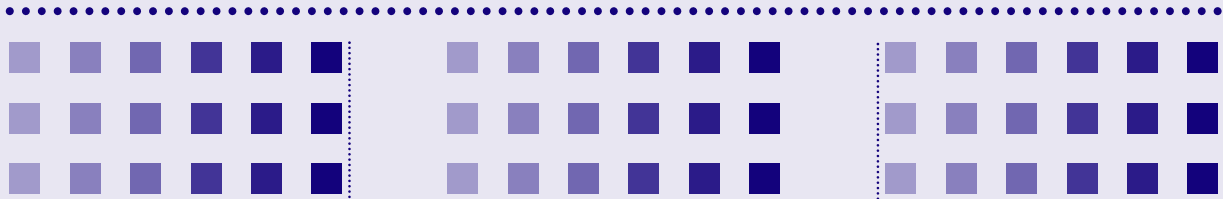




**STRENGTHENING
CIVIL SOCIETY
AND FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS
THROUGH CIVIC EDUCATION
PROGRAMS**



CASE STUDIES



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CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES / MACEDONIA

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY
AND FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS
THROUGH CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- Case Studies -

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ACRONYMS



BED	- Bureau for Educational Development
CRS	- Catholic Relief Services
HCO	- Humanitarian Citizen's Organization
HVOR	- Humanitarian Voluntary Organization of Roma
MCEC	- Macedonian Civic Education Center
MoES	- Ministry for Education and Science
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organization
USAID	- United States Agency for International Development
UNESCO	- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



FOREWORD

Our society is in a period of transition and it attempts to compensate the lost time by intensifying the processes that lead to development of economy, education, health care and technology by involving the citizen in these development processes. This will augment our inclusion in the family of democratic countries.

I am convinced that all of us, as educational stakeholders should become involved in the implementation of the education goals of peace, human rights and democracy for children, young people and adults. Therefore we should resolutely decide to base education on the principles and methods that will help the development of a student who will, afore all, be able to respect human beings, promote peace, human rights, trust and democracy.

Education of understanding, solidarity, tolerance and respect of others reminds us of the words of the UNESCO former director, Federico Major: "Children should be educated to avoid violence, to resolve conflicts in peaceful manner, in the spirit of altruism, transparency, respect of others, self-confidence, common good."

With great responsibility I claim that peaceful future rests on the everyday activities and behavior of the citizens. If this is accepted as true, then there will be no doubt that the content of the Civic Education program represents one of the major sources of positive changes of the awareness of the citizens, education of tolerance, responsibility and justice in our schools, our homes, but above all, in our hearts and thoughts.

Civic Education in the Republic of Macedonia still is not differentiated as a separate subject, moreover it has an interdisciplinary and practical character. In lower elementary education (grade 1-4) a special attention is paid to the content matters for development of children's basic rights and innovation of the forms and methods that stimulate socialization, cooperation, education of tolerance and building of trust and confidence among children in lower elementary education.

In upper elementary education, in grades 5-6, within the framework of the class, project activities are carried out for identifying and solving problems concerning the life of the students and the local community.



In grades 7-8, the subject Civic Culture has been introduced. This subject has the aim to develop personalities who will actively participate in civic life and development of civil society.

In the period 1998-2004 important changes were made in the Primary Education Law and the Primary Education Curriculum. Among the other innovative methods and principles, the basic principles of education of students civic awareness were encompassed including: democracy, openness, tolerance and respect of others. The above-mentioned principles are clearly identified in the content matter of the civic education programs for primary education, which in the form of projects, were introduced in the Republic of Macedonia for the first time in 1998. The activities of these programs were supported by the CRS and USAID.

At the end, I would like that together with the Ministry for Education and Science, the Bureau for Educational Development, the mentors and teachers - implementators of civic education, we include the program as a separate subject and structure the programs appropriately within the national curriculum, as well as within the organization and implementation of upbringing processes in the school.

Qamil Dzeladini,
Director of the Bureau for
Educational Development

INTRODUCTION

For more decades now civic education represent a very important segment in the education in the European countries. It is considered, by the stakeholders involved in the planning of the educational policy in Republic of Macedonia, an education that corresponds to the basic goals of the reforms of our educational system. The aim of civic education overlaps with the crucial aim of the reforms of the educational system in the Republic of Macedonia and that is the increase of the educational function and creation of aware and morally responsible citizens, capable of active life and work in a democratic society and wider, in the world's community of nations.

The introduction of Civic Education in the Republic of Macedonia in 1998 began with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry for Education and Science - the Bureau for Educational Development and the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

During the research period several civic education curricula were analyzed and according to the methodological, didactic and cultural characteristics, it was decided to introduce the programs: "Foundations of Democracy" and "We the People... Project Citizen."

The program "Foundations of Democracy" has the aim to teach the students the basic principles of democratic behavior. It examines four basic concepts: Authority, Justice, Responsibility and Privacy. It is an interdisciplinary program that is implemented through all the subjects that provide possibilities for integration. The program is implemented in pre-school education and in lower elementary education.

The program "We the People... Project Citizen" represents a project activity whose aim is to stimulate the interest of the students for the problems in the immediate surrounding and raise the awareness of their potential as active participants in the life of their community. The main goal of this program is to teach the students about the function of the governmental institutions and prepare them for future active participation in government and public po-



licity through problem solving. This program is included in grades 5 and 6 and the content matters are implemented during homeroom class.

Since the project activities are in accordance with the age of the students, the program "We the People... Project Citizen" can be implemented throughout the whole educational process.

The project is implemented through six steps: identification of the problems of the immediate surrounding, selection and definition of a problem, creation of a portfolio, presentation of the portfolio and review. The fifth and sixth grade students are involved in the program.

For a successful implementation of the program, trainings for the educators in pre-school education, the teachers in lower elementary education and the homeroom teachers of grade 5 and 6 students, were organized and implemented. The trainings included teachers and educators from all primary schools and kindergartens in Macedonia.

The highest level of partnership was demonstrated through the process for setting civic education standards, which was implemented by the Assessment Unit (BED) and CRS.

The civic education in the period of six years stimulated numerous partnerships that provided strong support to education on all levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education.

These case studies present the practical experiences and impacts of the civic education programs on the teaching process, the students, the teachers, the parents, the school directors and generally on the school, as a "small society."

The study considers two major topics:

- ➊ **Strengthening Civil Society Through Civic Education Programs;**
- ➋ **Fostering Partnerships To Support Educational Development.**

Golubina Georgievska,
Leader of the BED
Civic Education working group



TOPIC:

**STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY
THROUGH CIVIC EDUCATION
PROGRAMS**

CIVIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS HAVE GREAT IMPACT ON THE CHILDREN

Need for Civic Education Programs

With the independence of the Republic of Macedonia in 1991 new opportunities and challenges arose in education, especially concerning the democratization of the educational process, its modernization and harmonization with the European and world standards which on the forefront set the educational component, the quality of the knowledge and within these frameworks, the individual.

In a period of abandonment of the old system of economic, political and social life, it was necessary to create new values that will entice changes in the educational system and enable development of an individual who will claim upon himself or herself individual, domestic and civil responsibility.

It was necessary to create programs that will lead to the achievement of the aims of civic education.

Civic Education Programs Developed in Macedonia

The implementation of the programs "Foundations of Democracy" and "We the People... Project Citizen" accentuated the need for creation of civic education programs for the seventh and eighth grade students. They were created on the basis of the analysis of civic education in several countries in Europe and the world.

A program was created for vocational secondary education while a program for the subject "Foundations of Democracy with Methodic" that is taught to the students of fourth year at the Pedagogical Faculty in Bitola, was also developed.

"Foundations of Democracy" Program impact on the development of democracy values of the children in kindergartens

The children acquire most of their experience in their homes and in the local community. However, for development and expansion of the levels of experience, pre-school education plays a very important role.



What is achieved with the program "Foundations of Democracy"?

With the analyses of the stories that concern the four concepts, with the story telling, role-playing, simulations, dramatizations etc. the children develop trust, self-confidence and social, intellectual and creative abilities. They grow up aware of and respectful for the surrounding and the differences among the people, the responsibilities they have in their homes and in the kindergarten, what they think about the rules of behavior, the ecology, the respect of privacy etc.

"Foundations of Democracy" Program impact on the development of democracy values of the students in primary schools (Grade 1 to 4)

Schools expand the experiences the children have from their families and the kindergarten. In primary education, in grades 1 to 4 to be more precise, the program "Foundations of Democracy" studies the four concepts on four levels that offer opportunities for improvement of the results concerning civic education in the study process. Primary schools have made a considerable improvement in securing opportunities for the children to be able to participate in the processes of bringing new and changing old rules in their surrounding, of bringing decisions on the class level, of the planning and carrying out activities that help them understand and take responsibility in the class or the family, developing responsibility for study, respect of other people's opinions and the right to personal choice (election of a class president by voting), taking a personal stand etc.

Example:

The students from the "Dimo Hadzi Dimov" Primary School from Skopje noticed small but significant changes in the class as a result of the acquisition of the concepts Justice, Responsibility, Authority and Privacy. The girls complain less about the boys' improper behavior. Presence in class has increased, there are no truants. The class begins immediately after the bell rings and all the students are present in the classroom. The hygiene in the class is raised to a higher level. There are no complaints about missing pencils, pens etc. The shyest student already takes part in the role-playing, simulations etc. The children are proud of their accomplishments and so are the teacher and the school's director. They serve as an example to the other students.

Example:**What did the students from the "Vlado Tasevski" Primary School in Skopje do?**

The members of the journalist section of the IV-a grade, in cooperation with the school's civic education team, invited a famous journalist to talk to the students about an article of his, published in one of the daily newspapers. They questioned the journalist how he formed his opinion about the problem he addressed in the article. After the conversation, the children were assigned to select other articles, study them and write their own one.

What did the students learn?

They understood that different people can think differently about the same problem, they learned to think critically, form their own opinions and recognize the truth.

What did the teacher learn?

The teacher became aware that the aims of civic education coincide with the aims of the other subjects and that there is a room for interaction between different teaching subjects.

**"We the People... Project Citizen" Program impact on the development of democracy values of the students**

Civic education has a new meaning for the ten year olds who face many new subjects and new topics concerning the life in the local community. Many of the topics they face in the future course of their education (solving given problems, bringing decisions, taking stands) demand better knowledge and understanding of the contemporary topics and processes of bringing decisions. The students should know how to relate the knowledge and understanding to the numerous skills and abilities necessary for definition of a problem, gathering information and analysis, preparation of a report, evaluation of their own work and behavior etc.

The application of the program "We the People... Project Citizen" has led to improved results concerning the development of democracy and atmosphere in various schools. The school directors and the teachers think that there is a big change of the school atmosphere. Some primary schools have school council; others have children's school parliaments and have assigned members to the children's state parliament.

Example:

The Grade 5 students from the "Aco Sopov" Primary School from Radisani invited an employee of the Ministry of Transport. The class was organized as a presentation of a real life situation. The father suffered an accident and was no longer able to work. The family faced material and other difficulties. The children's task was to think and find a solution what the family should do. All the students in the class gave their suggestions what they should do, to which institutions they should go, what kind of letters they should write or which forms to fill in etc. Then representatives of the class talked to the representatives of the Center for Social Care, the representatives of organizations that offered jobs and so they solved the problem.

What did the students learn?

They learned how to select a real life problem, to look and find the ways for its solution, who can help and by what means. They learned something about the experience of synergy - how to help each other and create positive energy of mutual support, cooperation and help.



Liljana Gorgioska,
Bureau for Educational Development
Skopje

EXPERIENCES OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS WHO IMPLEMENT CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE KUMANOVO REGION

With the implementation of civic education in the schools, from 1999/2000 until today many in-class observation were implemented, a big number of debates were held, personal and group contacts with the teachers were established, all with the aim to sum the impressions, the results and the teacher's opinions about the implementation of the goals, as well as the benefits from the implementation of the civic education programs. The analyses of these experiences showed that almost all the teachers agree on the following:

- *With civic education the students are prepared for lifelong learning, necessary for establishing democratic values.*
- *Civic education helps their personal growth and obtaining abilities to help themselves and others and be the cause of changes.*

Here are several statements about personal experiences of the teachers who implements civic education programs.

Grade 3 teacher:

Short time after the civic education seminar, I felt ashamed of my previous work, because of my authoritative lectures, application of derogatory rules, disrespect of privacy, use of force...

Thinking about the changes, I decided to incorporate the four basic concepts of Justice, Authority, Privacy and Responsibility into my new approach towards the work with the students. This was to be done from the very first day of the new school year and the way in which I planned to do it was a way that will develop students' skills for democratic functioning of the class. The programs started to be felt. We broke the monotony and uniformity, the children were happy to accept my initiatives and suggestions.

The feeling of greater awareness, bigger responsibility and new knowledge are the positive benefits the students acquired from civic education. Usually the concrete action is less important than the feeling that they had the opportunity to do something to help the others or themselves. Their participation in the democratic processes is on the increase because they related the knowledge to the action. It



seems that they start to treat the community with greater respect and cooperation. Now they see themselves and others as diligent members of society because somebody listened to their ideas and opinions and they are treated with respect.

Teacher - after four years of practicing democracy:

After reconsideration of my work so far (until the civic education seminars) I came to the conclusion: what I must do is to go to work with a prepared plan for the lectures and the way the lecturing goes depends entirely on me.

Most of the time I was only listening to myself and watching the quiet students. It was boring for me as it was for them.

I realized that the students are taught only how to listen, they are not asked to state their opinions, they are not taught to respect other people's views, they are not asked to think critically about the problems and questions in the classroom and outside. I was acting as if I knew everything and the students knew nothing. My teaching methods stimulated behavior and values contrary to the democratic ideals.

I started to believe that I can and should make much more to give my students strength to become more capable for life. I understood that in order democracy to function in education, it should be implemented and there is no time to waste because it's a long learning process. To deny the children of this training would mean slowing down their personal growth.

With the conversations with my colleagues, through the following of the daily newspapers and situations and returning often to the civic education programs, I started to answer the questions that troubled me:

What is democracy?

Yes, I should teach them an appropriate behavior when they are alone, in a group, in the family, in the school, in public!

I decided to build and create a democratic classroom. Crucial for my new approach towards work were the ideas: community and common decision-making, learning with cooperation and individual and group solution of problems.

That is how together we started to bring the rules of behavior and work.

I explained to them that it is difficult to change the content, but that we can choose the techniques and the tempo of work, the home works and exercises.

In class I stated the aims clearly. I continually stimulated the feelings of belonging and cooperation, the respect of other people's opinions and responsibility for their own education. Occasionally we

would laugh and relax. My purpose was to help the students to get to know each other as personalities with different priorities, needs and values. I often start the classes with exercises of mutual introduction and unity: "Guess who I am," "My favorite toy and food," "Together we're stronger," "Building a house of cards, newspapers," "Active and passive listening," "I am" etc.

We introduced a "box of secrets" and every day we wrote personal problems and notes. Each day the box was opened and the notes were read. The students understood that they have same or similar problems and this stimulated the feeling of unity.

One teacher's experience with the model of group work:

After long observation and acquaintance with the children I often used the model of group work with the following roles.

Observer	Participant	Assistant
1. Observes and listens to the others. 2. Thinks about the work that needs to be done.	1. Observes and listens to the others. 2. Thinks about the work that needs to be done. PLUS 3. Gives ideas. 4. Asks questions. 5. Answers the questions. 6. Works well with the others.	1. Observes and listens to the others. 2. Thinks about the work that needs to be done. 3. Gives ideas. 4. Asks questions. 5. Answers the questions. 6. Works well with the others 7. Includes the parents. 8. Keeps things under control. 9. Everybody is working on the problem. 10. Praises and stimulates the others.

After getting to know each other, lately the students independently began to form the groups depending on the problem, the tasks and their interests.

Stimulation of freedom of expression

"Very often I used the children's inner needs to sing, dance and act. Simply, when they sing, play or dance they send messages to the surrounding, they get to know it and they experience it. All this leads to socialization, friendship, solidarity."

Stimulation of creative thinking with application of the technique "brainstorming"

"We cannot build a democratic society without citizens' freedom of expression, freedom of thought, providing ideas for solution of problems etc.

Brainstorming is a technique I often use in my work with the students. It is great for stimulation of creative thinking, gathering of many ideas for solution of a given problem. With this technique I encompass either individuals or groups, depending on the problem. It is implemented either orally or in written. The technique is easy and fun. We brought some rules of its implementation, such as:

- All ideas are written down and are useful.
- Allow for free flow of thought.
- Combine, add, improve and develop other people's ideas.
- The more ideas, the better.
- Don't criticize and don't judge.

The critical view on the ideas follows later on and it comprises of a selection according to a given criterion (acceptable - non acceptable, possible - impossible usual - unusual)."



Inclusion of the parents

"In my classes I often include the parents as a source of knowledge, from the most diverse profiles: craftsmen, journalists, doctors, volunteers, housewives. Here is just one example: Every 6-7 March we celebrate the Father's Day who together with the children prepare cards for the mothers.

The effects of this activity are clear: bringing the parents closer to the school, but also stimulation of competitiveness, development of a sense of aesthetics, creativity, friendship and love.

Work on self-improvement

„Civic education inspired us to work on improvement of our behavior. Therefore we decided to bring some rules that will, first of all, change us. We think that then we will be more prepared to teach the students civic education.

Here are some of these rules:

- *Respect the working hours.*
- *Listen to your collocutor.*
- *Cooperate with your colleagues.*
- *Conflict is a battle of opinions.*
- *Respect other people's opinions.*
- *Praise your successes.*
- *Don't be petty.*
- *Talk clearly, honestly and fairly.*

We also put some slogans in the teachers' room, as inspirations for life and work.

And indeed, things went for the better!"

This is just a small part of the personal experiences of the teachers concerning the practice of democracy in the schools with the civic education programs, as a path to a civil society.

From these and many other experiences of the teachers it can be concluded that with the civic education programs for the first time the natural sense of democracy is systematically encouraged, followed and developed.

We get further confirmation of the teachers' mood concerning civic education in the schools from the empirical polling on the topic: "Some observations concerning the implementation of the curriculum in grades one to four." Practically there was not a single teacher who did not express his or her enthusiasm and wish to work according to the topics from civic education.

Namely, the strategies that civic education offers enable a different manner of respect for the children's rights and final acceptance of the child and his/her ability to participate actively in the creation of a healthy and sensible life.

At the end, I give the statements and conclusions of a big number of teachers: "The civic education programs undeniably offered more relevant manners for authentic development of responsibility, courage and ability to live. Therefore in future they should be further developed and improved to help us find easier and faster solutions to the problems on personal, interpersonal, local and global level."

Vera Pankovska,
BED advisor
Kumanovo

THE SOCIAL ROLE AND THE CIVIC MISSION OF THE SCHOOL

This study is a result of an organized, systematic monitoring and analysis of the work of one primary school. The purpose is to establish how and how much the implementation of the civic education programs affects the strengthening of the civil society.

With the description of the process how the school is involved in the realization of the programs "Foundations of Democracy" in grades one to four and "We the People... Project Citizen" in grades five and six, I will also describe the impact civic education had on the building of the democratic relations in and out of the school. The material - technical conditions available to the school, the level of staff proficiency, the location and social surrounding of the school were all taken into consideration.

Bearing in mind that the school represents, or at least it should represent, a center where the whole educational process in the community is being realized, it should augment the building and strengthening of a democratic civil society.

With the completion of the project phase of introduction of civic education in the primary schools, many questions arose, among which:

- ❶ *What are the upcoming implications in the society with the introduction of civic education in the schools?*
- ❷ *What are and how favorable are the benefits from the realization of these programs?*
- ❸ *To which extent can they contribute to the strengthening of the civil society?*

This study concentrates on the answers of these questions with the aim to perceive the civic mission and social role of the school. This is particularly important in the last few years when the schools experienced a lot of changes, starting with the process of managing to the ways of implementation of the curriculum and the educational goals and aims.

This study is based on the materials (development plans, reports, letters and documents) gathered throughout the academic years 2002/03 and 2003/04 when numerous pedagogical insights, class visits, conversations, interviews with the parents, the students, the teachers and all the educational stakeholders who were directly or indirectly involved in the work of the school, were realized.

The basic presumption that we wanted to prove with the conducted research was: "The introduction of civic education in the schools, its successful implementation, contributed in a great extent to the development of a personality formed on the principles of tolerance and respect of the rights, fulfillment of responsibilities, cooperation, awareness for active participation in the community and promotion of a democratic development of the society."

The First Steps of the School's Civic Mission

The first step of the research was to make a selection of a school that will be monitored.

The selection was made on basis of several criteria, such as: location of the school, its communication with the town and educational institutions, the structure of the students, parents and teachers. A school was selected that belongs to the rank of averagely developed schools in a rural surrounding. The teaching takes place in a renovated object with appropriate conditions for work. The school has been built for the children of the employees in the local factory where, until not so long ago, majority of the local population earned their living. In the last few years with the economic problems that the country faced, surplus of labor came about. This increased the unemployment rate not only in the region, but also wider, thus making the socio-economic problems even worse. This had a great impact on the work in the school because the students who came from those families faced a lot of problems. It should be noted that apart from the main building, the teaching also takes place in two school buildings in the nearby villages.

The school has 280 students divided into 14 classes. From these, 134 fifth to eighth grade students commute, i.e. they come from the villages that belong to the community of Jegunovce (Janciste, Podbrege, Prelubiste, Tudence, Siricino and Raotince). 18 teachers with appropriate training and qualifications are hired for implementation of the educational process. They receive big help in the organizational aspect of the work from one psychologist. The director was changed twice in the last few years. The director who currently manages the school was assigned to this post one year ago. However, he knows the employees and the problems very well because he has been working in this school for 30 years.

The introduction of civic education in this school began in the academic year 2000/2001. In the beginning the program "Foundations of Democracy" was implemented in first grade only through the concepts of Justice, Responsibility, Authority and Privacy. Every following year the implementation of the program was broadened in the next grade and the concepts were further developed. The successful realization of the concepts is owed to the fact that they were

implemented through the existing curriculum as well as through the students' extra-curricular activities. With the established contacts, consultations, analyses of thematic planning and conducted observations, I came to the conclusion that the majority of the homeroom teachers successfully implement the content matters of the program "Foundations of Democracy" by integration with the programs from Mother Tongue, Nature and Society.

Simultaneously with this program, the school started to implement the program "We the People... Project Citizen" with the fifth grade students with the aim to continue in grade six. With this program the students were introduced to the ways, actions and steps that need to be taken when implementing a project, thus developing skills for identification of problems from the immediate surrounding as well as finding ways for their solution.

A common goal of the civic education programs was to help the students to see that in a democratic society everyone has equal rights and responsibilities concerning the creation of the public policy.

A long time of maturing passed before we could witness the first positive results of the introduction of civic education. Implementation of civic education means application of specific interactive methods of study and experience suggests that there is no

easy way of transition from the traditional ways to the new ones. Adaptation is a process of changes that, objectively looking, always is a difficult one to start.

In the beginning, as it always is the case when something new is being introduced, there was suspicion in the school. The suspicion was a result of the lack of information and absence of previous practical experiences of the staff. Some of the most common reasons that obstructed the implementation of the civic education programs were the fact that they were not part of the existing curriculum, the school directors did not have the courage and freedom to establish their own priorities within the frameworks of the existing curriculum, and also the fact that some teachers lacked the necessary professional self-confidence. This wall of suspicion started slowly to break down after every organized seminar - training for civic education, with more frequent meetings of the teachers, BED advisors, the parents, the students and everyone involved in the work of the school.



Another issues that should be emphasized are the publication and distribution of the civic education newsletter, the punctual delivery of the working materials and handbooks for all the students in the school, the organization of school and regional competitions in civic education etc. It is important to note the big and unselfish work and enthusiasm of the school psychologist who was always ready to help with the planning and implementation of the both civic education programs.

Introduction of Interactive Teaching

The realization of the programs was conducted by active methods of work, such as: leading directed conversations, debates, role-playing, simulations, work in groups, work in pairs and many others that are part of the interactive teaching.

An indicator of the presence of the active methods of work is the result of the polling conducted among the teachers. To the question: "Which methods of work do you use in the implementation of the civic education topic areas?", all of the polled teachers answered with at least two active methods of work and study.

This means that the teachers more and more often use these interactive approaches in their work, thus stimulating the active participation of every student in the teaching process. They performed socio-plays where the role-playing addressed real life situations; they made models, painted, discussed, debated, gathered information and prepared their own projects that addressed various problems. In this way the students became active participants in the educational process, equal partners in the building of the educational policy in the school and wider, in the building of a democratic community.

This is how individuals are prepared to face the challenges of the new time - individuals who know of justice, know how to overcome conflicts successfully, respect authorities and privacy (their own and other people's) and take responsibility in work and life. In this context, I would like to highlight the statement of one homeroom teacher:

"Students kept asking me - When are we going to study Foundations of Democracy? During these classes they behaved dif-



ferently. I felt them freer, they asked questions, but at the same time expressed their thoughts about given problems. This way of work helped me discover their genuine skills and potentials."

This statement supports the following:

If we create favorable atmosphere to the students and free some space where they could express their views without restraint, then the probability is high that they will form their own opinions, which will ensure their future active civic participation.

Parental Involvement

The successful implementation of civic education means active involvement of the parents and the other individuals from the immediate social surrounding. In this school the cooperation with the parents used to be scarce. With the introduction of the civic education this cooperation started, before all, to be planned, updated, and in the last period it intensified starting with the work of the Parent Council from where members to the School Council are selected and also with the parent meetings. The partnership that the school started to build together with the parents could be observed with the increased participation of the parents in the planning and realization of the upbringing and educational work.

With organization of open days in the school, days of democracy, workshops, debates and discussions, the parents and the people of the wider community became equal participants, together with the teachers and the students, thus showing a relationship based on the principles of democracy that started to be cultivated and built in the school.

A successful example of this is the initiative that came from the students and was supported by the school support team, the teachers' team and the Parent Council. The idea was to establish a computer classroom where the students could more easily learn the content matter from the subject Informatics. The parents in cooperation with the Women Association in the region helped the students in the achieving of their initiative.

Here is what one of the parents said:

"I was skeptical concerning the realization of the initiative, especially in time of crisis that struck our region. I was pleasantly surprised by the enthusiasm and persistency by both parties which, to the content of all, led to success."

Also the statement of the school psychologist is in this context:

"With no false modesty I can say that with mutual energy and enthusiasm in a very short period of time we achieved a lot. First, we established relations of partnership with the parents and through them with the local government. Together we held many meetings and succeeded in equipping the Informatics classroom."

The equipping of the classroom opened new possibilities for cooperation with the local surrounding. Namely, in the classroom, apart from the students, the teachers were also trained and all those who showed interest for education in the area of computers.

This was a good indicator that the civic awareness is developed in the right direction, stimulating unity and mutual cooperation. The population in the region is becoming more and more aware that they, the citizens, are active creators of the assurance of a high-quality education for the young and their involvement continues to grow.

Strong Foundations

Historically speaking, the school has always been a center of education of the future citizens in the society. In the period of transition it seems that it lost this function. The trust the citizens had in the institution school was lost. With the introduction of civic education in our educational system things started to change. One of the aims of civic education is to bring back the social role the school used to have. This meant that the school should turn to the needs of the social life, to meet the needs of the citizens and form personalities prepared for life in the community. With the processes of decentralization new relations are imposed between the school and the community and they demand cooperation in order to ensure better education.

The benefits of this cooperation between the school and the wider social surrounding had great impact on the development of the civic awareness of the students, the formation of positive opinions and behavior that shows increase of respect for the surrounding they live and work in.

The building of a democratic society is a long and continuous process. The role of the school is one of the important factors and driving forces in this process. Therefore, monitoring the work of several schools, as a BED advisor, I can rightly say that there is a pos-

itive atmosphere in the schools for further realization and development of the civic education programs that in themselves have many aspects of social, moral and ethical nature. In the long term, the school prepares the young citizens for life and work in a democratic society.

Olgica Naumoska,
BED advisor
Tetovo branch office



ORGANIZED ACTIVITY WITH THE GRADE 4 STUDENTS FROM "STRASO PINDZUR" PRIMARY SCHOOL, VILLAGE OF KARBINCI, FOR SOLUTION OF A PROBLEM BY A CASE STUDY

With this study I tried to present my practical experience with the grade 4 students from "Straso Pindzur" Primary School - Karbinci village, Stip region.

The content of this study is the organized and realized activity of the grade 4 students for solution of a problem through the case study technique. It is very important to note that the way in which we worked enabled the students to explore the solution of the problem with the help of a simulated situation of a real problem that is present in the school.

We present our way of work and we believe that you will try to test it in your practical work with the students.

Problem: The food prepared in bad hygienical conditions endangers the health and well being of the children.

Aim: The students to develop responsibility and obligation for active participation in the decision making processes that concern the well being of all people.

Description: The students from lower elementary education noticed that the snacks they received in the school did not comply with the basic hygienic requirements according to the standards for healthy food. Therefore, they asked for help to find out the reason for this problem and the way to solve it.

Presumptions: The fourth grade students are well acquainted with the program "Foundations of Democracy" and the civic education concepts and they will fulfill their duties in the case study with full responsibility. They will apply appropriate method of posing questions, but will meet problems in definition of the decision. They will demonstrate their knowledge of the way the school staff is organized, the governmental institutions and the way the parents are organized.

Forms of work: Frontal work in groups, individual.

Techniques of work:

Case study
Text analysis
Simulation

Time framework:

5 minutes for reading of the instructions and reading the text

Case study: the students, the parents, the teachers, inspectors, the companies in the realization of the idea to change the catering company.

15 minutes every group of students individually prepares the scenario according to the instructions and practices their roles.

40 minutes of simulation and observation of the simulations of the other groups.

10 minutes of evaluation of the simulations.

Actions:

Depending on the number of students, small groups with unequal number of students are formed and they will play the roles of STUDENTS, TEACHERS, PARENTS / PARENT COUNCILS, SANITARY INSPECTOR, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PUBLIC / PRIVATE / CATERING COMPANY.

The roles are assigned with drawing of LOTS.

In the room, WORKING TABLES are assigned for the meetings of the groups, in the middle of which the role of the group is written. The text of the case study is also on the table together with the instructions paper for the activities that need to be realized.

Variant I: Group of students together with the teacher /members of the drama section/ play out a dramatization based on the case study.

Variant II: The teacher reads the text from the case study in front of all the students.

For 15 minutes every group /individual/ prepares for the role.

The students either receive the schedule of the meetings together with the instructions paper, or it is hung out on a poster in the classroom.



SCHEDULE OF THE MEETINGS

First meeting - **GROUP OF STUDENTS**
5 minutes

Task: Focusing on the real problem with the food. Involving the parents.
The president and one member of the Students' Cooperation Commission also participate in the next meetings.

Second meeting - **PARENT COUNCIL /on a class level/ students / the president and member of the Students' Cooperation Commission**
Present:

Task: Informing the sanitary inspector and the school's Parent Council.

Third meeting
The director, the students, the representatives from the Parent Council, the teachers and a sanitary inspector. They discuss the problem.

Fourth meeting - **SCHOOL COUNCIL, students, representatives from the Parent Council, the school director**

The director should take the responsibility to contact the catering company and the School Council should bring a decision to terminate the contract with the catering company.

Fifth meeting
The students /president of the Students' Cooperation Commission/, the school director and representatives from the Parent Council and representatives from the CATERING COMPANY.

Task: Termination of contract.



CASE STUDY:
WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO HEALTHY FOOD

Aim:

The students, the teachers, the parents and the other citizens should be involved in the solution of the problem with the food in the school.

In order to have higher level of security and punctual delivery of the snacks during the break, the students from lower elementary education, with agreement with the Parent Councils on class level, accepted the private catering company "X" selected in a tender.

While eating, the students noticed inside the snacks bugs, straws, kernels of beans, wheat... Many students ignored this, the squeamish ones threw the snacks away and the more courageous ones would sometimes report this to the teacher. But all finished with the teachers' statements: "It is nothing, throw that away and eat the rest..." or "We will report this to the catering company."

But the problem reached the ears of the parents. When their children complained they were hungry after school because they had to throw the snack because they were full with straw or bugs, the parents requested urgent meeting with the teachers. They were worried about their children's health.

The participants - individuals join the other groups. The five groups of students make evaluation, form their view on the realization of the workshop where on the wall Article 12 and Article 14 of the Children's Rights Convention /UNICEF/ are written.

QUESTIONS

- Group 1 - WHAT HAPPENED? (Describe or illustrate)
- Group 2 - WHAT HAPPENED, WHICH SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED?
- Group 3 - WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN AND WE EXPECTED IT TO HAPPEN? (Illustrate)
- Group 4 - HOW EFFICIENT WAS THE DYNAMICS OF THE CASE SOLUTION?
- Group 5 - IS IT BETTER TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE OR SHOULD THE PUBLIC BE INFORMED ABOUT IT? HOW?

The activity led to the students' understanding that we, future citizens, can make the community a better place through cooperation with the adults

Article 12: *"The child has the right to freedom of opinion on all subjects that are of his/her interest and should be paid proper attention."*

The idea is that the child should be heard and his/her ideas taken seriously.

Article 14: *"The member countries recognize the child's right to the highest level of health care."*

Establishment of Presumptions

Concerning the first presumption, the students were motivated by the action and concentrated on the roles and were fast to react. They respected the time framework.

The students are able to think logically and this was obvious when they posed bright questions when looking for alternative solutions to the problem.

The second presumption was correct because the students needed help when defining the decisions. They knew the duties and the rights of the governmental institutions and the organization of the parents, which proved the third presumption correct too.

Task: /for all/

CAN YOU IDENTIFY ANOTHER PROBLEM OF COMMON INTEREST?

The group representatives state the opinion of the group. The others have the right to give their comments concerning the opinions of the other groups.

Nada Bogdanova,

Teacher in "Straso Pindzur" Primary School - Karbinci

Zlatka Glaeva, Retired teacher



SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED PLAN OF ACTION FROM THE PORTFOLIO OF THE PROGRAM "WE THE PEOPLE... PROJECT CITIZEN"

T

his study is an analysis of a successfully implemented plan of action of the students from one class in a primary school in Tetovo. This is done in context of the implementation of the project "We the People... Project Citizen."

The study describes all the activities of the homeroom teacher, who successfully followed the three-day seminar on training of homeroom teachers for project implementation. The activities of the students are described in all the phases of the project implementation, from the beginning to the presentation of the portfolio on a regional level in Tetovo in May 2002. The study also describes the concrete results.

The program "We the People... Project Citizen" as a component of civic education in primary education introduced a novelty concerning not only the approach and understanding of civic education, but also the contribution to the introduction of a new spirit in our education.

Ever since the first seminars for training of trainers and then the seminars for training of homeroom teachers for project implementation, the impression was that this work would receive feedback in the creation of a different ethos in schools and primary education as a whole.

The study is based on my personal experience from my work as well as on the information I have at my disposal concerning the work of the school and the homeroom teacher.

Lindita is a child who has suffered cerebral paralysis, she cannot move but has a good mental health. She comes from a poor family and lives with her mother in a small house near the school. The house has one room and at the ground floor there is a room that serves as a bathroom, but without the appropriate equipment.

In the academic year 2001/02 she completed fourth grade and continued her study in fifth grade. The mathematics teacher Setki became her homeroom teacher. At the beginning of the school year he introduced his students to the project "We the People... Project Citizen" and started with its implementation. During the training he showed considerable interest for the need for proficient implementation of civic education and was one of the most active teacher at the seminar.

During the process of problem selection, the students of the class V-4 unanimously decided on the problem that they defined as "Our care for the children with special needs." The whole develop-

ment was according to the steps of the project that the class realized through the following activities:

- The students formed smaller working groups and started to gather information by visiting institutions that are directly connected to the care for these persons.
- One group contacted the school doctor at Tetovo's medical center and he explained to the students that the illness is incurable, but that the surrounding should adapt to enable Lindita to live her life under those conditions.
- One group of students made an appointment and held a meeting with the Minister of Labor and Social Policy at that time. The children were cordially accepted and were given full support for solution of the problem and the help for their friend. Also, a meeting was held with the director of Tetovo's Center for Social Affairs at the time and through the Ministry, and as a result of the visits, Lindita was provided with a social help of 2 600 denars.
- With the help of the humanitarian organization "Hendikep" ("Handicap") from Tetovo, the students were able to provide a special wheelchair and specialized literature concerning the illness and the relations and responsibilities of the members of the families who have such cases.
- Another problem was the inappropriate access to the school building. This was discussed with the Parent Council and it quickly found ways to build an appropriate access to the school.
- One group of students visited the mayor of Tetovo who, impressed by their work and enthusiasm to help these persons, gave a suggestion to build a special pathway for entrance in the Community Council building. The suggestion was accepted and the pathway was built, to the delight of the persons with special needs.

The activities of the students and the home-room teacher do not end here. The care for Lindita was substantiated with the organization of an action for getting help for the family where all the children



from the school took place, no matter of their nationality, because the school has students from various nationalities (Macedonians, Albanians, Serbians and Turks).

A special occasion was the presentation of the portfolio in the school to the parents, the teachers and the students. The parents even shed tears expressing pain, but also pride of the persistency of the students.

The regional competitions that took place in "Lirija" Primary School in Tetovo with participation of three primary schools from Tetovo and Gostivar saw the successful presentation of the portfolio, which was carefully prepared, documented and designed. However, due to different reasons, the students from the class V-4 from the "Kiril i Metodij" Primary School did not manage to win the first place.

There were a lot of tears shed and reactions by the students who agreed beforehand that if they won the prize they would give part of it to Lindita and the other children who suffer from this illness and must spend their lives in a wheelchair.

The care for their friend continued. Very often they take the responsibility to take Lindita to school or bring her back home, thus helping her mother.

Last year Lindita finished eighth grade with honors and today she is proud of her friends from class V-4 and thankful to the project "We the People... Project Citizen."

The homeroom teacher is also proud of his students. One year later, with the same students he worked on a different problem and won the first place in the regional competition.

Dzemali Beluli,
School pedagogue
in "Naim Fraseri" Primary School - Tetovo

HOW THE CIVIC EDUCATION TEAM OF CLASS VI-2 WORKED IN "KRSTE PETKOV MISIRKOV" PRIMARY SCHOOL IN RADOVIS

Developing characteristics of a conscientious citizen is one of the aims of civic education. In the following case study we will follow the experiences of the sixth grade students from the "Krstev Petkov Misirkov" Primary School in Radovis, as well as the experiences of their parents and their homeroom teacher.

From stream of wishes - river of diligent students

What was so important that I decide to pass my experience with the work with my students?

I dedicated myself completely to the work with the students on the implementation of the civic education program, particularly on the problem selected by the students which we defined as: "Disrespect of Traditions and Cultural Values Endangers Interethnic Living." So, many students joined the work motivated from their inclinations. The wish of my students to learn something more about civic education was very big.

We started well prepared to follow the steps of the program "We the People... Project Citizen." In the communication with the students, as well as in the communication among them, I tried a pleasant working atmosphere to be created. I suggested focusing our activity towards the goals and the aims ahead of us. I actively followed the individual and common behavior, their creative approach to the problems in the project activities. With democratic actions when bringing decisions related to the problem the students on their own initiative and in a relaxed state of mind explored more and more deeply in the concepts of content matters of civic education.

The first activities that began during the homeroom class enriched its content, theory was transformed into actions and the actions into program realization. Our spare time was given a sense of purpose and it became dynamic. The banal everyday life was enriched with content consisted of the responsibilities, duties and obligations. The days of sincere and creative friendship enabled us to find within ourselves our creative capacities that will help us further on in the communication and implementation of the upbringing and educational process.

During this time I sincerely and intimately felt joy to be involved in the organization of civic education in my school.

I will not forget the straightforward remark of student Packa Taseva when she reacted to my mistake when distributing the tasks: "Teacher, I also want to have an assignment!"

I understood that this student already has a developed critical thinking and sense of confidence. This was my carelessness, my conceptual deviation from the content of civic education that hurt my student. I did my best to correct myself, if that was possible, and I included her in the project activities.

Pavlina Kosevac,
homeroom teacher of the class VI²

THE STUDENTS

How we selected the problem our class was going to study?

Although there are sport fields in Radovis, in the afternoon, in the school yard of the "Nikola Karev" Primary School youngsters of Macedonian and Turkish nationality do sports. Often there would be rows and arguments between them, even physical fights about the field and the schedule for playing football.

While during the homeroom class we were thinking and giving suggestions about the problem we were going to study, from the open windows of the classroom we heard an argument between the youngsters of Macedonian and Turkish nationality. They argued about the field. Both parties wanted to play football.

During the break we were standing by the window, already as sport fans and watched the two teams play. The conflict was solved with the game. The class started and we sat down, but during the next break they were already playing in mixed teams.

Nadica Stefanova, VI²



Pavle invited me to his house

While we were working on our project activities, Pavle invited me to his house. I am the only Turk in the class and I study with my classmates from grade one.

In school I hang around with everybody, and I sit next to Pavle in class. After classes, except for the organized excursions, celebrations and other school activities, we do not hang around.

I live in Sain neighborhood at the outskirts of the town and only in this part of the town the Turks live secluded, while in the other parts the houses are not isolated, interethnic life is being cultivated.

I was surprised when Pavle invited me to his house to watch the football match. After the game, we played a couple of games of chess, had dinner and I left. When Pavle was seeing me off, I told him that one day I too will invite him to my house.

This meant a lot to me. My friend and I wanted to stay close outside the school.

On my way home I was wondering whether Pavle and I were actually implementing the civic education content and whether we started to appreciate the civic values that we will cultivate, broaden and upgrade with our friends.

I was in a dilemma: Was this a real need for friendship or just an experiment in implementation of the civic education concepts? Only time will tell."

Kerim Shain, VI²

To the source of what makes us different

"Pantaloons (worn by the Moslem women) are no longer strange and silly."

As young, but true researchers, we approached the problem with honesty, we found it, reached its source, looked deep inside and drank its pure, crystal water.

We came back to the distant past through the literature we discovered.

We visited the ethnological collection, which is a tradition in the presentation of the material authentic heritage.

We were guests of several families in the neighboring Juruk village of Kodzalija where antiquity is preserved.

We talked, conducted interviews, used all the possible contact instruments with the persons who contributed to the solution of the problem we were studying, we gathered information from the mass media.

Our grandmothers and grandfathers were telling us how they lived and respected the traditions and the cultural values of the nationalities they lived with. Then they recalled the memories of their neighbors, whose major part moved to Turkey, but the communication remained. They send each others cards on holidays and other important moments in life, they remind themselves and relive their life together, they convey their experience and teach us with their wisdom. They say the town should nurture its shared existence, because it is the only way our life to be peaceful and quiet, richer in another tradition and culture we should know of, respect and participate in its creation.

It is no coincidence that the saying goes: "Sometimes the clothes do not make the man" but also: "Do not judge the book by the cover." Now, when somebody would say to me that I should dress up, I would ask myself whether to put my new dress on or my jeans. The Moslem girl will surely put her red pantaloons and her embroidered jacket on. The Moslem women who live in the city wear their pantaloons less and less in their everyday life, but a Turkish wedding without colorful pantaloons and belly dancing is hard to imagine. On their holidays, festivities, best photographs, they always wear their traditional dress - the pantaloons.

They used to be strange to me, not to say clownish. I was looking over my shoulder and smiled secretly, I would nudge my friend so she also sees how strange they were. We asked ourselves how many meters of silk was used, how much they costed, how they were made.

It was Sunday when we went to the Juruk village of Kodzalija and there was a wedding there. The bride was in pink pantaloons, she was wearing a string of liras around her neck, and she was gorgeous. They served us with baklava desert. A nice girl in silk pantaloons was serving and I felt her close, beautiful, solemn, I could not imagine her dressed otherwise.





Therefore, I volunteered to sew them up for our portfolio. Although my aunt was helping me, I was happy to participate in the creation. We made three pairs: blue, red, green, and we hung the red ones because they fit the colors of the first pane perfectly. On one side of it we put a Macedonian traditional dress and on the other side pantaloons with a jacket, as a symbol of our life together.

I understood that a Man is the one who respects the life of others, as much as he respects his own.

Among the many things I encountered during our research activity, I learned wisdom from the Koran:

"Destiny is like a woman behind her veil, shows very little, hides a lot."

So I will say: "Pantaloons are no longer silly." At the market when I see Moslem women wearing them, I do not look over my shoulder, because they wear their traditional dress, the traditional dress of the people we build our civic way of life with and with whom we belong together to the personal, professional, economic and cultural life.

During our work on the portfolio, I found out that I find the traditions and cultural values of the people we live with very close and I understood that we should mutually respect the things that make us different.

Ruzica Daova, VI²

The portfolio in my album

Many guests, representatives of the institutions and parents followed the presentation of school portfolios. It was also followed by the local TV network "Kobra" which enabled the introduction of the citizens to a part of the civic education activities that were realized in our school.

My contribution to the final part of the shaping was the aesthetical. With the eye of an artist I followed the creation of the portfolio and corrected the comments from the gathered information, illustrations, concepts and other details.

Maybe it's immodest to say that the painting of the basket with the Easter eggs and some other artistic works are mine, of which I am very proud.

We felt our portfolio as part of ourselves, because everybody wanted to write or draw or paint something in it.

For us it was not just a selection of a problem and reflection on the possible solutions, but also a participation in the public policy.

Our portfolio that shows our efforts, our enthusiasm and our results, was immortalized with a photograph and it became a part of our personal album.

Borce Janev, VI²

Thank you uncle Dragan!

For the solution of the problem our class studied, we decided in favor of the policy "Cultural and public manifestations and competitions." For the realization of part of our policy, we are very thankful to Mr. Dragan Gorgiev, the art director of the Folklore Association "Bucim" Radovis, who in the period of 28th to 30th May 2004 organized the international cultural manifestation "ORO VESELO" (Happy Dance). All the Folklore Associations from the region took part and there were also guests from several other countries.

We were part of that manifestation which was really very cheerful. We had three performances: in the sport hall, in the House of Culture and the most beautiful and most successful one in the town center.

The people followed the manifestation and the traditional dresses, as signs of tradition had never been more beautiful and cheerful.

Dressed in various dresses but with the same smile and wish to present our cultural values and traditions.

Part of the policy of our class was realized.

And that is why, from the bottom of our hearts, we say: "Thank you uncle Dragan, thank you for helping us understand that we select the right policy."

Mirjanka Grumbarova, VI²
Aleksandra Trajkova, VI²



We visit you for Bayram, you visit us for Easter and Christmas

Most important was that we learned that "there are no solved problems, just more or less solved problems." Although we know that it will take years to see the real results we will still give our contribution to the solution of this problem and we will be happy to see the achieved results, we will strive for harmonization of the interethnic and global relations.

We learned that a person suffers most when he/she is hurt and that is why we will enrich the real aims of our civic education, aims that we approached responsibly and creatively.

Verce Angelova, VI²

Creation of portfolio

"Disrespect of Traditions and Cultural Values Endangers Interethnic Living"

In the process of gathering and processing of information necessary for the project, I realized that the problems should be approached in an entirely different way from the present ways, all familiar to me, and the gathering of information led to an increased level of communication, responsibilities, need for efficient organization of the spare time.

In the completion of my tasks in the team work, I found out that I am mature enough to evaluate my understanding of the conflict and reach to its essence with individual and group approaches in the solution, at the same time being able to form an opinion on the possible solutions.

I learned various skills for cooperation and communication during the process of solution of the problem. I faced more styles of communication that I managed to distinguish.

Being limited with space, a major part of our portfolio content is symbolically presented: the church and the mosque, the basket with red eggs and the baklava plate - represent the religious symbols.



The stretched out hands - the mutual wish for interethnic life.

The rainbow - the world's biggest bridge, the plant - symbol of health, and the hopes always die last.

The symbol always says more than the content, it is stronger than the word and that is why our portfolio has so many symbols.

I warmly recommend all my peers to take active participation in these and similar activities, all with the goal to become useful citizens of this contemporary society that demands new people with new ideas and outlooks on the world. The

idea is to create a new and more beautiful world where problems, weaknesses and dogmas from the past will not break our efforts. Also, I would like to emphasize the support of my parents who part of their spare time devoted to my "mission" and promised that in future they will help me with similar endeavors.

Anita Stankova, VI²

SCHOOL STAFF

**Children are just children,
the adults should help them tracking
their way to the future**

Interethnic understanding among children is much easier because they are just children. We feel that in our school there are classes where from grades one to eight Macedonian and Turkish students study in their mother tongues, but also there are some who by their own choice decide to study in the classes with Macedonian students.

Also, we have 12 colleagues from Turkish nationality who teach in Turkish, but also in Macedonian in the school and also in the two schools in the villages of Kodzalija and Kalauzlija.

In the teachers' room, the Macedonian religious symbols are displayed at Easter and the Moslem religious symbols are displayed at Bayram.

When we celebrate the school holiday or other holidays, both Macedonian and Turkish students participate in the festivities and performances.

The spirit of unity is most strongly felt at the ceremony at the end of the school year when the students with dances and songs, sport and art, most sincerely celebrate and get closer.

When the Turkish students heard about the problem of the students of the class VI-2, they curiously followed their activities. They were happy that their co-students study the traditions and cultural values of their nationality, they wanted to give their contribution as much as they could, they invited them to their houses so that the Macedonian students could touch on their ways of life. They wanted to get closer and saw in them true friends, they believed that the study of this problem, not only in the school, but also in the community, will lead to improvement of the contemporary interethnic living.

As a pedagogical and psychological service in the school we followed all the activities concerning the creation of the portfolio and we noticed readiness for contacts and cooperation between the Macedonian and Turkish students. We conclude that this problem led to establishment of sincere trust between the teachers and the students.

**Gordana Valaiova, pedagogue
Zojka Petrova, psychologist**

PARENTS

Set foundations

To grow offspring is a demanding task, to educate it is even more demanding, but to make this offspring a real citizen is something that deserves all the credits. We are witnessing changes that shake our destinies and prevent us from following our paths to the future, but in this context I would like to express my excitement concerning the changes in the educational system, particularly the part on civic education.

We the citizens, big and small, rich and poor, should know how we can improve our tomorrow, our future. The foundations of this knowledge, ability and desire, are stronger if we begin to set them from the earliest age. I recognize the roots of the civic attitude towards society in my child who with the involvement in the civic education programs is becoming more aware of his personality as an active member of a society and the need for his important role in life: useful citizen in the community. This is a process and not just an occurrence that happens according to a formula or by pushing a button, it is hard work in the home, the educational institutions and in the surrounding.

It is not success if the child finds a correct or partly correct solution of the problem, success is the fact that the child becomes aware of the existence of the problem, that the child agrees to start the processing of the problem, thus changing himself and also the surrounding where he lives in a complex and to me very amazing, process. I am silent when I see my child's efforts to become a citizen. At night, tired after work, I bend over the working table of my child and I see the clippings, unfinished writings, drawings, with which he tries to express his opinions and thoughts on what has been assigned to him and, honestly, tears of joy come to my eyes. And I believe that if we all take that seriously, our role as citizens in the society we live in, we will have a better future.

**Boris Stanoev, parent**

Parents' participation

We all feel the need for civic education because the relations become more complex and we want to look deeply into all spheres of inner life.

I am happy that my child during her education had the opportunity to be introduced to the civic education programs. Last year, at the regional competition in Stip, they won the first place. We were delighted when they returned from Stip wearing CRS t-shirts and their prize - television set and a video recorder.

That day was unforgettable for them, a school holiday, pride and joy of the parents and the mass media presented it to the Radovis public. These children, who already have a clear vision of the civic education goals, presented to our community contemporary approaches to conflict solution.

When this school year the students of VI-2 class selected their problem, my child together with the rest, was richer with a new and deeper experience from civic education. She accepted the task she was assigned very seriously and responsibly. I noticed big changes: she was more active in the research and study of the problem. She grew closer to me and her grandmother and grandfather where she correctly found the right source for solution of her problem. She was all into the solution of this problem and not only this one. She already knew to identify problems from the public policy, to define and gather information.

She searched with curiosity, she found and gathered everything she thought it might be necessary for the creation of the portfolio, as a final part of their research job. Together with her co-students, under the guidance of their homeroom teacher, for three weeks until late at night they worked on the portfolio.

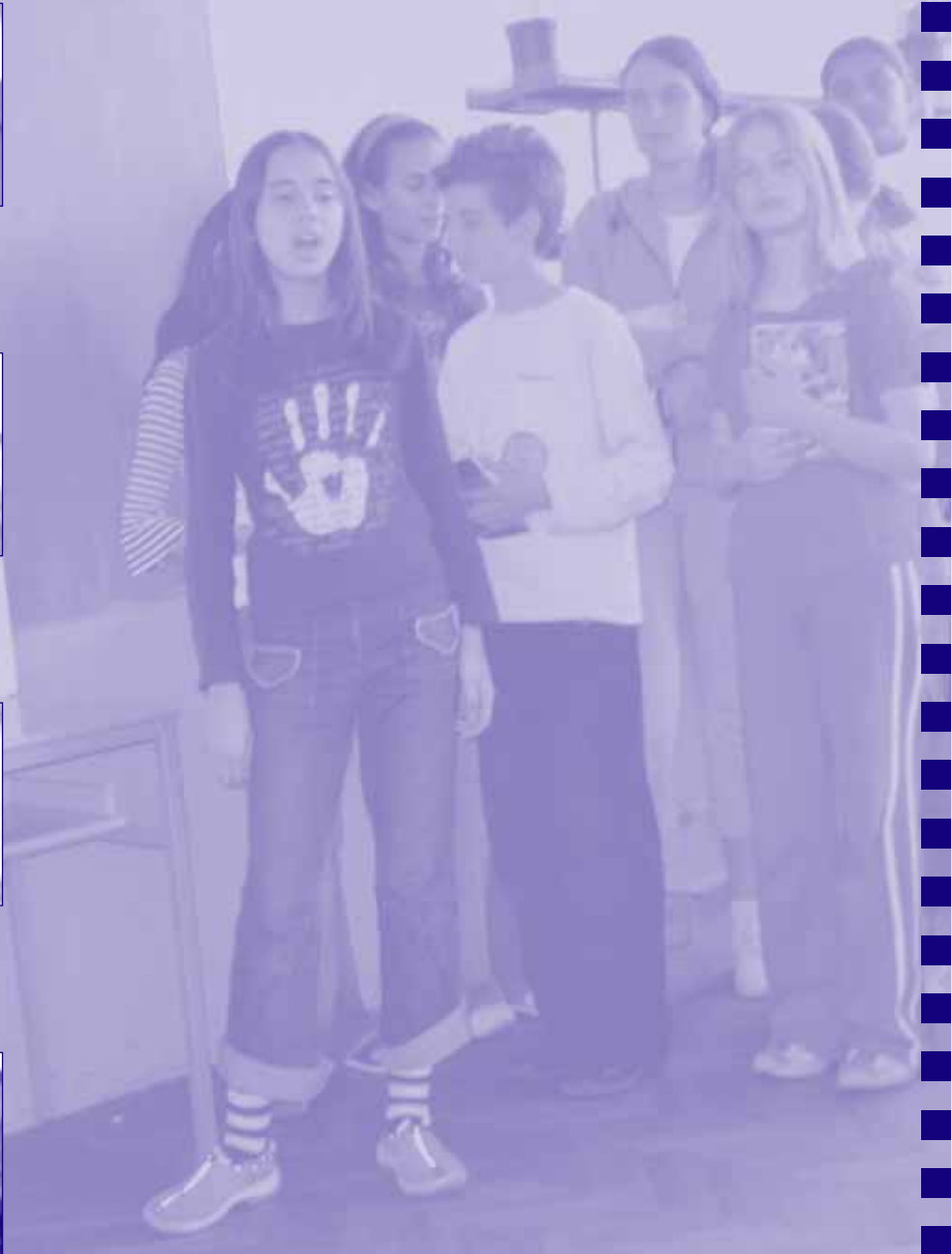
When she was coming home her tiredness transformed into a smile as she presented their collective work filled with friendship as a source for getting new habits and ideas, while their rare arguments turned into creative conflicts.

As a parent I wish our children to get more assignments, not just from the area of civic education, but also from other areas of the educational process.

Cvetanka Angelova, parent

Prepared by:

Pavlina Kosevac, homeroom teacher,
"Krste Petkov Misirkov" Primary School - Radovis
Mika Ilieva, advisor, BED Delcevo



TOPIC:

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PARENT - SCHOOL COOPERATION

More and more often our teaching practice witnesses most diverse forms of cooperation between the parents and the school. But this does not mean that there is enough communication between these significant subjects within the framework of the educational process. Often, because of lack of information, certain problems crop up.

Thinking and analyzing my own work and the work of my colleagues and the contact with the parents, taking the difficulties the students faced when studying the content matters of "Foundations of Democracy" as a starting point, I came to the conclusion that the parents should be placed in the classroom, to be placed in a position of students and get acquainted to the content matters, which to the majority of the parents are unknown. It will all be easier to understand if I say that I worked in a rural area where the majority of the parents have a low level of education.

In order to achieve this I organized methodical workshops under the motto "Let's learn together."

The first workshop was conducted with the parents of the first grade students and the members of the school's Parent Council and the topic was "Responsibility." Through the group work, the parents solved problems and illustrated them very successfully.

The second workshop was conducted with the second grade students and their parents and the topic was "Authority." The main activity was work in pairs (formed of a student and a parent) on various tasks. The students elected leaders, following the steps for election. Then every student illustrated his/her task. For all the time the student was the main participant in the activities while being helped by the parent.

The presence of the parents in the classroom helped to establish close relations with the other parents, the teacher and the students and this made the accomplishment of the assignments of the teacher much easier. Also, they were in a position to understand the meaning of their involvement in the educational process. I believe that this kind of cooperation overcomes the many prejudices that many parents have concerning the novelties that are being introduced in our schools, thus avoiding many unwanted situations. Beside this, the parents have the opportunity to improve in the sphere of democratic behavior and at the same time help their children - the students, in their study.

Proofs of the parents' content are the statements in the poll that was conducted after one of the methodological workshops:

"I felt content, useful, excited, pleasant..."

"I gave moral support to my child so that he didn't feel he was alone."

"It is a nice feeling to work with and help your child in the presence of the teacher."

"I would like to participate in other similar activities"

Second grade students answered the question: "How were you feeling while you were working?":

"...I was excited and happy because I was not alone and I had help. I am very content."

"I was happy because we worked and painted together with the parents."

For three years now I organize workshops, but this time in an urban area. It is very important to emphasize that in the "Nikola Karev" Primary School - Kocani a communication has already been established among all the subjects in the educational process. There are numerous activities and forms of cooperation and the participation of the members of the Parent Council is particularly active in the following: improvement of the working conditions, the provision of clothes, food, study materials, material help of the socially deprived or ill students, organization of excursions etc.

The partnership between the school and the parents is a priority for the development of our school.

All the teachers, students and other school staff accepted the parents as "of our own family" and not like "guests" who occasionally visit the school when they are invited. The school lives with the parents for the problems of the students, they discuss and look for solutions together. The parents know their rights and responsibilities, that is why they are equal members of the school community.

Kata Sinadinovska,

Teacher in the lower elementary class
"Nikola Karev" Primary School - Kocani

INCLUSION OF ADULTS IN THE TEACHING PROCESS

In order to make democracy to live and develop, the young should learn to build attitudes, to understand the importance of the law and the legal system and to participate in the improvement of society. To help the students gain knowledge and obtain habits and skills it is necessary to introduce new programs.

The program "Foundations of Democracy" enables improvement of the individual's skills to act with knowledge, success and responsibility. The implementation of this program is not an easy task. Effective programs for training in civic education demand certain philosophical and methodical principles.

The school represents an arena for empowering the future citizens in a democratic society. We need to provide opportunity for the young to have experience in election of people with position of authority before they vote for the very first time on elections. For this purpose people of authority such as directors, coaches, doctors, members of parliament etc. can be invited to class. This will enable the students to see the connection of their own experiences with the bigger picture of social and political life.

To conduct a class when a person from the public life is invited, it is necessary to have good preparation not only of the teacher, but also of the guest who will be an active participant in the class. We will give the phases of preparation for realization of a class where the students are supposed to elect a person for the certain position of authority - a coach of a football team.

- Agreement, instructions for participation and contribution of the guest -coach during the class with detailed information for analysis; assessment of the needed qualifications as well as for the benefits and costs related to this position of authority; the precise time framework of the class activities; the content of the lesson.
- Preparation of the teacher in a sense of use of the intellectual tools - questions that will help to elect the person who will be the coach of the football team; new words and aims of the lesson written down and posted; ways of dividing students in groups; arranging space for group work; preparation of tables etc.

The class should begin with introduction of the guest - coach and his short speech - personal information and the experience of the position. Then the teacher should explain that the students will



perform role-play in class as well as the use of the intellectual tools. The aim of the lesson is emphasized. The new words that will be used in the lesson are explained.

A discussion follows where the students can develop their ideas concerning the questions: "What does a position of authority mean?" and "What are the responsibilities, benefits and costs of that position?" During the discussion the teachers notes the answers on a big table posted on the blackboard while the students and the guest do the same in their own tables.

The class is divided into six groups, and each group has a detailed description of their work, as well as the time frame for completion of the work and presentation.

In the next phase the classroom is turned into a meeting room. A meeting is held with the guest - coach as a chairperson. At the beginning of the meeting the chairperson has an introductory speech, which emphasizes the importance of teamwork, sport and sporting spirit. Also, the chairperson states the responsibilities of the coach and the qualifications that are deemed important by the committee. A presentation follows (in order to be fair to every group, a person is appointed to measure the time and this persons uses the signs "one minute" and "stop"). After each presentation the members of the committee ask questions. After all the presentations, the committee withdraws for a while to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of all the candidates and to bring a fair decision. At the end the final decision is announced and the reasons for it are explained. A discussion follows where the decision of the committee is assessed.

The final phase of the class is an overview on the aims that were set at the very beginning - an evaluation whether they were accomplished.

At the end we can conclude that the new methods of work, with inclusion of adults in the realization of certain content matters help the students to become efficient and responsible citizens. The classes are more lively and more interesting because they present real life experiences and point to the application of the ideas that are being studied, thus improving and broadening the students' understanding of the concepts presented in the program.

Dina Janakopulu,
Lower elementary class teacher
"Petar Zdravkovski – Penko" Primary School

AFFIRMATION OF DEMOCRATIC VALUES THROUGH PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR IN CIVIC EDUCATION

Through civic education, we strive for active and responsible participation of the person - individual in democratic life with the aim to create innovative partnerships among various democratic institutions and organizations/groups, respecting the privacy, solidarity and interconnectedness in society.

In favor of building partnerships between non-governmental organizations and institutions, we will describe the experiences of cooperation and joint actions and will give facts and arguments of their contribution to the development of civic education and to the quality of education in general.

In the given case, we will talk about experiences from joint activities of several local non-governmental organizations from the Kocani and Delcevo regions and their contribution to the strengthening of certain values of civic education in cooperation with the schools.



In the past two or three years, several projects or project activities have been realized in our schools with the students from primary schools as a target group. The non-governmental organizations whose experiences we will describe in the text are: HCO "Svetla idnina" ("Bright Future") and HCO "Ednakvi za site" ("Equal to All") from Kocani and HVOR "Phurt" and HVOR "Kham" from Delcevo. We are convinced that there are also other non-governmental institutions that contribute to the building of civic awareness.

In this case study we will focus on several projects that we believe are important in regard to their set goals and focused specifically on realization of civic values through partnerships on local and regional level.

The implementation of the program "Practical Education for Roma" is of particular importance to this case. Within its framework several project are implemented, such as: "Education for Better Tomorrow" and "Practical Education for All" etc. This program started its implementation in September 2002 and will finish in June 2005. *Main aim of this project is raising people's awareness of education and in this case particularly of the Roma population, which is somewhat neglected in the educational institutions with poor attainments, drop outs, truancy, low level of the parents' interest about the education of their children and so on.*

Students from the "Vanco Prke" Primary School in Delcevo and "Malina Popivanova" Primary School in Kocani are target group of this project.

Many and various activities have been planned for realization of the aims with use of methodological approaches used for the implementation of the civic education programs, such as: panel discussions, workshops, debates, round tables, evening meetings, winter and summer camps, painting colonies, visits to cultural and historical monuments, additional classes, work with the parents, introduction of an ethno-area in the schools where the national dresses of the nationalities are displayed. Macedonian and Rom children participated in most of the activities. The managing team and teaching staff of the school participated and cooperated in the realization of the project activities concerning the content matter especially in the following areas: Macedonian Language, English Language, Mathematics, Geography, Chemistry, Biology, Art, Physical and Mental Education, Family Relations and Development of Human Relations. With the implementation of this and similar activities, an important contribution was given to the quality of education with an accent on certain civic values in a democratic society.

The psychological workshops have an especially important place in the process of implementation of this project. They were conducted in accordance with program developed in advance with concrete tasks whose focus is on the personal activities of the students - participants in the workshop. With the implementation of the goals, which are in function of the main aim, with micro dynamics that sees the students pass through several phases of activities, which although may look like games they realize important tasks and project

"With analysis of the conducted workshops and the other activities, with the evaluation of the effects (direct and indirect), the impressions and the processes, our expectations about the established aims are not overtly optimistic or with sense of helplessness because we believe that the work outlined in this way assures progress, but accomplishment of what we planned and optimum effect from the implemented activities we would have in conditions when the other activities would work in the same direction" says the psychologist of "Malina Popivanova" Primary School, who is directly involved in the development and implementation of the workshop project activities.

activities, i.e. *they augment the development of opinions, skills and values.* In the focus of attention is the personality of the student, *his or her motivation, needs, interests, expectations, inner life, emotions that alleviate the process of learning, as well as the respect of individual differences of the students in every sense, successful socialization, friendship etc.*

With the implementation of this project, building civic education values, the focus is before all on the respect of the following methodological principles in the realization of the planned and implemented content and activities:

- **Principle of democratic characteristics**, and here, above all, the ideas of personal rights and freedoms in civic education, the strengthening of the skills for constructive cooperation in society and bringing decisions, mutual respect and tolerance, openness of the school to cooperation with the other structures responsible for successful socialization of the students such as the family, some children's non-governmental organizations and associations, mass media etc.
- **Principle of learning by doing** which concerns the development of abilities and skills especially social and interactive ones, ability for analyzing situations from everyday life, bringing independent decisions and acting according to the law, all supported by an appropriate methodological approach.
- **Principle of respect of differences** that encompasses formation of opinions that respect political, ideological, ethno-national and racial differences, avoiding extremism in children's understanding and behavior, tolerance etc.

This approach developed with several forms and techniques of work enables discovery of the roots of prejudices and awareness of one's own stereotypical behavior and beliefs, understanding and acceptance of one's own individuality and the individuality of the others with respect of their privacy and their rights, acquisition of knowledge and skills for civilized and non-violent communication and recognition of the ways of dealing and releasing of emotional tensions and its transformation into positive energy.

The described activities with minor variances were implemented in both schools - partners of the non-governmental organizations who carry out this project. And differences occur, above all because of the capabilities and availability of the human and ma-

"Concerning the accomplished results, it is a general statement that the results certainly exist and it is necessary to continue the support to these initiatives for partnerships between institutions from the governmental and non-governmental sector" - the director of the "Vanco Prke" Primary School in Delcevo said. "But the results would be even better if there was a better coordination of the work between the two partners with an updated concretization of the project activities throughout the year."

terial resources and their creative abilities, the commitment to give their contribution and the responsibility for the assigned tasks.

The non-governmental organizations - partners in this program, with their coordinators establish the connection between their cooperative and partnership roles and jointly participate in the planning, realization, monitoring and evaluation of the accomplished effects. *"We expect to realize the planned aims and tasks, i.e. to get geometrical progression that would, in the near future, result in success, thus achieving the expected results which are integration of the young Roma population in the educational process, raising of the parents' awareness of the need for education, building relations of trust between the school and the community and better information flow to the public and the public institutions concerning the problems of the Roma"* the coordinator of the program of the non-governmental organization "KHAM" from Delcevo said.

Concerning the improvement of the quality of education, several projects were realized and they also established partnerships between non-governmental organizations and schools and it would be appropriate to mention here several projects that had impact or contributed to the improvement of the quality of the Roma student population: "Education Courses for Roma Students in English and Informatics Levels One and Two," implemented by non-governmental organizations for protection of Roma rights from Delcevo and Kocani.

In the final part of the partnership cooperation between some primary schools and non-governmental humanitarian organizations, projects concerning human rights will be realized.

All of them have the same philosophy of their aims and that is to influence the development of a personality with civic culture, which should make the students aware of the correlation between the ideas of human rights and freedoms and civic responsibility.

The implementation of these projects saw the use of content matter and activities appropriate to achieve the aims. The target group is involved in the planned activities, it is an active participant, gives suggestions concerning important issues and build attitudes thus developing debating skills and implementing the new abilities in practice.

"The benefits from the functioning of the state institutions and their competences in the process of decentralization are very interesting for the secondary education students especially in the area of organization and function of the educational institutions and the role of the young in those conditions" Anifa Demirovska - coordinator of the projects stated. According to her, this kind of cooperation and partnership should continue to develop in future.

These projects enable efficient building of partnerships between the schools and the non-governmental organizations in a very important sphere of joint impact on the development of civic education.

There are numerous experiences that witness the effects of joint impact and built partnerships between governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions, especially their joint contribution to the establishment of values in a democratic society with the aid of civic education.

All the newly gained knowledge, skills and abilities for active participation, responsible behavior, based on critical thinking within the framework of the existing norms, lead to development of a profile of a personality with civic competences and this is in favor of the complete realization of civic education aims in a democratic society which we strive to achieve.

Mika Ilieva,
advisor
BED, Delcevo Branch Office

CIVIC EDUCATION STANDARDS - GUIDELINE FOR CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Beginning

One of the turning points in the development of the project "Civic Education...Path to a Civil Society" was the mid-term evaluation of the project and the seminar for monitoring and evaluation of the progress when the issues of the quality and work control and levels of achievement as well as the indicators for future monitoring of the progress were directly addressed. The new knowledge gained by the participants, members of the team and the CRS employees opened new horizons with the further project activities.

Project team have had already established a practice to follow up each new activity (especially if it is conducted by international expert) by systematization of the newly acquired knowledge and ideas, placing them into the context of already achieved progress and planning further activities. The extended project team, after the evaluation of the seminar, during the workshop where future activities of high priority for development of the project were to be determined, put the assessment of the students' achievements in the "Civic Education" project as a number one priority. This was owed to the following reasons:

- In that moment, there were no objective indicators of the students' achievements or instruments for measurement of the achievements.
- In our country, in the last few years, the subjective opinions on and evaluations of the quality of the achievements are less and less trusted.
- The efforts on a national level were getting stronger to base education on standards of achievement and to control the quality by national assessments.
- The individual feeling of all involved in the project, as well as the assessment of the evaluation, pointed to a very high level of quality of such work so it was estimated that the results of the objective external assessment would not pose a "threat" to the implementators or discourage them.



¹ The evaluation and the seminar were conducted by Mr. Stuart Allison from the Scottish Qualifications Authority

All this resulted in the establishment of the team to develop a sub-project "Civic Education Standards" within the framework of the project "Civic Education... Path to a Civil Society"

Questions that emerged

When planning the future activities of the project from the aspect of assessment and evaluation of the achievements, at the very beginning the following question emerged: What is the best way to place the assessment of the students' achievements at the end of the project phase in function of the future development and programs sustainability? The solution was found in not conducting a single assessment and gathering information on the affecting factors which would be used in the planning of future trainings and revision of the textbooks, but in directing the sub-project towards setting civic education standards. This solution was quite appropriate for several reasons:

- With non-existence of an official civic education curricula, it will be easier to define the expected achievements in civic education.
- The set standards will serve as indicators for future assessments, whenever they are conducted.
- The national assessment in primary education and offsetting the standards based on these results was already in progress in the country and the use of the same methodology for quality control of the civic education achievements will easily connect civic education with the other areas of the national assessment.

As usual, the CRS civic education team had trust in the experts' team and supported the sub-project "Civic Education Standards" and managed to elaborate it successfully to the donor USAID who approved the funding for its implementation, first for one and then for another year.

Then the real expert questions and problems emerged.

Even with the four-year experience with the project in the pilot-schools and the good supply of textbooks, a serious problem from the very beginning was the non-existence of an official civic education curricula on which basis the examination program for the assessment would be prepared. Thus the preparation of the examination program was the first big challenge since the domain of civic education had to be set, not only on the basis of the content matters in the textbooks for the programs "Foundations of Democracy" and "We the People... Project Citizen," but also taking into consideration the aims of lower and the higher elementary curriculum that correlate civic education. In addition, the program "Foundations of Democra-

cy" has the content structure that covers the four concepts of Responsibility, Justice, Authority and Privacy while the program "We the People - Project Citizen" has the Family, the School, the Local Community and the State.

The preparation of the questions and the test-items that would be close to the real life situations of the children in Macedonia and which would measure knowledge, skills, abilities and readiness for civic participation was the next challenge. Preparation of test-items from the area of civic education that would measure primarily skills that can be objectively assessed is a delicate matter in itself, let alone the fact that in Macedonia, practically, there are no people who had experience in preparation of test-items for civic education or anything similar. Therefore, a significant number of teachers and advisors were involved in the process upon the completion of the test-items development training. . For most of them the preparation of the test-items was "a new adventure and fun" but also a new responsibility. Already released civic education test-items on internet were searched, and many possible real life situations and questions where democratic civic conduct is required were explored. Out of the 600 test-items prepared for the two conducted assessments, some above 200 (we hope the best ones) were used.



What we accomplished

In 2003, at the end of the school year, the achievements of the fourth grade students in the pilot-schools and the achievements of the representative sample of sixth grade students were assessed. Also, the students, their parents, the teachers and the school directors were polled on various questions concerning civic education. A lot of information was gathered and part of it was presented in the publication Civic Education... Path to a Civil Society - Students' Attainments in the Pilot-Schools 2003. The report was submitted to all primary schools, pedagogy faculties, BED advisors and the other interested subjects. The outcomes presented in the report served as a basis for a discussion at a panel discussion and were used by the school support teams for assessment of their own achievements as compared to the achievements on a national level. There were no standards to which the achievement could be compared to, but it seemed that we could have been satisfied with the achievements in the pilot-schools.

In 2004, an assessment of achievements of a representative sample of fourth grade students was conducted. On the basis of the previously prepared and revised examination program (based on the experience from the measurement of 2003), the test-items with good measuring characteristics, the expert opinions and knowledge of the teachers and advisors and the outcomes referring the students' achievements, the Standards of Achievement in Civic Education for

Grades 1 to 4 were developed. Their development was a new challenge for the working group (it was comprised of lower elementary teachers, BED advisors, school pedagogues - members of the schools' civic education teams and representatives of the Parent Councils). This was so because this was a first time that civic education standards were developed (and there are none whatsoever even for similar areas) and also because the students' achievements on a national level were much lower than the expectation of the group that worked on the standards. After a serious discussion and analysis of the aims of the examination programs, knowledge, skills and abilities that were assessed with the test-items, taking into consideration the achievements of the pilot-schools from the previous year as well as the assumed needs and expectations of the wider community, it was decided to set the standards on a significantly higher level than the

actual level of achievement. The idea was that with the gained experience in the implementation of the civic education programs and the new solutions for civic education program that are expected to be integrated into the existing curriculum, after a certain period of time they could be achieved and will be motivating for the teachers. The standards define and describe the expectations of what almost all the students should know and are skilled to do at the end of the school year in the area of civic education (minimum standard), what is expected from the majority of the students (sufficient standard) and what is expected from a small number of the most capable students (high standard).

Example of a test-item:

One of the members of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia overstepped the speed limit. The police officer wanted to write him a ticket, but he tried to explain that he was a member of the Parliament and that he was in a hurry to get in time for an important session.

What should the police officer do?

Answer: _____

Why do you think so?

Answer: _____

Examples of correct answers:

- Even though he is a Member of the Parliament, he is a citizen of the Republic of Macedonia and like everybody else should be fined for violation of the traffic regulations.
- To fine him for speeding. A Member of Parliament should be responsible and should not oversleep sessions.
- He should respect the law no matter who is in question. That is my opinion.

Examples of incorrect answers:

- To check if he really is a Member of the Parliament and why he is in such a hurry, because if he is not an MP then maybe his car is not registered and he will escape without paying a fine.
- To let him go because if he fines him the MP will be late and will inform the President and then the police officer will be in trouble.

Example of an item:

Remind yourself what you studied about the rights and responsibilities of the children. Take a good look at the picture.

What does the child in the picture need?

Answer: _____

What do you think of the way he expresses his need?

Answer: _____

The set standards are published together with examples of test-items that show how the achievement will be measured. They are submitted to all the schools and to the other interested subjects (professors at pedagogy faculties, civic education experts etc.)

Looking through the answers of the children, we encounter very mature answers, but also gaffes and blunders. All this shows how children think about

situations concerning the civics. Parts of them are published in a small brochure with the title "Foundations of Democracy from a Child's Perspective" that will serve to promote civic education with the wider public.

What we are proud of

For a very short period of time (less than two years) two assessments of students' achievements were conducted using latest methods of processing and analysis of data (item response theory). We started with minimal knowledge of this area and succeeded to develop reports and set standards (those who know how long it takes from the start to the end of such work, they will understand what endeavor is in matter). We are proud of the dedication and creativity of everybody involved in the work on the standards.

We are proud of the publications we published, which according to the assessments of international experts and domestic users are of a very high quality.

We created a solid basis for conducting future assessments because now, we know what we want the children to achieve and we have a good base of test-items to accomplish assessments successfully.

We are proud to be probably the first country in a transition to have set standards of achievements in civic education based on empirical measurements.

Working on the project of standards in various groups, we learned a lot and we made new friendships at home and abroad in

the countries we visited (Scotland and The Netherlands) with the aim to improve our abilities to measure and assess.

Lessons we learned

The more we delved into the challenges of measurement of achievements in civic education, the more we understood how complex and serious work that is. The children's reasoning and learning processes concerning civic education in lower elementary education became clearer. In future, we should pay much more attention how we teach children on civic conduct.

We saw that the low levels of achievement in some areas of civic education, especially the ones connected with the school are owed to the inappropriate practice in the school, which is in a contrary to the principles of civic education. Such situations demand changes on a whole school level.

Also, we became aware that the national curriculum in fact does not consist aims and content matters related to the topic area "The State" and everyone involved in this process did not have any doubt that in the young and newly independent state, which is still facing challenges with its independence, there is a must for the children to gain knowledge about the state and its functioning by the end of the 4-Grade.

The experiences we gained while working on the civic education standards will be valuable when we will work on the national assessment of other areas, particularly the social sciences.

The dedication of the whole project team, the teachers from the project schools and part of the other teachers resulted in high expectations about the students' achievements, but we understood that the study of civic values and civic conduct is a complex and

multilateral process and that it would be unrealistic to expect quick results. A long-term, consistent work is necessary including continuous monitoring of what has been achieved followed by setting further goals.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The work on the standards clarified some of the activities that should be taken in the following period in order to improve the foundation of civic education, its implementation and the students' achievements.



- Civic education, from the current status with approved textbooks and not precisely defined timetable for content matters implementation, should move to become integral and compulsory part of the curriculum for lower elementary education. The dominant idea is that the aims should be incorporated in all the teaching subjects and, consequently, in the textbooks.
- Certain changes should be made in the concepts and content matters that will make civic education more adapted to our culture and surrounding and aims should be set that will clearly address the organization and functioning of the state.
- In the implementation of civic education it should be emphasized that the learning is most efficient when the class and the school function as organized democratic entities where the principles of civic conduct are respected. This requires introduction of new contents in the training of the civic education implementers.
- The teachers who implement civic education should be trained to use and accept the standards and achievements of their students and to evaluate them in relation to the national level standards.
- The measurement of achievements in civic education should become a part of the national assessment of students' achievements. In this way, a continuous monitoring of the achievements will be ensured.
- Macedonia should participate in the first upcoming international measurement of achievements in civic education. This will promote the global dimension of civic education, offer new information and introduce new perspectives about civic education.

The experience from the cooperation in the project "Civic Education... Path to a Civic Society" and the sub-project "Civic Education Standards" between the two key partners BED (Bureau for Educational Development) and CRS - Civic Education Team (now Macedonian Civic Education Center - MCEC) promises that in the future these two partners will have the will and abilities to implement the mentioned activities which will enable the actual achievements of the students to come closer to the standards of achievements in civic education.

Gorica Mickovska,
advisor
BED, Skopje





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