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Citizenship Education in Estonia **By Sulev Valdmaa**

Country report

1. Citizenship education in Estonia is a compulsory part of the National Curriculum. It contains in the NC as an integrated area for following for all of the subjects throughout all the 1-years study period. It comes up as a separate specialized Civics course in the grades 4 (35 lessons per year), 9 (70 lessons per year) and 12 (70 lessons per year). Besides the official Civics course in public schools Citizenship education is exercised by some non-governmental organisations like "Open Republic", students' self government bodies at schools and uniting them "Estonian Students' Self-governments' Union", youth centres around the country.
2. Underlying concept for citizenship education is to educate knowledgeable, responsible and skilful members of the society.
3. The general dimension of Citizenship education is all-humanistic and practical: to equip (young) people with the analytical skills for making responsible decisions and taking necessary steps. National dimension is the content area for the 4-th and 9-th grades Civics lessons; the European and World dimension is the content area for the 12-th grade. Those contents serve like sources and resources for elaborating practical citizenship skills.
3. My organisation, the Jaan Tõnisson Institute is one of the founders of citizenship education in Estonia after the collapse of communism here. JTI is involved into the Curriculum development, textbook and methodical materials writing, teacher training, consulting and keeping international relations on the field.

Jaan Tõnisson Institute

The Jaan Tõnisson Institute is a non-governmental organisation founded straight after the collapse of communism in the country in 1992.

1. The target groups of our activities are mostly the compulsory schools' teachers of History and Civics, but also directly students at the schools, teacher-trainers, employees of local government, administrators of education.
2. Our orientation is pedagogical. We offer in the form of in-service trainings to the teachers the new experiences in teaching methods and didactics, we also deliver and mediate new knowledge about the Civics contents. By involving teachers into the curriculum development and textbook writing we offer to them very special chance for professional development.
3. JTI is a small NGO of 8 persons working in it. There is a special unit - Civic Education Centre - in JTI with the mission to strengthen and develop Citizenship, but also Human Rights, and Law education in the country.

Conclusion

JTI Civic Education Centre appears to be in Estonia the only specialised on promoting Citizenship Education to the compulsory schools and more widely, having for that professional experience for more than ten years and having lots of working contacts in the country and abroad.

4. The European strategy of gender mainstream of the concept of diversity is a new area for our work. It has an increasing importance especially after Estonia's becoming European Union member, but we would like to have professional contacts for working on that.