

SCHOOLS FOR DEMOCRACY

Supporting Educational Reforms in Ukraine

Final report 2017-2021

January 2022



The European Wergeland Centre (EWC) is a resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship.

Our work builds on Council of Europe recommendations and policies, such as the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, which was developed to make sure that the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law are promoted in and through education.

EWC's main aim is to strengthen the capacity of individuals, educational institutions and educational systems to build and sustain a culture of democracy and human rights.

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PROGRAMME IN NUMBERS

Support for policy makers and regional exchange

- **4** National Reform Working Groups supported
- **5** contributed to policy documents developed
- **2** policy documents piloted
- **160** Curriculum developers trained in education for democratic citizenship and human rights
- **102** education experts from Ukraine, Norway, Moldova and Georgia involved in experience exchange

Capacity -building of school community

- **409** schools trained directly during 5 cycles of the Programme in all 24 reg. • **1407** schools reached in total
- **30 000+** teachers, students, parents, school heads, local community representatives trained
- **128 000+** beneficiaries reached through Programme activities

Online teaching and learning resources

- **4** MOOCs and **4** blended learning courses developed for educators
- **51 000+** enrolled in the courses
- **15 000 +** certificates on the completion of the courses obtained
- **700** digital lesson activities developed ([Toolbox for teachers](#))
- **2** Council of Europe's manuals translated

Capacity -building of education experts

- **76** trainers trained in the Programme pool (since 2017)
- **66** experts from all regional In-Service Teacher Training Institutes trained to implement new approaches in education
- **25** experts trained to develop online learning resources

Communication and Dissemination

- **Program website** and **e-learning platform** launched at www.schools-for-democracy.org
- **2738** registered website users (school heads/deputies, teachers, students, parents, community representatives)
- **4500+** followers on Facebook
- Over **148 000** readers reached with articles published on the [New Ukrainian School Reform portal](#)

PROGRAMME'S TEAM: WHO WE ARE



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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2016, Ukraine embarked on the most comprehensive school education reform in its history. The New Ukrainian School puts a major emphasis on educating citizens who think critically and innovatively, participate in democratic processes, as well as value and respect dignity and the rights of all.

“Schools for Democracy: Supporting Education Reforms in Ukraine” Programme implemented by the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) aims to support democratic reforms in school education in Ukraine by promoting democratic culture and democratic citizenship in policy and practice.

NEW NATIONAL CURRICULUM

New National Curriculum for 5-9 grades and other supporting policy documents foster democratic competences and are ready for introduction in schools

REGIONAL EXCHANGE

Education policy in Ukraine draws on lessons learned from policymakers in Norway, Georgia and Moldova



GOALS

DEMOCRATIZATION OF SCHOOLS

Sustainable and systemic changes at schools (in governance, teaching and learning, and cooperation with local community) are introduced and function successfully

LEARNING DEMOCRACY ONLINE

Teachers and students in Ukraine have access to new digital resources for learning about democracy

The Programme is developed and implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. To ensure systemic and sustainable results, the EWC has partnered with a range of public and civil society institutions in Ukraine and internationally.

Partners in Ukraine

- Ministry of Education and Science (MoES)
- Ministry of Youth and Sports
- State Service of Education Quality (SSEQ)
- Ukrainian Institute of Education Development
- Institute for Modernization of Content of Education
- Lviv In-Service Teacher Training Institute
- Prometheus (online courses provider)
- Smart Osvita NGO
- CEDOS, Centre for Society Research
- Research Bureau Sociologist

Implementing partners

- Center for Educational Initiatives
- Ukrainian Step by Step Foundation
- ISAR Yednannia



“EWC is of great support in the reform process. The democratic approach, which is the focus of the European Wergeland Centre, is very important. It is based on the participatory approach where each contributor is heard, and common solutions are found”,

Roman Shyyan, deputy director of the Reform support team and leader of the working groups for the new curriculum

Internationally

- Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research
- Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Lillehammer
- National Centre for Teacher Professional Development, Georgia
- Ministry of Education of Moldova

POLICY WORK

The EWC has provided expert and technical assistance for working groups developing new national curricula for pre-school, primary and secondary school, strategy of civic education development and new quality standards for schools to strengthen the focus on development of democratic competences in the Ukrainian policy framework.

How did we contribute?

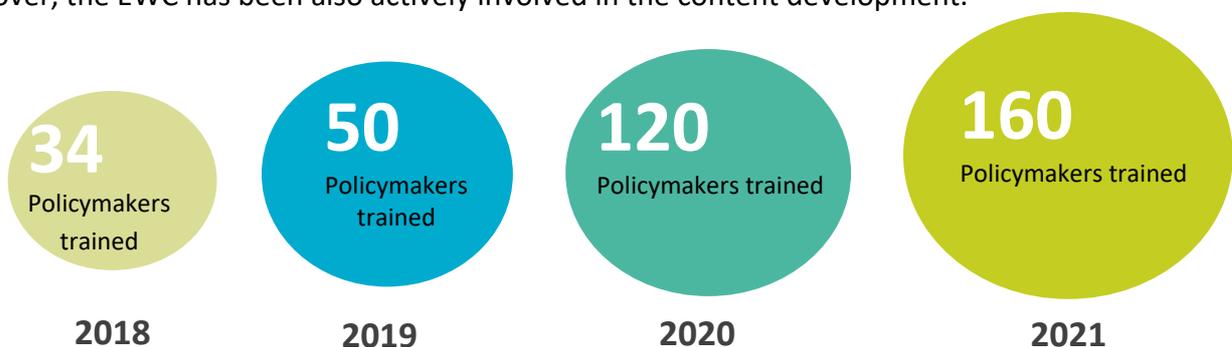
To support democratization of educational policies, the EWC has contributed to development of policy documents and provided support with piloting new policies in practice.



Working meeting for national curricula working group, 2019

Development of Policy Documents

The EWC has supported developers of national curricula and other policy documents by providing trainings, consultancy and organizational assistance for the working groups set up by the MoES. Moreover, the EWC has been also actively involved in the content development.



Number of policymakers trained from 2018 to 2021

Through regular discussions and meetings with experts representing institutions responsible for education quality criteria, strategic planning, definition of content and methodological approaches, the EWC has succeeded in including the Council of Europe recommendations on education for democratic citizenship and human rights and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture in several policy documents.

POLICY WORK

Since 2017, the Programme has contributed to the development of **5 policy documents**.

The deputy director of the Reform support team, Roman Shyyan, defines the main developments in the new documents as follows: “The main change is that students will be offered the possibility to influence the way things are being taught while the teachers will be able to accommodate students’ requests”.

Policy Documents developed with EWC contribution

Curriculum for Primary School (grades 1-4), 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross-curricular development of civic and social competences• Child-centered approach• Competence-based approach• More freedom in choosing teaching methods• Democratization of assessment practices
Curriculum for Basic Secondary School (grades 5-9), 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cross-curricular development of civic and social competences• Competence-based approach• More freedom in choosing teaching methods
Education Quality Standards for Schools, 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More focus on inclusive and democratic learning environment (prevention of bullying, shared decision-making, increased student participation)• Democratization of assessment practices• Focus on democratic teaching and learning in the external school audit
Pre-School Basic Component (National Curriculum), 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competence-based approach• More focus on free play, participation and child initiative• Democratic and inclusive environment• Continuity between pre-school and primary education• More focus on involvement of parents
Concept of civic education development in Ukraine, 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture• A bridge between formal and non-formal education• Focus on Youth empowerment• Civic competences in lifelong learning

Policy Piloting and Strengthening Teacher Capacity

To help put new policies into practice, the EWC has been providing teacher training and has carried out piloting of several new tools at schools.

One of the key changes in the curricula is the focus on civic competences in all subjects. In 2018, a national innovation project was launched within the Programme to pilot this approach (registered by a Ministerial Decree). It is being carried out in 62 schools in all 24 regions of Ukraine to test new tools and approaches for cross-curricula development and assessment of civic competences as outlined in the new curriculum. In 2020, 91% of teachers participating in the project stated that their understanding of the new policies, and how they can be put to practice has greatly improved.



Piloting project in numbers

The project results demonstrated that **the improvement of teacher skills in the development of civic competences leads to the progress of student achievements**. 98% of teachers confirmed that the participation in the Programme allowed them to improve their teaching skills in the development of civic competences. In 2020, 68% of teachers also mentioned that it was easier for them to adapt and conduct online lessons during the pandemic because of their online experiences in the project.

Teachers have used a **monitoring tool** especially designed by the project experts to assess student civic competences. The tool shows progress in the development of different components of the civic competences – e.g. cooperation for the common cause, respecting others, being open to other views, and so on.

Civic competences of over 16 500 students from 52 schools were measured before and after the Programme introduction.

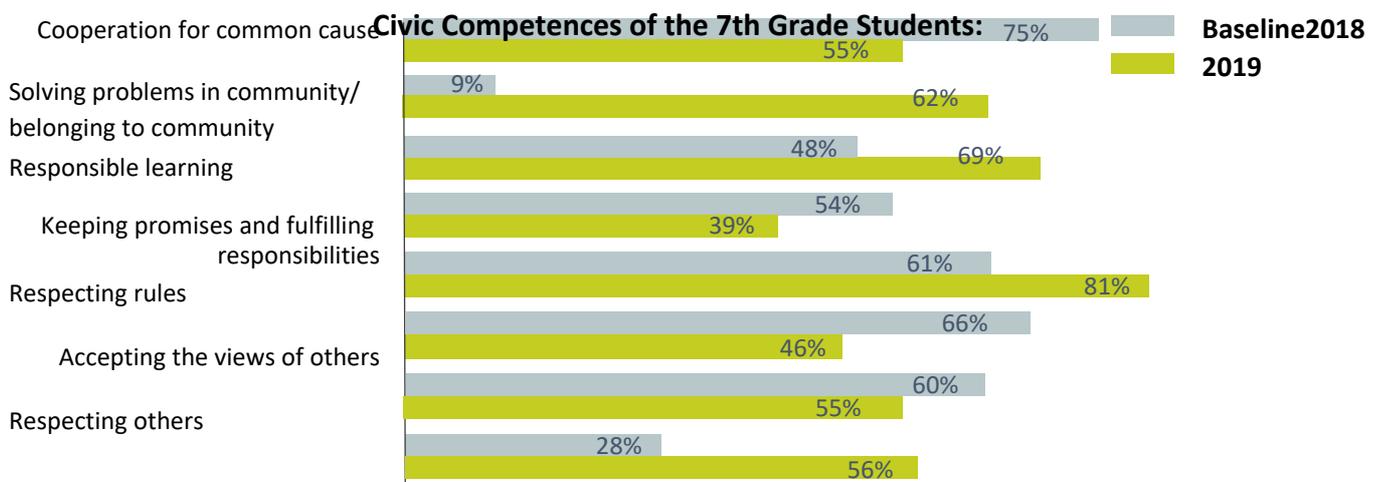


Chart with testing results in 2018-2019

As the numbers demonstrate, the percentage of students with a high level of certain competences increased considerably after two years of the Programme's support of the schools.

POLICY WORK

Introduction of the new curriculum in secondary school and getting teachers ready to use it in the classroom is another challenge that the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine is facing. Thereby, the EWC supported an innovative nationwide MoES project involving 136 schools piloting the new curriculum (one year prior to its large launch in all schools of the country).

48 Programme trainers facilitated the series of profound mini-courses, which in three weeks (late May – mid June 2021) resulted in 206 interactive online sessions for 2360 participants. Each participating school team consisted of the school principal and teachers, working with the classes piloting the new curriculum, in particular. Furthermore, trainers from all regional in-service teacher training institutes were also invited to these courses so that they could use the course materials working with teachers from other schools they are training.

Experience Exchange with Norway

Study visits to Norway are one of the elements of institutional cooperation between the European Wergeland Centre (EWC) and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science (MoES). In 2018 – 2019, the EWC organized study visits for 40 Ukrainian policymakers.

In summer 2018, the State Service of Education Quality of Ukraine (SEQ) and the MoES, including the Minister of Education Liliya Hrynevych, met with the representatives of key education institutions in Oslo.

In 2019, an official Ukrainian delegation led by the Minister of Education Hanna Novosad met with the Norwegian Minister of Education and Integration, as well as a State Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The delegation also had an opportunity to see how Norwegian pre-school and primary school policies are implemented in a kindergarten and a primary school in Oslo.

In 2020, an Oslo commune expert contributed to the Programme's work on pre-school policy development with two webinars on pre-school education. The following year, a Norwegian Directorate of Education representative delivered a presentation for the policy working group on upper secondary reform in Ukraine.



POLICY WORK

Regional Exchange between Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine

Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova go through similar educational reforms and face similar challenges in their implementation. To strengthen regional cooperation as well as dissemination of best practices and experience exchange, the Programme included capacity-building trainings, local projects at schools, sharing of experiences, and networking opportunities over a period of two years.

In February 2019, the EWC conducted a workshop targeting experienced trainers from teacher trainer institutions in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. The workshop strengthened the trainers' capacity to design, implement and promote activities on democratic and human rights education in schools both online and offline. The workshop was followed by the implementation of local projects at schools in the trainers' home countries.

In November 2019, a conference in Tbilisi brought the teacher trainers together again, along with representatives of the schools they worked with, policymakers, and other education professionals. Overall, 80 participants took part in the conference to share good practices and innovative ideas on educating school children to be competent, confident and responsible citizens of diverse democratic societies.

The online conference "Competence-based Teaching and Learning in Secondary School" organized in February 2021 served as a concluding meeting for the participants from three countries. An online panel discussion during the conference, focusing on digital citizenship and challenges for teaching civics in the times of the pandemic, gathered over 205 participants. 8 schools from Georgia, 9 schools from Moldova and 49 schools from Ukraine presented the results of their work on the development of student civic competences both offline and online.



LEARNING DEMOCRACY ONLINE

As the reform continues, it includes more areas and levels of school education and a larger number of professionals, who require new teaching and learning resources, as well as training in the new approaches. The Programme has responded to these needs by creating online resources, such as manuals, including translated CoE materials, an E-guide on democratic changes at school, as well as a toolbox with exercises on human rights and democracy education for different school subjects.

The Programme supports online capacity-building of educators in two formats: individual online learning (Massive Open Online Courses) and blended learning facilitated by an instructor.

Online Courses on the “Prometheus” Platform

In 2020, most educational processes were transferred online. One of the highlights of the Programme is the series of massive open online courses (MOOCs) launched on the Prometheus platform (leading online course provider in Ukraine). The courses allow to significantly scale up the capacity building of educators, also taking into consideration the restraints brought by the pandemic. The courses were developed by 25 Programme experts in different fields. They amass the EWC’s experience of offering teacher training in education for democratic citizenship and human rights in Ukraine during the last 5 years.



Illustrations from the series of MOOCs and example of course certificate

A series of courses entitled “30 Steps towards the New Ukrainian School: Educating a Citizen” consists of 4 MOOCs: “Starting towards a Successful School”, “Secrets of the Successful Principal”, “Everyday Solutions for Teaching” and “School and Community for Students”. They are self-paced. Each MOOC offers a certificate of one standard European academic credit (ECTS) recognized as a part of obligatory professional training. By winter 2021, more than 50 000 teachers and school heads enrolled in the programme MOOCs, and more than 15 000 obtained certificates upon completion.

According to the report of the external course evaluator, the content of the series of MOOCs is relevant for the professional life of most of the respondents. 73% of the respondents noted that they will recommend series of courses to their colleagues. The vast majority of school administration representatives (97%) would recommend these courses to their teaching staff. “All school administration representatives should take this course to push the reform forward. Involving all stakeholders in school life is crucial. The course was useful indeed”, a participant noted.

“My daughter will start school this year. I find it interesting to understand what contemporary school is offering and how can I contribute to making our school a better place”, a MOOC learner said. Another learner noted: “This course allowed me to really enjoy my own reloading process. At the same time, it provided an opportunity to plan real changes in professional development and changes in my environment. I have already recommended the course to some colleagues”.

Blended Courses on the E-learning Platform

In 2021, the EWC launched 4 new blended learning courses (duration 8-10 weeks). 3 of these were developed for school administration and teachers: “Development of Civic Competences through Student Councils”, “Transversal development of civic competences”, “Democratic School Governance”. One more course titled “Listening to children voices: the culture of democracy in preschool education” was tailor-made for pre-school teachers. Unlike MOOCs, blended courses provide an opportunity to discuss and reflect along with peers and facilitators. Online support is combined with workshops and school-based competence development. This approach ensures more commitment from learners and actual implementation of changes at schools as a result.

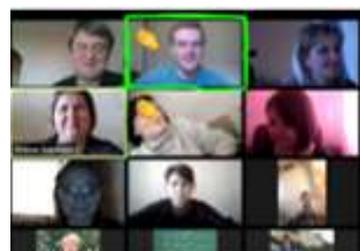
The structure of the courses allows the school staff not only to get knowledge, but also to practically implement it in everyday school life. After completing practical tasks, the participants give feedback and reflect on their experiences with the trainers. Course certificates are officially recognized by the educational authorities.

Currently, the total number of learners on the EWC e-learning platform is 818.

Blended courses launched in 2021:

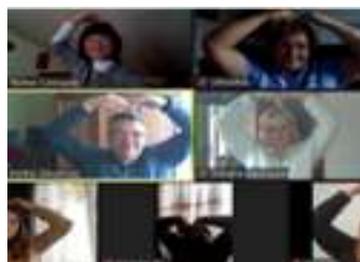
Development of civic competences through student councils (60 hrs, 2 ECT)

This course aims to prepare teachers and deputy school heads in charge of student councils to better implement the norms of the new Law on Secondary Education (2020), which grants student self-government bodies a larger role in the school governance. Through learning to participate in the decision-making process in schools, students develop necessary skills and attitudes for being an active and responsible citizens.



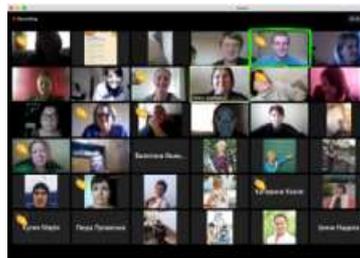
Transversal development of civic competences (30 hrs, 1 ECT)

The target group of the course is teachers of all school subjects who want to learn how to develop civic competences of students in their subjects. Because competence-based learning is relatively new for Ukrainian teachers, the course offers practical ways of implementing it through interactive methods, assessment for learning and project-based learning.



Democratic school governance (30 hrs, 1 ECT)

This course was developed for school teams consisting of school heads and their deputies. Participants analyse their school documents and practices during the course. They are guided in how to make them more inclusive and democratic, as well as how to align them with the New Ukrainian School reform requirements.



Listening to children voices: the culture of democracy in pre-school education (30 hrs, 1 ECT)

This course is aimed at kindergarten staff and administration. It encompasses valuable practical resources for teachers, administrators and parents. Both Ukrainian and international experts and practitioners were involved in the course development.



DEMOCRATIZATION OF SCHOOLS

With the educational reform, schools become autonomous units of change. This change concerns not only the content of education but, importantly, the transformation of the school environment, the transition to a more democratic and more inclusive education.

The Programme supports schools in applying the whole school approach to democratic school development. It encourages the whole school community to assess situation, plan and implement changes in three core areas of school life – teaching and learning, governance, and cooperation with the local community.

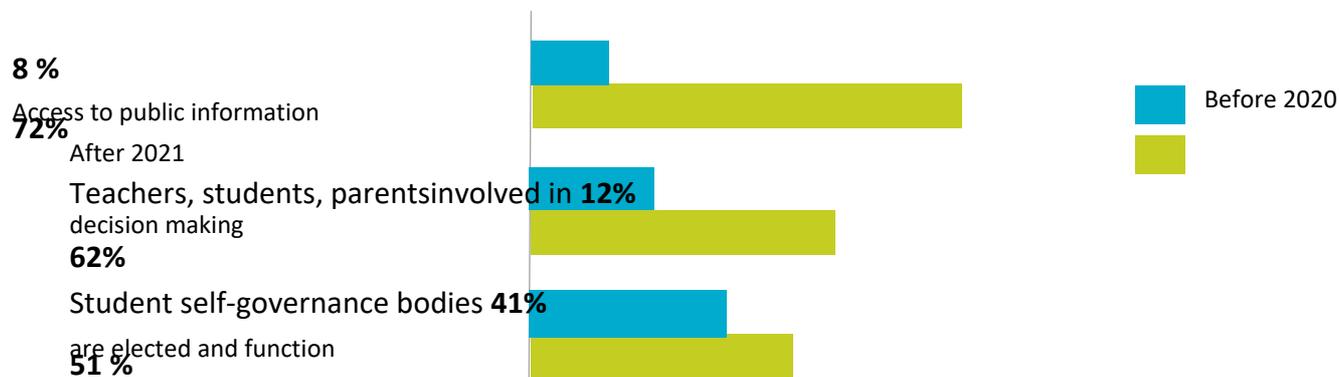
The EWC supports schools for 18 months. First, participating schools meet with other participants and trainers and the Launching conference. Afterwards, introductory trainings for school teams and 5 visits to each school are conducted. Meetings with schools allow reaching out to a large number of school stakeholders.

In 2020 and 2021, the Programme provided blended learning support to schools, since most of the meetings moved online. More than 250 meetings were conducted online, while 148 were held face-to-face. 33% of all school stakeholders were involved in Programme activities, communicated with trainers directly and were able to define the support they needed in order to implement democratic changes. Below are some of the examples of change stories provided after the completion of the projects (more change stories are available on the [Programme website](#)).

Changes at schools:

Governance and Culture

Involving students, parents, and teachers along with the school administration and community representatives in the decision-making processes assures that changes will reflect the needs of all. The involvement of students can take various forms – from their participation in particular projects to the organization of student governing bodies and drafting school documents that establish democratic procedures at the school.



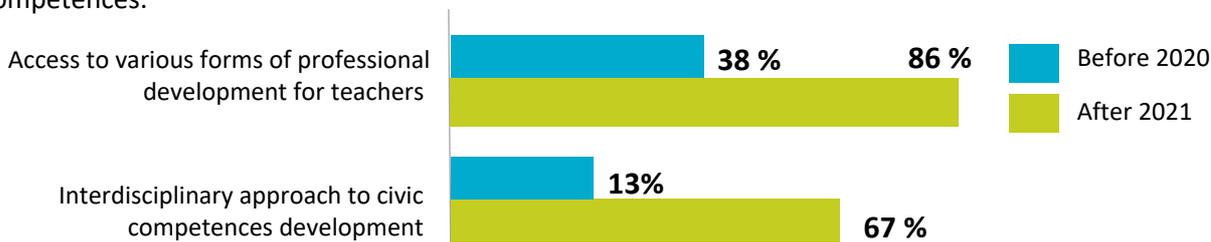
Changes in governance and culture at schools after participation in the Programme measured by the Tool for Democratic School Development

In Radyvylivsky lyceum (Rivne oblast) self-governing bodies were running at school before it took part in the Programme, but they were not involved in decision-making processes. Teachers and the administration selected active children and approved their decisions. After a year in the Programme, student government actively interacts with all school stakeholders - parents, teaching staff and school administration. Students are involved in decision-making and take part in the initiatives related to various aspects of school life. "It's nice that parents are now involved in creating a democratic environment at school. Everyone has benefited from such changes. Students have become active participants in the educational process, they have understood their role both during extracurricular activities and during the lessons," emphasizes Iryna Kulyk, one of the parents.

DEMOCRATIZATION OF SCHOOLS

Teaching and Learning

The new Curricula encourages development of civic competences in all subjects. It also promotes applying modern methods in the classroom, such as project-based learning, interactive learning, formative assessment: allowing for more freedom for students and requiring more responsibility, thus also fostering civic competences.



Changes in teaching and learning at schools after participation in the Programme measured by the Tool for Democratic School Development

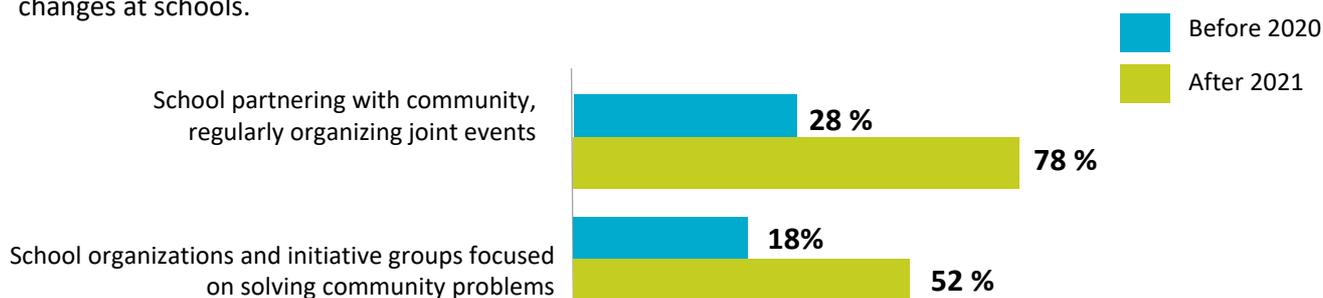
Khorol specialized school №1 (Poltava oblast) took the challenge to gradually introduce the development of civic competences into all subjects. First, trainings were conducted for all teachers at school. "At first, I didn't know how to combine the topics of the program material in mathematics with civic education. It seemed to me purely a subject of the humanities, but participating in the Programme helped to change that perception", said Oleksandr Radchenko, teacher of mathematics and computer science.

Teachers planned the introduction of new approaches together. On the one hand, it helped to avoid repetition which could overload the students, on the other it provided opportunities for peer learning among the colleagues. It united teachers and boosted their confidence. The initiative of conducting integrated lessons with human rights and democracy education elements was shared by 12 teachers. 145 students were involved in the process.

"In my opinion, the main qualitative change is new quality of relationships with students, colleagues, and parents. The communication style has been taken to a different level", says Lilia Larionenko, a teacher of Ukrainian language and literature.

Cooperation with the Local Community

Finding solutions for the challenges of local community development is at the core driver of democratic changes at schools.



Changes in cooperation with local community of schools after participation in the Programme measured by the Tool for Democratic School Development

Many schools in Ukraine see cooperation with parents as problematic or challenging. Lysychanska school №13 (Luhansk oblast) decided to improve its cooperation with parents. A social media chat for the whole school was set up to discuss challenges and possible solutions. New student governance regulations were introduced, and the format of parents' meetings was changed, allowing more space for parents and students voices. Teachers' council launched an anti-bullying project aimed at acquiring mediation skills and civic competences of all school stakeholders' development. The school also reached out to partners from the local community – library, teacher college, regional children's hospital and even shops looking for new ways of cooperation beyond the school.

School director, Marina Milishkevych, says that the cooperation within the school has changed a lot: "Parents, students and teachers come with suggestions instead of demands! We are as open to each other as possible. Applying the pedagogy of partnership (relationship-centered education) helps us to solve difficult situations".

SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

Programme priority that emerged as a Programme-shaping factor was the sustainability of changes. Establishing and support of expert and institutional networks in all Ukrainian regions set up a strong independent platform of agents of change who implement democratic education in the country.

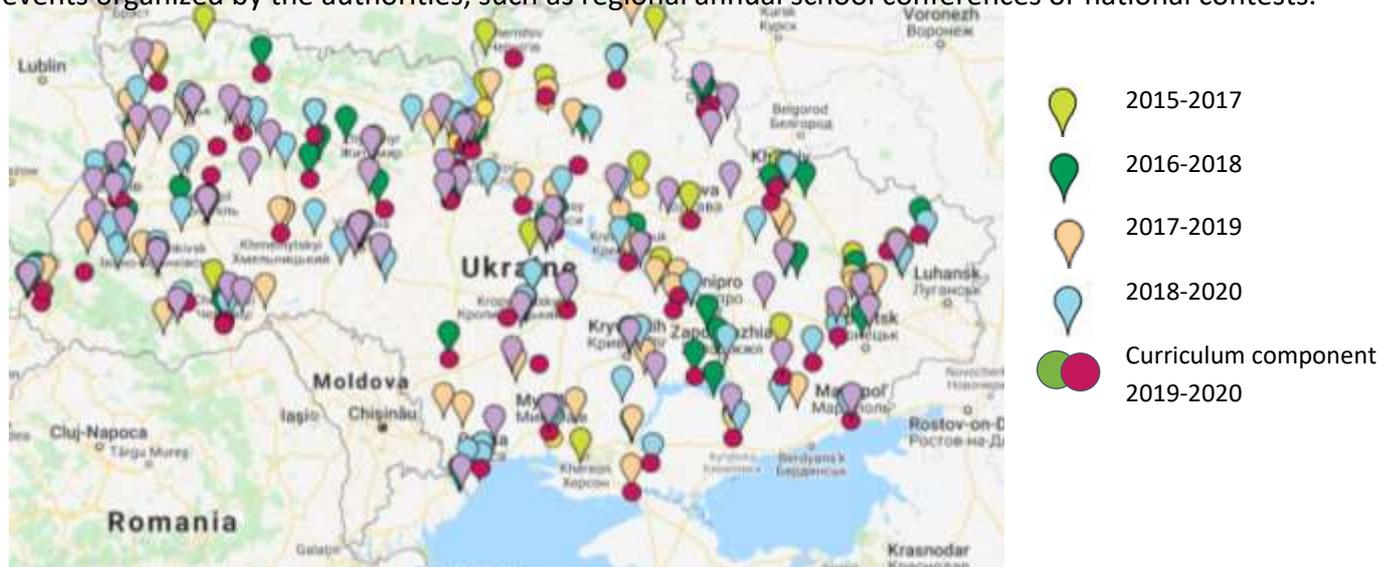
Various activities of the programme are aimed at networking through ensuring dialogue among the regions as well as peer learning. All programme trainers are part of 8 regional hubs that cover all 24 regions. The hubs are in charge of regular trainings of trainers for experience exchange and

participatory

planning of the regional schools support. Schools communicate directly with the trainers on the regional level. Furthermore, EWC organizes conferences on the national and international levels for the networking of all programme stakeholders. Facebook group with more than 4500 subscribers serves as platform for schools and trainers to share their stories and tools.

Network of Schools

274 schools are currently active in the Programme network, representing more than 160 000 teachers, students, parents and community members. Many of the schools are valued by the Ministry of Education as agents of change and have been frequently invited to present their projects at various events organized by the authorities, such as regional annual school conferences or national contests.



The cooperation of schools across regions throughout the years of Programme implementation is also supported through a mini-grant scheme. The grants are provided for the schools to cover small-scale project implementation costs in relation to school governance and culture, cooperation with the community, and teaching and learning. The priority is given to the projects that include the regional or interregional cooperation of schools. Currently, 15 mini-grant projects are being implemented.

In 2019 – 2020, 14 thematic trainings were organized. 8 of them brought together teachers and school heads from all 5 Programme cycles. The trainings were aimed at strengthening the capacity of participants to work with such fundamental topics of the Programme as student self-governance, project-based learning approach, and the development of civic competences. The schools had an opportunity to share experiences and tips with each other. In 2021, workshops on formative assessment, development of civic competences online and elaboration of interactive tasks for various subjects were conducted for school networks. 11 schools from the Programme’s network are also part of the network of democratic schools of the Council of Europe.

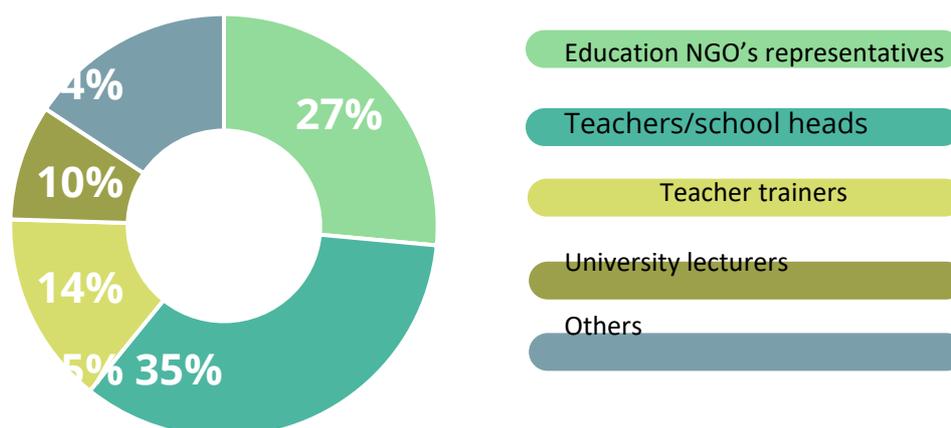
SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

Network of Trainers

Since 2017, 76 trainers have been involved in the Programme network. The pool of trainers is divided into smaller teams, coordinated by the regional hubs. 8 regional hubs are responsible for: introducing new trainers to the network, exchange of experiences and feedback, updating trainers on the latest concepts and practices implemented within the Programme. In addition, several times per year, the Programme organizes face-to-face trainings of trainers and webinars for peer learning and experience exchange often involving international leading experts.



The Programme supports continuous professional development of the network members. The training activities contribute to the enhancement of basic training skills and provide learning on specific topics (e.g., conflict mediation, digital citizenship, online learning, democratic assessment methods) to strengthen programme-related competences.



Profile of Trainer Network 2021

Trainers' professional growth, experience exchange and networking possibilities help also to promote the development of civic competences beyond the Programme. The Programme coordinator together with 5 of the trainers from the pool were involved as co-authors of several policy documents. Achievements of the Programme's trainers and school staff show the value of the participation in the Programme for their professional development. Natalia Kidalova, a Programme trainer, won the Global Teacher Prize Ukraine in 2019. In 2020, this prize was awarded to Vasyl Dyakiv, a teacher of Zalishchyky gymnasium, one of the first schools that took part in the Programme. In his speech at the awarding ceremony, he expressed gratitude to the Programme.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

One of the ways to assure sustainability is the dissemination and communication of Programme experiences and results. The Programme communication strategy is aimed at informing the target audience about Programme activities and resources that help implementing democratic reforms, as well as at motivating educators for change.

Moreover, dissemination of Programme results has helped to influence the national agenda of education democratization. In 2020, a particular focus was put on the promotion of online courses developed by the Programme to support implementation of the New Ukrainian School.

In order to reach the established goals and the various target groups, the EWC uses diverse channels of communication.

To communicate Programme results beyond the participants, the EWC cooperates with main media outlets that disseminate the information on education reform in Ukraine: the website of the Ministry of Education, the “New Ukrainian School” website and education.ua among others. The Programme shares information about current activities, useful resources, as well as interviews on key topics of highest concern.

The EWC Youtube channel is used for the dissemination of video materials.

Programme’s Facebook page remains the main platform for news and updates communication. Along with the main Facebook page, there are closed groups for Programme alumni network, current participants and trainers.



Illustration from the article on the New Ukrainian School Reformportal



Over **148000** readers reached with articles published on the [New Ukrainian School Reform portal](#)



More than **300** daily visitors to the [Programme’s website](#). **30062** users have visited the website **45754** times during the period from 1 Sep to 30 Nov 2021.



Over **3000** monthly visits of the [Programme’s library](#)



+3000 downloads of the Programme resources per month.



+4 500 followers on the [Schools for Democracy Facebook page](#)



5 promotion videos of the series of MOOCs available at the EWC youtube channel



30354 users have accessed [Toolbox for teachers](#), during the period from 1 Sep to 30 Nov 2021. approx. **300** visits per day.

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and <https://theewc.org/countries/ukraine/>

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