

Workshop Session 1

“EYCE 2005: Lessons from Practice.
National Experiences – European Challenges”

Country Profile 1

Report from the workshop
Friday, December 2nd, 2005

Presentators:

Germany: Mechthild Merfeld, Association of German Educational Organisations (AdB)

Great Britain: Graham Morris, Citizenship Foundation

Czech Republic: Alena Kroupova, Human Rights Education Centre of Charles University in Prague

Spain: Mónica Aymerich, Catalan Association for Education, Training and Research (ACEFIR)

Chair:

Eeva-Inkeri Sirelius, Adult Education Association (VSY), Finland

Reporter:

Marc Lauriac, Germany

Mrs. Mechthild Merfeld of the Association of German Educational Organisations (AdB) started her presentation of the EYCE in Germany with two preliminary remarks:

- There is in Germany a specific understanding of and interest for civic education due to history:
 - o Reaction to the ideological indoctrination during the Nazi period,
 - o Result of the policy of rehabilitation organised by the occupying forces after the defeat of Nazi Germany (especially in the FRG),
 - o Reaction to the strong ideological indoctrination in the GDR,
 - o Result of the development of an important movement of independent citizens within the GDR that brought about the fall of the communist regime.
- Importance of the federal structure of today's Germany with its 16 Länder having each a different systems for EDC (for instance, Berlin doesn't have any regulation for adult education).

Actors of the EYCE in Germany were:

- National coordination structure within the Federal Commission for Civic Education of the Conference of Culture Ministers of the German Länder (KMK),
- Actors at federal level like the Federal Agency for Civic Education (BPB),
- Actors at Länder level like the various Länder Agencies for Civic Education (LPB),
- Actors at local level such as local authorities,
- Non governmental actors, some of them with their own facilities, others without any,
- The various political foundations each of them close to a specific German political party.

Very diverse and creative implementation:

- Translation of the various materials from the EYCE,
- Big launch event on Mai 8th,
- Multitude of actions, many of which were registered on a calendar on the website of the BPB,
- Initiatives have taken place in all German Länder,
- This conference is a major event concluding a very intense year.

List of a couple of actions undertaken:

- Creation of coordination bodies for work within schools like for instance in the field of the work against racism,
- Various workshops organised by the LPBs and the BPB,
- Creation of the NECE Database of the BPB,
- Target group oriented actions undertaken by NGOs, some of them which were directly in connection with the EYCE, but most of them which would have been organised anyway,
- Cooperation between schools and non formal education: Such co operations are typically based on private initiatives and institutionalised co operations are still rare, but one effect of EYCE has been to raise hopes that hindrances to such co operations can be overcome.

Typical problems in Germany that EDC has to face are unemployment and the changing age structure of the population, which bring about a loss of trust in politics and on its capacity to influence the state of things.

How can the results of EYCE be secured?

- It is fatal for Germany to try and solve part of its financial problems by saving money on education: Investments in EDC at each administrative level should be increased.
- Germany has a unique diversity of actors in the field of EDC: Let us hope that EYCE has helped raise the awareness for this in order to secure and further develop this huge asset.
- Coordination bodies that were created thanks to the EYCE will not resume their work at the end of the year: In most cases, private initiative has already over the work.

Mr. Graham Morris of the Citizenship Foundation presented the current state of play in the UK in the field of EDC. UK has three countries and one province. Each has a different structure for EDC and has adopted a different strategy for the implementation of the EYCE. Mr. Morris' presentation will focus on England.

EDC in the UK has experienced a very intense development following the election of the Labour party in 1997. This includes a considerable activity of practice in school as well as in formal and informal training including the target groups 16+, adults and minorities. Furthermore, the coordination body created for this task is very representative. This 'Advisory Group on Citizenship' chaired by Professor Bernard Crick was commissioned to produce a report (www.qca.org.uk/3290.html) published in 1998 which defined recommendation regarding citizenship education.

In this report, 'Effective education for citizenship' is defined in three points:

- Firstly, children learning from the very beginning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other.
- Secondly, learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities, including learning through community involvement and service to the community.
- Thirdly, pupils learning about and how to make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values.

Following these recommendations, the secretary of State in England decided that civic education was to become part of the statutory programme for 11-14 and for 14-16. Very brief guidelines were developed for implementation and evaluation of EDC. NGOs have been involved in producing a Handbook for Professional Development. The Teacher Training Agency has developed an extensive programme to develop and network the knowledge. An association for citizenship teaching has been founded. The focus was initially upon schools i.e. for children up to 16. There is no particular requirement in England on how these contents should be integrated in the school curricula but an increasing number of schools are creating a separate subject starting from 14.

There has been a close collaboration between NGOs and the government which shows that the government relies on the civil society to implement these actions. For instance, another programme has been developed for the 16-19 target group including a network of seven pilot Active Learning / Active Citizenship initiatives. The focus of these initiatives has been on community leaders, professional learning and newcomers (asylum seekers...). They chose to engage much more in public legal education, for instance by publishing a summary of the British constitution.

There have also been many other local initiatives like:

- In April: Project about collaboration and sharing the practice for EDC between the 2 Irelands.
- In June: Association for citizenship teaching 'Citizenship and Europe'
- In November: 5 nations conference focussing on links with Europe
- Throughout the year: 'Communities first' programme involving a great number of individuals which develop a range of tools like a citizenship quiz.

How can the results of EYCE be secured?

- Much extension needs to be made in life long learning
- It is difficult to do the training of multipliers in such a short time. This is process has to be pursued.
- It was not right not to focus mainly on the population up to 16. We should deal in EDC primarily with mature people.

Mrs. Alena Kroupova of the Human Rights Education Centre of Charles University in Prague focused her presentations on the difficulties to implement ambitious EDC programmes in a country like the Czech Republic which has experienced decades of ideological indoctrination and has a society where the engagement of individuals in NGOs is not sufficiently developed. The whole educational structure in the Czech

Republic is based on formal education. There are few private schools (mostly catholic schools) and few NGOs. Civic education was a compulsory subject from the 1950s. Nevertheless, today it is very problematic to find new teachers to teach EDC.

One positive effect of the EYCE has been to help her centre for human rights education to get recognition. Indeed, it focuses not only on human rights education but on EDC, education for tolerance, peace and civic education as well. It has reached some positive results such as:

- preparing teachers on 3 campuses,
- developing lectures on education for tolerance in a multicultural society,
- raising awareness on the importance of highlighting and safeguarding personal dignity as the main essence of human rights.

How can the results of EYCE be secured?

- Mass media should play a more important role in informing the people on politics, development in the country, particularly when they address children and people not reached by schools.
- NGOs will need time to develop; this cannot happen overnight even if the COE declares a EYCE.
- You cannot change the way of thinking of people as fast as well; this needs at least 2 generations.
- EDC is not only about knowledge and information; it is about skills and involvement.

Mónica Aymerich of the Catalan Association for Education, Training and Research (ACEFIR) presented the work done in Spain during the EYCE.

Spain has 17 autonomous communities. Education, training and culture are decentralized to each autonomous community; the advantage being that each of them can give an adequate response to their needs when it's necessary; the disadvantage lies by the information: it is sometimes easier to know what is going on in Europe than in other autonomous communities.

The specificities of Spain during the EYCE were the following:

- Spain is living a delicate situation because of the radical political changes that followed the March 11 terrorist bombing in Madrid; this resulted in the development of a spirit of confrontation throughout the country.
- One of the specific challenges of EDC is to develop Spanish citizenship within all autonomous communities.
- Associations are a way of participation very well developed in Spain; there are more than 150.000 voluntary associations in our country focusing on solidarity, environment, sport, culture, art, music, education, health... Most initiatives on solidarity and participations focus on 4 specific target groups:
 - o Young people (example: initiatives in relation with the 'Prestige' oil slick in Galicia)
 - o Immigrants (focus on education and training)
 - o Pre-retired people (promotion on their involvement in professional training initiatives)
 - o Senior citizens (promotion of inter generational exchanges)

How can the results of EYCE be secured?

- Joint actions at a national level should be implemented in order to have better information on common challenges, best practices and to develop co operations (there is an important role to be played by the National Federation of Adult Learning Associations - FAEA).
 - An emphasis should be put on the respect of diversity and the development of a culture of peace.
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The discussion that followed came to the following results.

Successful outcome of EYCE in most countries:

- EYCE helped raise the awareness on the specificity and importance of EDC.
- The importance of NGOs was recognised by other stakeholders (governments, schools).
- A stronger cooperation between formal and non formal education was achieved.
- A wealth of best practice examples has been developed and well documented through publications, websites and networks.
- There have been good initiatives developing networks including various stakeholders (local / regional / national authorities, formal / informal / public actors, specialists in the field of EDC / HRE / professional training / education...).

Challenges for the Future:

- Guarantee the sustainability of good initiatives within the EYCE (networks, frameworks, forums, websites, and publications).
- Develop knowledge transfer between countries and regions.
- Risk of staying at the jargon level and not implementing the guidelines (especially regarding non formal education since most initiatives still have been in the formal sector).
- In post-communist countries, developing the NGOs within the society is a priority; this will be a long process.
- Need for a better coordination within government departments. Indeed, in many cases, actors from the formal and non formal sector succeeded to coordinate, but their initiatives were slowed down by the lack of coordination within the public authorities (for instance between the department of education, the department of culture and the department of health).
- Development of trust and cooperation between governments and NGOs; no ambitious EDC policy can be implemented without a wide, strong and diverse network of NGOs.
- EDC should especially focus on the following groups:
 - o Immigrants, with initiatives promoting the inclusion of this population in the society mainly through education
 - o Senior / Pre-retired citizens, with initiatives promoting the recognition of what they can contribute to the society and promoting their empowerment
 - o Young people, especially with initiatives counteracting the influence of mass media which incites the youth to be consumer rather than actor
- Education should not be focused primary on competitiveness but also on other values such as social justice, participation, equality and diversity, and co-operation.

- Need for more public funding for NGOs
 - Governments should think over their focus on the economic output of EDC and emphasis its social role as well; indeed, not only professional training brings economic benefits, also a pacified social environment contributes to less destruction of public property and more private initiative.
 - Problems with public finance should not affect education budgets. A country which cuts investments on its future generations is not on its way to become the “world’s first knowledge based economy”.
- Clarify the aims of EDC:
 - Fight political apathy and mistrust in politics (the aim mostly promoted by the politicians who aim to improve the legitimacy which, to a certain extent, they appear to have lost)
 - Develop social cohesion and tolerance
 - Help the potentialities of the various target groups come out
 - Educate citizen to be **critical thinkers** and **actors**