vertically), a constructivist learning process guided and supported by a particular key concept is possible. At the same time, the key concepts are linked horizontally, forming a network of understanding. A rough indicator of the potential links is to what dimensions of politics[21] they refer.

## 6.2 The essence of the key concepts

This section briefly outlines the essence of the nine key concepts in this EDC/HRE edition, addressing their significance for EDC/HRE at the micro and macro level (school and the political community).

20. See Unit 3 on constructivist learning in Part 1 of this volume.

21. For more information on the three basic dimensions of politics, see the work file in this volume (How can I address politics in my EDC/HRE classes?).

### 6.2.1 Identity

As natural rights, human rights focus on the individual. All human beings are endowed with human dignity and the right to live in freedom and to enjoy their rights free from discrimination. The state serves the individual and not vice versa. Personal liberty gives individuals the right to develop their personality freely, including key life choices such as values, partners, professions, and having children. In modern secular society, this liberty is a challenge, as the weakening of ties and traditions (family, religion, etc.) means making choices. Our choices affect others and vice versa, and therefore in shaping our identities we also carry responsibilities. In the school community, the students share their experiences and work on life choices that all young people must make, such as further education and careers.

The concept of identity is closely linked to diversity and pluralism, liberty, equality, and responsibility.

### 6.2.2 Diversity and pluralism

Modern societies are pluralist societies. Individuals exercising human rights of liberty will literally produce pluralism – a multitude of individual identities with different choices of lifestyle, priorities and interests, limited or supported, as the case may be, by the material resources available – income and property. Diversity includes difference based on gender, ethnic origin, class, age, types of learner, region, religious confession and values. Pluralist societies pose a challenge: what set of values can the members of a community accept? The stability of human rights-based communities depends on conditions that democratic states cannot ensure (the liberty–stability dilemma). The same applies to school, where students should learn to perceive and deal with diversity and pluralism as a challenge – it must be met, and it combines problems and risks with opportunities.

The concept of diversity and pluralism is closely linked to government and politics, liberty, conflict and responsibility.

### 6.2.3 Responsibility

Liberty is to be enjoyed by all, and therefore everyone must accept certain limits. This begins, for example, with an equal share of speaking time and attention to every student in class. In societies based on free trade and competition, the unequal distribution of income and welfare leads to an unequal distribution of opportunities to exercise liberty. In democracy, the principle of majority rule must be balanced with the protection of minority interests to ensure social cohesion.

Liberty and equality may be difficult to balance. One way to reconcile them is through personal responsibility, the other is through binding political decision making; both modes are necessary, as each have their limits. Laws cannot take care of every incident in daily life, and it is neither feasible nor desirable to have our lives completely monitored and controlled by state authority. A human rights-based community relies on our willingness and ability to take responsibility for our behaviour and the needs of others.

Responsibility is closely linked to liberty, equality, identity, rules and law, and conflict.

### 6.2.4 Conflict

Differences of opinion, competing needs and interests and conflicts are part of human life, and particularly so in pluralist societies. Many people consider conflict to be something harmful, standing in the way of harmony, that should therefore be avoided or even suppressed. However, conflict as such need not be harmful, but rather some modes of dealing with it. In EDC/HRE students should learn that in a framework of procedural rules, supported by a political culture of mutual respect, there is room for plenty of dissent and argument. Individuals and groups may, and indeed should, articulate their interests, to ensure that they will be taken into account. In the discussions and negotiations to follow, however, all sides should be prepared to negotiate for compromise. Without this dialectic, or constructive attitude towards one's own interests, no compromise would be possible.

In principle, any conflict over distribution of resources that can be reduced to a sum or figure can be solved by compromise. On the other hand, in conflicts involving ideology, values or even ethnic origin, a solution by compromise is impossible. A culture of civilised, that is, non-violent conflict resolution based on mutual respect is therefore indispensable for democratic citizenship. Conflict arises in school as in any other workplace or community, giving students the opportunity to learn how to resolve conflict peacefully and not to be afraid of it.

Conflict is closely linked to diversity and pluralism, government and politics, rules and law, and responsibility.

### 6.2.5 Rules and law

Laws provide the formal institutional framework for democratic, human rights-based communities. In principle everybody is expected to obey the law because it has been passed by majority rule. This is usually by parliamentary vote, which in turn rests on majorities in general elections, but it can also be by plebiscite. Laws are intended to reflect and protect human rights and set procedural rules for conflict resolution and political decision-making processes. Rules serve the same purposes, but are created by other bodies, and may exist in written or unwritten form.

We are expected to obey the law, but what happens if we feel the law is unfair or unjust? There are many cases of social and legal reform that were sparked off by civil disobedience: citizens deliberately disobeyed the law to challenge what they felt was unfair or a breach of human rights, to bring about a discussion and amendment of the laws in place.

Students must understand, and appreciate, the dialectics between rights of liberty and their protection and limitation through institutional frameworks. If the framework were lifted, liberty would turn into anarchy, and anarchy in turn into the rule of violence. In task-based learning, students experience this principle in school. A tight setting of tasks, time frames and rules does not stifle the students' creativity, but on the contrary, opens the door to a great realm of freedom and creativity. Students may also participate in reforming school laws that do not reflect democratic or human rights values.

Rules and law are closely linked to conflict, liberty, and equality.

### 6.2.6 Government and politics

In EDC/HRE, the key concept of politics focuses on the aspect of politics as a process of settling conflict and solving problems. Government covers the institutional aspect of politics, that is, political decision making within an institutional framework. Democratic government of school gives students the opportunity to learn how to influence and take part in decision-making processes to manage a community and define its objectives. The policy cycle model may be applied to decision-making processes both at the micro and macro level, that is, the school community and the political community as a whole (regional or national level). The media play a decisive role in controlling political decision makers, and also in agenda setting. The same applies to school, as the units on media in the three manuals (Volumes II-IV) show.

As a pair of concepts, government and politics refer to the different settings of political decision making. While government emphasises the hierarchical, institutionalised dimension, politics also includes the informal dimension – wider in scope, but also with less, or without, regulation of procedures. The informal, subsidiary side of politics is important for the efficiency of the institutional system. Both in school and in politics, institutions could not cope with all problems and issues, and they therefore depend on citizens to settle interpersonal disputes and conflict themselves.

Government and politics are closely linked to conflict, rules and law, responsibility and media.

### 6.2.7 Equality and liberty

These two key concepts are considered here together, for two reasons.

First, human dignity is the core value of human rights. The two basic principles of justice that make up human dignity in legal terms are equality (non-discrimination) and freedom (as experienced

through civil and political rights). A person's dignity is threatened through discrimination and through imprisonment. The first two generations of human rights focused on rights of liberty and equality of distribution and opportunity.

Second, there can be tension between liberty and equality. For example, freedom of expression implies that a student should be given the opportunity to state his or her opinion in class as he or she thinks right. Equality of opportunity for all students, on the other hand, requires speaking time to be fairly and evenly shared between all students. For the individual student, this may result in one or two minutes before the next student takes the floor. Individual freedom of expression must therefore be limited, perhaps quite strictly, to guarantee every student a chance to participate in the debate. To what extent a student suffers under such restrictions depends on how well she or he can make the point briefly and clearly. Therefore in EDC/HRE, students need to develop the competences to balance freedom of expression and equality of opportunity. These competences involve language skills, a clear understanding of the issue under discussion, and an appreciation of the framework of rules that provide the balance between liberty and equality.

Students must learn how to exercise their rights of liberty, for example freedom of thought, expression, and access to information. They must also learn to challenge discrimination, both on their own behalf and that of others. Teachers should be aware of unequal conditions and opportunities of learning rooted in difference, for example income and education of parents, or cultural background and ethnic origin. School and society cannot achieve equal distribution, but they should ensure equal starting conditions. In school, this sets teachers the task to account for students' specific learning needs. Equality means not treating everybody in the same way, but treating everybody in a way that serves his or her needs. This is, then, what teaching through human rights amounts to in practice.

Like democracy, liberty and equality are closely linked to all key concepts. No aspect of EDC/HRE is imaginable without addressing an issue related to liberty and equality, that make up human dignity, and the tension between them.

### 6.2.8 Media

This concept refers to the experience that, in modern society, we live in a media culture. Media are indispensable in our exercise of human rights – including freedom of expression, the exchange of information, access to information, political participation, control of government and political decision making, and agenda setting. The more complex our societies and structures of mutual global interdependence become, and the more support and guidance we need to understand the challenges and issues of the present and the future, the more we rely on media. Media pose a challenge – they open up new opportunities and tools for communication and participation, but also for manipulation and crime.

Media are commercial enterprises, and "telling and selling" tend to appear as one. Media transform information that they transmit. Students must therefore train competences both in using media devices (how to construct a message) as well as in deconstructing media-transmitted messages. Media also play an important part in the school community. Students may well be more aware of the fact that media are part of their daily lives than the generation of their parents and particularly their teachers may be willing to admit. Some young people are therefore often more experienced media users than their parents or teachers. In EDC/HRE, media competence is the key to participation and competence development in many other fields.

The key concept of media is closely linked to government and politics, identity, liberty and responsibility.

# 7. The method carries the message: task-based learning in EDC/HRE

## 7.1 The shortcomings of traditional citizenship education

In traditional content-based teaching, citizenship education focused on giving the students facts and information about the country's institutional framework. The contents were more or less "timeless" and could be taught and tested systematically. From the student's point of view, however, there was little difference between memorising facts about parliament or the different species of freshwater fish – "learnt" for the test today, forgotten tomorrow. Such a teaching approach adds very little to educating citizens in democratic, human rights-based communities.

## 7.2 Teaching though and for democracy and human rights requires active learning

In EDC/HRE, information on the country's political system has a purpose – it enables students to take part in it (teaching "for" democracy and human rights). However, political participation requires training and experience. Therefore, in EDC/HRE, the method must carry the message. Teaching "about" democracy and human rights needs to be supported by the way students learn – teaching "through" democracy and human rights. Students need learning settings that support interactive, constructivist learning and competence training. In short, students must be active and interact – so teachers must allow them to get busy and to communicate.

## 7.3 Tasks – the teacher's tool to support active learning

From the teacher's point of view, carefully designed tasks are the main tools to support active processes of learning. In designing or adapting learning tasks, a teacher takes into account all major aspects of teaching and learning: the structure of contents and learning objectives, the students' initial levels of achievement, understanding and skill, learning opportunities, media, and the working atmosphere in class.

EDC/HRE is essentially organised as task-based learning. Volumes II-VI give many demonstrations and descriptions of task-based learning – integrated into a sequence of four lessons to allow realistic planning. Task-based learning falls into three basic categories: simulation of reality, exploration of reality and production. The following table gives some examples for these categories.

| Task-based learning | | |
|---|---|---|
| Simulation of reality in class | Exploration and taking action in real-life situations | Production |
| Role plays<br>Decision-making games<br>Playing statues<br>Conferences<br>Talk shows<br>Debates<br>Hearings<br>Tribunals | Interviewing an expert<br>Interviews in the street<br>Surveys and research<br>Internship<br>Job shadowing<br>Case studies<br>Taking part in school government<br>Taking part in lesson planning | Presentation<br>Handout<br>Poster<br>Flyer<br>Wall newspaper<br>Video or music clip<br>Internet site<br>Presentation<br>Report: news of the week<br>Exhibitions<br>Portfolios |
| Skills training | | |

## 7.4 Task-based learning is problem-based learning

Experience has shown that students greatly appreciate the liberty they enjoy in such settings, and the trust the teacher places in them to use the time efficiently. Students only learn to take responsibility if they are given the liberty to do so. The risk of failure is always present – but without risk, there is no progress. Moreover, the students may achieve results that do not meet the teacher's expectations, but the teacher gains valuable insights into the students' level of competence development and their future learning needs. The process of learning is as important as the result.

In task-based learning, the students face problems – not only related to content and subject matter, but also in organising their work. They must become aware of them, and find a solution on their own. Due to this challenge of solving problems, every form of task-based learning offers rich potential for skills training, for example time management, work planning, co-operating in teams, obtaining materials and selecting information, finding and using tools, etc. Task-based learning is flexible, as students can adapt the task to their abilities.

## 7.5 The teacher's roles in task-based learning sequences

Task-based learning comes close to adult life – we all must cope without a teacher or coach at our side. The teacher should take care not to spoil this big learning opportunity by intervening too soon or too much. The teacher acts as a coach or trainer rather than in the traditional role of a lecturer and examiner.

- The teacher watches how the students cope with the problems they encounter, and should not give in quickly to any calls to deliver the solutions. The teacher's role is rather to give hints and make the task somewhat easier, if necessary. But to a certain degree, the students should "suffer" – as they will in real life.
- The teacher observes the students at work, with two different perspectives of assessment in mind – the process of learning and the achievements at work.[22] Students at work deliver first-hand raw material for the assessment of the students' learning needs. While the students are working, the teacher takes the first steps in planning future EDC/HRE lesson sequences.
- The teacher can also offer to be "used" as a source of information on demand, briefing a group on a question that needs to be answered quickly. The roles are reversed – the students decide when and on what topic they want to hear an input from their teacher.

## 7.6 Active learning requires a follow-up

Task-based learning must be reflected, and also may require an immediate debriefing, for example if the students have strong feelings – joy, disappointment, anger – after a role play.

In a plenary session chaired by the teacher, the students share their ideas and reflect their activity. What have we learned? How have we learned? For what purpose have we learned? Without this reflection effort, task-based learning is merely action for its own sake. In terms of constructivist learning, the reflective follow-up is the time for abstract and systematic analysis and judgment. The teacher can give instruction – concepts, additional information – for which the task-based learning activity has provided the context.

22. See Part 2, Unit 5, Work file 3: Perspectives and forms of assessment, in this volume.

## 8. A human rights-based approach to schooling[23]

Human rights education, which has primarily focused on teaching and learning, can also be seen as part of an overall HRBA to schooling. An HRBA draws our attention to overall school culture, policies and practices through the lens of human rights values.

There are two articles in the CRC that mention education directly. Article 28 defines education as a right and Article 29 comments that education should assist the child in developing her or his "personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential". Another purpose of schools, according to the CRC, is to develop respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We know one thing: to truly understand and promote human rights, one has to live them out in relation to others.

The core values of "dignity, respect and responsibility" should be the driving force behind the school. This means not only exposing students to human rights values and content in the classroom. The human rights framework is intended to create a child-centred school where these values inform how students learn, how they are treated by their teachers, how they treat one another, and how they will take their rightful place in the world, with a special sense of mission for promoting social justice – a tall order, no doubt, but one that has placed human rights front and centre in the school.

Teachers can bring human rights alive in their classrooms through examples they use, questions they raise, through active discussion, critical thinking and reflection, project-based work and enriching field trips. Teachers are challenged not only in learning about human rights content itself but in figuring out how to present human rights in a way that is meaningful and empowering for their students. One of the key challenges is not only helping to make human rights less abstract but also having students fall in love with the idea of human rights.

The human rights-based approach to schooling that the school aspires to includes the following characteristics, which you might identify as being core to school-based approaches to human rights in general. These are taken from a framework developed by UNICEF.[24] It:

- **Recognises the rights of every child.**
- **Sees the whole child in a broad context.** The staff are concerned about what happens to children before they enter the school system (in terms of health, for example) and once they are back home.
- Is **child-centred**, meaning that there is an emphasis on the psycho-social well-being of the child.
- Is **gender-sensitive and girl-friendly**. Staff are focused on reducing constraints to gender equity, eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting achievement of both girls and boys.
- Promotes **quality learning outcomes**. Students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, express their opinions, and master basic skills.
- Provides **education based on the reality of children's lives**. The students have unique identities and prior experiences in the school system, their community and families, which can be taken into account by teachers in order to promote student learning and development.
- Acts to ensure **inclusion**, respect and equality of opportunity for all children. Stereotyping, exclusion and discrimination are not tolerated.
- Promotes **student rights and responsibilities** within the school environment as well as activism within their community at large.
- Enhances **teacher capacity, morale, commitment and status** by ensuring that the teachers have sufficient training, recognition and compensation.

23. Author: Felisa Tibbitts (2009). Original source: Tibbitts F. (2005), "What it means to have a 'school-based approach to human rights education' and a 'human rights-based approach to schooling'" in Amnesty International USA, *Article 26 Newsletter*, August.

24. *Child Friendly Schools Manual*, Programme Division/Education, UNICEF, www.unicef.org/publications/files/Child_Friendly_Schools_Manual_EN_040809.pdf. Accessed on 23 September 2010.

– Is **family focused**. The staff attempt to work with and strengthen families, helping children, parents and teachers to establish collaborative partnerships.

These are abstractions, but they are an organising framework that the educator can apply to her or his own school. These principles can also be questions that we can use in evaluating a particular practice in the school. Is our discipline policy child-centred? Does it enhance student rights and responsibilities? Are there sufficient opportunities for student participation in the school? Is this participation meaningful and student-led? These principles can also lead to a whole school engagement of the infusion of human rights values in various dimensions of school life: learning, school development and management, and school and community policies.

Maybe we can agree that human rights in schools is not merely about education in the classroom, but a way of life in the school. This is not something created out of the goodwill of a few teachers. It is a commitment from leadership and a critical mass of teachers in the schools and, thus, is rather rare so far. Some initial results are promising, however.

The "Rights, Respect, Responsibility" (RRR) initiative of Hampshire County Council in the United Kingdom is a whole-school approach based upon the CRC.[25] Its universal principles emphasise the need to protect the rights of all children, to help children understand their responsibilities and to offer a framework for teaching and learning. These principles are used to promote the practice of democratic citizenship and respect for human rights among all members of the school community. Hundreds of primary schools, as well as 50 secondary and special education schools, are actively participating in the RRR programme. Its key features are as follows:

– The CRC is taught as a body of knowledge and promoted as a framework for school ethos, teaching and learning.
– Children and young people are treated as citizens.
– Children's identities and self-esteem are promoted so that they see themselves as bearers of rights, just as adults do.
– A human rights perspective is built into a range of subjects, including literacy, maths, science and history, and rights-based language is developed through the regular work of teachers.
– More democratic approaches to teaching and learning (emphasising participation and rights) are created.
– Class charters on rights and responsibilities are signed by both students and teachers.

Schools report that RRR acts as a framework for much of their citizenship work (for example, healthy schools, relationship education, drug education, emotional literacy, school councils), which can be related to articles in the CRC. School community members appreciate that they can point to a higher authority (international human rights standards) in relation to their school values and codes of conduct.

A three-year external evaluation was completed in 2008 and demonstrated a significant impact on the school environment where RRR has been fully implemented. These impacts include positive results on students' awareness of their rights, respect for the rights of others, and levels of participation and engagement in school. Teachers reported feeling less stressed and an enhanced enjoyment of their classes. Thus, the human rights-based approach enhanced both the human dignity of community members and the ability of schools to meet their academic mission to successfully engage learners in their education.

25. Hampshire County Council (2009), "Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A Whole School Approach" in *Human Rights Education in the School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice*, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Warsaw, pp. 72-74.

# Unit 4
# Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education – A short history of the Council of Europe approach[26]

## 1. Background

The Council of Europe, which is the oldest European organisation, was set up in 1949 in the aftermath of the Second World War. Its primary aim is to protect and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. The Council of Europe is active in many fields, including culture and education. Over 50 years, it has launched a number of co-operation projects in education in order to promote a culture of democracy and human rights throughout Europe.

At the beginning of the 1990s, as a result of the accession process of the new democracies of central and eastern Europe, the Council of Europe underwent a considerable transformation: the Organisation's membership more than doubled within a period of 10 years. In such times of change, more systematic work on democracy learning was needed. In 1997, a new project, Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC), was launched by the heads of state and government of the Council of Europe. This project has since grown considerably, acquired a strong human rights dimension and is now called the Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights (EDC/HRE) project.

By launching this project, the governments of European states acknowledged that people must learn how to become democratic citizens, that they are not born with these skills. At the end of the 20th century, European societies were faced with many problems, such as political apathy, migration movements resulting in increased social diversity, environmental threats and increasing violence. EDC/HRE was seen as a contribution to solving such issues. EDC/HRE is about promoting concrete participation in public life throughout one's life, about responsibility, solidarity, mutual respect and dialogue. It is in the unique pan-European setting of the Council of Europe that the best experts in the field from all over Europe have met over the last 13 years to work on this issue.

## 2. Outcomes of the EDC/HRE project

The first years of the project were devoted to defining concepts. Several basic publications were issued on the necessary strategies and skills for practising democratic citizenship. In 2002, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation on education for democratic citizenship (Recommendation Rec(2002)12). This was the first political text issued on this topic at the European level (with the second major one being the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education,[27] see below). It specifies that EDC should become "a priority objective of educational policy-making and reforms".[28]

In 2002, a network of EDC/HRE co-ordinators, which is composed of one person nominated by each member state, was set up in order to facilitate exchange and co-operation among the member states in this field. This network soon became an invaluable asset for the development and promotion of EDC/HRE. Specific projects were implemented in regions such as south-eastern Europe. 2005 was proclaimed the European Year of Citizenship through Education with the slogan "Learning and Living

26. By Ólöf Ólafsdóttir, Acting Director, Council of Europe Directorate of Education and Languages.

27. Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education adopted in the framework of Recommendation (CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers.

28. Recommendation Rec(2002)12, Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on education for democratic citizenship.

Democracy". The 2005 "Year" was a special moment for raising awareness in member states about EDC/HRE. Almost all member states took part in the "Year" in one way or the other, and the feedback from the various partners has been overwhelmingly positive.

However, it was clear from the beginning that giving education for democratic citizenship and human rights higher priority in education policies in member states is not an easy task, even if the situation varies considerably in different member states. Making EDC/HRE a key objective of education systems implies a new philosophy in terms of methodologies and work organisation. Studies carried out in the framework of the project, including the *All-European Study on EDC Policies*,[29] pointed to a strong need for practical instruments to help bridge policy and practice. Therefore, the preparation of instruments and tools, exchange of good practice and increased co-operation among and within member states were the priorities of the project in 2006-2009. There were three main areas of work: policy development, the training of education professionals and the democratic governance of educational institutions. For all areas the Council of Europe has developed a series of practical instruments like this series of manuals for teachers.

In May 2010, the many years of work outlined above culminated in the adoption of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education adopted in the framework of Recommendation (CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers by all 47 member states of the Council of Europe). This framework policy document will be an important reference point for all of Europe and will be used as a basis for the Council of Europe's future work in this field in the coming years.

29. Bîrzea et al. (2004), *All-European Study on EDC Policies*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

# 3. Practical instruments

## 3.1 The EDC/HRE pack

The different tools prepared by the Council of Europe include essential background information on various aspects connected with integration of EDC/HRE in educational systems. The major ones, called the "EDC/HRE Pack", are the following:

- Tool 1: Policy tool for EDC/HRE: strategic support for decision makers;
- Tool 2: Democratic governance of schools;
- Tool 3: How all teachers can support citizenship and human rights education: a framework for the development of competences;
- Tool 4: Quality assurance of education for democratic citizenship in schools;
- Tool 5: School-community-university partnerships for a sustainable democracy: Education for Democratic Citizenship in Europe and the United States.

These instruments have been developed by experts from the Council of Europe member states on the basis of the feedback and comments received from various target groups including the EDC/HRE co-ordinators. In addition to the EDC/HRE Pack, a host of supplementary material can be found on the Council of Europe website (www.coe.int/edc).

These practical instruments prepared by the Council of Europe in the field of EDC/HRE are generic instruments. In other words, it is recognised that they might need to be adapted to the various situations, developed and used as best suits the needs of each country.

## 3.2 Six volumes on EDC/HRE in school projects, teaching sequences, concepts, methods and models

In many countries, teachers need assistance with the implementation of EDC/HRE. This is why the Council of Europe is also developing a series of manuals for teachers on citizenship and human rights

Volume II:
***Growing up in democracy***
Lesson plans for primary level
on democratic citizenship

Volume III:
***Living in democracy***
EDC/HRE lesson plans
for lower secondary level

Volume V:
***Exploring children's rights***
Nine short projects
for primary level


Volume I:
***Educating for democracy***
Background materials
on democratic citizenship
and human rights education
for teachers

Volume IV:
***Taking part in democracy***
Lesson plans for upper secondary level
on democratic citizenship and human rights

Volume VI:
***Teaching democracy***
A collection of models
for democratic citizenship
and human rights education

education. The volumes have been published in partnership with the Zurich University of Teacher Education, International Projects in Education. The Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation co-funded the manuals with the Council of Europe. This book, Volume I, *Educating for democracy – Background materials for teachers*, is the first in this series of six volumes. On the previous page an overview of these six manuals and its different target groups can be seen.

The manuals include lesson plans for all levels of education, with a view to promoting active citizenship based upon participatory and task-based learning in a democratic school community.

The unique feature of these manuals is that they are the outcome of a truly European project. The idea and the first version were developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where many teachers and educators took part in the manuals' development. The authors and editors of the final version of the manuals come from many European countries and even further afield, and the manuals themselves have been tested and revised by a large number of people of different origins and different sensitivities. We hope that they will be useful to teachers and learners all over Europe.