

NECE



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A summer in Europe: youth movements, youth riots and a terror attack

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EDITORIAL


Dear readers,

The *indignados* (“outraged”), this is how an alliance of youth activists calls itself, who took to the streets in Madrid this summer. The Spanish political scientist Fernando Vallespin describes the reasons for as well as the course of the demonstrations, while also discussing other youth protests in Europe. His question, asking what the situation of democracy is like and how we should deal with increasing tiredness of democracy, is one of the crucial issues we, as civic educators, must deal with particularly in the troubled times we are currently experiencing. Currently, both perceived and actual social and finance-political changes shake our visions of European integration and solidarity – the outcome looks incalculable. Ways of communication become ever more complex. Most of all citizenship education is required to find new ways, strategies and closer cooperation. How this is done at the new Centre for Citizenship Education in Slovenia, for example, is described by Elena A. Begant in our NECE Interview. Also there is a number of reports, recommendations and information on events, reflecting the broad range of current discourses and topics in the landscape of citizenship education.

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

We would be pleased to welcome you to this year’s NECE conference, taking place from 17-19 November 2011 in Warsaw, Poland. Follow the latest news at the NECE conference blog blog.nece.eu and www.nece.eu

Best regards,


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

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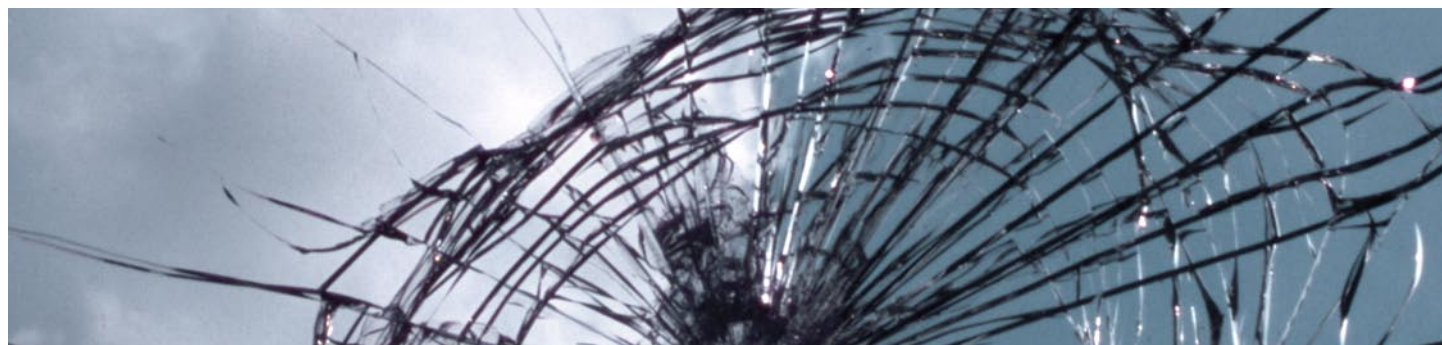
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FOCUS

This section highlights current issues on the political agenda of the European Union or in the field of citizenship education in Europe.

Angry young men (and women). Youth revolts in Europe

by Fernando Vallespín, Professor of Political Science and Administration at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain)

Apart from the overwhelming presence of the Euro crisis, the European political scene has been shaken lately by what we may call “unidentified youth movements”. They happened in Greece, Portugal and Spain, and in a totally different form by the riots that took place in some English cities this summer, particularly in London and Birmingham. Although pursuing totally different objectives, they were probably heralded by the “Arab spring” and had an aftermath in the massive popular demonstrations in Israel. But let us remain in Europe, focusing in particular on those that had the greatest media projection, the movement of “May 15th” in Spain, the *indignados* (“outraged”), and the violent looters of the British cities.

First thing that should be stated: both movements were radically different by their means and targets. One, the Spanish movement, was peaceful; the other was violent; one was essentially political and was meant to realise “real democracy now”; the other, like the banlieux rebellion in France some years ago, had the flavor of sheer wanton destruction. In each case, though, we detect a common background symptom, which we may call a “rebellion against low expectations for their lives” on part of a segment of the youth. This was perfectly portrayed by a poster held by a Lycée student in France during one of the demonstrations against social rights cuts in that country: “Nous voulons vivre comme notre parents” (we want to live like our parents). Due to the current economic crisis, indeed they seem to share a general feeling that their life-opportunities are increasingly being undercut, that there might be a whole generation that has to be wasted and sacrificed on the altar of “the markets”.

This was poignantly expressed by the demonstrations that brought thousands of them into the squares of the main Spanish cities. Their numbers were not particularly impressive; it was their discourse and the joyful and peaceful nature of their “camp-in” strategy that made them gain so much public attention. What triggered the movement was, of course, the high figures of youth unemployment in the country, but soon it became clear that we were facing more than a mere “social protest”. The rebellion, which happened in the midst of local and regional elections, was thoroughly political. In the name of “real democracy now” they cursed the system which encompasses the political class of entrenched political parties – “we are not represented by them” the slogan was – the main media and economic interests, mainly the bankers.

They improvised citizens’ assemblies where important political and social issues were publicly discussed. Their conclusions were then aired through different social media, eagerly followed and reflected on its turn by the established press. And they keep on discussing now in the cyberspace, awaiting a new occasion to make themselves present in the streets again.

The public concern that followed was thus not just on the lack of labor prospects for the younger generation or the economic situation in general, it moved over to the actual functioning of democracy itself. Suddenly we realised how the new economic interdependence has in fact eroded our capacity for designing our collective destiny by ourselves, one of the preconditions of democracy; the shallowness of electoral campaigns; oligarchic party politics; the image of politicians as plain “system managers”; and a methodically commercialised world, trivialised by an ever present media and cultural industry. We became abruptly conscious of a certain “democratic fatigue” that our liberal democracy has in fact been accumulating several flaws that ought to be analysed. In particular its increasing dependence on an unjust economic system.

The British case was, of course, of another nature. The looting led to an interpretation of the rebellion as a mere law and order problem mixed with some ingredients of deficient integration on part of some immigrant minorities. From some conservative perspectives, the blame was put on the lack of a culture of responsibility and the need of a “remoralisation” of society, as if there had been a breach of the values that make social integration and social peace possible. The left, in its turn, focused on cuts in social services for the disadvantaged, a constituent factor of social cohesion, as the key explanation.

In both the Spanish and the British case, as well as in other of those youth movements, one fact is clear: there is a background social malaise that demands our attention and should be closely scrutinised. The British riots were preceded some years ago by similar actions in France, and the Spanish movement has spread well beyond our borders. It is open to interpretation if we should just blame the economic crisis for what has happened. My feeling is that there is something more, a new questioning of our way of life and of our deep-rooted institutions and values. As if we were in need of a new social contract for these times of uncertainty.

FOCUS

The terror attack on 07/22 in Norway and the responses to it

by Claudia Lenz, Research Coordinator & Ana Perona-Fjeldstad, Executive Director, The European Wergeland Centre (Norway)



For Norway, the events on July 22 came as a shock – a young Norwegian, Anders Behring Breivik, attacked the government district in Oslo with a car-bomb and then went on to the island Utøya where he shot more than 60 youngsters belonging to the social democratic youth organization that had assembled there for a summer camp. Very soon his motivation became evident – none the least through his so-called “manifesto” in which he expresses attitudes that see Norway and Europe threatened by an Islamist conspiracy, supported by autochthonous accomplices. He felt like doing a historically necessary deed in order to save his country – and Europe – from an existential threat.

Saying this, it is clear that this terror attack has a European dimension and therefore we want to share some thoughts about the responses to it in the Norwegian society and about the consequences for future work in Citizenship Education.

What were the responses to terror in Norway?

- The immediate reaction by Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg on July 22 was: “We will meet terror with more democracy and openness”. This set the tone for the way in which the country has reacted since;
- The attacks were an expression of hatred of pluralism and diversity. Through the responses, the open and inclusive democratic culture was strengthened: throughout the national process of mourning one could experience that an inclusive national “We” was constituted, across ethnic and religious differences;
- More than before the voices of migrants, as those being attacked, as helpers and as supporters of Norway’s democratic national values, have been heard in public and in the media;
- Anti-Islamic rhetoric, which had become widely accepted, even taking a form that at times resembled the formulations in

Behring Breivik’s manifesto, is met with more skepticism now. A more “sober” debate about the challenges related to immigration and integration has been claimed – and so far been taking place.

Why can this send important signals to Europe?

- Right-wing populist tendencies gain territory in the public debate and in national politics nearly all over Europe;
- The suspicion that all Muslim citizens are more loyal to something else, namely their religion, than to the fundamental norms and laws of Western European societies has become a common place for media representations and public debates. This creates fear among many citizens and puts Muslims in the position of a nation’s “Others”.
- In the report of the CoE group of Eminent People, headed by Germany’s former foreign minister Joschka Fischer “Living together - Combining diversity and freedom in the 21st-century Europe”, xenophobia and intolerance are portrayed as the major threats for peace and sustainable democracy in Europe. At the same time, the report outlines the resources, which can be mobilized in order to overcome these threats, education being a central element of them. The recent terror attacks in Norway have proven the urgency of this work.

The attacks in Norway are a reminder that democracy itself is under threat if the fact that European societies are becoming more and more diverse is experienced as a threat by growing parts of the population. Even if Behring Breivik is an extremist individual, his views are rooted in attitudes, which have become broadly accepted and even mainstream in many European countries. This shows how urgently we need shared principles and values of living together in difference, we need to develop an understanding and practice of intercultural citizenship in Europe.

In Norway, a range of educational initiatives are prepared and launched these days, dealing with the strengthening of democratic culture as culture pluralism and diversity. One of them uses the money raised by selling bracelets with the famous saying after the Utøya attacks, “If one man can cause so much pain – imagine the amount of love we can create together”, to build up an antiracist educational programme for Norwegian schools. This shows that the message of love as the answer to terror is not as naïve as it might seem at the first glance.

Hopefully, the signs pointing in this direction in Norway will now last and inspire Europe.

INTRODUCING

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

Center for Citizenship Education

The Center for Citizenship Education is a non-profit organisation established in Slovenia in 1999 under the name “EIP Slovenia – School for Peace”. Since 2009 it has been called “Center for Citizenship Education”. The Center’s main aims are to promote HRE/EDC, especially among vulnerable groups in Slovenia, and to monitor official policies regarding formal, non-formal and life-long education in citizenship education in Slovenia. Elena A. Begant, programme director at the Center, answered our questions.

NECE: Why did EIP change its name?

Elena A. Begant: Actually, because in today’s world also NGOs have to care about marketing and promotion. Our mandate is in fact much broader than just working with school children, and although we had led some very successful national HRE/EDC projects for Slovenian schools in the past we wanted to be perceived by our target audiences as an educational organisation with much broader scope. Of course, there is also the fact that Slovenia has not been able to establish such a center yet, and one of our long-term goals is also to be recognised by governmental organisations and other HRE/EDC stakeholders as a national focal point for HRE/EDC.

NECE: How is the Center for Citizenship Education organised and financed? Who are the main partners you are working with and the main networks you are involved in? Which are your target groups?

Elena A. Begant: We are a non-profit educational organisation and we do not receive any financial support from the state whatsoever. That means we have to rely on donations and project grants. On the one hand this is very difficult, as in Slovenia there is no donor culture among the new capitalists, especially the field of education seems very unpopular, not to mention citizenship education. The concept of HRE/EDC itself is not very well understood by the people - they usually associate it with “someone is going to explain the legislation to me” rather than with “this will help me to develop my key competencies and empower me to act within society”.

On the other hand, the fact that we are seriously underfinanced gives us additional strength; in order to be successful on international project calls and appreciated by quality partners we have to work on our excellence and measurable results, follow new



trends and search for innovative solutions to existing HRE/EDC problems.

We are very proud that on the international level we are able to closely cooperate with excellent networks such as European NGO network DARE or with EIP in Geneva which enjoys the consultative status with OHCHR, UNESCO, Council of Europe and Organisation of African Unity. Within such networks we are able to find new strategic partners as well as to have our voice heard.

In the past we also did much excellent cooperation and exchange within the COMPASS project with the Council of Europe, especially the European Youth Center in Budapest. As a part of former Yugoslavia we are also very much interested in development in SEE countries, so we try to keep in touch with organisations and activists from various countries from the region.

On the national level we try to be seen and heard among HRE/EDC policy makers – we have already worked with the National Youth Department, the Slovenian ombudsman’s office, the National Education Institute. Currently we are part of the enlarged working group for the implementation of the UN WHREP at the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and we are actively involved in the development of the National implementation strategy for the 2nd phase. Also we are members of the Slovenian umbrella NGO Network CNVOS. I have to say that one of our main strategies is that we have never seen other NGOs as rivals but as possible future project partners. A network is always stronger than a single organisation, especially if it is as small as we are!

INTRODUCING

NECE: What are the Center's main topics, goals and tasks? How do you reach these goals? Could you give a concrete example of a topic including the methods you are implementing?

Elena A. Begant: We would like HRE/EDC to become an important part of life-long education in Slovenia! But of course, we also have more pragmatic goals as well. At the moment we are involved in an interesting multilateral Comenius project, VOICE, where we are developing problem-based learning and training HRE/EDC modules together with partners from Austria, Estonia, Germany and Turkey. On the national level we are testing the newly developed learning materials in cooperation with vocational schools with a special focus on multiethnic classes and socially deprived students.

Looking back, we can say that in Slovenia in the field of formal education many things have changed – after we started our work, the subject “Ethics and citizenship education” has been introduced into compulsory education, primary and secondary schools have started to perceive HRE/EDC as a whole-school approach and a cross-curricular topic, teachers have become interested in our working methods, NGO activists have started incorporating the HRE/EDC component in their project plans; also the recent ICCS Report has shown a statistically important improvement for Slovenia. Of course, this improvement did not happen only because of our engagement, but our lobbying and grass-root projects like “My rights”, “Democracy in Schools” or “Compass” have surely significantly contributed to it.

If I am asked to give a concrete example of some good practice we are still very proud of, I always mention Compass Programme. It was a long-term educational project that combined training of trainers in different fields of HRE/EDC (general human rights, women's rights, minorities, children's rights) with innovative didactic tools like the development of the first Slovenian on-line HRE/EDC training-of-trainers, self- and peer evaluation in HRE, promotional COMPASS workshops... We are still facilitating a HRE/EDC national trainers' pool which involves thirty skilled trainers, teachers and NGO activists. We are proud each time when we see that the knowledge we have passed on to them is used for the development of new HRE/EDC projects within the various organisations they work in, that they are active in our e-network and interested in taking part in current projects and activities we do. For our work we also received a Reward of Honour from the city of Maribor, the 2012 European capital of culture, and two entries in “HRE in School Systems of Europe, Central Asia and North America: A Compendium of Good Practice“.

Personally, I think open cooperation among people and organisations, being able to help others to develop and conduct a quality HRE/EDC project with usable results – this is what actually counts. If we, the HRE/EDC teachers, trainers and activists, are not able to believe sincerely in making the human rights oriented society work, how could we expect our target groups – the citizens and policy makers – to do so?

More information at: www.eip-cdv.si



REPORTS

International conference

**9 June 2011, Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)**

by Tit Neubauer, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

A one-day international conference, entitled “Towards a new age of citizenship education” was held at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia. The conference was organised as part of the project “Citizen(ship) in a new age”. It was divided into two sessions. The objective of the first one was to present potential institutional solutions in the field of citizenship education and depict the current state of affairs in the field in Slovenia, while the second one hosted a round table of representatives of formal and non-formal citizenship education in Slovenia and sought to deliver a discussion on the future guidelines for the development of the field in Slovenia.

In the introductory part of the conference the participants were welcomed by the head of the “Citizen(ship) in a new age” project, Prof. Dr. Jernej Pikalo, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Prof. Dr. Bojko Bucar, and the Minister of Education and Sports of the Government of Slovenia, Dr. Igor Lukšič. Subsequent to the introductory addresses were the presentations of the institutional solutions in the field of citizenship education in Germany, delivered by Ms. Petra Grüne, representative of the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Czech Republic, delivered by Mr. Ondrej Matejka, Director of the Czech Civic Education Centre. The first one was a good practice case with a relatively long tradition, while the second example served as a new example of a possible institutional setting.

The second session of the conference hosted a round table of key stakeholders in the field of citizenship education. As the chair, Prof. Dr. Jernej Pikalo, noted in his introduction, the purpose of the round table was to join different actors in the field of citizenship education and reflect on the possibilities of a joint conduct and cooperation in the field.

The round table hosted six participants, namely Ms. Tanja Popit from the National Educational Institute, Mr. Mitja Sardoc from the Educational Research Institute, Mr. Tadej Beocanin from the National Youth Council of Slovenia, Ms. Alenka Elena Begant from the NGO - Centre for Civic Education, Mr. Andrej Sotošek from the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education and Ms. Andreja Barle Lakota from the Ministry of Education and Sport. Prof. Pikalo explained to the participants that a joint statement on citizenship education had been drafted within the project and was based on the analyses conducted.

The full conference report is available at: www.nece.eu

Tunis Exchange Forum: Building Plural and Democratic Societies

23 - 26 June 2011, Tunis (Tunisia)

by Caroline Gebara, The European Wergeland Centre, Norway

The Mediterranean landscape has recently witnessed a wave of historical change. The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt as well as other social mobilisations in the region have demonstrated that youth and civil society are striving for more freedom, social change, and consolidation of democratic values within their respective societies.

It is in this context that the Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF) - the Mediterranean institution for intercultural dialogue based in Alexandria (Egypt) - organised the Tunis Exchange Forum: Building Plural and Democratic Societies.

More than 200 participants, among them civil society actors, journalists, youth leaders and bloggers from across the Arab region and different parts of Europe came together to exchange experiences, project ideas and good practices on issues of citizenship and intercultural dialogue in the context of democratic transition. The majority of participants came from the ALF Arab Networks in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauretania, Palestine, Tunisia and Syria.

During parallel workshops more than 100 project ideas and best practices were presented, illustrating the high level of activism and the diverse experiences of the participants. A broad range of proposals was shared: art and cultural projects connected to topics such as shared history and social cohesion, the use of social media to promote citizenship awareness, new forms of citizens' participation, e.g. drafting a constitution (Egyp-Tunisia), watch dog activities in the upcoming elections (Tunisia).

Moreover, participants formulated recommendations for future action covering the following three issues:

- the role of social media as a new form of social and political activism;
- the challenge of social movements in countries that went through a revolution and;
- new trends of artistic creation used as a tool for social change.

What emerged from the three fields is the strong need to update the intercultural dialogue agenda of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and to address the short and long term needs of societies undergoing changes. The process of reform has to be driven by the people – that was a sentiment that was stressed during the conference.

REPORTS

Recommendations presented underlined the need to create a forum for civic education, to develop exchange programmes for professionals from the North and South of the Mediterranean, and to provide technical support on different levels, including the participation of Arab communities in Europe in dialogue and exchange programmes.

Focusing on the important role of social media, the following needs were identified: to provide funds for new social media initiatives that engage in dialogue and social responsibility, to help professionalise media channels and to train bloggers on conflict resolution and diversity of opinions.

The conference platform www.tunisforum.org acted as a tool to open the debate to the wider public by involving people through social networking sites such as facebook and twitter, and also through blog posts from a team of EuroMed bloggers present at the event. The platform is being updated with videos, photos and resources from the event.

During the closing ceremony, Andreu Claret, Executive Director of the ALF, underlined how this event constituted a starting point for the preparation of the programme of the Foundation for the next three years, in particular for supporting democracy, human rights values and sustainable development through intercultural dialogue.

The participants can look back to an intensive, fruitful exchange, which provided food for thought for developing new projects and partnerships for future action. As young activist Olfa from the Tunisian Forum for Youth Empowerment emphasised: «The benefit of the Forum is that we have the chance to exchange with people from other Arab countries and Europe. We did not have the chance before. Now we are free in our minds, we can think. People who are free in their minds can create spaces to act.»

Surely, it will be enriching for all of us working in the field of civic and human rights education to follow the developments in the Arab world in the months ahead.



The final documentation and the results of the Forum will soon be published on the ALF website.

*More information at: Anna Lindh Foundation
www.euromedalex.org and Tunis Forum www.tunisforum.org*

Opening of ProDemos

**on 15 September 2011 in the Hague,
(the Netherlands)**

by Tatjana Meijvogel-Volk, ProDemos, the Netherlands

On September 15th - the International Day of Democracy - the former House for Democracy and the Rule of Law (since September last year a merger of the former Institute of Political Participation (IPP) and the Visitor's Center of the Dutch Parliament) opened under the name of "Pro Demos" in the Hague. The go-ahead of the day was a cleaning action of the chairwoman of the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament, Ms. Gerdi Verbeet, together with school children cleaning the first article of the Dutch constitution, which is carved in stone in front of the Dutch Parliament. During the whole Day of Democracy a colourful programme was presented at the premises of ProDemos, the Dutch Parliament and even outdoors in front of these buildings. In various debates journalists discussed if they are still fulfilling the function of watchdogs of democracy. Youngsters were discussing the challenges of current political developments, and in the Old Hall of the Dutch Parliament high-ranking guests from politics and science were exchanging views on the tension between democracy and the rule of law.

The climax of the day was the ceremonial opening of ProDemos by the Minister of Interior, Piet Hein Donner, and the chairpersons of the First and Second Chambers of the Dutch Parliament. After that, hundreds of guests were present at the reception at the new premises of ProDemos opposite the Dutch Parliament, where every day up to 16 high school classes are following interactive programmes on Dutch politics and history. Also, already now ProDemos offers several guiding tours through the parliament and through the history of Dutch politics for individual visitors. And like its predecessor IPP, ProDemos will also be active in the whole of the Netherlands, facilitating workshops, debates and trainings for adults, youths and professionals on the topic of democracy and the rule of law.

For more information on the activities of ProDemos, please contact Tatjana Meijvogel-Volk at: t.meijvogel-volk@prodemos.nl

POLICY NEWS

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

Extra funds for education, youth and creativity will boost jobs

As a part of its strategy for boosting employment, the European Commission aims at nearly doubling the number of young people, teachers and researchers who get EU grants for studying and training abroad, from currently 400 000 recipients per year to almost 800 000 in the future.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news3008_en.htm

European countries need to step up efforts to boost reading skills

One in five 15 years olds and many adults in Europe cannot read properly. A new study published by the European Commission shows what countries are doing to improve reading literacy - and where they are falling short. The study reveals that while most have made progress in developing literacy policies, they often lack focus on those groups being at biggest risk, such as boys, children from disadvantaged households and migrant children.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news3004_en.htm

EU budget 2014-2020: Investing today for tomorrow's growth

The European Union has just proposed a multi-annual budget for 2014-2020. Responding to today's concerns and tomorrow's needs it focuses on priority funding at the EU level that provides true added value and includes more funds for Europe's youth. In

order to overcome the fragmentation of current instruments, the Commission proposes to create an integrated programme for education, training and youth ('Education Europe'), with a clear focus on developing skills and mobility. The Commission's plans also include a new programme for the cultural and creative sector ('Creative Europe').

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news2992_en.htm

Children who have been taught citizenship skills are more likely to empathise and give to others

Children are often recipients of charity and social action, but they also have a great capacity to give themselves. A recent study suggests that cultivating their sense of social and moral responsibility increases the likelihood of them participating in society in the future.

www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/news.php?n968

Parental support initiatives improve literacy of children

A new study produced for the European Commission by independent experts concludes that involving families in literacy programmes is essential for increasing the literacy levels of children and adults. The report provides an overview of research and evaluates strategies, policies and initiatives in the field of family literacy, in particular those targeting disadvantaged families. It highlights good practice through case studies of unique and successful initiatives throughout Europe.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news3000_en.htm



CALL FOR...

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

European Policy Network on the education of children and young people with a migrant background

The purpose of this call is to strengthen cross-European collaboration between high-level decision makers, academics and practitioners for raising the educational attainment of children and young people with a migrant background. The call aims to support the establishment of a European network to analyse, develop and exchange policy and practice in the area.

Deadline: 14 October 2011

<http://www.elearningpapers.eu/de/directory/European-Policy-Network-on-the-education-of-children-and-young-people-with-a-migrant-background>

CALL FOR PAPERS

Comparative Studies of Civic and Citizenship Education: Approaches, Results, Impacts, Alternatives

The editors of the Journal of Social Science Education call for articles that will bring new perspectives and broaden the horizon of the domain of teenagers' citizenship and citizenship education. They welcome articles from a variety of perspectives (e.g. political socialisation, human rights and citizenship education, urban education, international development studies, education policy and pedagogical practices); a range of countries within and beyond Europe and with different educational systems; national and comparative studies.

First submission 15 October 2011.

<http://www.jsse.org/info/call-for-papers/comparative-studies-of-civic-and-citizenship-education-approaches-results-impacts-alternatives>

Citizenship and Community

The Journal of Social Science Education will publish a special issue in December 2012 on the topic of 'Citizenship and Community'. The editors welcome articles from a variety of perspectives (e.g. service learning, character education, political literacy); a range of countries within and beyond Europe; issues that affect students of different ages. The focus of the special issue will be education, but the editors will welcome theoretical and other material that allows for the consideration of issues, using insights from a range of academic disciplines.

First submission October 2011.

<http://www.jsse.org/info/call-for-papers/4-2012-citizenship-and-community>

CALL FOR PARTNERS

VoteMatch Europe is looking for partners

The VoteMatch Europe Project looks for partners within the EU for a joint VoteMatch in the context of the European Parliamentary Elections 2014 (www.vote-match.eu). Who is already currently organising a similar VoteMatch tool and would like to become a part of our European network and project on the European Parliamentary elections? Who knows about interesting tools in his/her country, whose initiators we might approach in this respect? We would be happy to receive much information as well as many contacts and links.

*Please contact: Pamela Brandt, Federal Agency for Civic Education, Germany
E-mail: pamela.brandt@bpb.bund.de*

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Seminar „Using e-learning in intercultural non-formal education activities. Experiences, lessons learnt, challenges and perspectives”, 29 November - 2 December 2011, Budapest (Hungary)

The seminar is organised by the Council of Europe's youth sector and aims at discussing and sharing experiences of using e-learning in intercultural non-formal education today as well as identifying quality standards and criteria, as a contribution to the process of improving the quality of non-formal education.

Deadline for application: 10 October 2011.

http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/news/news_298.html

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INFORMATION

Events

September - October 2011 in Europe **Literature in Flux - Via Danube**

From September to October 2011, the Halma Network will travel on the Danube on a vintage boat working as a temporary literary centre. More than 30 events incl. readings, discussions, film screenings, concerts and more in seven countries, from Ruse in Bulgaria to Vienna in Austria, will be organised. The project is supported by the European Commission. HALMA connects literary centres of Europe, organises intercultural exchange and allows actors of literary life to experience the variety of different cultures. It creates alterable structures, which promote dialogue and exchange among European regions and a forum for transnational encounter. Currently HALMA represents 26 literary institutions in 21 countries.

More information at:

www.halma-network.eu/en/projects.html

Preview

24 - 26 May 2012, University of York, United Kingdom **CiCe's 14th Annual Conference: Creating Citizenship Communities: Local, National and Global**

The conference will be organised in association with two significant groups in the field of citizenship education: CitizED (a glo-

bal network of academics) and the project team of the Esmée Fairbairn funded initiative 'Creating Citizenship Communities'. The conference topic is particularly pertinent to citizenship and identities education. It reflects on current concerns for community cohesion from local to global scales and chimes with current initiatives around volunteering and intergenerational solidarity. A full call for papers will be available from the CiCe website in November 2011, with all relevant information on how to register for the conference.

More information at:

http://cice.londonmet.ac.uk/news/news_home.cfm

Research

New indicators on Civic Competence

Our NECE correspondent, Bryony Hoskins, is currently working with the European Commission to create new indicators for civic competence, using the latest IEA 2009 ICCS data. Initial findings suggest that, like previously, young people from Southern and Eastern European countries have more positive attitudes towards participation and citizenship values than Western European youths. Nordic countries are more supportive of social justice, but actually it is Spanish youngsters who are the most supportive. Concerning civic knowledge and skills, it is countries like Finland who perform well at PISA and gain high scores.



NECE CONFERENCE

17 - 19 November 2011, Warsaw (Poland)

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

At the conference, the complex changes regarding civic participation in Europe and its effects on socially disadvantaged groups will be discussed. On the one hand, citizens tend to refrain from traditional political participation. On the other hand, a rising number of new ways of getting involved in politics and society, i.e. using new media, have emerged. However, these new forms of political involvement are to a large extent determined by the access to education and by income and skills. Groups with no access to these resources remain widely excluded from participation in civil society and political processes. Socially disadvantaged groups with poor educational opportunities suffer from a conspicuous 'empowerment gap'. Experts and activists in the fields of citizenship and cultural education, youth and social workers, NGO representatives will meet in Warsaw to discuss the role of citizenship education in this context. How can citizenship education become a suitable tool for closing the empowerment gap?

Follow the latest news at the NECE conference blog <http://blog.nece.eu> or at the NECE website: www.nece.eu

Registration at: <https://www.conf.lab-concepts.de/nece>

INFORMATION

The British results are approximately on or below the international mean for each dimension. New report will be out shortly.

Previous results: Hoskins, B., Barber, C., Van Nijlen, D. and Villalba, E. (2011) Comparing Civic Competence among European Youth: Composite and Domain-Specific Indicators Using IEA Civic Education Study Data. *Comparative Education Review*. Vol. 55, No. 1 (February 2011), pp. 082-110.

www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/656620

Learning citizenship: Hoskins, B., Janmaat, G. & Villalba, E. (2011): Learning citizenship through social participation outside and inside school: an international, multilevel study of young people's learning of citizenship, *British Educational Research Journal* www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01411926.2010.550271

Active Citizenship and the EU study (began June 2011)

Currently, Dr. Bryony Hoskins is also leading this European funded project which has seven partners across Europe analysing the concepts, policies and practices of active citizenship across the 27 member states of the European Union. By collecting new data on national and local policies and combing this with the analysis of international databases, such as the IEA International civic and citizenship study (ICCS), barriers and successful strategies for facilitating active citizenship and the relationship between active citizenship and social and economic outcomes should be identified.

More information at:

www.soton.ac.uk/education/about/staff/bh1a10.page

Links

Informal learning in formal adult education. Explorative study of experiences of low educated participants (published 12 September 2011)

Jeltsen Peeters, Koen Lombaerts, Free De Backer & Tom Vanwing, Department of Educational Sciences, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

More information at:

<http://www.infonet-ae.eu/en/articles/informal-learning-in-formal-adult-education-explorative-study-of-experiences-of-low-educated-participants-1215>

Adult learning is something for everybody

Interview with Johannes Laitenberger, Head of the Cabinet of Commission President Barroso, on adult education in Europe and the Europe 2020 strategy (published 19 April 2011)

More information at:

<http://www.infonet-ae.eu/en/interviews/adult-learning-is-something-for-everybody-1167>

The European Alliance for Democratic Citizenship

With its practice-oriented programmes, the Network of European Foundations - European Alliance for Democratic Citizenship promotes the involvement of young talents and professionals in political

decision-making processes in Europe. FutureLab Europe – The Council of Young European Citizens, is the first joint project of all European partners. The European Alliance for Democratic Citizenship is governed by the Körber Foundation and affiliated to the Network of European Foundations (NEF).

More information at:

<http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/bildung/futurelab-europe/european-alliance.html>

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