

*New Perspectives for Learning – Briefing Paper*  
**Intercultural Active Citizenship Education**

*This is the second Briefing Paper of the project started in March 2004*

Context of the Research

Europe is now, on the whole, made up of multicultural societies that are undergoing deep changes in the population fabric, due to the increased mobility between countries. That is why the very concept of national citizenship has to become more flexible in order to accommodate European and global citizenship and to allow new citizens to participate fully. Given its power and status in society, education has an important role to play in the preparation of future citizens. However, teachers, being at the same time citizens and educators, need to be educated themselves in terms of critical and reflective thinking, in order to promote the change outlined in the official educational policies at the national and European levels.

This project focuses on the perceptions, experiences and expectations that teachers have about the intercultural dimension of citizenship education, both as citizens and educators. Specifically, it looks both at the sources and ways of constructing teacher experiential and content knowledge, as well as indicates the possibilities teachers can create in order to become active and participative educators within the scope of intercultural citizenship education.

The project examines the intercultural element of citizenship and human rights education in four participating countries: Denmark, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. Furthermore, it analyses the whole process of the implementation of national and European official guidelines within each country, as it studies closely the intercultural element contained in the national curricula, teacher development and postgraduate programmes and a variety of school settings. As a result, the project will identify the national priorities, good practices and teachers' views within the intercultural dimension. However, given its transnational character, the project explores the great potential of contrasting and comparing the educational policies and practices between the countries with a recent history of immigration and European membership and those with a longer one. By looking at the relationship between the official policies and their practical implementation at a local level, the project will identify teachers' needs in the area of intercultural active citizenship education, which will enable the project participants to provide guidelines for teacher education.

Initial Conclusions

*1) European level education policies*

The project participants examined official European documents (policy documents of the Council of Europe and EU institutions) to find definitions of an intercultural dimension and how it was addressed in the contexts of intercultural, citizenship and human rights education. The time frame of the analysed documents covers the period from the late 1970s until 2004.

The focus of intercultural education, as presented in the analysed European documents, gradually **changes from the education of migration populations and their integration into European schools to a more inclusive approach**, raising the issue of relationships between cultural groups. The view of contemporary official European of intercultural education is concerned with **active participation in democratic life, empowerment and managing diversity**. Consequently, teacher training for such education should aim at combating political apathy in youth and should be based on the principles of non-discrimination, pluralism and equity. **“Learning to live together”** is a

key idea promoted in the European educational landscape as the ultimate goal of intercultural education.

According to the analysed documents, “citizenship” in the European context has an essentially multicultural quality and is to be constructed in transnational exchange and cooperation programmes, educating critical, conscientious, democratic citizens.

## 2) *National level education policies*

### a) *Priorities*

The comparison between the key national policy documents of Denmark, Spain, Portugal and the UK from the last twenty years identified differences and similarities in the priorities and objectives which relate to citizenship and intercultural education in schools:

- Firstly, **until 2002 citizenship and multicultural education were only to some extent recognised as cross-curricular themes in the national curricula of all the four countries**. However, since then citizenship education has been formally introduced as a national curriculum subject in England, while the official educational policies in the other three countries have called for changes in curriculum design in order to address those issues. These translated into either the idea of the creation of new subjects (Portugal, Spain) or in the re-conceptualisation of the existing curriculum subjects, like in Denmark. In any case, in contemporary Spain, Denmark and Portugal citizenship and intercultural issues are treated mainly in the classes of foreign languages, civics and history. The recent law within the Spanish educational reform (LOE 2006) has introduced a separate subject of “Citizenship Education and Human Rights” into the school curriculum. Its practical implementation is planned for September 2007.
- Secondly, **the explicit emphasis on education for democracy characterises the national policies of all the participating countries, except for England**. Democracy, human rights or children’s rights are not generally explicit concerns addressed in English education policy documents; the emphasis is in fact laid on citizenship.

### b) *Key concepts*

- Citizenship proved to be a debated concept across the four countries. Thus, whereas **Danish and Spanish** education policies highlight a **democratic dimension of education**, based on freedom, equality and participation, **Portuguese** national policies are more closely geared towards **an intercultural citizenship** that is concerned with integration, pluralism and diversity.
- The term “**intercultural**” turns out to be a controversial one across the four countries. Its scope varies greatly from country to country. Thus, whereas **Portuguese and Spanish** educational policies interpret intercultural education as **geared towards the integration of immigrants**, the **Danish** national curriculum emphasises **international** and transcultural understanding in order to enable students to cope in international/transnational environments. In **England**, although language teachers may see themselves as promoting intercultural skills, the main emphasis has been on **multicultural**, rather than intercultural, education. “International” and “multicultural” are the terms used interchangeably with the term “intercultural” in Denmark and England, respectively.
- Although racism and xenophobia, together with specific forms of racism, such as anti-semitism and islamophobia, are given increasing emphasis in European

policy documents, with education presented as a key force in the fight against racism, these concepts are not addressed centrally in any national policy documents. Anti-semitism and islamophobia are absent from any of the documents of the national ministries of education of the four countries.

### c) Strategies

- In the national policies of the four countries the concept of “citizenship” is related to “identity”. Thus, both in Spain and Portugal the **strategies** of building citizenship and a common identity are **linked to democracy** and fostered through **critical spirit, mutual respect and understanding, equal opportunities, and participation**. England acknowledges the diverse national, religious and ethnic identities in the countries and stresses the need for **political participation, mutual respect and understanding** in constructing citizenship. Danish policies, in their turn, similarly highlight the importance of participation and understanding, yet they are not consensual on the meaning of culture which results in different approaches to diversity in the Danish educational system.
- **Portugal is the only country which explicitly states strategies to prepare teachers** to deal with a multicultural reality. These include developing a critical attitude and different methodological approaches through stimulating innovation, investigation and self-learning.

### *3) Interviews with policymakers at the national level*

A number of leading figures in the field of national education were interviewed with reference to the main concepts of the project. The conclusions largely confirm the priorities and “telling absences” within national education policies that were identified in the document analysis.

- Unlike in Spain and Portugal, **European policy guidelines on citizenship education, human rights and intercultural education were not generally taken into account** during the work on the national curricula either in **Denmark or England**;
- **Intercultural education is a contested, controversial and even unfamiliar issue** to policy makers in Denmark and England. Therefore it is **not prioritised**, being increasingly replaced by a **multicultural or international education**. “International” is a preferred term in the Danish society as it is associated with the ability to engage and compete in a globalised world. However, in England there is no consensus on the meaning of multiculturalism or multicultural education.
- **Democratic education and education for diversity** are the apparent alternative priorities for the English and Danish educational authorities, respectively. As a result, compared to Spanish and Portuguese national policies, the disparity in focus can be observed, especially considering the fact that the Spanish policymakers gear intercultural education towards immigrants.
- The scope of **citizenship education** is more limited according to the policymakers in England or Denmark. The two countries’ interviewees mainly highlight the **political dimension** in building knowledge about citizenship. However, the English and Portuguese policymakers’ opinions coincide as they consider citizenship education as a **vehicle for promoting racial and multicultural equality**.
- **The intercultural dimension of citizenship education** appears to be more clearly outlined by the Portuguese interviewees. Its main objectives encompass ensuring social cohesion by developing knowledge and respect for different

cultures and encouraging a critical assessment of stereotypical representations, as well as by teaching immigrants Portuguese as a second language in order to accommodate them within the school system. Compared to the other countries, Portuguese education policy seems to correspond to European official guidelines to a greater extent.

### Initial Recommendations (for teacher education)

- The introduction of document analysis (European, national and comparative);
- The introduction of concept analysis (multicultural, intercultural, democratic, national, international, transnational, global, migration, citizenship, diversity, discrimination, equality, equity, critical awareness, critical pedagogy, etc.);
- The discussion of the multicultural understandings of human rights;
- The introduction of controversial citizenship issues (e.g. racism, anti-semitism, islamophobia, etc.);
- The analysis of the objectives, contents and methodologies of the various dimensions of education, namely democratic, political, multicultural, intercultural, international and global at the level of European, national and comparative analysis;
- The discussion of objectives, instruments and strategies related to intercultural active citizenship education, as established in documents (European, national and comparative analysis) compared to their implementation in school practices.

### Further Information

The full title of the project is: Intercultural Active Citizenship Education (INTERACT)

The final report is due in September, 2007.

The project website at <http://www.ces.uc.pt/interact>

### Key Publications

#### **Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet, Denmark**

1. Haas, C. (2004) Multikulturalismer - en problemudredning [The problem of multiculturalisms], in Korsgaard, O. (ed.) (2004) *Medborgerskab, identitet og demokratisk dannelse*, Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitets Forlag.
2. Haas, C. "Multicultural manifesto for the past and the future", Danish newspaper *Politiken*, December 27th 2005.
3. Haas, C. (2004) "Den offentlige sfære som interkultural demokratisk dannelse". (The public sphere as intercultural democratic education). *Historie & Samfundsfag, No. 4, December 2004*.
4. Haas, C. (2005) "Politik, nation og kristendomskundskab" [Politics, nation and the school subject of Christianity]. *Religionslæreren 101 (2), 2005*

#### **Centro de Estudos Sociais, Portugal**

1. (forthcoming) Guilherme, M.; Pureza, J.M; Silva, R. P.; Santos, H. (2006) "The Intercultural Dimension of Citizenship Education in Portugal" In Byram, M.; Flemming, M. *Education for Intercultural Citizenship: concepts and comparisons*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters
2. Guilherme, M.; Phipps, A. (eds.) (2004) *Critical Pedagogy: Political Approaches to Language and Intercultural Communication*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. "Critical Pedagogy", a special issue of *Language and Intercultural Communication (3/3)*.

3. Pureza, J.M. (2004) “Quem salvou Timor Leste? Novas referências para o internacionalismo solidário” [Who saved East Timor? New references for international solidarity], in Santos, B. (org.): *Reconhecer para libertar. Os caminhos do cosmopolitismo multicultural*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2003. Porto, Afrontamento, 2004
4. Pureza, J.M.; Portas, M. (2004) “Do atlantismo ao europeísmo de esquerda” [From Atlantism to left-wing europeism], in Louçã, F. E Rosas, F. (orgs.), *Ensaio Geral. Passado e Futuro do 25 de Abril*. Lisboa, Dom Quixote
5. Pureza, J.M. (2005) “Le Portugal et le nouveau internationalisme” [Portugal and New Internationalism], *Pôle Sud, Revue de Science Politique de l’Europe Méridionale*, nº 22, May 2005

**Departamento de Didáctica de la Lengua y de la Literatura, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain**

1. Castro, P. (2005) “Objectives of foreign language education and culture teaching time”. In Sercu, L. (Ed.), *et al. Foreign Language Teachers and Intercultural Communication. An International Investigation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
2. Sercu, L., Méndez García, M.C. y Castro Prieto, P. (2005). “Culture Learning from a Constructivist Perspective. An investigation of Spanish Foreign Language Teachers’ Views”. *Language & Education*, vol. 19: 6. (pp. 483- 495)
3. Castro, P., Sercu, L y Méndez García, M.C. (2004). “Integrating language and culture teaching: an investigation of Spanish teacher’s perception of the objectives of foreign language education”. *Intercultural Education*, vol. 15: 1. (pp. 91- 104)
4. Sercu, L., Méndez García, M.C. y Castro, P. (2004). “Culture teaching in foreign language education. EFL teachers in Spain as cultural mediators”. *PortaLinguarum*, nº1. (pp. 85- 102)

**Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education, University of Leeds, UK  
Institute of Education, University of London, UK**

1. Osler, A.; Starkey, H. (2005) *Changing Citizenship: democracy and inclusion in education* Open University Press.
2. Osler, A. (ed.) (2005) *Teachers, Human Rights and Diversity*. Trentham.
3. Osler, A. & Starkey, H. (2005) “Violence in schools and representations of young people: a critique of government policies in France and England”, *Oxford Review of Education*, 31(2), pp. 191-211.
4. Starkey, H. (2005) “Democratic Education and Learning”, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 26(2), pp. 299-308.
5. (forthcoming) Osler, A. and Starkey, H. (2006) *Teachers and Human Rights Education*. Trentham Books.

Research Institutions

- Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal (Coordinating Institution)
- Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet, Department of Educational Anthropology, Denmark
- Departamento de Didáctica de la Lengua y la Literatura, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain
- Institute of Education, University of London
- Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education, University of Leeds

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