



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



POLICY WORKSHOP
**"CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN ITALY:
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES"**

REPORT

12 JUNE 2023, BOLOGNA, ITALY

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Agenda

2.00 pm - 2.15 pm	<i>Institutional Greetings</i>
2.15 pm - 2.45 pm	<i>Patrizio Bianchi</i> - Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Ferrara, UNESCO <i>Chair in Education, Growth and Equality, former Minister of Education.</i>
2.45 pm - 3.00 pm	<i>Raffella Curioni</i> - school delegate of ANCI Emilia-Romagna and Councillor of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia
3.00 pm - 3.15 pm	<i>Annalisa Quinto</i> - University of Bologna, UNESCO Chair in Global Citizenship Education
3.15 pm - 3.30 pm	<i>Federica Manzoli</i> - University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Ithaca project
3.30 pm - 4.00 pm	<i>Coffee break and visit to the Opificio Golinelli</i>
4.00 pm - 4.20 pm	<i>Presentation of the results of the CITIZED project</i>
4.20 pm - 5.30 pm	<i>Parallel Sessions - World Cafè</i> <i>How can schools and the local community be made aware of the mission of citizenship education?</i> <i>How can we help teachers to develop the social skills and relationships of citizenship?</i> <i>How and why to assess civic competences?</i>
5.30 pm - 5.50 pm	<i>Presentation of the results of the discussion</i>
5.50 pm - 6.00 pm	<i>Closing Greetings</i>

Summary of the Policy Workshop

The Policy Workshop "Citizenship Education in Italy: Challenges and Opportunities" took place at the Golinelli Foundation in Bologna, via Paolo Nanni Costa, 14 (<https://www.fondazionegolinelli.it/it>). The event was part of the ERASMUS+ CITIZED project (Policy implementation support and teacher empowerment for CITIZenship Education). The project aims to develop a set of innovative tools to support the implementation of citizenship education in European education systems, helping to bridge the implementation gaps between policy statements and everyday practice in schools. The event was open to researchers, students and university lecturers, local and school authorities, teachers, school principals and, in general, to associations and citizens interested in the topic.

The Policy Workshop in Italy was joined by 4 other Policy Workshops, one for each partner country (Malta, Belgium, Austria, France) in order to contribute to the policy debate in all EU Member States starting from a transversal discussion at all levels involved. In this sense, on the basis of the discussions arising from these meetings, multi-level Policy Recommendations for Democratic Citizenship Education will be drafted.

Summary of interventions

The Policy Workshop was opened by institutional greetings from a representative of the Golinelli Foundation, who spoke about the work carried out by the Foundation. Specifically, the CLIMAté change teachers' acaDEMY (CLIMADEMY) project was presented.

Afterwards, Prof. Patrizio Bianchi spoke on the topic of global citizenship education. Specifically, Prof. Bianchi spoke of how with the increase in economic instability, there is also an increase in inequality. This is also linked to the change in production systems that has occurred throughout history, which has also led to the change of organizations and roles (some changes mentioned: WTO creation 1995; google creation 1998; 2008 crisis; covid 2019). In other words, economic development transforms social structures.

The idea of global citizenship must therefore take into account global macro-changes and is linked to the idea of responsibility in a complex world that thrives on continuous transformations. Global citizenship also needs to be studied, otherwise there can be a civil reaction or an uncivilized reaction, linked to fear. Global citizenship is linked to being aware that what happens on the other side of the world affects everyone

Councillor Curioni then spoke about the need and responsibility to confront with the world. In this way, knowing what is happening in the rest of the world, it is possible to structure appropriate school curricula. She also emphasised how projects such as CITIZED help structure innovative content. She also advocated the need to foster conscious and responsible participation in order to promote skills development.

Dr. Quinto, collaborator of Prof. Tarozzi of the University of Bologna, led a reflection on the concept of citizenship, starting from the question "What does it mean to be a citizen?". Assuming that the citizen is a person who is part of the state and takes part in political life. It is also linked to a sense of belonging (think of Mameli's anthem taught as belonging to a nation/to be a good citizen). However, global citizenship is linked to the concept of integration. Currently, the approach to citizenship education is disciplinarian and transmissive, which does not "educate for meaning", does not identify a direction and does not develop awareness (life skills). Citizenship education should focus on care and care education, well-being and well-being education.

Dr. Federica Manzoli gave the example of the Gio Project, designed to promote 1. participation in the issues of citizenship and global citizenship and 2. training for the common good (e.g. environmental problems, greater focus of the project). The aim of the project was also to establish a dialogue between schools and local administrations. The project developed for over several phases, including: the collection of scientific evidence, the study of policy analysis, classroom activities, activities with policymakers in which students asked questions to the politicians present (questions such as "dear local administrators, we ask you to..."). The project activities were then linked to the sustainable mobility plan of the Municipality of Ravenna, thus anchoring the recommendations to the political plan.

Following these interventions, the participants were able to visit the school area of the Golinelli Foundation (School of Ideas). At the end of the visit, Dr. Claudio Dondi presented the results of the CITIZED project and the activity of the second part of the workshop.

The results of CITIZED: Why is Citizenship Education a whole concern the whole school?

According to the Council of Europe, the **Democratic Citizenship Education Concept** "means education, training, dissemination, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding, and by shaping their attitudes and behaviours, to enable them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active role in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law". ([CoE, 2022](#)). The promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and, more generally, education for democratic citizenship have been a cornerstone of European societies and political systems. The acquisition of skills related to democratic life, human rights and, more generally, the ability to participate actively in democratic processes should start from early childhood and continue throughout life. In this regard, educational institutions play a key role. As stated by the CoE, "**School should be the place where democratic education begins**". ([RFCDC, Vol.1](#)).

The teaching of Citizenship Education is part of the curriculum in all European countries. In the research conducted within the CITIZED project on Citizenship Education in different European countries, it emerged that the teaching of **Citizenship Education is present in all European national education systems, although it is understood differently depending on the context**. For example, while in Italy EC teaching is understood as teaching civic education (although it also includes the axes of digital citizenship and sustainable development together with the classic "institutional" one), in France it is mainly linked to the teaching of the values of the Republic, religious issues and secularism, while in Germany Citizenship Education has the same constitutional status as Religious Education. Some countries have a broad conception of Citizenship Education, which includes intercultural learning, human rights education, and democratic school governance, while others have a narrower conception that focuses on the values of the republic and institutions.

In most of the national education systems analysed, EC teaching often remains a **marginal subject, lacking financial resources and time**. In some cases, it is not even evaluated and often depends on the goodwill of an individual teacher. Similarly, teacher education is often underfunded and primarily knowledge based. The research also showed that EC teaching is already competence-oriented in some countries, as promoted by the Council of Europe through the "Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture" and by the EU with the "Key Competences Framework". Citizenship Education is often transdisciplinary in formal education, but with a predominance of historical perspective in Austria and France, philosophy in Belgium, and law and economic disciplines in Italy. Citizenship Education is considered a highly political issue and its implementation by national policies is debated in all countries.

Thanks to this research, it was possible to identify four main challenges related to the teaching of Citizenship Education:

1. **Introducing Citizenship Education in curricula (programmes politicians, the general public, teachers, parents and students):** Despite attempts to introduce Citizenship Education into political curricula and the school sector, in many European countries it remains a marginal subject. As a result, Citizenship Education is often considered – sometimes even by students and families – a less important teaching, which is often sacrificed in terms of time and resources. In some cases, it is not even evaluated and often depends on the goodwill of an individual teacher. In order to bring about changes, public policies should strengthen the teaching of Citizenship Education, considering it not only as a subject in its own right so as not to become marginal and optional, but also as a general educational objective - helping all students to develop social and citizenship skills - which should inspire any educational activity. At the same time, since much of the

teaching of citizenship currently depends on the initiative of individual teachers, policymakers should encourage a Whole School Approach to avoid the isolation of these teachers and to disseminate their work. The System School Approach would also be essential to promote democratic school governance, as it ensures that democracy and human rights are integrated into all aspects of school life.

2. **From good intentions to good implementation (resources, cooperation, capacity building, monitoring, evaluation):** the analysis showed that, although policies related to Citizenship Education are often born from good ideas and good intentions, they may lack resources, cooperation, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation. In other words, policymakers do not always take into account the long-term development and implementation of policies. In order to combine good intentions and good implementation, public policies should include a long-term sustainable implementation plan in terms of methods, financial resources and evaluation resources:
 - a. **Method:** Participatory policy-making processes, involving stakeholders in the field of Citizenship Education, can help define policy objectives and provide suggestions for successful long-term implementation planning.
 - b. **Financial resources:** As far as financial resources are concerned, the lack of funds can be addressed by creating cooperation between institutional levels and finding external funding. For example, civil society organizations can help provide funds on the ground.
 - c. **Assessment:** To ensure successful policy enforcement, assessment is a key element of the implementation phase. Evaluation criteria and procedures should be defined in a participatory way. Similarly, it would be important for an external agency to evaluate the implementation of the policy, to ensure some independence. Evaluation by an external agency and agreed criteria and procedures (participatory/multi-stakeholder) should be foreseen already at the design stage. The evaluation could allow us to identify high-quality educational content and good practices. In this regard, an example of the dissemination of good practices can be the development of platforms that allow similar educational resources to be found, adapted and used. Good practices could also be promoted through regional and local networks and peer review.
3. **Teacher training – from the contents of Citizenship Education to the skills, attitudes and values of Citizenship Education:** Teacher training is often conceptualised and structured on the basis of content and knowledge. However, based on the analysis, it is clear that more effective Citizenship Education requires less knowledge and more cooperation and dialogic activities. Therefore, teachers of Citizenship Education should be trained to improve skills, competencies and attitudes in this field: in this regard, they need specific training on those pedagogical tools that would improve their teaching strategy. For example, evidence shows that project-based learning is likely to be effective in developing democracy-relevant skills (respect, collaboration, dialogue); Teachers should be provided with tools, materials and operational models (including through the Good Practice Platform) to promote this type of learning methods. Teaching Citizenship Education can also lead teachers to address **controversial issues** (such as migration) in the classroom, which some teachers might find uncomfortable. Teacher training should also take this into consideration and provide them with the tools to facilitate classroom debates and be able to address possible conflicts. Furthermore, the design of teacher training should also take into account the time of training (whether during school hours or as an extracurricular activity) and should also distinguish between teachers engaged in different subjects and age groups. The design of teacher training could be more effective if it is based on a participatory approach, including stakeholders. To this end, further research on teacher training methods is desirable.
4. **Assessing students' learning outcomes: the potential of national/European frameworks for bottom-up initiatives (informal and non-formal learning):** Since Citizenship Education is often considered a marginal subject, it is often not assessed. In cases where there is an assessment, it is often promoted in the

traditional way (knowledge tests), without considering different forms of assessment, which are not based on the acquisition of knowledge. As Citizenship Education is a transversal subject, with specific characteristics, different methods should be developed for assessing students' learning outcomes: focusing more on the learning process and students' self-assessment rather than on summative assessment by the teacher alone. Policies should focus on providing a set of assessment tools for the recognition of competences (including soft skills). The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) could be a basis for the development of an assessment grid for the teaching of Citizenship Education. Overall, a Whole School Approach to Teaching Citizenship Education can help address these challenges.

Reflections that emerged during the group discussion

In the second part of the policy workshop, participants were invited to divide into groups and reflect on three key questions related to the challenges described above:

1. How can we raise awareness among the local community and schools about the importance of citizenship education?
2. How can we help teachers to develop the social skills and relationships of citizenship?
3. How and why should civic competences be assessed?

As a result of the reflection, the following key elements emerged.

Group 1: How to raise awareness among the local community and the school on the importance of citizenship education?

Key points that emerged during the group's reflection:

- Research what the local needs are to build a project;
- The project must have a practical goal;
- Consider: Which part of the school curriculum can my project be linked to?
- Including expert interventions among the project activities;
- Building a pre-set product as a result of the project so that it can be disseminated more easily;
- Be clear from the beginning, when planning and making proposals to the school, about the time and resources needed;
- It is important to develop the documentation of the process so that it can then be presented at a collegial/dissemination moment to share the results and activities (past projects have shown that without this step there was no profitable impact on the rest of the school);
- Create educational kits that include the process and also the evaluation so that the project becomes an exportable model.

Some weaknesses in the school system to be taken into account:

- Little time to devote;
- It struggles to open up and open up to the rest of the world;
- Lack of training;

How to reach schools and teachers?

- E-mail institutions;
- Word of mouth;
- Presentation day;
- Training courses for new recruits;
- It would be important to differentiate communication according to the age group.

Group 2: How to help teachers develop the social skills and relationships of citizenship?

The group started from the assumption that "being a teacher is a job" and that "you don't help those who don't want to be helped". Therefore the group divided the teachers into three categories:

- "Lost causes"
- Deserving
- Intermediate group, which is also the largest → **group to focus on**

The key point of the reasoning is that one cannot reason only on the vocational aspect.

Point of reflection emerged:

→ **what characterizes the work?**

- Time, money and training: fundamental characteristics of the job;

- Training and informative aspect of teachers: training sessions should be structured to help teachers deal with the topic of global citizenship;

→ **Reasoning also about needs:** the ever-increasing presence of foreign students shows an increasingly evident need on the part of teachers and stimulates a search for answers.

→ **it is therefore necessary to:**

- **Promote training courses** that include training activities in the following areas: socio-emotional, life skills, self-awareness, metacognitive, professional reflexivity: ability to reflect in action, post-action and pre-action;
- **Stimulate relational skills** by working synergistically on sharing educational responsibilities. Therefore, eliminating the rhetoric "young people must be killed";
- Create an **integrated information system**, a formal, informal or non-formal place;
- **Provide psycho/pedagogical supervision.**

Group 3: How and why to assess civic competences?

The group's initial reflection: "to evaluate is to give value"

Why do I evaluate?

- 1) In order to bring back to the centre pedagogical-didactic practices of citizenship education that do not represent symbolic outcomes, but a set of **observable evidences**;
- 2) **In order not to fall into a hypocritical representation** of citizenship values that do not effectively impact the contextual and global community (not being like an environmental and social impact assessment of companies)

Reflection:

- A school in which we do not communicate in all languages and which does not act through school staff can → lead to attitudes of isolation
- Is issuing circulars about the winners and hyper-good → education for citizenship?

- 3) Because in the here and now it is necessary **to monitor the boundary** and distance between the dimension of the self and the dimension of the other, between the individual and the collective. The post-covid dimension - dimension of the self and dimension of the other → create an anchorage which, however, must be monitored, otherwise one cannot reflect on the process.

How do I evaluate it?

- 1) Inextricably linking **design (collaborative and metacognitive teaching)** and **evaluation** → **design if it is not exportable**, it does not disseminate and remains tied to itself. It is not only meant between adults but also with children;
- 2) **Co-designing authentic tasks in real-life situations** and providing coherent tools for evidence collection and data collection → need for tools suitable for evaluation → related to observable evidence (logbook, observational rubrics, cognitive autobiographies, self-assessment, hetero-evaluation, questionnaires);
- 3) **Foster contextual practices from which to gather observable elements** (service learning, community schools) that speak to us of participation, care, meaning-making, sharing → individual and collective participation;
- 4) **Declining skills in self-knowledge**, relationship with others, relationship with social reality in terms of availability, and concrete research and solution.

It would be desirable **to develop a kind of kit that would include a pathway of action and concrete proposals for schools and that can:**

- 1) motivate teachers to give of themselves;
- 2) contain examples of proposals as maps;
- 3) conclude the project with the evaluation of the pathway and dissemination.

Annex 1. The CITIZED project

CITIZED is an ERASMUS+ project co-funded by the European Commission whose ultimate aim is to develop an innovative set of tools that help the widespread implementation of Citizenship Education in European education systems. It has the ambition to become, by bridging the existing implementation gaps between policy statements and daily practice in schools, an effective catalyst for a multiplication process based on capacity building and teacher empowerment and school engagement. The project is complementary to some existing policies and measures that already have the ambition to support a generalised good practice.

Objectives

The project started in December 2020 and will run until November 2023. The project has the following objectives:

1. Reviewing, analyse, compare and catalogue existing policy approaches for the development of Citizenship Education, highlighting what works where and under what conditions, thus identifying inhibiting and improving factors in different contexts;
2. Proposing and testing self-assessment and self-reflection tools and training modules that enable future teachers and in-service teachers to implement effective learning strategies, appropriate for developing the set of competences of pupils/students related to democratic citizenship;
3. Developing an open collaborative platform and provide access to examples of good practice and methodological tools for schools implementing whole-school Citizenship Education projects;
4. Maximising the impact of the project activities in terms of supporting the large-scale implementation of validated good practices.

The Results

- a) A critical review of recent curricula and national policies in the field of Citizenship Education, including a classification of the most frequent measures;
- b) A validated stakeholder competence framework for teachers working in the field of Citizenship Education, based on a review of existing models in this field, and an operational model for a European qualification for teachers specialised in this field;
- c) A toolkit for schools preparing to become members of the Democratic Schools Network;
- d) A series of 5 transnational policy workshops (MT, IT, BE, AT, FR) to maximize the dissemination of project results and the creation of an effective policy impact in all EU Member States.