

Louisa Slavkova  
Maja Kurilić



# Great expectations

Demands and realities  
of civic education in Europe

Copyright of this publication is held by THE CIVICS Innovation Hub, all rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

© THE CIVICS Innovation Hub 2023

Published by THE CIVICS Innovation Hub, Bonner Talweg 64, 53113 Bonn, Germany [www.thecivics.eu](http://www.thecivics.eu)

Authors: Louisa Slavkova and Maja Kurilić

Proofreading: Adriana Cloud

Design by: Carina Schmitt, beta-web GmbH

Cover photo: Hanna Murajda, <https://thegreats.co/artworks/fly-high>

Print by: dieUmweltDruckerei GmbH



**klimaneutrales** Druckerzeugnis | durch CO<sub>2</sub>-Ausgleich | [www.natureOffice.com/DE-275-2AKED6G](http://www.natureOffice.com/DE-275-2AKED6G)

The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of THE CIVICS Innovation Hub.

Louisa Slavkova

Maja Kurilić

# Great expectations

---

Demands and realities  
of civic education in Europe

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Mapping non-formal civic education .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2. Country profiles .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Albania.....	12
Austria.....	14
Belgium .....	16
Bulgaria.....	18
Croatia.....	20
Czechia.....	22
Finland.....	24
France.....	26
Greece.....	28
Italy.....	30
Lithuania .....	32
Luxembourg .....	34
Malta .....	36
The Netherlands .....	38
North Macedonia .....	40
Poland .....	42
Portugal.....	44
Romania .....	46
Slovakia .....	48
Slovenia .....	50
Spain .....	52
<b>3. Patterns and trends in non-formal civic education across Europe .....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>3.1. Navigating the terminology and diversity of civic education in Europe .....</b>	<b>54</b>
The discourse surrounding civic education.....	55
Challenges and opportunities: A call for proactive action.....	55
Formal civic education.....	56
Civil society and civic education .....	57
Non-formal and informal civic education .....	57



<b>3.2. Beyond the classroom: A comprehensive profile of 434 European civic educators in non-formal and informal settings .....</b>	<b>59</b>
From non-profits to community libraries: Geographical reach and impact .....	59
Key topics shaping citizenship in Europe .....	64
Amidst conflict: The effects of the Ukrainian war on civic educators' work.....	65
From youth to migrants: Unpacking the diverse target groups.....	66
The most popular tools for civic education.....	68
Choosing between in-house and external expertise .....	70
Money matters: Financial landscape and funding sources .....	71
The price of participation .....	72
Funding for core costs .....	74
The real cost of action: Funding for civic education activities .....	75
The role of regular volunteers and interns .....	76
The power of the core: Exploring team sizes .....	77
The freelance factor: Use of independent contractors .....	78
Building capacity for impact: What civic education actors need.....	79
Envisioning a pan-European civic education network: Key priorities and expectations .....	80
The need for peer-to-peer learning opportunities .....	82
<b>4. Bridging the gap between civic education needs and realities:</b>	
<b>Actionable insights .....</b>	<b>83</b>
The hidden cost of democracy: The price of neglecting civic education.....	83
Beyond funding: Prioritizing capacity building and peer-to-peer learning .....	84
Measuring what matters: Research and monitoring in formal and non-formal civic education .....	85
Enhancing formal civic education in Europe.....	86
Toward a common language: Overcoming fragmentation in a dispersed field .....	87
<b>5. The way forward .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Disclaimer.....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>About the authors.....</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>91</b>
Appendix A. First questionnaire .....	92
Appendix B. Second questionnaire.....	96
Appendix C. Privacy Statement.....	98
Appendix D. Expert opinion pieces written by local mapping partners.....	101

## Executive summary

The report, which covers 21 countries in Europe, highlights the crucial role of civic education in promoting active citizenship and democracy resilience. However, the data also shows that a lack of resources, including financial support, hinders the effectiveness of such programmes.

The paper, which includes a comparative analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data and a set of recommendations, emphasizes the need for a European ecosystem that prioritizes capacity building, peer-to-peer learning and research to enhance the impact of non-formal civic education on democracy resilience. The creation of a pan-European civic education network is proposed to foster collaboration, learning and innovation among civic education actors, providing resources and platforms for peer-to-peer learning, financial stability, fundraising and advocacy.

The analysis also identifies a range of challenges facing formal civic education in Europe, including diverse approaches to teaching the subject, a perceived lack of seriousness and a shortage of resources and time for teachers. Recommendations include developing contemporary teacher training programmes, emphasizing cross-curricular grading, adopting more practical approaches to teaching and fostering collaboration between formal and non-formal civic education initiatives.

Additionally, the analysis highlights the need for a common language for non-formal and informal civic education, which would help to overcome fragmentation and facilitate communication among stakeholders. Establishing a common language would also enhance the comparability and transferability of non-formal and informal civic education practices across Europe, ultimately advancing the cause of civic education in a more unified manner.

Overall, the report warns that the lack of funding for non-formal civic education programmes poses a risk to the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of initiatives. To ensure the impact of civic education, a multifaceted approach that addresses funding, capacity building, peer-to-peer learning, research and collaboration is needed. By prioritizing these areas, we can bridge the gap between the needs and realities of civic education and empower citizens with the knowledge, skills, and values they need to become active and engaged citizens, capable of navigating complex and rapidly changing societies.

# Introduction

At the end of 2021, the “Mapping Civic Education in Europe” project team launched an online survey to thousands of civic education actors in Europe. The team was unaware that, less than two months later, Russia would invade Ukraine, drastically altering the geopolitical landscape. While the team had designed the survey with the assumption that the COVID-19 pandemic would be the decade’s defining crisis, the war became a turning point in European and global history. The war had an impact on the work of civic educators, and as the object of interest changed during the mapping process, assessing it became increasingly challenging. Nevertheless, the online survey yielded 434 responses from 21 European countries, representing various European regions, which provided insights for a comprehensive picture of the state of non-formal and informal civic education in Europe, despite online fatigue and the war in Ukraine.

In times of crisis, education is often touted as a solution. When youth unemployment rises, policymakers call for education on skills for employability. When poor performance in maths and science is revealed by PISA results, there is a call for promoting STEM education. And when democracy is in decline, even foreign policy experts call for civic education in order to restore citizens’ commitment to democracy, boost engagement locally and on the European level and more. But how can we determine what type of civic education is needed to achieve these goals? To answer this question, the “Mapping Civic Education in Europe” project team designed a multi-step mapping process and commissioned expert opinion pieces from 21 countries (the approach is described in chapter 1 of the report).

Chapter 2 includes country profiles based on the data collected at the national level and from the expert commentaries. In chapter 3, analytical notes are presented on a comparative basis, offering a comprehensive picture of all 21 countries, while chapter 4 offers practical and actionable insights on how to support the civic education ecosystem in Europe. The report concludes with a disclaimer and a thank-you to the 434 civic educators who contributed to the project, as well as the extended team that made it possible. The two questionnaires used in the mapping are reproduced in Appendix A and B, respectively. The privacy statement is in Appendix C, and the expert opinion pieces for each country are gathered in Appendix D. While the mapping process was rigorous, the authors are cautious about calling it a research report and instead use the term “mapping.”

# 1. Mapping non-formal civic education:

## Methodology, partners and results

Over the past two years (2021–2023), THE CIVICS Innovation Hub, with support from the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb), has conducted a comprehensive mapping project to identify actors from the field of non-formal and informal civic education across 21 European countries.<sup>1</sup>

As part of the project, over 2,800 civic educators from 21 European countries received an online survey, and 434 of them responded to it. The anonymized responses form the foundation of this report. A user-friendly visual map showcasing the profiles and geographic distribution of these civic educators across Europe has also been created.

### Definitions and methodology

A variety of organizations and individuals who actively engage in activities in the field of non-formal and informal civic education were eligible to be mapped, from non-governmental organizations, networks and foundations to experts in the field of civics and social media influencers on the topic. For the purposes of this mapping of civic education in Europe, a definition of “civic education” following the wording and recommendation of the Council of Europe has been applied: civic education equips citizens with the competences that enable them to actively participate in society. As per the Council of Europe competence model, these civic competences are:

- values (valuing human dignity and human rights, valuing cultural diversity, valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law);
- attitudes (openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views and practices, respect, civic-mindedness, responsibility, self-efficacy, tolerance of ambiguity);
- skills (autonomous learning skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, skills of listening and observing, empathy, flexibility and adaptability, linguistic, communicative and plurilingual skills, co-operation skills, conflict-resolution skills);
- knowledge and critical understanding (knowledge and critical understanding of the self, knowledge and critical understanding of language and communication, knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economies, environment, sustainability). (Council of Europe, 2018: 63)

The mapping encompassed non-formal and informal civic education. Whereas formal education covers activities prescribed by the curricula in elementary, secondary, high school and tertiary education, non-formal education refers to “planned, structured programs and processes of personal and social education primarily for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competencies, outside the formal educational curriculum,” while informal education refers to “lifelong learning processes, whereby each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experiences” (Brander et al., 2020).

The mapping process had two stages. In the first stage, local partners in each country collected a list of civic education actors. These contacts, numbering over 2,800, were then approached via email and invited to complete an online questionnaire. To increase the response rate, multiple reminders and follow-up phone

<sup>1</sup> Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain.

calls were made. Respondents were also asked to recommend other civic education actors they knew and worked with. After a vetting process, newly acquired contacts were approached to participate in the survey, expanding the mapping's outreach in each country. The first questionnaire comprised questions on the type of entity, key civic education topics, main target groups, additional expertise resources, financial health and funding sources, organizational capacities and capacity-building needs and the impact of the war in Ukraine (a question added after February 2022).

In the second stage, a shorter questionnaire was administered to the civic education actors who had completed the initial survey. Respondents were asked to indicate their relationship to other respondents and answer two additional questions about their needs for cooperation, networking and peer learning. This stage aimed to identify existing civic education networks in each of the mapped countries and to confirm relations between actors in the respective country. The information acquired through this questionnaire was used to create a network visualization map of civic educators in the 21 European countries. Respondents were asked to select individuals or organizations with whom they currently cooperate, and a follow-up question on intensity popped up once the entity was selected. Only actors in their own country were presented to the respondents.

The methodology of the mapping project was designed at the start and improved throughout the implementation phase. Local partners in each country, together with a researcher focused on quantitative methods and network analysis, were consulted to ensure the soundness of the methodology. For the technical implementation of the survey, a research agency was tasked with collecting the data.

Due to the extensive resources required, the mapping survey was not carried out simultaneously in all 21 countries. Instead, it was conducted in four cycles between November 2021 and December 2022. The first pilot cycle involved mapping five countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia. The second cycle mapped eight countries: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, and Romania. The third cycle, carried out in September 2022, covered six countries: North Macedonia, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, and Spain. The remaining two countries, Czechia and France, were mapped at the end of the surveying period. However, slight modifications to the schedule were necessary. Although the initial plan had been to include Ukraine and Moldova as well, the mapping activities in these two countries had to be halted due to the war in Ukraine. It should be noted that a local partner in Ukraine had already been selected, and partner selection in Moldova was in process. As for Turkey, only an expert opinion piece was created within the scope of this project, while other mapping activities were postponed.

In total, 434 entities have been mapped across all 21 countries, representing a response rate of 15.6% out of over 2,800 initial contacts. The average response rate per country is 20.8 entities, which is slightly above the expected range for online surveys. Online surveying presents challenges, such as invitation fatigue and the difficulty of motivating respondents to invest time and effort in completing surveys, as well as concerns about data privacy and security. Efforts were made to address these challenges, including the use of a simplified survey design and follow-up phone calls in some countries to increase response rates. As the aim of the mapping project was to facilitate better collaboration in the field of civic education, this served as an incentive for active participants to respond to the survey.

## Partners

The mapping project was conducted with the collaboration of local partners in each of the 21 mapped countries. These partners played a crucial role, providing valuable insight into the context in which civic educators operate, translating the questionnaire into the local language and supplying the initial database of contacts in their respective countries. Additionally, local partners contributed to the validation and elaboration of the gathered data through their participation in a validation workshop held in Vienna in December 2022.

Furthermore, the local partners have also been instrumental in utilizing and disseminating the results of the mapping in their countries, not only during the surveying period but also after the official mapping was completed. To provide a deeper understanding of the current state of civic education, each local partner wrote an expert opinion piece outlining current developments in the civic education field in their respective country, in formal as well as in non-formal and informal civic education. These pieces offer vital context for the data collected in each country, enabling us to draw careful conclusions and recommendations based on the findings.

## **Results: Network visualization and a comprehensive report**

---

To effectively capture the diverse stakeholders within the civic education sector across Europe and the relationships between them, the project has leveraged network visualization as a promising approach for visual representation. The use of such visualization aims to facilitate a clearer understanding of the connections and patterns within the field. The visualization provides a comprehensive pan-European overview of civic educators, with a list of all mapped organizations and a network diagram that depicts nodes representing civic educators and lines representing the connections between entities. Furthermore, the map enables sorting by location, legal status and founding year, as well as filtering by the main field of work, civic education focus and type of entity.

In addition, based on the comprehensive findings of the mapping project, this report provides an in-depth analysis of the state of non-formal civic education in Europe, identifying key actors, topics, target groups, resources and challenges in the field.

Overall, the mapping project has effectively achieved its objectives and provided valuable insights into the civic education sector in Europe. The resulting data and visualizations offer a foundation for further research and collaboration within the sector, and the project has paved the way for continued efforts to strengthen civic education in Europe.

The map will be updated on a regular basis and is available at:

<https://mapping.thecivics.eu/> →



## 2. Country profiles:

Understanding the landscape of civic education





# Albania

2,793,592

Population

Source: Eurostat data

4.2

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://monitoringmatrix.net/>

6.41/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023).  
Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy  
and the battle for Ukraine.

**C**ivic education is a relatively new concept in post-communist Albania, where civil society projects aim to integrate it as a topic in education curricula, build capacity for teachers and youth and raise awareness of human rights, social inclusion and community building. Despite progress in civil society, there is still a persistent lack of clarity among the general population about the distinction between politics and civil society. This confusion negatively affects citizens' trust in civil society and, consequently, in civic education.

According to the 39 respondents to the survey, almost all of whom engage in non-formal civic education work (89.7%), civic educators in Albania focus mainly on civic engagement (79.5%), social inclusion (71.8%) and community building (56.4%). The survey also found that 76.9% of respondents rely on external expertise when deciding on topics for civic education activities, while 74.4% use in-house expertise. The most popular methods and tools used for civic education are workshops and trainings (94.9%), followed by capacity building (89.7%), awareness-raising campaigns (84.6%) and peer-to-peer activities (69.2%).

The survey found that most respondents (79.5%) rely on external expertise when deciding on methods and didactical tools, followed by peer exchange (71.8%) and in-house expertise (66.7%). The local partner in Albania suggests that this result points to a lack of in-house expertise for most NGOs due to their small size and financial instability. Only 28.2% of respondents reported annual budgets between EUR 100,001 and EUR 500,000, while 17.9% reported budgets between EUR 50,001 and EUR 100,000. According to local experts, Albanian organizations tend to have a meagre presence in the field of development because they lack funds and human resources. The survey found that many respondents (64.1%) devote 11%–30% of their overall budget to the core costs of running their organization, with over a third (38.5%) devoting 51%–70% of their annual budget to activities. Regarding permanent employees, almost half of respondents (47.2%) have a team of 1–5 people, while 36.1% have a team of 6–10 people. Organizations with more than 21 people in a team are rare, with only 8.3% of respondents choosing that answer. The local partner in Albania explains that NGOs employing more people are typically those that serve as national representatives of an international organization. A third of respondents (35.3%) have a base of 1–5 independent contractors, while another third (33.3%) report having a base of more than 21 volunteers and interns.



The survey also reveals that respondents' work is mainly funded by EU funding (64.1%), foreign public funding other than the EU (53.8%) and individual contributions (41.1%). Despite receiving funding from international donors, organizations in Albania often have only short-lived support for specific short-term projects and activities.

The majority of those surveyed in Albania (71.8%) consider new methods, tools and approaches in civic education to be an area that requires further training. Many respondents deem it necessary to learn more about innovation and foresight (56.4%), communication and ways of working collaboratively with local and international partners (43.6%). Notably, securing funding (48.7%) is another area where additional capacity building is needed.

In conclusion, the survey results highlight areas for improvement in civic education in Albania and the need for sustainable approaches to support civic education initiatives. Training in financial sustainability and other areas will help organizations build capacity and strengthen civic education efforts, particularly as they continue to promote civic engagement, social inclusion and critical thinking.



# Austria

8,978,929

Population

13.6

CSOs per  
1,000 people

8.2/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Eurostat data

[https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&inkname=ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&inkname=ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf)

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**A**ustria has consistently demonstrated its commitment to advancing civic education by implementing policy measures to foster actively engaged and well-informed citizens. Civic education is an integral part of the country's education system, while the landscape of non-formal education in Austria is diverse, ranging from extracurricular education of young people in youth centres, traditional institutions of adult education such as community colleges, party academies and various NGOs. Despite challenges such as growing political disengagement and a loss of trust in democratic institutions, those involved in civic education in Austria are dedicated to addressing the gap between the recognized importance of civic education and its practical implementation.

Through the mapping questionnaires, 37 civic educators in Austria were reached, with most implementing activities in non-formal (70.3%) and informal (62.2%) civic education settings. The majority work in non-profit entities (81.1%), with respondents coming from non-governmental organizations (45.9%), associations (45.9%) and educational institutions (16.2%). Civic education work mainly focuses on civic engagement (75%), social inclusion (41.7%) and civil rights (38.9%), with critical thinking (75.7%), human rights education (64.9%) and intercultural competence (62.2%) coming up as the top three specific types of civic education. Most civic education activities take place locally (67.6%) or regionally (62.2%).

Workshops and trainings (89.2%) and publications (73%) are the most popular methods and tools used in civic education work, followed by in-person public events (62.2%), online events (59.5%) and participatory formats (59.5%). Respondents use in-house expertise for topics and also rely on external expertise (81.8%) and academic literature (81.8%) when deciding on methods and didactical tools.

Regarding budget, 32.4% of respondents refused to give a specific answer, while 27% report an annual budget between EUR 100,001 and EUR 500,000. Approximately one-third (29.7%) of respondents devote 0%–10% of their annual budget to core costs, while 27% devote 71%–100% of their budget to these core expenditures. Similar dynamics can be observed for activities.

Regarding personnel, most respondents (45.7%) represent entities consisting of 1 to 5 permanent employees, while the majority (63.6%) have a base of 1 to 5 independent contractors. Half of the respondents rely on the work of 1 to 5 volunteers and interns. Civic education work is mainly funded by national public funding (83.8%), with other sources of funding including individual contributions (48.6%), generated income (40.5%) and EU funding (32.4%).

When asked about future training needs, over half of the civic educators (54.1%) highlighted a need to learn more about securing funding and develop skills in working with the media (48.6%). Respondents also expressed a desire for training in the development of digital skills (43.2%) and innovative teaching methods (43.2%), indicating the importance of keeping up with rapidly evolving technological advancements. These results corroborate the assertion made by local partners, who identified a lack of funding and public recognition as the primary challenges facing non-formal and informal civic education in Austria.

Despite these challenges, the commitment and dedication of those involved in the civic education sector in Austria are evident. This is reflected in the diversity of organizations involved in civic education, ranging from traditional institutions of adult education to NGOs and party academies. The use of a variety of methods and tools, including workshops, publications and public events, demonstrates a commitment to engaging with citizens across a broad range of platforms and in different settings. However, to address the challenges faced by the civic education sector in Austria, it is important to establish sustainable approaches to supporting civic education initiatives and to recognize the key role of civic education in cultivating a population of actively engaged and well-informed citizens.



# Belgium

11,631,136

Population

Source: Eurostat data

12.9

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/environment-index/regions/index.html>

7.64/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**B**elgium is a federal state in which the organization of formal and non-formal civic education varies across its three communities and regions, although similar challenges are faced by civic educators across the country. The ongoing societal discussions regarding civic education in Belgium include issues such as the economic impact of the pandemic, super-diversity, the refugee crisis, the economic repercussions of the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis. Civic education is distributed across various policy domains, including culture, education, media, sports, youth and development work, and caters to diverse target groups such as adults, students and teachers.

The mapping questionnaires in Belgium reached 14 civic educators, many of whom conduct their activities in the non-formal (92.2%) and informal (71.4%) civic education settings. All respondents represent non-profit entities, with half of the respondents coming from an association and 35.7% representing a non-governmental organization. In their civic education work, respondents focus mainly on skills for civic engagement and participation (85.7%), social inclusion and community building (57.1%), with the majority concentrating on skills for civic engagement (85.7%), critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving competences (78.6%), and half of the respondents focusing on human rights education and intercultural competences. Most civic education activities take place on the local (78.6%) and/or regional level (71.4%).

The most popular methods and tools used in civic education include workshops and trainings (85.7%), training of trainers (ToT) and participatory formats (64.3%), followed by practice-based learning (57.1%). In-house expertise is used by all respondents when deciding on civic education topics and methods and didactical tools. The majority of respondents (42.9%) report a budget over EUR 500,000, with half of the respondents allocating 71%–100% of their annual budget to core costs. Most civic educators in Belgium work in entities with 21 or more employees (35.7%), with two-thirds working with 1–5 independent contractors, and many working with 21 or more volunteers and interns (41.7%). National public funding is the main source of funding for civic education work (92.9%), with half of the respondents relying on national private funding and their entity's generated income.

Impact evaluation and evaluative learning (78.6%) is one of the four main areas identified by respondents where further training is needed. The fragmented nature of civic education offerings in Belgium poses challenges for the implementation of effective monitoring and measurement mechanisms, and even though funding is centrally coordinated by the state, different activities are not necessarily aligned with one another, leading to competition for funding. However, many organizations find ways to cooperate on their own initiative. Other areas where respondents identified a need for future training include securing funding (57.1%), working with volunteers and new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field (50%).

In conclusion, while civic education in Belgium faces challenges due to the fragmented nature of offerings and competition for funding, civic educators remain committed to fostering engagement, participation and social inclusion. As societal issues continue to evolve, it is important for civic education to adapt and respond with innovative approaches and ongoing professional development.



# Bulgaria

6,838,937

Population

Source: Eurostat data

6.1

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: [https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil\\_society\\_studie\\_issuu\\_el-1.pdf](https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil_society_studie_issuu_el-1.pdf)

6.53/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**B**ulgaria is currently gearing up for its fifth election in the last two years. This situation has caused the trust in the institutions of democracy to plummet, further disenchanting citizens with democracy. The country's political culture faces a triple challenge: dealing with the remnants of the communist regime, addressing the legacy of the transition to democracy and confronting contemporary global challenges, such as disinformation and climate change. Despite the hurdles, a small yet robust community of civic educators operates in Bulgaria. While the public discourse on civic education revolves around topics such as the meaning of patriotism, susceptibility to disinformation and conspiracy theories, gender equality, Russian meddling, etc., non-formal and informal civic education in Bulgaria has made significant strides since the country's transition to democracy after the fall of communism in 1989. The range of topics covered by civic education programmes has expanded, and a diverse group of actors, including those who work in the formal sector, civil society organizations and active citizens at the local level, offer various civic education programmes. These programmes range from teacher trainings, teaching materials and extracurricular projects to education on diverse topics for citizens at large. Additionally, education on specific topics is provided by a variety of non-formal and informal actors, including popular social media influencers. However, non-formal civic education in Bulgaria, like many other areas in civil society, faces challenges related to funding and centralization.

Against this backdrop, the mapping in Bulgaria identified 37 civic educators covering a diverse range of fields. The majority of respondents (73%) engage in non-formal civic education, while a significant proportion (59.5%) implement activities in informal settings, and some (37.8%) operate in formal education settings. Respondents come from non-profit (67.6%), public (16.2%) and private entities (8.1%), as well as podcasts and freelance training programmes. The field of civic engagement and participation is the most common (77.8%), followed by social inclusion, civil rights and community building (each selected by a third of respondents). In terms of specific topics, survey participants mainly focus on skills for civic engagement (71.4%), critical thinking (54.3%) and human rights education (48.6%). Most civic education activities take place at the national (75.7%) or local (67.6%) level.

Workshops and trainings are the most commonly used methods and tools for civic education work (81.1%), followed by online public events (59.5%), as well as publications, awareness-raising campaigns and teaching/lecturing (each selected by 56.8% of respondents). When discussing topics for their civic education activities, respondents rely on in-house expertise (91.9%), external expertise (70.3%), academic literature (62.2%) and online sources (62.2%). In terms of sources for deciding on methods and didactical tools, in-house expertise (89.2%) and external expertise (86.5%) were identified as the top choices.

Regarding funding, 27% of respondents reported an annual budget of between EUR 50,001 and EUR 100,000, while 24.3% declined to provide specific information. Half of the respondents devote 11%–30% of their overall budget to the core costs of their organization, while more than half (55%) devote 51%–70% of their budget to activities. The majority of entities (57.1%) have 1–5 permanent staff. In most cases (73.1%), respondents rely on the work of independent contractors, with 1–10 in their core team. Almost all respondents (93.5%) make use of volunteers and interns, with more than a third reporting having 21 or more volunteers and interns in their team (35.5%). EU funding and national public funding (each 56.8%) are the main sources of funding for civic educators in Bulgaria.

When it comes to training needs, securing funding, and building and maintaining partnerships were identified as a priority by many respondents (51.4%). Close to half (48.6%) highlighted the need for new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field, followed by innovation and foresight (40.5%).



# Croatia

3,879,074

Population

Source: Eurostat data

14.7

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: [https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&inkname=ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&inkname=ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf)

6.5/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**C**roatia, as a young state with a relatively short democratic tradition, faces obstacles in the field of civic education. Public opinion in Croatia often reflects political polarization, which makes it challenging to build consensus around key topics and civic values. Furthermore, Croatia's complex history is subject to contested historical narratives, which, combined with conflicting understandings about the content and purpose of civic education in Croatian schools, further compounds the issue. Therefore, many educators in Croatia avoid controversy, and there is a lack of quality teacher training programmes that address controversial topics in a constructive and effective manner. This can limit the effectiveness of civic education efforts and contribute to a broader culture of apathy and disengagement.

Despite the challenges faced in Croatia, a vibrant community of civic educators is active in the sector, as evidenced by the feedback received from 48 survey respondents. All of the respondents (93.8%) were involved in non-formal civic education activities. The majority of respondents (64.6%) reported implementing activities in informal civic education settings, followed by 25% who worked in formal civic education settings.

When asked about their legal status, the vast majority of respondents (91.7%) identified as non-profit entities, while 2.1% chose public entities and 6.3% selected "other." The majority of respondents (72.9%) came from non-governmental organizations, with slightly less than half (47.9%) from an association, and some from a community-based organization or a civil initiative (10.4% each).

In terms of the focus of their civic education work, respondents mainly emphasized civic engagement (76.1%), followed by social inclusion (39.1%), civil rights and community building (37%) and culture and arts (32.6%). For a more detailed topical focus, the majority of civic education actors in the survey concentrated on skills for civic engagement (62.5%), human rights education (60.4%), critical thinking (60.4%) and cultural education



(35.4%). The majority of civic educators from Croatia who responded to the survey (72.9%) implement activities on a local level, while half (50%) work on a national level.

In terms of methods and tools used in civic education work, the most popular answers included workshops and training (89.6%), awareness-raising campaigns (68.8%), capacity building (66.7%), public events both online (62.5%) and in person (58.3%), together with publications (60.4%). Respondents declared using in-house expertise as their source when discussing methods (91.7%) and topics for their civic education activities (89.6%).

A little less than half of the respondents (45.8%) work with an average annual budget of EUR 100,001 to EUR 500,000. In most cases (39.1%), 51%–70% of the overall budget is devoted to the core costs of an organization, whereas less than half (43.5%) of respondents devote 31%–50% of their budget to activities. Respondents mainly (58.7%) represent entities consisting of 1–5 permanent staff, while some have a base of 1 to 5 independent contractors (45%) or a volunteer team of 1 to 5 people (31.9%). Their work is mainly funded by national public funding (85.4%) or EU funding (83.3%). Private companies are increasingly supporting societal projects as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy, indicating that there is a growing recognition of the importance of civic education in the broader societal context. This trend may provide opportunities for new partnerships and collaborations in the field of civic education, potentially leading to innovative approaches and new resources to support these efforts.

Based on the survey, civic education in Croatia emphasizes non-formal education (93.8%) and local-level activities (72.9%), with a focus on civic engagement, social inclusion, civil rights and community building. Hands-on learning through workshops, campaigns and events are popular methods. Finally, the mapping exercise revealed that funding, evaluation and analysis and further training in areas such as securing funding, working with media, and innovation and foresight are some of the main areas for improvement. The mapping results underline the importance of ongoing support and development in the field of civic education in Croatia to ensure its effectiveness and relevance in shaping engaged and responsible citizens.



# Czechia

10,516,707

Population

12.1

CSOs per  
1,000 people

7.97/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Eurostat data

Source: [https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil\\_society\\_studie\\_issuu\\_el-1.pdf](https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil_society_studie_issuu_el-1.pdf)

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

In Czechia, formal civic education emphasizes topics such as responsible environmental practices, healthy lifestyles and bullying prevention and is less focused on key democratic engagement topics such as the promotion of democratic values, extremism prevention and respect for cultural differences. Per the project's local partner, civil society in Czechia is actively striving to address this gap in formal education. NGOs, individual initiatives and communities centred around cultural and educational entities are taking the lead in this effort. At present, Czech society is grappling with a range of issues, such as the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the proliferation of misinformation on contentious topics, the fragmentation of civil society because of polarizing political rhetoric and the impact of populism on society. Despite these challenges, there is a concerted effort in Czech civil society to address these problems. The mapping questionnaire reached 20 civic educators who provided insight into their work and imminent needs. The majority of respondents (80%) engage in non-formal civic education work, while half (50%) implement activities in formal civic education settings. Mainly, the questionnaire reached those working in non-profit entities (85%), while the remaining 15% work in public entities.

Most of the respondents (80%) come from non-governmental organizations, followed by 35% who represent an association. In their civic education work, respondents focus primarily on civic engagement (60%), followed by other fields of work (60%) which included youth empowerment, anti-corruption, youth work and social services. As for a more detailed topical focus, most civic education actors reached by the survey concentrate on critical thinking (75%), followed by intercultural competences (55%) and skills engagement (40%). Civic educators from Czechia who responded to the survey mostly implement activities which take place on the national (75%) or local (65%) level.

The most popular answers on methods and tools used in civic education work include workshops and trainings (90%) and teaching/lecturing (80%), followed by practice-based learning (55%), online public events (50%) and digital tools (45%).

All respondents declare using in-house expertise as their source, both when discussing methods and didactical tools and when discussing topics for their civic education activities (100%). In terms of budget, 35% of respondents answered that their annual budget is between EUR 100,001 and EUR 500,000. In most cases (45%), 0%–10% of the overall budget is devoted to the core costs of the organization, and the same percentage of respondents (45%) devote 0%–10% of their budget to activities. Respondents mainly represent entities consisting of 1–5 or 11–20 permanent staff (30% each). Most (93.3%) rely on independent contractors in their work. Almost half of the respondents (42.9%) have 1 to 5 volunteers in their core team. Respondents' work is mainly funded by national public funding (80%), followed by their entity's own generated income and EU funding (70%), while the local expert observes that in recent years there has also been a growing interest among corporate foundations in supporting civil society. When asked about their needs for future training, half of the civic educators we have reached in Czechia (50%) highlight a need to learn more about working with the media, together with impact evaluation and evaluative learning (40%). Some of the respondents (35%) need further training in communication and new methods, tools and approaches in civic education. Based on the input of the project's local partner, there are two main challenges for individuals and organizations working in the field of civic education. The first is the need to devote time and attention to developing their own competencies in civic education, while the second is the importance of addressing controversial topics that do not receive sufficient attention in formal education.



# Finland

5,548,241

Population

Source: Eurostat data

19.3

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/environment-index/regions/index.html>

9.29/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**C**ivic education is highly valued in Finnish society as a critical means of promoting democracy, inclusion, equality, community spirit, societal cohesion and integration. In addition to fostering social unity and equipping individuals with new skills and knowledge, civic education provides ample opportunities for a diverse range of recreational activities that benefit both citizens and non-citizens residing in Finland. A significant number of organizations providing civic education have political party or labour union affiliations, while the remaining ones are independent non-governmental organizations. A total of 14 civic educators responded to the mapping questionnaire.

The respondents engage equally in non-formal and informal civic education work (85.7% each). Almost all (92.9%) of the respondents come from a non-profit entity, while the rest come from public entities (7.1%). The majority (57.1%) of respondents are from non-governmental organizations, followed by associations (35.7%). In their civic education work, they mainly focus on civic engagement (71.4%), followed by social inclusion (50%) and environment and sustainability and/or community building (42.9% each). Some respondents mentioned peace, youth work and social innovations as their main thematic field. The majority of civic education actors encompassed by this survey concentrate on critical thinking (71.4%), skills for civic engagement and education for sustainability (64.3%). All of the civic educators from Finland who responded to the survey implement activities that take place on the national level.

All of them also utilize workshops and trainings as methods and tools of civic education work. Many (71.4%) make use of online public events, digital tools and publications. All respondents report using in-house expertise as their source, both when discussing methods and when discussing topics for their civic education activities. The majority of respondents (57.1%) report an annual budget greater than EUR 500,001. In most instances (35.7%), 11%–30% of the overall budget is devoted to the core costs of the organization, while some (28.6%) report devoting 71%–100% of their annual budget to core costs. At the same time, half of the respondents report devoting 0%–10% of their annual budget to activity-related costs. Respondents mainly (35.7%) represent entities consisting of 11–20 permanent staff. In their work, some rely on independent contracts, with half of the

respondents reporting having 1–5 independent contractors in their core team. All work with volunteers and interns, and many (45.5%) have 21 or more volunteers and interns in their team. The work of all civic educators reached in Finland is funded by national public funding. EU funding and national private funding are also important streams of financing, selected by 64.3% of survey participants.

When asked about needs for future training, many (71.4%) respondents say that their organization needs further training in new methods, tools and approaches in civic education, and in impact evaluation and evaluative learning. More than half of the respondents (57.1%) identified innovation, foresight and organizational development as areas where they needed further improvement. Additionally, half expressed the need to acquire more knowledge about securing funding. This could be due to a recent shift from annual bulk funding, which organizations could use according to their own judgement, to project-based funding.



# France

67,842,582 22.1

Population

CSOs per  
1,000 people

8.07/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Eurostat data

[https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&inkname=ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&inkname=ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf)

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**F**rance has a unique approach to civic education, owing to the historical context in which the French state emerged. Since the 19th century, the state has taken the position that the school is responsible for educating the citizen (citoyen) and promoting the values of the republic. In contrast, non-formal and informal civic education in France are based on the concept of *éducation populaire*, which complements formal education and promotes lifelong learning and personal development with arts, culture, sports, politics, etc.

France has experienced several tragic events in recent years, including the murder of a teacher in 2020. These events have sparked a fervent public discussion about secularism, freedom of religion and expression, education and how to promote coexistence in a diverse society.

Within this context, the mapping questionnaire received feedback from eight civic educators, all of whom are active in non-formal civic education work. Half of the respondents implement activities in informal civic education settings, and most are from non-profit entities, with a few from public entities. The majority of respondents represent associations, followed by a few from non-governmental organizations.

Civic engagement, employability, international development cooperation and social inclusion are the primary areas of focus for respondents in their civic education work. When it comes to more specific types of civic education, many respondents focus on skills engagement and intercultural competencies. Most of the civic educators surveyed implement activities on the local and regional level.

Workshops and trainings are the primary methods and tools used in civic education work, with almost all respondents utilizing them. Three-fourths of respondents also report using public events in person and digital

tools. When deciding on topics and methods for their civic education activities, all respondents rely on in-house expertise and peer exchange.

Regarding budget size, about one-third of respondents report annual budgets between EUR 100,001 and EUR 500,000, while another third report annual budgets larger than EUR 500,001. Half of the respondents state that 51%–70% of their overall budget is devoted to the core costs of the organization, while a similar proportion devote 51%–70% of their budget to activities. A little over one-third of respondents represent organizations with 1 to 5 employees, while half have 1 to 5 independent contractors in their team, and less than half work with 1 to 5 interns and volunteers in their team.

EU funding and national funding sources largely fund the work of civic educators in France. Many of the respondents highlight the need for training in communication and new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field. Half of the respondents also wish to have more training in securing funding.



# Greece

10,603,810

Population

Source: Eurostat data

0.4

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/environment-index/regions/index.html>

7.97/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

In Greece, as in other EU countries, there's a focus on using civic education to address youth apathy towards public affairs and democracy. Civil society plays an important role in raising awareness and implementing non-formal civic education initiatives, through entities like museums, galleries, NGOs, as well as social initiatives and volunteers. These efforts aim to empower young people to become active and responsible citizens and create a more inclusive and democratic society. In Greece, the mapping questionnaire reached 15 individuals who are active in non-formal and informal civic education. Most of the educators focus on non-formal civic education work (86.7%) and informal civic education (60%). Respondents come from a variety of entities, including non-profit (66.7%), public (13.3%) and private (13.3%) organizations. Educational institutions (33.3%) and non-governmental organizations (26.7%) are the most commonly represented entities.

In terms of civic education work, respondents primarily focus on civic engagement (53.3%) and social inclusion (46.7%). The "Other" category was a frequently selected answer, with respondents citing various thematic fields of work such as bilingual support, child protection, innovation, mental health, migration and education, pedagogical techniques and support of civil society. When it comes to more specific topical focus, many civic education actors concentrate on skills for civic engagement and intercultural competences (53.3% each), as well as human rights education and cultural education (40% each).

Most of the civic educators who responded to the survey implement activities on the local level (80%) and national level (53.3%). In terms of methods and tools used in civic education work, many respondents utilize community building work and training of trainers (ToT) (73.3%), together with workshops and trainings (66.7%) and capacity building (60%).

When deciding on topics for their civic education activities, many respondents rely on in-house expertise (93.3%) and academic literature (80%). For deciding on methods and didactical tools, in-house expertise is a preferred source for almost all respondents (93.3%), while online sources come in second (80%). Regarding budget size, a third of respondents (33.3%) chose not to respond to the question, while 26.7% stated their an-



annual budget size is between EUR 100,001 and EUR 500,000. In most cases (40%), 0%–10% of the overall budget is devoted to the core costs of the organization. On the other hand, more than half (53.3%) of the respondents devote 0%–10% of their annual budget to activities.

In Greece, most respondents work in teams of 21 or more permanent staff (40%). The majority (70%) rely on the work of 1–5 independent contractors in their core team, and half report working with 1–5 volunteers and interns. Respondents' work is mainly funded by EU funding (80%), followed by national public funding (53.3%).

Many of the civic educators in Greece (73.3%) emphasize the need for new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field, as well as advocacy, communication and innovation and foresight (40% each).



# Italy

58,983,122

Population

Source: Eurostat data

6.1

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/environment-index/regions/index.html>

7.69/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**A**ccording to the local expert, there is room to improve the connection between education research and policy implementation in Italy, particularly with regards to civic and citizenship education (CCE). Despite that, educational authorities express support for CCE and have established various initiatives and identified several topics to improve it. Past debates have centred on the definition of civic education and whether it should be a standalone school subject. However, since the recent education reform, discussions have shifted towards practical concerns of how to implement and assess CCE. Italian schools are now required to design curricula that align with national guidelines and allow for CCE assessment.

Non-formal civic education in Italy is conducted by NGOs and associations that concentrate on peace, human rights, rule of law, sports and others. These organizations often collaborate with schools to implement civic education projects at the local level.

The mapping questionnaires reached 30 civic educators, mainly working in non-formal civic education settings (73.3%) followed by informal (56.7%) and formal (60%) settings. Most survey respondents represent non-profit entities (86.7%), with the majority representing associations (66.7%). Respondents' work focused on civic engagement (43.3%) and social inclusion (33.3%), with specific topics including cultural education, human rights education and intercultural competences (each 46.7%), as well as skills for civic engagement (40%). Activities conducted by civic educators in Italy mostly take place on the national (66.7%) or local (50%) level.

The most popular methods and tools used in civic education are training of trainers (ToT) (70%), followed by workshops and trainings (63.3%), capacity building (50%) and awareness-raising campaigns (43.3%). The respondents rely on in-house expertise for deciding on topics (93.3%) and methods and didactical tools (100%). Over a third of the respondents (36.7%) work with an average annual budget greater than EUR 500,001. Half of the respondents devote 11%–30% of their annual budget to core costs, while 40% allocate 71%–100% of their budget to activity-related costs.

A third of respondents represent entities with 1–5 permanent staff, while a quarter have no permanent employees. The majority (87.5%) work with independent contractors in their core team, as well as with volunteers, with 56% of organizations having more than 11 volunteers and interns in their core team. National private funding (70%) is the main funding source for civic educators in Italy, followed by national public funding (60%). The respondents identify impact evaluation, evaluative learning (50%) and new methods, tools and approaches in civic education (46.7%) as important areas of improvement for organizations. Communication was also identified as an area of focus by 43.3% of respondents.

In summary, there are numerous NGOs and associations working at the local level to promote active citizenship and education on peace, human rights rule of law and others. The mapping questionnaire results highlight the importance of in-house expertise and training, as well as capacity building in impact evaluation, new methods and tools and communication. By addressing these needs and building on existing efforts, Italy can continue to advance its civic education initiatives and promote active citizenship among its citizens.

# Lithuania

2,805,998

Population

10.0

CSOs per  
1,000 people

7.31/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Eurostat data

Source: [https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf)

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

In Lithuania, discussions regarding civic education often revolve around finding the appropriate balance between conflicting concepts, such as promoting ethnocentric national identity versus globally oriented citizenship, or theoretical teaching methods versus practical ones. Various stakeholders are involved in this discourse, and some hold divergent and occasionally opposing views on the content and long-term impact of civic education. It's worth noting that civic education itself is not particularly controversial; rather, it faces the same demographic, financial, social and technological challenges as the whole education system. Civic education is taught in a formal setting in the eighth and ninth grade as a standalone subject, while in earlier grades it is integrated into other subjects such as geography, languages and ethics. Teachers have the freedom to choose textbooks, materials and extracurricular activities for the subject. Moreover, students are mandated to engage in ten hours of socially oriented civic activities beyond the curriculum.

In Lithuania, the mapping questionnaires reached 15 civic educators, many of whom implement their activities in the non-formal civic education setting (86.7%) or informal civic education setting (73.3%). When asked about their legal status, 60% of respondents chose the answer non-profit entity, while 40% chose the answer public entity. Many of the respondents (46.2%) come from non-governmental organizations, followed by 30.8% who represent an association. In their civic education work, respondents mainly focus on civic engagement and participation (92.3%), social inclusion (61.5%) and research (46.2%). The majority of civic education actors participating in the survey concentrate on critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving competences (92.9%), together with skills for civic engagement (85.7%) and media literacy (64.3%). Civic educators from Lithuania who responded to the survey mostly implement activities which take place on the national (93.3%) level. Many (93.3%) of respondents use workshops and trainings actively as a method in their civic education work. Other popular answers include capacity building (86.7%), online public events and participatory formats (80%), practice-based learning (73.3%), followed by digital tools, publications and hybrid public events (66.7%).

In-house expertise (93.3%) and online sources (73.2%) are reported as main sources consulted when deciding on civic education topics, while when deciding on methods and didactical tools respondents mainly use in-house expertise (93.3%), external expertise and online sources (73.3%). One-third (33.3%) of respondents answered that their annual budget is between EUR 50,001 and EUR 100,000, while a little less than a third of respondents (26.7%) refused to answer the budget questions. In most cases (50%) 11%–30% of the overall budget is devoted to the core costs of an organization, whereas less than a half (42.9%) of respondents devote 71%–100% of their budget to activities. Respondents mainly (57.1%) represent entities consisting of 1–5 permanent staff, while some (28.6%) employ 21 or more people. This percentage is similar to the number of educational institutions who took part in the survey in Lithuania, and, as per the local partner, could be an explanation for this unusually high percentage of those working in civic education. Some of the respondents have 1–5 independent contractors in their team (40%). Respondents tend to work with volunteers and interns: 38.5% of all respondents work with 1–5 volunteers and interns, while another 38.5% work with more than 21 volunteers and interns. Civic educators who responded to the survey mainly receive either national public funding (86.7%) and/or EU funding (80%). Three main areas can be observed as needing further training: new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field (80%), innovation and foresight thinking (60%) and impact evaluation and evaluative learning (53.3%). Key challenges for organizations and individuals who work in civic education in Lithuania further clarify these findings related to capacity-building needs. According to local experts, these challenges include scarce funding for non-formal activities, insufficient public interest and a lack of opportunities to sustain continuous engagement.



# Luxembourg

645,397

Population

Source: Eurostat data

0.1

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/environment-index/regions/index.html>

8.81/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

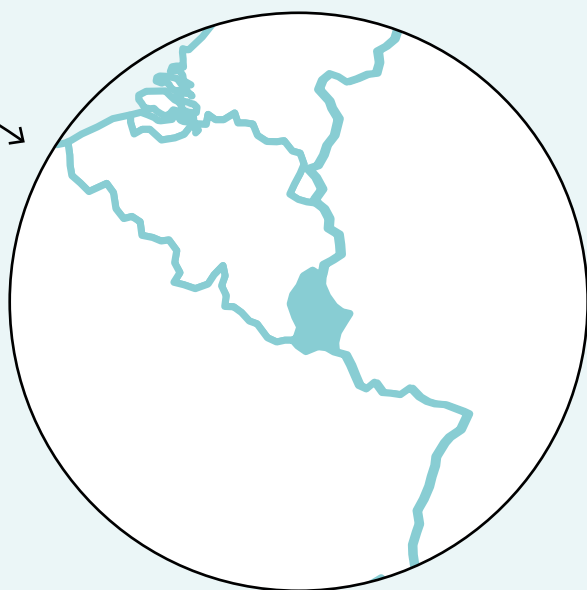
In Luxembourg, the mapping questionnaires reached 16 civic educators, with the majority of them active in non-formal civic education work (81.3%), and half implementing activities in the informal civic education setting. Most of the respondents (93.8%) were from a non-profit entity, while 6.3% were from private entities, with the majority of them representing associations (75%), followed by a little less than a third (31.3%) from non-governmental organizations.

In their civic education work, respondents mainly focused on civic engagement (73.3%), civil rights (60%) and social inclusion (46.7%), with many of them concentrating on human rights education (68.8%) and skills engagement (56.3%). Half of the respondents (50%) in Luxembourg focused on critical thinking and intercultural competences. All implemented activities on the national level.

When it comes to methods and tools used in civic education work, almost all civic educators utilized workshops and trainings (93.8%), with the majority also using awareness-raising campaigns and publications (75%), together with public events in person and participatory formats (68.8%). Sources for deciding on topics and methods in civic education work include in-house expertise, external expertise and academic literature.

A quarter of respondents (25%) reported that their annual budget was greater than EUR 500,001, with the majority devoting 71%–100% of the overall budget to the core costs of an organization. On the other hand, 30.8% of the respondents devoted either 0%–10% or 11%–30% of their annual budget to activities. Half of the respondents had 6–10 employees in their core team, while having 1–5 independent contractors was common for a majority of respondents (88.9%). Some (40%) had 1 to 5 volunteers or interns in their team.

Respondents' work was mainly funded by the national funding sources, be it public (100%) or private (62.5%). Many of the participating civic educators in Luxembourg (68.8%) highlighted a need for new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field, together with communication, and impact evaluation and evaluative learning (62.5% each).



While formal civic education is a relatively new phenomenon in Luxembourg, non-formal civic education and youth work have a long-standing tradition, though it is not referred to as civic education. All parties except the populist have supported the idea for more civic education and the establishment of the Zentrum für politisches Bildung (ZpB) in 2016, an independent foundation dedicated to civic education and funded by the state.

There are many organizations in Luxembourg that are mainly funded by the state, and, compared to other countries, they are well funded. Cooperation between them is easy and frequent due to the small size of the country, and the ZpB plays a role as a networking platform between the different initiatives.



# Malta

520,971

Population

Source: Eurostat data

3.6

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://maltacvs.org/vo-directory/>

7.7/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

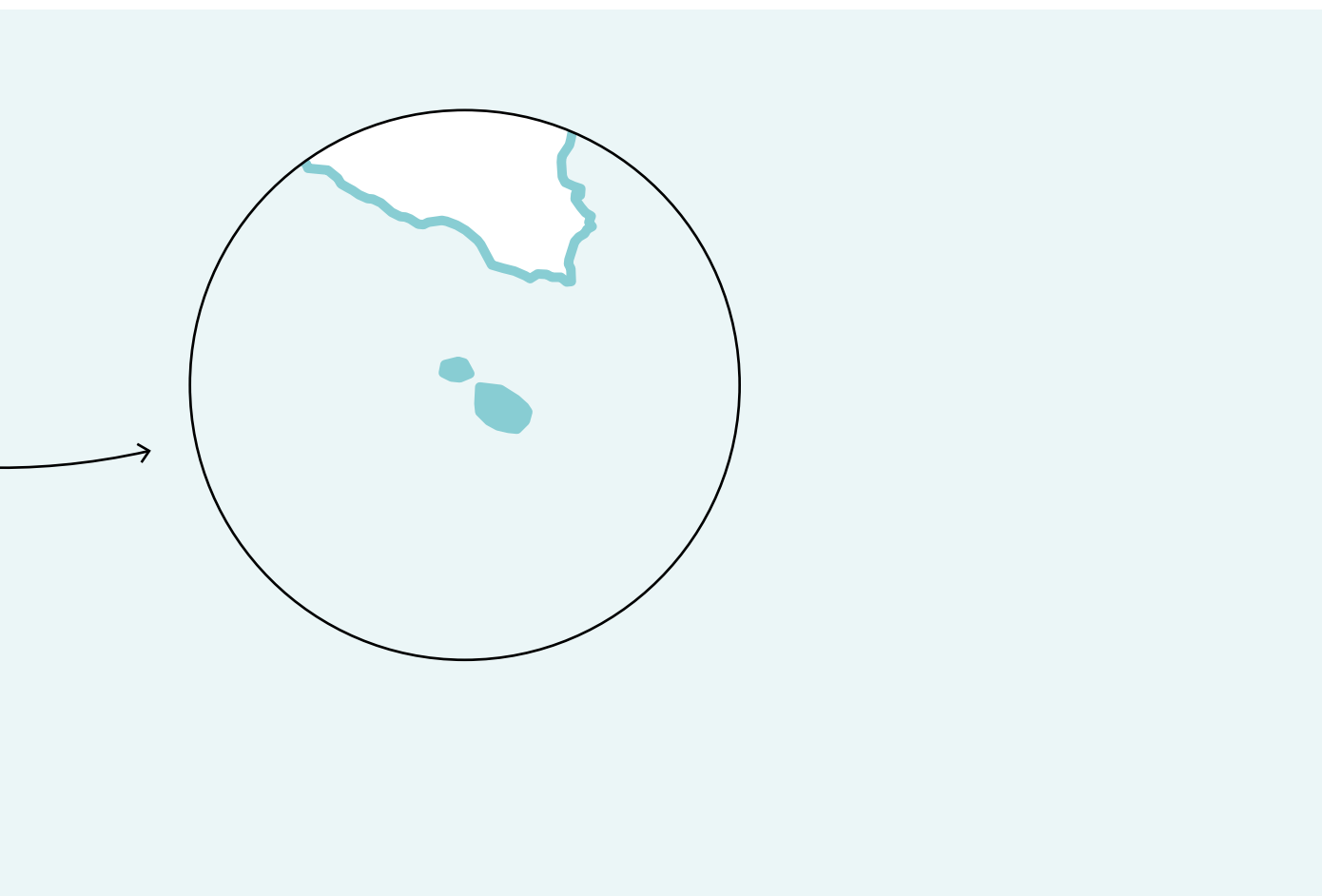
Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023).  
Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy  
and the battle for Ukraine.

**M**alta, an independent country since 1964, has various civic actors engaged in civic education, including national public organizations, NGOs, grassroots movements and informal activities. Environmental issues, health and well-being are among the important topics in the public debate, with citizens engaging in various activities from environmental protection to lobbying and local volunteer groups. Facebook is the preferred platform for grassroots organizing and information sharing. The distinction between civic education and civic activities is not clear in the public discourse, as any activity that seeks to engage the local community in improving their locality and surroundings can be described in educational terms.

Despite the mapping questionnaires reaching only four civic educators in Malta, the results are in line with the local expert's opinion piece. All respondents engage in non-formal civic education, with half conducting activities in informal civic education settings. Respondents work in the field of social inclusion, civic engagement, civil rights and community building. In their civic education work, respondents mainly focus on topics such as human rights education, critical thinking, cultural education, intercultural competence and skills engagement. All civic educators in Malta who responded to the survey implement activities on the national level, mainly using awareness-raising campaigns, capacity building, exchange programmes and workshops and trainings as methods and tools of civic education.

When it comes to annual budgets, reported budgets ranged from EUR 5,001 to EUR 500,001. Respondents devote either 11%–30% or 51%–70% of their annual budget to the core costs of the organization, while the annual budget devoted to activities varies widely. Half of the respondents work with a permanent staff of 1–5 employees, while all respondents rely on the work of 6–10 independent contractors. All use the work of volunteers and interns, with half having 1–5 and the other half having 11–20 volunteers and interns in their team. The work of the civic educators surveyed in Malta is funded both by the EU and by national public





funding. The respondents expressed a need for further training in innovation and foresight thinking, as well as in communication, impact evaluation and evaluative learning, organizational development and in working with public institutions.

In conclusion, despite the limited number of respondents, Malta's civic education landscape is vibrant and varied, with a focus on social inclusion, civic engagement and human rights education.



# The Netherlands

17,590,672 14.2

Population

Source: Eurostat data

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: [https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf)

9/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**C**ivic education is an important aspect of education in the Netherlands. In recent years, however, the country's performance in the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) has been worse than that of other European countries. The government is one of the main actors in this field, with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Interior Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice and Safety all playing key roles.

In addition to formal education, non-formal and informal civic education also have a long-standing tradition in the Netherlands. The mapping questionnaires reached seven civic educators in the country, all of whom are active in non-formal civic education work (100%). Some of those who answered implement activities in informal civic education settings, while others work in formal education. Most of the respondents are from a non-profit entity. The majority of respondents represent foundations, followed by educational institutions and social enterprises.

The civic education work of those surveyed in the Netherlands focuses on civic engagement, social inclusion and community building. Respondents also concentrate on skills engagement, critical thinking and intercultural competence. All the civic educators who responded to the survey implement activities that take place on the national level, with some also operating on the local level.

In their civic education work, all of the respondents in the Netherlands utilize workshops and trainings, while two-thirds report using digital tools. Respondents rely on in-house expertise and external expertise and peer exchange to decide on topics for their civic education activities. Similarly, all use in-house expertise and many seek external expertise to decide on methods and didactical tools.

A quarter of those surveyed report that their annual budget is greater than EUR 500,001. Mostly, respondents state that 11%–30% of their overall budget is devoted to the core costs of their organization. When it comes to implementing activities, most devote 51%–70% or 71%–100% of their annual budget to activities. One-third of those who responded represent organizations with 6 to 10 employees, while another third represent organizations with 21 or more employees. Many of the respondents have 1 to 5 independent contractors on their team, while some work with volunteers and interns, either 1–5 or 6–10 .

Respondents' work is largely funded by national private funding, followed by national public funding and/or their entity's generated income. When asked about capacity-building needs in their organization, securing funding is highlighted by almost two-thirds. Many of those surveyed also stated impact evaluation and evaluative learning, innovation and foresight thinking and new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field as areas for capacity improvement. Despite the challenges of securing core funding and competing for resources, the Netherlands has a thriving civic education landscape, with a range of organizations, both large and small, local and national.

Even though various organizations and initiatives have been working towards it, Dutch teachers, especially in higher grades, have been struggling to teach controversial topics in class. This presents a significant challenge in civic education, as the ability to engage in open and respectful dialogue on sensitive topics is crucial for the development of democratic values and active citizenship.

In conclusion, while the Netherlands places a high priority on civic education, particularly in formal education settings, there are still challenges to be addressed in promoting active citizenship and democratic values. Non-formal and informal civic education work is equally important, with many organizations and initiatives working towards these goals. However, there is a need for greater coordination and cooperation between these groups to maximize their impact and secure sustainable funding.



# North Macedonia

1,836,713

Population

Source: Eurostat data

5.8

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://monitoringmatrix.net/>

6.1/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023).  
Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy  
and the battle for Ukraine.

In North Macedonia, all 25 civic educators surveyed engage in non-formal civic education work, with the majority (52%) implementing activities in informal settings. The respondents come primarily from non-governmental organizations (60%) and associations, focusing mainly on civic engagement (76%), social inclusion and civil rights (56%). As for a more detailed topical focus, the majority of civic education actors participating in the survey concentrate on skills engagement (80%), followed by critical thinking and human rights education (64%).

The civic educators' activities mostly take place on the national (88%) or local (56%) level, and the most popular methods and tools used in their work include workshops and trainings (100%), capacity building (84%), awareness-raising campaigns, research (80%) and publications (76%). Respondents mainly represent entities consisting of 1–5 permanent staff (44%), with a significant percentage working with independent contractors. They mainly rely on EU funding (84%), foreign public funding other than the EU (84%) and their entity's own generated income (56%) to fund their activities.

All respondents declare using in-house expertise as their source, both when discussing methods and didactical tools and when selecting topics for their civic education activities (100%). Almost all respondents (96%) rely on external expertise as a source when deciding on methods and didactical tools.

When asked about the needs for future training, many (76%) highlight a need for new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field, together with innovation and foresight thinking (64%). Some of the civic educators in North Macedonia who were reached (44%) need further training in impact evaluation and evaluative learning, in securing funding and in working with public institutions. The mapping survey found that 96% of respondents in North Macedonia identified as non-profit entities, while 4% identified as other, without providing further explanation.

Civic education is not at the forefront of the public discourse in North Macedonia. Despite the lack of focus, the government has adopted a national strategy for developing the “One Society for All” Concept and Interculturalism in 2019, which has envisioned activities to strengthen the ties between communities and develop interculturalism. Based on our partner’s expert opinion piece, however, there is little information available on whether and how it has been implemented. Long-standing divisions have been preventing young people from learning how to respectfully and constructively engage with each other, leading to even more division, misunderstandings and stereotyping among different ethnic groups.

Non-formal and informal civic education in North Macedonia are mainly funded by international funders, embassies, UKAID and USAID, with small contributions from national funds and institutions. According to the local partner, funding for non-formal and informal civic education in North Macedonia is not transparent, and procedures vary between institutions, posing a challenge for civic educators in the country. Additionally, the target audience is mainly young people, and older generations are rarely a target group.

The general public is not well informed about the work of CSOs, which has resulted in many misconceptions about them. Cooperation between NGOs is also limited due to competition over funds. This highlights the need for more transparent funding procedures and increased awareness of and communication about the work of CSOs in North Macedonia.

In conclusion, while North Macedonia has made progress in non-formal and informal civic education, there are still challenges to be addressed. Civic educators in the country face obstacles such as limited funding, a lack of transparency and a focus on young people as the primary target audience. Future support programmes should prioritize the needs of civic educators, including capacity building, stable funding and institutional support to promote democratic ideals and active citizenship in North Macedonia.



# Poland

37,654,247 2.1

Population

CSOs per  
1,000 people

7.04/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Eurostat data

Source: [https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&inkname=ssoar-2020-hummel\\_et\\_al-Understanding\\_Civil\\_Society\\_in\\_Europe.pdf](https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/71556/ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&inkname=ssoar-2020-hummel_et_al-Understanding_Civil_Society_in_Europe.pdf)

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**P**oland is a prime example of civic education being manipulated for political gain. Despite attempts by various civil society organizations to support schools, Polish teachers, especially those in higher classes, struggle with addressing controversial issues with their students. This is a major challenge for civic education, as open conversations about sensitive topics are vital for promoting democratic values and citizen engagement. Thus, mapping non-formal and informal civic educators in the country has proven crucial for the project, shedding light on the current state of the field and identifying ways to provide optimal support. The mapping questionnaires, completed by 24 civic educators in Poland, found that almost two-thirds engage in non-formal civic education work, while half of them implement activities in both formal and informal settings. Most of the respondents (91.7%) represent non-profit entities, with half coming from foundations and the rest from non-governmental organizations and associations. The field of work for many is civic engagement and participation, followed by civil rights and social inclusion. Respondents' civic education work mainly focuses on skills for civic engagement (62.5%) and human rights education (58.3%). Activities are largely implemented on the national level (87.5%).

Workshops and trainings are by and large the most frequently used methods and tools in civic education (95.8%), followed by online public events and publications (75%), awareness-raising campaigns (70.8%) and community-building work (62.5%). When deciding on topics and methods for their activities, respondents rely on in-house expertise (87.5%), external expertise (83.3%) and online sources (75%). Respondents' budgets vary widely, with 20.8% reporting budgets greater than EUR 500,001 and one-fourth not disclosing their budget size. Most devote 11%–30% of their budget to the core costs of their organization, while 25% devote 71%–100% of their budget to activity-related costs.

Almost a third of respondents (29.2%) have 1–5 permanent staff, while 16.7% have no permanent staff. When it comes to volunteers and interns, an equal 23.8% report either having 1–5 volunteers and interns in their team or having none. National public funding and EU funding are the two primary funding sources for civic educators in Poland, with 70.1% and 62.5% respectively relying on these sources. However, many civic education actors in Poland stress the importance of capacity building in areas such as new methods, tools and approaches in civic education, securing funding, communication and innovation and foresight. Specifically, communication training is identified as a crucial need for civic education groups to respond to hostile politicians and gain public support.

According to the expert's opinion piece, any support for Polish civic education actors should consider the difficult working conditions affecting employee well-being and mental health, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these issues, future support programmes should anticipate organization members' needs, especially EU-funded civic education programmes, which are the second most common source of funding for civic education activities, after national private entities. Only one-third of the organizations mapped use national public funding, highlighting the need for EU civic education funding for human rights, anti-discrimination and other civic competence groups. The mapping results show that many organizations have limited resources, which may leave them without the means to support and train their staff.

Supporting non-formal and informal civic education actors in Poland is vital to promoting democratic ideals and active citizenship. Future support programmes should focus on stable funding, capacity building and institutional support to sustain civic education in civil society.

# Portugal

10,352,042

Population

Source: Eurostat data

1.6

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/environment-index/regions/index.html>

7.95/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**C**ivic education in Portugal is a complex landscape that requires attention both in formal and non-formal settings. The mapping survey reached 11 civic education actors, most of whom engage in non-formal civic education (90.9%) while some are also active in informal civic education (54.5%). Most of the respondents (63.6%) are from an association, 36.4% from a non-governmental organization and 18.2% from a foundation. The majority of civic education actors (63.6%) focus on civic engagement, environment and sustainability, followed by social entrepreneurship and social inclusion (45.5%).

When it comes to methods and tools, the most popular choices include workshops and training (81.8%), publications (63.6%), capacity building and community building (54.5%). The majority of respondents (90.9%) report using external expertise when discussing methods and didactical tools, while in-house expertise is preferred when considering topics for their civic education activities (90.9%).

National public funding and individual contributions are the main funding sources for civic education in Portugal (54.5%), and less than 30% of respondents work with an average annual budget greater than EUR 500,001. Most respondents devote either 11%–30% or 31%–50% of their budget to core costs, while over a quarter of respondents (30%) devote 11%–30% of their annual budget to activities. Respondents mainly represent entities consisting of 1–5 permanent staff (36.4%), while most do not rely on the work of independent contractors (57.1%). The majority of respondents have a core team of 1 to 5 volunteers (62.5%), and their work is mainly funded by national public funding and individual contributions (54.5%).

When asked about needs for future training, more than half of respondents (54.5%) said that their organization needs further training in communication, while a little less than half (45.5%) require training in impact evaluation and evaluative learning, and in new methods, tools and approaches in civic education.

Despite civic education being integrated into the Portuguese school curriculum, NGOs tend to have more visibility when it comes to civic education topics due to their very specific causes. Among younger people, ce-



lebrities and digital influencers who partner up with NGOs heavily contribute to raising awareness on specific topics, such as environmental issues, gender issues and bullying. However, democratic participation among youth remains low in Portugal, making promoting this dimension of civic education a challenge.

Non-formal and informal civic education in Portugal are rich and varied, mostly promoted by non-governmental organizations, many of which engage in fundraising campaigns. Most organizations engage in communication using digital media, often done by volunteers instead of trained professionals.

Overall, these findings highlight the need for continued attention to civic education across both formal and non-formal settings in Portugal, particularly when it comes to improving democratic participation among youth and addressing the need for further training in communication and impact evaluation.



# Romania

19,038,098

Population

Source: Eurostat data

3.3

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: [https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil\\_society\\_studie\\_issuu\\_el-1.pdf](https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil_society_studie_issuu_el-1.pdf)

6.45/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**C**ivic education in Romania is a critical issue, as highlighted by a 2019 study conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, cited in the local expert's opinion piece. The study revealed concerning perceptions among Romanian youth about democracy, civil/human rights and freedoms and active civic involvement, with a significant portion of respondents expressing negative opinions on these topics. Despite this, educational institutions, NGOs, media and citizens are working to promote civic education in Romania, often with the help of available European and international funds. However, bureaucratic obstacles and limited funding at the local level remain significant challenges for organizations working in civic education.

In Romania, the mapping questionnaires reached 16 civic educators, many of whom engage in non-formal (81.3%) and informal civic education work (68.8%). The survey reached mostly non-profit entities (93.8%), with respondents predominantly representing associations (75%) and non-governmental organizations (68.8%).

The field of work for many respondents (62.5%) is civic engagement and participation. Civil rights (56.3%), together with social inclusion (43.8%) and culture and arts, are other common areas of focus. In their work, respondents mainly focus on human rights education (81.3%), followed by civic engagement (62.5%), critical thinking (50%) and cultural education and media literacy (43.8% each). Civic educators from Romania who responded to the survey implement activities on the local level (68.8%), as well as on the national and regional levels (56.3% each).

The most frequently selected answers on methods and tools used in civic education work include workshops and trainings (81.1%), digital tools (68.8%) and awareness-raising campaigns (56.3%). All respondents declare using in-house expertise as their source when discussing both methods and topics for their civic education activities. Online sources are used in both scenarios by almost all civic educators reached in Romania (93.8%).

A quarter of respondents report that their annual budget is between EUR 50,001 and EUR 100,000, while another quarter have between EUR 5,001 and EUR 50,000 per year. Core costs take up 0%–30% of the annual budget for most respondents (62.6%), while half spend 71%–100% of their annual budget on activities. One-third of respondents in Romania have no permanently employed staff, while slightly more than half (53.4%) employ up to 10 people as permanent staff. In many cases (38.5%), respondents rely on the work of 1–5 independent contractors. All of the respondents make use of volunteers and interns, with 37.5% reporting having 21 or more volunteers and interns in their team. EU funding and individual contributions (62.5% each) are the main funding sources for civic educators in Romania reached by the survey.

When asked about the needs for future training, many (75%) state that their entity needs further training in new methods, tools and approaches in civic education, followed by organizational development (56.3%) and communication and securing funding (50% each).

In summary, these findings demonstrate a need for increased attention to civic education across formal, non-formal and informal settings in Romania. Collaboration between civil society and public institutions, increased opportunities for European youth mobility and a focus on improving communication with the public can help promote youth engagement and active citizenship in Romania.



# Slovakia

5,434,712

Population

Source: Eurostat data

9.8

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: [https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil\\_society\\_studie\\_issuu\\_el-1.pdf](https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil_society_studie_issuu_el-1.pdf)

7.07/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

In Slovakia, the 19 civic educators who participated in the survey reported that 89.5% of their civic education work is set in non-formal settings, while 42.1% is set in informal settings. The entities they work for include non-governmental organizations (57.9%), educational institutions (47.4%), civil initiatives (26.3%) and other types of entities. The survey found that civic educators mainly focus on civic engagement (78.9%), followed by community building (42.1%) and other fields of work (42.1%), including youth work, social issues, innovation in education and environmental education. They also concentrate on critical thinking (94.7%), skills engagement (68.4%) and media literacy and digital competencies (57.9%). The civic educators from Slovakia who responded to the survey implement activities evenly on the local and regional levels (both 63.2%). All respondents declared using workshops and training as their method of civic education work. In addition, many (68.4%) use digital tools and also teaching/lecturing. All respondents reported using in-house expertise when discussing topics for their civic education activities, while when considering methods and didactical tools, all respondents rely on external expertise. More than a third (36.8%) of survey respondents report their annual budget is between EUR 100,001 and EUR 500,000. Core costs take 71%–100% of their annual budget for almost a third of the respondents (28.6%), whereas 21.4% of respondents chose each of the following answers: 11%–30%, 31%–50% and 51%–70%. Activities take 71%–100% of the annual budget for 42.9% of survey participants. More than half (53.3%) have 1–5 employees in their core team, while about three-quarters (76.5%) have 1–5 independent contractors in their core team. One to five volunteers and interns are a part of the core team for 35.3% of the respondents. The work of civic educators in Slovakia who were reached by this questionnaire is mainly funded by EU funding (73.7%) and national private and public funding (68.4%).

These findings are in line with the outcomes of the first national conference on active citizenship held in Slovakia in June 2022, organized by a dozen organizations involved in civic education. The conference identified a number of challenges to civic education and articulated the need for a networking platform for all actors involved in formal, non-formal and informal civic education.

As a result, civil society organizations, public organizations and the newly established National Institute for Education have started to work closely together to discuss the form, content and support of civic education. National funding is becoming available and transparent for all actors in the sector. Collaboration among major actors in civic education is evident through the Initiative for Active Citizenship. A networking platform for sharing best practices and for advocacy is critical for the success of civic education in Slovakia. The data from the survey can inform that local network, as it highlights the key areas of focus for civic educators and the funding sources for their work. The findings suggest that there is a need for more training in communication and impact evaluation, as well as the adoption of new methods and tools in civic education.

In conclusion, the data shows that non-formal settings are the main focus of civic education work in Slovakia, with a strong emphasis on civic engagement and critical thinking. In addition to the need for a networking platform identified at the conference on active citizenship, civic education in Slovakia faces challenges in responsible online work, cultivating communities for young people and developing key skills. Collaboration among major actors and a systemic change in the form of education are needed to build a stronger culture of engaged citizenship in Slovakia.



# Slovenia

2,107,180

Population

Source: Eurostat data

13.6

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: [https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil\\_society\\_studie\\_issuu\\_el-1.pdf](https://www.erstestiftung.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/civil_society_studie_issuu_el-1.pdf)

7.75/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

In Slovenia, non-formal and informal civic education work is delivered by diverse public and private non-governmental organizations, such as associations and institutes. The mapping questionnaires reached 22 civic educators, almost all of whom implement their activities in the non-formal civic education context (95.5%), with many also implementing activities in the informal context (68.2%). The majority of respondents (90.5%) come from non-governmental organizations, with 86.4% identifying as non-profit entities and 9.1% as public entities. When it comes to funding, civic educators in Slovenia mainly rely on national public funding (86.4%), EU funding (72.7%) and their own entities' generated income (63.6%).

In their civic education work, Slovenian respondents primarily focus on the civic engagement and participation field (68.2%), social inclusion (59.1%) and community building (54.5%). For many respondents (61.9%), the specific topic of their civic work is critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving competences, together with skills for civic engagement. Other topics of interest include human rights education and intercultural competences (38.1% each).

When it comes to the methods and tools used in civic education work in Slovenia, workshops and training are the most popular (95.5%), followed by participatory formats, community building work and digital tools (68.2% each). Public events in person and training of trainers (ToT) are also popular methods among respondents, with 63.6% selecting them. In-house expertise (86.4%), external expertise (77.3%), peer exchange (72.7%) and online sources (68.2%) are all reported as main sources consulted when deciding on civic education topics.

Slovenian civic educators who responded to the survey mainly implement activities at the national (90.9%) or local (77.3%) level. When it comes to budget allocation, less than half of respondents (44.4%) allocate 11%–30% of their annual budget to core costs, while the same percentage allocate 51%–70% of their annual budget to fund activities. Respondents selected three main areas in which their organizations need further training: new methods, tools and approaches in the civic education field (68.2%), advocacy (63.6%) and communication (59.1%).

Slovenian civic education organizations face various challenges, including the inconsistent nature of project funding, which makes long-term planning difficult. Instead, organizations must adapt to each call's conditions and focuses, leading to decreased alignment with their own missions. Moreover, project funding creates competitiveness between organizations for scarce resources on the national and local levels, hindering collaboration and fund sharing among organizations.

In summary, the survey results and the expert opinion piece show that strengthen the non-formal civic education sector in Slovenia, civic educators must secure more stable and long-term funding, develop partnerships and collaboration and gain access to training and support for new methods, tools and approaches in the field.

# Spain

47,432,805 1.1

Population

Source: Eurostat data

CSOs per  
1,000 people

Source: <https://globalindices.iupui.edu/environment-index/regions/index.html>

8.07/10

Overall score  
Democracy index

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. (2023). Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine.

**S**pain's civic education sector has been embroiled in political controversy, with the introduction of the subject Education for Citizenship in 2006 sparking numerous debates about its appropriateness and content. Nevertheless, there is a small yet vibrant part of civil society in Spain that is dedicated to civic education. Non-formal civic education in Spain is promoted by different institutions in the third sector, such as foundations, NGOs and other institutions working in development cooperation, education and cultural activities. However, these institutions do not necessarily identify as "civic educators" using the terminology of the project.

The mapping questionnaires, completed by 16 civic educators in Spain, showed that the majority of respondents engage in non-formal (81.3%) and informal civic education work (68.8%). Informal civic education often occurs in schools and universities through activities such as citizenship projects, cultural activities, volunteering and service learning, but this takes place in a non-systematic way and depends on educators and educational institutions. Additionally, there is an increasing percentage of young people in Spain carrying out non-conventional participatory actions, which represents an opportunity to address citizenship issues within this population group from an informal and non-formal perspective.

Most respondents (62.5%) are from foundations, and this is consistent with the local mapping partner's observations that the term "foundation" in Spain encompasses different organizational types. The survey reached associations (18.8%), as well as non-governmental organizations, civil initiative and educational institutions (12.5% each).

In terms of focus, the respondents mainly concentrate on social inclusion (56.3%), civic engagement (50%), community building and employability (43.8%). The majority of civic education actors surveyed focus on human rights education (56.3%), cultural education (50%), critical thinking and skills engagement (37.5%). The respondents mostly implement activities on the local (81.3%) or national (56.3%) level, using workshops and training (75%), public events in person (62.5%), digital tools and publications (56.3%) as their most popular methods and tools.



The survey found that Spain's non-formal civic education sector is mainly funded by national public funding (62.5%) or EU funding (43.8%). However, the budget allocation is not evenly distributed, with less than half (42.9%) of respondents devoting 71%–100% of their budget to activities. The survey also found that the sector's staffing is mostly small, with entities consisting of 1–5 permanent staff (60%) or a base of 1 to 5 independent contractors (61.5%) or a volunteer team of more than 21 people (33.3%). Respondents pointed to the need for further training in impact evaluation and evaluative learning (56.3%), innovation and foresight planning, securing funding and working with local and international partners (50%).

Challenges remain for the civic education sector in Spain, such as the public suspicion of civic education, the lack of specific training for future teachers in citizenship and the difficulty of reaching agreements on education between political parties. On the other hand, there are increased opportunities to address citizenship issues within the youth population through informal and non-formal activities.

Finally, the survey results show the need for further training in impact evaluation and evaluative learning, innovation and foresight planning, securing funding and working with local and international partners. Overall, the findings suggest that while the civic education sector in Spain faces its share of challenges, there is also significant potential for growth and improvement through targeted training, innovation and research.

### 3. Patterns and trends in non-formal civic education across Europe

Civic education is crucial for the development of active, informed and engaged citizens who can participate meaningfully in democratic societies. However, the reality of non-formal and informal civic education in Europe is complex and varied. From the state of funding and resources for civic educators to their needs for capacity building, this chapter delves into the challenges and opportunities that define the landscape of non-formal civic education in the 21 countries in Europe that participated in the mapping project. Drawing on a comprehensive analysis of expert opinion pieces and a comparison of national-level data from each country, this chapter sheds light on the key patterns and trends in civic education practices and provides actionable recommendations for bridging the gap between civic education needs and realities.

The expert opinion pieces used in this analysis were drafted between November 2021 and November 2022, and the national-level data was derived from the 434 responses to the anonymized online questionnaire already discussed. It is important to note that these results are cautious analytical notes.

#### 3.1. Navigating the terminology and diversity of civic education in Europe

In Europe, different countries use different terms to describe civic education – both formal (in schools and universities) and non-formal and informal (outside of schools). The terminology varies due to the different languages, civic traditions and historical events that shaped the essence of citizenship education in each country (see chapter 2, “21 country profiles: Understanding the landscape of civic education”).

For instance, in France, two different terms are used for school civic education and non-school civic education. The term commonly used for civic education in schools translates as “citizenship education.” It reflects the leading role and responsibility of the state in educating citizens about the values of the republic. Non-school civic education is called “popular education.”

In Finland, civic education is referred to as “global education” or “global citizenship education.” In Belgium, a federal state, there are three different terms in three different official languages.

The inconsistent naming conventions used to describe civic education, which can make it difficult to identify and compare different programmes or activities, is only one of the methodological challenges of studying non-formal and informal civic education. Another challenge is the wide range of topics and skills that non-formal and informal civic education can cover, leading to variations in content that can be difficult to define and measure. Additionally, limited data is available on the number of non-formal and informal civic education actors, including both providers and learners, making it difficult to map the landscape of non-formal and informal civic education.

Further research is needed to fully understand the motivations and circumstances that drive civic education efforts in different countries. Nevertheless, the survey provides valuable insights into the state of civic education in Europe and highlights the need for continued efforts to promote and support civic education initiatives.

## The discourse surrounding civic education

In the 21 countries being studied, debates on civic education can be heated and politically charged. In some countries, such as Croatia and Spain, debates on civic education as a school subject have become divisive because of differing ideologies and specific national divides, like history or the role of the state or church. In some cases, these debates are even used for political gain. But in countries like the Netherlands, Finland and Belgium, civic education is widely accepted as important and there is broad agreement on its value.

The biggest impact on civic education, though indirectly, comes from the discourse surrounding the threats and challenges to democracy both at home and globally. At the heart of all these debates is the question of what makes a good citizen. In countries where there is much disagreement on issues of identity, history and belonging, and where there is no consensus on the basic principles and values of democracy, civic education becomes a battlefield for political leaders seeking to use it for their own purposes, instead of creating the best conditions for democratic engagement.

As the world becomes more complex, the question of what makes a good citizen becomes even harder to answer.

## Challenges and opportunities: A call for proactive action

Civic education, both formal and informal, is a vital component of a functioning democracy. It provides citizens with the knowledge and skills needed to understand the complex challenges facing our societies and take action to address them. However, despite its importance, civic education is not immune to the very challenges it is designed to address.

One of the biggest challenges facing civic education today is the erosion of trust in politics and democracy. This is a global phenomenon, with citizens becoming increasingly disengaged from political processes and institutions. This disengagement can lead to low voter turnout, especially among young people, who are less likely to participate in elections and less likely to be politically active. This is further compounded by issues such as media literacy and digital skills, with many people lacking the ability to critically evaluate information and make informed decisions.

Another major challenge is the growing social tension between ethnic groups amidst the rise of super-diversity. This creates an environment of conflict and division, which can make it difficult for civic education to promote social cohesion and understanding.

The Russian war in Ukraine is also a major challenge, as the conflict has exacerbated existing issues such as polarization and compounded the economic impact of the pandemic. Climate change is another pressing issue that demands our attention – its impact is felt globally and requires a coordinated effort from citizens and governments to address it.

The importance of critical thinking and empathy cannot be overstated, as they are essential for addressing the challenges of ethnocentrism, globalization and the well-being of citizens.

Additionally, the role of civil society in promoting and carrying out civic education is often not well understood, which presents a challenge in and of itself.

Addressing these challenges requires a proactive, rather than a reactive, approach to civic education, with a focus on promoting critical thinking, media freedom and the importance of civil society. The goal is to empower citizens to understand the challenges they face and help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to address them effectively.

The numerous challenges facing civic education can also be seen as opportunities for engagement and self-organizing. Despite low youth voter turnouts and growing approval of authoritarian regimes, young people in Europe have taken to the streets to protest the inaction on climate change, to stand up for women's rights, to remove corrupt leaders and to show their support for Ukraine, among many other causes.

Civic education, as a set of skills, values, knowledge and attitudes, requires time and favourable conditions to develop. With a growing focus on civic education within EU institutions and among philanthropic organizations, this is a crucial moment to invest in creating an ecosystem that supports the development of informed and engaged citizens and thriving democracies. By fostering critical thinking, media literacy and an understanding of the role of civil society, we can empower individuals to become active participants in the political process and address the challenges facing democracy and society.

As we work towards creating this supportive ecosystem, it's important to remember that civic education is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Different communities and societies may require unique approaches and strategies, but the goal remains the same: to equip citizens with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively understand and address the challenges they face.

## Formal civic education

Different approaches to civic education as a school subject are adopted by different countries, and often more than one approach is used at the same time. In half of the countries studied in the report, civic education is introduced as a standalone subject, taught at various levels of school or only in the final years. The standalone subject can be mandatory, modular or elective.

Civic education is always complemented (or replaced in countries without a separate subject) by a cross-curricular approach to civic competencies. This approach integrates civic education into various subjects, such as philosophy, social sciences, geography, history or all subjects, and is taught from an early age. However, this approach is often criticized for lacking grading, which could make it seem less serious. Italy is an exception, as it has incorporated both a competence-based approach and grading into its teaching system. Additionally, many teachers lack cross-curricular training, hindering students' ability to use knowledge and competencies gained in one subject across subjects.

In most of the countries studied in this report, formal civic education is perceived as not serious, with the exception of the Netherlands, Finland, Belgium and Luxembourg. There are few university teacher training programmes that focus solely on civic education, which limits teachers' motivation and competence. The lack of motivation among teachers and students is compounded by the lack of grading and perceived lack of usefulness of the subject. Additionally, teaching civic education in the final school years or during the most intense learning years contributes to its perception as unimportant.

Due to the shortage of resources and time, teachers are unable to reach the high standards set by educational laws regarding civic education. This is due to a lack of adequate initial and continuous training, motivation and effective methods for teaching civic competencies in schools.

Most of the countries in this report face criticism that formal civic education focuses too much on formal knowledge about institutions and neglects the practice of civic education and the values of democracy.

Some teacher training programmes in universities (focused on civic education as well as other subjects) and lifelong learning opportunities for teachers exist but are deemed insufficient and don't necessarily prepare teachers to address the growing problems in society and the classroom, such as polarization, extreme views, controversies and engagement fatigue. Most of the innovations to support teachers come from civil

society in terms of training and providing easy-to-use teaching materials. Most countries also lack university civic education classes, except for a few examples like Bulgaria or the universities in the Open Society University Network (OSUN).

## Civil society and civic education

A quick review of civil society registers in the countries studied in this report reveals that a relatively small number of civil society organizations prioritize civic education or related topics and activities. Instead, many organized civil society groups tend to focus on areas such as social services, sports and hobbies. This does not necessarily mean that these actors do not use civic education as a tool in their work, but it can be difficult to track this. Additionally, informal activities and newer forms of civic education, such as YouTube channels and social media influencers on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, are not typically included in official civil society registers. Nevertheless, civic educators face similar challenges to those in civil society, such as competition for resources, lack of funding for core costs and funding models that focus on project-based grants, which leaves limited opportunities for long-term planning.

## Non-formal and informal civic education

Non-formal civic education is a growing field across Europe, and the 21 countries examined here offer a diverse range of approaches and structures for this type of education. Despite the differences, several common themes emerge from the expert opinion pieces that provide additional context for the analysis of the survey data.

Firstly, **non-governmental organizations are a critical player in the delivery of non-formal civic education.**

Across Europe, NGOs are the primary actors in non-formal civic education programmes. These NGOs range from large established organizations to small community-based groups. They are often focused on specific topics or groups, such as human rights, environmentalism or youth engagement.

Secondly, **funding and resources for non-formal civic education are limited and inconsistent** in the 21 European countries surveyed. Many organizations struggle to secure long-term funding, which makes it difficult to plan and implement programmes effectively. The sources of funding vary widely, with some countries providing more government support than others. In general, civic education organizations in countries with more consolidated democracies tend to receive more governmental support without fear of state interference in civil society work, and there is also more support from local private philanthropies. However, organizations in countries with less consolidated democracies often rely on public and private foreign funding, as well as EU funding for civic education. The financial health of the countries also plays a role, with more affluent countries being able to allocate funds to civic education, while less affluent and often corruption-plagued countries have fewer resources available.

Thirdly, **collaboration and information sharing among organizations and across countries are essential** for the success of non-formal civic education. Despite challenges, several countries have established networks and platforms to facilitate this type of collaboration. For example, Slovakia has created a national network for NGOs focused on civic education, while Austria has a national platform for citizenship education. In France, a national committee for civic education has been established to promote dialogue and collaboration between NGOs and the government.

Fourthly, **schools and universities are increasingly engaging in non-formal civic education.** While this type of education is not yet widespread, it is gaining momentum in some countries. Civic educators in several countries mentioned the importance of extracurricular activities, such as volunteering and community service, in developing civic skills and knowledge. For example, in Lithuania, students are encouraged to engage

in community service projects and internships at CSOs, while in Portugal, some schools offer extracurricular programmes focused on human rights and democracy. One of the survey questions explores the degree to which civic educators engage in non-formal, informal and formal civic education. As expected, the answers show that most civic education actors are active in non-formal (86.6%) and informal (58.7%) forms of civic education, while 28.1% also work with formal civic education. Some countries have a higher proportion of civic education actors working with the formal sector, such as Italy, Poland, Czechia, Bulgaria, Austria and Romania, compared to other countries.

Finally, there is a **growing recognition of the importance of non-formal civic education in promoting active citizenship and democratic society**. While there are differences in approaches and structures across Europe, all 21 countries discussed in this analysis are committed to non-formal civic education as a critical component of a well-functioning democracy. For instance, in Albania, a national strategy for civic education has been developed to promote democratic values and active citizenship, while in Romania, civic education is seen as essential for promoting social inclusion and combating corruption.

## 3.2. Beyond the classroom: A comprehensive profile of 434 European civic educators in non-formal and informal settings

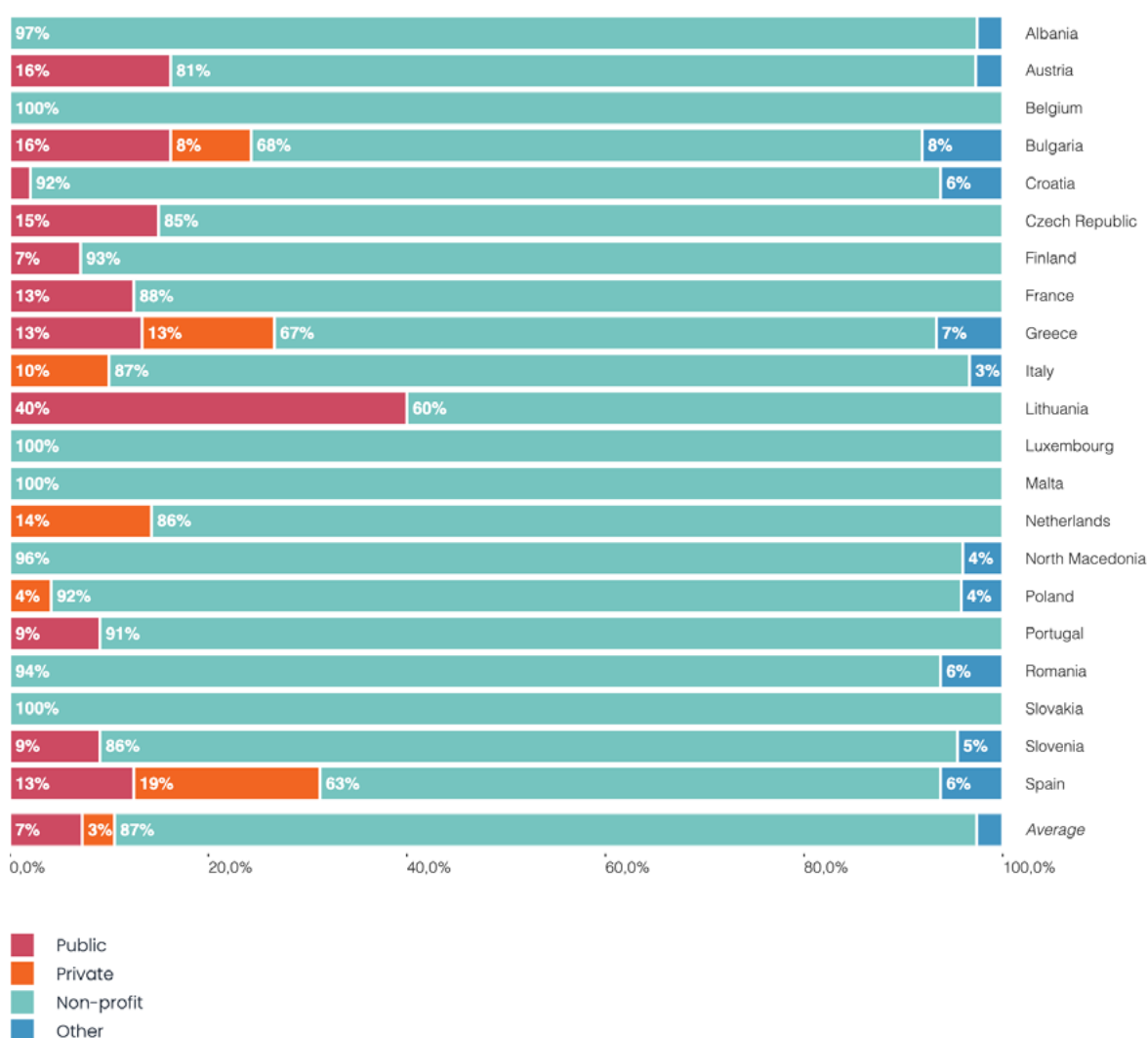
This section provides a summary of the comparative findings derived from the anonymized online questionnaires. The first questionnaire was organized into four sections, the second into two. For readability purposes, the responses presented here are clustered in a different order than the original questionnaire. Some data from certain questions has been omitted as it does not provide new information.

### From non-profits to community libraries: Geographical reach and impact

#### Legal and organizational forms

Most civic education actors, roughly 85%, operate as non-profit entities in terms of their **legal status**, while around 10% are public and less than 5% are private. It's worth noting that there may be some variation in these figures across different countries, which could be due to differences in the entities surveyed rather than any major differences in the overall proportion of non-profit and public entities.

**Figure 1: What is the legal status of your entity?**



In terms of their **organizational profile**, the majority of organizations surveyed were either NGOs (45.8%) or associations (43.6%), while educational institutions made up 17.5% of the sample. Other types of organizations, such as think tanks, research institutes, community-based organizations, religious entities, professional associations, networks, libraries, historical sites, etc., were underrepresented in the survey.

**Figure 2: Type of entity, what fits best?**







Geographical reach

The data from the survey reveals that most of the civic education entities assessed are in the capital cities of their respective countries, even in those countries with higher levels of decentralization. This is consistent with the general trend of civil society organizations becoming more concentrated in urban centres and larger cities. While this trend may not pose significant challenges for countries with a robust civil society, it can prove problematic for countries struggling to consolidate their democracies, especially in the face of depopulation and emigration. It can exacerbate existing disparities between urban and rural areas, further contributing to the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. As a result, individuals in less developed regions may have limited access to civic education and other civil society resources, which can deepen social, economic and political inequalities.

Extent of influence

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the geographical reach and impact of their work, and they had four categories to choose from: local, regional, national and international. On average, 64.8% of the respondents from all countries indicated that their activities were taking place locally.

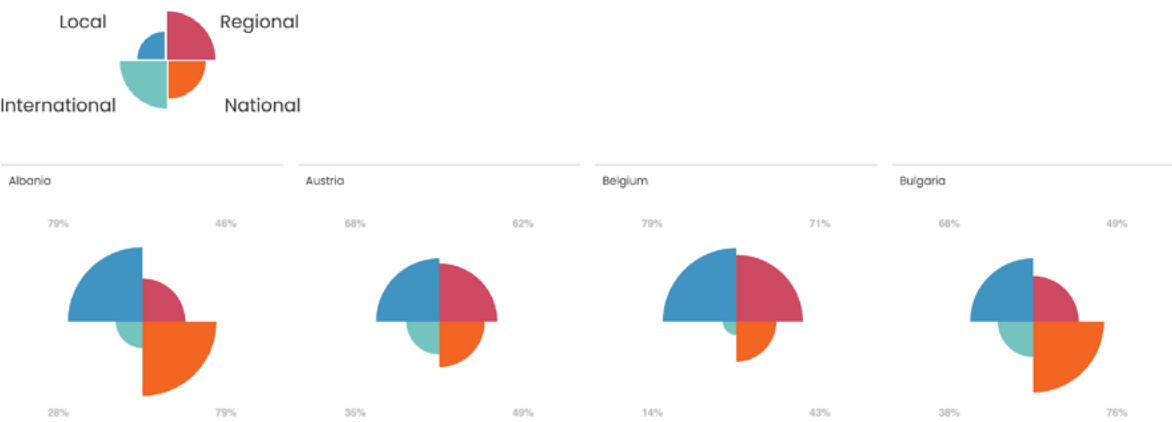
At the regional level, the results showed that a smaller proportion of respondents, 47.3%, reported working in a regional capacity. This figure is in line with the observation that working at the regional level is more prevalent in countries with high levels of decentralization and in federal states, where regional decision-making powers are more pronounced.

The largest number of respondents, 72.1% in total, said that their activities take place on a national level, making it the most popular category among the listed options.

On the other hand, the smallest percentage of respondents, on average 35.5% among the participating countries, indicated that their activities take place internationally. Respondents from Luxembourg, Portugal and Belgium said that less than 20% of their activities were international, which is significantly lower than the overall average.

Overall, the survey indicates that the majority of the respondents work locally or nationally.

Figure 3: Where are your activities mostly taking place?





## Key topics shaping citizenship in Europe

Most respondents marked civic engagement and participation as their main field of work (68.1%). The top five countries with the highest percentage of efforts towards civil rights are Luxembourg, Romania, North Macedonia and Albania, while the bottom five with the lowest percentage are Portugal, the Netherlands, Czechia, Italy and Slovakia.

Community building is the main field of involvement for 36.6% of all respondents, with Belgium, Albania, Slovenia, Spain and the Netherlands having the highest percentage of involvement, while only Portugal is below 20%. Culture and arts are the main focus for 24.3% of respondents, with Lithuania, Slovakia and Malta having a percentage below 10%.

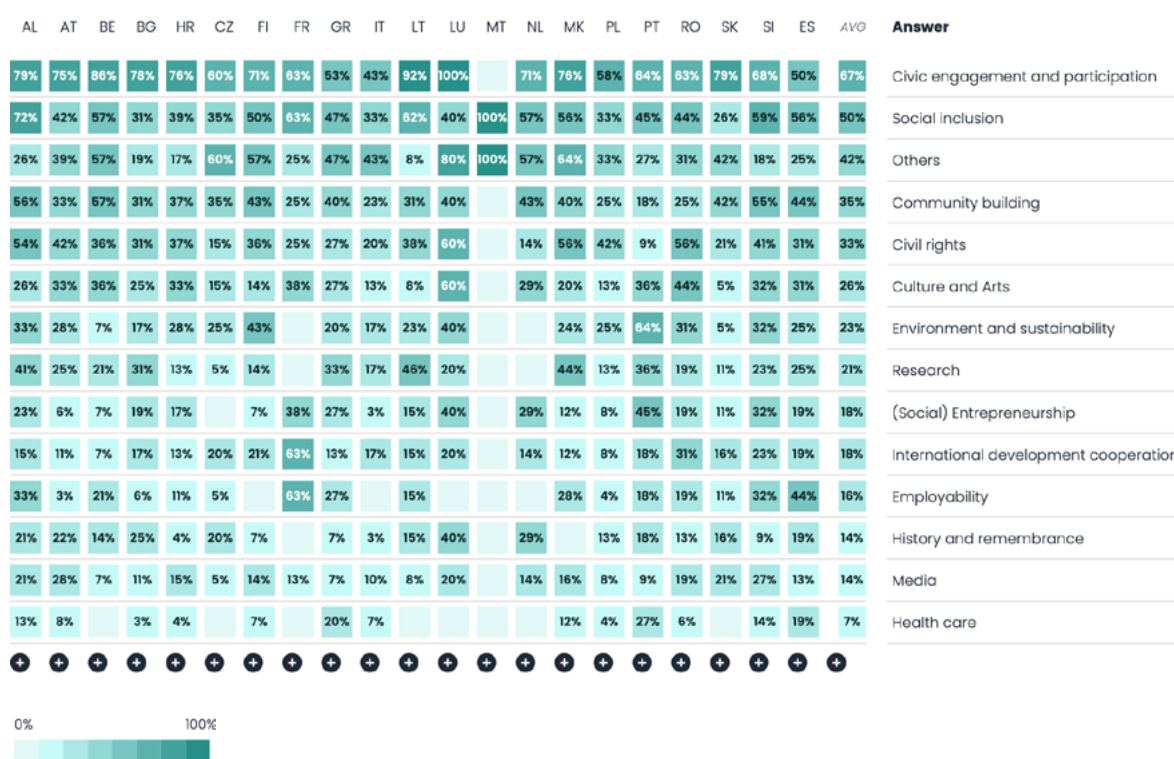
For employability, the top five countries are France, Spain, Albania, Slovenia and North Macedonia, while almost half of the countries are below 10%. The environment and sustainability are prioritized by Portugal and Finland, which had significantly higher percentages than other respondents. Health care is not the main field of civic education work for the majority of respondents, except for Portugal, where the result is the highest at 27%.

History and remembrance is a minor field, with less than 5% of work focused on it in Croatia, Italy, North Macedonia, France and Malta, while Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Bulgaria have above 25%. International development cooperation is a significant field for French respondents, while Poland, Belgium and Malta have below 10%.

Media literacy is a less prominent field for most respondents, with Austria, Slovenia, Slovakia and Albania being the only countries with more than 20% of their activities related to it. Research is a main field of work for respondents from 11 countries, while respondents from Czechia, the Netherlands, France and Malta indicate that 5% or less of their activities are related to research. Social entrepreneurship is marked as the main field of work by respondents from Portugal, France, and Slovenia, with below 10% marked by respondents from Poland, Belgium, Finland, Austria, Italy, Czechia and Malta.

Social inclusion seems to be the main field of investment for most organizations, with all respondents pointing out that more than 20% of their work is related to it. Respondents from Malta and Albania marked that more than 70% of their work is in the field of social inclusion, while respondents from France, Lithuania, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, North Macedonia and Finland are reporting that more than 50% of their educational efforts are in this field.

Finally, the prevalence of the response "Other" varies greatly among different countries, with more than 25% of respondents marking it as their main field of civic education efforts. More than 50% of respondents from North Macedonia, Czechia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland and Malta marked "Other" as their main field, and further data is required to determine if there are country-specific topics that haven't been well captured in the survey or if there are some international valid trends that were also not captured. In addition to their focus on the main fields of work, such as civic engagement, participation and social inclusion, civic education actors often prioritize local needs and issues in their work, reflecting the unique focal points of their communities.

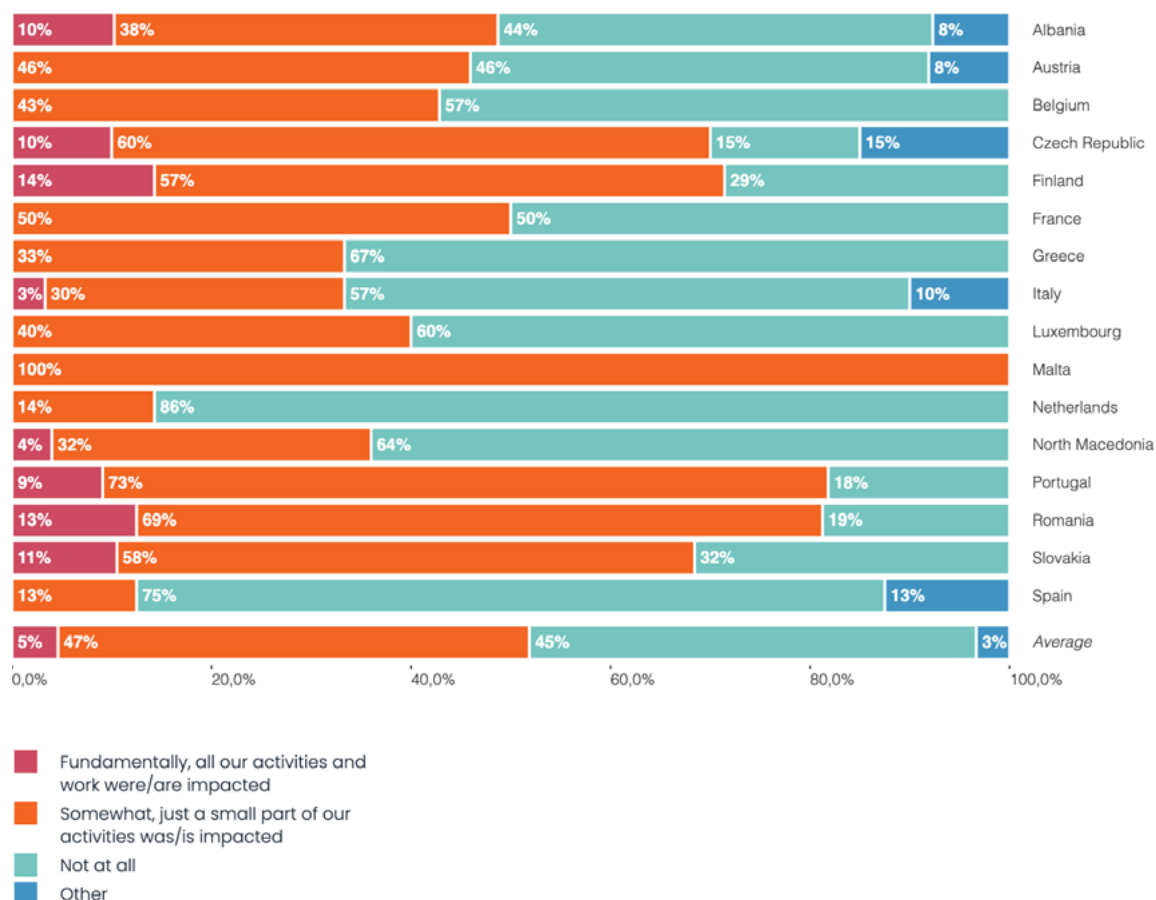
**Figure 4: What is your main field of work?**

## Amidst conflict: The effects of the Ukrainian war on civic educators' work

As the online survey period coincided with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, we sought to investigate its impact on the work of civic education actors. To that end, we could query only the civic education entities from the 16 countries that were part of the second, third and fourth cycle of the mapping process (see Chapter 1). The responses revealed that the conflict had a diverse range of effects on the work of civic education actors. Most civic education entities (47.8%) did not report any impact on their work, while 47.2% indicated that only a small part of their activities was impacted. Meanwhile, 9.3% of respondents reported that the war had a fundamental impact on all of their activities and work.

This suggests that the war in Ukraine has had a relatively limited impact on the work of civic educators across the countries surveyed. However, it is important to note that there is still a significant minority of entities (9.3%) for whom the impact has been more severe. The fact that almost half of the entities reported no impact on their work suggests that military conflicts and their consequences in general may not have been a major focus of their activities or that they were located far from the conflict zone.

The findings could be interpreted in different ways depending on the context of the individual countries. For example, in countries that have a strong tradition of peace education or conflict resolution (like Finland), civic educators may be more likely to view the war in Ukraine as an opportunity to promote their work and raise awareness of the importance of their activities. Conversely, in countries where the war is a highly polarizing issue, civic educators may be less likely to engage with the topic for fear of alienating their target groups.

**Figure 5: Did the war in Ukraine change your work?**

## From youth to migrants: Unpacking the diverse target groups

Asked about their target groups, civic education actors reported a predominant focus on young people, particularly those aged 16–29 (83%) and children under 16 (51%). This observation is not surprising, as non-formal civic education is typically delivered through extracurricular activities aimed at children and young people. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that civic educators also devote significant efforts to working with adults aged 30–65, who are the second-largest target group with 53.4%. This trend is particularly significant when compared to the low average rate of adult learning in the EU, which stood at 10.8% in 2021.

However, senior citizens appear to be a comparatively neglected target group, receiving attention from only around 20% of civic educators. Countries that display heightened awareness of their aging populations, such as Finland, Spain and Portugal, seem to put greater emphasis on reaching out to this group.

Women (47%) and men (39.9%) are targeted by civic educators in nearly equal numbers, with certain country-specific variations in focus. Countries like the Netherlands, Spain, Croatia, North Macedonia, Albania, Austria and France place greater emphasis on empowering women through civic education.

Professional groups, particularly teachers, receive attention from about 38% of civic education actors, with several countries such as the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Greece, Malta and Poland, dedicating over 50% of their efforts to these groups.

Around 30% of civic education respondents focus on ethnic minorities, with differences in the level of attention observed between countries. For instance, countries like Czechia, Poland, Portugal and Italy put in less effort than other countries, possibly indicating variations in the diversity of ethnic minority populations.

Similarly, roughly the same level of effort is directed towards economically disadvantaged individuals, with some countries such as Albania, Belgium, France, Slovenia and Spain focusing more than 50% of their efforts on this group.

Migrants are targeted by about 25% of civic education actors, with discernible regional variations. Countries like Greece have a much higher percentage of civic educators working with citizens with a migration background, with 75% of civic educators working with this group. However, in countries like Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland and Slovenia, this percentage is below 10%.

Overall, less than 20% of civic education actors focus on hard-to-reach learners, sexual minorities, refugees and asylum seekers (except in Greece). This could reflect a range of factors, including differences in the size and needs of these populations, as well as variations in the political and social context across different countries.

**Figure 6: Which are your main target groups?**



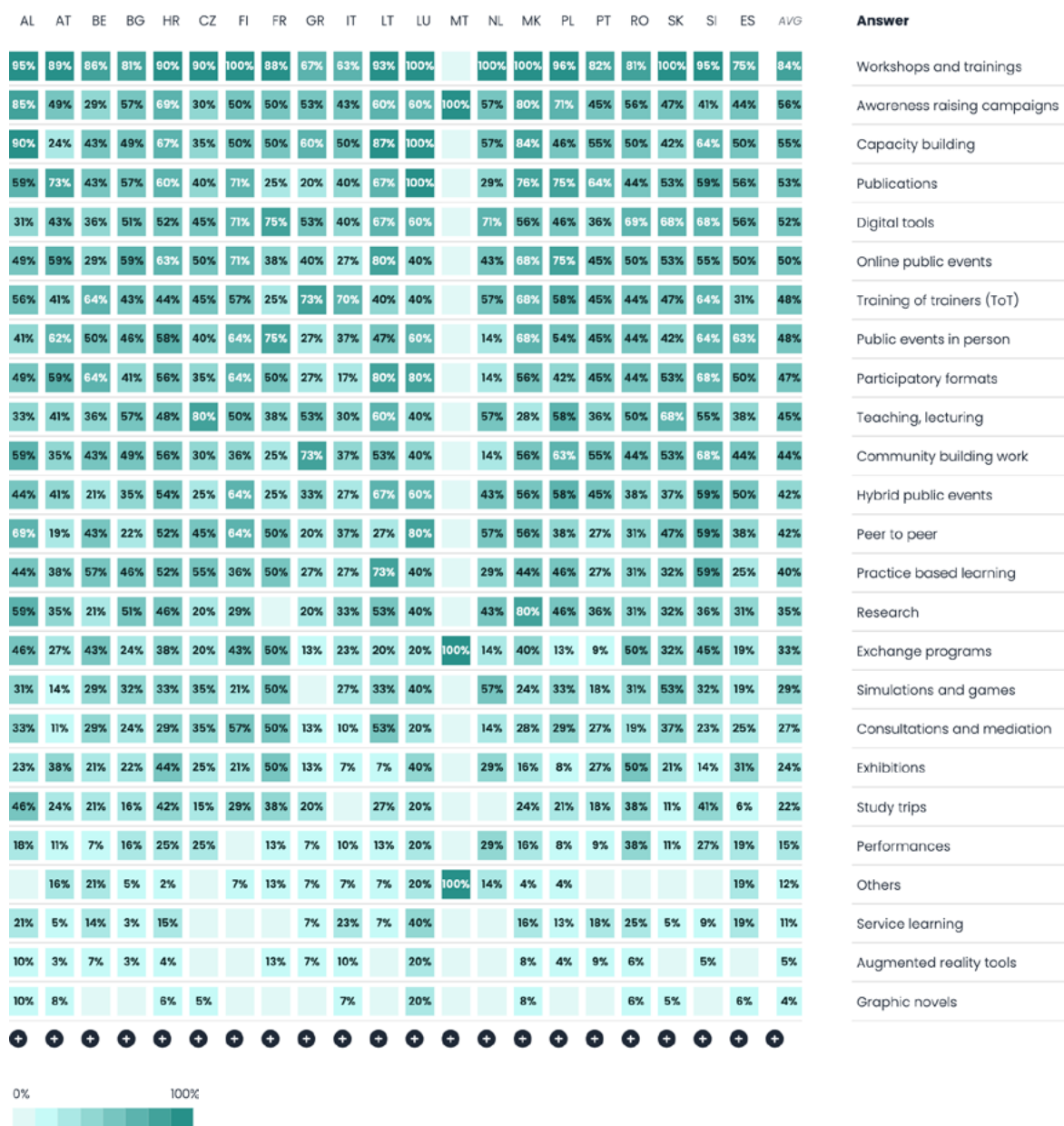
## The most popular tools for civic education

The data collected from this question provides valuable insights into the methodologies and tools used by European actors to promote civic education. Workshops and trainings, awareness-raising campaigns and capacity building are among the most popular methodologies, while publications, digital tools and training of trainers are also commonly used. The least popular methods include augmented-reality tools, exhibitions and performances. Preferred methods vary significantly by country, highlighting the importance of tailoring approaches to specific regions.

### The methods in order of popularity are:

- **Workshops and trainings:** the most popular methodology/tool, used by 87.6% of respondents, but only 63.3% in Italy.
- **Awareness-raising campaigns:** one of the most popular methodologies/tools, used by 56.7% of respondents, with 80% or more in Malta, Albania and North Macedonia.
- **Capacity building:** also among the most popular methodologies/tools, used by 56.6% of respondents, with more than 80% in Albania, Lithuania and North Macedonia, but only 24.3% in Austria.
- **Publications:** used by 54.3% of respondents, with less than 30% in the Netherlands, Malta and Greece, but more than 70% in North Macedonia, Luxembourg, Poland, Austria and Finland.
- **Digital tools:** used by 53.8% of respondents, with less than the average in Poland, Czechia, Luxembourg, Austria, Italy, Portugal, Belgium and Albania.
- **Training of trainers:** used by 50.2% of respondents, with more than 70% in Greece and Italy.
- **Online public events:** used by 50.1% of respondents, with more than 70% in Lithuania, Poland and Finland.
- **Participatory formats:** used by 47.9% of respondents, with less than 20% in Italy and the Netherlands.
- **Community-building work:** used by 45.4% of respondents, with the highest percentage in Greece, Slovenia, Poland, Albania, Croatia, North Macedonia, Portugal, Lithuania, Slovakia and Bulgaria, and the lowest in the Netherlands at 14.3%.
- **Public events in person:** used by 46.7% of respondents, with more than 60% in Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Finland, Slovenia, Spain and Austria.
- **Hybrid public events:** used by 41.1% of respondents, with the highest percentage in Lithuania, Finland, Slovenia, Poland, North Macedonia, Croatia, Spain, Portugal, Albania and the Netherlands.
- **Peer to peer:** used by 39.7% of respondents, with more than 60% in Albania and Finland.
- **Exchange programmes:** used by 30% of respondents, with the highest percentage in Malta, Romania, Albania, Slovenia, Finland, Belgium, North Macedonia and Croatia.
- **Consultations and mediation:** used by 28.7% of respondents, with the highest percentage in Finland, Lithuania and France.
- **Exhibitions:** used by 22.4% of respondents, with the highest percentage in Romania, Croatia, Austria, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Czechia and Albania.
- **Performances:** used by 16.9% of respondents, with more than 25% in Slovenia, Romania, Poland, Spain and the Czechia.
- **Augmented-reality tools:** the least popular methodology/tool used by 4.1% of respondents, with 10% or more in France, Albania and Italy.



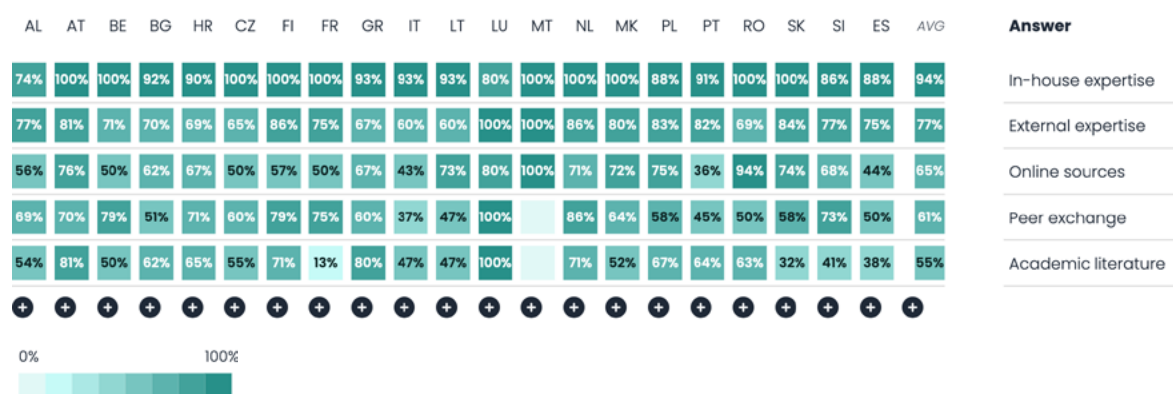
**Figure 7: Please select the methods and tools that you are actively using in your civic education work.**

## Choosing between in-house and external expertise

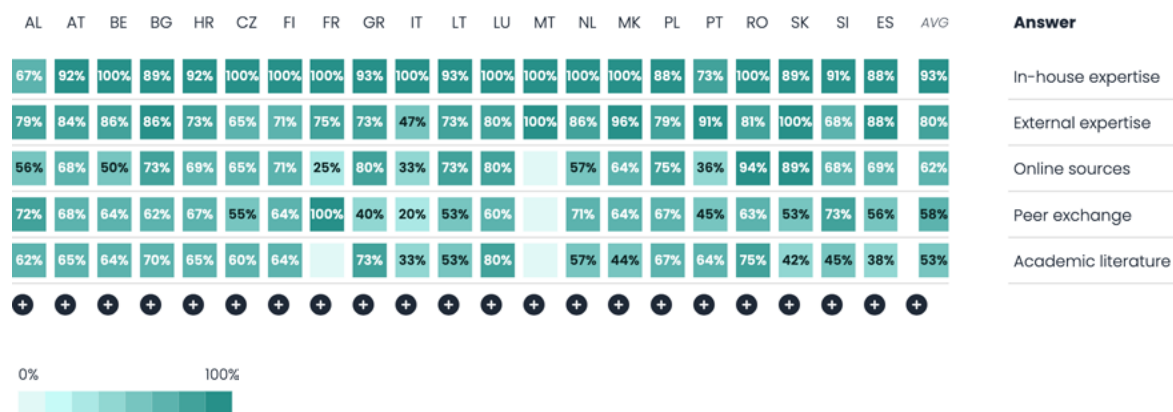
When it comes to deciding which topics to focus on and what methods and tools to use, most civic education actors rely on their own in-house expertise (94.4%). This is not surprising, as civic educators are mission driven and therefore are expected to have knowledge and expertise within their organization. However, some smaller organizations may not have the financial resources to have this expertise in house and often turn to external sources for support (74%). This approach has an advantage, as it can bring in more diverse opinions from outside the organization.

Civic education actors find online sources of information and expertise (63%) slightly more important than peer exchange (60.7%). They also use academic literature (56.3%) to inform their work, although the body of literature on civic education lacks interdisciplinarity. Civic education intersects with various fields, such as social studies, ecology, demography, neuroscience, AI, urban development, etc. Therefore, investigating further the academic literature that civic educators rely on is essential, and so is more interdisciplinary research in this area.

**Figure 8: What are the sources you use when deciding on topics for your civic education activities?**



**Figure 9: What are the sources you use when deciding on methods and didactical tools for your civic education activities?**



## Money matters: Financial landscape and funding sources

The sources of funding for actors in civic education play a critical role in their ability to carry out their work effectively. This section looks into the financing mechanisms and how they differ between countries and regions.

**National public funding** is the main source of financial support for 68.8% of respondents, although the availability of designated programmes that support civic education varies considerably between countries.

Countries like Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg have such programmes, which is why some of the surveyed organizations from these countries rely entirely on national public funding. However, non-EU member states, as well as Poland and Romania, receive the least national public funding and are at the bottom of the scale. In some cases, such as in Poland, these differences reflect the strained relations between the state and civil society.

**EU funding** is the second most common source of funding for 62.3% of respondents. However, in countries where national funding for civic education is available, EU funding is less prominent.

Other sources of funding include **income generated by the entity** (42.6%), **national private funding** (42.3%) and **individual contributions** (41.7%). There are geographical variances that point to differences in the philanthropic culture of countries, with more developed private philanthropy in the West and North of Europe and less in the South and East.

**National funding** from private companies accounts for 27.7% of total funding sources. Interestingly, organizations that rely on private companies for 30%–40% or more of their funds are based in Central and Eastern Europe, in Romania, Poland, Czechia and Slovakia, and one exception in the West: Belgium.

**Foreign public funding** (other than EU) and **foreign private funding** represent 23.7% and 19.6% of the funding, respectively, with clear regional differences. Foreign public and private funding is more common in Central and Eastern Europe, including in Lithuania, Croatia, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Poland and Albania.

National funding from public companies is the least common source of funding, reported by only 9.4% of respondents.

**Figure 10: Which are your funding sources?**



## The price of participation

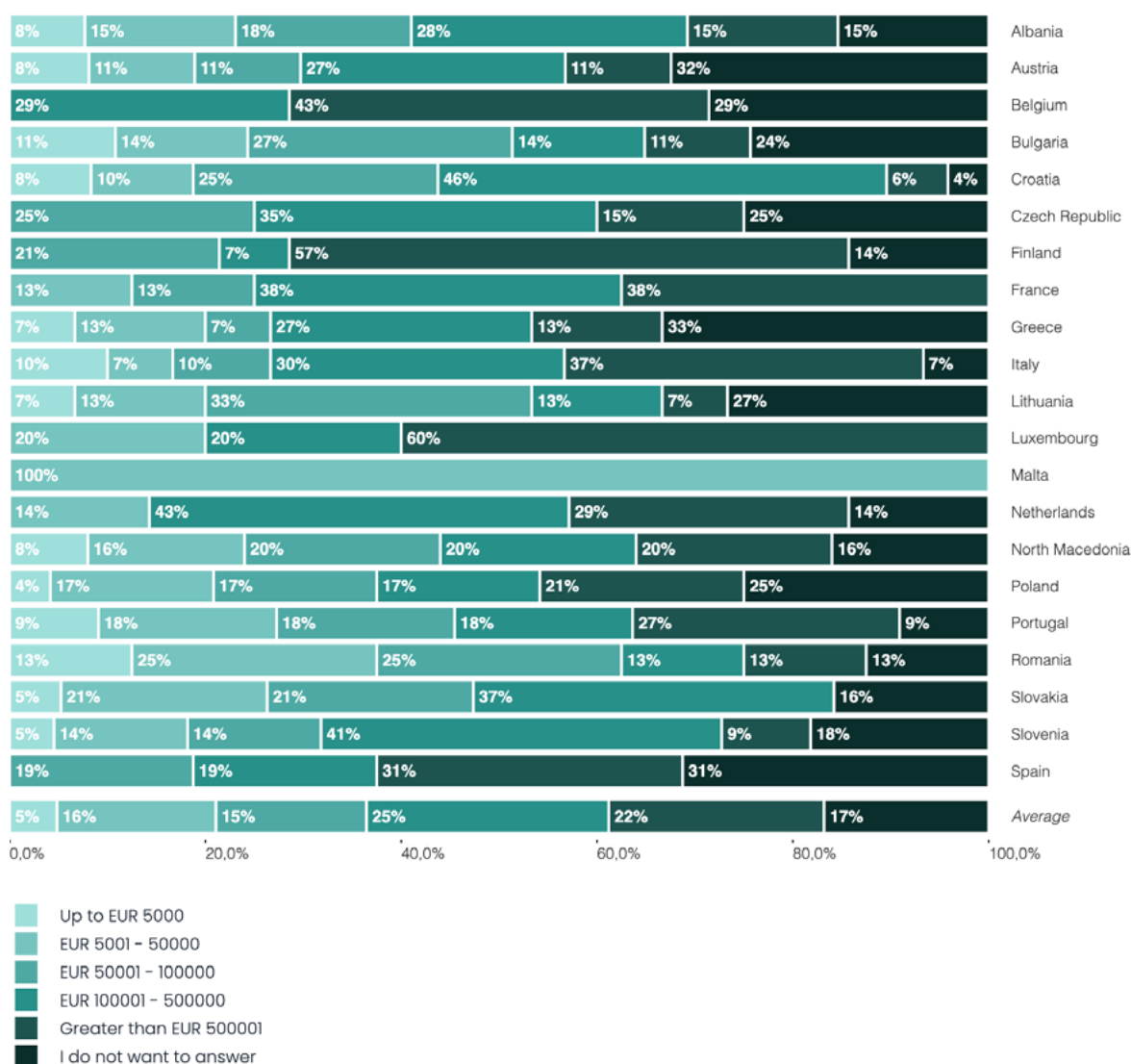
The average annual budget of civic actors in euros is a critical indicator of their financial capacity and sustainability. The survey data reveals a stark reality of financial scarcity faced by civic education entities, with 42.4% of all respondents operating on a budget smaller than EUR 100,000 per year. This implies a limited resource base for carrying out their civic education activities, with 7.8% operating on up to EUR 5,000, 15.6% on up to EUR 50,000 and 19% on up to EUR 100,000.

Additionally, the data highlights that a significant proportion of civic educators, 34.8%, allocate less than 30% of their budget towards core costs, while 20.8% dedicate less than 10% towards such expenses. This means they have less than EUR 2,500 per month to cover critical expenses such as salaries, rent, utilities and other essential costs. While volunteers provide valuable support to the work of civic educators, sustained and professional efforts are essential for the growth and impact of the field.

The survey data also reveals that 25.6% of respondents operate on a budget between EUR 100,001 and EUR 500,000, while 22.6% are on a budget greater than EUR 500,000. These higher-budget entities are disproportionately concentrated in Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands.

A considerable portion of respondents did not disclose their budget information. This may indicate a reluctance to share financial information because of a hostile environment for CSOs in the respective country or the presence of entities with budgets significantly higher or lower than those disclosed.

To address the growing demand for civic education, sustained and professional efforts are essential, and adequate funding and resources are crucial for enabling civic education entities to operate sustainably. The survey data serves as an urgent wake-up call for the need to bridge the significant disparity between the demand for civic education and the financial challenges faced by civic actors.

**Figure 11: What is your average annual budget?**

## Funding for core costs

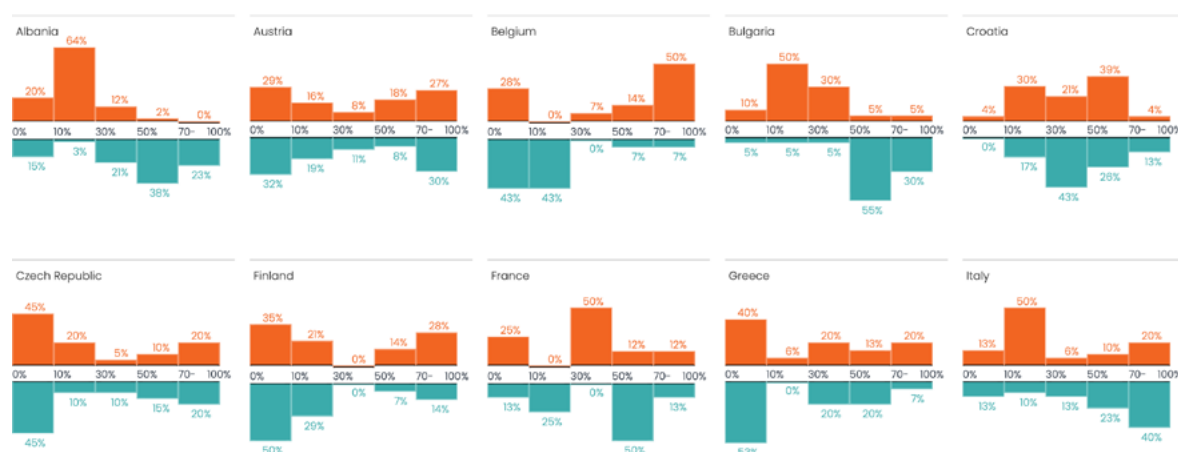
Civic education organizations allocate varying proportions of their budgets toward core costs. Specifically, 21% of organizations spend between 71% and 100% of their budgets to cover core costs, and Belgium and Luxembourg have the highest concentration of such organizations. Conversely, 16.4% of organizations spend between 51% and 70% of their budgets on core costs, with Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia and the Netherlands being prominent examples. Additionally, 20.2% of organizations spend between 31% and 50% of their budgets on core costs.

The largest group of organizations, comprising 34.8% of the sample, spend up to 30% of their budgets to cover core costs. This finding suggests that many organizations are entirely project funded, as project funds often require that core costs not exceed 30% of the project budget. The countries with a significant concentration of such organizations include Albania, Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, North Macedonia, Slovenia and the Netherlands.

A sizeable proportion of organizations, 20.8%, spend up to 10% of their budget on core costs. These organizations are mainly based in Czechia, Finland, Greece and Romania.

The findings highlight the challenges faced by civic education actors in securing funding for core costs. While a significant proportion of organizations allocate a substantial part of their budget towards these costs, a majority spend less than 30% of their budget on core costs. This suggests a reliance on project funding and limited institutional support. The findings underscore the need for sustained investment in civic education organizations and the creation of enabling environments that support their core functions. Failure to do so risks undermining the long-term sustainability of these organizations and their crucial role in promoting democratic values and active citizenship across Europe.

**Figure 12: How much of your annual budget is devoted to your core costs (staff, infrastructure, communication and administration). Please provide an approximation.**





## The real cost of action: Funding for civic education activities

The largest group of respondents, representing 26.2% of the sample, allocate 71%–100% of their budgets towards their activities, with above-average examples observed in Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Lithuania, Italy and Poland. This trend can be explained by the principles of project funding, where approximately 70% of the budget is typically reserved for activities. The second largest group, representing 24.6% of the sample, allocate 51%–70% of their budgets towards their activities, with above-average examples observed in Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Slovenia and Albania. Approximately 18% of respondents allocate 31%–50% of their budgets towards activities, with Croatia and Slovakia being the most notable examples, while another 18% allocate 11%–30% towards activities, with Belgium, Luxembourg and Portugal being the most prominent. Finally, 21.2% of respondents allocate up to 10% of their budgets towards their activities, with Belgium, Czechia, Finland and Greece being the primary examples.

The budget allocation patterns reveal that a significant proportion of respondents allocate most of their budgets towards their activities, with some countries showing a higher propensity for such practices. The data suggests that project-funding principles and context-specific factors may be contributing to these trends. Understanding the cost structures of civic education activities is crucial for policymakers and organizations to ensure that these initiatives can be sustainably financed and effectively carried out in the future.

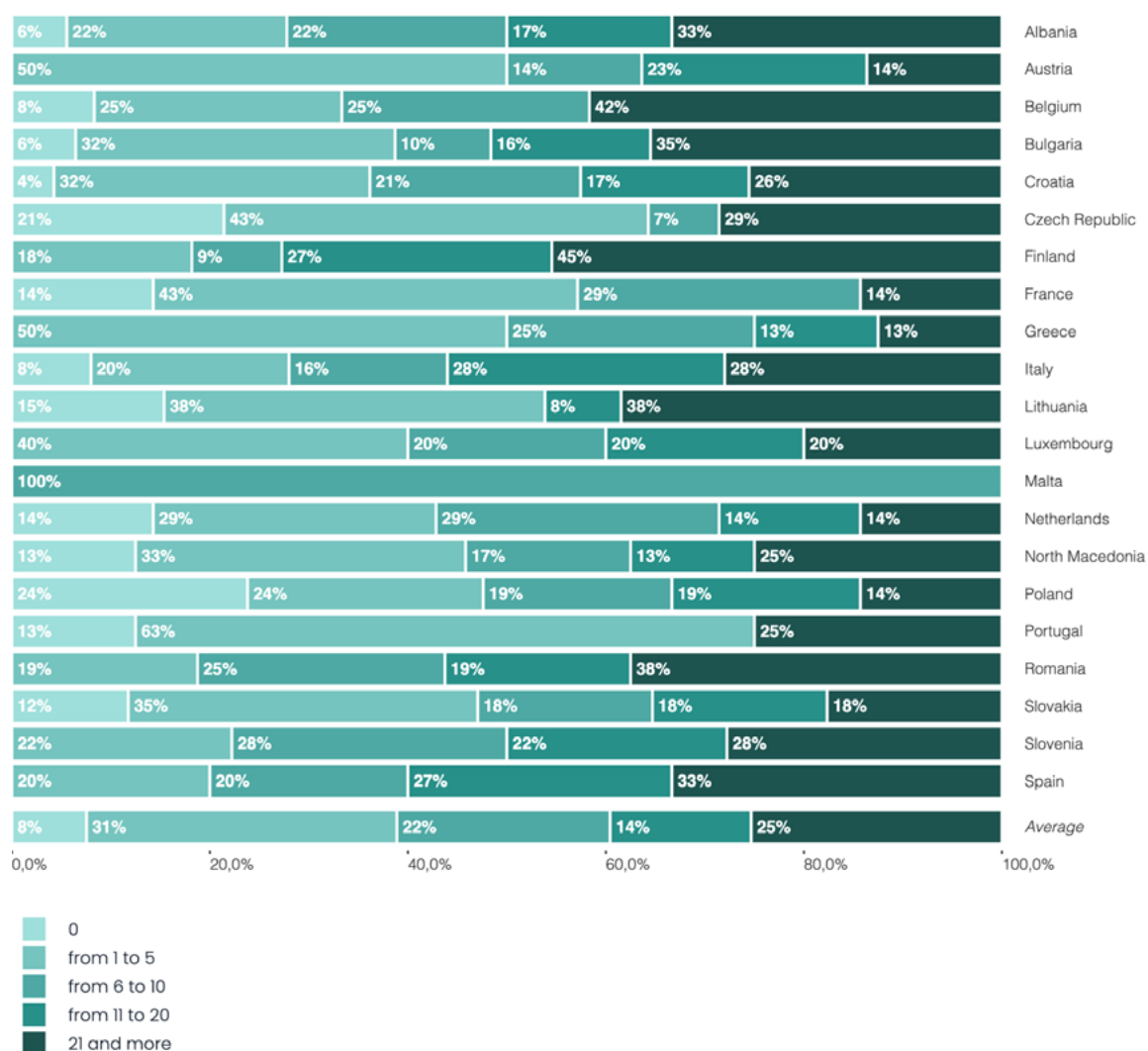
## The role of regular volunteers and interns

The data presented in Figure 13 illustrates the number of regular volunteers and interns working for civic education organizations in each country. The results show that 33.7% of organizations surveyed have 1–5 regular volunteers and interns, making it the most common category, while 27.1% have 21 or more, 20.5% have 11–20 and 18% have 6–10. Additionally, 11.3% of organizations do not have any regular volunteers or interns.

It is worth noting that the percentage of organizations with a large number of volunteers varies widely across countries. Belgium and Finland have the highest percentage of organizations working with 21 or more regular volunteers and interns, possibly indicating a higher level of civic engagement and volunteerism in these countries. In contrast, Poland and Czechia have a higher percentage of organizations that do not have any regular volunteers or interns.

The data suggest that regular volunteers and interns play a significant role in civic education actors in Europe, with the majority of organizations relying on at least a small number of regular volunteers or interns.

**Figure 13: What is the size of your core team? Volunteers & interns**





## The power of the core: Exploring team sizes

The dataset sheds light onto the staffing patterns of civic education entities across European countries.

Based on the data, the majority of civic education entities in Europe have a small core team of up to 5 individuals, with 37.8% falling into this category. This indicates that civic education entities in Europe tend to be relatively small in size and may operate on a limited budget, which is supported by the fact that 42.4% of the organizations operate on a budget of up to EUR 100,000 annually.

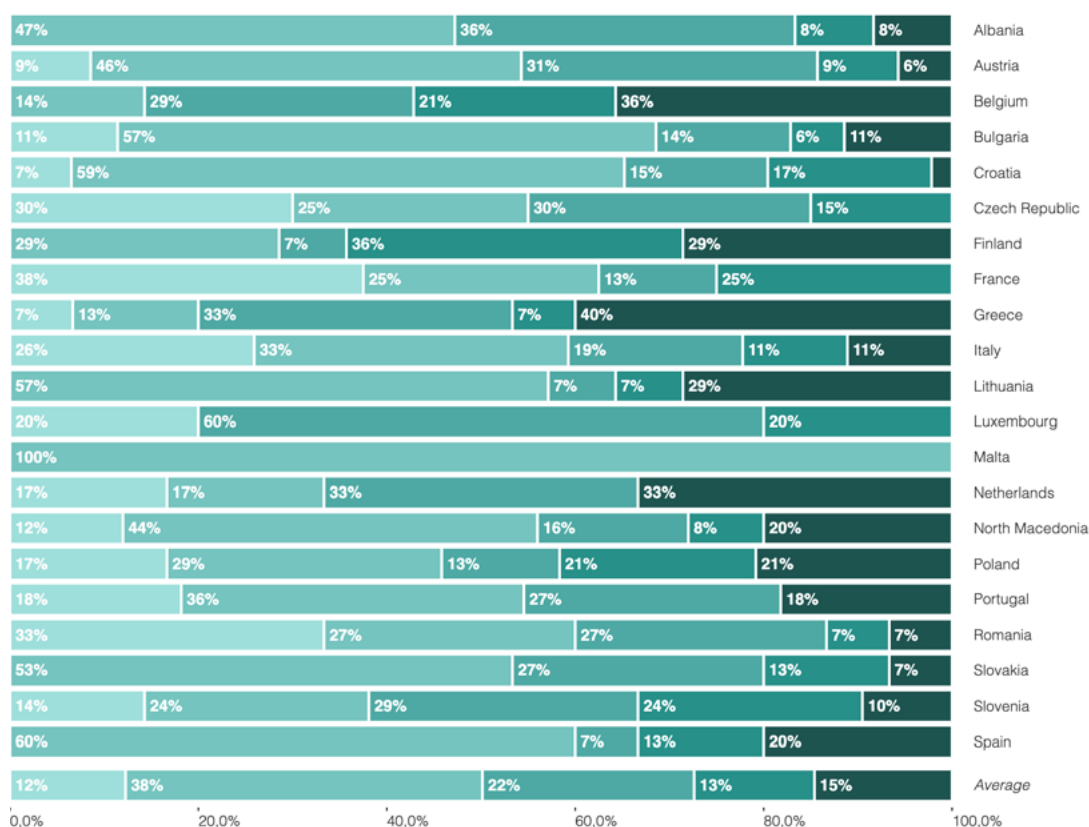
A closer examination of the data reveals some interesting outliers. For instance, Finland stands out as a country where a substantial proportion of civic education entities have a core team comprising 11 to 20 individuals, with 35.7% falling into this category.

In terms of mid-sized entities, the data suggests that a little over one-third of civic education entities in Europe employ 6–10 individuals (23.5%) or 11–20 individuals (14.6%). It is worth noting that the largest civic education entities (i.e. those with 21 or more individuals in their core team) make up only 18.6% of the total number of entities.

A closer look at the outliers within the data reveals some interesting patterns. For example, Belgium, Greece and the Netherlands are countries where larger core teams are more prevalent, with 35.7%, 40% and 33.3% of their civic education entities falling into the 21 or more individuals category, respectively.

In contrast, Romania and Greece have a relatively high proportion of entities that do not employ anyone as part of their core team, suggesting that many of these entities operate through voluntary work.

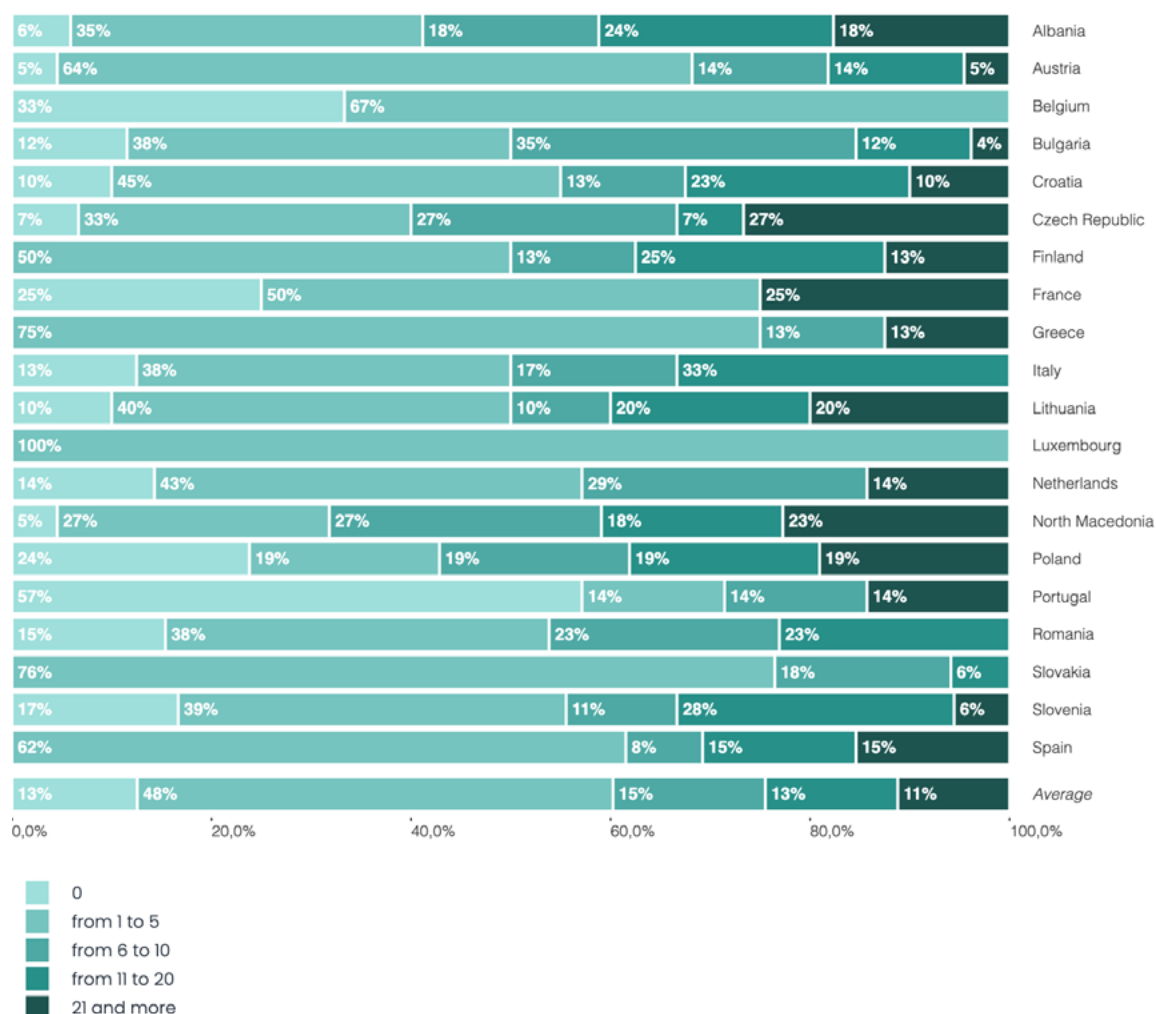
**Figure 14: What is the size of your core team? EMPLOYEES**



## The freelance factor: Use of independent contractors

According to data presented in Figure 15, independent contractors are a common resource for civic education actors in Europe. Many civic education actors in Europe (47.1%) work with 1–5 independent contractors. The second most common scenario is working with 6–10 independent contractors, which is the case for 22.5% of entities. Additionally, 18.4% of entities work with 11–20 independent contractors, while 16.8% and 14.9% of entities have 21 or more independent contractors or 0 independent contractors, respectively. The use of independent contractors is a double-edged sword – it provides access to expertise and diversity not available in house but also indicates the possible negative effects of unstable funding on the sustainability of organizations. While outsourcing work to independent contractors can offer advantages in the short term, lack of long-term funding may cause organizations to become overly reliant on freelancers, risking instability and loss of continuity in their work.

**Figure 15: What is the size of your core team? Independent Contractors**



## Building capacity for impact: What civic education actors need

The actors in the civic education sector require various forms of capacity building to improve their effectiveness. This section is a self-assessment of their needs. The highest percentage of respondents, 57.7%, said they need further training in **new methods, tools and approaches in civic education**. However, the percentage of respondents in the following countries that require further training in this area is lower than the average benchmark: the Netherlands, Belgium, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Italy, Austria, Portugal, Spain and Czechia.

Another area of need for training is **impact evaluation and evaluative learning**, with 46.1% of all respondents indicating they require further training. Respondents from Belgium, Finland and Luxembourg had a higher percentage of more than 60% indicating their need for impact evaluation and evaluative learning training. This may be attributed to the stronger civic education infrastructure in these countries, which places greater emphasis on the importance of tracking and improving the impact of programmes.

The survey also found that 45.3% of all respondents require further training on **how to secure funding**. Below that benchmark were respondents from North Macedonia, Lithuania, Italy, Luxembourg, Czechia, Portugal, Greece and Malta. Civic education actors also require **training in innovation and foresight thinking**, with 42.4% of all respondents indicating they require further training. Respondents from Malta, North Macedonia and Lithuania had the highest percentage indicating their need for training in this area, while in Czechia, the percentage of respondents who require such training is below 20%.

Furthermore, 41.8% of respondents need further training in **communication**. Respondents from several countries, including France, Croatia and Czechia, had 50% or more indicating their need for training in this area.

About a third of respondents, 34.2%, said they require further training in **organizational development**, with 50% or more respondents from Finland, Romania, Slovenia and Malta indicating their need for training. Similarly, 34% of all respondents said they require further training in **working with media**, with 50% or more respondents from France, Croatia and Czechia indicating need for such training.

**Building and maintaining partnerships** is another area where the actors of civic education require training, which 30.4% of all respondents identifying a need for further training. More than 50% of respondents from Slovenia and Bulgaria indicated their need for training in this area.

The survey also found that 29.7% of respondents require further training in **advocacy**, with more than 50% of respondents from Slovenia and Croatia indicating their need for training. Additionally, 29.6% of respondents require further training in **ways of collaborative work with local and international partners**, with less than 20% of respondents from Croatia, Luxembourg, Czechia and Lithuania identifying this as a training need.

In terms of **working with public institutions**, 28.3% of respondents require further training. Similarly, 26.9% of respondents require further training in **exchanging knowledge and practice with peers**.

Training is also required in **working with volunteers**, with 21.7% of respondents indicating their need for capacity building in this area. **Strategy, mission and vision** is another areas where training is needed, with 21% of all respondents indicating this as a training need. **Financial management and project management** are also areas where respondents require training, with 20.9% and 18.6% of all respondents indicating their need for training in these areas, respectively.

The survey results reveal varying capacity-building needs across European countries, emphasizing the importance of targeted and context-specific programmes. The findings demonstrate a high demand for training in new methods and tools, impact evaluation and securing funding, as well as the importance of effective communication, organizational development, and partnership building.

**Figure 16: Please mark all fields where your entity needs further training.**



## Envisioning a pan-European civic education network: Key priorities and expectations

The final two questions of the survey were included in the second questionnaire, which was sent exclusively to the 434 respondents who completed the first questionnaire. Out of these, 283 respondents filled out the second questionnaire, which aimed to explore the level of cooperation among the respondents and their needs for networking and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

Respondents prioritize a range of areas for the potential network to focus on. A clear majority, 75.6% of respondents, believe that such a network should primarily focus on opportunities for joint projects internationally. This result underscores the desire for cross-border collaboration and the potential for a pan-European network to foster partnerships across different countries.

Similarly, 75.4% of respondents believe that a pan-European civic education network should focus on exchanging good practices. This result highlights the value of sharing successful experiences and innovative approaches to civic education and suggests that a pan-European network could play a vital role in facilitating this process.

In terms of sharing the latest civic education trends, tools and topics, 60.9% of respondents believe that a pan-European civic education network should focus on this area. However, the percentage is lower in several countries, including Italy, Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, Portugal and Spain.

Other key areas that respondents believe a pan-European civic education network should focus on include opportunities for joint projects nationally (52.3%), peer-to-peer learning formats (49.7%), financial stability and fundraising (48.2%), advocacy (47%), working with politics and institutions (44.9%), communication (42.8%), working in a politically challenging environment (33.4%), digitalizing one's work (27.4%), learning sessions (26.8%), opportunities for cooperation with authorities (26%) and helping educators develop their soft skills (23.8%).

While the priorities for a pan-European civic education network vary across different countries, opportunities for joint projects internationally and the exchange of good practices are two areas that consistently receive high levels of support, suggesting that these areas should be a primary focus for such a network. At the same time, the desire for peer-to-peer learning, financial stability and fundraising, advocacy and other areas indicate the potential for a pan-European network to serve as a platform for a range of initiatives related to civic education.

**Figure 17: If there were a pan-European civic education network, what would you expect from it/what should it primarily focus on?**



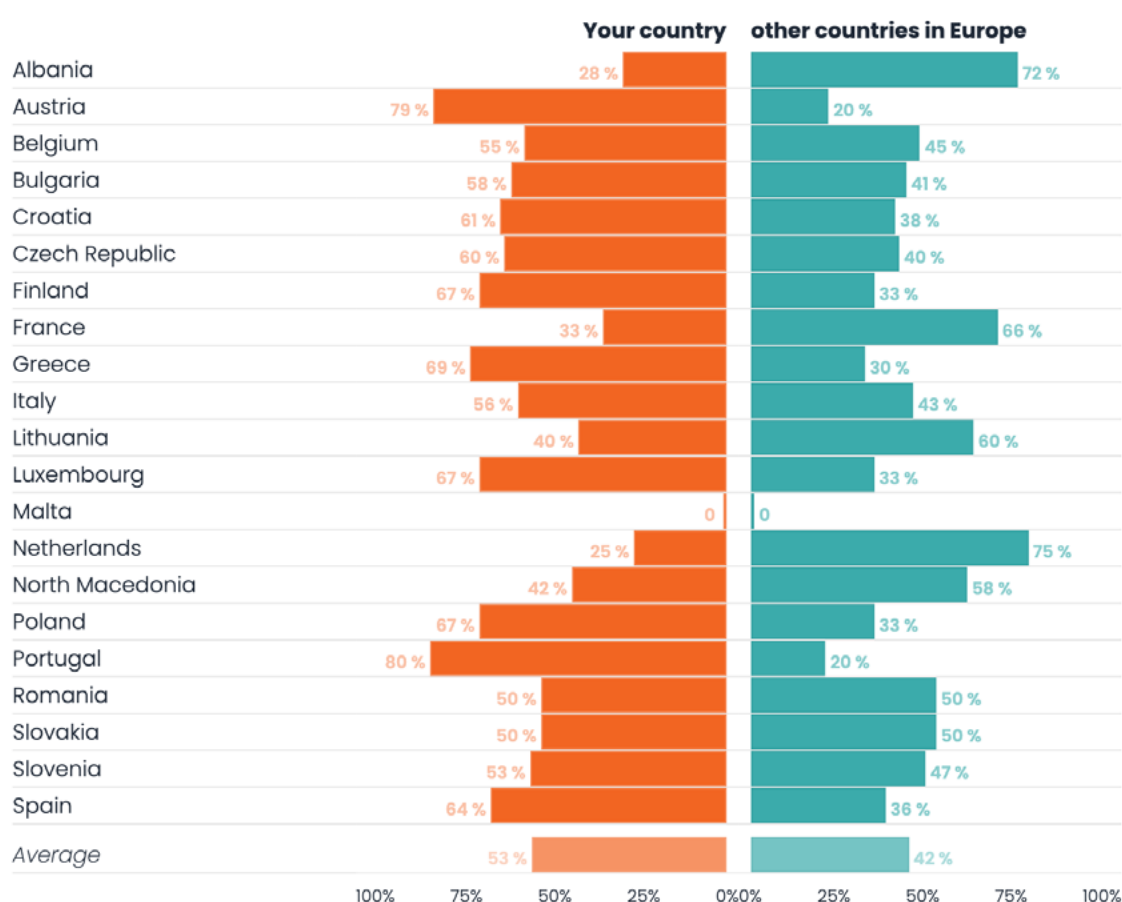
## The need for peer-to-peer learning opportunities

The data presented shows the percentage of respondents who reported a need for more peer-to-peer learning opportunities with civic educators in their own country versus other countries in Europe. Of the respondents, 55.1% expressed a desire for increased peer-to-peer learning opportunities within their own country, while 44.9% expressed a need for such opportunities with other European countries.

Notable country-level differences can be observed, with Austria and Portugal having the highest percentage of respondents indicating a need for more peer-to-peer learning opportunities in other European countries (79.2% and 80%, respectively). The Netherlands, on the other hand, had the lowest percentage of respondents indicating a need for more cross-border peer-to-peer learning opportunities (25%).

Overall, the data highlights the importance of peer-to-peer learning in the field of civic education, with a majority of respondents indicating a need for more such opportunities. The provision of such opportunities may be an important consideration for organizations working in the field of civic education, both nationally and at the European level.

**Figure 18: Would you like to have more peer-to-peer learning opportunities with civic educators? If yes, where?**



In conclusion, the comparative analysis of non-formal civic education in Europe shows both commonalities and differences in the discourse and practice of civic education. While there is much work to be done, the findings offer practical suggestions for policymakers, philanthropies and civil society organizations seeking to strengthen civic education initiatives across the region. The following chapter will provide specific recommendations based on the analysis presented here. 4. Bridging the gap between civic education needs and realities: Actionable insights

## 4. Bridging the gap between civic education needs and realities: Actionable insights

As the importance of civic education for shaping engaged and informed citizens becomes increasingly recognized, there is a growing need to address the gaps that exist between current needs and realities. The challenges of providing effective civic education are multifaceted, ranging from a lack of funding to inadequate training for educators. This chapter explores actionable insights that can help bridge these gaps and improve the quality and impact of civic education programmes in Europe. Focusing on key areas such as funding, capacity building, research and monitoring and collaboration, we offer practical recommendations for policy-makers, philanthropies, educators and civil society organizations to strengthen civic education initiatives and support the empowerment of active and informed citizens.

### **The hidden cost of democracy: The price of neglecting civic education**

Despite repeated emphasis, one issue that remains a fundamental barrier to progress in the realm of non-formal and informal civic education is a lack of funding for civic educators in civil society. Unfortunately, the reality is that these organizations are severely underfunded, with 42.4% of respondents operating on a budget smaller than EUR 100,000 per year. This limited resource base can significantly hinder the ability of civic educators to carry out their activities. The challenges that civic educators are supposed to address in a democratic society often create high expectations for their work. This discrepancy between expectations and reality highlights the pressing need for any discussion of non-formal and informal civic education to begin with a conversation about civic educators' financial health and sustainability.

The dependence of teachers on non-formal educators for training and materials, as well as for providing a practical link to civic education that is often missing in classrooms, further underscores the importance of addressing the lack of funds for non-formal education. Therefore, it is essential that policymakers and philanthropies review funding models to ensure that they support the long-term planning and sustainability of civic education initiatives. Finland and the BeNeLux countries can provide valuable examples.

A shift in funding from project-based grants to more sustainable funding mechanisms, such as core funding or multi-year grants, may be required. Policymakers and philanthropies should also address the lack of funding for core costs in civil society organizations, which limits their ability to carry out civic education activities. Furthermore, a revision of the project-based funding model should take place to investigate whether the 30/70 rule of core costs to activity costs reflects the reality of the work of civic educators.

Funding is crucial not only for the sustainability of civic educators' work but also for their growth and consolidation. This is particularly important for non-formal civic educators operating in countries with less consolidated democracies or where public funding is not available to ensure their systemic impact.

To extend the impact and scope of non-formal civic education, it is necessary to create an enabling environment that transcends local and national levels and actively seeks out opportunities for regional and international collaboration. Building partnerships with organizations from different regions and countries necessitates exchange and participation in events such as conferences and workshops, in addition to offering funding opportunities that support international cooperation. By fostering a supportive environment and proactively pursuing collaborative opportunities, meaningful connections can be established. Philanthropies and policymakers at a pan-European level could provide the necessary funding and resources to establish and



sustain regional networks and platforms, which would enhance collaboration and facilitate the exchange of knowledge among civic education stakeholders.

Civic educators require access to resources that support innovation and experimentation in their work to effectively serve their communities. Through cross-border collaborations and partnerships with other fields, civic educators can explore novel and effective approaches to addressing challenges in society. This interdisciplinary approach can enable the implementation of innovative and systemic solutions with a transformative impact on the communities they serve, increasing the sustainability of their work.

To build resilient and robust democracies capable of withstanding present and future challenges, civic educators must be empowered to act pre-emptively rather than reactively. This requires the provision of adequate resources and support to enable civic educators to carry out their essential work, implement innovative approaches and foster interdisciplinary collaboration across borders and sectors. Such collaborations can be facilitated through regional networks and platforms, allowing civic education stakeholders to exchange information and best practices. By working together, they can enhance their impact, and their work can be made more sustainable in the long run.

In conclusion, addressing the issue of underfunding for civil society organizations engaged in civic education is critical and requires immediate attention from policymakers and philanthropies. Sustainable funding models must be explored and measures taken to support the growth and impact of non-formal civic educators. In addition, fostering regional and international collaboration and innovation is necessary for the long-term sustainability of civic education initiatives.

## **Beyond funding: Prioritizing capacity building and peer-to-peer learning**

As highlighted in this report, achieving systemic impact in non-formal civic education is dependent on more than just financial resources for activities and projects. Creating a pan-European ecosystem that supports capacity building, exchange of ideas and experimentation with colleagues from across the continent is essential for enhancing the impact of civic education on democracy resiliency and ensuring the long-term sustainability of their initiatives.

### **Capacity-building needs**

In order to strengthen civic education initiatives across Europe and promote democratic values and active citizenship, it is necessary to address the capacity-building needs of civic education actors. To this end, various targeted and context-specific training programmes are required. They should prioritize new methods, tools and approaches in civic education, impact evaluation and securing funding, as well as developing skills in effective communication, organizational development and partnership building. In addition, capacity-building activities on financial management and project management can significantly improve the sustainability and impact of civic education entities. To enhance their impact, civic education actors need platforms where they can exchange knowledge and best practices and receive support for working with volunteers.

### **If there were a pan-European civic education network, it should...**

The creation of a pan-European civic education network is essential for collaboration, learning and innovation among civic education actors. Joint projects and exchanging best practices in civic education should be primary areas of focus, along with resources and platforms for peer-to-peer learning, financial stability, fundraising and advocacy. Initiatives should take into account the varying priorities for a pan-European civic education network across different countries and provide context-specific programmes and initiatives. Moreover, fostering cross-border collaboration and partnerships is crucial for promoting innovative approaches to civic education. Training and resources on digitalizing work and working in a politically challenging environ-



ment should be provided to address the evolving nature of civic education. Soft skills and communication and organizational development abilities must also be developed to maximize impact.

### **Peer-to-peer learning experiences**

To increase the effectiveness of civic education initiatives, it is necessary to explore the need for peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Policymakers and philanthropies can address the high demand for such opportunities by increasing funding for initiatives that facilitate cross-border cooperation and knowledge sharing. Cross-border partnerships and collaboration are essential to the field of civic education, as they bring together civic education actors from different countries and lay the ground for joint projects. Country-level differences in the need for peer-to-peer learning opportunities should be taken into account to ensure that initiatives are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of each country. Policymakers and philanthropies should emphasize the value of peer-to-peer learning and promote it as a key means of improving the effectiveness and impact of civic education initiatives. Finally, digital platforms should be developed to enable civic education actors to connect and share knowledge and expertise, both nationally and across Europe. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the potential of digital platforms for facilitating peer-to-peer learning and cross-border collaboration.

### **Measuring what matters:**

#### **Research and monitoring in formal and non-formal civic education**

As civic education programmes continue to grow in importance and demand, research, monitoring and evaluation of both formal and non-formal civic education are increasingly necessary for their long-term sustainability and effectiveness. Based on the mapping conducted, a number of recommendations can be distilled.

More systematic data collection and monitoring are needed to understand the scope and effectiveness of civic education programmes. Countries should establish regular surveys, evaluations and data collection methods to measure and track the impact of these programmes on learners' civic competencies and engagement. These should include indicators of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours related to civic engagement.

The research on civic education will need to cover a number of topics, such as the effectiveness of different approaches and methods, the impact on learners' civic competencies and engagement, the role of non-formal civic education, and the link between formal and non-formal civic education. This research should draw on both qualitative and quantitative methods and be informed by the latest developments in the field.

A common set of indicators and standards for measuring civic competencies and engagement across different countries and contexts should be developed. This would allow for more effective cross-country comparisons and sharing of best practices. Such standards should be developed through a collaborative process that involves civic education experts, practitioners, and policymakers.

Non-formal civic education initiatives should receive more support to help them with their monitoring and evaluation efforts. This support should include capacity building for monitoring and evaluation, the development of common indicators and standards and the sharing of best practices.

A culture of learning and improvement in the field of civic education should be developed. This includes promoting the use of data and evidence to inform programme design and implementation, as well as fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement through regular feedback, reflection and evaluation.

Finally, a comprehensive database of both non-formal and formal civic education initiatives in Europe should be built. This would help to provide a clear picture of the current state of civic education in the region and

can serve as a resource for policymakers, researchers and practitioners. The database can also facilitate cross-country and cross-regional learning and collaboration, as well as support the development of common indicators and standards for measuring civic competencies and engagement.

## Enhancing formal civic education in Europe

Formal civic education in Europe faces a number of challenges, including diverse approaches to teaching the subject, a perceived lack of seriousness and a shortage of resources and time for teachers. To address these challenges, several recommendations are proposed.

First, university teacher training programmes should be enhanced to better prepare educators to teach civic education. Currently, few countries offer a dedicated university-level teacher training course for civic education, which can lead to a lack of expertise and motivation among teachers. Such courses should emphasize practical aspects of civic education, including real-life applications that make the subject more relevant and engaging for young people. Additionally, cooperation between universities and civil society can provide access to innovative teacher trainings, materials and practical sessions outside of school.

Second, to improve the perceived lack of seriousness of formal civic education, the grading of cross-curricular civic education should be emphasized. Countries like Italy have successfully incorporated a competence-based approach and grading into their teaching systems, providing an example for others to follow. Teachers should also receive cross-curricular training to enable students to use the knowledge and competencies gained in one subject across subjects. Moreover, more countries should include civic education as a standalone subject in the curriculum from the early stages of education.

Third, formal civic education should focus more on the practice of civic education and the values of democracy, rather than just knowledge about institutions. This requires an increase in resources and time for teachers to enable them to adopt more comprehensive and practical approaches to teaching civic education. Examples of good practice from the Baltics, Finland and the BeNeLux countries demonstrate the potential of such approaches.

Fourth, teacher training programmes should be designed to address contemporary challenges facing society, such as disinformation, AI, polarization, extreme views, controversies and engagement fatigue. This requires the development and dissemination of innovative training and teaching materials, with input from both academia and civil society. While examples of good practice already exist, such initiatives are currently heavily dependent on project funding and lack a structured approach. With teachers being at the forefront of these challenges, it is crucial to provide them with the necessary support and resources to navigate these complex issues in the classroom.

Fifth, greater collaboration and alignment should be fostered between formal and non-formal civic education. Non-formal civic education initiatives can provide a more practical, experience-based approach to learning, while formal civic education can provide the necessary structure and context. Successful examples from all countries featured in this report demonstrate the potential benefits of such collaboration.

In conclusion, improving formal civic education in Europe requires a multifaceted approach that involves enhancing teacher training, emphasizing cross-curricular grading, adopting more practical approaches to teaching, developing contemporary training programmes and fostering collaboration between formal and non-formal civic education initiatives. By implementing these recommendations, formal civic education can become more engaging, relevant and effective.

## **Toward a common language: Overcoming fragmentation in a dispersed field**

As the call for better and more accessible civic education grows worldwide, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the diversity of terminology, definitions and practices in the field of education for civic engagement, including citizenship/civic education, democracy education and education for media or other competencies, can lead to fragmentation. This fragmentation can make it difficult to identify and compare different programmes or activities, and also to define and measure the content and impact of non-formal and informal civic education. Furthermore, limited data is available on the number of non-formal and informal civic education actors, including both providers and learners, which makes it challenging to map the landscape of non-formal and informal civic education.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that a common language be established that clearly distinguishes non-formal and informal civic education from other forms of education. This would help to overcome fragmentation and facilitate communication among stakeholders, ultimately advancing the cause of civic education in a more unified manner. A common language would also enhance the comparability and transferability of non-formal and informal civic education practices across Europe. An easy first step could be the development of guidelines or a glossary of terms that would help to define and clarify the scope, topics and target groups of non-formal and informal civic education, while also accounting for the different languages, civic traditions and historical events that have shaped citizenship education in different countries.

Furthermore, the development of a common language should be supported by research that examines the motivations and circumstances that drive civic education efforts in different countries. Such research would help to identify effective practices and develop evidence-based policies and interventions that would enhance the quality, accessibility and sustainability of non-formal and informal civic education across Europe. It would also provide valuable insights into the state of civic education in Europe and the need for continued efforts to promote and support civic education initiatives.

In conclusion, achieving comprehensive and effective civic education in Europe requires a multifaceted approach that addresses a range of challenges, from funding and capacity building to research and collaboration. By prioritizing these areas, we can begin to bridge the gap between the needs and realities of civic education. To this end, we must work collaboratively across sectors and borders, fostering a culture of learning and improvement that is grounded in evidence and data. By doing so, we can empower citizens with the knowledge, skills and values they need to become active and engaged citizens, capable of navigating complex and rapidly changing societies.

## **5. The way forward**

The mapping project has laid the foundation for continued collaboration and development within the field of non-formal and informal civic education across Europe. As the field continues to evolve and adapt to changing political and social contexts, regular updates to the map and country profiles will be necessary to ensure accuracy and relevance. THE CIVICS team and its partners remain committed to extending the scope of the mapped countries to encompass every corner of Europe and capturing additional aspects of the reality of civic educators that may have been missed during the initial mapping. Additionally, the project has generated valuable insights and lessons learned, including the importance of local partners in data collection and validation, the need for ongoing engagement and communication with stakeholders and the challenges of online surveying in the field of civic education. These lessons will inform future projects and initiatives aimed at promoting civic education and engagement in Europe and beyond.

## Disclaimer

This publication is not the result of scientific research, and the activities carried out under the “Mapping Civic Education in Europe” project should not be considered as such. The project aimed to map the actors in the civic education field across 21 European countries and their connections, rather than achieve a representative sample in each country. The project team is aware of the limitations of small sample sizes and potential biases that can arise as a result. It is important to note that small samples may not accurately represent the whole population of a country.

As with any collection of personal data, such as names, addresses and emails, data collected must be processed lawfully and transparently. THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH processed the data provided by survey respondents on the basis of their consent. Respondents can revoke their consent at any time and request that their data be deleted. A detailed GDPR policy is available in the Appendix C.

The mapping project involves 22 local project partners, and a survey was conducted in 21 countries, with Turkey being the exception. However, the report includes an expert opinion piece for Turkey that offers a valuable analysis of the country.

Lastly, considering the plan to continuously add new entities to the map, it is anticipated that a future discrepancy will arise between the total number of questionnaire respondents and the total entries on the map, which is regularly updated.

# About the authors

## **Louisa Slavkova**

Louisa is a political scientist and author with extensive experience in foreign policy, democracy development and civic education. She received her MA degree in political science, history and American literature from the University of Cologne and is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Sofia.

Louisa has held various positions throughout her career, including a visiting fellow at Columbia University, programmes manager at the European Council on Foreign Relations and adviser to Bulgaria's former foreign minister. In 2013, she founded the Sofia Platform Foundation, a non-governmental organization focused on civic education and dealing with the country's communist past. She is the co-author of two textbooks on civic education in Bulgaria and has authored and edited several books and publications on foreign policy and democracy development.

In 2021, Louisa co-founded THE CIVICS Innovation Hub and now serves as one of its three managing partners, overseeing operations in Sofia. She is also a civics course instructor at New Bulgarian University and a frequent contributor to Bulgarian and international outlets on democracy in Bulgaria and the region.

## **Maja Kurilić**

Maja Kurilić is a key team member of THE CIVICS, where she led the flagship project "Mapping Civic Education in Europe." Before joining THE CIVICS, Maja advised the public sector in her home country of Croatia on projects like the European Social Fund evaluation. She has ten years of active engagement in the non-governmental sector and in academia, conducting research and co-authoring articles on remigration, brain drain and policy-making in Croatia. Maja holds an MA degree in public policy from the Central European University in Budapest and a BA degree in political science from the University of Zagreb. During her studies, she participated in academic and cultural exchange programmes in the United States and Poland. She is actively involved in the work of the Croatian-based NGO Znanje na djelu, which provides practice-based education to pupils, and in European networks like the European Forum Alpbach. Maja currently serves as a board member in Club Alpbach Croatia.

# Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our appreciation to all those who contributed to this publication.

Firstly, we are immensely grateful to the 434 civic educators, librarians, project managers, social influencers and others who generously shared their time and perspectives on civic education, making this mapping project possible in the first place.

We also extend our thanks to the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/bpb) for their financial support of this initiative.

The involvement of our local partners was crucial to the success of this project. We thank each of them for their active participation, thought-provoking questions and invaluable support in the data collection and dissemination. Thank you: Emiljano Kaziaj, PhD and the team at IREX Albania; Rahel Baumgartner from the Austrian Society for Civic Education, Lara Müller, PhD and Simon Usaty from Demokratie Zentrum, Patricia Hladschik, PhD, from polis – the Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools, Sigrid Steininger from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education; An Lavens and the team at the BELvue Museum in Belgium; the Sofia Platform Foundation in Bulgaria; Znanje na djelu in Croatia; Anežka Dvořáková from Association of Non-Formal Education (ANEV) in Czechia; Riikka Jalonen from the Peace Education Institute in Finland; Florian Staudt and the Franco-German Youth Office; Dora Katsamori, PhD in Greece; Laura Palmerio, PhD from INVALSI in Italy; Ieva Petronytė – Urbonavičienė, PhD and Maryja Šupa, PhD from the Civil Society Institute in Lithuania; Michèle Schilt and Zentrum für politisch Bildung from Luxembourg; Pen Lister, PhD from Malta; Tatjana Meijvogel-Volk from ProDemos in the Netherlands; Vlora Reçica from the Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis – Skopje in North Macedonia; Filip Pazderski from the Polish Institute of Public Affairs; Patrícia Dias, PhD and Research Centre on Peoples and Cultures in Portugal; Pamela Ratiu and Alis Costescu from the Ratiu Democracy Centre in Romania; Juraj Varga, Lukáš Katriňák from the Centre for Education and Innovations and Jana Feherpataky-Kuzmová from the Institute for Active Citizenship in Slovakia; Tomaž Deželan, PhD from Slovenia; Rafael López-Meseguer, PhD and Lola Velarde, PhD from the European Foundation Society and Education in Spain; and our partner in Turkey, Ulaş Bayraktar, PhD.

We also thank Thomas Perry from the Q Agency for his time and feedback.

Our work was made possible by the dedication and hard work of the team at Kvaka agency – Tamara Kraus and Tatjana Rajković – who responded promptly to all our requests regarding data collection. We also thank Sergio Galán and Alfredo Calosci for their creativity and remarkable ideas in creating the map.

We are grateful to the whole team at THE CIVICS, especially those who supported us along the way with the data collection, review of contacts gathered, phoning and initial data analysis. Thank you: Maria Ganeva, Rumyana Hristova, Martin Kirbach, Magdalena Lipovac, Dobrena Petrova, Leonie Sichtermann, Ivana Velichkova, Dunja Vuković. Finally, we would also like to express our gratitude to Anja Ostermann, Caroline Hornstein Tomić, PhD, and Sabrina Räßple from THE CIVICS, for their invaluable support and advice throughout the project, particularly during the critical phases. We also extend our thanks to the Erste Foundation for hosting a data validation workshop with the mapping partners in December 2022.

# References

Brander, P., De Witte, L., Ghanea, N., Gomes, R., Keen, E., Nikitina, A., & Pinkeviciute, J. 2020. Compass: Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Council of Europe. 2018. Reference Framework for Democratic Culture. Vol. 2, Descriptors of Competences for Democratic Culture. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing. Appendix

## Appendix A. First questionnaire

### Introduction

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub, a pan-European non-profit organization, is conducting a mapping of civic education in Europe. We would like to invite you / your organization to join us by filling out the questionnaire below. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes.

With the mapping, THE CIVICS identifies the stakeholders of civic education, both in non-formal and informal civic education; describes which topics and groups of society they are focusing on; investigates whether and how they collaborate; and finally, seeks to analyze what they need in order to create innovative and strong responses to the challenges faced by the citizens of Europe. Our plan is to encompass 21 countries in Europe. The data will be published as an interactive map depicting stakeholders per country and their relations with each other. (An example of a map can be accessed [here](#).<sup>2</sup>)

While there are multiple definitions of civic education, in this survey, we understand civic education in accordance with the wording and recommendation of the [Council of Europe](#).<sup>3</sup>

Civic education equips citizens with the competences that enable them to actively participate in society. These civic competences are:

- **knowledge** (i.e. concepts of democracy, institutions, identity, politics)
- **skills** (i.e. communication, discussion culture, thinking critically, problem solving, [self-]reflection, awareness of bias and blind-spots)
- **democratic values** (i.e. valuing human dignity and human rights, equality, transparency, cultural diversity)
- **attitudes** (i.e. openness to otherness, trust, respect, tolerance, responsibility, self-efficacy).

In our mapping, we encompass both non-formal and informal civic education. Whereas formal education covers activities prescribed by the curricula,

in elementary, secondary, high-school and tertiary education, **non-formal education** refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education primarily for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum, while **informal education** refers to lifelong learning processes, whereby each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from educational influences and resources in their own environment and from daily experience.

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH processes the data you provide for the purpose of your participation in the project “Mapping Civic Education in Europe” on the basis of your consent pursuant to Art. 6 para. 1 sentence 1 lit. a EU-GDPR. You can revoke this consent at any time with effect for the future. Detailed information on data protection and the rights of data subjects can be found [here](#).<sup>4</sup>

☐ I have read and agree to the privacy statement.

If you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact us via email: [mapping@thecivics.eu](mailto:mapping@thecivics.eu).

Thank you for your participation,  
THE CIVICS team

### Profile of the entity

#### 1. What's the full name of the entity you represent?

*\*This data will be publicized in the map.*

#### 2. Where is it located? (name the city/town/village and country)

*\*This data will be publicized in the map.*

#### 3. When was your entity established? (year drop-down)

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

<sup>2</sup> <http://connected-action-impact.culturalfoundation.eu/universe>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/what-is-edc/hre>.

<sup>4</sup> [https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CIVICS\\_Information-1.pdf](https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CIVICS_Information-1.pdf).



**4. Website or Facebook or Twitter page if website is not available:**

*\*This data will be publicized in the map.*

**5. Contact person(s): (First name, last name, position) (optional)**

*\*This data will be publicized in the map.*

**6. Email of the entity to be published in the mapping profile:**

*\*This data will be publicized in the map.*

**7. Phone contact of the entity to be published in the mapping profile: (optional)**

*\*This data will be publicized in the map.*

**8. What is the legal status of your entity?**

*\*This data will be publicized in the map, but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

- A. public
- B. private
- C. non-profit
- D. other (text box)

**9. Type of entity, what fits best? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be publicized in the map, but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

- A. Association
- B. Civil initiative
- C. Community-based organization (CBO)
- D. Community centre
- E. Company
- F. Cultural centre
- G. Educational institution
- H. Foundation
- I. Historical site
- J. Library
- K. Museum
- L. Network
- M. NGO
- N. Professional association (i.e. teachers' association, firefighters' association, etc.)
- O. Religious entity
- P. Research institute
- Q. Scouts
- R. Self-help/support group
- S. Social enterprise
- T. Think tank
- U. Trade union
- V. Others

**10. What is your main field of work? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be publicized in the map, but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

- A. Civic engagement and participation
- B. Civil rights
- C. Community building
- D. Culture and arts
- E. Employability
- F. Environment and sustainability
- G. Health care
- H. History and remembrance
- I. International development cooperation
- J. Media
- K. Research
- L. (Social) Entrepreneurship
- M. Social inclusion
- N. Others

**11. What specific type of civic education do you focus on? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be publicized in the map, but also used for data analysis purposes in an aggregated and anonymized way.*

- A. Consumer education
- B. Controversy and conflict resolution
- C. Critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving competences
- D. Cultural education
- E. Education for sustainability and green literacy
- F. Financial and economic literacy
- G. History education
- H. Human rights education
- I. Intercultural competences
- J. Interreligious education
- K. Media literacy and digital competences
- L. Skills for civic engagement
- M. Vocational education
- N. Others

**12. Where are your activities mostly taking place? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Local (i.e. villages, cities, neighbourhoods)
- B. Regional (i.e. one or more counties)
- C. National
- D. International (i.e. other country, Europe, world-wide, etc.)

**13. In what context/setting are your civic education activities mostly taking place? (E.g. if you are an organization working with schools as part of the official curricula, you are working in the formal context; if you are providing activities outside of the curricula and formal system, you are working in the non-formal context.) (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Formal (civic education topics taught in schools/units of higher education, following an official curricula)
- B. Non-formal (planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education primarily for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum)
- C. Informal (lifelong learning process, whereby each individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from educational influences and resources in their own environment and from daily experience)

**14. Which are your main target groups? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Individuals under 16 years old
- B. Individuals 16–29 years old
- C. Individuals 30–65 years old
- D. Individuals 65+ years old
- E. Women
- F. Men
- G. Ethnic minorities
- H. Sexual minorities
- I. Economically disadvantaged individuals
- J. Hard-to-reach learners
- K. Migrants
- L. Refugees and asylum seekers
- M. People with physical and/or mental disabilities
- N. Professional groups
- O. Others

## Approaches

**15. Please select the methods and tools that you are actively using in your civic education work. (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Augmented-reality tools
- B. Awareness-raising campaigns
- C. Capacity building
- D. Community-building work
- E. Consultations and mediation
- F. Digital tools
- G. Exchange programmes
- H. Exhibitions
- I. Graphic novels
- J. Hybrid public events
- K. Online public events
- L. Participatory formats
- M. Peer to peer
- N. Performances
- O. Practice-based learning
- P. Public events in person
- Q. Publications
- R. Research
- S. Service learning
- T. Simulations and games
- U. Study trips
- V. Teaching, lecturing
- W. Training of trainers (ToT)
- X. Workshops and trainings
- Y. Others

**16. A. What are the sources you use when deciding on topics for your civic education activities? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. In-house expertise
- B. External expertise
- C. Peer exchange
- D. Academic literature
- E. Online sources

**16. B. What are the sources you use when deciding on methods and didactical tools for your civic education activities? (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. In-house expertise
- B. External expertise
- C. Peer exchange
- D. Academic literature
- E. Online sources

## Organizational capabilities

**17. What is the size of your core team? (People you work with on a regular basis) (Please, insert a number)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A) Employees \_\_\_\_\_
- B) Independent contractors \_\_\_\_\_
- C) Volunteers & interns \_\_\_\_\_

**18. Please mark all fields where your entity needs further training. (Please, select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Advocacy
- B. Communication
- C. Building and maintaining partnerships
- D. Exchange of knowledge and practice with peers
- E. Impact evaluation and evaluative learning
- F. Innovation and foresight thinking
- G. New methods, tools and approaches in civic education
- H. Organizational development
- I. Project management
- J. Securing funding
- K. Financial management
- L. Strategy, mission and vision
- M. Team management
- N. Working with volunteers
- O. Ways of collaborative work with local and international partners
- P. Work with public institutions
- Q. Work with media
- R. Others

**19. Which are your funding sources? (Please, choose all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. EU funding
- B. National public funding
- C. National private funding (i.e. foundations)
- D. Foreign public funding, other than EU (e.g. public agencies, foundations)
- E. Foreign private funding (e.g. foundations)
- F. National funding from public companies
- G. National funding from private companies (i.e. donations, sponsorships, investment)
- H. Your entity's generated income (i.e. membership fees, sale of services and products, etc.)

- I. Individual contributions (i.e. donations, crowd-funding)
- J. Others

**20. What is your average annual budget? (Please, choose a single option)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Up to EUR 5,000
- B. EUR 5,001–50,000
- C. EUR 50,001–100,000
- D. EUR 100,001–500,000
- E. Greater than EUR 500,001
- F. I do not want to answer

**21. A) How much of your annual budget is devoted to your core costs (staff, infrastructure, communication and administration)? Please provide an approximation.**

\_\_\_\_\_ %

*(Please provide an estimate in percentages)*

**B) How much of your annual budget is devoted to your activities? Please provide an approximation.**

\_\_\_\_\_ %

*(Please provide an estimate in percentages)*

*\*Optional question*

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

**22. Did the war in Ukraine change your work? (Please, choose a single option)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- a. Fundamentally, all our activities and work were/are impacted
- b. Somewhat, just a small part of our activities was/is impacted
- c. Not at all
- d. Other

## Networks and partners

In a two-step process, THE CIVICS is creating a map of civic educators which depicts their relationships. As a first step, we are collecting as many civic education organizations as possible. We kindly ask you to help us by naming as many other entities (NGOs, public institutions, informal groups, private companies, etc.) as possible that play a role in supporting

civic engagement, community building or democratic participation in your country or in Europe. A second step will follow in the coming months, when you will receive a list of organizations in your country and will be asked to note if you are cooperating with them.

*If you do not know all the information asked, please fill in as much of the information asked as possible.*

*Due to data protection, you are advised only to enter contacts who agree to the distribution of their address. None of the collected data will be used for any other purposes except for the “Mapping Civic Education” project nor publicized on the map without the consent of the other party.*

#### Add organization:

1. Entity name:
2. Where is it located? (name the city/town/village and country)
3. Website/Facebook page:

4. Contact person name:

5. Email:

6. Phone number:

*Respondents can add as many organizations as they like by clicking on “Add organization.”*

## Closing

Thank you for participating in the survey.

*To be able to conduct social network analysis and create a useful map, we will need your help in the second step of the research. In the coming months, you can expect a link to a short questionnaire where you will confirm relationships with actors in your country of operation.*

For more information about our work, subscribe to our newsletter at the bottom of our [webpage](#) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).<sup>5</sup>

## Appendix B. Second questionnaire

We would like to sincerely thank you for taking part in the previous mapping survey. We promise this one will take up to 5 minutes of your time, but will ensure that you/your organization are visible on the map of European civic educators.

As you already know, **THE CIVICS Innovation Hub**, a pan-European non-profit organization, is conducting a mapping of non-formal and informal civic education in Europe. More information on the mapping and how we define civic education can be accessed [here](#).<sup>6</sup>

While there are multiple definitions of civic education, in this survey, we understand civic education in accordance with the wording and recommendation of the [Council of Europe](#).<sup>7</sup>

The short questionnaire in front of you will show and confirm relations with other actors in your country and help us get essential information to create a map of civic educators in 21 European countries.

We thank you for your time and help!

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH processes the data you provide for the purpose of your participation in the project “Mapping Civic Education in Europe” on the basis of your consent pursuant to Art. 6 para. 1 sentence 1 lit. a EU-GDPR. You can revoke this consent at any time with effect for the future. Detailed information on data protection and the rights of data subjects can be found [here](#).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://thecivics.eu/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-civics-innovation-hub/>

[https://twitter.com/THECIVICS\\_](https://twitter.com/THECIVICS_)

<sup>6</sup> <https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/THE-CIVICS-Mapping.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/what-is-edc/hre>

<sup>8</sup> [https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CIVICS\\_Information-1.pdf](https://thecivics.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CIVICS_Information-1.pdf)

☐ I have read and agree to the privacy statement.

If you require any further information, do not hesitate to contact us via email: [mapping@thecivics.eu](mailto:mapping@thecivics.eu).

### Relations with other actors

In the following table, please select those individuals/organizations with whom you currently cooperate.

	Cooperation (Y/N)	If yes, then an additional question on importance and intensity pops up. See below
Name of the organization	Yes/No	
Name of the organization	Yes/No	
Name of the organization	Yes/No	

(...)

(Mandatory)

#### POP-UP QUESTION 1:

*\*This data will be publicized in the map with a line connecting your entity to the other entity. The number you choose will not be visible.*

**How intense is your relationship to this organization? Please select a number on the scale where 1 means "Not intense at all" and 5 means "Very intense." (1–5)**

### General questions

**1. Would you like to have more peer-to-peer learning opportunities with civic educators? If yes, where? (Select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. In your country
- B. In other countries in Europe (Please tell us which).

IF B, then (text box)

**2. If there were a pan-European civic education network, what would you expect from it/ what should it primarily focus on? (Select all that apply)**

*\*This data will be anonymized and aggregated before publishing.*

- A. Skills-related trainings
  - a. Advocacy
  - b. Communication
  - c. Digitalizing one's work
  - d. Financial stability and fundraising
  - e. Working with politics and institutions
  - f. Working in a politically challenging environment
  - g. Soft skills
- B. Learning sessions (acquire knowledge)
- C. Peer-to-peer learning formats
- D. Exchange of good practices
- E. Exchange of the latest civic education trends, tools and topics
- F. Opportunities for joint projects nationally
- G. Opportunities for joint projects internationally
- H. Opportunities for cooperation with authorities
- I. Other (text box)

## Appendix C. Privacy Statement

### Use of your personal data and your rights – Information according to Art. 13, 14 and 21 of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU-GDPR)

Dear participants,  
in the following we would like to inform you about the processing of your personal data by THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH in the context of the implementation of the project “Mapping Civic Education in Europe” and your rights in this regard.

#### 1 Person responsible for data processing:

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH,  
Bonner Talweg 64, 53113 Bonn, Germany  
Managing partner: Anja Ostermann  
Email: ostermann@thecivics.eu

### 2 What do we process your data for and on what legal basis?

#### 2.1 Conducting surveys based on your consent

The survey you are taking part in will enable us to identify stakeholders in European civic education in 21 European countries. We will analyze the information you provide in the context of this project and create an interactive mapping that depicts, among other things, the identified stakeholders including contact information, the connections between actors, the common challenges and the opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experience as well as for cooperation.

Furthermore, the collected data will be statistically analyzed and the results published in reports and papers in an anonymized and aggregated manner. The justification for the processing of your personal data results from your consent according to Art. 6 para. 1 sentence 1 lit. a EU-GDPR. You provide us with your consent to the processing of your personal data by participating in this study.

#### 2.2 Other processing purposes

Your personal data will also be processed for the following purposes:

- Creation of an interactive map in which the stakeholders identified via the questionnaire are mapped. Each stakeholder is integrated into the map with a short profile. Furthermore, the relationships to other stakeholders (if any) are shown with connecting lines. In the questionnaire, explicit reference is made to which data is published in the map.
- The collected data will also be aggregated and analyzed anonymously. The analysis will be published in reports or other publications.
- For the purpose of the successful implementation of the project, your data (name, address, telephone, email) will be used for internal communication between you, THE CIVICS, partners and, if necessary, third-party service providers.

We will publish your personal data to the following extent and for the following purposes:

- The data collected for the following questions in the questionnaire: 1., 2., 4.–11., will be published in the interactive map on THE CIVICS website as well as on websites and channels of partners and sponsors.
- The data collected from the following questions in the questionnaire: 3., 8.–21., will be anonymized, aggregated and statistically analyzed. After that process, data will be published in publications such as reports.

In the questionnaire, after each question, you will again find a note stating to what extent the data entered will be published. No further use of the collected data is planned. If further use of your personal data is planned at a later date, we will obtain your consent for this and will only use your personal data if you provide us with additional consent.

### 3 Who receives my data?

#### 3.1 Service providers

The following service providers will take on tasks within the scope of our project and thereby also process your data:

- The survey is conducted by the company Kvaka – Ured za kreativnu analizu d.o.o. (Plemićeva 6; 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia, <http://kvaka.com.hr>). It hosts and programmes the questionnaire, and is also responsible for sending out emails. Furthermore, the statistical analysis is also carried out by this provider.
- In addition, another service provider from the field of graphic design and/or network analysis will be commissioned for the graphic representation of the interactive map. This service provider has not yet been selected and can therefore not be listed here at the moment.

We have concluded a contract for the commissioned processing of personal data with all third-party service providers, which stipulates compliance with data protection law. None of these service providers are allowed to pass on your data to third parties or to use it for purposes other than this project. This also applies to any subsequent commissioning of third parties.

### 3.2 Client

We conduct the survey on our own behalf.

### 3.3 Other redirections

At THE CIVICS Innovation Hub, it is neither allowed nor intended to forward your personal data to third parties.

## 4 How long will your data be stored?

We process and store your data until the purpose no longer applies or you revoke your consent. If service providers commissioned by us process personal data, they store this for a maximum of 24 months after the end of the processing. After that, your data will be deleted in both cases.

## 5 To what extent is there automated decision-making in individual cases (including profiling)?

THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH does not use any automated processing, including profiling, to reach a decision on the establishment and implementation of a contractual relationship (Art. 22 EU-GDPR).

## 6 What data protection rights do I have?

Every person affected by the data processing has the right to

- information according to Art. 15 EU-GDPR,
- correction according to Art. 16 EU-GDPR,
- deletion according to Art. 17 EU-GDPR,
- restriction of processing according to Art. 18 EU-GDPR and
- the right to data portability under Art. 20 EU-GDPR.

In addition, there is a right of appeal to a data protection supervisory authority in accordance with Art. 77 EU-GDPR.

In principle, you have the right to object to the processing of personal data by THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH in accordance with Article 21 of the EU Data Protection Regulation if this is necessary to safeguard legitimate interests. If you have given us your consent to the processing of your personal data, you have the right to revoke this consent with effect for the future in accordance with Article 7 (3) EU-GDPR. The lawfulness of the data processing carried out up to the time of the revocation is given.

If you wish to assert the aforementioned rights, please contact:

Anja Ostermann, THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH, Bonner Talweg 64, 53113 Bonn (Germany)  
Email: [ostermann@thecivics.eu](mailto:ostermann@thecivics.eu)

## 7 Your right to appeal to the data protection supervisory authority:

In the case of fundamental concerns or complaints with regard to the processing of your data, you can contact the data protection supervisory authority responsible for THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH:

The State Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information of North Rhine-Westphalia, Address: Kavalleriestr. 2-4 40213 Düsseldorf, Germany, Phone: 0211 38424-0, Fax: 0211 38424-999, Email: [poststelle@ldi.nrw.de](mailto:poststelle@ldi.nrw.de), Postal address: PO box 20 04 44, 40102 Düsseldorf, Germany

## **8 Am I obliged to provide data?**

---

In the context of the implementation of “Mapping Civic Education in Europe” by THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH, you only have to provide the personal data that is required for this purpose or that THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH is legally obliged to collect. If you do not provide the required personal data, THE CIVICS Innovation Hub gGmbH cannot enable you to participate in “Mapping Civic Education in Europe.”



## Appendix D. Expert opinion pieces written by local mapping partners

### Albania

Written by: Emiljano Kaziaj, PhD, IREX Albania

#### **Civic education in Albania: Discourse, challenges and opportunities**

Civic education is a relatively new term for Albanian society. Until 1990, Albania was a communist country and one of the most isolated dictatorships in Europe. After 1990, when the country opened, the first attempts at civic education also began. Terms such as “civil society,” “non-governmental organizations” and “not-for-profit organizations” were used interchangeably in Albania to define initiatives of formal and non-formal groups aiming to bring change to society on some pressing issues that are key to a democratic country. There is a misconception in Albania about the blurred lines between civil society and politics. This has been an increasing trend in the past decades and has had an impact on the trust in civil society organizations and their actions.

Projects focused on civic education as a broad field can be divided into three main categories:

1. Integration of civic education as a topic in the education curricula;
2. Implementation of projects funded by international donors focused primarily on building the capacities of teachers and youth in civic education;
3. Implementation of projects funded by international donors and implemented by national and local civil society organizations focused primarily on raising awareness of topics such as human rights, women’s rights, environment, gender, the LGBTQ+ community, youth, children’s rights, etc.

Based on a report<sup>9</sup> published in 2010, civic engagement scored very low in Albania: only 47.6%. This was also the lowest score amongst the five dimensions analyzed for the civil society index which included: civic engagement, level of organization, the practice of values, perceptions of impact and the environment.

The main actors involved in civic education in Albania comprise:

- Intergovernmental entities and organizations such as The European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Council of Europe (CoE), United Nations (UN) agencies, etc.;
- Foreign development agencies and their representatives (embassies);
- International development organizations;
- State agencies (such as the Agency for the Development of Civil Society);
- Local and national civil society organizations;
- Media;
- Non-formal groups, including youth and community groups usually established with external support and funding.

#### **Formal civic education overview**

Civic education is a topic taught in Albanian schools. It is part of the learning competences in the subject called Society and Environment, which focuses on teaching students how to become active citizens and be informed and responsible for themselves and society at large. Through these competences, students build skills such as how to play their role as members of a society in an increasingly interdependent world. This education process starts early on in children’s educational path by focusing on different elements at different stages. In stages 1 and 2, from pre-school until the second grade, pupils get knowledge and skills on decision-making, knowing themselves and the world around them. In stages 3 and 4, corresponding to grades

<sup>9</sup> The report can be accessed: [http://www.civicus.org/images/stories/csi/csi\\_phase2/csi%20albania%20acr\\_eng.pdf](http://www.civicus.org/images/stories/csi/csi_phase2/csi%20albania%20acr_eng.pdf)

3–8, students are equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes through courses in history, geography and civic education. In stages 5 and 6, which correspond to grades 9–12, the focus is on cultivating a personal, social and national identity. Most of the knowledge and skills related to civic education are delivered through courses on citizenship, which are taught under different names in the pre-university curricula: Citizenship or Civic Education.

The state agency for quality assurance in pre-university education (ASCAP) and the Institute for Development in Education (IZHA) are the institutions responsible for teachers' capacity building in Albania as well as for curricula development. Recently, on 20 May 2022, the Ministry of Education and Sports announced the list of modules for teachers' capacity building that have been accredited for the period 2022–2026.<sup>10</sup> In this exhaustive list, there is an ample number of training courses in the broad field of civic education, such as inclusion, democratic culture in schools and communities, protecting the environment, human rights, antibullying, media literacy, soft skills, community participation, etc.

Civic education is perceived as a topic of low interest among pupils, and it is one of the courses which students consider entertaining rather than informative or skills building. The subject is graded in the pre-university school years, but it is not part of the core subjects for which students are tested in their maturity exam and which serve as the main component for their admissions to universities.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

There are many national and local organizations in Albania.<sup>11</sup> Most of these organizations conduct capacity building in the field of civic education. Due to the large number of organizations and lack of available funds and human resources to sustain them, most of these organizations have a meagre presence in the field of development in Albania.

The main challenge all these organizations face is sustainability as they mostly depend on foreign support for funds. Usually, they receive support from international donors but this support is short-lived and only for specific short-term projects and activities.

Lack of funds and human resources also affects their public presence. Most non-governmental organizations share information only at specific events and through social media channels. Due to the media context in Albania, media coverage is often granted to big international organizations and political affairs and actors. The same approach applies to local media outlets, which also focus on national issues and politics rather than issues of interest for their local communities.

National funding is available through the National Agency for the Support of the Civil Society, but access to these funds is difficult for small organizations and is usually accompanied by lots of criticism about transparency and nepotism.

As mentioned above and as evidenced by different reports on civil society in Albania, there is a general scepticism towards the work that civil society organizations do in the country. This distrust can partly be attributed to the widespread phenomenon of individuals transitioning from civil society work into politics and taking over roles in the government or at important state agencies.

<sup>10</sup> The list can be accessed: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HbB1xeltUeOgDycOYf0C6UU8KC5nhp89/edit#gid=415799393>

<sup>11</sup> A list of the non-governmental organizations registered in the Agency for the Support of Civil Society can be found here: <https://amshc.gov.al/ojf-qe-veprojne-ne-shqiperi/>. The number of NGOs could be much higher, as this list does not include international NGOs present in Albania.

## Austria

Written by: Sigrid Steininger, Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research & Patricia Hladschik, PhD, polis – the Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools

### Civic education in Austria: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

A better anchoring of citizenship education, especially in the school sector, is a long-standing demand of the youth and student representatives. This demand for a compulsory subject in schools (from 5th grade), as well as the call for an increased professionalization of educators, is also repeatedly raised by the Advocacy Group for Citizenship Education (Interessengemeinschaft Politische Bildung – IGPB). IGPB sees itself as a platform for linking institutions and people active in citizenship education and advocates for the improvement of citizenship education measures – in schools and outside schools.

The lowering of the active voting age to 16 in 2007 was an important stimulus for citizenship education in Austria. A broad coalition campaigned for more citizenship education from an early age in order to guarantee that all students are prepared for responsible political participation during their compulsory schooling. As a consequence, in the school year 2008/09, the reformed subject History and Social Studies/Citizenship Education for the 8th grade was launched. This curriculum also introduced competence orientation. In 2016, another curriculum reform resulted in further strengthening the part of citizenship education in the subject History and Social Sciences/Citizenship Education.

A big challenge is the professionalization of teachers since Austrian teacher training lacks study programmes for teaching citizenship education in its own right. It is no coincidence that in 2010, the IGPB chose this topic as the subject of its first annual conference and has addressed it repeatedly in its position papers (e.g. Position Paper from March 2022).

Important international anchor points for citizenship education are documents such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe's Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and the Reference Framework of Competencies for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), as well as the Key Competencies for Lifelong Learning of the EU.

The actors in the field are very much aware of the threats and challenges to citizenship education (economic considerations, focus on labour market skills, increasing distance to politics and loss of trust, etc.) and work hard to improve its general conditions and to bridge the gap between the broader commitment to the importance of citizenship education and the realities of its implementation.

In the future, the particularities of citizenship education in the digital age probably will be given more consideration as well: the range of fields to be tackled includes aspects of media literacy and distance learning. In this regard, the comprehensive Digital Citizenship Education concept of the Council of Europe offers guidance for the acquisition of competences for actively participating in a digital society.

### Formal civic education overview

The Austrian school system offers a variety of school types with different focuses, especially at the upper secondary level. Hence, there is a range of curricula for citizenship education. In vocational colleges, citizenship education is taught as a subject on its own. The curriculum of the subject History, Social Studies and Citizenship Education at secondary level 1 has provisions for compulsory modules for citizenship education from grade 6 onwards. Curricula also include human rights topics.

Apart from subject-specific curricula, citizenship education is defined as a cross-curricular educational principle that applies to all subjects and to all types of schools, at every level. The content parameters are decreed as a cross-curricular educational principle, which means that every teacher can be called upon

to teach citizenship education – even at primary level. The Educational Principle on Citizenship Education in Schools specifies a framework for the content and didactics in formal education. In 2015, the general ordinance was updated with modern didactics for citizenship education (General Ordinance 2015: Citizenship Education as a Cross-curricular Educational Principle).

Curricula for schools are decreed centrally by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education. If the occasion arises, additional guidelines or circulars provide frameworks for instruction. Textbooks, which have been free of charge since 1972, have to be approved by the Ministry of Education, as do audiovisual teaching materials. The aim is to provide equal opportunities for all children and young people. Teachers have a lot of freedom to choose teaching and learning materials for the classroom, as long as these materials fulfil the curriculum and have been carefully chosen and reviewed.

Teachers receive support from polis, the Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools, which is funded by the Ministry of Education and provides up-to-date materials, training opportunities and advice. It also acts as an information hub for citizenship education, and it also conducts research. In addition, there is a lively scene of civil society organizations in the field, many of which also combine research and educational offers, like the Demokratiezentrum Wien.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

The landscape of non-formal education is very diverse. It comprises areas like the extracurricular education of young people in youth centres, traditional institutions of adult education (e.g. community colleges) and party academies and various NGOs. Some of the providers of citizenship education are international organizations (some of which have their headquarters in Austria). Civil society players are mostly non-profit organizations financed partly or primarily through public funds.

A federal law on the promotion of citizenship education in the field of political parties and publishing was enacted in the 1970s, which lays down the rules for how political parties are to promote citizenship education.

The first state-initiated specialized organization for civic education in Austria was founded in 1977 and remains the only organization of its kind to date: the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Politische Bildung. It is a professional organization promoting citizenship education in the field of adult education through the financial support of projects all over Austria and through educational offers, project counselling and training measures.

In the 1990s, an increasing number of political education initiatives sprung up in associations and independent organizations, which contributed to a diversification of political education for adults in Austria. The two key challenges for adult civic education in Austria are lack of public recognition and lack of funding.

## Belgium

Written by: BELvue Museum

### NOTE on Belgium

Belgium is a federal state comprising three regions (Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels) and three communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking). Citizens can access three different educational systems, organized by the three communities: Flemish (BE-FL), French-speaking (BE-FR) and German-speaking (BE-DE). Most of the non-formal and informal civic education initiatives, if funded, are organized within the communities. Since the discourse, challenges and opportunities are very similar in the three communities, no distinction is made between them in this profile. As for formal, non-formal and informal civic education, it is important to distinguish between the three systems.

### Civic education in Belgium: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Current societal debates related to civic education in Belgium are focused on the (economic) effects of the pandemic, how to deal with (super)diversity, the refugee issue (even more acute recently because of the war in Ukraine) and climate change. Also, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and (de)colonization are very topical. In general, the growing complexity of society makes civic education increasingly relevant. The interpretation of civic education and concepts like “being a good citizen” may be a bit controversial.

A lot of actors are involved in different fields. Of course, the Ministries of Education play a major role. In BE-FL, a Committee on Society and Education, embedded in the Flemish Education Council (Vlor), brings together all education partners involved in citizenship education and health education. A large variety of organizations engage in civic education and may receive funding from state bodies to do so. However, this funding of civic education is not part of a centrally managed policy, but fragmented over various policy domains.

As for formal civic education, implementation remains a challenge: there are inconsistencies between statements of principle and existing education policies and their implementation in practice. In the educational field, both schools and teacher training programmes are struggling with the implementation of civic education competences.

Other challenges are the need to receive greater priority in terms of political will and the lack of sufficient and coordinated resources.

### Formal civic education overview

#### Compulsory education

*BE-DE*

Citizenship is one of the key competences for compulsory education. These key competences are the starting point for determining educational goals. Civic education is thus part of the formal curricula, but not a separate subject.

*BE-FL*

In the Flemish Community too, since a reform in 2018, citizenship has also been one of the key competences for compulsory education. This has resulted in attainment targets on citizenship in secondary education and made civic education compulsory. All attainment targets must be achieved.

Usually, citizenship or civic education is not a separate subject in the Flemish Community but is taught as a cross-curricular topic. In the educational network GO!, schools are given the option to organize a specific course in citizenship.

*BE-FR*

In the French Community, one of the core competences (socles de compétences in French) is Philosophy and Citizenship Education. The different educational networks either integrate citizenship in other courses or have a separate course in Philosophy and Citizenship.

**Higher education**

Higher education is also affected by growing social expectations. Therefore, higher education must address topics such as citizenship, democratization, sustainability, social commitment, etc. These elements must have a place in the curriculum, but higher-education institutions are relatively free in the way they do this.

**Teacher training**

As teacher training is part of higher education, the same policies apply. However, teacher training is influenced by the key competences and attainment goals of compulsory education. Hence, teacher training does include citizenship education, in different ways. It can be a specific course, an internship with a specific focus, project work, etc.

Within non-formal and informal civic education, some organizations offer support when it comes to civic education, e.g. training, animations, educational packages, etc. They address both primary and secondary schools and teacher training. They can also support the professionalization of teachers. These organizations are examined in the next section.

**Non-formal and informal civic education****Context**

Civic education is a topic within many policy domains across Belgium's regions and communities: education, culture, sports, media, youth, development coordination, etc. Different types of organizations (such as socio-cultural adult organizations, youth organizations, museums, NGOs) have an offer linked to citizenship targeting various groups, such as students, teachers, individuals, etc. This results in a fragmentation of the offer.

This fragmentation is a challenge for civic education. There is no coordinated monitoring. For instance, it is not known to what extent schools or teacher training opportunities make use of the possibilities of non-formal civic education. They are free to organize activities with these organizations, but it is not an obligation.

The funding is coordinated centrally but comes from different angles. Hence, the activities are not necessarily aligned with each other. Organizations are mostly responsible themselves for communication on their activities. Cooperation is also not explicitly encouraged; moreover, there is even competition when it comes to access to funding. Nevertheless, organizations do work together, albeit mainly at their own initiative.

**Overview***Federal*

Enabel, the Belgian development agency, founded in the late 1990s a programme called *Kleur Bekennen/Annoncer la Couleur*, focusing on global citizenship education. Since 2019, *Kleur Bekennen* became *Kruit*, the knowledge centre for global citizenship education in the Flemish Community. *Annoncer la Couleur* aims to promote global citizenship education in the French Community. Both organizations work closely together. A lot of NGOs dealing with civic education work at the federal level.

*The three communities*

Within each of the three communities, a lot of organizations are focused on civic education.

The BELvue museum works together with the three communities and other external partners. It is managed by the King Baudouin Foundation. This project aims to support and stimulate democratic and citizenship education for the public at large and young people in particular.

Furthermore, some specifics about each of the communities deserve attention:

1. BE-DE

Civic education (Politische Bildung) is mentioned as an objective in the policy domain “youth.”

2. BE-FL

In the legislature 2014–2019, citizenship (burgerschap) was explicitly mentioned as an objective in different policy domains, such as culture. In the recent legislature (2019–2024), it is mentioned less explicitly. Nevertheless, in the context of the decree on sociocultural adult work, which entered into force in 2018, clusters are defined that group different organizations together. One of these clusters is “democracy, peace and critical citizenship.”

3. BE-FR

In the French-speaking part of Belgium, citizenship is mentioned explicitly: the intention is formulated to develop non-formal civic education. Hence, citizenship is mentioned in the policy document “culture.” It is also one of the objectives of youth organizations (CRACS: citoyenneté responsable active critique et solidaire = responsible active critical and solidary citizenship).

## Bulgaria

Written by: Louisa Slavkova & Dobrena Petrova, Sofia Platform Foundation

### **Civic education in Bulgaria: Discourse, challenges and opportunities**

Prevalent topics in the public discourse on democracy and civic education in Bulgaria are the meaning of patriotism beyond the clichés of the oldest European nation-state, the positive attitudes towards Russia vis-à-vis the war in Ukraine and the susceptibility to disinformation and conspiracies. With an ongoing political crisis mirrored in parliaments unable to produce governing majorities, the levels of trust in the representative institutions of democracy have plunged, making citizens even more disenchanted with democracy.

A debate related to the structure, methods and scope of formal civic education in schools has not received much public attention and is mostly being held between a small group of experts, including the Ministry of Education and Science, teachers, university professors and non-governmental organizations. The war in Ukraine has given the democracy discourse a new salience as Bulgarian society has traditionally been divided between pro-Russian attitudes, even though Bulgaria was occupied by the Russian army in 1945, and pro-Western attitudes critical of Putin's Russia. These sentiments dictate the actions of politicians to a point where foreign media tells Bulgarian citizens that the first government after Boyko Borissov's 12-year rule has rescued Ukraine<sup>12</sup> in the first phase of the war but has done so secretly, because of their pro-Russian coalition partner and the general pro-Russian sentiments.

Partly due to the role of Russia in Bulgaria's liberation from the Ottoman Empire, partly due to the propaganda during Soviet times and the insufficient processes of dealing with the country's communist past after the end of the Cold War, the attitudes of Bulgarians are a mix of communist nostalgia, support for democracy and the EU, respect for Russia and Putin and solidarity with Ukraine. However, the country is plagued by low levels of volunteering, civic engagement and voter turnout.

The spread of disinformation, often anti-EU and anti-democratic, that up until recently has not been taken seriously enough, has proved to be particularly successful in a country in which the majority shares positive views of Putin's Russia. The way that political elites discuss these topics in mainstream media and act on them is largely priming citizens' attitudes too, including those of the youth. A study by Trend research<sup>13</sup> also finds that Bulgarian society is particularly susceptible to conspiracy theories.

**This is why civic engagement and dealing with the past become important topics of civic education in Bulgaria, alongside contemporary topics like disinformation, climate change and sustainability.**

### **Formal civic education overview**

There are two approaches to civic education in formal education. One is an interdisciplinary method, which holds that due to the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, teaching it cross-curricula would be most suitable (Petrova, 2021: 19). The other approach is having a separate school subject. Initially, civic education in schools was thought through the interdisciplinary approach, until the new subject was introduced in 2020. While both approaches have some advantages, in the Bulgarian context, where civic participation and competencies are not high, it is important to have a separate school subject as the former interdisciplinary approach did not prove very successful. The current approach is to combine both – a separate school subject to allow for a holistic and systematic curriculum, along with an interdisciplinary approach of integrating civic education in all subjects at all educational levels (Petrova, 2021: 20).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/bulgaria-volodymyr-zelenskyy-kiril-petkov-poorest-country-eu-ukraine/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://rctrend.bg/project/нагласи-на-българите-прямо-конспира-2/>



Civic education as part of the formal sector has seen significant improvements in recent years with the introduction of a separate school subject in 2020 for 11th- and 12th-grade students (the final two years of secondary education). The preparation of the educational curriculum by the Ministry of Education and Science included consultations and discussions with various actors such as teachers, university professors, non-governmental organizations and history, philosophy and civic education experts. The subject is thought predominantly by history, geography and philosophy teachers, who together negotiated the vision for the school curriculum.

The Sofia Platform Foundation implemented an approbation of the school curriculum in 2018 and 2019 by visiting 12 schools across the country and organizing open lessons on the different topics in the upcoming subject. The results of the approbation, which investigated the topics and methods in the curriculum itself, as well as the perceptions of both students and teachers, were largely positive, which could be because the open lessons were taught very interactively.

Another positive step is the organization of training opportunities for teachers of civic education by the Ministry of Education and Science and non-governmental organizations such as the Public Policy Institute, Sofia Platform Foundation, New Bulgarian University and others.

An important development is the National Olympiad in Civic Education held since 2007 in all grades. Interest and performance among students at the Olympiad vary across the country. Students from some regions (e.g. Vratza, Kazanluk, Haskovo, Sandanski, Plovdiv) perform significantly better compared to the national average. This is due to the strong initiative and involvement of teachers from these regions, who were better equipped for teaching civic education even before the subject was formally introduced in the school system, as data from the Civic Health Index Bulgaria in Vratza suggests, and this is reflected in the high competences of the students there.

At the higher education (university) level, there are a couple of universities that have specific civic education programmes. The New Bulgarian University has a two-year minor programme in Civic Education, as well as a general Civic Education course offered to all bachelor's students. The St. St. Kiril and Metodi University in Veliko Tarnovo offers a master's degree in Civic Education. The Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski offers teacher training programmes focusing on civic education and other subjects such as philosophy and literature. The American University in Blagoevgrad and the university of the Open Society University Network (OSUN) also offer a bachelor's course on civic engagement.

Although a systematic evaluation of the school subject has not been done yet, anecdotal evidence outlines a few areas for improvement. The biggest challenges currently are related to 1) students and teachers not perceiving civic education as a serious school subject and lacking the motivation to engage with it; 2) the insufficient teaching time for a large number of theoretical topics and practical sessions (Petrova, 2021: 20); 3) insufficient theoretical and methodological training of the teachers to teach the subject (Petrova, 2021: 20); and 4) the introduction of the subject at a late stage in students' education.

According to the Civic Health Index Bulgaria, an important change occurs in youth attitudes' formation during their time in pre-secondary education (around 12–13 years old). During that time, the role that school has in shaping students' attitudes increases significantly at the expense of the role of their parents (Slavkova, 2022). However, students in pre-secondary education do not currently study any school subjects that deal with the topics of civic education (e.g. ethics, philosophy), which are all introduced in secondary education (Kostov, 2018: 180–181).

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

As Bulgaria is a post-communist state, a significant part of the non-formal and informal civic education in the country after 1989 has been focused on democratization and transition processes. Key topics in early democracy included building a democratic state with accountable institutions and processes such as voting,

media regulation, NGO legislation. Since Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, however, there is diminishing funding for civic education as Bulgaria was considered part of the family of democracy and there was no talk yet of democratic backsliding in Europe. Another trend in early democracy was civic education for elites (civic and political leaders), which is today largely missing too, and few civic actors are offering it (e.g. School of Politics, German political foundations for representatives of their respective party families).

Since the EU accession in 2007, trends and topics in non-formal civic education began to change. A variety of non-formal and informal civic education actors emerged. They can generally be clustered as 1) civil society actors and institutions who work with the formal sector and offer teacher trainings, programme approbations, teaching materials and extracurricular projects for both students and teachers, etc. (e.g. the Sofia Platform Foundation); 2) civil society actors who offer civic education programmes for citizens at large through civic education academies and trainings, public lectures and discussions, etc. (e.g. Bulgarian Center for Non-profit Law, the Sofia Platform Foundation, AGO Academy, the Bulgarian Donors Forum, Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation, Bulgarian Youth Forum); 3) civil society actors who provide education on specific topics related to civic education, such as media literacy, climate education, women's rights, etc. (e.g. Media Literacy Coalition, Za Zemiata, Ecologica BG, Bulgarian Fund for Women); 4) young non-formal actors who discuss relevant political and social issues online (e.g. informal influencers such as Flora and Chefo, Instagram profiles such as Zemlevezh, Tsarski Pishtovi, Active Politics, or podcasts such as Channel4Podcast, etc.); and 5) active citizens, especially on a local level, who do civic education in their communities, often in or with the support of local community centres (tchitalishte). The work of many would be unthinkable if it weren't for the targeted support for civic education by America for Bulgaria Foundation for organizations both in Sofia and outside the capital.

## Croatia

Written by: Caroline Hornstein-Tomić, PhD & Maja Kurilić, Znanje na djelu

### Civic education in Croatia: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Since the beginning of the 1990s, when Croatia became an independent state, the education system has repeatedly undergone reforms. Also, there have been numerous initiatives to introduce civic education in formal education.

The first National Human Rights Education Program, with sub-programmes for preschool, primary and secondary school age, as well as for adults and the media, was drafted in 1998. In 1999, parts of that national programme were introduced in schools. Education for human rights and democratic citizenship has since become an integral part of the primary school curriculum, as an optional cross-curricular topic. As part of Croatia's preparations for membership in the European Union, which included promoting active citizenship, formal preconditions were created for the introduction of education on human rights and democratic citizenship.

Educational and curricular reform remained a matter of profound political controversy and was accompanied by public protests in the years following Croatia's EU accession and with changes of governments. Finally, in 2018, reforms in education and training were formalized under the programme *Škola za život*. The reform programme was launched first as a pilot project in the school year 2018/2019 to address key concerns about the quality and relevance of primary and secondary education. Along with it, civic education was introduced as an obligatory cross-curricular topic taught nationwide throughout all grades of elementary and high school (both in gymnasiums and vocational schools). Previous attempts to introduce civic education on a national level as a separate subject had failed, and instead it was implemented experimentally in selected pilot schools (Official Gazette, 2019).

These are some of the main contextual conditions and challenges to be taken into account for a better understanding of the conflicts around educational reform and the introduction of civic education in Croatia's formal educational system:

- Croatia is a young state with a short democratic tradition;
- Public opinion reflects the political polarization;
- Croatia's complex history is subject to contested historical narratives;
- The varying and conflicting understandings of the content and purpose of civic education have not been reconciled throughout the years;
- Quality training of educators in dealing with controversy and debating controversial issues is lacking. Instead, educators avoid tackling such issues.

All of the above have contributed to continuously opposing stances on how to enhance and safeguard a democratic political culture through civic education: what sort of knowledge is required, what the subject should be called, and what exactly should be taught in formal education.

Research indicates that despite the low amount of time devoted to civic education and teacher preparation/training, Croatia's pupils generally show a solid level of civic competencies (EC, 2018). A study conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) examining students' civic knowledge determined that 40% of Croatian students reached level B, above the average for the countries taking part in the study. Nevertheless, in areas such as community volunteering or campaigning for a goal, Croatian students scored below the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) average. Furthermore, students from Croatia showed a lower level of trust in public institutions, the government, parliament and political parties and the media in comparison to other countries (IEA, 2017). It also was pointed out that almost half of high school students soon eligible for voting do not know the definitions of dictatorship or constitution, and less than half can correctly name the prime minister of their country, who the opposition is

or how ministers are brought into office. The average number of correct answers was only 9 out of 19, and only 6 when it comes to students from three-year vocational high schools.

Other research depicts the gap in civic literacy and civic competencies between high school pupils depending on the type of school they attend – in the area of knowledge as well as in the area of democratic attitudes and values. For example, gymnasium graduates show less inclination towards authoritarianism, ethnocentrism, homophobia or traditionalism in seeing gender roles, compared to respondents attending vocational schools. The difference is slightly larger between respondents attending gymnasiums and respondents attending three-year vocational schools, and between graduates of gymnasiums and graduates of four-year (and five-year) vocational schools (Bovan, Širinić, 2016).

### **Formal civic education overview**

Currently, on the national level, civic education is taught as a mandatory cross-curricular topic in five cycles, throughout elementary and high school, both in gymnasiums and vocational schools. The first and second educational cycles are aimed at creating belonging to the class and school democratic community, learning about children's and human rights and developing a responsible attitude towards property and finances. The third, fourth and fifth cycles focus on the active application of acquired knowledge, skills and advocacy for human rights, involvement in solving social problems in the community and responsible behaviour for personal and social well-being. Cross-curricular topics are not graded.

The implementation of the civic education programme has been criticized by some teachers for the small amount of time available to teach cross-curricular topics, of which there exist too many. In addition, the implementation of the programme is largely depending on the engagement of individual teachers or schools. Combined with the lack of teacher training,<sup>14</sup> regional disparities in the implementation of the programme, which is mostly taught in a sporadic and non-obligatory way, are evident. What is positively noted is that the programme attempts to encourage the civic participation of pupils and that it is enhancing problem-solving skills and learning by experience. Progressive examples can be observed on the local level, where in some cities and counties the non-formal and formal sector cooperate in developing teaching materials.

One such example is the programme School and Community (ŠIZ) created by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies of the University of Rijeka and Rijeka's First Gymnasium, where it is piloted. In the school year 2022/2023, ŠIZ has been introduced in schools in Croatia's capital, Zagreb, and multiple other counties. The elective course is intended for 2nd- and 3rd-grade students at high schools. In ŠIZ, students become active participants in the learning process by identifying and acting upon the problems that surround them in the community. A specific problem, for example, poverty, is examined from different aspects, and those in public office, i.e. local government, are held accountable for how the problem is tackled. It is an opportunity for the voice of the youth to be heard in the community. In Zagreb, high interest was shown by schools to participate in this elective module, with more than 84% of schools applying for participation.

Civic education is not taught as part of the formal curricula in higher education institutions.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

Non-formal and informal civic education is implemented by a plethora of organizations, initiatives and platforms all across Croatia through a variety of tools and formats. While some approach civic education in the narrower sense by focusing on political institutions, democratic competences and civic participation, others lay out civic education in a broader sense and encompass youth empowerment, employability, equality and human rights, climate literacy, financial responsibility, etc.).

<sup>14</sup> Croatian teachers have significantly fewer opportunities to participate in citizenship education trainings, either in initial or ongoing training, as was measured in the 2016 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study.

The primary source of financial support is public funding, which can be traced via calls for proposals on local, national and/or European levels. In recent years, companies in the private sector have increasingly supported projects of societal interest as part of their corporate social responsibility policy. Civil society organizations, no matter the topic they tackle, are required to publish annual reports. Information on their activities and projects is widely accessible via web pages and social media activity.

Funding poses one of the greatest challenges to organizations and individuals working in the sector: fundraising is time-consuming, while project funding, once awarded, significantly increases the administrative workload and requires respective capacity. Other key challenges are ensuring new collaborations beyond the already established partnerships and engaging in meaningful discussion between ideologically opposing actors.

Careful analysis and evaluation on the national level of existing projects/initiatives in the realm of civic education are lacking in the Croatian context. If such an approach were implemented, long-term coherence and impact could be improved.

#### **Sources:**

Bovan, K., & Širinić, D. 2016. "(Non)democratic Attitudes of Croatian High School Seniors: presence and determinants."

European Commission. 2018. "Education and Training MONITOR 2018 Croatia." Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2018-croatia\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2018-croatia_en.pdf)

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IAE). 2017. "International Civic and Citizenship Education Study." Available at: <https://www.iea.nl/studies/iea/iccs/2016>

Official Gazette. 2019. "Decision on Adoption of the Curriculum for the Cross-Curricular Topic Civic Education for Primary and Secondary Schools in the Republic of Croatia." Available at: [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/full/2019\\_01\\_10\\_217.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/full/2019_01_10_217.html)

<https://www.vecernji.hr/zagreb/zagrebacke-srednje-skole-dobivaju-novi-predmet-jokic-mladi-nemaju-svoj-glas-ovo-je-njihova-prilika-1557075>

## Czechia

Written by: Association of Non-Formal Education (ANEV, z.s.)

### Civic education in Czechia: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Czechia has been an independent democratic republic since 1 January 1993. It became a republic after 42 years of totalitarian communist regime, including 23 years during which the country was occupied by the troops of the Soviet Union.

Civil society is actively developing, mostly through NGOs, individual initiative and growing communities around cultural and educational entities. Today, Czech society is moved by the issues of the war in Ukraine, the influence of Russia in post-Soviet countries, misinformation on controversial issues, the division of civil society by the rhetoric of some politicians and the influence of populist slogans, poverty, the radicalization of society and the growing level of xenophobia. Discussions about the impact of isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic on young people and the growing uncertainty about the future impact of the war in Ukraine on the citizens of Czechia and the climate crisis are also coming to the fore. In recent years, Czech society has shown a great deal of solidarity (helping others during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping residents of communities destroyed by the 2021 tornado, helping refugees from Ukraine). This demonstrates the ability of citizens to react to problems faster than the state apparatus.

Currently, Czech education is moving towards the implementation of Strategy 2030+, in which it also addresses the shortcomings in civic education by implementing two strategic goals: 1) to focus education more on the acquisition of competences needed for active civic, professional and personal life; 2) to reduce inequalities in access to quality education and to enable the maximum development of the potential of children, pupils and students. Strategy 2030+<sup>15</sup> also responds to the needs of society that are currently not being met: “to equip citizens with the competences needed for responsible living in a democratic society, i.e. the skills and knowledge to uphold and promote democratic values and attitudes, protect human rights and develop civic cohesion.”

### Formal civic education overview

Civic education is part of the educational curriculum in primary and secondary schools. The subject is graded on the basis of different criteria. It is usually taught as a thematic component of other subjects. Some primary schools also include civic education as a cross-curricular topic in several subjects or as part of school projects. In secondary schools, civic education is often taught in the form of a single subject that includes all the content or is integrated into several different subjects as a cross-curricular theme. The thematic focus is most often on preparing pupils for responsible civic life in a democratic society, in particular on the acquisition of social skills (e.g. the ability to clarify attitudes and values), but mostly on broadening of their knowledge in this area. At both educational levels, the greatest emphasis is placed on the themes of a responsible approach to the environment, the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the prevention of bullying. Less frequently, the key topics focus on the successful involvement of pupils in democratic society – the promotion of democratic values, the prevention of extremism and respect for cultural differences, the development of civic competences, etc.<sup>16</sup>

Teacher training is provided at the faculties of education as part of their studies and subsequently in the form of methodological materials available on the websites of initiatives focusing on civic education or through training courses offered by NGOs.

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Strategy for the Education Policy of the Czech Republic up to 2030. Prague: 2020. ISBN 978-80-87601-50-1.

<sup>16</sup> Česká školní inspekce. Tematická zpráva. Občanské vzdělávání v základních a středních školách. Čj.: ČŠIG-4129/16-G2. Prague: Listopad, 2016.

Civic education is mostly perceived in such a way that it does not need to be addressed specifically as a separate subject; it is considered part of almost every subject. This attitude unfortunately misses the opportunity not only to target topics that are relevant to Czech society, but also, for example, to teach necessary skills and to change attitudes among pupils.

“There is a fundamental contradiction in the education system where, on the one hand, high expectations are created for civic education and, at the same time, very little space is actually devoted to it in the curriculum.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

The main challenge for organizations and individuals in non-formal and informal civic education is now to give targeted attention and space to the development of competences in this area and to open up controversial topics that do not receive space in formal education. The activities mostly focus on skills, values and attitudes; thus, in a way, non-formal and informal education is supplementing the formal education system, in which these areas do not receive sufficient space in practice. Funding is made possible mainly from foreign sources, EU funds, international or national foundations, and in recent years there has also been a growing interest among corporate foundations in supporting civil society. At a smaller scale, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport also supports these activities; nevertheless, there is a lack of youth strategy and quality monitoring on a national level. Professional organizations at different levels cooperate with each other and this is also due to the fact that many professionals work with multiple organizations.

Citizens are informed about the activities of these organizations if they actively follow information through online networks, subscribe to the newsletter of the organization, participate in events or want to get actively involved (e.g. by volunteering).

---

<sup>17</sup> Doporučení v oblasti občanského vzdělávání Expertnímu panelu pro revizi RVP ZV; předkladatelé: iniciativa Občanská trojčlenka, Centrum občanského vzdělávání (Ondřej Horák, ředitel). Prague: 20 April 2022.

## Finland

Written by: Riikka Jalonen, The Peace Education Institute

### **Civic education in Finland: Discourse, challenges and opportunities**

Civic education plays a big role in Finland and is seen as an important tool to support democracy, inclusion, equality, a sense of community and societal cohesion, integration and overall well-being in society. In Finland, civic education is generally well valued, and the belief that everyone has the right to take part in it is widely shared by Finnish people.

Civic education played a crucial role in nation building and is seen as an important aspect of the Nordic social democratic welfare state that Finland is today. Apart from creating social cohesion and providing new skills and knowledge to people, it offers opportunities for a wide-ranging variety of recreational activities for people living in Finland (citizens and non-citizens). Traditionally, political parties, trade unions, religious institutions and sport associations (often politically affiliated in Finland) have all had their own institutions and their umbrella organizations providing civic education to their members and more widely to the public. In addition to politically and religiously aligned civic education institutions, there are many politically or religiously non-aligned organizations that provide civic education in Finland. Both aligned and non-aligned institutions are financially supported by the Finnish government, and the content of civic education is not dictated by legislation, nor is the right to core funding linked to the current political leadership of the country. The institutions that provide civic education in Finland and receive public funding for it can represent various world views or religious beliefs, and they can decide the content of their educational activities based on community or regional civic needs.

However, during recent years, funding has been increasingly linked to political programmes and government policies. The independent role of civil society and other providers of civic education is therefore weakening, and more and more they are seen as – and are indeed becoming – suppliers of state services rather than autonomous actors of civil society.

### **Formal civic education overview**

In Finland, civic education is not a separate subject, but its aims, values and content are included in the formal educational system and national curricula, from early childhood education and care to upper secondary education. Within the formal education system, the terms “global education” or lately “global citizenship education” are often used. Finnish education is based on human rights, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals are included in the curricula for general education at all levels.

Democracy and human rights education in schools also aims to strengthen the school culture and to promote well-being, equality and non-discrimination in cooperation with civil society organizations and other actors outside the school. The alleged passivity of young people as democratic citizens and the impact of their lack of participation in traditional democratic institutions have been the subject of vigorous debates in recent years, and civic education is seen as a key tool to tackle these challenges. There are currently several projects aiming to increase civic competences (human rights and democracy education projects) and providing schools with the funding and teachers with the training to do so. However, civic education in schools can also be seen as a tool to tame young people and steer them towards the sanctioned kind of active citizenship, and to discourage them from challenging the current power structures in schools or in society.

Folk high schools are national education providers that offer self-motivated studies for young people and adults, promote learning skills and help people grow as individuals and members of society. Folk high schools make decisions independently on the objectives and content of the education they provide. Folk high schools can emphasize their value base and the ideological background of their education. Most folk high schools are maintained by different associations and foundations, and some are maintained by local authorities.



Summer universities in Finland are regional educational organizations. They provide university-level courses in arts and culture, seminars and events, as well as university activities for mature students. Their educational activities aim to respond to the region's learning and civic needs.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

Civic education is at the core of Finnish civil society and is well-funded and supported by the Ministry of Education and other public authorities. Civil society organizations provide courses and run clubs that aim to improve civic knowledge and studies for hobby-based or interest-based learning and skills. The goals of non-formal education in Finland are versatile, but in general, at the level of the individual, it aims to provide opportunities for people's personal development and well-being, and on the societal level, it aims to foster democracy, human rights, resilience, peace and equality. In Finland, civic education can be translated in different ways in non-formal education (*vapaa sivistystyö* or *kansalaiskasvatus*) and is called by different names, based on the values and aims of the specific context (global education, peace education, democracy education, education for participation, youth work). Many organizations offering civic education are affiliated with political parties or labour unions, and the rest are independent non-governmental organizations. They provide civic education independently or in cooperation with their member organizations. The range of subjects offered is determined by the ideologies and collaborating institutions. Studies take place in the form of courses and learning clubs, for example. Traditionally, funding for civil society organizations in Finland is applied for and allocated annually (but is *de facto* constant). In particular, there is funding for educational activities for civil society organizations. Until recently, the funding used to come primarily from the general annual funding, and each organization would use it independently, according to their organizational aims, focus and rules. Lately, the funding has become more project based. This leads to more competition among civil society actors, and civic education is increasingly becoming a tool for continuously changing governmental political objectives, which hinders the autonomous role of civil society and non-formal civic education.

## France

Written by: Florian Staudt, Franco-German Youth Office

### **Civic education in France: Discourse, challenges and opportunities.**

Since the Third Republic in France, the school has been the guarantor of educating the republican citizen (citoyen). It takes over the state's educational function to promote the values of the republic, thereby establishing and securing social cohesion. Over the decades, civic education has repeatedly faced new challenges.

Since the beheading of a French teacher in the street in October 2020, the public debate in France has intensified around the issues of secularism, freedom of religion and expression, education and living together in a multicultural society. The attack on a representative of the institution of education after he showed Mohammed cartoons from a satirical magazine led to the adoption of several laws and programmes. The aim was and is to strengthen respect for republican principles and to make republicanism as a whole more defensible. Observers and experts see this as a continuation of the government's political control of the school, which puts a strain on it in terms of democratic politics.

The threat of terrorism, the social tensions between ethnic groups and the deficits of the school system as perceived by citizens are the origins of current problems. These issues feed French people's doubts about the republican model and its elite representatives in politics and administration. This is also regularly manifested at the ballot box (in municipal, regional, national and European elections). Voter turnouts are historically low. In particular, many young people between the ages of 18 and 35 do not see the need to vote. Those who do vote are increasingly giving their votes to the extreme left and right parties with their nationalist anti-European slogans.

Against this background, the president and the government are under pressure. The minister of education, in particular, is facing strong criticism that is gaining momentum, especially during the so-called *rentrée* (the beginning of the school year). Repeatedly, reform plans have been announced that target not only the collège, the teacher shortages and the increase in salaries, but also teacher training. In view of the situation described above, teachers are to be better prepared, according to the government, with regard to the value education incumbent upon them. The president has also announced, after his election victory in April 2022, a new method for involving citizens more in the political decision-making process. It would be advisable to place more emphasis on political education inside and especially outside of schools, and thus to recognize the social importance of the largely private actors of political education and to support them in their work.

### **Formal civic education overview**

Within the French understanding of the state, civic education, as already mentioned above, is seen as the task of the school, which is supposed to impart those republican-secular values to students. Civic education takes place less as a lesson-based concept of political education. Rather, it is a value-based civic education that is anchored in civic modules in history-geography as well as in economics and the social sciences. Since 2013, there has also been a programme called Moral and Civic Education (Enseignement Moral et Civique, EMC), which was politically reframed in 2015 by a civic education course (Parcours Citoyen). It follows a horizontal principle and is not linked to any specific subject. In a total of 300 school lessons, historical and political dimensions play less of a role than subject-related decision-making in the areas of readiness to engage and participate, moral judgement, cultural sensitivity, understanding of rights and duties and critical judgement.

The fact that French secondary school teachers undermine a very focussed education in only one subject and that the strict orientation of the disciplinary lines is softened by the EMC has led to some didactic problems. Since the EMC is not graded and is not part of the final examination, this has the effect of decreasing its importance among the students. The above-mentioned teacher training reform of the Ministry of Education is supposed to remedy this situation by providing appropriate modules for all teaching professions and

the accompanying pedagogical staff during university teacher training. However, many are critical of the developments and worry about the autonomy of the university and increasing alienation from their students. They speak out against “homogenization” and plead for a “pedagogization” of values education, as well as for more autonomy, in the sense of a civic education oriented towards critical-rational thinking skills.

**Non-formal and informal civic education**

Due to the state-political concept, France – in comparison to its European neighbours – has a different understanding of civic education. In the non-formal and informal context, what prevails is the concept of *éducation populaire*, which comes closest to civic education. It sees itself as a complementary structure to formal education in schools, promoting lifelong learning and empowering people to develop themselves in all areas (art, culture, sport, politics, philosophy, science, etc.). Many associations and federations have been founded since the last century that are also more or less financially supported by the state. Nevertheless, political education in the sense of civic engagement is limited to the involvement of individual non-formal actors. At present, they are being confronted by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased costs due to inflation and the energy crisis and the Ukraine war.

## Greece

Written by: Dora Katsamori, PhD, University of the Peloponnese, II&T, NCSR 'Demokritos'

### Civic education in Greece: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Citizenship could be characterized as the status of being a citizen. So, when we talk about civic and political education, we are referring to the kind of education that is mainly focused on preparing people to act like active and conscious citizens. Specifically, civic education refers to all the processes that affect people's beliefs, skills and actions as members of society. Civic education thus has to inform and train people regarding their rights and obligations as members of a community and regarding public affairs, and also to cultivate their social skills and to inculcate the core European values that impact their lives, like democracy, freedom, the rule of law, equality, human dignity, dialogue and tolerance. Nowadays, because of the values' crisis that seems to be affecting the whole of Europe, the topic of civic education is at the top of the agenda. Many people and especially the youth seem to be indifferent to public affairs and to question the concepts of democracy and freedom. At the same time, the wide dissemination of news on social media, the majority of which tends to be characterized as fake and is aimed at manipulating and misleading people, tends to contribute to this disillusionment.

In this context, the contribution of civic education as part of the general educational process and training of citizens, whatever their age, seems to be even more crucial. Most European countries, including Greece, have to focus their attention on increasing awareness in people regarding democracy, as an effort to cultivate a more inclusive and democratic environment at the regional, national and European level. Civil society's contribution seems to be really important in that regard, including various forms of social action by individuals or groups of people that do not derive from the state and are not undertaken by it. These actions include seminars, meetings, open discussions, trainings, etc., addressed to all citizens and complementary to formal education. At the same time, the lack of media literacy in Greece until recently presents another challenge in an era when technology is everywhere and the speed of news and information dissemination is out of control. Thus, private networks and private initiatives that operate in a non-formal way seem to contribute positively in that direction. Since there is no common blueprint for establishing democratic and free societies, each society should explore its own citizens' special needs and expectations and act for the common good, pursuing the active participation of its citizens and fighting against any kind of exclusion.

### Formal civic education overview

The issue of civic education as part of formal education in Greece was originally raised during the period of the Modern Greek Enlightenment, when the role of education in the progress and democratization of society was recognized. During this period, Greece, influenced by the principles of the European Enlightenment, added political content to Greek education, and civic education seems to be its core. Since the first decade of the 20th century, a discussion has started regarding the introduction of civic education as a separate subject in schools, even if it was marked by the clash of two different views: those who supported this change and those who objected to it.

The first official reference to civic education as part of formal (elementary) education was made in Law 4397/16-20 of August 1929 (FEK 309), while as a subject civic education was introduced for the first time in the curriculum of elementary education in 1931. During the 1980s and 1990s, in the context of civic education, the emphasis was on knowledge of the legal framework of society and its social and political structures, and therefore the teaching of this subject, which was also introduced in secondary education, was entrusted to legal and political scientists. A new secondary education specialty was introduced into the curriculum at that time. Nowadays, civic education as an independent course is part of the Greek curriculum of primary and secondary education. The relevant courses are offered two or three times per week in the last two grades of primary school, in the last grade of secondary school and in all grades of high school. However, the presence of civic education in the curriculum is not obvious at universities and higher education in general.

### Non-formal and informal civic education

As already mentioned, when we talk about civic education, we are mainly referring to a combination of theoretical knowledge and the cultivation of the appropriate skills, attitudes and values that characterize an active citizen. Thus, it is really important for the theoretical knowledge to “meet” the practice and for a relationship to be established between school and society, in the context of which students have the chance to be active from a young age and take the space and the time to express their thoughts on the issues that affect them. Private networks and private initiatives operating in a non-formal way thus seem to contribute positively towards that goal. Taking this point into consideration, we could easily conclude that civic education is provided, in addition to formal education, in various structures of non-formal and informal education, such as social groups, social initiatives, groups of volunteers, institutions/museums, NGOs, etc.

In recent years, in Greece, the discussion about civil society’s contribution to the social good has grown, and the term is used to refer to all forms of social action by individuals or groups of people that do not derive from the state and are not undertaken by it, but which often fill the gaps left by the state. Cooperation between the different actors is often achieved, especially during the pandemic and the refugee crisis, facilitated in some cases by local and national sectors, but securing funding is always a challenge, as there is no national funding available for such purposes. Additionally, citizens are not well informed about these actors’ contributions and achievements. Thus, even if the contributions of most of these actors are really important, they have not received the appropriate acceptance and facilitation by the state, which forces them to look for support from private and European/research funding.

### Sources:

Christias, I. 1983. Theory and Practice of Civic Education. *Nea Paideia*, 25, pp. 70–80.

“Civic Education.” 2018. Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civic-education/>

“Civil Society Organisation.” EUR-Lex. Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGIS-SUM%3Acivil\\_society\\_organisation](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGIS-SUM%3Acivil_society_organisation)

Deligiannis, D., Tsiougou, K., Goutha, V., Moutselos, A., Fleming, T. 2021. “Active Citizenship Education for Democratic and Sustainable Communities.” Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379824>

Dimakopoulou, F. 2019. “Political Education in the Greek Educational System.” *Pedagogy & Education*, ISSN: 2241-4665.

Gkinis, K. 1996. “Civic Education as Subject in the Greek Secondary Education (1964–1996).” MSc thesis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Karakatsani, D. 2004. Education and Civic Education. Athens: Metaixmio.

Mouzellis, N. 1997. “What Is Civil Society? Multiculturalism and Plurality.” *To Vima* (digital version), 14 December 1997. Available at: <https://www.tovima.gr/2008/11/24/opinions/ti-einai-i-koinwnia-twn-politwn/>

## Italy

Written by: Laura Palmerio, PhD, & Elisa Caponera, PhD, INVALSI

### **Civic education in Italy: Discourse, challenges and opportunities**

In Italy, there is a general weakness in the interconnections between research and policies on education or schooling and the subsequent implementation of reforms at various levels. This consideration concerns international as well as national research results.

Discussions of the relevance of CCE in the national educational system have regularly returned to the forefront. From an educational policy perspective, educational authorities have often expressed support, identified a wide range of possible topics, carried out initiatives on CCE during the years, and continued to participate in international projects on the subject (i.e. ICCS, the IEA surveys on CCE). Before the current law (92/2019) was passed, and soon after, the debate focused on the definition of civic education and how it differs from citizenship education (see e.g. <http://www.learning4.it/2020/07/09/dibattito-educazione-civica-ora-si-alleducazione-alla-cittadinanza-no-a-educazione-civica/>). Another topic of pre-reform debate concerned whether or not CCE should be provided for as a separate subject and object of assessment.

Since the launch of the reform, the debate has descended to a more practical level and mainly concerns how the provisions of the reform can be implemented and assessed.

Each school in the country therefore faces the challenge of designing and implementing a curriculum consistent with the national guidelines – which are very broad and generic – that allows for the assessment of students' CCE learning and on which to base specific teacher training, which is not yet mandatory nationwide.

### **Formal civic education overview**

The document “Curricular Guidelines and New Scenarios” (MIUR 2018) stated that CCE should be the cornerstone for the promotion of all subjects across the curriculum in the first cycle of education, with a specific focus on global citizenship and sustainability. Law 92/2019 and the subsequent guidelines (2020) stipulated that the teaching of civic education as a separate subject would cover civics and citizenship in the first and second cycles of education (grades 1 to 13), beginning in the 2020/2021 school year.

The law states that there will be a civic education grade on students' report cards, but there are no extra hours allotted to the subject at school. Therefore, each school and its teaching board must allocate at least 33 hours per year to teach civic education, subtracting these hours from other subjects. For each class, one teacher with coordinating duties shall be identified. The coordinating teacher proposes a grade expressed in tenths, acquiring input from all the teachers entrusted with the teaching of civic education.

Teaching focuses on three main themes:

- Constitution: law (national and international), legality and solidarity;
- Sustainable development, environmental education, knowledge and protection of the tangible and intangible assets of communities; and
- Digital citizenship.

As part of the teaching of civic education, in partnership with the local community, the following topics are also to be addressed: road safety education, the right to health and well-being and volunteering and active citizenship education.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education provides educational programmes that can be implemented during the school year as part of the teaching of civic education (according to Law 169/08 and Article 1, paragraph 7 of Law 107/15). These are related to the following topics: legality, active citizenship, control and measures against the mafia and organized crime.

On the Digital Education platform (<https://www.educazionedigitale.it/cittadinanza-costituzione/progetti-di-senato-e-camera/>), there is a space dedicated to civic education, where the most relevant novelty is the introduction of two platforms for the two Houses of Parliament: [senatoragazzi.it](https://www.senatoragazzi.it) and [giovani.camera.it](https://www.giovani.camera.it). On these sites dedicated to young people, one can find news about the projects and activities promoted in the institutional seats, in schools in the local communities, as well as information on how to participate, along with study materials, links and multimedia resources promoting knowledge of the two institutions and Parliament as a whole.

The MoE (Note No. 16706 of 27 June 2022) has begun monitoring the measures taken by schools to introduce cross-curricular teaching of civic education. School participation in the monitoring process has been voluntary and includes a questionnaire designed for all school leaders and teacher coordinators of educational and teaching activities ([https://www.istruzione.it/educazione\\_civica/](https://www.istruzione.it/educazione_civica/)). Monitoring started on 28 June 2022 and ended on 31 August 2022. Currently the data that was collected is being processed.

Regarding teacher training, opportunities for in-service and pre-service teacher training related to CCE at the regional and national levels vary and are often considered insufficient. As indicated in the Eurydice report *Citizenship Education at School in Europe* (2017), there are several professional development opportunities for teachers in the area of citizenship education. Nonetheless, in Italy, there are no specific requirements for teachers who teach courses related to civics and citizenship.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

There are currently no specific guidelines for ensuring the quality of participatory processes within non-formal civic education. However, the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work has been recently translated into Italian. In this document, there are guidelines for a quality approach to non-formal education, with a particular focus on the role of the youth worker as an agent and promoter of participatory community processes. The document provides recommendations to be applied at the national level to ensure the quality of youth work and the application of non-formal education.

Furthermore, ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities) – in implementing the Agreements with the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Department for Youth Policies and Universal Civil Service (DPGSCU) – promotes an initiative of administrative cooperation between municipalities aimed at strengthening and sharing best practices (including in the field of active participation), often carried out in collaboration with schools in the area.

Also, in Italy, there are many NGOs and associations with a focus on peace, human rights, legality and sports. Such NGOs and associations have carried out several citizenship education projects at the local level, sometimes in collaboration with schools.

For example, Legambiente teaches young people about the protection of the environment, biodiversity, and climate (<https://www.legambientescuolaformazione.it>), while the Libera-Contro le Mafie ([https://www.libera.it/schede-1-formazione\\_e\\_percorsi\\_educativi](https://www.libera.it/schede-1-formazione_e_percorsi_educativi)) promotes initiatives on active participation and combating mafias.

In addition, Law 92/2019 states the need for educational institutions to strengthen collaboration with families to promote the behaviours of citizens who are aware not only of the rights, duties and rules of coexistence but also of the challenges of the present and the immediate future. Schools can also establish networks with other institutional subjects within the world of volunteering and the third sector, particularly with those organizations engaged in promoting active citizenship.

## Lithuania

Written by: Maryja Šupa, PhD, Civil Society Institute & Ieva Petronytė–Urbonavičienė, PhD, Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Civil Society Institute

### Civic education in Lithuania: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Professional and societal debates about civic education in Lithuania most often focus on seeking out the right balance between opposites, such as the promotion of ethnocentric national identity versus globally oriented citizenship; strictly political versus broader politically and socially oriented citizenship; theoretical, text-book-based teaching methods versus practical, problem-based ones. Many stakeholders act in this field, and at least some of them hold divergent and at times conflicting views of the content and long-term outcomes of civic education.

Key actors in civic education include:

- Schools carry out the formal civic education curriculum.
- Teachers act as civic educators and community leaders, with this role especially pronounced in small townships and rural areas.
- The Ministry of Education and its subordinate institutions manage the curricula and provide teachers with the necessary support in carrying out their work.
- CSOs, local communities, libraries, and museums promote non-formal civic education and enable ongoing informal education.
- Universities award BA and MA degrees in education, publish teaching materials, organize conferences, workshops and other events for teachers, and engage secondary school students in non-formal and informal activities.
- Individual researchers at universities and independent research institutes conduct research evaluating the current state of civic education and provide recommendations for other actors.
- Well-known individuals widely acknowledged for their civic values and public civic initiatives work as role models, especially for secondary school students and youth, and are often invited to take part in formal and informal civic education activities as well as projects organized by other actors.
- The Ministry of National Defence and the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union contribute to formal, non-formal and informal civic education, which in Lithuania is widely perceived as a precondition for civil resistance.

Among the most pressing challenges in civic education in Lithuania during recent years was the renewal of the formal civic education programme for schools, applying appropriate, novel and engaging teaching methods to civic education, empowering students to become active participants in the process rather than passive recipients of information and increasing both students' and teachers' motivation. The new programme was approved in September 2022. Meanwhile Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 sparked more discussions on the introduction of mandatory national security and national defence training in the basic and secondary education curriculum. **Beyond sometimes heated debates among ideologically opposed stakeholder groups, civic education is not a particularly controversial topic in Lithuania. Rather, civic education faces the same demographic, financial, social and technological challenges as the whole educational system.**

### Formal civic education overview

Civic education is taught as part of the formal curricula in schools. It is a separate subject in years 9 and 10 (out of 12), and in earlier years it is integrated into other subjects (e.g. language, history, geography and ethics, among others). Educators are free to independently choose textbooks and other teaching materials and offer additional opportunities for civic education via extracurricular activities and external projects. Civic education is mainly taught by teachers of social disciplines and humanities, e.g. history or geography. A 10-point scale or pass/fail assessment may be used for grading the subject. In addition, school students are required to participate in at least 10 hours per year of socially oriented civic activities outside the curriculum.



In 2022/2023, a new “4K” (“I create, I change, I am with others and I am for others”) model is also being piloted in five municipalities.

Civic education is not taught as part of the formal curricula in universities. Student organizations and clubs, as well as volunteering opportunities, fill this gap for youth.

The Ministry of Education ensures the organization of teachers’ training events, conferences, presentations of research and dissemination of teaching materials. Other actors, e.g. universities and CSOs, among others, also contribute to this field.

Field research shows that formal civic education is generally perceived as being of medium quality. In a representative survey carried out in 2016 by the Civil Society Institute, the general public and secondary school students evaluated the effectiveness of civic education at schools with a mean score of 6 (out of 10). The main problems include: lack of students’ and teachers’ motivation, lack of relevant content and opportunities to actively engage in civic activities, overemphasis on factual information about political institutions in the curriculum and lack of meaningful political discussions, among others. Teachers are also concerned about limited opportunities to teach civics outside the classroom (including lack of human resources and funding) and to employ engaging teaching methods.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

In schools, non-formal civic education is carried out during extracurricular activities, such as events, field trips and collaborative projects with partner schools, CSOs or municipal institutions. For the youth, there are also ample opportunities to volunteer in the non-profit sector or join political organizations.

Ongoing informal civic education may be associated with participation in civic activities, which include following local news, participating in local, leisure and religious communities, volunteering and attending relevant public events. However, according to representative surveys, the share of citizens participating in these activities is not very high, and the number of activities they engage in tends to be limited.

Some of the key challenges for organizations and individuals who work in civic education are securing funding for non-formal activities, lack of interest from the general public and lack of opportunities to support continuous activity.

At different times, national funding for non-formal and informal civic education may be included in nationally distributed international funds, EU funding initiatives and ministry programmes supporting CSOs and regional communities. There is also a general national funding programme for non-formal children’s education to which civic educators may apply. Non-formal activities may also receive funding from business organizations, and citizens may direct up to 1.2% of their personal income tax to CSOs of their choice. In general, national funding for civic education is often insufficient, intermittent and most of the time not allocated specifically to civic education.

Organizations with initiatives in non-formal civic education have the option to collaborate locally and nationally to improve education and civic engagement via CSO networks.

Ongoing information about initiatives and events is disseminated via organizational websites and social media, local and national media and public events for stakeholder groups. CSOs, including those active in civic education, are required to present annual financial and activity reports to the State Enterprise Centre of Registers, which makes them publicly available.

## Luxembourg

---

Written by: Michèle Schilt, Zentrum fir politisch Bildung

### **Civic education in Luxembourg: Discourse, challenges and opportunities**

Civic education/citizenship education is rather new in Luxembourg. It found its entry in formal education (secondary schools and vocational training) in 2012. Before then, classes focused merely on knowledge about institutions rather than democratic processes. Special teacher training was introduced only in 2017. In non-formal education, however, encouraging young people to express their opinions and participate actively has a much longer tradition, although it has not been labelled “citizenship education.” All political parties (except the populist one) are in favour of an increase in citizenship education for children, young people and adults. This resulted in the creation in 2016 of the Zentrum fir politesch Bildung (ZpB), an independent foundation dedicated to the subject that continues to be funded by the government.

### **Formal civic education overview**

Civic/citizenship education is taught in secondary schools as part of the formal curricula on a weekly basis. The number of lessons varies from one (secondary school – “classic”) to six hours per week (vocational training) for pupils aged 15 years or older. It is also an overarching principle in the whole educational system from three years on, as the schools’ aim is to enable children and youngsters to be critical citizens. The ZpB provides materials for the teachers from different classes (language, sciences, etc.) to support their lessons. Since 2022, all secondary teachers have compulsory courses on teaching controversial issues in their basic training.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

In Luxembourg, there are many organizations focused on civil society, which are primarily funded by the state. Although they often lack money, overall their situation is – compared to other countries – quite good. Collaborations are frequent and easy (helped by the fact that Luxembourg is a small country), and ZpB often acts as a networking platform for connecting different initiatives.

## Malta

Written by: Pen Lister, PhD, RSO III and associate lecturer, Department of Leadership for Learning & Innovation, Faculty of Education, University of Malta

### Civic education in Malta: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

The Republic of Malta is a small, densely populated island nation, with a mixed economy of mainly tourism, iGaming and fintech. The majority of the population is Maltese, with a growing number of non-Maltese nationals living and working there. Malta gained independence from the British Empire in 1964 and became a full republic in 1974. Malta remains a member of the British Commonwealth, is a member of the European Union and has two official languages: English and Maltese.

Malta has embraced a wide range of voices and interests at the civic level, with various organizations representing the multitude of active citizen initiatives that exist and thrive within the islands. These can be national (e.g. EPAL in Malta<sup>18</sup>), NGOs (e.g. FIDEM<sup>19</sup> or the Institute of Migration<sup>20</sup>), numerous government-sponsored schemes or grass-roots activities focused on diverse issues impacting daily citizen life. A more serious issue is the major debate within Maltese civic society about journalistic freedom of speech and greater transparency of political and government processes. The ongoing legal case concerning the assassination of journalist blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia has shaken the nation and attracted global attention, including from the current president of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, who is a Maltese Partit Nazzjonalista MEP.

Other significant ongoing civic education issues in Malta would be health and well-being, particularly focused on child obesity, diet and exercise, and issues such as the creation and maintenance of green spaces, planting trees, combating increasing air pollution and supporting environmental sustainability. Associated challenges concern waste disposal and recycling, managing property developments to support quality of life and protection of the environment. Many issues drive the agendas for Maltese civic activities, and these are not always directly part of an educational initiative, but they are nevertheless educational in a civic sense, informing non-formal and informal learning activities in schools and local areas. The overlap and collaboration between government organizations, NGOs and volunteer civic action contribute to a rich and diverse sense of active civic engagement that demonstrates a high level of civic involvement in Maltese daily life.

The need for establishing channels where people's voices can be heard to lobby effectively for environmental protection or changes in legislation manifests in street protest but also in terms of informal educational or informational activities and initiatives of varying scales. From the "Clean up Malta" initiatives to protecting the Comino Blue Lagoon from over-tourism, people do get involved. Major players in these initiatives would be Movement Graffiti, Repubblika, Dn L-Art Helwa and other smaller informal initiatives at the local level led by volunteer groups. These organizations and initiatives lead to further involvement and raise the profile of issues amongst adults as well as young people. In turn, this leads to heightened awareness about civic engagement, ethics and health being taught in schools or via after-school activities. For example, a recent debate has arisen regarding the teaching of ethics in schools, prompting discussion at the grass-roots level through Facebook discussion groups.<sup>21</sup> As noted below, Facebook is a major channel of community communication in Malta. The line between civic education and civic activities and initiatives is not always clear; however, in general, any activity that seeks to engage local populations in improving their own locality and surroundings and their quality of life and to raise awareness of local and national issues might be described in educational terms. The following sections provide a brief overview of ongoing initiatives in Malta.

18 EPAL: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/nss/national-support-services-malta>

19 FIDEM: <https://www.fidem.org.mt/>

20 IoM: <https://malta.iom.int/>

21 Ethics in school, debate on Humanists Malta Facebook page: <https://tinyurl.com/ethics-fb-Humanists-Malta>

### Formal civic education overview

Malta schools teach civic education through the subject of ethics from year 1 to 11. Syllabi are available from the government curriculum website, for example, year 1,<sup>22</sup> year 7<sup>23</sup> or years 9 to 11.<sup>24</sup> The University of Malta Master's in Teaching & Learning (MTL), the teacher training programme in Malta, is also adding the teaching of ethics as an elective study unit. Malta takes a proactive approach in encouraging formal civic education initiatives, funding and support. Two key players in this area are Lifelong Learning Malta<sup>25</sup> and the government youth hub Aġenzija Żgħażaġh,<sup>26</sup> which offer a wide range of schemes and courses, including civic education courses for use in schools.<sup>27</sup> Both of these organizations provide certificate-level training in a wide selection of topics and skills, orientated towards the workplace and for personal interest, creativity and community. The University of Malta encourages civic education awareness in its student population, with the KSU<sup>28</sup> Council compiling various high-quality reports and policy documents.<sup>29</sup> There is also a strong financial support for teaching Maltese to foreign residents and locals who wish to gain a certificate.

### Non-formal and informal civic education

As previously indicated, Malta thrives on many grass-roots civic activities – some more traditionally educational, others more focused on civic awareness and engagement. Funding sometimes exists for some of these initiatives, with national calls of interest being issued, followed by a formal (nominally transparent) process of funding allocation on the basis of relevance and best fit to the call. The main channel of communication for funding calls, process, promotion and nominated successful applications is via Facebook. Facebook is far and away the main channel of national communication for recruitment of courses and activity promotion and engagement (sharing events). Examples of the range of government-funded, industry and volunteer-led current initiatives enjoying sustained interest would be preserving nature and heritage, local clean-up campaigns, art classes and events, learning Maltese, digital skills<sup>30</sup> and many more. Malta punches above its weight in terms of civic education, activities and engagement, using a co-funded model of ad-hoc collaboration between government, the private sector, NGOs and volunteer activism to offer Maltese citizens the widest possible range of activities and learning at the local and national level.

22 [https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/new\\_syllabi/Documents/Year\\_01\\_02\\_03\\_04\\_05/syllabus\\_ethics\\_los\\_yr1.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/new_syllabi/Documents/Year_01_02_03_04_05/syllabus_ethics_los_yr1.pdf)

23 [https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/new\\_syllabi/Documents/Year\\_07\\_08/syllabus\\_ethics\\_yr7.pdf](https://curriculum.gov.mt/en/new_syllabi/Documents/Year_07_08/syllabus_ethics_yr7.pdf)

24 [https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/470346/SEC40Ethics2025.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/470346/SEC40Ethics2025.pdf)

25 Lifelong Learning Malta, part of the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning & Employability Ministry for Education and Employment: <http://lifelonglearning.gov.mt/> and 2022/23 prospectus [[https://lifelonglearning.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/20845\\_OnlineProspectus.pdf](https://lifelonglearning.gov.mt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/20845_OnlineProspectus.pdf)]

26 Aġenzija Żgħażaġh: <https://youth.gov.mt/> (view “empowerment” navigation items).

27 Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, civic education in Maltese schools: <https://youth.gov.mt/schools-civic-education-programmes/>

28 KSU: <https://www.ksu.org.mt/about/resources>

29 KSU Social Policy Commission. 2018. “Civic Education in Malta.” <https://ksu.fra1.digitaloceanspaces.com/17715/Civic-Education-in-Malta-2018.pdf> (A comprehensive analysis of the required educational framework to be implemented in parallel with the lowering of the voting age to 16 for general elections and European Parliament elections.) University of Malta KSU. KSU Social Policy Commission. 2019. “Connect and Include.” <https://ksu.fra1.digitaloceanspaces.com/17716/Connect-%26-Include---2019-.pdf> (Initiatives and events to raise awareness about integration and accessibility and in particular autism at the University of Malta.)

30 E.g. Heritage Malta, Din L'Art Helwa, Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna; the Cast-Out Project: Gozo & Malta; Art Classes Malta, Art Club 2000 (Malta); Malta University Language School; eSkills Foundation (public/private/education partnership).

## Netherlands

Written by: Bas Banning, ProDemos, House for Democracy and the Rule of Law

### Civic education in The Netherlands: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Next to language and maths, civic education is considered a top priority in Dutch formal education. In recent years, ICCS scores were low, in comparison to other northern European countries. The main actors in this arena are the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Interior Affairs and the Ministry of Justice and Safety. ProDemos, House for Democracy and the Rule of Law, is a big actor in secondary schools, because they have funding to let every pupil visit the Dutch National Parliament. ProDemos focuses on democratic education. School and Safety (School en veiligheid) is another organization which is funded by the Ministry of Education and focuses on social safety in schools. The Peaceful School (De vredesame school) is a programme for primary schools and focuses on social competence and democratic citizenship.

### Formal civic education overview

Civic education is a part of the curricula at all levels in primary, secondary and post-secondary vocational education, but not in universities. It is being taught as a cross-curricula topic. Teacher training is organized by all kinds of organizations that are sometimes funded by the ministry. Secondary schools have a separate civic education course for ages 15–17, but it is also being taught as a cross-curricular subject.

Civic education has been underrepresented in primary schools. In 2022, the education inspectorate conducted a study and found that the knowledge and skills of 12-year-olds had gone down since 2009, and that pupils' knowledge of the key values of democracy and the rule of law was especially low. In 2021, a new law required all schools to come up with a plan for civic education. Critics say primary schools must focus on language and maths only.

Post-secondary vocational civic education has its own critics: some claim it does not take civic education seriously, because teachers do not have to have special authorization to teach civic education, while others argue that education should focus only on preparing students for work and not on civic education. Still others consider civic education in secondary schools to be too centred on "left topics" like identity and gender, but all consider civic education to be very important in secondary and primary schools. Dutch secondary schools have a lot of freedom in handling civic education. The Dutch constitutional right of freedom of education means that every religion or belief system can start its own school. Some people (mainly critics on the left) think it would be better to have stricter regulations from the government, but that would require changing the constitution.<sup>31</sup>

### Non-formal and informal civic education

The Dutch system of funding is on a national, regional and local level, which means there are all sorts of non-formal and informal organizations providing civic education – big and small, local and national. The challenge is to get systemic funding and not to go from project to project.

There are a lot of active organizations but they often miss opportunities to collaborate with one another and instead compete with one another when it comes to funding.

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2022/03/09/burgerschapsonderwijs-op-basisscholen-moet-verder-ontwikkeld-worden>

## North Macedonia

Written by: Vlora Reçica, Institute for Democracy Societas Civilis, Skopje

### Civic education in North Macedonia: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Civic education has not been at the forefront of North Macedonia's public discourse. The country has not created a general national strategy or action plan focused on civic education or social and civic competences. Despite a lack of focus on civic education, in 2019, the government, at the time led by Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), adopted a national strategy for developing the "One Society for All" Concept and Interculturalism, which envisioned activities to strengthen the processes of communication and cooperation between communities and to develop the concept of interculturalism. Information on the strategy implementation is scarce, and it shows a lack of implementation. The country is characterized by its multi-ethnic and multicultural composition, and the successful implementation of such a strategy could impact social and civic competences and improve coexistence. Long-standing ethnic and linguistic divisions have prevented students from regularly communicating and interacting throughout their education, thus contributing to interethnic divisions, misunderstandings and stereotyping. Furthermore, old civic education curricula in formal education did not promote the values of proactive engagement, civic culture or participation in civic life; thus, youths have become inactive, disillusioned and unsure about their role in society. The gap created by formal education curricula and the lack of government action has been filled by civil society's activities, projects and programmes.

### Formal civic education overview

Formal civic education has been part of the Macedonian education system since 2002; however, the concept of civic education has undergone several changes and reforms. The most recent reform process of the civic education curricula started in 2017 as a joint effort of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the Bureau for Development of Education (BDE), in cooperation with the Macedonian Center for Civic Education (MCCE), an NGO focused on civic education. Implementation of the new curricula started in September 2020; however, the new programme has not been implemented in all years of secondary education. The new concept of civic education is focused mostly on preparing young people to become active in society and to understand newer concepts of civic engagement and competences.

According to this high school curriculum, the main learning objectives are to equip students with social and civic competences, become active and responsible citizens, engage with social and political developments, advocate for and respect human rights, understand and use media critically, identify common European values and so on.<sup>32</sup> In elementary schools, civic education is often covered in other subjects, such as society, ethics, elective subjects and free subjects and activities. The topics covered by these subjects include children's rights, local community, social groups and roles, organizing with others, diversity and cooperation, developing tolerance and non-discrimination, dialogue, acceptance and respect for human behaviour and developing personal and human values.

Teachers do not always get the necessary support for a more active role, despite the legal requirement stemming from the Law on Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools (article 21), which envisages at least 60 hours over three academic years for personal and professional development. The National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility has organized different seminars and training opportunities for educators. In 2018, the MES, the BDE and the MCCE provided teacher training on civic education following the reforms and the new concept of civic education. The training was aimed at enhancing teachers' skills for implementing the new civic education curriculum. Similar trainings have been conducted in recent years concerning teacher capacities in civic education. High school organizing is established in school statutes, but only a few high school organizations, unions, and clubs exist. Programmes aimed at school staff and students on civic education, engagement and participation are mainly designed and implemented by CSOs.

<sup>32</sup> European Commission, YouthWiki, <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/republic-of-north-macedonia/57-learning-to-participate-through-formal-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

**Non-formal and informal civic education**

Non-formal and informal civic education programmes, schools and training opportunities are generally organized by NGOs, CSOs and civic actors. These programmes are primarily funded by organizations and institutions outside of North Macedonia (including international organizations, embassies of foreign countries and others, such as USAID, UKAID, etc.), with minimal input from national funds and institutions. The available national funding is not transparent, and funding procedures differ between different institutions.

The target audience of non-formal and informal civic education programmes is usually young people, while older generations are rarely a target group. The law on youth representation and policies formally recognized the status of youth workers. Still, challenges remain in its implementation, and the general public is not informed about the work of these organizations, which leads to misinformation, especially regarding funding and speculations on ulterior political motives. The collaboration between different national NGOs and CSOs is limited due to rising competition for funding.

## Poland

Written by: Filip Pazderski, Institute of Public Affairs

### Civic education in Poland: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

In the public education system in Poland, there has been a separate subject called Knowledge of Society since the 1980s. It covers civic education and education in social sciences, including social, political, legal and international issues. Its curriculum and subject range have changed over the years as a result of the actions of successive governments and the reforms of the education system, but in general, it has been taught to young people from the age of 13–14, in primary and secondary schools. Before further changes were made to the education system in 2017 (see below), these were compulsory classes for all students.

One would therefore expect that young Poles educated in this way would demonstrate a high degree of sensitivity to democracy and active citizenship. But the reality of public and social life over the past 20 years shows something different. In fact, young Poles, similarly to their older fellow citizens, exhibit a low level of trust in the institutions of representative democracy. They are also the group of citizens that is least interested in voting. This has changed only recently, in the 2020 presidential election, when 62.3% of eligible voters aged 18–29 took part (64.3% of all Poles). Young Poles emphasize that they are disillusioned with politics because of unjustified quarrels and disputes between politicians that deal mainly with “substitute issues” instead of solving important societal problems.<sup>33</sup> In one of the studies conducted 10 years ago, the young interviewees disturbingly often expressed the view that an effective government is better for society than a democratic government.<sup>34</sup> Youth also do not trust intermediary institutions, especially political parties and traditional media outlets, which expose them to populist politicians, who claim direct representation of the people while bypassing public institutions.<sup>35</sup>

Studies focusing on Central Europe show that the youngest citizens there tend to value higher living standards and access to goods more than democratic values in their country.<sup>36</sup> However, another survey shows that, when asked what features are more important to them personally when evaluating the current political system, Poles generally prefer democratic rights and freedoms to the quality of life and access to services. The same data shows, however, that Polish young adults stand out from this trend. People aged 18–34 are the only age group that values living standards slightly higher than the quality of democracy when the two values are paired. Democracy and freedom of speech were chosen in this context by 26% of this group, while quality of life was chosen by around 27% (with 37% indicating that both values are important, and approximately 10% unable to select any of these three available answers – which is another cause for concern).<sup>37</sup>

The data thus reveal that people remain broadly supportive of representative democracy but their commitment to democratic governance and satisfaction with the way democracy works varies across Europe and – in some countries – paves the way for non-democratic alternatives. This can be the case in Poland. The wavering commitment to democratic values seems to affect younger voters in particular.<sup>38</sup>

33 Batorski, D., Drabek, M., Gałqzka, M., Zbieranek, J. (eds.). 2012. *Wyborca 2.0. Młode pokolenie wobec procedur demokratycznych* [Voter 2.0. The young generation and democratic procedures]. Warsaw, [www.isp.org.pl/publikacje1559.html](http://www.isp.org.pl/publikacje1559.html), pp. 11–14, 18–22.

34 Dudkiewicz, M., Fuksiewicz, A., Kucharczyk, J., Łada, A. 2013. *Parlament Europejski. Społeczne zaufanie i (nie)wiedza* [European Parliament. Social trust and (un)knowledge]. Warsaw, <http://www.isp.org.pl/publikacje25610.html>

35 See report: Gyárfášova, O., Molnár, C., Krekó, P., Pazderski, F., Wessenauer, V. 2018. “Youth, Politics, Democracy: Public Opinion Research in Hungary Poland and Slovakia.” Washington, DC: NDI, <https://www.ndi.org/publications/youth-politics-democracy-public-opinion-research-hungary-poland-and-slovakia>

36 Ibidem, p. 6.

37 Pazderski, F. 2019. “In the Grip of Authoritarian Populism. Polish Attitudes to the Open Society.” Berlin/Brussels: dIpart/OSEPI, <http://voicesonvalues.dipart.org>, pp. 25–26.

38 See more in: Pazderski, F., Kucharczyk, J. 2020. “Democracy and Its Discontents: European Attitudes to Representative Democracy and Its Alternatives.” In Blockmans, S., Russack, S. (eds.), *Deliberative Democracy in the EU. Countering Populism with Participation and Debate*. Brussels: CEPS, <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/deliberative-democracy-in-the-eu/>, pp. 37–59.



In order to explain youth detachment from representative democracy, we should note the poor quality and ineffectiveness of formal civic education. Schools lack the environment where pupils would be introduced to a culture of participation and where from an early age youth would be taught that participation in the life of the community is something natural and important.<sup>39</sup> This is a fact, regardless of good Polish scores in international comparative studies, like the ICCS (International Civic and Citizenship Education Study).<sup>40</sup> These weaknesses of formal civic education in Poland are also evidenced by the low level of civic and social activity of young Poles, even if the opinion polls indicate a slight increase in young Poles' social engagement in recent years. They also have the least open attitudes to cultural diversity and are the only social group within Polish society that prefers better living standards to better democracy (as mentioned above).<sup>41</sup>

However, examples from recent years indicate that motivating the young generation to action requires time and favourable conditions that would allow them to grow to understand the value of democratic institutions.<sup>42</sup> The process of building young Poles' public engagement seems to have gained new urgency in recent years, evidenced by increased involvement of young people in mass protests, especially on climate change and in defence of women's rights.

Moreover, the debate around the system of formal education in Poland has recently been taken over by a new idea from the Ministry of Education, which plans to replace Knowledge of Society classes with a new subject called History and the Present (HiT) from 2022. In December 2021, the ministry released the first proposal of the core curriculum for its teaching.<sup>43</sup> It contains many themes with ideological overtones – including, among other things, no critical evaluation of recent history that coincides with the government's historical policy, a lot of information about the role of the church and the Catholic religion, as well as criticism towards the European Union.

### Formal civic education overview

Over the years, changes have been introduced to the Polish formal education system that also concerned the citizenship education sector. In 2009, the core curriculum of the general education was revised at all levels. Amendments were applied to the contents, working methods and the class timetables. From that moment on, greater emphasis has been placed on the learning outcomes that a student should achieve upon completion of a given level of education, rather than on the organization of the teaching process. Learning outcomes are described in a language of competences, which consist of knowledge, abilities, and social competences. In theory, this approach provided teachers with greater flexibility of choosing working methods and adapting the lessons' structure to better meet the students' needs.

Until 2016, the state's guidelines for schools acknowledged the importance of education for democratic citizenship in the development of school communities. The core curriculum stressed the importance of fostering the development of social and civic competences. There were official means for students' democratic involvement in the processes of school life. However, the 2017 education reform also affected formal civic education (carried out in schools as part of the subject Knowledge of Society – as mentioned above), reducing its importance. The civic education classes were moved to the last academic year of primary school, when pupils are focused on final exams, raising the potential for the topic to be neglected. For secondary education, civic education is a facultative course for the final exam, and only 6.6% of pupils chose it in 2020.<sup>44</sup> Beyond the inefficiency in promoting the topic, the curriculum has few indicators for the development of problem-solving

39 Bacía, E., Pazderski, F., Żmijewska-Kwiręg, S. 2015. Citizenship Education in Poland. Analysis of the Current Situation, Identified Needs, Opportunities and Barriers to Development. ENGAGE, [http://www.engage-edc.eu/download/6\\_ENGAGE\\_Poland.pdf](http://www.engage-edc.eu/download/6_ENGAGE_Poland.pdf)

40 Kosęła, K. 2014. Nauka szkolna i działania obywatelskie [School education and civic activities]. In Kordasiewicz, A., Sadura, P. (eds). "Edukacja obywatelska w działaniu" [Civic education in action]. Warsaw: Scholar, pp. 88–91.

41 Pazderski, "In the Grip."

42 Szafraniec, K. 2012. Dojrzejący obywatele dojrzejącej demokracji. O stylu politycznej obecności młodych. Warsaw: Instytut Obywatelski, p. 17.

43 See <https://serwis.gazetaprawna.pl/edukacja/artykuly/8315487.podstawa-programowa-hit-problemy.html>

44 See <https://cke.gov.pl/egzamin-maturalny/egzamin-w-nowej-formule/wyniki/>

skills, global literacy, creative skills and learning and collaborative skills, and the curriculum also lacks a practical component for learners. The passive model of teaching cannot meet current societal needs, leaving learners in a difficult position to adapt to the biggest current challenges, including climate change and the need to foster green transition. The only active component related to civic education adopted in schools – use of the educational project method – was abandoned as part of the 2017 education reform.<sup>45</sup>

It is worth adding that the same reform introduced organizational chaos in education on an unprecedented scale. It has led to an even more pronounced overload of the core curriculum, and also overcrowded educational institutions by a build-up of three different pupil years. Among other things, this triggered a massive teachers' strike in 2019 (not addressed by the government in any way).

The situation deteriorated further after the 2019 parliamentary elections. The new minister of education continued with reforms in service of political goals. He has increasingly pushed for even tighter control of education superintendents (the minister's representatives in the regions) over the management of individual schools. A bill has also been proposed (called "Lex Czarnek," after the name of the minister) which will effectively restrict access to schools for selected CSOs and similar entities.

These amendments to the education system would force organizations willing to undertake educational activities at school to undergo an extensive and lengthy procedure to obtain a permit. It would primarily involve the school management and parents, but the final approval would always be made individually by the school superintendent without a requirement to consider the opinions of other stakeholders. This could considerably hinder CSO work in schools. The current government's approach to CSOs and statements by the minister of education suggest that school superintendents might be particularly reluctant to allow organizations focused on human rights, anti-discrimination and sex education. The relevant bills have already been introduced twice and vetoed in 2022 by president.<sup>46</sup> However, the minister of education claims he will submit the same bill again. And before the bill has even entered into force, schools have already been threatened with lawsuits for letting in educators from specific organizations, which not only affects cooperation but also creates an atmosphere of resentment towards these CSOs.

### Non-formal and informal civic education

Quantitative research shows that 73% of formalized civil society organizations (out of ca. 100,000 such entities operating in Poland) indicate children and young people as their main target group. Slightly over half of the CSOs operating in Poland declare that education is one of the areas of their work, but only 14% indicate that the field of education and upbringing is the main area of their activities.<sup>47</sup> A small proportion of such organizations run educational institutions themselves.<sup>48</sup> Recent years have not made it easier for CSOs to cooperate with Polish schools (as indicated above). Neither have they been easy for those CSOs that have tried to carry out various activities in the field of civic education in a non-formal or even informal way, especially when they concerned topics incompatible with the ideological profile of the government, e.g. raising issues concerning human rights, counteracting discrimination of minority groups, ecology or cultural diversity.<sup>49</sup> Since these issues and education about them are not prioritized by the government, CSOs find themselves in a climate where funding for work on these topics is reduced. Organizations operating in these areas have also been

<sup>45</sup> See <https://podstawaoprogramowa.pl/Liceum-technikum/Wiedza-o-spoleczenstwie>

<sup>46</sup> See "2023 Rule of Law Report – Targeted Stakeholder Consultation," February 2023, [https://hfhr.pl/upload/2023/02/report\\_2023\\_rule\\_of\\_law.pdf](https://hfhr.pl/upload/2023/02/report_2023_rule_of_law.pdf), p. 35.

<sup>47</sup> Charycka, B., Gumkowska, M., Bednarek, J. 2022. "The Capacity of NGOs in Poland. Key Facts." Warsaw: Klon/Jawor Association, <https://api.ngo.pl/media/get/178891>, p. 7; Charycka, B., Gumkowska, M., Bednarek, J. 2022. "Kondycja organizacji pozarządowych 2021 – najważniejsze fakty." Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Klon/Jawor, <https://kondycja.ngo.pl/>

<sup>48</sup> Charycka, B., Gumkowska, M. 2019. "Kondycja organizacji pozarządowych 2018." Warsaw: Stowarzyszenie Klon/Jawor, <https://fakty.ngo.pl/raporty/kondycja-organizacji-pozarzadowych-2018>

<sup>49</sup> See Pazderski, F. 2020. "CSOs Sustainability Index in Poland in 2019." In "2019 Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia." Washington, DC: USAID/FHI360.

targeted by smear campaigns organized by government-controlled public media and other media outlets close to the ruling party. In addition, they have faced attacks from other organizations close to the government. Even in 2016 (shortly after the current ruling majority took power), there were already cases where organizations involved in anti-discriminatory education lost their existing public subsidies under an artificial pretext.<sup>50</sup>

At the same time, the far-right, nationalistic, religious and conservative organizations linked to members of the parliamentary majority have been receiving increased governmental funding through a new governmental agency created in 2017, the National Freedom Institute, which was established to support civil society development in Poland (also by the means of education).<sup>51</sup>

The activities of CSOs unfavourably assessed by the ruling majority are also rather reluctantly supported by the private sector (especially by larger business). Thus, the only financial support for such CSOs comes from abroad and from individual donations. Private media, particularly those that are critical of the parliamentary majority, are also more favourable to these CSOs. As a result, however, the evaluation of the activities of individual organizations, including those dealing with non-formal and informal education, reflects the deepening polarization of Polish society.

On the positive side, however, there is a tendency for organizations facing so many difficulties to overcome prior distrust and establish more intensive cooperation with each other. This facilitates knowledge exchange, mutual support and the development of joint positions on issues that raise public debate and letters of protest against the actions of the government. CSOs are also able to undertake advocacy campaigns, often forming coalitions in order to oppose the government's decisions that violate standards of international and European law – for example, to support independent education or refugees crossing the Polish-Belarusian border. Several coalitions have recently become active, including S.O.S. for Education,<sup>52</sup> which launched the “Free School” campaign.<sup>53</sup> The latter advocated for the reconstruction of education and opposed the “Lex Czarnek” reform. It is also an example of cooperation between CSOs, employers, local governments and education trade unions. Together, they work on a vision for change in the public education in Poland, so it can respond to the challenges of the 21st century.<sup>54</sup>

50 See: Pazderski, F. 2018. “CSOs Sustainability Index in Poland in 2017.” In “2017 Civil Society Organization (CSO) Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia.” Washington, DC: USAID/FHI360, <https://www.usaid.gov/europe-eurasia-civil-society>.

51 See Korolczuk, E. 2022. “Challenging Civil Society Elites in Poland: The Dynamics and Strategies of Civil Society Actors.” *East European Politics and Societies: and Cultures*, vol. 20, no. 10, p. 9; Pazderski, F. 2022. “Civil Society Organization Sustainability Index 2021: Poland.” Washington, DC: USAID/FHI 360, <https://www.isp.org.pl/en/publications/civil-society-organization-sustainability-index-2021-poland>, p. 6.

52 See <https://sosdlaedukacji.pl/o-nas/>

53 See <https://www.wolnaskola.org/>

54 Participatory work directed towards such a goal took place, among others, at the Education Summit organized at the end of January 2023 – see <https://sosdlaedukacji.pl/szczyt-edukacyjny-partycypacyjnie-o-przyszlosci-edukacji/>

## Portugal

Written by: Patrícia Dias, PhD, & Rita Brito, PhD, Research Centre on Peoples and Cultures

### **Civic education in Portugal: Discourse, challenges and opportunities**

Although civic education is integrated in the Portuguese school curricula, NGOs tend to have more visibility because each one focuses on a specific cause. Celebrities and digital influencers, who often partner up with NGOs, heavily contribute towards raising awareness on specific topics among younger people. Among these, environmental issues, gender issues and bullying stand out. Democratic participation is low in Portugal, particularly among the youth, so promoting this dimension of civic education is a challenge.

### **Formal civic education overview**

Civic education is integrated in the Portuguese formal curricula of schools, in the second cycle of basic education (two years) and in the third cycle of basic education (three years). The subject is graded and considered essential for students to reach the basic education profile that the Education Ministry has established as a goal. At the high school level (three years), civic education can be offered as an optional course, taught in collaboration with another course or integrated in multidisciplinary projects. The syllabus is broad and includes the following topics: human rights, gender equality, interculturalism, sustainable development, environmental education, health, sexuality, media literacy, democratic participation, financial literacy, road safety, entrepreneurship, defence and peace, animal wellbeing and volunteering. Schools are free to address additional topics according to identified needs.

In general, this course is well accepted by students and parents. However, there have been some cases of parents protesting against their children studying topics related to sexuality, gender and life (abortion, euthanasia), arguing that the approach of the course goes against their religious beliefs.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

Non-formal and informal civic education is rich and varied in Portugal. Generally, it is promoted by non-governmental organizations. Most of them act in conjunction with schools, offering extracurricular projects or projects integrated in specific courses. Funding is provided by the Portuguese government, by the European Union and other international sources and by the Portuguese society, as many of these NGOs often engage in fundraising campaigns. Most of these organizations engage in communication, using primarily digital media, but it is often amateur, done by volunteers rather than by trained professionals.

## Romania

Written by: Alis Costescu, Ratiu Democracy Center

### Civic education in Romania: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

The results of a study conducted in 2019 by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation highlight the need for formal, non-formal and informal civic education in Romania.<sup>55</sup> The perceptions of the respondents (aged 14–29) on democracy, civil/human rights and freedoms and active civic involvement reveal the following issues of concern:

- 17.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed that “democracy is a good form of government in general”;
- 22.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that “in certain circumstances, dictatorship is a better form of government than democracy”;
- 28.5% of respondents believed that ethnic minorities in Romania enjoy too many rights, and 22.9% expressed the same opinion about the LGBT community;
- 80.7% of the young people interviewed had never signed a petition or list of demands, and 80.1% had never participated in volunteering activities or civil society mobilization.

It should also be mentioned that only 25% of youth voted during the last parliamentary elections (2020).

The main actors implementing and promoting civic education are educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, media and citizens. The low level of civic involvement and initiatives among youth can be improved through meaningful joint partnerships between civil society and public institutions, with a focus on the increased opportunities for European youth – such as mobility opportunities – and through campaigns for raising awareness of issues and promoting best practices.

### Formal civic education overview

At the national level, civic education is part of the common core of disciplines in primary and secondary school (and an optional discipline only for some high schools). Civic education is studied in the third and fourth grades (primary education), while disciplines that pertain to the social education field are studied in secondary school (since 2017) as follows: critical thinking and children’s rights (fifth grade); intercultural education (sixth grade); education for democratic citizenship (seventh grade); economic-financial education (eighth grade).

The project CRED – Relevant Curriculum, Education Open to All was funded through the Operational Programme Human Capital 2014–2020 with approximately 42 million euro. Through this project, the Ministry of Education aimed to train 55,000 primary and secondary school teachers in order to harmonize the teaching content of the new framework plans. While the trainings started in September 2019 (with a delay of two years after the new content was introduced in the secondary school curricula), only 108 teachers had been trained for the social education discipline at the national level by December 2021.<sup>56</sup>

Furthermore, Rareş Voicu, the president of the Students’ Council, observed in an interview (in 2021) that the topics taught within the civic education discipline are outdated, and the textbooks are very old (or delivered to the students with delays).<sup>57</sup> Although the national education system needs to develop professional, social and civic skills in students, the importance granted to civic competences seems to be rather low. The discipline is graded.

<sup>55</sup> <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/bukarest/15294.pdf>; <https://publicatii.romaniacurata.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Policy-brief-cum-formeaza-Romania-competentele-civice-si-sociale-ale-elevilor.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> <https://publicatii.romaniacurata.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Policy-brief-cum-formeaza-Romania-competentele-civice-si-sociale-ale-elevilor.pdf>, p. 10.

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.mediafax.ro/social/educatia-civica-este-predata-in-scoli-dupa-manuale-vechi-de-14-ani-unii-elevi-nu-stiu-ca-romania-este-in-uniunea-europeana-19849075>

### Non-formal and informal civic education

The interest in developing non-formal and informal civic education initiatives increased since Romania became a member state of the European Union. In 2015, only 4% of the total active NGOs in Romania worked in the civic field, while 21% of the total active NGOs were focused on social/charitable activities, followed by sports/hobbies at 19%.<sup>58</sup>

European and international funds focused on fostering active citizenship, democracy, active participation, education and training (i.e. former Youth in Action, current Erasmus+ programmes, Active Citizens EEA funds, Europe for Citizens funds and others) have facilitated more articulated and engaged civic initiatives. The main challenge for the organizations working in civic education remains the bureaucracy. For example, sometimes a collaboration protocol or partnership between an NGO and a school can be signed without any further approval from the County School Inspectorate, which facilitates the cooperation between the two actors, but most of the time in Romania the process is intentionally dragged out and involves further hierarchic approvals or validations.

National funding is available, and there is also funding from city halls for local NGOs and informal groups. Yet, the budget available at the local level for funding civic initiatives is limited. Moreover, in 2015, 7.9% of NGOs accounted for 82% of the total income in the sector, while national funding (local or central) was the main funding source for only 6.5% of the total active NGOs;<sup>59</sup> the majority of them relied on private funding, the 2% mechanism, EU funding, etc.

Organizations do collaborate, though collaboration is often limited to individual projects or grant applications. The general public is not sufficiently informed, and even if the organizations use traditional and new means of communication, the information frequently does not reach the public.

<sup>58</sup> [https://www.fdsc.ro/library/files/romania2017.the\\_ngo\\_sector\\_\(en\\_summary\).pdf](https://www.fdsc.ro/library/files/romania2017.the_ngo_sector_(en_summary).pdf), p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.ies.org.ro/library/files/romania-2017.pdf>, pp. 36–77.

## Slovakia

Written by: Jana Feherpataky-Kuzmová, Institute for Active Citizenship & Juraj Varga, Centre for Education and Innovations

### Civic education in Slovakia: Discourse, challenges and opportunities<sup>60</sup>

When discussing Slovakia, we need to keep in mind that the formal education system and especially primary education are currently being remodelled, and the former two levels of primary education are being transformed into three cycles. This process goes hand in hand with curricular reform. In 2018, all the major actors in civic education (formal and non-formal), 13 organizations altogether, started an initiative for civic education and organized their first national conference in June 2022, entitled *ID Does Not Make a Citizen 2022*. Important findings were presented by national and international experts and the need for a networking and advocacy platform was openly articulated. Challenges discussed at the conference were, inter alia, working responsibly with online channels, strengthening debate skills and information sourcing, counteracting the trend of decreased volunteering and civic engagement, cultivating communities for young people and developing skills like leadership, problem solving, critical thinking and cooperation. A big challenge is the fact that formal civic education is undervalued and marginalized, and it doesn't fit the needs of students and society; additionally, it is being taught by teachers without the proper qualification and training. Vladimír Šucha, one of the keynote speakers at the conference, described the situation in a nutshell: "Slovakia has an acute problem of mistrust among the citizens, and trust is one of the basic elements of society." Potential solutions would require systemic change in the curriculum and methods of education, including addressing current social challenges, providing consistent support and further education for the teachers, school directors and youth workers, implementing extracurricular activities including volunteering into the education process, as well as highlighting to the general public the value of quality democratic civic education.

### Formal civic education overview

Civic education is a separate subject, without cross-curricular interconnections and without integrated thematic learning and teaching. Within the curriculum (the current curriculum as well as the one in the process of being developed), it is one of the key subjects in the so-called Man and Society educational area, together with history, geography and potentially ethics and religious education. As discussed during the 2022 conference, civic education receives the least amount of attention in formal education and its reform. The subject is graded mostly with summative assessments focusing on pupils' ability to memorize the required facts and information rather than on building crucial civic and life skills for life in the 21st century.

The expertise of civic education teachers varies, but between 30% and 60%<sup>61</sup> of teachers have not received relevant university education (which is of course only one of the relevant indicators), depending on the type of school. Quality teacher training is provided mostly by civil society organizations (NGOs, civic associations), but along with the curricular reform, major organizations from the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport were merged and transformed into one National Institute for Education and Youth. Accredited teacher training was provided for civil society organizations and not just for public methodology and pedagogy centres that were dysfunctional in providing proper teacher training and support programmes and support for teachers. The least amount of attention is granted to civic education teachers at vocational schools, who are in fact the most vulnerable ones.

The lack of modern, up-to-date and high-quality education materials, the low level of inclusion and low social appreciation are among the challenge for civic education in Slovakia.

60 Before the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://ipao.sk/vyskum/mladi-ludia-neveria-ze-na-ich-nazore-zalez/>; after the COVID-19 pandemic: <https://zoiakaobcanom.sk/slovensko-pandemia-prehlbila-problemy-v-obcianskom-vzdelavani-musime-zacat-konat/>

61 [https://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky.html?page\\_id=9230](https://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/statistiky.html?page_id=9230)

**Non-formal and informal civic education**

As of summer 2022, civic society organizations, public organizations and the newly established National Institute for Education and Youth started to work closely together to discuss the form, content and support of formal, non-formal and informal civic education. The biggest need is for a platform for networking, sharing best practices and advocacy. National funding is being made available for all the actors and is becoming transparent. All the major actors in civic education collaborate and are running the Initiative for civic education. It is hard to estimate the extent of information impact on the general public. Information is openly available, but the information campaigns are not very big. Overall, it is a challenge for the organizations and institutions providing non-formal civic education to operate sustainably and in cooperation with the state and local government authorities.



## Slovenia

Written by: Tomaž Deželan, PhD, & Nina Vombergar, University of Ljubljana

### Civic education in Slovenia: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Civic education in Slovenia has been developing since the country's independence in 1991. In 1996, it entered the formal education system for the first time through a compulsory subject called Citizenship Education and Ethics at the level of primary school education. Since then, it has appeared at all levels of the formal education system under various names, either as a compulsory or an elective subject. It has also been included as a cross-curricular topic in other subjects such as history, Slovenian language and geography. One of the main challenges has always been the contradictory views and opinions by the political (ideological) authorities on what should be taught and learned in the formal education system under the name of civic education. This issue can be illustrated by the history of the symbolic changing of the name of the subject under which civic education was delivered to pupils in primary education in the past years: Citizenship Education and Ethics (until 2008), Citizenship and Patriotic Education and Ethics (2008–2013), Patriotic and Citizenship Culture and Ethics (since 2013). Another challenge is related to the competences of the educators who teach civic education. Since only one hour per week is currently dedicated to civic education in primary schools, teachers are not primarily focused on this subject. Moreover, no special qualifications in the field of civic education are currently needed to become a teacher of the subject.

A systemic solution would be needed in order to equip civic education teaching staff with relevant knowledge, methods and skills to facilitate classes in this field in an engaging way. Civic education in Slovenia should respond to the alarming national and international situation where false information and media illiteracy result in the spreading of conspiracy theories, prejudices, discrimination and populism. Thus, one of the main objectives of civic education should be to prepare (young) individuals to think critically and be empathetic and to equip them with the skills to recognize reliable information and relevant knowledge in order to empower them and promote an inclusive society. While the numerous and diverse non-formal and informal education programmes seem to be committed to this, the formal education system does not yet seem to be doing enough to promote such citizenship attitudes.

### Formal civic education overview

Civic education is taught in primary schools as part of the formal curricula as mandatory content within a subject called Patriotic and Citizenship Culture and Ethics (two years, for a total of 70 hours, and the subject is graded). The general objectives are to develop political literacy and critical thinking and to promote the active participation of pupils in society. Civic education in primary schools is also present in the content of the elective subject Citizenship Culture (in the final year of primary school, for a total of 32 hours). It is based on knowledge and understanding of one's own national and cultural traditions, while at the same time introducing pupils to other cultures, their perspectives and different social systems. In addition, civic education in primary schools is also taught as a cross-curricula topic within other subjects, such as history, geography and Slovenian language. A person who has successfully completed studies (in tertiary education) of philosophy, geography, sociology, political science, theology or history can become a teacher of Patriotic and Citizenship Culture and Ethics. Professional support for teachers is provided by the National Education Institute Slovenia, which collaborates with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The intertwining of civic and patriotic education is regarded as desirable by some (ideological) positions and as problematic by others. The general question of what should be taught under the name of citizenship education reflects the wider issue of the ambiguous definition of citizenship, which is also a topic of political (ideological) disagreements.

Since 2020, Active Citizenship has been compulsory in upper secondary school programmes in the category Other Forms of Educational Work. The key difference from subject-based lessons is that the Active Citizenship content is largely carried out as activities and tasks connected with the environment students live in. The fundamental objective of the content under this name is to promote active, informed and responsible dem-

ocratic citizenship and participation. As in primary schools, the teachers of this subject can be graduates of sociology, philosophy, history, geography or political science. The subject was intended to be introduced into the curriculum as a compulsory subject in 2019, but this did not happen due to opposition from headmasters (who argued that an additional subject would overload high school students beyond the legally permissible number of lessons per week).

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

Civic education in the context of non-formal and informal learning is conducted in various forms by diverse (public or private) non-governmental organizations, such as associations and institutes. Some of them address civic education in more direct ways, but it is mainly delivered in indirect ways through various topics (such as global learning, human rights, sustainability, culture, anti-discrimination, etc.) and methods. Non-formal and informal civic education is mainly financially supported through different calls for proposals at the national, municipal and European levels. At the national level, financing is mainly available through the ministries (such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities).

Associations, which are the main promoters of civic education activities in the non-formal and informal context, are popular forms of engagement in Slovenia. There are almost 24,000 associations in Slovenia (or 1 association per 90 residents). Uncertain and inconsistent project funding is one of the fundamental challenges for organizations offering non-formal and informal education in this field. It makes long-term planning difficult and forces organizations to adapt to each call's conditions and focus, rather than following their own missions. Project funding also produces competitiveness between organizations for scarce resources at the national and local levels and thus creates less favourable conditions for collaboration and sharing of funds among organizations.

## Spain

Written by: Rafael López-Meseguer, PhD, European Foundation Society and Education, Universidad Internacional de la Rioja

### Civic education in Spain: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Civic education has been a topic of political controversy in Spain for more than 20 years. Since the introduction of a subject related to citizenship in 2006 (called Education for Citizenship), there have been numerous debates about the appropriateness of introducing such a subject and the content it should cover.

The main challenges for civic education in Spain can be summarized as follows:

- The public (especially the educational community) is suspicious of anything related to civic education.
- There is no specific training in citizenship for future teachers at the university level, and there are hardly any teacher training courses that deal with this subject (they only do so in a cross-curricular manner).
- It is difficult in Spain for the main political parties to reach agreement on education.
- Some political parties refuse outright to address at school any issues concerning the sphere of moral choices.
- Civil society has scant involvement in matters concerning citizenship.

In terms of opportunities, the following could be highlighted:

- The increase of citizenship awareness regarding the need to address the political and social challenges of the 21st century;
- Some development of civic education in public policy;
- Spain's participation in the latest edition of the International Civic & Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), which will provide valuable data for research in civic education.

### Formal civic education overview

The subject of Civic and Ethical Values in Spain is the most recent development of the so-called Ethics subject, introduced as an alternative to Religion in the 1970s. Prior to that, for about four years, there used to be a compulsory subject related to civic education called Education for Citizenship, which was introduced in 2006, but was then revoked in 2012. After a few years during which pupils could choose between Religion and Ethical Values, the current educational regulations have once again made the subject compulsory, relegating Religion to the status of an elective. Ethical Values is taught for one year at the primary stage (6 to 12 years) and for another year at the secondary stage (12 to 16 years).

In both primary and secondary school, the subject covers the development of four fundamental spheres of skills. The first is self-knowledge and the development of personal autonomy. The second covers understanding the social framework of coexistence and commitment to the democratic principles, norms and values on which it is based. The third refers to attitudes compatible with the sustainability of the environment, based on an understanding of our interdependent and eco-dependent relationship with it. And finally, the fourth area is dedicated to the understanding of emotions, and deals with the development of sensitivity and affection within the framework of the ethical, civic and eco-social problems of our time.

However, recent studies in Spain have revealed that this type of subject is perceived by both students and teachers as a second-tier subject, making it difficult for meaningful learning to take place. Furthermore, there is no specific teacher training, so civic education is actually taught by teachers who need to complete their working hours.

On the other hand, at the university level, there are no specific subjects devoted to civic education. However, there are interesting core curriculum initiatives in some universities, where students combine their specific professional subjects with the study of major philosophical texts, and where they reflect on the meaning of personal and social existence.

**Non-formal and informal civic education**

If we consider non-formal civic education, there are different institutions within the framework of the Spanish third sector that promote the development of civic learning in one way or another. However, these institutions do not consider themselves “civic educators,” according to the terminology used in this project. They include foundations, NGOs and other institutions working mainly in the field of development cooperation, in the education sector or in the dissemination of cultural activities. Some of these institutions develop activities focused on young people, while others focus their activities on adults.

From an informal perspective, schools and universities often organize activities that lead to civic learning, such as participation in citizenship projects, cultural activities, volunteering, service-learning, etc. However, this does not take place in a systematic way, but depends on the initiative of educators or educational institutions. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the percentage of young people who carry out non-conventional participatory actions (signing petitions, practicing sustainable consumption, attending demonstrations, etc.) has increased in recent years, which represents an opportunity from an informal and non-formal perspective to address citizenship issues within this population group.

## Turkey

Written by: Ulaş Bayraktar, PhD, Kültürhane

### Civic education in Turkey: Discourse, challenges and opportunities

Civic education in Turkey does not have a long history simply because during the era of the Ottoman Empire the people were deprived of most of their social and political rights as subjects of the sultan. With the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, formal civic education was introduced with the objective of “raising good citizens by actively integrating new generations to their environment” so that they love their land and thus get engaged with it.

The emphasis on “love” in this formula reveals the patriotic character of the spirit of civic education in the young republic. Traumatized by the collapse of a powerful empire, the founding elite’s priority was to secure the loyalty of the people to the newly established regime. Although their rights were also mentioned, citizens were more identified with their duties vis-à-vis the state. A nation was imagined and introduced with restricted cultural and political characteristics. Thus, civic education focused on securing the consent of the people for acknowledging and internalizing this definition. In other words, civility was more a subject of obedience than political rights. Hence it aimed for “good citizenship” rather than “political citizenship.”

In short, the most important debate on civic education in Turkey is based on the definition of citizenship and civility. As the state prioritizes an understanding of citizenship identified with obedience, public civic education implies duties rather than a conscience of rights. In the 1990s, civic education entered the agenda of NGOs with a perspective on human rights, participatory democracy and gender equality. This distinction between the public and civil understandings of citizenship has resulted in political tension, paving the way for the political stigmatization and even punishment of civil society organizations.

### Formal civic education overview

The early, and eventually fruitless, attempt at Ottoman citizenship was embraced after the proclamation of the republic. As early as 1924, a “Guide for Life” was prepared and distributed to schools to define the 48 principles for the ideal Turk. The 42nd principle preaches to children to not be unjust, unfair or silent against injustice – in contrast with the passive subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

In the same year, the first official curriculum was launched for primary schools in which the subject called Dialogues on Ethics and Information on the Homeland was prioritized. In every year of primary education, an hour-long course was introduced under this title with the objective of “raising good citizens by actively integrating new generations into their environment.”

This objective was so important for the founders of the republic that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk had personally undertaken writing the book Civil Information for Citizens. Although the official author was Afet Inan, his adoptive daughter, it is publicly known that Atatürk himself wrote some of the chapters of the book.

The founding party of the republic held the power alone until the transition to the multiparty regime in 1946 and until leaving the government seat to the recently founded Democrat Party in 1950. In the decade during which DP ruled the country, there were no significant changes with regard to the understanding of citizenship identified with loyalty. The only difference was the stronger emphasis on national values and culture. Given the conservative character of the ruling party, this was not unexpected.

The democratic character of the 1961 constitution, which was promulgated after the military coup of 1960, had repercussions for the civic education curriculum. While keeping the appraisal of the Turkish state and the nation, it emphasized the importance of active and participatory citizenship that was henceforth also associated with humanist and global values. However, this democratic inclination would not last long, as the

military coup of 1980 and the following repressive regime would take back the civic education curriculum to the nationalist and statist tone of the 1940s. The spirit of the era was the safeguard of the state at the expense of the individual rights of citizens against the threat of foreign interventions. In this understanding of citizenship, religion and race appeared as the core values of the Turkish nation.

With the integration of the Turkish economy into the global markets in the 1980s, the universal human rights discourse entered the curriculum of civic education in parallel with the campaigns of the United Nations and the European Union. While courses on human rights had been included in the official curricula, the growing unrest in the Kurdish provinces and the subsequent security measures had emphasized the importance of national unity and security. This eclectic reading of civic education persists with the acknowledgement of human rights and civic values, but within a restricted framework of national security.

In the following years, the government launched several programmes for this purpose. For example, the Human Rights programme that ran between 1998 and 2007 aimed at familiarizing public servants in the Ministries of Justice, Education and Internal Affairs with the human rights agenda. Another more recent programme introduces courses of civic education to recruited young men during their mandatory military service. However, these programmes were based on a statist and nationalist interpretation, and thus on a restricted reading of human rights and citizenship.

### **Non-formal and informal civic education**

The 1990s also witnessed the emergence of NGOs that campaigned and advocated for respect of civic values and human rights. The foundation of human rights associations monitoring particularly the violations of human rights against the opponents of the government, especially those active in the Kurdish movement, was a milestone in the civic education domain. Despite the direct reference to human rights, these movements were stigmatized as political and ideological mobilizations and thus did not facilitate the mainstreaming of civic values, except for those who were actively involved in or empathized with this kind of activism.

Movements related to gender and ecology have been another domain that emphasized human rights and civic values. Different from human rights activism, these movements have managed to build more heterogeneous communities that function as de facto civic education domains. Campaigns on ecological rights, civil rights, gender equality, etc., have mobilized millions of people to become informed, conscious and active about their civic responsibilities and rights.

The activism of such organizations has also triggered very significant mass mobilizations since the 1990s, for instance, against political corruption (One Minute of Darkness for Brightness), against plants and projects damaging to the environment (Bergama peasants), for workers' rights (Resistance of Turkish Tobacco Workers), for civic monitoring of elections (Vote and Beyond), etc.

The Gezi Movement in the summer of 2013 marked the summit of such civic mobilizations. By gathering all rights-based organizations, activists and ordinary citizens, social protests all around the country, particularly at the Taksim Square in Istanbul, enabled the dissemination of civic rights perspectives beyond political organizations or the direct victims of human rights violations and thus served as an exceptional occasion for civic education.

Despite the heightened political authoritarianism and centralism of the government, particularly since the failed military coup in 2017 and the following state of emergency, civic activism has not been totally suppressed, especially in the gender and ecological domains, thus keeping civic values on the agenda and disseminating such values among the population.

The organization UN HABITAT II Conference in Istanbul in 1999 and the civic mobilization during the earthquakes of 1999 have resulted in the mainstreaming of civic organizations and activism. The foundation of civic

councils in numerous cities within the framework of the UN-funded Local Agenda 21 project has also introduced a new understanding of civic mobilization and thus served as a platform for active civic education.

During the same period, volunteering has spread among university students. Apart from universities that introduced credited volunteering programmes or courses, organizations like the Foundation of Social Volunteers facilitated and encouraged civic undertakings by university students with the objective of raising their civic consciousness.

Unfortunately, all these initiatives are deprived of public funding and suffer from a lack of cooperation and coordination among the organizers. Moreover, the political tension and the harsh reaction of the state represent a big challenge for these initiatives.

[illegible]



This image shows a full page of a document template designed for handwriting practice or general note-taking. It consists of approximately 28 evenly spaced, horizontal dotted lines running across the width of the page. The background is plain white, and there are no margins, headers, footers, or other markings present.





