



Forming Responsible Citizens Presentation of Morocco Diagnostic study.

Presentation of Morocco diagnostic study, Forming Responsible Citizens Project.

Main objectives of the project

“**Forming Responsible Citizens**” is an ambitious project aiming to achieve the following main objectives:

- ✓ To establish schools as a key vehicle to disseminate citizenship and gender equality values through the implementation of a more effective and up-to-date citizenship education curriculum
- ✓ To reduce, then prevent children and children and juvenile violence, especially against girls and women
- ✓ To encourage policy makers and legislators to invest more effort in gender equality and prevention of violence through the anchoring of sound values of equality in our education system

Background and research methods

Despite the efforts of educators and the Ministry of Education, and the documents and publications produced in relation to the implementation of citizenship education within classroom settings, forms of antisocial behavior such as violence, drug-taking and vandalism still prevail across educational institutions and, thus, hamper the country's genuine societal shift to full democracy, responsibility, tolerance and acceptance of difference. This diagnostic study investigates educators', students' and parents' perception of citizenship education and the extent to which students and parents are engaged in school issues and governance. The study also explores how educators and school administrators deal with non-civic behavior such as violence, and gender inequality issues. It analyses a number of national institutional documents (including actual textbooks used in class for different age groups and school levels) as well as

international research papers; with a particular focus on aspects of education. Triangulation has been adopted as a research method, and data collected from focus groups and interviews has undergone rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Main Research questions

- How do educators, students and parents perceive citizenship education?
- What changes in civic knowledge and skills occur after the implementation of citizenship education activities? (teaching process Vs learning outcomes)
- To what extent are students engaged in community issues?
- To what extent do parents participate in school governance?
- How do educators and administrators deal with non-civic behavior such as violence and gender inequality issues?

Key findings

The key findings have drawn upon analysis of Ministry of Education documents and focus group discussions as well as on interviews with university students.

With reference to the reading and analysis of MOE documents and textbooks, it is worth noting from the outset that the ambition and drive to promote citizenship education and forge responsible citizens is so strong that almost every single detail of what to teach, when to teach it, and how to teach it has been considered in the main ministerial documents.

From the focus group discussions and interviews, respondents have indicated that “The contents of the textbooks are disconnected from political and social realities and overlook the gap between democratic principles and practices mentioned in school curricula” (Faour, P. 10). They have also revealed that a wide gap still exists between the stated goals of the MOE programs and their actual implementation and activation

inside and outside classroom situations. Furthermore, the issue of children and juvenile violence against girls is well known among educators and school stakeholders, but it is not dealt with in a sufficiently appropriate way so as to reduce and prevent it.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As the issue proved to be multidimensional in terms of scope and the actors involved, a number of conclusions with recommendations have been made to enlist educational authorities to promote equal citizenship education and, thus, foster interactive approaches and effective methods in both teacher training and student education in order to prevent juvenile violence against girls.

Conclusion 1: It is worthy of note that given the extent of legislative initiatives undertaken by the government to establish civic behavior and reduce children and juvenile violence, especially against women, good results should be expected. However, far from being eradicated, the phenomena of violence and gender inequality seem to be increasing and taking on new forms. The cause of this problem may be that the time load scheduled for the subject matter of citizenship education (including children's rights) at the level of middle school is not sufficient. It may also be that the method of teaching it is not participative enough and not sufficiently based on the everyday interests and concerns of Moroccan youth. There is no explicit statement of how to address the issue of citizenship education in particular in terms of approach, design, implementation and learning outcomes.

Recommendation 1.1: The MOE should devote and schedule more time to citizenship education activities in order to promote human rights and democratic values and to reduce juvenile violence.

Recommendation 1.2: The nature of the subject matter of citizenship education differs in many aspects from other school subjects in that it is more an attitude and set of

behaviors rather than an accumulation of knowledge fragments to be pencil-and-paper assessed and graded in exams. In order to provide an approach which is less based on theory and texts and more on young people's everyday challenges, more teacher training workshops should be conducted. Teachers and school administrators should be trained on how to deal with citizenship education through effective and reliable assessment using educational community work projects.

Conclusion 2: The school seems to be cut off from the outside world, for though it is constitutionally assumed that students have the right to leave schools for the sake of paying visits to different institutions, or to conduct field research and project work, the majority of respondents claimed that such strategies were in practice not part of actual school life.

Recommendation 2: There should be more room and active involvement to bridge the gap between the classroom and the community fostered by the MOE's genuine efforts to change the rules of school management. Parents and community members in democratic societies are part and parcel of school management boards to ensure good governance; therefore, Moroccan schools and their immediate environment should be more constantly and actively connected.

Conclusion 3: From the focus group discussions and interviews with university students, it has been revealed that there is no clear, explicit definition for either educators or students as to what citizenship education is, nor do these actors have reliable points of reference for managing the subject and acting upon the context.

Recommendation 3: More effort should be made to demystify the concept of citizenship education for teachers, students and parents alike.

Conclusion 4: The texts largely offer a rigorous framework, in that, aware of the dangers of violence, the legislator has set up drastic measures to tackle it; yet the scope still remains at the stage of courthouse judgments/sentences and executive procedures. Citizenship education focuses more on school-based activities and does not trickle down to the community and parents. On the subject of children's education, school and teachers are left alone. Extra-curricular activities including community service and authentic project work are too limited.

Recommendation 4.1: Teaching methodology and programs should be reconsidered with teachers and CSO staff getting more effective pre-service and in-service training and assistance in order to build up a genuinely holistic approach to civic education both during and after school hours and within and outside the school.

Recommendation 4.2: As school violence is not the concern of the school alone, but also the task of all layers of society, each with a proportional degree of responsibility, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) should be set up to conduct citizenship activities in terms of planning, implementation and assessment.

Intervention

Now that the diagnostic study has been accomplished to the satisfaction of the project's initial recommendations, the forthcoming moves should accordingly be performed:

- The target schools should be spread throughout the Moroccan territory covering both urban and rural areas.
- Teachers should be targeted during their pre-service training, as should teachers already in practice, through in-service training.
- The administration, too, has to be involved, starting from Ministry of Education level, and from teacher training institutions through to school administrations.
- Follow-up and evaluation spheres are to be involved in order to guarantee the effective, professional and long-term survival of the project, through the ministry inspectorate, teacher training evaluation boards, textbook design committees; to evaluate and update specifications, and exam boards in order to assess and evaluate students' learning outcomes.