

# POLICY RECOMMENDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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*„The teacher who governs her room through fear of punishment is one of the most contradictory influences which make for boy antagonism toward society. She may teach method and accuracy through arithmetic, expression of thought and self through spelling and reading, but she cannot teach social consciousness through history and geography – the advantage of a republican over a monarchical system unless her schoolroom is a republic and not a monarchy.”*

*Homer Lane*

KURT LEWIN FOUNDATION

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2012

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their participation and valuable contributions to the program upon which we have based our Recommendation: Julianna Kiss, lead researcher; Gábor Héra, managing director; and the staff and interns of the Kurt Lewin Foundation, who assisted the project either as researchers or as trainers: Angéla Szabó, Zsófia Makádi, Márton Illés, Judit Mocsári, Judit Kende, Dénes Szemán, Ágnes Pletser, Anna Bánkúti, Virág Benke, Ádám Keresztényi, Mihály Kovács, Katalin Makács and Attila Rácz.

For his professional assistance in the field of education for democratic citizenship we would like to thank Rolf Gollob.

We also thank and wish further success to the students and teachers of the schools as well as the experts and decision-makers participating in the program.

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Supported in part by a grant from the Open Society Foundations.

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## 1. Executive summary

Our Recommendation serves the facilitation and development of the *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (EDC) at a local, regional and in some aspects national level of decision making. While drafting this collection of recommendations, we took into account the current international expectations and trends as well as the present Hungarian reality. Our Recommendation is the product of an eighteen month long research and development program, through which we aimed to explore what impact the school – as an organizational-functional environment – has on the students' active citizenship, democratic values, knowledge and acceptance of anti-democratic ideas. While shaping the Recommendations, in addition to asking the schools, we also asked the opinions of local, regional and national level decision-makers and experts, and we took into account the legal framework in force as well. In the Appendix, we present one domestic and one foreign best practice. The Recommendation suits real needs and opportunities, at the same time it offers a methodological model. In our Recommendation, we provide specific pieces of advice both in the fields of strategy development and execution.

Our Recommendation is devoted to certain principles. According to our principles, the development of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) needs to be based on universal human rights: The acceptance and appreciation of diversity, legal certainty and active participation apparent in a pluralist and democratic society, and the democratic balance of rights and responsibilities. Regarding the definition of EDC, we agree with the Council of Europe:<sup>1</sup>

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

In the framework of the program, we collected research data about the schools. Based on our findings, we can state that the students are satisfied with their lives, though for many the vision of the future is uncertain. They tend to accept authoritarian views. It is not too important for them to respect the rights of minorities, and accordingly, the majority of them are negatively disposed towards Roma youth and homosexuals. They are not very devoted to democracy. They are disillusioned by politics. They feel no relationship to any present political party. They are not sympathetic towards any current political parties. Still, the one to which they are most sympathetic is the far-right Jobbik. According to the students, their communal needs are not, or not sufficiently, satisfied by their schools. Education is characterized by frontal teaching methods. Therefore, the social and civic competencies of students do not develop adequately.

We can conclude from the research data that the hidden curriculum of the schools primarily influences the democratic attitudes, values, knowledge and competencies appearing in the students' school life (e.g. freedom to express one's opinion and participation). At the same time, we can state that the schools do not have an impact on the social and political values, knowledge and skills of the students. The teachers do not undertake but rather avoid these topics due to the lack of definition

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<sup>1</sup>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, [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Charter/Charter\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Charter/Charter_EN.asp)

for EDC, the lack of tools, their unpreparedness and the differences of their own socialization. Therefore, the school does not fulfill its mission concerning democratic social and political socialization.

The ways in which the education system is being transformed negatively affects EDC, for the most part. Even the positive parts of the transformation are jeopardized by the misuse of administrative loopholes due to lack of preparation and commitment. The goals set in the national educational governance documents contradict the tools assigned – e.g. educating the students for responsibility and active citizenship without providing them with any real scope of authority.

According to our Recommendation, it is necessary to make the following elements continuous: the definition of the concept of EDC with the involvement and inclusion of stakeholders; establishment and maintenance of commitment; transparency and distribution of information. Furthermore, local, regional and national political directives, strategies and action plans need to be drafted with the aim of making the EDC development work continuous and permanent.

The legal framework needs to be changed to support EDC; the educational scopes of authority need to be employed in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.

It is necessary to include all school citizens in the development of EDC in a meaningful way, supported by scopes of authorities and budget. Student, parent and expert organizations need to be increasingly involved in school governance. The success of EDC requires democratization and division of power.

Teaching EDC is necessary – whether as a separate subject or embedded in the curriculum of other subjects. We recommend the definition of the educational goals of EDC, the development of its curriculum and its inclusion in school education from the 1<sup>st</sup> till the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Emphasis needs to be put on the improvement of critical thinking; the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for the expression of opinion and activity; social cooperation and responsibility; the understanding of human rights; the acceptance of pluralism and democratic values; and the reflection upon real life and the process of learning.

The preparation of teachers for EDC is needed in teachers' training and teachers' continuing professional development activities.

Professional standards, quality assurance and quality control of EDC – supporting localized manifestations of EDC – need to be developed.

Our previous experiences and our own research findings support our points that identification with democratic values and acquisition of democratic citizenship skills are best achieved via student activities; learning through activities and acquiring a sense of responsibility stemming from the expression of their opinion. In our view, schools and education that function on the basis of EDC lead to increased competitiveness, improved performance, the establishment of efficient and positive cooperation, and peaceful social coexistence.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Why is education for democratic citizenship important?

Democracy in schools, and the active, democratic citizenship of students has become more important worldwide, as the management of political and social changes make the responsible, active participation of citizens more necessary. Understanding and shaping the globally interlinked economic-political processes, the changing demands of labor market, sustainable development and life-long learning leads to appreciation of “*critical thinking, to engage effectively with others in the public domain; willingness for participation, non-discrimination, knowledge of the basic concepts connected to culture; effective communication skills, flexibility to changes; aiming at compromises, etc*”.<sup>2</sup>

In today’s schools, students need, in part, to be prepared for professions and scopes of activities that we do not know about yet. It will become clearer and clearer as well that strongly hierarchical and often autocratic school structure and education does not show an appropriate example in the field of democratic, social and civic competency.

School, as a micro-society, creates a channel for the students to acquire the basic knowledge, skills and values/attitudes that they will need as citizens during their whole lives. The central components of education for democratic citizenship create an educational environment, in which human rights; the knowledge of democracy and the rule of law as well as the understanding and practice of these things; the daily competition of competing values and goals; and the cooperation of stakeholders, serves as the basis of coexistence.

In today’s Hungary, 23 years after the transformation of the regime, antidemocratic ideas are increasing. The social situation in several areas of the country jeopardizes daily existence as social tensions are increasing. Violence, based on openly expressed racism, is beginning to occur almost daily. The pillars of the democratic state and social cooperation have been weakened, while education is about to undergo a complete restructuring characterized by strong central governance and ideological promulgation. Society’s trust in participatory democracy is low and decreasing.

In such an environment, the education and socialization of young people with regards to democratic values, knowledge and skills, as well as learning democratic participation and active citizenship is even more appreciable. True democracy can only be realized with active citizens, active citizenship can be taught and it is necessary to learn and teach it.

In the spring of 2010, the research report of Medián Public Opinion and Market Research Institute measuring party sympathy was published.<sup>3</sup> In this paper they reported data on Jobbik’s electoral base, and emphasized that “*among the devotees of Jobbik first time voters are the most overrepresented (13 per cent).*” Based on the publication of Medián as well as our own democracy

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<sup>2</sup> Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competencies for lifelong learning, available: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006H0962:EN:HTML>

<sup>3</sup> Medián Közvélemény- és Piackutató Intézet – Hogyan szavaztak a magyarok 2010 áprilisában?, Elemzés a Medián választási felmérései alapján [How Did the Hungarians Vote in April 2010? – Analysis based on the electoral survey of Medián], 2010, available: <http://www.median.hu/object.7c017750-53b9-4a03-87c6-a771ee519bb8.ivy>

development and research experiences of the last 16 years we started a school research and development program: we were curious about what happens and *what does not happen* in the schools regarding social and political socialization when young people turn to a party propagating extremist and anti-system views to such an extent. In other words: what is the connection between the organizational culture of the school and the students' democratic knowledge, values and attitudes?

The starting point of our program is that school – as the second most important agent of socialization – with its direct and indirect educational activities - impacts the democratic socialization of the students; including the emergence and shaping of active citizenship as well as the role of democratic values during daily life and activities. According to our hypothesis, students more democratic schools are themselves more democratic.

As a result of our work, in order to make it possible for the European Union and Hungarian educational political directives in the field of education for active citizenship and their local implementation to be in accordance with each other, we prepared a policy Recommendation. We provide specific recommendations in the fields of shaping strategy and execution. The unique characteristic of our Recommendation is that it builds from below, from the grassroots level. That is, instead of envisioning a kind of idyllic state, it aims at building on real needs and opportunities to provide a tool for decision-makers with which they can start the work within the everyday conditions in which they find themselves.

## 2.2. Who is this Recommendation for?

This Recommendation is for all stakeholders affected by the education for democratic citizenship, still, it is especially for people, who are working with local (school, settlement) education governance, who have decision-making competencies in local education governance.

Second, it is for those who are dealing with education management at the regional and national level.

Third, it is for other groups affected by education for democratic citizenship: students and student organizations, parents and their organizations, as well as other stakeholders working on education (educational institutes, NGOs, universities, local employers and their organizations, etc.).

## 2.3. What methodology was used to prepare the Recommendation?

The Recommendation was based on a one and a half year long research and development program. The program stood on four pillars: 1. Research, 2. Development, 3. Research, 4. Lobbying.

Our program was executed in four schools in Eastern Hungary. Via the research program components, we examined the impact of school socialization among 17-19 year-old (11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade) students regarding active citizenship.<sup>4</sup> In the development phase, we organized trainings and programs for the improvement of active and democratic citizenship for the management of the schools, the teachers and the students involved in the research. In the lobbying phase of the program, we included all participants of the local education governance (principals, local educational organizations, offices working on educational governance from the side of the maintainer) in processing the findings. We also involved partners working on educational governance at a national level, who were open for cooperation, and experts from NGOs.

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<sup>4</sup> The detailed summary of the research can be found on the website of the Kurt Lewin Foundation, <http://kla.hu/aktivallampolgarsag>



The Recommendation can be adapted. Its methodology and structure can be employed in all environments – in a class, a school, town or country. Therefore, our Recommendation is a methodological model of how to develop the education for democratic citizenship in a way that it is building on the local needs and opportunities, and what the necessary steps are for it.

### 3. Situation analysis

#### 3.1. Legal framework<sup>5</sup>

During this time of preparing our Recommendation, public education is being seriously transformed. The pieces of legislation regulating EDC (too) are very fresh, and are either currently being modified or only exist in the form of a discussion paper. A significant part of the legislation, as e.g. curricula framework defining daily work or as implementation of regulations has not yet surfaced. At the national level the legal framework of EDC is provided by the Act on National Public Education in force and the 2012 discussion paper of the National Core Curriculum (NCC). The Act on National Public Education regulates the rights of school citizens and the operation of schools at the legal framework level; it provides rules defining the development goals of the National Core Curriculum, through key competencies and in the cultural domain of ‘Man and society’.

The Act on National Public Education and the draft of the National Core Curriculum influence citizenship education at several points. Due to the lack of space, we only indicate the most important ones, rather than evaluating the laws, our goal is mapping the opportunities for the development of EDC.

The Act on National Public Education includes the centralization of education to a great degree, putting a significant percentage of the schools (exact numbers are not yet available) under state control. Through this, the principle of subsidiarity is damaged, which will have a significant impact on the education of EDC, among others, by the relevant decrease in opportunities for developing education strategies at the local level.

In the Act, besides the changes in the school maintainers’ rights, the damaging of the students’ rights is also a modification of high importance. *“However, the new law only records one thing about the student government regarding this issue: in questions where until now the law guaranteed the right to agree to the student government, this changed to the right of expressing their opinion. The guarantee rules, like the right to decide about their own questions, or the right to decide about the*

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<sup>5</sup> Regarding the thoughts expressed in this chapter, we have taken into account the comments and recommendations of the Network for Free Education (Hálózat a Tanszabadságért) as well, see in more detail: *Tételes válaszok a Nemzeti Erőforrás Minisztérium Oktatási Államtitkársága által készített, „Valótlanságok és tények az új köznevelési törvénnyel kapcsolatban” című tájékoztató írásban szereplő állításokra* [Specific answers to the statements included in the paper entitled „Untruth and Truth regarding the New Act on Public Education” produced by the Secretariat of Education in the National Ministry of Resources]- <http://nahalkaistvan.blogspot.hu/2011/12/halozat-tanszabadsagert-allaspont-xiv.html> ; *A Hálózat a tanszabadságért (HAT) véleménye a Nemzeti alaptantervre vonatkozó, 2012 februárjában megjelent javaslatról*, [The opinion of the Network for Free Education (HAT) about the recommendation concerning the National Core Curriculum published in February 2012]- [http://www.tanszabadsag.hu/pdf/HAT\\_allasfoglalasa\\_a\\_NAT\\_rol.pdf](http://www.tanszabadsag.hu/pdf/HAT_allasfoglalasa_a_NAT_rol.pdf).

*student day, [...], now are simply left out of the Act on National Public Education.*<sup>6</sup> Also: *„the forums for consultation included in the previous law are not included in this act.”*<sup>7</sup>

As a positive element, we can mention that *„the law strengthens the role of the teacher helping the student government, as it states that only a pedagogue, who is nominated by the student government, can have this scope of activity; and based on the nomination, the school management appoints him/her, and for five years.”*<sup>8</sup>

As a positive characteristic we can also mention the introduction of community service (see below).

As the research findings and recommendation written in this document reflect upon the legal regulations and development fields; we find it important to present the draft regulations of the National Core Curriculum regarding this issue.

The discussion paper of the 2012 National Core Curriculum<sup>9</sup> - in accordance with the EU expectations – defines social and civic key competencies in the following way:

*„The personal, value orientation, interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competencies are the conditions for a harmonious life and integration in the community; the commitment and activity for public good, includes all forms of behavior through which the individual can participate in social and professional life in an efficient and constructive way in a more and more diverse society, and if necessary, is able to solve conflicts. Civic competence makes the individual capable of – using his or her knowledge about the social processes, structures and democracy – participating in public matters in an active way.”*

According to the definition in the 2012 National Core Curriculum, *education for citizenship and for democracy* includes the following developmental areas and educational goals:

*„The basis of the functioning of a democratic state is civic participation, which strengthens national consciousness and cohesion, establishes harmony between the personal goals and public good. This active civic behavior is characterized by the respect for the law, keeping the rules of coexistence, the respect for human dignity and human rights, non-violence and fairness. The participation in public affairs requires the development of creative, independent critical thinking, analytical skills and debate culture. The teaching and education management procedures building on the active participation of the students support the learning of responsibility, independent action, reliability and mutual acceptance in an efficient way.”*

We think that it is an important change that though in its main parts the text is identical to the National Core Curriculum of 2007; one of the main components is missing from the present version. According to the National Core Curriculum of 2007: *“The development of partial abilities [...] necessary for active citizenship is, for the most part, ensured by the quality of teaching and learning*

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<sup>6</sup> Szabó Angéla – Új szabályok a közoktatásban – a jogász szemével [New Regulations in Public Education – Through the eyes of a lawyer], Szocháló, Társadalomtudományi honlap, 2012, available: <http://szochalo.hu/cikkek/4546>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Nemzeti alaptanterv 2012 – nyilvános vitaanyag – [National Core Curriculum – public discussion paper], available: [http://dokumentumtar.ofi.hu/index\\_NAT\\_2012.html](http://dokumentumtar.ofi.hu/index_NAT_2012.html)

*organisation processes, which build upon students' active involvement, and democratic practices at school (bold added by KLF)."*

The text in bold is missing from the discussion paper of 2012. In our opinion, leaving out the experience of democratic practices acquired in school from the text is a grave misunderstanding of the education for democratic citizenship, and impacts it in a negative way. Taking into account this step together with the cutting of the students' rights included in the Act on National Public Education, we have to conclude the targeted setback of EDC.

We also regard the fact that the present educational law intends to achieve *the respect of law, keeping the rules and responsibility* – that gained an important role among the educational objectives in the law – by damaging the students' rights, as having the opposite effect. It requires the acceptance of laws and regulations that are decided on without the involvement of the affected stakeholders and it expects the increase of the students' responsibility while taking away all their decision-making scopes of authority. In our view, this provision does not lead to the increase of democratic citizenship but to a culture of dependence.

The draft of the National Core Curriculum determines 90 percent of the content of education and provides only 10 percent for the schools to determine and administer local needs. From the aspect of EDC, this rate is very low and makes substantive work impossible. This also means that the teaching of EDC can lead to reverse results than originally intended, that is, to the social and political demotivation of the students, the increase of disillusionment and and of the students' turning away. Such civic attitudes engender the increase of anti-democratic political forces.

The general training hours defined for vocational secondary schools (szakképző and szakközépiskola in Hungarian) by the NCC make the substantive processing of the field of EDC impossible. This way, the increase in the differences between the various school types – also underpinned by our research – can be expected. That is, the students, who are not attending secondary grammar schools (gimnázium in Hungarian) will in most cases not have the opportunity to receive education for democratic citizenship, and will be subjected to antidemocratic and often racist social answers to a greater degree.

Based on the draft NCC we can state that it aims to achieve strong ideological education. This assumes that, according to the standpoint of the government, there is one specific kind of ethics/ideology that is of higher value than the others about which the students need to be educated in a targeted way. This approach is contrary to the view expressed in the current Recommendation, which supports pluralism, the equality of the various democratic value systems.

The development tasks in the NCC – 1. distributing information, education; 2. Critical thinking; 3. Communication; 4. Orientation in space and time – are suitable for the teaching EDC. However, regarding content, in connection to all developmental areas, the historical (that is mostly dealing with the events of the past) content, the broadening of lexical knowledge, data processing and secondary analysis of information dominate.

There are positive components: the strengthening of the topics of sustainable development, environmental consciousness, economic knowledge, media consciousness; the inclusion of the world of work; and the introduction of community service can provide a good opportunity for getting to know and understand social and political questions. Through community service, the local peculiarities, challenges and opportunities for development can be a greater part of a student's school experience. Community service, properly prepared, can thus facilitate the increase of the trust in active citizenship, participation and democratic cooperation.

### 3.2. Short introduction/presentation of the area

The schools in Eastern Hungary examined in our program are situated in disadvantaged areas: social-economic disadvantage, low employment, income and educational levels characterize the surrounding environment. The area is also characterized by a high level of child poverty. The life expectancy at birth is below the national average, though it is increasing. There is a high level of migration away from this area and the area's population is decreasing.

The educational level of young people in the area has been low for a long time, the rate of secondary school and university graduates is far behind the national average, the number of students in vocational secondary schools is high, drop-out rates are also high and the number of disadvantaged children is significant.

The decrease in the rate of the population and especially young people also brings forth the problem that if there are less children, then less educational institutions will be necessary. Another important problem is that vocational trainings do not adapt to the expectations of the labor market and the students in vocational schools are the most frequent dropouts. drop out the most frequently are subjected the most to dropping out.

Regarding public life, young peoples' political activity is decreasing and electoral turnout is lowest among young voters. Young people find political activity less important than local community participation, the assistance of those in need, independent opinion formation and compliance with the law and norms.

### 3.3. Research findings, problem areas

The Kurt Lewin Foundation implemented a complex research and education program in four secondary schools in Eastern Hungary for one and a half years starting from January 2011. During our program, we examined the impact of the school – as an organizational-functional environment – on the active citizenship, democratic values and knowledge of members of the school community, primarily students. We intended to explore how the organizational culture of the school, the so-called hidden curriculum<sup>10</sup> influences their active citizenship skills and competencies, the opinions and attitudes about democracy and democratic values. Our Foundation examined the questions concerning the issue of active citizenship in four secondary schools: one state school (BG), a school maintained by the church (AG), and two vocational secondary schools (CSZ and DSZ).<sup>11</sup>

With the help of questionnaires and interviews, we examined the students' socio-demographic characteristics; everyday habits; relationships; plans for the future; ways of gaining information; knowledge and opinions about democracy, politics and society; and the knowledge and views about the school – including democracy in the school. In our Recommendation, we only show exact research data to a limited extent. The detailed research findings can be found in the research report.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> About the *hidden curriculum* see in more detail: John Dewey – *Democracy and Education* Macmillan, United States, 1916., and Philip W. Jackson – *Life in classrooms*, Holt, Rinehart & Row, New York, 1968.

<sup>11</sup> Due to research methodological aspects, we do not present the data gained in DSZ in our Recommendation.

<sup>12</sup> The detailed summary of the research can be seen on the website of the Kurt Lewin Foundation, <http://kla.hu/aktivallampolgarsag>

We continued the analysis of the research results gained in the schools on three decision-making levels: we organized roundtable discussions on school governance at the levels of local education governance and national education governance. Through our work, the main problem areas became identifiable. In the following section, we will shortly introduce these areas.

### 3.3.1. Problem areas according to the sub-areas of education for democratic citizenship

#### 3.3.1.1. *The daily life and vision for the future of the students*

Regarding the daily habits, partner relations, satisfaction and vision for the future we can state: the students are mostly satisfied with their lives – they are most satisfied with their friendships, and least satisfied with their expectations for the future. They can talk about their problems with certain individuals – among those listed (mother, father, best friend, homeroom-teacher, other teachers), and least freely with their homeroom teacher and other teachers.

In their free time, the majority of students play sports and close to half of them attend private classes (significantly less in the vocational secondary school). The majority of the students have hobbies. We can see that community and organized programs are important for them.

Regarding the future, the majority of the students have specific ideas about what work they'd like to do after high school.

Here, we highlight the main problem areas embedded in a textbox. In the case of the “The students’ daily life and vision for the future” we can define the following areas for development:

- The students are the least satisfied with their expectations for the future;
- One-third of the students do not have a specific idea about what they want to do after finishing school.

#### 3.3.1.2. *The students’ democratic citizenship knowledge and attitudes*

Regarding their knowledge of democracy, the students vary from school to school: the students of BG are the most knowledgeable. Regarding methods for acquiring information, the majority of the students do not talk often or very often with their homeroom teachers, their parents or their friends. Regarding their media consumption habits, the respondents mostly acquire information from the television where society and politics are concerned.

With regards to their opinions and attitudes about general questions of democracy and active citizenship, we can state that the students tend to follow the law and the rules. They are obedient; they are mistrustful towards politics and are disillusioned; and rather agree with authoritarian views, accept violence and demand strong leadership.

In most cases, democracy is important for the students, as is to actively do something for their own prosperity and to be able to freely express their opinions. It is less important for them to respect the rights of minorities. Regarding party sympathy, for the majority of the students, neither present political party is sympathetic or very sympathetic. Still, the most sympathetic party is the far-right Jobbik that openly expresses radical ideas.

The students are the least reserved towards people with disabilities (they can be regarded as open towards this group). However, with young Roma and homosexuals, the majority of the students do not like to interact on any level and thus can be regarded as negatively disposed towards these groups.

- The students rarely talk about social and political questions with their homeroom teachers, parents or friends (even less in the vocational secondary school than in the secondary grammar schools);
- They speak the least with their homeroom teacher both about political and social questions;
- They mainly gain information from the television about questions concerning society and politics;
- Mistrust towards the present political parties and the power of the radical (not reactionary?) right can be identified;
- They are mistrustful of and disillusioned by politics;
- They accept principles of authority, strong leadership and violence;
- It is less important for them to respect the rights of minorities;
- It is less important for them to be committed devotees of democracy;
- The majority of them are negative towards young Roma and homosexuals;
- They vary according to whether they know their school and educational rights.

### *3.3.1.3. The activity and participation of the students*

Regarding their personal civic activity, the majority of the students plan to vote at the next national elections – lower numbers were measured at the vocational school (CSZ). Regarding organizational activity, the students would like to participate in the work of several organizations. On the average, they would like to participate in 6-7 organizations, mostly in charity organizations, environmental organizations or sports associations; the least in organizations taking a stand against racism or in political parties. However, regarding present activity, only 13 percent of the students are the members of an organization.

The majority of the students have done volunteer work before. Concerning the future, 60 per cent of the respondents would like to do volunteer work.

The knowledge of the students about the opportunities they can find in their schools also varies. The students of the secondary grammar schools have more opportunities in their schools. The students of CSZ think – mostly correctly – believe that certain opportunities (e.g. summer camp, extra-curricular activities) are not available in their school. The students of BG know the greatest number of correct answers concerning questions about school rights.

Regarding the participation of the students, they most frequently attend ceremonies, they least frequently participate in camps and coaching/tutoring. The students of CSZ participate the least in the programs organized by the school.

- In the vocational school, significantly fewer students plan to vote at the next elections;
- The students would like least to participate in organizations against racism and political parties;
- They would like to participate in 6-7 organizations on the average, but regarding their present participation, only 13 percent of them are members of an organization;
- In the vocational school, the students have significantly fewer opportunities for such activity;

- The school programs, regulations, and websites in most cases are not managed or organized by the students. Teachers manage or do the job;
- The student governments are supervised by teachers;
- The majority of the community programs actually refer to school ceremonies;
- For the majority of the programs, less than half of the students participate.

#### 3.3.1.4. *The satisfaction of the students with the schools*

The majority of the students are rather satisfied or completely satisfied with their schools concerning the quality of education and the relationships they have with their classmates. They are less satisfied with how fair the teachers are, how much they take into account the opinions of the students, and how good the community is.

To sum up in one question, we also asked how democratic the students think their school is.<sup>13</sup> The CSZ (2,8), are regarded as the least democratic and the BG (4,1) are regarded as the most.

- The students are least satisfied with how much their opinions are taken into account;
- They are less satisfied with how fair the teachers are;
- They are less satisfied with how good they perceive the community to be;
- The students of the vocational school regard their school as being the least democratic.

To sum up, we can state that in the case of questions regarding their school, the students of BG are in a better position: they have the best grades, they participate the most in programs in their schools and they know more about their rights. They also have better opinions about their institution than the others. The knowledge of the students is more often correct and their methods of acquiring information are more diverse.

Nonetheless, with regards to disillusionment with politics, the preference of strong leadership and negative attitudes towards certain social groups, the students cannot be regarded as being very different from school to school. School does not have a significant impact on the opinions of the students with regards to politics and society.

#### 3.3.1.5. *The democratic citizenship knowledge and attitudes of the teachers*

Concerning the general questions about democracy, politics and society; the teachers presented more democratic opinions than the students. Nonetheless, the teachers can be regarded as mistrustful towards the present state of the rule of law and the current political elite. We can state that the respondents did not give very different answers according to schools.

Certain factors concerning democracy prove to be important or very important for the teachers as well. The two least important factors here are respecting the rights of the minorities and loving the flag of the country. The most important dimension is the rule of law.

- Regarding politics, teachers are moderately mistrustful (though they are less mistrustful than the students);
- Respecting the rights of the minorities and loving the flag of the country is less important to them.

<sup>13</sup> Measured in a five-item scale, where „1” stands for „absolutely not”, and „5” stands for „completely yes”.

### 3.3.1.6. *The forms of cooperation used by the teachers and the methodology*

The majority of the pedagogues think/judge that they have good relations with the teaching staff, the parents, the school management, the technical staff of the institution, the maintainer of the institution and the students.

With regards to keeping in touch, the teachers mainly see the parents at parent meetings, office hours and also keep in touch via phone. Regarding their teaching methods, the teachers mostly build on the individual work of the student, the usage of the textbook, the explanation of the material.

- They rarely employ interactive methods, based on participation and critical thinking;
- Keeping in touch with the parents remains in the formal framework.

### 3.3.1.7. *Satisfaction with the school*

With the school – not taking salary into account – and the work done there the pedagogues are mostly satisfied. They also have positive regard the performance of the school regarding education for active citizenship. Examining certain statements describing the schools (concerning academic achievement, community, activity), we got mostly positive (agree/strongly agree) evaluations. The questions about active citizenship and community proved to be important for the teachers in the life of the school. The teachers regarded their own schools as mostly democratic.

## 3.3.2. **The hidden curriculum – Problem areas in comparing students/teachers regarding the subareas of education for democratic citizenship**

We can state that the organizational culture of the schools, their hidden curriculum has an impact on the democratic civic knowledge, skills and attitudes of the students, at the same time it has little influence on the general political, social opinions of the students.

### 3.3.2.1. *Democratic civic knowledge, attitude*

While examining the attitudes concerning social and political issues, we experienced that the pedagogues support the democratic principles more than the students in all of the schools, however, the pedagogues are only able to convey democratic principles to their students to a limited extent and only with regards to certain areas.

At the same time we can conclude that in the more democratic school, the students have more democratic attitudes regarding their own school life. In the less democratic school, however, the students have more authoritarian views and follow rules more.

- The certain democratic civic dimensions are less important for the students than for the teachers ;
- Disillusionment with political parties and questioning the utility of politics;
- Regarding the prevalence of the principle of violence, the students can be regarded more authoritarian, less democratic thinking than the teachers in all schools.



### 3.3.2.2. Activity, participation

We can state that to express their opinions freely is the most important for students in the school where it is the most important for the teachers. The same is true about how much they think that participation in politics is the way for social change.

- Though it is important for the students to do something actively for their prosperity, but it is more important for their teachers.

### 3.3.2.3. Satisfaction with the school

The teachers of the school regarded most democratic by the students also regard their school the most democratic, they are more satisfied overall and issues having to do with school life are more important to them than at the other schools.

- The students evaluate the questions about community in their schools as moderately satisfactory (medium), they feel less that the school performs well regarding emotions and community less than their teachers; (THIS IS VERY CONFUSING... there's one extra 'less' .. it's not clear which one needs to go)
- In the case of secondary schools, the students and teachers regard the level of democracy at their school as about the same while in the vocational school the students regard their school significantly less democratic than their teachers do;
- The pedagogues think more than their students that both their own and the students' opinions are asked for, the students are less satisfied in this regard.

## 3.3.3. Further problem areas

Based on roundtable discussions with those responsible for school governance and educational governance at the school, local and national levels, the following problem areas were identified:

### 3.3.3.1. The factors influencing the students

- Distorting influence of the media
- Examples taken from the family
- Peer community
- School hierarchy

The influencing factors at an individual and community level are not reflected upon in most cases. The transformation of the hierarchical structure of the school does not happen, and even if it does, it is governed from above without the involvement of the students.

### 3.3.3.2. Lack of experience

- Participation in the democratic decision making
- Opinion expression
- Democratic conflict management
- Search for consensus
- Social dialogue
- Democracy in the school
- Getting to know and understand real-life situations

Several schools lack the practice and culture of democratic decision making. The expression of opinion and argumentation is polarized and stuck to fixed positions. There is no real search for consensus and/or dialogue. The school decision-preparation, decision-influencing and decision-making organizations and forums often lack (well-defined) scopes of authority and carry on doing irrelevant activities (irrelevant to what? to the maintenance of the school or the EDC?). The various student and parent organizations are involved only to a small degree. The consultation and decision-making processes therefore are counterproductive. Due to the lack of social dialogue, the value systems become rigid. The bases and democratic nature of the dialogue between the teachers, students, and maintainers are underdeveloped; the opportunity to find and establish common values and interests is rare; and the differences in opinions appear as obstructions. The schools operate as closed systems with few impulses from the outside world. There is no social dialogue and the school does not facilitate positive encounters between the different social groups.

#### *3.3.3.3. Lack of knowledge and tools*

- Undefined area, content
- Unprepared teachers
- Not included in teachers' trainings
- Lack of methodology
- Lack of knowledge
- Inadequate curriculum framework
- Lack of practical help
- Lack of partner organizations

Education for democratic citizenship is not defined appropriately. The development directions, areas and priorities are not developed sufficiently; the people responsible, the tasks and tools are not defined. The teachers are not prepared; the issue does not appear in teachers' trainings with sufficient weight. There is no adequate time and framework designated for citizenship education in the curriculum. The schools feel that they do not get real practical help that would support them in daily work and without partner organizations they are left alone.

#### *3.3.3.4. Lack of professional standards*

- Follow-up
- Professional control

Without the definition of the exact professional standards, useful follow-up and professional control cannot be developed. The schools are left alone, they do not receive feedback about their work.

#### *3.3.3.5. Lack of strategy*

- Lack of local strategy
- Lack of regional strategy
- Lack of national strategy

The local, regional and national strategies in the field of democratic citizenship education are incomplete and do not accord with each other. The objectives, priorities and success criteria are not clear. The bases for the development and implementation of the local action plans are missing.

#### *3.3.3.6. Legal regulations*

- Legal regulations
- People responsible without scopes of authority
- Administrative loopholes

Without exact legal regulation and scopes of authority linked to tasks and resources, the framework of the education for democratic citizenship is uncertain. Due to the insufficient level of democratic

culture and the lack of commitment, the educational initiatives for EDC are jeopardized by the misuse of administrative loopholes.

#### *3.3.3.7. Political – social questions/the connection to public life*

- Politicized usage of concept
- Prohibition of party politics in school, the avoiding of the issues
- Social questions full of tension
- Politicized education governance
- Changing educational political strategies, unpredictability

The separation of public and political questions in the field of education for active citizenship is difficult. Due to the politicization of the concept, it becomes difficult to aim at objectivity, to have discourses without party politics, to analyze the strong social tensions based on critical thinking and democratic principles, and to search solutions. The strong political governance of the education system and the frequent change of directions pose serious difficulties in school governance, the strengthening of values, the establishment and maintenance of common educational principles, and middle and long-term planning.

#### *3.3.3.8. Lack of Models*

- Lack of political role models, social prestige of politicians
- Good examples for teachers, disillusioned, skeptical pedagogues

There are no or very few role models to follow in politics, and good examples to draw from for teachers. It is a problem, that teachers are characterized by political disillusionment and turning away from public life just as much as society in general.

### **3.3.4. Summary – the democratic citizenship socialization impact of the hidden curriculum on the social and political views of the students**

As we can see from the research data, the hidden curriculum of the schools primarily impacts the democratic attitudes, values, knowledge and competencies of the students that appear in the school, while it does not influence social and political questions. The students are mistrustful towards politics to a great degree, they prefer authoritarian social answers and the most sympathetic party to them is the far-right party, Jobbik.

In our opinion, these findings can be explained by the following:

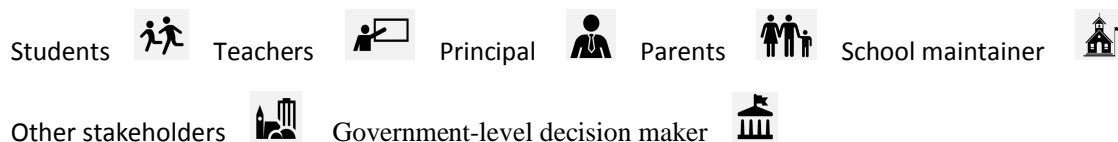
- The students do not really talk about their problems or about social and political questions with their teachers or their homeroom teachers;
- The communal needs of the students are not or are not sufficiently satisfied by the schools;
- The students acquire information about the world that surrounds them primarily from television;
- A significant percentage of the influences on students are not reflected upon at school;
- The teaching methods in use are mostly frontal and the predominance of lexical knowledge is widespread; therefore critical thinking, initiative, problem solving skills, opinion expression skills, etc. do not really improve. That is, all skills and competencies that would be the key components of education for democratic citizenship;

- Pluralism, the diversity of values and interests appear as an obstructive factor. There is no culture of the fact that during democratic decision-making individual interests sometimes have to give in due to majority decision;
- The usage of the concepts of social and political issues at both the level of public discourse and politics are politicized;
- Due to the lack of definition of EDC, the lack of tools, the lack of the preparation of the teachers and their different socialization, the pedagogues do not undertake but rather avoid these issues during their educational work at school. That is, the school gives up its role in the democratic social and political socialization process;
- The teachers themselves also become disillusioned and mistrustful regarding political questions;
- It is difficult for (school)governance to follow the changes in the strategies of educational governance under political influence. This negatively impacts the development of EDC.

#### 4. EDUCATIONAL POLICY RECOMMENDATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP



As we can see from our research findings, there are relevant development opportunities in the field of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC). Based on the research presented above, we can state that we are only at the beginning of the development of EDC. Therefore, in our Recommendation we both touch upon the establishment and development of EDC. Instead of listing the development tasks according to the levels of decision-making, we are going to discuss them according to the dimensions of the education for democratic citizenship. We chose this approach because – on the one hand – in our Recommendation we do not intend to determine who the person responsible for a given area should be (we leave this democratic process calculation and decision-making to the appropriate stakeholders). On the other hand, the person, who leads the given development process, can change according to the level of implementation – school, settlement, regional or national. Nevertheless, we indicate who the stakeholder(s) is/are for all development fields – signified by their competencies, sphere of authority or the fact that they too are affected. We have employed icons to symbolize the stakeholder groups:



The present Recommendation relies on the educational policy documents published by the Council of Europe concerning education for democratic citizenship and human rights;<sup>14</sup>

on the educational tools developed for the field of EDC; and at the same time adapts this framework to real, existing needs and challenges. This collection of recommendations is thus in accordance with the current international requirements in the field of education for democratic citizenship, as well as with the present Hungarian reality both regarding problems and opportunities.

Our educational policy Recommendation suits the needs of a given region (Eastern Hungary). Still, we believe that its methodology and the challenges identified make it adaptable in other parts of the country as well. In our approach, we formulate our recommendations primarily relying on local needs and resources. Still, we regard the methods recommended transferable to regional and - regarding certain components – to national decision-preparation, decision-making and execution levels as well.

<sup>14</sup> Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights – Council of Europe, [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/default_en.asp)

Our Recommendation is devoted to certain principles. According to our principles, the development of EDC needs to be based on universal human rights; the acceptance and appreciation of diversity, legal certainty and active participation apparent in a pluralist, democratic society; and the democratic balance of rights and responsibilities.

Regarding the definition of EDC, we agree with the Council of Europe:<sup>15</sup>

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

In our opinion, schools and education that function on the basis of EDC lead to the increase of competitiveness, the intensification of performance, the establishment of efficient and positive cooperation and peaceful social coexistence.

In the following section, we are going to present our recommendations regarding the development fields, scopes of tasks and tools of EDC.

## 4.1. The establishment and maintenance of the commitment towards EDC

### 4.1.1. The definition of EDC



Based on our research experiences, we can state that the exact definition of EDC is of primary importance. The definition can follow the principles included in the present Hungarian educational laws in force and/or the one adopted by the Council of Europe. None the less, education for democratic citizenship is context and culture dependent to a great extent. There is no one correct definition. It is in the process of constant change. This is necessary in order for it to follow the local/national social developments, and, in turn, to provide direction for these developments. A definition is best if its adoption is accompanied by widespread debate. This debate helps those affected to understand and accept or reject the question - in committing to the cause. Without commitment, no strategy or development can be realized. Also, a precise definition points out the main areas of development, helping stakeholders define the tasks and scopes of authority.

The definition process helps the (school, settlement/town, regional, national level) leaders to fit education for democratic citizenship in their own policies, that is, to recognize the success and benefits they can gain from EDC. For example, one such gain is the competitive advantage provided by the stability arising from diversity and democratic decision-making, the positive impact of democratic values in the field of communal coexistence, the predictability and transparency secured by legality, the non-violent management of conflicts, the greater opportunity for innovation, etc.

### 4.1.2. Raising awareness and providing information about EDC



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<sup>15</sup>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, [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Charter/Charter\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/Charter/Charter_EN.asp)

As a continuation of the consultation work that began at the definition phase of the work, it is necessary to inform a wide circle of stakeholders about the principles, values, areas and role of EDC in the field of democratic coexistence and education. The greater the number of circles of people that are impacted by EDC that become involved in the definition process, the more efficiently and thoroughly the awareness raising and information provision will be. Active participation in accordance with the principles of EDC is useful for the provision of information, that is, it is worth organizing debates, forums, or sharing the already known best practices, international examples in addition to analyzing the local situation. Raising awareness is most productive if the leader (school principal, local mayor, etc.) is committed and if it also builds on the grassroots level experiences by identifying the needs and benefits.

Certainly, raising awareness and providing information about EDC are always important (not only at the beginning of the development process): they provide transparency and sustain commitment. Based on the first successful steps and programs, the process can be assisted by the dissemination of the results achieved and the best practices.

This way, while realizing EDC, the bases of useful inter-sectoral cooperation can be established, at the same time mapping the kind of resources that can be found in the system, in the network.

#### 4.1.3. Needs assessment regarding areas for development of EDC



The process of providing information can be connected to the mapping of stakeholders' needs. The strategy and action plan for the development of EDC can only be successful if it answers real needs and problems. Needs assessment should include the analysis of the data available, the legal environment, as well as the needs and resources of stakeholders. The needs, through which involvement and motivation can be sustained, can be identified through this needs assessment. By searching for answers, the meaning, layers and complexity of EDC will become clearer for all the stakeholders, that is, the ways in which the communal needs depend on one another and what the fields where active civic participation is necessary will be more visible.

#### 4.2. Establishing political directives for the development of EDC



The political principles regarding EDC can be developed with the involvement of stakeholders. It is recommended for the directives to also include areas for inter-sectoral cooperation in addition to the educational system as well as the expected impact. In this way we are supporting the mainstreaming of education for democratic citizenship, and its impact radiates out horizontally.

#### 4.3. The development of the strategy of EDC

##### 4.3.1. The shaping of the strategy of EDC



The steps documented in 1.1.-1.3. help decision-makers acquire the information necessary to shape the strategy. Comprehensive situational assessment, based on data – that in itself includes the significant (educational and management) legal, socio-economic, competitiveness data and the

existing needs and resources – also provides an opportunity for the leader to assess where s/he stands in the field of EDC, at what level the work needs to start (e.g. is the tasks the harmonization or development of the existing processes or their launch, or, perhaps, a change in the approach).

The strategy regarding EDC (whether short, middle or long-term) needs to be in accordance with the national level, as well as with the strategies adopted by the international, supranational organizations (primarily the European Union, the Council of Europe and the UN), and the local educational strategy.

The different (school, settlement, regional, national, European Union) level EDC strategies are most successful when they build on each other. However, this does not exclude the opportunity of the community to determine their own answers and directions while also taking into account the higher level strategies. Furthermore, in case of really useful strategies, this is necessary.

### 4.3.2. Determining the objectives and priorities of EDC



Through the shaping of the strategy, the objectives and priorities of EDC can be precisely determined. The determination of the objectives and priorities includes the definition of the success criteria and the processes employed as well. This work phase further specifies EDC for stakeholders, this way strengthening the commitment as well as making clear the tasks and scopes of responsibilities.

### 4.3.3. The action, operations and budget plan of EDC



Alongside defining objectives and priorities, the specific implementation plan can also be developed, for which the budget and other resources as well as the people responsible have to be assigned. By this time the groups of stakeholders are participating in the process. They can assess their competencies and capacities, can undertake the tasks and the responsibilities belonging to them in realizing the strategy – e.g. pedagogue training, curriculum development, initiation of student programs, their harmonization, creation of forums for debate, coordinating, implementing projects, etc.

The specific action plan contributes to the professional control of the process and the realization of quality assurance as well. This way a system of requirements can be created where control is the facilitator of the process, and does not only stay a legal, administrative tool that negatively effects long-term motivation for the process.

## 4.4. The shaping of the legal system of EDC

### 4.4.1. The national level regulation of EDC



At a national level, the legal framework for EDC is provided by the Act on National Public Education in force and the draft discussion paper of the National Core Curriculum:<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See the chapter on *Legal Framework*.



We find it important to employ the principle of subsidiarity in the field of maintainers' rights, to secure the most scopes of authority for those affected at a local level, this way providing an opportunity for EDC to become a priority in local educational strategy.

We find – disagreeing with the Act on National Public Education – the expansion of the rights of the students, the restoration of the student government's right to have a say in decision-making, the strengthening of its role and the development of its structure - to be necessary. The real inclusion of the student- and parent organizations in the decision-preparation and making process needs to be established.

To make it possible for the EDC to adjust to local demands, that is, to the educational needs of the student, we find that providing diverse educational forms and establishing an atmosphere of academic freedom are important, as well as for the educational institutions to have the opportunity to adopt and operate their own philosophy and a concomitant educational program.

We find it important to establish at the level of the national curriculum that one of the areas of learning EDC is having experience of the democratic processes of school life.

We find the 10 per cent free content provided for the schools in the framework of the centralization of education very little for the successful education of EDC adjusting to the local peculiarities, serving as a tool for processing real social and political problems. In our opinion, a school's citizens are the most appropriate agents for shaping the actual curriculum and methodology.

The increase of the number of hours for EDC in vocational secondary schools is needed.

The development tasks that appear in the National Core Curriculum – 1. Acquiring knowledge, learning, 2. Critical thinking, 3. Communication, 4. Orientation in time and space – are suitable for the education of EDC. However, with respect to content, we recommend processing the topical issues and problems that are taken from real life, based on active participation, expressing autonomous opinions, taking responsibility, critical thinking, initiative, communication and cooperation.

During education for democratic citizenship, in our opinion – disagreeing with the value-centered education included in the National Core Curriculum – debate based on critical thinking and human rights as well as accepting and welcoming the pluralism of values should be supported.

We recommend the teaching of this cultural domain as an optional, independent subject. (Regarding teaching the subject, see point 5.2.)

#### 4.4.2. The shaping of the internal system of regulations of EDC



The strategy developed is shaped by higher level pieces of legislation. At the same time, the shaping of internal rules for the realization of the objectives and tasks set is also worth doing. It can include two different fields of regulation:

- First, the organizational-functional regulation of the realization of EDC, its definition along with the decision-making principles; how the implementation of the strategy is going to happen, what forums will serve as the places for discussing the problems and the new initiatives, who the actors are, what scopes of authority and responsibility they have, etc.;
- Secondly, it can include the educational policy regulation of EDC, the definition of the educational directive, decisions about the tools and resources required for EDC (e.g.

curriculum, teachers' training, student participation, etc., creating calls for applications for tendering resources for the development tasks in the Recommendations.)

Placing the internal operation on legal bases and rules helps the participants to reach a stable, predictable state of operation, democratic decision-making, sustainable transparency, efficient channeling of emergent proposals for change, governed competition of the values and interests and the peaceful management of conflicts.

## 4.5. The development of EDC at the school level

### 4.5.1. Management in EDC, for EDC



The success of EDC depends to a great extent on the commitment of the management. If this is there, then the process is sustainable. If not, or it is uncertain, then the process might even become counterproductive – it can lead to the disillusionment of the students with democratic values and the employment of undemocratic tools. The impact of the school as a micro-society on the democratic citizenship socialization of students is most significant here. The management of the school and the organizational culture of the school need to be in accordance with what is happening inside the classroom. The education for democratic citizenship is most successful if the whole school is imbued with it. Then it will emerge at the level of the hidden curriculum as well.

The basis of the management supporting EDC: the balance of rights and responsibilities, the division of power, the development of the activity of the students – their inclusion in the preparation of decisions as well as in the everyday management tasks of the school, the pluralism and competition of the values and interests, and the emphasis of human rights - are crucial elements of success.

However, it is not at all our intention to convey that it is necessary to transform the complete (typically strongly hierarchical, autocratic) institution management system at once. EDC can begin with quite small steps, bearing in mind the aim of raising it to the level of organizational culture.

For the management supporting EDC, it is also necessary to have cooperative teachers' staff and student community. It is not a goal that everyone should think the same. One of the principles of EDC is pluralism, that is, the diversity and competition of the ideas, values and approaches is regarded as the natural and supported situation. Diversity and pluralism are values that make the community stronger. The communal value system based on pluralism is the most stable, because it makes it possible for everyone to connect and to identify themselves with the goals. Neither the teachers, nor the students need to be changed/reeducated, the much blamed examples brought from home are also resources. Everything is part of reality, which is the basic component of EDC. The necessity of changing the approach does not mean the development of thinking alike, but that the differences in opinions support the community and the debate that occurs in democratic framework assist finding the best answers. To achieve this, a system of cooperation and consultation needs to be shaped and consistently sustained, in which mutual agreement can be reached in a non-violent way. The aim and tool is reaching win-win situations in increasing the commitment for EDC. In order to reach this result, all tools can be used that are used at the education for democratic citizenship of the students (see the examples below).

The management tasks and responsibilities of EDC can be shared with the students depending on the degree of the state of development. Of course, the same things apply to the cooperation with the students as what was written in connection to the teachers.

#### 4.5.2. EDC as a subject



A debate surrounds the question of whether EDC should be taught as a subject or is it better to place the topic under History or other subjects according to the present regulation. Or should it be conveyed to the students during school life, through the day-to-day operations of the school, developing it together with them. Our opinion agrees with the referential standpoint of the Council of Europe, according to which raising this question is not right as there is no real pressure to choose, this approach is a false alternative. The advantage of teaching it as a separate subject is that it provides opportunity for in-depth work with the questions (for example: rights and responsibilities, pluralism, conflict management, civic participation, media, power and government, identity, minorities, human rights, etc.), discussing the topics, as well as the targeted and efficient improvement of the skills and key competencies of EDC (for example: critical thinking, opinion expression, initiative, cooperation, conflict management, etc.). The subject framework at the same time provides time and resources for EDC.

Raising it to a subject level also raises the rank of the topic. At the same time, this does not mean that it cannot be built into other subjects. An argument against teaching it as a separate subject is that approaching education for democratic citizenship as an obligation and can affect the objectives in a negative way, and that the principles and methodology of EDC can and need to be enforced during the teaching of all subjects. It is true for both approaches that they assist the processing of the impulses and influences affecting the students, and provide opportunity for the students to make the process of learning itself to become a conscious one.

Based on our research findings, we can state that it is by all means necessary to directly teach EDC in a certain form (included in other subjects or as a separate subject) as it can be seen from the findings that democratic school organizational culture in itself does not provide enough support for the students to know their way around social and political issues. The demand can be inferred from the ways in which all school citizens reflect upon social life, life outside of the walls of the school; and for acquiring the attitudes, knowledge, skills and capacities necessary to deal with the problems that appear in everyday life. In order to be able to deal with the situations appearing in daily life in an efficient way, a process that spans over years is necessary, because EDC mostly deals with contents that have no black or white solutions. The topics of EDC demand the analysis of the questions not yet answered or not capable of being answered; the open-ended search for answers.

Based on this, we recommend the definition of the learning-teaching goals of EDC, the development of its curriculum and the inclusion of it in school education from the 1<sup>st</sup> till the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In case of grading, we find a marking different from the five-item grading appropriate, written evaluation is important. The direction of the evaluation needs to be supportive; it cannot evoke fear since in partnership cooperation, in the shaping of opinions and their free expression and in their competition, fear is an obstructive factor. The evaluation of the parties can be realized with assertive communication towards each other.

We also recommend the development of EDC during school life, for which a wide range of tools are available, for example:

- Project- and cooperation-based learning, supporting the initiatives of the students;
- Weekly class meeting for discussing the questions concerning the class lead by the students;
- The development of the student government, its reorganization, providing it with real scopes of authority and budget;
- Operation of student newspaper/radio by the students;

- Increasing the number of programs available in schools, giving/sharing the choice and organization of these programs to/with the students;
- Improving the cooperation between the school citizens (students, teachers, parents), establishing forums, organizing programs;
- Inclusion of external organizations, NGOs/employers in school life, the increased participation of the students in this, etc.

#### 4.5.3. Professional competence and tools for EDC



The method of the realization of EDC is hidden in the details. Our research findings raise the attention to the fact that the teachers are not prepared enough to teach this topic, they feel that they do not receive enough support, and they themselves are disillusioned and distrustful towards the existing social and political questions. This is a serious problem and we need to emphasize that in both in teachers' training and further training<sup>17</sup> preparation for EDC is necessary. Therefore, the forms of development need to be articulated in political directives, trainings need to be organized and resources need to be assigned for the improvement of the situation.

At the same time, it is important to emphasize that the teaching of EDC does not lie in the educational methods conveyed by the teachers to the students. Every school citizen is its participant, its teacher and student at the same time. Peer training can provide an inexhaustible source in the development of EDC both in and outside of the framework of the classes, as well as during the management of the school by the experiences gained through the sharing of power and their feedback. Peer training can be used both among teachers and students. The pedagogues therefore are not alone, and experiences show that if the students feel honest trust and get real opportunities, they will not abuse it. Therefore, the development of EDC can start together with the students, with small steps, processing the dilemmas and results together, teaching EDC to one another.

For the teaching of EDC and the transformation of the organizational culture of the school a wide range of the tools are available (see references).

The *open school* model provides countless opportunities for diversified learning and acquiring the key competencies necessary for life-long learning. That is, during the teaching of EDC, the inclusion of outside organizations – NGOs, employers, public administration organizations, other social organizations – is a useful tool, and could be connected to *community service* as well. These organizations can enrich the life of the school with knowledge, material and methodology that would not be available from internal resources. Through their inclusion, the school can establish newer connections with the outside world, making it predictable and capable of being professionally processed. In the open school model, special attention needs to be paid to programs that have been realized with an external partner in order for the knowledge to be channeled back and to become an organic part of the school.

The open school model makes possible – in addition to the previously mentioned advantages – the involvement of extra resources.

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<sup>17</sup> The Kurt Lewin Foundation is having its 30 hours long teachers' training program entitled *Demokratikus állampolgárságra nevelés - Módszertani lehetőségek a demokratikus ismeretek, szemléletmód és gyakorlat fejlesztésére az iskolában* [Education for Democratic Citizenship – Methodological possibilities for the development of democratic knowledge, attitudes and practice in schools - working title] accredited at the time of the publication of the Recommendation.

In the Appendix of our Recommendations, two specific EDC development methodologies that build on local needs can be found.

#### 4.5.4. The question of participation in EDC



The question of participation was raised in several chapters. Still, it is worth touching upon it separately. The degree of participation can be very diverse, from asking the opinion of the students to involving the school citizens with complete rights in school management. The degree needs to be decided on by the communities themselves, it is their own task. It is important to note however, that whether the school deals with it consciously or not, EDC “happens” every day. If the decision is made that the school management/teaching staff does not want to include the students in school life in any way, leaving the citizenship education through participation to other segments of their life, EDC still happens. The students learn from this example: without the opportunity for participation they become dependents instead of citizens.

The educational institutions that maintain as a primary objective the education/development of responsible, autonomous, motivated and empathetic students need to encourage and build on the participation and cooperation of the students. The basis of all these values is participation as partners – together with the tasks, responsibility and sense of achievement they engender. Widespread experiences and our own research supports our view that the identification with democratic values and the acquisition of democratic citizenship skills can be best achieved via the activities of the students; learning through these activities and through the responsibility that accompanies the expression of one’s opinion.

Participation certainly will lead to the collision of differing opinions; it will be filled with conflicts. However, this is one characteristic of democracy, competing views. Debate is one of the key components of EDC, but it is crucial that for a good debate, the framework needs to be agreed upon together (see points 5.2.-5.3.) in order for the democratic mechanisms to provide the secure and constructive treatment of the differences of views. Through the debate, the students learn that their opinion and goals do not always win, the community does not agree with their opinion, it wants to act in a different way. However, this experience will have a quite different characteristic than *losing* in an autocratic, authoritarian environment. Learning the treatment of the frustration accompanying losing is of primary importance while learning democratic citizenship. The democratic framework here provides opportunity for the students to broaden their boundaries and learn to accept the opinions different from their own, moreover, to be able to cooperate in activities about which they had different opinions.

It also should be noted that participation means the participation of all school citizens, that is, the partnership cooperation of students-teachers-principal-parents. Participation is worth starting with involvement in the development and adoption of the framework/rules in this case as well, this way creating the opportunity for partnership cooperation.

#### 4.5.5. Dealing with content full of tension as part of EDC „Social or political approach?”



In connection with the subject matter of EDC, it is necessary to talk about the topical social questions and to realize projects. This raises emotions in the participants, which is a sign that the given topic is really important to them. This is a problem only if the emotions and the tensions that also sometimes arise are not handled adequately, with suitable democratic tools. According to the approach

presently characteristic in schools – we also came across this in our research – teachers prefer to avoid these questions, so to say “leave politics outside of the walls of the school”. As in the case of citizenship education, the following problem also emerges regarding this issue: it is not possible to leave these things outside. Therefore, it is also not helpful or useful to create an artificial bubble that in reality does not protect the students, or does so to only a very small extent. Aggression in schools (bullying/mobbing, conflicts with parents) is also partly the consequence of the fact that school citizens do not know non-violent conflict management techniques well enough, and that democratic culture is low in the school.

According to what was written above, we do not regard as appropriate raising the question of whether *social* can be separated from *political*. Aristotle’s *zoon politicon*,<sup>18</sup> that is, the political/communal being, is a citizen for whom the questions regarding the community/state are important, and who actively and consciously participates in them. This way all questions concerning communities are political at the same time, and since parties are (also) intended for the aggregation and articulation of differing/conflicting interests, they necessarily become political by nature. All this is a feature of parliamentary democracies, and as such, should be learnt during school socialization. During all moments of school life, where student get responsibility over their own learning, they exercise political participation in their own communities. Instead of avoiding the subject, the school needs to facilitate the correct way of dealing with it. That is, it should assist the development of critical thinking, the shaping of a balanced value system, the learning of the skills and competencies necessary for expressing one’s opinion and for the ability to act, and the ability to think about open-ended questions. For all this, the basis can be provided by the near and broad communities as well as the law. In this case, the safest basis is provided by human rights that constitute the basis of all legal systems. The teacher and student communities, which have universal human rights as a basis and use the system of tools of democratic cooperation, are capable of discussing the topical social and political questions without exercising political activities at school that are prohibited by law. This approach and methodology can be learnt (see point 5.3.).

#### 4.6. The quality assurance of EDC, professional control

##### 4.6.1. The quality assurance of EDC



The action plan developed in accordance with the objectives and priorities, as well as the determined criteria for success can provide the basis of the quality assurance assessment of the process. The differences between the directive, strategy and the real situation need to be assessed.

##### 4.6.2. The professional control of EDC



Professional control is necessary. Therefore, the professional minimum standards of EDC need to be developed. However, it is useful – due to interpreting the local peculiarities as a value - to restrict this definition to a minimum. We are talking about the same mechanism as in the case of evaluating EDC as a subject/curriculum. The evaluation and the professional control has to be supportive, it should in no way evoke fear. Fear is an obstruction to partnership and cooperation. Professional control and evaluation can be realized by the participants through assertive communication towards each other. In this work, it can be of great help if professional evaluation among schools/settlements/regions/nations is provided successfully through a network of cooperation and horizontal learning.

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<sup>18</sup> Aristotle – Politics, Budapest, Gondolat, 1969.

## 1. Appendix

### 100 Poorest – Social studies and responsibility program for secondary school students – Kurt Lewin Foundation, Hungary<sup>19</sup>

#### The aim of the program

The aim of the 100 Poorest – Social studies and responsibility program is to develop the democratic culture, social knowledge, cooperation and active citizenship skills of young people, as well as to provide opportunity for positive encounters between different social groups, often living in isolation from each other.

#### The summary of the program

The educational program mixing experience-based learning, provision of information and volunteer work is about the social groups often handled as a taboo in school, facing discrimination (e.g. Roma, immigrants, homosexuals, etc.) and phenomena (e.g. discrimination, homophobia, prostitution, inequalities between genders, etc.): Besides knowledge, the program also provides the experience of active social responsibility.

The 100 Poorest project of the Kurt Lewin Foundation and its products, primarily the 100 Poorest booklet and photo exhibition serve as the basis of the program.

During the program, the students through the following activities and development work:

- Encounter a new approach of the social questions less emphasized in school, broaden their knowledge, widen their intellectual horizon;
- Learn how to articulate their opinion, become capable of listening to each other's opinions, arguments;
- Their critical thinking and social sensibility both improve;
- Realize their own responsibility in social issues;
- Reject extremist ideologies, racist and discriminative answers;
- Become the active shapers of participatory democracy, responsible citizens;
- Realize the necessity for active action and also raise the attention of their environment to this.

During the program, the methodology used is informal, based on training, and volunteer work is also connected to it.

The program constitutes of the following components:

- Unconventional lessons/classes

During unconventional home classes/social studies classes with their active participation, thinking together, the methods of the task-based, experience-based learning; the students plan the following components of the program.

- Volunteer program

The student themselves plan and organize their volunteer work, during which they cooperate with social groups - gaining a sense of achievement together – with whom they rarely meet and about whom they have rather negative experiences/stereotypes.

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<sup>19</sup> Kurt Lewin Foundation – [www.kla.hu/en](http://www.kla.hu/en)

- Exhibition

Utilizing the knowledge and skills gained through volunteer work, the students organize an exhibition. The core material of the exhibition is provided by the 100 Poorest moving photo-exhibition of the Kurt Lewin Foundation, which the students can reinterpret and complete with their own materials and games. Through the exhibition, they raise the attention of their peers, teachers, parents, friends, direct environment, etc. about certain social problems and the fact that the fight against poverty and discrimination is a common problem of us all, our responsibility and that there is opportunity to act.

### **The Kurt Lewin Foundation**

The Kurt Lewin Foundation is an independent civil public interest organization, the mission of which is to serve the strengthening of a democratic society in Hungary based on personal responsibility and cooperation. The aim of the Kurt Lewin Foundation is the strengthening of social dialogue, the increase of active citizenship and the facilitation of social investments.

The Foundation realizes its objectives in three main fields of activity: research, education (training-development), communication and provision of information. In our activities, we put emphasis on the realization of projects that facilitate the inclusion of the members of disadvantaged social groups.



## 2. Appendix

### Teaching Tolerance – Southern Poverty Law Center, USA;<sup>20</sup> the information about the program is disseminated by Athena Institute, Hungary. <sup>21</sup>

#### The aim of the program

The aim of Teaching Tolerance is to foster inclusive school environments, where equality and justice is not just a taught idea but a realized practice. The program aims at the dissolution of prejudiced thinking and the improvement of the relationship between different social groups.

#### The summary of the program

As one of the leading anti-discrimination centers of the United States, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) reaches several hundred thousand teachers and million students through their various educational activities (Teaching Tolerance). Among these activities, we can name the publishing of the Teaching Tolerance magazine, the multimedia teaching kits, the resources assisting professional development (such as the Teaching Diverse Students Initiative), publications and special projects (like „Mix It Up at Lunch Day”). The efficiency of their work is proven by scientific researches, which show that the programs help shaping the inclusive thinking of the students.

- Among the initiatives of SPLC there is the website entitled Tolerance.org, the previous winner of the international Webby award. The website daily produces fresh news about topics connected to tolerance. To facilitate the respect for diversity, it provides the children with educational games, the activists with guiding reports, and also gives the parents and teachers materials to use.

The program of the website entitled Teaching Tolerance targets two student age groups.

- For elementary school students it provides information for example about the history of the civil rights movement. On the website there is an interactive program available, encouraging students to rethink sensitive questions connected to race, gender and sexuality.
- The “Mix it up” initiative targets high school students, and try to encourage the readers to participate in school activities that place the interaction of different social groups in the center. Other components of the project include advice in the field of political and student activism.
- The program also includes the facilitation of the professional development of teachers, for example classroom strategies, trainings for teachers, multicultural activities and the method of self-reflective teaching.

Besides, SPLC monthly publishes a magazine, that mainly deals with minority, women’s rights or LGBT youth organizations.

Teaching Tolerance also provides advice to parents in order to strengthen the idea of multiculturalism while raising their children.

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<sup>20</sup> Southern Poverty Law Center – <http://www.splcenter.org/>

<sup>21</sup> Athena Intézet – <http://www.athenaintezet.eu/index/>

The success of the program also lies in the fact that it spans over the level of elementary and secondary school. Besides, the process of learning does not only function in the relationship of the student-teacher, but among the students as well.

All this at the same time also mean the oldest and most efficient method of the struggle against domestic extremism, since here it is not the state security, intelligence and police organizations fight an already emerged and deeply embedded form of behavior and thinking, but teachers and students fight against its emergence and embedment. The materials of the Teaching Tolerance program are available for teachers, school supervisors, advisors, professors for free. This way neither financial, nor technical barriers can play a role in their acquisition.

The components of the project can fully be built into the daily life of schools and education.

### **The Southern Poverty Law Center**

At the center of the activities of the Southern Poverty Law Center founded in 1971 stands the abolition of thinking motivated by hate and prejudice, through which it strives to realize the ideas of justice and equal opportunities. The Center employs a three-pronged strategy for the elimination of social injustice. First, it follows the activities of domestic extremist groups, secondly, uses the courts and other forms of advocacy to win systemic reforms, third, it provides educators with resources for teaching the children at a young age to reject hate and respect differences.

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