Various Forms of Participation

> **Participation can take on many forms. Participation can start in the classroom or school community and extend to wider society beyond school:**
>
> 1. To inform oneself about current questions and leadership
> 2. To write about current questions and leadership
> 3. To discuss current questions
> 4. To support particular causes within a community
> 5. To found an advocacy group (or political party) or to join a grassroots organisation
> 6. To take part in meetings of an advocacy group
> 7. To lead a Non-Governmental Organisation
> 8. To vote in elections
> 9. To support the candidates in election campaigns
> 10. To put oneself forward as an electoral candidate and after election to take up office
> 11. To pay taxes
> 12. To engage in lobbying
> 13. To perform military service
> 14. To use legal avenues e.g. contacting government officials, taking a case to court etc.

5. Pedagogical approach: learning by example

This manual adopts the classic inductive approach of teaching and learning through concrete examples. By studying or experiencing one or several examples, pupils may grasp a general, abstract principle or insight. This manual demonstrates the three steps that teachers need to take when teaching by example:

1. The careful selection of one or more appropriate examples; deciding on the best medium and method to introduce the example(s).

2. The creation of carefully moderated phases of discussion and reflection during which the pupils - using a given example - develop their general knowledge of a topic and its key concepts. In phases of discussion and reflection, the pupils develop their general understanding and come to grasp the key concepts that the example has demonstrated.

3. The creation of appropriate opportunities to use newly acquired knowledge and categories by applying them to new contexts (knowledge transfer).

To support the teacher in carrying out step 2, a matrix is used in all the units. This matrix addresses the three dimensions pertaining to democratic citizenship and children's rights education that are important to the unit described. Key questions are suggested to guide the pupil's reflection in class. This effort of reflection on the part of the pupils is important, as learning objectives should not stay at the back of the teachers' or pupils' minds, but need to be expressed by the pupils in their words, as something they have understood, experienced, trained in, or wish to do in future. By sharing their insights in class, pupils will benefit from one another, as will the class community as a whole.

Processes of learning will become most powerful and effective if the pupils know why and for what they are learning certain pieces of Information, concepts and categories, skills, or modes and principles of behaviour in democratic communities. Phases of reflection and discussion should therefore not only draw general conclusions from concrete examples, but also address the whole process of learning. In terms of constructive learning, the pupils will become aware of their own personal approach to learning in general, and they will find out what type of learner they are, and what specific

strengths and learning needs they have. Teaching in the spirit of human rights ("through") encourages teachers to give learners the space and time to learn according to their needs. We may then become aware of our profiles as learners as part of our identities.

Viewed from the perspective of democratic leadership, the teacher should not keep the learning objectives at the back of his or her mind but share them with the pupils, which in itself turns lesson planning into an exercise in democratic decision making.

Finally, this form of meta-learning in children's rights classes gives a model of how to teach pupils to organise their own processes of learning. In modern societies, processes of change - for example, technology, economy, globalisation or the environment - are becoming more dynamic and complex. This poses new challenges for future generations: in order to succeed in their jobs and to participate in decision making, they will engage in a lifelong process of learning, having to tackle problems no one in school can anticipate today. Our pupils therefore need to become experts in co-operative learning, project work, process assessment and problem solving. In this manual, we have suggested some small steps for children at the beginning of their lives as learners.

6. Task-based learning: accompanying learning

The units are conceived as small projects in which the pupils are confronted with problems that are typical in project work - relating to the subject matter, organisation of work, communication, time keeping, etc. By finding ways of how to identify and solve these problems, the pupils develop a wide range of competences (task-based learning).

In Unit 1, the children are given the task of creating a flower which carries their name and a photograph of themselves. It is left up to them, for example, how they will design their flower, where they will obtain the materials, how they will find a photo, how they will plan their time. This way, the children will learn a lot "on the job", but the teacher needs to think carefully about the framing of the task, deciding questions like the following. How much time will the children have? Which materials must I provide? Should I supply some parts for the flowers ready-made? (See variations for the project laid out in Unit 1.)

This example shows that at a very early age, the children are encouraged to take responsibility for their work in class, in effect sharing responsibility with the teacher. This kind of learning experience is important if the pupils are to plan their work more independently at a more advanced stage.

In children's rights education, as a branch of EDC, the teacher will act within a wider spectrum of roles and activities. Teaching "about" children's rights corresponds to the classic function of instruction and information - by means of a lecture, a reading task, a video clip, etc. Teaching "through" and "for" children's rights, on the other hand, requires the teacher to reflect his or her behaviour and his or her personality as a role model. Children will perceive an adult's message as credible if his or her behaviour supports it, for example, by the tone of voice and level of understanding, tolerance, fairness or encouragement. As all units in this book show, the methods of teaching and learning correspond closely with the subject matter. The approach of task-based learning requires careful planning and preparation by the teacher, who may then seem more inactive in class. However, while the pupils are working, the teacher should watch them closely, as he or she will identify and respond effectively to their competences and learning needs in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills training, and values.