

Our Educational Approach to European Citizenship – How we think it should be done



T-Kit
on
European Citizenship

Building on the foundations of the concepts of European Citizenship and education for European Citizenship already explored, the challenge that remains for this T-Kit is to offer some guidance on how all these ideas can be transformed into practical action¹⁰. In particular this section will focus upon how to develop an ethos and practice that support our conceptual framework. For, while techniques might be simple and relatively easily learned, the complexity lies in their application, which requires experience, thought and skill to be successful (Merry and Titley, 1999).

We provide an educational framework inspired by the main ideas developed in this T-Kit so far; our view of citizenship, its history and the current challenges it faces, our conceptual framework for citizenship and an exploration of Citizenship Education. This framework is not and does not pretend to be a closed model. It is an open attempt at gathering together the most relevant

- general considerations,
- key competencies
- and knowledge

needed by European citizens to function and actively participate. The details and further developments of the educational framework we offer have to come from the users of this T-Kit themselves, as you are the ones carrying out educational programmes and activities on Citizenship Education all over Europe. We do, however, try to provide some guidance that will help you along your way.

There are a couple of disclaimers that accompany what follows. The first relates to the educational context. Although much of the content of education for European Citizenship should be relevant across formal and non-formal educational divides, it is worth noting that the content of this T-Kit is specifically directed at the non-formal sector and, more precisely, out of school education with young adults. It will, we hope, be of particular relevance to those working in that sector. However, we hope too that it will inspire and be of practical use to formal or in-school educators.

Secondly, we ask you to keep in mind that any effective approach to the *content* of European Citizenship needs to be sensitive to the dynamic and transformational nature of the *concept* of European Citizenship itself. This implies leaving space for potential innovations in concept and practice, hence the general nature of our guidance. We resist, therefore, establishing a concrete model.

With this in mind we now go on to explore how to generate some practical action out of all these good ideas.

Making it happen: Doing Education for European Citizenship

The need for project or programme implementation to include *planning*, *doing* and *evaluating* will be familiar (see the T-Kit on Project Management for more information in this area). We will devote some time to exploring each of these areas. However, we don't want to present these elements simply as distinct steps to be followed one after the other. As you will read below, the kind of *responsive practice* that we promote encourages ongoing evaluation and planning as part of maintaining flexibility and responding to individuals, the context and new situations that arise. For this reason, our exploration of these three elements is set in the context of an integrated approach. This approach advocates an intelligent and responsive educational practice that recognises the need for continuous evaluation and revision of planning and action.

¹⁰ This section owes much to Straker, A. (2001) Pushing at the Limits: Reconstructing Cross-Cultural Exchange in Education. Unpublished PhD thesis, The University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK.

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Building an Intelligent and Responsive Practice

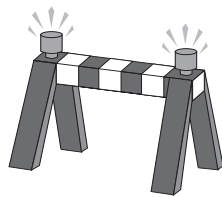
As will already be clear, we are not offering a quick-fix or simple step-by-step recipe or guide for education for European Citizenship. We make no apologies for this. We respect your intelligence as practitioners and your capacity to put your own skills and experience to practice in a manner that fits the particular circumstances in which you find yourself. This approach is well illustrated by the words of a British cookery writer, Nigel Slater. He introduces his recipe-free cook book with the following instructions:

I want to encourage you to take in the spirit of the recipes that follow, but then to deviate according to your ingredients and your feelings, to understand that our ingredients and our hunger are variables that should not, cannot, be subjected to a set of formulas laid down in stone. I want you to break the rules. I want you to follow your own appetite. (2000, p. 50)

However, we do want to point out that is not the same as saying that none of us has anything new to learn! We do believe that

- all of us can learn from the experience of others,
- more abstract discussion and thought can challenge us to think and adapt our ways of doing things.

The first will be addressed by the practical examples that follow, and what we hope to do in this section is to raise some questions and issues that will address the second, and enable you to further develop your own approach to practice.



Give a small group of people a number of ingredients and a target group of people to cook for. Have them prepare food for the target group. Debrief the metaphor (after eating!), linking to learning about how to design an educational activity or process for a certain target group.

In essence what we are proposing is that as a facilitator of education for European Citizenship, you may be given ideas about which elements might unite in a successful combination, or which tools can help work towards a desired outcome, and what might lead to disaster, but that it is equally important that at every stage of your work you apply your own intelligence, skills and personality, and reflect upon the particularities of any given situation. There is no replacement for the sensitive and intelligent practitioner.

In addition to this, while rational thought, understanding, and direction appear necessary prerequisites to success, a positive outcome also depends on that which is not so easily quantifiable – instinct, taste, feeling.

I believe a recipe should be treated as a living thing, something allowed to breathe, to change its nature to suit our ingredients, our mood and our desires. (ibid.)

This should not be perceived as a problem but as the very essence of good practice. We should not be fooled by the ease of following apparently simple pre-determined step-by-step routes, the effect of which can be to crush innovation and inspiration and to depersonalise involvement. Rather, we advocate a very personal approach that draws upon the skills and personal qualities of the facilitator and places them firmly in the specific work context. By context we refer to something much more particular and complex than sweeping cultural definitions.

Of course it is vitally important to recognise a broad social context and to conduct oneself and any activities accordingly. However, we argue that it is equally important to reflect on the details of the micro-context. In practice this means not just considering what country the project is taking place in or the religion of the participants, but such details as the personal skills and characteristics of the individuals in the group, or how somebody reacted to a situation five



minutes ago, or the limitations of the room in which your project is based. A method we would advocate is to be present in a situation, to continually assess it and to work with what seem to be the best techniques within that particular context, at that particular time and to the desired end. Also, let's not forget that much depends on the skill, talent, taste, and personality of the person – probably you – who is coordinating all of this.



Is this the way you work already? If not, what do you feel are some of the challenges of this approach, and how might you be able to try it out?



Evaluating, doing and planning a project

As we have already suggested, it is difficult to draw a clear distinction between evaluation and educational practice, for *a responsive working practice is itself an evaluative process*. This is both through the ongoing reflective process that accompanies action and brings about continual adjustment and modification, and the more conscious, retrospective analysis of action (Leitch and Day, 2000). Evaluation, therefore, is not to be regarded as something to be tacked on to the end of the project – a mild irritation suffered for the sake of pleasing funders. We consider it a very important process that should be ongoing from conception to completion of any project or programme of work. For this reason, we choose evaluation to head our discussion of implementation.

Evaluation: What? How? and Why?

Evaluation can be seen as the most complex and challenging aspect of any programme. To be of a high quality, it must be implemented with the skill and sensitivity of the programme itself, and it must take account of the conventions of social research (e.g. maintaining confidentiality if requested, allowing people to choose to participate, using techniques that minimise bias) and address the, perhaps diverse, concerns of the facilitators, participants, and funders of a project. Additionally, if the evaluation process is not to undermine the desired aims of the project under evaluation, then it must actively support them.

Evaluation can be seen to operate on three levels: *outcome*, *impact*, and *process* (United States Department of Education, 2000). An outcome evaluation explores the immediate, direct outcomes of a programme on its participants. Impact evaluations, on the other hand, identify more long-term outcomes of a programme as well as unanticipated effects. The last, process evaluation, focuses upon techniques and their implementation. Ideally, in our view, evaluation of a project should be a balance between the three.



In evaluation you have done, have you put more emphasis on outcome, impact or process? How could you get a better balance next time?



Perhaps due to the pressures upon project organisers to prove the value of their work to external bodies (particularly those from which they seek funding) there is a tendency for disproportionate attention to be afforded to outcome evaluation. This is encouraged by evaluation guidance such as that given by Woolf (1999), which states that evaluation can only be effective if SMART objectives are set for a project. SMART objectives are those that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and achievable within a Timescale.

This approach can be very appealing for its neatness and simplicity, and indeed evaluation by SMART objectives does have its place and value. However, we feel that an evaluation process defined purely around measurable objectives cannot always do justice to the richness of outcomes, and the long-term impact education for European Citizenship can have. Every European Citizenship project will have different outcomes and will depend upon different processes for its success.

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Also, it is likely that unpredicted outcomes, and certainly unpredicted processes, will arise over the course of a project. The fact that some outcomes cannot easily be evaluated, and certainly cannot be quantified, should not diminish their importance. We consider it imperative that educational aims are not reduced to those that can be measured, for the sake of being able to prove what has been achieved. An evaluation based only on preconceived notions of outcomes, thus, is unlikely to do full justice to any project.

“ Is SMART so smart, after all? ”

We propose that *evaluation, as an element of practice, should be a responsive process, implemented in a manner suited to the particular project, and according to the particular skill, taste and understanding of the person conducting it.* Evaluation must also be founded in ethical practice and should reflect the aims being sought in its implementation. Perhaps even more important than the need for evaluation to address immediate and long-term outcomes, is the need for ongoing evaluation of processes and outcomes to inform responsive educational practice.

**“ Evaluation, should be a responsive process,
implemented in a manner suited to the particular project,
and according to the particular skill,
taste and understanding of the person conducting it. ”**

The fact that unanticipated results might be significant and that outcomes are complex and not always predictable or measurable, does not save us from the need to set goals and think about what we want to achieve from the earliest stages of planning. Equally, the fact that step by step processes cannot guarantee success does not remove the need to consider what approach you might adopt. In particular it will be important to work out your values and ideas – the ethos or philosophy of your approach, if you like.



Think of a time when you have had outcomes of a project
that you could not / did not predict in advance.



In the text that follows we explore broad considerations that we believe should be taken into account at every stage of the implementation of your project. In order to help you to relate this to your own work and practice, what follows on from that is a series of practical examples or ‘citizenship scenarios’ that explore particular projects and how their organisers combined ideas and aspirations with the reality of getting things done.

Thinking and Doing: Generating Action

Intercultural education is not a closed programme that may be repeated without continuous modifications. On the contrary, not only is the range of possible intercultural activities very wide, but we also have to question continuously what we are doing and why. It is impossible to buy a magic formula which can guarantee us success. (Council of Europe, 2000)

Before going on to look at the principles and ideas that we believe are important to build your educational practice around, we remind you once more why we take the approach we do. We hope that this will help you bear with us in the challenge of developing your own practice!

There are several reasons why we are (as it may appear) choosing to make your work difficult by refusing to tell you how to do it in simple steps – sadism is not one of them! First and foremost,



we feel that it is important to remember that there are many and varied ways of achieving high quality education for European Citizenship – what happens with one group of people working with one facilitator on one day will never be exactly repeated. Success, too, depends on much more than meeting a pre-defined set of criteria and this is why we focus on the deeper ideas of how to approach education for European Citizenship rather than dictating how to do it.

To achieve a (satisfyingly simple) set of step by step criteria for how to run a workshop or make a project happen, it is tempting to dissect a successful project and then repeat back its components as a set of criteria for success. However, as we were reminded in the history section, Aristotle tells us that *the whole is greater than the sum of its parts*, and there is little sense in such an exercise. For example, the fact that a performance created with an international group is performed in all the languages spoken by members of that group might well be indicative of an inclusive working practice. In contrast, to prescribe use of all those languages as an essential aspect of inclusive practice is plainly ridiculous. Equally, making use of all the languages would not automatically be inclusive. So much depends on how and why things are done.

In essence, what might be a consequence of a high quality project will not necessarily be a causal factor of another good project. That, however, is not to say that it does not matter how you approach and plan projects. Instead, it is to argue, as Pettigrew (1986) does, that practice should be driven by a broader theoretical basis, one that goes beyond a listing of conditions.



To what extent can you relate to the approach taken here?



It is with this in mind that we set out some general considerations for education for European Citizenship.

General considerations for European Citizenship Education

A life long process

The dynamic nature of our concept of citizenship calls for any educational approach to European Citizenship to be an ongoing and life long process, capable of engaging with the new challenges arising from the continual transformation of societies and individuals.

The complexity and integrity of citizenship that we referred to earlier, implies that the simple transmission of knowledge is not enough for the effective development of citizenship in modern European societies.



How can you equip people with the skills for ongoing, life-long learning?



Diverse and thoughtfully selected contents

In terms of contents, learning for citizenship could include for example computer training - as a key skill and competence that young people need for effective economic and social participation under conditions of technological modernisation and economic globalisation. It could also include training on Intercultural Communication, as a key social competence for living in culturally, ethnically and linguistically plural societies. In both cases, in terms of an educational approach, learning for (European) citizenship has to involve the affective, cognitive and pragmatic level of learners, in order to achieve their full development as individuals so they can play a fully active part as citizens in society.

In this line, a curriculum for Citizenship Education could include a large diversity of subjects. Citizenship Education does not have to be exclusively on the "subject of citizenship". As was mentioned in the Four Dimensions model of citizenship, the development of citizenship can

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come through the awareness raising and knowledge about a variety of subjects such as human rights in Europe, literacy and health, cultural heritage and history, ecological aspects of the global economy.

In non-formal education, while choosing the contents for each programme on Citizenship Education, there are always a lot of criteria to consider. One of the first could be to look at the different subjects covered by formal education and other educational actors in order to find the complementarity in terms of content and approaches. In a certain socio-economic context, for example, computer training is largely covered by the formal education system and in some others it is something that youth organisations have to promote in order to guarantee the access of young people to new technologies.

The aims of each educational programme and the specific training needs of learners would be the two most important criteria for an adequate choice of contents for European Citizenship Education. Education for European Citizenship would be, in each case, an autonomous subject dealing with a clearly identified list of contents (curriculum) according to the aims of the educational programme and the specific training needs of learners.


 Think back to the last activity you organised, and reflect on how you selected the contents. How could you improve the way you select content next time? 

Transversality

When schools, educational institutions or organisations do such an exercise and come up with a certain Citizenship Education Curriculum, there is the tendency to think “We found it! Finally! This is Citizenship Education!”. But being realistic it would be more adequate to say: “Here, now, according to our aims and to the identified training needs, our offer for Citizenship Education consists of...”. In other words, the autonomous nature of Education for Citizenship shouldn’t play against its transversality.

Education for Citizenship as a transversal educational priority is the only reasonable response to the diversity of individuals, groups and communities – reflected for example in our Conceptual Framework “Senses of Belonging”. The diversity and the transversality that it implies are even clearer considering Education for Citizenship at European level. Its transversal nature facilitates the dynamism and cross-fertilisation with other educational priorities such as Intercultural Learning, Human Rights Education and Participation.

At the same time, this transversality cannot be a superficial facade trying to cover every theme without deeply touching any of them. Apart from the already mentioned importance of a well-reflected selection of contents, the promotion of some clearly identified competencies (described below) should be an integral part of the objectives of education for European Citizenship programmes.

 How could you integrate some of these concepts for education for European Citizenship into activities you have already planned? 

“Learning” oriented

It would be very difficult to imagine that any “teaching” (the transmission of a previously elaborated knowledge) could cover the complexity and integrity of citizenship. It may be suitable for transmitting certain facts, but in the development of attitudes, it would not be adequate. In addition to this, through teaching on citizenship, individuals would acquire theoretical knowledge likely to be quite unconnected with their reality, with minimal significant contribution to their integral development as citizens.

For citizenship education, what is essential is the «learning», (the process of active discovery of new knowledge and the development of attitudes and competencies) through experience and not the «teaching». Learning for citizenship comprises the development of democratic values



and attitudes on the affective level, but also the acquisition of knowledge and competencies on the cognitive level. Both are best gained through practice and experience – on the practical level.



Why do you think we are asking you all these questions?



Learners as active participants

For a Citizenship Education based in knowledge, attitudes and skills it is necessary to place learners at the centre of education and training methods and processes. This is not at all a new idea, but in practice, the established framing of pedagogical practices in most formal contexts and in some non-formal ones has privileged teaching (and teachers) rather than learning (and learners).

Learners should become active participants in the own learning process, which they learn to co-manage and negotiate together with their trainer-guides and with their co-learners; by developing awareness, having responsibilities and taking decisions.

The significance of this educational approach to citizenship is self-evident. If the content of what should be learned, i.e. «become an active part of society», stands in contradiction to the way in which it is being learned, i.e. “without being an active part of your learning process”, the educational process becomes very ambiguous, due to the lack of coherence between the content and the educational approach.

In relation to European Citizenship, we might conclude that European citizens are not produced through informing people that they should be European citizens. The development of European Citizenship takes place through experience, through providing individuals with experiences that enable them to reconstruct the framework of their thoughts and actions. And the learning process that can achieve this takes place on both conscious and unconscious levels.



Does the way you train or work with young people reflect and complement the topic you are working on?



An Integrated Practice

There is a long-standing view that the learning process and the ethos of the learning situation must embody those values being promoted (see for example Allport, 1954; Fogelman, 1996). What we are in favour of is an approach that Albala-Bertrand (1997) terms *systematic wholeness*. Within the context of school-based education for citizenship, he writes that this implies all curriculum areas as well as the teaching style and organization of the school reflect the values of citizenship. The same principle can be applied more widely.

It is important that every element of the work is sympathetic to the skills and values being promoted. For example, the manner in which group work is approached dictates the nature of the learning outcomes. The mere fact of working in a group does not necessarily result in collaborative group work. (Kaye, 1995) The educational process appears equally important as the aims. Vink (1999) feels that this is particularly so in the non-formal sector, given its less pressured learning environment.



How can you make your work and the environment you work in, better reflect the skills and values you are promoting?



Participatory pedagogies

Therefore, democratic and participatory pedagogies are very important: their value as self-managed tools for personal and collective development constitute the very essence of what is to be learned and practised in Citizenship Education. For this reason it is very important to use the whole potential of participatory pedagogies and not only use them as irrelevant exercises without any meaning for individuals. Such a reductionism of participatory pedagogies can be as inadequate as the use of authoritarian ones (where methods are just tools at the service of the unilateral or one-sided transmission of knowledge).

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In both cases (authoritarian pedagogies or misuse of participatory ones), by imposition or by superficiality, there is a lack of real interaction between the learner and what is to be learned and between the learner and the trainer. But if participatory pedagogies are used with all their potential, this interaction is provoked and expected. This “object of learning - learner” interaction is the heart of participatory pedagogies and it could be their most significant contribution to Citizenship Education.

This interaction comprises, among others, the following steps: exploration of the interest and initial knowledge of learners, self-managed learning, critical questioning of what is being learned, application of what is learned to the learners environment and further exploration. We would like to emphasise the need for participatory pedagogies to be carefully articulated in structured learning opportunities and educational programmes.

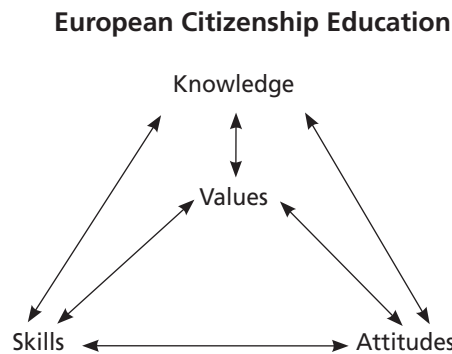
The implementation of participatory pedagogies in educational programmes is one of the most important characteristics of non-formal education. For this reason the rich educational experience of institutions and youth NGO's in training (e.g. running different educational programmes, covering the cognitive, affective and practical dimension of individuals, developing and innovating participatory methods) is of particular value for Citizenship Education. We will present some good examples of that rich experience in the next section.

For the moment, and having addressed some of the more general aspects of *how* to approach education for citizenship, we would like to turn to the *content* of education for European Citizenship, and to look at some of the key skills and attitudes we feel that citizens in a modern and plural European society need, and by implication that education for European Citizenship should educate for.

Key Competencies for European Citizenship Today ¹¹

We believe that there are three interrelated spheres making up the competence needed by citizens to actively participate in European society, and that should be addressed by education for European Citizenship. First, education for European Citizenship should provide **KNOWLEDGE** about relevant themes such as democracy, rights and freedoms, the World, Europe, current affairs and politics. Second, education for European Citizenship should provide **SKILLS** such as competence for active participation or intercultural communication skills. Lastly, education for European Citizenship should work on **ATTITUDES**, such as attitudes to democracy or difference, and should attempt to assist young people to develop their attitudes in line with their values. All of these spheres have political, social, cultural and economic dimensions and necessarily have to be treated on a number of levels and from a variety of perspectives.

Figure 13 – Key competences for Education for European Citizenship



¹¹ This section has been developed with reference to a number of texts, combining elements of all: International Project “What Education for What Citizenship” – What Citizenship (<http://www3.itu.int/ibe-cityed/inoeng90.html>); Curriculum and Quality Development Group “Pilot Course on European Citizenship – Curriculum Principles” (Partnership Programme between the European Union and the Council of Europe on European Youth Worker Training); Gordon H. Bell “Educating European Citizens – Citizenship Values and the European Dimension”, David Fulton Publishers, London, 1995; “Jump into Education for Democratic Citizenship!”, Council of Europe Education for Democratic Citizenship Project, 1997 – 2000.

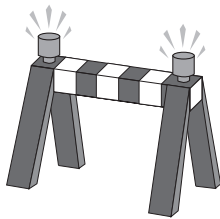


However, **VALUES** should inform the identification of the **AIMS** and be the “centre of gravity”, the permanent reference of education for European Citizenship where all dimensions and spheres find their sense and balance. Indeed education for European Citizenship should also provide young people with the opportunity to explore their values, identity and senses of belonging to the community or communities of their choice and should assist young people in becoming active protagonists, both in defence and promotion of their values.

As has already been mentioned, the identification of the concrete objectives of European Citizenship programmes should stem from the learning needs of the learners.

Even if the interaction between all the elements mentioned above is not necessarily linear and in practice, as we will see, their relationship becomes more complex, the following matrix could be used as a tool for the articulation of educational programmes for European Citizenship.

The entry point into an educational process can be different for each programme and even for each learner. In that sense, the matrix can be read in multiple directions without necessarily starting from the values and finishing with the attitudes. This matrix is just an attempt to show, all together, the different elements to consider and the relationships between them in the design of Educational Programmes for European Citizenship. You do not need to include everything! Use it as a guide, map, or initial starting point, but not as an ultimate check-list.



Design a curriculum, Training Course or activity on European Citizenship. Outline which qualities of European Citizenship you are focusing on, and justify your choice.

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Figure 14 – European Citizenship Education Matrix

Values	Aims	Learning Needs	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Equality of all human beings	To assist young people in exploring their value orientations, personal identity and senses of belonging to the community or communities of their choice	Identifying one's values and understanding where they come from	Human Rights (universality, rights, legal mechanisms to protect human rights, role of individuals in creating a culture of human rights and human rights protection)	Empowerment and Participation (motivating and enabling others, letting go of control)	Tolerant of ambiguity
Human Rights		Understanding one's senses of belonging and identifications with a / many communities	Environment (awareness of our interdependence with the environment, how to protect it in one's everyday life)	Community Development (working with communities to help them develop more sustainable and peaceful environments in which to live)	Empathic
Solidarity	To assist young people in becoming active protagonists (in defence and in promotion) of their values	Understanding where one's values intersect those of other individuals, the communities to which one belongs and society as a whole	Global concerns (e.g. development, poverty)	Nonviolent transformation of social and political conflicts (nonviolent approaches to conflict transformation, team work and co-operation, problem solving, active listening and communication)	Distanced from social roles
Pluralism (e.g. cultural, social, political)		Ability to articulate one's values without causing oppression of others	Cultural Diversity (awareness of cultural diversity, pluralism of opinions and interests)		Respectful of (cultural and social) difference
Environmental responsibility			Democracy (Awareness of how democratic regimes function and the norms that regulate their operation (legal framework and operating mechanisms))		Showing solidarity
Active respect for self and others					Trusting and honest
Sustainable Human development					Open
Interdependence					



Values	Aims	Learning Needs	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Democracy	To develop the civic, political and social awareness and competence of young citizens in Europe to participate actively in the development of the local, regional, national and European society	Ability to navigate and negotiate civic, political and social life in one's immediate environment and to see one's role in that of the State, Europe and the world	<p>Human Rights Rights and freedoms of citizens (main declarations, conventions, and legal instruments governing these rights and freedoms)</p> <p>Civil Society (awareness of the role of civil society and the importance of active participation)</p> <p>Globalisation (what is it, how does it function, what effect does it have on the lives of citizens, the role of Europe in the world)</p> <p>Current Affairs (what is going on in the news in Europe and the world, what do people with different opinions say about current affairs)</p> <p>European and national political landscape (descriptive, and theoretical politics, social change in different countries and Europe)</p> <p>Peace and Conflict (What is conflict, where does it come from, how does it escalate, its relationship to power, etc)</p> <p>Knowledge about Europe (e.g. different cultures and religions, different political systems, Europe and its history, European law and economics)</p>	<p>Representation (self-organisation, lobbying, presentation skills, political and social autonomy)</p> <p>Change-management (empowerment of persons and groups, analytical skills, critical and argumentative thinking, evaluation, assertiveness, problem-solving, democratic leadership, team work and co-operation)</p> <p>Global communication (New information technologies, foreign languages, intercultural competence).</p>	<p>Respectful of the environment</p> <p>Understanding and responsive to different needs</p> <p>Responsible for own actions and their consequences</p> <p>Passionate and determined</p> <p>Favourable towards democracy, active participation, social change</p>
Respect for the rule of law					
Nonviolence and Peace					
Freedom					

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