MONITOR 2018

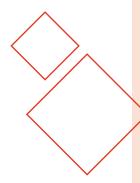# Citizenship and Lifelong Learning

Contents

SOLIDAR Foundation members have a long-standing tradition of empowering people through lifelong learning, and actively promote social cohesion, active inclusion and participation in society. They are active in the fields of adult education, professional and vocational training, education populaire and education for Peace.

The fundamental values of solidarity, equality, participation and social justice are the cornerstones of the process of building inclusive learning societies, where people are given opportunities to develop and to cooperate as free and equal individuals within collective frameworks. SOLIDAR Foundation members and partners aim towards creating an inclusive learning society on the grounds of openness and democracy, where all members have an opportunity to participate in lifelong and life-wide learning opportunities.

Our societies are becoming increasingly polarized, divided and as a consequence the willingness to reach intercultural understanding is fading away. Educational activities aiming at facilitating intercultural understanding should be core to the European policies, as requested in the Paris Declaration and as this is a basic condition for peaceful living together and therefore an essential element of the European Union. Both for the relations between communities living in different EU member states and for those with the neighbouring countries.

Personal emancipation, individual's full civic, social and economic participation in society and the development of human talents can only be achieved through social investment in education. This means re-envisioning European policies on education to achieve accessible, inclusive, participatory education everywhere in Europe.

Conny Reuter, SOLIDAR Foundation Secretary General

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1. Introduction

Over the last couple of years, the world has witnessed the harsh impact of populist politics. In the European Union, this rise in nationalism and populism has translated into an old member state leaving the Union for good, and "illiberal" countries rising up against civil society which could bring a major overhaul in the European Parliament for the May 2019 elections. Struggling with how to deal with extremist parties and their leaders, the EU has nonetheless attempted to cautiously restrain possible conflicts by peaceful means and promotion of participation of its citizens to bring people together despite far-right challenges ahead of the next European Parliament elections in May 2019.

To counter and prepare citizens to reinforce and strengthen core European democratic values, the Union has pledged to promote citizenship through education after ministers convened in Paris on March 2015 to set up common objectives[1]. Having derived the 2017 report based on three thematic issues directly taken from the declaration's objectives, this year the monitor aims to go further into understanding the processes and methods for the promotion and delivery of citizenship education in Europe by non-formal education providers.

First designed by an internal working group, the Citizenship and Lifelong Learning Monitor is a tool aimed at exploring those three thematic areas directly derived from the Paris Declaration's objectives, while also monitoring the state of play in various countries as well as the positions and shape of members from SOLIDAR Foundation. The three monitored areas touched upon are: monitored

- Ensuring that people acquire civic and inter cultural competences

- Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly regarding the use of the internet and social media

- Promoting intercultural dialogue
To counter radicalization from the youth and

enhance democratic participation, in recent years citizenship education has become the focus of attention as a long term viable solution to help bring fundamental European values in and outside of the classroom. However, the latest Eurydice report on Citizenship Education in schools in Europe demonstrates the considerable differences there is among approaches took by member states to implement citizenship education[2]. Many countries use more than one approach when implementing citizenship education, with the most widespread model being the integrated approach combined with some teaching as a cross-curricular theme. However, the average annual time devoted to citizenship education significantly differs depending on member states. Furthermore, according to Eurydice almost half the countries have still not introduced regulations on the inclusion of citizenship education competences in initial teacher education, while in some member states a national legal framework is only at its infancy with no systematic approach to implementing citizenship education. Additionally, education authorities pay less attention to citizenship education in school-based initial vocational education and training than with general education[3].

To illustrate these differences and inform national education reform debates in each country, in October 2018 the European Commission released its annual Education and Training Monitor (ET Monitor)[4], in line with the Europe 2020 agenda for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in bolstering education and training[5]. With its international comparison and country analysis, the monitor shows that despite progress having been made towards the 2020 targets, the EU average conceals disparities between and within Member States. Furthermore, the main differences stem from implementation and national frameworks, along with disparities when it comes to non-formal education.

1. https://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20150316-paris-education_en
2. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/news/eurydice-brief-citizenship-education-school-in-europe-2017_en
3. Ibid.
4. https://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/et-monitor_en
5. https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/european-policy-cooperation/et2020-framework_en

SOLIDAR Foundation's monitoring has come to similar conclusions to those of the Eurydice and the ET Training reports, specifically regarding the lack of training and resources for teachers and proper implementation from national goals. **Moreover, SOLIDAR Foundation members have highlighted the need to have long term investment in lifelong learning education and support for civil society organisations that are helping bridging policy gaps to address challenges for citizenship education.**

In the context of an increased crisis of trust between government and civil society, the need to develop further effective partnership models remains vital as CSOs have the resources when it comes to knowledge, experience and networks and should be taken into account when developing citizenship and lifelong learning objectives and programmes. If the European Union (EU) wants to reinforce its values among citizens and learners, while playing an international role in leading democratic learning societies through active participation, **citizenship education is a key tool and proper long-term strategy to bring those values back and reinforce its own role and the role of the EU**. As the 2019 European Parliament elections approach, those values will be defining factors in Europe's democratic renewal.

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2. The Ties that Binds Us: Civic and intercultural competences
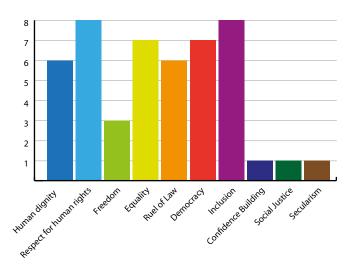
Civic and intercultural competences have brought increased attention in light of recent events. With the Brexit referendum, terrorist attacks in European capitals and disenfranchisement on political participation among the youth, focus is set on social fragmentation and rising levels of anti-political beliefs and low civic engagement in European politics[6]. These challenges have crossed most member states and remains priorities for civil society and the European Union, facing the challenges of rising populist nationalism across countries.

6. http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/policy/documents/perception-behaviours_en.pdf
7. https://rm.coe.int/2018-shrinkingcivicspacesforyouth-executivesummary/16808eb41b

Within these challenges lies the citizenship challenge which is a shared one, as national and European identity are being eroded and undermined in line with the current shrinking of democratic and civic space[7]. To understand the state of play in most member states, this section will review how citizenship education is taught in countries where our members are active, and how they view implementation of civic and intercultural competences at a national level.

To analyze these findings, cross-country comparisons will be made as they offer one of the few ways in which policy-makers can assess performances outcomes of policy measures and people's qualities for civic engagement (HJ Kang, 2012). Taking heterogeneity into account and using interpretative care for effective comparisons, the need to monitor the learning outcomes of citizenship education and lifelong learning through comparative research is essential to understand democratic life.

Undertaking a comparative evaluation among our members, as seen in **Figure 1**, the results shows that European values most promoted by civil society organisations are inclusion and respect for human rights, including of minorities, two areas which are often taken up by CSOs rather than formal education providers.

Figure 1. _Comparative of European values promoted by civil society organisations._

Our members have taken up activities such as the inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers into economic, social and cultural life, respecting human rights and freedom in social care facilities, while other members have taken up the route of bringing forth capacity building and mentoring for municipal committees for inter-community relations and increasing support for people with disabilities as a path to promote inclusion and intercultural dialogue in local communities.

Furthermore, citizenship education and practice for seniors, or providing support services for those socially disadvantaged groups for better integration and social inclusion are all examples given by our members which demonstrate how big pledges taken from European fundamental values are turned into local and national changes by promoting an open and enabling space through interconnectedness.

In many countries CSO implement project dealing with very specific issue such us active aging, access to healthcare system, labor rights and violations on labor market or even management of assets confiscated from the mafia.
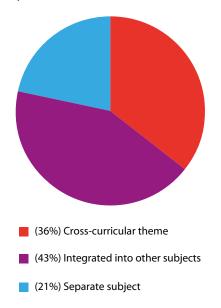
The outcome confirms the essential role of CSOs in democratic societies where they demonstrate to jointly provide 360¬° support to disadvantage groups.

According to the Eurydice report, in nearly most European member states is citizenship education part of the national curriculum, with national curricula tending to be broader in scope in most education systems, covering the four areas of competences which are interacting effectively and constructively, thinking critically, behaving in a socially responsible manner and acting democratically[8].

Figure 2 in our monitor also confirms the Eurydice findings in 2017, mainly that most countries use a mix of citizenship education being integrated into other subjects and also as a cross curricular theme. **Figure 3** shows overwhelming level of dissatisfaction among our members and CSOs on the content of citizenship education, which is majoritarily seen as insufficient due to a lack of priorities given for the subject seen as less relevant than other core subjects for learners to integrate the labor and social market. **Thus 78% of our members view the main curriculum content for citizenship education as unsatisfactory**. Our members reported cross generational lack of preparation of teachers to confront the hard issues in depth, lack of dedicated time in the curricula as well as confusion on who from the teaching/managing staff has the responsibility within cross-curricular theme.
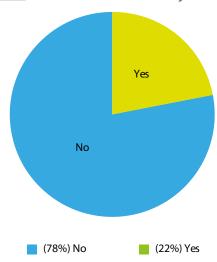
**Figure 2.** _Main curriculum approaches to ticizenship education_

- ■ (36%) Cross-curricular theme
- ■ (43%) Integrated into other subjects
- ■ (21%) Separate subject

Our members have stressed the need to have adequate training for teachers and school staff, along with higher specialization and focus on citizenship education as a priority subject in the curriculum.
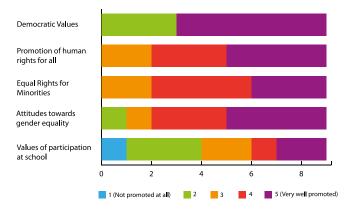
8. https://rm.coe.int/prems-008318-gbr-2508-reference-framework-of-competences-vol-1-8573-co/16807bc66c

<u>Figure 3.</u> Is the content satisfactory?

■ (78%) No   ■ (22%) Yes

In our 2017 Monitor[9], comparisons between the levels of civic competences provided by national authorities and (CSOs) were made, in which participatory approach and social justice were mostly taken upon by CSOs providing non-formal education due to community engagement instilled through the feeling of ownership and belonging to the learner's community.

<u>Figure 4.</u> Values promoted by civil society organisation to support social justice

■ 1 (Not promoted at all) ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5 (Very well promoted)

This year our members have reported promoting social justice mostly through democratic values, promotion of human rights for all and

gender equality with activities such as training programmes for specific vulnerable groups such as migrant women with a lower socio-economic background at higher risks of gender-based violence and discrimination, or organizing after school activities and developing Free Age universities for seniors and part-time adult learners, as seen in **Figure 4**.

Case Study

Free Age universities

L'Associazione per l'invecchiamento attivo (Auser) is an Italian association promoted by Spi - Cgil: the federation of retired people from the major Italian trade union. Auser was born in 1989 with the aim to promote elderly active participation through social and civil voluntary service, self organisation of services, activities for young people and workers in general, active citizenship. It has 1.000 offices and 190.000 members, among them 60.000 active volunteers. Auser manages Third Age Universities, also called 'Free Age Universities', as universities first aimed for the elderly and now for young men and women to promote lifelong learning, integration and gender equity, with other 215.000 members participating each year to Auser's cultural activities across Italy. Furthermore, these universities work with other Auser's organisations involved in volunteering and active citizenship events, giving the possibility for students to get practical help (i.e.: mobility, company at home or in nursing homes, delivering hot meals and medications, etc.) while also being involved with some cultural activity to bring forward skills and competences. On the other side, this link between these two different "kind" of structures allows to meet people interested in cultural activities and to invite them to participate also in volunteering and social activities.
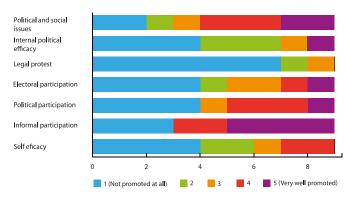
9. http://www.solidar.org/en/news/citizenship-and-lifelong-learning-monitor-2017

The various activities listed above demonstrates the network and existing knowledge that CSOs carry which should be valued and used by national authorities when developing programmes and structures to reinforce community living and fair participation. Our members promote social justice mostly through promotion of democratic values, human rights for all and attitude towards gender equality.

**Figure 5.** Values promoted by civil society organisations to support participatory structures.

Other members have reported promoting participatory structures mostly through legal protest, internal political efficacy, electoral and political participation, along with self-efficacy, as seen in **Figure 5**. Activities such as organizing community forums with relevant stakeholders on educational topics, organizing protests and citizens gathering on issues such as climate change and pollution, or informational campaigns on public national referendums, along with supporting cross-border volunteering for the youth to be politically engaged are all taken up by our members to reinforce a culture of active citizenship.

However, **our members have pointed at the difficulties in securing enough funds to develop and perform their activities independently,** despite the initiative of the extra funding instrument called the European Values Instrument[10]– to promote and protect EU values such as democracy, freedom, rule of law and fundamental rights.

Case Study

Engaging young people in the electoral process in Bulgaria

The Institute for Social Integration(ISI)[11] is an organisation that supports trainings, educational courses, research and scientific studies, monitoring along with organizing discussion forums and publishing. ISI mostly aims at reinforcing greater integration in society and bridging social and economic gaps in Bulgaria. Since 2011, ISI and the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) dedicated a joint project to monitor the electoral process due to a crisis of public confidence in the latter and a dissatisfaction of a great number of Bulgarians to public institutions and political parties.

The main objective was to increase civil participation in voting and observing the elections, while also encouraging civil society to denounce any abuse as regular problems include buying votes, abuse of office, physical retribution or raids along with widespread disinformation. Young people were trained to monitor and act as watchdogs as ISI used its own Alumni network of almost 400 members.

The monitoring took place in 27 areas of the country and noted ignorance of the electoral legislation from the election administration itself, compiled in a detailed report[12]. Young civil observers were also tasked with monitoring the media environment during a two-month span, for which the trained team followed the main national and regional online media to evaluate public narratives prior to election campaigns.

This initiative is a concrete sample for promoting participatory structures as it has both educational and participatory elements, where youth are trained to monitor different phases of democratic election process and then afterwards they have the opportunity to take part in the process as observers. Last but not least, this promotes also democratic values as the observers play watchdogs role in this election process.

10. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180412IPR01607/eu-must-support-civil-society-organisations-promoting-european-values
11. https://www.isi-bg.org/?cid=3
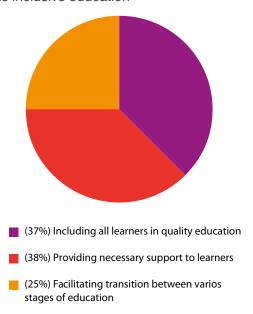12. http://www.isi-bg.org/?cid=30

When it comes to existing partnerships between public authorities and CSOs to promote civic and intercultural competences, 66.7% of our members are aware of such partnerships but reported that information arerarely promoted by national authorities and therefore difficult to access for smaller organizations or newly established organizations.

Some of our members have highlighted the few projects available for integration of migrants or interethnic integration in schools to improve intercultural dialogue and inclusion. **Our members stressed the need to let CSOs contribute more to public policy during the legislative process, with a dedicated contact point for civil society along with more openness to stakeholders in the community already working with specific groups and learners, especially in the non-formal sector.** Trans-sectorial partnerships can only be successful if formal education providers and national authorities allow CSOs and the non-formal education sector to join initiatives and consultation processes when co-operating for revision of curricula concerning citizenship education.

77.8% of our members have reported awareness of public programs in their country to promote inclusive education. **However, our members have called on greater information to be disseminated among public authorities, CSOs and NGOs on inclusion objectives and strategies, along with better allocation of funds and active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, such as an improved cooperation between CSOs and public institutions**. Furthermore, the need to have a systematic coherent approach at national level for including wider groups within education systems is seen as vital.

Another long term viable solution to bridge policy and the value gaps between CSOs providing non-formal education and those formal education providers is the recognition of non-formal and informal learning (NFIL). The importance of

skilled and knowledgeable citizens goes beyond what formal education can provide as recognition, as citizens must be able to get credit for skills learned outside of the formal education systems.

Figure 6. Ways in which public authorities promote inclusive education

■ (37%) Including all learners in quality education

■ (38%) Providing necessary support to learners

■ (25%) Facilitating transition between varios stages of education

The 2012 Council Recommendation on validation encourages Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018[13]. These recommendations are for European countries to establish national frameworks which would allow citizens to identify, document, assess and validate through certification all forms of learning to use this learning for advancing their career and for further lifelong learning, education and training. As shown in our last monitor, social justice and participatory structures, along with other skills and knowledge such as grounded in non-formal and informal learning, have not been included fully in formal education, for which civil society organisations fill the gap and links local communities with national and European frameworks. This year, our members have reported the challenges keeping validation of

NFIL at a lower pace than expected. Mostly our members have recommended a clear division of responsibilities among the various stakeholders and providers of NFIL, along with a comprehensive framework with learning outcomes for NFIL an a stronger cooperation with formal education providers to reinforce the benefits of VNFIL for citizens and societies.

3. Enchancing critical thinking and media literacy online

Our capacity to access information and have a critical understanding of the media has changed in the past decades as young people and adults mostly use the internet to get information and news. In 2016, 91% of young people in the EU made daily use of the Internet[14], with nearly a quarter of all news (23%) read via social media[15]. As online spaces for information and socialization tap into basic needs through digital technologies, young people need to be equipped to use technical skills to access, critically reflect and analyse media content.

Media literacy and critical thinking have never been as important as today, enabling all to take informed decisions linked to democratic decisions and active participation. It concerns all types of media and the various distribution channels available such as social media and online platforms which concerns all European citizens.

In light of the effects of disinformation campaigns and fake news spreading in Europe[16], digital tools and skills have the capacity to raise awareness and empower citizens by making politicians and political institutions much more transparent while having the capacity to develop local, national and European networks.

However, 80% of Europeans have come across information they believe was false or mislea-

ding several times a month or more. 85% of respondents perceive this as a problem in their country[17]. As young users now turn to online media as their main source of information, the easy availability of diverse quality information has the potential to make democratic processes more participatory and inclusive only if those challenges are properly tackled.

Thus it is the life-long learning and development of critical and digital competences for young people, but also for adults and seniors, that must be vital to reinforce resilience of our societies to fake news and hate speech. The Digital Education Action Plan, adopted by the Commission in January 2018, highlights the risks disinformation poses for educators and students and the urgent need to develop digital skills and competences of all learners, in both formal and non-formal education.

The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens[18], developed by the Commission, sets out the wide mix of skills needed by all learners, from information and data literacy, to digital content creation, to online safety and well-being. The Commission, in its 2018 Communication on tackling disinformation, has encouraged independent fact-checkers and civil society organisations to provide educational material to schools and educators[19].

Following the results of the Monitor, **88.9% of our members do provide learning opportunities to tackle fake news and hate speech.** Most of SOLIDAR Foundation's members have launched activities in the forms of workshops, debates, online and offline training, monitoring and debunking along with fact-checking platforms and training in schools, while one of our member reported implementing activities specific to the political landscape of the country linked to political disengagement among the youth and monitoring the electoral process[20].

14. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Being_young_in_Europe_today_-_digital_world#Youth_online:_a_way_of_life
15. https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/communities/sites/jrccties/files/dewp_201802_digital_transformation_of_news_media_and_the_rise_of_fake_news_final_180418.pdf
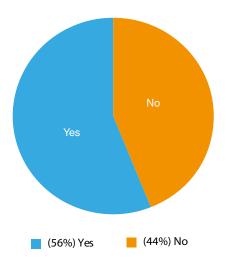16. https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/fake-news-disinformation
17. http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/flash/%20surveyky/%202183

18. https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/digcomp-20-digital-competence-framework-citizens-update-phase-1-conceptual-reference-model
19. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20180926RES14426/20180926RES14426.pdf
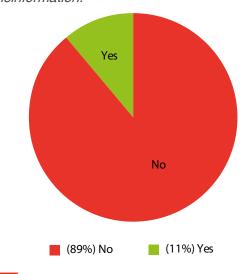20. see Case study 1.

As seen in Figure 7, 55.6% of our members have reported partnerships between civil society and media organisations to implement new approaches to tackle fake news and hate speech in their country, however absolute majority of our members reported missing information on crucial partnership between public authorities and private companies to tackle online and offline disinformation. (figure 8), Issues of funding and capacity often causes thatbigger high tech companies omit cooperation with CSOs which have often already developed toolkits and initiatives on smaller scale levels to counter fake news and hate speech.

Figure 7. Partnerships between civil society organisations and media organisations to implement new approaches to tackle fake news.

■ (56%) Yes   ■ (44%) No

When it comes to enhancing digital skills, 77.8% of our members reported providing opportunities through activities such as training and working methods of educators and providers of non-formal education about online learning, along with workshops for teachers on use of IT and free age universities implementing digital literacy courses for seniors and adult learners, or intergenerational partnerships involving young people and older ones into peer learning.

Figure 8. Partnerships between public authorities and private companies to tackle online/offline disinformation.

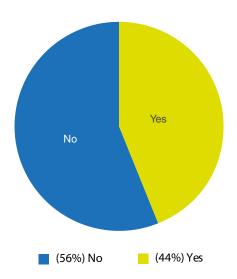
■ (89%) No   ■ (11%) Yes

4. Intercultural dialogue

With 28 countries and various cultural identities across the European Union, intercultural dialogue is seen as essential for avoiding conflict and marginalization of citizens on the basis of their cultural identity. Based on the 2008 European year for intercultural dialogue, and the 2008-2013 Platform for Intercultural Europe, civil society in reality play a leading role in promoting and implementing intercultural dialogue through a number of various methods and practices[21].

For instance, a longstanding area of activity for which intercultural dialogue has been introduced is with the Roma community, which has long been discriminated in a number of Member states despite being Europe's largest ethnic minority. To counter such discrimination and further integrate the community, local and international CSOs have coordinated and gained extensive experience and knowledge on the role of cultural and educational institutions in taming conflicts and strengthening integration of specific vulnerable groups in societies.

21. https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/intercultural-dialogue_en

Figure 9. *Civil society organisations having developed a whole school approach with formal learning institutions.*
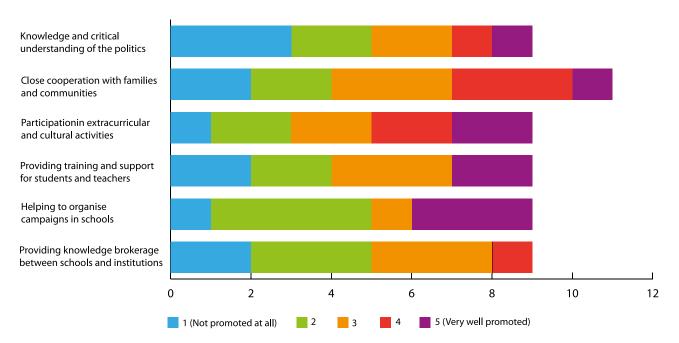

- (56%) No
- (44%) Yes

Figure 10. *Comparative ways in which civil society organisations develop connections with formal learning institutions to promote a whole school approach.*

The *whole school* aims at raising quality and standards for the lifelong learning path of each individual. This approach acknowledges that all aspects of the school community can impact upon learners' health and wellbeing, and that learning, social life and wellbeing are intertwined. Our members and partners report it as a remarkably effective way to tackle early school leaving. For it to be effective, schools need to identify relevant partners from outside of the formal school system and address the needs of the educational community by engaging in continuous, cyclical processes for improvement[22].

The whole school approach that translates in putting the learner at the centre and cross sectoral cooperation has proven to be an effective methodology for improving the wellbeing of students and their communities.

As seen in **Figure 10**, our members have worked with formal learning institutions in an attempt to bring a whole school approach through various ways such as close cooperation with families and communities, participation in extracurricular and cultural activities, or helping to organise campaigns in schools to develop a common understanding of objectives and in an attempt to play a key role in promoting cooperation.

- 1 (Not promoted at all)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Very well promoted)

22. http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/project-result-content/360e3a02-40e9-4c17-b4f9-ca552f0cd970/A%20Whole%20School%20Approach.pdf

5. Conclusions

As mentioned in the 2017 Eurydice report on citizenship education, our members have confirmed the lack of vision and priority for civic and intercultural competences to be launched as a separate and core subject for learners, despite increased attention on the content in light of recent current events in Europe. From our members' input, we can conclude that inclusive education remains the most important tool to combat social inequalities and enable social cohesion. Access to quality education and lifelong learning is the key factor for citizens being able to individually and collectively voice their concerns, express theirneeds, access services and take active part in the local community (trough volunteering for example). In current European societies intercultural dialogue, facilitated by CSOs is thus the tool that needs to be supported by adequate financial resources as well as proper structure through which the CSO can transparently contribute to the policymaking.

To address the lack of certain values and skills missing within formal education systems, NFIL providers should be given more support and investment from EU member states for which some are lacking behind in implementing national strategies and legal framework for validation of NFIL as advised by the 2012 Council Recommendations.

Furthermore, the need to develop a whole school approach based on cross sectoral cooperation in the educational process is vital to foster learners potential and well being in every age and stage of their life.

To enrich the learners' experience and implement critical thinking when using digital tools, skills and media literacy must be strengthened to equip people with competences which would allow them to become active participants in democratic processes and in society when making econo- mic, social or political choices based on informed decisions. Closer attention has to be paid to public partnerships with private companies and inclusion of CSOs which have proven knowledge and experience for combatting fake news, hate speech and online discrimination.
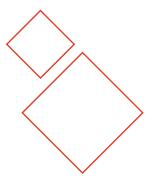
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LIFELONG
LEARNING
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EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION

This Monitor is a contribution to further examine the relationship between citizenship and lifelong learning experiences and policy outcomes in and outside of the classroom in various European countries. Mapping the different approaches that SOLIDAR Foundation members have taken in promoting EU values in relation to citizenship education and lifelong learning for greater democratic participation of citizens, the outcomes will be disseminated towards European and national policy-makers and offers an array of best practices to collect, use and transfer among networks. The SOLIDAR Education and Lifelong Learning Forum will further work on the topic and develop a long term sustainable advocacy strategy for CSOs towards national and EU-wide authorities to influence the debate and revision of national curricula and education systems.

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.