

INVALSI – CIDREE

2005: European Year of Citizenship Through Education

*Building Democracy in Europe Through Citizenship Education*

## **Experiences of Education for Democratic Citizenship in Italian Schools in Recent Years: Research**

### **Lines**

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### **Context**

Over the last few years Italian schools have been particularly called upon to make a renewed commitment to education for democratic citizenship (EDC)<sup>1</sup>. These stimuli have come both from within, from the context, and from above. From the inside it was, above all, changes in the school population towards a multiethnic and multicultural population that spurred the rethinking and redesigning of EDC, over and beyond civic education<sup>2</sup> and the participation in management that had characterised the period following the issuing of the 1974 decrees on school democracy.

The glocal context, with its technological and economic changes (globalisation), has gradually become an increasingly more important interlocutor of the didactic planning of autonomous schools (since 1998) through interactions with local bodies, private organisations operating in the social field, NGOs and voluntary associations, with international institutions and bodies, particularly European ones with which schools have established reactive and proactive relations and partnerships in which issues of the education of citizens – and not just of students – are fundamental.

However, an important role in catalysing the innovation processes has also been played from above, by policy decisions, central/national ministry initiatives and by the actions of international organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> Let us take the meaning put forward in the Council of Europe contribution “*All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies*” that is part of the EDC Pack, instruments for European Year of Citizenship ([http://www.coe.int/T/e/Cultural\\_Co-operation/E.D.C/Documents\\_and\\_publications/By\\_Subject/Policies/All\\_european\\_study\\_complete.PDF](http://www.coe.int/T/e/Cultural_Co-operation/E.D.C/Documents_and_publications/By_Subject/Policies/All_european_study_complete.PDF)) in which it is stated that EDC (Education for Democratic Citizenship) “**is a set of practices and principles aimed at making young people and adults better equipped to participate actively in democratic life by assuming and exercising their rights and responsibilities in society**”. Also the Eurydice document “*Educazione alla cittadinanza nelle scuole in Europa*”, n. 24, 2004 edited by S.Baggiani & A.Turchi ([http://www.indire.it/eurydice/documenti/quaderno\\_24.pdf](http://www.indire.it/eurydice/documenti/quaderno_24.pdf)) states that the term generally refers to the knowledge and practising of civil rights and responsibilities, also highlighting that, depending on the context, the term may recall a juridical status or social role.

<sup>2</sup> Civic education, a discipline introduced in the school curriculum with President of the Republic Decree no. 585 of 1958, should have significantly contributed to citizenship education and to promoting a civil conscience. In the official primary school programmes, starting from the third grade, civic education was taught by treating social groups closer to the children’s experience: the family and school. In the fourth grade, the subject dealt with local authorities (the regions, provinces and municipalities), meant as institutional structures experienced by the learners. In the fifth grade – when it can and must be assumed that children already have a sufficient degree of abstraction of cognitive processes – the pupils studied the state as well as international and transnational organisations. Since 1987 primary school programmes have indicated education for democratic cohabitation as a cross-curricular aspect and aim of all school subjects, which also envisaged specific ‘social studies’. In secondary schools, on the other hand, civic education was envisaged as an independent school subject, associated with the history timetable and teacher. The programmes listed the contents and sequence for dealing with the topics already treated in primary school. There has been no lack of school textbooks that have extended the topics to more recent and more strongly felt issues such as environmental protection, gender equality and equal opportunities, immigration, etc. (from Bertagna G., Barnato M. – eds. -, *Educazione alla convivenza civile e riforma del sistema d’istruzione*, Rapporto CISEM, Milano, 2005; I wish to thank Prof Giuseppe Bertagna for having made available this work still at the pre-print stage).

The 1990s witnessed many projects<sup>3</sup> geared to promoting the school's role in citizenship education. These led to the (macro) *Progetto Giovani* ("Youth Project") and to the overall proposal entitled *Nuove dimensioni formative, educazione civica e cultura costituzionale* ("New educational spheres, civic education and constitutional culture"), which the Minister Giancarlo Lombardi adopted with directive no. 58 of 8 February 1996 and which resulted in drafting the Students' Statute (President of the Republic Decree no. 249 of 24 June 1998)<sup>4</sup> and in the student councils. Following Law no. 53/2003, reforming the national education and training system, Civil Cohabitation<sup>5</sup> – which includes citizenship education – was prescribed by the National Indications for primary schools not as a new discipline, but as a cross-curricular education.

The expression *civil cohabitation* was taken from the delegated law and was used by the *National Indications* not only as a synthesis of citizenship, environmental, highway, health, food and affectivity "educations" making it up, but also as the outcome of the learning of every single item of knowledge and disciplinary skill – in the sense that a good teaching of religion, Italian, English, mathematics, sciences and so on essentially produces – and is called upon to produce – *civil cohabitation* at a personal level, as a condition and aim. Not only this, but the knowledge and skills specific to *civil cohabitation*, if they do not wish to indulge abstraction and sterility, are not born and do not exist outside good and proper knowledge and skills<sup>6</sup>. It is in this perspective that we also have citizenship education, meant as the introduction to "agreed" aspects of civil cohabitation that consider as common and shared values those which have been established by universal laws and declarations<sup>7</sup>. Education for Civil Cohabitation does not envisage any specific evaluation since it is a cross-curricular discipline, but the evaluation of 'behaviour' is (re)introduced – meant as the 'interest and manner of participation in the educational community of the class and school. Commitment. Relationship with others. Other things at the school's discretion', which may be expressed either by using a scale of adjectives, as with study disciplines, or through a discourse format.

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<sup>3</sup> A lucid reconstruction is found in the essay by L. CORRADINI, *Radici e sviluppi dell'educazione alla Convivenza civile*, in: L. CORRADINI, W. FORNASE, S. POLI (eds.), *Educazione alla Convivenza civile. Educare istruire formare nella scuola italiana*, Armando, Roma 2003, pp. 25-91. As regards the projects:

- They started from noting a discomfort, a socially significant "educational emergency".
- The state – through a legislative type provision – established that schools had to somehow deal with the "educational demand" underlying this emergency.
- These dispositions stimulated, encouraged, financed or suggested the inclusion of certain educational type attentions in specific sectors, with some teachers or schools generally taking up the challenge.
- The actions were often of an "informative" kind and – above all, in secondary education – tended to reproduce the face-to-face teaching model – perhaps resorting to experts to whom these actions were "delegated".
- On the whole, the actions tended to be occasional, isolated, disconnected and rarely linked to curricular subjects (from Bertagna G. & Barnato M. – eds. - *Educazione alla convivenza civile e riforma del sistema d'istruzione*, Rapporto CISEM, Milano, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> For more details of this experience, it is useful to see the study promoted by the *Cittadinanzattiva* movement in 2004, which may be found at <http://www.cittadinanzattiva.it/dyn/doc/527.pdf>. The study shows, amongst other things, that the right to assemblies is respected in nearly all the schools of the study, but some schools devote little attention to social and current problems and there are not many innovative projects bridging the gap between the theory and practice of civic participation in school life.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Obiettivi specifici di apprendimento per l'educazione alla Convivenza civile* in *Annali dell'istruzione*, anno XLVIII, n.5/6, pag.63. Ed. Le Monnier, Firenze 2002

<sup>6</sup> From Porcarelli A. in Bertagna G. & Barnato M. – eds. -, *Educazione alla convivenza civile e riforma del sistema d'istruzione*, Rapporto CISEM, Milano, 2005

<sup>7</sup>V. Attachment 1, which provides the complete national EDC indications that G. Cannarozzo summarises as follows: EDC firstly envisages "the concept of citizenship and various kinds of citizenship", confirming the attention to be paid to the composite form of our society and to its multicultural nature, with its aspects of diversity and integration of differences. An account is given of the basic elements of our national identity in its institutional forms (government, institutions) and of the Constitution, completed by the knowledge of those fundamental documents which are the Declaration of Children's Rights and the International Convention of Children's Rights. The indications continue with the foundation concepts, and namely the value of rules and of law, duties and rights, responsible freedom, peace and cooperation – the latter being rounded off with the knowledge of international organisations supporting peace and the rights/duties of peoples. The "proximity" to one's own context is dealt with through knowledge of the forms and functioning of local administrations as well as the services offered to individuals in the local context. The approaches to these topics attempt to promote an active stance in children, developing the capacity to analyse and investigate the reasons underlying different point of view, as well as paying attention to the acquisition of ways to deal with relations with others: the controlling of impulsivity, calmness and respect, which are acquired through practical activities such as group work, the drafting of class rules, by taking on tasks, by exercises of understanding others – particularly when they are "different" (from Bertagna G. & Barnato M. –eds. - *Educazione alla convivenza civile e riforma del sistema d'istruzione*, Rapporto CISEM, Milano, 2005).

In 2005, the European year of democratic citizenship through education, the Ministry of Education exhibited a wide range of projects on the subject. The ones underway are: the European pilot teacher-training project for education for European citizenship, provided by the INDIRE in a blended-learning format; a three-year project for secondary school heads and teachers on the citizenship theme (active, democratic, European) as an important component of the school's educational offering plan (under the acronym 'POF', in Italian). The specific initiatives for 2005 were: the national seminar for information and awareness-raising addressed to all those working in education; student campuses at national and regional level; the school and voluntary work project; specific projects for youth training respecting youth, developed in cooperation with NGOs (<http://europagiovani.atheneumnae.com>); the project 'Students in Europe – for a governance of young citizens of an enlarged Europe'; national seminar activities on educating for active citizenship and human rights (<http://www.educazionecittadinanza.it>). All this in order to create stable structures (at regional and national level) with coordination and monitoring tasks as well as the dissemination of 'good practices'. In short, a context undergoing great upheaval.

### **Research methodology**

The aforesaid short outline of the research context shows the methodological problems and the need to define limits, objectives and instruments in order to contain the risks deriving from different meanings of the **object** 'citizenship education experiences'.

In fact, the ambiguity of the term 'experiences' is added by that of 'citizenship education' which is often preceded by an adjective (active, European, multicultural, planetary and local by other social actors), placed into context (such as within education for civil cohabitation), linked (for example, with education for human rights, legality and civic education) with frequent shifts from narrower meanings (technical-juridical ones) to broader comprehensive ones. In this regard, what has turned out to be a very useful guidance tool is the citizenship concept map proposed by M. Santerini<sup>8</sup> which indicates its components on the basis of international studies, synthesising them into the scheme reported in the following page and illustrated as follows:

On the vertical axis of **IDENTITY** we find – at the two extremes – the macro-concepts of **national identity** and **social, cultural and transnational belongings**; on the horizontal axis of **EQUALITY** we instead find the two extremes of the **effective regime of rights** and **political and civil participation**. The individual elements cannot be considered separately, but in an interlinked manner; moreover, each macro-concept contains three levels, which clarify its sense.

On the vertical axis, at the top, there is national identity, a set of characteristics referred to the collective identity of a political community, which all citizens are invited to share; on the same vertical line, below, we find **social, cultural and transnational belongings** to which citizens refer. The fact that the term **belongings** is plural indicates that today's societies contain minority elements due to history or immigration. This macro-concept includes different forms of belonging: *national minorities, cultural-linguistic minorities, religious ones, sociological ones, or even regional or transnational ones.*

The horizontal axis is made up of the **effective regime of rights**, on the left, which aims to assure equality of citizens within a society. This pole refers to public norms defining the political and juridical status of the citizen: *human, political, social and cultural rights*, and measures aiming to guarantee *equality of access, protection from discriminations, and recognition.*

**Political and civil participation** is the set of actions, competencies and dispositions with which the citizen shows his commitment to the government of society. It is the level of responsibility in **participation** (electoral, political, civil) and of the *competencies* required to practice it as well as the *duties and responsibilities.*

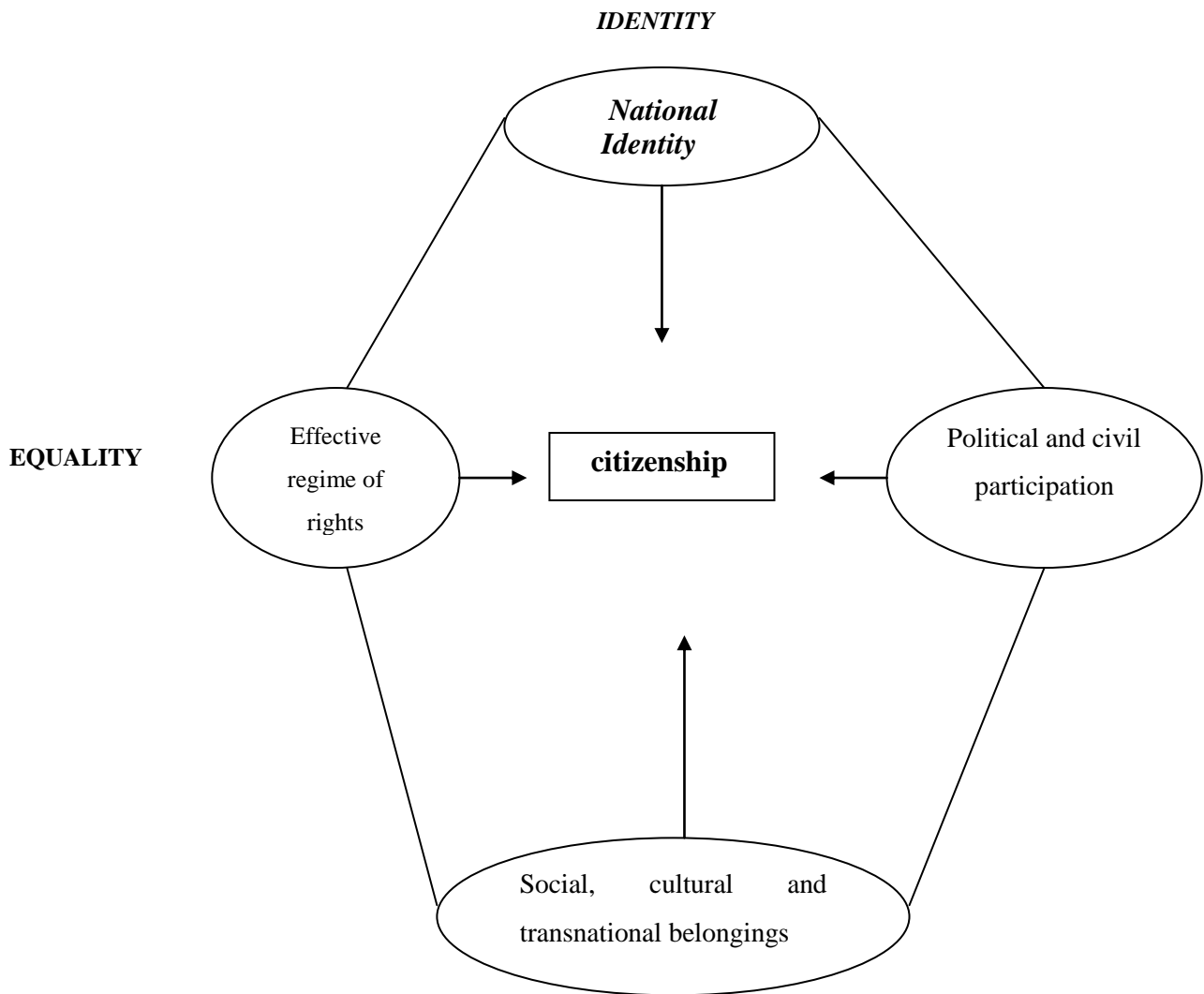
It is thus a question of considering citizenship as a set of interdependent levels and of formulating citizenship education as a project attempting to reconcile identity and equality, republican identity and openness to pluralism<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. SANTERINI M., *Educazione alla Cittadinanza- La pedagogia e le sfide della globalizzazione*, Carocci, Roma, 2001

<sup>9</sup> from *Europoliteia - educazione alla cittadinanza nelle scuole della Lombardia*

<http://www.europoliteia.org/formazione/download/informative/Milena%20Santerini%20Il%20quadro%20attuale%20dell%27educazione%20alla%20citt.doc>



Secondly, the breadth and depth of the research field ('experiences') are complex and difficult to contain within a descriptive network that can analytically represent reality. Not only the limits of time, instruments and resources, but especially the awareness that the map cannot be the territory but is still a selection (however sophisticated) of elements performed from a point of view and according to value criteria, all impose a reduction and clearly specify the limits and options of exploration and interpretation.

Among the alternatives possible, the exploration of 'citizenship education experiences in Italian schools', entrusted to me by the INVALSI (whom I wish to thank), adopts an inductive perspective and goes to seek what 'emerges' considering it as an indicator of the submerged iceberg that is more complex to inspect. Moreover, not so much for reasons of economy, it limits the use of investigation tools 'provoking' schools to 'show/exhibit' declarations or documentations on the matter; it firstly aims to assess to what extent schools show and label their activities as 'citizenship education'.

The national character of the exploration and reference to the last few years leads to considering the documentation found online as significant – albeit not representative, by starting from the INDIRE institutional website and privileging the archives relating to school practices. Already through this survey we find information of a quantitative and qualitative kind, as well as open questions, on 'how schools' represent

EDC and on the documentation and circulation of experiences made possible by institutional services. In an internet environment the links also lead us to explore non-institutional sites and documentation.

But the explorative gaze cannot be restricted to observing from afar and in a mediated manner – as with the internet. Nor can it be deluded/dispersed in the attention to individual cases, however numerous. It is necessary to find a level of further interpretation and in-depth analysis, necessarily limited to certain contexts, that enables integrating the reference documentation and putting forward interpretations for discussion. To this end, the search proceeded with some more probing ‘surveys’ in some local contexts, by reading the online and paper-based documentation and some qualified testimonies found via the snow-ball method – also starting from direct contacts.

Having established the research field and sources, it became necessary to obtain the **selection and reading tools** for the documentation collected in order to have an initial representation. In view of the specific context of this study within the European Year of Citizenship promoted by the Council of Europe, the identification and construction of these tools started from the **ECD Pack**, which contains, amongst other things, a tool for quality assurance of EDC in schools<sup>10</sup> including a **system of indicators for surveying the practices/experiences in schools**, in many respects useful for our research. The framework considers curricular, context and management aspects and is summarised in the following table, which highlights the more important and practicable ones within this explorative study.

AREAS	Quality indicators	Sub-themes
CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNING	<u>Indicator 1</u> Is there evidence of an adequate place for EDC in the school's goals, policies and curriculum plans?	- School policies in EDC - School development planning in EDC - EDC and the school curriculum - Coordinating EDC
	<u>Indicator 2</u> Is there evidence of students and teachers acquiring understanding of EDC and applying EDC principles to their everyday practice in schools and classrooms?	- EDC learning outcomes - Teaching and learning methods and processes - Monitoring EDC
	<u>Indicator 3</u> Are the design and practice of assessment within the school consonant with EDC?	- Transparency - Fairness - Improvement
SCHOOL ETHOS AND CLIMATE	<u>Indicator 4</u> Does the school ethos adequately reflect EDC principles?	- Application of EDC principles in everyday life; Relationship and patterns of authority; - Opportunities for participation and self-expression; - Procedures for resolving conflicts and dealing with violence, bullying and discrimination
MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT	<u>Indicator 5</u> Is there evidence of effective school leadership based on EDC principles?	- Leadership style - Decision-making - Shared responsibility, collaboration and team-work - Responsiveness
	<u>Indicator 6</u> Does the school have a sound development plan reflecting EDC principles?	- Participation and inclusiveness - Professional and organizational development - Management of resources - Self-evaluation, monitoring and accountability

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.coe.int/T/e/Cultural\\_Co-operation/Education/E.D.C/Documents\\_and\\_publications/By\\_Type/Education\\_materials/QA\\_EDC.pdf](http://www.coe.int/T/e/Cultural_Co-operation/Education/E.D.C/Documents_and_publications/By_Type/Education_materials/QA_EDC.pdf)

Evidently, the areas, indicators and sub-themes not considered in this exploration signal the need for further studies if we wish to have a realistic picture of the state of the art and, at the same time, show the limitations of the present pre-study.

Finally, for an **initial qualitative interpretation**, some of the controversial elements and the EDC dimensions (Santerini) will be taken up in order to trace a stylised map of the defining attributes and of the open issues in the EDC experiences considered. To this end, as well as the aforesaid tools and the debate present in the literature (see the references), there are also some useful comparative analyses (such as those of Eurydice and of the Council of Europe) which enable identifying the main controversial points useful for the stylisation of the trends assessed – points which are not analytically set out here but can be found in the mentioned sources. In particular, the inductively constructed interpretative grid will concern:

- The placement of EDC in educational projects of the schools considered
  - Affirmed principle and/or educational content and/or actual practices
  - Ordinary/incorporated vs. extraordinary/supplemental
  - Internal explicit and/or implicit and/or external institutional and/or external social and civil
  - Cross-curricular vs. disciplinary vs. multi/interdisciplinary
  - Knowledge and/or skills and/or attitudes and/or competences
  - Central vs. marginal
- The dimensions of EDC privileged in projects and in the good practices of the schools considered:
  - Identity (national/transnational) vs. equality (rights/participation)
  - Legal status vs. social and political role
  - Topicality vs. historical nature
- EDC evaluation in projects and in good practices of the schools considered
  - Internal vs. external
  - Experiences vs. performances
  - Open vs. structured

In conclusion, the report highlights some **lines emerging** from the documentation examined and traces possible **research lines** on the theme that are useful to bridge the evident gaps of this initial search.

### **Seen from the outside: online documentation**

By searching the internet by means of the **Google** search engine, for the last year, it was possible to find (on 22 September 2005 at 2.01 pm) 11,200 records in Italian containing: experiences and “*educazione alla cittadinanza*” (‘citizenship education’), and school; a much smaller number with respect to the 50,900 pages containing the phrase *educazione alla cittadinanza* and indicative of the meaning and sphere not just of a school kind, but still enough to discourage or complete the search. If we browse through the first 100 results, we find, for example, web pages of:

- local authorities ([www.comune.torino.it/crescere-in-citta/percorsi/](http://www.comune.torino.it/crescere-in-citta/percorsi/); [www.comune.fe.it](http://www.comune.fe.it); [www.comune.palermo.it](http://www.comune.palermo.it); [www.padovanet.it](http://www.padovanet.it); [www.scuolaer.it](http://www.scuolaer.it)) and their organisations (such as C.Am.In.A. [www.camina.it](http://www.camina.it))
- of the Ministry of Education, the INDIRE, regional school education offices (USR), and regional education research institutes (IRRE) ([www.istruzione.it](http://www.istruzione.it); [www.annaliistruzione.it/riviste/quaderni/pdf/QA1102.pdf](http://www.annaliistruzione.it/riviste/quaderni/pdf/QA1102.pdf); [www.istruzione.lombardia.it](http://www.istruzione.lombardia.it); [www.progettoceas.it](http://www.progettoceas.it); [www.istruzioneer.it](http://www.istruzioneer.it))
- services for schools and teachers ([www.dienneti.it/risorse/varie.htm](http://www.dienneti.it/risorse/varie.htm); [www.edscuola.it](http://www.edscuola.it); [www.pianetascuola.it](http://www.pianetascuola.it))
- private organisations in the social sphere, NGOs and voluntary associations ([www.fondazione scuola.it/europaclub/progetto.asp](http://www.fondazione scuola.it/europaclub/progetto.asp); [www.legambiente.org/TANews/news/data/uptextfiles/RappCulturaCivica2003.pdf](http://www.legambiente.org/TANews/news/data/uptextfiles/RappCulturaCivica2003.pdf); [www.fivol.it/profilo/convegni/2004/corradini.html](http://www.fivol.it/profilo/convegni/2004/corradini.html); [www.gruppoabele.org](http://www.gruppoabele.org); [www.libera.it](http://www.libera.it); [www.cesvot.toscana.it](http://www.cesvot.toscana.it))

This short review shows the leading role of many social actors, the breadth of meanings and references, but also the fact that schools and their experiences have a very low profile. This is a first background element leading us to study the schools’ institutional documentation.

The **INDIRE** (the national institute of documentation for educational innovation and research) has the task of gathering ‘factual resources’ and making them available online through some dedicated projects/services. Here, the search (on 22 September 2005 at 3.40 pm) with the key words “*educazione alla cittadinanza*” (‘citizenship education’) led to 254 records offering many related articles of a conceptual orientation, and particularly on European citizenship (<http://www.indire.it/content/index.php?action=read&id=1278>).

Of particular interest for our exploration is the **Eurydice** *Quaderno* (‘notebook’) *no.24* of 2005 on ‘*L’educazione alla cittadinanza nelle scuole in Europa*’, edited by S. Baggiani & A. Turchi ([http://www.indire.it/eurydice/documenti/quaderno\\_24.pdf](http://www.indire.it/eurydice/documenti/quaderno_24.pdf)) which devotes its entire second section to ‘*Educazione alla cittadinanza nella pratica scolastica*’. In line with European indications, EDC is considered on three levels:

- Daily life at school
- Student and parent participation in the school’s democratic committees
- The school’s participation in society, which may be in the form of partnerships, pupil exchanges, open days or celebrations, visits to nearby institutions or to community groups, encouraging elections and democratic organisations, gathering funds for solidarity or voluntary initiatives and for internships.

The Comenius projects (of which the ones calling themselves “European citizenship” went from 150 in 2002 to 674 in 2004-2005) are considered by Fiora Imberciadori (National Coordinator of the Socrates-Erasmus Agency) as ‘experiences of really experienced European citizenship’ in which “the common thread

of the joint work (by partner schools of different countries) considered the historical background, culture and traditions, artistic wealth, play and sport, literature and music, the environment and food". Some good practices of Italian schools coordinating the Comenius projects are also presented: awareness-raising for European citizenship, sharing European citizenship, changes in cities owing to immigration, schools and local institutions in dealing with problems of the integration of ethnic minorities. Finally, experiences are also presented of Comenius projects involving silent partners – i.e. the schools of countries applying to join the EU: The Children's Island; *Pace: personaggi, eventi, immagini*; Art of Living: *arte ed educazione*; European Culture without Borders: Steps towards European Integration, *Arte e notizie dall'Europa*; Children, Toys and Games.

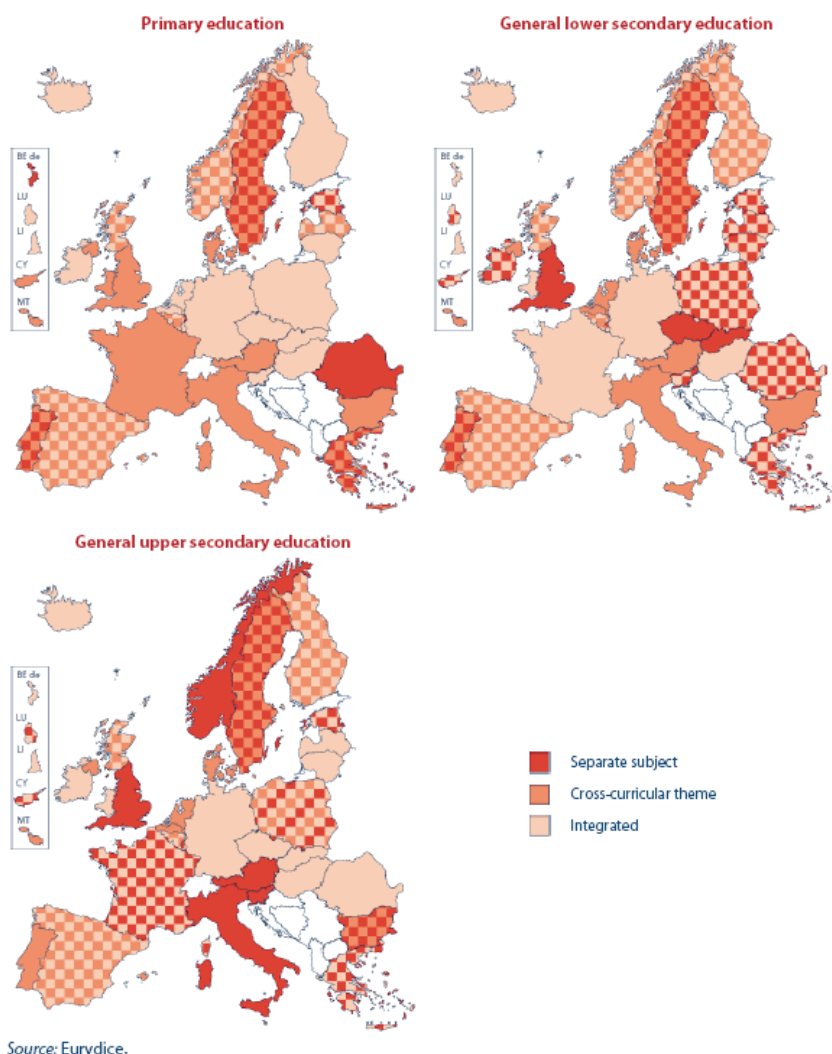
This comparative reference text offers many elements for developing our exploration and for finding/interpreting trends and emerging issues.

Firstly, it may offer a 'stipulated' form of definition of the practice and experiencing of EDC in order to clear up the meaning and establish its operational spheres (daily life and democratic bodies in schools, school participation in society). Moreover, the exemplification of good practices show a wide range of references and meanings, even within a 'Eurocentric' orientation making EDC both cross-curricular (interdisciplinary) and extraordinary (international partnerships, trips and exchanges, website building etc.), involving a considerable number of schools.

Above all, the text encourages us to explore – over and beyond the Comenius projects – what lies behind the thematic charts which Eurydice makes usefully available, which is the task of this study.



Figure 2.1: Approaches to citizenship education as specified in the curriculum for primary, general lower and upper secondary education, 2004/05



Source: Eurydice.

Besides projects and services in an international vein, the INDIRE offers useful functions also for exploring projects and experiences (good practices) of schools not involved in European projects. The *POF-progettare la scuola* project (<http://pof.indire.it/>) monitored the educational offering plans ('POF') of autonomous schools right from the start-up of experimentation with autonomy in 1998, and makes available an archive, which can be consulted via criteria and keywords, with datasheets and links to complete educational offering plans of schools of academic years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005.

**GOLD – the good practices archive (<http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/>)** is found at the site <http://www.indire.it/content/index.php?action=read&id=1279> and is the online databank of **the most innovative and interesting experiences achieved in Italian schools** of every level and type (and is arranged at national and regional level). The aim of GOLD is to disseminate – for everybody's benefit – the wealth of 'didactic knowledge' produced by schools: ideas and tools used in situations, but transferable to other contexts. The search here yielded a list of immediately consultable experiences by merely clicking on each title. The catalogue-fact sheet is immediately available with the first, summary information, while the attachments (description of the experiences, the didactic object) can be saved on any computer in order to more deeply analyse the details later. There has been a recent addition of GOLD-train in order to spread

good practices in schools. GOLD is thus a promising initiative in order to answer the question of what schools record and show as EDC experiences.

The initial search in the national archive of good practices, via the *educazione alla cittadinanza* keywords, yielded the following.

1. **LA SCUOLA COME AMBIENTE DI APPRENDIMENTO** (“school as a learning environment”) (by the ***Istituto Comprensivo Meneghetti – Verona – Veneto; 2002-2003; 12/13-year-old pupils***) Main aspects:

- 1) Being aware that school is one of the privileged places of education because it is here that children’s orientation takes shape as regards institutions, commitment, responsibility, culture and work, and the principles of justice and transparency are conveyed, often implicitly.
- 2) Experiencing the school, class and group as human and cultural spaces where children can find motivations and meanings.
- 3) Considering school subjects as essential tools for also improving cognitive-behavioural skills, and devoting more systematic attention to aspects concerning the development of students’ personal and social identity – that are often left in the background or to chance, without isolating them from the cultural context, where we instead find suitable tools to be valorised. Valorising EDC in everyday teaching.

Related projects: I care, Comenius, Life Skills Education

[http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/archivio/index.php?action=read\\_esperienza\\_src&id\\_esperienza=BDP-GOLD0000000000182193](http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/archivio/index.php?action=read_esperienza_src&id_esperienza=BDP-GOLD0000000000182193)

The catalogue sheet contains documentation (didactic objects) including an detailed and documented project correlating class work and school organisation and three cross-curricular didactic paths/learning units, respectively concerning the learning environment, citizenship and conflict, developed within the really significant international partnerships with other schools and to which the reader is referred for further details

2. **Un libro, un amico** (“a book, a friend”) (1999-2000) ***Istituto Comprensivo di Carpi – Emilia Romagna; adults***)

This past project was characterised by the sharing of a common process for students, parents and teachers on communication, and aims to stimulate the motivation to learn and develop creativity. The catalogue sheet has descriptive documentation of the activities carried out.

[http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/archivio/index.php?action=read\\_esperienza\\_src&id\\_esperienza=BDP-GOLD0000000000190E56](http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/archivio/index.php?action=read_esperienza_src&id_esperienza=BDP-GOLD0000000000190E56)

3. **ACQUA...MAGIA.....SCORRE VIA...` - Sottotitolo : ` Un Tizio che ho incontrato, il Signor Acqua mi ha presentato...` (2003-2004)** (“Water ... magic... flows away” – subtitle: “A guy I met, Mr Water introduced me to ...”) ***Istituto Comprensivo di Felino – Emilia Romagna; infant school***)

The water theme is a key educational element and natural focus of cross-curricular interest directly involving all the teachings, contents and EDC. The idea is also to link the school and the local area, and to make school the privileged place for an active and responsible education. The catalogue sheet contains documentation describing the activities conducted.

[http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/archivio/index.php?action=read\\_esperienza\\_src&id\\_esperienza=BDP-GOLD00000000001B1EBF](http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/archivio/index.php?action=read_esperienza_src&id_esperienza=BDP-GOLD00000000001B1EBF)

In the ‘guided search’ the descriptor based selection criteria refers to the Thesaurus and refers the searcher to ‘civic education’, which is considered a synonym. In the *search by categories* section of the home page of GOLD, civic education is listed among the ‘human and social sciences’. In the civic education category we find 13 experiences of the theme, mainly of a primary school kind<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> [http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/archivio/index.php?action=archivio\\_04\\_civica](http://gold.indire.it/nazionale/archivio/index.php?action=archivio_04_civica) The complete list of projects:

1. **Micro progetto** Interdisciplinary approach to EDUCATION FOR READING, using the narrative text “When Hitler Stole the Pink Rabbit” by Judith Kerr (along with the micro-project “*Io ho un sogno...*” – or “I have a dream ...”) in turn contained in the school macro-project “*Io e te... diversi ma amici*” (“Me and you ... different but friends”) concerning the UNESCO associated schools; now

Only one of the sheets (3+13) had a comment (“splendid!”), recorded in the specific function window available.

Guided searching of the region sites in GOLD yielded the following results:

- out of a total of 3,187 records there were 39 experiences (1.22%) of which 6 out of 1,610 (0.37%) contained transferable didactic objects, and
- 8<sup>12</sup> were relative to the years 2003-2005, out of 606 records (1.32%).

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in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year, for enriching the educational offering for academic year 2002/2003. The central theme is the history of yesterday and today: researches, in-depth studies, exchanges of opinion with particular reference to human rights violations (End of the experience: 2003 Region: Calabria ) primary school

2. ["Oltre le parole..." - progetto pari opportunità](#) Recognising equal cultural dignity to sign language by offering equal opportunities for learning and interpersonal relations to a deaf pupil by teaching sign language to the whole class. (End of the experience: 2003 Region: Marche ) primary school
3. [CURRICOLO verticale di Istituto Comprensivo predisposto per Obiettivi Formativi, su cui costruire Piani di Studio Personalizzati, da realizzare mediante Unità di Apprendimento.](#) Constructing a PROGRESSIVE/VERTICAL/SHARED CURRICULUM characterising the quality of teaching-learning and acting as a reference for teachers and families. It envisages the construction of processes **on social skills** from 3-14 years of age, taken from national guidelines for the PSP – education for civil cohabitation. (End of the experience: 2005 Region: Emilia Romagna) Comprehensive School no. 2 of IMOLA, **interesting for the project analysis. Functional for accurate evaluation** (see attachment IMOLA).
4. ["La barca affonda?...Ditecelo voi!"](#) 1. Dream of a reality not conditioned by the mafia. 2. Reflection on the Sicilian situation dominated by the mafia. 3. Dream of a society free of mafia conditioning and led by men (Falcone, Pio La Torre, Borsellino...) who gave their lives for a better future (end of the experience: 2004 Region: Sicily ) Lower secondary school.
5. [Progetto Antigone](#) Antigone: From the Literature and History curriculum to the Cinema. How to transfer to film the moral value and strength of Antigone by avoiding the mere cinematographic transposition of Sophocles' tragedy? (End of the experience: 2003 Region: Sicily) Technical commercial school.
6. ["Diritto Donne"](#) Educating on diversity and respect for equal rights between gender and understanding the notions of right, equality and democracy. (End of the experience: 2003 Region: Sicily) Lower secondary school.
7. [Nutrire la mente per combattere la fame](#) Creating a product to disseminate online the awareness that all individuals have a right to food, to access knowledge and nutritional well-being at an individual and collective level. To achieve this aim, I have created didactic objects using images, music and texts with television effects. (End of the experience: 2003 Region: Umbria ). Part of a larger project: Pythagoras, with the patronage of ENEA; First Prize in *Netdays* 2003 – lower secondary school.
8. [Storia e Memoria \(Progetto di Rete - anno II-\)](#) Making history interesting and enjoyable for pupils. How? (End of the experience: 2004 Region: Sardinia) *Liceo scientifico* (upper secondary school).
9. [I giorni delle memorie - un percorso di consapevolezza](#) Creating, within the school and with the contribution of students, teachers and experts, some spaces for reflecting on the meaning of individual and collective memory and on the responsibilities connected to forgetting and denial in order to take a trip to the places of our memory, going beyond the boundaries of mere ritual, so that “memory day” and “legality day” can strengthen the bonds inside the community. (End of the experience: 0 Region: Veneto ) *Liceo scientifico* (upper secondary school).
10. [Gotico e barocco on line: patrimonio culturale e cittadinanza europea](#) Developing and acquiring an idea of European citizenship by studying the cultural heritage (Baroque, Gothic and Neo-Gothic) with institutional occasions at local-European level; using ICT and language communication. (End of the experiences: 2003 Region: Sicily) Technical commercial school.
11. [PROGETTO CURRICOLARE DI STAGE IN DIRITTI UMANI - Comunità internazionale, diritti umani, diritto umanitario e relazioni economiche](#) The role of human rights and humanitarian rights in international trade relations (end of experience: 0 Region: Emilia Romagna ) school for surveyors.
12. [Cittadino e cittadinanza europea](#) The role of human rights and humanitarian rights in international trade relations (end of experience: 0 Region: Emilia Romagna ) – the same as in point 11.
13. [Cenerentola e il principe azzurro esistono ancora!](#) Building a vertical path from primary to upper secondary school to make students aware that equality and diversity are rights. (End of the experience: 2003 Region: Umbria ) *Liceo classico* (upper secondary school)

<sup>12</sup> GOLD of the regions Civic Education 2003-2005 Experiences found: 8, all first cycle ones

N.	Title	Name of Institution	Level	Place	Prov.
1	<a href="#">LA LIBERTÀ: alla ricerca del significato</a>	PRIMO	Primary school	PESCARA	Pescara
2	<a href="#">Il sindaco dei ragazzi</a>		Comprehensive school	ORSOGNA	Chieti
3	<a href="#">Per una scuola che promuova una cultura dei diritti e della responsabilità solidale</a>	N. 1	Comprehensive school	Sant'Agata Militello	Messina
4	<a href="#">Educare alla pace per educare alla legalità</a>		Comprehensive school	Rocca di Caprileone	Messina
5	<a href="#">Verso un curriculum di pace</a>	ADA NEGRI-	Comprehensive school	MOTTA VISCONTI	Milan
6	<a href="#">educazione alla convivenza attraverso la lingua inglese</a>	Irish Institute	Comprehensive school	Rome	Rome
7	<a href="#">L'anno del nostro amico diversamente abile</a>	L. ANDERVOLTI	Comprehensive school	Majano	Udine
8	<a href="#">Legalità-illegalità: lo padrone delle mie azioni</a>		Comprehensive school		Cagliari

On a request (e-mailed at the address indicated in the online sheet, sometimes incorrect) for up-to-date news on the continuity and evaluation of the experiences, the following schools, **the Andervolti comprehensive school of Majano and the comprehensive school of Orsogna** said that the projects became an integral part of their educational offering plan, within education for civil cohabitation, and of their everyday teaching activities; these activities envisage specific evaluation sessions and tools. Moreover, the Orsogna comprehensive school sent a copy of the **evaluation and observation tools for knowledge, skills and competences activated with these Learning Units**. (see ORSOGNA attachments).

Within GOLD-train, out of the 12 good practices selected through the *Centoscuole* (“100 schools”) competition and considered exemplary and transferable, two concerned citizenship themes (*L’Europa per noi. L’Europa per gli altri* of *Liceo Scientifico “Antonelli”* of Novara - [http://gold.bdp.it/goldtrain/content/index.php?action=read\\_cnt&id\\_sc=339&id\\_cnt=339&area=read\\_sc](http://gold.bdp.it/goldtrain/content/index.php?action=read_cnt&id_sc=339&id_cnt=339&area=read_sc) - and *IMIG – Identità, multiculturalità, interdipendenza, globalizzazione* of the *Istituto Professionale Statale per i servizi sociali, commerciali e turistici “Pietro Giordani”* – Parma [http://gold.bdp.it/goldtrain/content/index.php?action=read\\_cnt&id\\_sc=359&id\\_cnt=359&area=read\\_sc&PHPS ESSID=dc81cc425ee17435244c2b7eb3cdf0d0](http://gold.bdp.it/goldtrain/content/index.php?action=read_cnt&id_sc=359&id_cnt=359&area=read_sc&PHPS ESSID=dc81cc425ee17435244c2b7eb3cdf0d0) ), but for these there seemed to be no experimentation started up for implementation in other schools.

The extensive description of the GOLD archive shows some useful elements for interpreting the research object, but especially offers some open questions on the documentation of school experiences, particularly on complex and detailed issues like EDC (above all, presented by comprehensive schools). The meanings are, however, ‘sacrificed’ in the indexing of a thesaurus that refers them to civic education (where secondary schools are mostly present) – placing heterogeneous material under the same label. This also shows the lexical and semantic uncertainty of schools in stating their activities, which remains mainly tacit because the quantitative data does not account for the real actions of schools but only what they (some of them) consider to be (politically) appropriate to put in institutional “windows” that many people perhaps see, and indeed doing so without even leaving any trace of their comments. Thus, every school/experience appears/remains isolated in its activities, particularly when we deal with EDC., at least, judging by what emerges from an initial superficial search of the GOLD archives.

An initial ascertainment of this first brief reading can come from the **POF archive** (for school educational offering plans), which enables selecting the records via keywords of the abstract of the POF drafted by schools and included in the survey sheets also containing other ‘closed’ items. With reference to academic years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005, it was thus possible to find the schools highlighting EDC (or civic education or education for civil cohabitation) as a qualifying element/character of their educational offer plan, by using the literal expression in the abstract. Quantitatively, the search yielded the following:

Archivi for a.y.	No. of POF abstracts	EDC	Civic Education	Civil Cohabit. Ed.
2003-2004	4,389	12 (0.27%)	1 (0.02%)	69 (1.57%)
2004-2005	3,361	17 (0.50%)	2 (0.05%)	112 (3.33%)

The table shows a growing ‘evasion’ of schools from the INDIR-ministry POF monitoring, a relative increase in attention to these issues which still remain absolutely marginal, the privileged and growing use of formulations present in legislation (education for civil cohabitation) and of broader significance (with respect to civic education of the GOLD thesaurus).

A summary reading already highlights many meanings of EDC that only in a few cases directly refer to the new national indications. EDC is largely presented as an aim, mission and direction of education action, alongside and in response to the demands for ‘glocal’ and intercultural social integration. But there is

no lack of cases in which it is found as a specific project, within the enrichment of the educational offering (POF) or in a European perspective.

Moreover, the INDIRE POF archive makes available some school responses to specific questions on POF characteristics and on exercising autonomy. The summary gives the questions and answers on aspects relatable to EDC. All cases show the cooperation with local and public authorities and (except in one case) initiatives of education for cooperation, for brotherhood and for civil values, while the positions regarding other aspects such as the school networks, cooperation with voluntary organisations and evaluation are more varied. However, these characteristics are declared even for the POF that do not place EDC among their key points.

In sum, the POF archive presents a picture of schools in which EDC is important, above all, when a specific question is posed on the present of initiatives of education for cooperation, for brotherhood, for civil values or on the activation of collaborations, but it lies at the heart of the free statements of intent of a smaller number of schools, mainly of the first cycle.

Overall, therefore, the institutional documentation archives of the activities of Italian schools for EDC show quantitatively limited and qualitatively very varied data. One may hypothesise that it depends on different reasons, for example, the search methods adopted/possible, but it could also be a realistic picture if we assume that the online documentation represents the phenomena, or is distorted by filters imposed by rules and by the documentation tools shown in the institutional network.

It thus became necessary to proceed in the search by two possible roads. The first used the snow-ball technique and, starting from the schools' documentation, explored the links and references (especially the non-institutional ones) they cited and referred to. The second, which will be illustrated in the next section, in particular, instead focused on some cases by more deeply examining and integrating the online documentation with other sources. There are many **other websites** (not strictly school-institutional ones or European type ones – which are the majority) which offer schools indications, proposals and materials for EDC and that – in some cases – document its good practices. We shall briefly explore some **that make available the documentation of school activities and experiences**, for exemplification purposes.

[www.cittadinanzattiva.it](http://www.cittadinanzattiva.it) is the site of a **civic participation movement**, set up in 1978 with the name of federative democratic movement, operating in Italy and Europe for the promotion and protection of citizens' rights. With a Ministry of Education decree of 18 July 2005, *Cittadinanzattiva* was included in the list of accredited subjects for school personnel training. But already before this recognition, starting from 2001, *Cittadinanzattiva* had implemented many projects, informative initiatives and teaching activities in schools of every level and type concerning EDC. Moreover, it published the already mentioned report on the knowledge and application of the Student Statute and, since 2002, the Manual of EDC Good Practices ([III Quaderno di Buone Pratiche di educazione alla cittadinanza](http://www.cittadinanzattiva.it/dyn/doc/401.pdf) – <http://www.cittadinanzattiva.it/dyn/doc/401.pdf>). This contains data sheets on some of the more significant initiatives implemented in 2003 in secondary schools of various regions on the following themes: 1. EDC; 2. Participated schools; 3. Saving to live better: energy, water, refuse; 4. The management of city spaces as meeting places for teenagers; 5. Preventing for protecting; 6. For ecology; 7. Participation and Respect (Pa-Ri); 8. The seminar *cittadini attivi si diventa* ("becoming active citizens"); 9. Applied democracy: are citizens born or made?; 10. Ideas for a policy of peace and non-violence; 11. Disseminating the draft of the European Constitution.

The **local authorities** (regions, provinces and municipalities) besides presenting projects and experiences in the many individual and specific sites (e.g. <http://www.progettoeduc.pr.it/progetti/Elenco.asp> ) use services made available to schools by their associations, which often present good practices, too. For example, <http://www.democraziainerba.it/> is the address of the National Association of Children's Municipal Councils that schools practicing this kind of EDC and local authorities refer to and are encouraged to do. It refers to all the experiences underway and thus to the schools involved. The Children's Council experience



is also supported by the CAMINA association (“cities that are friends of childhood and adolescence”); <http://www.camina.it/pubblicazioni/democrazia.htm>.

In 2004-2005 **the teachers’ professional association** CIDI (*Centro di Iniziativa Democratica degli Insegnanti*), in cooperation with the National Magistrates Association, the Lelio and Lisli Basso Foundation and other organisations, put forward to all schools of every kind and level the proposal to start up studies on the Italian Constitution in their school activities, participating in a great contribution of ideas for an active citizenship. The didactic initiatives and experiences of the schools (or even individual classes) taking part in the “*A Scuola di Costituzione*” project will contribute to building curricular paths for EDC, to be disseminated on a national scale. Among the schools which sent in works in 2004-2005 there are two primary schools (from Aulla and Lauria), two lower secondary schools (from Genoa and Pescara), three upper secondary schools (from Paderno Dugnano, Brescia and Rivoli), one standing territorial centre (in Genoa) that Caterina Gammaldi comments as follows: “The children from Aulla (Massa province), for example, encouraged us adults to resume the road of dialogue and cooperation to learn democratic cohabitation and to once more find – among our differences – the reasons for equality. Other forms of language, other stories come together in the experiences of the standing territorial centre of Genoa “*Aula con vista globale: l’istruzione è aperta a tutti*” (“Classroom with a global view: education is open to all”). The decision to illustrate the three-year course of study of class 3E of the lower secondary school “*B. Croce*” (Pescara) tells of a work practice shared over time by teachers and students, which ends by joining the in-depth study of the reasons underlying art. 3. A process for reflecting on art. 11 of the Constitution, with the awareness that the culture of peace is key in youth education, is the one performed by class 2P of *Liceo scientifico “Gadda”* of Paderno Dugnano” (<http://www.cidi.it/documenti/insegnare.constituzionegammaldi.doc>). The works may be consulted at [http://www.cidi.it/attivita/scuole\\_premiate%20costituzione.htm](http://www.cidi.it/attivita/scuole_premiate%20costituzione.htm) .

**Regional education offices (USR), regional education research institutes (IRRE) and school networks** often use online tools for promoting, documenting and sharing EDC experiences. For example, [www.adottaundiritto.org](http://www.adottaundiritto.org) is the website of an inter-institutional project of the Emilia Romagna region that makes available illustrative sheets and documentation of 29 experiences, as well as a wide range of information and materials useful for teaching activities.

And the review could continue at length.

### **Reading of some materials**

Most of the documents consist of projects and products, with a limited reconstruction of processes and actions. The schools’ experiences therefore mostly revolve around products – mainly for internal, local circulation and/or (in the meanders) of the internet. They are monographic (multimedia) presentations of contents dealt with and the studies and activities conducted, which re-elaborate and summarise posters, exhibitions, representations and monographs concerning activities of a mostly non-routine nature in school life, listed as projects, set in laboratories/workshops and presented in competitions. It is enough to connect to many of the cited websites (in particular, [http://www.cidi.it/attivita/scuole\\_premiate%20costituzione.htm](http://www.cidi.it/attivita/scuole_premiate%20costituzione.htm) ) to get an overall idea. All significant, in their respective contexts, the products show the quality of the underlying didactic experience, but it is an interpretation which – devoid of further feedback – is all left to the reader. For an initial analysis, therefore, I shall focus my attention on *something different* from products, present among the projects and the (few) evaluation tools shown by the comprehensive schools – as a meeting point between primary schools and secondary schools – and their attachments.

The first comes from the primary school found in the GOLD national archive of good practices – the Meneghetti school of Verona (that I do not know directly) which, as we have seen, complements the catalogue sheet with documentation including a detailed and documented **project connecting class work and school organisation**, and three cross-curricular didactic paths/learning units concerning, respectively, the learning environment, citizenship and conflict, developed within the international partnerships with other

schools. Some extracts can give an idea of the specificity of this material. In the general project, for example, one reads:

*“The school becomes one of the privileged places of education because it is here that children’s orientation takes shape towards institutions, commitment, responsibility, culture and work. Principles of justice and transparency, rules for proper competition and solidarity, forms of cooperation and individual evaluation are conveyed. The teachers’ task is thus to accompany the students in experiencing responsibility and reliability by motivating them through culture and attention to behaviours and daily routines.”*<sup>13</sup>

*School disciplines come into this picture as essential tools for improving also cognitive-behavioural skills*<sup>14</sup>. In fact, competencies of the cognitive sphere, such as observing, describing, paraphrasing, listening and producing hypothetical-deductive reasoning, space-time connections, finding correct and alternative solutions, creating projects, predicting and evaluating also promote important behavioural/relational skills refining the ability to reason, favouring correct interpersonal relations in a dynamic changing society.”

What is significant is not so much the theoretical reference framework, but the attention given to daily activities in the school environment as citizenship experience, not just affirmed as a principle but ‘operationalised’ at the level of interlinked individual, class and school practice – and progressively disseminated by implementing good practices. For example “a proposal starts from some research-projects elaborated within the class committees and selected as the best practice for the school’s didactic organisational culture and ... arranged into three moments in which one tries to valorise the interpersonal dynamics because in class the students can:

1.1 Recognise their own abilities and rationalise personal resources according to the goals

1.2 Recognise the values guiding their own decision-making

1.3 Recognise and carry out concrete roles:

1.3.1 as students

1.3.2 as citizens

1.3.3 as people”

Still as an example, there is the declension of the “RICONOSCEMI CITTADINO” (“recognising myself as a citizen”)

- *Recognising one’s civic role*
- *Recognising the school as a privileged place for education because it is there that the students’ orientation towards institutions, commitment, responsibilities and work is shaped.*
- *Recognising the school as a place where one can exercise principles of justice and transparency, rules of proper competition and solidarity, cooperation methods and individual evaluation.*
- *Bringing out in students the awareness of searching for their own actualisation as responsible and reliable persons.*
- *Finding motivations through culture with attention to behaviours and daily habits.*

## INSTRUMENTS

- The class statute<sup>15</sup>

(distributed to all first-year students and kept in A3 format in all classrooms).

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<sup>13</sup> Reference is still made to our POF general programming based on **man’s basic needs** and structured by using the categories of the **cognitive field**, according to **S. Bloom’s taxonomy**, **C. Rogers’ motivational approach** and **A. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs**, in this way characterising the guidance value of the educational process.

<sup>14</sup> To develop this aspect, reference is made to **Gardner’s multiple intelligences** (1983), criticising the limits of the old views and stating that there is no unique type of intelligence but a variety of intelligences expressing a person’s abilities and potential. According to his theory, known as the theory of multiple intelligences, there are specific types of intelligence: linguistic, logical-mathematical, kinetic-motor, spatial, musical and also of a social nature, such as interpersonal intelligence that concerns the understanding of others and intrapersonal intelligence, meant as the capacity to know oneself. Reference is also made to emotional intelligence (**Goleman**). Recent studies in psychology bring to the fore the importance of emotions for an adequate social integration and for self-actualisation in one’s job and affections. Some writers speak of the existence of a specific form of intelligence expressing our ability to govern our emotions: **emotional intelligence** (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). These researchers describe emotional intelligence as consisting of the following abilities: knowledge of one’s emotions, tolerance of frustration, recognition of other people’s emotions, self-control and relational skills. Following these orientations, Daniel Goleman – in his book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995) – offers a detailed argument on the role of emotions and of this particular form of intelligence in daily life. Goleman stressed the fact that one can become competent at the emotional level and on the need to develop these skills. Schools can play a decisive role in teaching children and teenagers the emotional and relational skills necessary for social and professional success by broadening their educational action through actual “**emotional induction**” courses. The **social intelligence** model (Gulotta/Boi) was also applied along with the revision of T. Barresi’s cognitive-behavioural skills, in *Viaggio alla scoperta di sé...*, by various authors, op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> The regulation is structured so that (art.1 President of the Republic Decree) the school is experienced as a **social environment**, but also as a **community** bringing together social behaviours governed by rules of human cohabitation and behaviour, and namely personal and social commitment, solidarity and conviviality dictated more by internal value principles, by an affective disposition to experience them and really respect them. (Articles 2 & 3 of President of the Republic Decree). The regulation clearly states the **rights** and their respective **duties** in order to emphasise the responsibility of both those offering the service and the responsibility of those receiving the service.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- Observing the class has rules, but also values to respect.
- The school is at the same time a social environment and a community (art. 1 of the President of the Republic Decree) where behaviours governed by rules and behaviours coexist, such as personal commitment, cooperation, solidarity, conviviality – all dictated more by internal value principles. Recognising values as man’s internal needs.
- Schools guarantee rights (art. 2 President of the Republic Decree) alongside their respective duties (art. 3 President of the Republic Decree) to stress that responsibility lies with those offering the service, but also the responsibility of those benefiting from the service.
- Learning to respect the rules and value of cohabitation because man cannot live alone: he is born a man to then become a human being, and becomes one when others infect him with their humanity.
- Handling “freedom in context”<sup>16</sup> means that:
  - “We have to freely choose what we want to be by taking on the consequences: it is a moral experience where at the heart there is the sense of having to choose between the possible actions whose implementation depends on our free choice”.
  - “Our actions always fall within a finite situation, within a space of action: freedom in context where our knowledge must be placed alongside the freedom to desire – albeit among difficulties and insufficiencies (knowing how to do and how to be)”.
  - “There is not just the complex of external situations of our functioning, but man – in his entirety, in his complex personal identity – meets with external as well as internal obstacles. This awareness gives the possibility of finding the authentic internal freedom that will give meaning also to other forms of freedom”.

In sum, a kind of school I really want to ‘see’ in action, talking with the actors, and not just ‘read’ about.

The second, taken from the GOLD national archive among those of civic education, illustrates **paths on the social skills enacted from 3 to 14 years of age**, and was drafted by comprehensive school no. 2 of Imola (which I do not know directly). Within a unitary matrix common to all infant schools, primary schools and lower secondary schools, the social skills – divided into three main spheres: existential, relational and project related – are analytically detailed into specific descriptors/levels for each segment of the education process. The common matrix is structured as follows:

<b><i>Alms: ...</i></b>	
<b><i>Educational aims</i></b>	<b><i>Skills ...</i></b>
<b>a. Knowledge: ...</b> <b>b. Knowing how to do: ...</b> <b>c. Knowing how to be: ...</b>	<b>a. Declarative knowledge: ...</b> <b>b. Procedural competences: ...</b> <b>c. Heuristic abilities: ...</b>

The chart shows the problems of defining the subject and the analytical contents could be the object of critical exegesis with respect to the National Indications they declare they refer to. However, this detailed approach, in continuity, is interesting, significant and isolated as a unitary reference for the whole school system, in framing the formation of social skills as a school task – not just as an educational principle or special project, but as a common framework.

Finally, the wide range of monitoring and evaluation tools proposed by the Orsogna school (Chieti) – the observation protocols, self-monitoring checklists for the student, test sheets (matching, cloze, multiple-choice and true-false items), self-evaluation sheets, evaluation sheets, description/narration of the competencies in situations relative to the Learning Unit “The Children’s Mayor” and, more generally, education for democratic citizenship and for civil cohabitation that are part of the school education offer plan. For example, the **OBSERVATION PROTOCOL description/narration of competences** in context relative to the Learning Unit “Elect our Mayor” is reported below.

<sup>16</sup> Agazzi E., *LA LIBERTÀ IN SITUAZIONE*, in Nuova secondaria, Ed. La Scuola, BS, no. 9,15 May 2000, p. 5



Name and surname:	Class v		Date:
	YES	NO	IN PART
Can:			
Listen and understand what is heard			
Adopt proper behaviour in situations of school life			
Correctly execute the instructions received			
Autonomously handle the material			
Use a rich and appropriate vocabulary to report the knowledge learnt			
Plan the activities to carry out			
Organise the time and way to conduct one's work			
Enthusiastically participate in activities			
Make a consistent commitment			
Cooperate with peers			
Show initiative			
Make autonomous decisions			
<b>Observation and description of competence in context.</b> <i>During the guided visit of the <b>Palazzo Montecitorio</b> and in the activities for electing the children's mayor, the pupil showed him/herself capable of having an attitude of willingness to exchange views and cooperate with others by making autonomous decisions and working tenaciously and consistently in order to reach his/her objectives, highlighting a considerable propensity to active participation in civil and political life.</i>			
The Pedagogical Team		The Parent	

Since this is only one of the instruments, what emerges is a analytical nature of the evaluation in this sphere that is certainly demanding and accurate, through codified and structured tools not frequently found in the materials explored.

Experiences, materials and instruments of this kind, although quantitatively limited in the documentation available online, are certainly not the only ones around, nor are they exemplary, but show the problems and ferment present (for good and bad) that the most widespread projects and products must come to terms with:

- the relationship between EDC, daily classroom life and school organisation;
- the continuity of education processes;
- authentic and feasible evaluation.

The specificity of the experiences considered lies in having made an issue of these critical points which most projects and products do not explicitly state and leave in the background. This may indicate both the underestimation (to be ruled out, owing to the quality emerging from the products) and 'tacit incorporation' of the practices – so habitual and taken for granted – that they are considered too superfluous to mention explicitly in the project designing and documentation-publicising stage. The features and quality of the products lead us to consider that the aforesaid points are more or less present – albeit tacitly – for the attention of schools, at least those for which documentation was found and analysed. So, these experiences of a somewhat atypical nature stimulated new searches in order to clearly state what is implicit and to render more conscious through reflection and research. It is not the isolated case, which is of no consequence, but the unforeseen that opens up new lines of research and interpretation to 'understand' the experiences, over and beyond merely classifying them and selecting 'good practices' to be 'decontextualised', standardised and implemented.

### **Seen from within: teachers' accounts and reflections**

For a more congruous interpretation, the search could not be restricted to just a review/search of the documentation online, of which an introductory account has been given in the preceding sections, but a more in-depth analysis was necessary. The possibilities were varied and all partial and complex to implement

outside a detailed research work. Websites, journals and grey materials were not lacking, indeed it was enough to send an e-mail in order to get many back. Along with surveys and reviews on related issues<sup>17</sup> or the regional production linked to national projects underway within the National Plan “2005: European Year of Citizenship Through Education”, which is promoting well-structured and documented networks and services. However, it was mainly a quantitative enrichment of the documentation, useful for confirming or rejecting trends, that did not come within ‘experience’. An appropriate search of experiences from within was outside the scope of this study. Among the materials found, one contained *something different*: interviews with teachers who had been called upon to be part of the regional network of Sardinia (see <http://web.tiscali.it/direzione generale/pagine: L'Europa dell'Istruzione>), being set up according to the national plan, as in the other Italian regions. This consisted of documentation of the search phase that Prof. Gabriella Lanero (whom I wish to thank for her precious cooperation) is conducting within the Sardinia IRRE in order to devise a qualitative study on education for Civil Cohabitation, linked to the regional development of the aforesaid national plan. I shall report some aspects highlighting – with a view to reflection and not representativeness – the professional experience of some teachers. This documentation is useful to interpret the sense of many grey materials available and which are also copiously offered. Some reflections of a primary school teacher (under the initials MA), of two philosophy teachers (a man and woman, initialling themselves MFIL and FFIL), of a secondary school Italian and History teacher (initials: IS) and a law teacher (initials: DIR), involved in the EDC projects, can help to ‘immerse ourselves’ in their experiences. That is why I am reporting them below without any comments, grouping them together according to themes, and selecting them (inevitably on the basis of personal sensitivity and interest) in order to synthesise their message within a discourse format.

### **Motivations and objectives**

*I love repeating to the kids a phrase that at a certain time of my training changed my way of dealing with this kind of problem. I, too, in my early years of high school experienced this feeling of otherness with respect to political commitment and, more generally, civil participation. The aphorism that led me to a different awareness is that “We may well not deal with politics, but it is politics that deals with us”. I told myself this and I tell my children this: “Instead of being used or instrumentally manipulated it is better to have a more direct and participated commitment” (MFIL).*

*“I believe that you must give the kids information of a more general historical, legal, artistic, literary and cultural kind, and at the same time construct opportunities for the kids to personally experience situations of migration and to understand” (FFIL).*

*“... these studies must help us to acquire a sense of belonging to the community and must serve to understand and analyse the facts of everyday life, and to play a conscious role ...” (DIR).*

*“The Maginot Line, the strategic importance of Strasbourg in history, both for issues of French claims and because of the choice of Strasbourg, all these things also came out in the discussions ... The highly symbolic choice of Strasbourg, which was for many centuries a place of conflict ... many things that are in our history programme; we managed to deal with the 20<sup>th</sup> century programme better. We went to Strasbourg, when we finished dealing with Napoleonic Europe” (IS).*

### **Sharing (difficult) and openness**

*“... he drafted the project by himself, the class committee only approved it, but he received solidarity but we didn't cooperate actively. But we made use of his work, accompanying him in the trip, once with me and another time with a colleague, and then with an impact on our programmes” (IS) ... “the law teacher – in class 5 it is possible, but in classes 3 and 4 it is not – also took the decision to do a part on the attributions of the two houses of Parliament, the two-chamber system, the two branches of Parliament, the part concerning the institutions, ... but we can't say it was work we did together” (MFIL).*

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<sup>17</sup> I particularly wish to thank Prof. Luciano Caimi and Dr Irene Di Dedda of the Legality Studies Centre of the *Università Cattolica* of Brescia, who made available data of a survey underway on the topic in the provincial territory that confirms some trends emerging from the online search.

*"I like getting inspiration from things that happen. Following the texts, I should develop topics in a sequence that does not match real life, so that if newspapers are talking about the election issue, I will talk about the election law issue, I decide what to teach of the electoral system. For example, type of state and government: we are now seeing it from every angle; what it is in France, Mexico, Spain. The kids are doing this work with my Spanish and English teacher colleagues. In this way, you can even involve your colleagues" (DIR).*

### **Teaching methods**

*"Instead of doing a 'normal lesson', we betted on research, on the handling of materials, viewing of videos, and gathering of direct experiences" (MA).*

*"You must built occasions of real experience. Think of activities in which you meet diversity, experiences that, at the same time, enable reflection. ... going outside school and having 'another look at the city' ... an opportunity to experience an interesting activity, of group effort, of pursuing an intent, implementing a project together ... trying the experience of taking a decision together, negotiating ..." (FFIL).*

*"... in the regional council building, in the empty hall, we carried out our simulation ... when we took the kids to the European school, which is organised along different lines to Italian schools ... the kids who saw other ways of organising school ... were struck by the fact that there were more spaces for them ... they can move around for lessons and can have a one-hour gap, have their own meeting places ..." (DIR).*

### **Evaluation**

*"Assessment was by observing in class the degree of the kids' maturity, the ability to take interest, to make an effort and work within a group, the curricular type objectives" (MA).*

*"All that wealth of experiences (visits to institutions) we also took with us and reprocessed daily. I did so in my choice of topics ... such as ... when we compare and contrast the thoughts of two 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers like Rawls and Nozick who are bearers of two different views on the tasks of the state" (MFIL).*

*"Then other things ... what they wrote about the trip, articles published in the school magazine and were published in the whole institute's magazine ... I would like to attach a photo I took of Paolo on coming out of the European Parliament that I think very symbolic in terms of impact: he is walking surrounded by the girls who are smiling very noticeably, and he is happy and the result he had achieved was clearly seen. Not to mention what they told him on the coach" (IS).*

*"The important experience ... was how the pupils worked ... Certainly, when you have experiences like this, you also have the chance to see whether the learning was consolidated ... **the things we did, they know.** ... we are a place where the certifications are the kids themselves, with what they do and manage to do, and they themselves are the databank when they say, "in this experience I learned this ... I managed thanks to this ... We see these things every year. They can't wait to leave and yet come back every year to tell you what had been significant for them" (DIR).*

### **Personal commitment**

*"... then at the end you find yourself working only thanks to your goodwill ... the project remained operational for the sensitivity and interest of the school head of the project leader school and of the referent tutor. ... We laid the foundations for continuing ..." (MA).*

*"It's not easy. At the beginning of the previous year I got going by moving through the official channels; the website contained a page for school visits and bookings. They answered it wasn't possible, without saying why, and then – I'm sorry to say – I started 'pulling strings' by asking a friend who immediately got going and helped me out ... Of course, in a process with these aims, taking these side routes is somehow incongruent, but then I said to myself 'Paris is well worth a mass!' ..." MFIL).*

### **The interviewer's comment**

*The feedback shows that it is, above all, felt as the teacher's task to create opportunities for learning and experience; the more we move away from programmes, manuals and the school subject, the teacher's role becomes crucial and brings his/her life into play: relations, interests."*

At this point, we should give **the word to the students**, but for now it is only a **possibility for future research**.

### **Inside and beyond the uniform colour of thematic charts: interpretative hypotheses and guidelines**

The evidence gathered during the search, although partial, does show variety, liveliness, implicit elements and problems of which some trends can be drawn, by taking up the framing questions guiding the work and by putting forward interpretative hypotheses and guidelines to be discussed and tested.

*Is there evidence of an adequate place for EDC in the school's goals, policies and curriculum plans?*

As we have seen, in the educational projects of the schools examined, EDC is a widespread *established educational principle* and a significant *educational content* in projects, activities and *projects* which, at least initially, have (had) an *extraordinary* and additional/supplementary feature with respect to prevalent classroom work within the school subject. However, this comes about with different characteristics in the various segments of the school system. Firstly, the presence of **infant school** experiences is significant. I noted an involvement of the whole school, above all, of comprehensive schools (where leadership plays an important role) while in secondary schools there is mainly the initiative of individual teachers or of groups of teachers towards external and participative involvement.

EDC planning is motivated and targeted by the *combination of different drives*: internal ones (shared educational responsibility, relations between different groups), external institutional drives (national indications and international and national projects – the European ones being particularly significant), external social and civil drives (proposals and militancy of movements and NGOs, local authorities). When these interests converge or integrate, then they lead to the richest, central, widespread experiences in schools. When they overlap, go in different directions or are even conflicting, then the experiences become fragmented, marginal and personal. There are significant signs of transition from the second to first view, also thanks to the development of the autonomy process which involves the building of networks and relations (as the POF archive sheets show).

The EDC spheres privileged in the projects and good practices of the schools considered lie mainly in the lower right quadrant of the citizenship 'compass' proposed by Santerini. The development of an *active and participated transnational citizenship* (a European one in the institutional proposal and a planetary one in the movements' case), starting from the rights and duties established in the National Constitutional Charter, is the orientation and focus of most of the documentation considered. In other words, what is stressed in citizenship is the *social and political role* with respect to the juridical status, thus focusing the attention on *topicality* (of which the historical roots are sought).

*Is there evidence of students and teachers ... applying EDC principles to their everyday practice in schools and classrooms? Does the school ethos adequately reflect EDC principles?*

The search only allows making a few inferences regarding the actual daily classroom practices because the documentation mainly concerns projects and products of *supplementary activities* of a *cross-curricular and interdisciplinary nature in infant and primary schools* while in secondary schools they start from disciplinary and multi/interdisciplinary approaches involving mostly only a part of the teaching staff.

The development of *specific EDC activities* sees the *cooperation of several (committed) teachers, professionals and militants* even external to the school, and sees the adoption of mostly more active and participative teaching strategies, which *are added to the traditional lesson and involve discussions and group activities, research and productions (monographs, exhibitions, shows, multimedia), simulations and field activities*. Therefore, in the specific EDC activities we certainly do find the application of EDC principles in classroom teaching practices. And this influences daily life in the schools conducting the projects.

The projects and products considered at all school levels devote *prevalent attention to developing and disseminating sensibilities and values (attitudes) and the treatment and knowledge of citizenship*

*contents*, in the aforesaid meaning of the term, while the practising of skills and competences is either limited to particular moments or linked to 'normal' school, social and civic life that is not the object of specific documentation and exploration.

Thus, *the quality of citizenship in schools remains an issue still to be explored*, with other more suitable research techniques.

*Are the design and practice of assessment within the school consonant with EDC?*

Or, rather, how does EDC evaluation come about in the projects and good practices of the schools concerned?

As we have seen, internal evaluation moves among (a few) *cases where it is highly structured with many tools and aims to assess knowledge and skills*, on the one hand, while – on the other – *the great majority of products and testimonies where the open and qualitative appreciation of the experiences gained and of its contents and values constitutes the focus of daily work*.

External evaluation does not have features of *continuity, or a systematic and structured arrangement*, and – at least, for the time being – is limited to initiatives of documentation/publication, selection and signalling/awarding of 'good practices' according to criteria that privilege attention to contents with respect to the work methods employed, and to the characteristics of the actors/students' experiences and the results/competencies.

In other words, EDC still seems to be considered – in the wake of civic education as a study subject – *more a content of teaching/learning than a practice*, instead of a balanced mix of one and the other, both inside and outside school, and is thus documented and evaluated according to this criterion.

The search fully confirmed that EDC is a very atypical 'object' and teaching commitment. Firstly, we must recall that the school system itself – in all its different historical forms throughout modernity – 'incorporates' (in its curriculum, in action forms and in its very spatial and organisational structuring) 'implicit' and 'explicit' models of citizenship and of civil cohabitation, as the analyses by Foucault, Illich and Postman, for example, have documented with arguments not easily put aside. And these considerations show how EDC, more than any other educational and curricular 'contents/purposes', is still present – within the complex weave between in-school and out-school activities, between the implicit and explicit, and between the intentional and non-intentional.

The first step for the didactic 'governance' of this educational sphere is thus in 'discovering' what is tacitly incorporated in the good practices that convey different forms of cohabitation and values, in comparing and contrasting their meanings and their educational and democratic acceptability, making them explicit and intentional – assessing their implementation.

The main coordinates within which the various didactic models lie and which contain the experiences with no pretentiousness of being comprehensive<sup>18</sup>, may be summarised as follows:

- EDC may take the form of a school subject (as is the case for civic education) or be a cross-curricular activity (as it is today) or even be made 'explicit' through specific ad hoc and integrated projects (as with

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<sup>18</sup> A detailed analysis of the forms of EDC in European countries is found in the Council of Europe document *All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies*, available at [http://www.coe.int/T/e/Cultural\\_Co-operation/Education/E.D.C/Documents\\_and\\_publications/By\\_Subject/Policies/All\\_european\\_study\\_complete.PDF](http://www.coe.int/T/e/Cultural_Co-operation/Education/E.D.C/Documents_and_publications/By_Subject/Policies/All_european_study_complete.PDF)

the various youth projects). Each solution has certain advantages and disadvantages from a didactic standpoint and is consistent with different social and pedagogical frameworks.

- Moreover, whatever curricular form it takes from the ones mentioned above, the educational stress of EDC may variously be distributed by privileging knowledge, knowing how to do or knowing how to be. Knowledge is obviously key in the first case, actions in the second, and attitudes in the third, while the other dimensions become instrumental or secondary; rarely are they excluded. The first model may degenerate into 'notionism', the second into proselytism, and the third into emotionalism.
- Finally, teaching strategies may range, for example, from transmission to simulation and construction. The presentation of citizenship knowledge and values is typical, for example, of institutional campaigns for information and education such as the ones on the European Constitution. Using election procedures within school democratic committees and their functioning, the children's town councils etc. are all examples of simulation. The construction is achieved through the experiences of designing, implementing and (self)-managing the products, services and organisations as we find, for example, in school cooperatives (present in the Trentino province).

Different combinations of options concerning the coordinates give rise to different teaching models that have specific functions guided and oriented by different pedagogical options.

In sum, the 'didactic transposition' (from knowledge to taught knowledge and then to learnt knowledge) of EDC is a complex issue to be faced as such, avoiding any reductionist short-cuts. Certainly, a didactically suitable perspective for EDC involves the detailed integration of different educational work plans and forms between in-school and out-school activities. Starting from the rules and practices of everyday school life, EDC develops through specific teachings, or as a cross-curricular value, or even through ad hoc moments.

Models and solutions of a simplified or unilateral nature seem inadequate for dealing with the didactic transposition of such an important theme that is absolutely fundamental in the education of today and of the future.

With a view to democratic citizenship, different options have a right to citizenship, on the condition that they be consciously and freely constructed/chosen and open to social, professional and scientific exchanges of views.

### **Further research lines**

The limitations and decisions regarding this search for EDC experiences in Italian schools over the last few years are evident and open up several lines for conducting further research work. I shall briefly mention them here.

Firstly, the research object was limited by experiences (actually gained and documented) specific to EDC (thus defined). Hence, the search, selection, reading and interpretation of the materials focused more on the specific (nominal) than on the relations and links between these experiences and themes, by leaving aside the wealth of references and interconnections characterising most of the experiences, with evident problems in defining the object and shifts in meaning. It is not by chance that many of the experiences considered are polyvalent. The 'broad' definition of EDC that I have taken from documents of international organisations should thus be broken down to its more analytical components in order to identify more defined objects and carry out more targeted searches.

Secondly, the time and conditions available for searching meant a narrow definition of the search field to the documentation available online – that is, reconstructing the experiences – and to the projects and products. The result is a task involving the reading of documentation rather than the exploring of practices and experiences of the main actors – the students. In short, the limits of the sources are clear, as is the need for further research on a broader basis and, above all, more targeted to exploring practices. In this regard, the grid of indicators, tools and methodological indications proposed in the aforesaid Council of Europe's Tool for Quality Assurance of EDC in Schools constitute a significant frame of reference (also with a view to evaluative and comparative analysis, beside the educational one) for starting up actions enabling the gathering of a critical mass of information – both inside and outside school – on which to develop a second level study. A chance for a complex study that is feasible thanks to cooperation between research institutions in a shared project.

Finally, the search approach used means that the work done is an initial gathering of elements, clues and indications rather than a systematic analysis. Hence, the interpretations and conclusions should be considered more as hypotheses to be corroborated by further and appropriate studies than as descriptions, evaluations or even representative or consolidated models. In view of this, the reader is given the chance to refer directly to the sources in order to enable public scrutiny that characterises research communities of practice and allows making the interpretations more convincing. In short, these pages contain only an initial limited and documented search that enabled making a provisional useful outline in the hope of proceeding with the definition of a research programme (above all, a qualitative one) suitable for constructing an overview of EDC experiences in Italian schools, and that has a prospective and developmental orientation more than a documentary or evaluative one. A coordinated action-research programme which, for example, has the aforesaid tool as common reference is the path that remains to be constructed and taken in order to further promote EDC in Italian schools.

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