



Erasmus+ KA3 2018-2021 - policy-making entitled “Teachers4Europe: Setting an Agora for Democratic Culture”

HUMAN RIGHTS & DEMOCRACY

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HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION - FIRST THOUGHTS

- ▶ **HUMAN RIGHTS:** Need for an interdisciplinary approach
- ▶ Especially when it comes to teaching

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RIGHT TO EDUCATION

- ▶ Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights refers to education, its effects on the shaping of human personality and on the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental (individual) freedoms.
- ▶ UN Member States reaffirm their belief in the value of human rights education - as a long-term strategy - to prevent human rights and conflict violations, promote equality and sustainable development, strengthen participation of the citizen in the decision-making process.
- ▶ Human rights values must be taught at all levels of education, starting with elementary school, and of course affecting all educational methods used. In this context, besides teaching, there should be a specific bibliography school learners or university students will be invited to use.

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Why should human rights be taught ?

- ▶ Individual rights are based on the ever-increasing demand of citizens around the world for a culturally upgraded quality of life where the value of every human being will be constantly respected and protected.
- ▶ The protection of individual rights refers not only to the satisfaction of natural rights but also to the formation of those living conditions that allow the development and use of all human intellectual properties and, above all, consciousness.

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Basic axes in teaching human rights

- ▶ The rights of every child are recognised.
- ▶ The child is viewed in a wider context. Staff are concerned about what happens to children before they enter the school system (e.g. re. health) and as soon as they return back home.
- ▶ Teaching is child-centered, which means that there is an emphasis on the child's psychosocial well-being.
- ▶ It is gender sensitive and girl friendly. Staff focus on reducing restrictions towards achieving gender equality, eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting the success of both girls and boys.
- ▶ It promotes quality learning outcomes. Students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, express their views, and acquire basic skills.
- ▶ It provides education based on the reality of children's lives. Students have unique identities and past experiences in the school system, their community, and their families, which can be taken into account by teachers with the aim to promote student learning and development.

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Basic axes in teaching human rights (cont.)

- ▶ It works towards ensuring inclusion, respect and equality of chances for all children. Stereotypes, exclusion and discrimination are not tolerated.
- ▶ It promotes students' rights and obligations within the school environment, as well as activism within their community as a whole.
- ▶ It enhances teacher competences, morale, commitment and social status by ensuring that teachers receive adequate training, recognition and remuneration for their work.
- ▶ It is family focused. Staff strives to work with and support families, helping children, parents and teachers build constructive collaborative relationships.

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The importance of teaching human rights

- ▶ An educational target should be set that goes beyond the formal and non-formal curriculum and develops more within this framework than through individual training activities. A complete training project on human rights is considered to be every project that promotes human rights, aiming at cognitive development, emotional fulfillment and capacity building.
- ▶ *A culture should be fostered, namely attitude and morality in the relationships of students and teachers, class/group organizational awareness, school administrative culture, and problem solving strategies.
- ▶ * A methodology of collaborative discovery, critical thinking and transformative power should be developed.
- ▶ * The material used should be selected from the source of materials gathered by the defenders of human rights with respect to human dignity and systematic documentation.
- ▶ * Any subject should be taught within the real context of life across the world. Teaching important notions should be taught such as human dignity, freedom of thought and expression, indivisibility and interdependency of rights, positive and negative prejudices, accessibility, empowerment, global community and humanitarian or international law.

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The structure of good practices when teaching human rights in schools

- ▶ Theoretical approach and practical analysis aiming to improve the learning environment
- ▶ Pedagogical tools for the class
- ▶ Professional teacher development and improvement
- ▶ Evaluation methodology
- ▶ Every module should comprise a short overview of the various practices to be implemented as well as a detailed presentation of the means utilized for the collection of data, as follows: **title, organization’s name, target group, project goals, strong action points, applicability of the project action plan, sources of practice updates.**

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Education on the citizen’s democratic identity & human rights

- ▶ The definition of the citizen’s democratic identity and of the human rights as an educational priority in the educational policy of the member states is no easy task, even if the situation may vary in different member states.
- ▶ The definition of this priority as a main goal of educational systems leads to a new philosophy in terms of methodology and workload management. Studies carried out in the context of the program, including the All-European Study on EDC Policies, pointed out the urgent need for practical means that will help bridge the gap between designing and putting the plan in action.
- ▶ Therefore, the preparation of tools and means, the exchange of good practices as well as the increased cooperation between and within the member states have proved to be priorities of the program in the years 2006-2009.
- ▶ Three main fields of action: Policy development, the education of the professionals of education and the democratic administration of educational institutions. Re. all the above fields, the Council of Europe has developed a series of practical tools such as the present set of manuals for teachers.

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Class autonomy in the teaching of human rights teaching

- ▶ Teaching human rights at school is often seen as abstract, but it actually represents an organizational framework that teachers can apply to their own school. The actual principles of human rights can also be questions that we can use to evaluate a particular school practice. Is our discipline policy child-centered? Does it enhance students' rights and obligations? Are there sufficient opportunities for student participation in school? Is this participation meaningful and is the student the main actor? These principles may also lead to the involvement of the entire school in spreading the values of human rights in different dimensions of school life: learning, school development and management, as well as school and community policies.
- ▶ Perhaps we can agree that human rights in schools are not just about classroom education, but are also a way of school life. This is not something created by the goodwill of some teachers only. It is a commitment of the leadership and of a considerable number of teachers in schools, and therefore is so far rather rare.

Characteristics of crimes against humanity

- ▶ Crimes against humanity stand out for extensive and systematic attacks, that is, they regard any atrocity committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack on civilians, either by one perpetrator or by many acting once or at different times within an organized plan or a premeditated plan of action.
- ▶ The word "extensive" refers to the range of the nature of the attack and the number of persons targeted, as well as the one-off crime that has a cumulative and overall effect and results from a series of human acts (as a whole) or by an inhumane act of extraordinary dimension, while the word "systematic" refers to the organized nature of the act of violence and to the zero probability of its random occurrence, and is often expressed through a uniform, repetitive crime in the sense of an identical repetitive behavior on a regular basis.

Characteristics of the Crime of Genocide

- ▶ The genocide has been characterized as “the crime of crimes” by the ad hoc Court for Rwanda. The first time it was defined was in 1944 by Rafael Lemkin, who proposed that the genocide should be understood as denoting “a coordinated plan of various actions which aim to the destruction of the essential keystones of the life of the groups with the aim to destroy their life and annihilate the groups. The goals of such a plan are the decomposition of political and social institutions, of civilization, language, national beliefs, religion and economical self-sufficiency, even the circumvention of the rights for personal security, freedom, health, dignity and the life of the members of all these groups.”
- ▶ The definition given is included in the Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (9th October 1948), while it was integrated to the statutes of the ad hoc Courts, established by the Security Council for the cases of the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, but also to the Statute of Rome for the International Criminal Court. According to the Genocide’s Convention of 1948, the genocide is defined as the physical destruction of national, ethnic, racial and religious groups, in whole or in part.

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The teaching of the crimes of genocide in school

- ▶ The initial and more essential reason for teaching about the Holocaust and the other crimes of genocide in school (primary and secondary education) is the existence of so many cases of mass persecutions and suffering against groups of people, who were occasionally targeted during our contemporary history.
- ▶ Initially, a clear and well-documented knowledge of the Holocaust, the biggest genocide experienced by humanity, could help teachers and students understand other genocides, mass atrocities and violations of human rights. We ought to underline that the teaching of mass persecutions and criminal actions began after World War II, particularly after the Holocaust, namely the political extermination of the Jews in Europe by the NAZI and their partners. The survey about the Holocaust, at the same time, triggered a whole field of studies on genocides, such as the Genocide of the Armenians, the slaughters of the Herero, the murders and deportations from Stalin and the atrocities that took place in Central Africa, Sudan and Cambodia.

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Holocaust - Crimes against humanity

- ▶ 1. The Holocaust is often considered to be the trigger for shaping the sense of the term “genocide”, a term which came to the surface during World War II, to a great extent, as a response to the NAZI’s and their partners’ crimes. Thus, the Holocaust could consist the beginning and the base for investigating the genocide.
- ▶ 2. By comparing the Holocaust with other genocides and crimes against humanity, we ought to remain acute and clear-sighted and not focus only on the similarities between the facts, but also on essential differences. In this way, we could have the chance to understand the particular historic importance of the Holocaust, and on the other hand, through this, reach the firm understanding of other forms and facts of genocide. Following the same line of thought, the teaching of other genocides could contribute to the deeper understanding of the Holocaust.
- ▶ 3. By comparing the Holocaust to other genocides and crimes against humanity, it is also possible to recognize common principles and procedures that can result in the circumstances of genocide. As a matter of fact, through the understanding of this procedure and the understanding of all the stages that preceded sending alarmed messages, the deterrence of future genocides could be feasible.

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Holocaust- Crimes against humanity (cont.)

- ▶ 4. We ought to clarify to the youth, students in schools and universities, the historic importance of the Holocaust for the evolution of the International Law, the jurisdiction, even the efforts of the international community to face phenomena of genocides in the contemporary world.
- ▶ 5. Nowadays, the comparison of the Holocaust to other genocides could help to predispose young people against the possibility of causing other genocides and crimes against humanity. This element could enhance the consciousness/awareness level re. the role of the youth and their the responsibilities to the global community.
- ▶ 6. The comparison of the Holocaust with other genocides could help to combat the difficulty of recognizing other genocides too.
- ▶ 7. The knowledge about the Holocaust could also be useful when we investigate how we can “discuss” with the past and the societies after the genocide, how the communities can react against a genocide or even how the survivors can continue living with their traumatic experiences.
- ▶ 8. There are cases where the national history of a state could provide causes for comparing the Holocaust with a genocide that concerns this state and that has occurred against it.

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The teaching of the Children’s Rights and the student’s role

- ▶ According to the International Convention for Children’s Rights, the teaching of the Children’s Rights (up to 18 years old) in school should be based at the presentation of:

Non-discrimination principles, the child’s participation in the decision-making processes that concern them, the child’s identity (name, citizenship, family), access to basic (free) qualified education targeted at the development of the personality and skills of each and every child, the respect for a child’s cultural characteristics (development at intellectual, natural, psychological and moral level), the knowledge of the difference between private and social life (e.g. the participation in movements of young people), the child’s security (deterrence from and persecution of every act or action that may exploit them).

- ▶ Undoubtedly, the children’s knowledge of these essential principles may also enable them to complain if their rights are violated.

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- ▶ www.govunet.eu
- ▶ <https://summer-schools.aegean.gr/el>
- ▶ Tel. 22510.36512 (daily 10.30am-13.30pm)
- ▶ Europe Direct of Northern Aegean (Europe Direct), tel. 22510.36522, <https://www.europedirect-northaegean.gr/> (daily, 10am-17pm).

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