

## MODERN PRACTICES IN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION





# DEMOCRACY STARTS AT SCHOOL

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It is very important to realize that democracy starts at school. From this perspective the crucial objective of education is to teach young people to be active citizens.

For many children, school is the first public institution they experience. This experience has potentially an enormous impact on their development as citizens. Here they learn for the first time about the system of state governance and principles of its operation. Even more importantly, schools can offer children a safe place to experience the principles and mechanisms of

democracy first hand, and learn to trust them while gaining confidence in their own ability to participate in democracy as active citizens.

Everyone in school can contribute to this in a number of ways. Through democratic school governance and innovative participatory teaching methodology, school leaders and teachers can facilitate independence of opinions and judgement, and encourage students' engagement in society. In a democratic school culture, students will experience solidarity, responsibility for oneself and for others, and principles of co-operation and participation in public life.

In a world of diversity, democratic values and practices are more important than ever. Education – from kindergarden to higher education institutions — is key to the development of a sustainable democratic culture. Moreover, education is increasingly seen as a defense against the rise of violence, racism, extremism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance. This growing awareness is reflected in the adoption of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education by the Organisation's 47 member states, including the Russian Federation.

To support the implementation of Council of Europe's education policies, such as the Charter, in member states, The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) was established in 2008. Since then, EWC has worked with thousands of educators, scholars, civil society representatives, politicians, parents and students on issues of civic education, including democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding.

Since 2012, EWC has worked in partnership with the Moscow School of Civic Education on a joint program on promoting civic education in the regions of the Russian Federation. The programme has involved education professionals in several regions, and has generated great results. This publication compiles some of the best practices and innovative approaches in civic education which has emerged from the programme so far. I hope that these experiences and practices will serve as inspiration for new initiatives in educational practice in Russia and beyond.

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*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil  
is for good men to do nothing.*

**Edmund Burke (1729–1797)**

Supporters of citizenship education often hear from their opponents: why do you think children, school and society need all those enlightening stupidities that you promote? Is it necessary to teach citizenship, democracy and the operation of constitutional state? Does the contemporary world really need any special skills for civic life? Isn't it enough for being a citizen to be born as one? You'd better teach the children useful school subjects, give them proper moral upbringing and teach them to be patriots of their country! It is not easy to object to this line of reasoning. Each of these rhetorical questions expresses an individual position, life experience and undoubtedly, deep personal feelings. However, in my opinion, it is not difficult to oppose such opinions if we have a clear and simple concept of citizenship education as the antithesis to ideological indoctrination. I do not intend to present a comprehensive concept and will only identify the most important and the most contradictory points in today's discussions about citizenship education.

### **Why it is necessary to teach citizenship**

For the most part, teachers and education administrators are skeptical about it. They believe citizenship education to be nothing but a trendy area of knowledge that is totally meaningless for school curriculum. It is seen as an additional responsibility for overworked teachers and an unnecessary burden for school in general. Moreover, the idea of citizenship education is said to be borrowed from Western pedagogical experience that is alien to local traditions. For the sake of justice I will point out that thirty years ago teachers and school administrators in the West thought in a similar way and questioned the rationale of the new subject imposed on them. However, skepticism decreased with increasing understanding that citizenship education is not an additional, random or optional subject but a new stage in international philosophy of education. It promotes a new reading of its mission and objectives as well as a new definition of the subject and object of pedagogical impact. At present, citizenship education has become the key subject. As a result, secondary education is no longer seen exclusively in "technical" terms of information,

skills, abilities and basic knowledge acquisition, i.e. in terms of the state standard with its obligatory and thoroughly verified components. Modern education contains an integrating element that avoids simple testing in school conditions — it is the level of the civic awareness of school graduates. Today the content matter of entire education is revised from the perspective of civic ideas and values. Forms of the teacher's work become less restricted, more creative and oriented at the development of independent civic thinking. In other words, citizenship education is a new teaching philosophy which is adjusted to demands of the present. It is a philosophy of the equality of teachers and students. It is a philosophy that rejects dogmatic ideology, ethnic nationalism, false patriotism, catechetical preaching, and mentoring. And finally, it encourages students to think independently, develop civic consciousness and vocabulary skills and activate a sense of morality and the spirit of citizenship.

Thus, the main aim of citizenship education is to ensure continuity and progressive development of civic culture, supremacy of law, democracy and social justice in any country. This aim can be achieved only through continuous education and coherently well-planned citizenship instruction.

### **The meaning of citizenship education**

Citizenship education is the teaching of democracy and at the same time teaching through democracy. Democracy presumes direct participation of citizens in public life: their ability and readiness to discuss different problems, participate in decision-making, influence political processes and be responsive and emphatic. In other words, it presumes involvement in civic and political life. Such citizens are responsible mediators between the government, institutions, interest groups and what is most important, indifferent citizens who avoid politics.

Being a civic communicator is the most essential social function (and trait of character) of the democratic citizen. It means more than being honest and moral. One is expected to know the theory and practice of public discussions, persuasion, compromising, reasoning, defending one's point of view, social problems analysis and alternative development vision. Besides, a civic communicator should possess civic virtues for voluntary involvement in social life.

### **A democratic citizen**

The concept of democratic citizen is profoundly contradictory. Perhaps that is why we receive such different answers to the question, "What does it mean to be a democratic citizen?"

Typically, he/she is described as a critically-thinking person who can see social drawbacks, assess the scope of the problem and decide how a situation can be improved through participation in decision-making. Sometimes it is also said that a democratic citizen is angry and always in opposition to the government. Or that this person is a demanding and determined leader who openly calls things by their names. In other words, a democratic citizen is often presented as a "revolutionary" even though a moderate one.

Others believe that a democratic citizen should abide the law, accept and support the existing social order and restrict his/her civic involvement to charity and help extended to the socially unprotected. Such an approach does not assume an open expression of one's opinion.

These are two contradictory approaches that nonetheless are the two sides of the same coin: cooperative vs critical and compromising vs intolerant as the two faces of a "good/active citizen." Today he/she holds out a hand and is ready to cooperate with the government, and tomorrow he/she turns away from it, refuses to compromise his/her principles or supports an alternative agenda. At the

same time, he/she always follows the existing procedures and with his/her activities endorses the superiority of law. A democratic citizen adheres to the philosophy of active citizenship and as the British philosopher Brian Murphy puts it, supports a democratic concept of an open “conspiracy” in favor of positive social changes.

### **Didactics of citizenship education**

The dilemma of whether we need a common national curriculum of citizenship education or whether schools and teachers can take the responsibility for the subject, has not yet found a satisfactory solution. Those who believe that without a common and coherent framework the teaching of citizenship education courses can be chaotic have their point as well as those who fear that bureaucratic regulations can destroy any educational initiative at the very beginning. In short, for different countries and even different regions within the same country there is no single solution to this difficult task. Citizenship education is increasingly interpreted as a tailored course, although at the same time it is expected to meet strict educational requirements.

It is essential to didactically distinguish the following subject lines: (1) civic theory, (2) civic concepts, (3) civic process, and (4) civic opportunities. In real life, these elements are closely intertwined but for educational purposes they may be separated. The first two lines form a knowledge-block and the other two a skills-block. While the first block is typically easy to teach, the latter is considered problematic. It is not always obvious what can be considered skills in civic life.

Experts from countries with experience in the area of citizenship education suggest viewing the three main aspects of the idea of a civic “skill”. The first aspect is critical thinking and independent study, i.e. looking at the level of social significance of a problem and the way it is formulated in everyday language. In order to do it, one is expected to be able to gather information,

analyze it, distinguish a fact from a value judgment, view a range of opinions, compare interests and positions, etc. In the era of free information circulation, competition of traditional media and the Internet, media wars and government indoctrination, teaching a teenager these skills is a major pedagogical challenge. After all, you can run into a problem and fail to recognize it. One can take government or media messages at face value and consider all related sources of information objective and unbiased. All this brings into play a second super skill, i.e. promulgation and protection of civic interests.

As a communicator, the democratic citizen must constantly engage in political debates and public speaking, evaluate points of view, choose between different values and approaches, and determine his/her personal and group position. It means that one must be able to argue again and again.

In the 21st century, as the world is becoming more and more individualized, people are much less inclined to rely on the opinion of the majority. Persuasion, negotiation and consideration of multiple views on terms of a consensus are the essence of a civic dialogue today. The idea of a dialogue, not a debate, is essential because the internal logic of the debate implies that there are winners and losers and that situation should be avoided.

Finally, civic action itself is the third super skill. It refers to definition of objectives, selection of best possible means of problem-solving, identification of partners, planning and many more things included in civic engineering. Civic action comprises specific practical abilities, such as working with target groups, cooperation and opposition, organization of group actions, critical assessment of one’s own actions and learning from civic practice (auditing).

### **Projects in civic pedagogy**

A student can acquire all civic skills in the process of an integrated activity, its planning and implementation. Projects can be individual. However,

experience shows that group projects have a higher educational value.

Projects usually begin in class, then extend beyond it, and, finally, reach the outside world not connected with school. Projects may be more or less closely coordinated by the teacher, may involve parents or focus on the interests of local communities. In case of the latter, projects become practice-oriented real actions.

The simplest projects usually facilitate the emergence of the so-called proto-civic "voice" that presumes the identification of his/her position by a student and ability to express it. Although small-group work is still considered a very important didactic tool, group actions and not just formal discussions proved to be the most effective way to achieve the above. Such projects develop skills of free expression and respect for the "voice" of the other. When the subject of the project relates to the outside world, the students not only learn the basics of civic objectives identification but also develop their ability to create a balanced strategy of civic life in a community and global world and in agreement with nature. These are the challenges that only "holistic pedagogy" is ready to deal with today.

The most interesting aspect of project activity is the teaching of role identity. It usually begins with a role design, which keeps a teenager in the familiar space of his/her class and school. Here a problem of school democracy emerges as a new fundamental issue of citizenship education. What are its objectives, content, limits of the possible and permissible, given a conservative orientation and fears of the supporters of the traditional school?

### Democracy at school

School has always been an institution of discipline and authority. Power and control prevailed over individual perspectives of a child. That was how the system protected itself. It was considered an established convention that everything at school, including classrooms, was designed in teacher's

interests and ensured his/her domineering position. Teachers, parents and students considered it to be a norm. A "humanist" was a label given to a teacher (typically a lonely one) who chose the softest forms of the generally adopted authoritarian and disciplinary policy. A new educational philosophy proposes not minor repairs but a thorough renovation of the entire system. That idea emerged for the first time nearly fifty years ago, but the system changes slowly and shows much resistance.

The Little Red School book is the title of an eye-opening book for students by the Danish authors Søren Hansen and Jasper Jensen. It was published in 1971 (in fact, the book was originally published in 1969 – translator's note) and was immediately translated into many European languages. It is a straightforward and honest story about real life in an ordinary school, the way school system works and many aspects of school life that are not typically discussed in the open. The authors told the students about the organization of teachers' and schoolmasters' work, formal and pedagogical restrictions of their professional activity, and students' rights and the ways to defend them. However, this is not an exhaustive list of "taboo topics" in the book. The book was banned in almost all countries and printed copies were withdrawn from sale. The official reason for such measures was an explicit description of sex and drug culture in European schools. However, it was only a pretext and the actual motivation went much further: the European pedagogical establishment turned out to be totally unprepared for equality with students and did not wish the existing "rules of the game" to be discussed in public. The overall picture presented in the book was too unattractive to be accepted. It is amazing that an unexpurgated edition of the book was published more than thirty years later. We can presume that it is an average speed of cultural changes in education. What is the subject and object of democratization at schools? The point is not to replay selected "adult" democratic procedures (even with a noble educational purpose), such as, for example, elections with key



candidates, school development strategies, budgeting, and discussion of plans. As the aim is to teach democracy, such role playing can also be relevant, however, a superficial character of the changes it suggests is more or less obvious. A real democratic environment at school presumes the recognition of children's rights by teachers, the students ability to discuss and defend those rights, broad school equality, the freedom of educational process, and changes in the internal infrastructure, including, for example, abandoning the repressive class system. Certainly, a list of such elements is not exhaustive. Living in democracy and learning through it makes new educational objectives achievable and in this way ensures a tangible change in the character of new citizens.

### **Citizenship education methodology**

Is it possible to have a single methodology for teacher-tailored courses in citizenship education? If we turn to the European experience, we will find a well-balanced combination of the teacher's freedom, reasonable coordination and careful planning. The British educators Kate Brown and Steven Fairbrass analyzed a large number of school strategies for citizenship education and came to the conclusion that in one way or another all schools adopt one of four possible methodological approaches: 1) a tactics of specialized citizenship lessons (with an increasing complexity from one level to another); 2) strategies of cross-curricular teaching (even during math lessons it is possible to discuss citizenship issues); 3) civic life re-creation strategy (the creation of civic life models in school), and 4) a tactics of educational events (for example, Memorial Day, Tolerance Lesson, etc.). The research shows that students find a cross-curriculum approach most appealing, which does not necessarily mean that it is most efficient. Whatever is the basis of systematic citizenship education in a particular school, its success depends much less on rigid requirements and internal logic and more on the availability of a single-minded team that plans its

activities and identifies priority themes and subjects. Then it does not matter what formal structures its activities will take at school. Experienced educators recommend to use the so-called funnel method when long-term planning identifies reference points for medium-term planning and clear objectives for short-term planning. Planning from the bottom removes contradictions between the teacher's freedom and restrictions of the national curriculum. Yet a belief in grassroots initiatives should not be absolute.

### **Education of a responsible citizen: the role of supranational institutions**

In the united Europe, the European Commission and the Council of Europe perform the role of a supreme "legislator" in citizenship education. They determine the importance of the subject and define working definitions and concepts, and a common approach to mission understanding, but do not dictate a policy or general rules as to how the above should be implemented in practice. In 1997, the Education for Democratic Citizenship Project set up by the Council of Europe gave for the first time a new definition of a "responsible citizen" as a person whose identity depends on his/her understanding of democracy, human rights, social partnership, solidarity, tolerance and justice. The European Commission recommended all member-countries to use this extended explanation in the creation of new national educational strategies. They no longer contain a narrow vision of patriotism, fear of cosmopolitanism or any ideological instructions. Even though national curricula may considerably differ from country to country, they have three common themes that are fundamental at the present moment.

### **Three themes of modern citizenship education**

The first is political competence. It implies not only a proper understanding of the actual structure of a





democratic society and constitutional state, but also the awareness of those ‘ideal’ conditions when social life of an individual is harmonious, stable and full of dignity.

The second is critical thinking and orientation at the solidarity of values. On the one hand, a responsible citizen is expected to have an independent political position (independent opinions and judgements) and be able to publicly express an opinion (have discussion skills).

On the other, as a civic communicator, he/she is expected to be solidarity-oriented in his/her social behavior, respect other community members and minorities, be morally responsible for the creation of a tolerant environment and resist violence and xenophobia.

The third is active participation. Social cooperation and responsibility for the community in both a narrow

and broad sense is the most important practical knowledge, psychological orientation and civic skill for future generations. It is true that at the moment of birth people have different temperaments but their social engagement is the matter of their free choice determined by knowledge and understanding of citizenship “vocation” as essential for an individual today. That knowledge and understanding are acquired at school.

\* \* \*

The booklet you are reading is a summary of regional initiatives in citizenship projects and teaching. These initiatives are still very rare in Russian pedagogy. All of them are original projects adjusted to local situations. It is not recommended to copy them. However, the experience of others can help in the acquisition of one’s own.

*Olga Krivulina*

## **A TEENAGER FOR A TEENAGER (YOUTH FILM STUDIO)**

### **Project realization place**

*State Municipal Educational Facility for Additional Education of Students Stavropol Palace of Children's Arts, Studio School of Journalism 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel, Stavropol*

### **Context and Problem**

*The project promotes the development of teenagers' citizenship competences on the basis of active social engagement and support of youth initiative using the facilities of youth film studio. Teamwork at the studio and meaningful and responsible group activities that include shooting, dubbing and film editing create a favorable environment for social education and personality development of teenagers. This is a specific creative process that uses a unique language of reality visualization as a means to citizenship capacity development. The studio school is attended by 13–17-year old teenagers who want to learn more about the world and are convinced that an individual is not only an observer of life but its active participant. Teenagers who attend the studio created a "self-conscious community" that exists and develops thanks to mutually enriching communication and activity.*

### **Project aims**

*To prepare a series of films that will initiate a free discussion of social*



*problems which are important for teenagers, with a suggestion of their solution.*

### **Activities**

- 1) Conducting survey polls of 250 students in order to identify their problems.*
- 2) Project planning: a selection of social roles, forms of filming and graphic means appropriate for the subject by the participants.*

- 3) Shooting and preparation of different types of thematic video materials: short films, visuals, etc.*
- 4) Shows of video materials in city schools with a subsequent discussion of the problems they raise. We conducted 22 shows in 12 schools in the city.*

### **Outcomes**

- 1. Participation in the implementation of the project allowed*





teenagers to get engaged in socially significant activities and acquire communication experience with their peers in the format of film dialogue.

2. Acquisition of social project development skills and thematic video-making skills (8 video materials were prepared). Many project participants arrived at a better understanding of the perspectives of their activities. Students became aware of their contribution to a so-

lution of socially significant youth problems.

#### Long-term impact of the project

Stavropol Palace of Children's Arts may become a center of new partnership between educational institutions and teenagers as well as of the organization and development of socially significant teenagers' activities.

Posting information about the proj-

ect on the Internet will help it get new supporters.

#### Participants' Comments

"I thank the project for an opportunity to express my point of view and see that one is not lonely in the attempt to solve a problem. It is an opportunity to remind adults that a child is also a legitimate citizen of the country"  
(Elizaveta Rogozina).



*Secondary School No. 6, Stavropol*

*The social position of any individual (an adult or a child) determines his/her rights, obligations and responsibilities. To prepare children for dealing with difficult life problems in modern world, it is necessary to help them develop a mindset based on the respect for the law and awareness of one's rights, freedoms and responsibilities in society. In order to do so, adults, parents as well as teachers, should respect the law themselves and live according to legal and moral norms.*

*To promote the development of legal culture at school and acquisition of legal and citizenship skills by students by means of information sharing and discussion of individual, citizenship, social and cultural rights in socially-oriented activities.*

1) *A cycle of interactive classes intended to provide information about human rights conducted on the basis of the textbook of human rights education for children Compassito. Information meetings and discussions with students about*

2) *Group discussions of the project theme. Meetings and discussions with representatives of university students and teachers, members and instructors of youth art clubs, students and teachers of this and other*



schools, and representatives of local government and business.

3) Elaboration and implementation with the students of a social ecological project titled *We Care*.

4) Making of posters and drawings in a competition format. Design of the Calendar of Human Rights in the same format.

5) Organization of the following events:

— *I Have the Right to Know*: a series of weekly class meetings in three city schools (project's target groups) aimed to popularize the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

— *We Care*: an initiative conducted simultaneously in three city schools, which included a demonstration of a short video about environmental protection and human rights

## Outcomes

1. Students have been broadly informed about norms of citizenship

and legal culture and principles of social interaction on the basis of human rights principles. They have a clear understanding of their human rights, documents that legalize those rights and ways to protect them.

2. Students became more interested in problems of their school and local community in general. They gained experience of participation in school life and that of their closest community. Students not only became aware of a possibility to exercise their rights through participation in socially significant projects but willingly did it.

3. Engagement in social activities helped students develop their teamwork skills and initiated an exchange of experience and opinions inside the group. The school developed new forms of legal education. Active engagement of all participants in the implementation

of the social project created an atmosphere of trust, openness and mutual respect.

## Long-term impact of the project

Both teachers, students and parents benefited from the experience of collaboration and social partnership. The implementation of the social project helped not only to increase legal awareness, but also to develop the ability to identify urgent social problems and propose ways of their solution.

## Participants' Comments

"Children should know their rights in order to defend them and fight for their interests."

"Children should be aware of their rights to understand the world and move forward."



## FROM LEGAL AWARENESS TO CIVIC PEACE AND CONSENT

### Project realization place

*North Caucasus Federal University (NCFU), Stavropol*

### Context and Problem

*With the introduction of European standards and values in the Russian system of education secondary school teachers, organizers of extracurricular activities and university faculty should pay more attention to the study of human rights and liberties, citizen's responsibilities, and possible involvement of young people in the activities of their school, city, region and country. The main aim of the project is to develop youth legal culture and legal awareness, encourage interest in social life in young people, and teach them critical thinking and legal assessment skills for dealing with social events.*

### Project aims

*To facilitate the acquisition of knowledge about human rights, understanding of the connection of rights and freedoms with responsibility and the development of an active citizenship position and citizenship competence of students of different ages.*

*To support cooperation between students aimed to increase their social engagement.*

### Activities

*1) Creation of training materials on the topic "Basics of Legal Culture."*

*2) Conducting ten classes with students on the topic "Basics of Legal Culture."*

*3) Conducting three round-table discussions about citizenship and legal problems for senior school students and NCFU students (group discussion skill).*

*4) Opening of an art club "Chil-*

*dren's Rights in Contemporary Russia: Youth Perspective."*

*5) Facilitation of independent teamwork of students who prepare and present literary and artistic works on the project's topic in the art club.*

*6) Final test on citizenship competence for senior school students and university students.*







## Outcomes

Test results after the completion of the project and our observations showed an increased level of citizenship competence of school and university students. In particular, they — developed a coherent vision of individual, civic, social and cultural rights of an individual; — became aware of the citizen's right as a moderator of social relations and developed a respectful attitude to the law; — mastered models of moral and legal behavior that conform with democratic society standards; — improved relations with their

peers. All projects participants worked as equal partners and their collaboration was based on mutual trust. As a result, school and university students became more efficient in their legal and citizenship activities.

## Long-term impact of the project

The project increased students' interest in human rights, democratic values, and the problem of tolerance. They aspired to realize their citizenship rights and responsibilities. School students became more active in class and in extracurricu-

lar activities. School and university students developed their social competence and their communicative engagement increased.

## Participants' Comments

"I found those activities fascinating. My attitude towards human rights as the highest value in the constitutional state changed. I would like to take a more active part in similar events in the future because I am very much interested in such problems"

(Daria Chalova).

## BRIDGES AS THE CITY SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DISCUSSION PLATFORM FOR SENIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

### Project realization place

*Municipal Center for Educational Development, Yaroslavl*

### Context and Problem

*A low level of political culture and social indifference of many young people leads to abuses at various levels of government hierarchy and prevents the development of civil society and democracy. Especially organized discussion platforms like bridges connect different social groups: senior school students, parents, representatives of government, NGOs and businesses. Public discussions of current problems contribute to the growth of mutual trust between community and authorities and a sense of their joint responsibility, as well as develop the culture of political participation in young people.*

*A public debate over the government document titled Teacher's Professional Standard determined social and political contexts of the project. With the agreement of the Municipal Department of Education, the discussion platform became part of the Pedagogical Forum of 2015 — "Development of Human Resource Capacity in the Municipal Education System".*

### Project Aims

*To engage parents and students in solving urgent educational problems.*

### Activities

*The idea of an open discussion platform was to launch public debates about the "Teacher's Professional Standard". The target audience consisted of students of various age groups (4–11 grades), parents, teachers, including the winners of professional competitions, school principals, representatives of educational authorities, and organizers of professional development courses for teachers. Numerous NGOs, artistic associations and studios, and students of Pavel Demidov State Pedagogical University were among the partners of the event. In total more than 300 people attended the Forum, including students of eighteen city schools.*

*1. Discussion clubs were set up in five pilot schools (No. 25, 37, 42 and 49) and the Provincial College. A total of 120 senior school students were involved.*

*2. On the basis of the Council of Europe manuals Compass and Living in Democracy fourteen teachers developed the Program for Democratic Citizenship and Discussion Methodology Education*

*3. The Municipal Center for Edu-*

*cational Development organized a cycle of workshops for school-teachers on EDC/HRE.*

*The project consisted of three stages:*

*Stage I. Spring 2014 – organization of school discussions. Examples of the issues discussed: "Do we need a school uniform?", "What books should a school student read these days?", "How to punish a child" etc.*

*Stage II. Autumn 2014 – organization of school discussion platforms. Examples of the issues discussed: "The Role of Students in the School Management Council," "City-Manager: Arguments For and Against," etc.*

*Stage III. Spring 2015 – organization of a city discussion platform Modern Teacher through Students' Eyes. This event became the culmination point of the project and aroused an enormous interest in the city. It was widely discussed in the media, by educators and in social networks.*

### Outcomes

- 1. Students contributed their proposals to Teacher's Professional Standard.*
- 2. Interest in problems of the municipal education increased.*
- 3. Interactive methods and technologies were introduced in educational practice.*





### Long-term impact of the project

*Project participants gained positive experience of collaboration and clear awareness of the need for a constructive dialogue between adults, children, school and the community. Teachers were able to see the benefits of interactive technology (used by moderators in thematic sections). Joint decision-making concerning the development of the educational system in the city has stimulated further reflection over the issues*

*and methods of citizenship education.*

### Participants' Comments

*"For me it was important to learn the technology and practice of public opinion polls. It was my first experience with them. I realized how often adults manipulate figures for their benefit and learned to distinguish between fact and argument" (Ilya Smirnov, grade 9).*

*"It was a certain risk offering children to discuss adult problems, but it succeeded beyond all expecta-*

*tions! We saw entirely new forms of interaction, a new style of communication between teachers and students. Discussions help overcome the isolation and conservatism of a modern school. They should be more widely used in education and public life"*

*(Elena Ivanova, Deputy Director, Department of Education, Yaroslavl).*



### Project realization place

Yaroslavl Constantin Ushinsky State Pedagogical University

### Context and Problem

Federal Law on Education assumes the creation of School Services of Reconciliation (SSR) to defend students' rights and teach parents, teachers and representatives of school administration the skills of conflict resolution in child's interests. Prevention of school conflicts and their solution is an important aspect of children's rights protection. The development of conflict management competence is a significant element of citizenship education that promotes forms and methods of taking active positions in conflicts. The key problem that shows the urgency of this element of citizenship education is the inability of conflict participants to have a dialogue and discuss complex problems related to children's rights.

### Project Aims

1. To develop conflict management competence of teachers, i.e. knowledge, abilities and skills to prevent and solve conflicts in child's interests.
2. To help students develop skills necessary to defend one's position in conflicts.
3. To apply innovative methods in teaching conflict management.



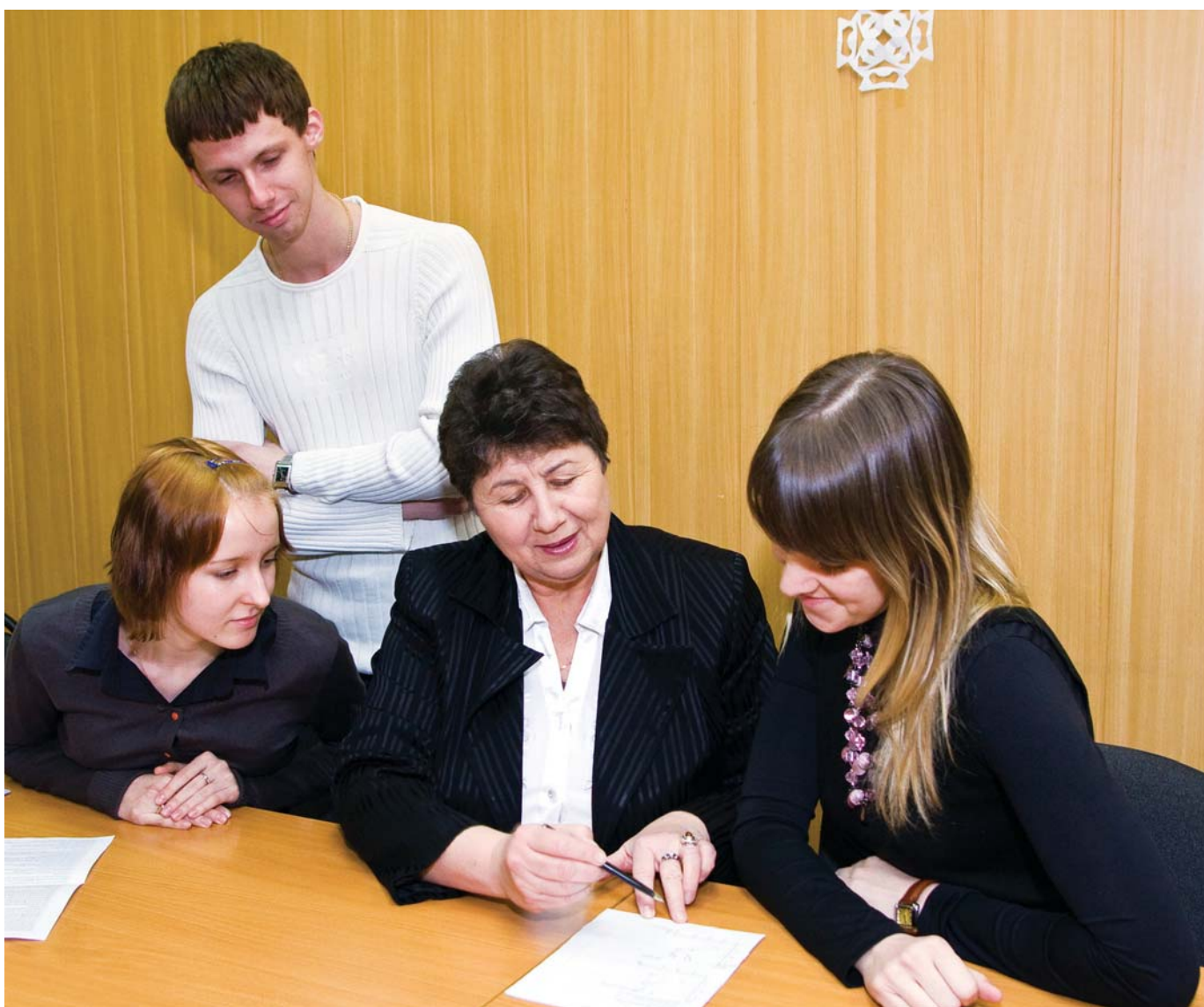
### Activities

1. Conducting workshops on mediation and conflict management.
2. Introduction of human rights topics into the curricula of Bachelor degree and Master degree programs in Conflict Studies.
3. Preparation of graduation projects on teenagers' rights.
4. Participation of Bachelor degree and Master degree students of Conflict Studies in international and Russian conferences with presentations related to the topic of the project.
5. Promotion of school students' research within the framework of

Otkrytiye (Discovery) project on civic engagement.  
6. Preparation of the project *Mosty i mostiki* (Big and Small Bridges) for work with parents at Rybinsk school. Workshops are conducted for the following target groups: senior school students from schools no. 66 and Lesnaya (Forest) school in Yaroslavl and colleges and schools in Rybinsk.

### Outcomes

1. Conducting workshops on mediation for school students and university college students.



2. Preparation and successful defense of five diploma theses about family, school and institutional conflicts.

3. Conducting classes with Master degree students of Conflict Studies about the development of conflict management competence in the area of children's rights.

4. Conducting classes with school students (12 academic hours) on mediation and defense of one's rights in conflicts.

5. Preparation of six conference papers by Bachelor degree and Master degree students and their presentation in Kazan and Vilnius.

6. Preparation and presentation of 12 student's papers for the conference Konstantin Ushinky's Reading at Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University.

7. Preparation and initiation of the *Mosty i mostiki* (Big and Small Bridges) project for work with parents at Rybinsk school. The project is prepared and conducted by the first-year Master degree student.

#### **Long-term impact of the project**

*The most important result of the project is the increase of conflict*

*management awareness in the Yaroslavl region and involvement of teachers, parents, students of experimental and other city schools, Provincial and University College in these activities.*

#### **Participants' Comments**

*"We liked these classes but we must study more to be able to use this knowledge in practice."*

*"We need a system of education and training that will include specialists of different profiles."*



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEENAGERS' CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN CHILDREN'S CAMPS

### Project realization place

Russian Children's Center Orlyonok, Children's Camp Stremitelnyi, Krasnodar Krai

### Context and Problem

Teaching staff of the Children's Camp Stremitelnyi developed a comprehensive program of pedagogical activity for 2013–2014. It aimed to elaborate an educational model that would encourage teenagers' civic self-identification in the children's camp. Democratization of the children's camp management style and the inclusion of all parties involved in that process was an essential condition for the successful implementation of the project.

### Project Aim

Identification of the impact of leisure and project activities of temporary children's communities on the development of social engagement of teenagers.

### Activities

Preparation and conducting of a practical sociological survey aimed at the analysis of the social engagement of teenagers. The questionnaire was answered by 275 teenagers of age group 12–13. The questions aimed to identify and analyze the tar-

get group's expectations as well as content and diversity of forms of their leisure activities, to analyze activity types that are favored both at the camp and at home and to assess the level of the teenagers' initiative in the two spaces.

### Outcomes

1. The development of core EDC/HRE competences and identification of the model of their development in educational institutions. The situation in two children's camps (Solnechnyi and Stremitelnyi) was used to identify the level of children's camp management democratization from the administrative perspective and to identify the involvement of teachers, children and other parties involved in that process.
2. Results of the pilot sociological survey helped single out three main types of teenagers as far as their social engagement is concerned: (1) "consumers," (2) "those interested" and (3) "activists." "Consumer" is the dominant type of social engagement in summer camps. Over half of the respondents see the diversity of activities as a value and an advantage of the summer camp. Teaching methods are selected and used in accordance with different teenagers' needs. In regards to the interests of ethnic minority groups present in the camp, most camp counselors believe that the staff makes every effort to estab-

lish a cooperation and hires instructors who represent national minorities and other isolated groups to help children get integrated in the camp's culture and successfully participate in its activities.

3. In 2015 Stremitelnyi camp published a book of materials that describe a model of teenagers' civic identification development in children's camps.







### Long-term impact of the project

*The results confirmed earlier observations: managerial process is open and can be influenced by teachers, children, and their parents. The model of core competences works and can be used as a tool not only at schools but also in children's camps.*

### Participants' Comments

*"The camp is open to children from all regions of Russia. That is why the recognition of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity is essential for us. If we do not accept it, we will be entrapped in conflicts"*  
*(Inna Kolganova, educational programs facilitator, children's camp Orlyonok).*

### Project realization place

*Secondary School No. 105, Rostov-on-Don*

### Context and Problem

*At the moment, about 60% of students in Secondary School No. 105 in Rostov-on-Don are children of labor migrants from Central Asia. Many of them do not speak Russian well and have communication problems. Residents of the city are distrustful of migrants and do not like their increasing presence. The number of migrants in the Rostov region is estimated to be 70 thousand. Young people, including students, have many negative ethnic stereotypes of people from Central Asia and North Caucasus and lack tolerance in everyday relations with them.*

### Project Aim

*To develop positive intercultural orientation in students, children of migrants and their parents by means of students and children's involvement in active communication with each other and introduction to the cultural landscape of the city.*

*To overcome negative ethnic stereotypes that school and University students may have.*

### Activities

*1. Weekly meetings with students aimed to foster civic values, under-*

*standing of tolerance and intercultural communication.*

*2. The development of sociocultural project ABC of Everyday Culture by local university students. The project is oriented at the interaction with school students from migrant families and their integration into local sociocultural environment.*

*3. Implementation of the project during interactive classes with school and university students.*

*4. Weekly group interactive meetings with students to discuss their project activity.*

### Outcomes

*1. Teachers observed an increased interest of school students in meetings with their university partners. Children began to bring their peers to those meetings and their behavior in class changed. They became more active and relaxed and used the in-*







formation, they received during meetings with students, in class. 2. Stereotypes about other ethnic groups were defied: “They are like us.” Students learned many useful things and realized that they learned from each other and participated in cultural exchange.

#### Long-term impact of the project

Students overcame stereotypical negative attitudes towards mi-

grants from Central Asia and developed a new vision of ethnic equality, i.e. equality for everyone substituted a traditional tolerance of the “other”. It is also important that they became more confident in themselves and their ability to independently develop projects targeted at the local community, solving socially significant problems. They also learned the difference between project activity and voluntary work.

#### Participants’ Comments

*“I must say there was mutual understanding and mutual respect... It was good to see how the children changed and to realize that you also contributed to it and that even with a difference in age and little experience you can change yourself create your own project and help others at the same time changing yourself...”*  
(Elizaveta Lokotko, student).



## TEACHING OTHERS WE LEARN OURSELVES: STUDYING HUMAN RIGHTS AT SCHOOL

### Project realization place

*Southern Federal University,  
Lyceum No. 103, Rostov-on-Don*

### Context and Problem

*The level of legal awareness of middle and junior high school students even in the so-called “good” schools leave much to desire. In conflict situations, teenagers prefer aggressive and violent methods that easily offend human dignity and can be qualified as illegal actions.*

### Project aims

*To shape in teenagers a clear vision of human rights, to develop their skills of responsible behavior and critical assessment of their actions, especially in conflict situations, and to teach them to apply this knowledge in everyday social interaction.*

### Activities

- 1. Classes with 4<sup>th</sup> years students of Social Studies aimed to foster an attitude to human rights as a value, to teach students to understand the ways of their implementation and protection and to master interactive teaching methods.*
- 2. Workshops with school students of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade aimed at teaching them the game "Debates".*
- 3. Weekly class meetings with mid-*

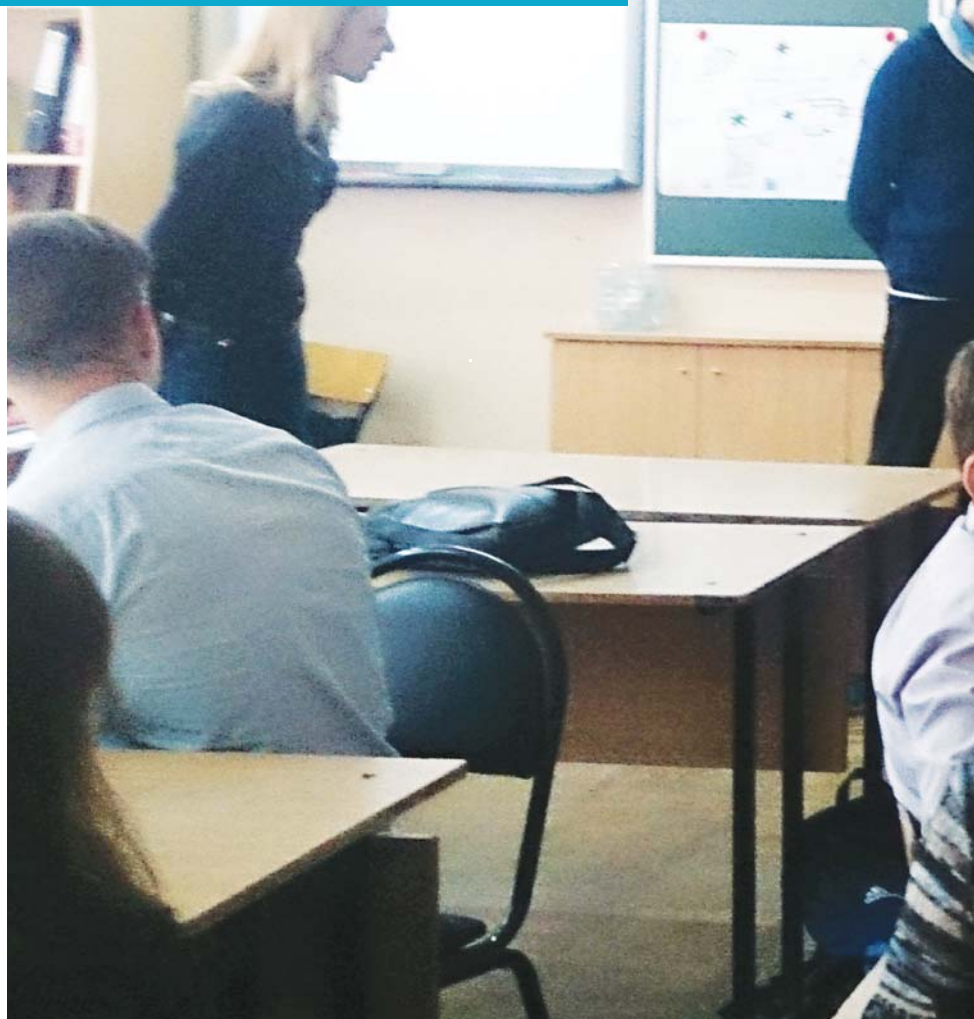
*dle school students (grades 7–9) to discuss the following topics: “Learn about your rights” and “Conflict of rights: freedom of speech and safety, education and leisure, freedom of religion and of expression.”*

- 4. A series of four interactive seminars for nine-graders (25 students) to discuss human rights, Constitution of the country, rights and liberties and conflict of rights.*

- 5. Debates in the Karl Popper debate format with two classes of 10 graders.*

### Outcomes

- 1. Students noticed an important change in their attitude towards others: they understood that even junior school students have the same rights as adults. They realized that all people, irrespective of their*





age, sex, ethnicity or social status, have the same rights.

2. School students became interested in human rights and discussing problems related to them. Awareness of human rights and constitutional awareness increased.

environment and revealed a high level of anti-legal consciousness in certain groups of students. The results will be used in preventive activities intended to improve internal class and school environment.

but also experience the implementation of their rights and know who to contact if their rights have been violated”.

(Mariya Kleimenova).

#### Long-term impact of the project

Project results allowed to identify problems existing in teenagers' en-

#### Participants' Comments

“Children should not only have basic theoretical knowledge of law



## CHILD'S RIGHTS AND BASICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY AT SCHOOL

### Project realization place

*Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don*

### Context and Problem

*Since 2009, the position of the ombudsperson for children has been introduced in secondary schools in the Rostov region as a public elective office which is not subject to administrative structures. This explains a constant turnover of candidates elected for these posts and a low level knowledge and skills in the area of human rights activities in educational institutions.*

### Project aims

*To facilitate a value-based approach of school ombudspersons to human rights activities in the school and to create an institutional framework for teaching them the basics of this activity.*

### Activities

- 1. The development of “The Legal Protection of Children in Educational Institutions” program and its syllabus, their approval by the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children’s Rights in the Rostov region and the introduction of the program to the complementary education system of Southern Federal University.*
- 2. Presentation of the program, en-*



*rollment of students and teaching the course.*

### Outcomes

*In 2013–2015 the program was run five times, in total there are 143 graduates in three rural districts and the cities of Taganrog and Gukovo. By means of interactive exercises, the newly elected Children’s Ombudspersons discussed changes in the principles of school*

*functioning from the perspective of gradual expansion of citizenship rights of the child and ways to facilitate schools’ transition to principles of independence and critical thinking of students and their subsequent development as well as to support cultural diversity and involvement of all the parties involved in school management. Program graduates developed the skills necessary to work with legislative documents on human*





rights. Ombudspersons established personal contacts with their peers from other districts and regions. Program graduates mastered basics of project activity in the promotion of citizenship values at school.

#### Long-term impact of the project

*Teaching basics of human rights activity at school within the framework of additional education program at South Federal University facilitates*

*institutional development of this type of training for newly-elected Ombudspersons. Additionally, it ensures consistency both of their activity and of public control over children's rights and facilitates the creation of democratic environment at school.*

#### Participants' Comments

*"Only now, after this very significant course is over, I realized the*

*value of the position of school ombudsperson for children's rights. The ombudsperson not only helps in the restoration of the child's rights, but also creates and develops a civilized legal space at school. So the ombudsperson is working for the future."*

*(Elena Drofa, history teacher, Secondary School No. 23, Taganrog).*

## VALUES OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN CROSS-CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE

### Project realization place

Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don

### Context and Problem

*As surveys conducted at schools have shown, students are not fully aware of the possibilities they have in defending their individual rights and interests and do not know about the ways of their protection. Teachers lack clear understanding of citizenship values. School administrations act in an authoritarian way and do not always follow democratic principles. Schools use project activity but it is chaotic, often poorly planned and formal.*

### Project aims

1. To promote the development of democratic citizenship values among teachers and facilitate the creation of democratic environment in school, based on democracy and human rights principles.
2. To develop project development skills among teachers.
3. To create partnerships between schools that participate in the project.

### Activities

1. Conducting 16 training seminars for teachers and representatives of school administration on the follow-

ing topics: "Fostering citizenship qualities at school," "Democratic school" and "Technologies of project activity in education for democratic citizenship and human rights education."

2. Conducting 4 workshops for middle school teachers and 4 workshops for elementary school teachers on how to work with the Council of Europe manuals *Living in Democracy* and *Exploring Children's Rights*.

3. Conducting 4 seminars within existing partnerships for school communities (teachers, students and parents) with the participation of

representatives of the Prosecutor's Office, Attorneys Association and Department of Law Alumni.

4. Conducting 2 seminars (in 4 rural and 4 city schools respectively) to discuss the results of projects on democratic citizenship and human rights education.

### Outcomes

*In 8 schools that participated in the projects teachers made respective changes in syllabi to include classes on democratic citizenship education and human rights education. The teachers used the Council of Europe*







manuals *Compass*, *Compassito*, *Living in Democracy* and *Exploring Children's Rights* to develop and conduct a series of weekly class meetings (trainings) on EDC/HRE. The content and complexity of those trainings depended on the students' level. In the academic year 2014–2015 schools carried out 10 EDC/HRE projects.

#### Long-term impact of the project

*School teachers continue working with projects on EDC/HRE. Schools use principles of democratic participation and human rights in their ac-*

*tivities more often. All members of school communities share information required for a discussion of their problems. In 3 city schools a system of co-management that engages parents and local community representatives was created. There is a school in the city that adopted its own Constitution. A special course "We study children's rights" will be launched next year in another school.*

#### Participants' Comments

*"Our school used to have excellent results in the district as far as stu-*

*dents' level of knowledge and their participation in contests and different events was concerned. However, the atmosphere at school was authoritarian and it affected the relations among the administration, teachers and students. The seminars not only brought all of us closer to one another and showed what great people I work with, but also changed the school from the inside. Now we can call our school democratic."*

*(Olga Kolodenko, schoolteacher, Neklinovski District, Rostov Region).*

## PSYCHOLOGICAL FACILITATION OF THE PROJECT

### A Psychologist's role in project

The introduction of project methodology in the development of educational systems and technologies means new professional responsibilities for a school psychologist and psychological service as a whole. Project development as an activity is much broader than encompassed by the scope of professional responsibilities of a psychologist. However, it is possible to define a psychologist's role in project activities on the basis of his/her professional competence:

— a psychologist can participate in the project as a support and development party;

— a psychologist can participate in the implementation of the project as a member of the project team. Psychological support of the project includes the following:

1. Increase of the psychological competence of all participants of the project (teachers, experts, students, their parents, etc).
2. Information and analytical facilitation of the project including the prevention and removal of stress factors; identification of psychological criteria of achieving the project's objectives.
3. Psychological project development that means the elaboration and implementation of such forms and methods of work and organization of events that facilitate a successful implementation of the project and a development of its participants.
4. Psychological expertise which consists of monitoring and analysis of a dynamic and psychologically comfortable situation for the implementation of the project; identification of hidden resources for the evolution of the project.
5. Psychological aid to project participants at all stages of its implementation. Psychological component of the project is meant to preserve and improve

psychological and social health of the participants, facilitate education and development of the students depending on their age, personality, openness to different kinds of project methodologies and emotional comfort.

Thus, support of the project can be seen both as a direct professional contribution (i.e. a possible space of professional activity and its content matter) and as a methodology of a psychologist's engagement in the project (i.e. a practical manageable process with a specific content matter, forms and methods of work that comply with aims, objectives and theme of the project).

### Project objectives and their understanding in a psychological perspective

Problem definition in a social project should be preceded by understanding of its origin, objectives and scope of application. As elements of this approach, several fundamental ideas and positions can be identified.

1. It is necessary to experiment. An individual is open to changes and by nature likes to experiment. The awareness of this challenge guides the initiator of the project. However, there are also conservative individuals who are reluctant to change. Project initiator prioritizes those features of individual's self-organization that allow for the conception, planning and implementation of changes.

a. Readiness to accept changes is a psychological premise and condition for their planning and introduction. Thus, changes are desirable but their intensity depends on the community type, a situation at a given time in a given place, and the position of individuals and communities they represent.



b. Openness to changes does not mean endless experimentation. A degree of openness is determined by values and norms of the system and its social and educational demands that to a large extent inspire project activity.

2. The project is interesting not for everyone but for many. Although each individual is unique, they are similar in regards to their features and attitudes. Ambiguity and heterogeneity of living spaces can be overcome with the introduction of the parameter similarity into the project:

a) people's needs are similar (what is suitable for one, is suitable for many);

b) the course of life is similar (different people have similar forms of life);

c) people behave in similar ways (similar incentives provoke similar reactions in a particular environment);

d) there is always a certain type of individuals and thus the group of people who support the proposed project or feel a need for its implementation. However, the similarity is not characteristic for the entire community. Therefore, the assumption that the project will make everyone happy, can remain only an assumption.

3. "We" are always better than "they". A division into "us" and "them" and into "natives" and "aliens" on one hand is a natural way for individuals to restructure a society and resolve differences and on the other help maintain distance. Projects encourage restructuring of relations, make participants closer and develop partnership communication and efficient interaction. Solidarity is one of the most valuable personality features. A direct or indirect objective of the project is always about the achievement of solidarity among participants.

4. Create something feasible. The planning of changes is subject to the "imperative of time." All projects start with an idea and it is best to create ideas on the basis of problems. Creativity can inspire us to de-

velop "super ideas" which in reality may be unachievable. At the preliminary stage of work we can "demand the impossible" that will only encourage aspiration to achieve the possible. But remember that the success of the project is conditioned by a problematic situation in a specific area and practical social and educational demands.

5. Find partners. The project is successful if it is not imposed on potential participants but is chosen by them. The initiator of the project seeks to improve the situation, but others must be convinced that it would benefit them as well.

When ideas and positions have been identified, the initiator of the social project proposes a new idea, which aims to create, improve or support a spiritual value. This idea is limited in space, time and resources and has a positive social impact on an individual.

A subjective (unique) nature of the project, its relation to cognitive, psychological and moral resources of the initiator creates a psychological framework for its implementation.

Psychologists noticed that success orientation encourages people and inspires them to do things that would otherwise be impossible. This phenomenon is called the "Pygmalion effect". It means that a positive forecast directs the behavior of the individual and stimulates it. It affects the emotional, sensual and rational spheres of human psyche as well as individual's will and encourages the expression of human creativity.

### **Psychological facilitation: project stages and areas**

Let us outline the directions of psychological facilitation of the project. Its models can be constructed in different ways – as regular support of the project or as temporary involvement at crucial stages of the project.

## Content, forms and methods of a psychologist's involvement in the process of project's implementation

<i>Project stages</i>	<i>Focus of the problem</i>	<i>Psychological support of the project</i>	<i>Forms and methods of a psychologist's involvement</i>
Project planning	<p><b><i>From the problem to the idea</i></b>            Generation of ideas for the project. Identification of aim and objectives</p>	<p>At the planning stage a psychologist is responsible for group involvement in the identification of project aims and helps project participants understand their individual aims. The psychologist organizers (moderates) work aimed to identify difficult points for project participants and helps to develop models/procedures for problem-solving. A process of group project activity requires a submersion into sample situations and understanding of the efficient methods of work aimed to enhance group norms and conventions.</p>	<p>Key competences: awareness of group thinking patterns and dialogue skills. Individual and group work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work in small groups</li> <li>• brain-storming</li> <li>• discussion platforms</li> <li>• role play</li> </ul>
Project development and implementation	<p><b><i>Those who are not with us are against us!</i></b>            Resistance and search for critically-minded partners</p>	<p>Different forms of resistance can emerge at different stages of the project. Resistance can be caused by subjective (personal rejection of the project, different degree of teachers' readiness for changes, insufficient motivation etc.) and objective reasons. In the course of project implementation changes that lead to expected results take place. However, a project is a dynamic system and it can lead to unmanageable changes caused by both objective and subjective reasons. Such circumstances may invoke negative emotions, thoughts and behavior of project participants. The psychologist is to observe and assess these changes in order to identify risks and negative attitudes and try to eliminate or minimize them. The psychologist should also look for allies not only among partners but also among those who disagree</p>	<p>Key competences: knowledge of individual's behavior in project interaction and interpersonal communication skills in project management. Individual and group work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• observation of participants and analysis of resistance types</li> <li>• consultations</li> <li>• negotiations</li> <li>• workshops on assertive behavior</li> <li>• discussion (dialogue) platforms</li> </ul>
Project implementation	<p><b><i>I must- I want-I can...</i></b>            Motivation of project participants</p>	<p>Motivation of each participant of the project must be coherent with the general nature of project activity and specific features of each individual project. Motivation as determination to achieve a specific valuable and significant result is an important element of project work. Creation of the system of incentives is the responsibility not only of the project manager but also of the psychologist who can identify a motive significant for a specific person (professional development, achievement of results etc.)</p>	<p>Key competences: efficient adjustment skills and teachers'(students') motivation skills. Individual and group work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consultations</li> <li>• brain-storming</li> <li>• coaching</li> <li>• role play and situation games</li> </ul>

		At each project stage when results and risks are being analyzed motivation is viewed as the key aspect in the assessment of project efficiency	
Project implementation	<b><i>Together or apart?</i></b> Planning and support of team's efficiency	<p>Interaction takes place at different work stages: problem identification, idea generation project planning and implementation, and test activity.</p> <p>The psychologist is expected to use the efficiency of existing contradictions, create constructive ways for conflict resolution support the readiness of teachers to continue achieving set project goals keeping in mind project's aim and idea.</p> <p>Operational cycle of the project implies permanent correction of actions and adjustment of resources as well as ability to overcome difficulties, and deal with unexpected situations and ambiguities.</p> <p>Such a strict regulation of project operation determines emotional tension, behavioral change and change in interaction style of participants.</p> <p>The psychologist is expected to see areas of possible tension and contradictions and develop communication in ways which will allow to preserve efficient ways of interaction. Personal emotional stability of the psychologist facilitate the success of his/her work. However, it is difficult to maintain due to the dynamic nature of project activities and constantly arising issues related to project. As a result this may lead to a sense of internal dissatisfaction.</p>	<p>Key competences: knowledge and skills of project team-building</p> <p>Individual and group work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consultations</li> <li>• training in team building</li> <li>• training in partnership communication</li> <li>• workshops on the implementation of changes</li> </ul>
Monitoring and project evaluation	<b><i>What are the results?</i></b> Evolving potential of the project as an idea	<p>When we deal with a project we should also take into account the potential of the idea itself.</p> <p>The project often includes different forms of activities with children that use project methodologies.</p> <p>Psychological facilitation of the project aims to create comfortable conditions for participation.</p> <p>In this respect the psychologist conducts psychological monitoring of changes and tendencies.</p>	<p>Key competences: skills of creating psychological conditions for the engagement of teachers/students in the project.</p> <p>Individual and group work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consultations</li> <li>• communicative training</li> <li>• modelling of situations that emerge in the course of project implementation</li> <li>• psychological expertise</li> </ul>



## **COOPERATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL IN PREPARATION OF CHILDREN'S OMBUDSPERSONS**

Strengthening and development of democratic political regime in Russia that was established by the Constitution of the Russian Federation in 1993, implies socialization of children and young people aimed to foster citizenship and value-based attitude to the legal form of behavior.

At the same time it is not a declaration of citizenship as a value but the creation of a legal framework in educational institutions and organization of its activity in a way that regulates behavior according to legal standards. In this sense, school functions as a model of the constitutional state where students acquire practical freedom and citizenship skills that are a necessary condition for the development of political culture of the activist type.

The creation of a legal framework of the democratic school is essential but not sufficient since it does not guarantee the formation of legal values, primarily the values of individual's civic rights. Secondly, it does not ensure the exercise of children's civil rights in everyday school life. The first problem — the formation of the value of rights in the course of educational process and the introduction of the personality-centered component in humanity courses — is a separate topic for analysis and at the moment it is being discussed not only by educators, but also by politicians and scholars. The second problem — the creation of a mechanism to protect the civic rights of the child — has been resolved by the organization of the Commission for the settlement of disputes between participants in the educational process in all of educational institutions (Decree nr 273-FZ On Education in the Russian Federation, Art. 45). Another step to contribute to the solution of the second problem was the

creation of the position of the Ombudsperson for Children's Rights, which is initiated by local federal authorities.

In Russia, the post of children's ombudsperson was introduced as an experiment in 1998 in the Volgograd, Kaluga and Novgorod regions. In 2007, the Rostov region supported this initiative.

On the basis of the recommendations from the Ministry of Education and the Commissioner for Human Rights we worked out Regulation on Children's Ombudsperson in Educational Institutions in the Rostov region. According to the requirements stipulated in the above documents, since 2009 this position has been gradually introduced in the majority of secondary schools.

The main responsibilities of the school ombudsperson are the following:

- protection of rights and legitimate interests of children at school;
- development of legal framework of school activities;
- fostering of legal culture and legal awareness of all participants of school life;
- formation of individuals, capable of socialization in civil society;
- improvement of relations between the participants of the educational process.

At the same time, the social status of school ombudsperson revealed a lack of professional training required for the performance of this function at school. It also showed that in many schools the administration does not understand a necessity, meaning and functions of this position. Therefore, it became obvious that additional training of children's om-

budspersons elected by school students was required. The analysis of the teachers' position shows that traditional forms of education do not help in the formation of values that encourage a significant rethinking of pedagogical activity as it is required by the principle of children's civic rights protection. Although this principle has been included into federal state educational standards which encourage teachers to increase the degree of freedom in the development of citizenship qualities of their students (understanding of citizenship rights, freedoms, and responsibilities by students, learning social roles etc.) the vast majority of teachers expect further instructions and explanations about how to implement those principles. According to sociologists, this situation is typical for many regions of the country. In such circumstances university faculty should engage in educational activities aimed to promote the values of citizenship education and civic rights of the child. Preparation of school ombudspersons for human rights was the subject of cooperation between the Southern Federal University (South-Russian research and educational center for regional studies and social and communication technologies), the Ombudsperson for Human Rights in the Rostov region and secondary schools in the Rostov region and the city of Rostov-na-Don. Within the framework of the additional education program the South Federal University developed a training course "Legal protection of children at schools." More than 230 school ombudspersons from different districts of the Rostov region completed this course in 2013–2015. It is a 72-hour program for full- and part-time training. A significant part of the full-time component is carried out as a three-day workshop with elements of training aimed to develop a comprehensive understanding of human rights protection and explanation of the role and functions of the children's ombudsperson at school. Contacts with school ombudspersons demonstrated their lack of understanding of human rights activities,

in particular lack of awareness of specific rights violation at school and forms it may take. Such an approach is deeply rooted in paternalist consciousness, which is typical of Russian culture in general and the Russian tradition in teaching in particular. Most teachers (ombudspersons) do not see children as citizens. Therefore, the most important objective of the course "Legal protection of children at schools" was to create conditions for cognitive reflection of the trainees over basic values which constitute the essence of civil rights, i.e. the value of human dignity, freedom and responsibility. To achieve this objective, we used a method of interactive games that helped to understand the content of civic values and freedoms as a reflection of basic human needs. The analysis of Russian and international documents in the sphere of human rights and civil rights of the child from this perspective changes a stereotypical perception of these documents as unnecessary at school. A consistent implementation of the value-based approach to the civil rights of the child during the training course for school ombudspersons encouraged them to identify forms of a democratic approach visible in school space and in the relations between teachers and students. This aspect of the discussion created a new framework for understanding everyday details of mundane school life, such as offering children a choice of dishes in school cafeteria, the arrangement of toilets and the adjustment of the elements of school space to children's height — stairs, the level at which billboards are located etc. These and other details of the organization of school space were viewed from the perspective of respect for the child's personality, his/her right for choice and the development of his/her ideas about personal space in daily school life. As a result, participants of the course came to an independent conclusion that the school ombudsperson should take care of creation (maintenance and supervision) of the infrastructure that does not violate civil rights and human dignity of the child.



Value-based context also determines a different perception of the norms of everyday interactions of teachers and students. Using the game method school ombudspersons worked with international documents on the protection of civil rights of the individual, the Russian Constitution and the decree On Education in the Russian Federation. They looked into specific manifestations of children's civil rights at school and cases of their violation. In particular, participants of the course discussed such rights as the right of students to information, the right to education (in particular, the right of children with disabilities to education in a regular school located next to their place of residence), the child's right to respect for human dignity, freedom of opinion expression, the right to equal treatment of students regardless of their academic performance, appearance, nationality, gender, health, financial status of parents or family relations between a student and a teacher.

As the dialogue ensures equality of teachers and students in cognitive activity which is the core activity at school the training of school ombudspersons included an important block of issues to discuss the conditions for the involvement of students in interactive learning. Diverse interactive forms used in the training course for school ombudspersons (mainly work in small groups on problem tasks that required adaptation of personal experience, communicative skills, problem-discussion skills and skills of achieving a compromised solution) contributed to the identification of effective methods of work with school students.

A separate part of the training program for school ombudspersons concerned the acquaintance with social projects technologies. The inclusion of this part of the course is caused by a necessity to involve students in civic activities using practical tools. The school ombudsperson together with the teachers, can initiate

projects that involve students and provide methodological assistance to teachers in the selection of the problem and project implementation.

Traditionally, each day of the three-day training seminar for school ombudspersons ended with a group discussion of a new experience acquired during the day. Awareness of civil rights values and a need to reorganize teachers work accordingly was an important result of the use of training methodology. Equally important was the creation of professional community of school ombudspersons at the district level and establishment of horizontal links between them.

The analysis of the professional experience of the participants discussed at the final seminar also allowed to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational program. Here is what one the participants of the program said: "Now, only now, after this very important course, I came to understand the value of my status of school ombudswoman. The ombudsperson not only restores child's rights that were violated but also creates and develops a civilized legal space at school. And it means work for the future. For me personally, it is a very valuable and important status as the work of the ombudsperson at school gives children a sense of legal protection: here is someone I can come to with my problems. It gives understanding that one can and should live according to the rules, that other people also have their rights and those rights must be respected. As a teacher of history and social sciences I always believed it to be the main principle of my work and life. It is also important that the ombudsperson is close to the children and is accessible. He/she is someone the children know, someone who can give them a piece of advice and explain rights and limits of responsibility. Am I ready to work in this capacity? I would have had a problem answering this question a month or even a week ago. Now I say with confidence "yes"."

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## ABOUT THE PROJECT

*Anastasiya Gontareva*



The educational project *Promoting Civic Education in the Russian Federal Regions* owes its emergence to a conviction that citizenship culture must be fostered since childhood. The founders of the Moscow School of Civic Education and its graduates in different Russian federal regions are seriously concerned about the fact that citizenship education of adults, which is so necessary and important in many people's lives, is several decades behind. At the same time, a significant role in bringing the citizenship consciousness to life can be played by the educational system that creates a framework in which an individual grows and develops as a personality. However, schools must work on the basis of obligatory curriculum and deal with ambiguous interpretation of key concepts and ideas of civic life, poorly developed methodology of citizenship education and limited specialized knowledge and competence of teachers.

One thing is clear: in the system of education (both formal and informal, basic and additional) and in NGOs working with children and youth there are enthusiasts who are ready to share their experience, study and do everything possible to create a professional civic environment in education and institutionalize citizenship education in Russian regions.

The cooperation with the European Wergeland Center and study of the experience of the Council of Europe and Russian experts in citizenship education facilitated the emergence and development of modern national conceptual approaches and methods which do not copy the existing examples but take into consideration regional peculiarities and specific needs of individual schools. The support of child's ability to perceive the complexity of the surrounding world and the fostering of an independent position and efficiency in social interaction are seen as crucial components for the implementation of the project. We can talk incessantly about main democratic and citizenship values but the theory will fail to take root in children's consciousness if they are not engaged in specific democratic procedures with tasks to build relations, make independent choices, make decisions and take responsibility for them.

Dozens of schools and universities in the Russian Federation volunteered to participate in the pilot project on citizenship education. Schools independently identified problems which were significant for them and worked on their solution by means of social project-making. The creation of internal partnerships facilitated the acquisition of democratic values through joint activities. The involvement of students and parents in socially significant events, and even making them the initiators of such events, constituted an important part of work in pilot schools.

At the same time, many successful efforts have been made to institutionalize civic education in the curricula of Bachelor and Master degree studies in different universities in the Russian Federation. Issues of citizenship education have been included in professional teacher's work and in voluntary activities.

The implementation of the project gave rise to many interesting partnerships connecting universities, secondary schools, NGOs, libraries and museums. Methods of cooperation of school ombudspersons for children's rights and school mediating commissions with local communities have been elaborated.

Professional networks connecting all the parties interested in civic education promotion in the regions are being set up and inter-regional links are strengthened. The project and ideas of citizenship education have become popular in educators' community and many teachers and representatives of educational NGOs wish to cooperate.

All these achievements would be impossible without the enthusiasts who launched the project and without teachers who supported the initiative and shared their inspiration with little citizens at schools and older ones at universities. Through a well-planned integration of citizenship education in the educational system of the country these people have made a serious investment in the development of human capital of Russia.



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