

V-01: Respect for others and freedom of speech

In some legal systems freedom of speech is limited and excludes the incitement of hate for others. We believe that other people's views should generally be respected as sincerely held, even where one disagrees with them, but it follows from Article 19 in the UDHR (<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights>) that everyone has the right to challenge other people's views through rational argument.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) includes the following:

Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Opening statement

Freedom of speech is an essential element in all democratic decision making. But this freedom should not extend to inciting hate for others. Protection from hate speech, however, does not imply any right not to be offended, upset or contradicted.

Why it is important in context of inclusive citizenship education?

Freedom of speech requires careful exploration through citizenship education. It may initially seem to be a fundamental, absolute right but in real social situations unfettered freedom of speech may infringe other people's rights by inciting or threatening hatred and persecution. Learners should discuss the legal and informal limitations, and the reasons for them, in different situations, including agreed limitations on freedom of discussion in the citizenship classroom during lessons. Learners should also consider if the right to express oneself should be linked to the responsibility to protect others' rights.

An inclusive learning group will agree ways of working so that freedom of expression does not disadvantage any group members or worsen the power relationships (e.g. allowing the most powerful members of the group to dominate discussion or humiliate weaker members).

Freedom of speech is an essential characteristic of any inclusive democratic society. People should be able to challenge others, but not in ways that generate hatred, or being needlessly offensive in voicing difference. In a functioning democracy this means respecting others with opposing views. Individuals and communities should live together in a society that includes minority and majority opinions.

Those with other points of view have reasons for these – maybe misplaced views, maybe alternative ideologies – but simply telling people they are wrong makes them likely to put up barriers and reject what others say. A discussion, in which each side can hear the beliefs of the other and exchange information and experiences, can lead to reflecting on both positions and experiences, rather than excluding one or the other. But such exchanges need participants not to be offensive to each other, and not to display hatred for the other.

Context, issues, processes

A democratic society requires mechanisms for different opinions and policies to be expressed, debated and tested publicly with reference to legitimate evidence and logical reasoning. So citizenship education must equip citizens with the skills required to understand important issues and express their own viewpoints and interests in order to participate in the democratic life of the community.

Defining the difference between inciting hatred and expressing legitimate criticism can be difficult. Insulting, abusing or discriminating against a person or a group because of their ethnicity or skin colour is widely recognised as unacceptable racist abuse, but criticising a behaviour, belief or custom that is closely associated with an ethnic group or religion may be acceptable if it does not incite hatred.

Inclusive citizenship education must equip citizens to understand the reasonable limits of freedom of speech, and develop skills of engaging in dialogue, expressing views without unnecessary offence, and sharing space with those who hold conflicting views. Lack of such skills puts democracy and social cohesion at risk. The understanding of freedom of expression and its limits is particularly critical in diverse communities. Mutual respect for each other's right to speak freely, with consideration of other's human rights, is central to citizenship education. Engaging in dialogue with other people requires a degree of empathy.

Conclusion

Freedom of speech must be promoted as a fundamental democratic requirement but it is limited to not create hatred for others. Citizenship education must help communities to engage in dialogue, respect diverse opinions and promote democratic decisions. Reasoning and encouraging reflection is more likely to work than dismissal, and this requires some element of respect.

PV-02: Equity, Fairness and Development

Opening statement

All members of the society should have fair access to resources and opportunities for development. In education, outcomes can only be fair if different starting points and obstructions are recognised and accommodated. We define fairness in inclusive education to mean striving for equal outcomes and taking account of individual's different starting points and barriers.

Why it is important in context of inclusive citizenship education?

Equity and fairness are often used without clear definition. In societies they may be used about the distribution of resources, power or the administration of legal justice. Being fair may not mean treating everyone equally. In the distribution of resources or power fairness may be achieved by taking into account an individual's needs, difficulties, efforts and skills. Inclusive citizenship education must encourage learners to explore the different meanings of 'fair' and 'equal' as they apply to social and political issues.

For decisions to be recognised as fair, the criteria that dictates what is fair needs to be understood and accepted. Education will only be 'inclusive' if it effectively meets the differing needs of all in society and the learning group. This requires educators to understand barriers that obstruct learning opportunities for some learners. Inclusive citizenship education allows people from different backgrounds to contribute to the development of themselves, their communities and wider society. Inclusive education creates a greater pool of well-educated people and contributes to national economic success.

Citizenship learning must give learners understanding that the laws of a society need to be fair and transparent and applied consistently without prejudice or favour either to the weak or the powerful. Learners should discuss how laws which seem unfair might be changed.

Context, issues, processes

Exploring fairness, equality and equity involves discussing different core values about fairness. For example is it fair that a person should get a higher reward than another if they have worked harder? This would measure of effort to define what is fair. Should greater rewards go to those with greater skills or experience? Should extra resources go to those with most need, such as people with disabilities or illness?

Other criteria, such as 'first come, first served' or random choices are commonly seen as 'fair'. Understanding what is accepted as fair in the distribution of resources, wealth, wages, power, education and social status are all topics that are important to discuss inclusive citizenship education.

Equality of respect, rights and access does not mean treating everyone exactly the same – it requires individuals, communities, societies, service providers and the state to recognise differences in the distribution of resources. Such differences may include gender, age, socio-economic status, disabilities, sexualities, ethnicities, language, religious beliefs and much more.

Conclusion

Promoting entitlement to universal human rights, equality, fair treatment and demonstrating equal respect for all people in society are core principles of inclusive citizenship education. Teaching content and methods should demonstrate these principles – in the ways that we treat all learners, and in ensuring that learners understand fairness is not a simple concept – it must be examined, discussed and worked for.

Working to support the development of all individuals, communities and societies is everybody's concern and citizenship education should teach how we can all contribute. It is not only the responsibility of government only.

PV-03: Argumentation, Discussion, Evidence

Opening statement

It is important to understand that we all build up all our ideas and beliefs through social interaction with others (talking, social media, hearing and reading the views of others). Therefore, evidence that is used to support different peoples' views can be subject to conflicting or incompatible interpretations.

Why it is important in context of inclusive citizenship education?

Our ideas, beliefs, and understandings of the world are created, or built, through interaction with other people, in conversation, through social media, mass media, and digital media. So our assumptions, beliefs and judgements are always contingent and dependent on the context and our own perspective. Realizing this means it is important to analyse and interpret evidence and arguments, to determine to how far ideas and beliefs seem to be valid, accurate, reliable and appropriate. While participating in inclusive citizenship education debate or discussion it is important that all views are based on and substantiated by evidence and rational arguments. In order to be able to debate and negotiate different views, it is important to evaluate arguments in a constructive manner and accept that different interpretations are possible. In doing so we may be able to discover new perspectives, alternative views or produce new arguments.

Context, issues, processes

Acknowledging the fact that our beliefs and ideas are not natural but built through interaction with others is an important step in becoming aware of how our thought processes may be emotionally biased and limited. Controversial situations and issues sometimes generate inflexible single perspectives. Accepting that our views should be based on evidence, and that the evidence may support multiple interpretations is key to encourage communication and successful dialogue in diverse societies. This understanding emphasises the need to assess arguments and access alternative sources of information. Being able to analyse, interpret, and reflect on beliefs, ideas, and perspectives may contribute to:

- generating new understandings and possibilities;
- challenging fixed and inflexible categories for thinking about society and the world;
- resisting manipulation and “fake news” by looking at how facts and evidence are selected and represented and learning to identify propaganda and hate speech.

Conclusion

Understanding how our worldviews, beliefs and ideas are socially constructed is key to being able to try on new perspectives and realising how inequalities and disadvantages may surround us in many silent and often invisible ways.

Supporting one's views on evidence and accepting alternative possible interpretations are required attitudes to actively listen to others, which is necessary to participate appropriately and effectively in a culture of democracy.

PV-04: Democracy and Participation

Concepts of democracy and participation are applicable and important in many human group activities, including national politics. Marginalised groups have particular needs to learn how to represent their rights through democratic processes, and majority groups have particular duties to ensure marginalised groups can participate and contribute. Democracy is a contested concept. It may not survive in its present forms if education systems fail to promote it effectively and establish recognition of its importance in all learners.

Opening statement

Democracy is fundamental to the values and characteristics of modern European states. Democratic government should work for the common good, and to protect and promote human rights. But there are many different democratic practices, and some states have greater levels of democracy than others. In most democracies, all adult citizens elect the legislators who make the laws, but not all democracies elect the government, and only a few elect the judiciary. Elections have to be fair, secret, and held at fairly regular intervals. But democracy is not simply the will of the majority: the rights of minorities and individuals must be respected. Democracies should try to balance the views and rights of all citizens. Inclusive citizenship education must prepare all learners to participate responsibly in democratic decision-making and use it to preserve and extend human rights, equity and a sustainable global future, and to understand the difficulties of achieving this in modern diverse societies through cooperation and reconciliation of different interests.

Why it is important in context of inclusive citizenship education?

Education is responsible for preparing people to participate actively in a democratic society. Effective representation of all individuals and groups in a country requires individuals to participate in democratic processes, at a minimum, to discuss issues, to express views, and to vote and/or stand for election. These processes are complex. Learning to participate in a democratic society requires both knowledge and experiences of involvement in decision-making as well as the skill of rational reasoning and discussion; together, this learning is 'education for democracy'.

People and groups who are most likely to face discrimination or social exclusion are also most likely to find it hardest to assert their needs and rights through democratic structures. Lack of democratic engagement and representation of an already excluded group will make it unlikely that their position in society is improved through democratic processes by policy-makers. For this reason, 'education for democracy' is especially important for disadvantaged groups. It is also necessary for those who are not disadvantaged to understand that it is important to encourage the disadvantaged to participate in the process of democracy, and to ensure that minority rights and views are not overlooked.

Context, issues, processes

Simple voting is not the only democratic process; there are many other democratic decision-making methods for large and small groups which can be learned through practice during education.

Participation at any level of community, national or global activity requires skills, self-confidence and some understanding of collective benefit. These qualities can be fostered through well-planned educational activities which create safe opportunities for group decision-making, shared leadership, responsible civic action and an understanding of how minorities can be excluded – wittingly or unwittingly – from these processes. These should be core activities for all learners with special support being given to marginal or disadvantaged groups to be fully involved. People who do not feel engaged or valued in their schooling may not develop the capacity to participate in democracy and may remain disenfranchised throughout their lives.

Some people think that the gradual spread and stabilisation of inclusive, pluralist democracy across Europe, or indeed its survival can, no longer, be assumed. The elections of populist and increasingly authoritarian and illiberal politicians and regimes in European countries require citizenship educators urgently to reassess their work. They must now take responsibility for promoting a commitment to inclusive democracy in all learners.

Conclusion

Educators have a unique and important responsibility to equip all learners with skills, knowledge, values and practical experiences that promote rational discussion and inclusive democracy.

An inclusive learning setting will be managed to ensure that disadvantaged learners develop the skills of participation in order to assert their rights throughout their lives.

Additional notes:

In representative democracies, decision-making groups are appointed through periodic public elections. Important features of this system include:

1. defining who is entitled to vote; and which posts of responsibility are elected (local/national/wider; parliament; government/executive; judges; police ...)
2. who actually votes;
 - how do they decide who to vote for and what information informs this;
1. how elections are conducted and regulated.
2. How much power an elected leader has (e.g. to suspend democratic processes and civil rights in the interests of national security)
 - WHO CAN VOTE? Eligibility to take part in democratic elections is associated with legal citizenship of the state or country, other criteria (such as age, serving prison sentences or mental health) may also apply. All residents may not be eligible, but all will be affected by decisions

made. Migrants are at risk of being left out of important decision-making processes. Politicians may consider who can vote to re-elect them and make decisions that favour electors rather than those who cannot vote. May make it difficult for the marginalised to vote

- **SECRET VS PUBLIC VOTES**

If each person's vote is known only to them then the danger of threats, intimidation or rewards for votes is reduced.

- **INFORMATION** For people to decide how to vote they need information about the consequences of each outcome. Controlling the sources and content of public information gives huge power to influence elections through selection and distortion of available information. Media ownership and editorial control are therefore critical factors in the working of mass democracy. Individuals and corporations with a lot of money can use it to dominate information media. Different amounts of campaign information in favour of different candidates or political parties can lead to electoral advantage for some. Some form of regulation is required to ensure that those with most money to pay for communications don't overshadow those with less.

- **SHORT TERM POLICIES**

If elected politicians face another election within a few years, they will be less inclined to make decisions which yield long-term benefits but have short-term costs. They may fear a loss of support from voters who feel the costs but don't gain the benefit.

- **POLICY AND IDENTITY**

ethnic, religious or other loyalties may influence voters to vote for a candidate who belongs to the same group as they do or one who promises to favour their group. Some people believe their interests can only be represented by a politician from their group because others do not understand their situation. This may lead politicians to distort policies to favour larger groups and may increase divisions and inequality within the country.

- **WHO IS BEYOND GOVERNMENT CONTROL?**

Some large transnational corporations and financial operators can wield significant power over national economies. Their decisions regarding investment, currency trading, employment and use of resources may be beyond the control of an individual government. Although these decisions can impact whole populations, the democratic electors have no direct control over them and governments may fear economic reprisal if they seek to regulate the corporations or control international financial manipulation in the interests of their populations. Because of this, democratic elections may not alter or shape aspects of the economy.

- **HOW BIG CAN A DEMOCRACY BE?**

Politicians elected across large populations may have very little contact with, or knowledge of, the people they are meant to represent. This raises a question over how big a population can be governed effectively by a single tier of elected representatives and whether a democratic structure can be effective for large international organisations.

PV-05: States and Nations

Opening statement

We all live in states, which are responsible for the safety and good governance of all people within the state's borders. Not all citizens or residents in a state will share the same nationality, but the state is responsible for them all. Societies within a state may be made up of a number of communities.

Why it is important in context of inclusive citizenship education?

Modern states have many people with full citizenship but who come from different backgrounds. Many of them may feel that they belong to a nationality different from the majority in the state in which they are now a citizen. Some people have more than one nationality and some can legally hold the nationality of their parent or grandparent wherever they may now be living. But the responsibility for their rights and welfare is that of the state in which they now have citizenship, and it is important that the state, all its citizens, and the individual recognise this. Feeling that one belongs to a nationality has been described as being part of an imaginary community which may span many countries. Formal citizenship of the state is something that only a state can give.

Members of minority groups and majority groups can be confused about these differences: inclusive citizenship education will help learners understand them, and enable everyone to discuss them.

Context, issues, processes

Each state is responsible for the well-being of all its members, including those who may also be members of different communities, groups and ethnicities and citizens of other countries. It is the state of which we are citizens that has this duty, not any other state or society. The obligation to ensure well-being is that of all members of the state. It's possible to still feel a sense of attachment to one's historic roots and be a fully-contributing and participating member of the state in which one is now living.

Conclusion

In a rapidly changing and globalising world, most states now have members who come from many different parts of the world, or whose ancestors did. They can be both loyal members of the state they live in, meeting its duties and enjoying its rights, and at the same time value the culture from which they originally came. But societies and countries also need to change to meet the changes that come from their members (including both people moving into the state and young people with different views being born into the state). Societies and countries should reflect the cultures of their present members, which may be different from the previous culture. Norms and values change through negotiation between members of a community and a society.

Glossary of terms:

A **state** is a compulsory political organization with a centralized government that maintains a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a certain geographical territory.

A **nation** is a relatively stable **community** of people, formed on the basis of some or all of the following – a common language, territory, economic life, ethnicity, manifested in a common **culture**. A nation is distinct from a **people**, and is more abstract, and more overtly political than an **ethnic group**. It is a cultural-political community that has become conscious of its autonomy, unity, and particular interests. Nations have been famously described as ‘imagined communities’,

Although the term ‘nation-state’ has been common, it is fairly rare for the members of a state to be all of the same nationality – the great majority of states have citizens of more than one nationality; and it is common for people who consider themselves as members of the same nation to live in, and be citizens, of several states.

A **society** is a group of individuals involved in continuing social interaction, or a large social group sharing the same geographical or social territory, typically with a set of dominant cultural expectations. Larger societies often show stratification or patterns of dominance patterns between subgroups. As far as it is collaborative, a society can empower its members to benefits in ways that would not be possible on an individual basis; so individual and common social benefits can be seen (and in many cases overlap).

A **community** is a group of people living in the same place and/or having particular characteristics in common. A community will often have attitudes and interests in common.

PV-06: Identities

Opening statement

We all have multiple identities that come from our feelings of belonging to a variety of social groups: ethnic, religious, gender, professional, national, civic, etc. Each particular and concrete situation we find ourselves in makes particular identities more salient than others.

Why it is important in context of inclusive citizenship education?

Citizenship education is an important tool in forming our identity as citizens. We belong to civic society by accepting and following the civic values, attitudes and behaviour that are accepted as part of our civic society. Cultural, ethnic, linguistic and other identities normally co-exist with our civic identities, and in democratic diverse societies and states there are mechanisms to accommodate a range of different identities, as long as these have values that do not conflict basic human rights. Such stable civic identity can constitute an important element in maintaining the security of the state. Media, traditional and electronic, can play an important role in the construction and the undermining of such civic identity. Citizenship education plays an important part in challenging some media attempts to undermine civic identity.

Context, issues, processes

Each person's range of identities co-exist in the individual, and different social and community contexts can make different elements more or less important. Balance and stability in this system can be challenged by social interaction. Each identity consists of a particular set of values, attitudes and behaviour. For example, being the only migrant in a group may, in some contexts, make ethnic identity particularly salient. If this persists across many social contexts, ethnic identity can become the most prominent, and result in widespread racism that is inconsistent with democratic societies that respect human rights. Similar situations may arise around, for example, gender identity or sexual orientation. Ethnic and gender identities may be fundamental to an individual, though they might not become salient until ethnic and gender rights are violated. Negative challenges to basic identities can sometimes lead to radicalization and extremism.

Conclusion

The protection of vulnerable groups' rights around a range of identities is a common good in democratic and harmonious societies. Stereotyping of minorities, by organisations, society, community or the media significantly undermines social cohesion and harmony, challenges the rule of law, and is inequitable. Citizenship education should include ways to recognise and challenge stereotyping of all different identities to counter such challenges to democratic civic identity.

PV-07: Rule of Law

Opening statement

Democracies work with the rule of law: all laws provide justice that is available to everyone. Laws are agreed in an elected legislative body, but are administered by an independent judicial system, which is appointed and operates without interference from the law-making bodies or the government. Everyone is subject to the same laws.

Why it is important in context of inclusive citizenship education?

One of the principles of a democracy is that law provides justice for everyone, and that laws, both criminal and civil, are made by a body that is elected specifically to do this, not by the government except under the control of the legislature. Interference in the system of law is corrupt, and incompatible with democratic norms. The laws, once made, are applied by an independent judiciary – which is not appointed by politicians, and which administers the law without interference. People cannot be imprisoned or punished without the due process of law. Laws apply to everyone, including members of the government, the judiciary, the legislature and political bodies. Everyone should have access to the courts of law.

Context, issues, processes

The 'rule of law' is a principle that holds that all the citizens and residents of a state have the protection of laws that are made by a legislature and which apply to everyone. People are otherwise at liberty. The rule of law means that every person is subject to the same law – including law-makers, law officers and judges, and members of the government. Laws are public, everyone should have access to the legal system, and legal processes must be carried out before anyone is held to have broken the law and to be punished for this.

Conclusion

Modern states have laws that provide everyone with justice and that are democratically made and that equally apply to everyone in the state. No one is above the law, and the processes of the law is applied fairly to all citizens, without exception.

PV-08: Cooperation and Solidarity

Opening statement

The feeling of belonging shared between members of a society and trust in each other and in those representing them (in government) is an important and desirable characteristic of democratic societies. Inclusive citizenship education should help learners explore with whom they feel 'solidarity' and what creates the boundaries to this group.

Why it is important in context of inclusive citizenship education?

For societies to flourish and to be inclusive, first societies need to exist. Their existence is not to be verified by any objective observation but it is the subjective experience of a sense of belonging and of ownership shared among individuals who recognise themselves as being members of those societies.

The inclusiveness of a group can be defined as the preparedness of all their members to trust each other and to be accountable to each other for the effects of their actions.

In societies characterised by diversity, it is particularly important for inclusive citizenship educators to help learners develop solidarity with each other across communities.

Context, issues, processes

Democratic citizenship requires a shared feeling of belonging which facilitates the participation of all – including groups who are sometimes marginalised – and it is based on commitment to equality and equity. This is in addition to the need to respect the diversity of identities, opinions and beliefs represented within democratic societies

Education should help learners recognise that membership in social groups brings with it a shared responsibility to collaborate, to protect the rights of each other and to contribute to the renewal of the values which underpin group practices. Learners should also gain a variety of group learning experiences to increase their collaborative skills, understand the impact of their behaviours on others and discuss how the benefits of collective work should be shared.

Conclusion

Individuals' democratic participation in a society is a constant balancing act between the inclusiveness of the feeling of belonging and the exclusiveness of the feeling of ownership. Communication and collaboration skills need to be developed together with a commitment to honesty, openness and to work effectively against any form of discrimination or exclusion.