

EDUCATION POLICY IN EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP AND THE
MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

STOCKTAKING RESEARCH PROJECT

COUNTRY REPORT

A L B A N I A

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1. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Albanian education comes from a history of endless propaganda, ideologically permeated school curricula, failed courses on developing “right” attitudes, knee-jerk patriotic drill. “Proletarian democracy” arguments were encapsulated into slogans; indoctrination was the only teaching strategy during the time of dictatorship. School education grew in a culture of taboos and social shame and exclusion.

The Albanian reality of the last ten years is a testimony of economic, social, political and cultural transformation. Society has not only been generating new options for the individual to develop, but it has also been charging everyone with more responsibilities. The weakening of the state since early 1990, along with distrust of the government are cited by almost all survey respondents to be the prevailing cause of the poor performance of Albania. At the same time, people still expect the state to take care of every aspect of their life without always considering the possible role of private sector and initiative, of non-governmental sector and communities. NGOs are mushrooming in Albania, but for many people their role, especially in the education sector and social services, is unclear.

There is a well-accepted consensus that the situation is ripe for a more far-reaching effort to raise the level of education for democratic citizenship. As the years pass, Albanian educators have become more conscious that citizenship is crucial to democratic development in the country (resolutions of the three EDC conferences, 1998,1999, 2000).

2. POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE BASE

2.1. General Considerations

These last ten years have been a period of intense constitutional development in the country. The new Constitution of Albania was approved in 1998. It is the basis for open, just and democratic society based on the rule of law. The road to the approval of the Constitution by referendum was not easy. Four years were needed to adopt the Constitution, which provides safe grounds for stable democratic developments.

Prior to the approval of the Constitution, fundamental documents on Human Rights had been ratified. The Convention for Children's Rights was approved in 1992, the fundamental law on Human Rights and Freedom and the European Convention on Human Rights was approved in 1996 by the Albanian Parliament. These fundamental documents served as a basis for action under the conditions of the abolition of the previous Constitution, till the new Constitution was approved in 1998.

Constitution

According to the Albanian Constitution, the government of the country is based on free, equal, general and periodical elections; sovereignty of the Republic of Albania belongs to the people. It is exerted through freely elected representatives. The bases of the Albanian state are, amongst other concepts, human dignity and human rights. The State obligates itself to the respect of these concepts (article 3). The Constitution allows the creation of the organizations based on the democratic principles. Albanian fundamental law allows every citizen 18 years of age to vote and be elected, to organize collectively for any lawful purpose (article 45).

Law on Higher Education system

Education in Albania has come from a very centralized and highly controlled tradition. Since then, through political changes, continuous decentralizing steps have been taken. Decentralization started with higher education. In April 1994, parliament passed the law allowing "higher education decentralization, academic freedom, institutional independence and financial self-governance". Initial teacher training programs and university initiatives became more liberal. Further reforming action was taken in a favorable political situation.

Albanian Law on Pre-university Education System

On June 21, 1995, the Albanian parliament passed the law on Pre-university Education System in Albania. It provides a broader legal basis for social development and citizenship education of the younger generation. The law allows for social development of citizens. Articles 2 and 21 of this law write:

"The mission of education is the spiritual emancipation, material progress and social development of

the individual ,

“The compulsory public education aims at developing students’ intellectual, creative, practical and physical capacities, at developing basic cultural values and citizenship skills”.

“Public compulsory education aims at developing the intellectual, creative, practical and physical abilities of students, to develop their personality as well as to equip them with the fundamental elements of general culture and citizenship education” (article 21).

The Law on Pre-university Education System established the general principles of education, the structure of the public education system, the structure of public special education, private education, complementary structures of the education system, the administration of the pre-university education system, and final dispositions. It sanctions that *it is in full compliance with the adults’ and children’s rights sanctioned in respective documents (article 1).*

The Law foresees that the teacher is the central scientific and pedagogical figure in public education institutions. The teacher is obliged to implement the teaching programs approved by the Ministry of Education. The teacher has the right to select his/her own methods of teaching. The teacher is responsible for protecting the student’s personality. He/she is responsible for avoiding any influence on students coming from his/her own political, social or religious values (article 14.1).

The Law foresees that the state takes all measures to ensure that *institutions of compulsory education are spread all over the country.* (article 20)

The Law sanctions that the administrative organization of the education system involves several levels:

The *central level*, including the legislative and executive bodies as well as national institutions such as: the Parliament, the Council of ministers, the ministry of Education and Science and its institutions such as pedagogical Research institute, textbook Publishing House, Textbook Distribution Enterprise. The Ministry of Local Government that was created in 1998.

The *district level*, including the Educational Directorates, the elected heads of the districts and the District Council. At school level, there are several advisory bodies, such as parents’ councils at the class and school level, the school board and the teachers’ council, representing the interests of the local governments and playing a role in the budget planning and execution process, monitoring the way the resources allocated to municipalities and communes are used.

The Law foresees that secondary public education aims to develop to the most possible and harmonious level the personality and potential of the students, to *enable them to contribute in the best active way to the economic, political, social and cultural development of the country.* (article 26). According to the law, the school is expected to train active citizens to participate in the political, social and cultural life of the country.

According to Article 39, *physically, emotionally or mentally handicapped children have the right of social education.*

The Ministry of Education *is responsible for the development planning of education, for the approval of the fundamental curricula: teaching plans, programs and students textbooks (articles 51,52).*

Albanian citizens have the right to all levels of education, despite their social background, nationality, language, gender, race, political convictions, health concession and economic level.

People from the minorities have the right to learn and be taught in their mother tongue, learn the history and culture, within the limits of the school teaching plans and materials.

Local government has increasingly been getting more rights in school governance.

According to **Law no. 306**, “*education is governed by the local government*”. It enjoys the right to decide to set up general schools, maintain schools, govern the granted budget, hire teachers, etc. The education directorates (so far under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education to govern education locally) will be reduced in number (from 38 to 7). Nationally, school activities will be governed by the National Education Inspectorate.

Schools have more say in administration. School boards have their own statute and authority. There are more possibilities for community involvement.

A new law is being drafted on the decentralization of vocational education following some piloting action on the freedom of school boards to decide to engage in for-the-school profiting activities.

2.2 Education for Democratic Citizenship

2.2.1 Curriculum

Albania has a national and centrally developed curriculum and programs for basic education. The MoE is responsible for curricula design. The MoE assigns to the Institute of Pedagogical Research the responsibility for developing subject programs and to the publishing house the responsibility for developing students’ textbooks. No systematic procedures are in place for assessing the impact of the intended curriculum on students learning and teaching practices (Albania - Issues and Challenges in Education Governance).

Under these conditions, AEDP has developed a program of preparing elaborated standards and guidelines for preschool education in 2000. They are being piloted in some districts, which have been previously included in “Step by Step” program. It comprises of a preamble as well as the following chapters.

- Standards of cooperation between adults and children.
- Curricular standard
- Family education staff cooperation
- Qualification standards
- Administration
- Physical environment standard
- Health standards
- Food standard
- Evaluation standards

The way the standards are elaborated shows that care is shown to the proper citizenship education of preschoolers and development of accepting others who are different. So, standard A4 tells that

“...staff start activities and discussions with children in a way to build positive self identity so that they learn the value of diversity”. It is further elaborated into:

“...staff treat children equally, respectfully and with consideration despite race, religion, ethnicity, cultures and abilities...”,

“...staff always organize integrative activities related to ethnicity, religion and culture”,

“staff encourage the contribution of different ethnic groups”,

“staff provide equal gender unbiased opportunities to children”¹.

The standards include a description of the educational activities. They aim at citizenship education, emotional, social, ethical and moral development. The mechanism to realize these standards is through the organization of different games, rule establishment, discussions, inclusion of the subjects, as described in standard 4.

Civics Standards

The new school mission as well as the transformation of the way citizenship education was introduced in school, brought about the need for writing civics standards in 1997. They may be seen as structured fundamental concepts and principles to be transmitted to students as knowledge, as skills, values and attitudes. Preparing young people to become responsible citizens of tomorrow is a major goal in Albanian education. Traditionally, schools have prepared students for citizenship by teaching civics as a separate subject throughout the compulsory education, as well as by executing a plan of educational extracurricular activities.

The National Pedagogical Institute and the Foreign Ministry of Netherlands, the Dutch Helsinki Committee as well as the Albanian Education Development Program of the Soros Foundation have developed the project of National Standards of Civics in 1997. In other words, there was an effort to develop the set of basic citizenship competencies to be developed through teaching of civics at school as well as a set of teaching competencies for teachers of civics. The draft of Civics National Standards was distributed in schools to be piloted. It is still in the piloting process, expected to be improved through wide scale reflection of practitioners. Nevertheless, it has started to be an orienting document for policy and institution development. Civics Standards (grades 1-10) are closely related to the utmost mission of school, citizenship education. They aim at giving a status to Civics and Civics teachers.

They clearly reflect:

- Changes that have occurred within the social institutions (family, government, school, media, religion, etc.),
- The newly assumed roles of the social institutions,
- The new integrative tendencies of societal development,
- Standards aim at focusing on knowledge, values as well as skills and attitudes. Standards are so defined, that they orient the teaching process towards clearer objectives.

Based on the overall legal frame, Civics aims at:

1. Enabling students to intellectually understand, analyze and influence the country social policy,
2. Developing participatory, problem solving and decision making skills, developing commitment skills, democratic values and attitudes necessary for a democratic living

¹ (Standards for Preschool Education, page 8)

together in Albania as well as in the region².

Compulsory Education Student Achievement and Teacher Performance Standards

Based on the requirements of the Pre-university Law approved in June 1995, the mission of education is “*spiritual emancipation, material progress and social development of the individual*”. (Law of Pre-university Education System, article 1). Compulsory education aims to develop intellectual, creative, practical and physical abilities, and to equip students with the basic elements of the culture and citizenship education. Based on these general criteria, citizenship education aims at:

- Providing students with knowledge and developing intellectual abilities to understand, analyze and impact on the social policies and the way they are enforced.
- Developing civil participatory skills and enabling them to consciously participate in the community problem resolution.
- Developing civil commitment to respect democratic values and principles necessary for the necessary co-existence in a democratic society³

The Pedagogical Research Institute experts drafted the “National Student and Teacher Standards”. There is an initiative of the Council of Europe to help prepare national standards. There is a PISA project of OCDE for national standards. In both these two initiatives, EDC and MofD are clearly aimed at.

2.2.2. Structural/organizational

Alongside the political and legislative changes, school restructuring was a big undertaking. Changes in all curricular areas in general, as well as those in the field of citizenship education, were so projected that they were embedded in the overall societal and political changes. Subjects like, “History of the Party of Labor of Albania” and “Moral and political education” are removed to make room for “Knowledge on society” and “Citizenship education”. The Albanian students are being exposed for the first time to topics like: civil society, human rights and responsibilities, education for peace, democracy in action, citizenship and law. Schools are adopting the strategy of training citizens capable of exerting their civil responsibilities and freedom, capable of making contribution to further spiritual emancipation, social and material development of society. Important documents like: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, The Convention on Children’s Rights, The Convention on Civil and Political Rights as well as the Convention on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, European Documents on Human Rights and the respective national, regional or international organizations and institutions are being brought down to classroom level. Moreover, students and teachers are qualitatively using different sources of information on democracy and citizenship, human rights, conflict resolution and decision-making.

Education has been facing new perspectives: its age-old mission to train future citizens is presently considered as multi-faceted. It is widely accepted that democratic

²Civics Teacher and Student Standard 1997.

³ (National Civics Students’ and Teachers’ Standards”, 1997)

citizenship education is expected to play a crucial role in future democratic processes, that the already changed Albanian society, the perspective of living together, lays down the necessity to:

- Transmit integrated democratic knowledge, values and skills,
- Identify short-term and long-term perspectives of the civil action and living together,
- Consistently evaluate in-the-field developments of citizenship education,
- Undertake systemic reform of Civics teacher training endeavours.

The introduction of an effective subject-based program was considered an imperative. Citizenship education in Albania is part of official curriculum. **It is taught as a separate subject in grades 1-10.** The school curriculum is under process of further improvements; reliable sources of information are becoming more easily learned and digested. Topics like: culture, family in transitional society, social behavior, social interests, ethnicity, minorities, political structure of society, environment and global issues are becoming of interest not only to the school student, but also to wider communities.

2.2.3. Teacher Training

Initial Teacher Training Policies

Everything that has been done or is on the way, asks for well-trained missionaries of citizenship education. Lots of action is aiming at improving Civics teachers in teaching methods, classroom management, evaluation procedures, etc. It also aims at having teachers know more about democracy, societal development mechanisms and ways of citizen involvement. Training aims at teaching skill development. Since 1991, the universities have focused on having more academic freedom, opening new faculties, renovating course structure and content, balancing the ratio of theory and practice, implementing new methods of teaching, conducting research, providing services and staff training. The “Luigj Gurakuqi” University of Elbasan, since 1997, has been working with Norre Nisum College of Education, Denmark, within the framework of DANIDA project, to introduce new courses on citizenship education in pre-service teacher training.

In-service teacher training

In-service teacher training is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Pedagogical Research Institute. Actually, there is no training scheme or program in action. Civics teacher training remains the initiative of different donors and NGOs.

On March 20, 2001, the Minister of Education and Science of Albania signed an agreement with the US State Department representative and the President of the University of Washington USA, to have 1500 civics teachers trained during the fall 2001.

The National Civics Teacher Standards have been used as the basis for organizing training activities. The need for better-trained teachers became sharper with the vacuum in initial training, and with the need for a radical change in the methodology of teaching Civics in school

KUALIDA – AEDP training scheme is based on the principles of distance learning. As a result of the three-year activities, two teachers' manuals on "Methods of teaching Civics" and "Questioning in Civics" as well as two video cassettes illustrating teaching methods and questioning techniques were produced. The training sessions developed are transmitted through public TV for Civics teachers. Teachers have been trained in local and national seminars to use them.

In-service teacher training has sporadically been taken over by the following institutions:

- Pedagogical Research Institute
- Local Universities
- Local Educational Directories
- Pilot Schools (scarce in-the-country and inter-country twinning of schools)
- Different donors
- Different NGOs

Through the cooperation of these institutions, the emergency needs for teaching materials and activities were met. An important component of it all is the consistent reflection on the training process and the responsibility of continuous and systematic training of civics teachers. There are initiatives of the Ministry of Education to cooperate systematically with AEDP- Soros Open Society Foundation, like "Tirana 2000", (for other districts, too) that aim at addressing the school needs holistically, but still there is no clear strategy of fully recycling the in-service Civics teachers.

2.3 Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion

2.3.1. Curriculum

A high priority task for the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science was the development of the new curricula, textbooks and other instructional materials for students that emphasize the core concepts of democracy. Various topics that have to do with the cultural heritage, national governing, democratic institutions, contemporary issues as well as other important issues are included in civics courses. The core democracy concepts are the foundation of teaching and learning democracy at school.

These aims are further broken down into more specific standards for students to master according to grades, on the following topics:

Grades 1-4

- The individual
- Social group
- Family
- Education
- Local community and the nation
- Rules and citizenship
- Health and environmental issues
- Human needs
- Needs and desires
- Production resources

Money and banking system
Economic change
Public services
Health public service
Public order
Information technology
Telecommunication

Grades 5-8

Students of **grades 5-8** have chances to retake the following issues in citizenship education classes:

Community
How do communities change
Citizenship and the law
Civil society and the role of citizen
Participatory skills as basis for citizenship
Rule and law, their role in society
Civil participation in the process of compiling and enforcing law
Rights, liabilities and responsibilities of citizen
Civil rights and liabilities
Civil responsibilities
Social values
Government
Legislative power,
Executive power
Judicial power
Organization of the local power
Political parties, voting and elections
Economic relations in society
Production, distribution and consumption in market economy
Needs fulfillment and economic requirements
Career development and professional training
Albania and actual global issues
Albania and international relations
Albania and global issues

Grades 9-10

Students study the following topics in the secondary education,

Social groups and social institutions
Social groups
Social institutions
Culture
Citizenship and law
Citizenship, civil society and the role of the citizen
Law and the role of law in human society
Procedures of law writing
Rights, responsibilities and liabilities of the citizen
Human rights
Civil responsibilities

State and government
Power and power issues
Local governing
Political parties
Constitution
Global issues
International relations

Each teaching objective is elaborated into achievement standards. The achievement and performance objectives are elaborated on basis of Bloom's taxonomy of (know, understand, apply, synthesize, analyze, evaluate).

2.3.2. Structural/organizational

What Albanian society badly needs today is responsible citizens, open to others' cultures and traditions, capable of managing conflicts and making decisions. In its efforts to meet this societal prevailing demand, schools are undertaking various initiatives which have a shared focus: democratic citizenship education.

The extending of foreign languages teaching and learning (e.g. German and Spanish), the twinning between Albanian and European schools, common activities and school based activities focused on European culture and history heritage, on European advantages and challenges, present to students the impact that Europe will have in their life as adults and make them feel part of the wider, diverse and collaborative European community. Educating the younger generation to accept living in peace and harmony with different people remains an indisputable priority for Albanian school. Albanian society needs responsible citizens, open to others, their cultures and traditions, capable of treating and solving conflicts through peaceful human means.

2.3.3. Teacher Standards

“Standards for Teachers and Students of Civic Education” drafted in 1997, include the standards for a Civics teacher. Here are the generic components required of a Civics teacher:

- Mastery of core concepts that denote essential knowledge, intellectual and participatory skills that enable practical application of the civic knowledge, values and virtues that dispose citizens to act for the good of their community.
- Mastery of the interactive teaching and learning strategies through which students are challenged to take the responsibility of their achievements and actions.

According to the standards, the Civics teacher establishes and applies rules fairly, while creating a classroom environment that respects the worth and dignity of each student.

General professional standards for Civics teachers include knowledge of democratic concepts and principles, mastery of intellectual and participatory skills, command of democratic values.

The European dimension became an important component of education after 1995 (Albania became a member of the Council of Europe on July 1995). The education community is becoming aware of its role in the preparation of the younger generation to become active European and Albanian citizens. “European studies” is now one of the most fashionable projects of the University of Tirana under the TEMPUS scheme. It aims, among other things, at putting teacher-training programs in a European perspective. The training of teachers on the European dimension of education, the concepts and approaches of introducing it in the teaching and learning process, based on the programs of European Union, Council of Europe, the translation of some of their publications, the use of CEDREE materials and the publications of some articles in educational magazines, are the steps taken so far.

2.4. CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

More needs to be done in aspect of lifelong learning, for coordinating public education policies and employment of the youth policies.

3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

3.1. General Consideration

There is a **mid-term and a long-term strategy of education development in process of approval**. The first phase of the national discussion is over. It is at the phase of getting approval from the Albanian government. Nevertheless, the national curriculum and teaching programs are regularly enforced. The mid and long term strategy aims at:

- Bringing the education system infrastructure to normal functioning
- Ensuring quality improvement in education
- Increasing education efficacy
- Complying Albanian education with the Euro-Atlantic strategies.

EDC is part of the effort taken to improve education.

3.2. Education for Democratic Citizenship

3.2.1. Curriculum

“Annual breakdown of the curriculum standards of civic education” (grades 1-10) is an 83 page book that breaks down into working objectives the whole curriculum of the civic education program starting from grade 1 to grade 10. It was developed and published in 1997. It is co-authored by 5 experts of the Pedagogical Research Institute and 15 teachers of Civics in Tirana. The Helsinki Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands supported it. The breakdown is such that the core knowledge on democracy is applied effectively in civil life.

A characteristic of the “Annual Breakdown of the Civics Curriculum Standards” is the focus on the essential civic knowledge; many of the objectives recommended to civics teacher aim at teaching thoroughly the meaning of the basic ideas, so that students know what something is and what it is not. Many objectives aim at encouraging critical thinking and evaluating the course of action against democratic criteria.

Another central characteristic of the “Annual Breakdown of the Civics Curriculum Standards” is the focus on the development of the intellectual and participatory skills, on enabling students to think and act on behalf of their human rights and common good. Intellectual skills are developed through objectives that aim at identifying, describing, explaining information or events pertinent to personal or public issues, and making or defending positions on certain civil issues.

Participatory skills are developed through objectives and activities that aim at influencing decision-making authorities, holding to account people responsible for certain action. Civic skills are designed to be realized through intellectually active learning, both inside and outside the school. Based on the breakdown, students are constantly challenged to

use information and ideas, individually and collectively, to analyze case studies and certain complex issues and events, respond to public issues, resolve certain problems.

3.2.2. Structural/organizational

An important operational document for education is the packet of the “**Normative Dispositions**” approved in August 1996. They are compulsory for all public pre-university schools. The aim of education, according to the normative dispositions, is to “*spiritually emancipate and to allow for the development of the students’ personality, to develop independent, critical, creative, constructive and tolerant thinking and action*”. It aims at “*developing nationhood, human, moral and democratic values*”, at “*creating equal chances for preparing students for life*”⁴.

“*School activities, both within and outside the teaching processes, educate and respect children’s’ rights*”⁵

Albanian schools allow for migrant students to keep up with their studies after a period of migration on the basis of documents of attendance in other countries.

*The textbooks of “History of Albania”, “Geography of Albania” as well as “Albanian Literature” are discussed and approved respectively by the National Council of History of Albania, National Council of Geography of Albania and National Council of Albanian Literature*⁶.

There is an executive order from the Minister of Education allowing the Greek and Macedonian minority students to study the history in their mother tongue.

Civics teachers have a teaching load of 24 hours (45’ each) a week (there are 5 working days in each week). Teachers of “Knowledge on Society” (secondary schools) teach 22 classes (45’ each) a week (there are 5 working days in a week).

One teacher per school is responsible of the cultural center for children. There are different clubs in the center, each of them with approximately 10-20 children⁷.

Through the cooperation of these institutions, the emergency needs for teaching materials and activities were met. An important component of it all is the consistent reflection on training processes and the responsibility of continuous and systematic training of civics teachers. There are initiatives of the Ministry of Education to cooperate systematically with AEDP- Soros Open Society Foundation, like “Tirana 2000”, (for other districts, too) that aim at addressing school needs holistically, but still there is no clear strategy of fully recycling the in-service Civics teachers.

Students’ government

If we look around at the attitude of the young people towards education, there are concerning data. According to INSTAT, since 1990 there has been an increase in the school dropout rate. (INSTAT refers that school enrollment in 1990 was 100% (age 6-14) whereas in 1997 it has dropped to 96%) Similar figures are reconfirmed by an UNICEF study in 1998. The most alarming figure is reported by VNICA WB: 33% of drop-out children age 8-14 are illiterate. These students’ skill level is far from the knowledge, skill and attitude parameters expressed in national standards.

⁴ Article 5, Normative Dispositions

⁵ Article 6, Normative Dispositions

⁶ Article 20, Normative Dispositions

⁷ Teacher Trade Union Contract

The student government project aims at building models of democratic school environment. It aims at building check and balance systems within schools. This project was first piloted in 13 districts; now it is spread through out the country. There are 65 local students' governments in the country. They have their own parliament. What students learn is what democracy is. They learn how to run the school democratically. They come to government through students' elections. They run their own plans and problems, assist peers solve complex problems, cooperate with their parents and community to resolve school problems. Though school boards of parents and students government are not mentioned in the normative dispositions for public education, in practice there is a teacher parent board in every class and every school and a student government in every school. These structures do exist in school, but the way of their involvement in school decision-making is too far from being democratic. There are deep issues waiting to be addressed.

NGOs involvement with school projects is becoming a testimony of breaking down the rigidity of school management. It is difficult to give a precise number of NGOs involved in schools, but it is, in practice, too high. They come in to assist schools in relieving economic issues mostly. Several are assisting in teacher training, holistic school reform projects, students involvement in social issues, etc.

On the other hand, in meetings with representatives of the Ministry of Education, they stress that EDC is part of the national education strategy. **Government has given education a priority in the fight against poverty.** The budget of the Ministry of Education is the second largest, after that of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs⁸:

	1999	2000	2001
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	18.615.871.000	19.593.215.000	21.573.169.000
Ministry of Education and Science	14.047.771.000	15.646.652.000	17.227.887.000
Ministry of Local Power	5.224.474.000	6.773.050.000	8.493.238.000
Ministry of Finance	2.604.120.000	2.690.022.000	4.211.988.000

But, they too accept that there is a long way to go in the area of EDC and MofD.

3.2.3. Teacher training

Ideas about teaching democratic citizenship education are as important as the core ideas about the content. Many of the teachers of Civics have been exposed to advanced methods of engaging students actively in the course of learning the core concepts and related topics of information in other subjects, like history. But, actually, there is no official in-service teacher-training program in the country, neither training schema in place. Civics in-service teacher training has been totally left at the initiative and good will of different donors. Two problems come out of the abandonment of teachers and their training needs by the state:

1. Many schools and teachers, especially in remote and rural areas, are left out of training. Donors look at different conveniences for themselves, their organizations, staff and trainers.

⁸ Data taken from the Official Newsletters, December 1998, 1999, 2000

2. Training is tailored according to the philosophy of the donor more than to the needs of the students, schools and teachers.

On top of that, training on citizenship education is more focused on the Civics teachers' needs. Other schoolteachers have no possibility, other than through school targeted projects, of being exposed to the process they are expected to undertake in schools.

3.3.Valuing cultural diversity and social cohesion

3.3.1.Curriculum

Lots of Civics teachers, but not only them, are provided with handy teaching materials and training chances. The list of publications related to education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity includes:

- “Civics” (Students textbook, grades 1-8, supplied all students)
- “Civics Teacher Guide”, Grades 1-8 (lesson plans covering the whole teaching program, grades 1-8), 1998
- “Knowledge on Society” (students’ guide, grades 9-10, supplied all students)
- “Knowledge on Society” teachers’ guide, grades 9-10 (lesson plans covering the whole program grades 9-10) 1999
- Manual on Teaching Social Studies (I) (university textbook), 1999
- Manual on Teaching Social Studies (II) (university textbook), 1999
- “Manual on Conflict and Communication” for teachers, 1997
- “Manual on Education of Human Rights at School” for teachers, 1997
- “Manual on Questioning in Civics” for teachers, 1998
- "Methods of teaching Civics", 1998
- “Critical Thinking” (8 manuals for teachers), 1999
- “Give Reasoning First Priority” (translation), 1998
- “Manual on Human Rights” for teachers, 1997
- “Manual on Human Rights” for elementary school teachers “First steps”,1997
- “Human Rights” (students’ textbook grades 1-8), published in 87.400 copies
- “Human Rights”, posters, published in 11.000 copies
- “It’s only the right”, teacher guide, 10.000 copies
- Teacher Instructional Textbook on Human Rights 5100 copies
- “Human Rights Education at School” (brochure) 35.000 copies
- “ABC on Human Rights” 4000 copies
- “Global education” teachers’ manual
- Distance learning and training materials (videotapes and television transmissions)
- 3 regional conferences “Democracy and Education” December 1998, “Education for Democratic Citizenship in Albania” October 1999, Regional Conference on Education for Democratic Citizenship”, December 2000, took place in Tirana.
- [Dad@los](#) (CD-ROM on democratic citizenship education)

In most of cases, curricular material development is accompanied by training schema for teachers.

3.3.2. Structural/organizational

The growing tendency to resort to violent means in solving conflicts is a great challenge to school. The fear that it will continue to be considered a way of resolving social and civil conflict later, in adult age, is strong. This is why teachers are trying to integrate into the everyday curriculum, issues of tolerance, peace education, human rights, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, mediation, etc.

Trying to achieve these objectives, schools have constantly been engaged in projects which, though different in focus, have the same aim: democratic citizenship education, making school a democratic environment.

The following are some of the positive projects that have had an impact so far on the school ethos:

3.3.2.Human Rights

Human Rights education has been recently introduced in Albania as a central tenet of educational curriculum (1993). Actually, it has become a primary focus of numerous NGOs' engagement. The new state institutions founded on democratic values and principles ask for the widening of the human rights education program, helping people transform human rights from abstract norms to sets of values. Under this framework, the Pedagogical Research Institute in cooperation with the National Center of Human Rights, the Helsinki Committee of Netherlands, UNICEF, ANA, MIRA foundations (Norway), developed human rights education guidelines that were the basis for the introduction of human rights activities as formal, cross-curricular and extracurricular activities in grades 1-8. This initiative aimed at:

- introducing the Human Rights issue in compulsory education,
- providing books and materials for students and teachers,
- training teachers to teach human rights at school according to national and international standards.

Collaborative efforts led to publication of:

- Students book on human rights grade 1-8 (70.000 copies each grade).
- Teachers' guides: "It is only the human right!" (translation, 10.000 copies)
- "Human rights" (5.000 copies)
- "Human rights education in schools" (35.000 copies)
- "Children's Rights Convention" (simplified version)
- Posters: "Our rights" (11.000 copies)

In-service teacher training of hundreds of teachers, trainers and local supervisors of education in the field of human rights was intensively provided (the total sum of seminar days during 1993-1996 mounts to 75 seminars and the number of participants 10.000). International experts assisted in training and developing teaching materials.

After the piloting phase, 93-95, these materials were expected to be used all over the country. The most important aspect of this is that human rights education was reflected in the Law on Pre-university Education System in July 1995, as well as in the standards of civic education.

The introduction of human right education in the high school curriculum, (as a follow-up project), is seen as an effective way to empower the younger generation for a knowledgeable, informed, responsible and active participation in civil society. It is widely believed that focus on this age group will result in desirable outcomes.

- Instilling human rights as democratic values and fundamentals, as conditions for the rule of law and active participation.
- Making people aware of national standards and international institutions for promoting and protecting human rights.
- Helping people understand their political, economic and social rights and define ways of enjoying them.
- Setting links between school and the immediate communities in addressing everyday problems.
- Enabling people to participate and have a better say in the policy making process.

3.3.2. Peace education

Peace education is another direction in which schools are working to offer students a chance of living democratically. Prior to 1997, there were only elements of peace education in the social studies curriculum. After the tragic events of spring 1997, education for peace and tolerance started to be considered as a means of making schools a living democracy.

Self-armament of the population, conflicts, riots and killings had a very bad impact on the lives of children who more often than not have witnessed adults' violence. School is facing a very difficult task: to assist students' get over the stress and depression and provide peace education for them. The common ground of many projects was peace education across different age groups, building capacity to resolve conflicts and practicing mediation within school and outside.

UNICEF started teacher training aimed at helping teachers recognize different forms of stress in young children, read students' messages and understand their inner world, use art therapy, etc. In daily school life teachers are using "Conflict and Communication", a book translated into Albanian, as a resource activity book. They carry the message of peace to the whole community.

This initiative of 1997 grew into a regional project of the Open Society Foundation, "Conflict resolution and mediation in School". Actually Open Society Foundation, Albanian Education Development Program, Albanian Foundation of Reconciliation of Disputes and Conflict Resolution run the project with participation of Pedagogical Research Institute and University of Tirana. It aims at making students familiar with concepts and practices of conflict resolution through mediation.

Further steps are taken under the "Net-link" project with the Swedish Ministry of Education.

3.3.2. Democratic change: School and community based initiative

In order for the school environment to be democratic, the school role should no longer be considered to be that of knowledge transmitter. Students need knowledge, skills and attitudes to become active and responsible citizens. Today's students' role is not that of passive knowledge recipient, but of the active individual capable of critical thinking and constructive action in the school and community in which she/he learns and lives. This is

the philosophy that permeates the initiative of school and community democratic change, which aims at school development as a place where democracy can be experienced in day-to-day decision-making and the partnership within school and between school and community. The initiative was embraced by 13 secondary schools in the country. It aimed at:

- Individual enhancement through acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to act as responsible citizens in a democratic society.
- Model creating through working out school partnership and school democracy which can be followed and applied.
- Development of partnership between school and community to the benefit of both.

The project ‘School and Community based Initiative for Democratic Change’ was developed September 1997-December 2000, sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Science, the Council of Europe, the Austrian Chancellery, KulturKontakt Austria, AEDP. Head-teachers, teachers, parents and students democratically developed projects to improve the structures of their schools. Almost 50 project proposals devoted to the reconstruction of libraries, school newsletters and youth-clubs, as well as for the improvement of the physical environment of the schools, were selected by an international steering committee. Five editions of the Newsletter ‘Shkolla ndryshe’ were produced and distributed by a democratically selected Editorial Board. In July 1999, student representatives were trained at an international youth camp in Austria. Two summer-academies were organized in Saranda. 130 students represented all participating schools. This activity was perceived as an important motivation to strengthen intra-Albanian co-operation. Outcomes of this project are:

- Training of 96 Albanian educators at the school level
- Curriculum guides and training materials
- Training Video
- School Twinning Activities
- Regional collaboration program
- Six issues of a quarterly Newsletter
- Project Brochure and Guide
- Sustainability Plan

This project is being continued into ‘Sites of Citizenship’ an EDC project under the Stability Pact.

3.3.2. Global education

Global education is an approach to education which seeks to influence changes in school, so as to make education more influential in the preparation of children for life in this increasingly complex and interdependent world. Global education dictates such curricular modifications that make knowledge, skills and values comprehensively acquired. Specially, the global education approach dictates infusion of the following issues into curriculum:

- Interdependence and interconnectedness of communities, countries and

peoples, the interplay of local, national and international trends and events. Education for democratic citizenship, education for human rights and responsibilities, education for peace and conflict resolution, environmental, health and safety education, education for social, political, and economic development, anti-discriminatory education as well as the equity education.

- Future oriented thinking (probable, possible, and preferred futures at personal, local, national, regional and global levels).
- Self-awareness, understanding the complementary intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects of individuals

The teaching of all the above is encouraged at school through active methods - cooperation, discussion, interaction, and participation. Activities brought to the classroom are designed to reinforce basic skills and higher order thinking skills such as: conflict avoidance and resolution, consensus building, negotiation, and problem solving. This project has been piloted for three years (1997-2000) starting from the 5th grade in math, language, reading and civic education. The pilot experience showed:

- Enrichment of the learning environments with diversified materials and methods.
- Reinforcement of certain important issues throughout the curriculum (topics like environment, future, democracy, citizenship, health were constantly reinforced across and throughout the curriculum.
- Enhancement of teachers' professionalism, through new skills and position in their role as facilitators.

The "Manual on Global Education", authored by D. Selby, G. Pike, F. Myteberi, S. Llambiri, A. Dautaj, M. Gjokutaj and B. Rexha, was published in 2000. It helps teachers organize global education activities. It is comprised of a thorough description of the global education objectives as well as of a set of interactive lesson plans in the subjects: Albanian language, Reading, Mathematics and Civic education.

The Institute of Pedagogical Research runs this project in cooperation with UNICEF and Toronto Institute of Global Education, Canada.

3.3.2 Law education

Law education is being introduced in high schools through the "Street law" project. It aims at providing accessible and available information to all citizens in a wide variety of settings, including high school. Albanian partners: AEDP, the Pedagogical Research Institute and the Law Faculty are enthusiastic because Law education is a field about which people are mostly illiterate. School is a perfect place to generate education about law, human rights and respect for them. Schoolwork so far has mostly been academic and the methods used, very traditional. There is not too much to mark in project development so far.

3.3.2. Distance Learning

Recently, the distance-learning center started to function as a Ministry of Education

project. It aims at providing real training opportunities to adults. Its growth has led to the abolition of the part time schooling of adults, a very dubious training system. Actually there are 4 distance-learning centers in the country (Polytechnic University of Tirana, University of Tirana, University of Elbasan and University of Shkodra). An Italian initiative is technically supporting all three. EDC is not part of these new adult-learning schemas.

3.3.3 Teacher training

There is also an initiative of TEMPUS and AEDP, in partnership with five Albanian universities, to work on citizenship education in pre-service teacher training. A TEMPUS project on Institution Building has brought the University of Tirana into partnership with the Tirana Prefecture and the Tirana Municipality

The University of Elbasan has been training teachers of Civics for two years now. There are 60 students attending courses in the expectation of graduating in Civics. This is the first group of trained civic teachers, expected to graduate two years from now.

There is cooperation with the University of Washington, USA and the Ministry of Education, to set up Civics resource centers in 5 universities in Albania. The cooperation is expected to start this autumn⁹. It aims at establishing permanent democratic citizenship education resource centers in teacher training faculties

⁹ Agreement between Minister of Education of Albania and the US State Department representative on March 24, 01

3.4.1. Life-long Learning

Albanian young people are facing new challenges and are threatened by new social, educational and health risks. Albanian young people are suffering from the collapse of the older generation's values and from the lack of new role models and social positive norms. The traditional family, the school with obsolete methods and inefficient structures and the whole society seem not to be able any longer to respond to the needs of youth. Unemployed youth usually resort to illegal activities and criminal organizations. 18.9% of the capital's youth are unemployed. (July 2000), 30.000 the capital's youth are drug users, 82% of which use heroin. (VNICA, July 2000).

Youth are included in juvenile crimes, 0,9 young people have a criminal record in Tirana, 3 150 children have quitted school, 2 845 others are single parent children 355 are out in the streets begging. 7.8% of children are vulnerable. Many of them for sure are neither ready to become citizens, nor in the process of hoping to become.

The main concern of the government in the field of training youth for life has been the **development of vocational education**. It has grown to comprise 20% of secondary education as compared to 16% in 1994. Vocational education is either 3 year long, or 3+2 or 5. The first two schemas lead to labor market, whereas the third leads either to the labor market or to the graduate studies. The vocational education has grown with new training profiles like: hotel management, tourism, marketing, Kulturkontakt (Austria) and Swisskontakt are involved in curriculum revision.

EDC is an outspoken part of the state vocational school curricula. Subjects like, *"Knowledge on society"*, *"History"*, *"Geography"*, *"Philosophy"* aim, among other things, at citizenship training of the vocational education students. Most of them are of comparable size to the social studies curricula of the general secondary education. Though the official curriculum contains a considerable EDC component, in practice, both students and teachers look towards practical skills more than to social skills.

Economic education

The role of economics is widely accepted as an essential part of civic education by education experts in Albania. The economic curriculum aims at enabling students to understand the relationship between democratic government, freedom and market economy. The economics curriculum covers topics like: market economy and the role of government in the market economy, international trade, economic reasoning in civic education. The course on economy is taken in the 8th grade. Lots of NGO-projects support junior economic achievements. There is still much formalism to be overcome.

3.4.2. Research

There is no government money available in the country to research or analyze the policies in the field of EDC and MofD. Instead, different donors are taking different actions. Lately, UNESCO is planning to carry out some research in the field. The Ministry of Education is thinking about dividing funds for research, in which the case, EDC might be a part of it. Educators and actors are more on the "Let's do things" style than into searching out the most effective and reasonable ways of doing things. Albanian education is more

determined to follow models presented by other countries' experience as compared to the reforms based on the Albanian soil and grounds. A third component of pushing research out of the focus is the fragmented desire of different donors. They tend to realize their own whims and philosophies, sometimes for a short time, more than entering into research business of doing things.

3.4.3. International Co-operation

Albanian policy is active in the region. Albania is part of the Stability Pact. Under this schema, it is absorbing support for EDC from various partners like CoE, UNESCO, etc. There are several regional initiatives that Albania is part of.

3.4.4. Information and Communication Technologies

A schema of equipping all secondary schools with proper means to use ICT is on the way. There is no initiative for elementary education. An Internet access policy has gained a fragile bastion. Albanian Telecommunication Company is looking to donating free access to universities and secondary schools for Internet service. Communication technology is a separate subject being taught in secondary education. There is no consistent policy of including EDC into the aims of using ICT at schools, except for the initiative of DADALOS, an NGO that is starting to train EDC teachers to use ICT. They have prepared materials in CD-ROM in the Albanian language and giving it to teachers.

3.4.5. Quality Assurance

There is more to be done in the direction of quality assurance.

3.4.6. Finance

The total national education budget for all education levels combines a local and national budget. Education expenses are covered totally by parents. It is not clear the part of the budget that is spent for EDC and management of diversity school activities.

4.1. General Consideration

The stocktaking research on Education for democratic citizenship in Albania examines a wide spectrum of the actions taken and changes happening in the country in the field of building democratic capabilities. The gap between the need for knowledge and skills in practicing democracy and the present public education system level opportunity is evident. This research helps to make evident where the gap is, in the hope of future narrowing action. The aim of the stocktaking research in the country is to:

- Examine the legal provisions to consider the degree to which they allow for democratic education,
- Examine the school textbooks and supplementary materials, the state requirements and standards in social sciences and civics as special subjects,
- Consider the written standards of teacher training,
- Scan the developments in education for democratic citizenship (EDC) both in policy and implementation level.

4.2. Chosen approach to data gathering

There is no fundamental study in the country to present the level of knowledge, beliefs and enthusiasm of young people as related to democracy. There is no study to tell whether people are able to decide for themselves what will ensure or endanger their freedom, what the democratic vulnerabilities are, to what degree people accept political and social responsibility. Under these circumstances, research has taken guidance from a number of official documents. The basic concepts of education for democratic citizenship and management of diversity are borrowed from the draft Common Guidelines for Education for Democratic Citizenship adopted by the Council of Ministers of Education, Cracow 2000, as well as from the Draft Klagenfurt Memorandum: Managing Diversity, Klagenfurt 1999.

Under these conditions as well as in accordance with the aim, the following specific activities were designed:

- Study of the Albanian constitution,
- Study of the Albanian Law on Pre-university Education System,
- Study of Normative Disposition for Public Education,
- Research on the continuous normative acts and orders of the Ministry of Education and Science of Albania,
- Review of the UN conventions and declarations available in Albanian in simplified versions (Convention on the right of Children, Convention on the child labor, etc.)
- Research on the Official Newsletters (1998,1999,2000,2001),
- Research on the publication and research activity of the Pedagogical Research Institute (standards, teaching programs of social studies, EDC projects, training programs, etc.),

- Research on the projects and publications of Albanian Education Development Program of Soros Open Society Foundation, UNICEF, Albanian Center of Human Rights, Helsinki Committee, World Bank, UNDP, etc.),
- Research on the Civics teacher library,
- Research on the EDC initiatives of the University of Tirana, University of Elbasan, University of Shkodra,
- Roundtable meeting on EDC in Albania of the Ministry of Education and Science of Albania (March 23, 2001),
- Meetings with decision-makers, project actors, teachers, headmasters, students and parents.

This is a picture of the efforts to develop education for democratic citizenship in Albania.

4.3. Findings

In order to learn about the concerns of teachers related to citizenship education, teachers from Tirana, Elbasan and Shkodra were met respectively in March 21, 01, March 24, 01, and March 30, 01. Here is what was noticed in the discussions:

- Intellectually active methods of receiving of knowledge, in contrast to passive reception of it, appears to be associated with levels of achievement. Where teachers are conscious of the multi-faceted objective of citizenship education, they are careful in picking up the working interactive methods. But most of them get easily unmotivated to put extra work into citizenship education.
- The general status of school and teacher, the weak links with the wider community, the misuse of media, the balkanized culture of school in the broad sense are some of the causes teachers mention as factors of demotivation.
- Teachers feel that “they know what to teach, but they do not know how and why” What is lacking is the application of concepts and related information to various types of tasks such as discussions, involvement decision making, problem solving, etc.
- Schools lack initiative in incorporating democratic practices into daily life.
- Stability Pact projects are not seen as objective targeted projects on peace, stability and democracy. Teaching and learning history, which is one of the Stability Pact projects for Albania, is not understood as a means of educating citizens for a peaceful and diverse region.
- The empowerment of laws and normative dispositions, Civics Standards and Objectives is still problematic. There are not yet mechanisms and systems of enforcing the requirements deriving from the law and Normative Dispositions. On the other hand, there is a lack of any mechanism to evaluate the impact of the projects in the system. Lacking also is a mechanism for incorporating successful pilot projects into the system.

In order for the school to meet expectations in the fight against poverty as well as in the effort to develop democratic processes in the country and region, Albanian teachers need training on the school bases supported by school autonomy; regional resource centers need to be set up to provide need assessment and address issues of civic concern.

There is still a lack of understanding of what is a good Civics trainer, a good Civics teacher. In response to this need, there is a publication of the “**Standards of Certification of the Critical Thinking trainer**”. (AEDP, Critical Thinking for Reading and Writing Project) This is just a bud to be followed by further understanding and action.

Material production for teachers and students needs refreshment and republication.

The EDC process will be difficult to achieve without cross- and extracurricular activities. There should be a nationwide step taken towards recognizing the importance of extracurricular and cross-curricular activities in promoting citizenship education.

More research on civics teaching and learning is needed, especially research focused on teachers’ efforts to develop social understanding and civic efficacy in their students. Improvement of learning chances and resources for students is needed, alongside research

into how to use effectively what is already there.

Partnership with different NGOs is the working style of Ministry of Education. The Soros foundation is active. It has actually worked in 243 schools in 13 districts in the country. Human Rights education center is active, many others too. There is a center of cooperation with NGOs in the Ministry of Education and Sciences.

Though what has formally been done in the country so far is remarkable, daily school life is far from digesting it. Teachers are trapped into the old ways of teaching. the result of this is students' reluctance to use knowledge to solve problems. Teachers are encouraged to use active methods, to stir students to raise questions and conduct inquiries, surveys, independent study. The school environment and culture, the school discipline and structures, the opportunities it provides for each student to express personal views on what is happening around, have a direct impact on education for democracy. Though it hurts to admit it, it is too far from being in line with the messages students get in Civics. What is being taught in Civics is, in a way, conditioned by the degree of freedom that students enjoy in school. There is still a long way to go ahead.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The newly introduced Civics curriculum is in line with the philosophy of the present situation and the challenges of the future. Education for citizenship education has gained a fragile foothold in the development policy of education in Albania. Education partners are negotiating ways of engaging schools in democratic citizenship. This recognition comes on the heels of these ten years of grassroots initiatives as well as systemic changes from the top down. These two streams have recently coalesced into a true desire to educate for democracy.

But now, democratic citizenship education seems to be at a crossroads. Having captured the attention of the wider public concerning the importance of EDC, the educators must begin the difficult task of moving from piloting projects into a systemic wholesome, comprehensive action of placing EDC as school priority. They face the burden of releasing themselves from the rhetoric of democracy and human rights and jumping into the business of empowering young people to become responsible citizens. They need to move away from rhetoric to focus attention on the reality of the skill levels of the young people. They need to become experts of the myriad ways in which school can train future citizens. There is an emergent need to stop talking loudly about democracy, diversity and human rights and get down to the private sphere of children's behavior to address the many interrelated issues that keep democracy strangled in the region.

The public/ private education for democratic citizenship

As it seems at first glance, there has been a lot of public action taken towards democratic education and management of diversity. There is a quite inclusive set of laws in education, there has been a series of administrative actions taken to implement law, there is a set of quite advanced standards being worked upon, there is a modern curriculum available for each Albanian student. There is a lot of attention from the international organizations to the development of democratic skills. Yet, things are very far from being OK.

It is evident that both international support and local action are missing an important point: that of individual action, of strategies of empowering individuals. We are reporters of what action is taken by government in the country to ensure that citizens are provided with the opportunities of developing democratic skills. But we have failed to be reporters of what is happening to particular souls, of the underlying causes and consequences of violating democracy at school and society and region, sometimes in a very flagrant way.

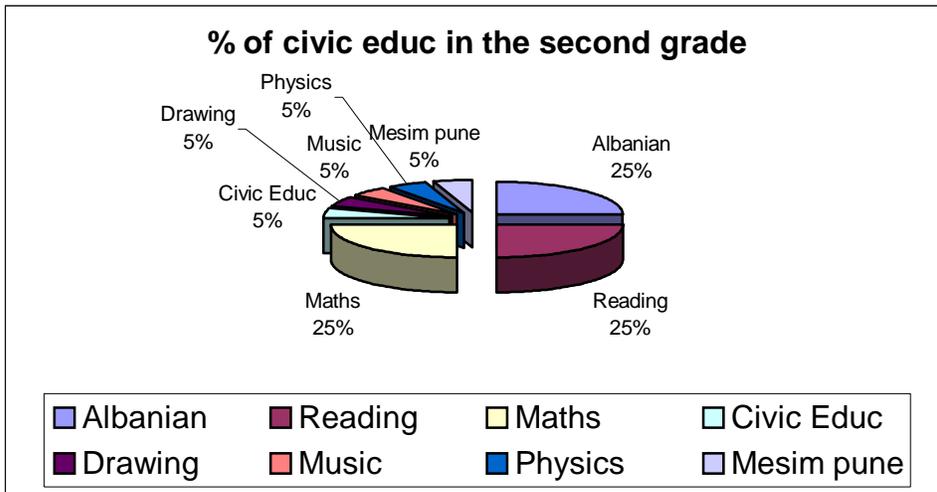
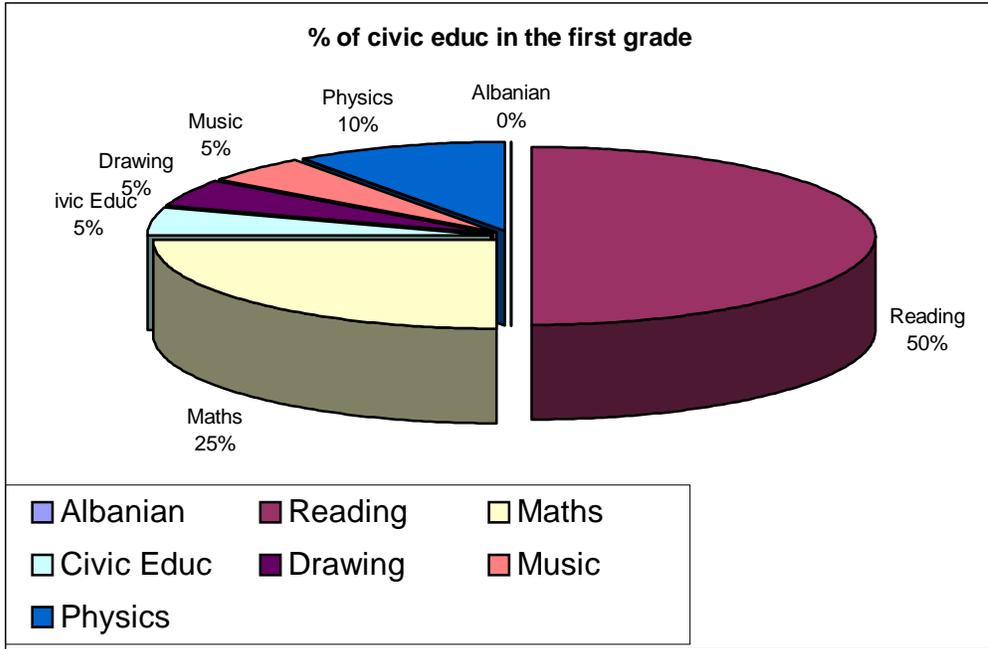
Certainly, the stocktaking exercise is believed to be of paramount importance. These country reports are going to be instrumental in lending credibility and substance to future action in the field of EDC in the countries of the region. But I also do believe that research and action has to go down to the individual and into "what's happening in the world of little souls". Such a probable future undertaking might have its own opportunities and risks. It might offer extensive chances in researching and designing and implementing interventions to change behavior and social norms. But it might have the potential risk of taking the skill

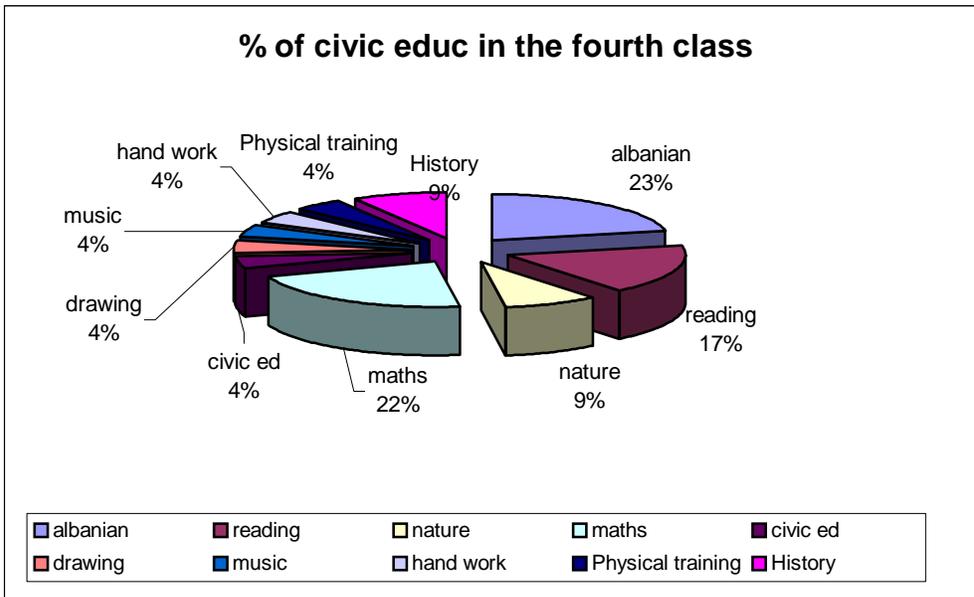
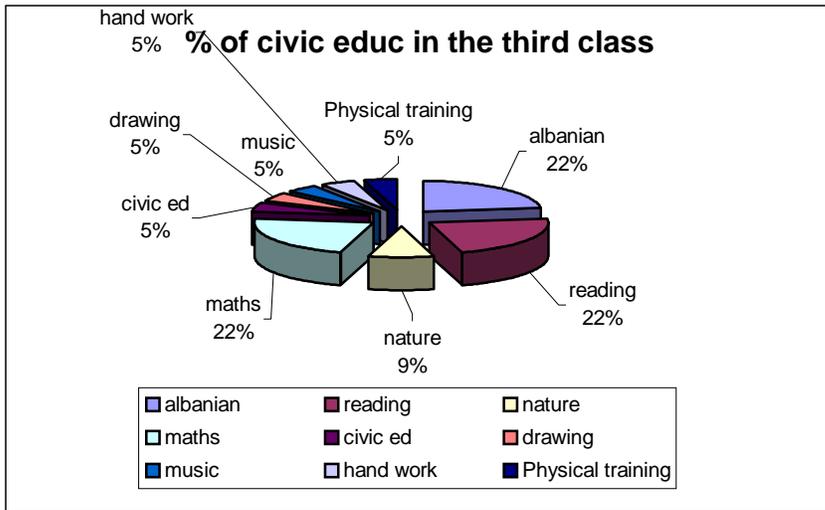
per se and not integrating it into the personality.

Another issue that came to be noticed in the second phase of the research, mainly during the contacts with the teachers and students, is the status of the socially excluded children, who are totally or partially denied rights. Social exclusion is present. Most of the time it is let to go by unnoticed, undocumented and therefore untreated.

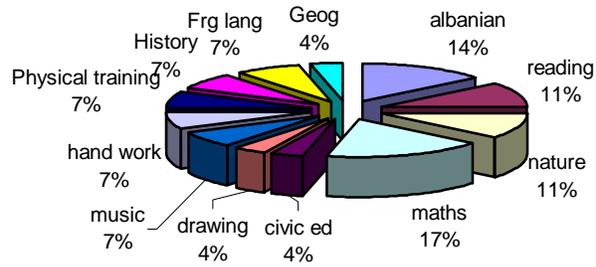
(Vulnerability Needs and Institutional Capacity Assessment - World Bank Report, 2001). One day they are going to be citizens, but their knowledge and skill level to exert their own will to make world a better place will be compromised from today's force of action.

Nevertheless, I have to express my gratitude for being part of the stocktaking research team. Democracy is looming in the region. Let education grab the momentum. Every effort is worth making.

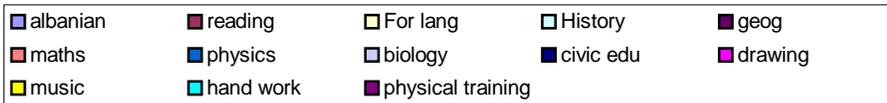
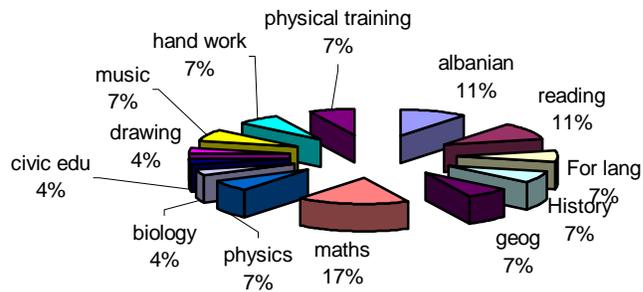




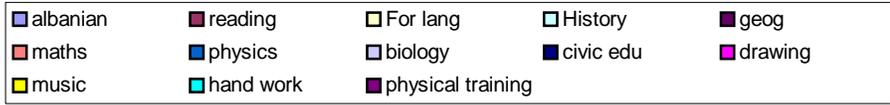
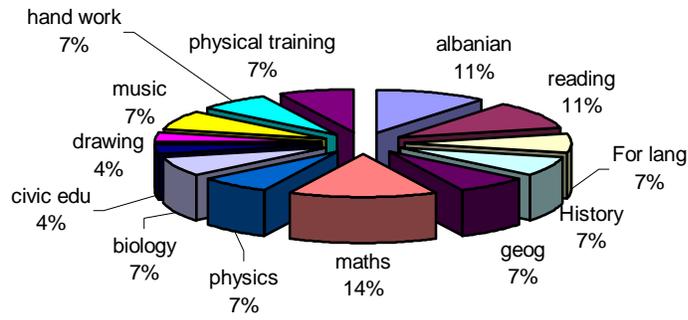
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