PRACTICAL PROPOSALS

Developing Competences for Democratic Citizenship in the New Ukrainian School

The Round table conference "Democracy and human rights in the new Ukrainian school" took place on December, 9 2016 in Kyiv. The Conference was organized by the European Wergeland Centre, the Nova Doba Association and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in cooperation with the joint EU and Council of Europe programme "Education for democratic citizenship in six Eastern Partnership countries" and the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine. At the Conference, the EWC has presented the newly published Ukrainian translation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights. The conference was supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the framework of the Schools for Democracy National Programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship in Ukraine.

More and more educators in Europe and in the world are trying to come up with suggestions on how to equip learners with competences for living in democracy. The round table conference "Democracy and human rights in the new Ukrainian school" offered a common platform for both international and Ukrainian experts to discuss the current state and ways to better implement recommendations set out in the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship And Human Rights in Ukrainian schools, in the context of the upcoming reforms in education.

During the Conference, **Proposals on developing democratic competences at school** were elaborated by practitioners working in the Ukrainian schools by using the Council of Europe approaches to EDC/HRE. Over 80 educators representing a wider spectrum of stakeholders in Ukraine contributed to elaboration of these Proposals. These were the education experts and researchers in the field of Education for democratic citizenship and human rights, managers of the key international programs in the field in Ukraine, school principals, teachers, representatives of parent associations, education and youth organizations cooperating with schools, as well as representatives of oblast in-service teacher training institutes, pedagogic universities, territorial departments of education.

It is expected that the Proposals compiled by the experts and practitioners will serve a useful material for further elaboration of education policy in Ukraine in the field of developing of competences for democratic citizenship. This document may be used by educators in their everyday practice to develop competences for democratic citizenship, strengthen democratic culture in their schools as well as build the new Ukrainian school from the «inside». In addition, these Proposals will be shared with the Council of Europe as a result of the public discussion on the EDC/HRE Charter implementation in Ukraine.

The document consists of three parts:
- **Challenges in developing competences for democratic citizenship at school** as outlined by the participants of the conference (in terms of the system of education in general, and at the school level in particular);

- **General Proposals on developing competences for democratic citizenship** (outlining key tasks in terms of the system of education in general, and at the school level in particular, taking into consideration the challenges identified, using practical experience of the participants and referring to the formal provisions of the following documents: the New Ukrainian School Concept, Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE and the OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Secondary School Systems);

- **Practical advices for schools** on developing competences for democratic citizenship (along such three main topics as democratic teaching and learning process, democratic governance and environment at school, partner relations between the school and community).

CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AT SCHOOL AS OUTLINED BY PARTICIPANTS

In terms of the system of education in general:

- Lack of systematic approach and continuity in the educational policy in the field of education for democratic citizenship and human rights;

- Week coordination between various projects, programs and educational institutions towards implementation of education for democratic citizenship and human rights;

- Insufficient interaction between formal and non-formal education in this field;

- Poor quality of pre-service and in-service teacher training in education for democratic citizenship and human rights and consequently, a low level of teacher competences in education for democratic citizenship and human rights among teachers in other than social studies and humanities;

- Focus on development of competences for democratic citizenship is put primarily within Civic Education or similar subjects, lack of understanding of the role of the whole teaching and learning process at school in this regard.

At the school level:

- Lack of common strategic vision of the school's values, mission and aim among the stakeholders and lacking discussion of common needs, challenges and ways to solve them;

- Lack of the whole school approach to development of democratic competences; little to no cross-curricular links to reach these learning outcomes at schools and, consequently, chaotic and fragmentary implementation of education for democratic citizenship and human rights components by the teaching staff;

- Authoritarian style of management and governance, partly caused by the lack of examples of good democratic practices at schools; low level of participation of other stakeholders in decision making at school (parents, students and community actors), poor teamwork and sharing of responsibility;

- Lacking democratic principles in the education management system, conservatism of local educational officials and their reluctance to support implementation of democratic principles in their work;

- Combination of the controlling, executive, organizational and methodological functions by the local departments of education, which consequently leads to abuse of power and limitation of the real school autonomy;

- Misuse of schools by the local and regional authorities (emergency bodies, tax agencies, police, social services) and loading schools with "external work" that exceeds the mandate of an educational institution or a teacher. This puts the teachers in danger and causes additional tension between the school and community;

- Rhetoric nature of self-government bodies at school (teacheres' council as a self-government body, parental committee and student self-government bodies); lack of opportunities for students to gain a real life experience of democratic participation in school and community life;

- Low level of trust and partnership relations between teachers, parents and students; lacking ability to lead a constructive discussion at school;

- Lacking skills in promoting school achievements in the local community; the schools' ambitions to get recognition from education management dominate over the intention to gain recognition by the local community;

- Lack of social partnership between the school and civil society institutions, low level of trust to NGOs leading to their poor involvement in the educational process;

- Demonstrating and "reporting" nature of extra-curricular activities at school; overload with events; schools tend not to admit problems and keep silent on existing challenges (bulling, violence, internal conflicts among the school staff), keeping up with the "reported positive image" tradition;

- Lack of the value-based approach in the school governance and, consequently, a gap between declared objectives, procedures on the paper and in the real life at school;

- Lack of confidence in the ability to reach long-term and sustainable democratic changes at school;

- The school staff's lack of skills of autonomous planning of own development and organization of the educational process, with regard to the needs of the school and the local community. As a result, schools tend to follow recommendations from the "above" which are perceived as orders;

- Insufficient focus of the school upon development of such democratic competences as problem solving skills, effective social communication and democratic participation in the society;

- Lacking skills of working in a team both among the teaching staff and other stakeholders at school;

- Overwhelming bureaucracy in the school activities, in particular, in carrying out school events.

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GENERAL PROPOSALS

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In order to facilitate and improve implementation of the Council fo Europe's Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights in the Ukrainian schools, it is suggested:

1. To include the principles of the Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights into the state education standards, national curriculum and programs using the **transversal approach** (as a key learning outcome of the school education as a whole, not only of some particular specified disciplines)**.**

> Links to the key reference documents:
> *Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE, Articles f-g:* An essential element of all education for democratic citizenship and human rights education is the promotion of social cohesion and intercultural dialogue and the valuing of diversity and equality, including gender equality; to this end, it is essential to develop knowledge, personal and social skills and understanding that reduce conflict, increase appreciation and understanding of the differences between faith and ethnic groups, build mutual respect for human dignity and shared values, encourage dialogue and promote non-violence in the resolution of problems and disputes.
> One of the fundamental goals of all education for democratic citizenship and human rights education is not just equipping learners with knowledge, understanding and skills, but also empowering them with the readiness to take action in society in the defence and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
> *Core Standards of Education, The New Ukrainian School project, p. 11:*
> The key competences listed above go through all education areas and disciplines.
> *OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Secondary School Systems, p. 19*
> The human rights-based approach also implies that human rights principles are integrated in all phases of programme planning and implementation, as well as in the organization of educational institutions.

2. To facilitate development of democratic competences by using the **whole school approach** based on partnership between all stakeholders at school and promotion of democratic culture, in particular by means of:

- democratization of the **teaching and learning process**, transversal development of democratic competences within the frames of curriculum and extra-curricular activities, using interactive teaching methods and problem-based learning;

- strengthening of the **democratic culture** and atmosphere of respect of human rights at school, introduction of non-discriminatory procedures, rules for peaceful conflict resolution, and mechanisms of reaction to cases of discrimination at school;

   development of **democratic government** at school, strengthening of the real role of the school self-government bodies and enlarged participation of all school stakeholders in decision making (individual initiatives, student self-government bodies, parents' committees, teachers' councils etc);

- partner cooperation with community, local authorities, and parents; participation in community life and benefitting from the education opportunities provided by the local civil society actors.

Practical support for the implementation of the proposal: Schools for Democracy National Programme in Ukraine, The EWC

Links to the key reference documents:
Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE, Articles 5i, 5e, 5d, 8:
Partnership and collaboration should be encouraged among the wide range of stakeholders involved in education for democratic citizenship and human rights education at state, regional and local level so as to make the most of their contributions, including among policy makers, educational professionals, learners, parents, educational institutions, non-governmental organisations, youth organisations, media and the general public.

Teaching and learning practices and activities should follow and promote democratic and human rights values and principles; in particular, the governance of educational institutions, including schools, should reflect and promote human rights values and foster the empowerment and active participation of learners, educational staff and stakeholders, including parents.

Non-governmental organisations and youth organisations have a valuable contribution to make to education for democratic citizenship and human rights education, particularly through non-formal and informal education, and accordingly need opportunities and support in order to make this contribution.

Member states should promote democratic governance in all educational institutions both as a desirable and beneficial method of governance in its own right and as a practical means of learning and experiencing democracy and respect for human rights.

Council of Europe Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, p.16
(E)ducation has a vital role to play in preparing individuals for life as active democratic citizens, and education is in a unique position to guide and support learners in acquiring the competences which they require to participate effectively in democratic processes and intercultural dialogue.

Core Standards of Education, The New Ukrainian School project, p. 7, 15
The New Ukrainian School shall «develop the culture of democracy at school by means of elaboration of the relevant procedures for protection of human rights and practice of the democratic values».

«The new standards of education empowers teachers, teachers communities and schools to create own study programs based on the needs of the students and local communities, as well as to foster an open learning environment, taking into consideration the school potential and involving partners in the educational process.»

The New Ukrainian School concept, p.21
«The New Ukrainian school shall develop values, attitudes and understanding that will set the core ground for a happy personal life and successful interaction in the society».

OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Secondary School Systems, p. 16, 20

> It is essential that human rights values infuse the culture and practices of both the classroom and school environments so that human rights are a "lived" experience in the schooling system.
>
> Human rights education goals encourage action to fulfil the human rights of all members of the secondary school community, including students, teachers, administrators, parents and support staff in all capacities.

3. To elaborate a **Framework for Monitoring of Quality of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights**, to facilitate monitoring of the implementation of the Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights and share the results with the wider public.

Practical support for the implementation of the proposal: Swiss-Ukrainian Program «Development of Civic Competences in Ukraine» DOCCU (at the level of the whole education system); Schools for Democracy National Programme in Ukraine, The EWC (at the school level)

> Links to the key reference documents:
> *Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE, Article 14*
> Member states should regularly evaluate the strategies and policies they have undertaken with respect to the present Charter and adapt these strategies and policies as appropriate. They may do so in co-operation with other member states, for example on a regional basis. Any member state may also request assistance from the Council of Europe.
> *OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Secondary School Systems, p. 35*
> Evaluations of human rights education in secondary schools are regularly carried out in order to understand and improve programme implementation, the quality of curricula and learning materials, student and teacher achievement, the adequacy of teacher preparation, and the realization of human rights in schools and communities.
> *Tool for Democratic School Development , The EWC*
> Development of democratic competences in school is closely connected to democratic development of the educational institution itself. It is important to create and constantly improve the safe environment at school, which is favorable for learning and practicing the principles of democracy and respect of human rights ».

3. To provide the **initial training in Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights** (in the system of formal and non-formal education) **for all education professionals** (methodologists, administrators, teachers, class teachers etc.); to create conditions for in-service training for teachers and school directors on the basis of a free choice of the form of training and institution; to introduce courses on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights into the study programs of higher educational institutions, pedagogical universities, and in-service teacher education system with a special focus on methodology skills.

> Links to the key reference documents:

Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE, Article 5h, 5b

Ongoing training and development for education professionals and youth leaders, as well as for trainers themselves, in the principles and practices of education for democratic citizenship and human rights education are a vital part of the delivery and sustainability of effective education in this area and should accordingly be adequately planned and resourced.

Learning in education for democratic citizenship and human rights education is a lifelong process. Effective learning in this area involves a wide range of stakeholders including policy makers, educational professionals, learners, parents, educational institutions, educational authorities, civil servants, non-governmental organisations, youth organisations, media and the general public.

Education standard basis for the New Ukrainian School, p.21

«The critical element that hampers development of education is the inefficient system of professional in-service training for teachers and school directors».

The New Ukrainian School Concept, p. 21

The key component of the New Ukrainian School is «a motivated teacher, who enjoys the freedom of creativity and takes the opportunities for professional growth».

OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Secondary School Systems, p.41

In order to effectively implement human rights education in secondary schools teachers and other educational personnel require a range of competencies. These competencies should be deliberately cultivated by the necessary initial and ongoing high-quality training and development in human rights education as a separate and/or mainstreamed thematic area.

4. To strengthen **cooperation between projects and initiatives** in the field of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights in Ukraine, to document and share best practices.

Links to the key reference documents:

Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE, Article 5c

All means of education and training, whether formal, non-formal or informal, have a part to play in this learning process and are valuable in promoting its principles and achieving its objectives.

OSCE/ODIHR Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Secondary School Systems, p. 33

Co-operation is facilitated and encouraged among secondary schools, parents and communities, including NGOs, children and youth organizations, local-government agencies, higher education institutions, media and 27 Ibid, p. 46. 34 Guidelines on Human Rights Education for Secondary School Systems businesses, in order to put into practice what is learned as part of human rights education in schools. The participation of human rights experts and activists is encouraged.

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PRACTICAL ADVICES FOR SCHOOLS

PRACTICAL ADVICES FOR SCHOOLS:

TOPIC 1:   TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Democratic competences can be developed best when this task is not limited to one discipline or extra-curricular activities only, but rather embarked on via a set of combined efforts across the whole teaching and learning process at school.

Schools would benefit if the teaching and learning process is planned and carried out in the following way:

– the cross-curricular and transversal approach is used to develop democratic competences;

– active and interactive teaching methods are used in classroom;

– the principle of partnership is applied in the teaching and learning process, when parents, students and civil society representatives are encouraged to participate in planning and implementation of the educational program and extracurricular learning;

– teaching and learning process is rooted in the principle of equality;

– opportunities are created for constructive dialogue between all school stakeholders to maximally account for students' voice in the teaching and learning process;

– conditions are created for all students (not only for the best performing ones) to effectively participate in the teaching and learning process, taking into consideration individual preferences and academic needs;

– action learning is encouraged to facilitate development of competences for democratic citizenship;

– professional development of teachers in the field is encouraged.

To this end, the schools may:

– integrate elements of the Education for democratic citizenship and human rights in the educational programs for various subjects at all education levels (pre-school, primary, secondary, general) using the transversal cross-disciplinary approach;

– work out and share methodologic recommendations on effective implementation of EDC/HRE into all school subjects; joint efforts of teachers in social studies with teachers and methodologists in other subjects;

– work out and offer optional courses in the field of education for democratic citizenship and human rights;

– improve cross-disciplinary planning of development of democratic competences by the whole teacher staff at school;

– learn from best practices of the extracurricular activities aimed at developing democratic culture at school;

- appoint a school coordinator on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights in order to systematically work on development of the democratic culture at school;

- carry out trainings for teachers, students, parents and representatives of the local community in the field of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights as well as to make them familiar with recommendations set out in the Charter on EDC/HRE;

- carry out educational projects aimed at gaining knowledge and developing skills, attitudes and values necessary for living in a democratic society.

TOPIC 2: DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL CULTURE AND DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

The democratic culture at school and real practical experience of democratic participation in school has proved to be highly beneficial for raising a free and responsible citizen. To this end, it is essential to strengthen the culture of democracy in school and encourage personal initiative, critical thinking and respect to diversity, as well as mutual respect and responsibility.

A safe space at school provides for building equal and responsible relations between all the stakeholders, which in turn facilitates development of the democratic competences not only by students, but also by teachers, parents and community representatives. Practice shows that if every student is appreciated and given the voice at school, both motivation and learning performance would increase.

When fostering democratic culture at school and promoting democratic governance, it is essential that:

– relations between teachers and students, administration, teachers and parents are grounded on respect of human rights,

– all the processes at school are built up on the principle of dialogue and mutual respect;

– self-reflection and self-evaluation is an integral part of the school life;

– transparent and routinized communication is promoted and supported, in particular a free and open discussion of current problems and challenges;

– a common vision and school development plan is worked out jointly by all the school stakeholders, based on common values;

– co-government rather than government is practiced at school, when all the stakeholders are involved in decision making, and actively participate in the self-government bodies;

– the whole school approach is applied, and no one is excluded at school;

– election principle is observed when self-government bodies are set up at school;

– the school utilizes its right to organizational autonomy (including the teacher's right for holidays);

– opportunities are created to practice the freedom of speech at school (via school website, social media, school media etc);

– active participation in school life is promoted among students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders;

– an "open school" concept is promoted, when the school is ready for partnership with parents and community;

– student directed learning is promoted, when the students' rights and needs determine the school policies and processes;

– personal example is set, when teachers, school administration, parents and students follow the principles of democracy and respect of human rights.

Democratic governance of schools is one of the key prerequisites for developing the culture of democracy and fostering democratic competences at school. Here are some **advices on how to establish and strengthen democratic governance of school**:

– motivate school administration, school staff, students and parents to democratize school processes and actively participate in them;

– work out joint school procedures and policies, and agree on them with a wide circle of stakeholders;

– observe the established procedures, but also use an opportunity to make amendments upon approbation of the new rules and procedures;

– practice various formats of discussion and decision making etc, not being afraid of making mistakes and, if so, grant the opportunity to correct the wrong or improper decisions;

– discuss what democracy in school means and how it can be learned and practiced in the school life;

– include principles and provisions of the Council of Europe's Charter on EDC/HRE into school documents - e.g. in the school Statutes and school regulations; these documents should contain more empowering and allowing norms;

– create opportunities for taking personal responsibility and make decisions by all the stakeholders at school; students and other participants of the school life should see their initiatives implemented in practice;

– promote democracy at all levels (in the student self-government bodies, parent committees, teachers' councils etc);

– Observe the principle of equality: teachers' voice = student's voice = parents' voice;

– remember that the school director is just a manager who "gives enough space" for the teachers;

– create conditions for existence of the constructive opposition.

To this end, and guided by the values and principles outlined above, the schools may:

– learn best practices and share own "know-how" in the field of democratic school development;

– promote and explain the concept of democratic governance, in particular with the help of students and through social media;

– delegate power to students and parents on the issues and in the scope decided by the school;

– practice «situation leadership» for all stakeholders of the school life (so that each student, parent or teacher could be a leader in a certain situation);

– collect, analyze, and take into account the feedback from all stakeholders at school;

- use simulation and role plays to better understand the needs of other groups of stakeholders in school;

- foster team-building among teaching staff and administration, as well as among students and parents (team-building tasks and joint events);

- create free, safe and open space for students' initiatives, encourage student initiative and facilitate its implementation;

- support students with advice, moral support or approval but do nothing they can do themselves;

- provide for a functional school mediation service (student-student, teacher-teacher) and other forms of conflict resolution;

- reduce distance between students, teachers and parents (say, cancel "the teachers' table" in the school canteen, spend the school breaks together with students) etc.

TOPIC 3: PARNER RELATIONS BETWEEN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

Development of democratic competences is not limited by a "school yard" only. The use of the NGOs' training potential, cooperation with local authorities, media, business, participation in social projects – all this fosters awareness of democratic citizenship, critical perception of the world, cooperation, empathy, responsibility, self- confidence and respect to others.

The process of interaction with local authorities and civil society is key to experience a democratic process in practice both by students, teachers, parents and community representatives. In this regard, it is very important to ground cooperation between the school and community on the principles of democracy, equality and respect of human rights.

In cooperation with civil society representatives, the schools would benefit from:

– establishing sustainable partnerships (draft mutually beneficial cooperation agreements, make common plans and implement joint public projects/events/actions);

– making use of the education potential and resources of each other.

To foster partner relations with civil society representatives, the schools may do the following:

– organize NGO fairs in schools, teach how to critically analyze information on NGOs' activities;

– participate in trainings organized by NGOs;

– establish own NGOs at schools;

– join the NGO's activities (teachers can act as experts for NGOs; students can be volunteers in various projects) ;

– invite NGOs to school to diversify and complement the teaching and learning process;

In cooperation with the local authorities, the schools would benefit from:

– cooperation and study visits;

– participation in the local community decision making;

– participation in the community life.

To foster partner relations with the local administration, the schools may:

– organize excursions, "open days" at school to learn how the governmental system works;

– take part in the local self-government programs, project competitions, internships;

– take part in drafting local community budgets, participate to the work of the profile committees of the local councils, contribute to consultations upon community planning and decision making via Youth Councils;

– inform the local community on the school's needs and successes;

– initiate the school appeals to city /town mayors;

– establish a community youth center based in school;

– initiate joint events (holidays, fairs, area improvement).

In cooperation with business representatives, the schools would benefit from:

– cooperation aimed at professional orientation of the graduates;

– making use of each other's resources;

– joint participation in the local community life.

To foster partner relations with the local business representatives, the schools may:

– participate in the internship and study programs available at the companies;

– organize the study visits to the local companies;

– invite businessmen/-women to train or carry out master classes on how to start one's own business etc;

– carry out trainings for businessmen/-women on children's rights, human rights, democratic citizenship etc;

– carry out joint events and social campaigns, to organize opinion polls and participate in such;

– contribute to the implementation of the corporate social responsibility programs.

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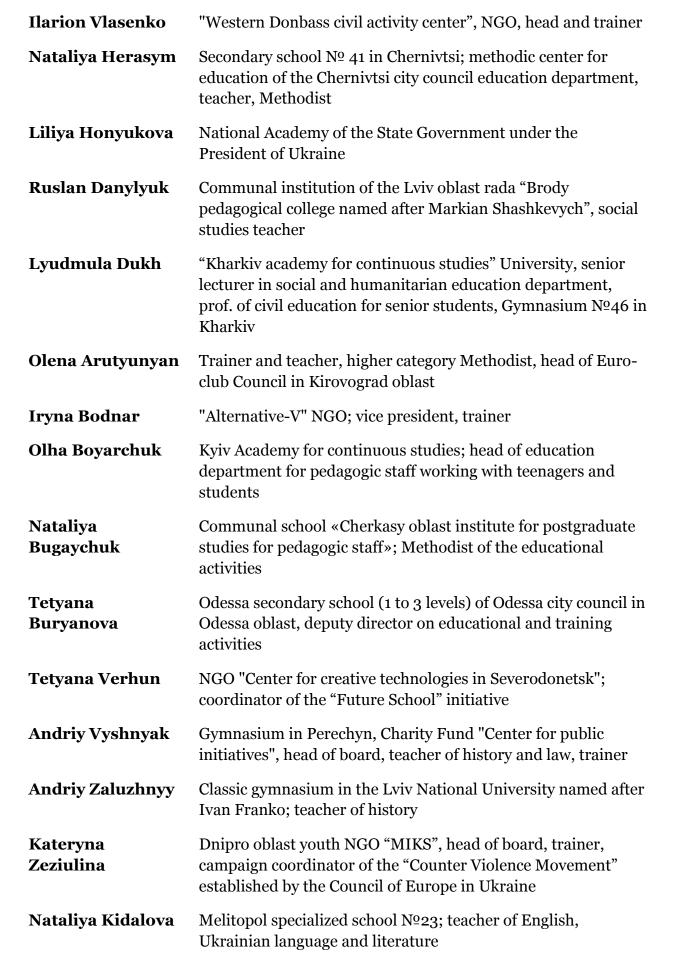|	
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