

Summary Flanders

The Active Citizenship Compass project has the following aims, implementation strategies and predictive results:

Objectives

The aim of this project is to promote Active Citizenship (AC) in secondary schools and prepare students to be active citizens in Europe. To achieve this goal, the consortium (institutions from Belgium, Czech Republic, Greece, The Netherlands, Spain and Turkey) will work on raising students' and teachers' awareness on AC in Education (ACE), create an Active Citizenship Compass (ACC), design and implement learning activities on AC, and develop Active Citizenship school policies as an excellent practice for secondary schools.

Implementation strategies

The activities that will contribute to achieve the objectives of the project are as follows: the investigation of the current situation on ACE in partner countries, the creation of ACC - a digital tool that will assess students' skills and knowledge level on AC -, teachers' training on how to design and implement learning activities and tools on AC and their students' training accordingly. Finally, partners will develop and follow-up the school policies on AC.

Results

It is expected that after the implementation of the project, the students will have developed competences and attitudes in terms of becoming active citizens in Europe. Teachers and HEIs staff will be aware of the concept of AC, having skills required to train and guide their students on Active Citizenship, both now and in the future. Finally, schools will be able to adapt a dynamic policy on Active Citizenship that will be revised and evaluated on a regular basis.

The project consortium understands Active Citizenship as follows:

Active Citizenship is the ability to participate in politics and society, characterized by the knowledge, skill, and confidence to engage effectively in one's environment and society.

The content of the activities in this work package can be divided into 3 categories:

- research
- meetings and working processes
- outreach and dissemination activities

The majority of the activities focus on research on the current situation regarding ACE in Europe and in the specific partner countries. The research will be conducted using a mixed method approach, with a.o. literature and source analysis, questionnaires/surveys and/or interviews/focus groups, comparative analysis ...

The collection of real practices and thus, the involvement of local teachers and pupils during the research (focus groups, interviews) should be highlighted here. The final writing, editing and publishing activities within this work package belong to the HEI staff's daily core activities and an effective working process can be guaranteed. The transnational project meetings will take place as a blend of virtual, hybrid and in-person activities. The work package kick-off will be online, prepared by the WP leading institution and organized through MS Teams as interactive session. One in-person meeting with the project partners is planned to work on the concrete deliverables and share, learn and co-create transnationally. To facilitate participation and input from other colleagues at the partner institutions, hybrid sessions will be included. Other online meetings will be held whenever needed and applicable. For outreach and dissemination, activities such as peer review, sharing and reflection sessions and dissemination will take

place throughout the research process. Important is the specific sharing and reflection session within each secondary school partner institution, where input and reflections from an extended teacher and pupil panel will be collected. The ACC consortium wants to highlight again the unique cooperation between secondary schools and HEI in each partner country and the involvement of teachers, pupils, parents and other stakeholders throughout different activities.

The results of the activities can be categorized according to the typology of the activities as mentioned above. The research activities will build the evidence and knowledge foundation for the other work packages and contribute to the applied scientific education domain. The meetings and working process activities will contribute to the overall alignment within the work package (and beyond) and result in a higher quality of the outputs and to the wellbeing of the staff members. The dissemination and outreach activities result in a bigger awareness on the topic of ACE. This will create leverage for the implementation and further distribution of the project results, the developed materials and the ACC tool. In that way, the activities also contribute to the realisation of the envisaged impact.

The book publication “Active Citizenship Education for a better tomorrow. History, challenges, and perspectives across Europe”, published by the publisher house Waxmann (Germany), is the result of 6 country studies regarding active citizenship education across Europe. Beside these 6 country studies, an introduction about the European situation (including recommendation and papers from the European institutions) and a comparative analysis about this topic are integrated. This comparative analysis is based on a questionnaire filled out by 4,187 pupils and 776 teachers in the above mentioned countries.

Active Citizenship (AC) Education in Flanders began with VOET in the late 1990s, facing low pupil engagement and broad implementation challenges. Reforms in 2010 had minimal impact, but spurred by EU competencies and ICCS findings, a significant policy shift occurred in 2018. This led to specialised subject mandates and a new phase of integration. Despite the variegated pedagogical methodologies employed across umbrella organisations, AC Education has garnered momentum within schools. Presently, curricula incorporate AC subjects; nevertheless, attaining homogeneity poses challenges, particularly in catering to the unique requirements of diverse pupil flows. Collaboration among educational networks, school boards, and governmental entities is imperative for ongoing enhancement.

The Flemish students report lower levels of self-perceived skills and attitudes toward active citizenship compared to their peers in countries like Greece, Spain, and Turkey. Notably, Flemish students, particularly males, show little interest in joining a student parliament or participating in demonstrations for a good cause. The Flemish students place greater emphasis on statements related with empathy and group cohesion compared to the other active citizenship components. The Flemish teachers mirror these trends, aligning closely with the students’ responses. Among all participating countries, the answer patterns of both the Flemish students and teachers most closely resemble those of the Netherlands.