



MONITOR 2017

Citizenship and Lifelong Learning

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Europe and the European project are currently facing significant challenges. Socio-economic problems, the rise of extreme nationalism and a lack of trust in the democratic process are the main threats to democracy, freedom and peace - the very founding values of the European Union. Education and training can help to counter these challenges, foster common values and restore people's trust and interest in a common European future.

In public debate, education's main purpose is viewed as preparation for the labour market. **For SOLIDAR Foundation members, however, the most important role of education is preparation for democratic participation, personal empowerment and the development of a broad knowledge base for social and professional inclusion.**

When we think of democracy, we often think of parliaments and constitutions, institutions and laws. However, these will not function unless they are built on a democratic culture: a set of attitudes and behaviours that emphasize dialogue and cooperation, solving conflicts by peaceful means, and active participation in the public space. For this reason, formal and non-formal and informal learning providers and stakeholders have to work closely together in order to provide citizens with truly empowering training and education and to achieve democratic learning societies.

Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Foundation Secretary General



1. Introduction

Citizenship education occupies a very prominent position among members of the SOLIDAR Foundation, even though the main aims and forms it takes vary from country to country. There is growing concern in Europe that its citizens have become disenchanted with and indifferent towards the political sphere, reflected in the low level of participation in democratic processes (especially among the younger generations) and the increasing distance between governments and their citizens, exacerbated in many countries by the rise in corruption and governments' disappointing performance.

The Citizenship and Lifelong Learning Monitor is a tool that was designed by an internal working group and aims to explore four thematic areas, directly derived from the Paris Declaration's objectives, and to monitor the situation in different countries as well as the situation and positions of members of SOLIDAR Foundation.

The four areas are:

- Ensuring that people acquire civic and intercultural competences
- Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly regarding the use of the internet and social media
- Promoting intercultural dialogue
- Ensuring citizens' rights

The signing of the Paris Declaration¹ by EU leaders, partially triggered by the latest terrorist attacks in the region, clearly strengthens the role of education in promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance, and non-discrimination. The EU institutions stepped up their efforts, leading finally to a conference under the title "Learning to Live Together: a shared commitment to democracy"², where policymakers pledged to adapt school curricula and implement

different forms of civic education at the different levels of the formal education system (agreeing that the "one size fits all" solution is not viable). The Council of Europe has published results from its monitoring of the implementation of its 'Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education', adopted by all EU Member States (CoE, 2017)³.

It is therefore clear that public expectations have grown in regards to education and particularly, citizenship education. The recent report on Citizenship Education in Schools in 2017⁴ published by Eurydice aims to summarize current national policies in the area of citizenship education. While the report shows that citizenship education is part of national curricula for general education in all countries, it also highlights how little unity there is among approaches by Member States when it comes to civic education. The main differences lie in the strategies for the implementation of citizenship education, that is, whether delivered in discrete lessons, integrated into other disciplines or through on a cross-curricular approach. These differences are also clearly apparent when it comes to non-formal education. SOLIDAR Foundation's monitoring has reached similar conclusions to those of the Eurydice report, particularly regarding policy gaps and **the severe lack of education and training for teachers**. Additionally, SOLIDAR Foundation members agree that addressing these gaps is not possible without strong investment in lifelong learning education as well as long-term improvements in conditions for teachers.

1 http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf

2 Link to the conference and more info about it https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/calls-for-participants/-/asset_publisher/4fpQap76X0K5/content/-learning-to-live-together-a-shared-commitment-to-democracy-conference-on-the-future-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-education-in-europ-1?inheritRedirect=false

3 Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education <https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/charter-on-education-for-democratic-citizenship-and-human-rights-education>

4 Citizenship Education in Schools in 2017 https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/images/9/97/Citizenship_Study_EN_2017.pdf



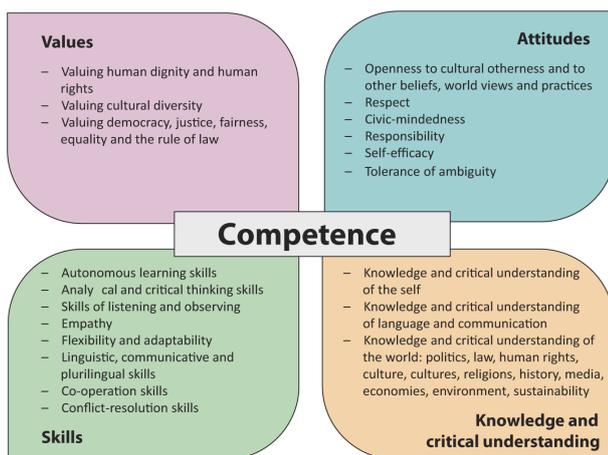


2. Civic and intercultural competences

In this chapter, civic and intercultural competences and the ways our members see their implementation at a national level will be explored. Cross-country comparisons of people's qualities for civic engagement have become an established field of research inquiry (Amná and Zetterberg 2010)⁵. In the European Union member states, recently undergoing economic crisis and a reduction of global power, it can no longer be taken for granted that the region will remain stable and democratic (Europe's Political Union 2012)⁶. Therefore, there is a growing need to monitor the learning outcomes of democracy through comparative research.

This Monitor aimed to examine and compare the levels of civic competence provided by national authorities and civil society organisations. To achieve this we used the model developed as part of the study Active Citizenship for Democracy⁷, that identifies four main areas of civic competence.

Figure 1
Model of competences for democratic culture.



Source: Council of Europe

This chapter of the Monitor was based on the model from the Council of Europe (2016)⁸ that proposes a conceptual model of the competences which enable citizens to participate effectively in a culture of democracy. The purpose of the model is to describe the competences which need to be acquired by learners if they are to become effective participatory citizens and live peacefully together with others as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies.

After the comparative exercise among our members, visualised in Figure 2, the results show very clearly that at least in two areas, Participatory Attitude and Social Justice, there is a significant mismatch between national authorities and the organisations providing non-formal education. This outcome further confirms the vital role of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) in democratic societies. **Our members stressed the need for educational structures to be open to more actors in the community and establish a strong cooperation with the non-formal sector.** Trans-sectorial partnerships with CSOs should become a reality in order to innovate, diversify and implement effective teaching and learning methods. The national authorities should therefore further strengthen the capacity of CSOs notably with appropriate funding and resources, creating more partnerships and diverse forms of co-operation that could contribute to the ongoing revision of national curricula and approaches to education.

CSOs are successfully promoting the participatory approach because community engagement is needed to instil a feeling of ownership and belonging to the learner's community. The national authorities should use the existing experience of civil society to establish structures that reflect the diversity of the communities they are in rather than applying one-size-fits-all solutions.

5 Amná Erik, Zetterberg Pär. A political science perspective on socialization research: Young Nordic citizens in a comparative light. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley; 2010.

6 Europe's Political Union. (2012). Europe's political union is an idea worthy of satire. Financial Times, July 29

7 Indicators on Active Citizenship for Democracy - the social, cultural and economic domain. Paper by order of the Council of Europe for the CRELL-Network on Active Citizenship for Democracy at the European Commission's Joint Research Center in Ispra, Italy, 2006

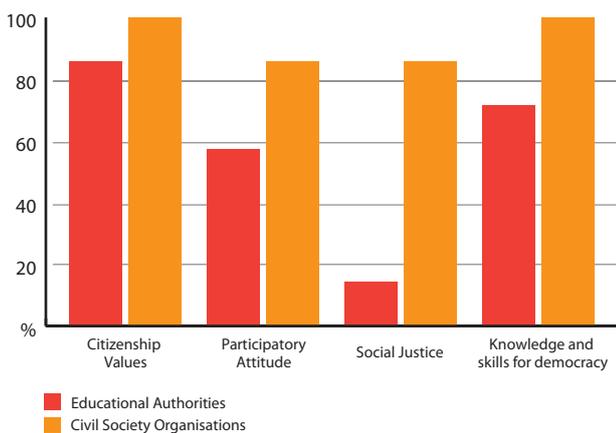
8 Competences for Democratic Culture <https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07>





Another way to breach the gap visible in Figure 2 is to recognize the skills acquired through non-formal and informal learning (NFIL). Validating non-formal and informal learning is increasingly seen as valuing the learning outcomes. National authorities are emphasizing the added value of the learning that takes place outside formal education and training institutions, such as work experience, in leisure time activities and at home. One reason for stepping up efforts to ensure validation is the importance of the skill set that will enable citizens to participate in democratic society in the future.

Figure 2
Comparative of values promoted by the educational authorities and civil society organisations:



A modern democracy cannot function unless it is able and willing to engage in intercultural dialogue, and intercultural dialogue is difficult to imagine without a democratic culture. Given the multicultural composition of our society and current global tendencies, it would be unhelpful to treat democracy and intercultural dialogue separately. In addition to civic competence, people have to acquire intercultural competence in order to contribute to, influence and foster their democratic society.

Intercultural competence is defined as the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and/ or understanding in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges, and opportunities that are presented by democratic and intercultural situations (CoE, 2016).

It was the Paris Declaration that highlighted the need for intercultural competence and underlined the promotion of European values. As a follow up, the public authorities translated the common pledges into a number of policies at the national level⁹ and at the same time CSOs increased their efforts to address an increasingly hostile atmosphere towards minorities and joined their national struggle against radicalization. It is therefore interesting to analyze what are the different attributes that can facilitate a change and how successfully they have been implemented by CSOs and public authorities on a national level so far.

Using the model proposed by the Council of Europe (2016), in this part of the Monitor we analyze in detail where formal education fails to include certain values, attitudes, skills and knowledge and where non-formal and informal learning and the actions of civil society organisations fill the gap, and build bridges between EU and national government and other stakeholders. The results are presented in four comparative charts. From Figure 3 we can see that Analytical and Critical thinking is very well promoted by CSO's, while we see that in some countries that is not the case in the formal education system. *“Critical thinking begins when people make the connections between their individual lives and social conditions. It ends one step beyond perception towards the action people take to regain control over social structures detrimental to their lives.”* (Wallerstein, 1983)¹⁰. In learning environments that feature critical thinking, learners are encouraged to participate actively, raising issues of concern in their daily lives, such as work, school,

⁹ <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ebbab-0bb-ef2f-11e5-8529-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

¹⁰ Wallerstein, N. (1983). *Language and Culture in Conflict: Problem-Posing in the ESL Classroom*. Reading, MA: Addison- Wesley.





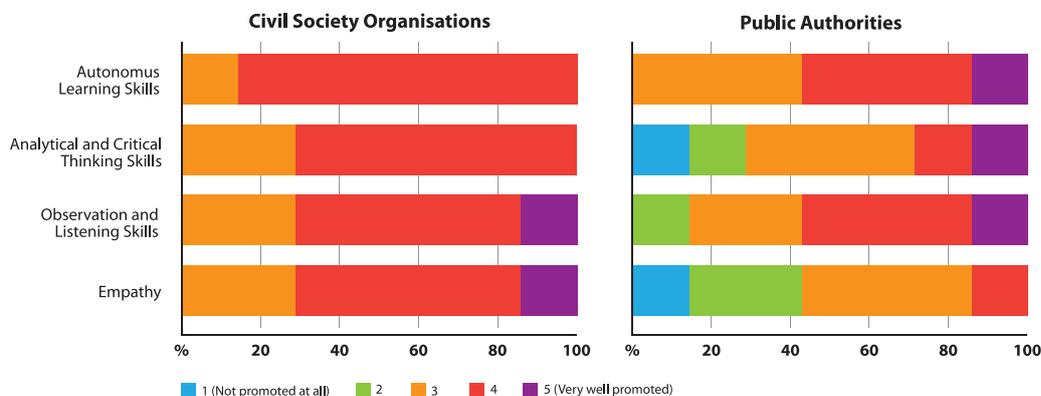
housing, and marriage, as topics for scrutiny. Empathy, a skill that has proven links to democratic societies built on respect (Morell, 2010)¹¹, is also strongly visible in CSOs actions and less or not at all in formal settings. Morell further argues that empathy plays a crucial role in enabling democratic deliberation to function the way it should. Learning empathy is necessary as it often triggers a reaction in response to a bad policy decision. Empathy is a democratic emotion that often leads to policy change and as such should not be omitted in formal learning settings. Other skills that the respondents saw as lacking in formal education and promoted by CSOs were Co-operation and Autonomous learning skills. Both of these skills are particularly important in regard to lifelong learning and the participation of adults in education. Autonomous learning and resilience in the new digital societies are highly prioritised topics not only by Civil Society but also the EU authorities (EC, 2017)¹².

Values are general beliefs that individuals hold about the desirable goals that should be striven for in life. They motivate action and they also serve as guiding principles for deciding how to behave (CoE, 2016)¹³.

The set of values that we asked about in our questionnaire are crucial for participating in a culture of democracy and it comes as a surprise that these values are poorly promoted by the public authorities (Figure 4). Democratic values and the rule of law are fundamental for societies where all citizens participate equally (directly or through elected representatives) in the creation of the rules that regulate their society. It is not enough to only repeat this mantra but also to equip citizens with the means and tools to put it into practice.

Civil society organizations and NFIL providers not only promote fair societies but also access to justice and understanding of citizens' rights. Bearing in mind the rising inequalities in Europe, and the increasing number of people living in poverty, it is of utmost importance to promote human rights and decent living conditions. It has been agreed that cultural diversity is an asset to society and that people can learn and benefit from other people's diverse perspectives. That cultural diversity has to be not only protected but particularly enhanced in value based learning environments where students can benefit from it. **The respondents providing learning opportunities described their goals as aiming for culturally diverse learning environments as that gives additional boosts to learning outcomes.** The same tendencies have been followed by major players in the labour market¹⁴.

Figure 3
Comparative of skills promoted by Civil Society Organisations in a non-formal learning framework and the skills promoted by the public authorities in a formal learning framework.



11 Morell, M. (2010). Empathy and Democracy: Feeling, Thinking, and Deliberation, Penn State Press

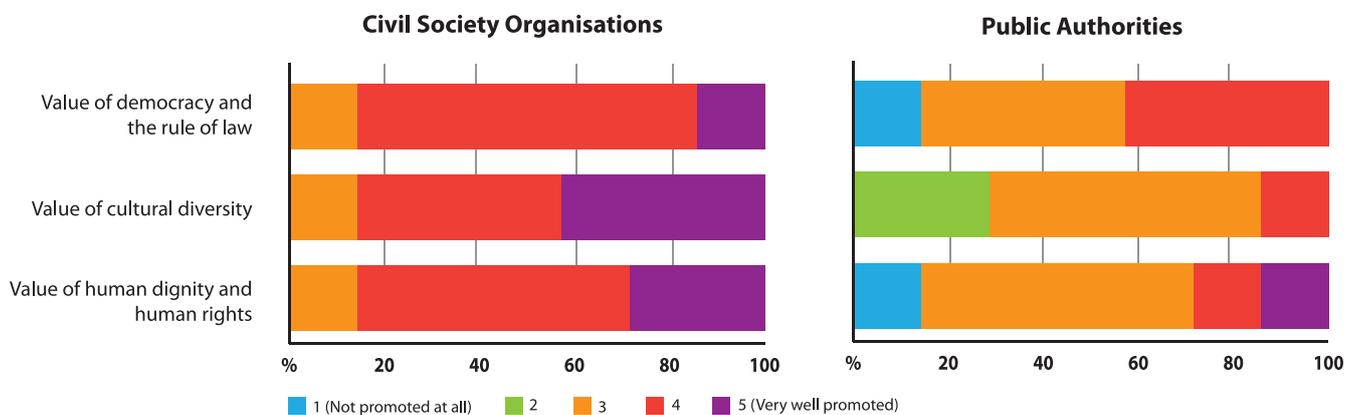
12 EC, 2017 <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-skills-jobs-coalition>

13 Competences for Democratic Culture <https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07>

14 <https://www.oracle.com/corporate/citizenship/workforce/diversity.html> >>>



Figure 4
Comparative of values promoted by Civil Society Organisations in a non-formal learning framework and the values promoted by the public authorities in a formal learning framework.



To further explore the differences between formal and non-formal learning, we inquired about different attitudes, described as overall mental orientation which an individual adopts towards someone or something, that are determinative for democratic culture (Figure 5). While respect scored positively in the comparison between formal and non-formal learning, openness remains a challenge for public authorities. Openness to other cultures and especially different beliefs has become particularly relevant in the present scenario in which Europe is facing large numbers of newcomers.

The formal education system has to embrace an attitude of openness at all stages to guarantee the successful integration of newcomers as well as to contribute to the fight against racism and homophobia and other forms of discrimination. CSOs are built on civic mindsets, engagement towards community or individuals, and therefore it is natural that they should promote civic values and pay particular attention to a sense of solidarity towards other people in the community, including a willingness to co-operate and work together, developing feelings of concern and care for their rights and welfare, and a willingness to defend those who might be disempowered and disadvantaged within the community. This is also closely linked to the responsibility that we have as citizens.

The formal education system fulfils its role in explaining citizens' responsibility to participate in the democratic process (to vote) but NFIL providers and CSOs take a step further when they address democratic responsibility from a different point of view.

One of the answers in the questionnaire reads: *“Democratic responsibility means tempering feelings with facts. It requires not just a viewpoint, which a three-year-old can have, but the duty to support it with logic based on objective information (the fact that others share the feeling does not make the feeling any more a fact)”*. CSOs are not only addressing the current political trends underlying their belief that citizens' responsibility in a democracy does not only involve choosing a government, but also building a resilient civil society movement which contributes, along with the public authorities, to building democratic and fair societies.





Finally, Figure 6 shows that CSOs and the knowledge acquired through NIFL are vital for the critical construct of politics. As described above, critical thinking will play an ever more important role in shaping our future society. Political education, which is often included in obligatory civic education in European curricula (Eurydice, 2017)¹⁵, offers a good understanding of the theoretical political framework of the country and its democratic process. However, it is CSOs who promote the critical understanding and evaluation of it. This part is absolutely vital in order to enable citizens to make choices about their future and that of their fellow citizens.

In different European countries nationalist and populist political parties are leading in the polls, partly, political commentators believe, because their programmes were poorly understood and little analyzed by the voters. (Mounk, 2018)¹⁶. In this regard, the public authorities should take into account, rather than waste, the expertise that CSOs have developed over the years when adapting the national curricula to better respond to the issue. Additionally, SOLIDAR Foundation members stressed the need for continuous access to professional development for teachers and educators, and the adoption of innovative teaching methods that stimulate critical thinking.

Figure 5
Comparative of attitudes promoted by Civil Society Organisations in a non-formal learning framework and the attitudes promoted by the public authorities in a formal learning framework.

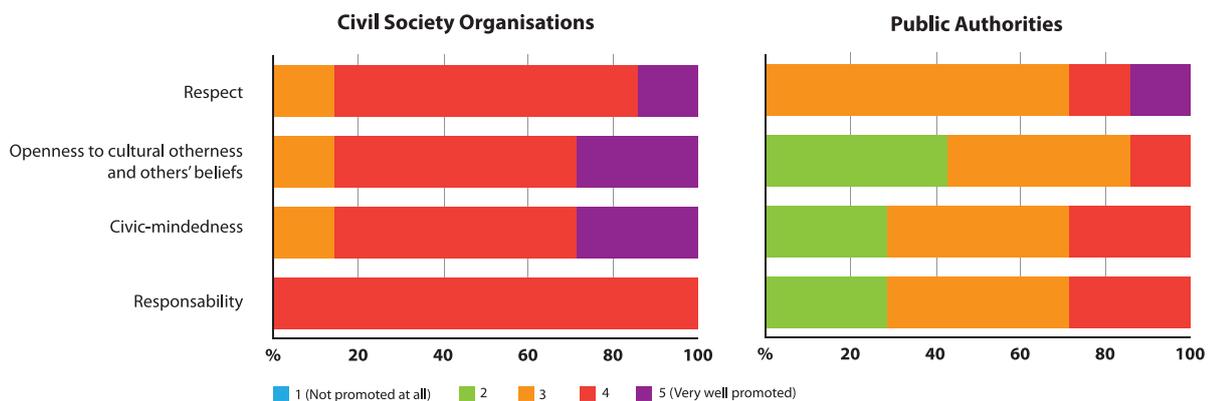
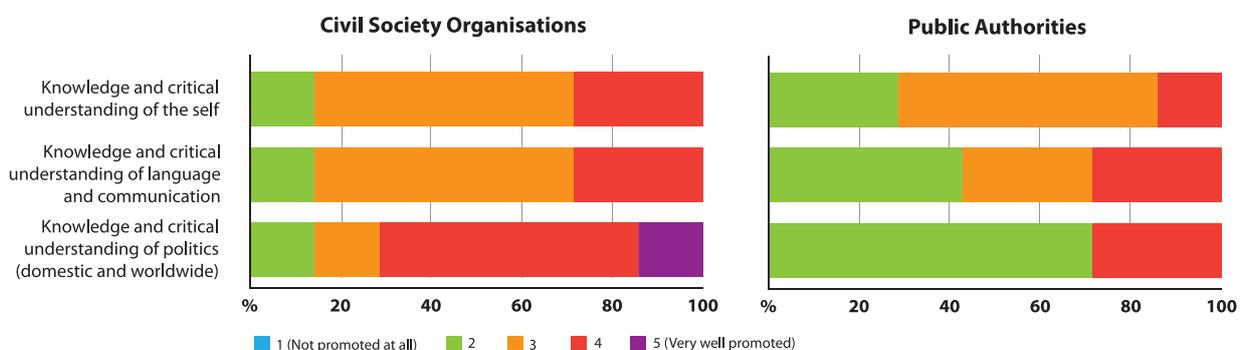


Figure 6
Comparative of knowledge promoted by Civil Society Organisations in a non-formal learning framework and the attitudes promoted by the public authorities in a formal learning framework.



15 European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2017. Citizenship Education at School in Europe – 2017. Eurydice Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

16 Mounk, Y. 'How populist uprisings could bring down liberal democracy'; 2018; <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/04/shock-system-liberal-democracy-populism>





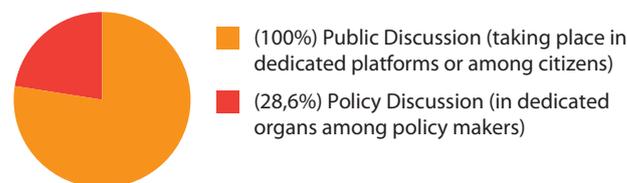
3. Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy

Gone are the days when trusted teachers and textbooks were the main providers of knowledge. These days citizens are flooded with information, and without the proper skill set for identifying fact from fiction, it is difficult to determine legitimacy. Modern media comes in many different formats, including print media (books, magazines, newspapers), television, movies, video games, music, cell phones, various kinds of software and the Internet. Knowing how to read these media critically is the key competence for democratic participation. The Eurydice report states that most education systems tend to favour similar components related to critical thinking and some seem to be important enough to be included at all or nearly all education levels. First and foremost is the ability to reflect critically on matters and choose between different options, particularly when ethical considerations are involved (thinking critically and exercising judgement). About half of the education systems acknowledge media literacy (including social media literacy and dealing with cyber bullying) as an important skill, incorporating it to a certain extent into the curriculum at all levels of the formal education system. The level of critical thinking remains very low in VET. Following the results of the Monitor, we see that more than **57% of our members are engaging in activities that enhance critical thinking and fight against disinformation**. Most of them implement activities that improve awareness and build resilience (such as seminars, public exchange and conferences, training for youth), while some members reported that they are conducting activities that target responses to the crisis and recovery (such as help for refugees in transition countries, or training and interventions to respond to the basic needs of vulnerable populations).

So-called fake news and materials that are created to persuade, sell, mislead or exploit have been proved to lead to hate crimes and discrimination. The recent numbers show that a growing

number of EU citizens (46 % on average in 2016) follow news on social media. Six out of ten news items shared on social media have not been read by the user who shares them. (EP, 2017)¹⁷. The issue of how to spot when news is fake has become an increasingly visible global phenomenon and was reported to be a topic by our members in all member states. As you can see from Figure 7, however, only a few SOLIDAR members believe that the topic is part of policy discussion in their country.

Figure 7
Presence of the topic “fake news” in both the public and political domain.



The discussion about fake news is closely connected to the debate on public and private partnership. Policy makers understand that the big online players such as Google and Facebook need to be on board. Equally Facebook, Google and others repeat their commitment to tackle fake news and hate speech. Following the results of our Monitor, it is clear that even if the **bilateral conversations might be ongoing, their content is not available or disseminated to the public**. Our members reported zero or minimal awareness about the existing relationship between private and public companies in their country to tackle hate speech and “fake news”. And while they similarly reported that civil society is not considered as a partner in the public authorities’ attempts to tackle “fake news”, there is awareness of several initiatives on the national level where civil society cooperates with the public authorities to tackle hate speech both online and offline.

¹⁷ How to spot when news is fake
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=E-PRS_ATA%282017%29599386





While most of our members consider digitalisation and digital skills necessary for the future development of democratic societies only half of them (51%) provide opportunities to learn and enhance digital skills. The main action that supports digital inclusion is training courses, one on one assistance, or walk-in computer houses where people can get assistance with digital skills. Some members reported that their action to support digital inclusion and support digital citizenship is in line with the national digital strategy (Denmark).

Case Study

Developing the digital skills of our tutors

Workers' Educational Association in the UK (WEA) is a charity dedicated to bringing high-quality, professional education into the heart of communities. With the support of nearly 3,000 volunteers, 2,000 tutors and over 10,000 members, we deliver friendly, accessible and enjoyable courses for adults from all walks of life. WEA is committed to developing the life skills of our students through our teaching of over 50 different subjects covering our four themes – culture, employability, health and wellbeing and community engagement. We have over 1,600 sessional tutors many of whom teach less than 60 hours a year – that is to say 1 or 2 courses only. Some of our longer standing tutors have not got up to date digital skills or experience of using digital tools in the classroom. In addition, we deliver our education in over 2,000 community venues, many of which have poor wifi access, and no IT equipment. We are therefore developing a 'use your own device' approach. Alongside this we have developed a longer term approach to developing the confidence and skills of tutors in using digital tools in classrooms.

Previous training has excited tutors about the possibilities of digital, but has led to little change in practice. Through the WEA courses digital

project tutors were given the opportunity to try approaches and apps, talk with other tutors, agree and plan their next steps. This approach was used by tutors to explore Open University OpenLearn resources; later a 'Digital Resilience' model, developed through ETF funded projects, was incorporated. This is based on four steps: trying out and playing with software; seeing how it applies to a subject area or class; developing ways to use it in a collaborative environment; becoming fluent in using and extending the use of it. This model is now embedded in tutor webinars and is to be part of tutor training in all regions.

In the first session, tutors are introduced to four options to explore, including the use of Padlet and other apps. As part of the session, which is face to face, tutors have at least an hour to develop further one idea that they can incorporate into teaching.

At a second session, and via video conference catch ups, tutors share their experience and knowledge. At a third session tutors are helped, alongside Digital Champions from our partner Lloyds bank, to mentor and support an additional three tutors through the process. By July 2019 all tutors will be trained and digitally active.





4. Intercultural dialogue

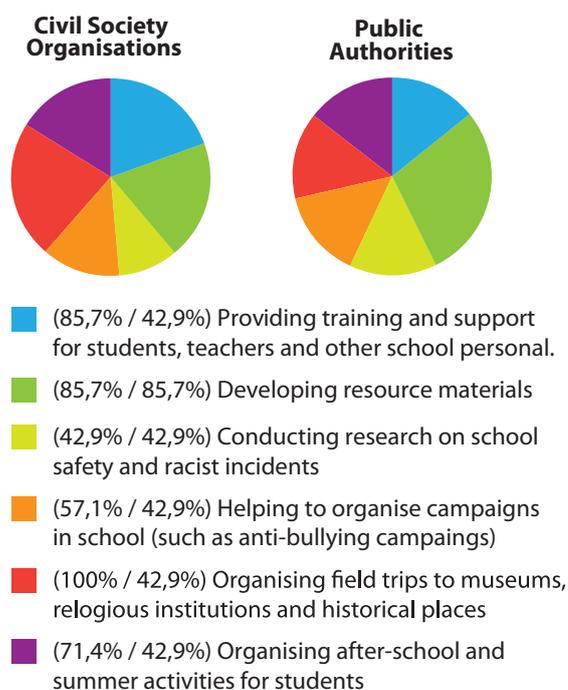
Intercultural dialogue has long been a principle supported by the European Union and its Institutions. The year 2008 was designated “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue” and today there is still considerable funding available under that same label. International NGOs and civil society play a crucial role in promoting and implementing the principle. The following questions should, therefore, explore what are the most common practices and perhaps also what are the latest obstacles.

In many countries, local and international CSOs have gained extensive experience in training and educating teachers, students and other stakeholders about issues related to tolerance and diversity but this expertise has not been relevantly used. (EC 2016)¹⁸.

Figure 8 compares the involvement of Civil Society Organisations and public authorities in different actions supporting the implementation of intercultural dialogue. It shows that **CSOs are the frontrunner in activities such as providing training and support for students, teachers and other school personnel** and organising field trips to museums, religious institutions and historical places. According to our members, the public authorities are equally involved in developing resource materials, but in other actions rely on partners.

Figure 8

Ways in which Civil Society Organisations and public authorities are involved in various aspects of support to intercultural dialogue.



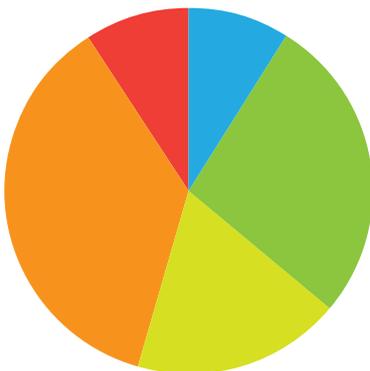
¹⁸ ‘Education policies and practices to foster tolerance, respect for diversity and civic responsibility in children and young people in the EU’ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/study/2016/neset-education-tolerance-2016_en.pdf





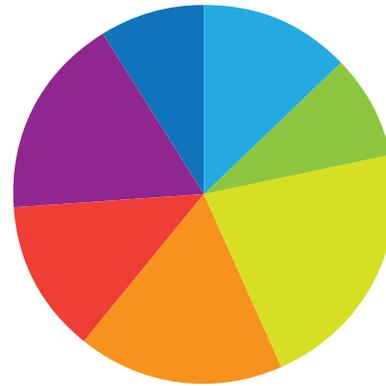
Figure 9 shows the key role of public authorities in the implementation of multicultural dialogue. The fact that more than 57% of members reported the assistance of NGOs in the implementation of multicultural dialogue demonstrates a strong existing partnership on the national level. When it comes to our members and their objectives we can see from Figure 10 that they are quite different. A majority of our members work actively on raising of awareness in society, but their activities go further, taking a wide range of forms, from playing a role of watchdog to breaking down stereotypes and prejudices.

Figure 9
Main action by public authorities as one of the key stakeholders in intercultural dialogue.



- (14,3%) Definition of public discourse conducive to intercultural dialogue
- (42,9%) Adoption of relevant legislative standards that create conditions for efficient implementation of intercultural dialogue
- (28,6%) Alignment of social policy towards social inclusion and social cohesion
- (57,1%) Support of the NGO activities in the implementation of intercultural dialogue
- (14,3%) None of the above

Figure 10
Key objectives and activities of civil society organisations in the context of multicultural dialogue.



- (42,9%) Simulation of its own daily practice of living together on grass root level
- (28,6%) Extirpation of stereotypes and prejudices
- (71,4%) Fostering of awareness in society for the issues related to intercultural dialogue
- (57,1%) Human rights education (non-formal and informal education)
- (42,9%) The assumption of consultative function in the process of development and political decision making process and constructive dialogue between society and public authorities
- (57,1%) Lobbying of public interest with the authorities
- (28,6%) Playing a watchdog role





5. Citizenship Rights

Just under nine in ten respondents (87%) said they were familiar with the term ‘citizen of the European Union’ in 2015. The European Commission is very proud of that result yet they plan to launch a big awareness campaign to raise awareness about the EU and will offer additional funding related the promotion of citizens’ rights in the national context. This funding will certainly have an impact on civic education, especially in the context of the non-formal education. Our Monitor, in line with the conclusions of the Eurydice report, shows that national education policies place a strong focus on **promoting citizenship rights and common European values**. Meanwhile other areas, such as strengthening security and promoting equality, and simplifying daily life for citizens, that represent areas of interest of our members, remain quite outside of the focus of education policies. Additionally, we noticed that in some countries citizenship rights are not at all included in obligatory citizenship education and therefore the role of civil society is crucial in such cases. Figure 11 shows the detailed breakdown of the results.

Among different activities that our members organise to promote active citizenship and citizenship rights are public debates, election meetings, engagement of volunteers in social actions and work with small communities. Our members are **often active in rural areas where there is less access to information as well as public services**. The impact of CSOs in those areas is positively acknowledged by governments (Spain, Serbia).

Figure 11
Ways in which Civil Society Organisations and public authorities are involved in various aspects of support to intercultural dialogue.





6. Conclusions

From the data collected, we can conclude that intercultural dialogue is one of the most important means through which citizens can express their opinions, aspirations, concerns and needs to those who have different cultural affiliations from themselves. NFIL providers in different countries focus on the promotion of values crucial for democratic discussions, debates and enabling all citizens to contribute to society and decision-making processes on an equal footing. In order to close the gap between public authorities and CSOs (as seen in Figure 2) stronger cooperation on a national as well as European level is necessary. The methods and concepts taught in the framework of NFIL could serve as a model for the revision of national curricula and particularly for civic education. Inclusive education governance is needed and it ought to be accompanied by sustainable funding that will allow CSOs to continue developing and sharing their expertise with national authorities.

Furthermore, EU member states have to increase their effort to implement strategies for validation and certification of competences acquired through NFIL. EU authorities have recognised that the need for skilled and knowledgeable citizens extends beyond formal education to learning acquired in non-formal or informal frameworks. In 2012 the Council Recommendation on validation encouraged Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018. These arrangements should aim to enable individuals to increase the visibility and value of their knowledge, skills, and competences acquired outside formal education and training, however, only a few Member States made a progress since then.

The value-based education that puts the learner at the centre is an environment that best stimulates critical thinking and understanding of the subject. This competence is crucial to ensuring

peaceful and fair societies. An education system which equips people with such competences empowers them and endows them with the capacities they need to become active participants in democratic processes, intercultural dialogue and in society in general. Closer attention has to be paid to the broad and varied experience that organized civil society has developed over the years while actively combating online harassment and disinformation. It could serve as a valuable input for national authorities who are currently establishing different national schemes to fight disinformation and illegal data collection. In this regard some SOLIDAR Foundation members working on digital resilience have already included topics such as “responsible data sharing”.

This Monitor has contributed to map the relationship between citizenship and lifelong learning experiences in different European countries and shed light on the different approaches that SOLIDAR Foundation members take compared to those of national authorities. The results of this exercise will be disseminated to EU and national policymakers and will serve as a basis to exploit and transfer collected best practices. The SOLIDAR Education and Lifelong Learning Forum will further work on the topic and develop a sustainable advocacy strategy for CSOs that will enable them to form stronger alliances and partnerships with national authorities and increase their influence in the discussion and process of renewal of national curricula and education systems.



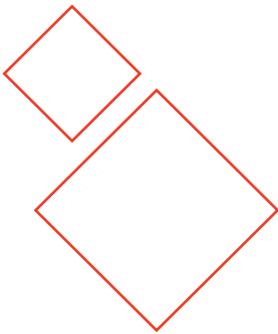


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The SOLIDAR Foundation is the cooperation platform of SOLIDAR, a European network of NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR brings together 60 member organizations based in 25 EU member states and in six candidate countries. We work together on Social Affairs, International Cooperation and Lifelong Learning. The Building Learning Societies pillar includes 23 members, covering 18 EU member states.

Through its member and partner organizations, SOLIDAR Foundation engages citizens in EU decision making processes, empowers people through lifelong learning and VET, and voices their concerns to the EU institutions by carrying out active lobbying, project management and coordination, policy monitoring, research and awareness-raising.

SOLIDAR Foundation cooperates with progressive civil society and labour movement organizations, is a founding member of EU-CIS-LLL and European Year of Citizens 2013 Alliance and works in strategic partnership with ETUI and EVBB.

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