



GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP & YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE



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GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION BRIEFING FOR TEACHERS

Young people are growing up into an increasingly globalised world. Many of them are concerned about global issues and wish to know more about topics such as climate change, refugees, global poverty and gender inequality. But they don't just want to know more, they want to do something about these issues, to be involved in activities and campaigns.

Teachers therefore have a responsibility to respond to these interests and enthusiasms from young people. They also need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to address them within the school. All too often these themes, where they are tackled in the classroom, are taught in a form that does not encourage young people to believe that they can play a role in making difference to these issues in the world. By encouraging follow up actions that young people can take, this will more likely deepen their interest and develop their skills in how to engage in social and political issues.

Teaching topics such as refugees, climate change and global poverty are also complex issues. They require a depth of knowledge and understanding for teachers and young people, who also need to be aware that for many of these issues there are no simple solutions. There are also different viewpoints about themes such as refugees and asylum seekers, climate change and causes of global poverty. The development within young people of effective critical thinking skills therefore, needs to be included with young people's learning about the issues.

Across Europe, many schools will teach some of these issues but all too often little attention is given to how young people can be empowered to move beyond the recipients of knowledge to be active global citizens. There are a number of ways teachers can address these challenges.

- They can ensure that within the classroom consideration is given to different methods and styles of teaching that can encourage youth participation and the development of effective skills to take their interests further.
- Teachers can also consider the creation of clubs or after school activities that can support young people themselves develop their own forms of action and deepening their interest in these global issues.

These approaches have gained support amongst policy-makers across Europe through various initiatives on citizenship and global citizenship. The launch of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 have given an added impetus through the call to equip all learners with the knowledge and skills on sustainable development including global citizenship.

Teachers may well find that civil society organisations can be an effective resource and provide support to implementing global citizenship through youth participation within their school. Many of them have a wealth of expertise in global issues and are often engaged in projects that aim to encourage greater societal engagement in global issues. These organisations may also offer professional development



opportunities, access to resources, engagement in projects that can help teachers become more proficient and confident in teaching global issues within the classroom, and to be able to advise young people on how they could take their learning forward into meaningful action.

About this Briefing:

This directive is part of a major European Commission funded project called Schools for Future Youth involving organisations in Cyprus, Italy, Poland and the UK and is based on a longer paper, Global Citizenship and Youth Participation available at <http://www.sfyouth.eu/index.php/en/mm-about-en/reports/needanalysis>.

The aim of Schools for Future Youth is to increase educational engagement and active civic participation through the application of Youth Participation for Global Citizenship in formal and informal education. It will be reached through the achievement of three main objectives which are to:

- Develop innovative support for European teachers to use Youth Participation for Global Citizenship effectively through their core teaching;
- Develop innovative support for European youth to use Youth Participation for Global Citizenship to promote social actions through formal and informal education;
- Influence school systems across Europe to increase opportunities for teachers and young people to carry out Youth Participation for Global Citizenship.

Further information about the Project can be found at: <http://www.sfyouth.eu>.