NECE

newsletter

News Information Conferences
Reflections Introducing Projects **01/11**

Facebook Revolutions

TOPICS:

Social Media, "Facebook revolutions" in the Arab World and some implications for citizenship education /// NECE Workshop "Perspectives of Web 2.0 for Citizenship Education in Europe" /// International Civic Education Symposium "Building Democratic Citizenship in Europe through active Engagement /// International Seminar for Strengthening Civic Engagement in Europe "Your Commitment – Shaping Society" /// Active Citizenship Foundation, Hungary /// "Me, and" - Facilitating paths of self-representation in mass-media and educational contexts ///

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Digital media have a huge potential to influence politics and society and provide numerous new forms of civic participation. Thus, citizenship education has to reflect how it might critically accompany these developments. In particular, citizenship education has to consider seriously which impact these developments have on the institutions of citizenship education, its working methods as well as formats and methods. Therefore, the NECE initiative conducted a workshop concerning the perspectives of Web 2.0 for citizenship education in Europe in April in the Czech Republic (section "Reports"). Three of the participants offered us some interesting perspectives regarding the consequences of social media on politics, society and the so called "Facebook revolutions" in the Arab World as well as some implications for citizenship education (section "Focus").

Zsuzsanna Szelenyi from the Active Citizenship Foundation in Hungary also participated in this NECE workshop and she gave us an interview about the Foundations` aims and work as well as the crucial developments concerning the New Hungarian Media Law and the changed Hungarian Constitution. "Me, and" is a project that tries to facilitate paths of self-representation in mass-media and educational contexts. In the section on "good practice", David Tosco from Zenit Arti Audiovisive (Italy) describes what this looks like exactly.

Finally, we would be pleased to welcome you to this year´s NECE conference that is going to take place from 17-19 November 2011 in Warsaw, Poland. For further information please visit www.nece.eu.

We hope that you will enjoy reading and look forward to your suggestions!

Best regards,

Petra Grüne & Christoph Müller-Hofstede
Federal Agency for Civic Education (Germany)

Content:

FOCUS

This section usually highlights current issues on the political agenda of the European Union or in the field of citizenship education in Europe. But on the occasion of the events in the Arab world, this time this section focuses on these developments and their relevance for citizenship education.

Social Media, "Facebook revolutions" in the Arab World and some implications for citizenship education

From 7 to 9 April 2011, the NECE workshop "Perspectives of Web 2.0 for Citizenship Education in Europe" took place in Brno, Czech Republic. Amongst 40 participants from 15 different European countries, one was **Maartje Nevejan**, an independent filmmaker based in Amsterdam, with a background in theatre and multi media. Maartje participated in the sixth annual Al Jazeera Forum in Qatar (from 12 to 14 March 2011). During the workshop and informal get-togethers she told us about her recent experiences regarding social media and its influence on the latest developments in the Arab world.

NECE: Maartje, you participated in the Al Jazeera Forum, and now you are visiting this workshop. How does it come?

Maartje: I returned quite inspired from Qatar. During the Al Jazeera Forum I learnt much about the importance social media may have when it comes to political changes. In this sense, this workshop is actually in direct relationship to this journey. Web 2.0, active citizenship and civic participation - that`s what it is all about in the Arab world at the moment. While some of the participants here are discussing these issues quite theoretically, young people in the Arab world are really practicing it.

NECE: So, Maartje, you really have the opinion that the latest developments in the Arab world are connected with modern ways of communication and civic participation?

Maartje: Yes, absolutely. The modern Arab revolution would not have been possible without such young, civically engaged people and social media.

NECE: We heard that some of the autocratic leaders in the 'Middle East' stated that it was Al Jazeera which organised the uprisings. How are we to understand such accusations? We remember some quite outspoken journalists on the Tahir-square in Cairo, but such a way of reporting about political developments in itself does not bring dictatorial structures down.

Maartje: It is not that easy. You have to consider the influence of Al Jazeera in a broader context and in a larger time-line. Until the founding of Al Jazeera in 1996, dictators in the Middle East had the

monopoly on information distribution. All started with a satellite TV station funded by the enlightened Emir of Qatar. In the meantime, Al Jazeera has 65 offices all over the world. 3.000 people are employed in 60 countries, and 220 million families are following the Al Jazeera programmes in more than 100 countries every day. There also exist 'Al Jazeera English', 'Al Jazeera Sports', 'Al Jazeera Documentary',' Al Jazeera Mobile', 'Al Jazeera Study Center and Media-Training' and the website 'Al Jazeera.net.'

NECE: But all this does not have much to do with social media yet…

Maartje: Wait a minute. The crucial site - which I have not mentioned yet - was 'Al Jazeera Talk'. The website has been established since people from Al Jazeera realised at quite an early stage the importance of social media for the Middle East. 'Al Jazeera Talk' with 150.000 visitors a day is the most important website in the Arab world. Young people are putting their own news or some movies on this site. The young bloggers developed into a sort of soldiers in the first lines of the war about information. Very often they were the only source of information for Al Jazeera journalists themselves. For example, Mubarak banned Al Jazeera, but everyone became a reporter him- or herself. How could you stop 80 million reporters?

NECE: So, the current situation is not happening 'out of the blue'?

Maartje: No, absolutely not. In the past years, these young people have developed their own communication infrastructure. They developed their own ways of avoiding the censorship of the ruling dictators. They developed a way of 'citizen journalism', if we want to call it like that. And now finally it is their time. It is dangerous, but they are making history.

NECE: How did all this get started?

Maartje: It started approximately 10 years ago. A group of computer technicians were dealing with the Arabisation of computer software. After a while, the technicians came into contact with political activists working on issues like democracy, freedom of the press and human rights. In the beginning, all these contacts were actually only happening online. But five years ago they started to meet in reality – so called 'offline'. For example, they met people from other Arabian countries in Lebanon, but also people living in asylum in Paris or London. They discussed the possibilities for change, talked about strategies and techniques to reach their aims - and they discussed not only virtually, but also in the streets and on the squares.

NECE: And what did the actions of these young people actually look like?

Maartje: There is, for example, an organisation called 'Tactical Technology Collective'. They publish books, DVD's, and folders where citizens who want to come into action may learn how to transform information into action. They answer questions such as how to build secured websites?, How to create a blog?, How to prevent the authorities from tracking down you or your friends? and How to erase sensible information from your computer?

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All in all, we may say that the social media had an extreme influence on the political consciousness of citizens in the Arab world. If, for example, a tool like Facebook created something, then these people from the whole Arab world began to come into contact with each other and to exchange views. Later they went out into the streets together. You might put it as a young Arab told me: the 'curtain of fear' among the people in the Arab world was lifted by Facebook. In this sense, there are no leaders. Everyone is part of a nameless sort of Wikipedia, where everyone may add something, and all this stuff together creates a network.

NECE: And what is it these promising young people you met during the Al Jazeera forum are dreaming about? What are their aims?

Maartje: Some are dreaming that the Arab world should build up a strong coalition of states such as the EU, especially in the economic sense. Libya has the oil, Egypt the strategic potential, Tunis its intellectuals. If they will cooperate, in the future they might compete with growing economies like Brazil and India. Since they have been experiencing a virtual Arab Space via the Internet, their dream of an Arab space in the real world is coming closer. Some call it Pan Arab Humanism. It might take another 10 years, but I believe they will replace the old Arab images by new Arab images for the next generation. The new images will talk about human values and dignity such as freedom, democracy, constitutional reforms, more equality in society and the emancipation of women.

NECE: Maartje, now finally, do you have any messages for the workshop organisers or the readers of our newsletter?

Maartje: I am very happy that I could participate here in the NECE workshop. I would suggest to the organisers to have a close look into the role of social media in the Arab revolutions. There might be interesting examples regarding active citizenship and civic participation, which might as well have some influence on the political landscape in European countries tomorrow …

Maartje Nevejan worked for Dutch, Belgian, Finnish Broadcast, and Al Jazeera. She is mostly known for her films and websites about angry teenagers around the world, not taking the standard power structures anymore. In her projects she likes to research the (raw) poetic quality of reality. Maartje Nevejan has won several awards, amongst others the Golden Calf, Silver Zebra, and was nominated for the Rose d'Or and the Emmy Award.

More information about Maartje Nevejan and her work at: www. couscousglobal.com or www.nevejan.nl

Social Media and the New Arab Spring

by Dr Andy Williamson,
Director of Digital Democracy at the Hansard Society in London

Across North Africa and the Middle East we are witnessing a rising tide of citizen-led protest against autocratic and corrupt regimes. In echoes of the Czech Spring of 1968 and the tumultuous wave of change that swept across Eastern Europe during the 1990s, there is a real feeling that change is real, can happen and can be sustained. There is a new and emergent spirit of pan-Arabism, with activists in one country following and gaining confidence (and support) from those in others. There is nothing new in this; we have seen such movements before during the 1960s. Some of the countries that are today rising up for change were the same ones who were brutally repressed 50 years ago. The difference between then and now is the rise of digital media.

Key tools for the modern revolution are digital because they achieve significant things; first, they bring together otherwise remote and disparate groups. Second, they create channels to bypass traditional state control of the media so the outside world can see what is going on. Alongside traditional activism and action, the tools of the trade today are the internet (for information dissemination and news), social media (to connect and coordinate), mobile phones (to capture what happens) and digital, particularly satellite, television to report it.

The underlying complexity of the network is an important factor too. Whilst many regimes would like to simply turn off the internet, this is very difficult to do completely. Activists on the ground and net-savvy supporters around the world are able to implement proxy techniques to evade detection and bypass the controls of states. Flows of information can be slowed but not stopped; the world is now simply too porous.

Social media is important because it is an ideal tool for connecting loose networks of association, bringing together otherwise disparate groups and individuals to support a common cause. It is no respecter of borders. What happens in Morocco and Egypt motivates and empowers protesters in Libya, Syria and Yemen.

We saw digital activists from Morocco support Egyptians, teaching them how to exploit these new tools. One must be careful not to overstate the role of social media; it is only a tool. The previous example was largely done face-to-face, not online, and what social media can achieve is down to alignment with social behaviour and its effective social appropriation. That said, social media does play an important part in contemporary revolutionary movements; we are seeing around 40-45 tweets per minute from Egypt and 30-35 per minute from Syria and Libya.

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Twitter receives much media attention, perhaps because it is more visible to the media. Therein lies its value, as a tool to tell your story to the world. This is reflected in the significant number of tweets in English, particularly from Egypt at the time of the Tahrir Square occupation. Equally, Facebook's role in Egypt and across North Africa is to show a growing mass public that they are not alone; suddenly made visible on their social networks is an emerging pan-Arab movement for change, from which individual citizens have quickly taken courage and then action.

What is perhaps most telling, is that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook to organise and promote demonstrations is now mentioned in passing, almost casually by those involved. What we are seeing in North Africa today mirrors what we saw in Germany and the UK during recent elections. First, a media wanting to portray Web 2.0 as being more important than it really is but, more importantly, clear evidence that the internet – blogs, Facebook, Twitter, citizen journalism and the consumption of these – is becoming normative: it is business as usual, at least it is amongst a significant cohort in terms of scale (UK and Germany) and influence (Egypt and Libya). We make friends, keep in touch, shop and listen to music online, is it not obvious that, when democratic change happens, it happens online too?

More information about Andy Williamson at:
www.hansardsociety.org.uk or follow him (@andy_williamson).

Are we witnessing a "Facebook revolution"?

Evaluating the impacts of Web 2.0 in the peoples' struggles in North Africa and some implications for citizenship education

by Tit Neubauer & Tomaz Pusnik, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Influence of Web 2.0 in the revolutions in North-Africa and Middle East

One of the more visible impacts of globalisation is that, as we observe the Middle-Eastern and North-African revolutions unfold on the TV screen, we are already evaluating and reflecting on some of the socio-political impacts of these events. Notwithstanding that an in-depth scientific analysis still needs to take place, we can readily observe that Web 2.0 has been the "buzz word" of the current events. Terms such as "the digital revolution", "Web 2.0 revolution" and "Facebook revolution" have overwhelmed both the traditional and new media spaces. Both in the case of the current events in question, as well as in citizenship education the power of social interactions through Web 2.0 social media is indispensable.

Denoting the current events in North Africa as a "Facebook revolution" might be going a step too far or taking that step too quickly. We need to keep in mind that revolutions and reforms are not spurred by technology, but by the people who have been subject to a particular set of socio-political conditions.

As a researcher based in Egypt has vividly pointed out, "it is high time to put this question [Is this a Facebook revolution?] to rest and insist that political and social movements belong to people and not to communication tools and technologies. … They are what people make of them" (Herrera 2011). It seems that the underlying question is not whether the struggles in North Africa can be labelled a "Facebook revolution" or not, but how Web 2.0 contributes to and (globally) amplifies the public discourse and the political struggles of the people.

Web 2.0 and citizenship education

As the examples of Egypt and Tunisia show, Web 2.0 must not be understood as the source of citizens socio-political involvement but rather acts as a catalyst for the social struggles of the people, providing them with free space for voicing their concerns and a plat-

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form for communication, and as such builds upon the social ties of a community, which have already formed in real socio-political space (see Morsi 2011). In citizenship education it has the capacity to transform the traditional, classic and rigid forms of formal citizenship education into an interactive field. What can be learnt from the cases of the current revolutions is that a new space for citizens' involvement is available and citizenship education needs to react accordingly by harnessing the possibilities of Web 2.0.

But the fundamental issue for citizenship education remains. How to harness the possibilities provided by Web 2.0, without discouraging (driving off) the potential target group – the students? Another important issue that arises is the involvement and specialisation of teachers practising citizenship education. Using Web 2.0 in any classroom demands special skills and a higher degree of teacher involvement in preparing the class. Before utilising Web 2.0 in citizenship education, these and other issues need to be seriously addressed, either through networked discussions with citizenship education stakeholders or through a set of in-depth analyses and case studies.

Conclusion

Web 2.0 certainly has the ability to allow individuals and groups to establish themselves as a subject in or through the act of politics rather than before the act of politics takes place (Biesta 2011). In this respect, citizenship education is understood as a process of

subjectification (creating new political identities and subjectivities) and not as a process of socialisation, which can be described as the current approach to citizenship education. Through these revolutions, Web 2.0 has contributed to broadening the scope of the concept of citizenship, and we argue that Web 2.0 needs to be recognized as a catalyst for "revolutions" in the field of citizenship education through which new ways of addressing issues of political apathy, democratic deficit and new forms of political participation can be sought.

References:

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REPORTS

NECE Workshop:

"Perspectives of Web 2.0 for Citizenship Education in Europe", Brno, Czech Republic

by Anita Baschant, lab concepts, Germany

40 participants, among them net activists, Web 2.0 experts and practitioners from the field of citizenship education, came together to identify the specific interactions of Web 2.0 and citizenship education and discussed current tasks, challenges and opportunities for citizenship education in a digitalised world.

First, Andy Williamson, Head of the "Digital Citizenship" department at the Hansard Society, UK, introduced the workshop topic by considering the fundamental change in our underlying social processes through Web 2.0. He stated that the internet is becoming a ‚business as usual' tool for how we live, work, socialise and participate and that Web 2.0 is a timely tool to support radical new ways of socially organising for effective change. Subsequently, in the discussion panel Axel Maireder, University of Vienna (Austria), Ulrike Reinhard, author (Germany), Simon Delakorda, Institute for Electronic Participation, INePA (Slovenia) and Andy Williamson lively discussed with the audience the opportunities and risks of Web 2.0 as a tool for politics, participation and active citizenship from different perspectives.

In a world café the participants intensively exchanged their experiences with Web 2.0 and mentioned, amongst others, the following aspects as being important for the relation of citizenship education and Web 2.0: the development of Web 2.0 strategies for active citizenship, the changed meaning of citizenship through Web 2.0, digital and political literacy, making Web 2.0 campaigns sustainable, the limitations of Web 2.0 for citizenship education, can online go offline, inclusion using Web 2.0 in citizenship education etc. In his contribution, Stefan Huber from the ICT&S Center of the University of Salzburg (Austria) tried to clarify the difference between New Social Media adoption and New Social Media capabilities. He identified "the development of New Social Media capabilities as crucial for active online participation and collaboration, (…) because the times when political education was complacent with the teaching of factual knowledge are gone".

The participants also discussed different aspects of the subject in three parallel working groups. One of it dealt with the question whether there are differences regarding the use of Web 2.0 and the reflections about the consequences for citizenship education in different European countries.

Jochum de Graaf, host of this group, summarised that of course, in accordance with the different historical development in all European countries, there are big differences. Referring to this, Tit Neubauer from Slovenia pointed out, "(…) that Western European models of citizenship education cannot simply be adopted in other European countries, and this also holds for Web 2.0. We have to adapt all tools to fit our shape of democracy."

Another group focused on the question whether Web 2.0 offers an innovative and interesting toolbox for citizenship education. Jöran Muuß-Merholz (joeran & konsorten, Germany) presented an overview of the Web 2.0 Map of Educational Events and thereby explained which social media formats be suitable in which educational contexts. For him "(…) all of Web 2.0 is about creativity, participation, connecting and sharing – that's why Web 2.0 and citizenship education should be best friends."

Whether new forms of online participation increase the empowerment of certain groups of citizens and whether this might reinforce exclusion of already educationally disadvantaged people, was a question discussed by the third working group. Based on the World Internet Project 2009 UK data(1) Ellen Helsper (London School of Politics and Economics, UK) showed, that 21% of internet users had participated in some way civically online and 34% of them offline(2). Of those who had undertaken civic engagement activities online, about 70% (11% of the population) had also done this offline, 30% (4% of the population) had participated online only. The result regarding the group of disabled persons was really surprising. Disabled people were less likely to be online and less skilled and confident in using the internet. However, if they managed to overcome these barriers they were more likely than other internet users to have participated civically online(3). Finally, based on the EUKidsOnline II study, Ellen Helsper underlined that educationally disadvantaged young people are not completely disengaged or unskilled in the online world but that they have different patterns of participation and engagement. The main problem is that at the moment we do not understand how to explain these differences and nuances well enough, she stressed.

The workshop was organised by the Federal Agency for Civic Education together with the recently founded Czech Civic Education Centre, located in Brno, and the Dutch House for Democracy and the Rule of Law, formerly known as the Institute for Political Participation, and was kindly supported by the Robert Bosch Stiftung, Germany and the ERSTE Foundation in Austria.

More information is available at www.nece.eu

References:
(1) Dutton, W.H., Helsper, E.J. & Gerber, M. (2009) The Internet in Britain: 2009. Oxford Internet Institute. Oxford (UK): www.oii.ox.ac.uk/microsites/oxis
(2) These are UK figures and are likely to be lower in most EU countries
(3) Helsper, E.J. (2007), PhD Thesis:
www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/alumni/PhDAlumni/Helsper.aspx
Footnote: disabled users tend to be older than the general population and age is probably related to civic participation so some of this might be an age effect.

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International Civic Education Symposium "Building Democratic Citizenship in Europe through Active Engagement"

by Inken Heldt, Leibniz University Hannover, Germany

From 18 to 20 April 2011 the Research Group "Citizenship Education" at the Leibniz University of Hannover in cooperation with the University of Sydney held the international symposium, "Building Democratic Citizenship in Europe through Civic Engagement".

30 civic and political educators as well as social scientists and educational administrators across Europe were invited to identify key competencies required for active citizenship of young people in future Europe and to translate those competencies to school-based activities in the form of curricular and pedagogical strategies. Most societies acknowledge that the future of their democracy rests with educating the young generation. Consequently, most societies engage their young generation in some form of educative experience to prepare them for democratic citizenship. Yet, most undervalue and understate the potential impact on an effective civic education programme in building democratic citizenship.

The first aim was to see what background knowledge, skills and competencies young people require to function effectively as future democratic citizens. Secondly, what role can schools play in successfully building new forms of democratic citizenship amongst the young generation? It has often been argued that active citizenship and participation is based upon an understanding and acceptance of key concepts of an enlightened democratic way of life, including popular sovereignty, representative democracy, the rule of law, human rights, citizen rights and responsibilities, civic participation in a civil society and some form of a market economy. But what exactly does this mean? And what does it mean in terms of competencies for a democratic Europe in the future?

The answers to these fundamental questions were discussed in parallel working groups. The composition of these working groups varied each day, covering the fields of civic education, educational administration, political science, public policy and social science. "The answers will have a potentially significant impact on government policy, the administration of educational systems, how schools teach democratic citizenship, the fundamental curriculum and the essential pedagogy throughout Europe", Prof. Dirk Lange, host of the symposium, pointed out. Each day of the conference focused on different aspects of citizenship education: key concepts of democratic citizenship, curriculum and pedagogy.

Dr. Bryony Hoskins from the Institute of Education at the University of London introduced the symposium by raising the question, "What does democracy need from its citizens? Making it explicit, attempting to measure it and comparing the results". Dr. David Kerr from the University of London looked at why schools and curriculum are important and set out a range of approaches to Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) in schools. He examined the evidence base about the curriculum for EDC and its application and explored influences on those approaches. Prof. Murray Print from the University of Sydney debated the state of the type of discussion about teacher pedagogy and achieving citizenship competencies at schools.

The participants can look back at an intensive, professional exchange which laid the foundation stone for further cooperation. The ICE Symposium was financed by the Volkswagen Foundation and was made possible by the Agency of Adult and Further Education.

More information is soon available at:
www.ipw.uni-hannover.de/ice.html
Furthermore, an event documentation is in preparation.

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International Seminar for Strengthening Civic Engagement in Europe "Your Commitment – Shaping Society"

by Ivelina Kovanlashka, MitOst Association, Germany

In March 2011, the MitOst Association hosted 60 active citizens from many European countries for an international seminar for strengthening civic engagement in Europe. The one-week meeting "Your Commitment – Shaping society" was designed to explore specific areas and opportunities for cooperation among volunteers in Europe and enhance their professional and methodical skills in the field of cross-border volunteering.

The Seminar at the European Youth Education and Meeting Centre in Weimar (Germany) opened with three parallel workshops. Participants discussed different aspects of strengthening civic engagement, including individual and personal prospects of volunteering, current institutional frameworks, challenges of European cross-border dimension, as well as methods helping to deal with sensitive issues such as "Diversity" and "Tolerance" as well as motivational strategies for volunteers. The debates were accompanied by meetings with experts with local and international background.

An information market with experts in several action programmes of the EU offered a deeper inside view on opportunities for achieving the support of the European Commission for civic projects. A final prospects workshop helped outline prospects for civic engagement in the future as well as set forth joint initiatives and projects for strengthening civic engagement.

The developed project ideas reflected diverse experiences and interests of the participants and covered a broad range of proposals: from interactive seminars for promoting voluntary engagement and supporting disadvantaged youths, via arts and culture projects connected with topics like history and its interpretations, city exploration and cultural heritage, as far as to strengthening local and regional engagement by developing international learning partnerships.

The results, together with the topics discussed and some of the methods used, will be published in a brochure, which will be distributed among the participants and their partners as well as among decision-makers and other interested parties. It is also planned to create a digital competency-album (CD) to support sustainable cooperation among participants.

The seminar was organised by MitOst, the Berlin-based international Association for Cultural and Language Exchange in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Cooperation partners: Antikomplex (Czech Republic), European Youth Education and Meeting Centre in Weimar (Germany), International Elias Canetti Society (Bulgaria), Südwind Niederösterreich Süd (Austria). The seminar was supported by the Europe for Citizens programme of the European Commission.

More information at:
www.mitost.org/dein_engagement.html (in German language)
or via E-mail to: kovanlashka@mitost.org

INTRODUCING

In every edition we introduce organisations actively involved in the field of citizenship education.

Active Citizenship Foundation

The Active Citizenship Foundation (ACF) is an independent non-profit organisation, established in 2007 in Budapest. The Foundation aims to contribute to the establishment of democratic political culture in Hungary, by means of developing active Hungarian citizens who are able to take responsibility for themselves and their society and who are able to exercise their rights. Zsuzsanna Szelényi, Chair of the Board, answered our questions.

NECE: How is the Active Citizenship Foundation organised and financed?

Zsuzsanna: The Foundation is politically and financially independent. This is very important in Central and Eastern Europe, where a large part of the NGO sector is built on government funding, which often makes NGOs vulnerable and politically dependent. ACF was organised from purely private resources. Access to private funds, however, became limited with the economic crisis. For sustainability, staff and experts of the Foundation offer policy consultation and training to various third parties.

NECE: The Foundation aims to contribute to the establishment of democratic political culture in Hungary. How does the Foundation try to reach its main goal? Could you name a concrete example of the methods and formats you work with?

Zsuzsanna: The Foundation aims to build its work on a complex approach. There are three main pillars of the Foundation's activities: conceptual and policy work, research and development of educational programmes for children and young people.

First, we have done some serious conceptual work on what citizenship means in the 21st century. As a result, we built a knowledge base on our website. Over two years we were following a consultation process with the Ministry of Education to identify appropriate content and methods of citizenship education. We are also active in policy work at the international level. Last November, in cooperation with the DARE (Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe) Network, we organised an international conference entitled "A Europe of Active Citizens: Assessment, Policy Responses and Recommendations on Active Citizenship Education".

Second, in order to help evidence based programme, in 2010 we published a secondary research study on active citizenship competences - attitudes and values - of young Hungarians, entitled "Will they become subjects or citizens?". The results concerning

democratic values were depressing, showing that Hungarian children are not able to capture the essence of democracy. Young people as well as adults support a leader-based system and accept autocratic political attitudes; and they are highly intolerant towards most minority groups.

Third, the Foundation developed an interactive educational programme, called "Dream Citizen", for involving children and young people in democracy-building in their own environments. "Dream Citizen" is a game that can be run in various settings. We have been cooperating with schools, teachers and youth workers to implement the programme in the last two years.

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NECE: What does the changed Hungarian constitution imply for the self-conception and work of the Active Citizenship Foundation?

Zsuzsanna: The new Hungarian constitution is a setback compared to the one that has existed since 1989. The new constitution refers to poorly defined 'communities' instead of individual rights, it weakens a number of civil rights including the right to information, various social rights, it limits the citizens posibilities to appeal to the Constitutional Court and it limits the independence of a number of state institutions such as the judiciary, thus limiting institutional and individual control of the government. The Foundation's main mission is more relevant than before. On the other hand, our experiences so far show that we cannot count on the educational system as a key actor in democracy education in the future. New ways need to be developed to train and mobilise young people's learning processes.

NECE: In which way does the new Hungarian media law influence the Active Citizenship Foundation´s work and the achievement of its goals?

Zsuzsanna: The new media law gives overwhelming authority to a state agency on regulating and sanctioning every kind of media. Access to information will be largely limited through traditional media. The importance of Internet-based and Web 2.0. tools will grow in the future.

NECE: What will be the next most important steps on the further development and upcoming special features of the Active Citizenship Foundation? Which future co-operations with European partners do you plan?

Zsuzsanna: We will concentrate on our educational activity in the future and work on different methods to reach young people directly. European partners have always been important for the Active Citizenship Foundation to share experiences and learn from each other. Our presence in the DARE and the NECE networks have offered great opportunity for that. At the moment we are studying various projects that build on social media in fostering citizen's activities and democratic community building. It is clear, however, that while social media is great in networking and awareness rising, more consistent learning functions 'off-line', thus real groups and communities need to be built and managed.

More information is available at: www.aktivpolgar.hu

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP FOUNDATION

GOOD PRACTICE

In this section we introduce projects intended to exemplify and clarify how different target groups could possibly be empowered and qualified by means of citizenship education.

"Me, and" - Facilitating paths of self- representation in mass-media and educational contexts

by Davide Tosco, Zenit Arti Audiovisive, Italy

The educational values of narrating personal experiences.
Laura Halilovic is 19 and wants to become a film director. When she decided to take a stand and tell her story she choose to make us acquainted with her family, inviting us to get close to a culture which is still unknown to most. 'Me, my Gipsy family and Woody Allen' is a TV documentary presenting a very intimate journey on the Halilovic family giving up on nomadic life and settling down in a council apartment. Laura's film deals with marriage, discrimination and endurance in pursuing a dream. The importance of this work is the preciousness of its point of view, something that has proven to be particularly effective in capturing people´s attention. With the construction of an emotional narration, events in personal life are mixed with more general reflections presenting an insight on controversial aspects of traditional culture. Told in the first person, with irony and playfulness the film rises questions in a delicate matter, going beyond judgmental positions, demystifying preconceived ideas of mainstream representation.

Creating awareness-rising tools with a participatory approach.
From its conception, the project has been developed around Lauras ideas and objectives: Rising the awareness of broad audiences of the rights of Roma people; presenting a different, more personal perspective of Roma culture by highlighting aspects which are usually not considered by popular media. All working phases deployed inclusive methodology and saw the support of several professionals, as for a regular tv production. The young author/director was accompanied by two co-authors that mentored the creative process without interfering with final decisions.
By 'Me, my Gipsy family and Woody Allen' a different outlook on the ‚Roma issue' has been fostered, for once not related with crime or folklore but presenting an image of strong auto-determination and protagonism.

Alter perception, affect positive social changes.
The airing on Italian national public television generated great interest in the media. Press articles and interviews with the director were published by most prominent national newspapers, magazines and tv channels. Following the broadcast of the documentary, a series of awareness activities targeting high-school students have been implemented. From June 2009 to December 2010 more than 300 projections have been organised throughout Europe by public libraries, community centers, universities, conferences and festivals. Screenings are currently held at public schools and film clubs in Italy, Sweden, Czech Republic, Austria, Romania, UK, Bosnia, Romania, France, Kosovo and Slovakia. In Italy, presentations to teachers have been organised to promote the use of the film as an educational tool for students. On an on-going basis, in Italy's north-west region requesting teachers receive a free copy of the DVD, accompanied by an handbook conceived to facilitate discussions, providing teachers with suggestions on how to introduce the screenings and to articulate debates on the topic of social inclusion. Whenever possible, the director is engaging the young audiences, these moments of interaction, following the projections, have proven to be particularly effective in exploiting the potentials for peer education. Evaluation has been carried out through questionnaires and interviews with teachers and students, the results show that the documentary has the strength to contribute to changing the viewers´ perception of the topic dealt with. Since its completion, the film has received fifteen awards at national and international festivals, making it the year's most awarded Italian documentary. In 2010 it was acquired and transmitted by public channels in France, Poland and Sweden; reaching an even wider public.

The project saw the collaboration of: Radiotelevisione Italiana RAI 3, Roma Decade Initiative; European Union's MEDIA Program; Dosta! Campaign (Council of Europe); Piedmont Doc Film Fund, Department for Intercultural Affairs of the Turin City Council.

For any additional information related with the distribution of the film please contact: info@zenit.to.it

POLICY NEWS

This section provides information about news and political decisions that are relevant for the agenda setting of citizenship education.

Youth need active citizenship education

Within the framework of the Hungarian EU Presidency, the State Ministers of Education discussed active citizenship education and related educational policy objectives at an informal meeting in Gödöllö (Hungary) at the end of March 2011. The European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Andrulla Vassiliou, pointed out: "The crisis made it clear that we need citizens who can solve their own problems. Therefore, our educational and training systems must be better adapted to the needs of society." Active citizenship and citizenship education provide a framework for this, as its main purpose is to teach students to think and responsibly participate in economic, political, social and cultural life.
www.eu2011.hu/news/youths-need-active-citizenship-education

Lithuanian President signed a new law on education

The Lithuanian President signed a new law on education which includes civic education in the Lithuanian language. The President believes that better knowledge of the Lithuanian language will help ethnic minorities to integrate into the labor market.
www.civnet.org/contenidos.php?ACTION=TW9zdHJhck5vdGljaaWFz RXZlbnRvcw==&id_secciones=MQ==

EU education report: good progress, but more effort needed to achieve targets

EU countries have improved their education systems in key areas over the past decade, but they have achieved only one out of five benchmarks set for 2010, the European Commission's new progress report on education and training revealed.
http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news2900_en.htm

Results of the mid-term evaluation of the "Europe for Citizens" programme

At the end of 2009, the European Commission launched the mid-term evaluation of the Europe for Citizens programme on the implementation of the programme during the period 2007-2009. The evaluation has recently been concluded. The full report is only available in English. The summary reports of the mid-term evaluation of Europe for Citizens programme are available in English, French and German.
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news1225_en.htm

Launch of Region-Wide Initiative "Believe in Dialogue, Act for Citizenship"

The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt and other social mobilisations in the region have demonstrated that the youth and civil society are eager for more freedom, social change, and consolidation of democratic values within their respective societies. It is in this context that the Anna Lindh Foundation decided to launch its region-wide initiative „Believe in Dialogue, Act for Citizenship" to promote intercultural dialogue and its relationship with democracy, active and participatory citizenship and human rights in the Euromed region.
www.euromedalex.org/believeindialogue

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EVENTS

26-28 May 2011, Berlin (Germany)
International Symposium "1989: a Turning Point in Perceptions of the 20th Century Dictatorships and their Representations in School?"
The MitOst Association is inviting 60 school experts, historians and other interested parties from all over Europe to discuss changes in perceptions of 20th century dictatorships and their representations in schoolbooks. The Symposium is supported by the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" and the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship.
More information at:
www.mitost.org/symposium_1989

31 May 2011, Sofia (Bulgaria)
Educators' Consultations 2011: International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)
To encourage dialogue among researchers and practitioners, the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) annually organises a series of Educators' Consultations in cooperation with European universities and teacher training institutions. In 2011, the Educators' Consultations will focus on the findings of the IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS). The next workshop will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, in cooperation with the University of Sofia, "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Pedagogy, and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science – Bulgaria.
More information at:
www.theewc.org/calendar/view/educators.consultations.on.the.iccs.in.sofia/

9-11 June 2011, Dublin (Ireland)
Europe`s Future: Citizenship in a changing world
The 13th Annual CiCe Network Conference
This year´s conference of the CiCe Network has a particular focus on identity and citizenship in a changing world, and aims to give consideration to the experiences and understanding of young people, as well as to educational policy, practice or outcome in order to reflect on, or respond to, the opportunities and challenges that a future Europe may bring.
More information at:
http://cice.londonmet.ac.uk/conferences/main/main_home.cfm

1 July 2011, London (United Kingdom)
Citizenship, Society and Social Justice: New Agendas?
5th Annual Conference of the International Centre for Education for Democratic Citizenship (ICEDC)
This year´s conference will explore the many possible relationships between citizenship and education, including formal citizenship education. Therefore the conference will address issues such as: How should citizenship education deal with agendas of security, social cohesion, volunteering, patriotism, social justice both locally and in the wider world? What is the role of social networking and new media? What kinds of support do citizenship educators need?
More information at:
www.bbk.ac.uk/icedc/news/ICEDCInvitation2011

Annual NECE – Networking European Citizenship Education Conference

Closing the empowerment gap through citizenship education:
How to address educationally disadvantaged groups

17-19 November 2011 in Warsaw, Poland

All over Europe, citizens are turning away from classic political participatory processes. This is reflected by low numbers of voters at polling stations during elections and a general disenchantment with politics. One criticism is that – increasingly influenced by private or narrow-topic interest groups – the people and institutions active in politics are losing legitimacy, and no longer work as elected representatives for the general public good. Feelings of powerlessness and disillusionment when it comes to 'institutional politics' are rife as trust in representative democracy ebbs. What Colin Crouch calls 'post-democratic' tendencies now share the field with a rising number of new ways of getting involved in politics or socially conscious projects. This development could be considered a positive one, interpreted as proof that democracy is still alive and kicking. However, these new forms of political involvement are to a large extent determined by access to education, income and competencies. Groups and individuals with no access to these resources remain excluded from participation in civil society and political processes. It can be shown empirically that socially disadvantaged groups with poor educational opportunities suffer under a conspicuous 'empowerment gap'.

How can citizenship education at the national and European levels contribute to the closing of this empowerment gap?

The NECE conference invites multipliers in the fields of citizenship and cultural education, youth and social workers, NGO representatives and experts from a wide range of academic disciplines from all over Europe to come and take part in an exchange of approaches and ideas, and find out more about the possibilities of transfer and new networks. Presentations will include theoretical and practical approaches from Europe, both in schools and in out-of-school or informal learning environments, providing a platform for the discussion on inclusive approaches of citizenship education for educationally disadvantaged groups. The conference format aims to be both participatory and interactive.

The keynote speech at the conference opening will be held by Benjamin R. Barber, an internationally renowned political theorist, who brings an abiding concern for democracy and citizenship to issues of politics, globalisation, culture and education in America and abroad.

Online registration is already possible at:
http://conf.lab-concepts.de/nece
For more information please visit www.nece.eu

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