

## TOWARDS A SHARED VISION OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN EUROPE

### One page summary

- **Civic education has a threefold mission in contemporary societies: strengthen democracy, promote the feeling of belonging to a community & facilitate access to knowledge and civic character.**
  - The way in which we access knowledge becomes relevant: **intellectual capacities or virtues such as critical thinking, curiosity, the desire for true knowledge, humility, and intellectual honesty**, among others.
  - In a society where different positions on how to achieve the common good coexist, it is more necessary than ever to **foster a moral sense of capability of bringing about a common ground between these positions.**
- **Civic education is fundamental for an integral education.**
  - **Civic education refers to others:** life with others is an essential component. The ethical criterion structures the way in which the interaction takes place and meaningful relationships are drivers of a happy life.
  - **An ethic of humility and solidarity is needed**, the sense of belonging to the community, and the desire to share spaces among those who think differently.
- **There is a transcendental connection between the associative sphere and civic education.**
  - **Community life is one of the main schools for democracy.** Associations are particularly effective tool in promoting citizenship competences.
  - Programs on issues such as environment, social action, participation and volunteering. Virtual media have become central elements for public participation, but new contexts require specific adaptations of human capacities or virtues, and further studies are needed.
- **Any civic education initiative will produce different effects according to the ideal of citizenship that one wishes to promote. So, what do we aspire to promote?**
  - **Firstly:** a personally responsible citizen, who feels the duty to fulfil his or her obligations to others and acts responsibly for the development of society. Values or virtues such as honesty, responsibility, generosity, self-discipline and effort provide the framework for this concept of citizenship.
  - **Secondly:** a participatory citizen, with a higher degree of commitment to public affairs, and direct actions in the community. Group organization of social movements, management of entities, project design...
  - **Thirdly:** a justice-oriented citizen, with a deeper vision of the political, economic, and social factors, specifically on the factors that generate social injustices. Understanding structural imbalances that maintain inequalities and their link with the public sphere. Active in social and political movements.
- **Our proposal is to bet on social attitudes common to all actions of a good citizen, such as optimism, altruism, responsibility –both social and political- respect, loyalty and justice.**
  - A good citizen is one who not only knows but also cultivates and practices virtue, in the classical sense. When we speak of social or civic virtues, we refer to those that play a facilitating role in the service to others, within society: they ensure the common good. Every virtue improves the character of the individual. Since society exists as a function of the people who make it up, the more virtuous the people, the better the society.
  - A good citizen wants to participate in the improvement of collective life: concerned about the proper functioning of everything related to politics and social issues.
  - For this to be real, a good citizen needs to know, love, be tolerant, understanding and open to the contrast of opinions different from their own, that is to say, to be respectful, without renouncing one's principles and always oriented towards justice, accepting the legitimately constituted authority within the legal framework.
  - The way to educate and cultivate positive social habits is to proactively develop in practice these characteristics of a good citizen: **altruism, responsibility, respect, loyalty, critical thinking, justice...** on the basis of rational knowledge.