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Organización
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Education for Citizenship



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Education for Citizenship

Learning to live together with respect for the other, that is the essential challenge of education for citizenship.

The range of educational initiatives to encourage the values of citizenship is continually expanding, from lessons in morality in Japan, learning basic values in Sweden, a pupils' parliament in Lithuania, to France's "path to citizenship." Education for citizenship witnessed a boom during the 1990's, with the "third wave of democracy," as apartheid ended, the Berlin wall came down, and former communist countries of Eastern Europe held democratic elections. For these countries, civic education programmes have become increasingly important means to teach citizens about their rights and responsibilities.



Learn to respect others
(D.Deriaz © UNESCO)

ACQUIRING VALUES

By bolstering pluralism, states have encouraged the development of civic education programmes that go beyond the simple patriotic models of citizenship that merely demanded unquestioning loyalty to the nation-state. This civic, or civilian education requires a great deal of time and effort, as it means acquiring knowledge, forming attitudes and building values. Citizenship has to be perceived as a capacity to live together in a society that is both democratic and pluralist, as well as the capacity to join together to build a fair and equitable society. Citizenship, then, means possessing qualities, attitudes, behaviours and skills that can be used to build a civic space, where respect for individual differences can be reconciled with shared common values. The feeling of belonging to the same entity can be undermined in some

countries by historic divisions and difficult daily realities. How can one talk to children about citizenship when there is a war raging all around them? UNESCO has placed this challenge in the context of a wider programme that links education for all, the fight against poverty, and sustainable development. It is in this spirit that the highly successful teaching kit, *The Practice of Citizenship*, was created in 1997, and subsequently translated into several languages, including French, Spanish, Albanian and Lithuanian. The aim was to extend the notion of civic education to integrate peace, tolerance, international understanding, intercultural dialogue, human rights and the practice of democracy.

EVERYDAY CONSIDERATIONS

Citizenship is much more than politics. It involves thinking every day about what we buy, which mode of transport we use, and how we behave with our fellow citizens. School is naturally at the core of learning about citizenship. Besides this manual, UNESCO has produced a whole range of teaching materials based on human rights education, which are adapted to local contexts and the needs of students. Most of these publications are available in national and local languages.

- *All Human Beings – a Manual for Human Rights Education* is a guide to understanding the universal elements of human rights (for primary and secondary schools, available in several

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A few considerations

To make the language of human rights accessible to all, national education policies have to take account of the following points:

- ensure that teaching manuals integrate human values that promote peace, social cohesion and respect for human rights and dignity
- change traditional teaching methods for more participative and democratic approaches
- democratise the school's internal structure (e.g. by involving children in school life, creating school societies and student councils, integrating disciplinary measures with the learning process and the exercise of rights)
- ensure that communication and the appreciation of diversity are practised constructively
- allow rights to be exercised in everyday situations. It is therefore very important to link schools with their local communities, while promoting activities outside school.

languages, including English, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Lithuanian, Bengali and Turkish.

- *Education for Citizenship* is a multimedia CD-ROM in three languages (English, French and Spanish), produced with Education International, the world's largest union of teachers.

- *Education for Human Rights & Democracy in Southern Africa* is a teachers' resource manual, developed within the framework of the pilot project "Education for Human Rights and Democracy in Southern Africa" financed by the Danish Agency for Development Assistance DANIDA in Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

- *Peace and Human Rights for Croatian Primary Schools* is a booklet published by the Croatian Commission for UNESCO. It presents a project that aims to promote peace and human rights education in Croatian primary schools through educational programmes and teaching materials.

- *Defence in the Service of Peace* is a teaching manual produced with the French Ministries of Defence and of Education. It provides secondary school teachers with a collection of fact sheets on defence and citizenship.

- *Tool for Quality Assurance of Education for Democratic Citizenship in Schools* is designed to help schools organise themselves around the principle of democratic citizenship and,

for the first time, includes six quality indicators of education for citizenship.

The concept underlying education for citizenship is that education should contribute to the development of individuals so that they attain the means to interact with society and to take an active part in decisions regarding social, cultural and economic policies.

Contact :

Section of Education for Peace and Human Rights

To find out more

www.unesco.org/education

For the manual *Defence in the Service of Peace*, see:

www.unesco.org/shs/philosophy