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voor het Nederlandse Onderwijs



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for UNESCO

## **Expert meeting CE: Collection of school portraits**

**June 2004**

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## **Introduction**

This collection of school portraits is a product of the expert meeting on Citizenship Education (CE) in May 2004 in the Netherlands. The meeting was organized by the Dutch National Commission for UNESCO and the European Platform for Dutch Education, on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Participants came from a variety of EU countries (Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Malta, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Sweden) as well as the European Commission, Eurydice and Unesco.

Each of the country representatives was asked to submit 'good CE practice' school portraits from primary and secondary education. The descriptions were preferably to follow the guidelines provided by the Dutch Educational Council and successfully used to draw up a number of Dutch school portraits in 2003. The intention was to expose the rich diversity of approaches that can be found all over the European Union, to explain and discuss each other's examples of 'good practice' in the field of CE, and to identify variables that may be indicative for success and failure of CE initiatives.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the collection and hope that others interested will benefit from our exchange of experience through this publication, too.

## Primary education

### *Finland*

#### *Roihuvuori Primary*

*By Ms Satu Honkala, Head of the school*



#### *General information on the school*

Roihuvuori primary is a non-graded primary school (ages 6-13) in one of the eastern parts of the city of Helsinki. It is a city-owned day school and about 80-90% of the children living in the area are enrolled. (In Helsinki the parents can choose the school freely.) The social backgrounds of the students vary from well-paid parents living in private houses to unemployed refugees living in city housing.

Roihuvuori school has 500 students. There are 24 general education groups, five of them form a Music School, two are bilingual Estonian + Finnish and two are Swedish language immersion groups. In addition there is one preparatory group for migrant children and two special education groups. The migrant students mainly come from Russia, Estonia and Somalia. More than 20% of the students and 15% of the teaching staff have immigrant backgrounds. All the groups in the school are non-graded, having children of different ages studying according to a partly individual curriculum. This also means that the parents may choose their child's own curriculum to a fairly large extent. The teaching arrangements and temporary student groupings are accordingly flexible.

Roihuvuori primary has been very active in many of the national school improvement projects in Finland. The main fields for development work are non-graded teaching methods, new teachers' salary system and intercultural school community. We are also a Unesco ASP-school.

#### *The origins of CE initiatives*

Democratic citizenship, tolerance, individual responsibility and respect for human rights are core values in the Finnish education system. Therefore there is only a very broad national framework curriculum and the municipalities have responsibility for the actual curriculum. In Helsinki city there is a school based curriculum system, which is made to meet the needs for the students in each school. Accordingly Helsinki city school department welcomes school initiatives and finances school based development work.

The Roihuvuori school curriculum was totally renewed in 1994 on the basis of the needs of the students. The non-graded, mixed age teaching system with strong emphasis on thinking skills and student initiative was created by the teachers working together with parents. A lot of school based in-service training for the teachers was needed. All schoolwork was organised to self-steering teams as well as the administrative system was changed to sheared leadership. School values are still discussed every year with new parents.

The national framework curriculum was renewed this year and the schools in Helsinki are just renewing their curriculum. Many of the CE related features that have been in Roihuvuori curriculum since 94 now seem to be promoted nation and citywide.

#### *Educational content*

In Roihuvuori school CE is promoted in all schoolwork. It is stated in the school's curriculum core values, mission statement, educational goals, working methods and student participation.

The aim of the school is to create a democratic intercultural learning community. The guideline for all work is improving thinking skills. Most clearly these are seen in so-called themes teaching and in participating in the Voice of the Young in Helsinki Campaign.

### Thinking skills and democracy

Democracy is based on freedom and equality. Freedom means an ability to make choices and change the world together with other people. Equality means that every individual is a unique member of the community. A community is successful only when all its members participate and bring in their opinions and talents.

In classrooms this means that the students need to be in a democratic learning environment. Students need to learn take responsibility of their own actions and to understand how their actions reflect on others. Both reflective thinking and dialogue with others need to be learned practised.

### School based curriculum for Roihuvuori primary

The school-based curriculum describes how the school works. The common values and goals shared among parents and staff are stated in the first chapters of the curriculum.

#### *Core values*

*In all Helsinki city schools:*

- everyone has the right to good learning and growing as a learner and as a human being*
- everyone has a democratic right to participate and be member of the school community*
- equality and human dignity is promoted, everyone together takes care of friendly atmosphere, safety and well being*
- Finnish culture and everyone's own cultural backgrounds are valued and cultural interaction is promoted*
- no forms of violence, discrimination or racism are tolerated*
- there is a commitment for sustainable development and everyone grows to take responsibility for environment and future*

*In addition to this our parents want that Roihuvuori primary takes special care for every student's individual needs, values everyone's own culture and promotes tolerance. Together with parents we take responsibility for students. School work is based on good atmosphere. Special attention is paid to preventing bullying and the development of social skills. Everyday situations in school are dealt with common sense.*

*The Roihuvuori school curriculum mission statement is defined together by the parents, staff and students: Roihuvuori primary is a Unesco ASP school working for peace, democracy and human rights education. We aim to be the best possible school for all our students. Working together in safe surrounding is based on seeing the students in a balanced way as individuals and members of the school community. We aim to continuous progress and joy of learning according to each student's own starting points. Freedom, responsibility, respect for others and tolerance are the starting points for learning life skills. We aim to guarantee basic skills and knowledge for each student to become good citizens and member of their communities.*

This means that CE is taken seriously in all school life situations as well as in teaching. Every student is seen as an individual responsible for his or her own learning, having the right for adult guidance and help from teachers. For instance mother tongue teaching and religious

teaching according to own faith or non-religious ethics teaching, and free lunches also according to religious diets are provided for each student.

*Goals for Education and Learning in Roihuvuori primary:*

*Our school creates non-graded mixed age learning environments to learn basic skills and wide over-all knowledge needed for further education. Our school has emphasis on multiculturalism and tolerance. Our educational aims emphasises integrity and confidence in one's own abilities and possibilities. Responsibilities, initiative, co-cooperativeness and social skills are important.*

*Working methods*

*In addition to what is said about teaching and learning in Helsinki city schools, in Roihuvuori primary learning is based on students' own planning and self-evaluation. Our school has emphasis on initiative, responsibility, co-operative and social skills. Schoolwork supports individual and social growth and tolerance. Our school have individual learning plans and learning takes place in mixed age home groups. Individual choices and individual learning are valued; there is no need for everyone to learn the same or at the same time as others. In teaching we promote learning skills, thinking skills and skills to find information. Working in groups and pairs and co-operation between different home groups is important.*

*Student participation*

*In addition to Helsinki city program:*

*Roihuvuori primary has a student body with elected representatives from all home groups. The teacher coordinator for student is elected every year. Student body works with issues brought up by students, makes suggestions and gives opinions to various school work issues like school lunch menu, school festivities, school atmosphere and improving learning conditions. Student body may organize special activity days, festivities and take part in different projects- The teaching staff may also give assignments for student body. The head of school participates in the student body meetings when needed. Student body is one element in the school's Unesco ASP work.*

In Roihuvuori students have individual learning goals and they can make some free subject choices for the school year. They learn to plan their weekly work and how to get it done working together with other students and teachers. All teachers work in teams or pairs and are in this way also a grown up model for teamwork expected in classroom. Large part of the schoolwork is planned together in the weekly meetings of the six bigger teams and all teaching is planned weekly in the teacher teams that have joint responsibility of 2-3 home groups' teaching and learning.

The permanent home groups are mixed age having three age groups together, so the CE content is present in all age groups. The groups are permanent through the six primary years so that they only take new first year students when the sixth year ones move to the next school. This means rotation of years 1-2-3 to 2-3-4 to 3-4-5 to 4-5-6 to 1-5-6 to 1-2-6 and back to new 1-2-3. Mixed age groups give good training for thinking skills and understanding people older or younger than you. It also allows students to have bigger and smaller "sisters and brothers" in school while very few families have more than one or two children.

In Finland the school assessment is self-evaluation. Roihuvuori school students have however been studied as a part of a school improvement program. The over all result was that students performed in core subjects the same as in other schools, but they had significantly better social skills and more positive attitudes towards school than average. They seemed to be more tolerant in conflict situations and showed more initiative and individual responsibility in their schoolwork. They also had better confidence in their ability to solve the given tasks and



especially the ones who did not perform very well did not stop trying before the given time was up. Helsinki city regularly makes sample studies on different aspects of schoolwork; Roihuvuori results in those continuously show same features as the main study.

### *Educational process*

#### Thinking skills and "themes teaching"

The curriculum content in CE, Science, Biology, Geography and History is combined together with parts of Music and Art to form themes. There are 12 themes and two different versions of each, so every student studies one theme twice during the six years. There are four themes in one year and they are the same for all school. So the whole school discusses and studies the questions at the same time for 3-4 hours a week, each student starting with his or her understanding and covering the subject according to his or her ability. At the end of the theme period there are show days to present all the work to other students in the school. This can also happen in a form of festivities like the Medieval days. Two of these themes concentrate entirely on CE issues, one on human rights and the other on citizenship. Different CE elements are combined with all themes.

The teacher teams prepare the work for each theme for the whole school. The emphasis of the work is on improving thinking skills and social skills. Working methods vary, but project work is very much used and even the youngest students learn to make their own studies and present their findings to others. The international work of the school is connected to themes teaching as much as possible. All the cultures in the school are shown connected to the themes and the twinning activities with schools in different countries focus on these themes as well.

#### The Voice of the Young in Helsinki Campaign in Roihuvuori Primary

Roihuvuori school participates in the voice of the young campaign now for the second year. Participation is based on the student body and home group work done in school for several years. The campaign gives our school and students the benefit of making real difference. They have the possibility to develop their ideas to suggestions, campaign for them in school and finally with good arguments win the money to make the ideas come true.

All the work is done by students, teachers only helping the smallest with reading and writing and giving good advice if asked. (For our adults' surprise in this years election the student body president turned out to be a 7 year old Finnish Italian first grader and he needed someone to read the meeting agendas for the first half year. Helsinki city school department also had some difficulties accepting the democratic decision of our students, so our student body had to send our 12 year old secretary to represent us in the city meetings instead of the president.) The campaign includes creating future visions, developing plans for improvement, finding good arguments for own ideas, evaluating different ideas and their argumentation and finally presenting the school's plan for the Mayor of Helsinki in a form of normal municipal meeting in the city hall. In the year 2003 our 11-year old representatives convinced the all city youth and municipality meeting to bend the rules of the campaign by accepting the school's improvement suggestion and on top of that to give Roihuvuori primary extra bonus money by arguing for the very special needs of our multicultural students and several school buildings. The students suggested buying lockers for older students and playground equipment for the smaller ones.

The Voice of the Young Campaign has given good support in a practical form for improving communication and thinking skills. It has shown how citizens can participate. It also strengthens whole school feeling of belonging together by everybody working for the same aims approved by all students and staff.

### ***School organization***

In order to promote social cohesion and citizenship the school organization must respect democratic values and students' rights. The school must be a model of intercultural community in which the children and adults work together and are respected alike. The elements for this in Roihuvuori primary are the school based curriculum, non graded learning, mixed age home groups, inclusion of immigrant and special education, team work and shared leadership.

School based curriculum allows developing own solutions to schools problems and together designing the schoolwork to suit everyone's needs. It makes it possible to have common values shared with all. Also the responsibility of the school works' success lies on every staff member and student. When the curriculum as well as appointing staff and allocation of money is done independently in the own school board it shows how democracy works locally.

Non graded learning allowing individual study plans and individual speed and time to complete learning tasks respects every student as a valuable individual and important member of the school community. Evaluation and assessment is based on individual goals and self-evaluation. Comparison between students is not done, which promotes competition with one's own work instead of competition between students. This gives all students equal access to feeling successful and being able to accomplish tasks well.

Mixed age home groups and strong integration or inclusion of migrant and special education creates tolerance and trust for people different from myself. It forces everyone to improve in communication and widen his or her way of thinking. Since issues are complex and opinions often conflict this improves problem solving skills and creative ways to find compromises that everyone can agree on. Students learn to argue for themselves and to negotiate and compromise in order to get things done. Human rights knowledge and ethics are best learned when discussing everyone's rights in the school community. Having refugee students in the school makes all students pay much attention to human rights and democracy issues in Finland and in the world.

Teamwork and shared leadership involves and empowers the whole staff in the administration of the school. Teamwork modelled by adults creates teamwork and shared responsibility in the classrooms. Teamwork skills are taught to students and the active student bodywork in each home group allows students to learn to have courage to care about people and issues and be active in life.

The responsibilities for CE are defined in the school-based curriculum and it is every teacher's duty to promote those values and skills in all teaching. The actual planning of all schoolwork is done in teacher teams who meet at least once a week.

### ***School environment***

School is municipality service for each child and it must be equally successful in all neighbourhoods and for all children regardless of their family backgrounds. It is for the school together with parents and other institutions, social welfare for instance, to arrange school and learning in a way that meets the needs of the students. Helsinki city gives more funding to schools in the parts of the city with heavy immigrant numbers and unemployment. The differences between schools in Finland are very small as measured in the latest PISA study. In

Roihuvuori school as in all others very special care is taken of the poorest students to guarantee that they will perform their best.

Underprivileged areas like Roihuvuori probably give better chances for CE because there are in school and in the neighbourhood real problems and issues to discuss and solve. Initiatives and activity in democratic structures makes real difference.

The media is an important factor in schoolwork. Media education is part of Finnish mother tongue teaching and one of the over all themes of all education. All schools pay much attention to media and ICT skills. Helsinki city gives in school free Internet and e-mail access to every student and also videos are very much used in teaching. Free access to all of the Internet means that there is a very high emphasis on learning critical thinking and taking individual responsibility of the use of media. Media makes worldwide human rights and democracy issues a part of the life of even the youngest students while they often watch TV alone at home after school. For this reason current issues like the war in Iraq are always discussed in classes with all students and the teachers prepare themselves for those discussions in team meetings as part of regular CE work.

#### *Monitoring CE initiatives*

All schoolwork is subject to self-evaluation in classes, among staff and with parents. School board gets an annual self-evaluation report of schoolwork. The Voice of the Young in Helsinki Campaign gives out fairly big sums of money for the student bodies based on good argumentation and suggestions. The school's international work and school improvement projects give self-evaluations for city school department for the extra money they have received. Teachers in Roihuvuori participate in results-based salary system where by auditing the results on agreed issues a large sum of in-service money is given to the school according to what percentage of the goals are fulfilled. Good work according to agreed plans in areas like CE or special education inclusion makes it possible for the teaching staff to arrange a training for themselves abroad in places like Barcelona (2003) or Rome (2004) once a year.

#### *Expert's opinion*

Good cooperation in the school, and of course the basic idea: school as a community of inquiry.

## **Germany**

### ***Geschwister-Scholl-Schule, Crailsheim***

***By Ute Nettlau***

#### ***General***

The Geschwister-Scholl-Schule in Crailsheim is a public primary school with 300 pupils from grade 1 to 6 (age 6 to 12). Boys and girls are in mixed classes and belong to different ethnic and religious groups.

The pupils come from eight different municipalities, partially rural villages, but also from towns with large groups of Russian immigrants and Turkish families. Especially in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade there are pupils who have tremendous language problems. One third of the pupils and two thirds of the parents were not born in Germany. Many pupils from one of the towns show behavioural disorders and experience tremendous learning difficulties. A part of the parents is raising the kids without a partner or working in shifts with the consequence that the children are often left by themselves in the afternoon.

At the school there is an active parents' council that organizes information events for the parents.

#### ***Educational content***

The Geschwister-Scholl-Schule is member of ASPnet and actively cooperates with other ASPnet schools. An important focus area of the school is value education. During several years of work a *value calendar* has been created which hangs in every classroom. It serves as an impulse for activities and communication. Every month is subject to another topic. The topics are: peaceful interaction with each other, respect, patience, honesty, self-control, helpfulness, reliability, tolerance, and friendship. On an advertisement pillar that stands in the lobby, the results of the specific topic of the month are presented by a different class each month.

Another focus area is the memory of the Scholl siblings. Hans and Sophie Scholl were resistance fighters against the Nazi regime. Memorial events are organized and activities carried out that show how children can already show civil courage.

*Solidarity projects* of the school are further important focus point. Through bazaars and the sale of breakfast during recess the children collect donations. The money goes to Msambweni, Kenya to support the construction of a school in a children village and to Tanzania to finance water containers.

We want to educate pupils to act democratically. In consequence we have class and school summits and a pupil's government that organizes events for the pupils. The class summits are chaired by the pupils themselves and they also decide on the agenda that will be discussed and carry out the voting and decisions. They maintain a speaker's list and write the report.

In the Geschwister-Scholl-Schule the education to peaceful coexistence is very important. In a peer mediation-training program the 12-year-olds learn how they can contribute to conflict resolution as unbiased mediators.

In the godfather program pupils of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade support pupils from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to become integrated in the school.

All of the education content is part of the school working program that was developed by teachers and parents.

#### ***Educational process***

These above described activities are part of the education program at the Geschwister-Scholl-Schule.

The leading principles of our school are the four Delors pillars of UNESCO: "learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, learning to live together".

As member of the ASPnet, the Geschwister-Scholl-Schule regularly organizes various activities with respect to the common topics of the German ASPnet. Every year there are project weeks with a 'Day of Solidarity'. In 2002 the topic was "child labour – children's rights", in 2003 "art for aid projects". The value topics were transferred into visual arts and the sales profit of the art objects was used for the school's solidarity projects. In 2004 there will be a "water project" at the school, which will point out the importance and the protection of water.

Every teacher supports individual and self-responsible studying of the pupils. Training of effective learning methods, to acquire communication and team skills are important didactic goals of our school.

### **School organization**

At the Geschwister-Scholl-Schule there is a UNESCO team of eight teachers and two parents that designs the projects carried out at school. It is also responsible to transmit the common network activities of the ASPnet to the school.

### **External school environment**

There is an intensive cooperation between the local kindergarten and our school, as well as an exchange of information with the local secondary schools. The parents are incorporated in the school's decisions making processes.

### **Summary**

- Education goals: peace, tolerance, responsibility for oneself, responsibility for the environment, aid for the needy
- Focus areas: education to democracy, memory of the Scholl siblings, value education, environment, solidarity projects
- Joint responsibility of parents and teachers

<b>School</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Focus areas</b>
Geschwister-Scholl-Schule, Crailsheim	Educational content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value education</li> <li>• Education to democracy and peaceful coexistence</li> <li>• Memory of the Scholl siblings</li> <li>• Solidarity projects</li> <li>• Peer mediation program</li> </ul>
	Educational process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNESCO principles (4 pillars of Delors report)</li> <li>• Key competencies (effective learning, communication and team skills)</li> <li>• Regularly: project weeks</li> </ul>
	School organization/ external school environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' government, class and school summits</li> <li>• UNESCO team and networking within ASPnet</li> <li>• Contact with kindergarten and secondary schools</li> <li>• Personal contact and exchange with parents and participation of parents in school decision making</li> </ul>

## *Latvia*

### *Barta primary school, Liepaja district*

*By Aija Tuna, education program director, consultant on CE*

#### *General information on the school*

Municipality of Barta is located in the South-East of Latvia. Barta primary school is in operation since school year 1925/26. The school is situated in the centre of Barta village, in rural area in the west part of Latvia, close to the border with Lithuania. Distance to one the largest cities in Latvia – Liepaja – is 34 km, distance to the capital city Riga – 230 km.

There are around 120 students, 18 teachers and 7 technical staff members in the school. School provides compulsory primary education in grades 1 to 9<sup>th</sup>. In most cases students start schooling at age of 6 or 7 and graduate at age of 15 or 16 years. Average age of teachers is little over 40 years what is comparatively young for Latvia. Most teachers are actively involved in the activities of political, cultural and social life of the local community, showing good example for their students.

Barta village and region could be characterized as rather low-income area with high unemployment rate. At the same time it always has have rich cultural life and historical traditions, maintained by its population of all generations.

School principal, vice-principal and consultant for extra-curriculum activities carry out the management of the school, each class has its class teacher who not only teaches particular subject, but also is more connected with the students and overlooks their general educational process, participation in the school community, maintains links with the families etc.

There is wide range of extra-curriculum activities for students, including cultural, sport, advanced learning and other options.

School has its Development plan in which civic education is elaborated in different aspects and is considered as bases for successful work.

#### *The origins of civic education initiatives*

Education and its quality have recently become the focus of considerable societal attention in Latvia. It is quite understandable; since it is precisely the educational potential that determines the development of a country.

After the restoration of Latvia's independence, the reform of educational content became one of the most important missions in transforming society from a socialist and totalitarian system to a free, open, and democratic system. During the past decade, there has been a gradual increase in public understanding about the significance of social and political education and its role in forming a democratic society.

The most important difference between the social education systems that exist in developed democracies and the system Latvia inherited from the Soviet period lies in the understanding of goals as well as in the methods and forms that are used to socialize students and to help them become informed and active citizens of the country. The basic goal of education in democratic countries around the world is to prepare students for life in a democratic society by developing

skills, abilities, and values. However, the dominant approach in post-Soviet Latvia was the study of information at the factual level (e.g., memorizing dates, names, and political theories without proper understanding what the information means for a person's life). As this approach served ideological academic goals rather well, teachers and educational authorities were proud of the academic results of students, but this approach did not prepare students for practical life or, more importantly, for developing the ability to participate actively in a democratic society.

In 1998 *National Standard of Compulsory Education* was adopted as a nationally and politically endorsed document that outlines the contents for education reform by the year 2005. The guiding principles for this educational reform, as envisioned and outlined in the document are:

A changed focus from the acquisition of information to the application and utilization of information;

A practical orientation, accenting functional knowledge and skills;

The integration and correspondence among subjects to avoid overload, duplication and discrepancy.

This document provided good bases for civic education in broader understanding as only one or some subjects on the school timetable, including opportunities and duty for all teachers to pay time and attention to the various aspects of civic education.

Barta primary school, living in the same conditions as all schools in Latvia, started to pay extended attention to civic education since mid-90<sup>th</sup>. Recognition of the importance of the civic education was the starting point for visioning and planning.

Main task, stated by school administration, has been to help students to become competent and responsible citizens, who

- Are informed and thoughtful
- Has civic participation and critical thinking skills
- Participate in community life
- Have moral and civic virtues

School administration has put a lot of effort to ensure school's participation in different projects in order to promote professional development of teachers, ensure communication and cooperation within region, state and internationally.

In cooperation with Soros Foundation – Latvia, Barta primary school has not only improved civic education in their school but also has become trainers and resource centre for other schools o the region and country. In addition to regular content school has implemented two programs: "Foundations of Democracy" (including such topics as Authority, Responsibility, Justice and Privacy) for grades 1 – 6 and "Project Citizen" for grades 6 – 9. Both programs are developed in the Centre for Civic Education (USA) and implemented in Latvia within CIVITAS: International Civic Education Exchange Program.

As a positive factor for implementing civic education initiatives was commitment and support of school administration and good cooperation with local authorities. As an obstacle can be mentioned limited number of lessons and insufficient skills of teachers as well as lack of appropriate teaching materials.

### ***Educational content***

Civic education in direct educational process is a part of specific subjects and also is included in the curriculum for class lessons. There have been some regulations, passed by the ministry of education as well as space for options and variations. Depending on the position of school

administration and qualification of the teachers civic education has been viewed and implemented in broader or more limited understanding.

The first version of civics as a ninth-grade subject was created and included as a compulsory segment of the school curriculum in 1996 with one lesson per week. This subject included a wide range of topics starting from self-concept and family as a part of society to ethical questions and very basic ideas about market economics. It was a sort of “survival kit” for 15-year-old students who finished compulsory schooling and who would probably never continue their formal education, but who would definitely join society as citizens of a democratic country.

Some steps were taken toward including the basic ideas of social studies and civic education at the primary level as well. In 1997, the first version of guidelines for teaching primary-level social studies was created and published as a part of the *Guidelines for the Primary School Curriculum*. This was the document on which Barta school based their civic education efforts in grades 1 – 4.

In 2000 -2002 new standard of social studies was developed and given to schools for pilot testing. Four previously existing, separate subjects (ethics, introduction to economics, civics, and health education) were combined into one subject. The objective of social studies was to facilitate the readiness of a student for life activities in a modern society by:

- recognizing the value of health and life and the responsibility of a person and society for health and a healthy environment;
- carrying out ethical searches in the creation of a free and responsible personality;
- being able to think economically and to participate in economic life and activities; and
- understanding, analysing, and judging the socio-political processes taking place in the society and actively participating in them.

The new standards envisaged the necessity to focus on the development of a student’s value orientation and acquisition of social experience and life skills and provided the opportunity to achieve these goals.

Barta primary school participated in piloting activities and included new opportunities to strengthen civic education in their regular activities. Several teachers, including school principal, became trainers for other teachers. Special attention was devoted to the promoting experience, obtained within project “Social studies content and methods reform”, implemented by Soros Foundation- Latvia, and using Students Council as a democracy school.

### ***Educational process***

If we think about the biggest obstacles in the role of the schools in developing a democratic and tolerant society we have to refer not only to inadequacies in the content of social studies (or lack of understanding about specific content at all) in the first part of 90<sup>th</sup>, but also the traditional approach to teaching and learning in general (e.g., emphasis on the regurgitation of facts provided by the teacher or a text-book as opposed to critical and creative analysis and use of new information connecting knowledge with personal experiences and socio-political context). Traditionally lessons were teacher-dominated and statistical. Students in most cases could not develop critical and analytic thinking and evaluation skills, nor could they acquire experience in social action. The very expression “critical” was perceived traditionally and understood only as a process of deconstruction with no constructive proposals to follow.

Therefore one of the main goals for teachers in Barta primary school was to learn and use modern teaching techniques and democratic methods in order to demonstrate theoretical content in practise. At the beginning teachers identified as the biggest problems for students in grades



seven through nine in acquiring social studies skills the lack of knowledge to use different sources of information, lack of discussion skills, lack of independence, lack of public speaking skills, and lack of experience in working with groups.

The situation was such that teachers very often demanded these skills from students who were never taught them or without giving sufficient time to practice cooperation, discussion skills, or using different sources of information and learning experiences. Teachers admitted that they themselves seldom incorporated such teaching methods and learning experiences as fieldtrips to museums, exhibitions and different events out of school; work on independent projects and gathering information in libraries; thematic events organized by students themselves; using the Internet for gathering materials; watching and analysing video-materials; involvement in research about processes in the local community.

Purposeful policy of Barta primary school has changed the situation dramatically during last five years. The position of the school administration is such that the development of civic virtue and behavioural dispositions of a good citizen in a democracy is very essential. If students are to develop civic virtue, they must practice the behavioural dispositions or habits of the good citizen in a democracy. Participation in different project helped teachers to see and feel the importance of this element of practice and to develop it in them in order to extend it to their students and communities.

#### ***School organization***

Students' Council (Skolēnu līdzpārvalde – students' co-governance) was established in 1995. The main idea of the Students Council has been *cooperation* with administration and teachers, as well as community in order to identify problems, develop quality of the school environment, to promote values of democracy and practise civic participation skills. Students Council has always received substantial support from school principal. There is specially assigned teacher who works part-time as a consultant of Students Council.

Students have designed their own Cabinet of Ministers. Students have divided duties and responsibilities taking care of particular sectors of the school life. One can become a member of School Council through the process of democratic elections only. If there is some opportunity to represent school into some summer camp or other important event, students have process of application with the writing of letters of motivation etc. This is also great practise in order to obtain skills necessary for contemporary life in democracy and market economy.

With the support of school principal all class teachers have developed their individual plans for civic and moral education.

This school year Barta primary school participates in the project, sponsored by Phare "Participate and influence!" in the partnership with the school with Russian language of instruction from Liepaja – typical urban school. Project is aimed at promoting civic participation and social cohesion.

Parents and representatives of the local community are closely involved in the civic education activities carried out by Barta primary school. For example, students take care of elderly citizens, work in the local history museum, participate in the oral history project etc. This spring students in cooperation with the local authorities started a campaign against burning of dry grass what is very dangerous for the people and nature.

### *Findings and conclusions*

This is important to note that school plays important role in the development civic knowledge, skill and virtues of the young people. Civic education cannot occur in the particular lessons only. The whole school environment, relations among students, teachers, school administration, staff members as well as students families and community members provide real evidences for students about what has been valued and what is important in the “real life”.

If the school is active in the community it can inspire other people of different ages for active participation and promote knowledge necessary for modern life.

There are also some conclusions what goes beyond Barta primary school portrait and included experience, gained during four-year project on social studies and civic education in Latvia.

- Major changes in the particular field of education, for example, civic education or social studies education --including the development of standards, programs, curricula, and the restructuring of teachers' work--are more successful if they are combined with long term teacher training, including the formation of a positive attitude toward those changes.
- The team approach is essential in order to achieve sustainability and to develop further new ideas and practices. In our case, the involvement and commitment of the principal and /or other representative from the school administration was crucial. Their understanding and support will determine to a large extent whether or not their school will become democratic community, an open and active resource centre for other schools of the region, student teachers or any other visitors.
- Teachers must be encouraged and taught to participate in professional discussions about their work, including the challenges and successes as teachers develop the ability to define pedagogical problems, to analyse and reflect upon problems that occur in school practice, to seek solutions to the problems, and to realize that they can be successful problem solvers. In Latvia, many working teachers have not received sufficient training in acquiring these skills during their pre-service studies, and this is one of the most important tasks for in-service training.

It is important to have political decision makers with a clear vision about the place and role of civic education. It is also important to have high quality documents, including standards, programs, and curriculum materials. However, it is most important to have teachers who are capable and willing to educate future citizens, not only with words or in theory, but also by demonstrating in their everyday practice that they believe in democracy and can act as responsible and participatory citizens of a democratic country.

**Malta*****Carmela Sammut Primary School******By Lina Deguara M.Ed, Head of School******General Background*****6.**

Carmela Sammut Primary School has a long tradition in transmitting the culture of learning to the children of Mosta. Following the initial establishment of an educational institution in a privately owned house by the then Colonial Government of Malta back in 1840, the new Mosta Elementary School officially opened its doors in August 1898. The original plan of the school still encompasses the ground floor of the present school building, though three more storeys have been added at the back of the school since then. Over the years, like all the rest in Malta and Gozo and reflecting the signs of the times, the Mosta primary school passed through various reforms. However, since 1980 the school has established itself as an institution that focuses on Early Childhood Education, catering for the three to seven year-old age group. In 1999 the school changed its name to 'Carmela Sammut' – a locally renowned headmistress who led the school with great dedication for twenty-nine years.

With seven hundred and fifty children, the school's organisational set-up is made up of:

- i. A Kindergarten Annex which houses fourteen playrooms for three/four year-olds.
- ii. The main school comprising eighteen classes for five/seven year-olds.

Formal education starts at the age of five in a Year 1 class, progressing to Year 2 and Year 3 classes. At the end of this term the pupils automatically move on to the adjacent school, which caters for the higher Years. The school is provided with professionally trained teachers and ancillary staff. The school also has the services of two support teachers for Complementary education and a number of peripatetic teachers for specific specialised subjects such as Science, Art, P.E., Music, Drama, Personal and Social Education etc. A number of services are also offered by the Education Division to provide the necessary support for all pupils e.g. Guidance and Counselling; Welfare; School Psychological Services etc. The administrative staff or, as it is increasingly being called, the Senior Management Team (SMT) is made up of the head of school and four assistant heads, one delegated to run the Kindergarten Annexe. The head of school is expected to promote and further the all-round education of the pupils; to organise, manage and control efficiently and effectively the human, physical and financial resources of the school and to provide professional leadership in the implementation and development of the National Minimum Curriculum (NMC). The head of the school is also the Secretary/Treasurer of the School Council.

It is appropriate to point out that the development of this school has had the enormous demographic and social changes of Mosta as its context. From a small rural village in the central north of Malta, Mosta has grown into a large suburban settlement with around twenty thousand residents. The rapid growth, particularly in the last twenty years, has triggered multiple spin-off effects primarily the mushrooming of a large number of commercial outlets and the provision of a wide range of services for both the locals as well as for clients in the surrounding settlements. Adding to this and boasting of the world famous Dome that attracts thousands of tourists, Mosta has indeed established itself as the 'capital' of the North.

Against this backdrop Carmela Sammut Primary School has a tremendous role to play in serving the needs, aspirations and expectations of the much-changed people of Mosta.

### ***The Origins of Civic Education initiatives***

Civic Education (CE) initiatives at school owe their origin to various sources. Chief amongst these is the NMC whose distinctive feature is the great emphasis it lays “on the importance of skills, competencies, attitudes and values and not merely on Knowledge and Information” (NMC: 10). This inspires us all to have value education and the provision of educational experiences, which truly promote democratic practices, human rights knowledge and personal attitudes/traits such as honesty, tolerance, responsibility and trust on top of the school’s agenda. The NMC also spurs us all “to have a clear educational vision, clear educational goals and a concrete strategy regarding how these goals must be reached” (NMC: 85). Linking with this the NMC emphasises “the decisive role that all educators, schools, parents and the community are to play” in developing well-planned strategies and policies. School management developments have simultaneously shifted the onus on the school’s professional staff to formulate the School Development Plan (SDP).

In response to these new ideas and viewpoints the school embarked on a collaborative process incorporating mainly the staff and the parents to:

- i. Establish its Mission Statement
- ii. Establish its Aims and Objectives
- iii. Establish effective links with the Community particularly the Local Council, Social institutions and NGO’s
- iv. Seek support from educators and Agencies

All these forces pulled together have been, at one point or another, instrumental in initiating and consolidating a whole programme of CE to our children.

### ***Educational Content***

The philosophy of the school is expressed loud and clear in its Mission Statement:

#### *In partnership with the Community*

*The school commits itself*

To enable all pupils

To realise their full potential

By the acquisition of

Values, skills and knowledge

In a happy, peaceful, stimulating

And caring atmosphere

In whatever the school strives to do it places the individual learner before anything else. We strongly feel that CE, in its widest sense, is not made explicit solely by the taught curriculum, but more convincingly by being experienced through the ethos and management of the school, through its policies and through its approach towards pupils, staff, parents and visitors. Therefore emphasis is laid on pupils to develop a sense of worth of self and others; to be involved in democratic processes; to see that justice and fairness are around and to appreciate diversity with an open-minded approach to other cultures.

This belief is re-enforced even further by the aims and objectives of the school which, amongst others, have been defined thus:

#### ☛ To nurture a culture whereby children can develop a healthy self-image

- to treat children with understanding, respect and compassion
- to help children realise the merits of good behaviour, self-discipline and mutual respect

- to help children who are in difficulties as a result of their behaviour or someone else's behaviour
- to liaise and work effectively with parents and outside agencies.

☛ To enable pupils become autonomous persons

- to provide children with experiences that require critical and creative thinking e.g. discussion of current issues/news
- to help children develop a curious mind
- to establish and maintain the right democratic environment wherein children may express their concerns and make suggestions
- to reward innovative ideas and contributions
- to make children aware of their rights and duties as well as the rights of others
- to challenge traditional stereotypes and ensure equal gender opportunities.

☛ To make children aware of the environment and the need to conserve what is of value within it

- to stimulate children's interest in their local environment
- to develop their awareness of the variety of physical and human conditions on the earth's surface
- to help children develop an informed concern about the quality of the environment and the future of the human and animal habitat
- to enhance their sense of responsibility for the care of the earth and its people
- to make children aware of NGO's in their efforts to preserve a healthy environment

☛ To encourage children develop their spiritual and moral faculties

- to help children develop those beliefs and feelings that give meaning and purpose in life
- to promote such values as truthfulness, trustworthiness and fairness
- to instil in children a love for their neighbours
- to develop in children tolerant attitudes

It is evident that the school's commitment to empower children with a sound character, good habits and to be endowed with civic knowledge is very much in focus.

This vision as expressed by the Mission Statement and the school's goals is turned into reality by:

- i. emphasising the importance and value of each child, whatever his/her dispositions
- ii. promoting and enhancing children's self-esteem. Every effort is made and all opportunities that present themselves are capitalized upon so as to celebrate children's achievement, both at school and class levels
- iii. children are rewarded for diligently carrying out responsibilities given to them by the class teachers. School and class rules are established after consulting and by the active involvement of the children
- iv. pupils' work and achievements are highlighted in the school's publications, particularly the school magazine whose name was specifically chosen by the children themselves
- v. teachers are encouraged and supported to develop school-based curricula in CE
- vi. concern for the environment is aroused by transmitting sound and pro-environmental habits and values.

### ***Educational Processes***

As stated above CE at school is not a 'stand alone' subject, but it decisively takes the form of providing 'live' experiences of good practice. In addition, a series of processes have been set in motion with the specific aim to empower individuals and groups to participate in shaping proposals, in harnessing ideas and in decision taking.

Human dignity and a sense of self worth are at the very core of the school belief. Therefore each child is valued and is given the opportunity to participate and play a role in the school's everyday unfolding of events and activities. Moreover a process of inclusion for all, particularly for those who may be at risk to be emarginated, was also initiated. The available resources, whether at school or at the Education Division, are mobilised and harnessed to address the needs of these children. Therefore a sense of caring and trust has been instilled and, now, it permeates the whole school climate.

The Morning Assembly is particularly A-time for CE. The head of school strives every morning to share with children current events and/or commemorations, local and global, and to elicit from children what we could do or how we should behave to enhance living together in a just world. To the great joy of the children the head of school also involves individual pupils by calling them by their proper name. Their self-esteem and their morale gets sky-high. Besides a focal point for discussions, the Morning Assembly also gives children the opportunity to give suggestions and to make choices. The school rules were established in this manner. The same could be said for the name given to the school magazine. This was a truly democratic exercise whereby all pupils were invited and helped to think of possible names they would like to give to their magazine. Everyday the 'potential' names submitted by children were read in the morning assembly. A short list was finally drawn up and children were asked to make their preferences through a secret ballot. This was preceded by a very healthy discussion whereby children were helped to realise the importance of holding elections; of their duty to make an 'informed' choice and, ultimately, to accept the rule of the majority.

A pilot process for the 'Responsibilisation' of pupils was also commenced. Being much aware of the very young age of our pupils we were not sure if this could parallel pupils' abilities and/or disponibilities. Some of the elder pupils were elected by their peers, though not through a secret ballot, to take charge of specific tasks such as 'transport' monitors, 'green' fingers etc. A trial period of a term was given. The results are very encouraging. Even if very young, pupils can rise to the occasion and perform their duties with excellence. All staff agreed that this strategy of decentralising control should not only be established on a permanent basis but should be spread out to cover other areas.

CE is a key area for teachers in their daily toil of classroom management. Besides involving children in setting rules, in celebrating and rewarding pupils' achievement, and in transmitting an aura of trust, appreciation, equity and fairness amongst the pupils, the teacher is also seen to lead by example - "A load of books does not equal one good teacher" is a popular slogan which holds much water at Carmela Sammut! However, CE has also its share in the taught curriculum. It is taught under the umbrella of "Social Studies" in conjunction with Geography and History, though this may yet again been incorporated in the "Thematic" methodology so much advocated by the NMC. To consolidate CE, a process of professional interaction has been initiated whereby the teachers develop school-based curricula covering such topics as the Self; the Family; Personal Hygiene; Good Behaviour; the School; the Locality; Road Safety and People around us. To further support CE and to give exposure to pupils, they are taken on educational visits such as the Local Council; the Church; Old People's Homes; a Bakery; Heritage

appreciation etc. Moreover, extra curricular activities are organised at school whereby Public Service officers are invited to spend a day at school and children could share, discuss and appreciate their work. To this end members of the Police Force have provided us with a highly educational day. At the Kindergarten a Teddy Bear Hospital event was organised. The idea is to familiarise and to make doctors and hospitals user-friendly for these kids.

Events that would foster CE in general and social cohesion in particular are also focused upon on particular days. Some of these are: Peace and Non-Violence Day; Pet Day; Arbor Day; Commonwealth Day; Local Council Day; Environment Day etc. The visit the President of the Republic paid to the school was also a great event for us as it provided us with an excellent scenario to expose our children to the high civic personalities of the country. Moreover, 2004 being the European Year of Education through Sport, the school is celebrating the value of Sport by twinning with another Maltese school. Together, we have planned to hold joint activities so as to enhance solidarity, mutual trust and fair play.

The school has also embarked on a Comenius Partnership with other schools from all over Europe – fourteen countries in all. This has led to a healthy exchange of ideas and, subsequently, of programmes of work. Our children communicated with their contemporaries from other countries thus becoming aware, appreciative and understanding of cultural differences. This partnership reached its climax in March 2003 when a Co-ordinators' meeting was held in Malta. This was a truly educational encounter where all children worked heartily with our foreign counterparts looking on amazingly.

However, the school's major landmark has been in targeting the core curriculum, providing new teaching and learning perspectives which are truly 'child-centred'. By initiating a process of retraining in the 'Let Me Learn' approach, teachers are increasingly recognising the 'voice' of the learning patterns within each learner. Being proficient in these vital skills and insights teachers are therefore more likely to allow for the different learning styles and to adopt individual learning programmes. For us this is the most concrete form of democracy in our school.

Concern and responsibilities towards the environment are also on top of the school's agenda. As educators we strongly believe that it is very important to transmit to pupils sound pro-environmental habits and values. Therefore a process of awareness and responsabilising was initiated whereby pupils can perceive themselves as proactive agents and as contributors to a healthy environment. At school such a stance is not only achieved by raising environmental matters in the formal curriculum but, more crucially, by reflecting them in the school's institutional and pupils' daily practices. Therefore, healthy eating habits, the use of the Three R's and Waste Separation have long been embedded in the SDP.

They now stand out prominently as an established and coherent school policy. Moreover, the school is presently participating in a project commenced by Bird life Malta called 'Dinja Wahda'. This consists of a series of activities with varying levels of difficulty. If completed, in part or in full, the school scores points. The 'Adopt-a-Tree' campaign has also been launched with a resounding success. Such initiatives are helping children to become more aware of the environment and its challenges.

Participation and communication with parents is regarded as an important cornerstone for the democratic development of the school. Therefore various processes were initiated to address this:

- i. regular contact with parents through the issue of circulars; the publication of the school magazine twice annually and a quarterly newsletter. A

Question/Suggestion Box has also been set up for parents to make suggestions, comments, ask questions etc.

- ii. Reaching-Out Educational Programme for parents consisting of regular Encounters at school; Seminars that may focus on specific topics, both of a scholastic nature or concerning generic issues.
- iii. Open Days are organised when parents are invited to come to school and share hands-on learning experiences with their children.
- iv. Concerts are held, particularly around Christmas and on Celebration Day at the end of the year, when children perform in front of their parents.

This home-school link reached its climax on Election Day when 60% of the eligible voters turned up to democratically elect the School Council Members. This partnership has been forged more effectively by the inauguration, on October 14<sup>th</sup> 2003 the European Day of Parents and Schools, of 'Fantasy Library' – a joint project between the School, the Parents, and the Community.

More recently and as the first step to increase parent's influence in the SDP, a questionnaire, covering various aspects of school management and pupils' general achievement, was sent to parents. The 95% response rate is witnessing enough of the great attachment and respect parents have vis-à-vis the school. Furthermore, the feedback given by them was outstanding and certainly very crucial for future school developments.

More recently the school's sphere of influence has been widened to spill over the community of Mosta. This came about by the publication of a Calendar for 2004, which, besides the history of the school, it also featured the Chapels that are scattered all over the locality. Besides providing the illustrations, a brief history of each and its whereabouts are also highlighted. Thus we feel that the school is actively contributing towards the civic awareness of the people of Mosta by reminding them of the rich heritage that surrounds them.

### ***School Organisation***

The Aspects as discussed above show that the values of love, respect, inclusion, solidarity, democracy, commitment and responsibility are woven right into the heart of the school's educational process and organisational framework. Moreover, we strongly feel that once all the members of the school as an organisation, in spite of the differences that there may be, are keen to perform their tasks diligently and in harmonious relationships with colleagues, then this is in itself a very tangible example of social cohesion and citizenship.

However, the organisation of CE has been recently taken more formally and more incisively at a school level. Prior to our Audit Day, a perennial activity which focuses on the evaluation of the SDP and setting targets for the following year/s, teachers were asked to subscribe to a specific Focus Group in which they wished to contribute to enhance that particular area. The focus groups related to CE were:

*Democracy at School*

*Building Bridges: the School and the Community*

*Pastoral Care*

Around twelve teachers, kindergarten assistants and facilitators were assigned to each group. Following a guide sheet these group then discussed the specific areas. The terms of reference of each group was:



- to discuss current practice
- to identify strengths and weaknesses
- to offer suggestions
- to formulate an action plan

These plans will then form part of the SDP. It is also being envisaged that in subsequent SDP sessions later on in the year and next scholastic year, the same focus groups will continue to monitor and evaluate how 'their' particular area is faring. Thus CE is not only held in continuous focus, but it can also be said that, now, teachers 'own' CE and therefore feel empowered to work with greater satisfaction and, probably, with greater success. Furthermore, it is also being envisaged that these areas will equally be on the agenda of the SMT and a healthy inter-change of ideas and initiatives is bound to commence both individually and/or collectively with these Focus Groups.

### *School Environment*

The school serves a community that strongly identifies itself with the culture of learning. Even if much changed, the sociological context of the children remains more or less homogeneous with very few instances of racial differences. Parents are very supportive and contribute willingly to the demands of the school whether by material or human input. Their attendance for meetings, seminars, etc is impressive. Moreover, they set themselves very high expectations both for their children's achievement as well as for the school in general.

Being very much aware of and capitalizing on such a rich and compliant home background the school is continually gearing itself to review, update and/or create new initiatives in all areas concerning Early Childhood Education, no less in CE.

A factor, which is bearing some negative weight, is that, out of their zeal, parents may get too demanding and may trod onto the rights of others. As a reaction the school is doing its utmost to educate and make parents realise how important it is to strike a balance between their rights and duties, and the rights and duties of others. The dignity of all has to be respected.

The school neighbourhood is also very rich and offers a wide range of social sites with which the school is building very useful linkages, thus strengthening CE.

### *Monitoring CE initiatives*

Monitoring and evaluation of CE initiatives and activities is on going as it is regarded as an integral part of the educational process. 'Feed-back' and 'feed-forward' analysis is therefore the norm of the school.

The SMT and School Council hold regular meetings to evaluate the impact of these activities. The criteria for assessment are generally as follows:

- the educational content
- the benefits reaped by children and/or parents and/or community
- the behaviour and participation of children and/or parents
- to what extent the impact of these activities has influenced the professional development of the school

Less formal but, somehow, quite significant feedback, tacit or explicit, is also obtained from the staff, pupils, parents and from the community at large.

## **Malta**

### **Sir Arturo Mercieca Primary School**

**By Ms Antoinette Psaila, Head of School**

#### **General**

Sir Arturo Mercieca Primary School is a public school in Victoria, the main town of the island of Gozo. It is the oldest school in Gozo. The school building is rich in history. Originally the school was built in 1854 and started functioning as a school in 1856. The building was extended in 1893. Later a large hall was built on the first floor to serve as a public library. Up to a few decades ago the schoolyard was used to host the national Agrarian Exhibition held annually for the feast of *Santa Marija*. During World War II, the school building served as a hospital for the elderly and the pupils were shifted to a nearby house. A new school hall was inaugurated on June 7, 1985. The school was formerly referred to as *L-Iskola tal-Vajringa* (the School of Vajringa), taking its name after the street on which the school is located. On the 14 June 1994, the school was officially named after Sir Arturo Mercieca. Our school is proud to bear the name of this renowned and distinguished Gozitan judge.

The school is a blend of children, parents, teachers, ancillary staff and administrators, all working cooperatively to provide a safe and caring environment that is conducive to learning, for Kindergarten and elementary school children, as stated in the school's mission statement.

The student population currently standing at 358, is the biggest school on the island. We cater for Pre Kinder and Kinder children as well as primary school children from P.1 to P.6. Children in P.5 and P.6 are streamed according to abilities as reflected in examination results at the end of Ps.4 and 5. The school is diverse, reflecting both the social and multi cultural composition of the local community. This diversity provides our children with a unique and enriched educational experience.

The school has a very high profile with a strong tradition of academic excellence. Our children do very well at the end-of-year national examinations as well as in the prestigious Junior Lyceum Examinations. Both the percentage of passes and the grades obtained by our candidates are always very high. Many parents from outside Victoria try to have their children admitted into our school.

The school is committed to its mission statement – that is, it is committed to '*promote values, skills and knowledge necessary for individuals to become reflective, responsive and responsible citizens.*' To this end the school focuses strongly not only on cognitive domain, but also on the affective and psychomotor domains.

The school also has a very strong and high profile of school-parent partnership. The school strongly believes in parental involvement for two major reasons: Firstly because the degree of parental involvement in the education of their children determines children's holistic achievement and secondly, because parental involvement certainly accrues to the greater effectiveness of the educational mission of our school.

#### **Educational Content**

We, at Sir Arturo Mercieca Primary School, believe that order and discipline are vital to an effective, caring and orderly environment. We believe that everyone in the school community has a very important role in building such a healthy school environment. This philosophy underpins the school Mission Statement.

The school mission statement targets citizenship education. It requires teachers' and ancillary staff's cooperation to create a democratic school system. Teachers have ownership of the mission statement, being themselves its authors. However, the mission statement also requires parents' cooperation. Approved by the School Council, the mission statement was then gradually presented and explained to parents during meetings held especially for this purpose.

Regular meetings for parents on ways and strategies to improve school social behaviour are held throughout the year. These meetings are often addressed by school administrative members, teachers and external experts in this area. This way we can get parents and teachers working together on behaviour management at school, at home and in the community.

An action plan on positive school ethos was included in the School Development Planning for three consecutive years. Through this action plan, the school started an intensive programme that promotes a happy, safe and caring place as well as a friendly and welcoming climate. Programmes include activities that help children to know themselves - to discover who they are and how best to respect themselves. Programmes also include activities that help to instil in everyone a sense of responsibility towards oneself and others. The school believes that all these programmes help children to interact with others and to build strong relationships among themselves and between staff.

Children are encouraged to set their own classroom rules - rules that promote self-discipline, respect for self and others, tolerance of one's rights, empathy and cooperation between school and parents and among children themselves. Rules are generally of a preventative nature and give entitlement to reasonable hearing procedures and fair disciplinary action of misconduct. Both the school administration and class teachers value these practices. This gives children both ownership and empowerment and makes them responsible for the elements in the classroom and beyond. Children are given a lot of positive reinforcement and this motivates positive behaviour. However when conflicts arise, children are encouraged to solve conflicts peacefully among themselves.

Children are also taught how to be good winners and good losers and to be fair players in sports. Both the school football team and the school netball team annually participate in interschool leagues. Fair play and teamwork always come before winning. This attitude is also developed in school tasks and other activities. Appreciation for other people's work as well as cooperative learning are strong areas in our school.

Inclusion of children with special needs, as well as children from low socio-economic backgrounds is total. These children are loved and treated with great dignity by all. This is because the school strives to safeguard pupils' rights. These rights include the right to be treated with dignity and worth, the right to quality and inclusive education, the right to express opinions which do not infringe on the right of others and the right to freedom of religion. Staff, children and parents have the right to contribute to the educational process.

In all school activities, there is a strong focus on instilling in children the desire and ability to live as reflective, responsive and responsible citizens.

Pupils' responsibilities include punctuality and regular school attendance, commitment to schooling and adherence to school rules and regulations. Pupils are also responsible to promote

a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning. A pupil has no right to be disruptive in any activity within or outside the classroom.

Parents are expected to respect school rules and regulations and to discuss these rules with their child / children whenever the need arises. Parents are also expected to attend Parents' Days, Open Days and all parents' meetings.

### ***School Organisation***

Our school strongly believes that a school should be a place where everybody learns. To this end, our school identifies and creates learning opportunities for staff members – administration, teachers and ancillary – pupils and parents. In fact the whole school system strives to promote favourable conditions for learning. Teachers are encouraged to practise action research and to devote time to ethical issues. Teachers are also encouraged to stimulate children to think critically and to become autonomous learners. The school also focuses on managing the curriculum by looking inside and outside the world and linking the two together. The globalisation of the classroom was brought about through the Socrates-Comenius Project. Our partnership is with six other European countries namely Germany, England, Italy, Spain, Hungary and Poland. Our project entitled 'My Day ... Your Day' focused on children's leisure time in seven different countries. For the past four years the seven countries worked closely together on this project. As a school we believe that both teachers and children have gained educational value out of this project. It gave our teachers a lot of exposure to different practices in other countries. It also brought both teachers and children from the six countries together in a way that all could appreciate one's culture as well as others'. It has also mobilised parents' interest in the children leisure time after school.

Last scholastic year, our school hosted the Pan Commonwealth Conference on School Evaluation Best Practices. The conference was a joint programme by members of our staff and children from various age groups. Our children were the main protagonists they and gave lively presentations to our guests. Later visitors could also enjoy children's work pieces. It was encouraging to note that both staff members and children collaboratively worked together for a success story.

The school ethos enables participation in the decision making process. Opinions and suggestions from all stakeholders including children are welcomed. Decisions are then reached after serious discussion by all concerned. Of course the privilege of collective participation carries with it the obligation to shoulder the responsibilities that result from shared decisions. Initiatives from all stakeholders are also very appreciated and they are always supported.

Staff collegiality is very strong. Teachers help and support each other and also collaborate with colleagues in other schools whenever the need arises. This positive climate among teachers sends healthy messages to the student body. Consequently most pupils have collaborative working relations with others. This is something that the school is working towards since an examination-oriented system often creates unhealthy competitions among children and parents.

### ***Educational Process***

The teacher in the Primary School starts with the advantage of having children's parents giving major importance to the academic subjects – namely English, Maltese, Mathematics, Social Studies and Religion - even though a number of parents themselves are sadly lacking in competencies in these subjects competencies. However, over the past two decades, we have witnessed a mounting pressure upon our primary school teachers, children and parents, for

tangible improvements in the academic subjects. This is mainly due to the fact that at the end of the Primary Education, children sit for the Junior Lyceum examination. These highly competitive examinations determine whether children go to the prestigious schools of the Junior Lyceum or the low profiled Secondary Schools. The latter are perceived as schools for children who lack motivation and who do not have a positive attitude to schooling.

Pressure and efforts did not help to raise standards over the years. In fact, the results of a National survey on Literacy held five years ago, showed that our school scored below average. A strategic plan therefore had to be adopted to upgrade the profile and quality of language within our school. This meant that we needed a new vision to plan for our needs.

Where languages are concerned, we aim to develop skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, so that our pupils would be able to articulate thoughts clearly, coherently and fluently, through written and oral work. At our school we encourage children to love books and to take good care of 'their friends'. The school boasts of a school library, which houses over four thousand books, and fourteen class libraries with a total of over two thousand books. It is very encouraging to note that most of these books are on loan most of the time and we very rarely have a child fined for tearing a book.

The Creative Arts are given a lot of importance in the National Minimum Curriculum and therefore they form a compulsory part of every pupil's school experience that helps to develop a holistic education. After various discussions and consultations on these subjects, the school felt that the school aims and objectives of these subjects– those of pupil's enjoyment and creativity – should be extended. The new aims and objectives of the Creative Arts now include also a strong focus on language (speaking and listening), through drama, singing, movement and art.

The changes and development explicit in the Midweek Project has redefined the roles and responsibilities of the classroom teacher and the pupils. Both now need to articulate clearly processes and outcomes. Teachers have the main responsibilities of making time for planning, and to make assessments of the rehearsals and presentations.

The school is committed to give children valid experiences in performing the works of authors / composers, the works of peers and their own. Children learn to appreciate and value their public performances and exhibited works. Furthermore the idea of having an audience encourages children to manage time on task, to improve their skills and to be able to cater for needs necessary to improve on their rehearsals and 'public' performances. Children also acquire concepts, knowledge and attitude towards learning, towards themselves and towards others. They learn to practise cooperation and tolerance. Children acquire self-esteem and self-confidence. These in turn lead to children and teachers gaining empowerment. On the other hand, the audience learns to develop skills in listening and observing. It also gives them opportunities to assess performances and to trigger off new ideas for different versions. During the creative arts session, teachers can find out, better comprehend and empathise with children's deeper understandings and needs which might be veiled and simulated, for children very often 'do' what they know and what they 'are'.

The school believes that a strong focus on the creative arts is a valid way of educating for leisure. We already have children who have taken up specific areas of the creative arts as a hobby.

Furthermore, the results of the last National Survey on Literacy has shown that the school is on the right track with its on going practice of promoting literacy through the creative arts. The

school level in literacy has significantly improved and is above the average standard. The creative arts are therefore not only contributing to the psychomotor and affective domains but also to the cognitive domain, in areas such as verbalisation, richer vocabulary, higher language comprehension, higher intellectual competence and greater concentration. This is indeed very rewarding and encouraging.

### ***External School Environment***

Our school gives great importance to the relationships between the school and parents and the school and the local community. The main aims behind these is to raise the level of awareness of the school's programme through information programmes and to mobilise parents and community's support by drawing interested individuals into meaningful participation in school functions with the sole aim of giving our children their entitlement to quality education.

It is a fact that today's parents are becoming increasingly demanding and want to be more involved in the schooling process. Today, parents are more educated, more inquisitive about school programmes, more demanding of schoolteachers and administrators, and more ambitious for their children than they have ever been in the past. To this end, the school invests a lot of its time, energy and financial resources to establish clear lines of communication with both parents and community.

The bi-monthly school Newsletter strives to give valuable information about our school. With each edition, the reader is able to track the school's progress towards meeting the Curriculum's stated aims and standards. In addition the newsletter also provides information about the teaching staff, the calendar of events and class activities, along with other data that provide a complete picture of the make-up of our school.

The school also accepts invitations from community radio stations to participate in programmes on education. Here the school has great opportunities to pass on to the general public up-dated information about the school as well as accomplishments and services offered by the school. The potential audience of these community stations is impressive and therefore the school's slots on these programmes influence perceptions and attitudes of listeners.

The 'Junior News Pages' of our local newspapers are also an important source of projecting the school to the public, who is after all paying taxes to support us. School activities penned by teachers are always 'news' that make interesting reading. Moreover the little stories and poems supported by photos and drawings, contributed by children are always attention grabbers.

The school regularly participates in the cultural life of the local community and is a strong contributor in civic service functions. Every year on a December morning about sixty children from our school, walk the street of Victoria. Their aim is to collect money for a very good cause – The Community Chest Fund – a national voluntary institution that aids people in need. A group of our children collect money while another group dressed in Father / Mother Christmas costumes dances to the Sleigh Song. The school also participates in cultural activities both those organized on a national level and those organized on school level.

The school also involves itself with organisations that work in safeguarding the natural environment. We are actively involved with the Bird Life Society and Nature Trust, two NGO's working to promote in schools awareness on the importance of Bird Life and nature. Through these programmes children learn to observe, admire, love and protect the natural environment. At school we have placed a display board with children's 'work on the subject, a birds' table

where children monitor and feed birds. To this end field trips, discussions, audiovisual meeting, research and projects are organized by different classes. Experts in these areas are often invited to lead these presentations. The school's enthusiasm has also motivated us to join EkoSkola. The application is still being processed. However we are confident that a lot of good would come out of this once we have joined. EkoSkola is democracy at work. This would be most evident in the workings of a students' committee, (elected from the student body) since proposals and ideas need to come from students and tasks undertaken by them as well.

The School Council meets on a monthly basis throughout the scholastic year. Council agendas are designed to strengthen understanding and cooperation between school and home. The council provides the moral and financial support needed to upgrade, strengthen and create educational experiences to our students. The Council also upgrades the physical maintenance of the school premises out of its funds. This is greatly appreciated since the school building is very old and not designed to meet today's curricular demands. Consequently maintenance work needs to be on going. The school often taps parents' talents in various voluntary activities and regularly asks parents to donate their time to school functions. Parents' support and cooperation are almost indispensable to the effective operations of school functions. The Council makes valuable contributions to school improvement through identifying parents' problems and advising the school on how to handle these problems.

The school believes that there is mutual benefit from parents' involvement – parents become more familiar with the staff and the school's programmes, and are therefore more understanding, while pupils feel proud that their parents have an important role in the running of the school.

Our school like any other school has constraints. Ours are those of physical space resources and time. Financial resources are always very short, in the sense that the head of school very often would like to spend more on curricular related activities. The physical space too poses a problem since the school building is very old and does not meet the exigencies of today's schools. However the major constraint is that of time. Teachers are continually racing against time trying to maintain a balancing act with a crowded curriculum and extra curricular activities. On the other hand, the administration has the difficult task of making the time to visit classes, monitor and evaluate planning and preparation so as to give the necessary support. It also takes time to take review of successes and needs of the whole school and to collate records of achievements – children's work, publishing a newsletter, taking photographs.

Generally speaking constraints do at times seem too big to handle and it is only our strong determination that gives us the courage to go on. However the school strongly believes that the bigger the challenges, the bigger is our satisfaction in a job well done.



## Netherlands

### *De La Reyschool, The Hague*

#### *General*

The De La Reyschool is a public primary school in The Hague with 184 pupils. The school is in an old part of the city, a 'problem' district earmarked for renewal. 76% of the pupils come from underprivileged families; 60% are immigrant pupils with learning difficulties. The school has a very active parents' committee with ten members.

The school has developed from a neighbourhood school to a city school: parents from the whole city try to get their children admitted. With the slogan 'Work and play: a laboratory for life', the school wishes to convey the message that education should not only prepare children to work and function as members of society, but also teach them how to spend their free time fruitfully. To this end, the school devotes attention not only to cognitive subjects, but also to drama, all kinds of play, literature and visual arts education.

#### *Educational content*

The De La Reyschool works on the principle that citizenship education should be more than a series of individual projects. It must be embedded structurally in the school curriculum. With this in mind, there must be a central, guiding method that runs through the school as a whole and through all the classes. The method should not only transfer knowledge, but also teach pupils skills that will help them later to function and work as good citizens in society. For this, the school uses an intercultural method with a global orientation known as *De Grote Reis* (The Great Journey), which was partly devised for this purpose.

*De Grote Reis* was an outcome of the 'Four Cities Project', a joint project of the schools support departments in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. The method crosscuts individual subjects, runs through the school as a whole and is aimed at all classes. The pupils are actively involved in themes like 'people and livelihood' and 'people and power'.

In addition, the cognitive subjects are subordinated to 'worlds of experience'. The school has embedded the teaching in special facilities like a play tower, a laboratory, a museum, a theatre and a language class. Pupils, parents and teachers bear joint responsibility for these facilities. The oldest children in the school 'run' the museum, parents supervise creative activities and a teacher (the 'parent coordinator') is responsible for recruiting and instructing parents.

#### *Educational process*

The school attaches great importance to such matters as learning how to interact with each other. It provides the space and opportunity for pupils to take their own initiative and makes that an integral part of life in the school community. Children learn to make their own choices and to take responsibility for them. In addition, the school offers a wide range of cultural activities, such as education through art and scientific development. The educational concept is broad: a combination of learning and playing, with attention to culture and art, social interaction between children and their social development.

The method in *De Grote Reis* also imposes demands on the teacher, in the form of a new educational-didactic approach. For example, pupils must use each other as a source of information, and there is a wide choice of options for increasing their knowledge out of school.

### *School organization*

Generally speaking the school makes teachers responsible for the personal development of pupils and contact with the parents. In addition to the parent coordinator, the school has a coordinator for music tuition and another for the information and communications technology (ICT) project. The school is also thinking of appointing a neighbourhood coordinator. Teachers receive time to perform these duties, in accordance with the school's integrated personnel policy. To teach children to work together, they are grouped in mixed-age classes. In this way, the younger children can learn from the older ones.

### *External school environment*

The public primary schools in The Hague work together in 'transversal clusters', which criss-cross the city. In this way, inner city and suburban schools work together in clusters of around 2,500 pupils. The welfare work is, however, neighbourhood-based. These two different forms of organization hamper optimal embedding of the schools in the neighbourhood and coordination of welfare activities in the community. Moreover, contact with Catholic and Protestant schools is diminishing. Activities relating to the extended school day are also organized within the neighbourhood. In addition to the official clusters, individual schools take the initiative to form new networks in the neighbourhood. Schools with different religious or ethical outlooks take part in these neighbourhood networks.

The De La Reyschool sees a coordinated neighbourhood network, in which schools and welfare bodies take part, as a critical success factor for citizenship education. The school thinks it would be advisable to appoint a coordinator for all neighbourhood-related matters. It also took part in a project in which pupils from underprivileged families who were in danger of dropping out were assigned a mentor, who then supervised them in a community centre. To design a project like this effectively, a number of conditions have to be fulfilled. Pupils need supervision outside rather than during school hours. Mentors have to take part in the project for a long time and there has to be close coordination with parents to avoid disagreements about how the child is being brought up.

Parents play an important role. The De La Reyschool sees the fact that the school is open to the outside world as a critical factor in making it the centre of the neighbourhood and a 'serving hatch' for education. To make sure that parents do not become a dead end, the school has appointed a teacher as parent coordinator for half a day a week to establish and maintain contact with them. The coordinator is responsible for recruiting parents for various activities. This can also be done through the parents' council and the school newsletter, but experience has shown that a personal approach is more successful. The coordinator supports the parents whenever necessary. The school is observing, however, social trends that conflict with close involvement by parents. For example, in many families both parents work, which leaves them little time to devote to school activities.

There is a special area in the school (the 'kwekplek' or 'chat corner') where parents can drink coffee and talk, and they are involved in producing the school newspaper. They also share the ICT facilities with the children, as a form of parent education. Lastly, the school is taking part in a European project in which children and parents chart their local area and exchange the information with a school in Denmark.

In addition, the school organizes out-of-school projects, both as part of the curriculum and in the context of the extended school day. The local community plays a role in these activities, which

gives the school a firm footing in the neighbourhood. An example is after-school music projects under the supervision of music teachers.

### *Summary*

- The school has a vision of the contribution that it can make to the citizenship education of its pupils and it puts that vision into practice in the educational content, the educational process, the school organization and the place of the school in the local environment.
- Citizenship education is embedded structurally in the curriculum. This takes the form of a central method that runs through the school as a whole, is aimed at all classes and crosscuts individual subjects. In addition, the school devotes specific attention to citizenship education in subjects that lend themselves for it (e.g. drama).
- The school sees citizenship education not only as the transfer of knowledge, but more as the teaching of skills.
- The school is embedded in the neighbourhood by way of a coordinated neighbourhood network in which schools participate along with welfare bodies.
- The school is open to parent participation, more than just through a parents' committee. Parents can contribute to the teaching at the school and the school provides a form of 'parent education'.
- The school combines teaching at school with out-of-school learning, for example in the context of the extended school day.
- Each teacher projects the school's vision of citizenship and feels responsible for the education provided throughout the school, rather than just for his/her own class.
- Each teacher is trained to teach citizenship skills in his/her lessons.
- Within the integrated personnel policy, each teacher is responsible for the personal development of the pupils and the contact with parents and neighbourhood organizations. An example is the appointment of a colleague as parent or neighbourhood coordinator.
- In addition to teachers, pupils and parents are also responsible for certain activities and facilities in the school.

## Netherlands

### *The Openbare Basisschool Overvecht, Utrecht*

#### *General*

The Openbare Basisschool Overvecht (Overvecht Public Primary School) has a forceful reform policy, aimed at expanding the opportunities of all children. The school has five sites in the Overvecht district, with about 600 children in 30 classes. More than 95% of the children come from immigrant families, with about 80% classified as immigrant pupils with learning difficulties. Because of the high degree of mobility in the neighbourhood, many children do not pass through the whole school. The school has chosen for a single educational concept, within which the five sites can lay the emphasis, as they consider appropriate.

The school assigns a central role in its curriculum to teaching children to be good citizens. The teaching rests on two pillars: school-based teaching and training pupils to be good members of society. Both pillars are reflected in the school's mission.

#### *Educational content*

In the 1999/2000 school year, the school introduced an integrated programme known as *De Vreedzame School* (the Peaceful School). The programme aims to make the school a democratic community, in which pupils are responsible for the climate in the school and the classroom, and where conflicts are resolved by means other than violence. The programme combines a series of lessons for 3 to 12-year-olds with other activities, including teacher training, class visits by internal and external supervisors, the setting up of a steering group, training peer mediators (pupils who help other pupils), organizing workshops for parents, and training organizations in the local environment. The school has also appointed a teacher as pupil mentor for two days a week to support pupils and help them understand their problems.

*De Vreedzame School* was developed in response to the increase in violence and conflict in the school and on the streets of the neighbourhood, which was a threat not only to staff and pupils, but also the school's educational performance. Through the programme, the school wishes to become a safe place, by effecting a cultural and behavioural change. The school aims to become a community where everyone feels involved and interacts with each other in a positive way. The basic principle is conflict solution: children and teachers learn how to solve conflicts peacefully. Cooperation and pupil responsibility is key, as is parental support.

#### *Educational process*

*De Vreedzame School* is a cyclical programme: the same subjects recur each year, but on a higher level. It is a combination of lessons, with implicit attention for citizenship skills throughout the entire school community. It is more than just conflict management; it aims to foster the community awareness in the class, neighbourhood, city, etc. It is important that each child feels that he or she matters. The school has also included 'service learning' in the curriculum, in which children develop skills that benefit the community. Examples are cleaning and helping at crèches.

Many teachers think that teaching time is being lost because of the many activities. But time is actually being gained because the educational climate is better, for example, because there are fewer arguments to be settled.

### **School organization**

The Openbare Basisschool Overvecht only has mixed-age classes. Because of the integrated approach of *De Vreedzame School*, there is no need for a procedure to combat bullying. Every year, the school conducts a safety analysis, during which the children are interviewed. The annual 'safety thermometer' indicates that this approach works: at four of the five sites, pupils say that they feel safer than before at school, in the classroom, in the playground and on the way to and from school. Through inspections, the school examines how the reforms work in practice and what improvements are necessary. Lastly, there are a lot of festivities and gatherings involving the whole school to enhance the feeling of belonging. Older children are each made responsible for one of the younger children.

### **External school environment**

The Openbare Basisschool Overvecht attaches great importance to the relationship between the school, the neighbourhood and the parents. Cooperation aims to increase the school's effectiveness and 'yield'. The school takes part in a neighbourhood network. Local schools have set up a project called *De Vreedzame Wijk* (the Peaceful Neighbourhood) to instruct the staff of welfare bodies in the philosophy of *De Vreedzame School*. In this way, all the professionals with whom the pupils come into contact have the same approach. In addition, the school is taking part in a youth services network for Overvecht-Noord and Overvecht-Zuid, in which schools, school doctors, the police, social workers, the youth services department, welfare bodies and district nurses discuss 'problem pupils'. It is also the aim to have pre-school facilities at all five sites by 2006.

Parent participation receives high priority. The teachers are trained to communicate effectively with parents and parents take part in workshops on the theme of *De Vreedzame School*. Many activities are organized in the context of the extended school day.

### **Summary**

- The school creates the necessary preconditions (a 'safe' school) for the teaching to result in more success for the pupils.
- The school has a vision of citizenship education which is reflected in the curriculum on a cyclical basis, and which the whole team projects and teaches by example. Citizenship education is more than just a subject.
- The school realizes that effecting behavioural change is a long-term process and demands much time and energy from all involved. A combination of activities is crucial to success, including lessons, teacher training, keeping parents informed, etc.
- The school works together with neighbourhood organizations and instructs them in its philosophy.
- The teachers give lessons in a different way: more interactively and expecting pupils to take their own responsibilities.
- Parents play an important role in supporting their children and are instructed in how to do so.
- Pupils are given a high degree of responsibility and are called to account for their actions.

## *Netherlands*

### *De Hoeksteen, Rotterdam*

#### *General*

De Hoeksteen in Rotterdam is an ecumenical primary school (Protestant and Catholic) with about 400 pupils of 36 nationalities, divided into 19 classes. The school has expanded enormously in a short time, changing in the process from a 'white' to a 'black' school. It is located in a 'problem' neighbourhood: 88% of pupils come from underprivileged families and 71% are classified as immigrant pupils with learning difficulties. Many teachers concern themselves with supporting pupils who are in danger of dropping out.

For many years, De Hoeksteen was confronted with worsening behavioural problems among pupils and with teachers who did not know how to deal with them. Six years ago the school started to develop a social skills programme, because the unfavourable climate at the school was proving an obstacle to teaching and learning. The programme, which aimed at changing the behavioural patterns of pupils, teachers and parents, has proved very successful. The school climate has changed dramatically, as a result of changes in behaviour at all levels. Pupils work systematically on learning social skills. Teachers also receive training in this area, peer supervision groups have been set up and parents have been more closely involved. The school rules have also been modified.

#### *Educational content*

De Hoeksteen is working systematically on developing social skills and the behavioural changes that entails. Social skills are linked to subjects like 'listening and speaking' and 'working and playing together'. These themes run through all classes and through the entire school year, with a new cycle starting at the beginning of each year. For a period of several weeks the entire school works on a certain theme at different levels. The theme also receives attention in parts of the school outside the classroom. There are interim and final evaluations to identify areas for improvement. The evaluations focus on pupils who are in danger of dropping out in certain skill areas.

#### *Educational process*

The basic principles are that children acquire the social skills to stand up for themselves in an acceptable way and that teachers acquire the skills to help children in this process. The school distinguishes between teaching social skills as part of the curriculum and applying what has been learned in a variety of situations. Each class devotes two lessons a week to social skills, which always consist of an activity and a group discussion. In addition, attention is devoted to times at which a pupil should employ certain social skills.

There is a task group on teachers' skills to help achieve the aims of the social skills policy plan (*Sociale competentie op maat* – Tailor-made social skills). The task group creates opportunities for teachers to increase their abilities to work systematically on pupils' social skills. It has drawn up an inventory of what this involves for teachers, which includes holding conversations, motivating pupils, effecting behavioural changes, and more regular skills such as class organization. The group has also explored ways in which teachers can expand their skills in these areas, for example by self-assessment or a professionalization plan. All of these aspects are embedded in the school's personnel policy.

### ***School organization***

De Hoeksteen has a task group on rules and agreements (*Regels en Afspraken*). The group has drawn up a comprehensive handbook of school rules and coordinated their implementation. The book contains all the rules needed for the school to function, including rules governing behaviour in the playground and corridors, general rules for classroom behaviour and options for setting specific rules for in the classroom. The rules are not intended only for pupils, but also for parents and teachers.

### ***External school environment***

One of the spearheads at De Hoeksteen is maintaining and improving cooperation between the parents and the school. Parents are permitted to sit in on lessons. A task group has drawn up a handbook on parent involvement. This is a first step towards closer involvement by parents in the education of their children, which can also be expanded to other areas of the school's activities.

### ***Summary***

- The school sees a good climate as a precondition for successful teaching and learning.
- The school embeds social skills structurally in the curriculum of the whole school community. In addition to implicit attention to social skills, it is considered important to also make them part of the specific teaching programme. To this end, the school makes concrete written agreements, which can be assessed and evaluated.
- The school works on changing not only the behaviour of pupils, but also that of the teachers. Parents are also involved in this process.
- The school has various types of rules of conduct, and agreements on their implementation, enforcement and evaluation are given high priority.
- Teachers at all levels of the school are concerned with the behavioural problems of the pupils.

## Secondary education

### *Austria*

#### *The UNESCO General Secondary School of BÜRS: A School for Everybody*

*By Bernhard Neyer*

##### Vital statistics and geographical environment

Bürs is a village of 3000 inhabitants, at the edge of Bludenz (12,000 inhabitants), a town in Vorarlberg, the western-most state of Austria.

The UNESCO-Hauptschule (general secondary school) of Bürs has eight forms, altogether 160 pupils and 20 teachers. Apart from children from the Czech Republic, Norway and Venezuela, our school is attended by six Bosnians, three Serbs, two Croats and 22 Turks. Because of the special commitment towards integrating special-needs children in a standard school, the school was admitted as a UNESCO school in 1996. The school model, described in greater detail below, is used by all forms and in many fields meets the focal points of UNESCO schools. Anchoring social learning in the so-called “standard teaching”, the weekly classroom assembly and special projects combine into a harmonised overall concept. Collaboration with the university (Prof. Dr. Michael Schratz) commenced in 2000, by an in-depth evaluation of the school.

##### The autonomous school model and its contents

###### *Open teaching and open learning*

###### *Learning from each other*

The idea of learning from each other is accorded priority, with due regard to enabling each individual child to be promoted and encouraged by his/her personal abilities. These two key elements constituted a challenge to us as teachers to modify our teaching method. In doing so, we increasingly thought along the lines of pupil-centred teaching. By taking a leaf out of the teachings of reformers Maria Montessori, Celestin Freinet and Peter Peterson, we created an open learning climate.

###### *Classroom assembly*

The classroom assembly (modelled along Freinet’s “Réunion coopérative”) is another crucial pillar of our model. Chaired by a pupil, the class assembles for one hour a week to discuss suggestions, wishes and complaints. This assembly is an occasion to practise basic democratic techniques, an important principle of UNESCO schools.

###### *Project-oriented learning*

Specific technical as well as interdisciplinary projects are used by the pupils to achieve co-operative learning, which should be given special value not just in integration classes (i.e. classes that include handicapped children). All the humanities and natural science subjects are especially suitable for project-oriented learning. Each child can work on a subject, either stipulated or chosen by the child, in line with his/her interests and abilities.

Projects that cut across classes and subjects are carried out on a regular basis. Every second year, the entire school is involved in a single topic for presentation to the public.

In the first form, the school organises an events week where the children can experience life outdoors and in the community.



For the second form, a winter sports week is organised in our immediate surrounding, the Bürserberg/Brand ski resort.

In the third form, a ten-day trip to the United Kingdom is organised, to underline the importance of learning a foreign language.

In the fourth form, our pupils meet up with the democratic institutions of Austria and the historic sites of Vienna, the Federal capital, in the form of a trip to Vienna.

#### *Subject-based teaching*

##### *Internal differentiation*

During the subject-based lecture hours, teachers are free to design their teaching in line with their own concepts. Yet even here we find the impact that the changing role of the teacher has. Rarely do teachers use frontal teaching for the whole hour. It should be noted that for German and foreign language classes as subject-based teaching, critical emphasis is placed on the proper pronunciation and on communication. Depending on the content of open subjects, such “closed-structured” classes are used preferably to strengthen the curriculum-based knowledge and to develop topics that are not covered by “open-structured” work.

##### *UNESCO school*

In 1996, the Bürs school became a member of the group of UNESCO schools in Austria. UNESCO schools are model schools, as shown by their special pedagogical foundation.

Their principles are: a new concept of learning, an integrative style of education, and the hands-on practice of democracy. In our school, we focus specifically on democracy, a new school climate and increasing internationalisation by a greater emphasis on foreign languages (more English lessons and French as a second foreign language), as well as more contacts to international schools. By participating in UNESCO school projects (such as the “World Cultural Heritage”, the “Year of Older People”), we foster global thinking.

##### *Small team of teachers*

Each class has a core team of three teachers assigned to it who are qualified to teach German, Mathematics and English and who can teach a multiple number of subjects. This cuts down on the number of reference persons for children and, as an additional advantage, greatly simplifies the organisation of project-focused teaching and curriculum planning (including the double lessons required for “open-structured” work. Weekly, the class teams discuss their progress, prepare the lectures jointly with the team responsible for the parallel class (the same age group) and obtain the requisite materials.

##### *Alternative assessment – the task book*

With individualised teaching, project work and the key issue of individual abilities, we were faced with the problem of how to assess each child’s performance. The teaching method that focuses on a learning objective suggested to us a task book, to be supplemented by a direct performance model (portfolio). The subject is formulated by way of objectives, and the child is allowed to catch up at any time with any objective not achieved.

##### *Quality assurance – evaluation*

A scientific assessment accompanied the integration class and its parallel class between 1995 and 1999, with reports prepared after one year and four years respectively. As the work in the “pioneering team” was always considered to be something special (both inside the school and externally), the school wished to include the entire school in an evaluation. Accordingly, Dr.

Michael Schratz and a group of students of the Pedagogical Institute prepared a comprehensive study in December 1999, to look into the school's quality level and options for improvement. Upon studying the findings, the teaching staff identified and prioritised the problem areas. This is to be followed by a conference to discuss these problems, which in turn is intended to make the current model more sophisticated.

**Concluding remark:** We do not have a complete model. We want to jointly develop a path that will make our school a place to feel good in, where personal performance is encouraged, cultural techniques are called for, individual independence and autonomy are supported and social behaviour is practised.

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**Special interest: Quality assurance - evaluation**

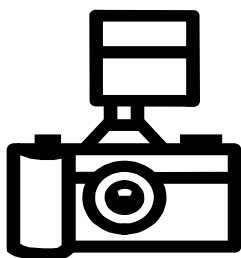
Following an initial approach to Univ. Prof. Dr. Michael Schratz in 1998 that concerned the idea of evaluating our school, this evaluation was performed in the winter semester of 1999/2000. Upon a preliminary discussion with the school's headmistress, she was invited to a lecture at Innsbruck University, where she was given an opportunity to present the school and where several key issues were identified:

- How can the school monitor pupils (and their performance after leaving school);
- Which are the qualities of the school?
- What is the room for improvement?

The first issue could not be discussed within the scope of university lectures because it would have required a longer period of observation, which was, however, precluded by the distance between school and university. Accordingly, the emphasis was placed on analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Specifically, the following methods were prepared:

- photo shooting evaluation (1<sup>st</sup> form classes),
- monitoring the open-structured work based on monitoring sheets (4<sup>th</sup> form classes),
- questionnaires to be filled in by the pupils (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> form classes),
- classroom interviews (head pupils, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> form classes),
- testing the general knowledge of pupils (tests in 4<sup>th</sup> form classes),
- interviews of teachers,
- interviews of parents,
- short interviews of inhabitants of Bürs.

**Below, a few excerpts are given from the study that totals 47 pages**



**Photoshooting evaluation in the 1<sup>st</sup> form classes**

Guided by a teacher, the pupils carried out a photo shooting evaluation, a method that serves to visualise the school and classroom climate.

*The results were immediately presented to the school. It was found that 1<sup>st</sup> form pupils had already learned to constructively treat problems. The teachers*

were very skilful in anchoring the discussion of subjects (including delicate ones) highlighted by the presentation.

Here a documentary is presented, made by Prof. Schratz in English with German subtitles, which describes the method in detail and which excellently demonstrates the communicative skills of our pupils.

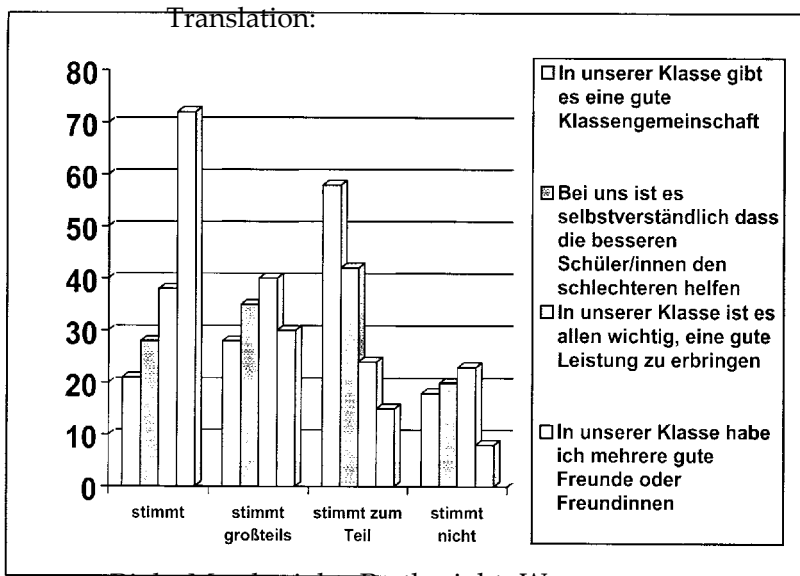


### **Monitoring open-structured work**

The monitoring covered the degree of independence, pleasure in learning and the social form chosen for open-structured work.

It was observed that the pupils have a choice of individual learning or, if they so choose, not doing anything at all during open-structured class time. The majority of pupils appeared to put an intensive effort into their tasks and to have pleasure in working that way. Nevertheless, not all the pupils appeared to be challenged by open-structured work to put more efforts into learning. Some pupils are highly motivated by individual activation, whereas others are more amenable to structured work.





Our class forms a well-functioning community.

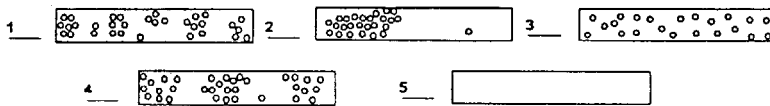
In our class it is clear that the more advanced pupils help those trailing behind.

In our class we all feel it important to perform well.

In our class I have several best friends.

Right-Mostly right -Partly right -Wrong

Welches Bild entspricht am ehesten Deiner Klasse? / Which picture best reflects the situation in your class?



Most pupils chose picture no. 1

**The teachers**

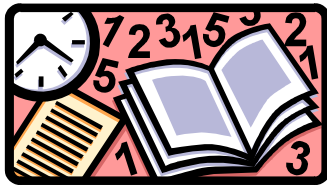
Your teachers' teaching methods	Right	Mostly right	Partly right	Wrong
• I believe the teachers are able to properly assess my abilities	29+22+19 = 70	13+12+13 = 38	4+1+7 = 12	3+2+0 = 5
• They make efforts to praise or admonish us for our performance and conduct, and try not to prefer anybody	31+18+14 = 63	13+15+12 = 40	1+1+9 = 11	4+3+4 = 11
• When I have trouble learning I can count on the teacher to help and understand	29+28+20 = 77	15+5+13 = 33	4+2+6 = 12	1+2+0 = 3
• The teachers manage to keep the peace and order necessary for study	25+19+5 = 69	14+12+13 = 39	7+4+13 = 24	3+2+8 = 13

## Classroom interviews



*The core question asked during the classroom interviews (two pupils per class) was: What do the pupils think of the teaching system used at this school?*

It was found that the pupils have highly different ideas of good teaching. As to teaching arrangements, pupils mostly expressed a positive opinion. With regard to the relations between teachers and pupils, opinions varied. Most pupils have a highly positive and sound attitude towards learning.



### Checking the general knowledge of pupils

*(Comparison with the Hauptschule Sulz)*

*A knowledge test was performed in the 4th form in geography, biology, mathematics, English and German. For the purposes of comparison, the tests were also made at the Hauptschule Sulz for all three performance groups.*

Results: average marks on a scale of 1 (highest) –5 (lowest) broken down by subjects.

Subject	Bürs	Sulz
Biology	3.58	3.8
Geography	3.38	3.6
English	3.3	3.1
Mathematics	2.4	2.5
German	3.7	3.6

### Interviews of teachers

*How do the teachers perceive their work at the Hauptschule Bürs?*



In summary, the study finds that the overwhelming majority of teachers is positive towards the pilot scheme and its results and recommends its implementation at other schools. The criticism of weaknesses is based on the fact that neither the spatial nor the organisational prerequisites are optimised and that deficits in the teachers' occupational education and further training need to be covered solely by the teachers' own initiative.



### Interviews of parents

*How do the parents perceive work at the Hauptschule Bürs?*

Parents feel that this type of school is suitable in particular for “slower” children, and as a rule they welcome the school scheme. It could be said that those parents who are open to novelty and are not affected by the partly negative opinion are more likely to send their children to the Hauptschule Bürs. A decisive factor also appears to

be the positive experience obtained from older children who currently attend or once attended the school.



### Short interviews of inhabitants of Bürs

*Opinions on the Hauptschule Bürs*

The spectrum of information on the Hauptschule Bürs and its specific type of organisation depends very much on the relationship between interviewee and the school. It ranges from total ignorance to knowledge of integration and full information on the open-structured work and task books. Opinions vary greatly, both on the positive and negative

side. Statements cover a large ground, from “They are only playing” to “That’s a good school”.

### What did the school evaluation yield?

Already when the idea of an evaluation was first conceived and even more during preparation and upon the presentation of its results, a feeling of great fear emanated from the teachers. They are unused to handling an evaluation that concerns themselves. Most of teachers, when reading the highly detailed study, saw only the negative sections, and their attention was pointed only to those fields that concerned them most individually (their own class, own subject, etc.). Their first response was typically an attempt to justify themselves, doubt the objectivity of results and criticise the way they were obtained.

It was only after prolonged thinking of and thoroughly discussing the study with colleagues and the headmistress that teachers were able to see the overall good result and provide the foundation for future work. The findings were considered in a pedagogical conference, which led to the overall concept being improved in some aspects.

Thanks to the strong team spirit and teamwork between teachers at our school, it is possible to discuss the quality and quickly implement small corrections of the model on an ongoing basis. The overall concept corresponds to that of a modern school that focuses on the child’s knowledge competence, social competence and self-competence as the objective of school work.

*Denmark*

*Youth Town*

*From the website:* [http://www.inet-spf.dk/U\\_by/2003-4/En-version/shortversion.htm](http://www.inet-spf.dk/U_by/2003-4/En-version/shortversion.htm)

[Rahmen7]

## **WHAT IS YOUTH TOWN?**

Youth Town is a training centre built up and run by business- and non-governmental organisations plus the Ministry of Education. Youth Town consists of a number of houses in which specially trained staff from the different organizations teach pupils from 8<sup>th</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

45 municipalities around Copenhagen have co-operative agreements with Youth Town, and every year about 25.000 pupils attend the courses, which first of all are orientated towards society. The courses are carried out in one day, with one class in one house. Many of the courses can be made available all over Denmark. Schools simply apply to the various organizations involved in the innovative work in Youth Town.

These decentralised activities mean that the courses are used by about 100.000 pupils each year. During the last few years both teachers and students from upper secondary and teacher training colleges have also begun to use the courses.

Youth Town is a place of change: development, implementation, revision, and innovation frequently occur – but there is also a handful of permanent courses which remain very popular year after year. They cover subjects which are always relevant to young people in 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In Youth Town they are presented in short, concise and activating courses.



## A Short Description of the Courses

In cooperation with the Danish Bankers Association: **ECONOMY AND EDUCATION** - the financial situation of the young seen in perspective with their future education. How can a good educational plan be combined with a sensible economic plan?

**FAMILY ECONOMY** - A new version of the course - based on the storyline method - introduced from August 2002. The course consists of a role play based on discussions about the monthly and yearly domestic budget.

**THE ECONOMIC ADVISER'S GAME** - with advice to the Danish government on the national economy. The mysterious words from newspapers and television are explained. The course is offered on different levels for primary and higher education.

In cooperation with Post Denmark: **A DAY AT THE POST OFFICE** - a large public service company that we all use. Here the students act both as employees and customers. Special versions are available for schools of commerce, vocational centres, disabled groups and language-schools for refugees.

## Courses - with a compulsory teacher course

Other courses are offered as part of a longer teaching programme. Materials, ideas for implementation of school projects and date and content of student courses are covered on introductory, compulsory teacher courses:

In cooperation with I/S Vestforbrændingen (A Refuse Incineration Unit): **ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY** and **WASTE, ENVIRONMENT AND DEMOCRACY** are the titles of the two new courses that are offered from August 2003 in the Environment and Energy House of Youth Town. The first course is focused on natural science while the second course also includes elements of social science. A visit to the local refuse incineration unit *I/S Vestforbrændingen* is included in both courses.

In cooperation with Danish Cooperative Stores:

**MONEY AT STAKE** - is the title of the course in the new Consumer House. The course has been developed and tried out in 2002-03. The young run from 4 to 6 different firms that all sell typical consumer goods for young people. From the summer of 2003 the course is offered on all five week days.

In cooperation with the Information and Welfare Services of the Danish Armed Forces: **THE PEACE AND CONFLICT GAME** - deals with both national and international security policy. An exciting and involving game about crisis management from which young people, adults and any personnel group will benefit. After the terrorist attack on New York, September 11th 2001 the demand on the course has increased significantly.

In cooperation with five Danish NGOs: Ibis, Danish Association for International Cooperation, Dan Aid, The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Save the children Alliance and with economical support from Danida (The Danish Foreign Ministry), we have established **THE GLOBAL ROOM** - a physical framework and exhibition for human rights courses and the activities mentioned below:

In cooperation with Ibis and Danida: **VALUES IN DEVELOPMENT? - Cultural meetings and tourism**. By using tourism as an example the students are confronted with the fact that choices made in one part of the world have consequences for people elsewhere. The world is united.

[Rahmen8]

*Estonia**Aravete Gymnasium, Järva County**By Anne Roos, teacher of Civics**General information*

There are 349 students in the Aravete Gymnasium. 159 of them are studying in the forms I - VI (7 forms altogether), 116 in the forms VII - IX (5 forms altogether) and 74 in the forms X - XII (3 forms altogether). There are 27 teachers at the school. The management of the school consists of the principal, vice principal and of two student leisure time leaders. At least once per study period (quarter - the school year from September to June is divided in Aravete into 4 quarters) there are teachers pedagogical general meetings. The same- or closely related subjects teachers' councils are meeting more often. Once a week there is an information hour for all the staff working at school. There is also one class-teachers lesson per week (the first lesson on each Wednesday) at each form considered by the teachers to be necessary. There are commission of teachers' professional improvement and school council working at the school. Parents' and local administration representatives belong to both of them together with the school management and teachers' representatives. At least once per school year there is the general meeting of parents at school and at least twice per school year the different forms' parents meetings.

Aravete is a small town in Central - Estonia. The distance to the capital city Tallinn is 80 kilometres and the distance to the Järva county centre Paide 35 kilometres. During the Soviet period the area was specialized for producing agricultural products. After the restoring of independence the economical profile has tremendously changed, causing high level of unemployment. Entrepreneurship is not very successfully developed and bid number of the local people go to work to Tallinn (80 km), Paide (35 km) or Tapa (20 km).

The school is situated in the nice park and the building itself is comparatively new. There are blocks for primary school forms, basic school forms and gymnasium school forms. The subjects are taught in different classrooms (for math, literature, languages, physics etc.). There are facilities for sports - a gym and stadium and also a canteen.

Civics teaching initiative.

Since 2002/2003 study-year as an enriching part of Civics teaching there has been implemented a project method - Project "Citizen" in the 9-th grades. The leader of the Project is the teacher of Civics, who has passed the special preparation during in-service training at the Jaan Tõnisson Institute (JTI).

The Project "Citizen" is practiced by the 9-th graders. It enables to activate each student by offering them through active personal participation a chance to determine a problem in our local life, to design the ways for solving the problem and finally to try to solve it. Local administration representatives from the community like the youth worker, social worker, also members of the local government elected council, parents, fellow students and teachers are involved into the project.

The project implementation has been supported by JTI, school management and by everybody, who has been involved or in touch with the project activities. Different people have for instance given interviews, filled the questionnaires, made suggestions and proposals.

The obstacle for the project has been the attitude of some passive people around saying: "I personally can not change anything in our life. Trying to change such kind of people's mind and attitudes hasn't always been successful."

### ***Educational content***

There have been two projects dealt by the ninth graders: "How to hire a Youth leader - a needful person for school?" and "How to create a Youth Centre to Aravete village?". Those concrete topics were carried out in the result of students' brainstorming in Civics lessons. Dealing with those selected problems has followed the special instructional material produced by JTI, which guides and aims the particular project work method in general.

During the project students learn to pay attention and identify the problems in surrounding of them life and society. They learn to design realistic solutions for the problems. They develop important communication skills while doing the project like to say out ones opinion, to communicate with the officials in written for, by phone and via e-mail, to listen to the others and to take into account different points of view. They develop computer skills while searching the information from Internet and working with different computer programs.

The Project "Citizen" correlates very well with the Civics Syllabus in the National Curriculum for instance learning about the concepts and practices of the Syllabus topics "A person and the society" and "Democratic society" etc. The project work achievement of each student will be accessed with one mark consisting of the evaluation of everybody's participation in the project outcome final presentation, the classmates opinion about everybody's input, participant's self-assessment and teachers assessment.

### ***Learning process***

It is very important while studying civics, that the learner understands the environment and society around him. Therefore the active teaching methods are most suitable ones for granting it. Discussion, group-work, observation, analysing, field trips, project work are the preferred methods for teaching Civics. For studying about the theories the textbook is used. IT and video equipment also contribute for teaching Civics.

At Aravete Gymnasium Civics is in the weekly study plan of the IX-th and XII-grades as an independent. In both forms there are 70 lessons per year altogether. Civics teaching is integrated with History, Mother Tongue, Foreign Languages, Economics, IT Studies and State Defence subjects. There is a special week of different activities at school dedicated to the Day of Citizen (State Holiday in Estonia, November 26). During this week there are excursions and lectures arranged for the students. For instance the Parliament Members, local administration representatives and local entrepreneurs are asked to visit the school and meet the students this day. Aravete students have also participated in the wider campaigns like "Let Us Clean Up the Highways!", collected waist paper etc. It is followed at school, that the students from those forms, where the relationships between the classmates are friendly and warm are braver to speak out their opinions and the Civics lessons are more interesting.

There are three bigger student unions at the Aravete Gymnasium: students' self-government, organization Estonia 4-H and the Scouts organization. Each of those organizations offers a good opportunity to the students to develop their group-relationships, organizational skills, responsibility, problem solving skills etc. All the mentioned student collectives turn due to their interesting activities the attention of the others to themselves.

**Conclusion**

1. Project "Citizen" unites the theories and practices of Civics teaching and teaches the students to become independent and responsible citizens.
2. The school offers to the students a variety of chances to participate in the different organizations accordingly to their interests.
3. The school cooperates with different institutions, organizations and people for teaching the students to communicate with the society around them.
4. The school plays the role of a leader in designing the students' active behaviour towards the life.

## *Estonia*

### *Saku Gymnasium*

*By Mai Kahru, Teacher of Civics*

#### *General information*

Saku Gymnasium is located near to the Estonian capital city Tallinn in Saku village. The school operates in two separate buildings, which were built in 2001. The classrooms are rather big, in good condition and rich of light. Surroundings of the school are well maintained and aesthetical. Saku has rather well developed infrastructure and busy entrepreneurship.

All the three school steps divided into 34 forms (forms I - IV, V - IX and X - XII) with 992 pupils are studying in those blocks together. The school management consists of four people: the principal, two vice-principals and students' leisure time organizer. There are 65 teachers at the school. The functioning of the elected school board supports cooperation with the parents. The school board and teachers' council's meetings during the study-year are regular. School belongs to Saku local government.

#### Civics teaching initiative.

Teaching Civics takes place accordingly to the National Curriculum. Initiatives for teaching Civics are directly influenced by the opportunities of the local self-government, by the activities of the non-governmental organizations and also by the state structures openness to be involved into the teaching. But nevertheless - teacher is that person, who brings all those availabilities together and includes into the educational process. Local government has sometimes supported Civics teaching by paying for instance for the bus taking the students to the excursion.

The biggest obstacle for taking the students to the out-of-school activities like to the excursions or meetings is finding the compromise with the other subjects teachers, as the weekly schedule of lessons is strict and precisely fixed. Taking students out of school means loss of some other lessons and needs to be compensated.

#### *Educational content*

The Civics teacher, who is following the national Curriculum, formulates the aims and goals for teaching Civics. The aim of teaching Civics in Saku Gymnasium is to introduce to the students the life of the society not only by teaching to them the content of textbooks, but by making their participation through the study trips and meetings at the places concrete and live. Taking the students quite often out of the classroom makes them acquainted with the variety of "real life" and teaches them to be active and independent decision makers. The excursions and activities out of the school are very characteristic for Saku Gymnasium Civics teaching making that school to be special.

The main stress has been put on the designing of the students' attitudes and behaviours; if needed on changing of stereotypes. Tolerance and democratic values are for instance key concepts in Civics teaching for adopting by the students. In the lower grades the attention is slightly more on the "knowledge giving", but on the gymnasium level the main goal is to teach the students to participate and be active.

For the assessment of students' achievement different methods are used. Most often the teacher gives a mark on the 5-point scale for some final result. Extraordinarily good results may be evaluated by expressing to the student a special gratitude on behalf of school management either in oral or written form.

### *Learning process*

Civics is an independent subject in the lesson plan. The subject has good opportunities for integration with History, Mother Tongue and Literature, but also with Music, Arts, Geography and even Science. Mentioned above excursions, meetings and study visits are regular. The students usually are taken to the Parliament, Court, prison, church, police department etc., where they meet the representatives of those professions. Each year a research on social issues are conducted. The researches "Is life possible in Saku County?" (about poverty and unemployment) and "School violence in Saku Gymnasium" have been the most recent. The Project "Citizen" has also been implemented.

The group work is a preferred method while teaching Civics. The best success will be granted if the students in the form behave friendly and cooperatively towards each other. Friendly atmosphere makes the study-trips and following discussions and debates to be easy and enriching.

The students self government is at school active, representing the students' interest on the school level very well. The elections to the self-government are a very good school for democracy for the students. The cooperation and partnership of school with Tallinn City Court, Commission of Justice of the Supreme Court, Saku police, Saku local government administration and many other institutions is close and also giving to the students a chance to learn about democracy.

The teachers have opportunity to participate in the in-service trainings. The Jaan Tõnisson Institute Civic Education Centre is one of the providers; there are study days and courses also at the universities. The teacher's professionalism depends mainly from the teacher himself, as there are choices to be used.

### *School environment*

Active teaching methods are propagated and supported at school more widely. Excursions and study visits are written by the teachers into their annual teaching plans, what makes them unavoidable. The attitude of local authorities and institutions for participating in the learning process is supportive. Also the school administration is supportive towards the Civics teacher's needs.

The students' home situation is obviously an influencing Civics teaching factor. Often the student comes to the lesson with particular prejudices and attitudes towards what is going on in the society. Sometimes those attitudes are supportive, but quite often also vice versa.

The computer usage is widespread. Most of the needful information for Civics learning is gathered from the Internet.

### *Monitoring and assessment*

All the Civics initiatives are monitored and assessed by the teacher. Some bigger initiatives (like project works) are assessed and monitored also by the school administration or even a quest from outside.

Assessment criteria depend on the content and goal of the concrete achievement, but they have to be in accordance with the national assessment principles. It is obvious, that teacher can not give a mark to student after each meting with some quest, but teacher collects general observations about the students participation, which will finally be formed into a concrete 5-

scale mark for instance for the level of participation. What is every time required is students' evaluation about the usefulness of the concrete event and to the self-assessment during the event. Often the mark depends on the student's concrete participation and input to what was done. Together with the teacher's opinion the fellow students opinion is taken into account.



## **Finland**

### **THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG IN HELSINKI campaign**

**By Leena Nousiainen, Project Planner, Helsinki Education Department**

The Voice of the Young in Helsinki campaign is a joint project of the Helsinki Education Department and the Helsinki City Youth Department in 2000-2006.

The vision is that *children and young people will feel that Helsinki is a city where they can be heard and make a difference in matters important to them. By 2006, all Helsinki schools and youth centres will be using practices that promote active, democratic participation by children and young people.*

The aim of the campaign is to help children and young people to grow up into socially active members of society. This means establishing democratic operating models and practices in the communities where children and young people live, and allowing them a voice in adult social decision-making. True democracy and growth into democracy cannot be distinguished from one another.

The vision is best implemented in three participation arenas:

1. School
2. Local youth work
3. The city as a whole

These three arenas are the City of Helsinki's answer to the debate on youth councils.

#### **1. SCHOOL AS A PARTICIPATION ARENA**

School as a participation arena is the most important and extensive sub-project in the Voice of the Young in Helsinki campaign. In 2004, 87 schools in Helsinki's northeastern and southeastern districts, i.e. some 30,000 children and young people, are involved in the project. As of the beginning of 2005, the campaign will expand to cover the whole city of Helsinki, which means that as many as 35,000 children and young people will be taking part.

Participation is based on classroom work, in other words each school class sets up their own Future Workshop where students discuss problems and ideas related to the school environment and vote on them. Finally, each class selects its own proposal and presents it to the new 'student board'.

The new student board has 1-2 representatives from each class. These representatives are 'negotiators' representing the views of their class at board meetings. The board discusses any proposals made by the classes, sets up working groups to further develop the projects, and finally selects the school project to be presented at a general Voice of the Young meeting chaired by the Lord Mayor at City Hall.

The Helsinki Education Department's unit for real estate earmarked EUR 420,000 in its 2004 budget for carrying out suggestions made by children and young people for improving their school environment. The suggestions this year included swings, climbing equipment, toilet repairs, social corners for school corridors, goals for football pitches, skateboarding ramps, etc.

Student bodies play an important role in a democratic operating culture. They develop students' readiness to represent their own groups and learn to cooperate by negotiating.

Functions of student bodies:

1. To create a functional student board for the school.
2. To create prerequisites allowing members of the student board to become active players and future decision-makers.
3. To develop the class's communal operating culture and support ways in which students can take part in discussions related to common concerns.
4. To strengthen the school as a community.

In the view of the Voice of the Young in Helsinki campaign, becoming an active citizen requires an active childhood and youth. The will and skill to manage common concerns is part of a person's social capital, in which one key skill is being able to act in a group, to express an argument, to negotiate and to make compromises. These skills are learnt in practice in the student bodies.

## **2. REGIONAL YOUTH WORK AS A PARTICIPATION ARENA**

Youth centres help to implement children's and young people's grass-roots democracy. They develop their own in-house democracy and implement projects related to the physical environment of the area or young people's leisure time or cultural pursuits jointly with the young people and in co-operation with student bodies and local youth organizations.

All young people involved in the operations of youth centres should be able to feel that the centres are places where they can get their voices heard and can pursue their aims vis-à-vis leisure time and social participation. For young persons to be able to participate they must have sufficient information on the issue at hand and the social aptitude required for decision-making. In addition, they must feel an inner need to participate and to commit themselves to decision-making. What is most important of all: participation is not possible without power that can be exercised.

The challenge for youth workers is to create an operating culture for youth centres that activates the young. This requires a fully conscious and comprehensive approach to work and a vision of democracy as a motivating and participatory process. Youth centres will also be developing responsible new duties for young people, training assistant youth workers, and implementing activities planned together. In addition, the young should be able to exert influence on action plans, intoxicant abuse strategies and budgets of youth centres, for instance.

Examples of co-projects with children and young people:

- Renovation and interior design projects at youth centres: Young people plan and implement the whole project jointly with the centre's youth workers and a Voice of the Young worker.
- Green area and shopping centre repair projects: Young people take part in co-planning projects jointly with the City's Green Area Division and planning department workers.
- Advancement and launch of young people's green zone and skateboarding site projects together with various administrative bodies.
- Participatory projects based on young people's own ideas and initiatives: e.g. Malmi youth café.

## **4. THE WHOLE CITY AS A PARTICIPATION ARENA**

### **Open Forums**

The aim of Open Forums is:

- To learn to discuss social issues with peer groups and decision-makers.
- To create a positive picture/experience of managing common concerns and young people's opportunities to make a difference in their own affairs.
- To strengthen processes that promote social participation in schools and youth centres.
- To get to know city officials and councillors.

The Open Forums project is aimed at older students at upper comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools, polytechnics and youth centres. The themes of the Forums are always related to some topical issue of relevance to the young. In 2002, the theme was 'Me, an opinion former?', that is, 'Let's save representational democracy'. In autumn 2003, the subject in the Open Forums will be the attitude of young people to intoxicants and what worries them about the growing use of various drugs. The theme of the afternoon panel is a "powwow" where City decision-makers and young people discuss the subject of alcohol.

It is important for children and young people to feel proud of their own school, living environment and city, and that they are playing a part in building a good life for all local residents.

## **Hungary**

### ***The Alternative Secondary School of Economics (Alternatív Közgazdasági Gimnázium - AKG)***

***By Orsolya Szendrey, based on a case study by Mihály Kandó<sup>1</sup>***

#### ***General information on the school***

website: <http://www.akg.hu/>

School type: 6-year secondary school

School roll: Approximately 400 students, grades 7-12

Age range: 12-18

#### ***The educational principles and the organisational structure of the school***

The Alternative Secondary School of Economics was founded in 1988 as a 4-year secondary school. It was the first foundation school in Hungary, and also the first school with “alternative” pedagogical program.

The most important basic principle of the school is the idea that ‘a child is not preparing for life, but is living it’. Therefore the specific goal of its founders was to create an institution that provide educational alternatives for its students, which correspond with their natural abilities and personal motivations, as well as their social and cultural backgrounds through the experience of living their daily lives. The development of the program is strongly connected to the educational reforms of schools at the time of the political, economical and social transition in the 1990’s. The pedagogical approach implemented at the institution contrasted the dominant principles and practices of the educational system in Hungary under the socialist regime before the political transition in 1989 (heavy emphasis on sciences, acquisition of material content and theoretical knowledge contrary to developing skills, traditional frontal approach to teaching, strict division with regards to the role of teachers and students).

The AKG was established by an independent teachers’ workshop, and the educators who founded and organized the school aimed to break from this tradition and to develop an educational program which put the individual student at the centre of the educational activities in a free, individual-oriented setting, with a specific focus on meeting the demands of students and strengthening personal contact and co-operation between students and their teachers. On the other hand the basic educational principles of the school emphasized that the school takes responsibility for socialising its students, preparing them for community and social life, and providing them with knowledge, developing their skills and setting an example of values that the teachers uphold.

During 1988-1996 the school operated as an experimental foundation school in co-operation with the Ministry of Culture and Education. As it was impossible to establish non-state schools at that time, it was an acceptable solution, which ensured complete autonomy to the students, teachers, parents and the supporting businesses of the school. The new education laws in 1995 opened the way for the implementation of the original concept of the school to become a 6-year secondary school and to apply the original pedagogical principles in a more coherent structure. Unwilling to leave independence at the mercy of political changes, the founding members of the school

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<sup>1</sup> The school portrait is based on a Hungarian case study ‘Implementing Cross-curricular Themes’ by Mihály Kandó, the Educational Program for the Alternative Secondary School of Economics, interviews with social study teachers of the school, program descriptions, and written evaluations of students.

decided in favour of a foundation status the following year, which resulted in AKG becoming a legally independent organizational entity.

AKG is a free school in that it has rejected traditional instruments of institutional regulation i.e. house rules, systems of punishment and reward. These have been replaced with the free flow of information and the freedom of choice, tailored to the personalities, personal needs and interests of the individual students. Direct and personal contact between students and teachers in a family-like atmosphere supports the transition of students from adolescence to adulthood and the nature of freedom enjoyed by students in the school changes in accordance with the different stages of the students' life in the school. Therefore the proportion of free decisions made by students depends on their age, and on upper-intermediate level individual students begins to take on additional rights and responsibilities as free citizens of the school (sovereignty, the right to enter into agreements, the role in the community and participation in its affairs). In order to maintain close contact, communication, feedback and co-operation in the course of daily teaching work, a personal atmosphere and wide range of choices at the same time, the AKG developed the following organizational units and activities:

- Micro-schools: Each separate grade within the school consists of approximately 50-60 students and a faculty of 6 educators (usually responsible for teaching their own specialized area of study), who remain as one unit for the entire duration of the 6-year training course. As such, these communal entities provide an opportunity to run training programs that suit the individual interests and progress of the students and allow teachers to create and maintain an ongoing personal relationship and effective co-operation with their students.

- Patrons: Fulfilling the role of "parent" in the school context, each of the 6 teachers on a micro-school faculty also act as patrons chosen by smaller groups of 10-12 pupils during their first year to guide and represent them throughout their time in the school. The pedagogical techniques adapted by the patrons are meant to assist students in getting to know the world around them, facilitating the development of values and norms conducive to co-operative relationships. Patrons must devote time at least once a week to students individually and also together as a group. These weekly sessions serve to inform students about school issues and upcoming tasks, but also present an opportunity for extended discussion.

- Epochs: Basic subjects on the lower-intermediate level (grades 7-10) are taught in certain subject "blocks", which consist of "epochs" - 85-minute and 60-minute lessons held over a period of approximately 3 weeks (history, natural sciences, mathematics, literature, arts) – concentrating on the in-depth study of one particular subject. Topics covered in epochs may include material from several subject blocks in a project format, designed to explore a given theme from as many aspects as possible utilizing a wide range of interactive learning techniques.

- Theme weeks: Similar to epochs in that they provide an opportunity to deal with a particular theme over an extended period of time, theme weeks frequently involve a complex series of tasks conducted in the form of field-work outside of the classroom. Implemented on 4 occasions a year, such projects offer a variety of circumstances in which students can make use of the skills they have acquired, and generally demand an interdisciplinary approach from both students and teachers.

### *The origins of CE initiatives*

The educators of the school have created the content of the social studies-history curriculum, which combines two closely related fields: history studies and social subject, i.e. civic education. Their main goal was to assist students in becoming familiar with their society and its roots, to

present up-to-date knowledge, and to develop skills that can help students in personalizing their own historical thinking process. This alternative approach towards teaching history and social sciences has been supported by both students and their parents, however in practice several questions, dilemmas and risks have evolved.

The transition to the 6-year structure in 1996 meant that students at the lower level began to enter the school at a younger age (12 as opposed to 14), and this necessitated a change in content so that training could be tailored to meet their needs. While the emphasis on skills and methodology remained, the revised lesson framework separated history and social studies.

Major obstacles in the field of teaching CE at the AKG according to Mihály Kandó<sup>2</sup>

*AKG in its present form continues to represent an approach radically different from the norm in current Hungarian education. At the same time, the school must follow the requirements of national curricula while providing an alternative approach based on its own subject criteria and pedagogical principles. The curriculum and organizational structure leave considerable room to do so, but keeping a coherent balance in practice depends to a great extent on the skills, knowledge and personal judgement of the educators involved in addition to the material and pedagogical resources available to them. In addition, social studies as a subject within the framework of national curricula is interpreted in a variety of ways on the local level.*

The education of social studies in practice is influenced by several factors:

- The outside world: Hungarian society still demands a high degree of theory-based, factual knowledge from its students as a standard of achievement, and this is also reflected in the fact that parents, students and institutions of higher education require tangible evidence of this knowledge. The emphasis on skills development in the classroom is often undermined by the need to provide the students with the amount of knowledge they need to successfully meet the requirements of both final exams and university entrance. Consequently, history and other related compulsory subjects, particularly on the upper-intermediate level, cease to act as vehicle for examining current issues because there is not enough time to cover the required material content.
- The school: Because of their autonomous nature, micro-schools have a tendency to become too isolated from one another. Despite having significant freedom to modify their programs in accordance with their specific needs, they are not able to appropriately transmit their pertinent experiences to the entire faculty in the interest of maintaining consistency. The result is a variety of different approaches in social studies courses, which may work well within the context of a given micro-school, but cannot be effectively adapted to others. Even though social studies textbooks for the lower-intermediate level define specific themes, there is still no general consensus among faculty members regarding uniform implementation, and this only serves to increase inconsistencies in terms of approach. Sufficient comprehensive documentation of theme weeks and other projects for the benefit of colleagues in other micro-schools is also sporadic at best.
- Teachers: A further problem is the fact that adequate teacher-training in the area of alternative pedagogy is still lacking, which often means that teachers must gain experience with unfamiliar, improvisational techniques on a trial-by-fire basis. Add to this the fact that many educators in the current system also either grew up and/or worked in a

<sup>2</sup> Mihály Kandó is an English teacher holding 'Circlespeak' course on Rights and Responsibility in the AKG. Mr Kandó has evaluated the teaching process of cross-curricular social studies at the AKG in his case-study.

traditional school environment. The teachers face different interpretations regarding social studies as a subject and they approach the concept of assessment differently. There is also the issue of time: maintaining a student-centred approach requires a great deal of energy and does not always leave enough hours in the workday to share experiences in an effort to assist each other.

- **Students:** Given that social studies courses in the basic phase of training at AKG often deal with difficult issues that require considerable discussion, students also face dilemmas in terms of how to regard their participation as well as the interaction it requires. It is imperative that the teacher be accepted as a partner, and this is frequently a long and delicate process. Indeed, social studies from this aspect is not something that can be considered a “traditional” subject, and so pupils sometimes have difficulty understanding that an honest exchange of opinions, drawing on their own experiences and knowledge, also requires work in order to be effective. They tend to view discussion as a form of leisure, making constant preparation and improvisation on the part of the teacher essential to the process.

In light of the above, it has been proposed that the number of social studies lessons be increased in both phases of training along with the introduction of more theme weeks. It would seem, however, that before anything is done, the faculty must reach a consensus on exactly what the subject of social studies comprises and take steps to adjust both short and long-term strategies accordingly, with a specific focus on how these are to be implemented on a uniform, practical level that can be adapted to each micro-school. Another important question that has yet to be addressed is the issue of who is most qualified to teach the subject. If social studies on the lower-intermediate level are to be the task of patrons, then the development of a comprehensive training program for patrons entering the school seems a logical step.

### ***Educational content***

Social studies has always played a prominent role in the pedagogical and educational program of the school as significant emphasis has been put on the pupils’ development of thinking in terms of society, the analysis of people, lifestyle, social structure, values, mentality and issues of everyday life. Furthermore, this approach has become the filter through which a number of subjects within the curriculum are taught, and has been considered as a central element in the basic organizational structures and activities of the school.

The content of training materials - an overwhelming majority of which have been developed by members of the faculty - is compatible with the standards set by the current national curriculum, although the nature of individual lessons is largely determined by the requirements of the given subject, the age of the pupils involved, and their personal motivations and skills. Training is personality-oriented and focuses primarily on developing the skills of individual students, with a heavy emphasis placed on cooperative-interactive methods of study. The dominant element in the teaching of different subjects is the personal development of the pupils themselves, knowledge of material content is considered secondary.

The following aims are defined for social studies at the AKG:

- to develop behaviour based on a humanist system of values
- to form a higher degree of empathy, tolerance, self-respect and self-critique as they grow to become active adult citizens in their community.

This demands an extensive knowledge of social values past and present as well as the ability to perceive connections between social, economic, political and historical phenomena in light of their own personal experience and that they become familiar with other people and cultures.

Another, equally important goal is to teach social studies for the satisfaction of curiosity, to provide further knowledge that will satisfy the existing interest of students in social issues.

Social studies at AKG represents a complex discipline that appears as a set of concrete subjects and closely related themes within the lesson framework, in various learning techniques used in the classroom to acquire knowledge of other subjects (cross-curricular themes), and in the form of the hidden curriculum behind the daily activities and interaction that comprise life in the school community as a whole (extra-curricular activities). The overall methodological approach in the teaching of all subjects incorporates the development of social skills.

The aim is to assist students acquire the following skills on a deeper level, which extend far beyond the requirements of the curriculum:

- Drawing conclusions, making basic generalization based on concrete social events;
- Understanding and ranking the causes behind social/historical events, distinguishing between significant and insignificant social phases;
- Understanding broader historical connections, processes, abstract concepts; developing personal connections, thinking in terms of socio-economic and political systems;
- Understanding the reasons behind social phenomena, neutralizing defective personal reflexes – prejudice, over-simplification;
- Knowledge and understanding of complex concepts regarding historical change and development; understanding and presenting connections;
- The ability to understand and feel empathy regarding a given historical period and culture; recognizing anachronisms, maintaining caution when comparing different periods of history, empathy towards the thinking typical of certain periods;
- The development of interest and in-depth analysis;
- Orientation regarding the present political and economic circumstances in Hungary, Europe and the world; civil rights, responsibilities; active citizenship;
- Realistic national identity, East Central European identity – knowledge of neighbouring peoples – European identity – free of bias – understanding of non-European cultures;
- Interpreting connections regarding human and environmental circumstances in various periods of history, including the present;
- The development of open and coherent historical thought – preparing for life as active citizens

### *Educational process*

The training program divides activities in two progressive phases designed to correspond with the needs of students at different age levels. The basic phase (lower-intermediate, grades 7-10) is a period of general study characterized by a practical, problem-solving approach to learning. Activities focus on the acquisition of knowledge through personal experience and lessons tend to stress group work, role-play and interactive discussion as well as some independent study. Students on the lower-intermediate level study history in 4 lessons/week within the epoch format, supplemented by two 45-minute social studies lessons.

The concepts of lower-intermediate social studies courses under the title Study of Co-existence (community, social norms, ourselves and our environment, values, customs, appropriate behaviour, cooperation and competition, personal, legal and human rights etc.) reflect the development of the above-mentioned skills. The teaching materials designed for basic social studies training clearly define the specific themes mentioned above, but teachers often find that related issues arise spontaneously and are forced to tailor lessons/activities on an ad hoc basis.



The approach taken in the history/social studies classroom is that teachers tend to begin by examining individual cases, personalities and localities to progressively reach a point where generalizations can be made based on the analysis of specific conditions, circumstances and their consequences. The social study program also tends to supplement theory-based studies with as much manual, physical and practical activity as possible.

The second phase (upper-intermediate, grades 11-12) concentrates on alternative, often specialized courses of study. Training here is goal-oriented and offers a broader range of choices. Students are encouraged to develop their own unique schedules according to their needs and interests, with a stronger emphasis on independent study. History lessons continue on the upper-intermediate level in the same number of hours - but no longer in epochs – with 2-3 lessons/week in elective courses related to social sciences (economics, ethnology, political science, psychology, media studies etc.).

Among elective courses lessons are available, which are specifically designed to promote the conscious use of social skills in combination with a thematic approach:

Rights and Responsibility is among the specialized, elective courses for 17-18 year old students in the last two years of study at AKG, the basic principle being a widespread interpretation of human rights in the form of small-group verbal dialogue aimed at finding common ground between conflicting viewpoints. The fundamental difference here is that discourse is conducted using the English language, and so “Circle speak” is advertised as an opportunity for students to discuss current social issues that interest them in a context that will enable them to refine their language skills. Some of the topics that have appeared over the last few years include: national identity/nationalism/neo-fascism, spirituality/religion/Islam, sexuality/homophobia, and mass/mass media/advertising.

Written evaluations at the end of each semester by subject teachers as well as patrons are a central component in the assessment of students’ progress. However “social studies” skills cannot realistically be evaluated in terms of completed units, the rate of skills development, knowledge of specific material content and the overall performance of individual students in accordance with their personal abilities can be assessed. Students at the lower-intermediate level receive no marks, but their progress is consistently checked through the use of other methods, such as percentage ratings given for various aspects of their work.

### ***School organization***

The structure of micro-schools operating within the AKG has significant contribution to the development of social cohesion and active citizenship, as they help to prepare the individuals for community life. Each micro-school forms a community with its own rules, work schedule and daily activities in accordance with the order of operation of the AKG. It is also the responsibility of the micro-school to furnish, clean and maintain its workspace, in which students have responsible roles. In the micro-schools students experience through the school years, that they are important, and integral parts of a close community. Micro-schools have the right to initiate independent projects and special programs, in addition to establishing their own traditions.

On the other hand the school has numerous programs (Young Enterprise, fairs, clubs, school camps) and creative activities (drama, film, video, ceramics, weaving, woodwork, photography, craft of enamelling etc.) that provide opportunities for students of all ages to regularly work together. The operation of Young Enterprise groups provide the students with the opportunity to try out the role of entrepreneurs by doing it, to contribute to substantial and continuous group work for a common cause, while gaining personal experience of how business works and understanding its role in employment and social life.

The epoch format in itself dictates that group work and dramatic games are an integral part of the learning process. Written and visually oriented work by students is posted on the school computer network and in the corridors of the school building and handcrafted articles created

by pupils are displayed in a similar fashion. Lecturing by teachers is only one part of the lesson framework; students work through numerous topics individually or in groups (diagrams, visual material, written sources) based on the given aspects of analysis. The teacher merely acts as a guide, organizing activities and providing assistance. Many of the interactive and co-operative techniques designed to acquire, digest, handle and produce information are also valid in lessons for other subjects: mathematics, different branches of natural science, languages, literature, music, drama, dance, visual arts etc. are all taught using more or less the same approach, depending on the level and the specific subject matter involved.

The role of patrons is vital regarding the development of social skills and the promotion of socially oriented thinking, as specific issues facing students in present day society (e.g. vandalism, addiction, health care, nationalism, terrorism, politics, sexuality, student rights etc.), are constantly dealt with in weekly sessions between teachers and the group of students under their patronage. Although the “nest” of students under a patron is not a training unit organized for the purpose of study, these regular discussions have become increasingly important in terms of social studies content since they often touch upon social issues that students have been exposed to in the framework of lessons and in the course of their daily life.

Theme weeks are always structured to provide the students with the opportunity for a deeper exploration of topics they have covered during lessons. Students can utilize in practice the subject-knowledge and learning techniques they have acquired in the classroom. Furthermore, the social and cultural circumstances students are exposed to on such field trips and activities force them to apply the intellectual and social skills developed during their life in the school community. Theme weeks are very popular among students in the AKG as they enjoy exploring scientific or social issues on a face-to-face basis and taking active part in a great diversity of programs offered during these weeks. A few examples of theme weeks include:

- extensive field work to research and explore the problems facing physically and mentally disabled people in the course of their daily lives, involving day to day interaction with handicapped persons in a variety of settings;
- field trips in the framework of a natural science theme week, including on-site experiments in biology and chemistry combined with a study of life in the local community from a regional perspective
- extensive field work, presentations, interactive workshops with Romani intellectuals and common activities with Romani students to familiarize with the culture and history of the Roma minority and to explore prejudice and social problems that Roma face in Hungary<sup>3</sup>
- lectures, seminars, discussions and interviews to explore the nature, effects and consequences of addiction

According to students’ accounts of these theme weeks, the programs are not only informative and useful because of the wide scope of knowledge acquired, but the emotional benefit gained through personal experiences is also very significant.

### ***School environment***

It is stated in the Educational Program of the AKG that “the basic responsibility of the school is to fulfil the requirements of its customers”. Students are the primary customers of the services provided by the school, and their interest must be represented by the family. AKG is obligated to organise any program for which parents or students express a need, provided that there are suitable numbers of applicants. Trustful, co-operative and supportive attitude of the parents towards the school is an essential condition for the success of the educational process. Parents are therefore considered to be a partner, and they are encouraged to actively participate in the

<sup>3</sup> Photos and reports of students about the Roma theme week can be found at <http://www.akg.hu/handabanda/roma7/program.html>

whole education process. Parents' representatives play an important role at the meetings of the AKG Foundation Board of Directors and the School Court of Appeals. All activities, including lessons, are open to parents and parents are provided as much information as possible about their children's work on a regular basis through the system of patronage (written evaluations, meetings, private conferences, written reports). Patrons must consult and reach agreement with parents on a regular basis concerning their children's intentions, it is however, an important principle of the school, that teachers are only willing to go against child's intentions in case of extreme exceptions.

Since AKG operates as a non-profit organisation and its expenses are considerably higher than that of an average Hungarian school, educating a student in AKG requires higher financial contribution from the family. Therefore the socio-economic status of the students' families is generally higher, and the sociological composition of the students is homogenous in the school. Hence the school is in a relatively easy position, as it does not face challenges originating in the heterogeneous social and cultural background and neighbourhood of the students. It is in the mission of the school, however, to be open to the world outside of the school, and to provide the students with as much information and experience about the complexity and diversity of the society around them, as possible. In order that the school has developed and continuously extends co-operation with its social environment, including different professionals, NGOs and community members, who are invited to participate in the activities of the theme weeks, clubs, and other thematic programs of the school.

### *Monitoring CE initiatives*

Monitoring and evaluation of the educational content and the effectiveness of the teaching process is an essential and integral part of the teachers' role in the AKG. This assessment is closely related to the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the students' progress regarding the acquired knowledge and the development of their social skills. Assessment in written form and in verbal discussion with students enables teachers to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the educational process itself. Therefore the evaluation process has three main tasks: informing students about what they are expected to achieve, providing feedback on the results, and monitoring the effective implementation of cross-curricular strategies and the general pedagogical goals of the institution.

Besides the continuous evaluation of the student's progress the system of reports and written evaluations of teachers are used as tools for monitoring and evaluation of the social studies curricula and the teaching process. The curriculum and organizational structure of social studies is flexible enough to enable teachers to revise and alter the teaching process according to the findings of the assessments.

Students' reports and evaluation of theme weeks and other extra-curricular activities are also used as a systematic tool for evaluating the impact of these activities and designing the program schemes and content for the future ones.

Since individual micro-schools enjoy a considerable degree of independence as autonomous units within the larger organization, and it is the group of patrons within a single micro-school unit who have first-hand knowledge of their daily successes and failures, they are the ones most qualified to develop solutions and coordinate activities related subject curricula to suit the needs of their own students in a way that is compatible with principles and long-term strategies of the school.

Serious questions rises, however, regarding the consistency of assessment of teaching social studies by the fact that social studies content on the lower-intermediate level is increasingly becoming a part of activities conducted by patrons with their own group of students outside of the general lesson framework and that the social studies courses during the first 4 years are handled differently in the micro-schools.

### ***Conclusion***

The civic education approach of the AKG is a good practice that deserves broad attention in Hungary for several reasons. There is at present no other school in Hungary that emphasizes basic social studies training in the number of lessons that AKG does. Furthermore its example is worth analysing as civic education, the development of social skills and social awareness is such a high priority in the AKG, that besides being taught in the framework of a complex social discipline, it is incorporated in numerous cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities and reflected in the overall methodological approach of the school. However, there are several follower schools in Hungary, which have adapted the social study curricula of the AKG and utilize the textbooks and supplementary materials developed by the teachers of the school; the AKG still remain unique for how it has managed to build up such a coherent system to foster civic education in the daily life of the school.

**Lithuania****Šiauliai Didždvaris gymnasium****By Vaidas Bacys, Headteacher and Rima Morkuniene, Deputy Headteacher****General**

The Siauliai Didzdvaris gymnasium is a state secondary general education school with 1127 students, age range 10 to 19. The school used to provide primary, middle and senior general secondary education until 1999 when the school has been authorized the status of gymnasium and following the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania it has to become a pure gymnasium. Thus, the school is in the transition period, ending primary education in the year 2004 and middle year education in the year 2008. From September 1, 2008 the school will be providing senior secondary education and pre-university education for the students aged 15 to 19. Due to the process of changes in the society of the country in general, the school has become active in participation of a number of local, national and international projects and implementation of innovations. The transition period speeded up the process of the school becoming accessible to everyone and showing respect to everyone. It focuses on academic education and wider upbringing, namely, aiming at developing social, life-long learning skills both within and outside regular school hours.

**Education content**

The Siauliai Didzdvaris gymnasium provides citizenship education course structurally embedded in the National curriculum in the year 7 and 10 with 1 academic hour per week, therefore, there is a central, guiding syllabus and recommended resource materials. It is meant not only to transfer knowledge, but also teach students skills that would help them later to function and work as good citizens in society.

In 1997 the school became a member of UNESCO ASP-net and a team of subject teachers devised and prepared in integrated 2-year programme for the students aged 15 – 17 aiming at developing their social skills based on problem solving. Besides this programme, the school has been organizing and carrying out its activities relying on its inner resources, infrastructure and the priorities recognized by the school community. The school has been contributing to strengthening of the aims and principles set out by the UNESCO Constitution both in class and outside community through the following activities:

- education for peace, human rights, democracy and tolerance;
- development of the ICT skills;
- environment education;
- non-violent conflict resolution;
- intercultural education

The school does not attempt to draw strict limits between the above-mentioned aims but seeks to find out points of integration.

**Educational process**

Both the teachers and school management constantly consider ways in which the education at the school and its activities can be designed such that the content and the educational task receive sufficient attention, maintain standards of attainment as well as devote time and attention to social relationships and socializing skills development. The tool used is the school self-evaluation, which enables the school to envisage its vision and to design annual school development plan and outline its priorities. Setting an example is of great importance and a group of teachers are members of the movement "Teachers for peace" which organized an

international conference "Peace education: life-long learning" (2000) and held a seminar "Teaching and learning conflict resolution" (2001).

Each class in the year 7 and 10 has the citizen education lessons (1 lesson per week), which always consists of an activity, group work and discussion. Each teacher is encouraged to teach citizenship in his/her lessons, especially teachers of humanities and social sciences.

As an elective subject the students of the senior classes (year 11 – 12) can take a 1-hour per week integrated history and English language course "Facing history".

There is a social pedagogue working full time at the school whose main aim is to work with the students who have behaviour and socializing problems. This means that such students and their parents are confronted with fewer teachers and it allows the problems to be identified more quickly and improving contact between the school and parents. The social pedagogue is in charge of and carries out in the school the national projects "Safe school" and "I can". The project "Big brother/big sister" allowed creating peer support groups and students act as mentors in non-violent problem resolution. The school has clear house rules which are presented in the "Students' guide". Since the change of the school status (gymnasium with 15 – 19 years old students), it takes in an increasing number of students from other schools each year, which brings new challenges. In order to make the process of adaptation of the newcomers smooth, the school has held several successful 3-day students' summer camps where the newcomers and old-timers are supervised by the teachers and mix together being involved in various activities.

In addition, the school gives the possibility for the students to become critical thinkers and fosters freedom of speech which manifests in the school newspaper "Second home", school radio "Radio club" programmes and Year book where students are allowed to express their opinions.

The school attaches great importance to learning to live in a multicultural environment and since 1998, every year, has participated and hosted a number of students exchange projects with partner schools from Poland, Estonia, Italy, Sweden and Denmark. During the exchange projects it is important for the students to work in mixed groups, stay at the host families, which enables them to know better different cultures, practice their linguistic competencies and socializing skills. It is worth to mention that the school is open to the students from ethnic minorities and has successfully integrated the Russian speaking senior students.

The school thinks it is important to develop students in extra-curriculum activities; consequently, there are clubs and organizations that provide the students with possibilities to develop their skills, share their common interests, express themselves, and develop their talents. Such clubs are the Debates club, Radio club, jazz group, folk dance group, art studio, scouts, sports club, break dance group, drama club, and UNESCO club.

Lastly, the school organizes a lot of festivities and events, gatherings (School days) involving the whole school community to enhance the feeling of belonging.

### ***School organization***

The school emphasizes the importance of educating students to become active members of society. It has the students' council and the school board. The students elect their president and the parliament; the members of the parliament are delegated from each class. The school board consists of 5 students, 5 teachers and 5 parents. The school board and students' council participates directly in school management. Meetings are held regularly, the students' self-government organizes self-government camps and open meetings where current issues, problems are being raised and solved. This is one of the ways of teaching students policy and decision-making, taking responsibilities. The school is considering of changing the method of elections to the students' parliament (candidates should be nominated not only from each class but from each club, organization of the school).

The school organizes parents meetings, overall and class parents meetings. Also, parents' days are held twice a school year when teachers and parents can meet individually and discuss

pending matters, resolve problems, parents are invited to sit in on lessons. Parents' participation and keeping parents informed on school life receives high priority. In addition, the school signs a cooperation agreement with all pupils, which is undersigned by the parents. The class teacher (tutor) also plays a central role in contact with parents.

The head teacher and the school management are an important driving force behind the school plans, activities. But many initiatives come from the staff themselves. Resistance to change among the staff has, over the course of time, been overcome and the staff is now enthusiastic and willing to cooperate.

### ***External school environment***

The duty and mission of the school does not stop at the school entrance door, but extends both locally, nationally and internationally. It works closely with the local institutions, museums, art galleries, other cultural and sports organizations, police, education experts and authorities. There has been established an informal former students' club which makes actions and participates in school events and serves as an informal life-long learning example. If the school has a possibility it recruits a teacher from abroad (usually English language) in this way enabling the students to broaden their minds and cultural awareness, develop communication and socializing skills.

The school is ambitious to provide a wider range of courses and classes for adults from the local community, including educational facilities for local residents. Currently, the school offers English language and computer skills. A group of parents dance at the folk dance group of the school.

### ***Summary***

- Citizenship education is embedded in the curriculum. In addition, the school develops specific programmes and activities, devotes special attention to citizenship education through extra-curriculum activities.
- The school sees citizenship education not only as transfer of knowledge but also developing socializing skills, both in teachers, students and parents.
- Teachers are encouraged to teach citizenship skills in her/his lessons.
- The school has a clear identity, which can be recognized in its vision, aims, application policy and daily activities.
- The school projects itself as an open school, being open to the out-of-classroom world.

**Malta*****Lily of the Valley Girls' Secondary School, Mosta******By M.D. Aquilina, Head of School******General Information***

Lily of the Valley is an area secondary school that has an overall goal to educate female citizens from the ages of 10 to 16 years. The population of the school is made up of over 600 students, one head teacher, 3 assistant heads, 64 teachers, 10 facilitators, 4 clerical staff; 3 technicians, 4 ancillary staff, 9 part-time cleaners and 4 watchmen.

The school is situated in a picturesque valley in the middle of Mosta. It is made up of the following rooms, 4 Administrative offices, 1 photocopy room, 35 classrooms all installed with a video recorder and monitor; 3 staff rooms; 3 Home Economics rooms, 1 Needlework room, 3 computer labs, 1 library, 1 crafts room, a hall which is equipped with stage, lighting, sound system, video projector, cyclorama and screen. There is also a conference room, 3 guidance rooms, 2 PSD rooms, Art room, Radio Station for school premises only, 4 science laboratories, 1 music room. Then there is the sports ground, changing rooms, a landscaped garden, and a lift in the building for accessibility.

***The origins of CE initiatives***

These students who are living in this tiny village we call school, have a transitory period where they can learn how to be good citizens and also learn what their rights and responsibilities are. They can participate in the whole process through various democratic procedures that are adopted by the school. To mention just a few examples, there is the students' council, the special assembly; the radio, the library and other extracurricular activities. If we had to take a look at the classroom, students can take the initiative to be nominated for prefect or sub-prefect, who are then chosen through a democratic election. Representatives from each form can be nominated to sit on the students' council. These potential young leaders are prepared for their role by attending a one-day seminar on Leadership. This is held once every 2 years, with the initiative of the School's Guidance and Counselling Service and "Sedqa" (an agency which works to prevent substance abuse). The concept of the students' council is relatively new in the school, but gradually their presence is being felt more and more. The school organizes formalized meetings for these leaders, with the presence of the administration or School Council. They can then share their views in a more structured way. Therefore, the communication process is facilitated and the students are given more validity for what they do. As a result this will do wonders for building their confidence and self esteem and assert their rights more in society. By learning what the expectations of the administration and the teachers are they can easily do their part by following the school rules and other duties that are the baggage of every student since they are, already involved in the making of these rules. It is then a sign of good practice to have and maintain an effective Board of Discipline which is run on democratic principles and is a tool that will enhance the school ethos as is quoted in the School Development Plan.

I believe that the school has earned its good name because it has been able to build an atmosphere where the students feel they belong. The environment is clean, bright and welcoming. This already enhances their spirits. Also, by being part of the school, the value that is constantly passed on is that 'from here they can succeed'. Not only can they reach their objectives through formalized teaching but also through various media like drama, music, art and sports. Through their own initiatives and with the help of their teachers they can hold various activities like "Christmas Concert", "Breakfast week", a "Modelling show". They also have the opportunity to invite local young singers to entertain them. All this and more not only



shows their creative way of expressing themselves but again continues to enhance their personal worth!

### ***Educational Content***

If one had to take a look at the school's "Mission Statement":

"Lily of the Valley Girls' Secondary School, in collaboration with teachers and parents ensures a healthy and caring environment for the development of self-esteem, creativity and the full potential of all students through sound moral values and skills."

S.D.P. (Lily of the Valley 2002-2004)

One already finds that from this stepping stone one is led into a school which has "citizenship" ideals embedded in its daily running.

The school strategic plan has two qualities that continue to characterize this process. It has come about after a co-ordinated consultative and collaborative exercise amongst all stakeholders. These being the school and its entire staff, as well as the students and their parents.

The Strategic Plan offers a framework that provides sufficient direction for the schools and the teachers but allowing them space for autonomous initiatives, thus facilitating school-based curriculum development.

The School Development Plan addresses curricular issues with full commitment from the school, articulating its needs and its priorities, and at the same time monitoring the progress in the implementation of these policies.

At Lily of the Valley, the aims for 2002-2004 were varied, covering key areas as Curriculum, Learning and Teaching, Attainment and Ethos. The goals were a result of consultation with the Staff and parent representatives.

1. To strongly encourage students for EXCELLENCE in all they do.
2. To explore and develop students creativity and potential to the full by keeping in mind that every student is a UNIQUE individual with particular needs and interests.
3. To develop and maintain ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS between teachers and pupils, school and home, school and the wider community.
4. To develop SELF-ESTEEM and SELF-CONFIDENCE in pupils and to encourage them to assume responsibility and make positive contributions to the wider community.
5. To encourage students in developing a POSITIVE ATTITUDE towards themselves and to appreciate and tolerate others.
6. To continuously develop within the school a CARING CLIMATE which nurtures the collective and individual welfare and sound moral values of students and staff and which recognizes the worth and contribution of all.

The Development Plan saw various targets to work on and these reflected the work of all the teaching and auxiliary staff in providing a conducive atmosphere and curriculum for the school to follow.

Working with the mentally-challenged students was the target for the curriculum area, with seven tasks to see this problem tackled. Classification tests were made of the new entrants and this gave a better chance for students to be monitored and their progress checked. Departmental meetings were held for all teachers who were involved with slow-learners so as to be prepared and advised when difficulties arose. It is detrimental to motivate slow learners to read and research in both main languages, this achieved with the help of subject teachers, librarians,

drama and Personal and Social development teachers. Their progress assessed through Pictorial Presentations or Drama or the Reading Scrapbook, besides their teachers' assessment. Fieldwork by subject or themes has been part of their educational programme with follow-up reports and scrapbooks to check on their progress. The withdrawal of students with special needs, from structured team teaching to specialized lessons, has been monitored by the monthly evaluation so as to ensure a continuous positive development. During one of our Staff Developments a profession person passed us relevant information regarding specific particulars of students with special needs.

Lily of the Valley is particularly happy to be able to help these special students, integrated with the other students, as part of the citizenship education. We know that education does not stop here, although some opt to do so, but it is just a stepping-stone towards a continuous education that we hope all our students will be ready to undertake.

### ***Educational Process***

Various methods or instructional principles have been adopted to teach civic education in order to educate students to understand our national civic values and to be willing and able to participate as responsible citizens. During certain lessons such as Social Studies and especially Personal and Social Development lessons, students are taught and practise life skills such as evaluation, critical thinking, decision-making, problem solving and participation skills.

During PSD lessons, classes are reorganized and restructured to teach the skills, knowledge and values that the students need in order to become responsible citizens. Through brainstorming exercises, group work, role plays, discussions, presentations and journal keeping, students become aware of their rights and learn the civic duties of active participation in interpersonal and community problem solving and develop realistic goals. In this way, the students are empowered to practise these skills in school.

During the morning school assembly, the headmistress picks a topic or an aspect of current affairs, which she analyses when she addresses the whole school. Very often there are further discussions regarding the mentioned topics during other lessons particularly in PSD lessons. In this way the students learn the knowledge, skills and values of responsible citizenship in the context of analysing and solving real school and community problems.

Every Thursday morning each class holds a special assembly in turn. A good number of students participate, thus overcoming their inhibitions and exhibiting their own creativity to other students and are challenged to exercise leadership and responsibility.

For the weekly extra-curricular afternoon, all teachers offer their various activities and the students have the opportunity to decide and make their own choices. Sometimes guest speakers, who are professionals in their own fields, are invited to address students about certain topics. Being a good citizen is about making informed choices, the Home Economics department has often invited guest speakers on how to be responsible consumers. Topics which incorporate citizenship values are conflict management, teamwork, human rights, racisms, careers, sexuality, bullying, persons with disabilities, substance abuse, Satanism, the rights of customers, hairdressing, the art of make-up, beauty as well as shown films regarding the human body.

An open week exhibition is held every two years. A theme is chosen for the whole school and students, with the aid of the subject teacher, take various aspects and the topic is analysed and adopted according to the subject they tackle. These creations involve a lot of hard work,

brainstorming, creative skills, research, collaboration and responsibility. This year's theme is "Stone as a Foundation of Culture", which is to be held in May. Two years ago the theme was "Wine-Making". All aspects of wine making were analysed, the students gained so much knowledge about traditions and culture, the good and bad effects of drinking wine, statistics, and even the process of wine making itself. The fact that all students work together to promote the same topic empowers them and thus they are challenged to apply civic values to the process of resolving their issues as well as school discipline and politics.

To promote reading the students are asked to keep a diary of what they read every day and record the time they spend reading. Every entry in the diary is endorsed by one of the parents or the student's carer. From time to time the Head or any of the Assistant Heads inspect these diaries. Hence, students are encouraged to read, discipline themselves and are held accountable.

Very often the teachers are the models themselves and guide students to practice democratic skills and apply civic values to real problems in their class, school, the community and beyond.

Our students also attend periodic outings to the Drama Education centre – where through the use of drama, students have been made aware of certain topics related to becoming better citizens, such topics were disability, consumerism, bullying, and classic authors like Shakespeare. Various teachers also use outings and invite guest speakers that in their right are also helping to support citizenship education. For example guidance teachers do a number of talks and visits related to the career and work orientation. Biology teachers organize fieldwork visits, and visit places to make them more aware of the environment we live in and how to take care of it, tackling topics like global warming and how to dispose of waste properly through recycling.

Ultimately what is happening in the classroom, not only covers the academic, formal syllabus, but also incorporates in it informal discussions that are helping these students learn how to fulfil their role in society. For example the Italian teachers by organizing a visit to see the "Caravaggio" Exhibition are helping to promote an appreciation for our culture and heritage. This work is also complemented by the History and Geography teachers – who have organized visits to the Three cities, "Limestone Heritage Experience", Mdina, Valletta, etc . . .

### ***School Organization***

There are various aspects of the school organizational structure that contribute towards the development of citizenship skills and social cohesion. These are mainly the school council that is represented by the Head, teachers, parents and a member from the locality. The students' council is then made up of students who are facilitated by a teacher. These systems together with prefect and head girl system offer students, staff and parents excellent opportunities to engage themselves and participate more purposefully in its procedures. Such procedures include nominations, campaigning, lobbying, elections and finally representation. Throughout this whole process the role of the elected representatives is then to speak on behalf of fellow parents, staff, students, represent the school in various functions and then report back to relevant parties. It is also their role to participate and decide meaningfully with regard to policymaking, resource acquisition, deployment, etc....

For the good functioning of the school, communication is a crucial element. The school organization promotes better communication via regular meetings for parents. These are generally held at the beginning of the year. This year the administration together with the guidance teachers and subject coordinators held a number of meetings titled as follows:

- "Services offered by the Guidance & Counselling Services" for parents of Form 1 students.
- "The studies & your children" for parents of Form 2 students.
- "Relationships between parents & their children" for parents of Form 3 and Form 4 students.
- "Opportunities after Form 5" for parents of Form 5 students.

To enhance better communication with the parents a newsletter is published every term to keep the parents informed about school activities. Also, a number of informal activities are organized for parents, an example of these are coffee mornings, ladies circle, bazaars, etc. Apart from all this, there are two parents' days, where one of them is held in the evening to be able to be accessible especially to the parents who work. There is also a school magazine where students contribute through writing articles – this is published once every year. Technology also gives us a helping hand to facilitate better communication between teachers and administration – these are the intercom, telephone and Internet. Also, the staff meetings, departmental meetings and staff development seminars are crucial to help reach the school objectives and in the smooth running of the school.

### ***School Environment***

The school is just a microcosm of the whole society. All that the school works on to promote citizenship will not be effective if it is not linked to the larger picture.

One of the initiatives the head of the school worked on was a typical Maltese farmhouse - "Ir-razzett tal-Markiz Mallia Tabone", which once rehabilitated was lent to the "Ghaqda Talent Mosti" a local organization which through its drama and cultural activities raises money for philanthropic organizations. In this way the school is brought a bit closer to the wider life of the community. The school also uses "ir-razzett" for exhibitions and lessons. For example one successful exhibition was the one organized to promote Maltese folklore – in an Open Day exhibition in 2002. These initiatives are helping a lot to bring parents and people from the locality closer and more involved in the goings on of the school.

Another activity, which brings us closer to the community, is when we celebrate mass at Mosta church on special occasions like before Christmas, Easter, or Eucharistic Day. There is also some link with the Mosta local council, especially since they have a member that is represented on the school council board. They attend regular activities that are organized by the school such as the annual prize day event. One initiative organized with the school library was to have a donation of books given by the various local councils that have students who fall in our catchment area.

The success or failure of the ideals of the school is trying to achieve depends a lot on the Motivation, Cooperation and Involvement of the parents in all that is happening in the school.

As a school there are various factors that are contributing to this whole school ethos:

#### Family educational background –

Those families that esteem highly the value of education – are in the forefront to encourage their students to get a good education, to study and ultimately get a good job.

#### Family's Economic and Social Status –

Unfortunately we have a number of students who come from families who are experiencing problems e.g. illness, family break ups, - which in their turn effects the education and whole well

being of the students. Also students who came from families with low economic means – find certain difficulties, which the school when is made aware of them tries to overcome them.

***Monitoring CE initiatives***

As much as it is difficult to define citizenship into one definition, we know it's the backbone of the daily running of the school; and as long as there are various factors which are mentioned in the Mission Statement – which are helping to promote Citizenship Education, the evaluation of all this is found in the daily running of the school – mainly P.M.P.'s evaluate discussions during departmental meeting, Staff Development Evaluation sessions etc. The head has recently distributed questionnaires to all the staff, parents and students in order to evaluate and measure the decade and more of the goings on of the school.

## **Malta**

### ***Sta Tereza, Junior Lyceum, Mriehel***

***By Dorsi Gatt Scicluna, assistant head***

The school has been interested in Citizenship Education for a long time. It has always been of importance for the Administration to encourage all stakeholders in the school, such as staff, students and parents to participate in school affairs. With the introduction of the School Development Plan democracy was highlighted and programmes in training in democracy introduced.

When the Staff Development Plan was being formulated, each of the stakeholders in the school was identified and the role of each geared towards democracy and the implementation of its principles. The fact that the personnel involved in the making up of the school were contacted and invited to express ideas and suggestions towards the better functioning of the school, was in itself a democratic practice. Administration, staff, students, parents and local councils each have a part to play.

With the implementation of the strategies and programmes of the SDP, special focus was put on the School Council and the Students' Council.

The School Council is a functioning body, meeting regularly to suggest and accept new policies for the school. The School Students' Council has now become a fully-fledged body in the school, an accepted tradition, where the students can express opinions in a safe and healthy environment, knowing that their suggestions and ideas will be given weight and consideration. The Students' Council provides students with the opportunity to put democracy in practice. It is Citizenship Education to the full as it encourages students to be wholly participative citizens in a democratic state. The Student Council provides not only the members of the Council with the skills necessary to participate in an organization but invites all students to develop knowledge and attitudes which lead to free participation in decision-making and decision-taking.

In our school this is a dynamic process. It is cross curricular, but mainly presented during Assemblies where the School Council communicates directly with the students, and indirectly by inviting administration and staff to participate in organizing activities in the school. For moral support the administration is ever-present and teaching staff are ready to co-ordinate activities which lead to democratic practices - e.g., discussions, Scoops, projects, (World Children's Prize), activities (Olive Grove), school magazine.

Possibly the major obstacles for the implementation and continuation of the practice is time. The School Student Council is an extra curricular activity and the students are limited to coordinating all necessary preparation and research in the limited time during breaks. The school provides a well equipped ICT programme and the students are encouraged to make use of present day technology.

### ***Educational Content and Educational Process***

Citizenship Education is not a defined subject on the curriculum. CE cannot be classed and pigeonholed as a subject 'taught' during a stipulated time but it is a subject that necessitates permeation in all subjects. It requires participation, awareness, value formation and assimilation. Stakeholders are made aware of their rights. But emphasis is equally made on responsibilities. Students are challenged with new ideas and projects. They are given guidelines and given the opportunities for open discussion either in class during each subject, and also as groups when the activity is school based.

The goals for Citizenship Education cannot be quantitative, but qualitative. The responsible, accountable, resilient, young adult who graduates at the end of five years is the result we are

working for. The curriculum emphasises skills and attitudes. The student, who leaves the school equipped with the determination to participate productively in the political democratic state she is to live in, is a reflection of the democratic practice she encountered at school. Certain subjects give more concrete and practical opportunities for democracy such as PSD, Religion, Social Studies, but democratic practices cannot be confined to subjects but acquired and assimilated throughout the educational term. During their school days students take these practices home and encourage and coax parents to make them aware of their presence, their rights, their responsibilities and their desire to be involved in home affairs. This provides parents with the opportunity to be dynamic, and updated to parental skills required for healthy child development. Suffocating the child with over protection and excessive care will not lead to independence and self-control. Talks for parents provide this awareness.

Citizenship Education helps the students to face up to dealing with difficult issues, to making informed choices and generally behaving as responsible citizens. The School Discipline Policy is geared towards this. Not only are students 'taught' of their rights but they are made aware of their responsibilities to strike a healthy balance. Each time a student is given a warning, the reason for it is explained and the student herself accepts it, realizing that she has been guilty of some wrong doing. The common good practice of the school has been broken and amends have to be made. Service to the school has now been introduced, as a disciplinary measure, where students have sessions with guidance teachers, and administration, to assess the action committed and the 'sentence' to be passed. They have a say in the type of work they are to do. We have realized that a challenging, stimulating, motivated safe environment minimizes vandalism, bullying, and bad conduct in general. Identification with the school, and ownership of each school policy leaves no time or room for misbehaviour. Conflict management is taken seriously both by administration and guidance department. Pains are taken to deal positively and tactfully with each of the parties involved and a compromise, if not a solution, are reached to the satisfaction of each of the parties involved. No conflicting situation is taken lightly, as there are often very serious undercurrents, which bring about these negative outbursts. Democracy is not limited to the school only speakers are invited to come to school to address the students on Children's Rights, e.g. Consumer Education.

This year the school embarked on a new project, World Children's Prize - which involved voting for candidates nominated by world leaders, for dedication to improve the life of suffering children throughout the world.

Parents are encouraged to write in the school magazine, and take part in school surveys during Parents' Day. The results of the survey are communicated to parents. Local Councils have been invited to school to speak about their function and projects in hand to the students of their locality. The students were involved in publishing articles in the Local Council Newsletters, in initiating the building of a sports complex, giving ideas for decorating a roundabout in the village, and expressing complaints about the local bus service. Students have taken part in pupils' parliament and read a paper prepared by them on 'Youth and Work'. A guest singer was invited to participate in an activity organized for World Peace Day, for which the students wrote poems and slogans for peace.

### *Monitoring CE initiatives*

CE initiatives are all ongoing. Members of the administration and staff finely monitor them. A round up, or concluding activity is encouraged - e.g. Assembly activity, detailed report, Year Book (Council and Scoops) Annual General Meeting (Scoops).

The evaluation, or assessment, of the projects involving Citizenship Education is done by discussion and general agreement of the benefits gained from the activity. Suggestions for improvement are identified, discussed, accepted or rejected according to the practical limitations

available. New ideas are encouraged and organization and improved implementation noted for the following activity. The idea behind these activities is ownership leading to empowerment.

### ***School Organization***

As has already been stated we cannot classify Citizenship Education in specified categories, but it is a subject, which permeates the whole school environment. All members of staff are in some way involved in Citizenship Education. The whole process is normally initiated by the administration but it is not the first time that members of staff, the School Council or the Students' Council or other bodies in the school come up with ideas where democracy is called for. One such body is Scoops, which enjoys a great deal of autonomy in the projects it participates in. The Senior Management Team is informed with the projects, which are going on in the school, and regular meetings of the SMT are held. Staff room Representative Meeting are also held regularly and forthcoming events are discussed. The Head of School makes it a point to be present for each of the SMT and Staff room Representative Meeting so that there will be logically connected and consistent ideas.

The school administration has always emphasised the importance of the role of the parents. The School Development Plans encompasses the significance of healthy communication with parents, by encouraging communication with the school council, meetings with Guidance Department in the school, and making parents aware of school policies. Within the School Development Plan parental involvement featured as a priority both in Ethos, stressing improved communication with parents, and Support of Teaching and Learning, stressing parental role in child's learning. Parents work with the school to help students make educational and vocational choices. The Pastoral Care Policy states "Parents are always welcome in the school and there are many opportunities for parents to get involved in the life of the school". There are numerous meeting for parents throughout the school calendar. To celebrate the EUROPEAN DAY OF PARENTS AND SCHOOLS an exhibition was put up in the school foyer and a debate organized when approximately 400 parents took part. Guest speakers came from the Education Dept. Recommendations and ideas were issued, and parents voiced their complaints and concerns. Of importance was the strong working links between parents and schools underlying all discourse. Students with problems at home are dealt with through the Guidance teachers. Discretion is always used when dealing with such cases.



## *Netherlands*

### *Bonhoeffer College, Castricum*

#### *General*

The Bonhoeffer College is an ecumenical school community for preparatory secondary vocational education, theoretical track (VMBO-T), senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). It is a district school with more than 1,200 pupils, mostly of Dutch origin. Several schools are merged under a single management, with each school maintaining its own individual profile.

The Bonhoeffer College gives a central place to the question 'What is your position in life and how do you interact with others?'. The college sees it as its task to teach children to become valuable members of society, who can take responsibility for their own lives and for those of others. The school's mission and aims reflect this commitment to a broad and far-reaching social education. Norms and values play a prominent role in daily life in and outside the school. The school is a single community with a clear identity.

#### *Educational content*

The school sees its task as supplying young adults who have a good academic knowledge and are aware of their position in life. The emphasis lies on education in the broadest sense. The school wishes to extend this further to include social and ethical questions, such as the implications of cloning. This may entail extra training for teachers.

The transfer of norms and values is not restricted to a separate subject, but plays a role everywhere and at all times. Specific attention is, however, devoted to norms and values in religious and ethical education and in social studies.

#### *Educational process*

The Bonhoeffer College devotes a great deal of attention to social relationships in the educational process. Interacting with other people plays a central role and personal relationships are given high priority. With its ecumenical background, the school attaches great value to reflection and analysis.

Setting an example and general upbringing are seen as part of the educational process, even though the pupils themselves believe that the latter is primarily the responsibility of the parents. Teachers think that they have enough time in the lessons to devote implicit attention to pupils' more general upbringing. Both teachers and the school management continually consider ways in which the education at the school can be designed such that both the content and the educational task receive sufficient attention.

#### *School organization*

All teachers emphasize the importance of educating children in accordance with the school's identity; this is one of the issues addressed when interviewing new staff members. The school has an active identity committee, and avoiding anonymity is a spearhead of policy. To ensure that pupils interact with each other as within a small community, the school has a heterogeneous transition class, in which all pupils from VMBO to VWO spend the first year together. The school is currently considering setting up smaller units within the school to make it easier to supervise and assist pupils. The school has clear house rules, a bullying and truancy policy and rules for correct behaviour at school. Up to a certain point, pupils have a say in how these rules are drafted.

### *External school environment*

The school organizes various activities to increase the social engagement of pupils and to teach them how to play an active part in society. Every year, there are a number of activities involving the local community, such as giving pupils practical experience of working in shops. Pupils are also exchanged with pupils from a school in Amsterdam and there are solidarity projects with other countries. In addition, pupils can take part in a wide variety of out-of-school activities. In the case of many projects aimed at increasing pupils' social awareness, the school works with other organizations. There is a parents' council with 30 to 40 members, and there is always a good turnout at parents' evenings. The school also wishes to be a safe school, and has signed an agreement with the police.

### *Summary*

- The school has a clear identity which is recognizable at all levels: in its mission, its aims, its application policy and its day-to-day activities.
- The school combines academic education and wider upbringing.
- The school does not limit the transfer of norms and values to a specific subject. Norms and values are, however, a specific component of religious and ethical education and social studies.
- The school has clear rules and a bullying and truancy policy; the pupils have a certain degree of say in how these are drafted.
- The school organizes activities, together with other organizations, to increase pupils' social engagement.
- The teachers set an example.

## *Netherlands*

### *G.K. van Hogendorp Scholengemeenschap, Rotterdam*

#### *General*

The G.K van Hogendorp Scholengemeenschap is a VMBO school with 300 pupils in the Delfshaven district of Rotterdam. Its teaching covers only the economics sector, within which pupils can choose ICT or commerce-administration. The school was originally Catholic and is one of five schools belonging to the general-special Rotterdam school community.

The school aims to be a neighbourhood school for VMBO and to prepare pupils to participate in society. Safety, respect, involvement and clear structures are the key aspects of the school climate. The school formerly had many pupils who failed their examinations and many 'problem' pupils. Seven years ago, it introduced a number of radical reforms. It split away from the MBO (secondary vocational education) school and is now an autonomous unit. The school's motto is '*rust, regelmaat en reinheid*' (peacefulness, regularity and purity). The reforms have been successful: pupils have better social skills and academic results, and the dropout rate has fallen. Absenteeism among pupils and staff is now very rare.

#### *Educational content*

The school wishes to give its pupils a thorough preparation for the future. This means devoting much attention to their emotional and social development, as well as to their cognitive skills.

The school is currently setting up a social skills programme for the transition class. As a starting point, it has formulated a number of skills aimed at increasing pupils' self-confidence and sense of responsibility. Learning to live together must primarily be based on a continual process; teaching it as a separate subject is not seen as having enough impact. A number of subjects do, however, focus on strengthening social skills: drama in the second year and life skills in the third year. In the second year, pupils have to do voluntary work and, in contrast to other courses, in the third year they do a period of work placement in preparation for a future job. The main aim now is to involve parents more in these activities.

#### *Educational process*

The school lays the emphasis on teachers' educational-didactic skills, and they are selected on this basis. A majority of the teachers have experience of teaching in primary schools. The school also invests a great deal in teacher training.

The way teaching is organized at the school also takes account of its social objectives. The school has introduced a transition core class for the first two years. As in the last year of primary school, pupils have a fixed class, in which they are taught nearly all subjects. They have one teacher, who also acts as their mentor. This means that pupils and parents are confronted with fewer teachers, allowing problems to be identified more quickly and improving contact between school and parents. Another advantage is more continuity between primary and secondary education, including better coordination between what the pupils are taught. The school has also made lessons longer to make the school day less hectic.

In one special project aimed at increasing their sense of responsibility, pupils mediate in conflicts between their fellow students. They are chosen by their classmates and receive a short course in conflict mediation. They then help to solve conflicts, under the supervision of a coordinator. Experience has shown that, in practice, teachers now hardly have to intervene.

### ***School organization***

The school makes every effort to give its pupils a good start in society. The staff is closely involved with the pupils' welfare. Pupils have a right to a 'second home' and the school feels it can provide that. It sees itself as a 'family company'. Everyone works together to ensure that the pupils leave the school with the necessary cognitive and social skills.

The school director and management are an important driving force behind the plans. But many initiatives come from the staff themselves. Resistance to change among the staff has, over the course of time, been overcome and they are now enthusiastic. Teachers who did not want to work in a core class or who showed contempt for pupils were asked to look for other jobs.

The school is strict, for example in its dress code. It also records pupils' behaviour on coloured cards, which are issued at the start of the school year. A yellow card records absenteeism, a green card shows when they have broken school rules and a red card shows when they have arrived late. The cards are signed by teachers. After a certain number of violations, the problem is discussed with the pupil concerned. If necessary, the parents are also involved. Good behaviour can also be recorded on the green card. Pupils can recommend each other for this. In addition, the school signs a cooperation agreement with all pupils, which is undersigned by the parents. The school pledges to abide by the commitments it makes in the school prospectus. Pupils and parents promise to be honest, open, respectful and self-reliant, and to take their share of responsibility for what happens at the school, and to keep to agreements.

### ***External school environment***

The school's duty of care does not stop at the school gates, but extends throughout the Delfshaven neighbourhood. It has an idealistic aim to improve the lot of both its pupils and the local community. It works closely with parents, neighbourhood police officers, education experts and politicians. The school is well on the way to becoming a genuine community school, and one teacher has been appointed community school coordinator. The climate of safety and engagement among the pupils is reinforced by close contacts with organizations in the community with specific areas of expertise or activity (for example, a Turkish-Moroccan organization). The school also offers ICT facilities for external users and holds a 'mothers' afternoon'.

The turnout at parents' evenings is high, but participation is a problem, especially among immigrant parents. The school is trying to improve this situation together with the local mosque, and by providing a course for Turkish and Moroccan assistants to maintain contacts with parents. The course teaches them about Dutch norms and values, so that they can explain them to the parents of Turkish and Moroccan pupils. The core teacher also plays a central role in contact with parents.

### ***Summary***

- The school is small and operates as an autonomous unit.
- In addition to cognitive development, the school also focuses on social development. It includes the whole school in this. There are also a number of specific subjects and projects aimed at strengthening social skills.
- The school is aware of the importance of well-trained and committed staff. Teachers are selected on the basis of their educational-didactic qualities and the school invests a great deal in staff training. Teachers' initiatives are also followed up.
- The school has taken a wide range of steps to offer pupils a safe learning environment: in the first two years, they are taught nearly all subjects in a fixed class, with one teacher as their

mentor and with longer than average lessons. In addition, the school has strict rules and monitors compliance both positively and negatively. Pupils themselves mediate in conflicts.

- The school signs a cooperation agreement with pupils and their parents, in which the responsibilities and duties of each side are specified.
- The school projects itself as a neighbourhood school, a community school that works closely with a wide range of community organizations and invests in parental involvement.

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## *Netherlands*

### *Stedelijk Lyceum Enschede*

#### *General*

The Stedelijk Lyceum Enschede is a public school community for VMBO (vocational and theoretical tracks) to pre-university education (gymnasium) with nine sites. It has a central management, and each school has its own site management. The school has a total of 3,800 pupils, about a quarter of whom are of immigrant origin.

The school aims to be accessible to everyone and to show respect for everyone. It considers it important to devote attention to religious and ethical outlooks and values in Dutch society, whilst respecting differences. Pupils must be given the best chances possible to develop their talents. Priority is given to a pleasant and safe school climate, and care and attention in a recognizable environment. The school focuses on academic education and wider upbringing both within and outside regular school hours.

#### *Educational content*

The school considers it important for pupils to have links with the outside world, as part of the preparation for life in wider society. In the 2003-2004 school year, a new approach to education policy was introduced, on the basis of the community school idea. This was largely a response to aggressive pupils and absenteeism among teachers. The school had formally introduced the basic curriculum and the study centre system without giving much attention to the links between different subjects and the application of study and other skills. Positive experiences with the workplace structure in the VMBO now form the basis of the total package of educational changes. The aim is to make education interesting and challenging again for pupils. There are seven central objectives, including an extended school day with no homework, and learning areas instead of separate subjects. The school develops its own teaching materials for this. In lessons on care, much attention is devoted to citizenship skills on the basis of personality and communication theory.

#### *Educational process*

The school thinks it is important to train pupils in basic skills through play. A key feature is that teachers act as coaches to the pupils. For pupils who have serious problems, there are pupil mentors.

The reforms at the Stedelijk Lyceum are largely based on the principle of shared responsibility of pupils and teachers for small groups. The school is moving towards team teaching, with two teachers and an assistant taking care of a core group. Older pupils also help those from the lower classes.

#### *School organization*

The Stedelijk Lyceum is in the process of reforming its teaching. Some reforms (like the extended school day) have already been introduced; others (such as team teaching) still have to prove their value. In any case, the nature of the education provided by the school will certainly change in the coming period. In addition, the school has rules and pupils can be called to account for not complying with them. The school is also taking part in a national project called *De Veilige School* (The Safe School).

### *External school environment*

The Stedelijk Lyceum set out on a new course this school year. One of the main features of this new form of education is opening the school to the outside world. The community-school concept is making good progress. The school has regular contact with social, cultural and sports organizations and with the local authorities. The Stedelijk Lyceum organizes a lot of activities aimed at learning or at the local community. In addition, the school is also opening its gates to the community. There are plans to incorporate the school together with a library, a music school and a number of new homes, all under one roof. In September 1997, the school started to take part in a national experiment to try out an extended school day at secondary schools. Sport is a key feature of this project. Parents' evenings are organized on how to communicate with adolescents. Generally speaking it is difficult to get parents to become involved in the wider process of upbringing.

### *Summary*

- The school attaches great importance to religious and ethical outlooks and social norms and values; respect is the starting point.
- The school devotes attention to education and upbringing, both within and outside school hours, with a specific focus on citizenship skills in lessons on care.
- The school employs a community-school concept and makes teachers and pupils jointly responsible for small groups.
- The school has an extended school day and a safety project, and opens its gates to other organizations.

## *Northern Ireland*

### *St Joseph's College, Belfast*

*By Professor Tony Gallagher, Graduate School of Education, Queen's University Belfast*

#### *General information on the school*

St Joseph's<sup>4</sup> is a Catholic secondary school located in South Belfast<sup>5</sup>. It has an enrolment of 660 students aged between 11 and 18 years. The school offers the full range of GCSE examinations (for 16 year old students) required by the Northern Ireland statutory curriculum and provides a flexible curriculum for a targeted group of students at Key Stage 4 (age 14-16 years)<sup>6</sup>. At the post-16 stage St Joseph's provides 12 A Level subjects and vocational NVQ Level 2 programmes in two courses.

The school serves a mainly Catholic population, although it encourages applications, and has received, students of other faith communities and traditions<sup>7</sup>. The majority of the students come from two mainly Catholic inner-city areas which suffer high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Approximately 57 percent of the students are eligible for free school meals (less than 20, out of 240, secondary schools have an equivalent or higher proportion of students eligible for free school meals), although many other eligible parents choose not to claim their entitlement.

#### *The origin of the CE initiatives*

St Joseph's has been involved in three CE activities over the past four years.

In 1998 the Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) began a review of the Northern Ireland curriculum and began to explore the possibility of incorporating a citizenship programme in the new NI curriculum. A pilot curriculum development project was established by the University of Ulster in 2001 and schools were invited to participate. St Joseph's was one of the first schools to take up this offer, but whereas most schools allocated one teacher to take one class as part of the pilot programme, St Joseph's decided to allocate two teachers taking a total of six classes, two in each of the first three year groups (Years 8 to 10<sup>8</sup>). St Joseph's remained in the programme when it entered its second stage and a larger number of schools were invited to participate. In addition, a new programme was established by the local

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.adream.tv/displayschool.aspx?schoolid=a324b236-dadb-4d3f-b27d-a75e94f92e0c>

<sup>5</sup> Northern Ireland still operates a system of academic selection at the end of primary education (11 years). About a third of pupils are selected to attend grammar schools and the rest attend other secondary schools. St Joseph's is one of the latter schools. Following a series of reports from research studies and review bodies, a decision was taken in 2004 to discontinue the use of academic selection from no later than 2008.

<sup>6</sup> The statutory Northern Ireland Curriculum was established under the 1989 Education Reform Order and applies to students in the compulsory period of education, from age 5 to 16 years. As part of school improvement initiatives, schools may disaffiliate from part of the statutory obligation for targeted groups of students who are disaffected or alienated from school, or have some other special need.

<sup>7</sup> Schools in Northern Ireland are largely divided on denominational grounds. Only a minority of schools are owned and operated by local education authorities, and they mainly enroll Protestant students. The Catholic Church operates a system of primary, secondary and grammar schools, attended by a little under half the entire school-age population almost all of whom are Catholic. The rest of the grammar schools are managed by trust bodies and mainly enroll Protestant students. Since 1981 a sector of Integrated schools has developed and it currently enrolls about 5 per cent of the total school-age population.

<sup>8</sup> Education in Northern Ireland is divided into a series of stages. Pre-school and nursery education covers children aged 3-4 years. Primary education lasts for seven years and takes pupils aged 5 to 11 years: the primary years are defined as Years 1 to 7. Post-primary or secondary education lasts for the next 7 years (Years 8 to 14), with the compulsory period ending after Year 12 (age 16 years).



education authorities to train up to five teachers in each of the 240 secondary schools in Northern Ireland for the Local and Global Citizenship curriculum (due to become statutory in 2005 or 2006)<sup>9</sup>. Five teachers from St Joseph's will be involved with this training, in addition to the two teachers who were involved in the first phase of the pilot project.

Also in 2001 an organization called Cooperation Ireland<sup>10</sup> established a Civic Link<sup>11</sup> project in order to join schools in Northern Ireland with schools in the Republic of Ireland on common action learning projects. The Civic Link programme is funded by the US government and mirrors a successful US initiative aimed at promoting civic engagement. St Joseph's was invited to participate in the Civic Link programme and accepted with enthusiasm. Teams of post-16 students engaged on these action learning activities and school links for three years from 2001-2003. In addition, the teacher coordinator made two visits to the USA to train for the Civic-Link programme.

In 2003 St Joseph's was invited to participate in the work of Public Achievement (PA)<sup>12</sup>. This project also involves action projects, but is based on teams of young people working within their own schools (or community contexts) and being facilitated by trained coaches. The young people are given a high degree of autonomy in terms of the projects they undertake. The overall aim of the initiative is to encourage the young people to learn the skills of civic engagement and negotiation, and to provide them with a sense of efficacy arising from democratic engagement for change. Once again St Joseph's accepted the invitation with enthusiasm and a number of teachers in the school were trained as coaches and work with groups of students from Years 8-10<sup>13</sup>. In addition, a number of Public Achievement workers come into the school once a fortnight to act as coaches.

In each of the three programme areas, the decision to engage in the work was taken by the Principal and endorsed by the Senior Management Team and Board of Governors. The main rationale was that work in CE fitted within the broader ethos of the school, which the Principal described in the following terms:

I saw citizenship as an ethical thing, but also a way of self-development of children, which could permeate their whole lives and could actually take on, in a focused way, what we were trying to do with them. So, in other words, citizenship, civic link, PA can give a better shape and focus to the ... aims which we have, which are to raise young people who can take their place in society.

The Principal identified teachers who she felt would be interested in the projects and invited them to consider running with the activity. In each case this invitation was taken. The Principal also considers it important that parents are kept informed about these developments and that this commitment is firmly set within the whole-school curriculum and pastoral context as a long-term objective.

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<sup>9</sup> For details of this programme see: <http://www.belb.org.uk/teachers/subjectsCitizenship.asp?ddid=328>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cooperationireland.org/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.civic-link.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.publicachievement.com/>

<sup>13</sup> The Principal visited the University of Minnesota in October, 2003 and had an opportunity to see Public Achievement work in the university and in local schools – she described this as important in developing her understanding of the project. In addition, there has been considerable planning towards sending a group of students on an exchange visit to the United States to carry out PA projects.

### **Educational content**

As will be the case in many societies, schools are invited to participate in a host of initiatives of one kind or another. Northern Ireland is no different and any school Principal can expect to receive numerous requests for participation in curriculum, development or research projects. In the case of St Joseph's the Principal was very keen to develop a series of projects on aspects of Citizenship Education. There were two main reasons for this. The first was that work in this area was seen as enhancing the school's existing efforts to encourage the holistic self-development of its students. As noted above, the Principal described it as part of an 'ethical commitment' to an approach to education that sought to develop the whole personality of the children. A deliberate attempt has been made to mainstream this as a normal part of the school's activity, including its inclusion on the timetable, a commitment of teacher time and inservice support, and the inclusion of citizenship education prizes in the school's annual awards.

A subsidiary reason for involvement in this area of work is that the new Northern Ireland Curriculum will include Local and Global Citizenship, so involvement in projects related to Citizenship Education was seen by the Principal and Senior Management Team as timely and appropriate preparation for new statutory requirements in the future.

The Civic Link project (now completed) involved 16-18 year old students (Years 12 and 13). This was largely an extra-curricular activity, although with most work carried out within the school day. Annually it also involved one residential visit to the link school in the Republic of Ireland and hosting a visit from students from that school. St Joseph's was in Civic Link for three years, but a change in the criteria for inclusion meant that they could no longer continue. Students who were involved in the project have all gone into higher education or will go this year – in the Principal's view this success was helped by participation in the project.

The CCEA Local and Global Citizenship programme is targeted at 11-16 year old students, but for the moment St Joseph's provides this as part of the normal timetable to 120 students in Years 8 to 10 (ages 11-14 years), with two class groups involved in each year-group. The same students are involved in the Public Achievement action projects. The timetable provision for this work involves one class period of one hour per week on a two-week cycle. On one week the students receive a class of Local and Global Citizenship and are taught by one teacher; on the second week the class focuses on Public Achievement and each class is split into three groups, each of which is facilitated by a 'coach'. The Local and Global Citizenship teacher acts as a coach for one of the groups, and the other two coaches are provided by Public Achievement.

### **Educational process**

The Local and Global Citizenship programme involves a number of distinct strands<sup>14</sup>. Within St Joseph's it has been decided that each year-group will focus on one strand. Thus, the Year 8 students (11 year olds) focus on human rights, the Year 9 students focus on social responsibilities and the Year 10 students focus on democratic participation. The Local and Global Citizenship classes concentrate on the specific curriculum strand for each year group, and the action projects identified for the Public Achievement work also focus on activities related to the curriculum strand. In this way the Principal hopes that the two activities support and complement one another: the Local and Global Citizenship class providing curriculum content and process, while the Public Achievement class provides active learning.

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<sup>14</sup> The four strands are: (1) diversity and inclusion (2) human rights and social responsibilities (3) equality and justice, and (4) democracy and active participation.

The Public Achievement action projects are action-oriented in practice. The pedagogy used by coaches is very different in comparison to 'normal' classroom teaching: perhaps this is best characterized as an approach which encourages greater autonomy among pupils by helping them to develop the skills of active citizenship and encourages them to think responsibly and practically on how social change can be achieved. One of the challenges to teachers provided by this alternative approach is that it changes the nature of the relationship between teacher and student. The Principal described it as follows:

... it will develop better relationships generally, relationships which are not based on authoritarianism, which is what they shouldn't be, but on mutual respect, which is our aim in the school.

From the perspective of the Principal, an advantage of running both these programmes in the school is that they complement one another and thereby enhance the overall aims of the commitment to Citizenship Education:

We are in an evolving position and we will get a better language as we go. As a start, the children who have gone through citizenship have learned that there is a better way than fighting, that you can explore things in a safe way, if you're prepared to work with other people. It's about giving them a language of negotiation.

The pilot stage of the CCEA Citizenship Education programme included training and feedback sessions with the project coordinators, and the sharing of curriculum materials that were developed through the project. Now that this programme has moved to another stage, the local education authorities are running a training programme for up to five teachers in each secondary school. An impressive teacher pack of material has been produced for this training and as a resource for teachers.

The Public Achievement action projects are supported by the PA group in Northern Ireland. PA provides training for coaches which introduces them to the distinctive action pedagogy of the initiative. In addition, PA has a number of interns and staff from other countries (currently, Spain, South Africa and the United States) and visitors from PA programmes in other countries (Palestine/Israel, South Africa, Serbia, United States) who occasionally provide some support in St Joseph's. According to the Principal this external support for the work in the school is very important: the fact that training and resource support is a fundamental part of the activity helps to underpin the seriousness of the activity, while the involvement of key workers from other countries and traditions is seen as an extra advantage by teachers and students, not least in adding to the plural atmosphere which the school seeks to generate.

The Principal thinks it entirely possible that a logical outcome of the work underway in the school will be a request from the students for a School's Council. Her preference is that this proposal emerges from the students, rather than be provided to the students by the school. Whether this occurs or not, the next planned stage of development on Citizenship Education involves a collaborative project involving St Joseph's and a number of other schools in Belfast. The project will involve the current Year 10 students and will be facilitated through the [www.adream.tv](http://www.adream.tv) website and resources made available through the C2K programme through which every school in Northern Ireland has been provided with leading-edge ICT facilities.

### *School organization*

The Principal was the prime mover behind the introduction of the various Citizenship Education programmes in St Joseph's. In order to incorporate these activities within the life of the school it has been important to gain the support and cooperation of the Senior Management Team, especially as the intention was to include Citizenship Education work as a formal part of the timetabled curriculum and not simply as an add-on extra-curricular activity outside normal school hours.

For the moment the Principal has been content to let enthusiastic and committed teachers across the school take on responsibility for the various activities under the Citizenship banner. She felt that there were teachers on her staff with the enthusiasm and capacity to take on these tasks and, to date, this faith in her teachers has been confirmed. Currently the teachers directly involved in the various Citizenship initiatives come from across the specialist areas of the school, including teachers of Mathematics, Religious Education, Business Studies and History.

As part of the action projects students are encouraged to approach teachers and other staff in the school in order to gain information about various areas. An interesting consequence of this is that teachers beyond those directly involved in the Citizenship Education programmes have gained an awareness of the skills being developed among the students. This is drawing some of them into more engagement with Citizenship Education issues.

At the moment there is no formal post of responsibility for Citizenship Education, but such is the rate at which the work is developing in the school that such a position may be established at some point in the future. The key feature of the overall project to date has been its evolving character, and it is clear that the Principal and senior management are keeping a close eye on this evolution in order that the school structures adequately reflect the position of the subject in the school.

### *School environment*

The majority of the students attending St Joseph's are drawn from two inner-city communities where the levels of social and economic disadvantage are very high: this is reflected in the fact that 57 per cent of the students in the school are eligible for free school meals. In addition, the families of many of the students do not have strong educational experience and many of their parents will themselves have had negative experience of school. All of these environmental and social factors raise the challenge to the school in developing programmes that will engage the interest and enthusiasm of students, and challenge the fatalism that is all too evident in many disadvantaged communities in Northern Ireland.

An additional set of circumstances is provided by the context of religious and political division in Northern Ireland, and the fact that it is a society struggling, with some difficulty, to emerge from a quarter-century of political violence. It is indicative of the problem of dealing with the legacy of this violence that the main political parties in Northern Ireland find it difficult to find ways of working agreed and shared political structures. In such circumstances there are likely to be limits and constraints on Citizenship Education programmes in schools.

The Principal spoke candidly about these constraints. The official policy of the Board of Governors of the school for many years, as with many schools in Northern Ireland, had been to establish St Joseph's as a neutral space, a safe haven for students where they would not feel obliged to challenge or be challenged by the sectarian and political divisions that poison the

wider society. The new skills and experiences being developed by the students are opening up new possibilities for the school. They have received visitors from such organizations as the Community Relations Council<sup>15</sup> and the Equality Commission who can provide dispassionate information on key areas of Northern Ireland society that are being addressed through the Peace Process. There is a growing view in the school that the students are ready and able to engage with these perspectives.

The Principal does not feel, however, that the school is yet in a position to welcome representatives of the different political parties in Northern Ireland in to talk with the students. There is a concern that some parents may be uncomfortable with this, not least due to the legacies of the conflict in the areas from where many of the students are drawn. In a similar vein, while the Police Service in Northern Ireland engages with the school, as appropriate, on civil and legal matters, it is probably not yet appropriate to have PSNI officers address the school as a whole. These are difficult matters, reflective of the troubled history of Northern Ireland and the continuing tensions that are being addressed in the wider society.

It is the case, however, that the experience gained by the school through its involvement in citizenship education projects had made it more able to respond positively to other invitations: currently, for example, there are detailed discussions aimed at establishing a two-year anti-racism project to be carried out by St Joseph's and two other schools (a grammar school and a special school) for students in Years 9-13. In March, 2003, St Joseph's hosted a Public Achievement conference in which an expert from Minnesota and various other visitors participated and observed PA work in the school. The Principal is committed to the value of this type of engagement:

*We must be prepared to invite interested people in to observe and learn, and we must share good practice and example. I have teacher-volunteers willing to go to work with groups in other areas and countries – this is staff inservice work of the best sort.*

### **Monitoring CE initiatives**

Since most of the Citizenship Education programmes in St Joseph's are linked to external bodies, all of them also involve formal evaluation activities. Cooperation Ireland operates a standard evaluation project for the Civic Link programme. CCEA ran an evaluation project for the Citizenship Education Pilot project. And Public Achievement operates a number of evaluation elements in its civic engagement programme. Thus in all three cases there has been some external evaluation of the work going on within the school, as part of wider and more comprehensive evaluation projects.

Within the school itself there are no formal evaluation mechanisms in place. There are, however, numerous informal evaluation procedures, mainly involving regular communication and reflection on aspects of the work within the school. The teachers involved in the CCEA Citizenship Education programme reflect on their work and progress through regular meetings with teachers working on similar activities in other schools. The teachers working as coaches in the PA project also have regular debriefing sessions and training opportunities. The Principal and Senior Management of the school maintain an overview of the programmes and their consequences. The Principal has regular meetings with groups of students as part of their PA action projects and sees this as an important aspect of the overall programme. These meetings provide her with an opportunity to demonstrate to the students the seriousness with which the

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.community-relations.org.uk/>

school views the activity. In addition, it provides her with an opportunity to gauge the extent to which the wider aims and goals of the initiative are being achieved. In addition, and as mentioned above, the widening net of teachers interested and involved in these programmes is taken by the Principal as an indicator of success.

Sometimes the outcomes of this work are not entirely predictable, but are nevertheless tangible. We have already noted above the fact that students who participated in the Civic-Link project went on to enter higher education. In addition, five Year 10 students from St Joseph's who had been involved in PA work were selected by the Children's Commissioner in Northern Ireland to be trained as part of a youth panel which will assist in decision-making and staff appointments.

### *Expert's opinion*

There is little doubt that St Joseph's provides a model example of a school in Northern Ireland making a positive contribution to Citizenship Education. Over the quarter century of political violence in Northern Ireland many looked to schools and teachers to promote tolerance and reconciliation to young people. Since 1989 this work was placed on a statutory basis when the themes of Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage were placed on the statutory curriculum. Despite this status, however, research and evaluation on these themes suggests that they had a variable impact. There were some schools where truly inspiring work was carried out by teachers, but in many more schools the approach to these issues was more characterized by avoidance. In part the development of work on Citizenship Education in recent years is an attempt to deal with some of the weaknesses and gaps in the previous programmes. As noted above, the new Local and Global Citizenship programme is due to become statutory by 2005 or 2006.

St Joseph's is one of the schools that has grasped this new opportunity and carried out extensive preparatory work towards what is going to become a statutory requirement for all schools. However, the reason why St Joseph's has taken this opportunity is not just pragmatic, but also because this work is seen to fit into the ethos and mission of the school. Clearly the Principal's commitment to this area of work, and her ability to persuade the Senior Management Team and Board of Governors of the appropriateness of this approach, has enabled the school to make a serious, long-term commitment to Citizenship Education. The Principal herself would be quick to acknowledge the capacity and commitment of many of her teachers in seizing opportunities to develop work in this area. In addition, her view is that the extent of external support has been crucial in carrying the work on Citizenship Education forward.

At present there would appear to be three main potential sources of constraint on the further development of this work.

First, part of the success of the Citizenship Education work in St Joseph's, particularly over the past year, has been that the Year groups involved have not been taking the subject as part of a public examination process. The formal intention in Northern Ireland is that students in Years 11 and 12 may undertake a GCSE in Learning for Life and Work that would include significant elements of Citizenship Education. It is possible that the creative possibilities which clearly have been taken in St Joseph's for their Years 8-10 groups may not just be so freely available if the work is being geared towards formal examination. The school will have an opportunity to examine this possibility as the Local and Global Citizenship programme has been introduced for many Year 11 students – these students will take the examination in this subject at the end of the next school year.

A second possible constraint arises from the Catholic nature of St Joseph's. The school has traditionally taken a mainly Catholic enrolment, but in recent years there has been a conscious attempt to broaden its appeal to welcome students from other faith communities and traditions. This is in line with a wider development with the Catholic schools' system in Northern Ireland. However, the Principal was very clear that the autonomy accorded to the students in regard to the action projects they identified for the PA work had to fit within the values and ethos of the school. To date, in fact, this has not been an issue and it may never arise, but a likely consequence of Citizenship Education is that students become more prepared to question assumptions and mores, and this may arise as an issue in the future.

The third potential area for constraint lies in the context of Northern Ireland and the continuing difficulties experienced by our society in dealing with the legacies of a quarter-century of political violence. Colleagues from other European societies may think it strange that a school with such evident commitment to Citizenship Education nevertheless feels unable to allow a representative of the police to address a large-scale meeting of students (while being willing and able to work closely with the police on civil matters). But that is a current reality of Northern Ireland and is part of a wider process of change that is slowly, but tangibly, being undertaken. This context will, in all probability, provide a constraint with which the school will have to keep in mind for some time to come. However, perhaps one of the most important issues is that the school is aware of this context and of the need to consider ways in which the work in the school can be carried forward, at appropriate times.

## **Poland**

### ***Self-governmental Gymnasium no 1 in Gołdap, Warmińsko – Mazurskie Voivodeship, powiat Gołdap, gmina Gołdap*** ***By Jarosław Żukowski – KOSS teacher***

#### ***General information on the school***

The number of pupils in our school is 1000 and it is one of the biggest gymnasiums in the voivodeship. 13-16 years old pupils learn in our school. They come from different environments of white-collar workers, army officers and workers. About 30% come from families of the unemployed. Approx. 50% of pupils live in a town, 40% come from rural areas and they commute to school every day. Most of the pupils' parents from rural areas are unemployed. They are former workers of the State Farms, which were liquidated as the result of economic changes in the beginning of the 90's.

#### ***The origins of CE initiatives***

The introduction of Civic Education into schools was a result of the adoption of the new minimum curriculum requirements by the Ministry of National Education and Sport. The broaden program "Civic Education in a Self-governmental School – KOSS" was initiated in our Gymnasium by a teacher of history and civic education upon a consent of the School Headmaster and the local self-government (*gmina*). The beginnings of KOSS in Gołdap back to the period before the reform of educational system. This program was introduced already in the Primary School no 3 in Gołdap and covered pupils from VII and VIII grade. After the establishment of the Gymnasium in 1999 KOSS was introduced into the curriculum of grades I and II.

The introduction of Civic Education by means of KOSS program resulted from the need to look for new, better and more attractive (both for pupils and teachers) forms of activities within the lessons of this subject. Furthermore the teacher who initiated this program in our school knew other schools where this program was already implemented and seeing its outcomes tried to introduce it in our Gymnasium. The concern for good, new civic education for youth in democratic Poland motivated our teachers as well.

By introducing Civic Education (KOSS) we have obtained a very big moral support from the school management, financial support from the self – government authorities and when we launched the implementation of the program we gained also the support of pupils' parents. The biggest motivation for us was the enthusiasm with which our pupils welcomed KOSS.

Practically, in the beginning, there were not any obstacles to the implementation of the program. Only few years after the self-government authorities due to the strict economy planed to cut down the expenditures for Civic Education by 50%. Thanks to the defence of KOSS organized by teachers, pupils and parents, Civic Education in our school was maintained on the same level. I think that the achievements of our pupils (and in the past of younger children) as well as the teachers played also an important role in changing the economic decision of the self-government authorities. KOSS managed also to change the attitudes of young people who entering their adult life have more mature civic competences.

#### ***Educational content***

Bringing up new citizens in a democratic spirit, pluralism and raising the level of activity of citizens in local environment - these are the aims of Civic Education and KOSS program. The



Civic Education should change also the attitudes of the closest pupils' environment: their parents, friends and neighbours.

The overall aims of Civic Education were defined in KOSS program, which was developed by the Centre for Civic Education (CEO) in Warsaw. On the basis of these aims teachers wrote detailed teaching plans adjusted to conditions and situations of their own schools. The teaching content of Civic Education in our Gymnasium was also included in the School Development Plan worked out by the teachers and the management of the school. Civic Education within the teaching plan of our Gymnasium covers pupils from I and II grade. It means 13 – 14 years old. Older pupils may also participate in other forms of Civic Education organized in our school.

### ***Educational process***

Civic Education in our school is a separate subject. There are 2 lessons per week of KOSS in each class. Additionally we also implement different economic, social and cultural projects. We implement youth projects in cooperation with CEO in Warsaw within the scope of the program "Youth in action" and "Traces of the past". In the school year 1998/99 we had been implementing a Polish – American project „River speaks”. In the school year 1999/2000 we had been implementing an economic project „Frying pan full of lard - family life in Gołdap” The work of our youth within this project was awarded by Aleksander Kwaśniewski - the President of the Republic of Poland, who invited our pupils to participate in the celebration of Saint Nicholas Feast organized traditionally by the President on 6 December 2000. In the school year 2000/2001 we had been implementing a historical project „Our outstanding heritage – war cemeteries in Gołdap region”, presently, for two years, we have been running a project “Ancient ceremonies of calling the ghost of the dead in the tradition of the Poles and national minorities of Northern and Eastern Poland”.

Since two years we have been organizing a competition of civic knowledge and skills “ KOSS – Championship League”. The name of the competition is connected with the fact that its different parts are organized during a school year on the basis of the system of UEFA cap - ties. 100 pupils participate in this competition every year.

In the year 2002 having completed a training organized by the National In-Service Teacher Training Centre - CODN „Multicultural education in school...” I provided lessons on this subject within the number of lessons, which were at the disposal of the Class Master.

There is also a School European Club in our Gymnasium. About 30 pupils are involved in the activities of this Club. The aim of this Club is to disseminate knowledge about the European Union and the accession of Poland to the European Community.

All school activities connected with Civic Education, in particular projects, are based on the cooperation between the school and local self – government authorities, parents and their school representation –The Parents Council. We also cooperate with different associations (ZHP, PTSM) foundations (Polish Humanitarian Action), other organizations and local institutions (National Park of Romincki Forest).

### ***School organization***

In terms of organization the school is a self-government establishment, that is why the activity of the school is closely related to the conditions and needs of the local environment. We can always count on the aid of the local environment in reaching our goals within the scope of the implementation of Civic Education. Local self-government authorities, local cultural animators,

employees of different associations actively cooperate with our school in the implementation of different projects, programs and activities (e.g. voluntary service).

Teachers who together with the school management plan particular actions and evaluate them are responsible for the implementation Civic Education.

### *School environment*

The environment of pupils' parents is very diversified. There are the unemployed, entrepreneurs and employees of the local-self government institutions. Although we use many methods of influencing local environment developed by the Civic Education trainers we also face many difficulties. One of these deficiencies is a group of pupils living outside Gołdap, who after lessons have to come back homes. Their contact with the school is limited to the lessons of standard subjects. It is difficult to involve this youth in any kind of out-of-school activities. In this scope we can only count on those pupils who can come to such meetings by themselves.

Our work and achievements are also visible in the local press. Journalists are always invited to attend different school events and presentations of projects. We also edit news and information about our work by ourselves. This information is put on different Internet sites (e.g. CEO or the site of The Foundation for the Development of Gołdap Region, etc.)

### *Monitoring CE initiatives*

The activities of Civic Education in a gymnasium are subject to assessment and evaluation by the School Headmaster and within the procedure of the School Quality Measurement - by the Office of the Regional Educational Superintendent. The educational achievements, outcomes of extracurricular activities i.e. number of pupils involved in additional activities, opinions of associations running programs in which the school participates are also evaluated. The work of our Gymnasium in the field of Civic Education during past 6 years was awarded many prizes and diplomas. The Superintendent of our region who highly evaluated the outcomes of one of the projects was also present during its presentation.

**Poland****Portrait of Gymnasium no 51****By Lidia Korecka****General information on the school**

Gymnasium no 51 was established as a result of the reform of the system of education and was opened in the school year 1999/2000. Since that time we have shared the same building with the Primary School no 297, which will cease to exist this year. The school is located in Wola (one of the Warsaw districts), which in the past was called a workers' district due to the social statutes of most of its inhabitants in the 70's. Not rich environment, increasing unemployment, low level of mobility (former pupils send their children to the same school), rather low aspirations, many disadvantaged families. Children (youth) 13 –16 years learn in our school. This year there are 16 classes (I to III). The school is managed by a Headmaster and the Deputy Headmaster. 40 teachers, a school pedagogue, psychologist, socio - therapist, speech therapist and re-educator work in the school. The school provides also afternoon activities during which pupils have the possibility to do their homework. A psychologist runs the activities.

**The origins of CE activities (KOSS)**

Civic Education in a Self-governmental School *Kształcenie Obywatelskie w Szkole Samorządowej (KOSS)* has been provided for 9 years in our Gymnasium. It started to be implemented already in the Primary School no 297. The introduction of this very interesting program (the Award of the Ministry of National Education and Sport) - was an initiative of the Centre for Civic Education (*Fundacja Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej – CEO*). CEO outpaced the reform of the education system for few years, trained few thousands of teachers all over Poland preparing them in an excellent way to work in a reformed school. This program became an alternative solution for those (very often indoctrinating) that were implemented in Polish schools up to then. Thanks to very innovative and interactive methods this program was also very attractive for pupils. The introduction of KOSS into schools was possible thanks to the very positive attitude of educational authorities and financial support from local self- governments, which as a result of administrative reform of the country overtook the supervision over schools. All over Poland, also in our Gymnasium, where KOSS has been implemented since its creation, open lessons with the participation of school Headmasters and the representatives of self-governments have been provided. The biggest obstacle to this program, within a school, was to convince teachers of other subjects to new methods and their effectiveness, to encourage them to use these methods during their lessons and to change their mentality. Pupils and their parents have been very enthusiastic about this program since its beginning.

**Educational content**

The aim of KOSS is to provide pupils with broad, but also easily acquired, political and social (the program includes also a module "*Preparation to family life*") knowledge as well as, and may be first of all, to shape civic attitudes and skills which will enable young people to live in a democratic, civic society, to make them be interested in the World (closest environment and its problems), to make them undertake initiatives and to develop the activities of pupils' councils. The scope of the KOSS program is in accordance with the teaching standards laid down by the Ministry of National Education and Sport. There should be 3 hours of civic education per week during 3 years educational cycle in gymnasium. This year in our school pupils of 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> class have 1 hour of civic education per week, and pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> class have two hours per week (one hour is an additional hour which is at the disposal of the school Headmaster). The smaller amount of civic education lessons is a result of savings in schools. Originally KOSS was run on the basis of 2 hours per week on all teaching levels, which was an excellent idea.

The assessment of achievements in civic education is not an easy task and has to comply with the school internal assessment system at the same taking into consideration the specificity of this subject. The assessment standards prepared by CEO are of a great help for the teachers (so called "hard knowledge" is assessed by way of tests and e.g. portfolio and projects are assessed on the basis of many elements – choice of materials used, performance, presentation etc.).

### **Educational process**

KOSS is mainly implemented by use of interactive methods very much appreciated by pupils. Discussion, point discussion, debate, metaplan, simulations, role-playing, and projects – these are methods used during KOSS lessons. Civic education is a separate subject in our school. Its elements are also introduced during lessons of other subjects: Polish language, foreign languages (German and English in our school), history, geography, ICT, tutorial hours. KOSS assumes the cooperation between teachers of different subjects, particularly in the implementation of such projects as: "The European Day", "Young citizens in action...", "Youth goes to the election polls" (our Gymnasium has participated in this event 7 times) – twice we elected the President of the Republic of Poland, members of the Parliament and the President of Warsaw. A year ago (in June 2003) we participated in a youth referendum on the accession of our country to UE. We are very proud of participating in the newest and biggest CEO project (its implementation lasts 2 years) "*The traces of the past – pupils adopt historical monuments - following the traces of November Insurrections in the district of Wola*". The aim of the project is to mark educational paths and to renovate the symbolic grave of gen. Józef Sowiński. Our pupils participated also in a national presentation of this project in the Royal Castle. They also took part in radio programs. The local self-government authorities support this project financially. Parents, the vicar of the Saint Wawrzyniec Parish and other institutions such as the Museum of the District of Wola and the Institute of National Remembrance also participate in the project.

As a part of developing the activities of pupils' councils we organize pupils' assemblies. One of the topics of such assemblies was – "Reasons for not doing homework and avoidance of certain lessons". During next assembly we will discuss if our Gymnasium is a pupils – friendly school. For 3 years, few times a year we have organized workshops for the representatives of the pupils' councils. A team of peer mediators has been acting for 2 years within the teaching standard "Safe school". This team successfully helps, without any aid from adults, their peers to resolve their problems. Members of our school council are elected in a democratic way. We have also the Pupils Ombudsman. The pupils together with their parents and teachers prepare and issue their opinions on school legal documents: the School Statutes and Rules of proceeding. We have also an internal assessment system and criteria of assessing pupils' behaviour. The voluntary work service is getting more and more popular among pupils. Two years ago we were awarded the *Certificate of Learning School (Szkoła ucząca się - SUS)*, and this year we have obtained a title of "*High Quality School*" (*Szkoła z klasą*). KOSS lessons are run in a special classroom with a carpet and without chairs and tables. The pupils' works are displayed on the classroom walls. Audiovisual equipment and video camera are at pupils' disposal.

### **School organization**

The very friendly and positive attitude of the school management, supportive attitude of teachers and the local self-government authorities as well as very fruitful cooperation with CEO encouraging us to undertake initiatives enhance the appropriate and effective implementation of civic education activities in our school.

### ***School environment***

The successful achievements of pupils depends to a large extent on the environment (first of all a family) in which they are brought up (the role of school is obvious). As it was already mentioned in this paper our pupils' parents are indigent, with rather low level of aspirations, only small percentage of them have diplomas of higher education. We have to add to this list decreasing feeling of social security (loss of employment, difficulties in finding employment, increasing costs of daily life, lack of prospects, crisis of trust in politicians...). The result of this deteriorating situation is the indisposition towards involvement in public life. This phenomenon may be also noticed in a school. The second environmental factor includes participation in informal youth groups that can result in the risk of drugs taking, aggression and violence. Our school does a lot of things to give our pupils a possibility of self-development and the feeling of security. The aim of a wide range of out-of-school activities (subject deepening meetings, sport clubs, etc.) is not only to develop pupils' interests but also to give them a proposal to spent their leisure time after lessons differently. The programs for pupils connected with the prevention of such risks as drugs, alcohol, violence; trainings: *How to fight stress, Learning to learn*; pedagogical trainings for parents (the latest one on the risks connected with "The use of internet – making new friends") are run in our school.

The activities of the team of peer mediators teach pupils problem solving and the responsibility.

### ***Monitoring CE initiatives***

KOSS teachers, monitored by the school Headmaster, are responsible for the implementation of the program. This cooperation is very good. The pupils, their involvement in new activities and initiatives of doing something for themselves and the others (e.g. a motion submitted to local authorities on the necessity of renovation of the school yard, or the establishment of a School Sport Club), activity of the school council and pupils' interest in issues of the local environment are the best evaluation of our work.

### ***Expert's opinion***

I consider the introduction of KOSS into schools (those which were interested in it) to be a very big success not only of the authors of this program, but also of parents and pupils. I am entitled to express such opinion because of these 9 years of working with this program. The program that neither my pupils nor me are bored with. The program which gives opportunities for anyone: excellent and poor pupils, teaches how to express own opinions, to discuss, to resolve conflicts, to cooperate within a group. It prepares very well to mature and responsible citizenship and active involvement in public life. This program is being constantly modified, enriched by new projects and ideas that are born on the basis of fast changing reality.

## **Portugal**

### **Secondary/3rd cycle Basic School Aurélia de Sousa Porto – Portugal**

**By: COSTA, Maria-Rosa (European Club coordinator and ASPnet co-coordinator); RODRIGUES, Delfina (President of Executive Board); SANTOS, Clementina (Head of Philosophy Department); SARAIVA, Maria-Luisa (Library and Resources Centre Coordinator and ASPnet co-coordinator); and SARMENTO, Fátima (Head of Physical Education Department).**

### **General**

Aurélia de Sousa School is part of the Portuguese state school system teaching 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> forms (12 to 18 year-olds). It is an ASPnet school (UNESCO Association of Schools Project), 7500 at world level, officially promoting peace, tolerance and international cooperation since 1953. Being part of ASPnet is an award we proudly exhibit in our school, and we religiously follow the items of the two-year application programme we submitted to our National Commission. CE initiatives comply with the directives of the Portuguese educational system, and the bi-annual programme of activities submitted to the UNESCO Commission. The President of the Executive Committee took an oath to further this two-year plan, and guaranteed the effective commitment of the whole school community: the Pedagogical Council ratified and pleaded to execute the Plan at the level of Departments, Class Directors, Teacher Training Centres, Students Association and Parents Association. Aurélia de Sousa School inscribes CE teaching inside and outside the Classroom according to the principles of the Educational Project of the school and School Regulations.

Educational Project – *Me /Others: Others/Me* - Proposed by the Executive Council, calling the whole school community to define and integrate all the action levels, including a parents association and local authorities. By law, the educational project is proposed by the educational system and it is valid for a three-year period. Every three years, it is revised, updated, and shaped to fit the subsequent generations of students. Since 10 October 2002, the date of submission of the ASPnet Project to the Portuguese National Commission, the educational project of Aurélia de Sousa has guided itself within the principles of UNESCO Schools. The school has taken the responsibility to adopt UNESCO principles. The methods used include teamwork, cross-subject communication, innovation, and the introduction of the world outside into the classroom, including the examination of the topics in UNESCO publications. Therefore, following the curriculum, each discipline and each teacher bring the world into the classroom as much as possible.

Meanwhile, a Plan of Activities is defined in the Pedagogical Council to further CE and Citizenship across the curriculum and even extra-curricular, inside the school each year. Here, we have to distinguish between Basic Education and Secondary Education.

Annual Plan of Activities - According to Regulations of the Portuguese Basic Educational System (6 to 15 year-olds), students dedicate one hour per week to CE to induce a system of values into younger students upbringing. The *Civics Education* Programme is defined for all the *Basic Education* students in our school as a result of a needs-analysis study. The main themes covered this year were: On-the-road education, how to deal with feelings, education for a healthy living including good eating habits and eating ailments like anorexia. These initiatives are supported by teams of nutritionists prepared by the Ministry of Health, cooperating with the Ministry of Education to this very purpose.

For *Secondary Education (15 to 18 year-olds)*, the various organs of the school define an annual plan of activities to further CE and above all Citizenship. Each subject Department proposes a number of activities to breathe life into the principles of the educational project of the school.

The enumeration of some activities is given as an illustration of content, procedure and sequencing of part of the annual plan of activities of the school CE organization. The school portrait follows according to the proposed guidelines.

### *The origins of CE initiatives*

Who: Teachers, students and parents following the directives of the Portuguese educational system create CE initiatives. Local authorities and NGO's such as UNESCO, Antonio Almeida Foundation, European Schoolnet, European Union programmes such as Socrates, Young Reporters for the Environment are valuable support for these initiatives.

When: The ASPnet project was initiated in October 2002 when the school submitted it to the National UNESCO Commission.

It was initiated at that moment because there had been work done on volunteerism, Human Rights, tolerance, international cooperation and other guidelines common to UNESCO principles. A group of teachers got together and realised that to belong to the ASPnet network would empower and honour our institution greatly. Therefore, the European Club Coordinator and Library and Human Resources Coordinator submitted the school project. The President of the Executive Council agreed to lead the school project as she felt the school was ripe to apply to this network.

### Whose support was invoked?

In the application, the proponents invoked the methodological and moral support of the whole school at the various levels of management endorsed by the President of the Executive Council and the whole School Community.

### Whose support was obtained?

The school obtained the support of the Portuguese UNESCO Commission, The Young Reporters for the Environment, European Socrates programme, the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art in Porto, Antonio de Almeida Foundation, Local and Municipal Authorities, businesses and others.

### Obstacles:

1. The floating teaching body has some adjustment difficulties; few teachers appointed for only one year become interested in the continuing initiatives of the institution.
2. There is a certain individualism, which is detrimental of the collective enterprise.
3. It takes time until some authorities learn how to listen to the evaluation of lower ranks of the hierarchy.
4. Aurélia de Sousa school juggles with problems of space and harsh working conditions like unheated classrooms and less than fair support facilities.
5. Although the middle levels of management respond fluidly to team decisions, the majority of teachers focus mainly on classroom practice.
6. Projects like these are specially supported by the idealism and stubbornness of people who believe and volunteer extra time and work, and whose reward is mainly the warm feeling that they are doing good, shown by that certain smile on people's faces.

### ***Educational Content***

Which goals: The goals defined for CE according to the Educational Project and the corresponding Plan of Activities are to educate the students as a whole person together with himself or herself and living harmoniously with otherness (*I and the other/ the other in me*).

Who: The whole school community defines and proposes CE goals to the top levels of school management. The Pedagogic Council publishes, coordinates, monitors and evaluates them

How: The school defines CE goals in terms of cognitive and affective objectives, attitudes and behaviours. In CE, goals are only achieved in terms of learning by doing in fair play and teamwork, which reflects in behaviours and, ultimately, in terms of the individual's character as a whole person and a member of society.

#### How are they reflected in the curriculum?

According to the Regulations of the Portuguese Basic Educational System, students dedicate one hour per week to CE, the main objective of which is to induce a system of values into Basic Education students' upbringing, based on UNESCO principles. The *Civics Education Programme* is defined for all the *Basic Education* Students in our school as a result of a needs-analysis study. The main themes covered this year were: On-the-road education, how to deal with feelings, education for healthy living including good eating habits and eating ailments like anorexia. These initiatives are supported by teams of nutritionists prepared by the Ministry of Health cooperating with the Ministry of Education to this very purpose.

For *Secondary Education*, the various organs of the school define an annual plan of activities to further CE and above all Citizenship. Each subject Department proposes a number of activities to breathe life into the principles of the educational project of the school. The ASPnet Project is only a small part of this plan of activities, but can illustrate a sample of initiatives coordinated by the ASPnet Coordinators and the European Club.

#### How do they reflect in the curriculum?

These initiatives are curricular and extra-curricular. Each subject contributes its expertise and works together with the other subjects across the curriculum, in a kaleidoscopic way, to achieve common results in the whole school, such as educating a public for the theatre, educating towards defence of the environment, educating towards a healthy body and a healthy mind, educating for a sports culture and fair play.

#### How are the results assessed?

The results are assessed by means of interviews to the implicated members, turnouts, meetings convened for the purpose, reports to the members of the School Bodies such as the School Assembly and the Pedagogical Council. They are published in summarised reports of the meetings of the administrative bodies, or publications such as the school newsletter and the school website, and sometimes in media external to the school community.

### ***Educational Process***

#### What methods or instructional principles have been adopted to 'teach' CE?

The methods used to teach CE are mainly: 1) project-based methodologies, 2) task-oriented activities, 3) result-targeted evaluation and 4) curricular activities integrated with cross-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Therefore, a variety of approaches used in class for all



the subjects combine with action-oriented ones. It is hard to enumerate them all, but it is possible to highlight a few.

1. *Search information /Present findings*: Students often search information on topics using modern technologies and present their findings on various supports, such as poster exhibitions, oral presentations, or multimedia presentations both individually and group work.
2. *Organization of events*: Different members of the school community organize seminars and elicit presentations of the participant students. An example is the programme "*Ler consigo*" meaning *I can read to/with you*, in which an alumnus, now a professional translator, was invited. Guest Experts are often invited.
3. *Simulations*: students organize and maintain their own Vegetable Garden Patch at school.
4. *Writing for Publication*: Students contribute articles to be published at a European Forum. In connection with Young Reporters for the Environment, students published four articles on environmental issues such as "Forest Fires", "Waste Management", "Energy from Biomass" and "Clean Technologies."
5. *Exhibitions*: Teachers and students organize an exhibition on the New European Partners and symbolically welcome a class from a school in a neighbouring town in the Spring in Europe Celebration.
6. *Newsletter*: Students write articles on their favourite topics and report on school activities in the school newsletter.
7. *Student Website*: Students keep their own site in the Internet, where they inform the school community on aspects such as marks, or the activities taking place at school as well as keeping fora of discussion on issues such as abortion or terrorism.
8. *Visits*: Students go out of school and visit museums, foundations, environmental facilities, and others to further certain goals.
9. *Drama*.
10. *Video production*.
11. *Tournaments*.
12. Nature walks and *sports and cultural activities* in the open such as forests or natural parks.
13. *School trips*.

Is CE an identifiable subject in the 'regular' curriculum (or is it taught in conjunction with other subjects)?

In Basic Education, CE is one hour each week: it is not a subject like the others, though. Generally speaking, CE is taught inside the regular curricula of the various subjects, across the curricula and extra-curricular.

What cross-curricular or extra-curricular activities are undertaken to support CE?

These activities are varied and usually cover all subject departments. They are organised each year with the input from all departments into an Annual Plan of Activities. For the benefit of exemplification the ASPnet Project is only a small part of this plan of activities but can illustrate a sample of initiatives coordinated by the ASPnet Coordinators.

Young reporters for the environment

Aurélia de Sousa School integrates a network at national level and its coordinator at international level - *Young Reporters for the Environment*, a UNESCO associate. There was a project at national level, implying participation at an International Mission in the Azores in September, and participation at the National Seminar, which took place at Coruche. A teacher, Maria da

Luz Carvalheira, and three students: Pedro Santos, 12th year, Catarina Bastos, 11th year, and Joana Monteiro, 10<sup>th</sup> year. Pedro Santos participated as seminar monitor and speaker in connection with the Azores Mission (vide: [www.youngreporters.org/](http://www.youngreporters.org/)).

Maria da Luz, a biology teacher, coordinates a 10th year class project of composting with the organic waste of the canteen. The resulting fertilizer is used in an organic vegetable patch, sown and planted by one 11th year class. At the international level, the school is part of a team with a Greek and a Turkish school presenting work on urban environment. Catarina Bastos, Sónia Moreira and Filipa José jointly wrote two articles that the international network published: one, *Spring Cleaning in our City*, on waste management and another on a European project using clean energy to move city buses, *H2 Buses*. This team won Article of the Month award in January. Hugo Durães, Andreia and Mafalda published an article on *Forest Fires*. Lígia Massena Claudia Alves and Daniel Alberto told about the benefits of a Water Treatment Station they visited at Parada, Maia. The residual waters of the place are cleaned before they flow into the river Leça; the solid residue is transformed into valuable fertilizer in agriculture, by composting at an industrial level, as the students do at school in a small scale; the gas exuded in the process produces biomass energy, used in the station, although this energy may be complemented by electrical energy from the regular public distribution.

#### European Citizenship

Implies participation in national and European fora. A Debate on the future of Europe, namely on the ECHELON programme, was enlivened by a candidate to the European Parliament, Miguel Portas, invited by the representatives of the students in the School Assembly. The debate also prepared the students to participate in a Project *The Assembly at School*. Led by a Geography teacher, Arlinda Ferreira, and the European Club, the 11th year students in the area of Economics and Humanities participated in the *Hemicycle Project*, on European Enlargement: one of the students from Aurélia de Sousa School was selected Vice-Chairman to the Regional round of the debate. This year, in cooperation with the European Schoolnet, the school celebrated *Spring Day in Europe*, on 1<sup>st</sup> April. The Economics and Geography subject groups and the European Club, organized a Welcoming Fair to the New Countries of the Union. Students organized a stand on each new country of the Union, representing their Cultural, Economic and Social resources. Then, the school and the European club symbolically welcomed neighbours by hosting the visit of a teacher and one class from a school from a neighbouring municipality, Gondomar. We sent a report to the European Schoolnet, which was published in the [www.futurum2004.eun.org](http://www.futurum2004.eun.org) site.

#### Reading Exchanges

Implies two projects: a pen-friend exchange via snail- or e-mail on cultural aspects of the students countries, initiated on *Spring Day* last year, 21 March 2003, which was called *Say Hello to a Friend in Europe*. The main goal is to create the Reader's Corner, by assembling a collection of favourite writers of the young participants. The Bulgarian partner school, a public school in Sofia is also a member of the ASPnet. But we are assembling more partners to the project as an on-going process.

The second project works at national level and was promoted by the Association of Teachers of Portuguese. It is called "I can read to/with you" and consists of choosing a favourite text to read to others. Its goals are to learn how to listen; understand the feelings and sensibilities of others; cultivate exchange of ideas, and to learn how to share. The school participated in this programme with an 8th year class and a 10th year class in the humanities area. A former student now a professional translator launched the session.

### Christmas in the World

This project started the year 2001-2, and new participations have expanded the project. At the beginning there were exhibitions on gastronomic customs at Christmas in the German- and English-speaking countries, promoting peace and good will. This year, Christmas music in various countries was highlighted and there was the special participation of a German AFS-student.

### Languages and Cultures week

In March, the language teachers and students celebrated Abolition of Slavery, to integrate the UNESCO year celebration. All language teachers in school, including Latin, Portuguese, French, German and English worked on the theme. Slavery was studied from various points of view from its History perspective to an analysis of new aspects of modern slavery which society imposes on the human being. It was a whole-school event and it lasted a whole week with daily exhibitions on each linguistic community, depending on the history of the speakers and culture of each language. The result was a whole week of fresh daily exhibitions, contests, games, music, drama and reports on the same topic to make the UNESCO YEAR of Celebration of Abolition of Slavery visible and to make it a real experience to the whole school.

### Www. esasmais.com

The representatives of students in the Pedagogical Council, elaborated and keep a website, where they inform the School Community on curricular and extra-curricular activities, including publication of students marks, activities of Students Association and discussion fora on topics such as abortion, terrorism and other topics of students choice at *www.esasmais.com*.

### School publications

The school newsletter, *Jornalesas*, publishes articles on school activities and topics of students' preference. It is a quarterly, but there is no Summer issue. Students develop the school paper with the cooperation of the teacher of Introduction to Communication Techniques. The newsletter is instrumental in giving a structure to school life, and forming a shared image of the institution in each school term. This year, for the first time *Jornalesas*, presents its virtual counterpart, integrated in the students website.

### Reflection on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, promoted by the Philosophy teachers and students

Exhibition of work done as a result of reflection in the philosophy lessons, consisting of texts, drama, video, questionnaires. The philosophy teachers and some other teachers also elaborate an Agreement on Student Principles. The dates of 16 November, the date of UNESCO Constitution, and 10 December, celebration of publication of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are celebrated.

### Interculture

Aurélia de Sousa participates in the international project of AFS (American Field Service) – Interculture. A German student integrates a regular Portuguese class 11th G, an arts class. According to the project, students, teachers and the school in general develop constant reflection and debate on what it means to live in another European country. This project permits a day-to-day form of coping with differences and common aspects between the Portuguese and this German student. It also provides hints on how to live together in Europe.

### Celebration of Unesco dates and international agreements

Following UNESCO guidelines, the school celebrates some important dates to the progress of humankind and creates a space for reflection and information on the significant content of these dates. An example is the main objective of 2004: Year of Celebration of Abolition of Slavery, Earth Day, and others.

#### International/national Day of the handicapped person

This celebration of European Year of Education through Sport entails the organization of games and sports all year round. The International and National days of the handicapped person were the opportunity to hold paralympic sports (Boccia, wheel-chair slalom, wheel-chair basketball and others) by guest technicians on sports for handicapped players and paralympic athletes. The main objective of this celebration is to make the school aware of ways to live, practice sports and socialize in a more inclusive society. The students have a chance to have a try at practising sports in a wheel chair to appreciate the handicapped person expertise better.

#### GuiJoTO 2006

A Comenius project in partnership with Italy and Bulgaria aims at developing a youth guide to the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino. The group working on the GuiJoTO project meets once a week to develop the materials for the guide and organize the reception programme of the Italian and Bulgarian partners in June. This project uses the skills of teachers and students in various areas such as History, Physical Education, Visual Arts Education and Languages.

#### Celebration of the first two-year period as an ASPnet school

SOUNDS OF THE WORLD is a multicultural show of music, movement and costume. António Almeida Foundation accepted to support the event by offering the auditorium. It will be held on 4 June 2004. Partner schools, university students associations, and immigrant associations of foreigners present shows of multiple ethnic popular Music and Dance.

#### Are CE activities reflected in the classroom climate?

CE activities are the content of some classes, and they always reflect in the classroom climate. School members expect CE to be the regular climate of the classroom and the whole school. Whenever the climate of the classroom may in anyway jeopardize a CE climate, teachers and staff are responsible to cope with the breach of a regular harmonious, civil climate. They are also supposed to report to the proper bodies of group organisation, and from here to the authorities if needed. Punishment may occur, but more often rule breaches integrate a stock of topics to be addressed in CE activities, in order to induce positive reinforcement to the members of the school community. Besides, activities such as *Spring Day in Europe* to Celebrate Enlargement of EU, or the Celebration of Abolition of Slavery to mention only two examples, directly influence class discussions and class achievement, integrated in the quantitative evaluation of some subjects.

#### Is the school organization itself used as an instrument to develop social cohesion and citizenship (e.g. by pupils' parliaments,...)?

1. The school organization is used as an instrument to develop social cohesion and citizenship. All members of the school community are governed by the *School Internal Regulations*. When students enter this community, they are welcomed by the school authorities or lawful representative, and they are given the regulations and invited to analyse them and present any comments they might see fit; then students and parents sign acceptance of school regulations.

2. The students are called to exercise their right to vote to choose their representatives: their class representatives, their representatives in the students' Association, their representatives in the Pedagogical Council and the School Assembly.

3. Besides that, the students take part in games, contests, and other initiatives for this purpose, such as the two national initiatives *The Hemicycle* and *The Assembly at School*. According to *The Hemicycle*, students organized a discussion on Enlargement of the EU. They elected their representatives to discuss the topic at a regional level. One student of Aurélia de Sousa was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Regional Parliament. *The Assembly at School* is a simulation of the procedures of the National Parliament: the students are lobbying against participation of the UK and Germany in the Echelon Network in order to protect privacy in a democratic way in Europe.

#### Does the school involve the world outside in furthering CE?

The school in general and the European Club in particular aim at including participation of Aurélia de Sousa school in the local, national, and European educational network.

#### How are teachers prepared for teaching CE?

There are training courses that teachers can choose to complete a certain amount of obligatory on-the-job training credits. These courses are not obligatory, though. They may be chosen from a span of offers. Besides, CE education is a team kind of work. Members learn from one another. Teachers have been appointed, having into consideration their own personal bending and profile.

#### ***School organization***

#### Which aspects of school organization are considered relevant for the development of social cohesion and citizenship?

Properly monitored autonomy, support of bottom-up group initiative and flexibility are important aspects of an organization, conducive to social cohesion and citizenship.

All levels of organization are concerned with the development of social cohesion and citizenship. The student is a whole human being, and harmonious development entails a knowledge of who you are, however different from your next-door neighbour, and a sense of belonging to a group where each citizen contributes with his/her own capabilities, only possible in a cohesive society. This starts in the programme of some subjects, such as Foreign Language or Introduction to Communication Techniques, History, Philosophy, and Physical Education but also in the programmes furthered in the European Club or writing articles for the school Newsletter. The Association of Students and student representatives at the level of the different organs develop activities of their own initiative be it of social, sport, cultural or leisurely nature, supported by the whole school.

#### How have the responsibilities for CE been arranged?

CE is considered more basic, pertaining Basic Education; Citizenship is considered a more developed stadium, pertaining specially Secondary Education, but this is not a rule. CE activities on Eating Habits were targeted at Basic and Secondary students, for example. As for Citizenship activities, all take active part in citizenship activities as voters, producing work for exhibitions, or taking initiatives themselves.

CE responsibilities have been defined at the various levels of decision. They are pertinent inside and outside the classroom. Each starts with the scheduling of CE Activities. The Pedagogical Council invites each organ to reflect on what happened the preceding year and to devise ways to address the needs of the school. Input comes from all participants in school. Then the Pedagogical Council organises, harmonises and schedules the inputs from the different units.

How do teachers and managers communicate on CE?

Teachers and managers communicate at meetings at the various levels from bottom-up and from top-down. All operational levels of activities are planned, executed, and evaluated at all levels. Besides, various written documents and reports are valuable communication channels. An emphasis on clear writing of minutes of meetings, reports, evaluation sheets, directives, a set of forms developed for any kind of action, or putting in writing any case there is no form designed for yet. Writing is a way to guarantee communication.

*School environment*

What factors in the families of the pupils are relevant for success and failure?

The supportive family is important for success. Our consumer society and living for the short-term seeks fast results and sometimes parents undervalue the long-term development of the individual and the community.

Parents usually do their best to give their children the best conditions in life in order to build a better society in the future. Aurélia de Sousa is located in a rather well to do area. However, each case is a case in itself:

1. Single-child families may produce insecure children and over-ambitious parents.
2. Single-parent families may put too much pressure on the young student, bringing him or her too much responsibility too early in life.
3. Contrasts on accessibility to consumer goods, may put too much pressure on families incomes to acquire goods they can't afford, like the most recent mobile phone or the best computer technology. Sometimes parents tend to be more aware of the material conditions or tend to overemphasize the cognitive aspects of education and quantitative results while undervaluing the overall development of the whole person.

How does the school deal with them?

The school deals with these problems by informing and reflecting on the problems with the parents at general meetings and through the class director: a teacher who works as the link between teachers, students and parents. The class director offers a friendly ear and moral support to parents in distress at meetings and person-to-person interviews. The school psychologist is available to interview and offer counselling whenever needed and sought.

What factors in the neighbourhood are relevant for success and failure?

The school is located in the modern mid-20<sup>th</sup> century surrounding area of the city, close to the Stadium of the most famous football club of the city and presently of the country. The area is undergoing radical changes for the EURO 2004 Championship. Although the community has this feeling of living in a continuing building site, everybody hopes all the present hassle will be for the better in the future.

The first time a national newspaper decided to publish rankings of schools based on marks of national examinations, Aurélia de Sousa came out as the best school at national level. It has been up in the top levels of classification, even when the Ministry of Education appointed a scientific committee to define what the evaluating parameters for schools should be based on school environments. However, living in contemporary society is full of jerks and jumps and the difficulties abound: they may be motivated by a rotating part of the teaching body, which has to get to know the school, and when they adapt, they have to leave. There are sometimes drug-dealers prowling in the surroundings of school. The teen-age students may be vulnerable to this problem.

How does the school deal with them?

There is a municipal programme called "Safe School" in which the police frequently patrol the surroundings of the schools. There is a so-called Support Centre to Addicts in the neighbourhood, which organises sessions on information, prevention, and Health Education. The Parents Association is always present with support to school initiatives and with some initiatives of their own.

What factors in the (electronic) media that children are exposed to are relevant for success and failure?

Electronic media usually bring more information and more entertainment but also massification, standardization and unsafe and artificial virtual relationships. People become less critical. They are less aware of what life is about.

Students are eager to use the few computers available in the library for student use. They use all the available time they have, popping in the resources centre even during breaks to use the little time there is a computer available. Students sign up orderly to gain the right to use a computer, but the means available are scarce. There were some cases of misuse of the material, which could not go unpunished. The resources centre also makes films or documentaries available for viewing. Students are more informed and more responsible if they seek information.

How does the school deal with them?

CE, teacher-student projects, and formal and informal interaction help students sift information and build a balanced consciousness on today's society.

*Monitoring CE initiatives*

Are the described CE activities subject to monitoring or evaluation?

CE initiatives are subject to monitoring and evaluation: first, they are self-evaluated by the organising team; then, they are evaluated by the School Assembly and the Pedagogical Council. The Pedagogical Council channels information on their evaluations to the school community at large via summary of the Pedagogical Council meeting discussion.

When it comes to evaluation, parents are informed both about cognitive achievement, and affective, attitudinal and social development. For pre-secondary students there is a student portfolio where CE evaluation is considered. For secondary students, besides quantitative scores for each subject, all teachers in the class council are responsible for a short CE evaluation of each student. At the various meetings or evaluation sheets, teachers - managers and teachers - parents communication encompasses both the contents of the various disciplines and CE matters. These occur in term or final evaluations. Some teachers commit themselves to CE responsibilities more than others. It is frequent for Physical Education, History, Philosophy and Language teachers, and some of the teachers of scientific subjects to involve their departments more directly than other departments.

Which criteria are applied?

The criteria applied are: the *commitment* of the people concerned with each activity; the *appeal* to the members of the school community; the cognitive, affective, attitudinal, psycho-motor and social *values conveyed*, *diversification* and *inclusion* of most students and groups. These criteria are elicited in interviews to students, teachers, managers, middle management, and staff, who have their say on the course of activities.

*Turnouts* also show the interest and attention of these initiatives. It is frequent for two similar activities to take place. Since we have 1033 students, a large population, it is common for one initiative to be repeated in order to satisfy a group who could not participate the first time the initiative took place. Initiatives may be targeted at the participation of the whole school, such as the *Celebration of Abolition of Slavery*, or small groups, such as the *Reading Corner*.

What are the possible consequences of evaluation?

Evaluation provides a reflection of school activities on the agents and factors at stake in the school community. The results mirror a stadium of the school community's development. At the end of the year, this stadium is the launching pad for planning CE activities in the following year. Evaluation brings improvements, clarification, polishing. CE initiatives do not usually happen out of the blue, ad impromptu. A project takes time to mature and evolves piecemeal. It is like port wine: it takes time, toil and the right environment to reach the colour, bouquet and the flavour.

***Conclusion***

This project is feasible in the context of the Portuguese system of education. It took shape little by little. It all started by putting together a small framework of activities, which was expanded into other projects, with the input of the various individuals, in the various teams, working for the good of the students first, and ultimately, for the good of the whole school community. The main success traits of this project are positive reinforcement, inclusiveness, diversity, articulation and self-induced change.

If you jointly reflect on results, it is possible to infer the main success factors to know how to live together. Europeans are all different, but they have common duties, common rights and a long past of living close in the same continent. Sometimes differences were the source of conflict, not unlike family relationships where clashing interests may overcome affection bonds. Human rights and democratic values are the beacons that show us the way to live together. A knowledge-based, technology-aided society will bring European citizens the key competences to lead fulfilling lives together. By articulating these success factors identified, you can transfer them to new projects prone to success, in a spiralling continuum. The self-awareness of success empowers and motivates to new ventures: that is what makes us all what we are. Success brings more success.



*Sweden**Storvretskolan**By Birgitta Kimber*

Storvretskolan is a Swedish public primary and secondary school situated in the southern suburbs of Stockholm. The school has 700 pupils. About 50% of them come from immigrant families, and many are under-privileged. The school has given a profile to "Livskunskap" (Learning for Life) as a subject on its curriculum.

There has been considerable concern in Sweden about the increase in psychological ill-health (as manifested in depression, violence, and alcohol and drug abuse) among young people. The problem arises throughout the country, but there is a greater need for prevention in certain parts (e.g. the poor suburbs of the major cities).

Storvretskolan is situated in such a problem area, and a project designed to provide social and emotional training (SET) was started in 1999. The project has been supported by the Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, and the school itself through its own disposable funds. The head-teacher of Storvretskolan initiated the teaching in social and emotional skills. It was decided that all pupils should be instructed in competencies of these kinds. The aim of the project was to create a safe environment for pupils, where they learned skills that would enhance their life opportunities and which also could reduce psychological ill-health. Many young people do not get the opportunity to realize their full potential – not because they lack intelligence but because they lack skills in functioning together and cooperating. To be able to learn something, it is essential be able to work together with others. Learning does not take place in isolation, and therefore it is very important not to take for granted that pupils will acquire skills of this kind. If they do not have the skills they will not be able to achieve their full potential. Clearly, for each and every child, acquisition of such skills is one of the school's most important tasks. The SET programme teaches competencies that improve psychological health, and also ones that are important for learning. Bringing-up young people to lead a healthy life and to believe in democratic values is an important task for any school.

All schools in Sweden teach democratic skills. Pupils have their own union (which is organized nationally as well as by school), and every class has its representative in the school's own "parliament". The school's parliament has real power, and can decide on a lot of student matters. Pupils are also represented on the "school council" (a group consisting of teachers, parents, school leaders and students), where matters concerning the school and teaching are decided upon. What we did not teach before, however, are the skills that will enable all students to have a chance actively to take part in these processes, and to show concern and empathy towards peers and adults. These competencies are important for all pupils to attain, since they will help them to become responsible, caring young people with a healthy life-style.

The concept of *Emotional Intelligence* was important in constructing the SET programme.

Working with social and emotional training (SET) in school and preschool involves using tailored exercises to develop children's/pupils' social and emotional abilities. These exercises are taught in special SET lessons. The lessons are called "Livskunskap" in Swedish, which in approximate translation, means "Learning for Life".

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability continuously to observe one's own and others' feelings and moods, to distinguish between them, and to let that information guide one's

thinking and acting. On this definition, being emotionally intelligent means knowing what you feel, being able to detect what others feel, and using that information in the best manner. Examples include encouraging people when you feel this to be needed, and motivating groups of people to strive towards attainment of a common goal.

People who have developed their social and emotional skills understand and express their feelings, recognize the feelings of others, and are able to handle affects, and allow moods and feelings to motivate adapted behaviour. They are usually fun to have around, and they make others feel good. They can accept hardship in the short term because they know that reward may come later. They can, for example, make a sacrifice to help a friend, since they know they will be strengthened by it in the longer term. These people tend not to seek superficial pleasures, but highlight their feelings so that they can be of help on the path to maturity and growth.

Lack of social and emotional skills can lead to incapacity to distinguish between experienced feelings. Accordingly, it becomes impossible to plan life so that it is as meaningful as possible. Such a deficiency may mean that people, especially children and adolescents, have a greater tendency to be subdued. Not being able to handle your feelings makes it easier for you to be governed by them. If you find it difficult to understand the reactions of others, it is easier to be perceived as tactless or unpleasant – sometimes to the extent that people will avoid you.

People who are emotionally intelligent can control their lives, and they can influence other people. Those who are not tend to perceive themselves as victims; they end up in situations where they cannot cope.

Research has shown that, to the extent that there is a difference between children with emotional disturbances and those without them, the latter have a greater ability to control affects. Understanding emotions and being able to handle them is of importance to all children, whether or not they are in a risk zone with regard to health and well being or deviant behaviour. Development of these capacities can therefore be expected to be a key ingredient in preventive work in the health arena. If children find it hard to identify, or even misjudge, their own and others' feelings, the likelihood is greater, regardless of how intelligent they are, that they find bad or asocial ways of solving problems.

### *The SET programme*

Schools today face major problems. In particular, the level of violence among children and youth has risen. Many perceive the situation as almost hopeless. At the same time, society at large is struggling with an increase in psychological ill health, which has become one of our greatest public-health problems. Psychological ill health can lead to violence, depression, drug abuse, truancy, and so on, and must be prevented. Over the last decade in the USA efforts have been made to produce educational programmes that promote social and emotional skills, and thereby prevent psychological ill health. These programmes include training of the abilities that can be said to reflect emotional intelligence, namely to recognize feelings in oneself, to be able to solve problems in an adequate manner, to have the capacity to cooperate, to show empathy, to be capable of motivating oneself and others in relation to pre-set goals, and to be able to join in rewarding relationships.

The longer a programme is in progress, the greater is the opportunity for it to have an effect. Working preventively in relation to the psychological health of children and young people is important. The arena in which there are greatest possibilities of reaching everyone is, of course,

the school. But, achieving effective prevention requires a positive attitude and commitment on the part of school management. It also demands a positive approach to working preventively from teachers, and a willingness on their part to master the techniques involved.

The Swedish SET programme covers children and young people from the age of six through to sixteen. It is based on five aspects, during which training takes place on a regular basis (twice a week up to the age of about 13, and then once a week). All exercises have degrees of difficulties that rise with age. The aspects are:

- *SETf-awareness* – knowing what you feel and being able to use your feelings when reaching decisions; having a realistic assessment of your own abilities, and healthy self-confidence.
- *Handling your emotions* – Knowing why you feel a certain way and how to handle your feelings so that, instead of being self-destructive, they help you manage the task you are confronted with; being able to control your emotions, and having the capacity to wait for reward after having achieved a certain goal.
- *Empathy* – understanding how others feel, and seeing things from their perspective; appreciating that others feel differently, and being able to handle and understand such differences.
- *Motivation* – employing your inner drive to attain your goals; learning to take the initiative and striving for improvement; handling setbacks and frustrations on the path to goal achievement, and putting up with any delay in reaping the benefit.
- *Social competence* – being able to handle feelings in relation to other people; managing relationships, learning from social situations and being able to operate in diverse social environments (which includes making use of your feelings when cooperating, negotiating, solving conflicts and handling other people's emotions); having the capacity to utilize a variety of tools to solve conflict and problem situations.

Lessons are based on the following themes:

- Interpreting pictures and stories;
- Increasing activities that make you feel good;
- Handling peer pressure;
- Being able to say "No";
- "Reading" people and situations;
- Problem-solving;
- Handling strong feelings;
- Being similar/different;
- Values clarification;
- Handling conflicts;
- Cooperation;
- Recognizing one's feelings;
- Listening and communicating;
- Goal setting and working towards personal goals;
- Giving and receiving positive feedback;
- Stress management;

SET is a subject in the regular curriculum in the school

*SET practice*

The programme is based on social learning theory.

For a programme to have its intended effect requires the people working on it (usually teachers) to be aware of the ideas underlying the programme's design and how it is envisaged they should work with it. For teachers to be as successful as possible, the following aspects are important:

- Teachers must work with the programme on a regular basis, once or twice a week, and over a lengthy period of time. For pupils, this means that they receive SET lessons throughout their schooling. The teachers follow a manual.
- The programme must be presented so that pupils understand why they are working with it. You can speak for example about how important it is for people to reach their own decisions, to be able to solve problems, to be liked, to have friends, to be able to listen to others, and so on. Probably, you should also stress how important it is for people to take control of and have responsibility for their own lives.
- Each particular exercise and the utility of it should be presented. Let's say that you're working on the *listening position*. Then, the teacher has to talk about how important it is to be able to listen. For example, the teacher might say that everyone likes people who can listen.

When a teacher has presented the exercise, she/he shall be the model – offering personal examples or role-plays to illustrate what is to be learned. Taking the *listening position* as an example, the teacher might ask a pupil to tell a story. When the pupil is talking the teacher shows what you should not do, e.g. look the other way or start wandering around in the room. The pupils see exactly what they ought not to do. Then, the teacher can say "What should I do?". The pupils reply, and eventually agreement is reached on what a good listening position is. Thereafter, the pupils practice, e.g. by doing role-plays or training in pairs. They are also given homework where they should practice "for real".

If you are going to talk about "No" feelings, i.e. strong feelings of aversion that make people shout out "No", you can start by talking (preferably with empathy) about an occasion when you yourself felt that way, and then ask the pupils what they would call a feeling of that kind. Eventually, they will tell their own stories, and ultimately work out ways of handling "No" feelings.

Practicing in the classroom and as homework in real life is important. The training that this entails reinforces the behaviours that SET is designed to encourage. The homework also means that the teacher works together with parents. It is very important that parents are kept informed about what the school is doing and how it is doing it, so that they have a chance to participate. If the teacher, for example, is working on *calming-down* techniques, it is important that parents are aware of this, so that they can help the children to practice, and also to help them find the method that suits them best.

SET concerns an area in which parents are just as expert as teachers. Parents generally find it so important that they are only too willing to help. Parents must therefore be kept continuously informed about the aspects the pupils are working on so that they are enabled to take part. We have found, though, that we need to expand cooperation with parents. Accordingly, we are now planning to implement courses for parents where they are taught particular social and emotional

skills that will improve parenting. We know that the preventive effect will be a lot larger when both parents and children are involved.

Teachers' attitudes are important. That is, they must live what they teach. If they do not, it is doubtful whether a programme will have the intended effect. This means that a child will be surrounded by supportive adults and that the classroom climate is optimal. It also means that teachers have to be trained in social-emotional skills and classroom management, and that they continuously get supervision. Teachers have to be good at listening, engage in dialogue with the pupils, and so on. If a teacher fails in some respect, e.g. by losing her/his temper, this should be discussed. What happened? What did I do? What could I have done instead? The teacher must highlight good examples. Every time there is an example of pupils' using the techniques they have learned or displaying an attitude demonstrating social or emotional competence, the teacher should draw attention and give prominence to it. Also, during other than SET lessons, the teacher should remind pupils of what they have learned. Whenever problems or awkward situations arise, the teacher should refer to what the pupils have learned and encourage them to make use of it.

The teacher's attitude to the pupils' learning is very important. Does the teacher believe that the pupils will come to be able to control their own lives? To what extent is the climate in the classroom characterized by a willingness to cooperate, dialogue, discussion and other features that might promote autonomy and an ability to solve problems. How active are the pupils during the exercise? All these questions are significant to the outcome of SET.

The SET programme is being evaluated. Measures are taken every year. The following Self-report instruments are administered to all pupils:

*The Youth Self Report (YSR)* by Achenbach and Edelbrock (13), in an abbreviated Swedish version (13), measuring mental-health problems.

*Jag tycker jag är (I think I am)* by Ouviaen-Birgerstam (15), measuring self-esteem.

Some items from a questionnaire concerning alcohol, drug and tobacco use, and bullying, devised by Sweden's Central Association for Alcohol and Drug Information (CAN).

*The Social Skills Rating Systems* by Gresham and Elliot (16), measuring cooperation, assertion, self-control and empathy.

*The Mastery Scale* by Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan and Mullan (17), measuring depression and resignation/dejection.

*Social och emotionell förmåga – SEF (Social and emotional capacity)* – an instrument being developed at Linköping University in Sweden.

Also, observations of the teachers were made by two independent observers during the first two years (school years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002) regarding implementation issues like fidelity, how they use the concepts, and classroom management. Further, we have some interviews with teachers.

The evaluation is still under way, but certain things have already become obvious with regard to the success of implementing social and emotional training in school:

- The school leader must be positive and active in the implementation process.
- Teachers need training to teach these skills but also to master the skills themselves; classroom management skills are also important.
- There must be an opportunity for pupils to train, to exercise these skills; it is important that the subject is not only taught by reading and talking but by actually *doing*; behaviour techniques are vital.
- There must be cooperation with parents.
- All school personnel should be involved and trained to make sure the school climate reflects what is being taught.
- Continuous supervision is essential.
- Programme fidelity must be maintained.

It is important that the school is supported in its activities. The higher up in the hierarchy a program or the teaching of social and emotional skills is supported, the better will be the outcome. The school also has to organize the teaching and the subject area, in the same way it does with other subjects. This means that there have to be regular conferences where specific teaching matters are discussed. In Storvretskolan this has meant that "Livskunskap" is being discussed at least once a month among the staff. New personnel are being trained in using the program, and they receive supervision on an ongoing basis.