THE FUTURE OF IRAN: EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Civic Education in South East Europe and Turkey:
REFLECTIONS ON RECENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

By Ted Huddleston
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1. CIVIC EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Upsurge of interest in civic education

The last 20 years have seen an upsurge of interest in civic education around the world and, in particular, in Europe. New courses in civic education have been introduced into schools; guidance material, toolkits, textbooks and teaching resources created; competences identified; monitoring and assessment strategies developed; teachers trained; research commissioned; and networks established.\(^1\)

Strong pressure for change in Europe has come from experts and policymakers in a range of organisations—including higher education institutions, local and international NGOs, regional networks, research and resource centres, UN agencies, and supranational organisations and agencies—forced to re-think the aims and purposes of traditional forms of civic education in the light of profound social and political changes affecting European societies in recent years.\(^2\)

The Council of Europe

At a European level, the Council of Europe’s EDC/HRE (Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education) programme\(^3\) has been particularly influential. EDC/HRE has been defined as:

‘A set of practices and activities designed to help young people and adults play an active part in democratic life and exercise their rights and responsibilities in society.’\(^4\)

The programme, which began in 1997, includes a comprehensive collection of guidelines and manuals for policymakers and practitioners on topics such as EDC/HRE policy, democratic school governance, teacher competences, quality assurance and partnership working. It has been developed through collaboration with a number of local and international organisations—including UNESCO, the United Nations Office of the High

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Commissioner for Human Rights and the European Commission—and promoted across the 47 member states of the Council of Europe. Civic education development within member states is overseen by a network of EDC/HRE co-ordinators, one person per member state—the majority of which are employed by national ministries. The programme received political legitimacy with the adoption of the Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE in 2010 by all 47 member states. The non-binding Charter defines key terms and sets out principles of policy and practice in EDC/HRE across Europe.\(^5\)

**The European Commission**

The European Commission has also been influential in the field of civic education in Europe, albeit more indirectly. Firstly, through the EU enlargement process: membership of the EU depends, among other things, on candidate countries achieving ‘stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities.’\(^6\) Candidate countries are required to adjust their administrative and judicial structures in line with EU practice. This requirement has been an important stimulus for educational reform, including in civic education, in a number of South-East European countries seeking or considering EU membership.

Fundamental to this approach to civic education is belief in the power of formal education systems in general, and schools in particular, to tackle major problems in society.

Secondly, in response to issues of globalisation and the shift to more knowledge-based economies, the European Commission has been active in identifying key competences for lifelong learning in Europe, building on the 2000 Lisbon Objectives in education and training. Among the eight competences identified was ‘social and civic knowledge’. A composite indicator has been developed to measure the ‘civic competence’ of European citizens, based on 63 basic indicators, as a first step in measuring outcomes in civic education. This work has take place under the auspices of the European Commission’s Europe for Citizens programme (2007–13) designed to stimulate opportunities for ‘active citizenship’ in formal and non-formal education throughout the 27 member states.\(^7\)

**A new approach to civic education**

The term ‘civic education’ (or ‘citizenship education’), as used by these organisations relates to a number of related activities—including ‘education for democratic citizenship’, ‘human rights education’, ‘intercultural education’, ‘global education’, and ‘peace education’. Although in theory they are all different, at the practical level the difference is often only one of emphasis, and, taken together, they may be regarded as collectively forming a distinctive civic education imperative—one which is significantly different from the way the subject has traditionally been taught in schools. This new model of civic education has a number of defining characteristics.
1. Education as a solution to societal problems

Fundamental to this approach to civic education is belief in the power of formal education systems in general, and schools in particular, to tackle major problems in society—by inducting citizens into appropriate kinds of knowledge, skills and values at an age when they are most receptive. (Rarely is it justified in terms of its contribution to a ‘general’, or ‘liberal education’, essential to the development of ‘rounded’, or ‘whole’, individuals—though it has sometimes been justified in terms of human rights).

Thus civic education has come to be seen as a strategic response to, among other things:

- Declining levels of civic and political engagement—especially among young people
- The need to build democracy afresh—especially after the fall of communist or dictatorial regimes
- Ethnic or religious conflict—especially in the context of diversity and migration
- Global injustice and inequalities—especially in connection with the rights of women and minority groups.

For example, civic education has been seen as improving social cohesion in England; as supporting democracy-building in the former Yugoslavia; as challenging xenophobia in Germany; and as contributing to the solution of global issues by international organisations, such as UNESCO.

2. Universal values

Universal values, as expressed in international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the European Convention on Human Rights, are assumed to have priority over local or national ones. This is a fundamental principle of human rights education. Similarly, in the Council of Europe’s EDC/HRE programme the three foundational values of the Council of Europe—democracy, human rights and the rule of law—are thought of as pan-European values which trump particular national values of any of its member states. This implies a critical model of citizenship in which duty to state can never be an ultimate value, and, when state policy conflicts with wider values, citizens are charged with holding state authorities to account.

3. Active citizenship

The concept of citizenship on which this model of civic education is based is an ‘active’ or ‘participatory’ one. Democratic citizenship is conceived not just as voting, rather as a continual process of engagement in the civil and political life of the community—be it local, national or international. The notion of citizenship as a legal-political concept (‘citizenship as status’) tends to be downplayed in favour of a more general activity-oriented one (‘citizenship as process’). This notion is clearly evident in ‘European approach’ of Council of Europe’s EDC/HRE programme, in which the legal rights and duties of citizenship in particular member states, take second place to a more fundamental sense of active citizenship rooted in basic ‘European’ values. An implication of this is that school students come to be seen as active citizens in their own right, not
simply as citizens-in-waiting (waiting to vote)—suggesting, in turn, that civic education should be seen not just as a preparation for future activity, but as a way of encouraging citizen action among young people now.

4. **Active learning**

The principle of active citizenship has important implications for teaching methods in school. Traditional teaching methods based on passive memorisation are regarded at best as outmoded and at worst negative in their impact on young people’s civic learning. Current literature on civic education is highly critical of ‘frontal’, or ‘didactic’, teaching in which the teacher acts as the only source and transmitter of knowledge and pupils as its passive receivers. The capacity for active citizenship is seen as more than the possession of factual information, but as also involving the acquisition of important skills and attitudes. These are best learned, it is argued, through experience—that is, learning by doing. The sorts of skills and attitudes to be developed derive from the active, participatory model of citizenship outlined above. Thus we find an emphasis on classroom teaching methods which are:

- Interactive—focus on discussion and debate
- Relevant—deal with real-life problems
- Critical—encourage questioning
- Collaborative—promote team- and group-work
- Participative—provide opportunities for learner participation.

The introduction of forms of ‘active learning’ and the emphasis on skills and attitudes acquisition has implications for the assessment of learning, as well as for the monitoring and evaluation of school provision. These sorts of outcomes are not easily measurable in written tests.

5. **A ‘whole-school’ approach**

The principle of learning through experience is applied not simply to the classroom but also to the school as a whole. Human rights and democratic values and behaviour are meant to be apparent in all aspects of school life—from informal relationships between individuals to the formal processes of school governance. Much importance is placed, therefore, on the ‘culture’, or ‘ethos’, of schools, and, in particular, their decision-making processes. Traditional hierarchical models of school governance are rejected in favour of more open ‘democratic’ procedures in which all stakeholders, including pupils, have a voice—often in the form of ‘student councils’ or ‘pupil parliaments’.

This principle is extended into the relations schools have with their surrounding community. School-community links are seen as another important source of civic learning—including through links with parents groups, community organisations, local businesses, public services and other educational institutions, such as universities.
Thus civic education has come to be conceived as a multi-dimensional activity—both in terms of the sorts of learning it encourages (skills and attitudes as well as knowledge) and the different aspects of school life through which it is learned (classroom, school and community). It has been described as ‘a subject and more than a subject’, one which requires a ‘whole-school approach’. This makes civic education a responsibility for all staff, not just for a particular subject teacher or subject team—with implications for school personnel in general, and for school leaders in particular.

2. CIVIC EDUCATION IN TURKEY

Unlike some countries, such as England which only introduced civic education as a separate subject in its national curriculum in 2002, Turkey has a long tradition of civic education in its schools. The nature and salience of this tradition with its origins in the nation-building years of the Republic, following the lengthy War of Independence and the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the 1920s, is of central importance in understanding the challenges facing civic education reform in Turkey today.

The single-party period: 1923-1946

A key objective of Atatürk’s secularist reforms after the foundation of the Republic in 1923 was the creation of a unified sense of national identity based on principles other than those of religion—replacing the previous millet system of the Ottoman Empire.

As part of these reforms, formal religious teaching was abolished and schools were brought under central control. A new primary-school curriculum—with civic education at its heart—was introduced in 1926, with the stated aim of ‘raising good citizens’. Later versions of the curriculum were more specific. The stated aim of 1936 version, for example, was to raise citizens who were ‘republican’, ‘statist’, ‘secular’, and ‘revolutionary’.

Atatürk was himself responsible for an influential civic education handbook (Civic Education for the Citizen) introduced into schools in 1930. Chapter headings included: The People; The State; Sovereignty; the Republic; The Constitution; Movements Threatening Democracy; the State’s Duties to the Citizen; Freedom; Right to Peaceful Assembly and Association; Right to Education; Right to Place a Complaint; Personal Rights-Political Rights; Division of Labour and Work; Tolerance; Solidarity; The Citizen’s Duties to the State. Textbooks issued in following years followed a similar pattern, emphasising topics such as The Nation, The State, The Republic, Democracy, Taxes, The Military and Military Service.

Several important themes ran through the civic education curriculum in its various versions during the single-party period. Firstly, national unity and solidarity continued to be the overall aim of the curriculum. The aim was justified in terms of the perceived threat to the Republic from outside. This has sometimes been referred to as the ‘Sèvres Syndrome’, the idea that Turkey is surrounded by enemies intent on dividing it along the lines of the Sèvres Treaty imposed by the Western powers at the end of World War I (an idea said to be still current amongst some Turkish citizens today). France, Britain and Greece are often cited among these enemies and discussed in the textbooks of the time.
Secondly, citizen duties were given priority over citizen rights. Children were to be taught that citizens need to fulfil their duties to the state in order to deserve their rights, one of the more important of which was the performance of military service.

Thirdly, the concept of citizenship was rooted in a particular notion of ‘Turkishness’, rarely defined precisely but combining elements of geography, history, language (Turkish), morality (a set of what were believed to be uniquely Turkish values, including cleanliness, honesty, bravery and hospitality), religion (Islam, specifically Sunni) and, sometimes, ethnicity (Turkish). Textbooks emphasise the importance of being born a Turk, living as a Turk and dying as a Turk—periodically quoting Atatürk, ‘How happy is one who says I am a Turk’. The importance of ethnicity appears to vary over time. Noting a lack of reference to other ethnic groups in textbooks of the time, Cayir & Gurkaynak (2008) suggest that a racial element in the idea of Turkishness became more pronounced in the 1940s.

Emergence of a multi-party system: 1946-1960

With the founding of the Democratic Party (DP) in 1946, Turkey entered a period of multi-party democracy. After the DP came to power in 1950 there was more emphasis on rights in the curriculum, with some textbooks printing the full text of the UN Declaration. There was also more emphasis on the principles of democratic government, especially the multi-party system.

Despite these elements of liberalisation, there was considerable continuity with the approach to civic education which had gone before. There was the same emphasis on national unity and threats to the nation from outside, with the implication that the restriction of rights under martial law might be necessary in circumstances where the state was under threat. Some texts also continued to define citizenship in terms of race and religion, distinguishing the word ‘citizen’ from ‘co-religionist’, ‘minority’ and ‘foreign subject’.

Military intervention: 1960-1990

In the years following the military intervention in 1960 a more liberal definition of citizenship began to enter the civic education curriculum, under the influence of the constitution that was enacted in 1961. Citizenship was increasingly defined inclusively, with one textbook suggesting not only that Armenians, Greeks and Jews living in Turkey should be thought of as ‘Turkish citizens’ but in respect of their citizenship also as ‘Turks’. Despite this, there was little change to the fundamentally nationalist objective of the civic curriculum as a whole, with textbooks proclaiming slogans such as ‘Everybody and everything is for Turkey’. There was also implicit support for the principle of martial law,
with the military intervention of 1960 referred to as the '27 May Revolution'.

A further liberalisation took place in 1969 under the influence of the European Council's General and Technical Education Report. This time the focus was on teaching methods in civic education, in particular, a tentative introduction of active and participative learning methods with a view to creating a more active and participative citizenry. In this respect, the 1969 syllabus has been described as 'the most democratic … in the entire history of the Republic'.

Civic education integrated into Social Studies

In 1970, however, as part of a far-reaching reform of the whole school curriculum in line with modern methods, the civic education curriculum was merged with Geography and History to form a discrete Social Studies course. The course combined the traditional emphasis on national unity with some new elements of active citizenship.

Following the military intervention of 1971 the liberalising reforms of the 1960s were largely reversed in favour of a stronger emphasis on Turkish nationalism and the duties citizens owed to the state.

This revisionist process speeded up after the 1980 coup d'état. Civic education course books were revised to favour the military's perspective. Although citizen's rights and freedoms were important and to be respected it might be necessary, if circumstances dictated, for them to be restricted by the state. The content of the curriculum allowed little criticism of the state. Democracy was reduced largely to voting and taught as an abstract principle, with no reference to contemporary real-life problems. Previous attempts to introduce active learning, including critical thinking, were sidelined in favour of traditional teaching methods based on factual memorisation. Citizenship was defined more exclusively, with orthodox (Sunni) religion counted as a basic element. Previous concern with external threats to the state was now coupled with warnings about the dangers of enemies within, intent on dividing Turkey along lines of race, class or religious sect. The curriculum aimed to develop 'militant citizens' who were 'open-eyed and waiting'.

International standards: 1990–2010

Civic education as a separate course

During the 1990s civic education came increasingly under the influence of national reforms designed to bring Turkey's legal and educational structure in conformity with international agreements and human rights regimes. Human rights were recognised as a mark of a civilized country and as a vehicle for promoting Turkey's reputation and respectability on the international stage.

A National Committee on the Decade for Human Rights Education was inaugurated in 1998 in response to the United Nations General Assembly Decade for Human Rights Education 1995-2004. In the same year a separate civic education programme, with the new title of Citizenship and Human Rights, was introduced into the national curriculum (replacing the previous integrated Social Studies course). This was mandatory in Grades 7 and 8 in primary schools for one hour per week. It was followed in 1998 by the introduction of an elective course for Grade 10 in secondary schools, also one hour per week.
title suggests, the course incorporated a new emphasis on human rights. Of the eight Units in the primary curriculum (4 per year), the rubric of six contained the word ‘rights’, of which four specifically mentioned ‘human’ rights.

In contrast to this, a significant proportion of time (8 out of 36 hours) in the secondary elective was dedicated to ‘National Security and Elements of National Security’—even though there was still a separate course in ‘National Security’, mandatory for all school students at this level. This was the continuation of well-established curriculum tradition: there had been a discrete element devoted to studies in national security alongside civic education in the school curriculum since the 1920s. Cayir (2011) observes how the civic education textbooks produced to accompany these courses blended ‘human rights themes’ with a ‘nationalistic and militaristic perspective’. Chapters on ‘the protection of human rights at national and international level’ sat alongside chapters on ‘our internal and external enemies’.

One of the challenges of civic education today, therefore, is the provision of appropriate and sustainable forms of professional development. Genuine educational reform does not take place overnight.

Despite the references to human rights, therefore, it is argued that these new courses continued to promote an overwhelmingly duty-based concept of citizenship defined as ‘membership in the State on the basis of a single religion (State-monitored version of a Sunni Islam) and a single language (Turkish).’

Civic education as a cross-curricular dimension

With the election of the pro-European Union Justice and Development (AK) party in 2002, education reform became more rapid. Pressure exerted by the European Union on membership candidates moved education in general and human rights in particular higher up the policy agenda in Turkey. In 2005 Turkey embarked on the ‘screening’ phase of the European Union, involving an assessment of its current educational profile and the drafting of benchmarks for mandatory reform prior to successive stages of the accession process. This resulted in a whole-scale revision of the school curriculum along constructivist and more student-centred principles, in which the Citizenship and Human Rights Education courses in Grades 7 and 8 were abolished and their themes distributed into the curriculum of other courses: Turkish, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, Life Science and Mathematics. This was not so much a comment on the content of the civic education courses as an expression of the larger task of creating a more internationally-approved primary-school curriculum.

The new textbooks introduced more modern teaching methods, encouraging the active engagement of students and downplaying the previous reliance on rote-learning. The concept of citizenship was still largely duty-based, however, and although explicit references to enemies of the state were removed, there was little discussion of ethnic and religious minorities or their claims, and no mention of Kurds living in Turkey.
Civic education as a separate subject again

However, in 2009, on the recommendation of academics and international bodies, such as the Council of Europe, the cross-curricular approach to civic education was once again dropped in favour of a separate course in Grade 8. This course is still current and is called Citizenship and Democracy Education. It comprises four themes: “Every human is valuable”, “Democracy culture”, “Rights and Freedoms”, “Our Duties and Responsibilities” and was rolled out nationally in the 2011-2012 school year.

Commentators have noted how, in spite of the introduction of many new elements into this course, there are nevertheless important continuities with previous curricula. On the one hand, it strengthens students’ ability to take action in protection of their rights, e.g., on how legally to defend their rights in court. It also encourages young people to identify and challenge discrimination, including against women, the disabled and migrants. The emphasis on gender equality, in particular, is relatively new to the curriculum. On the other hand, despite its title, the overwhelming emphasis of the course is on human rights, and, when it deals with the principles of democracy little reference is made to Turkish-specific institutions or real-life problems facing Turkish citizens.

Although national security and the role of the military are no longer included, the concept of citizenship continues to be defined in terms of a single ‘culture’, Muhammad is described as ‘our Prophet’ and there are no references to non-Turkish and non-Muslim groups living in Turkey. Topics such as discrimination and gender rights are not contextualised, but discussed in the abstract, and the term ‘difference’, as in ‘respect for difference’, is used in the textbooks to refer to individual differences and capabilities. This makes it difficult for pupils to take a critical stance, either to conform or reject, on current issues in or affecting their country. In fact, teachers are warned explicitly not to allow criticism of the state or discussion of controversial political issues:

‘... it is in no way allowed to conduct any political and ideological propaganda against Atatürk nationalism defined by the Constitution and get involved in any current political developments and discussions of such a nature in the educational institutions.’

It is not yet clear how this curriculum is being received by students in schools. However, previous research in Turkey would suggest that the lack of reference to real-life issues may be de-motivating for students. In a study of the reception of the earlier Citizenship and Human Rights Education at Grades 7 and 8, Cayır (2011) notes that students found the courses ‘boring, unnecessary, unimportant and easy’. One reason, according to the students was that the textbooks did not touch on ‘real problems’. Through the media they were well aware of controversial issues, such as the Eastern (Kurdish) issue, but felt unable to discuss them in school. They also said that that they felt that many of the human rights principles taught in school were not reflected in life in society beyond. Consequently, the course did not make all of them feel as empowered as it might. In particular, some thought that since rights were not always well respected in society they might be oppressed for trying to uphold them publicly.
Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education Project: 2011–present

In 2011 the Turkish government embarked on a new project to overhaul the Republic’s educational legislation in line with the principles of the Council of Europe’s EDC/HRE programme. This is a joint project of the Council of Europe and European Union. It is funded by the European Union (9 million euros) with the intention of supporting Turkey’s effort to promote and improve democracy and human rights awareness through education, in the context of Turkey’s bid for membership of the European Union. The Council of Europe is charged with implementing the Project, of which the main beneficiary is the Ministry of National Education, and, particularly, the Board of Education. The legal framework legitimising the project is the Council of Europe Charter.

Key activities include:

• Re-designing the curriculum of the existing elective course and course book in secondary education
• Reviewing the new compulsory course and course book in primary education, to ensure consistency and progression between these and the secondary course and course book
• Reviewing and revising the ‘preparatory programme’ for teachers in relation to EDC/HRE
• Developing and piloting awareness-raising and educational materials on EDC/HRE in pilot schools
• Capacity-building for Ministry of National Education personnel in EDC/HRE
• Developing training programmes and materials to be used by teacher trainers to train other teachers and raise awareness in school communities
• Developing and piloting a Democratic School Competence Framework and an accompanying manual, promoting democratic school culture from pre-school to the end of secondary education
• Developing a comprehensive communication strategy and increasing the level of awareness of the public through launching and closing events, seminars, and a dedicated website.

The Project entered its second phase in September 2012. The focus of this phase is ‘piloting, benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation’. This includes the piloting of a new elective course (Democracy and Human Rights) and a Strategy Paper on Developing Democratic Culture with accompanying manuals in 10 secondary schools in 10 provinces in the school year 2012-13.

Civic Education and Religion in Turkey

The tradition of religious education in Turkish schools has a very different history and is in many ways quite distinct from that of civic education.
In the 1920s all medreses (religious schools) were closed down and courses concerning religion removed from the curriculum of primary, secondary, and high schools. This was justified on grounds of the need to promote national unity during the early years of the Republic.

It wasn’t until 1949 that the Ministry of Education acceded to an optional course on religion in Grades 4 and 5 of primary school, taught outside school hours. This was very popular with parents, the vast majority electing to have their children follow the course. There followed in the 1950s an optional course at secondary level, from which parents could exempt their children if they chose, and in 1967 an optional course in the first years on parental written request—extended to the third year in 1975.

Finally, after the military coup in 1980 a mandatory religious education course was introduced into secondary schools (The Culture of Religion and Knowledge of Ethics), and for the first time in the history of the Republic a legitimate place for religious education in public schools was secured under the constitution. The rationale for this policy—reasons of piety apart—was rooted in nationalist ideology, and largely the same as it was for civic education, as it was for the school curriculum as a whole. According to the programme issued in 1992, the purpose of the course was to ‘strengthen Ataturkism, national unity, human love from a religious and ethical perspective, and to educate students about virtues and ethics.’

Currently, religious education is taught from Grade 4 of the primary school and throughout secondary schools. However, unlike civic education there are no set books for the course. Each school decides which book to follow for itself from a Ministry of National Education approved list. The element of choice which runs through the history of the subject is an implicit recognition of the potentially controversial nature of the subject in Turkey.

Religious education in Turkey continues to be open to two opposing forms of criticism: either it undermines the secular principle in state education or, insofar as it is taught for non-religious purposes, it is not religious enough.

The religious-secular fault line also runs through other areas of educational policy in Turkey in significant ways today. In particular, the AK party’s policy of reforming the structure of the school system, which secularist critics say goes against founding principle of state secularism, privileging imam hatip (vocational religious) schools to take boys from 11 rather than 15 and introducing optional Islamic classes in other schools. But since religion does not enter into its curriculum, civic education in Turkey is relatively immune from criticism from pro-Islamic or pro-secular lobbies. Criticism of civic education is more likely to come from other sources, in particular the debate over pluralism and the rights of ethnic minority groups.

3. CIVIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

Given the substantial differences between the countries of South-East Europe, it is difficult to generalise about the issues facing civic education in the region, and to make direct comparison with the situation in Turkey. There are differences in history, political make-up, diversity of population, and education systems. In particular, there is a distinction to be made in terms of relation to (a) experience of communism, (b) membership of the
European Union, and (c) the conflicts consequent on the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some common challenges faced by these countries in developing policy and practice in civic education, as well as certain characteristics which are more country-specific.

Common challenges

The importance of civic education in forming and developing a democratic political culture and the kinds of social values that allow religiously and ethnically diverse groups to live together peaceably was widely acknowledged at a policy level throughout the region in response to the various social and political transformations that took place from the 1980s. There was also strong pressure for civic education reform from outside, in the shape of international organisations, agencies and foundations. One by one, the different countries in the region began to introduce new forms of civic education into their school curricula.

A number of major challenges and obstacles became apparent in the transformation of these written curricula into practice in schools, i.e., from the ‘written’ to the ‘taught’ curriculum. Some of these were highlighted in the Council of Europe’s All European Study on Education for democratic citizenship Policies in 2004:

- Many countries lacked a sufficiently organised and co-ordinated system of teacher training to be able to provide the sustained approach to professional development needed to introduce the kind of multi-dimensional, participatory form of civic education promoted by the Council of Europe and others.
- There was a problem providing appropriate textbooks and resources in the local language since what was required was radically different to what had gone before.
- Many school leaders, administrators and teachers had particular difficulty coming to terms with the emphasis on the significance of school culture, especially the idea of democratic school governance—in the light of traditional practice which was often both hierarchical and authoritarian.
- Education authorities at a national level were often either unaware of, or disinclined to co-operate with, the many NGOs and related organisations already working in the field—-institutions with the potential to play an important role in the provision of appropriate forms of professional development, teaching resources, etc.  

Country-specific issues

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina

In post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina education in general and civic education in particular were seen as essential components in the process of national reconstruction and rehabilitation. In the light of the recent conflict, much emphasis was placed on the role of civic education to help young people from different ethnic backgrounds practise tolerance and understanding, and adults to reconcile their differences, so that ethnic minorities might live safely with the dominant majority in each part of the country. This, rather than any other objective—say, fostering participatory democracy—was
the fundamental goal of the new Human Rights and Civic Education course which was introduced into Grades 7 and 8 in primary school in 2003 replacing the former course in civil defence.

Of all the countries in South-East Europe undergoing educational reform in the early 2000s, Bosnia and Herzegovina was arguably the least well-placed to develop and implement a coherent and sustainable civic education policy. Not only was there a serious lack of financial resources, but the fragmented system of government—two Entities, one of which was divided into ten cantons—led to a confusing collection of responsibilities and government agencies in charge of various aspects of education, often with overlapping or contradictory policies. There was difficulty in agreeing any common elements in the curriculum. The teacher training system was undeveloped and unable to provide the level of professional development required. In absence of systematic support from the state, educational initiatives were supported by a wide range of other bodies, including: the Council of Europe; the European Commission; OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation), UN agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank; NGOs such as the Center for Civic Education and the International Foundation for Election Systems; and private donors, such as the Soros Foundation—through a combination of funding and the provision of technical advisers.

Significant among these initiatives was Project Citizen, part of the Civitas programme run by the US-based Center for Civic Education—a research-based activity in which school pupils investigate a public policy-related issue of their own choice and propose a solution, and a joint European Union/Council of Europe EDC/HRE programme of teacher training seminars. The latter sought to induct teachers, many of whom had previously taught civil defence and were new to the subject, into the principles of EDC/HRE, and thereby create ‘communities’ of civic education practice which would act as ‘multipliers’ throughout the country. With expert support, these groups helped to create new textbooks and a method of accrediting civic education teachers on the basis of a professional portfolio.

One of the long-standing challenges facing civic education in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be the way in which the positive messages of civic education are sometimes contradicted by the other messages from within the education system, e.g., from ethnically segregated schooling, controversies over the language of instruction and the teaching of different versions of history.

2. Serbia

A new era in Serbia’s political history began in 2000 when Milosevic was ousted—after half a century of communism and a decade of nationalist authoritarianism—and a coalition of two previously anti-Milosevic parties came to power. The first substantive educational reform made by the coalition government was the simultaneous introduction of civic and religious education into the first years of primary and secondary schools the same year. Initially, both subjects were optional electives, but in 2002 they were made compulsory electives, as an alternative to one another.
Civic education still has this status in Serbia today—the only arrangement of its kind in the region. It testifies to the continuing power of the Serbian Orthodox Church in public life in Serbia. Although officially it includes several religious denominations, in practice the form of teaching found in religious education in schools is largely based on Orthodox Christianity. There are different explanations for the origin of this unusual arrangement. One is that the two programmes represented the different policies of the two coalition partners at the time. Another is that having the two subjects was more likely to secure the support of both conservative and progressive sections of Serbian society, by invoking symbols of ‘good old pre-communist and pre-Milosevic era’ on the one hand, and modernisation and ‘Westernisation’ on the other.\textsuperscript{44}

What is fairly clear is that the introduction of civic education was intended to be seen as an element in that part of government policy geared towards creating a Serbian society which was modern, European, democratic, tolerant and respective of differences and human rights. The Ministry of Education and Sport openly acknowledged the influence of the Council of Europe’s EDC/HRE programme on its education strategy. It adopted the concept of ‘democratic education’ as both a process and a goal, i.e., the aim of creating critical, independently-minded and tolerant citizens (goal) through activities like debate and discussion, critical thinking and peaceful conflict resolution (process). In this light and in respect of its apparent incompatibility with religious education, civic education can be seen as a rejection of a traditional concept of Serbian citizenship as defined by religion and ethnicity—a concept which, despite this, still has considerable salience today. (Serbia is a very homogeneous country in which both the percentage of Serbian nationals and Christian Orthodox believers coincides at roughly 85\%.)\textsuperscript{45} This is not to portray this policy as a secular attack on religion, therefore, but rather as a response to an exclusive form of religiously-defined nationalism rooted in ethnicity. It is significant that there was no attempt to include nationalist or religious elements in the civic education curriculum (this was left to religious education), or to try to reconcile the two.

One of the notable features of government policy on civic education was a significant reliance on academics and NGOs for teacher training and resource development—in particular, the local NGO, Civic Initiatives\textsuperscript{46} in conjunction with Belgrade University. The government was also a participant in the European Union/Council of Europe joint project which provided training seminars in EDC/HRE for teachers and teacher advisers. If nothing else, this was a reflection on the government’s relative unfamiliarity with the concepts and methods of this new model of civic education, and the inability to provide the level of professional development it required.

The introduction of civic education was intended to be seen as an element towards creating a Serbian society which was modern, European, democratic, tolerant and respective of differences and human rights.
Unlike some countries in the region (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina), many of the first teachers of this course were reasonably receptive to active learning methods. Many of them were social science teachers who had already had experience of training in interactive teaching methods through seminars organized in the 1990s by NGOs and alternative education networks (in contrast to religious education teachers who were often priests and untrained for working with children). While teachers may have been confident with more open, participative classrooms, there seems to have been some uncertainty about how or whether these techniques might be applied to the exploration of issues of democracy and human rights in real-life contexts as experienced by learners in their lives outside school. There was a tendency to treat democracy and human rights a-politically—as a set abstract principles interpreted in terms of the development of individual self-expression and positive relationships and attitudes in the school and the classroom.\footnote{17}

3. Slovenia\footnote{48}

The first free multi-party elections were held in Slovenia in 1990 and in the following year independence from Yugoslavia was declared. This was followed by a short Ten Day War in which Slovenia successfully rejected Yugoslav military interference. The history of Slovenia can therefore be distinguished from other members of the former communist Yugoslavia by (a) its relatively conflict-free secession from Yugoslavia, and (b) the early development of a functioning parliamentary democracy (in contrast to other countries that continued to be run for most of the 1990s by charismatic and sometimes highly authoritarian presidents). It is also distinguished by its early application then membership of the European Union in 2004.

During the late 1990s the government introduced a series of educational reforms in which increasing importance was placed on civic education—in particular, on developing the abilities required for living in a democratic society rooted in ‘European’ values—based on the recommendations of international organisations such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and OECD. In particular, there was a new emphasis on student participation in school life and critical and independent thinking—both crucial for active participation in democratic life beyond the school.

A new compulsory subject, Civic Education and Ethics, was introduced into Grade 7 and 8 of lower secondary schools, and an optional subject, Civic Culture, into Grade 9. At the primary level, civic education themes may be integrated into other civic-related subjects, e.g., social sciences, Slovenian language. At upper secondary level, civic education is a mandatory subject for 15 teaching hours per year, alongside opportunities for student participation in school and community life. In the same vein, lessons in lower secondary are intended to encourage the critical discussion of topical issues beyond the immediate environment of the school—including discussing ‘contemporary events, domestic and international, and observing how they are presented in the media’.\footnote{49}

A distinctive feature of the approach to civic education in Slovenia has been the development of a sophisticated and systematic approach to pupil participation in school, community and national life. The Elementary School Act (1996) introduced a half-hour...
session per week for class discussions on school and community life, which then form the basis of school parliaments. Head teachers are required to summon a school parliament at least twice a year—the regulations for which are set out in the Rules on Rights and Duties of Children in Elementary Schools (1996). These mandatory parliaments are recognised as one of the best means of inducting young people into the processes of active citizenship.50

Class communities and school parliaments are integrated into the wider system of youth participation, through the election to municipal or inter-municipal parliaments of representatives from each school. School representatives also participate in the children’s parliament at state level. Sessions of this parliament are hosted by the Chairman of the Parliament of the Republic of Slovenia. They are regularly attended by representatives of educational administration and of other branches of executive power.51

4. EVALUATING CIVIC EDUCATION

Evaluating curricular reform can be a protracted and difficult activity. There are important differences (a) between what a syllabus says (the ‘written’ curriculum) and what teachers and schools do in response to it (the ‘taught’ curriculum), and (b) between what teachers and schools do and what pupils come to learn as a result (the ‘received’ curriculum). There is also the difficulty of identifying and agreeing measurable success criteria. Opinions on what counts as ‘good’ civic education can differ significantly in detail and certain types of outcome raise questions for scientific measurement—in particular, outcomes which relate to personal values or the effect of civic education in schools on society as a whole. Add to this the multi-faceted nature and relative newness of the subject and it is not surprising that, while we have a growing body of research, there are still considerable gaps in the evidence base for civic education at both quantitative and qualitative levels.52

The more robust evidence tends to come from cross-European research involving multiple European countries.53 One important exception is the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) on the impact of the introduction of a mandatory course in civic education in England.54 On the whole, country-specific research tends to be smaller in scale and ambition. With a few exceptions,55 many of the countries of South-East Europe do not feature in the major European studies, nor does Turkey—making the evaluation of civic education initiatives in these countries more problematic. However, it is possible to arrive at a number of tentative judgements by extrapolating from general European trends.

Trends across Europe

Evidence from across Europe suggests:

1. There is considerable variation in how countries define and approach civic education. In the 2009 IEA study, 11 countries included a specific subject concerned with civic education in their school curricula, 22 provided it through integration into other subjects. Curricula for civic education covered a wide range of topics, encompassing knowledge and understanding of political institutions and concepts, such as human rights, as well as social and community cohesion, diversity, the environment, communications and global society.56
2. There is, across Europe, an ‘implementation gap’ between the ‘written’ and ‘taught’ curriculum in civic education, i.e., official policy is not always or only partly followed in schools. The All-European Study on EDC Policies stated:

   ‘… the conclusions of all national and regional studies are clear: neither the practice in use nor the actual organisational settings corresponds to the expectations and recommendations in the normative texts. Despite numerous bottom-up initiatives and grassroots innovations, and despite the efforts made in some countries and regions, there are still visible differences between EDC policy statements and practice in European countries overall.’

3. Quality of implementation is linked to the status the subject is given by school leaders and administrators, and the way they incorporate it into their curriculum—including: giving civic education the same status as other subjects (e.g., in terms of assessment, or examinations), and ensuring it has clearly identifiable curriculum time (rather than simply integrating into other or all subjects).

4. Schools which model democratic values and practices—e.g., encouraging classroom discussion of real issues, providing opportunities for pupils to undertake open-ended investigations on topics of real social and political significance, and opportunities to take an active part in school life—are the most effective in promoting both civic knowledge and the expectation of future civic engagement.

5. There is a tendency for teachers and school leaders to conceptualise the outcomes of civic education in terms of individual benefits to pupils rather than benefits to society as whole (when policy outcomes are most often framed in terms of the latter), e.g., prioritising the development of knowledge about civic institutions, knowledge of citizens’ rights and responsibilities and the development of critical and independent thinking over the preparation of students for future political participation or teaching strategies to challenge racism and xenophobia.

6. School students with higher levels of civic knowledge are more likely to say they intend to participate in political and civic activities when they are adults, and that teaching about topics such as elections and voting has a role in this.

Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) in England

Although it relates directly only to England, the Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study (CELS) is of wider significance to a range of other countries. The study is unique in focusing on the implementation and impact of the introduction of mandatory civic education course in English schools on a large cohort of young people over a period of nine years from age 11 to 18.

Over the course of the study (2001-2009) there was a marked and steady increase in the proportion of the cohort reporting they had participated in ‘political activities’—commonly signing petitions and electing student/school council members. There was also a marked increase in numbers reporting they had participated in civil society activities, such as fundraising for charities and helping in the local community. As they got older the cohort were
more likely to report that they intended to participate in conventional civic activities, such as voting in national elections and volunteering. Intentions to vote became stronger as the cohort got older. Civic education also appeared to have a positive effect on student’s sense of personal efficacy—the extent to which they felt able as individuals to make a difference and influence the government, their school and family. In fact, it was in the area of personal efficacy that the impact of civic education seemed to be strongest.

In other areas the results were more mixed. While becoming markedly more supportive of human rights in general, and women’s rights in particular, the cohort became less liberal and more conservative in their attitudes towards refugees and immigrants, and also about jail sentences, welfare benefits and some environmental restriction policies. There was also a gradual weakening of attachment to their communities (local, national of European) with age, though attachment to the school community remained relatively strong. Trust in civil and political institutions remained high with age, but distrust in politicians increased. Although they became increasingly aware of the personal impact of politics, as they approached the age of majority (18) they were only moderately likely to feel that they as individuals could influence political and social institutions.

What is important about these findings overall, however, is the indication that civic education can make a positive contribution to young peoples’ attitudes and intentions towards civic and political participation (both in the present and in the future). Crucially, positive outcomes were linked to a high level of ‘received’ civic education. This in turn was related to the format, timing and duration of the subject in schools. Students were more likely to have experienced higher levels of ‘received’ civic education in schools where civic education was formally examined, and taught in a separate ‘slot’ in the timetable, by specialist teachers, regularly and consistently.

However, school experience was not the only factor affecting outcomes. Other variables included age and life-stage, individual-level background characteristics, and previous attitudes and intentions towards citizenship—the latter being particularly important as the study seemed to show that young people’s attitudes tended to stabilize and become more difficult to shift with age.

5. CHALLENGES TO INNOVATION

The evidence of studies such as these suggests a number of practical ways to improve the impact of civic education regardless of country background: a distinct (rather than cross-curricular) subject, taught regularly, beginning young, with specialist teaching, formal examination and parity with other subjects. It also suggests the key areas to develop are specialist teacher expertise and a democratic school ethos. This implies a central role for professional development—not simply for classroom teachers, but also and especially for school leaders and managers.

One of the challenges of civic education today, therefore, is the provision of appropriate and sustainable forms of professional development. Genuine educational reform does not take place overnight: it requires widespread and concentrated effort over a period of years.
and significant investment in resources—financial, technical and human. The lack of such resources and the necessary professional development structure to support them has been a significant obstacle to civic education development in a number of countries.

While shortage of adequate resources is a problem across the board, in some countries there are more fundamental challenges to new forms of civic education arising out of their distinctive social and political histories and educational traditions. This is certainly the case with Turkey and some of the countries of South-Eastern Europe. These challenges arise out of the need to integrate a new model of civic education into education systems steeped in different and sometimes conflicting traditions of practice—in particular, traditions relating to ideas such as:

- **Citizenship**
  - e.g., defined in terms of ethnicity or religion, or both

- **Democracy**
  - e.g., limited to voting and party activity

- **Citizens’ rights and responsibilities**
  - e.g., rights dependent on fulfilment of duties
  - e.g., duty to the state paramount

- **Human rights**
  - e.g., emphasis on rights at inter-personal rather than societal level
  - e.g., belief in legitimacy of suspension of human rights in times of national emergency

- **Diversity**
  - e.g., pluralism seen as a threat to national security

- **Teaching methods**
  - e.g., emphasis on ‘frontal’ teaching and factual memorisation
  - e.g., avoidance of controversial issues or public criticism of the state

- **School governance**
  - e.g., dominance of hierarchical and authoritarian relationships in schools

Clearly, these sorts of idea are difficult to reconcile with the demands of the sort of approach to civic education outlined in this paper. Where they exist they only help to increase the ‘implementation gap’ between policy and practice. The rhetoric of democracy or human rights may be written into formal education policy, for example, but the learning activities prescribed in accompanying teaching resources present a watered-down version of these concepts, or discuss them in the abstract rather than in relation to real issues and events. The goals of civic education may be undermined by teaching in other subjects (e.g., history, or religious education) or other curriculum arrangements (e.g., the civic education/
religious education alternative in Serbia). Active learning methods may be recommended—
discussion, collaborative group work, etc.—but not actively applied to overtly political
issues. Official guidelines on democratic school governance may be followed, but only in a
tokenistic way, and so on.

Conflict of ideology can be experienced at different levels in the education system and in
different ways. For example, teachers may be empowered by their syllabus to encourage
critical discussion of social and political issues, but be wary of doing so for fear of what
other staff, parents or community leaders might say. Or they may fail to appreciate the
proper application of new teaching methods and implement them ineffectively—for
example, a Serbian study (of mainly high school students) found that the most frequent
reason for disliking civic education was the workshop- and games-based class organisation
which many found silly, childish, demeaning and boring.64

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Curriculum reform is never a straightforward matter. While we can detect signs of
positive outcomes from civic education reforms around Europe, and identify some of the
success criteria associated with these, there are still significant challenges to be faced in
many countries, particularly in terms of curriculum development and the provision of
professional development. These challenges are more protracted in situations where social
and political traditions and education systems are rooted in norms that conflict with those
inherent in more recent approaches to the subject. Programmes of civic education reform
are likely to stand more chance of success when they are built on a thorough and critical
analysis of existing traditions of practice and their salience in a country’s education system.
FOOTNOTES

1. For details, visit the website of the European Wergeland Centre—www.theewc.org—a European resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship
2. Georgi (2008)
3. See www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/default_en.asp
4. Olafsdottir (2008), p129
11. On links with higher education, see Hartley & Huddleston (2010)
15. Cayir & Gürgaynak (2008)
17. Ince (2012)
18. Ince (2012)
20. Ince (2012)
23. Ince (2012)
26. Aksit (2010), Table 1.
27. Cayir (2011)
28. Cayir (2011)
30. Ince (2012)
31. Cayir (2011)
32. Cayir (2011)
33. Turkish Ministry of National Education (2010)
34. Cayir (2011)
35. See www.edchreturkey-eu.coe.int/Description_EN.asp
37. Turkish Ministry of National Education (2012)
38. Adanali (not dated)
39. Adanali (not dated)
40. uk.reuters.com/article/2012/03/30/uk-turkey-education-idUKBRE82T12D20120330
42. Soule (2000)
43. I am grateful to Sanja Djerasmovic, doctoral student in education at Oxford University for sharing her insights into and knowledge about the development of civic and religious education in Serbia
44. Personal communication from Sanja Djerasmovic
45. 2002 census—personal communication from Sanja Djerasmovic
46. See http://www.gradjanske.org
47. Huddleston (2005), e.g., when asked whether they were taught about issues like the war in Iraq in civic education, one 15/16 year-old in a Belgrade school said, “No … it is politics … it is not for us … it is not appropriate for us.”
49. Sardoče (2008)
50. Sardoče (2008)
51. Huddleston (2007)
52. Kerr (2008)
53. e.g., Torney-Purta et al. (1991), Torney-Purta et al. (2001), Birzea et al. (2004), Eurydice (2005), Kerr et al. (2009)
54. Keating et al. (2010)
55. Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, Bulgaria
56. Kerr et al. (2009)
60. Kerr (2009)
63. Defined as students reporting they had ‘a lot’ of civic education
64. Quoted in private communication from Sanja Djerasi
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J. Torney-Purta, R. Lehmann, H. Oswal &d W. Schulz (eds.) (2001) "Citizenship and Education in Twenty-Eight Countries: Civic Knowledge and Participation at Age Fourteen". Amsterdam: International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA)

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