



# NECE Focus Group on 'Competences for Democratic Culture'

## Recommendations and Documentation

Editors:

Patricia Hladschik, Claudia Lenz

Authors: Claudio Dondi, Jan Faber,  
Veronika Fehlinger, Patricia Hladschik,  
Claudia Lenz, Hanna Lorenzen,  
Thimo Nieselt, Georg Pirker,  
Mari Varsányi, Rebecca Welge

Vienna, December 2020



networking  
european  
citizenship  
education

# The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)

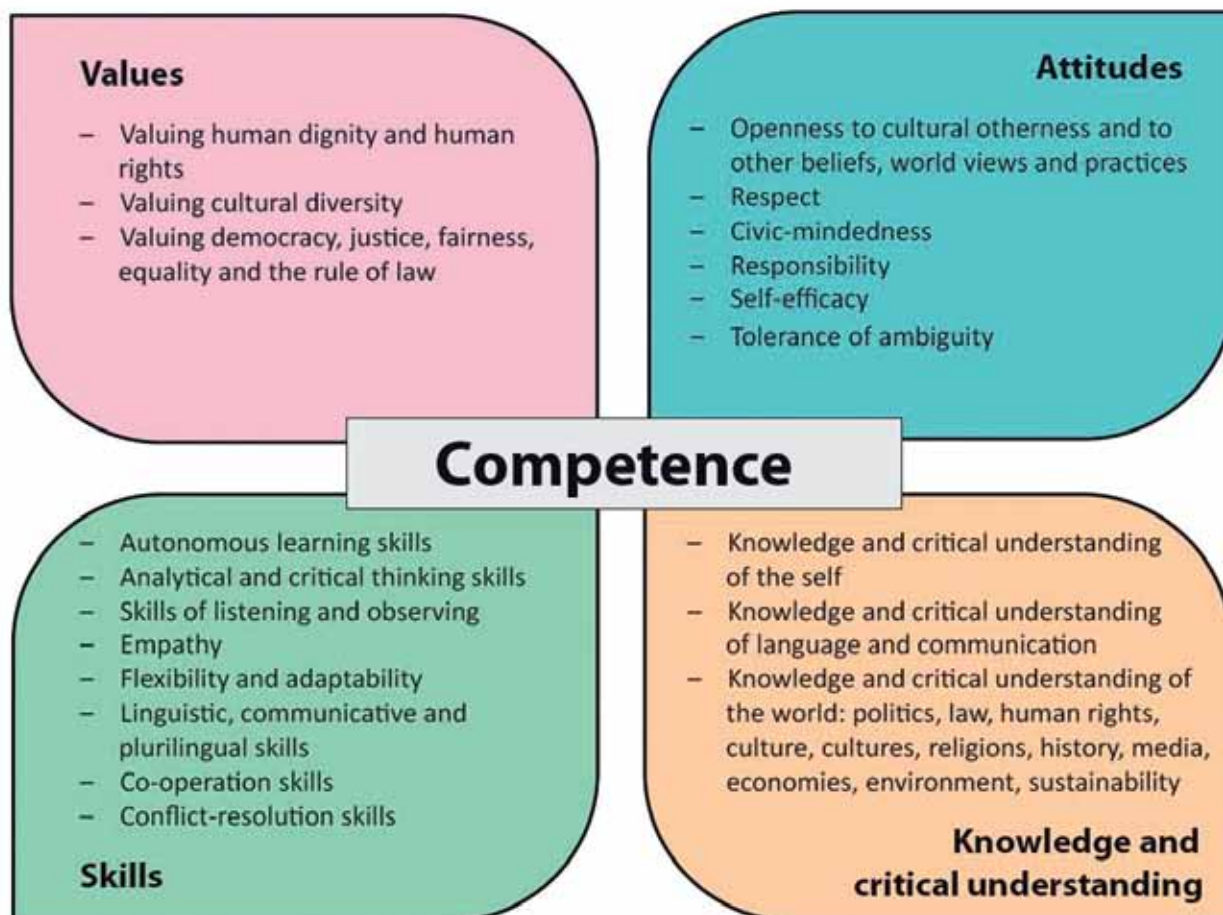
The framework is a set of materials that can be used by education systems to equip young people with all the competences needed to act to defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law; to participate effectively in a culture of democracy; and to live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies. It is intended for use by education policy-makers, especially those working within ministries of education, and by education practitioners in all sectors of education systems, to include pre-school, primary and secondary schooling, higher education, adult education and vocational education.

The RFCDC provides a **systematic approach** to designing the teaching, learning and assessment of competences for democratic culture, and for introducing them in education systems in ways that are coherent, comprehensive and transparent.

**The RFCDC consists of three main components/ three volumes:**

- Context, concepts and model
- Descriptors of competences
- Guidance for implementation

**The ‘butterfly’ of competences is at the heart of the model**



For more information: [www.coe.int/rfcdc](http://www.coe.int/rfcdc)

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Eds: Patricia Hladschik, Claudia Lenz

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Hanna Lorenzen, Thimo Nieselt, Georg Pirker, Mari Varsányi, Rebecca Welge

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# Introduction

In February 2019, the NECE focus group on 'Competences for Democratic Culture' started its work. The focus group brought together educators and multipliers from formal, non-formal and higher education, who explored the potentials and limitations of the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) by introducing and implementing it in their specific institutional, local and national contexts.

The group was led by The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools (*polis*) in cooperation with the DARE Network. Patricia Hladschik from *polis* coordinated the group, Claudia Lenz, one of the co-authors of the RFCDC, acted as key expert.

This report documents the work of the focus group, it presents the results of the seven pilot projects and comes up with a set of recommendations for the further implementation of the RFCDC.

For more information about the work of the NECE focus group on 'Competences for Democratic Culture' see:

[www.politik-lernen.at/necefocusgroupcdc](http://www.politik-lernen.at/necefocusgroupcdc)

We want to thank the Federal Agency for Civic Education/bpb for giving us the opportunity to undertake this journey within the NECE network and will continue to inform the network about further results of the manifold implementation projects all over Europe.

Patricia Hladschik, Claudia Lenz, Georg Pirker

Results after two years of work:

- The project involved a wide variety of educational practitioners in different national contexts; most of them engaged with the RFCDC model for the first time.
- The workshops during the NECE conferences in 2019 and the NECE campus in 2020 led to valuable feedback for the next implementation phase.
- The intense involvement of the non-formal context in the focus group opened new perspectives and pathways for the implementation of the RFCDC.
- The different sub-projects resulted in several sets of teaching and training material.
- The project enabled a broad view and discussion about the topic of competence-based learning in citizenship education and will result in a publication on the topic in 2021.
- The project intensified the cooperation of the European NGO DARE and the NECE network, two important networks for citizenship education in Europe.
- The work of the focus group has intensified the exchange between the Council of Europe and the NECE network.

# The members of the focus group and their projects

**Rebecca Welge**, Demokrative, Switzerland

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RFCDG-based evaluation of Demokratiebausteine: The RFCDG was used for re-planning and adjusting the workshop evaluation using RFCDG dimensions and descriptors.

RFCDG-based DEMOGAMES design and selection: The RFCDG was used to systematically select game ideas for the main outcome of DEMOGAMES, the 'democracy game box' (D-BOX).

<https://demokrative.ch>

**Hanna Lorenzen**, Evangelische Trägergruppe für gesellschaftspolitische Jugendbildung (et), Berlin, Germany

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The RFCDG in the non-formal sector: The project aimed to reflect on the implementation of the RFCDG in the non-formal sector of civic education. The reflection took place by discussing the RFCDG with non-formal educators in Germany and applying it to various practical work settings.

[www.politische-jugendbildung-et.de](http://www.politische-jugendbildung-et.de)

**Mari Varsányi**, Human-ed, Netherlands

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Cultural and Linguistic Identity Portfolio (CLIP): The Cultural and Linguistic Identity Portfolio (CLIP) contains a number of activities built around certain CDC descriptors. CLIP invites students to reflect on their backgrounds and identities and trace their development in democratic competences by using self-assessment before and after using the portfolio.

[www.human-ed.org](http://www.human-ed.org)

**Claudio Dondi**, International Institute of Humanitarian Law (IIHL), Sanremo, Italy

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UPPER – Systemic Upscaling of Peace Education Practices: The UPPER project is about collecting, analysing and presenting good practices in the field of education inspiring peace and democratic citizenship. The focus group project intended to collect feedback on the RFCDG within the whole set of activities and stakeholders' consultation events within the UPPER project implementation

<http://iihl.org>



**Veronika Fehlinger**, Land der Menschen, Linz, Austria

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Open Mind – Learning to live democracy: Open Mind is a school development programme in the fields of citizenship education, human rights and anti-racism for the region of Upper Austria, which has already been tested in pilot schools. The Open Mind workshops, as well as the whole programme, are based on the RFCDC.

[www.landdermenschen.at](http://www.landdermenschen.at)

**Jan Faber**, MBO Raad (VET Council), the Netherlands

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Citizenship Agenda: The Citizenship Agenda aims to promote the provision of quality citizenship education for all VET schools that optimally meets the educational needs of the very diverse student population. The Citizenship Agenda provides schools with tools to clarify and strengthen their existing policies as necessary. The RFCDC was presented to various stakeholders.

[www.mborraad.nl/english](http://www.mborraad.nl/english)

**Thimo Niesel**, Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europa, Berlin, Germany

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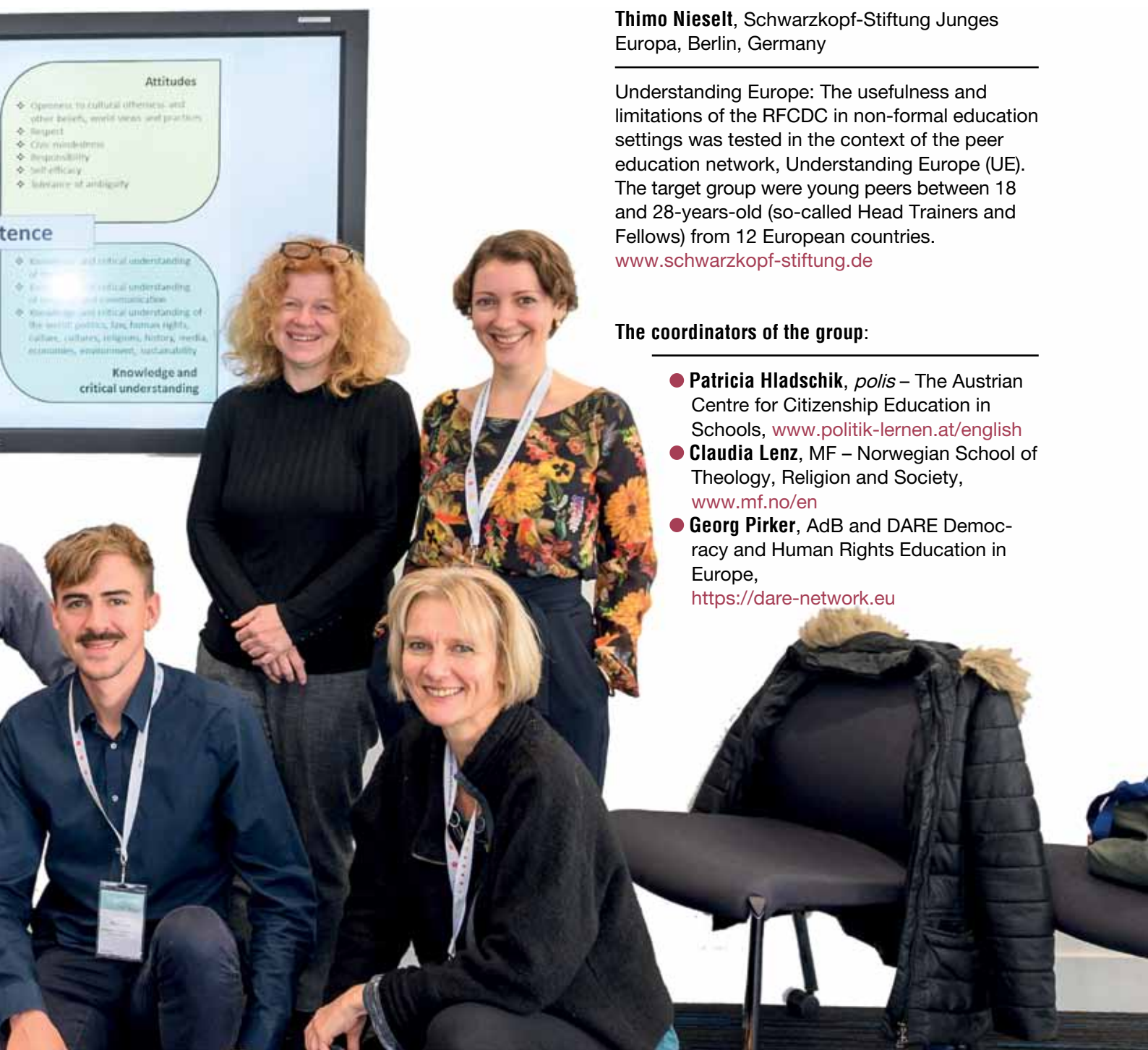
Understanding Europe: The usefulness and limitations of the RFCDC in non-formal education settings was tested in the context of the peer education network, Understanding Europe (UE). The target group were young peers between 18 and 28-years-old (so-called Head Trainers and Fellows) from 12 European countries.

[www.schwarzkopf-stiftung.de](http://www.schwarzkopf-stiftung.de)

**The coordinators of the group:**

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- **Patricia Hladschik**, *polis* – The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools, [www.politik-lernen.at/english](http://www.politik-lernen.at/english)
- **Claudia Lenz**, MF – Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society, [www.mf.no/en](http://www.mf.no/en)
- **Georg Pirker**, AdB and DARE Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe, <https://dare-network.eu>



# The RFCDC in formal and non-formal contexts

## Recommendations from the NECE Focus Group on the RFCDC

### Policy-makers

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#### National level

- Use the RFCDC in order to make citizenship education a cross cutting priority at all levels of education
- Encourage the use of the RFCDC as an inspirational model that can be **integrated in and combined with other existing competence models** e.g., in national curricula
- Encourage and support exchange of good practices through national and transnational school networking

#### Transnational level

- Promote EU projects using the RFCDC in the next Erasmus phase
- Link with current initiatives of Bridge 47 on global citizenship

### Formal Education

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- Support the **work on democratic competences as an ongoing process**, integrated in systematic and holistic institutional approaches
- Provide teachers and students with **concrete tools** based on the RFCDC rather than only introducing the theoretical framework
- Promote **self-assessment and active learning resources** developed by the Council of Europe and related projects in order to **engage and empower learners**
- Provide **incentives for schools** working with the RFCDC (resources, training, internationalisation, etc.)

### Non-formal Education

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- Be prepared for **scepticism and reluctance** towards the notion of 'competence'
- Emphasize that the **RFCDC can be an opportunity for the non-formal sector** to create better links between its own approaches/activities and formal education
- **Seek to make the RFCDC easily accessible by translating into less academic terminology** for use by different target groups
- Use the RFCDC as a tool for educators' personal and professional development (e.g., by adapting the teacher reflection tool to the non-formal context)
- Use the RFCDC as a common reference with **funding partners** to be used in **applications, reporting and evaluations** of third party-funded projects in the non-formal sector



## Interface Formal and Non-formal Education

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- **Foster common educational vision** of building democratic culture in and through education across the formal and non-formal sectors
- **Introduce/use the RFCDC as a common language** in cooperation between formal and non-formal education
- Introduction of the RFCDC in training of trainers (non-formal) and teacher education (formal) to **enable synergies and cooperation**
- Support and fund project schemes linking formal and non-formal education

## NECE – Networking European Citizenship Education

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- **Build on experiences** from NECE focus group and support/fund extended pilot scheme
- **Encourage the NECE academic network** to systematically evaluate the uses and impact of the RFCDC in different educational contexts across and beyond Europe

## Council of Europe

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- **Create arenas for sharing experiences** of adapting/applying the RFCDC in formal and non-formal contexts
- Clearly **address the unintended and undesired uses of the RFCDC** (grading, high-stakes assessment of attitudes and values)

# Our activities: Whom did we reach?

## Policy-makers

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- Ministries of Education in: Austria, Italy, Malta, Norway, the Netherlands
- EPAN members (EPAN = The Council of Europe's Education Policy Advisers Network) in Austria and Germany
- Members of the Netherlands' VET school board
- President of the Upper Austrian State Parliament
- Members of the team working on the civic education curriculum in Italy
- German preparation group of the EU presidency, council on youth
- Commission of the German government working on the 16th youth report on democratic education
- Verena Ringler from European Commons (Austria)
- Council of Europe

## Formal Sector

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- Network of Europaschulen in Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany
- ESHA – European School Heads Association
- Students in secondary education
- 5 Dutch as a second language teachers in the Netherlands
- 60 students from diverse immigrant backgrounds between the ages of 12-18 in the Netherlands
- Teachers working in higher education and teacher trainers in the Netherlands
- Teachers and school leaders in vocational schools in the Netherlands
- All schools in Upper Austria including the teaching staff, students, principals and parents
- Approx. 200 students and 10 teachers (upper secondary school) from 12 classes in Switzerland

## (Academic) Networks

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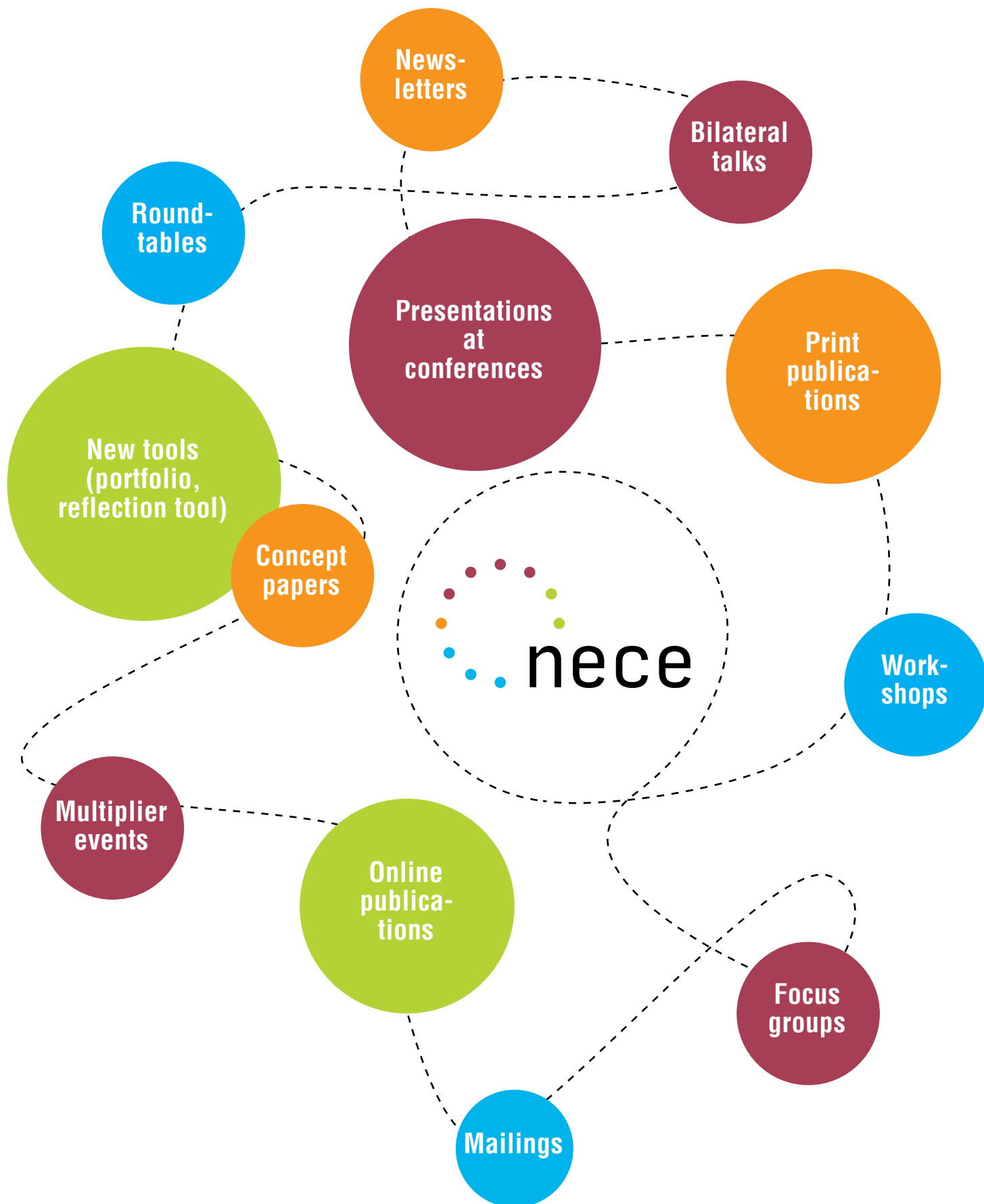
- The network of citizenship educators and researchers in the Netherlands
- UNIMORE multiplier event in Reggio Emilia, Italy
- RFCDC presentation at multiplier event in Valletta, Malta
- Students and teachers of the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria
- NECE academic network ([www.nece.eu/](http://www.nece.eu/))
- DARE Network ([www.dare-network.eu](http://www.dare-network.eu))

## Non-formal Sector

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- National network of non-formal educators in Germany
- Educators in the non-formal sector of civic education in Germany
- Learners in the non-formal sector of civic education in Germany
- Multi-professional teams in civic education (teachers in the formal educational system, educators in the non-formal educational sector, youth and social workers) in Germany
- 30 youth workers, educators, teacher trainers from the formal and non-formal field from 15 European countries in the DARE SEMIFIT Workshop
- 15 peer educators and 4 fellows (18 to 27-years-old) from 10 European countries of the educational network Understanding Europe
- About 200 Understanding Europe peer trainers from 10 European countries who conduct workshops on European citizenship education at schools

# Our activities: Which approaches did we choose?



# Products, results, and achievements

## Achievements at the policy level

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- Contribution to the process of appointing an Italian member to the Council of Europe's EPAN Network
- Contribution to closer cooperation between the Council of Europe and NECE
- Contribution to closer cooperation between the NECE and DARE networks

## Contribution to the discourse on the RFCDC

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- DARE Blue Lines issue on the RFCDC in the non-formal sector
- RFCDC presentations to the NECE network
- Workshop at the NECE conference 2018 with preliminary results and first presentations of projects
- Workshop at the NECE online conference 2020 with presentations of the Council of Europe's activities on the RFCDC, results of the pilot projects, followed by presentation and discussion of the recommendations of the NECE focus group

## Sustainable products

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- **Cultural and Linguistic Identity Portfolio** ((Mari Varsányi, Human-ed, The Netherland): The Cultural and Linguistic Identity Portfolio (CLIP) contains a number of activities built around certain CDC descriptors. CLIP invites students to reflect on their backgrounds and identities and trace their development in democratic competences by using self-assessment before and after using the portfolio.
- **"Open Mind – Learning to live Democracy"**: The school development project addresses all schools in Upper Austria. The Open Mind workshops are assigned to 4 categories based on the "butterfly model" of the Council of Europe (in German language).
- Reflection Tool for Peer Trainers
- Set of reflection methods for educators in the non-formal sector
- Set of illustrated methods for learners addressing the competences 'valuing cultural diversity' and 'tolerance of ambiguity'
- Integration of the RFCDC-competences in learning modules and teaching concept 'Demokratiebausteine': <https://demokratiebausteine.ch/demokratiebausteine> (DE/EN)

# Looking ahead

## **CITIZED – Policy implementation support and teacher empowerment for CITIZENSHIP**

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The idea of a new ERASMUS project emerged during the focus group meeting in Glasgow, linking the focus group's work to the existing UPPER project results and to the Education Inspiring Peace Lab in Sanremo. The CITIZED project was prepared and submitted in February 2020 and approved for funding by the European Commission (Erasmus+). It started in December 2020, will last for three years and involve three focus group organisations as direct partners. The intention is to continue to promote the work started in the focus group on the RFCDC and to complement it with other activities (critical review of recent citizenship education developments, analysis of specific competences necessary for educators, tools and school approaches, and policy workshops in Austria, Belgium, France, Malta and Italy). The project coordinator is the International Institute of Humanitarian Law in San Remo.

## **DEMOGAMES – Democracy and Games: Analogue and Digital Game-based Learning Tools for Youth Work**

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The Erasmus+ project DEMOGAMES creates game-based learning tools for young citizens on democracy, with the main purpose to engage, connect and empower (project duration 2019-2022). The partner organizations are the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), Demokrative – Initiative für politische Bildung, The European Network on Democracy and Human Rights Education (DARE), Culture Goes Europe e.V. (CGE), Asociacion Cultural DA2 Trucados, and The Intercultural Institute of Timisoara (IIT). The main outcome of the project will be a Democracy Box (D-BOX) with analogue and digital games for educational purposes. The RFCDC is one major reference in the process of game development and the manual for educational activities. For more information about the project and the output materials, see: <https://demokrative.ch/demogames>

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## **Continuation of CoE and NECE cooperation**

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Presentation of results and recommendations from NECE focus group to the Council of Europe's EPAN network.

## **Further dissemination of results and products**

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*polis* – The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education will publish a German translation of the Cultural and Linguistic Identity Portfolio (CLIP), which will be presented during the annual Austrian Citizenship Days in April/May 2021.

**For more information see:**

[www.politik-lernen.at/neceproductsandresults](http://www.politik-lernen.at/neceproductsandresults)

# Timeline of activities

Spring  
2018

## The idea

Claudia Lenz, in her double function as EPAN lead expert and NECE advisory board member, initiated the focus group on competences for democratic culture.

Autumn  
2018

## Setting up the structures

*polis* – the Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools and the DARE network were commissioned to jointly coordinate the focus group.

4–5  
February  
2019

## Kick-off in Vienna

At the kick-off meeting in Vienna, representatives of all projects were present. Topics of the meeting included:

- Clarification of framework conditions
- Introduction of individual projects in the group
- Development of a schedule for individual projects
- Development of a schedule for the focus group
- Development of possible impact of the focus group from the perspective of participants e.g.,
  - Provision of case studies for testing the RFCDC in different education contexts
  - Evaluation of possibilities and limitations in the use of the RFCDC
  - Recommendations to different education actors regarding RFCDC implementation

2018

2019

7  
September  
2018

## NECE Conference 2018

### Presentation of the RFCDC focus group

As part of the NECE Conference 2018 in Marseille, a 'teaser workshop' took place during the IDEA CAMPUS. Claudia Lenz and Patricia Hladschik presented the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and its potential for educational processes as well as the idea of the focus group to pilot the RFCDC in diverse educational projects and settings. The general conditions for participating in the focus group were presented. The 15 participants could ask questions, sketch their first ideas for projects and discuss possible cross-border or cross-institutional cooperation. Finally, the procedure for applying for participation in the focus group and the selection criteria were clarified.

24–27  
October  
2019

## NECE Conference 2019

### Workshop: Countering Inequalities, Fostering Inclusion: What can the Council of Europe's new 'Competences for Democratic Culture' contribute?

The workshop, led by Claudia Lenz and Patricia Hladschik, provided an introduction to the RFCDC. Members of the NECE focus group shared their experiences with the implementation of the RFCDC in their diverse national and educational contexts. Participants of the workshop became familiar with the elements of the reference framework in an interactive setting that would allow them to apply the tool in their own contexts. In the second part of the workshop, participants explored the potential of the reference framework in working with disadvantaged children and adolescents: What can the RFCDC do in concrete terms to counteract inequalities and promote inclusion?

### Second focus group meeting during open space

**times:** The participants reported on the status of implementation and planned steps to take before the next meeting, which aimed to prepare the most important results and recommendations for the NECE Conference 2020. A new member joined the group; Veronika Fehlinger from Land der Menschen Oberösterreich submitted the 'Open Mind' project and presented it to members of the focus group.

April  
2020

### Cancelled focus group meeting

The planned meeting in Vienna was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In reaction to the situation and keeping in mind that the restrictive measures would slow down the implementation processes of the national projects, a no-cost extension was negotiated with the NECE partners until December 2020.

24  
September  
2020

### Fourth focus group meeting (online)

- Work on recommendations
- Preparation of the final report
- Sustainability and continued work

5-7  
November  
2020

### NECE Conference 2020

**Workshop: One framework, many contexts - How can this work? The Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for**

**Democratic Culture and its potential**

Workshop jointly curated by the Council of Europe and the NECE focus group. Katerina Toura talked about the Council of Europe's current strategies and programmes. Thereafter, the members of the focus group presented their key findings and results, came up with personal recommendations, and also talked about challenges and limitations of the RFCDC. The session closed with the presentation and discussion of the recommendations derived from the first set of RFCDC pilot activities.

2020

20 May  
2020

### Third focus group meeting (online)

- Project updates
- Discussion about the effects of the pandemic on activities
- Structure of the report developed
- Great to hear that all projects continue

28  
September  
2020

### NECE Campus online Workshop 'Self-Reflection: Becoming a democratic teacher'

The Council of Europe launched the RFCDC teacher self-reflection tool to support (student) teachers in developing their democratic professional ethos and competences. The workshop, led by Claudia Lenz and Patricia Hladschik, offered a guided tour through the online version and included the possibility to test parts in small groups. Members of the focus group were invited to participate.

15  
December  
2020

### Closing meeting of the focus group

- Discussion of the final report
- Presentation of finalised products
- Focus on continued cooperation in new contexts

30  
December  
2020

### Finalisation of documentation

- The RFCDC in the non-formal sector (DARE Blue Lines issue)
- Final report of the focus group

# Reports of the seven pilot projects

- 17 **Demokrative – Initiative für Politische Bildung / Switzerland**  
**Dr. Rebecca Welge**
  
- 26 **Evangelische Trägergruppe für gesellschaftspolitische Jugendbildung (et) / Germany**  
**Hanna Lorenzen**
  
- 33 **Human-ed / The Netherlands**  
**Mari Varsányi**
  
- 38 **International Institute of Humanitarian Law – IHL / Italy**  
**Claudio Dondi**
  
- 40 **Land der Menschen – AUFEINANDER ZUGEHEN OÖ / Austria**  
**Veronika Fehlinger**
  
- 44 **MBO Raad (VET Council) / The Netherlands**  
**Jan Faber**
  
- 46 **Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europa / Germany**  
**Thimo Nieselt**



# Demokrative – Initiative für Politische Bildung Switzerland

## Contact

### Dr. Rebecca Welge

[<https://rmwelge.ch>], [welge@demokrative.ch](mailto:welge@demokrative.ch)

Project leader & member of Demokrative managing board

[The report was written with the support of Sabine Jenni, Andi Pratiwi and Olina Welge.]

## The organisation

**Demokrative** initiates and promotes offers of civic education for different target groups; promotes the scientific monitoring of civic education programmes; and fosters national and international exchange with actors and providers of civic education. Our understanding of democracy education (particularly in the context of educating about democracy) is – in addition to civic education methods – based on normative and empirical research in political science.

To read more about Demokrative, its mission and purpose, visit:

<https://demokrative.ch>

## The projects

We report on the implementation of the RFCDC in two projects:

1 **Demokratiebausteine** (German for ‘building blocks of democracy’), a teaching concept that can be transferred to various topics, and specific instructor-led learning modules in which young people deal interactively with fundamental values and conflicting goals in democracy. Currently, different modules on the main topics of participation rights and majority decisions are offered. The development of new learning modules based on the democracy building block concept is being planned for the thematic focus on federalism and more. More information about Demokratiebausteine (in German or English): <https://demokratiebausteine.ch>

2 The project “**Democracy and Games: Analogue and Digital Game-based Learning Tools for Youth Work**” (**DEMOGAMES**) designs game-based learning tools for democracy education in youth work to empower young citizens to acknowledge their own value as well as the value of participation in political processes. The consortium of partner organisations for this Erasmus+ project are: the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GI GA) based in Germany, Demokrative – Initiative für politische Bildung based in Switzerland, the Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe Network (DARE) based in Belgium, Culture Goes Europe e.V. (CGE) based in Germany, Asociación Cultural ‘DA2 Trucados’ based in Spain, and the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara (IIT) based in Romania.

For more information about this project:

<https://demokrative.ch/en/demogames>

## Target groups

1 Teenagers from about 12 years of age and young adults (mainly, but not exclusively, **secondary school formal education**) are targeted as workshop participants. Beyond school classes, the project covers two indirect target groups. Firstly, **teachers, youth workers, trainers**: the democracy building block facilitators actively exchange information with the participants’ teachers during the preparation and follow-up phases, thus promoting understanding of civic education in connection with the topic, e.g., participation rights. Secondly, **researchers** from relevant fields (political science, civic education, pedagogy) are involved in the development and are encouraged to engage in communicating research discourses to the wider society.

- 2 DEMOGAMES develops game-based learning tools, methods and materials for democracy education in the field of **non-formal education** (target group is young adults, 18-24-years-old). The project develops analogue and digital games for the field of non-formal education and targets young people with or without prior knowledge about democracy, its processes, values and principles. In more general terms, the project enables young people to reflect on different meanings and values of democracy and provides tools to playfully learn about, for, and through democracy.

## Documentation of the activities

### Description of the project

#### 1 RFCDC based evaluation of Demokratiebausteine

The RFCDC was used for re-planning and adjusting the workshop evaluation using the RFCDC dimensions and descriptors. Since the beginning, every Demokratiebaustein workshop has been evaluated using written questionnaires for both participants and teachers/trainers. Each module (2-3 lessons) includes individual reflection, group work and plenary discussions, and are carried out by external experts in the school or in external training locations. Workshops/modules built on the Demokratiebausteine concept are instructor-led learning modules in which young people deal interactively with fundamental values and conflicting goals in democracy. The project, Demokratiebausteine, started with modules on participation rights in grammar and vocational schools in the German-speaking part of Switzerland in 2017. An evaluation report (in German) of the 2017/18 implementation phase (before the RFCDC was integrated) can be found online at [https://demokrative.ch/images/Dokumente\\_Demokrative/Evaluationsbericht\\_SekII\\_2017\\_18.pdf](https://demokrative.ch/images/Dokumente_Demokrative/Evaluationsbericht_SekII_2017_18.pdf).

#### 2 RFCDC based 'DEMOGAMES' design and selection

The RFCDC was used to systematically select game ideas for the main outcome of DEMOGAMES, the 'democracy game box' (D-BOX). Ultimately, the D-BOX will include a set of analogue and digital democracy games that practitioners (youth workers, trainers and teachers) can use to teach democracy from different perspectives and to engage young people in a participatory way. Moreover, the D-BOX will be accompanied by easy and understandable training materials for practitioners with examples and exercises to use our democracy games. The project includes several activities for young people and practitioners in youth work and non-formal education to engage in discussions on democracy related topics beyond their local, regional or national experience.

### Description of the process and reflection on the status quo

- 1 It is a core aim of Demokratiebausteine to encourage participants to recognize and reflect upon their own preferences, to perceive controversies and to bring in their own opinions and interests regarding the specific topic of a workshop. In particular, the project intends to strengthen democratic competences (with reference to the RFCDC):

- knowledge and critical understanding of the topic and underlying controversies;
- reflection of values and ambivalence;
- attitudes that strengthen a democratic system and make it sustainable;
- promotion of skills that are important for the citizens (including naturalised and non-naturalised residents) of Switzerland for their political participation and active involvement.

### How was the RFCDC integrated into the project?

2 DEMOGAMES (2019-2022) is a project which aims at developing game-based learning tools for young citizens on democracy, with the main purpose to engage, connect and empower young people. The RFCDC is one major reference in the process of game development. Accordingly, the design and feedback survey on game ideas included the rules and the structure of the games but also specifically asked for the integration of the RFCDC competences in the game play process. During the first phase of the project, project partners were introduced not only to game design but also to the RFCDC. Several ideas for analogue and digital games have been created (Demodice, Participedia, Deckmocracy, Covert Influence, Theory of Change, Island Utopia, and Observers) and are now under review and revision. In an ongoing process, project partners are exchanging feedback on the development of the analogue games, planning activities for the refinement of existing prototypes and developing digital games.

1 Demokrative's civic education programmes go hand in hand with regular evaluation to ensure a high-quality outcome. We grow through target groups' feedback and evaluate each programme to ensure its quality. Since Demokrative and its programmes promote a competence-based understanding of civic education, we are highly interested in participants' ability to reflect upon their (non)democratic values and attitudes, train (new) skills and deepen their knowledge. Integrating the RFCDC descriptors and the components of the CDC model in the evaluation questionnaires allows the participants to reflect upon their values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding, and allows the project to continuously strengthen its contribution to competence development.

In order to adapt the evaluation questionnaires for the Demokratiebausteine workshops, we started from the full list of the RFCDC descriptors to formulate open and closed questions. Especially the indicators listed in Vol II, Chapter I & II were helpful, since these specify critical thinking/understanding and democratic diversity. We chose them selectively according to the aims of the project. Since the aims of the project and the choice of the descriptors are mainly based on the initiator's background in political science, the acknowledgment of different understanding of democracy also played a role. Furthermore, we chose open questions to ask participants to reflect upon competence gains along the four components of the CDC model.

2 The output material of DEMOGAMES is designed to include different perspectives on democracy. The RFCDC's 20 core competencies allowed the consortium to develop educational tools and training methods against the background of this framework. In the early phase of the project this includes reflection about the RFCDC competences along the design thinking process. Each of the game developers were encouraged to provide reasoning as to why and how the game (idea) relates to the RFCDC competences in the dimensions of values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding.

To make this more concrete, we include two exemplary descriptions of RFCDC-based game designs in detail:

The game (prototype), **DEMODICE**, triggers and guides the imagination and story-telling of players regarding democracy by using a combination of specific symbols on the dice. The standard set includes nine democracy-dice: three dice directly relate to key dimensions of democracy as a political system (participation, rule of law, human rights), three dice relate to individuals and interactions (actors, intentions, power-relations), and three dice

relate to anchors and context (locations, policies, challenges). Additional special dice can be used to focus on a specific subject (sustainability, the COVID-19 pandemic, etc.). Telling a story, players share their personal experience within (non)democratic situations and context settings, which links to different RFCDC key competences, including **critical knowledge about the self**. The articulation of thoughts/creation of stories requires certain skills, and encourages a sense of self-efficacy. While the player at turn trains these active competences, all other players train their (passive) **listening and observing skills**. They may listen with disbelief, doubt, or hope and may internally reflect on the connotations of the narrator. This trains their **openness to cultural otherness allowing/ tolerating the upcoming ambiguities**. Particularly, in multilingual settings, the story-based game is quite straightforward about **language and communication skills**. After the storytelling as such, a reflection phase about several stories/storytelling elements follows. This gives all participants an overview of the intertwined democratic principles and a comparison of diverse experiences. As a result, participants experience the advantages of telling different stories, **valuing (cultural) diversity and democratic values**.

The game (idea), **OBSERVERS**, aims at fostering a broad range of competences of the CDC model. By reflecting on challenging situations related to democracy and rule of law, participants develop **knowledge and critical understanding of democracy and value democracy and rule of law**. Reflection on the role of civil society develops **civic-mindedness**. The need to cope with ambiguous situations and with incomplete information develops **tolerance of ambiguity** but also **analytical and critical thinking skills**. By listening to the story at hand and searching for clues, participants develop **listening and observation skills**. Asking questions of the storyteller develops **linguistic, communicative and multilingual skills** (multilingual if played in an international setting). To guess the causes of an incident, participants also need **empathy** to put themselves in the situation and to come up with questions to ask the storyteller. The output phase of the learning process allows participants to come up with recommendations to resolve the incident. This trains their cooperation skills as well as their conflict-resolution skills. They need to be **flexible** to come up with recommendations that resolve the issue at hand.

These examples show how the games of the DEMOGAMES project are designed to foster many of the competences of the different components of the CDC model. The RFCDC thereby serves as a key reference point in the design process, while the games serve as tools to activate and train RFCDC competences.

### List of presentations of the tool

- Presentation and discussion of the RFCDC list of descriptors (Vol I & Vol II), at **Demokreative internal project meeting** Demokratiebausteine, March 2019
- Tools & Projects presentation of the CoE's RFCDC concept, at **E+ SEMIFIT** – Seminars for Intercultural Trainers 'Citizenship Education' in Werftpfuhl (Germany), 03/05/2019
- Presentation and discussion of national and international reference documents in the field of democracy education with CH stakeholders (RFCDC short summary) at **BNE-Netzwerktreffen**, 13/11/2019
- Presentation of the RFCDC concept (presentation by Calin Rus, IIT) at **E+ DEMOGAMES**, transnational project meeting, in Zurich (Switzerland), 14/02/2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Presentation and discussion of the RFCDC, BA/MA seminar ‘Politikwissenschaft trifft politische Bildung’ at <b>University of Basel</b>, 2020</li> <li>● Presentation and reflection of the RFCDC at <b>Demokratiebausteine (training of trainers)</b>, virtual workshop, 25/03/2020</li> </ul>
<p><b>List of publications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Training manual</b> in relation to the project ‘Democracy and Games: Analog and Digital Game-based Learning Tools for Youth Work’ (DEMOGAMES) will be available in 2021.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Description of methods that were developed</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Games</b> designed in the project ‘Democracy and Games: Analog and Digital Game-based Learning Tools for Youth Work’ (DEMOGAMES) will be made available here: <a href="https://demokrative.ch/index.php/en/projects/demogames">https://demokrative.ch/index.php/en/projects/demogames</a></li> <li>● <b>Questionnaires</b> created in the Demokratiebausteine project to stimulate reflection upon competences in the four components of the CDC model (values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding) and selected RFCDC descriptors can be forwarded upon request (<a href="mailto:office@demokrative.ch">office@demokrative.ch</a>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Necessary adaptations due to COVID-19</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 As for Demokratiebausteine, most project activities have been temporarily suspended or interrupted since March 2020. Schools were closed, and meetings were impossible even for small groups. We considered digitising individual modules but decided against this option in the short-term, since further development is difficult to foresee, and the modules are explicitly design as an interactive face-to-face activity. The closing of facilities and shut-down measurements led to a low rate of completed questionnaires in the evaluation of learning modules, since we started using the revised version of the questionnaire and included questions related to the components of the CDC model and RFCDC descriptors in open and closed question formats. This also makes conclusions and generalisations based on the evaluative statements almost completely impossible at this stage of the project. Once in person meetings in schools are possible again, we will continue with our project activities and their evaluation.</li> <li>2 In reaction to the COVID-19 pandemic, the consortium of the project DEMOGAMES discussed available alternatives to proceed with the project: either to postpone the events (project meetings, multiplier events as well as learning activities), adapt and hold activities and meetings virtually (when possible), and to combine online and in-person meetings. Until now, part of the meetings have taken place virtually while other activities have been postponed, since face-to-face game testing is considered to be a best practice in analogue game development. In light of the severe trade-offs between democratic rights and health and safety concerns due to the pandemic, the project reacted by including the COVID-19 pandemic as a special theme in the game Demodice: a special dice, ‘pandemic’, has been created to foster storytelling about the current situation and how this situation challenges the democratic way of life and democracy as a society and as a political system.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Synergies/exchange with other projects of the focus group</b></p>	<p>For synergies/exchange with other projects, the focus group meetings were important to exchange and discuss different ways of implementing the RFCDC into the different activities of the focus group members. Using the RFCDC reflection tools during one of our focus group meetings led to including reflections with reference to the RFCDC within a variety of our project activities. The personal exchange was vital to gain insights into the different ongoing activities and to see the different context factors and challenges of implementation.</p>

### Preliminary conclusions

- 1 As mentioned in the section about adaptations due to COVID-19, the project was almost put on hold, which makes even preliminary conclusions very difficult. For the project team, revising the survey evaluation with reference to the RFCDC triggered a deeper process of reflection. The teachers we collaborate with were also invited to fill in a teacher version of the questionnaire, and it was interesting to see how more than one of them stated quite clearly that the discussions among the pupils were meaningful from their perspective. At the same time, teachers questioned whether competences for democratic culture can be fostered in 2-3 lessons or if more time is needed.
- 2 DEMOGAMES just started in autumn 2019 and runs until 2021. The Intercultural Institute Timisoara (ITT), and Calin Rus, director of the ITT – key partners in the RFCDC development – are directly involved in this project. This ensures that the RFCDC was presented to all project partners early in the process and serves as key reference point for the design of DEMOGAMES games and training material. As of today, several analogue and digital games are in development: Demodice, Participedia, Deckmocracy, Covert Influence, Theory of Change, Island Utopia and Observers. During the selection process of the games, the project partners aimed for an encompassing and broad coverage of different RFCDC competences.

### Reflections on the individual project level

#### Added value of the RFCDC in the respective context

- 1 By using the RFCDC list of descriptors as a toolbox (Vol II, page 25-52), we were able to expand the purpose of our Demokratiebausteine workshop evaluation. Using the descriptors and rearranging them, we were able to evaluate the target groups' competences and the project's outcome, and we hopefully will also be able to compare workshop learning gains across topics and over time. The evaluation helps us to improve the Demokratiebausteine workshops, to figure out whether the modules fulfil their purpose, and to compare them with other projects (internal and external ones referring to the RFCDC).
- 2 The RFCDC is integrated in the DEMOGAMES project and the different game designs as key reference. The framework provides a shared language, including shared terminology, which enables all teachers and practitioners to assess comprehensively the different kind of competences and the relations between them within their target groups. The framework empowers local organisations as social actors and helps them to design and develop curricula and assessment tools in formal and non-formal contexts. Furthermore, it provides the means of conceptualising and describing competences that are necessary for the young to be active members of democratic culture. Thus, the RFCDC has been helping the consortium in the process of designing and developing the DEMOGAMES games and training materials and makes sure that each of the games are justified and meet several of the core competences of democracy education for young people.

### Limitation of the RFCDC in the respective context

1 The common understanding of democracy in Switzerland is rather a procedural understanding of democracy. This comes as no surprise, given that the Swiss political system is a democracy with a strong emphasis on federalism (including a strong principle of subsidiarity) and various direct modes of citizen participation (e.g., referenda). Offering programmes in Switzerland, a society characterised by and based on a democracy with strong participatory elements, the framework's emphasis on a broad understanding of democratic culture and liberal democratic institutions challenges a broadly shared understanding of citizens about (Swiss) democracy. We would be interested to learn from other countries/project contexts in which people bring along their understanding of democracy, which may only represent specific elements of a comprehensive understanding of democracy.

2 The acquisition of competences of democratic culture is not a linear progression to ever-increasing competence in intercultural dialogue of democratic processes. As mentioned in the RFCDC publications (RFCDC V1, p. 20), competence in one situation may transfer to others, and the acquisition of competences of democratic culture is a lifelong learning process. The RFCDC has been integrated as one of the key references, and it enriches the discussion about democracy and democratic quality among the project partners. In addition to addressing democracy as a way of living, as a form of society and of government, the process of game development includes several other references, which were considered important to democratic learning based on political science theories and concepts of democracy. Particularly in relation to democracy as a form of government, the project also refers to Dahl (1971, Chapter 1) on the ideal of democracy, key characteristics, conditions, institutional guarantees and on the concept of Polyarchy (1989, Chapter 15) as a set of institutions necessary to the democratic process on a larger scale. Based on the different references, the project takes human rights, rule of law and participation as three equal pillars of democracy as a way of living, a form of society and a form of government. With reference to the level of competences required for a sound democracy, 'the heart of the framework is a model of the competences that need to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse democratic societies'. (Vol I, page 11). We find the RFCDC very comprehensive at the level of concept and model, but it seems more limited at the level of descriptors with respect to the pillar of participation. At the level of descriptors, we find many indicators of individual freedom and measures of respectful treatment and would have wished for more visibility of the spectrum of participation within democratic systems (e.g., inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower), or more generally speaking, visibility of participatory democratic processes in the descriptors.

### What worked well and what didn't

1 Overall, the adaptation of our evaluation questionnaires worked well. Key chapters in 'Context, Concepts, and Model' (Vol I) and the list of descriptors in Vol II enabled us to develop new ideas and perspectives and to improve our evaluation. It is also worth mentioning, that we opted to include open format questions for all four components of democratic competences (values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding), leaving it to the participants to come up with concrete examples in order to share with us not only if and how these components of competences were addressed during their learning experience, but also how they understood the dimensions. In the future, insights based on these responses may help us to further develop the questionnaires and potentially feed back into future iterations of the RFCDC as well.

Despite the limited number of workshops conducted in 2020, we can already see that participants state the activities stimulated their democratic competences through experiencing (non)democratic processes in their own and their classmates' behaviour, thereby sharpening their awareness of ambiguity and complexity. Particularly, the forms of democratic discussion and moments of collective decision-making were perceived as enriching. However, all results need to be interpreted with caution because of the limited number of workshops conducted.

- 2 During the game design process in DEMOGAMES, it became evident that many game ideas brought to the table by the project partners aim at fostering the following competences:
- Values: valuing democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law
  - Attitudes: openness to cultural otherness and other beliefs, world views and practices; respect
  - Skills: analytical and critical skills; listening and observation; empathy
  - Knowledge and critical understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, cultures, religions, history, media, economics, the environment and sustainability.

At the same time, it became clear that some competences are less likely to be explicitly stipulated by every single game:

- Values: valuing human dignity and human rights
- Attitudes: civic mindedness
- Skills: autonomous learning, conflict resolution
- Knowledge and critical understanding: language and communication

The list of competences, which are less likely to be explicitly stipulated by every single game, are important to take into account in designing the complementing training material if a broad range of competences of the RFCDC are to be covered. Also, because the components of the CDC model are conceptualised as complementing elements of democratic culture, focusing only on a few indicators increases the risk of leaving important aspects of democratic culture unaddressed.

### Challenges, scepticism, resistance

In this section, we combine insights from both implementation projects. As stated above, we believe that a broad perspective on democracy is vital for meaningful democracy education. Our activities include educating about different notions and models of democracy, putting emphasis on deliberation, different representation modes, (direct forms of) participation, rule of law, human rights and other elements that are key for the quality of democracy. Against this background, we welcome the comprehensive approach of the RFCDC. We share the RFCDC's key assumption that democratic ideas and democratic principles are put into practice through institutions and laws. In turn, institutions in terms of the RFCDC cannot function without a culture of democracy based on individual competences.

In theory and practice, different ideals of democracy deal differently with democratic dilemmas such as majority rule and minority rights, governing efficiency and modes of participation and representation, individual freedom, rights and duties. Indicators covering competences to deal with the trade-offs between majority rule and minority rights, compromise and conflict, and access to alternative information seem to be missing from the RFCDC glossary as well as the RFCDC descriptors. Being responsive to the views of the majority is addressed as a principle feature of democracy in the conceptual framework of the CDC model (Vol I, Chapter 3, p.23), but rather implicitly translated



to descriptors at the level of values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding; yet, the concept is essential to understanding how democratic culture functions and how different democratic systems operate distinctively. We believe that the RFCDC would benefit from including more competence descriptors explicitly related to dealing with (non)democratic functioning of institutions.

A second major challenge is language related. One part of our mission is that the designed programmes work for different people in our target group and to ensure access of people with diverse backgrounds to our project activities. The language being used in the RFCDC list of descriptors is at times (too) complicated and excludes some of our participants (e.g., many vocational school students). Through language use, we make power and hierarchies visible. This is why we see language as one important tool for allowing (or often, rather, creating an obstacle to) participation of certain people. We view this as a special challenge of the RFCDC, particularly against the backdrop of inclusion as an important principle of democracy. In our own implementation process, we discussed adapting some RFCDC items using simpler terms, to use for our learners' evaluation. Also, we are looking forward to the simplified RFCDC version, which might not only be adequate for kids but allow RFCDC items to be used for all kinds of audiences in a more accessible language.

### Lessons learnt

Comparing the RFCDC Volumes and RFCDC Glossary to some of the major political science references, we stumbled upon the following aspects:

- RFCDC Chapter 3 and Glossary do not mention the importance of free media/information as an important criterion for upholding democratic principles.
- RFCDC Chapter 3 does not include constitutional limits, although the RFCDC Glossary mentions constitutional limits on government as one of the key pillars of democracy.
- RFCDC Glossary does not include accountability, whereas Chapter 3 explains that democratic institutions should ensure government accountability.
- RFCDC also does not emphasize alternative information and does not emphasize majority rule or minority rights, nor compromise or conflict.

Both, RFCDC Volume 1, Chapter 3 and RFCDC Glossary seem to make different emphasis on some criteria. The consortium also highlights other points regarding the democratic principles, the key pillars of democracy and conflict resolution through the emphasis on majority rule and minority rights. Unexpected opportunities and new initiatives sparked by the work Overall, including the RFCDC as a key reference in our projects did not only affect the quality of our outcome, but also the development and evaluation processes. The (extensive) list of descriptors, but also potential limitations of the reference framework deepens (self-)reflection on aims and potential outcomes of educational activities.

In the game design process, discussions on the justification of the competences were necessary to ensure that the developers clearly explain how the game experience could foster the respective competences. On the other hand, others commented that if certain improvements in the game activities and designs are being made, additional elements of the RFCDC could be incorporated. These feedback loops were valuable to ensure a broad coverage of RFCDC competences.

# Evangelische Trägergruppe für gesellschafts- politische Jugendbildung (et) / Germany

**Contact** **Hanna Lorenzen**  
Bundestutorin  
T 0049 30 28395417  
[lorenzen@politische-jugendbildung-et.de](mailto:lorenzen@politische-jugendbildung-et.de)

**The organisation** Evangelische Trägergruppe für gesellschaftspolitische Jugendbildung is a network for civic youth education. Coordinated by the national headquarters in Berlin, a team of approximately 32 youth educators works at 21 Protestant institutions for youth civic education throughout Germany. The network aims to develop educational programmes, most importantly workshops and seminars for young people from diverse social backgrounds and conference formats for multipliers in youth education, youth politics and civil society organisations. It contributes to professional debates with articles, presentations and workshops at national and European conferences, thus disseminating experiences and knowledge from its practice into expert, academic and policy circles.  
[www.politische-jugendbildung-et.de](http://www.politische-jugendbildung-et.de)

**The project** The project aimed to reflect on the implementation of the RFCDC in the non-formal sector of civic education. The reflection took place by discussing the RFCDC with non-formal educators in Germany and applying it to different practical work settings of the non-formal sector. The reflection of the RFCDC set its focus on its opportunities, fields of application, and methods of use as well as its challenges and limitations.

**Target groups**

- Educators in the non-formal sector of civic education
- Learners in the non-formal sector of civic education
- Multi-professional teams in civic education (teachers in the formal educational system, educators in the non-formal educational sector, youth and social workers)

## Documentation of the activities

**Description of the project** The project aimed to reflect on the implementation of the RFCDC in the non-formal sector of civic education. The reflection took place by discussing the RFCDC with non-formal educators in Germany and applying it to different practical work settings of the non-formal sector. The reflection of the RFCDC set its focus on its opportunities, fields of application, and methods of use as well as its challenges and limitations.

The project of the Evangelische Trägergruppe für gesellschaftspolitische Jugendbildung (et) developed the following project results:

- **A set of guiding questions** to reflect on the implementation of the RFCDC in the non-formal sector
- **A set of a few reflection methods for educators** working with the RFCDC in the non-formal sector. The reflection methods focus on the non-formal educator's attitude and can be used before and after an educational activity.

### Description of the process and reflection on the status quo

- **A set of a few illustrated methods for learners** in the non-formal sector to foster the development of a selection of competences in the RFCDC framework.
- **Two articles** in the DARE Blue Lines Issue: RFCDC in the non-formal context can help as a common language to clarify expectations, goals and roles in **cooperative relationships** between civic educators and youth workers (especially social workers), as well as between civic educators and teachers.

In a **first step**, the three partner organisations, the Ev. Trägergruppe, the Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten and the Schwarzkopf Foundation developed a set of guiding questions (result of guiding questions attached). The project team presented questions to the educators with respect to the following three dimensions.

- ① the attitudes of the educators
- ② the learning settings
- ③ the learners themselves

In a **second step**, educators of non-formal youth education working at the Evangelische Trägergruppe discussed the RFCDC at several train-the-trainer workshops and conferences, between April 2019 and January 2020. The network of non-formal educators that was included in the process consisted of approximately 25 non-formal educators. The educators discussed how the competences for democratic culture could be used for the design and the implementation of educational activities in the non-formal sector.

In a **third step**, and as a result of these rounds of discussions on the RFCDC among the non-formal educators, the project team developed from a practical point of view three concrete project results for each one of the three perspectives (preparation of non-formal activities, reflection on educators' attitudes, impact of non-formal educational activities) that were at the core of the different discussion rounds.

Also, the AdB simultaneously introduced the RFCDC to several working groups of non-formal youth and adult educators at their regular group meetings. During AdB's conference of educators in 2019, a specific workshop was held to take stock of the general opinions and estimation of the educators about the RFCDC instrument and to select volunteers to test the model in their non-formal educational settings.

### How was the RFCDC integrated into the project?

The RFCDC was the basis and the working tool in all rounds of discussions with the non-formal educators.

The discussions at the workshops and the conference made clear that the RFCDC in the non-formal sector has great potential as a reflection tool for the practitioners themselves. Thus, the first dimension 'the attitudes of the educators' was the core of the discussions most of the time. The educators developed the following ideas on how the framework could be used as a reflection tool for educational practitioners in the non-formal sector:

#### **1st Perspective – In the preparation phase of a non-formal educational activity:**

- Determination of aims and learning goals
- Inspiration for the choice of topics
- Briefings of speakers, facilitators and cooperative partners
- For fundraising and writing applications and reports
- For the development of methods and educational material

### **2nd Perspective – In the reflection process of the educator`s attitude and practice of a non-formal educational activity:**

- To describe and know your own understanding of democracy as an educational practitioner
- To reflect and know the competences you bring in as an educational practitioner
- To have a more precise language regarding what you mean by civic education, especially regarding different professions (e.g., civic educational practitioner or youth worker)
- To make the results and the effect of your own work more visible
- To reflect on where your educational work is more focused on deficits and where it is more focused on strengths of participants

### **3rd Perspective – In the reflection process of the impact of a non-formal educational activity:**

- To be aware of your own 'hidden agenda' in an educational process
- To compare your own alleged and intuitive concepts with the concepts of the framework
- To make implicit concepts explicit for educators and learners alike

#### **List of presentations of the tool**

- February 2019: AdB international youth work committee introduction and discussion (25 educators)
- April 2019: Team workshop of Ev. Trägergruppe (7 participants)
- May – July 2019: Testing the model in YW/AE educational settings in AdB
- June 2019: Workshop of national network of non-formal educators (25 participants)
- September 2019: Conference of AdB educators in AE and YW – feedback workshop on the RFCDC test (20 participants)
- January 2020: Conference of national network of non-formal educators (25 participants)
- A final meeting and a mini-conference in June 2020 were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Policy: Discussion of the RFCDC at a meeting of the commission of the German government working on the 16th youth report on democratic education

#### **List of publications**

**Two articles** in the DARE Blue Lines Issue: RFCDC in the non-formal context can help as a common language to clarify expectations, goals and roles in **cooperative relationships** between civic educators and youth workers (especially social workers) as well as between civic educators and teachers.

**Article** about the RFCDC in AdB annual report to introduce the concept/project to a wider audience.

**Publication of two sets of methods** applying the RFCDC (one set of methods for learners, one set of methods for educators).

#### **Description of methods that were developed**

### **1st Perspective: In the preparation phase of a non-formal educational activity**

**Project result:** A set of a few illustrated methods for learners in the non-formal sector to foster certain competences in the RFCDC framework

At several meetings in 2019, the non-formal educators concluded that a profound debate on certain competences and descriptors of the RFCDC could help educators to plan their educational activity as well as to choose or even develop better methods and educational material to help learners foster a certain competence. The project team developed two example methods as well as suitable educational material for these methods addressing the competences 'valuing cultural diversity' and 'tolerance of ambiguity'. The educators

chose these two competences due to certain running projects at the Ev. Trägergruppe in 2019. Another reason was the assessment of the educators that there is a lack of suitable educational material aiming to develop and foster these two competences. The developed methods use illustrations of another project of the Ev. Trägergruppe. With the help of these methods, learners can bring in their experiences with diversity in societies and they learn about different existing expectations when it comes to the organisation of the public space and our terms of living together in diverse societies. In the process of preparation of an educational activity or in the process of developing or selecting certain educational material, the competences and the descriptors of the RFCDC can help to clarify learning goals and to select the right material accordingly. In the reflection of educational methods and material, the competences and the descriptors can also help educators to spot gaps in their collection of methods and material they use.

### **2nd Perspective: In the reflection process of the educator`s attitude and practice of a non-formal educational activity**

**Project result:** A set of a few **reflection methods for educators** working with the RFCDC in the non-formal sector. The reflection methods focus on the non-formal educator`s attitude and can be used before and after an educational activity.

At the workshops of the non-formal educators, the project team of the Ev. Trägergruppe applied several methods to discuss the relevance of the RFCDC for the reflection of the educator`s attitude and practice in a non-formal setting. The developed methods help to reflect on personal attitudes as an educator and to clarify educational motivations and learning goals in a specific setting with respect to the competences. Another developed method addresses critical teaching situations in a non-formal setting and the different impact educators` competences can have in these situations. This helps on the one hand to become aware of already well-developed competences and on the other hand, to reflect on ways to develop certain competences further. A final method aims to extend the set of non-formal teaching activities and training methods in regard to the development of certain democratic competences.

### **3rd Perspective: In the reflection process of the impact of a non-formal educational activity**

**Project result:** **Two articles** in the project brochure reflect on the ways the RFCDC can help as a common language to clarify expectations, goals and roles in **cooperative relationships** between civic educators and youth workers (especially social workers) as well as between non-formal civic educators and teachers

The various rounds of discussions with educators from the non-formal sector revealed the potential the RFCDC has as a mediating instrument between different educational professions, for example between educators in the non-formal sector, youth and social workers and teachers in the formal educational system. All these professional educators have different approaches to teaching and often they do not share the same conceptions of civic education or democratic competences. Teachers in the formal educational system have to follow certain curricula, they have to give grades and students are obliged to come to school. Non-formal educators work with learners who take part in the activity voluntarily. Non-formal educators are thus also obliged to design the educational programme according to the interests of its participants, in order to recruit them. Although non-formal educators design their activities along certain learning goals, they are not bound to a curriculum or a system of

efficiency control. Social workers and youth workers, in turn, do not have educational activities at the core of their professional work, but they still implement educational activities that usually follow a certain experience-oriented approach. Social workers work especially with disadvantaged target groups, which again has an impact on their professional approaches. All these different professional circumstances have an impact on how these professional groups work together. Cooperative relations sometimes face misunderstandings of the aims, approaches and concepts of the respective professional settings. The RFCDC can help in this regard as a mediating instrument. The descriptors serve as a translational tool for common learning goals and concepts of democratic competences. It can help to prepare multi-professional cooperative relations in a more efficient way. Two articles in the project brochure summarize some ideas on how the RFCDC can be used in multi-professional cooperation.

The practice testing in AdB was conducted by experienced educators and their teams in several youth and adult educational settings of AdB members. The experiences gained and made were introduced and discussed with a group of non-formal education professionals at AdB's conference of educators in 2019. It allowed for sound feedback on the additional value as well as on the limits of the RFCDC model. The feedback included all chosen dimensions of the German testing. There was an ongoing debate on using the tool itself for the training of trainers and as a reflection tool for educators. In practice, the tests with all reference groups showed significant difficulties in applying the model in non-formal educational settings with the participants. Especially when working with 'older' participant groups, educators gave feedback that the tool is very/too static and is not adequate for working with groups that have largely differing access/entry conditions or pre-dispositions towards topical activities of education for democratic citizenship.

### Necessary adaptations due to COVID-19

One meeting and a planned mini-conference in 2020 were cancelled due to COVID-19.

### Synergies/exchange with other projects of the focus group

The project team focusing on the non-formal educational sector consisted of three organisations of non-formal civic youth education: the Evangelische Trägergruppe für gesellschaftspolitische Jugendbildung (et), the Arbeitskreis deutscher Bildungsstätten (AdB) and the Schwarzkopf Foundation. All three project partners agreed on common project goals, in order to use synergies between project partners and to create matching results from different work backgrounds of the non-formal sector.

The four focus group meetings ensured the exchange with the other project partners from other countries and educational settings.

### Preliminary conclusions

The project developed concrete results with regard to three dimensions of the non-formal educational sector:

- 1 the attitudes of the educators
- 2 the learning settings
- 3 the learners themselves

Because of the discussions of these dimensions, three perspectives illustrated the potential the RFCDC has for the non-formal educational setting.

- 1st Perspective: In the preparation phase of a non-formal educational activity
- 2nd Perspective: In the reflection process on the educator's attitude and practice of a non-formal educational activity
- 3rd Perspective: In the reflection process on the impact of a non-formal educational activity

## Reflections on the individual project level

### Added value of the RFCDC in the respective context

- The RFCDC in the non-formal sector has great potential as a **reflection tool for the practitioners** themselves.
- In reflecting on **educational methods and material**, the competences and the descriptors of the RFCDC can help educators to spot gaps in their collection of methods and material they use.
- The RFCDC can help as a common language to clarify expectations, goals and roles in **cooperative relationships** between civic educators and youth workers (especially social workers) as well as between civic educators and teachers.

### Limitation of the RFCDC in the respective context

The educators in the project discussed critically whether the framework could also be used to observe learning results among learners. The discussions pointed out that this contradicts in part the principles of non-formal educational processes when it comes to openness to results and participatory learning processes. The educators also discussed whether and how the competences that are at the core of an educational activity should be transparent for learners and educators alike. If the competences that an activity wants to foster are made transparent, it was discussed whether this would rather lead to conformist behaviour of the learners.

### What worked well and what didn't

What did work really well in the process was the systematic approach. We started the discussion rounds with the educators with a very openly formulated set of guiding questions. It was a good approach that we first listened to the educators and asked them openly about the potential they see in the RFCDC. It quickly became clear that the educators see the potential more as a reflection tool for their own work and less as a tool to observe learners or the impact of their activities. In this way, the discussions revealed perspectives that the project team did not have in mind when we started the project.

What did not work well was the expectation that the RFCDC could be used as tool to reflect on every non-formal educational activity on a regular basis. The project team planned a pilot phase, during which educators would apply the RFCDC to reflect on every activity before and after taking place. It turned out that the educators had no interest and no time resources to do this on a regular basis. Instead, they applied the RFCDC as a reflection tool for their general attitude as educators as well as for their working relationships and repertoires of training methods and educational materials.

The often quoted lack of time to apply RFCDC during the highly intense non-formal learning settings (even if lasting 3 to 5 days) is definitely a barrier for the use of the RFCDC. There is a certain contradiction between the 'static' model and the process orientation of non-formal education.

### Challenges, scepticism, resistance

The German debate on non-formal civic education competences often critically discussed the measuring and operationalisation of learning processes. Following this line of argument, non-formal learning processes should be individually acquired without being measured or directed towards a certain desired behaviour. This complex discussion in the non-formal field made it complicated to discuss competences and especially the descriptors of the RFCDC with educators. The debate about competences also lies at the core of debates between teachers in the formal educational system and non-formal educators, which is one reason why working relations sometimes struggle with misconceptions and differing professional approaches. Even though the RFCDC is a very open model of competences, this professional debate made it difficult to discuss the competences without meeting any preconceived interpretations of competence models and their use in the non-formal educational setting.

## Lessons learnt

- Reflection processes on educator's attitudes need time and a trustful setting. This reflection works best if educators already know each other and have a mutual feeling for each other's working contexts.
- Educators themselves lack time and practice in reflecting on their own competences that they need for a confident and professional day-to-day working life.
- Learners themselves can best reflect on competences. It is very hard to make predictions or to observe the development of certain competences based solely on singular learning situations that are common in the non-formal sector.
- In the non-formal setting, educators work with a great variety of training methods and educational material. Many educators have their favourite material that they implement in educational activities. However, educators often do not thoroughly reflect on the learning goals they want to pursue with certain methods. The RFCDC can help educators to follow a more structured approach in developing and selecting methods and materials that help to foster certain competences. This can add value to a more strategic approach of planning educational activities in the non-formal sector.
- There are several competence frameworks and models in use targeted at democracy learning. It is difficult for educators to orient themselves to the different approaches and identify the respective strengths and limitations of competence models especially in regards to non-formal learning processes. Here, the RFCDC can provide a thorough look into the 'black box' of civic education, while on the other hand, there are inherent limits to its use in non-formal educational approaches as the procedural dimension of learning as well as the pre-dispositions of learners to topics tackled in EDC/HRE settings largely differ.
- Multi-professional working relationships between teachers, non-formal educators and social workers often struggle with different professional approaches. The professionals take it for granted that their cooperation partners share the same learning goals and conceptions of civic education, which is usually not the case. There is need for more communication about professional approaches and conceptions before a cooperation activity takes place. The RFCDC can coordinate and ease this communication process.

## Unexpected opportunities and new initiatives sparked by the work

The perspective that the RFCDC can be used to extend your repertoire of training methods or that the RFCDC can be used as a mediating tool for multi-professional working relationships are examples of project results that came out of the open discussion process and were not foreseen by the project team in the planning phase.



# Human-ed / The Netherlands

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Mari Varsányi</b> Trainer and consultant Intercultural Education <a href="mailto:info@human-ed.org">info@human-ed.org</a> T 0031 639878232
<b>The organisation</b>	Human-ed facilitates training, consulting and material design in the field of intercultural and inclusive education. <a href="http://www.human-ed.org">www.human-ed.org</a>
<b>The project</b>	The Cultural and Linguistic Identity Portfolio (CLIP) contains a number of activities built around certain CDC descriptors. CLIP invites students to reflect on their backgrounds and identities, and to trace their development in democratic competences by using self-assessment before and after using the portfolio.
<b>Target groups</b>	The portfolio primarily targets students in formal education settings, between the ages of 10 and 18. The portfolio is especially useful for schools with a diverse student population. Most activities can, however, be used in non-formal education as well as higher education (e.g., teacher training) and adult education.

## Documentation of the activities

### Description of the project

When it comes to today's increasingly diverse classrooms, there is a tendency to talk about difficulties and challenges, ignoring the arising opportunities that diversity brings along.

The current project builds on the firm belief that students bring with them a rich cultural and linguistic heritage, and it is their teachers' task to tap into this, thereby helping their students feel at home and creating inclusive schools.

Human-ed has developed a 'Cultural and Linguistic Identity portfolio' (CLIP) in order to:

- offer newly arrived immigrant and refugee students a smoother transition to their new environment by reflecting on their (changing) identities
- boost students' self-confidence by allowing them to stay connected with and live their identities
- help teachers gain a better understanding of their students' backgrounds, so as to be able to build on them

The portfolio is based on the Council of Europe's Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC). The descriptors chosen for this portfolio look at students' attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding. With the help of the portfolio, students work towards certain learning goals through selected activities.

In order to consciously focus on the RFCDC descriptors, a pre- and post-activity self-assessment tool has been developed to help students reflect on their growth regarding the given competences.

## Description of the process and reflection on the status quo

To start with, four descriptors were chosen from the RFCDC based on their relevance to reflecting on one's cultural and linguistic background. Next, six activities were collected that help students work towards the selected competences. These were then structured into a document. As a next step, a simple tool was designed for self-assessment, which the students could use to reflect on their democratic competence before and after the activities. To round off the portfolio, a foreword and an introduction were added to explain the aim and the suggested use of the portfolio. At this last step, the RFCDC and the Butterfly Model were explicitly introduced.

Once the portfolio design stage was finished, the portfolio was introduced to a school in Amsterdam during a staff meeting in mid-January. The school in question ([www.denise.espritscholen.nl](http://www.denise.espritscholen.nl)) is a primary and secondary school, with a highly diverse student population, also housing a 'newcomer' programme for newly arrived immigrants and refugees.

The school's management originally suggested that the portfolio be introduced in the last two years of the primary section, in order to build up awareness during those years before moving on to the secondary level. However, several teachers from the secondary school's 'newcomer' programme showed interest in piloting the portfolio, hence this option was chosen. The 'newcomer' programme's Dutch as a second language department's coordinator took it on herself to coordinate the pilot within her department. To accommodate this group of teachers, a Dutch translation of the portfolio was provided.

Piloting was planned to take place between January and March 2020, with an evaluation meeting scheduled for the end of March. Despite COVID-19, most of the implementation did take place. Five Dutch as a second language teachers spent six weeks on piloting the portfolio with 60+ students between the ages of 12 and 18. Most students filled in the first round of the self-assessment sheet, however, due to COVID-19, they did not get the chance to fill in the post-project self-assessment. Therefore, no findings could be gained based on that tool.

The evaluation meeting couldn't go through, either, and the participating teachers were not available for feedback as the Coronavirus crisis began. Therefore, a different approach was decided on, and a phone interview was arranged with the programme coordinator towards the end of the school year to evaluate the pilot.

Despite the disruption due to COVID-19, the coordinator was highly positive about the pilot. She explained that all participating teachers reported that the students had been very engaged and that they clearly enjoyed reflecting on their identities and sharing this with each other. According to her, students seemed to feel more comfortable in class once they got the chance to share such information with their peers. Moreover, their self-awareness seems to have grown. The coordinator also highlighted how attentively the students had been listening to each other during the activities.

The most striking findings from the interview are the coordinator's comments on the focus of the RFCDC competences. She declared that it had been 'an eye-opener to see how important these competences are in our work'. 'We have seen that our students feel more comfortable when they can reflect on their linguistic and cultural background. We need to make more space for these competences'.

**How was the RFCDC integrated into the project?**

As a next step, the coordinator will share their positive experience with the portfolio so that other colleagues might also be inspired to implement it. 'It would especially be useful for our Civics Education section,' the coordinator commented.

The following descriptors have been chosen as the basis of the portfolio:

**ATTITUDES**

**Openness to Cultural Otherness**

21 – Shows interest in learning about people's beliefs, values, traditions and world views

Tolerance of Ambiguity

52 – Is comfortable in unfamiliar situations

**SKILLS**

**Skills of Listening and Observing**

71 – Listens attentively to other people

**KNOWLEDGE**

**Knowledge and Critical Understanding of the Self**

109 – Can reflect critically on himself/herself from a number of different perspectives

A simple pre-and post-pilot self-assessment tool was designed to help the students reflect on their democratic competence. Finally, an introduction section was added to explain the aim and the suggested use of the portfolio, with explicit reference to the RFCDC and with the introduction of the Butterfly Model.

**List of presentations of the tool**

The portfolio (or rather, its first draft) was first presented at the conference 'Teaching Language and Intercultural Communicative Competence in Higher Education: Issues, research and best practices' on 7th June 2019

As this workshop was preceded by Professor Michael Byram introducing the RFCDC, there was much interest in the workshop. Participants greatly appreciated how the activities in the portfolio offered a hands-on way of working with the competences.

Also, the Portfolio was later informally discussed during the IAIE 2019 conference ([www.iaie.org/amsterdam2019](http://www.iaie.org/amsterdam2019)) in November 2019, where several international educators expressed interest in the pilot.

**Description of methods that were developed**

The activities used for the portfolio are frequently used activities from the field of intercultural competence and multilingualism, and are partly derived from our own practice. One source of inspiration has been the Council of Europe's earlier publication: **TASKs for Democracy** (Activity 1 & 2 of the portfolio). Activity 3 is a commonly used activity in multilingualism trainings and cannot be traced back to one single source. Activities 4, 5 and 6 derive from my own teaching practice.

For the self-assessment tool, a 1-5 rating scale has been employed (1:never, 2:rarely, 3:sometimes, 4:often, 5:always). The four RFCDC descriptors have been translated into "I-statements", and the language has been slightly adjusted to be more accessible. This resulted in the following statements:

“I enjoy hearing about other people’s beliefs, values, traditions and world views.”

“I feel comfortable in new, unfamiliar situations.”

“I listen attentively to people.”

“I know myself well.”

**Necessary adaptations due to COVID-19**

Due to COVID-19, the final self-assessment could not be carried out by students. Also, the pilot evaluation meeting with the participating teachers could not take place. Hence, the findings are based on a phone interview with the coordinating teacher.

**Preliminary conclusions**

The portfolio has been seen as an effective tool in highlighting diversity present in classes and in empowering students. Students have been highly engaged during the pilot stage and, reportedly, felt more comfortable among their peers and teachers after the pilot.

The six participating teachers were enthusiastic about the portfolio and saw it as a relevant tool for their teaching practice. They found that the focus on the democratic competences added an extra layer to their curriculum. They reported that this layer had been often overlooked but was important when working with diverse groups of students.

Finally, while the competences described in the RFCDC framework were seen as important, teachers reported that they would not have enough time to look at the framework themselves. They were ready and happy to use tools, such as the portfolio, to work towards the RFCDC descriptors, however. It can then be concluded that teachers in this context would prefer hands-on tools that help them develop democratic competences in their students.

## **Reflections on the individual project level**

**Added value of the RFCDC in the respective context**

Within this project, the RFCDC proved to be a useful foundation for addressing democratic competences and helped bring competences into the picture that would otherwise not easily come up.

A number of the RFCDC descriptors could be used as a basis for activities. Also, the RFCDC coming from the Council of Europe lent the framework added credibility.

**Limitation of the RFCDC in the respective context**

Several of the RFCDC descriptors are rather abstract. This makes it difficult to refer to them in practice or use them when working with students.

Also, the RFCDC, in and of itself, seems overwhelming for teachers who have difficulties finding the time to think about ways to implement it. Developing tools based on the RFCDC that can be readily implemented seems to work much better for teachers. The hands-on format of the portfolio, for example, was appreciated.

**What worked well and what didn't**

The activities in the portfolio worked well and, seemingly, achieved the main purposes. The direct use of the RFCDC descriptors was somewhat more difficult to implement. Due to the disruption of the self-assessment process as a result of COVID-19, it is unclear how effective the self-assessment tool would have been.

**Challenges,  
scepticism,  
resistance**

During the presentation of the portfolio at the conference, several participants raised concerns around the use of values and even attitudes in the Butterfly Model. These features caused resistance, and several educators were discouraged from using the RFCDC because of these components.

Another limitation is the level of abstraction and the lack of practicality in the framework. This forms too much of a barrier for most teachers.

**Lessons learnt**

In general, the conclusion can be drawn that the RFCDC serves better as a source of inspiration to build activities on than a set of descriptors to be used.

# International Institute of Humanitarian Law – IHL / Italy

**Contact** **Claudio Dondi** – Senior Education Expert  
[Claudio.dondi@iihl.org](mailto:Claudio.dondi@iihl.org)

**The organisation** International NGO established in 1970, active in training civil servants and officers on international law and human rights. Since 2017, it has been developing an international Laboratory on Education Inspiring Peace, related directly to the UPPER Project.  
<http://iihl.org>

**The project** UPPER (ERASMUS+ KA2) is about collecting, analysing and presenting good practices in education, focused on inspiring peace and democratic citizenship. FREREF (the Foundation of European Regions for Research in Education and Training), ESHA (European School Heads Association), UNIMORE (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia), the Ministry of Education and Employment of Malta and IHL are partners.

The main UPPER project outcomes are: 1. A collection of good practices in the field of peace education, some of which directly relevant to democratic culture; 2. A competence framework and self assessment tools for educators inspiring peace (particularly influenced by the workshop of RFCDC held at ESHA in Utrecht); 3. Benchmarking models for schools and for policy makers; 4. A handbook for schools and 5. Policy recommendations. All these are available at the website of the Sanremo Laboratory for Education Inspiring Peace ([www.eiplab.eu](http://www.eiplab.eu))

**Target groups** School children in primary and secondary school, teachers and school heads, informal educators, policy makers

## Documentation of the activities

**Description of the project** Collecting feedback on the RFCDC within the whole set of activities and stakeholders' consultation events during UPPER project implementation

**Description of the process and reflection on the status quo** The competence framework has been reviewed and commented upon in the process of developing a more specialised competence framework for educators willing to develop the capacity to inspire peace and positive conflict transformation competences in children/students.

**How was the RFCDC integrated into the project?** The RFCDC was presented to partners and stakeholders in several meetings before the explosion of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was presented to the Italian Ministry of Education, which has appointed a previously missing representative to the CoE EPAN (Dr. Diana Saccardo). It should be noted that during the first semester of 2020, the Ministry developed curriculum guidelines for citizenship education at school (Educazione Civica), which has again become compulsory starting in school year 2020-21.

<b>List of presentations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All UPPER multiplication events (Sanremo in November 2018 and November 2019, Utrecht in April 2019, Malta in October 2019)</li> <li>● At the UNIMORE Department of Education and Humanities' (DESU) training of future teachers</li> <li>● Presentation of the three volumes of the RFCDC to the Italian Ministry of Education – winter 2020</li> </ul>
<b>Necessary adaptations due to COVID-19</b>	Face-to-face events have all been cancelled or postponed since March 2020 and school feedback has become more difficult.
<b>Synergies/exchange with other projects of the focus group</b>	A follow-up project has been conceived to test the RFCDC as an instrument of Citizenship Education activities in European schools. The CITIZED project involves partners of the focus group and of the UPPER Project. It will start in November 2020.
<b>Preliminary conclusions</b>	The RFCDC has been highly appreciated for its comprehensiveness and has been an inspiration for the development of several new projects. IIHL and the other UPPER project partners have benefitted from its use and are committed to continuing its validation.

## Reflections on the individual project level

<b>Added value of the RFCDC in the respective context</b>	It provides not only reference description of relevant competences for any citizen, but also valuable instruments and approaches for its use.
<b>Limitation of the RFCDC in the respective context</b>	Partners and stakeholders, while appreciating the comprehensiveness and 'universal' value of the framework, observed that adaptation is necessary in every considered context to shape the competence framework to the curricula and learning outcomes.
<b>What worked well and what didn't</b>	See above. The 'key-turn' use is difficult as discussion and reflection on the specific conditions of use in a given context are required. This is natural for a reference framework and is good as far as it facilitates teacher or curriculum-designer ownership of a process.
<b>Challenges, scepticism, resistance</b>	The RFCDC is not yet a well-known instrument in the European education systems. More effective dissemination and networking are necessary. The related initiatives of the COE and new projects may help.
<b>Lessons learnt</b>	Citizenship education is not an immediate field of interest in all educational environments. More policy effort is needed to stress its importance in education. The influence of national tradition in teaching civic education may become an obstacle to including a more European/international/intercultural approach.
<b>Unexpected opportunities and new initiatives sparked by the work</b>	See the CITIZED project mentioned above, that will allow a follow-up action over the next three years.

# Land der Menschen – AUFEINANDER ZUGEHEN OÖ / Austria

**Contact** **Veronika Fehlinger, MSc**  
General Manager  
Kapuzinerstraße 84, 4020 Linz, Austria  
[office@landdermenschen.at](mailto:office@landdermenschen.at)

**The organisation** Land der Menschen OÖ is an association and platform of 13 organisations from Upper Austria and serves as a network and think tank. The managing directors of the social, educational and health sectors of Upper Austria represent the executive committee. The aim of the association is to develop projects and pedagogical material and set actions to limit discrimination in society, to support disadvantaged groups and to promote a peaceful and respectful coexistence of all people in Upper Austria. In this mission, the organisation has been financially supported by the Upper Austrian government over the last 20 years and has worked with different cooperation partners to develop and implement various projects. The latest and biggest project is 'Open Mind – Learning to live democracy', a school development project.  
[www.landdermenschen.at](http://www.landdermenschen.at)

**The project** **'Open Mind – Learning to live democracy' is a school development programme** initiated by Land der Menschen OÖ and developed in cooperation with the Counselling Centre of the Private Pädagogische Hochschule of the Linz Diocese (BZ der PHDL) and the anti-racism initiative, 'Rassismus? Mog i ned!' (Rmin).

#### **AIM:**

The aim is to strengthen discussion skills/improve discussion culture and to raise awareness on the issues: getting along with others, equal treatment, anti-discrimination, racism and human rights.  
Further aims are to raise democratic competences and to put the RFCDC into practice. At the end of the process, there should be an impact-oriented award given for the Open Mind School.

#### **WE OFFER:**

- Comprehensive and impartial school development
- Survey of the current status/problem survey
- Procurement of educational services such as workshops
- Open Mind workshops for teachers
- Open Mind workshops for teachers and students
- Open Mind workshops for pupils
- Advice and support during the entire process
- Necessary materials
- Evaluation of the process through an impact analysis by the Upper Austrian University of Applied Sciences

Our **Open Mind workshops** are divided into four categories according to the **Council of Europe's Butterfly Model**, which defines competence criteria in four areas: **values, attitudes, skills and knowledge/critical understanding**.



The catalogue is a part of the Open Mind school development programme, and supports schools in promoting the transmission of communication skills and participatory competences. Additionally, we offer a special booklet with Open Mind workshops for teachers; these workshops are also divided into the four categories.

An Open Mind school is a place where communication takes place at eye level; people listen to each other, issues are discussed, questions raised and doubts voiced until a mutual understanding is reached. Values such as the protection of human dignity, democracy, equality and the protection of human rights and of minorities are transmitted and put into practice.

Open Mind supports schools that wish to become such a place. This requires people with an open mindset – be they students, teachers, directors or parents!

### Target groups

Teachers, educators and pupils of all (formal) schools in Upper Austria  
Ages: 7–18 (pupils), 21–65 (teachers)

## Documentation of the activities

### Description of the project

OPEN MIND for two pilot schools in Autumn 2019

### Description of the process and reflection on the status quo

Our aim was to implement the Open Mind project at class level at two pilot schools in Upper Austria. We found two high schools who wanted to participate.

Step 1: Certificates at a class-level

We conducted a 4-hour kick-off workshop at each of the two high schools in Linz, Austria (the students were 14 to 15-years-old). We explained the project and identified topics of interest to the students, then organised four workshops per class.

- **Open Mind workshop:** Introductory workshop (3 to 4 teaching units)
- **Expert workshops** comprising 8 teaching units from at least two of the four categories (Values; Attitudes; Skills; Knowledge and Critical Understanding); individual choice from the Open Mind catalogue; participants broaden their social and discussion skills and improve their discussion culture.
- Applying the subject matter in daily teaching (2 to 3 subjects) comprising 16 teaching units (certified); ideas: biology > racial ideology, maths > immigration statistics; German > portraits of idols, etc.

Output: one product per class (displayed to the whole school), e.g., flipchart on the topic of equal treatment, anti-discrimination and racism, a game, school newspaper, information stand, videos, visits to exhibitions, etc.

**Optional:** Workshops for school and classroom speakers or team leaders/peer principle

Participants receive the Open Mind certificate upon completion of the required teaching units.

### OPEN MIND 2020:

- **Open Mind Kick-Off Day** – Laying out the conditions for successful collaboration and coexistence at the school, based on the values: protection of human dignity, democracy, equality and the protection of human rights and of minorities.
- **Where do we stand as a school, what is still needed?** Reflecting on and improving the discussion culture among students and among teachers, but also between students and teachers.
- **Developing practical measures** to help establish Open Mind within the school management, the teaching staff, the students and the parents.
- Working out options for the implementation of respectful, non-discriminatory interaction within the classroom. Mentoring and support through the advice centre of the PHDL. Workshops by partner organisations from the anti-racism group, 'Rassismus? Mog i ned!'
- **Delivering teaching and organising learning** with an open mental attitude, marked by **listening, questioning & discussing, understanding and acting.**

### How was the RFCDC integrated into the project?

- Our Open Mind workshops are divided into four categories along the Council of Europe's Butterfly Model.
- We developed a workshop catalogue for pupils and one for teachers.
- The Workshop Catalogue for teachers includes a workshop on RFCDC.

### List of presentations

- Presentation about Open Mind at the NECE-Conference in Glasgow, 24.-27/10/2019
- Presentation about Open Mind at the Innovation Forum of FH connect, 18/11/2019
- Presentation at the Kick-off Workshop at Körner-High-School in Linz, 25/11/2019
- Presentation at the Kick-off Workshop at Peuerbach-High-School in Linz, 02/12/2019
- Prezi-presentation for the Kick-off Workshop at both schools

### Description of methods that were developed

- We start the Kick-off Workshop with a quiz based on the book, *Factfulness*. We adapted the questions to the workshop topics and made the results visible. That was quite a funny and interesting start!
- Thematic immersion and activation of previous knowledge - Exercise: Sentence beginnings for the topic Open Mind, for example: 'For me, diversity means...' - 'When I see a wheelchair user, I think...'
- Exercise: Pupils stand in a circle, and each one draws, at random, the beginning of a sentence that they must complete.
- Role plays/situations for four groups
- Format: World Cafe – ten minutes per table.

#### Evaluation questions:

- What did you particularly like today?
- What would you like to deal with more intensively?
- What do you need in your class to work well together?
- What topics would you like to work on with your class?
- Box table (anonymous): What problems do you have in your class (delicate topics) that you would like to work on individually?

For teachers and school management, we prepared the same questions on a worksheet. They formed a separate group.

- What do you think is needed to work well in class?
- What ideas do you have for integrating the topics discussed into the classroom?
- After today, which workshops from the catalogue would you find useful for your class?

Final round: Offering a school development process to deal with these issues in a more sustainable way.

Outlook on the next steps:

- Project work: What could this look like (class working together on a project or in small group/individual projects?)
- How the teachers can take up and implement the topic in class.

### **Necessary adaptations due to COVID-19**

Because of COVID-19, we could not finish the pilot project, because we couldn't finish the workshop series that leads to the certificate. We might be able to finish the project in the upcoming school year, but because of the ongoing uncertainty, we can't yet say if this will be possible.

### **Synergies/exchange with other projects of the focus group**

Veronika Fehlinger (LdM) and the cooperation partner Brigitte Neuhauser from the counselling centre of PHDL were part of the pilot team of the TRT and gave feedback.

I took part in the application for the CITIZED project, which was successful, so we can work further on the project for the next three years (Claudio Dondi, etc.)

### **Preliminary conclusions**

Quality before quantity - as process facilitators, we will ensure the quality of the workshops by being present there. This ensures communication and the flow of information.

## **Reflections on the individual project levels (with reference to the framework)**

### **Added value of the RFCDC in the respective context**

We have not yet been able to determine the impact of the RFCDC in the pilot project because the completion of the project was interrupted by COVID-19. We have divided our workshops according to the Butterfly Model of the RFCDC. Starting in autumn 2020, six students of the Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences will start researching the impact of RFCDC at one of the two new pilot schools that want to do the whole school development process. Only after that, i.e., in about a year's time, will I be able to present more detailed results.

# MBO Raad (VET Council) / The Netherlands

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Jan Faber</b> j.faber@mboraad.nl T 0031 650272666
<b>The organisation</b>	The VET Council is the member organisation for all vocational schools in the Netherlands. Information on vocational schools: <a href="http://www.mboraad.nl/english">www.mboraad.nl/english</a>
<b>The project</b>	Policy influencing on a national level
<b>Target groups</b>	Vocational schools and their students, formal education mainly for 17-27-year-old students, but also up to 50+

## Documentation of the activities

<b>Description of the project</b>	'Citizenship Agenda', supporting VET schools to improve their educational programme on citizenship
<b>Description of the process and reflection on the status quo</b>	The Citizenship Agenda aims to promote the provision of quality citizenship education for all VET schools that optimally meets the educational needs of the very diverse student population. The current legal framework for citizenship provides sufficient basis for this additional input. The Citizenship Agenda provides schools with tools to clarify and strengthen their existing policies where necessary.
<b>How was the RFCDC integrated into the project?</b>	One of the goals in the Citizenship Agenda is to lobby: firstly, to convince the Ministry of Education to work on an ongoing curriculum programme between the different school levels, and, secondly, to develop a guideline to give schools a better understanding of which elements citizenship education contains. For both goals, the RFCDC provides a great structure.
<b>List of presentations</b>	I used and presented the RFCDC on several occasions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● In a meeting with the Ministry of Education for VET. The representatives had never heard of it, and I provided a first-time explanation.</li><li>● In a meeting with the committee responsible for the new curriculum proposal for primary and secondary schools. I had hoped the RFCDC would become the guideline for the citizenship curriculum part, but it was not successful. The developers didn't know this structure and preferred their own.</li><li>● In several meetings with VET schools to help them improve their citizenship education, especially the content of their educational programme and possible measurement of student competences.</li><li>● To the European project 'Convince'; exchanging on several citizenship themes with education leaders, teachers and employers,. On several occasions during those meetings, the Butterfly Model was suggested to participants from all over Europe.</li></ul>

### Necessary adaptations due to COVID-19

- Less live meetings, more digital. There was less focus on the citizenship part of the programmes and more on digitalization of the educational programmes. In the last few weeks, during the start of the new year, we managed to put a new focus on citizenship topics to help teachers have the right discussion with their classes as they started their new year.
- See: <https://burgerschapmbo.nl/nieuws/start-dit-bijzondere-studiejaar-goed>

### Synergies/exchange with other projects of the focus group

- In the several meetings, we exchanged good practices. Each of us took them home and applied what suited us.

### Preliminary conclusions

- Every country has its own education development culture and structure. The RFCDC can be a guideline to help structure and develop a good framework. Depending on the national educational structure, there is more or less a national policy. In the Netherlands, the national framework is quite general, and it is up to professionals in the schools to design a lesson structure and content that suits student needs.

## Reflections on the individual project level

### Added value of the RFCDC in the respective context

The RFCDC helped greatly in the discussion on the topics and structure for our new national educational framework. Also, on citizenship, see: <https://www.curriculum.nu/voorstellen/burgerschap/>

### Limitation of the RFCDC in the respective context

The extended version of the RFCDC makes it look like 'a lot'. More scientific-oriented readers love the research and breadth. The curriculum-oriented readers (teachers) think it too much.

### What worked well and what didn't

- The research background gives the RFCDC a high standard. Also, the broad variety of different levels that were involved makes it accessible.
- The structure and the Butterfly Model, helps to focus.
- What didn't help was the reality that there are many qualified teachers and developers who have their own opinion on citizenship and are able to make their own choices.

### Challenges, scepticism, resistance

- The RFCDC helps as a guideline, not as a dictated structure.

### Lessons learnt

- In those countries where there is a discussion about a new curriculum, the RFCDC can help a lot! In countries with existing policies, it's hard to make a change.
- In countries with a more top-down policy on education, it is easier (not better, I think) to make structural impact with the RFCDC. When teachers are in the lead, there is more variety and the RFCDC can be used as a good example.

### Unexpected opportunities and new initiatives sparked by the work

- New contacts in other national and international networks. Good learnings to strengthen my policy position.

# Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europa Germany

## Contact

### Thimo Niesel

Programme Lead Education Network 'Understanding Europe'

[t.niesel@schwarzkopf-stiftung.de](mailto:t.niesel@schwarzkopf-stiftung.de)

T 0049 30 726219529

## The organisation

The non-partisan Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe (Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europa) was founded in 1971 in Hamburg by Pauline Schwarzkopf. The foundation's mission is to support the development of young people into politically conscious personalities ready to take on responsibility with the goal of strengthening European thinking, the intercultural understanding between all of Europe and the fight against right-wing extremism, antisemitism and racism. As a recognised funding organisation of civic education, the Schwarzkopf Foundation enables educational work by young people for young people in forty European countries.

<https://schwarzkopf-stiftung.de>

## The project

As part of the Understanding Europe project, young peers between the ages of 16 to 28 hold four-hour seminars in public as well as vocational schools. Those interested are currently able to choose between different formats: the EU Crash Course and the media literacy, 'Good News!', course. The main target group are students from the age of 14. The participation-oriented peer approach in schools creates a space for young people to talk about politics in Europe and their own life-worlds without being graded. The peers see themselves as moderators and discussion partners at an equal level. Our qualification programme enables peers to reflect on their roles as multipliers as well as on their societal positions in order to deepen their knowledge of Europe and be critical of semblances of power. Peers are also shown how to successfully apply inclusive and discrimination-sensitive methods.

<https://schwarzkopf-stiftung.de/en/eu-crash-courses>

## Target groups

The pilot project was mainly targeted at peers aged between 18 and 28-years-old who plan and execute trainings for other peers (so-called 'Peer Educators') and who develop new educational formats (so-called 'Fellows'). The peers are active in 12 European countries: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Ukraine.

## Documentation of the activities

### Description of the project

In the context of the peer education network, Understanding Europe (UE), the usefulness and limitations of the RFCDC in non-formal education settings was tested. The target group has been young peers between 18-and-28-years-old (so-called Head Trainers and Fellows) from 12 European countries. The project mainly dealt with self-reflection and observation as well as planning and evaluating trainings and educational formats. According to the UE project's strategic/pedagogical goals, there was a focus on four CDC: valuing cultural diversity, tolerance of ambiguity, self-efficacy and knowledge and critical understanding of the world.

**Description of the process and reflection on the status quo**

For the first time, the RFCDC was used in June 2018 at the first Head Trainer Summit. The participants were first asked to write down the competences they find most important in the UE project. Afterwards, the CDC were presented and compared to their own set of competences.

The RFCDC was then presented and discussed more broadly at the Head Trainer Summit in May 2019. During the event, 15 peers from ten different European countries received qualification to plan, execute and evaluate trainings for other peers of the UE network. After a presentation of the CDC, the trainers were asked to fill out an evaluation tool. Finally, the general usefulness and limitations of the model for peer education were discussed. As a second step, the Head Trainers used the model for the planning and evaluation of their trainings in the respective countries that were held in September/October 2019. They were once again asked to fill in an online tool with more concrete questions before and after their trainings. The RFCDC was also presented to our four fellows in July 2020 who used it for the development of new digital workshops on media literacy.

On the basis of the peer feedback and by using the RFCDC teacher reflection tool, a self-reflection tool for peer trainers has been developed. Moreover, the RFCDC has been integrated in the qualification modules 'Didactic principles' and 'How to conceptualize a training programme'. Both will be presented for the first time at the digital European Summer School in September 2020.

Finally, the RFCDC was presented in the strategy retreat of the UE project team and to the whole staff of the Schwarzkopf Foundation. The model has been referred to in two publications of the UE project. The RFCDC has also been used in funding applications and reporting in 2020, as well as in meetings and discussions with funding partners.

At the moment, the RFCDC (with a focus on seven competences and indicators that have been adapted to our needs) is being integrated into the evaluation concept for the whole project, Understanding Europe.

**How was the RFCDC integrated into the project?**

- Tool for planning and evaluating trainings and workshops as well as the whole project
- Self-reflection tool for peer trainers
- Module 'How to conceptualize a training programme'
- Funding applications, reporting and evaluation
- Publications

**List of presentations**

Within our own organisations and networks:

- Head Trainer Summit, June 2018
- Head Trainer Summit, May 2019
- Trainings in UE countries, September/October 2019
- Strategy Retreat UE project team, November 2019
- Jour Fixe Schwarzkopf-Stiftung, November 2019
- Fellowship Programme, July 2020 (online)
- European Summer School, September 2020 (online)

### List of publications

- Nieselt, Thimo (2019): Learning through trainings and educational practices – Development of Competencies. In: Schwarzkopf-Stiftung Junges Europa (Ed.): Understanding Europe - Approaches to diversity-oriented peer education, pp. 16-19 (Download available)
- Schwarzkopf-Stiftung (2020): Mercator Educational Briefing - Development of competencies in diverse democratic societies (available December 2020)
- DARE publication on the usage of the RFCDC in the non-formal education sector

### Description of methods that were developed

For conducting the pilot project, an online evaluation tool has been developed. It focuses on the planning and evaluation of train-the-trainer events as well as on the four CDC chosen as a main focus of the project.

The RFCDC has been integrated in the already existing qualification modules, 'Didactic principles' and 'How to conceptualize a training programme'.

On the basis of the feedback and the methods of the RFCDC teacher reflection tool, a self-reflection tool for peer trainers has been developed. It contains a short introduction to the RFCDC, a self-observation tool as well as three practical exercises.

### Necessary adaptations due to COVID-19

Due to COVID-19, the activities from March 2020 on had to be conducted online (presentation to and evaluation by Fellows 2020, presentation at the European Summer School 2020). The self-reflection tool for peer trainers could not be tested as planned because EU Crash Courses at schools could not be conducted after March 2020.

### Synergies/ exchange with other projects of the focus group

The questions of the evaluation tool were developed by the Ev. Trägergruppe für gesellschaftspolitische Jugendbildung, AdB and the Schwarzkopf Foundation. The same actors are part of a DARE publication about the usage of the RFCDC in the non-formal education sector.

## Reflections on the individual project level

### Added value of the RFCDC in the respective context

#### General guidance and self-reflection

The RFCDC has proven to be useful as a general guidance for peer trainers. Learning about the concept at trainings makes them aware of the impact their educational work might have on participants. Moreover, the RFCDC can be used as a tool for self-reflection and self-observation for the peers themselves. We see them as educators and learners simultaneously. The tool can be used to track how they develop certain competences or on which competences they want to focus regarding their personal development. However, it is important for us that this is happening anonymously and without any kind of 'rating'.

#### Planning and evaluation of trainings, workshops and educational formats

More specifically, the RFCDC is certainly useful as a guiding framework for the planning and evaluation of trainings, workshops and educational formats. We want those peers who plan longer training programmes to first think about which competences they want to foster with the participants and then to match those with the modules they plan. In the evaluation of trainings, the participants, or the Peer Educators themselves, should evaluate whether the training actually helped them to develop certain competences. Likewise, the fellows who developed new educational formats used the RFCDC to have more clarity as to the pedagogical goals of their workshops.



### **Communication with funding partners and impact measurement**

The RFCDC has proven to be useful for funding applications and reporting as it provides a common language with partners. It makes the outcome and impact of non-formal education formats as well as the personal development of the peer trainers measurable, and it becomes easier to communicate them (instead of only communicating numbers of courses and events). Therefore, the RFCDC has been integrated into the whole evaluation concept of the Understanding Europe project.

### **Limitation of the RFCDC in the respective context**

#### **Short-term educational formats at schools**

The RFCDC has not proven to be useful for the evaluation of short-term educational formats at schools (such as our four-hour EU Crash Course). It is not realistic to evaluate whether certain competences have been developed in such a short time frame. The indicators are also too detailed to apply them to short-term formats. The RFCDC is, rather, useful as a tool for educators or peer trainers (and their long-term personal development) than for pupils themselves.

#### **Time and capacities in voluntary context**

As most of our peers are doing their educational work voluntarily without being paid, there is often a lack of time and capacity. Apart from the presentation of the RFCDC at our trainings, they did not really take the time to read the volumes or any other additional information. Moreover, they are not professional pedagogues which means that they probably need more time to understand the RFCDC in depth.

### **What worked well and what didn't**

#### **What did work well**

The Peer Educators and fellows were very interested in the RFCDC and in the discussion on how they could use it in their educational work. The RFCDC has also proven to be very useful for the project team in the foundation, e.g., for planning trainings, evaluation and impact measurement as well as partner communication (see above).

#### **What did not work well**

Due to the voluntary character of the peer project, the Peer Educators' response rate to the online poll was unfortunately quite low. Moreover, due to time constraints at trainings, the RFCDC has not been integrated systematically into their own training programmes.

### **Challenges, scepticism, resistance**

#### **Peer feedback regarding competences and indicators**

- Many competences are missing in the model, there should be the possibility to add more competences
- Model separates competences that belong together for simplification, many linkages between competences
- Competences not specifically tailored to the set of competences pupils should develop
- Critique regarding intercultural concept inherent in some of the competences/indicators: culturalist view on diversity, missing power-critical and racism-critical perspectives
- Critique regarding knowledge indicators: have to be adapted to content and goals of educational formats

#### **Peer feedback regarding usefulness of the RFCDC**

- Missing component of how to implement the model in a training
- Difficult to apply the model in a cohesive way due to time restrictions at trainings

## Lessons learnt

### **Low-threshold access for peers**

In the peer education context, it is important to make the RFCDC easily accessible. It helps to provide a short and low-threshold introduction to the concept and to focus on the competences rather than on the very detailed indicators. Moreover, it should be easy and not too time-consuming for the peers to apply the RFCDC to their educational practices.

### **Focusing and adapting the model**

One possibility is to focus on a certain set of competences and indicators that are seen as most relevant (see for example the four competences chosen for our pilot project). Another way to reduce the complexity of the model is to only look at the competences (as a general guidance) and not at the indicators. If indicators are used, some of them certainly have to be adapted to the respective educational context (this is especially valid for the knowledge competences).

## Impressum:

NECE focus group on 'Competences for Democratic Culture'. Recommendations and documentation

Eds: Patricia Hladschik, Claudia Lenz

Authors: Claudio Dondi, Jan Faber, Veronika Fehlinger, Patricia Hladschik, Claudia Lenz, Hanna Lorenzen, Thimo Nieselt, Georg Pirker, Mari Varsányi, Rebecca Welge

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- DARE – Democracy and Human Rights Education in Europe  
[www.dare-network.eu](http://www.dare-network.eu)





In February 2019, the NECE focus group on ‘Competences for Democratic Culture’ started its work. The focus group brought together educators and multipliers from diverse educational contexts who explored the implementation of the Council of Europe’s Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) in their specific institutional, local or national contexts.

This report presents the seven pilot projects and develops a set of recommendations for further implementation of the RFCDC.

The group was led by *polis* – The Austrian Centre for Citizenship Education in Schools in cooperation with the DARE Network.

Information about the work of the focus group on ‘Competences for Democratic Culture’:  
[www.politik-lernen.at/necefocusgroupcdc](http://www.politik-lernen.at/necefocusgroupcdc)