



This paper is taken from

***Citizenship Education: Europe and the World  
Proceedings of the eighth Conference of the  
Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe  
Thematic Network***

London: CiCe 2006

**edited by Alistair Ross, published in London by CiCe, ISBN 1 899764 66 6**

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***Rone, S., Liduma, A. (2006) The Development of Citizenship in the Latvian Educational System, in Ross, A. (ed) Citizenship Education: Europe and the World. London: CiCe, pp 231-242.***

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CiCe  
Institute for Policy Studies in Education  
London Metropolitan University  
166 – 220 Holloway Road  
London N7 8DB  
UK

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



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 herein.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

This is taken from the book that is a collection of papers given at the annual CiCe Conference indicated. The CiCe Steering Group and the editor would like to thank

- All those who contributed to the Conference
- The rector and the staff of the University of Latvia
- Andrew Craven, of the CiCe Administrative team, for editorial work on the book, and Lindsay Melling and Teresa Carbajo-Garcia, for the administration of the conference arrangements
- London Metropolitan University, for financial and other support for the programme, conference and publication
- The SOCRATES programme and the personnel of the Department of Education and Culture of the European Commission for their support and encouragement

## **The Development of Citizenship in the Latvian Educational System**

*Sandra Rone and Anna Liduma*

*Riga Teacher Training and Educational Management Academy (Latvia)*

This article discusses the development of citizenship and civic upbringing in the educational system of Latvia within the European context. It discusses the theoretical motivation of cognitions about the development of pre-school and school age children in the aspect of citizenship in the educational system. The analysis of the contents and the social, national and emotional components for balanced development at pre-school and at school are based on the development of the child (CiCe guidelines: 2004, 2005). The aspects of the development of citizenship for children in the pre-school and at the schools of Latvia are analysed.

A model of cultural inheritance is the basis of the development of citizenship. Justified and purposefully organized tools are the content, enabling children's choice and creative activities with equal rights cooperation in the educational system. Factors to be addressed in meeting the development of citizenship education in the context of Europe in the Latvian environment are considered.

The authors deal with citizenship education upbringing as the essentials of development in the educational system. Celebrations in minority schools are emphasised as one form of citizenship integration, which is the guarantee to promote the understanding of development.

### **Civic development: a problem in multicultural society**

Latvia is a multinational state and democratic processes have been discussed in the country since the reestablishment of the independence of Latvia in 1991. Many national minorities live together in the same territory: Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Polish, Lithuanians, Estonians, Jews and others. For all of them Latvia is their native country, where people work and live. This is the basis for creating an understanding of the process of civic education in the schools of Latvia.

The issue of multiculturalism has become very important over the last hundred years, not only in separate countries, but also over the continent. The Europe of the Millennium is a multicultural continent in which many cultures meet, and nobody can prevent this. There are different ethnic groups living in different countries, and these ethnic groups define the economic, political and cultural development of their countries. The model of the national state was formed by common symbol and images, based on an ethnic majority. A consequence of this is that minority ethnic groups can face difficulties. On the one hand, they would like to preserve their ethnic culture, on the other, they want to identify with the national state. There should be ways out of this dilemma. In Latvia this is an actual problem: we are aware of our ethnic identity, and this is a problem for all in polynational countries.

This paper is part of *Citizenship Education: Europe and the World: Proceedings of the eighth Conference of the Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe Thematic Network*, ed Ross A, published by CiCe (London) 2006. ISBN 1 899764 66 6; ISSN 1470-6695

Funded with support from the European Commission SOCRATES Project of the Department of Education and Culture. This publication reflects the views of the authors only, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained in this publication.

The most important task for the nationalities of Latvia is to carry out multiculturalism. During the session of UN on a 'Dialogue among civilisations', the President of Latvia V. Vīķe-Freiberga emphasized that each nation has its own joys and sorrows. He asked that we listen to each other with clear heart and soul (Vīķe-Freiberga, 2000). The wish to listen to the joys and concerns of other nations - in other words, tolerance – is the basis of multiculturalism. The process of developing civic integration is not possible without tolerance. Apine (1998) considers that there will be two large groups of inhabitants in Latvia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – Latvians (with a growing birth rate, and with some Russians leaving) and Russians (which includes Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Polish, Jewish, Estonians, Lithuanians). Ethnopolitics should be based on the real facts, not national rhetoric. The reality is the state as a national but multicultural society, in which national cultures exist next to each other (Apine, 1998). Tolerance is not only mutual concessions, but also attention and interest about cultures existing next to one.

The aim of multicultural civic education is to show the existence of a multi-shaped culture in the world and in the country, to prepare people to meet the other culture, to understand people's behaviour and to avoid racism and xenophobia.

Considering the problems of multicultural civic education, several pedagogic problems arise around the conception of multicultural education, where there are various approaches:

1. Education for civic integration in a multicultural society is a process where students form positive perceptions and evaluations of cultural systems, which differ from their own culture. Models of behaviour are created to be compared with representations of other cultures.
2. Education for civic integration is an exact educational programme, that provides minority children with educational practices adjusted to their specific languages, physical and cultural needs. Practice proves the validity.

Multicultural upbringing is a complicated psychological process, involving development and education for empathy, forcing others to think according to my thoughts, and self-denial (searching for the compromise). Teachers have a significant role in civic education in a multicultural society. They have to generate interest not only about the culture and history of their own nation, but also to know all the ethnic histories of Latvians and their cultures (Freidenfelds, 1996).

The year 2001 was designated as the year of culture and festivals: the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city of Riga, a Song and Dance Festival, the Days of Hanseatic League, European Culture month, with concerts devoted to these days and public holidays. This was to unite thousands of people in common happenings and emotions. Speaking about daily life, when it may be difficult to find common ground because of competition and misunderstandings, Veber writes that festivities are actions to develop civic integration during which competitive fights lose their meaning: common interests prevail, and the mental essence dominates (Veber, 2001).

Latvia is not a mononational but a polynational state. The solidarity between the people of Latvia has been achieved through recognising the cultures of other nations and

respecting them. Questions of national aspects, including the polynational, will soon be solved by youth. Festivities and traditions in the schools of Latvia is civic education, and everything connected with it. There are no spectators during festivities: all take part in them because of their attractive forms and contents. Festivities at school are needed to encourage civic consciousness as:

- Participation in festivities helps children be cooperative in Latvian festivals:
- Through organizing and preparing for these festivals, children obtain knowledge about culture, traditions and folklore.
- When parents participate in festivities, understanding about values is created in cooperation with their children.

The school is a model of the country, but a minority school reflects brightly the processes of the society: civic integration and upbringing in a multicultural environment. A person cannot love that which he does not know.

To become a legitimate citizen of Latvia one has to know not only the state language, but also to know, understand, accept and love Latvian culture. The nation's festivals are an inseparable part of its culture. The calendar of holidays of Latvia are used in the civic development and education process for minority nations; this is one of the ways to encourage understanding about civic development in Latvia, which is one of the most important issues in our multicultural country. Traditional national calendar holidays are used to promote the understanding of civic upbringing between the national groups.

### **Encouraging development in civic integration education in pre-schools**

In the multicultural society of Latvia, art, music and festival celebrations play an important role in children's integration into Latvian cultural values. Knowledge about citizenship is acquired at different levels in the educational system, but attitudes are formed during the education process, are improved all through adult life, and are transferred from generation to generation.

Children master basic communication skills in preschool. Attitudes towards oneself, state, society and culture are created, achieved purposefully in preschool and extended in elementary school. The content of this is one way to civic integration in preschool, elementary school and secondary school. But even if these contents are rich, they will not be significant for the student unless they also have emotional sympathy and effort.

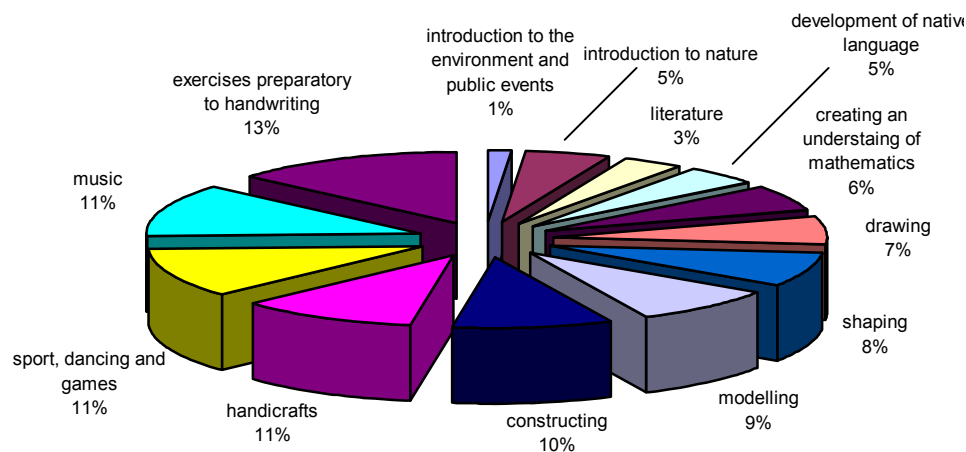
That is why purposeful civic integration education takes place in Latvia. The Latvian Ministry of Education provides regulations about obligatory preparation for school for 5 and 6 year old children. From September 2002 these children in schools and preschools follow a two-year educational programme.

In accordance with CiCe guidelines (CiCe, 2004), with standard documents of the Ministry of Education and with statements of humane pedagogics about holistic approaches in education, the Rīdze preschool has developed a preschool educational programme that aims to develop a humane, free, independent and responsible personality (Rone, 2000).

An essential task is to form awareness of social processes, citizenship, and membership of Latvian society, and to promote this in the intensified integrated class. The teacher, through his personal example, teaches the child to solve conflicts without violence and encourage children's understanding about human empathy (Craig, 2002).

Children of preschool age are directed towards civic integration and understanding: including cultural identity, similarities and differences in the traditions of Latvians and other nations, attitudes towards the locality and the environment, work habits, attitude towards oneself, bodies, clothing and possessions. The contents of the programme are worked out.

**Figure 1: The model of the contents of the programme**



The content of the programme is created every year to meet the children's age and situation in preschool. They are integrated to prepare the civic education questions gradually, as this is connected with the development of understanding. Participation allows every child to express her or his thoughts and feelings, so cooperation creates responsibility in the productive actions of the child. Regular, intensive and active game activities are organised to cover these contents. In the active 'actual development zone' the child acts independently, but 'in the closest development zone' the child is supported by the adult (Vigodskis, 1997).

Emotions find expression in verbal and non-verbal communication, intonation of voice and body movements. Through action the child realises his inbuilt need to investigate the world. Activity is stimulated by the need for self-actualisation, and the result of purposeful activity is the child's habits and self-regulation.

The child's psychological training and encouragement of understanding is very important. The teacher's personal example demonstrates activities so that children can acquire significant civic integration. Civic upbringing is a purposeful process in which the important attitude of the citizen towards the state and responsibilities and rights are developed with pedagogical support.

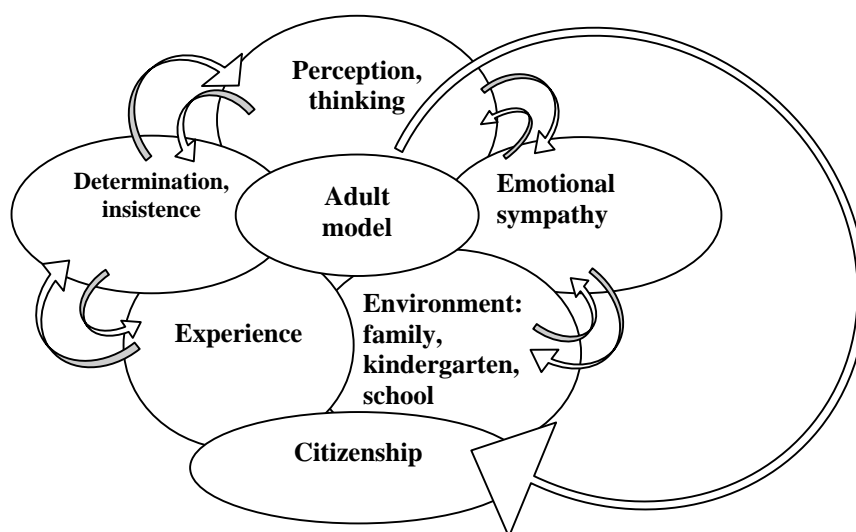
**Table 1: Methods of promoting civic integration**

Methods	Techniques
Oral methods	Explanation; teacher's story; discussions; talks; reading of literary works
Demonstrative techniques	Observation; demonstration of things; usage of pictures; demonstration of movements; didactic materials
Game methods	Game exercises; activities with toys; imitation of actions; contest elements; riddles
Practical methods	Simple experiments; life situations; changing of things
Investigative methods	Problem questions; modelling; experiments

Citizenship status is an integrated emotional attitude towards one's own country, society, people, work and culture. These are attitudes expressed through mutual human relationships and work to accomplish prosperity. The real manifestation of civic quality is to scrupulously observe norms of social behaviour and to recognise the value of work.

Mutual confidence, respect and honesty lies at the heart of teacher - parent cooperation. Outstanding forms of cooperation are discussions, open classes, meetings for parents, festivity celebrations and singing together with children, etc. Children inherit their values of cultural identity when they imitate adults at school and at home. So the succession of generations has been provided for. The succession of civic heritage is depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. The inheritance of civic succession in the process of forming.**



The final product of a child's activity in pedagogy is his knowledge, experience and skills to work with information. The psychological aspect - a positive emotional attitude and satisfaction with achievement – is the final product of a child's activity, as studies closely connect with real life and the child becomes closer to the aims of education for civic integration. The result of purposeful systematic work is a preschool pupil prepared for an integrated upbringing that will follow in a multicultural environment.

### **Possibilities for civic integration education in minority nations' elementary schools**

Integration has been much discussed in Latvian society, with devotees and opponents. It is clear that the process is happening and that it cannot be stopped. The process of civic integration is widely discussed in the government and amongst the public. Awareness of it in a poly-national society is not disputable, but there are many who neither understand nor accept it.

In January 2003 a debate started about minority schools teaching in the state language from 2004. Opponents raise the question that this is not an attempt of the core nation to adjust to the presence of the other nations, but an attempt at assimilation. At the same time civic integration education is asking each individual alternative to accept the diversity of others and to cooperate in achieving common goals. The general resolution is that the aim of the civic integration is development for the individual as well as for society. The civic integration is not a process outside society, or without tolerance in the mutual relationship.

School is one of the state institutions, with the task of bringing up citizens in an integrated multicultural society. Teachers today have not only to know how to teach their subject methodologically correctly, but also to be able to create the conception of the subject. Teachers have to awake interest not only about history, language and culture, but also to motivate the wish to learn, to study and to understand Latvian history and culture.

Knowledge of Latvian is obligatory for everybody, but only 5.8% of the Russians in Latvia know the Latvian language. The state programme says 'the background of civic integration in society is the readiness to accept the Latvian language as a state language, to respect the Latvian language and the minority languages and cultures'. This comes back to the role of the school in the process of civic integration, where there should not be differences between Latvians and the minorities, but an attempt to find commonalities.

One way to find similarities is to celebrate the calendar of festivities: Līgo–Ivans Kupala Day, Shrovetide Carnival, Christmas and Easter. Celebrating these holidays reveals the similarities in traditions from which ethnic diversities between Russian and Latvian cultures develop. The celebration of these festivals is significant in the minority schools, and is one of the ways of developing civic integration in the Latvian environment.

Several conclusions can be reached from this:

1. There is a continuing process of civic integration education in Latvia;
2. Schools are significant institutions in this process; and
3. The celebration of festivals in minority schools is one way to integrate Latvian culture.

### **Participation in festivities as a form of civic integration**

‘The goal of development is determined by the progress of personality development that chooses content, methods and forms in every society. The aim of civic upbringing – ideal personality in multicultural society – is different and corresponds with the needs of society’ (38; 42). Latvia is a poly-national state, in which other nations – Russians, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Gypsies – live alongside Latvians and their culture and traditions. Each of these nations forms its own ethnos with its language, culture and traditions, but at the same time accepts the culture and traditions of the Latvian ethnos. It is believed that a new culture has been created in Latvia, an aggregate of many nations, as happened in the USA. A confirmation of this may be seen in the way some holidays, such as Līgo, Christmas, and Easter, are celebrated not only by Latvians but also by all the nations living in Latvia. The principles, goals and methods of cultural upbringing are not fixed, but change alongside changes in politics and economics. We are living at a time when these changes are taking place. In the soviet period the word ‘upbringing’ was most often used alongside the word ‘communist’. The aim of communist upbringing was that a person should be brought up not only as having knowledge, but primarily as an active member of socialist society, as an active builder of communism. ‘The demand to organise communist upbringing in such a way that the communist idea is an inner activity regulator, and becomes a norm of behaviour for every soviet citizen’ (Spona, 2001). Everything was predetermined: October child-pioneer – komсомол – member of party. The alternative was an illusion of existence: if you did not participate in these organisations, you immediately became an outcast and could not hope for a professional carrier.

The target of soviet upbringing was to develop many-sided, developed, and navigable people. The development of a multicultural society development – the general goal development now – is to develop an humane personality, the basis of unity of freedom, permanence and responsibility, developed through cooperation (Spona, 2001). This aim can only be achieved if individuals understand and accept it. The family has always been the main educator, but economic instability and unemployment in Latvia has sometimes made the family indifferent, or even aggressive. So the role of the school and the teacher has become greater: they become the only bearers of humanistic upbringing, humanistic attitudes and humanistic values.

A child learns from the attitudes shown towards him or her. People’s behaviour against certain things, phenomena and facts is determined by the attitude shown towards them (Spona, 2001). The child learns how an adult man should behave towards women by watching father’s behaviour towards the mother, from parents’ attitudes towards the child – how they treat weaker and dependent children. Professor Spona emphasizes that the content of upbringing is improvement and the realisation of relationships: against



himself, against others; against work; against culture; against state and society; and against nature (Spona, 2004). Relationship form and cooperation between activity and knowledge becomes stronger as a result of emotional experience. One of the roles of civic integration through sharing festivals and the preparation for celebration is to develop the emotional experience and feelings of unity that unify members of a family and groups with strangers.

Preparations for festivities are an integrative content of civic upbringing. It is seen in the element of the curriculum about attitudes towards oneself, in the subparagraph on 'habits of independence and responsibility'. To prepare for the festivity, each group member receives a task for which he or she is responsible:

- Attitudes towards others: cooperation and honesty in preparation for the festival, through group work and cooperation;
- Attitudes towards work: purposeful overcoming of difficulties. The Latvian way in which children work together with adults. Parents' work becomes an example: if parents dislike their work as hard labour or repetitive, then work has less value for children and its value decreases, as is happening now. Children's attitude towards work is formed in this way;
- Attitudes towards culture: an interest in traditions and active participation in accomplishing culture. Festivals are rituals about the future, and festival beliefs are connected with hopes of fortune, health and prosperity, etc. For example, swinging at Easter: the higher the swinging, the richer the crop and more milk will be given by cows; at Christmas eating nine times leads to prosperity next year; at Līgo jumping over the fire protects from illnesses, etc.;
- Attitudes towards the state, society and social activities: understanding that man is part of society, and festivities are social activities, either as state holidays or family celebrations. Preparing for the holiday helps the child understand he is a part of society and the family. Nothing else unites people so much as common action for common goals.
- Attitudes towards nature: knowledge of man as part of nature. Festivals are connected with changes in season and natural phenomenon. Mārtiņi at the end of autumn and beginning of winter, Christmas at the winter solstice, Easter at the spring solstice, Meteņi at the end of winter, etc. Many beliefs are linked to festivals, explaining and predicting time, weather and crops.

So preparing for festivals and rituals emphasises traditions of culture and work; social cohesion: phenomena connected with work and social values. Festivals are a form of civic integration in a multicultural environment.

**Table 2: Integrated definition of traditional festivals on civic upbringing**

Russian tradition	Latvian tradition
Vastlāvji (end of winter)	Meteņi (End of winter)
Pasha (Easter solstice)	Lieldienas (Easter solstice)
	Mother's Day
Ivana Kupala day	Līgo (summer solstice)
	Miķeļi (beginning of autumn)
	Mārtiņi (end of autumn)
	Time of ghosts
Roždestvo (winter solstice)	Ziemassvētki (winter solstice)

A dialogue with students is the basis of civic upbringing in which knowledge about Orthodox festivals can be shared. Latvian school students know more about differences between Orthodox and Catholic festivals than do the minority school students. Latvian pupils know less about other Orthodox holidays and even less than the minority school students. Unfortunately Latvian pupils know little or very little about festivals, including Russian culture as well as about the minority cultures. The clear negative attitudes found are not the result of ignorance. Analysis of research shows that nearly two thirds of Latvian school students and minority school students can orient themselves in festivities: they know when Miķeļi, Mārtiņi, Christmas, Easter, Līgo are celebrated. Nearly all minority school students and Latvian school students know about the origin of these festivals and how their roots can be found in ancient national traditions. Almost all school students know about the characteristics of these festivities. Knowledge about traditional meals is less common: fewer than half of the minority pupils and only two thirds of Latvian students.

The conclusion of this research is that minority school students orient themselves well in Latvian national festivals. Their knowledge creates respect towards Latvian culture. Students acquired their knowledge not only from mass media, but also from families, the Latvian language, the history of Latvia, Russian language and lessons in ethics and music. Many after-school activities are about these festivals, and these broaden students' horizons. Representatives of the minorities living in Latvia (Russians) know and respect Latvian culture and festivals: they are ready to unite, but not to allow their identity disappear in Latvian culture. Latvia is a multicultural country in which there must be a place for the cultures of other nations.

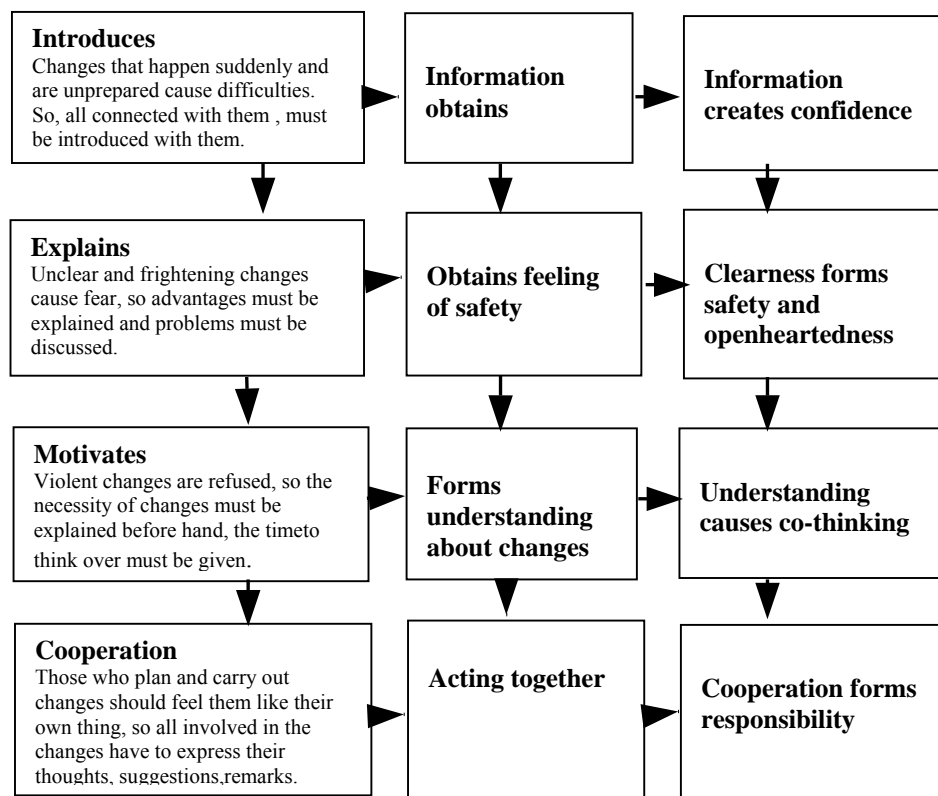
### **The need to changes aspects of civic integration upbringing**

Modern educational systems are characterised by constant change.

Education has a moral aim, which can influence students' lives in spite of their previous experience and origin, and to promote the upbringing of citizens who can successfully live and act in complex social circumstances (Fulans, 1999).

Teachers are ready to change, develop and take part in projects to carry out these goals. Purposeful changes in school organisation are needed to allow every teacher to act and establish the need for self-realisation. Lihacova, the author of *Qualitative school development*, supports the psychological aspect of the process of change, understanding that 'teachers will not lose hope and will participate in a common development process that will become long lasting' (Lihacova, 2003). One idea in educational change is the development of civic education in the process of studying, and this is included in the teaching standards. The introduction of standards is connected with changes in school educational programmes, as well as in promoting teachers' understanding. Life-long changes are only achieved through serious work carried out by students. The process of changes is gradual.

**Figure 3: Terms for the process of changes**



### Conclusions

1. Civic integration in a multicultural society is a process in which students are given positive perceptions and characteristics of cultural systems which differ from their own culture.

2. Civic integration is a clear educational programme, which provides educational forms for minority children, adjusted to specific language, educational and cultural needs.
3. The terms for civic integration are taught to children in preschool and continued in subsequent stages in school.
4. Emotional attitudes towards the state, society, people, work and culture is expressed through civic integrative education programmes that emphasise humanistic mutual relationships between people.
5. The celebration of Latvian festivals in minority school is one way of civic integration into Latvian culture and environment.
6. Purposeful changes in school civic education will create understanding about diversity and provide circumstances for all teachers to find their potential and self-expression.

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