CRitical thInking feat. poliTICal activiSm

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF CIVIC EDUCATION

1. Introduction

1.1. Project Idea

One of the biggest problems people in Europe have been facing in recent years is radicalisation, which can be seen from the decreasing participation of Europeans in political life. The radical tendencies of political ideas they will have to deal with. These tendencies become even more visible in times of crisis. Especially in times of the Pandemic crisis, when people suffer severe curtailments in the exercise of their personal freedoms, many people are particularly vulnerable to radicalisation, where groups or individuals, through their radical behaviour, represent unilateral political views and do not allow any other view.

The phenomenon of radicalisation is increasingly identified with terrorism and violent extremism.
To counter this, we need to think more carefully about the role of political education, the recognition of rights and the strengthening of European cooperation.

What are the reasons for radicalisation and how do radicalisation processes work? Who are the actors and how does radicalisation spread? What democratic means are available to implement initiatives? How does political participation work? What skills need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant topics?

The project is a Small-Scale Partnership that aims to foster the development of social, civic and intercultural skills and to combat discrimination, segregation and racism. In addition, it will support and evaluate new approaches to reduce disparities in access to participate in political decision-making and political activism.

2. Project Partners

2.1. Portugal: Project Coordinator

The Association for Educational, Cultural and Sports Action - form2you is a non-profit association and its objective is to empower people, groups, organisations and communities to respond autonomously to the demands and needs of the social inclusion process. It also develops social activities for children, young people, adults and the elderly. The Association was created in 2018, in Sintra, Portugal, by a group of teachers, psychologists, and other professionals from various areas, in order to fill an existing gap in the implementation of actions that were not possible without its creation.

The educational policies of school establishments often do not allow to effectively help families and the young people themselves at school age and after leaving school.

Thus, the creation of this association has allowed the development of several actions, and projects implementations, that have been positive and effective in the process of fighting against the exclusion of young people and adults.

This project is very important for Form2you, because it will allow us to work directly with teachers and educators, which in a second plan will create an increase in civic awareness in young people, so that they always have in mind the fight against radicalisation, political participation and the increase in critical thinking as a way to face the problems of our society in challenges, challenges in which young people should have an active role.

The methods resulting from the project will be made known and experienced by various actors who work directly with young people.

The fact that Form2you has teachers and psychologists working in schools as partners will allow the methods to be presented through workshops. These workshops will also be held with leaders of institutions working with young people. In this way, the implementation of the methods will be a reality and the expected results are very high.

The motto of the project:

Better Adult's of tomorrow; Democratic Dialogue; Creative Spirit.

2.2. Austria - Project partner: Akademie für Politische Bildung und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmen

The Akademie für Politische Bildung und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmen is based in Linz and is an association for the promotion of civic education. The Academy was founded in 2017 to promote equal opportunities. Through international cooperation and diverse educational offers for schools, companies, and public institutions, we support the personal, scholastic, and academic development of children and adults. We develop and implement projects in the field of civic education to ensure opportunities for European citizens to participate in socially relevant issues.

How is this project important for the Akademie für politische Bildung und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmen?
It is very important for the Akademie für politische Bildung und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmento show the importance of political activism and critical thinking. So we want to put together a mix of methods for teachers to address the issues of political participation, radicalization, democracy, and related issues and to raise people's awareness about them.

How will the Akademie für politische Bildung und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmen uses the project results?
The Akademie für Politische Bildung und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmen will create workshops based on the set of methods created in the project and offer them to schools, recreational and educational institutions for young people and all previous cooperation partners.

The motto of the project

Participate actively // Think critically // Be a Citizen in Charge

2.3. Greece – Project partner: EPAL NAFPAKTOY

EPAL NAFPAKTOU is a vocational school with a long tradition in Vocational Education (the school was founded in 1967). It provides specialized training in the field of services: ICTs, Health, Food Technology, Economics and Management, Tourism, Mechanical Engineering, Refrigeration Systems, Central Heating Systems – Technology of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Electrical Engineering, Electronics.

Our college educates around 300 students aged 15+ , from both rural and urban environments taught by 50 teachers who show an increased interest for continuous improvement of the educational process offered both related to general and vocational field.

In 2019 The New beginning at EPAL initiative was introduced in selected vocational schools in Greece. Our school was in the initial schools to be implemented. Since it is designed to upgrade the role and image of VET in Greece, it sets our students' at the epicentre of action. Via this program, implemented in our school we try to enhance the key competences of learners through psychosocial and cognitive support. Critical thinking is one of the pylons set via this initiative. Educators, supported by a psychologist appointed in our school , work via class sessions to promote basic principles by using amternative methods such as role plays, problem solving techniques etc.

Being a school gives us the huge opportunity of having everyday contact with youth , exploring their needs and interests from first hand and use their background knowledge as base to build new ones. Our students usually come from underpriviledged environment (socially, economically, psychologically) and this makes them the perfect canva for further evolvement. Of course it is an everyday challenge to start from scratch in some cases as there are no basic skills to step on and start cultivating critical thinking but that is also a motive to use alternative ways to reach the final goal.

By joining this partnership EPAL NAFPAKTOU aims at working with partner organisations far more experienced, get into touch with good practices and methods used in other countries and environments and thus use this useful knowledge to our youth benefit. EPAL Nafpaktou is directly interested in offering, apart from basic and professional knowledge, some soft skills for the future and adult life, as well. Unfortunately our students are either unaware of their social

rights and duties, or stand uninterested in front of basic questions and challenges of school , social, political life. Some of them have bigger problems to solve such as survivor but still critical thinking has a lot to offer even in the part of earning one's living even if it is in longterms.

2 years ago there was a discussion for the upgrade of the public school and the 6 basic reform packages that it includes were analyzed in the Parliament.

Referring to the bill, the Minister of Education and Religions, Niki Kerameos stressed: "We change programs, institute new procedures, gradually differentiate the educational standards, in order to provide our students with more and better supplies for the present and the future."

As the Minister underlined: "By investing in today's modern school, we provide our children with more and better supplies for tomorrow. And together we are building a society that is more dynamic, more inclusive, with equal opportunities and without exclusions. "Because education is the most important mechanism of social mobility."

Describing some of the school's pathogenesis, such as poor performance at the PISA International Competition and school bullying, he emphasized the need for rapid change, with planning and determination: educational example. To build the school of critical thinking, the school of vigilance. The school of continuous self-improvement. The school that teaches knowledge, at the same time ethics, the school that shapes free and responsible citizens at the same time ".

The motto of the project :

Seek //Sense //Share: Raising Critical Thinkers

1 EPAL NAFPAKTOU

3. Desktop Research

3.1. Situation in Portugal

According to the Directorate General for Education in Portugal, "the practice of citizenship is a participatory process, individual and collective, which calls for reflection and action on the problems experienced by each one and society. The exercise of citizenship implies, on the part of each individual and of those with whom they interact, an awareness, whose evolution accompanies the dynamics of social intervention and transformation. Citizenship is translated into an attitude and behaviour, a way of being in society that has human rights as its reference point, namely the values of equality, democracy and social justice.

As an educational process, education for citizenship aims to contribute to the formation of responsible, autonomous, supportive people who know and exercise their rights and duties in dialogue and respect for others, with a democratic, pluralist, critical and creative spirit."[1]

Thus, the school is an important context for learning and exercising citizenship and it reflects concerns that cut across society, involving different dimensions of education for citizenship.

How is civic education implemented in the classroom?

Each school should have a subject coordinator. The coordinator, together with the school management, chooses the topics to be covered.

The Strategy for Education for Citizenship in School is developed on the assumption that its implementation is a school mission that does not end with the implementation of the activities proposed for the various classes, but that it is the unifying theme of all the work developed in the school.

In this way, its implementation should result from practices that

a. are significant and prolonged in time, not limited to occasional interventions;

b. integrate and be integrated in the curriculum of the various subjects/modules/UFCDs taught;

c. they promote the transversality of knowledge and multi- and inter-disciplinarity;

---

[1] Direção Geral da Educação: https://www.dge.mec.pt – Pesquisa efetuada a 4 abril 2022

d. work in a project work logic;

e. involve students in meaningful and contextualized learning;

f. involve the community

g. promote inclusion.

The different domains of Education for Citizenship are organised into three groups with differentiated implications: the first, compulsory for all levels and cycles of schooling (because they are transversal and longitudinal areas), the second, at least in two cycles of basic education, and the third with optional application in any year of schooling. Each domain should specify how it contributes to the areas of competences defined in the Profile of Students at the end of Compulsory Schooling[2]

Are there curricula?

No. The strategy for teaching the subject is based on benchmarks that each school must adapt to its own reality. Considering that Citizenship Education is a school-wide mission, it is proposed that the implementation of the Citizenship and Development curricular component follows a Whole-school Approach

based on the following objectives:

- It stems from sustained practices over time and not from mere one-off interventions.

- It is integrated in the curriculum, in the teaching and non-teaching activities, in the daily practices of school life and

its articulation with the community.

- It is based on educational practices that promote inclusion.

- It is based on the continuous professional development of teachers.

- Involves students in active methodologies and offers opportunities to develop personal and social skills.

personal and social skills.

- It is integrated into democratic school policies and practices involving the whole school community.

- Promotes individual and collective wellbeing and health.

- Involves working in partnership with families and communities.

- Is aligned with the specificities of students and the priorities of the educational community.

---

[2] Perfil dos Alunos à saída da Escolaridade Obrigatória

http://dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Curriculo/Projeto_Autonomia_e_Flexibilidade/perfil_dos_alunos.pdf - Pesquisa efetuada a 6 de abril 2022

- Relies on monitoring and evaluation to ensure effectiveness and participation.[3]

Is there a separate subject for it?

In Portugal, Education for Citizenship (ECD) is embodied in the curriculum component that integrates the basic curricular matrices of all years of schooling, of basic education and of secondary education.

In the 1st cycle of basic education, ECD is a transversal working area, enhanced by the globalizing dimension of education in this cycle.

In the 2nd and 3rd cycle of basic education, ECD, as a subject, can work according to the curricular options of the school (quarterly, half-yearly or other).

In the education and training courses for young people at basic level and in secondary education, the training component of Citizenship Development is developed with the contribution of all the subjects included in the basic curricular matrices[4].

In secondary education, the school decides how to implement the Citizenship and Development component, the school may, among other options, adopt:

a) The offer as an autonomous subject;

b) The practice of co-adjuvant teaching, within the scope of a subject;

c) Working in juxtaposition with another subject;

d) The approach, within the scope of the different subjects of the curriculum, of themes and projects, under the coordination of one of the teachers of the class or group of students.

The operationalization model implies three strands of development of this component, namely

- transversally in the disciplinary and multidisciplinary curricular management (all schooling);

- Specifically in the subject of Citizenship and Development (2nd and 3rd cycle EB);

- Globally in school projects (all schooling).

In the context of ECD, the expected learning by cycle and by domains are considered:

- Conception of active citizenship;

- Identification of essential skills of citizen training (Skills for a Culture of Democracy);

- Identification of essential domains throughout schooling.

The domains to be developed in the component of ECD are organized into three groups with different implications, as follows:[5]

1st Group - Mandatory for all levels and cycles of schooling (because these are transversal and longitudinal areas)

- Human Rights
- Gender Equality
- Interculturality
- Sustainable Development
- Environmental Education
- Health

2nd Group - Worked in at least two cycles of basic education

- Sexuality
- Media
- Institutions and democratic participation
- Financial literacy and consumer education
- Road safety
- Risk

Group 3 - With optional application to any school year

- Entrepreneurship
- World of Work
- Security, Defence and Peace
- Animal Welfare
- Volunteering
- Others, according to the needs for citizenship education diagnosed by the school

---

[5] https://www.dge.mec.pt/sites/default/files/Curriculo/Aprendizagens_Essenciais/cidadania_e_desenvolvimento.pdf - pesquisa efetuada a 4 abril 2022

How are teachers prepared for teaching in this regard?

Each training centre of the municipalities, where the schools are part, sometimes conducts training in the area. However, these trainings are scattered and there is not always this possibility. The Directorate General for Education itself sometimes carries out short courses on the subject of Citizenship and Development.

But from the research carried out, and informal testimonies of teachers in schools, we see that the vast majority teach the subject based on their knowledge, and using some references existing on the website of the Directorate General of Education.[6]

Are there civic education focal points in youth center programs?

In Portugal, formal youth centres are regulated by the Institution of Sport and Youth, a government body. One of the largest is the Youth Centre in Lisbon.

Actions in the field of civic education and political education are very scarce and mostly involve individual initiatives of the centres, which try, each in their own way, to attract young people to the urgent need for civic and democratic participation.

JOÃO PAULO REBELO, Secretary of State for Youth and Sport, says: "The warnings come from various sources: we are living in a situation of permanent inadequacy

and obsolescence of educational systems in the face of the challenges of the present and the

challenges of the present and the immediate future. We speak today - as others in history have done before - of a world in transition, because the economic, social and political changes that we are living and foreseeing require radical and substantive reactions from the institutions. Climate change, technological unemployment and the globalisation of problems previously thought to be local, force States and other political actors to build responses that, by the time they are produced, may already be behind schedule".[7]

AUGUSTO BAGANHA, President of the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth, also states that: "Education for active and democratic citizenship is a universal value..."[8]

---

[6] Direção Geral da Educação https://cidadania.dge.mec.pt/ - pesquisa efetuada a 6 abril 2022

[7] Instituto Português do Desporto e Juventude https://cjl.ipdj.gov.pt/documents/33934/36620/Juventude-e-Cidadania_pt.pdf/87de1f19-00c0-1add-329f-517a325bc10c?t=1624999285009 pesquisa efetuada a 7 april 2022

[8]https://cjl.ipdj.gov.pt/documents/33934/36620/Juventude-e-Cidadania_pt.pdf/87de1f19-00c0-1add-329f-517a325bc10c?t=1624999285009 pesquisa efetuada a 7 april 2022

At this moment in Portugal, getting young people involved is one of the fundamental obstacles to be overcome in order to ensure a substantial change in the way they participate in democracy.

Involving young people in political processes strengthens their links with the community - it should be seen as an investment that will help them to help them stay mobilised as adults.

The development of services is important to show how young people interact in their world, not only among peers, but also in relation to their successors.

Although the preferred model varies, it is increasingly recognised that young people's participation and representation not only benefits them in the process of transition to adulthood, especially by fostering leadership and and group work, but will also result in better decisions for those who have to make them.

As far as we know, mobilising young people is as beneficial for them as it is for public authorities. It contributes to employability and improves school readiness, while also producing improvements in services and societies.

According to the Lisbon Youth Centre publication: to become an "Open door to Europe and the world",[9] it should be seen from the European perspective, as well as being "an open door to Lisbon and Portugal for young Europeans".

Youth must be supported for their participation in associations, education for democratic citizenship and human rights with non-formal education programmes and projects. Young people and those who work with them also need to look for ways to respond to the negative consequences of social negative consequences of social developments involving young people. The growth of populism across Europe, radicalisation and other threats to democratic culture, together with the effects of economic and social crises and new social pressures resulting from migration flows, have had an impact on a certain disillusionment and disillusionment and demobilisation among young people. Programmes and policies should promote youth empowerment so that trust in democracy can be restored.

Some of the initiatives that the Institute of Sport and Youth promotes are:

- Youth Parliament: Educating for citizenship;
- Euroscola: Raising young people's awareness of European citizenship;
- 70 NOW! Youth rights;
- Youth Participatory Budget: Promoting active citizenship;

---

[9] Porta aberta para a Europa e para o mundo:
https://cjl.ipdj.gov.pt/documents/33934/36620/Juventude-e-Cidadania_pt.pdf/87de1f19-00c0-1add-329f-517a325bc10c?t=1624999285009 Pesquisa efetuada a 7 april 2022

- Movement against Hate Speech: Raising awareness on hate speech, online discrimination and its risks;
- ERYICA | European Youth Information and Counselling Agency

Who offers civic education for young people?

- Associação para a Ação Educativa, Cultural e Desportiva - Form2you;
- Secundary Schools;
- Centros de Juventude de Portugal;
- Ministério da Educação e Ciência;
- Federação nacional das associações juvenis;
- ...[10]

Is there a focus on political activism and critical thinking in schools and youth centers?

In the research carried out, it was evident that there are benchmarks for citizenship education, and political activism is practically non-existent. We also found some training in the area of Citizenship for teachers, but no workshops for young people on this subject.

---

[10] You can find more in: https://rnaj.ipdj.gov.pt/

3.2. Situation in Greece

How is civic education implemented in the classroom?

The course Social and Political Education of A 'Lyceum aims to form a free and responsible democratic citizen, who will understand the meaning of democracy, will defend and respect freedom of expression. It also aims to make the students capable of:

- Understanding the basic institutions of organization of both society and state;
- Understanding how the different political mentalities of the people are shaped and manifested in modern society so as to develop competence of empathy, moderation and critical thinking;
- Developing rational political thinking so that they are able to participate as active democratic citizens locally, nationally, on European and global level;
- Recognizing and defending human rights;
- Understanding the importance of the principles of transparency and accountability and realizing the need to strengthen their personal moral values and their ability to act on them;
- Pondering how anyone can lead, pioneer, innovate in striving for the prevalence of moral values for promoting the well-being of all.

Special purposes

- The use of concepts and research tools of social sciences in order to understand the dynamic interdependence of society, economy, the state and the principles of law;
- The awareness that they are members of a community, having, at the same time, rights, obligations and duties;
- The realization that their own well-being is tied to the prosperity of the community in which participate;
- The development of self-knowledge and the ability to critical exploration of social and political phenomena;
- The acquisition of the necessary knowledge on basic social and state institutions and familiarization with their operation;
- Awareness to address social and political problems;
- Awareness of the value of dialogue so that they learn to listen to and respect the different views.

- The cultivation of active listening skills, development of argumentation and cooperation;
- The understanding of the public interest as different from self-interest;
- Cultivation and promotion of trust and solidarity among them.

The course Social and Political Education of A 'Lyceum aims to make students capable of:
- Realizing the potential of human to co-shape institutions freely but also responsibly;
- distinguishing the national political community from the world community;
- Explaining the function of socialization and politicization;
- Understanding the role of the media and the general public social networks of communication and interaction;
- Recognizing the decision-making process from the individual to the legislative level;
- Understanding the political system - state - community relationship;
- Characterizing the organization of the state;
- Understanding the rational of sustainable development and corporate social responsibility;
- Approaching migration as a complex economic, demographic, cultural and political phenomenon;
- Analysing social problems (social exclusion, poverty, violence, etc.), which prevent access to collective resources and courts, and looking for ways to deal with them[11].

---

[11] (NEWSPAPER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HELLENIC REPUBLICE December 15, 2021 ISSUE SECOND No. Sheet 587975247 GOVERNMENT GAZETTE 75248 Issue B '5879 / 15.12.2021) http://ebooks.edu.gr/info/newps/

Are there curricula?

The Thematic Units of the course Social and Political Education of the 1st grade of Lyceum are being developed in the following Thematic Fields:

1. The free, responsible and active citizen:
   a) Citizenship in its historical development;
   b) The types of rights and obligations of the citizen;
   c) Types of civil participation and the phenomenon of political apathy;
   d) Social sensitivity – Volunteering;
   e) Citizen safety (Civil Defense and Civil Protection - Traffic education).

2. Decision making:
   a) Individual and collective decision - Individual and public interest;
   b) Decision making principles;
   c) Decision based on belief or responsibility, interest or pursuits;
   d) Decision based on cost-benefit ratio;
   e) Procedure and criteria of decision making;
   f) Decision making in pursuit of public policy and in its context democratic governance;
   g) The conditions for peaceful settlement of disputes.

3. The integration of the individual in society and the state:
   a) Socialization and political socialization;
   b) Agencies and networks of socialization and politicization;
   c) Social and political control: From discrimination to exclusion.

4. Civil society:
   a) Civil society and its forms;
   b) Social movements – NGOs;
   c) Stakeholders, influence groups and interest groups;
   d) Social media Networking - Digital communities;
   e) Public opinion and its opinion leaders;
   f) Mass media and information.

5. Government - State - Attitudes – Society:

   a) Regimes and political mentalities;

   b) Types of regimes;

   c) Cultures within the political community - A pluralistic society;

   d) State-society relations in a democracy;

   e) The democratic state as a shaper of the political community and the political mentality;

   f) Interaction of state and society within it democratic regime;

   g) Electoral systems and government formation;

   h) Types of electoral systems;

   i) The formation of the government;

   j) Basic characteristics of societies such as the Greek one (patronage, nepotism, anarchic individualism, domination of smallholding and family businesses, economic and political dependence).

6. Organization of the state and legal order:

   a) The separation of powers and the rule of law;

   b) The institution of the President of the Republic;

   c) The executive branch and its main institutions: Government - Public administration - Central government bodies and NPDD;

   d) The legislature and its main institution: The Parliament and its legislative function;

   e) The Judiciary;

   f) The legal order and the hierarchy of rules of law;

   g) The penitentiary system;

   h) Types of criminal offenses and criminal courts;

   i) The ways of denouncing a criminal act and the intervention of the authorities. Ways to challenge a court decision;

   j) European Union;

   k) European Union law;

   l) Institutions and European Union policies.

7. Sustainability as a model of economic growth and social organization:

   a) Natural environment and humans;

b) Economy and hierarchy of needs according to Maslow - Materials and meta-materials values;

c) Renewable sources of energy - Green growth - Waste management;

d) Innovation and social business responsibility;

e) Training for sustainability.

8. Immigration and the refugee issue:

a) Migration as an overtime phenomenon;

b) Categories and causes of migration;

c) Social, political and economic consequences of immigration;

d) Refugees and the Schengen Agreement;

e) Democratic principles for social coexistence;

f) Solidarity and justice;

g) Respect for the human rights of the "other".

9. Social problems:

a) What we define as a social problem;

b) Government policies to address social problems - Social policy and welfare state;

c) Social and cultural factors that challenge and solve social problems;

d) Poverty, unemployment: Identification, causes and coping policies;

e) The problem of violence;

f) Types of violence: Intra-school, domestic, fan, etc;

g) Causes, effects and response to violence;

h) Birth rate and aging population;

i) Problems of the ascetic space - Spatial structure of social inequalities (crime and delinquency, social exclusion)[12].

---

[12] https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/kat-ekpaideuse/deuterobathmia-ekpaideuse/upourgike-apophase-160510-d2-2021.html

Is there a separate subject for it?

The course of Social and Civil Education in A 'class of General Lyceum corresponds to the course of Civil Education (Economy, Political Institutions and Principles of Law and Sociology) of the 1st grade of General Lyceum of the Curriculum of the courses of A ', B 'and C' classes of the General Lyceum (under elements 94196 / Δ2 / 29-07-2021 **ministerial decree**. - B ' 3791 and under ministerial data 94201 / Δ2 / 29-07-2021 **decree**. - B '3540).

How are teachers prepared for teaching in this regard?

The course Social and Political Education of 1st grade in 'Lyceum, due to its content, needs a holistic and synthetic view. It is a course that is offered for substantive dialogue, but also for exploratory and experiential learning. The teacher is a partner and facilitator of the group / class. Encourages and assists students to understand, to research, to participate in the learning process, by connecting the school knowledge of out-of-school reality and by applying, where necessary, differentiated teaching in practice. Topics should be approached with participatory and experiential methods, which enable promoting exploratory learning and cultivating skills, abilities and attitudes, such as those that refer to the objectives and activities of teachers guide.

The evaluation of the student is done via those ways defined by educational legislation and makes use of all kinds of questions.
Objectives:

- True-False
- Multiple choice
- Matching
- fill in the gap (s)
- Mind map
- Open questions which include critical questions with justification.

It is useful, however, to the extent permitted by the content, to take advantage of questions that invite the student to make a comparison of phenomena, situations, processes, functions, scientific or research findings and positions; views-opinions. Because the comparative perception and the benchmarking is perhaps the most, if not, ultimately, the only one capable

of cultivating critical thinking and mental functions in general. It is also possible to use some combination questions - ie questions that can only be answered by correlating knowledge and information derived from two (or more) (sub) chapters which are not included in the syllabus in a row (so that they no way lie on a single "continuum"). It is also appropriate for student assessment to be based on student performance, participation and contribution (with questions or answers) in the conducting of the course, but also in group projects, classroom activities and group activities taking place outside the classroom, so long they are neither optional, nor voluntary. In these cases, the degree and how students participate in the group "Works" is to be taken account of - e.g. if and to what extent they participated in a fruitful way, if they contributed to the work creation/production etc.

Finally, student involvement in individual and collective evaluation processes of their learning outcomes, which make use of the following modern evaluation techniques:

- Self-evaluation,

- use of descriptive evaluation sheets,

- rubrics, peer evaluation by classmates, or student portfolio are highly recommended.

Are there civic education focal points in youth center programs?

In Greece youth centers act under the umbrella of Youth and Lifelong learning Foundation. It is an entity governed by private law operating in the wider public sector, which is independent in financial and operational terms. It is a non-profit, public benefit institution, which is supervised by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs but also directly related to it as a provider and as contractor of the projects and programmes the Ministry assigns to the Foundation. Despite the fact that there are many youth centers in Greece, civic education does not seem to be appealing as a topic. Youth participation in Greece is not a given and it is widely proved by their scarce participation locally and on national level, as well. Still, there are some programs on the process of implementation :

- European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programs

- Lifelong learning centers programs related among others to Social Skills and Actions

- Lifelong Learning Centres for the Environment and the Sustainability programs (workshops and awareness-raising actions, while emphasis is being given to experiental learning, the active involvement and taking initiatives.)

- Voluntary Action Program for Risk and Crisis Management and Emergency Response "Protecting Myself and Others" (among others : Cognitive parameters (Problem solving Decision making - Information management - Working in groups - Panic management[13].

There are also programs on civic education and promotion of critical thinking offered.

"21st Century Skills Academy" offers a series of trainings by acting under the umbrella of European Solidarity Corps. This ESC project aims to connect the youth with skills regarding critical thinking, teamwork, and digital innovation and to equip them with crucial tools to understand digital transformation[14].

NCR- Youth Centre (Network for Children's Rights**)** is supported by Niarchos Foundation. It offers one-off activities in support of people living in Athens and organized by actors with or without legal status (NGOs, international organizations, migrant community groups, citizens groups, municipal services/bodies etc). The activities cover among others the thematic areas of solidarity, culture, and public space, technology, environment, health, education and child[15].

HELLENIC NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL
Aiming at continuously training and informing young people on issues that concern them, the H.N.Y.C. implements workshops, conferences, cultural and other programs, seminars and activities that directly target young people[16].

---

[13] https://www.inedivim.gr/en/tags/programmes-actions
[14] https://youthmakershub.com/portfolio/21st-century-skills-academy/
[15] https://www.accmr.gr/en/the-athens-coordination-center.html
[16] http://www.esyn.gr/en/

Who offers civic education for young people?

In Greece civic education for young people is offered by:

- Primary/Secondary education (State - Private schools)
- Youth and Lifelong learning Foundation
- Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs
- Scouts and Guides associations
- NGO's

Is there a focus on political activism and critical thinking in schools and youth centers?

As mentioned above, political activism and critical thinking are to be evolved in the future. At the time of speaking, evidence has proved that a small percentage of greek youth shows interest in political matters, although there is a slight rise of awareness after the age of 17 when they are given the right to vote and get actively involved in social matters. Still, there is a quite notable rise of interest when it comes to teachers and actors of offering critical thinking training and that is a promising indication that there is more to come in this sector.

3.3. Situation in Austria

How is civic education implemented in the classroom?

According to the Austrian Ministry of Education, civic education should be implemented in the classroom according to the "Austrian Competence Model for Civic Education", according to which the following competence areas should be realised:[17]

Political decision-making competence:

- Examine opinions in terms of their justification
- Distinguish between political prejudices and preconceptions and rationally justified and justifiable decisions.
- To examine existing decisions about their historical context of origin.
- To perceive and understand the points of view and perspectives of those differently affected by political problems, controversies, and conflicts.
- To be able to recognise and reflect on one's own political decisions and convictions in their historical context.
- To recognise the interests taken into account and neglected by political opinions/decisions, assess the respective consequences, and evaluate the opinions/decisions made accordingly.
- To position oneself in a well-founded way
- To plausibly justify partial decisions that make up the overall decision.
- If necessary, modify and/or withdraw one's own decisions, etc.

Political action competence

- Articulate and (publicly) represent one's own opinions, value judgements, and interests.
- To stand up, alone or with others, for common interests and/or for the interests of others
- Accept compromises

- To use democratic means to assert one's concerns (e.g.: signature lists, petitions, ...)

- Use the media to disseminate their own political opinions and concerns.

- Contact state institutions and/or political representatives at municipal, state, and federal levels, etc.

Policy-related methodological competence

- Recognise the dependence of the results on the type of data collection

- Recognise and critically comment on the questions and evaluation criteria used in the data analysis.

- Recognise that data can be used in different ways within different policy frameworks.

- Plan, conduct, and present simple studies

- To argue one's political interests in a comprehensible way

- To improve communication by critically perceiving one's behaviour and the behaviour of the interlocutor, etc.

Political factual competence

- To distinguish the everyday language of politics from a (science-oriented) technical language.

- To deal constructively (cf. use, expansion) and critically (cf. questioning the respective content charge) with specialised terminologies.

- To know and apply the epistemological principles appropriate to the cultural/social sciences (e.g. accuracy, completeness, validity, perspectivity). To be familiar with the terms on which the methods used are based and the concepts connected with them, etc.[18]

---

[18] Geschichtsdidaktik – Politikdidaktik Standort Salzburg: Materialien für den Unterricht. Verfügbar unter: https://www.geschichtsdidaktik.com/materialien-für-den-unterricht/lehrpläne-kompetenzmodelle/. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.

Civic education as a teaching principle

In principle, the basic decree on the interdisciplinary teaching principle of civic education has been in force since 1978 and is thus to be implemented in all subjects in the classroom. Well presented in theory, but not always implemented in practice. In 2015, a basic decree for civic education was issued again, which calls for contemporary didactics of politics and takes into account international recommendations and guidelines, such as the Council of Europe Charter on Civic and Human Rights Education 2012.[19] and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, takes into account.[20] This policy decree recommends goals for implementation in the classroom.[21]

Civic education as a combined subject

As a combined subject, Civic Education is most often realised as History and Social Studies/Civic Education. This was mandated in 2016 with the amended curriculum History and Social Studies/Civic Education for lower secondary education.[22]
According to the regulation of the Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, the curriculum is divided into the following fields:

- Educational and teaching task

For example, this section addresses the fact that, among other things, an essential educational and teaching task is, *„to provide orientation for learners to find an identity in a pluralistic society and to develop independent historical and political thinking and action"[23]* to enable.

---

[19] Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung: Europarats-Charta zur Politischen Bildung und Menschenrechtsbildung. Verfügbar unter: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulrecht/rs/1997-2017/2012_15.html, zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.
[20] Bundesministerium Bildung Wissenschaft und Forschung: Unterrichtsprinzip Politische Bildung, Grundsatzerlass 2015. Verfügbar unter: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulrecht/rs/1997-2017/2015_12.html. zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.
[21] Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung: Unterrichtsprinzip Politische Bildung, Grundsatzerlass 2015 verfügbar unter: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulrecht/rs/1997-2017/2015_12.html. zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.
[22] Zentrum Polis Politik Lernen in der Schule: Lehrplan Geschichte und Sozialkunde/Politische Bildung Sek I (2016)https://www.politik-lernen.at/gskpb. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.
[23] https://www.politik-lernen.at/dl/mnoNJKJKonmomJgx4lJK/Gesetzesblatt_113__Verordnung_18_Mai_2016_pdf. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.

- Basic issues and dimensions

When implementing the basic areas and dimensions of civic education, formal dimensions in the sense of institutional theory, content-related dimensions, such as the tasks of politics in general, as well as process-related dimensions, such as the implementation of political ideas, etc., should be taken into account.

- Contribution to the schools' areas of responsibility

"The aim of the lessons is therefore to develop in the pupils a reflective and (self-)reflexive awareness of history and politics and to raise awareness of the importance of democracy and human rights, as well as European fundamental values as defined, for example, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and the associated social and legal order. In this context, references to Austria are to be taken up insofar as an understanding of historical contexts and their interaction in larger contexts can be established."[24]

- Contributions to the educational areas should be considered in the following areas:

Language and communication (e.g.: working with sources, interpreting and evaluating images, etc.)

Nature and technology (e.g.: a critical examination of scientific and technical achievements, etc.)

Creativity and design (e.g.: using art to participate in social issues, etc.)

Health and movement (e.g.: sport in other cultures, etc.)

People and society (e.g. respect for democratic values, etc.)

- Topic selection

Global, continental, national, regional, and local aspects are to be taken into account.

- Didactic basics

---

[24] https://www.politik-lernen.at/dl/mnoNJKJKonmomJqx4lJK/Gesetzesblatt_113__Verordnung_18_Mai_2016_pdf. Zuletzt augerufen am 1.04.2022.

Individualisation and differentiation

Subject-specific requirements are: Reproduction, transfer, reflection;

- Didactic principles
  - Learning with basic concepts
  - Historical and political competences, such as judgement, action, methodological and factual competences.
  - Historical and political insights

- Subject matter

The subject matter is divided into modules, such as exploitation and human rights, past and present forms of domination, etc.

Civic education as a subject in its own right

For the Austrian vocational schools, there is a separate curriculum for the subject of civic education and as a teaching principle (civic education as a cross-curricular educational task) as well as a compulsory subject in all branches of education with a total of 80 teaching units.

"The focus of the lessons is on identification with democracy, human rights, and the rule of law as well as the promotion of interest in politics and political participation. The examination of current political and social events is to take precedence over factual knowledge. (...) Contemporary historical developments are to be integrated into the lessons, taking into account the importance of the historical dimension of the subject areas to be dealt with, especially democracy and human rights."[25]

Areas of competence are defined for the following areas:
- Learning and working
- Living in society
- Helping to shape society
- ...[26]

---

[25] Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung: Politische Bildung im Lehrplan der Berufsschule. Verfügbar unter: https://www.politik-lernen.at/dl/qkotJKJKoOoOLJqx4KJK/Berufsschule_2020_pdf. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.

[26] https://www.abc.berufsbildendeschulen.at/downloads/lehrplaene-berufsschulen.

The implementation of the subject "civic education" is handled differently at Austrian schools. On the one hand, "civic education" is taught as a teaching principle or as an independent subject as well as a combined subject.[27]

Civic education as a teaching principle

In school, content is taught that is not included as a separate subject, but is important for imparting knowledge in a broader context, such as health promotion, media education, sex education, traffic, and mobility education, and also civic education.[28] For the implementation of civic education in Austrian schools there is a basic decree which takes into account the Council of Europe Charter on Civic and Human Rights Education. The Charter states that
„Civic and human rights education should enable students to play an active role in a democratic society. Democratic civic education aims at the acquisition of those competences that prepare people to be able to exercise rights and responsibility in society."[29]

Civic education as a combined subject

At Austrian schools, civic education is compulsory for all learners from the sixth grade onwards. Civic education is usually combined with the subject of history and is called history and civic education. At the secondary level, the combination of subjects depends on the subject area. In technical colleges, civic education is also combined with geography, history, and economics. This regulation has been in force since the school year 2016/2017.[30]

Civic education as a subject in its own right

Civic education is only taught as an independent subject at vocational schools.

---

[27] Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung: Politische Bildung. Verfügbar unter: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/prinz/politische_bildung.html. zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.
[28] Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung: Unterrichtsprinzipen. Verfügbar unter: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulpraxis/prinz.html. zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.
[29] Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung: Europarats-Charta zur Politischen Bildung und Menschenrechtsbildung. Verfügbar unter: https://www.bmbwf.gv.at/Themen/schule/schulrecht/rs/1997-2017/2012_15.html. zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.
[30] Demokratiezentrum Wien: Politische Bildung in verschiedenen Schulformen. Verfügbar unter: https://www.demokratiezentrum.org/bildung/methodisch-didaktisch/kompetenzorientierung/politische-bildung-in-verschiedenen-schulformen/. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.

Curricular contents are: *"Democracy, Political Opinion Formation, Civil Society Engagement, Fundamental and Human Rights, Political System of Austria. The political system of the European Union, Public administration, Public services, International cooperation."*[31]

How are teachers prepared for teaching in this regard?

Currently, there is no teacher training for civic education. Civic education is taught by teachers without special thematic training. According to Thomas Hellmuth, the president of the master's programme in civic education at the University of Linz, a further problem is that *"teaching is often "less than satisfactory" and the quality depends "on the idealism of individual teachers". And even with committed teachers, it is not guaranteed that the goals of civic education are achieved."*[32] However, the Ministry of Education thinks that there are enough offers in this field.

Are there civic education focal points in youth center programs?

Not all youth centres have made it their business to provide civic education. Politics is not necessarily a topic that attracts young people. Especially in the field of youth work, it is very difficult to design offers that appeal to young people. On the other hand, young people have a right to civic education. For this reason, the nationwide network Open Youth Work bOJA decided to initiate an EU project in cooperation with the Styrian Office for Child, Youth, and Citizen Participation. The aim was to include the opinions of young people in the European youth consultation process (structured dialogue). This dialogue will continue from 2019 as the "Youth Dialogue" and will collect young people's opinions and ideas on the European Youth Goals. Culture-Factor Y from Vorarlberg, the youth and cultural centre CORNER from Salzburg, and the youth centre CLOOB from Linz also participated in this project. Workshops were held on the following topics:

- European "we-feeling
- Musical Journey through Europe
- Action Days "Never Again Fascism
- Migration, inclusion, and the challenge of a non-discriminatory language

[31] Bundesministerium Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung: Politische Bildung im Lehrplan der Berufsschule. Verfügbar unter: https://www.politik-lernen.at/dl/qkotJKJKoOoOLJgx4KJK/Berufsschule_2020_pdf. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.

[32] Lehrer-Ausbildung bei Politischer Bildung „sehr problematisch". Verfügbar unter: https://www.derstandard.at/story/1266541374709/historiker-lehrer-ausbildung-bei-politischer-bildung-sehr-problematisch. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.

- Interviews with refugees about their refugee experience
- The shooting of a short film on the topic "We are Europe
- and much more[33]

other priority programmes are taking place:

- as cooperation programmes between youth work, schools, and local politics, such as **Word Up - youth parliaments**, to create equality in conflict resolution and understanding between young people and adults:

- as cooperation in **planning procedures for urban development** to ensure more room for manoeuvre for young people.

- as a public platform for young people such as **CU television**, a non-commercial youth broadcasting, and a community station in Vienna. There, young people can communicate their concerns. CU television is thus a supra-regional media-pedagogical institution of the Association of Viennese Youth Centres.[34]

Who offers civic education for young people?

- Akademie für Politische Bildung und demokratiefördernde Maßnahmen
- Akzente Salzburg
- Arbeitsgemeinschaft Jugend gegen Gewalt und Rassismus
- Arbeitswelt und Schule
- Aufstehn.at – Verein zur Förderung zivilgesellschaftlicher Partizipation
- Bundesjugendvertretung
- Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung
- CLIO – Verein für Geschichts- und Bildungsarbeit
- Demokratie Lernen
- Demokratiewerkstatt
- Demokratiezentrum Wien
- Dialoginstitut für Politische Bildung, Generationen und Kulturen

---

[33] https://www.boja.at/sites/default/files/wissen/2020-01/bOJA_pol.Part_._Methodenbroschuere-komprimiert.pdf. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.
[34] https://www.jugendzentren.at/publikationen-blog/blog/jugendpolitik/. Zuletzt aufgerufen am 1.04.2022.

- EfEU – Verein zur Erarbeitung feministischer Erziehungs- und Unterrichtsmodelle

- Europahaus Burgenland

- Kinderbüro – Die Lobby für Menschen bis 14

- Kritisch-politische Jugendarbeit

- Museum Arbeitswelt Steyr / DEMOS.Politikwerkstatt

- PoBi / Politische Bildung mit Kindern und Jugendlichen

- PolEdu – Politics & Education

- Politikos

- More organisations can be found at[35].

Is there a focus on political activism and critical thinking in schools and youth centers?

When looking for programmes in the field of political activism and critical thinking, one is more likely to come across method manuals than concrete workshops offer.

---

[35] https://www.politik-lernen.at/site/praxis/akteurinnenabisz/index5.html

4. Interviewing teachers/trainers/young people

Questions for adults (teachers/trainers):

a) **Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?**

b) **Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?**

c) **How can democratic values be taught and implemented?**

d) **What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?**

e) **To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?**

f) **What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?**

g) **Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?**

h) **Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?**

i) **What do you understand by political activism?**

j) **What do you understand by critical thinking?**

k) **How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?**

l) **Have you done any further training on this topic?**

m) **Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?**

a) **What do you understand by civic education?**

b) **Has civic education ever been implemented in class?**

c) **What is political in life?**

d) **How do you define political activism?**

e) **What do you understand by critical thinking?**

f) **If you want to start an action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to go about it?**

g) **Have you ever felt like expressing your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and finding allies to achieve common goals?**

h) **Would you like to know more about this topic?**

i) **What exactly would you like to see?**

5. Interviewing teachers/trainers

5.1. Portugal: Interview 1

a) Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?

I think so. Lack of interest in politics and all that is going on in society is not of interest to young people.

b) Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?

I think that in Portugal there is a great effort to involve young people in these issues. However, parents should take an active role in their children to be aware of such important issues.

c) How can democratic values be taught and implemented?

At home, at school, in the family. But at the moment democracy is not a current issue for young people because they were born in a democratic country and they take it for granted: Freedom.

d) What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

I think mainly interest and participation. There is a lack of interest. Each person only cares about their own life and doesn't look at the other person.

e) To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?

Radicalisation, part, in my opinion, because of people's ignorance. People who are radical either have never lived without freedom or are extremists because some "minds" manage to influence them to be "sheep of a flock".

f) What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?

I think I have already answered in the previous question.

g) Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?

I don't think so. Teachers are tired and no matter how much there is this subject in the Portuguese curriculum, for students from primary to secondary school, teachers still only follow some guidelines from the ministry of education. They are based on issues such as road safety, health etc.

h) Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?

I don't think we need more training. I think we need to rethink the priorities of the subjects to be covered. Political activism and critical thinking should be taught every year, at least 1 semester.

i) What do you understand by political activism?

For me it is being aware of misinformation, fake news, and trying to participate in actions that are fair and can improve the current policy landscape.

j) What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical thinking is the ability to question. The Media are increasingly responsible for constantly distracting society from the important political points of the country.

k) How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?

In class, daily, in my discipline, by setting an example and being aware of issues that should be talked about in class.

Have you done any further training on this topic?

No.

Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?

Yes. In every class I try to be aware of the big issues of everyday life, and be able to include them in the subjects I teach.

5.2. Portugal: Interview 2

a) Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?

I think it used to be more so. It seems that now young people are starting to realise that it is important to be more involved in social problems.

b) Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?

In schools I don't think so. There is a subject of Citizenship Education. However, it does not mean that teachers address the essential topics related to this project.

c) How can democratic values be taught and implemented?

I think mainly through practice. With methods that exist and are implemented in classrooms, creating real simulations, etc.

d) What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

I think that attention and critical spirit in relation to everything that is seen and heard on social networks, news media, etc.

e) To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?

If people believe, especially young people, everything they are told, and don't think that the news is fake, it is easy to get into radical groups.

f) What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?

The lack of self-esteem of many young people, and the group phenomenon and wanting to belong to those who are always saying bad things. It is cultural in Portugal.

g) **Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?**

No. Teachers when they take their courses maybe talk about it. In their daily lives, despite the existence of the Citizenship subject, each one does what is more or less implicit in the curriculum, without any concern for the importance of the subject.

h) **Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?**

Yes, especially workshops on the importance of radicalism that happens nowadays and with extremist politicians who want to turn society back a century.

i) **What do you understand by political activism?**

For me it is the involvement in institutions that may have the power to change something for the better.

j) **What do you understand by critical thinking?**

Critical thinking exists if we are aware of what surrounds us in terms of information. And thinking if what I hear makes sense, and who said it. What is the source of the information.

k) **How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?**

Through projects, games, class assemblies, etc.

Have you done any further training on this topic?

No.

Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?

I try to. But as the school defines the topics to be worked on in the school year, critical thinking and political activism are never part of the work to be done.

5.3.   Portugal: Interview 3

a) Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?

In my opinion, these themes are rarely dealt with in schools and youth associations. From this perspective it can be considered a problem, since not promoting critical thinking in children and young people, through the development of active citizenship competences, is to compromise the involvement of these same young people, future adults, in the decisions that concern the future of the country, whether in social, political, economic or cultural terms.

b) Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?

The answer to this question is a deepening of my previous answer. The approach to citizenship in schools should be worked on consistently, with clear intentionality, transversally and in the perspective of developing skills and abilities of children and young people so that they are able to recognise problems and challenges, seek solutions, be critical of themselves and others. despite the work that has already been developed around this theme in schools, it is still possible to deepen the way it is approached.

c) How can democratic values be taught and implemented?

There are many ways to do this. It depends on the ages and the target audience, in terms of geography, etc. It should always be done starting from the surrounding reality, with local contact (both cultural and socio-economic), with the methodology of reflection, discussion and finding solutions.

It can be through the exploration of author texts/stories/documentaries, games, assemblies, competitions, etc.

d) What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

Curiosity, creativity, empathy, resilience, assertiveness and confidence.

e) To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?

It is closely linked. Without a correct and normal development of these skills, we are faced with (radical) decisions based on ignorance and the opinions of the masses, most often "fabricated" to influence the less competent...

f) What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?

They occur in a simple way. Nowadays, trends/influences spread rapidly through media and communication platforms, especially associated with the internet. Disinformation promotes radicalisation by creating a prominent figure (leader) and giving "stage" to the public that follows him/her.

g) Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?

I think they do. Teachers and other technicians have, in general, the tools that allow them to do the necessary research and self-training, to promote the approach to these issues. However, it is necessary that they are made aware of the importance of these issues.

h) Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?

Yes, of course it is desirable and will make the process simpler, faster and more effective.

i) What do you understand by political activism?

Political issues can never be considered passive. Political activism implies knowledge, opinion, debate, critical analysis of the decisions taken and laws that govern democracy and implies grounding for the opinions one shares.

j) What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical Thinking is not enough to think that a thing may be right or wrong. We must weigh the pros and cons and give an opinion about it.

k) How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?

Through exploration of author texts/stories/documentaries, games, assemblies, competitions, etc.

Have you done any further training on this topic?

Yes, I have done several trainings due to my position as a school board.

Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?

Whenever I teach these topics are intrinsic in the subjects I teach, as I usually work with mathematics and science which requires constant critical thinking. However, as I work with young and adult prisoners, politics is always a subject that we usually address in a serious way.

5.4. Áustria: Interview 1

a) Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?

Yes, but not enough. Civic education, media literacy, and ethics are not compulsory subjects in school. Without committed educators, nothing would happen in this regard.

b) Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?

Civic education is a small part of history lessons. Ethics lessons exist for pupils who do not attend religious education classes. Media literacy is not institutionally anchored in the curriculum at all. All this is far too little.

c) How can democratic values be taught and implemented?

Through practical experience and role models.

d) What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

What competences must be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?
You need a law degree for that (constitutional law, European law, social law,...).

e) To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?

Critical thinking requires certain skills, such as media literacy and civic education. Simply criticising everything is relatively pointless and can degenerate into radicalisation because you feel backed into a corner without arguments.

f) What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?

Either through false friends (easy to influence) or no friends (no critical exchange of opinions). Frustration is always an important factor in radicalisation.

g) Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?

It depends on the individual teacher, but the Austrian education system tends to encourage less initiative and commitment.

h) Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?

Yes, but as this is a highly charged issue, this training should be reviewed by experts, not that e.g. religious groups hold training on women's rights such as abortions.

i) What do you understand by political activism?

Since nothing in life is apolitical (even the private sphere is political), every single action and non-action is political activism, e.g. renouncing consumption and refusing to work in order not to support the economic growth of our affluent society.

j) What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical thinking means having methods at hand to question issues, problems, and opinions. Critical thinking does not mean blindly questioning everything.

k) How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?

Practice: visiting a women's shelter, a mosque, a hospital, a home for the elderly, political parties, company visits, stays abroad, cultural exchange, learning foreign languages...

l) Have you done any further training on this topic?

I have completed a Master's degree in Civic education.

m) Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?

Yes always, because I am a political person, I regularly incorporate political, legal, and socio-economic issues in my teaching.

5.5. Áustria: Interview 2

a) Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?

Yes, these topics are occasionally discussed at schools and recreational facilities for young people, but it always depends very much on the teacher or the youth worker. So it depends on individual persons, how committed they are, and whether young people are confronted with these issues or not.

b) Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?

As I said, it is an issue in isolated cases, but certainly not across the board.

c) How can democratic values be taught and implemented?

Democratic values can already be taught in kindergarten. There are always different ways of decision-making processes and the earlier they are taught the better. Peace education should certainly be integrated much more into the kindergarten and later into the school day.

d) What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

In this context, we need education, education, and more education. Because it doesn't take much to form your own opinion, it takes a lot of background knowledge to decipher fake news, and not run into false information. You don't learn that overnight. In any case, you need a network of competences that often intertwine, such as soft skills, global skills, institutional knowledge, ...

e) To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?

I think it's not always that simple. To say that is because of that. Often personal experiences, disappointments, and the like play a role. I think it's often more of a psychological problem.

f) What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?

I think this question is in line with the question I just answered.

47

g) Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?

Teachers are not taught as much knowledge in this area. Some of the topics taught are also related to civic education, but no reference is made to this. Teachers would need far more training offers in this area, but also time for it. Since in most school levels civic education should only be integrated into the lessons, this content is often neglected because other things are more important. Especially in times of the pandemic, teachers had and have enough to do to teach content related to the subject being taught, there is no time for extra content or projects.

h) Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?

Teachers should be sensitised more in this area.

i) What do you understand by political activism?

I understand this to mean being able to participate in socially relevant issues and to express opinions, what I stand for, how I think, as well as to participate in political actions or initiate actions myself.

j) What do you understand by critical thinking?

By critical thinking I mean the ability to think outside the box, not to think in black and white patterns, to reflect, to be able to check media reports for their truthfulness, ...

k) How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?

I would set up a civic education regulars' table and at every meeting discuss a topic in the sense of civic education and also start actions.

l) Have you done any further training on this topic?

Yes, I studied civic education.

m) Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?

Yes.

5.6. Áustria: Interview 3

a) Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?

Yes, it would be important, but it is not done in schools. Unfortunately, I don't know what it looks like in recreational facilities.

b) Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?

Civic education was a subject at my school (HBLA) and it was also related to current issues. Unfortunately, this was 25 years ago and I don't know how it has developed. I think it would be good for young people to get their own picture outside the family and circle of friends. And schools, leisure facilities, ... would be the given places for that.

c) How can democratic values be taught and implemented?

Simply that one takes political topics, e.g. now the Ukraine war, and breaks this topic down into individual topics of interest to young people on the basis of facts and information. It would also be important to counter fake news, as this still leads to misunderstandings and untruths.

d) What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

An important competence would be to be able to defend oneself against slogans or fakenews, for this it is important to be sure of the facts and to be able to defend oneself against these slogans.

e) To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?

Many people rely on the internet and statements that are formed there. Through messangers, Telegram and Facebook groups, such messages spread immensely. This is exactly where it would be good to be able to counteract these mass disseminations.

f) What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?

Envy, greed and resentment are at the forefront. People don't even realise how well off they are and they are afraid that they are worse off than refugees and displaced persons, for example. Unfortunately, no one is aware of the wealth we have, instead we envy the poorest of the poor for the little we have.

g) Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?

Yes and no, I have knowledge, but it would be good to have further training to simply become more confident in the issues.

h) Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?

In any case.

i) What do you understand by political activism?

I understand this to mean public relations, information for ordinary citizens from a neutral source. (No promises from politicians)

j) What do you understand by critical thinking?

For me, critical thinking is advocacy for justice towards all people without favoritism towards others. It should also be a gathering of information from which conclusions can be drawn.

k) How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?

With practical examples, current events, with appeals to common sense

l) Have you done any further training on this topic?

Many years ago in my training as a basic educator

m) Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?

I teach in the natural sciences, but unfortunately, this topic has never been within my reach. On the other hand, it would be possible with diagrams and how they can be influenced.

5.7. Greece: Interview 1

a) **Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?**

In the case of Greece I believe that only a few schools implement activities regarding political activism. The dominant didactic method in Greek public secondary education schools is teacher-centered , which leaves little space for critical thinking.

b) **Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?**

In my opinion civic education is restricted to reading political/civic texts and discussing or writing essays about the importance of civic engagement. But there is little action inside and outside of school's community regarding several modern issues.

c) **How can democratic values be taught and implemented?**

By applying student-centered learning activities (e.g. debate, role-play, drama, dialogue, roundtable discussion) and giving the students resources that show different points of view.

What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

Empathy, critical thinking, cooperation, communication , reflection

d) **What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?**

Critical thinking, and empathy.

e) **To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?**

Radicalization is the opposite of democratic attitude, empathy, tolerance. So the lack of the referred competences lead to extremism.

f) **What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?**

I believe that poverty, unemployment, the spread of fake news, low self-confidence are some reasons for extreme ideology. Under-served communities or groups of people may turn to

radicalization in order to find a reason for their condition. It is easier to accuse refugees, roma, immigrants for the difficult conditions you are facing.

g) **Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?**

No, at least in Greece.

h) **Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?**

Of course there is a need for more training in student-centered activities.

i) **What do you understand by political activism?**

Expressing your opinion, taking a position regarding political issues and taking decisions about these issues.

j) **What do you understand by critical thinking?**

Understanding the reasons that there are arguments of opposite sides and trying to find a common ground between two opposite opinions.

k) **How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?**

By interesting, playful, student-centered learning activities.

l) **Have you done any further training on this topic?**

No.

m) **Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?**

Yes, once I organised a debate about 3-4 topics that teenagers found interesting (e.g. expending high amounts on the army). The participants could express and listen to different point of views , all of them reasonable. In this way they respected the opposite political opinion and expanded their intellectual spectrum.

5.8.   Greece: Interview 2

a) Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?

In my experience, political activism is demonstrated through acts that show a deficit in democratic education at schools: the pupils' unions, for example, set up as a body that can vote and assemble, rarely ever operate in a democratic way. This becomes all the more evident during the mass school building occupations by pupils that we experience in Greece frequently throughout the school year and for reasons that could be resolved through more democratic means.

b) Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?

Civic education is taught during the final two grades of primary school, at the final grade of Junior Highschool and at the first and final grades of Senior Highschool. However, one may mark a lack of correspondence between the theory taught and the actions understood to be materialized as acts of political activism by pupils.

c) How can democratic values be taught and implemented?

Hard to answer. I think they are comprehended experientially. They cannot be taught without being experienced, even in the deprivation of them (opposite experience). One has to partake in them before one understands them. Having the pupils work in teams that embody democratic values is one such lesson.

d) What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

Empathy is a competence that may be acquired through training, in case one lacks it. It is the ability to sense other people's feelings or to imagine how they may feel. Although critical thinking is a form of intellectual discipline, empathy is a much needed, and much missed, form of emotional discipline which allows for optimal social involvement. I would advise colleagues to work more on developing pupils' empathy through tools that are available and have been designed for this purpose.

e) To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?

To a large extent indubitably.

f) What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?

Radicalization is bred by a lack of scientific understanding of (political/social etc) data: by "scientific" I mean the method according to which one gauges her/his opinions in an objective, factual and measurable way before assuming action, whereby one tests her/his hypotheses, marks possible errors or is willing to reform and change. Radicalization processes do not testify to such methods; rather, they appear haphazardly, disregard the results they bring about and are resistant to self-testing and correction.

g) Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?

No.

h) Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?

Definitely yes.

i) What do you understand by political activism?

The assumption of responsibility for the participation in, criticism, reform and change of a political status.

j) What do you understand by critical thinking?

The ability to analyze data impartially, to deduce and extract conclusions.

k) How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?

By involving them experientially in team-based activities that manifest the existence or absence of political activism and critical thinking.

l) Have you done any further training on this topic?

I have not had in-depth training in this topic. I have previous training in Conflict Management and Empathy (Erasmus KA1) and previous experience in ensemble (team work) in drama groups.

m) Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?

I am currently coordinating a european project (Erasmus KA2) on the teaching of Holocaust as a means to eliminate discriminations and promote inclusion in classrooms. Within this project, various forms of political sensitization have been explored: case studies, debates, role playing and documentary literature are prime among them. The meaningful involvement of pupils has been assessed twice through questionnaires: prior to the beginning of the project, violence among pupils at Evening Schools in Greece was assessed through a questionnaire we distributed to pupils of such schools in our area. Following the commencement of the project, the "Barometre of Democratic Participation" was used to assess the pupils' democratic profile. Results were presented in international conferences (Dublin/Prague) and shared with pupils and teachers in our area.

5.9.   Greece: Interview 3

a) Do you think that political activism and critical thinking are/were made an issue in schools and recreational facilities for young people?

Political activism and critical thinking are a topic in schools, as they are the pillar of social coexistence.

b) Or even more broadly, is civic education in general an issue at all in schools or recreational facilities for young people?

Citizen education is not a problem in schools. On the contrary, it is a process of preparation for the future and a proper present way of coexistence in the context of school life.

c) How can democratic values be taught and implemented?

Democratic values can be taught and applied experientially through school coexistence.

d) What competencies need to be acquired to be able to participate in socially relevant issues?

The skills that the teacher must have in addition to knowledge are empathy and the ability to be able to respond successfully and pedagogically to the solution of social problems.

e) To what extent is there a connection between the lack of competencies in the field of political activism, critical thinking, and radicalization tendencies?

Radicalization is directly related to the lack of skills in the field of political activism and critical thinking.

f) What are the reasons for radicalization and how do radicalization processes take place?

The reasons for radicalization are political, sociological, ideological and psychological and are directly related to the actors of socialization, mainly the family and the school. They take place in all areas of youth activity and especially on the internet.

g) Do you think that teachers/trainers have enough knowledge to introduce young people to these issues?

Teachers as members of society have enough knowledge to respond but are more generalized.

h) Or would there be a need for more training for teachers/trainers in this regard?

There should be more specialized training for teachers, so that they respond more thoroughly to the consolidation and teaching of these subjects.

i) What do you understand by political activism?

Political activism is the practical activism for the defense of fundamental moral values such as equality, justice, etc.

j) What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical thinking is the ability to think in an organized and rational way. It is "learning how to think".

k) How would you teach young people what is meant by political activism and critical thinking?

The teaching would be done through experiential methods and examples from events of history and social reality.

l) Have you done any further training on this topic?

I have not done any training. But I would like to attend a training seminar on this topic.

m) Have you ever implemented these topics in the classroom/program?

Yes, I have applied the specific topics in the context of the social and political education course taught to high school children.

6. Interviewing Youth

6.1.   Portugal: Interview 1

a)   What do you understand by civic education?

In France, civic education is studied from an early age and helps us to the functioning of a country through the politics put into practice. (senate, parliament, embassy roles, the right to vote) (senate, parliament, role of the embassy, right to vote) and also to understand the rights and duties of the citizen. The emblems of of France (flag, Marianne, the rooster, the bene fry, the national anthem, the motto liberty equality fraternity).

b)   Has civic education ever been implemented in your classes?

Personally, I studied from high school to college

c)   What is politics in life?

Politics in France is very important in the eyes of the French people because there are many parties and participants who put forward their ideas. Politics divides society today and generates a lot of controversy. It influences violence, insults and disrespect of rules.

d)   How do you define political activism?

Political activism is a group of people who stand up for a party with political ideas and their ambitions/objectives. These people try to influence other citizens to join them (leaflets, meetings)

e)   What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical thinking involves examining ideas to understand and form an opinion about the situation.

f)   If you want to start an Action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to carry it out?

ind people to influence (social media, advertising, word of mouth)

g) Have you ever wanted to express your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and found allies to reach common objectives?

No, I have never expressed my ideas in public.

h) Would you like to know more about this subject?

No.

i) What exactly would you like to know more about?

(no answer)

6.2. Portugal: Interview 2

a) What do you understand by civic education?
Education in colleges regarding the needs of the citizen for these rights among other things that

a citizen needs

b) Has civic education ever been implemented in your classes?
Yes, from high school to graduation

c) What is politics in life?
Politics should have an important place in everyone's life because it defines the future of a

country and its ideology

d) How do you define political activism?
Political activism is defined by the people who are part of it

e) What do you understand by critical thinking?
These are thoughts based on the judgement of one party or another

f) If you want to start an Action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to carry it out?
I will start by advertising on social networks and finding people who share the same ideals

g) Have you ever wanted to express your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and found allies to reach common objectives?
No. I haven't had that kind of experience yet.

h) Would you like to know more about this subject?
Yes, I would like that very much

i) What exactly would you like to know more about?
On the political opinion of young people in Lisbon.

6.3. Portugal: Interview 3

a) What do you understand by civic education?

I think that Civic Education is a subject where we talk about more day-to-day issues, so that young people learn to deal with social situations or causes that are essential for our growth. I think that this subject also looks at ethics and how to put them into practice.

b) Has civic education ever been implemented in your classes?

Yes

c) What is politics in life?

For me, politics is a way that society has found to organise the relationship between people in a society.

d) How do you define political activism?

I don't really know. I think it is when someone or a group stands for something they believe in, and that position is based on real facts or science.

e) What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical thinking is the ability of a person to form an opinion based on facts and not on speculation. It is also when a person can understand and substantiate their opinion even if it is different from other people.

f) If you want to start an Action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to carry it out?

Yes.

g) Have you ever wanted to express your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and found allies to reach common objectives?

Yes, my class in grade 10 decided to sponsor a child from Africa, and we had to do fundraising activities at school so that we could help send money and materials to our godson.

h) Would you like to know more about this subject?

Yes.

i) What exactly would you like to know more about?

I would like to know more about Political Activism and what politics is in life.

6.4. Austria: Interview 1

a) What do you understand by civic education?

Understand how our political system works. What parties are and how you vote and can vote and what decisions are attached to voting.

b) Has civic education ever been implemented in class?

Yes, it has.

c) What is political in life?

-

d) How do you define political activism?

-

e) What do you understand by critical thinking?

That you question things and actions, regardless of the source of information.

f) If you want to start an action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to go about it?

No

g) Have you ever felt like expressing your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and finding allies to achieve common goals?

Yes

h) Would you like to know more about this topic?

Yes, it would be good to know more about it.

i) What exactly would you like to see?

How such initiatives work and are implemented.

6.5. Austria: Interview 2

a) What do you understand by civic education?

That I am taught the most important things about politics.

b) Has civic education ever been implemented in class?

Yes, in history class.

c) What is political in life?

For me, it is the things that make society act, talk, and think.

d) How do you define political activism?

Advocating for and drawing attention to a particular political issue.

e) What do you understand by critical thinking?

That you question something and think about it, and don't believe everything.

f) If you want to start an action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to go about it?

Advertise it, make people aware of it via social media, convince as many people as possible of my idea, etc.

g) Have you ever felt like expressing your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and finding allies to achieve common goals?

It would be interesting to do this, but I haven't done it yet.

h) Would you like to know more about this topic?

Yes, I find it interesting.

i) What exactly would you like to see?

In general, more information about politics, e.g. about voting, etc.

6.6. Austria: Interview 3

a) What do you understand by civic education?

Civic education is one of the key qualifications on the way to becoming a responsible citizen. Only those who are politically educated can help shape the political events of their own country. In Austria, civic education means teaching the principles of democracy, tolerance, and critical faculties, as well as the ability to actively participate in the political events of one's own country.

b) Has civic education ever been implemented in class?

Unfortunately not

c) What is political in life?

From the political and practical form of life. The political form of life is an activity that is primarily about acting in a political community.

d) How do you define political activism?

That you inform yourself about politics you go to vote for.

e) What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical thinking can be described as the ability to think clearly and rationally or to grasp the logical connection between ideas. It is the ability to think independently and reflectively.

f) If you want to start an action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to go about it?

No unfortunately not

g) Have you ever felt like expressing your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and finding allies to achieve common goals?

More likely not.

h) Would you like to know more about this topic?

Yes

i) What exactly would you like to see?

Electoral processes, online voting, etc.

6.7. Greece: Interview 1

a) What do you understand by civic education?

By the term education of the citizen I understand the socio-political system of the society that defends and promotes the rights of the citizens through the institutions.

b) Has civic education ever been implemented in class?

In general, I believe that the school system promotes democracy and supports the citizen-student.

c) What is political in life?

3) Political in life I believe is the policy that is applied at every stage of life.

d) How do you define political activism?

I can not define the term political activism.

e) What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical thinking is creative thinking that is cultivated through humanistic and spiritual education.

f) If you want to start an action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to go about it?

Not particularly because I have not had the chance to start something like this.

g) Have you ever felt like expressing your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and finding allies to achieve common goals?

No it has not happened.

h) Would you like to know more about this topic?

Yes I would.

i) What exactly would you like to see?

I do not have something specific in mind.

6.8. Greece: Interview 2

a) What do you understand by civic education?

By the term education of the citizen I understand we refer to the process related to social balance and justice.

b) Has civic education ever been implemented in class?

In general, I believe that it was recently introduced it into the school system .

c) What is political in life?

I have no idea.

d) How do you define political activism?

I cannot define it.

e) What do you understand by critical thinking?

Critical thinking is the ability one has think in an effective way.

f) If you want to start an action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to go about it?

No, I m afraid I don't .

g) Have you ever felt like expressing your opinion publicly, making a difference in your school/city/etc. and finding allies to achieve common goals?

I haven't thought about it but it would be a good idea.

h) Would you like to know more about this topic?

Yes I would.

i) What exactly would you like to see?

Any information about critical thinking would be more than welcome.

6.9. Greece: Interview 3

a) What do you mean by citizen's education?

It is a process that helps us (students) become active and responsible citizens.

b) Has the citizen's education ever been applied in the classroom?

Yes

c) What is political in life?

-

d) How do you define political activism?

When a politician becomes an activist trying to implement his political ideology

e) What do you mean by critical thinking?

The ability of "organized" thinking. When we listen, we understand, we analyze the facts, so that we can make the most correct (for me rational) decision.

f) If you want to start an action, a citizens' initiative, do you know how to do it?

There are agencies and associations that we can address and contact

g) Have you ever felt to express your opinion in public, to make a difference at school / city / etc. and finding allies to achieve common goals?

Not yet but I am only 15 and I will have many opportunities to do it !!!

h) Would you like to know more about this topic?

Yes

i) What exactly would you like to see?

-

7. Conclusions

This qualitative research was conducted in the 3 project countries (Portugal, Greece and Austria), and was complemented by 3 interviews with teachers/trainers and 3 interviews with young people between 18 and 25 years old in each of the partner countries, for a total of 18 interviews.

Providing knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable young people to become active citizens capable of shaping the future of our democratic societies is one of the great challenges facing European education systems in the 21st century. And citizenship education constitutes one of the main tools used by European countries to help young people acquire the social and civic skills they will need in their future lives.

The Survey:

Comparing the data collected in the surveys, we can see that in each of the countries there is either a national curriculum for Citizenship, or these skills are intrinsically linked to the subjects of the student's school curriculum.

In Portugal, there is a discipline of its own, but without a curriculum, and there are reference parameters organised by groups. This subject aims to contribute to the education of responsible, autonomous, solidary people, who know and exercise their rights and duties in dialogue and respect for others, with a democratic, pluralist, critical and creative spirit.

In Greece, citizenship education is taught as a compulsory stand-alone subject in both primary and secondary education, but as in Portugal, there is no curriculum, only recommendations. There are also active citizenship projects available to primary school students on a voluntary basis, within the framework of "creative and integrated curricular activities".
In secondary education, students can carry out research work on topics in the curriculum areas "social and civic education" and "home economics".

In Austria, although well presented in theory, it is not always implemented in practice. In 2015, a basic decree for civic education was issued, which appeals to contemporary didactics of politics and takes into account international recommendations and guidelines, such as the Council of

Europe Charter on Civic Education and Human Rights 2012. Thus, Civic Education is most often delivered as History and Social Studies/Civic Education. This was mandated in 2016 with the curriculum changed into History and Social Studies/Civic Education for secondary education.

However, analysing the realities of the 3 countries, we can easily conclude that there is no concern to teach young people what critical thinking actually is, on the one hand, and what critical thinking is on the other.

True critical thinking presupposes an analysis of facts to form a judgment. This must include a rational, sceptical, impartial analysis or weighing up of factual evidence. Critical thinking presupposes adherence to rigorous standards of excellence and a conscious mastery of their use. It should also involve effective communication and problem-solving skills, and a commitment to overcoming one's own ideologies.

In the 18 interviews carried out, it is clear that young people know very little about the subject, not answering some questions because they are unaware of it. The teachers and trainers, on the other hand, also revealed great difficulty in completing the interviews. On the one hand, because in reality they do not teach or develop critical thinking in students, and on the other hand, because they themselves have not been prepared for this reality.

We think that the importance of critical thinking is very well summarised in one of the interviews: "not to promote critical thinking in children and young people, through the development of active citizenship skills, is to compromise the involvement of these same young people, future adults, in decisions that matter to the future of the country, whether in social, political, economic and cultural terms."

In short:

One of the main objectives of this small scale project was to get to know the reality of each of the 3 countries involved, and to be able to confirm with the research carried out, when the project was being built, that the problems we identified are confirmed.

Young people do not currently have adequate training in critical thinking, and without it, it is not possible to carry out political activism without easily interpreting it as ideas of political

radicalisation. It should also be noted that they have never mentioned the importance of the sense of belonging to Europe and the feeling of being a European citizen and the actions they can carry out at a level that transcends their own country.

Teachers and educators urgently need more in-depth training on this subject, and for this they need to create a methodology and curriculum that can be effectively implemented in schools.

The outcomes of this project (methods, guide and videos) will be a way to start a much bigger project, which needs more partners and more countries. The work that will be carried out in this project will be a first approach on the subject, allowing the creation of a solid base for future actions to be carried out.

In this way, the consortium will start making contacts with partners that are experienced in this area, and will start outlining a future project, with a much larger scope than the current small scale partnership.