

Developing the Curriculum With NGOs

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CiCe
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This report does not necessarily represent the views of the CiCe Network.

	 Education and Culture	This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.
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CiCe Guidelines on the Design of Higher Education Courses

ISBN: 978-0-9562789-7-5

CiCe Guidelines: ISSN 1741-6353

December 2009

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This publication is also available in electronic format at <http://cice.londonmet.ac.uk>

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Introduction

This booklet focuses on developing links between Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and those Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that are concerned with social understanding, tolerance and respect for human rights, in developing the citizenship education/developing identities curriculum in higher education.

It offers guidance on how NGOs and other social institutions can work with Higher Education Institutions in educating active citizens and on how curriculum in higher education (for students training for professional work with young people, teachers, youth workers *et al*) can be developed and constructed by working with partners from the NGO sector in a broad societal setting, with focus on how cooperation between these actors can be fostered and developed. Consideration is also given to broadening how HEIs work with society at large, particularly in the pan-European and regional contexts

Before looking at the relationship between the work of NGOs and HEIs we will consider what we mean by Active Citizenship and how it currently features in the Curriculum.

Active Citizenship

There are many different definitions for the concept of Active Citizenship. One such definition was developed by a group of European professors working on indicators for Active Citizenship¹: Active Citizenship is a participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy. Education for Active Citizenship can be described as learning opportunities (formal, non-formal and informal) that at any stage of the life cycle serve to facilitate or encourage Active Citizenship. It is important also to consider what we mean by the term citizenship. In the framework of European states and national cultures, which is the case in Europe mostly, the term citizenship was connected to politics and was given public expression through voting in elections. Today we as educators see the need to define the term citizenship in a new European context and to discuss the meanings of this term.

As Ross suggests, in European contexts we can distinguish between two potential kinds of citizenship: the active and the passive (Ross, 2008). He also states that 'active citizenship should be encouraged and developed by educators (even though this might not necessarily be the first choice of all policy makers) and the context of contemporary Europe makes the development of an active citizenry particularly necessary' (Ross 2008 p.43). When we consider the concept of citizenship as a passive phenomenon it can be described as the ideology of a nation-state, as a socio-politically constructed attitude, rooted in emotionally grounded feelings, like love and

loyalty toward nation-state. Sometimes it is said that this patriotic attitude should be seen apart from the individually understood social interest and should be subordinated to the needs of a nation and state as a group identity. In this case citizenship becomes one of the terms describing cultural identity and has to be taught as a cultural value of each given group.

Active Citizenship generally refers to the ideology that in a democratic society all individuals and groups have the right to

- engage in the creation and re-creation of that democratic society
- the right to participate in all of the democratic practices and institutions within that society
- the responsibility to ensure that no groups or individuals are excluded from these practices and institutions and
- the responsibility to ensure a broad definition of the political which includes all relationships and structures throughout the social arrangement.

It often states that members of different groups or different cultural identities have certain roles and responsibilities to society and the environment, although those members may not have specific governing roles. The active citizen uses words such as a commitment to 'making a difference', 'getting things done' or 'changing things', wanting to 'help', 'doing something worthwhile', 'putting something back into the community', having a 'political consciousness', 'getting involved', 'tackling injustice' and 'improving conditions'. Active Citizenship was connected to personal needs such as 'personal development' 'doing more with one's life' and an 'opportunity to learn', as well as to a sense of social responsibility. Active Citizenship can be regarded as some individual and/or collective act of social responsibility towards others or on behalf of others. It is therefore understood as something one does for oneself as well as for others and is generally associated with 'doing': doing with others and for others. It is also associated with some form of cause - social, political or developmental. These could occur in a variety of areas of life: in the family, at work, in civil society, etc. Active Citizenship also involves participation and involvement in decision-making processes that affect wider society. These processes of participation and involvement can be referred to as 'governance.'

Thematic links between NGOs and Education for Active Citizenship

In most European countries there are several types of non-governmental organizations. The role and the idea of non-governmental organizations may differ from country to country, but usually non-governmental organizations share the following ideals: they collect citizens together to act upon issues of social concern

and are (usually) independent from the governments of states. Usually they are organizations which receive their funding from the private sector although this is not always the case. NGOs are also usually non-profit in their business orientation and have a strong voluntary participative element. They can be organized on a local, national or international level. A feature of non-government organizations is that they facilitate public debate and activism. The term NGO refers to a United Nations basic document. Chapter 10 article 71 declares that the United Nations can ask for documents from organizations which are independent from member states and their government. In different countries NGOs are seen in different ways. In Finland, for example, they are usually referred to as the third sector of society and are seen as many-sided, non-profit additions to the public sector.

NGOs have several purposes. Generally their basic function is to promote their members' political or social aims. Some NGOs concern themselves with influencing politicians or consumers. Others engage in work in the developing world. They also act as organizers of participation and action in broad citizenship areas. Furthermore, in recent years NGOs are also seen as forming a significant part of the common social capital. They can be seen as active participants in open, democratic societies. The profiles and economic status of NGOs varies considerably depending on the country in which they are based and the thematic area they operate within. It is because of this variety that attempts to arrive at a universal definition of an NGO can be problematic. However it can be said that some NGOs operate in what can be regarded as the domain of Active Citizenship and in that domain there are mainly three types of NGOs in operation: those which concentrate on individual welfare, those concerned with environmental questions and those that engage in political activism. The current economic crisis, with its consequent political and social upheaval, particularly in European societies, has brought the question of citizenship and citizen welfare to the forefront of debate. In most European countries many NGOs work to raise consciousness concerning people's welfare. Some NGOs provide material assistance to those who find themselves in financial difficulty because of changes in their employment circumstances while others work with those facing difficulties due to drug addiction and others work in the area of raising awareness about sexual health particularly in the area of disease prevention and containment. Finally, there is an increasing number of NGOs working with immigrants and those involved in the immigration process.

Many NGOs work in the area of environmental protection and awareness raising. In many EU countries environmental pressure groups form powerful political and social lobbies. This concern with the living environment is one of the key questions currently exercising the minds of European citizens with more and more

people taking an active role in highlighting issues from an environmental protection perspective. Furthermore some NGOs are very interested in political activism. This interest is informed by the idea that today's citizens are too far removed from political institutions and the locus of power. Political decisions making is perceived as being isolated from people's everyday lives and concerns. People can effectively be disenfranchised and feel that they have limited opportunities to influence those decisions which impact on their lives.

If, as we have seen, the work of NGOs can be seen to concern itself with a form of Active Citizenship how then does society educate and prepare its people in these areas? This observation prompts a further question: if NGOs and Active Citizenship are two sides of the same coin then what role do NGOs play in such education systems or programmes? To explore these relationships we will look first at the location of Active Citizenship in the curriculum.

Active Citizenship in the Curriculum

The concept of *Curriculum Development* is applicable in all educational settings. It can be viewed as the process through which the questions: "What do we want the learner to learn?" and "How do we support learning?" translate into actual processes and practise, undertaken by all educators with learners (O'Shea, K. (2003). Whether within a classroom, adult learning institute or Higher Education Institute curriculum development includes a willingness to engage in creating learning frameworks that meet the needs of learners and society in whole.

Citizenship education has in recent years featured more prominently in curriculum development in European education systems. There have been many attempts to increase civil education and education for democracy, for example see: coe.int/edc; teachernet.gov.uk/citizenship; citizen.org.uk/education.html; civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/. Concern with these issues has been informed by issues regarding children's and young people's marginalisation from mainstream society. Since the 1990's research has consistently pointed out that young people are losing interest in political questions and feel less committed to society. At the same time there was a concern about how new generations were equipped to deal with the challenges posed by the impact of increased globalisation on their lives and social arenas. Generally the obstacles for making successful citizenship education interventions were found in peoples' attitudes as well in the social system of communication. Research into these problems shows that some threats to democracy lie in ignorance or apathy as a generalised attitude of young individuals. Sometimes young people are cynical about being able to influence things, have no patience and are not able to see the social context apart from their own interpretation ('what's the point?').

In some studies it was found that young people felt excluded in some communities and these feelings led to alienation. Social reality is more and more complicated in multicultural contexts and the impact of globalisation and other complex social issues can be oversimplified by the mass media.

In different societies citizenship education is organised in different ways. In Britain citizenship education has become a key part of the national curriculum whereas in Scandinavia and Finland citizenship education has been seen as a part of history education and social studies. Citizenship education aims to raise young citizens' consciousness of social questions and to highlight the need to take responsibility for social questions and society. Other aims include citizens' responsible values and attitudes and participation in activities in school and society. In many countries intercultural questions form an important element of citizenship education programmes.

It could be suggested that a typical programme in the area of Active Citizenship would incorporate the following:

- Opportunities to reflect deeply on democratic values through principles and attitudes of individuals. A precondition for effective citizenship education is the social and moral responsibility of individuals.
- The development of political literacy in the sense of knowledge and skills required in influencing decisions in formal and informal groups, locally and nationally.
- Efforts to increase awareness about skills and attitudes of young people that should be developed for becoming active citizens. These can be done through community involvement, volunteering etc.
- Increased understanding of how non-formal learning can enable the development of those skills and attitudes of young people (reflecting on principles of non-formal learning through practical exercises and reflection sessions).
- Opportunities to develop skills to use experiential learning as an approach in citizenship education (by reflecting on experiential activities or by running workshops during the training).

It is essential to notice that educational objectives are to be reached by real experience together in group situations rather than by exclusively theoretical inputs. These experiences would include Active Citizenship activities, which take place in a number of contexts such as at work, through the family environment (private domain), community (civil society) or through public, elected office (state domain). Active Citizenship is connected to personal needs such as 'personal development' 'doing more with one's life' and an

'opportunity to learn', as well as to a sense of social responsibility. We believe that Active Citizenship is a combination of individual and collective acts of social responsibility towards others or on behalf of others. A 'good' citizen becomes an 'active' citizen when he/she feels the need to try to change things, to make a difference, alone or with others. Active citizens strongly believe in a right to take part in public debate and shape (directly or indirectly) the laws and decisions of state and hold the belief that the law should be obeyed and that future citizens should discuss the difference between law and justice. Active citizens also need the skills to change laws in a peaceful manner. Active citizens 'rock boats', are sometimes critical and are prepared to 'whistle-blow'.

Role of NGOs in developing the Curriculum

As far as NGOs are actors in civil society, they can become a bridge for reflecting civil society needs in the curriculum especially in the curriculum of different kinds of Higher Education Institutes. On the other hand the work and practices of NGOs can form an integral part of the curriculum. Therefore NGOs can be both a topic or subject thematic area within the taught curriculum or they can be an *agent for teaching* civil society issues. In other words, NGOs play an important role in Active Citizenship education through the formal, informal, and non-formal curriculum. In practical terms NGO programmes can benefit citizenship education programmes. In many countries NGOs have made special material for schools. Because of their activities NGOs have lots of opportunities to show examples of a living Active Citizenship. Co-operation between citizenship education programme providers and NGOs can be seen from three different perspectives:

1. Giving people basic knowledge and skills about citizenship.
2. Internalization of knowledge and giving opportunities to practice it by dialogue and interaction between students.
3. Action, participation and influence in different contexts.

Each level and stage has different tasks and procedures. In devising Active Citizenship material the role of NGOs can be influential. Active Citizenship can develop from practical activities. Co-operation with NGOs and schools can be seen in a very positive way: the organisations can promote their own aims and work and schools can directly benefit from their expertise. NGOs usually see their educational role as a positive thing. In school the development of co-operation is the responsibility of certain teachers as not all teachers are interested. Co-operation with NGOs and schools give people significant opportunities to practice Active Citizenship and such co-operation between NGOs and schools can be mutually beneficial: NGOs get opportunities to spread their message and students get information and learn to look at situations from many

different perspectives. NGOs are a part of open society. In an open society it is very important that there are several actors which give their own perspectives on questions in society. Many things can be then looked in broader terms. Deepening perspectives is one of the key ideals of citizenship education. Without looking at things from many different perspectives, pupils do not learn to make informed political decisions in an open society.

Case Studies: NGOs

This section focuses on the relationships between NGOs and HEIs and how cooperation between these actors can be fostered and developed. It explores these themes through a series of questionnaires, which were administered to representatives of both NGOs and Teacher educators in HEIs. These questionnaires asked respondents to reflect on the nature of the relationship and how best to incorporate the thematic work of NGOs into Citizenship education curricula.

We devised a set of questions looking at how NGOs see Active Citizenship in the Curriculum and asked for their suggestions as to how this concept could feature more prominently in such contexts. The questions below were put to local NGOs in each of our countries (Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland). We also devised a series of questions which we put to our colleagues in Higher Education Institutes whose work involves training those who will teach in the area of Active Citizenship. These questions also addressed the location of the Active Citizenship theme in the Curriculum.

The questions put to the representatives of various NGOs addressed broad thematic concerns, namely: Active Citizenship (AC); The teaching (T) of Active Citizenship; examples of Good Practice (GP) in teaching in the subject area; and, Professional Relationships (PR) between HEIs and NGOs.

- In your work in an NGO what do you understand by the term Active Citizenship? AC
- What role should teachers who teach Active Citizenship have? T
- What content/material/courses on Active Citizenship should HEI courses contain? AC
- What ideas do NGOs have for teaching Active Citizenship? GP
- Are NGOs aware of/interested in what we teach in the University in this area? T
- What is the nature of their current engagement/relationship with HEIs? PR
- What skills/competencies should teachers in this area have? T

The following questions were asked of our colleagues who train teachers who will be working in the broad thematic area:

1. What connections as professionals do they have with NGOs? PR
2. How could these links be started/ improved? PR/GP
3. Are these relationships important to educators in the field of AC? PR/GP
4. What content should courses contain in this area? T
5. How could the delivery of this content be improved/developed? T

The responses of the representatives of the NGOs who answered the questionnaire have been merged. The anonymityⁱⁱ of the individuals and their organisations has been observed where requested.

In answer to the question of their understanding of Active Citizenship the respondents offered a range of opinions. We felt that this question was important in order for us to understand NGO perceptions of our key thematic concern. In Lithuania the representative from the NGO offered that Active Citizenship is 'when people are fighting against the government and not always in a positive way' and that 'Active Citizenship has to have a more positive influence in decision making'. The Polish representative felt that Active Citizenship had a more practical dimension: 'one has to know how to put the idea into practice, how to send the global idea into local context'. This person stressed that Active Citizenship is mainly concerned with realising that global problems need to be addressed at a local level to begin with and that people must be aware that similar social problems occur all over the world. The Irish NGO worker felt that Active Citizenship should essentially be about 'participatory democracy rather than simply representative democracy where people take an active role in shaping their local and wider community'.

The second question concerned the role that teachers who teach Active Citizenship should have with the following suggestions being made to the respondents to help guide their answers: mentor/facilitator/traditional methods. The Lithuanian NGO highlighted the critical role played by teachers in this subject area because they have a responsibility to teach students from a very early age coupled with the need to 'show the behaviours of activism themselves'. This idea ties in with the practical dimension outlined above whilst also placing a considerable responsibility on the shoulders of teachers in this subject area. The Polish NGO reiterated this practical theme and suggested that teachers have to 'do the things with their students and have to believe in the principles of Active Citizenship and have to know how to engage the pupils in action'.

Question three looked at the range of skills/competencies that teachers in this area should have (e.g. should teachers have worked in the NGO sector before beginning teaching? Should their teaching approach mirror the values and ideas espoused in typical Active Citizenship curricula?)

Again the theme of activity and practice arose with the Lithuanian NGO suggesting that participation skills were important. For the Polish and Irish NGOs, experience of working in the NGO sector was seen as a vital prerequisite for those who are training to teach in the area. Good analytical skills and a background in community development work of some kind were also seen as valuable skill sets to have.

Regarding the content on Active Citizenship that HEI programmes should contain the following were identified:

- human rights and responsibilities
- decision making processes
- how citizens can participate in decision making processes
- history and social reality of the region
- knowledge about how to work with people, how to engage them in activities
- a focus on change, equality and marginalisation
- the barriers that prevent/militate against active citizenship
- social sciences and knowledge of the environment

The NGO representatives were then asked to suggest ideas for teaching such an Active Citizenship course and the main response concerned an active involvement on behalf of NGOs in the actual teaching process. Because of recent changes in global markets the role of NGOs in fostering and developing Active Citizenship work has become more visible and necessary. NGOs are attempting to counter the erosion of citizenship concepts caused by the neo-liberal policies pursued by a number of western European governments. It is important that students are educated in the practical ways in which this work can be conducted. According to the Finnish NGO 'activity in the society can be taught in school...NGOs have a tradition of focusing attention on areas of life and society that require improvement or social change: pupils must get knowledge that in the society are organisations which have opportunities to influence and impact things'. NGOs were aware of what HEIs teach on courses in this area. Some suggested that HEIs were out of touch and took an overly theoretical approach to what they considered to be a very

practical subject. Pressure of work for both students and HEI professionals was also a factor that militated against proper consideration of the subject.

Regarding the nature of their current engagement/relationship with HEIs some of the respondents said that they actively cooperate with the students who volunteer to work on NGO projects. In the Finnish case the NGO has had some co-operation with Teacher Education. The Finnish Government provides funding to NGOs' to produce and develop programs and materials, which can also be suitable for school and teacher education. Because teachers have a very important role in society in educating the next generation, the NGOs think that teachers are key agents so they try to positively influence student teachers and persons who are working with them.

One organisation visited a teacher education institute and presented material to deepen student perspectives and consciousness. Some researchers have pointed out that people do not nowadays understand that they are citizens and that they have to take responsibility for questions in society. So we produced material and internet resources which represents what it means to be a citizen in modern society and what kinds of responsibilities are necessary

Regarding the content/material/courses taught in Active Citizenship and whether it was of any interest or relevance to their work in the NGO sector some were aware of the efforts made at institutional level to create a culture of active citizenship within the HEIs and between the HEI and the broader community in which the organisation resides. This relationship between the HEI and the local community is a practical demonstration of the HEI engaging in the promotion of an Active Citizenship and is regarded by this particular NGO as being relevant and important.

In the Finnish experience 'the main point is that people know the role of NGOs in the society and if they want they can take responsibility also in NGOs. In Finland the biggest problem in many NGOs is that there are not so many people and volunteers; when they become older, there are no persons. So NGOs can also get new people from these co-operations'.

Case Studies: HEIs

A number of professional working in the area of Teacher Education were asked to respond to a questionnaire which explored similar ground to that covered by the NGO survey.

When asked to reflect on the nature of their professional relationships with NGOs the Polish educator stated that

In Poland generally, teachers have professional contacts with NGO's. They cooperate with them in several ways. They cooperate in a sense (that) they put the students into work of given NGO's (in a frame of

students practice), or they work for NGO's themselves apart from their work. They do the research or do work as experts. Generally they have contact with local NGO's. Among my colleagues only one case was cooperation with a world wide NGO (Amnesty International)

In Ireland it was noted that many NGOs provide resources and packs for subject teachers and students. Most of these resources are relevant and up-to-date with topical issues that can be explored in classroom settings and are used with students preparing to become subject teachers.

Another professional also works in a voluntary capacity as a Board Chair of an NGO working with young people promoting the principles of engagement, citizenship and self-development using music as the learning vehicle.

In the Polish case links between education professionals and NGOs generally was started through individual contacts.

Someone knows someone as a colleague and he/she was invited to the NGO or they volunteered for NGO years ago. In some cases the NGO organized a course/workshop and that activity was the start of cooperation. It is worth noting that in some cases the NGO was an effect of sharing the same values and belonging to the NGO was an individual choice of a person. Mostly links are improved through cooperation between University and NGO. Students of our Department have to have a practice during their study and they do this very often in an NGO and generally with a local NGO.

As for improving or developing links it was suggested that those working in education and curriculum development within NGOs could issue Teacher Training Departments with notice of new resources and perhaps provide open-days for academics as well as for subject teachers and students. These open-days could be used by students as part of their practical work in the subject.

State support for volunteering and the development of mentorship schemes would also be helpful in forging such links.

Generally it was felt by the education professionals that relationships between NGOs and HEIs were important and necessary. It was particularly important in order to help to bind theory to practice. 'Students can have an experience and see the problem not only from the theory perspective but also in a social context. One can have information about the real social context of a problem when there is cooperation with an NGO'. In addition, these relationships provide useful opportunities for academics to engage in research activity in the subject area. These ties also help to strengthen the institutions' relationship with its local community and allow the HEI to develop international cooperation and projects. Further benefits derive from volunteering for NGO's as students can use examples from real life

to inform their understanding of the subject matter on Active Citizenship courses. As HEIs attempt to help the development of active citizenship at local, national and international levels then 'close relationships with NGOs provide a greater awareness of where active engagement is possible'. Another respondent noted that

These links are important, as all aspects of society need to work together to create critical mass thus enhancing the chances of societal progression and overcoming iniquities for everyone. A self-driven focus both socially and economically can only have short-term individual focussed outcomes. The bridge between individual and society engagement needs to be nurtured supported and encouraged as a positive force for change.

The main point of developing relationships between NGOs and HEIs is that students will become conscious of NGOs and their role and work. When students have finished their studies and leave university to work as primary school teachers, they are aware of NGOs and can contribute to their work. Many NGOs co-operate practically with schools and in teacher education students get information about NGOs and can understand their work.

In Finland universities have changed in recent years and nowadays there are three different areas of university work: research, education and activities in society (influence/impact to society). In light of this universities have become more active in making contact with NGOs in order to work with them. In addition, Finnish society has rapidly changed during this time, so people are more concerned about their role and position in society. This in turn means that they are a little bit more interested in these kinds of questions than they were before. The Finnish education professional offered the following example

In Teacher Education we had a project of active citizenship. That project was funded by the Ministry of Education and involved a lot of co-operation with NGOs. Together we reflected on what is meant by Active Citizenship in Finnish society and how we could develop new ways to create such content. NGOs have an active role in Finland e.g. in environmental questions and human rights questions. The problem is the content of teacher education: there are so many different subjects and contents that there is no space and time for this important subject matter.

Each of the education professionals working in the HEIs were asked to suggest content that courses in this subject should contain.

The following topics were offered:

- Sustainable development, interdependence and human rights.
- Curricula that promotes an understanding of political and social structures and the more realistic view of world citizenship and engagement.
- Foresight exercise outlining the links between governance, economics and society
- Specific course on how school level teachers can work together with NGOs

When asked how this content could be delivered more effectively it was felt that in Ireland for example 'while NGOs have developed numerous resources for use at second level, there are very few geared towards teaching 3rd level students. Such resources and active methodologies would significantly improve students' ability to relate to citizenship issues' and that a 'bottom-up approach is better'. Existing literature and case studies to aid development of curricula could also be used.

According to the Finnish educator 'NGO's are organisation for a specific purpose and this purpose informs all their activities. They do not always understand that primary level teacher education is the basic education for teachers. There are lots of important contents in teacher education curricula. There are only some studies which students can choose according to their own willingness. That is not possible for strict curriculum and timetables. Of course the NGO's role in society is important and they do remarkable work but we could not serve all of them'.

Conclusion

The principal findings from the perspective of both NGO and HEI groups in response to our central themes concerning: ways in which links could be developed or strengthened between NGOs and HEIs; the content of Active Citizenship courses; the skills teachers need to teach in this domain; and, how this subject should be taught; include the following recommendations:

Developing links between NGOs and HEIs:

- HEI courses could invite NGOs to participate more directly in Active Citizenship course creation and maintenance.
- HEIs could be more active in highlighting the work of certain NGOs.
- The thematic links between the content of traditional Active Citizenship courses and the work engaged in by certain NGOs could be drawn more clearly.
- NGOs could offer concrete opportunities for students to engage in meaningful work experience and these experiences could be tied into course structures.
- HEIs and NGOs could be more active in cooperating at a local community level to create interventions and devise projects.
- Closer cooperation could also be forged at a 'visiting expert' level and from a research perspective.
- NGOs to provide open-days for academics as well as for subject teachers and students.
- NGOs to develop resources and active methodologies for *third level* (HE first- and second-cycle) students.

What should be taught:

- Human rights and responsibilities.
- Decision making in society.
- Facilitation of citizen participation in decision-making processes.
- Historical, social and environmental contexts.
- Focus on change, equality and marginalisation.
- Focus on barriers that prevent/militate against Active Citizenship.
- Contain a strong, traditional civic element.
- Specific course on how school level teachers can work together with NGOs.

What skills do teachers need to teach in this domain and how this subject should be taught:

- Teachers should have highly developed participation facilitation skills.
- They preferably should have worked in or with an NGO in the past.
- They should possess good analytical skills.
- They should have good inter- and intra-personal skills.
- They should have a background in community development/community/social activism.
- They should have internalised and be able to represent in their teaching and facilitation approaches those values and principles which are espoused and promoted in Active Citizenship curricula and by NGO activities i.e. they have to show the behaviour of Active Citizenship by themselves.
- They should be able to engage students to action through the practical demonstration of these principles.
- NGOs could have an input into the delivery of aspects of these courses through devising and delivering content in partnership with teaching professionals. NGOs could also impact on course content and delivery by offering an experience-placement element to students whereby the students spend time working with NGOs in authentic settings and then reflect their experiences back to the course through their coursework and assessments.

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i See: http://farnweb.jrc.cec.eu.int/CRELL/active_citizenship.htm

ii *In Lithuania the NGO chosen by the Working Group to engage with this research plays an active role in the teacher training university: sometimes it is active in suggesting new ideas for curriculum development, sometimes helping to implement it and sometimes it is very active in the teaching process. The Director of this NGO was interviewed. The Finnish NGO representative is a Master of Philosophy and has worked for 3 three years in the Union of Citizenship Education.*

The Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe (CiCe) Thematic Network links 28 European states and some 80 universities and college departments which are engaged in educating students about how children and young people learn about and understand their society, their identity and citizenship.

A cross-disciplinary group, we include lecturers in social psychology, pedagogy, psychology, sociology and curriculum studies, and those who educate various professions such as teachers, social pedagogues, psychologists, early childhood workers and youth workers.

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ISBN: 978-0-9562789-7-5

CiCe Guidelines: ISSN 1741-6353

Published by the CiCe Thematic Network Project

Institute for Policy Studies in Education, London Metropolitan University