

Symposium - Strengthening Education for Democracy

EfD in the EU: the examples of six countries

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(Dublin City University – Ireland)



Democrat

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

DCU

Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University



This project has received funding from the European
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Overview of the Six Countries:

ESTONIA:

Bridging Knowledge and Practice in Democracy

Estonia emphasises learner-centred education with a strong focus on collaboration and problem-solving, reflecting democratic values.



Challenges

- Limited practical opportunities for students to engage in democratic activities, resulting in lower-than-average EU participation rates.
- Teachers' insufficient pre-service training in participatory teaching methods.
- High workloads and inconsistent civics education limiting sustained development of citizenship competencies.

Opportunities

- Update to social subject curricula
- Efforts to enhance teacher training

Overview of the Six Countries:



SPAIN

Competence-Based Education and Service- Learning



- Education for Democracy (EfD) in Spain shaped by the 2022 education reform, which introduced "citizenship competence" as a key focus across all subjects and educational levels.
- Citizenship Competence: embedded in all subjects.
- Learning Situations: real-world democratic scenarios.
- Service-Learning: academic learning linked with community service.

Opportunities

- Deepen engagement through Service-Learning.
- Broaden reach with cross-curricular democratic education.

Challenges

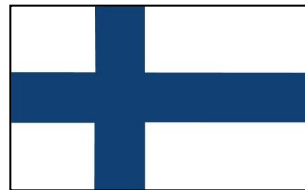
- Scepticism about the long-term impact of reforms, given frequent policy changes.
- Inconsistent Implementation across regions due to regional autonomy.

Overview of the Six Countries:



FINLAND

Holistic and Inclusive Education for Democracy



- Finland's emphasis on equality, quality, and comprehensive student development.
- Democratic values integrated into the broader educational framework.
- Finnish schools emphasise community trust, collective well-being, and critical thinking, preparing students for active citizenship.

Opportunities

- Strong focus on research and initiatives supporting democracy education, backed by the Ministry of Education and collaborations with NGOs.

Challenges

- Varying degrees of implementation across schools
- Information overload and increasing polarisation in classrooms.

Overview of the Six Countries:



POLAND:

Creative Approaches to Democratic Education

Teachers use creative methods like simulation games, project-based learning, and participatory budgeting. Focus on fostering critical thinking and democratic governance in schools.



Challenges

- Limited understanding of democracy and need for more experiential learning
- Financial constraints limiting educational programmes

Opportunities

- Expanding community involvement,
- Strengthening international collaborations for best practices.

Overview of the Six Countries:



GERMANY

Integrating Democracy into School Life

- Germany's decentralised education system incorporates EfD through various subjects like Social Studies, History, and German language, with a focus on democratic competencies.
- Education for democracy integrated into everyday school life through project days, school parliaments, and student councils.



Opportunities

- Leveraging regional support for civic education,
- Expanding holistic democratic education initiatives.

Challenges

- Teacher shortages and high workloads,
- Managing diversity in classrooms and the need for additional resources to support inclusive education.

Overview of the Six Countries:



EfD in Ireland is integrated into various educational stages:

Politics and Society (Senior Cycle) – A subject focused on political literacy and civic engagement.

Civic, Social, and Political Education (CSPE) (Junior Cycle) – Encourages active citizenship, although it has shifted from core to optional in recent years.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (Primary level) – Introduces young students to basic democratic concepts and values.

Aistear (Early Childhood) – Emphasises holistic development, including social and civic competencies

IRELAND

Experiential and
Participatory Learning
for Democracy



Opportunities

- Irish Primary Curriculum reform
- Youth councils have successfully influenced local and national policies, showcasing the power of youth in governance

Challenges

- Varying degrees of implementation across schools
- Limited reach of CSPE due to its optional status.
- Exclusion of marginalised groups, the rise of the Far-Right, anti-immigration sentiment driven by social media and the need for holistic, inclusive education.

Commonalities, Contrasts & Gaps



- **Shared Practices:** Emphasis on participation, critical thinking, and collaboration.
- **Challenges:** Variability in implementation and the need for teacher training.
- **Innovative Approaches:** Service-learning, participatory budgeting, and inclusive pedagogy.
- **Contrasts:** Different focuses across countries (e.g., global citizenship in Ireland vs. practical civic participation in Estonia).
- **Gaps:** Inconsistent emphasis on digital literacy, resilience, and mental health education.



Thank you!

Dr Justin Rami,
Dr Ben Mallon
Dr John Lalor
Dr Ebru Eren



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Strengthening Education for Democracy

From competences to curriculum

Maija Hytti, Niclas Sandström

University of Helsinki

ECER Nikosia 29.8.2024



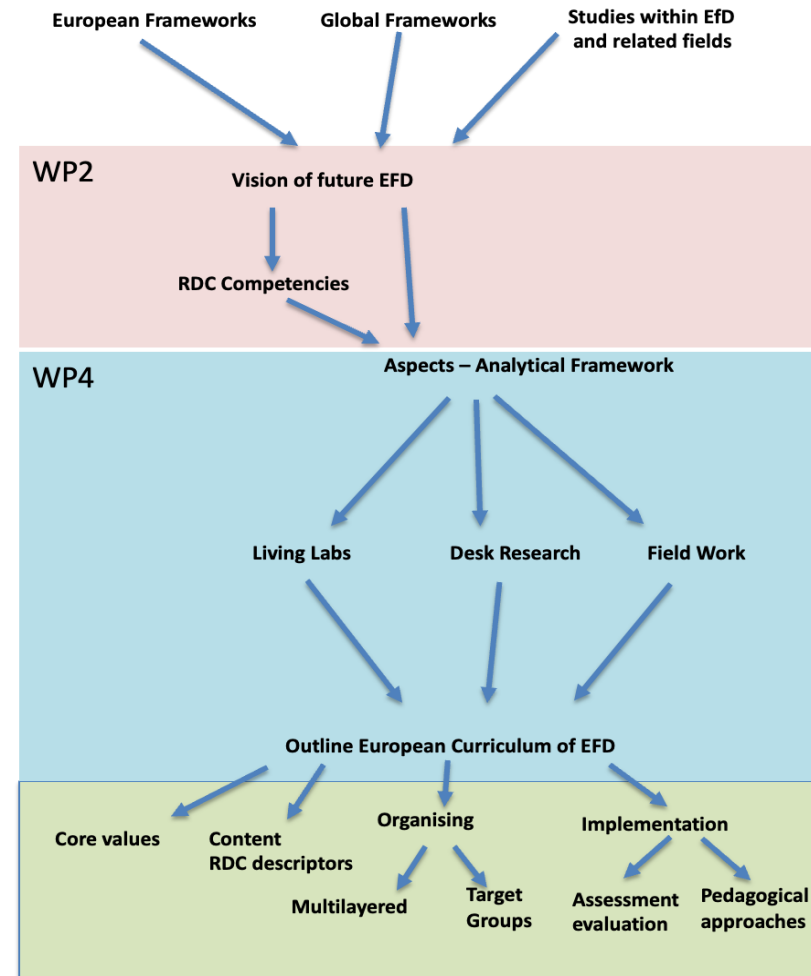
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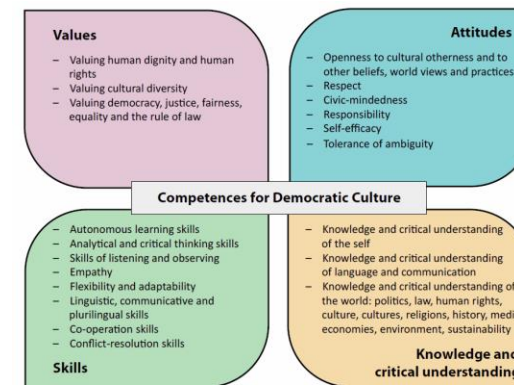
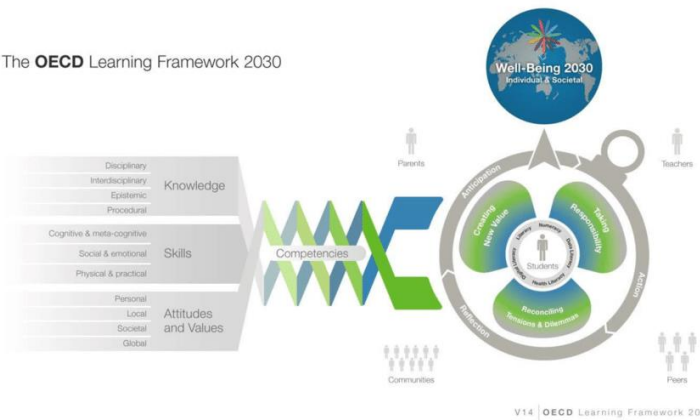
Project phases



Background



The OECD Learning Framework 2030



RDC into analytical framework



Aspect of <u>EfD</u>
Understanding democracy basics
Understanding self: identity and culture
Engagement and participation
Commitment to ethics, norms, democratic values
Collaboration & deliberation
Respect and empathy
Problem-solving ability and solution-oriented mindset
Judgement of trustworthiness
Reflection, learning to learn, emotions and readiness to change
Resilience and thriving in uncertainty

RDC into analytical framework



ASPECT	Description	Relation to RDC Framework
Understanding democracy basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does democracy mean (for everyone), which areas of personal life are open for democracy, which are closed - what is society, how does it work - what is democratic political and governing system, how does it work - democratic societies: rights and responsibilities - decision-making processes: politics, elections etc. - infrastructure - what are the roles and expectations for citizens in a democratic society 	<p>Participation/Solidarity: Encourages active participation in democratic processes and societal engagement, fostering solidarity. Judgement: Enhances critical understanding of political systems and decision-making processes, aiding in discerning the democratic structure's reliability. Deliberation: Informs respectful discussions and debates on democratic processes and structures.</p>
Understanding self: identity and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be who you are, building identity in a safe environment (also ethnicity, culture, gender/sexuality etc.) - "we are products of our culture", the role of identity and culture in society - exposure to different ways of thinking, languages, cultures etc. 	<p>Participation/Solidarity: Promotes inclusion and collaboration across different social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, fostering a sense of solidarity. Deliberation: Encourages respectful dialogue and understanding of diverse perspectives, essential for democratic deliberation.</p>

RDC into analytical framework



<p>Engagement and participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - willingness/ desire to contribute/participate in society, 'active citizen' with agency - having the feeling that one belongs and can have an impact (politics, community, society) - participating and engaging in a time and energy adequate way - promote inclusion of others and collaboration - manage one's time, diverse obligations, plan, implement and achieve results - engage in community and political affairs in a time and energy adequate way, with an impact 	<p>Participation/Solidarity: Directly aligns with fostering participation and promoting solidarity by encouraging active involvement and collaboration. Deliberation: Involves engaging in public discourse and community debates, essential for democratic decision-making. Democratic Resilience: Enhances the ability to participate and contribute during crises, maintaining democratic principles.</p>
<p>Commitment to ethics, norms, democratic values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - personal responsibility as a democratic citizen - defending democracy - not compromising on ethical principles for short-term gain - being aware and addressing social inequalities in democratic processes, particularly during crises 	<p>Democratic Resilience: Emphasizes the commitment to democratic values and ethical principles, particularly in times of adversity. Participation/Solidarity: Involves defending democratic principles and addressing social inequalities, fostering a sense of collective responsibility and solidarity. Judgement: Upholds ethical discernment in democratic processes.</p>
<p>Collaboration & deliberation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - respectful discussion for collective decision-making, including conflict - resolution and dealing constructively/peacefully with diverse perspectives, arguments and interest in a public debate - collaboration with the others getting things done 	<p>Deliberation: Central to democratic life, emphasizing respectful and constructive discourse for decision-making. Participation/Solidarity: Encourages collaborative efforts, essential for fostering solidarity. Democratic Resilience: Supports resilience by promoting collaboration and effective conflict resolution.</p>
<p>Respect and empathy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - towards self and others 	<p>Participation/Solidarity: Enhances solidarity by promoting respect and empathy within diverse communities. Deliberation: Facilitates respectful and empathetic dialogue, crucial for democratic deliberation.</p>

RDC into analytical framework



<p>Problem-solving ability and solution-oriented mindset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - defining problems and analyzing their root causes - applying critical thinking, systems thinking, design thinking etc - generating solutions and deciding on courses of action - having a can-do attitude always seeking solutions 	<p>Judgement: Enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills, crucial for evaluating and addressing issues within democratic processes. Democratic Resilience: Supports the capacity to solve problems and find solutions during crises, maintaining democratic values. Deliberation: Involves critical discussions and collective problem-solving in democratic contexts.</p>
<p>Judgement of trustworthiness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discerning reliable information, behaviour and intentions of others, especially in the digital age of misinformation - media literacy and also scientific literacy more broadly, such as being aware of algorithms, having healthy suspicion, double-checking, proof seeking, understanding data and how it is presented etc. 	<p>Judgement: Directly relates to the competence of discerning trustworthy information and evaluating sources, essential for informed democratic participation.</p>
<p>Reflection, learning to learn, emotions and readiness to change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - critical reflection in order to learn and to have transformation - embracing and working with emotions that are a strong factor in learning - lifelong learning - basics about psychological well-being, learning to self-regulate emotions, learning to learn, growth mindset, setting healthy boundaries etc 	<p>Democratic Resilience: Enhances personal resilience and adaptability, crucial for maintaining democratic values in changing circumstances. Judgement: Encourages critical reflection and continuous learning, essential for informed and reflective democratic participation. Participation/Solidarity: Supports personal growth and active participation through self-reflection and emotional readiness.</p>

RDC into analytical framework



Resilience and thriving in uncertainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- not compromising democratic values- collaboration during crisis- facing crisis together, problem-solving in crisis- personal peace and balance - basics about psychological wellbeing, learning to self-regulate emotions, learning to learn, growth mindset, setting healthy boundaries etc.- individual survival skills from food growing and cooking to making do without electricity, internet	<p>Democratic Resilience: Directly relates to the competence of maintaining democratic principles and effectively responding to crises. Participation/Solidarity: Encourages collaborative efforts and mutual support during crises. Judgement: Involves critical evaluation and problem-solving in uncertain situations. Deliberation: Promotes collective problem-solving and decision-making in times of crisis.</p>
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Curriculum elements

- Current policies, Curricula, needs
- RDC Competences
- Organising the Curriculum
- Context – Teachers- Shared vision and understanding
- Implementation, pedagogies, Living Labs
- Assessment and evaluation



RDCC Evaluation tool



Resilience	Most of the basic level elements are missing	Students understand foundational principles of democracy and develop basic resilience skills such as maintaining a positive attitude, recognizing personal strengths and weaknesses, and seeking help when needed. They understand community responsibility and collective action, and approach challenges with a positive mindset, supported by teachers.	Democratic principles and resilience skills are applied in broader contexts, engaging in active problem-solving, seeking feedback to improve strategies, and encouraging others to stay positive during challenging situations. Students reflect on personal and collective resilience, considering how their actions contribute to community well-being.	Competences are fully integrated into actions, leading and innovating in fostering resilience within democratic systems. Students critically examine and address threats to democratic values, demonstrating emotional regulation and ethical decision-making under pressure. They recognize and utilize personal strengths while managing weaknesses, and actively seek and give feedback to align actions with democratic principles. Through their efforts, they contribute to building a resilient, inclusive, and democratic society.
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RDCC Evaluation tool



Judgement/Critical Thinking	Most of the basic level elements are missing	Students understand that not all information is true or trustworthy, especially in the digital age. They recognize the importance of verifying sources, identifying different types of media and their purposes, and comprehend the potential for errors in judgement. They begin developing skills in evaluating and prioritizing factors in simple decision-making scenarios.	Skills are applied more broadly, critically assessing objectives and points of view in different media, evaluating the credibility of complex sources, and exploring the impact of hidden agendas and power structures on information. Students engage in ethical considerations, use analytical thinking to make informed decisions, and understand the role of AI and technology in spreading misinformation.	Competences are fully integrated into actions, leading discussions on media literacy and guiding peers in critical evaluations of media. Students apply advanced critical thinking skills to deconstruct complex media narratives, assess the societal and ethical impact of misinformation, particularly on marginalized groups, and innovate in promoting media literacy, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making. They lead efforts that promote sound, ethical decision-making based on a thorough evaluation of evidence and a deep understanding of the broader implications for society.
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RDCC Evaluation tool



Deliberation	Most of the basic level elements are missing	Students understand and practice fundamental skills within a controlled classroom environment, engaging in respectful dialogue, basic justification, and understanding of the common good, all within teacher-guided discussions. The focus is on establishing a solid foundation for deliberative competence, largely confined to the classroom setting.	Skills are applied more broadly, engaging in complex and structured justifications, participating actively in discussions beyond the classroom, such as in community settings. Students demonstrate increased independence, consider diverse viewpoints, and engage in critical thinking, connecting classroom learning with real-world situations with some guidance.	Competences are fully integrated into actions, applied effectively in real-world contexts, contributing to societal discourse. Students take on leadership roles in discussions, build consensus, and manage complex issues independently. They critically reflect on biases and beliefs, manage emotions constructively, and justify decisions and arguments thoughtfully. They innovate in deliberative processes, resolve conflicts, and utilize alternative forms of communication, such as storytelling and deliberative negotiations, to enrich discussions and ensure a broad societal impact.
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RDCC Evaluation tool



Competence	Minimal	Basic Level	Intermediate Level	Advanced Level
Participation /Solidarity	Most of the basic level elements are missing	Students focus on understanding and practicing fundamental skills within a controlled classroom environment. They learn about public issues, civic responsibilities like voting, and how processes work. They begin to recognize and appreciate human rights, marginalized groups, and diversity, identifying where they belong in social groups and showing empathy and respect for others.	Skills are applied more broadly, engaging in collaborative group projects and community initiatives. Students demonstrate increased independence, critically reflect on their participation, and understand broader societal influences like social movements and public initiatives. Participation extends beyond individual actions to include collective efforts that influence society as a whole.	Competences are fully integrated into actions, applied effectively in real-world contexts, contributing to societal discourse. Students take on leadership roles in civic engagement, organizing participation efforts. They critically reflect on biases and beliefs, understand how to make impactful contributions, and innovate in participation strategies, progressing from being informed to consulting, involving, collaborating, co-creating and ultimately empowering others.

Thank you for Your attention!

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Innovative practices in EfD



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How can we develop
the competencies that
were mentioned?

Educational factors



- ▶ **whether deliberate instruction on civics and politics existed** (it increased student knowledge)

- ▶ **school & classroom culture:**

e.g. an open classroom climate, whether they are consulted about school policies and rules, involved in planning class work

- ▶ **opportunities for discussion, dialogue, and debate:**

e.g. discussing controversial public and political issues in an open and safe/respectful classroom environment, students are encouraged to make up their own mind about an issue; methods such as 'structured academic controversy'

- ▶ **real opportunities for participation and problem-solving:**

e.g. 'issues-centered curriculum', participation in extracurricular activities and 'service learning' programmes, opportunity to learn to solve problems in the community, learning cooperation skills, decision-making, and civic action

- ▶ → **more broadly 'student-centred pedagogies'**

(Hahn, 2010; Geboers et al, 2013)

Participation



1. Youth political participation (in a conventional sense) has been low for some time (Allaste et al, 2023)
2. Nowadays youth participate in different ways (Allaste et al, 2023)
3. Participation is central to healthy democracies (Moyser, 2003; Peterson, 2011) and central also to our project

Solution: transformative and experiential learning approaches, such as PBL, service learning, school democracy, and similar.



Bicycle parking lot

Marten, Maria, Inkus, Triine



0:00 / 1:54



Tallinn French Lyceum students, 11th grade, an example of PBL in English lessons,
https://youtu.be/4WVpBQbb1IM?si=sCO_MN_DGJRhq6w4



Drawing: Maarja Hallik, Proovikivi

Gutsy Go (Finland)



Check out:
<https://gutsygo.fi/en/>



80% OF YOUTH WANT TO HELP BUT DON'T KNOW HOW.
Family Federation of Finland 2020

84% OF YOUTH CONSIDER MAKING WORLD A BETTER PLACE THEIR MISSION IN LIFE.
Deloitte Millennial Survey 2016



GUTSY GO
MAKE PEACE VISIBLE.

PBL and service learning benefits

- Real-life and community connection + learning occurs due to 'need' = more meaningful learning
- Engages also the academically poorer performers
- Develops the so called 21st century competences like teamwork, problem-solving, conflict resolution and communication skills – all important parts of EfD, can be deliberately connected to also judgement (e.g. during the discovery / research phase) and democratic resilience (tuning in phase and reflection)
- Possibility, but also the challenge for teachers to connect it with existing curriculum; and also fostering teacher collaboration across subjects

Deliberation



- *promoting debates on collective decisions that could be taken to solve a shared problem*
- *willing to listen to everyone's voice, to dialogue and to make active and constructive contributions*
- *ability to articulate one's own point of view and to listen to and respect the opinions of others, different preferences, values, and interests*

Simple example from Estonia: Statements or the Claims Game (sociometric line)



Democratic schools



Democratic schools involve students in curriculum design, teaching, and institutional governance (Dzur, 2018; Trafford, 2008).

Screenshot from:
<https://www.facebook.com/estonian-democrateducation/>

Really listen & give choice



Estonian Democratic Education Community - EUDEC-Eesti

22. juuni · 🌐

TKG-Suvmäe's fifth graduated generation!

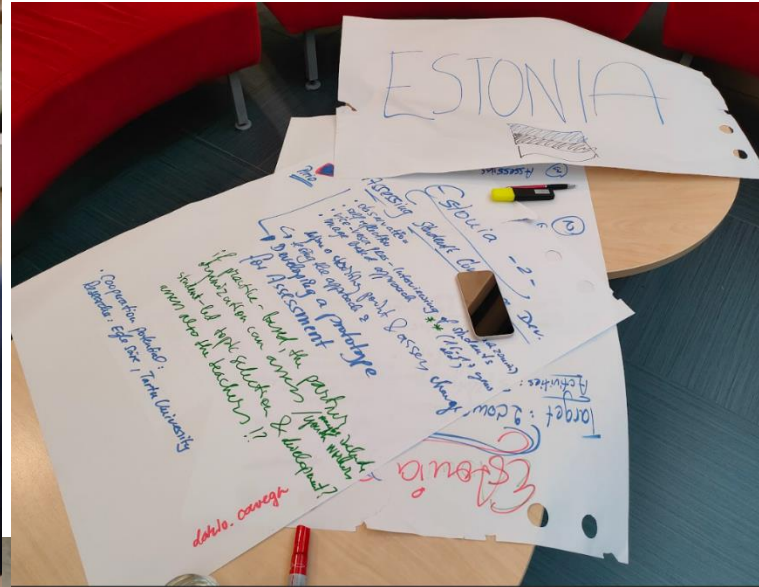
Very proud of these guys for what they have become and will achieve in life! 😊

Yesterday was my last day at [Suvmäe-TKG](#), initially as head of studies and later as a subject teacher. These last 5 years were a continuous growing experience, both personally and professionally! I'd like to thank all students, parents [Suvmäe pere](#) and colleagues Rabin Gurung Mihkel Lappmaa Anni Arumäe Natallya Svuetsovva Sandra Mikomägi Marili, Anna and Ruta! Moreover, my gratitude to [Tallinna Kunstigümnaasium](#) director, Mari-Liis Sults, for her support, and those colleagues who were sensitive to alternatives to conventional schooling! 🙏
Suvmäe has become an internationally recognised pilot experience of democratic education within mainstream schooling and hopefully its learning community will make it stronger and more accessible to every child and family interested.
Aitäh! 🙏





What great examples or good practices do you know of? Can you bring some examples?



Thank you!

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An open social innovation project

Karsten Krüger
Universitat de Barcelona

ECER-Conference – Nicosia - 29/08/2024



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Democrat-Horizon.eu

Agora.Democrat-Horizon.eu



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Main Objectives



- **Framework of Responsible Democratic Citizenship competences**
- **Outline of a European Curriculum for Education for Democracy**
- **Testing in real environments (Local projects)**
- **Toolbox with novel solution for education for democracy.**

How to do it



- **Open social innovation process**

- **Living lab activities**
 - **Online or onsite Workshops (national transnational)**
 - **Online Platform Agora (1 transnational and 6 national Agoras)**

Social readiness level



Level	Description	Steps done to impact
Month 1 – 14: 1st Project Period: Identification of the social problem and formulation of solution		
1	identifying problem and identifying societal readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying the problem of risk for liberal democracy. - Reflection on the societal readiness to promote education for democracy as a possible mean to reduce the risk of liberal democracy.
2	Formulation of problem, proposed solution(s) and potential impact, expected societal readiness, identifying relevant stakeholders for the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulation of the problem: Liberal democracy is under threat from a growing number of people who are critical with democratic principle. - Proposed solution: Strengthening education for democracy in schools through educational projects with local relevance. - Expected societal readiness: Awareness of the threat to democracy by all stakeholders. - Identifying obstacles
3	Initial testing of proposed solution(s) together with relevant stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed solution: Strengthening Education for Democracy by the developing a Competence Framework and a European Curriculum as guide for EfD in practice and testing them in local projects in 6 EU-member countries based on innovative cooperation between schools and other actors. - Methodology Desk research on current trends in civic education in the LL countries and discussion of the results with the education community in workshops, meetings, focus groups and interviews. - Search for cooperation for with schools to find or create local projects to test the European Curriculum and the Competence Framework.

Social readiness level



Level	Description	Steps to be done to impact
Month 14- 26: Testing of the proposed solutions in real contexts		
4	problem validated through pilot testing in relevant environment to substantiate proposed impact and societal readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Testing the outlined European Curriculum: Selection of LPPs based on agreed guidelines - Project monitoring and assessment: Based on a common, but flexible methodology. It also includes national and transnational workshop to share and compare the different national experiences. - Competence assessment: The LPPs guideline includes several types of competence analysis: Pre- and post-evaluation of student's RDC competences.
5	proposed solution(s) validated, now by relevant stakeholders in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation by the project team based on common guidelines. - Reflection on the pilot results: Presentation of the LPPs results and discussion at national and transnational workshops. - Development of pedagogical material: In close cooperation with teachers, pedagogical material in the field of human geography will be developed to complement the pilots.
6	solution(s) demonstrated in relevant environment and in cooperation with relevant stakeholders to gain initial feedback on potential impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refinement of the RDC Competence Framework and the European Curriculum - Elaboration of the toolbox: selection of good practices in the pilot projects and other pedagogical projects on democracy; finalisation of the pedagogical material on human geography. - Presentation of the project and its toolbox to the European and global community of education.

Social readiness level



Level	Description	Steps to be done to impact
Month 27-36: Refinement of the proposed solution and strategy development		
7	refinement of project and/or solution and, if needed, retesting in relevant environment with relevant stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refinement of the RDC Competence Framework and the European Curriculum: according to the feedback to the first presentation within the national Living Labs. - Elaboration of the toolbox: Compilation of good practices from the LPPs and other educational projects on democracy; refinement of the didactic material on Human Geography. - Preparation of the presentation of the final product: Once the toolbox is finalised, its presentation online and at on-site events will be prepared
8	proposed solution(s) as well as a plan for societal adaptation complete and qualified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the political context to implement DEMOCRAT in order to prepare the strategic plan, a detailed analysis based on advocacy principles should be realised to identify the strategic points for the implementation strategy. - Design of a strategic plan to implement the product in school practice, but also put the issue of education for democracy at the national and European political agenda. <p>Will start still in the phase from month 15-to 26 but fully developed from month 27 – 36.</p>
9	actual project solution(s) proven in relevant environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Execution of the strategic plan to implement the product in school practice, but also to put the issue of education for democracy high at the national and European political agenda. <p>Will start still in the phase from month 15-to 26 but fully developed from month 27 – 36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisation of the 2nd Project Conference to which national, European and Global stakeholders will be invited

Living Labs

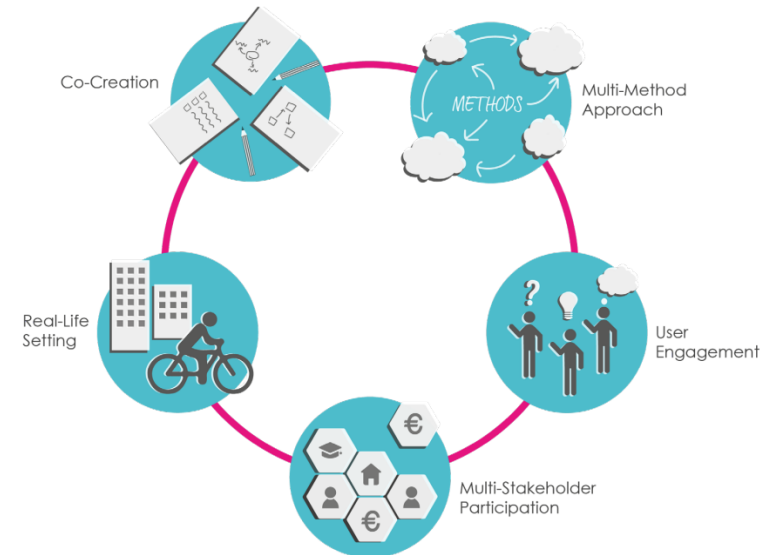


- It is an **iterative** process for developing innovations
- Users (teachers, educators, students and parents) are involved as **co-creators**.
- It is based on **cooperation with multiple stakeholders** including public authorities and experts.
- It includes stages of **research, design and reflection**.
- It is **evidence based** by the testing in real environment

Living Labs

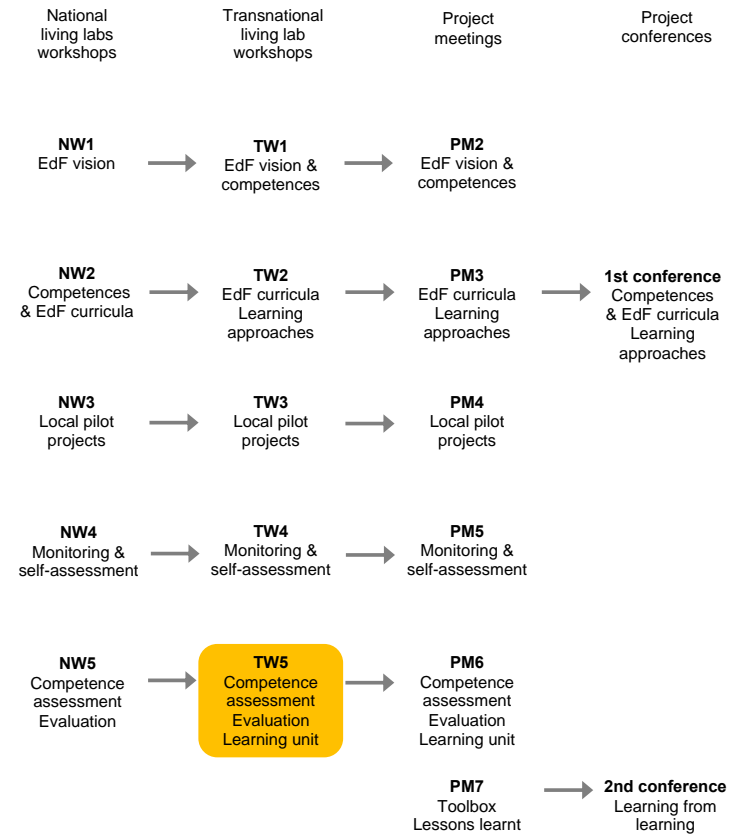


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- It is **evidence based** by the testing in real environment



Living Lab means

- **Creating iterative co-creation process**
- **Workshops (National & Transnational) with stakeholders**
- **Focus groups, individual interviews, visits to education centres**
- **Other means**

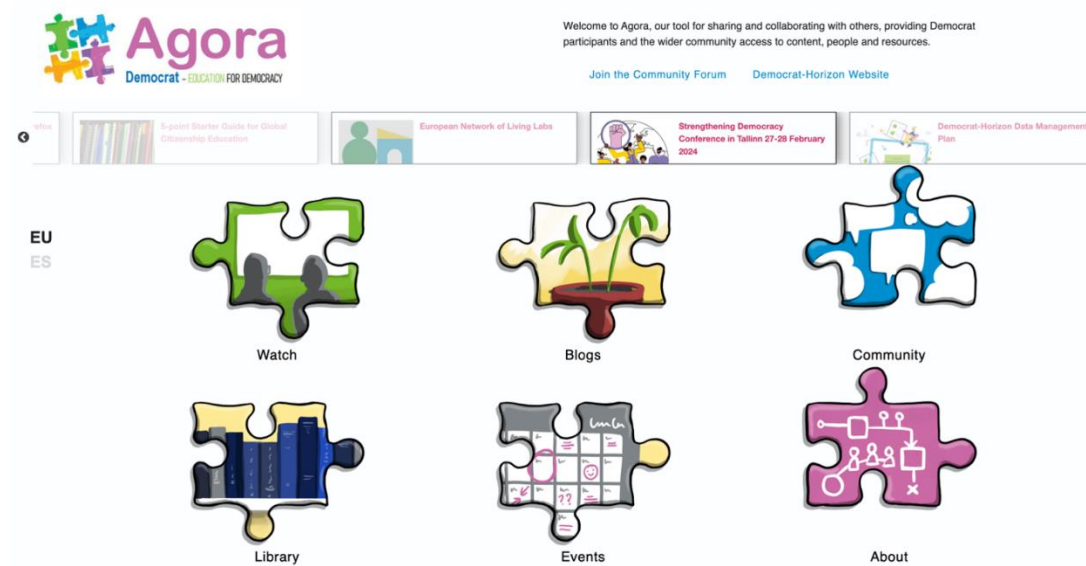


Living Lab means



Consolidation of co-creation process

- **Transnational Agora (english)**
- **National Agoras (Estonian, Finnish, German, Polish, Irish, Catalan/Spanish)**



**Thank you for
Your attention!**



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