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Can citizenship education inspire

youth participation in democratic life?

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Contents

1. Introduction

Citizenship education is frequently proposed as a vehicle to promote young people's participation in political and civic life. This paper examines this claim by first exploring the two concepts of youth participation (particularly youth political participation) and citizenship education and our understanding of citizenship education as a practice with the potential to increase young people's political participation. It then reviews the existing evidence base for the impact of citizenship education on youth participation through a number of case studies, examining the complexity of the relationship between the two concepts, and providing recommendations on how citizenship education and other factors can contribute to higher youth engagement.

Youth participation and citizenship education – key concepts

Youth participation can be defined as "young people having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities, so as to contribute to building a better society" (Council of Europe 2015: 11). A distinction can be made between civic and political participation. Political participation refers to activities which are voluntarily undertaken by people as citizens, and which deal with government, politics or the state (Van Deth 2014). Civic participation refers to working to make a difference in the life of one's community and can include things such as political activism, environmentalism, and community and national service (Hoekema and Erlich 2000). According to the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership's study "Meaningful youth political participation", "political participation is any activity that shapes, affects, or involves the political sphere". Yet, this broad understanding of the concept also indicates that the definitions of youth participation are still contested and evolving (Barta et al. 2021).

Within research on youth participation there is a general consensus that young people's engagement in formal democratic processes such as voting, membership of political parties, and engagement with institutions is lower than among previous generations and that this represents a significant issue for our democracies (Dezelan and Moxon 2021). However, rather than being politically apathetic, young people show a preference for alternative

forms of participation (Barta et al. 2021, Cammaerts et al. 2014, Crowley and Moxon 2017). This phenomenon is increasingly understood to relate to lack of trust in political institutions and formal politics (Foa et al. 2020), and the belief amongst young people that formal politics does not represent young people's interests (Moxon and Pantea 2021). To address this issue in our democracies, many stakeholders highlight a need to increase and improve the citizenship education that young people receive (Campbell 2019). This has been supported by research studies on youth participation in democratic systems, which have concluded that there is a need to invest in citizenship education as a way to stimulate young people's formal political participation (e.g. Putnam 1994, Pontes et al. 2019).

"Citizenship education" currently refers to a wide diversity of practices and definitions. According to Hoskins (2020), language and terminology is inconsistent; citizenship education can be connected to concepts of education for democratic citizenship, national citizenship education, European citizenship education, human rights education, education for global citizenship, critical/active citizenship, and many other areas. Connected to this is also an issue of existence of a range of different concepts of what citizenship is and who citizens should be. These often relate to complexities of promoting national citizenship compared to European or global citizenship (Yurttagüler n.d., Hoskin 2018). The term citizenship education is more heavily associated with formal education than non-formal education, though this may reflect the fact that (formal) education is a larger field and more heavily researched than non-formal education. Within this paper the term citizenship education is used as a broad umbrella term, referring in general to practice that directly identifies itself with citizenship education – including both formal and non-formal educational approaches.

According to the Council of Europe's (CMRec (2010)7) concept of "education for democratic citizenship", the aim of citizenship education practices is to equip learners with the competences to "exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society" and to "play an active part in democratic life". However, it cannot be said that all implementations of citizenship education share this goal exactly; the way the aim of citizenship education is defined varies across different policies and practices. As Hoskins (2020) notes, a continuing issue within the study of citizenship education is uncertainty whether these varying terminologies refer to fundamentally different concepts, or if they are simply a result of sector and organisational branding.

Identifying which parts of youth work and the non-formal education sector fall under the banner of citizenship education is particularly challenging. Compared to formal education, there is considerable variation in non-formal education and youth work projects, which do not follow standardised national curricula. However, citizenship of young people and political participation is a central concern of youth work (Ohana 2020), though understandings of it are shaped by context, culture and historical influences (Yurttagüler and Martinez 2020). Ohana (2020) argues there is simply too little empirical evidence to map key approaches to youth work's contribution to young people's citizenship. Another factor is that non-formal education and youth work projects do not usually follow a standardised evaluation. Furthermore, many youth projects designed to support youth participation or citizenship are not exclusively, or in some cases even primarily, educational in purpose. For example, youth councils focus mainly on political representation of young people. Although the theme may be related to citizenship, non-formal education and youth work projects tend to focus their efforts more on the experience and process itself than on the development of competences. Thus, there are youth sector projects which make a contribution to citizenship and youth participation, but are not citizenship *education* in the strictest sense, as they do not have educational goals.

Theories of influence

According to Weinberg and Flinders (2018), the "pedagogic link" between citizenship education and youth participation, especially if it focuses on democratic engagement, continues to be underdeveloped both theoretically and empirically. Although citizenship education may influence young people's feelings about civic and political participation (Finlay et al. 2010) or have a positive impact in terms of their social capital (Pontes et al. 2017), it does not necessarily seem to persuade young people to participate.

Increasing young people's involvement in political participation is not necessarily the fundamental aim of citizenship education, it is instead focused on the development of competences to enable active and responsible citizenship. Quality education should "prepare children and young people for democratic citizenship" (Council of Europe CM/Rec(2012)13) and equipping young people with democratic and civic competences is part of their right to education. Education has its own intrinsic value to democratic societies even if it does not lead to changes in political participation. So, from an educational perspective, almost any theory of learning could provide insight into understanding how people might *learn* democratic competences.

However, if citizenship education should address youth disengagement, the extent to which it can be *instrumentalised* as a tool to increase young people's political and civic engagement is an important consideration.

This is particularly the case for areas of youth policy which seek to understand and address young people's political behaviour.

Several theories can offer an insight into how citizenship education may lead to a change in young people's political participation and behaviour:

1. **Theories of political socialisation** as outlined by Neundorf and Smetz (2017) are most commonly used by political scientists to conceptualise citizenship education in formal education settings. Political socialisation can be understood as the process through which children and young people "learn directly or indirectly about social and political issues from various socializing agents". Such agencies can be diverse: family, peers, school, mass media, and even the political context. Learning is said to

be lifelong, but childhood and adolescence are very important formative years. Theories of political socialisation therefore argue that citizenship education's place is to teach young people about social and political issues in order to inform their political habits.

2. **Childhood studies research,** and the so-called new sociology of childhood, is most commonly used by those working to support child rights agendas and is strongly associated with the children's rights movement. This theoretical perspective is rooted in a rights-based approach to citizenship, rejecting the idea that children and young people are citizens in the making (Qvortrup 1994). Instead, scholars argue that children and young people should be seen as citizens whose political competency is limited primarily by the environments and relationships they have with others, rather than their own inherent lack of knowledge or ability (Hutchby and Moran-Ellis 2005). They argue that politics extends into childhood and is not exclusively an adult phenomenon (Kalio and Hakli 2011). In this perspective, children and young people are not blank slates needing to learn about citizenship as they become adults. Instead, they are citizens from birth – they are shaped by their own relational and lived experiences, which frequently include age-based denial of voice and agency (Esser et al. 2016). Thus, promoting children and young people's participation is not only about training and support, but about changing the environment and relationships (Larkins 2014).

3. **Critical democratic pedagogies** informed by theorists such as John Dewey and Paulo Frere have been popular in **youth work**. Ohana (2020: 124) identifies two distinct approaches based on experiential learning and democratic group work practices. First, the civic youth work approach "invites and supports young people's civic and political development, as well as community and societal change". Second, the classical youth work approach "supports personal and social development" but is inherently less political. Both approaches place an emphasis on learning by doing and activities which actively involve young people in participation.

Each theoretical approach can be used to inform the design and implementation of programmes and policies to foster young people's participation. They imply different

understandings of how young people's political behaviour is influenced, and therefore they propose different methods of project and programme design. Political socialisation maintains an emphasis on an individual's learning. It is oriented towards a range of educational methods which focus primarily on the individual's development. By contrast, childhood studies suggest a need for programme methods which build enabling environments and relationships around individuals, to enable their participation. Finally, critical democratic pedagogy emphasises active involvement and "learning by doing" within programme and project design.

However, there is no substantive work which fully compares the three theoretical approaches and their methodological implications. Their use to inform different programmes and policies to support youth participation is influenced by their association with different sectors and organisations and their underlying values and ideologies, rather than by a comparison of their effectiveness.

Summary

Increasing young people's involvement in formal political processes and building their trust in democratic institutions is a pressing concern for youth policy. Citizenship education is often identified as one possibility for achieving this goal. However, after considering these theoretical approaches there is a need to identify more clearly how citizenship education can influence young people's participation. Yet, there are several issues with attempting to draw a direct link between the citizenship education and the practice of participation. First, there is no common definition of citizenship education and its forms. Second, there are numerous theories regarding how citizenship education leads to changes in young people's political behaviour. The "pedagogic link" between citizenship education and participation is, for the most part, undeveloped.

2. Initiatives by European institutions

The Council of Europe and the European Union are leading initiatives to develop the quality of citizenship education across Europe. Both are focused on providing support to their respective member states to realise citizenship education at national level. The Council of Europe's work is underpinned by its Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (CM/Rec(2010)7). The European Union's work is underpinned by the European Strategic Framework in Education and Training (EU 2019) and the Paris Declaration (2015). Under these frameworks, both the Council of Europe and the European Union have developed conceptualisations of citizenship education to support their respective member states, and have undertaken various mapping, training and capacity building activities.

European support for the national level

The Council of Europe promotes education for democratic citizenship in its member states through the Reference framework of Democratic Competences (RFCDC) (Council of Europe 2018). The RFCDC is divided into 20 competences and related indicators. Each competence focuses on values, attitudes, skills or areas of knowledge required for an individual to take part in democratic culture and intercultural dialogue. A democratic competence is defined as "the ability to mobilise and deploy relevant psychological resources … in order to respond appropriately and effectively to the demands, challenges and opportunities presented by democratic situations" (Council of Europe n.d.).

Within the European Union, Eurydice (De Coster et al. 2017) provides a similar, though less detailed, framework for its own member states, based upon four areas:

- Area 1: Interacting effectively and constructively with others, including personal development (self-confidence, personal responsibility and empathy); communicating and listening; and co-operating with others;

- Area 2: Thinking critically, including reasoning and analysis, media literacy, knowledge and discovery, and use of sources;

- Area 3: Acting in a socially responsible manner, including respect for the principle of justice and human rights; respect for other human beings, for other cultures and other religions; developing a sense of belonging; and understanding issues relating to the environment and sustainability;

- Area 4: Acting democratically, including respect for democratic principles; knowledge and understanding of political processes, institutions, and organisations; and knowledge and understanding of fundamental social and political concepts.

The Paris Declaration (2015) also defines common education objectives for EU member states and encourages them to ensure the sharing of ideas and good practices with the following objectives:

- ensuring that children and young people acquire social, civic and intercultural competences by promoting democratic values and fundamental rights, social inclusion and non-discrimination, as well as active citizenship;

- enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the internet and social media, so as to develop resistance to all forms of discrimination and indoctrination;

- fostering the education of disadvantaged children and young people by ensuring that our education and training systems address their needs; and promoting intercultural dialogue through all forms of learning in co-operation with other relevant policies and stakeholders.

In addition, the European institutions published several studies mapping the national implementation of citizenship education (De Coster et al. 2017), democratic and human rights education (Council of Europe 2017) and non-formal education and learning practices to support youth participation (Yurttagüler and Martinez 2020) across Europe. These show that national practices within formal education place emphasis on the development of competences whereas non-formal education and youth work emphasise learning, an enabling environment, and direct involvement in decision making (Yurttagüler and Martinez 2020). These mapping studies identify that there is a growing political emphasis at national level on citizenship education and related practices. However, they also confirm Hoskins' (2020) concerns about the wide variation in terms of its delivery and implementation.

The Council of Europe's report on the state of citizenship and human rights education in Europe (2017) identifies increasing inconsistencies between national citizenship education policies and their implementation at the national level. These inconsistencies were reported by 66% of respondents to a survey of Council of Europe member states in 2016, compared

with 20% in 2012. In the same survey, over 80% of respondents felt that greater awareness of the relevance of citizenship and human rights education for addressing the current challenges in our societies was needed for such education to receive a greater priority in their countries. Similarly, within the European Union, there are significant differences between the way citizenship education in schools is implemented across different EU member states with national curricula being broad in scope (De Coster et al. 2017). There are substantial variations including whether citizenship education is taught as a dedicated subject or embedded within other subjects, and the number of years and hours it is taught. In some countries, pupils receive as little as seven hours in total of citizenship education across all of their compulsory education systems (De Coster et al. 2017).

National policy evaluations of citizenship education are also limited. Two thirds of the Council of Europe member states have developed no criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes in the area of education for democratic citizenship and human rights, and only half have evaluation strategies and policies in place (Council of Europe 2017). Within the European Union, many countries do have criteria and strategies for evaluating citizenship education (De Coster et al. 2017). These policy-based evaluations, however, do not necessarily focus on the impact on young people's political behaviour.

Summary

Both the Council of Europe and EU educational frameworks focus on learning about democracy and developing the skills and attitudes needed to engage in democratic systems. The frameworks are conceived with a general emphasis on equipping young people with the competences they need to engage with the pluralist democratic world around them. They are broad in scope and place emphasis on intercultural dialogue and interacting with other citizens, and focus on understanding and tolerance of diversities of opinions, dialogue, critical understanding and commitment and ability to resolve points of difference through democratic process. In the RFCDC there is a strong focus on relating these ideas to support for human rights.

Considering the limitation of these frameworks for promoting youth participation, it can be said that they are not designed to overtly persuade young people to engage in political processes. Instead, they attempt to equip young people with the competences necessary to

engage with political processes, should they choose to do so. Whilst the frameworks emphasise the value of democracy and human rights, their content does not strongly promote support for specific political bodies and processes. They do not seek to emphasise the value and achievements of the national states and parliaments of Europe (or the wider European project and institutions), nor instil learners' belief and support for these specific political institutions. Furthermore, the frameworks do not place strong emphasis on instilling a moral obligation or civic duty to be politically active. Whilst it is certainly encouraged, the frameworks do not contain strong messages emphasising (for example) a patriotic duty vote, a strong moral requirement to be an active citizen or, and the personal value and benefits of political participation. This can be contrasted with things such as electoral campaigns run by parliaments, central electoral commissions, and political parties, where messaging is much more explicit and persuasive, with a clear goal to persuade the citizen to engage. On the whole, the European frameworks are based on the principle that citizenship education should be about learning the principles of democracy, and the skills to interact within it, so that the learner has a free choice to engage with democratic process (or not). There are potentially strong ethical reasons for this approach; an important part of participation is being able to have the free choice not to participate. However, when considering the extent to which citizenship education can convince young people to engage in youth participation, the lack of strongly persuasive messaging within education frameworks is a limitation. The discourse of European citizenship education frameworks seems to be that young people should be informed that democracy is there, but that educational frameworks should not necessarily aim to convince them to participate.

3. Research evidence on the impact of citizenship education

This chapter provides an overview of peer reviewed empirical evidence of the impact of citizenship education published within the last 10 years,[1] supplemented by multinational studies published as grey literature. It includes peer reviewed literature or meta reviews as well as peer reviewed primary research. The overview indicates that strong empirical evidence on the impact of citizenship education on young people's behaviour remains in short supply (Campbell 2019, Donbavand and Hoskins 2021, Manning and Edwards 2014). Much of what is written about citizenship education (of all forms), is written as a call by political scientists, activists or others to use citizenship education to solve democratic problems of the lack of youth democratic engagement (Campbell 2019). Independent empirical evidence on the impact of youth work and non-formal education projects is exceptionally limited and almost non-existent in the field of citizenship and politics (Ohana 2020). It is beyond the scope of this paper to review examples of good practice, non-independent project evaluations, and sector consultations which are common within the youth sector grey literature, though this would no doubt be a useful exercise.

Limitations of the evidence

Besides a general lack of research, there are a number of issues within the available literature. First, there is a lack of a common definition and understanding of citizenship education, resulting in contrasting ideas of the concept. Second, the research often included a wide variety of different educational programmes (Pashby et al. 2020, Pais et al. 2020, Oxley and Morris 2013, Hoskins 2020). Manning and Edwards' (2014) systematic review of the research on the impact of citizenship education indicates that most studies do not explicitly state the exact nature of the programmes being studied. Third, there is variability and debate on how "citizenship" and the effects of citizenship programmes should or can be measured (Donbavand and Hoskins 2021, Keating et al. 2012), although the primary focus is often on measuring young people's competences rather than their actual later political behaviour (Manning and Edwards 2014). As a result, the extent to which research on the impact of citizenship education is comparing the same types of educational programmes and measuring their impact on youth political participation effectively is highly debatable.

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1. Based on a search of Academic Search complete and web of science databases, TI ("Citizenship Education") AND (Impact* OR outcome* OR effect*).

Overall, when considering the body of research, it cannot be taken for granted that all studies are focused on the same types of educational programme or demonstrate a direct link to youth political participation. This is particularly the case when considering the distinction between non-formal and formal education and learning. Studies rarely make a clear distinction between non-formal learning methods used in formal school settings and the work of non-formal education providers.

These issues in the research arise for several reasons:

- Citizenship is an evolving, situated and contested concept (Lister 2003); understanding of it will vary with time and place and therefore so will understandings and modes of citizenship education (Nicoll et al. 2013, Maitles 2001, Yurttagüler n.d., Hoskins 2020). This makes classification and measurement of citizenship education much more challenging than other areas of policy such as youth unemployment.

- A body of American literature in the late 1960s largely concluded that civic education had no impact on democracy, and it is argued that this dampened research in the areas for several decades (Campbell 2019).

- Impact research is complex and expensive, often beyond the budgets of educational research, and even more unobtainable for youth research. It is argued that there is a need for more rigorous evaluation methods, such as randomised control trials (Donbavand and Hoskins 2021). Consequently, much of the existing research does not consider practical realities of implementing educational programmes. Studies rarely explore the policy and operational challenges of implementing specific models of education or cost implementation.

The impact of citizenship education

Overall, there is a somewhat limited academic consensus on what, if anything, makes citizenship education effective and what difference it makes to young people's political participation. The evidence base does not conclusively demonstrate the impact of citizenship education on youth participation (Hernández and Galais 2021, Campbell 2019). On balance, there is some agreement that citizenship education leads to an increase in

political knowledge (Hoskins et al. 2017, Knowles et al. 2018, Neundorf et al. 2016, Persson 2015, Whitely 2014). Several studies have shown that some forms of citizenship education can have a positive effect on young people's likelihood of participation and political attitudes (Alivernini and Manganelli 2011, Blasko 2018, Keating and Janmaat 2016, Neundorf et al. 2016, Tonge 2012, Whiteley 2014). Yet, contrastingly, other studies have shown citizenship education has no effects, or even negative effects on attitudes towards political engagement and likelihood of participation (Garcia-Albacete 2013, Krzywosz-Rynkiewicz et al. 2017). Hernández and Galais' (2021) research even concludes that "those exposed to [citizenship education] are significantly less trustful and less satisfied with the way democracy works". A few studies (e.g., Hoskins et al. 2017) have attempted to identify whether citizenship education can overcome political inequalities, but these are few in number and results are mixed. The most significant pan-European study (Blasko et al. 2018: 3, 15), from the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) concludes that there is only a "moderate but non-negligible impact with respect to adolescents' attitudes and behavioural intentions related to civic life" and that "civic attitudes and behavioural intentions are to a large extent dependent on factors unrelated to [students] school experiences".

It is not necessarily clear that this moderate increased political knowledge and mixed evidence on its impact on attitudes to participation leads to longer term changes in young people's political behaviour (Donbavand and Hoskins 2021, Blasko et al. 2018). Two studies do identify longer-term behavioural impacts on youth participation linked to direct involvement in political or democratic activities within school. Keating and Janmaat (2016) identify that school-based political activities have a positive and independent effect on electoral and expressive political engagement among young people, as does the ICCS study (Blasko 2018).

The value of non-formal methods

Overall, the research literature indicates that non-formal methods of education and learning are valuable for young people's development and behaviour. However, as discussed above, research on citizenship education often does not explicitly state the exact nature or the format of the educational programme and it rarely considers the role of the wider

educational environment (Coopmans et al. 2020). Crucially it sometimes fails to distinguish between non-formal methods used in formal education settings, and non-formal methods delivered outside of school. Taking this into account, there is evidence that participatory, non-formal methods of education, as well as an open culture/environment for discussion, are more effective at creating impact (Alivernini and Manganelli 2011, Blasko et al. 2018, Geboers et al. 2013, Hoskins et al. 2012, Persson 2015, Weinberg 2021). Donbavand and Hoskins' (2021) review of randomised controlled trials supports this claim, identifying that participatory methods are more likely to lead to behavioural or attitudinal change than formal methods of education. The ICCS study (Blasko et al. 2018) identified open classroom environments (arguably close to non-formal methods), active involvement in democratic school processes and volunteering as the most important factors for later political activity. This support for non-formal approaches is not universal across the literature; for example, Geboers et al.'s (2013) review of empirical literature between 2003 and 2009 emphasises the value of both formal curriculums and open classroom environments. Dassonneville et al. (2012) argue that there is no reason to privilege specific forms of civic education, as each form relates to different relevant political attitudes and behaviours.

A critical issue is that when non-compulsory forms of citizenship education are implemented (such as youth work programmes or optional school subjects or school councils), evaluation of their impact may be strongly affected by participant selection bias (Qunintellier and Hooghe 2013). It is argued that non-compulsory programmes may be more likely to have impact on learners, because they attract people who are already more interested in youth participation. The RAY-MON (Böhler et al. 2021) study of Erasmus+: Youth programmes is one of the few studies focused clearly on non-formal education delivered outside of school (albeit within the delivery of the Erasmus+ programme). This research identifies that 37% of Erasmus+ participants are more active citizens as a result of their participation in an Erasmus+ activity. However, in the dimensions of citizenship studied, the lowest area of impact is on participants' active involvement in democratic or political life. Only 25% of participants report an increase following their involvement in Erasmus+. This finding does not take into account, or control for, selection bias. So, whilst the RAY-MON indicates that non-formal education projects may indeed have a positive impact on youth participation, the level of impact may be somewhat overstated by the figures.

Summary

One of the intentions of this research was to identify which forms of citizenship education lead to which forms of youth participation, in order to understand and address issues of youth disengagement in formal political processes. Given the research evidence available, it is not possible to identify clear linkages between the approaches and the results. Overall, the evidence that citizenship education, in its current form, is being successfully used to lead to substantial increases in youth political participation is not strong. This does not mean that citizenship education has no impact on youth political participation or is not capable of doing so. There are a number of factors contributing to the weak evidence base.

- There is a limited body of research on the impact and outcomes of citizenship education generally. This is especially the case for impact research on youth work and non-formal education settings.

- Existing studies have a variety of inconsistent definitions, measurements and concepts of citizenship and citizenship outcomes, making them difficult to compare.

- Existing studies include a wide variety of types of educational programme, without making a clear distinction between programme types or paying attention to their context. The theoretical perspective applied by the projects and programmes studied (see chapter 1) is typically not described.

- Those studies which do demonstrate a positive impact often indicate only moderate or small effects.

- There is an absence of studies which consider the operational challenges and costs of implementing different forms of education when assessing effectiveness and impact.

There is an indication that citizenship education does have some level of positive impact on young people. However, when the whole body of work is considered, it is difficult to discern the exact nature of that impact and contributing factors. A full systematic literature review, or meta-analysis, may provide a weighted comparison of the evidence and more detailed conclusions. However, from this limited overview of impact literature, it is clear that strong

conclusive evidence on how citizenship education can have an impact on youth democracy at a societal level is currently not available.

The most promising area of practice seems to be non-formal education methods. However, non-formal education is an exceptionally diverse area of practice and greater differentiation is needed on what is included within the study. Not all forms of non-formal education and learning contribute to young people's political involvement (Ohana 2020). Within the research, the distinction between non-formal methods applied in formal settings and non-formal methods delivered outside of formal education settings is often not made clear.

A significant gap in the literature fails to fully consider which systems of education may be most practical for implementation at national scale. Creating a population-wide social impact on young people's engagement in democracy requires an impact on a substantial number of young people. In some policy-making contexts it may simply be easier to deliver large-scale programmes through the formal schooling system compared to non-formal education providers. Formal school systems are highly organised, consistently structured and closely regulated by national policy. By comparison, non-formal education providers are often NGOs that vary in size, scope and purpose, and are not subject to the same degree of state control. Developing extra-curricular activities delivered by non-formal education providers requires significant investment, although it does offer the possibility to draw specialist expertise relating to youth participation which may not exist to the same extent in formal education.

4. Citizenship education as a first axis for participation

According to the previous sections, non-formal education and learning seems to be the most promising method of citizenship education to promote youth participation. For this reason, the research studied six cases to explore the link between the competences they aim to develop in young people and the forms of participation. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews with project leaders and the examples are categorised according to geographical distribution, range of sectors and frameworks, and modes of political participation.[2]

To achieve the above, this section is divided into three sub-sections. First, six practical examples are presented and described. Second, there is a discourse analysis of common points between the practical cases and interviewees. Finally, a summary of key discourses in policy and practice is presented.

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2. The case studies were selected based on geographical distribution, range of sectors and frameworks (policy/system/country level, international organisations, formal education and non-formal education), and modes of political participation (voting intention, registration for a political party, enquiries to the state, carrying out administrative procedures, supporting a social cause or creating new spaces).

Citizenship education in practice

Council of Europe electoral support	
Title	Supporting the transparency, inclusiveness, and integrity of electoral practice in Ukraine
Entity	Council of Europe office in Ukraine
Country	Ukraine
Webpage	https://bit.ly/3yJn7VA

Summary of the case study
The Council of Europe Office in Ukraine is working on the 2018-2021 Action Plan to improve the integrity, transparency and electoral process at both the national and local levels. This objective extends to the capacity of organising elections, transparency of political funding, the participation of minorities in the democratic process as well as keeping the electoral process in line with European standards and good practices. This action plan is focused on the fulfilment of Ukraine's statutory obligations as a member state of the Council of Europe and the defence of human rights and rule of law in the country.

How is it done?
The project was elaborated after consulting national authorities, civil society, academia and the Council of Europe office in Ukraine. Recommendations were also taken from other international reports and from experts in the electoral process. Minority groups' perspectives were taken into account when drafting the plan, which includes gender and diversity issues. The long-term objectives were established regarding political participation, corruption and electoral processes. The action plan also addresses first-time voters and law students, by educating them in electoral participation and processes as well as democratic institutions through pre-vote training sessions and summer schools. In this way, the Council of Europe in Ukraine hopes to develop active youth engagement in civic and democratic life.

How is it connected with participation?
This part of the project focuses on young people, and it is aimed towards teaching them how and what it means to participate not only in the electoral process but also in the political agenda. Young people are encouraged to vote after having learned to critically analyse political parties and campaigns. Moreover, the Council of Europe in Ukraine wants to safeguard women's and young people's right to participate in all levels of the democratic process.

National policy	
Title	National Youth Policy – Towards 2020
Entity	Agenzija Zghazagh
Country	Malta
Webpage	https://bit.ly/3kNHewo
Summary of the case study	
The National Youth Policy in Malta aims to foster respect and support towards young people. It wishes to help youth in achieving their own aspirations while giving them the skills to become active citizens that participate in their communities, so that young people can also build the practical concept of what citizenship education means.	
How is it done?	
The policy was implemented using two different strategies: youth work and services for young people, and cross-sectoral support for young people. The first approach focused on supporting the personal development of youth through initiatives and activities based on non-formal learning. The second approach encouraged co-operation and mutual support through programmes that develop young people's skills and competences. Two programmes were launched to support the implementation of this policy. The first one was "Ideatzionesty", consisting of a group of young people coming together, proposing ideas, and seeking to carry them forward in their community. The second is Democracy Awards, where youth workers went to schools to train the Student Councils on citizenship education and, at the same time, monitored if schools complied with a transparent democratic process and election inside these educational institutions.	
How is it connected with participation?	
The National Youth Policy is aimed towards creating an environment which respects young people and encourages them to participate in national and local policies. Youth were supported in voicing their ideas and focusing on what matters to them. In this regard, the philosophy of the policy is focused on citizenship education.	

Formal education settings using non-formal approaches	
Title	Schools for Democracy in Ukraine
Entity	The European Wergeland Centre
Country	Ukraine
Webpage	https://theewc.org/countries/ukraine/

Summary of the case study

Schools for Democracy in Ukraine aimed to support democratic reforms in school education by promoting democratic culture and democratic citizenship in policy and practice. This initiative had three pillars of action. The first is the education of citizens, through the promotion of co-operation between teachers, students, school administration and parents. The second one was work with teachers, so they know how to teach their subjects incorporating civic competences. The third one was co-operation with the community, so they know that they are part of a process, and that democratic culture does not happen by itself.

How is it done?

To achieve its goals, the School for Democracy has taken a "learning-by-doing" approach. In this way, the organisation looked to generate both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in civic and democratic competences, using the Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture as a reference. The project also based its concept of citizenship education on Democratic Governance and Management by setting an example at school as to how democracy works. This means that young people had the opportunity to learn to design their recommendations, present them, follow the entire decision process and make them come true. As an indicator to evaluate the project, each school was assessed on the development of the programme.

How is it connected with participation?

Schools for Democracy is a project that seeks to support young people in developing active citizenship competences. Through its activities, it encourages young people to participate in the decision making of their schools as well as co-operate with their community. Youth councils have been set up in order to develop initiatives and make a real impact through active participation. The programme teaches young people how to design, present, and follow the decision-making process of their initiatives.

Formal education settings using non-formal approaches	
Title	Politik Lernen in der Schule
Entity	Zentrum polis
Country	Austria
Webpage	www.politik-lernen.at/

Summary of the case study
The project is present in Austrian schools and aims to spread citizenship education throughout the country. Teachers are supported in bringing human rights and citizenship education into the classroom. Zentrum Polis also works as an information platform and develops new materials for the education system. It helps train teachers and organise student events while it plays a part in European and Austrian debates on the topic of citizenship education. The centre encourages skills-based learning to create political awareness in students and teaches them how to deal with political themes and current social issues.

How is it done?
Citizenship education in Austria has become especially important since the legal voting age was decreased to 16 years in 2007. This meant that the teachers needed to explain the voting procedures to young people and teach them about electoral processes. Textbooks and other materials on the subject were not readily available, which is where Zentrum Polis came in. The organisation has become a hotline for teachers adapting to this new situation and including citizenship education in their classes. To achieve its goals, the organisation is centred on creating and sharing materials, running training programmes, and collaborating with universities to share and access these materials. Among other ways and channels, the materials are distributed every year through the celebration of Austrian Citizenship Days between the end of April and 9 May.

How is it connected with participation?
Zentrum Polis is dedicated to ensuring the accessibility of materials on citizenship education in educational centres and among teachers, so that they can transfer citizenship education knowledge and competences to young people (learning what participating in the political agenda and in the current social issues is all about). Since the change in the voting age, this organisation is working to support teachers to approach and create educational activities where young people discover and understand the political arena before they start voting and to encourage them to participate in the creation of new initiatives.

Civil society organisations	
Title	Capital of Children
Entity	CoC Playful Minds
Country	Denmark
Webpage	https://bit.ly/3sgFX5g/

Summary of the case study

Capital of Children is focused on making the Municipality of Billund a space which respects and invests in children and young people. Children and young people are considered valuable members of society and are encouraged to participate in the community. The programme believes in learning through play, and it fosters the creativity that comes from playing. Through this approach, Capital of Children hopes to develop children's critical thinking, problem-solving, communicative and collaborative skills in order to prepare them for navigating the complexities of society.

How is it done?

Capital of Children collaborates with various organisations such as universities to research and evaluate the impact of the project and improve it further. The programme also seeks to create intercultural and intergenerational spaces so that all members of the community can learn from each other and share their unique perspectives. Capital of Children also views democracy as a creative space in which all citizens have a say in how they want to live and what future they see for their municipality. The programme has a special focus on children and young people which are generally overlooked as participants in political discussions. Capital of Children also works with parents, authorities and institutions to achieve its objectives. The programme had three main focuses: urban design of Billund, in which children are incentivised to participate and make decisions that directly affect their municipality, innovation and entrepreneurship, by inviting start-ups to develop new products and services together with children and young people; and creating a learning environment for the future, where children and young people are not only interested in their community, but also in what happens in the world.

How is it connected with participation?

The project centres on building up children's and young people's participation in the democratic spaces of the Municipality of Billund. Bringing together children and young people and the lawmakers of the community throughout the decision-making process is an important aspect of Capital of Children. Children and young people are being encouraged to voice their ideas, share their knowledge, design political proposals, and improve society through democratic participation. At the same time, external agents coming to Billund are invited to participate in this co-creative process with the children and young people.

Civil society organisations	
Title	GOOD initiative
Entity	Consortium of civil organisations
Country	Croatia
Webpage	http://goo.hr/good-inicijativa/

Summary of the case study

Since 2008, civil society organisations dealing with non-formal education and human rights have been gathered in an initiative that advocates the systematic and quality introduction of education for human rights and democratic citizenship in the educational system (GOOD Initiative). The need for active involvement of civil society organisations in this area stems from the current situation in which, despite clear indications of how civic education is needed in schools, the education policy of relevant institutions is not focused on its introduction.

How is it done?

The GOOD Initiative uses the term civic education as a generic term that combines all types of formal and non-formal education for human rights, peace, democracy and active citizenship. The three main pillars of the GOOD Initiative are education of teachers, advocacy on local governments and research on civic competences. Based on these three pillars, the aim is to create a conducive environment so that teachers can approach citizenship education, incorporate civic competences through curricula in extracurricular activities within formal education and, finally, generate empirical evidence to know what works.

How is it connected with participation?

This initiative prioritises a participatory approach. That is, it involves people from the beginning of the process to create ideas with which they want to improve their community, work on them, and invite expert groups to contrast them. In this way, young people are involved as critical citizens who think about their community, who are not afraid to raise their voices and who have the necessary citizenship tools and competences.

The complexity of citizenship education as a catalyst for youth participation

Following the interviews with project leaders, a discourse analysis was undertaken, classifying the information into six categories: the concept of citizenship education; the competences promoted by citizenship education; the link between citizenship education and participation; intercultural dialogue and political tolerance; advocacy and impact on public policies; national and European identity; and citizenship education in the digital world.

The concept of citizenship education

The concept of citizenship education implies three fundamental aspects: being an active citizen in one's community, knowing one's rights and exercising these rights in both social and political life.

> "From a project's perspective, our conception of citizenship education means to provide knowledge related to participating in elections, electoral processes, democracy and democratic institutions. And if we achieved this, we can also contribute to develop an active engagement in civic and democratic life of young citizens."

This concept should be treated as a process in which young people not only receive knowledge, but also produce and maintain it for life. Its success depends on individuals acquiring democratic skills, beliefs and habits both in and out of school so that they can contribute to improving the community in which they live.

> "We understand that citizenship education not only implies knowing, identifying, or working on the competences of the future, but also deepening who you are, what values matter to you, how to bring them to the world and share them. A more philosophical discussion of what it means to be human in today's world, what good can you bring to the world."

The analysis shows that non-formal education is the preferred method for working on citizenship education, because it seems to be an "essential tool" for achieving a truly open, complex and global social co-existence. This may be linked to the presumption that this type of competence should be promoted outside the more rigid framework of formal education.

> "One strategy was the youth work. I see youth work as the basis of citizenship education policy. For me youth work and citizenship education are not the same but it's the vehicle. The fact that youth work is the strategy in the policy ... means that citizenship education is at the core of it."

The selected examples use a broad umbrella term to describe citizenship education. Almost all interviewees refer to the Council of Europe's "Competences for Democratic Culture" as a fresh framework that provides a point of orientation for the development of teaching materials.

> "Citizenship education is a very wide concept. In reality, I … think if you have to search in the policy and you put 'citizenship education' you won't find it as a word. But the philosophy of that policy is all around citizenship education."

Competences promoted by citizenship education

Citizenship education is capable of developing both soft skills and civic or democratic competences. Surprisingly, however, it is non-cognitive skills, such as creativity, critical thinking or solidarity which are the first to be linked to citizenship education.

> "There are a number of competences that the young people [develop] – … the critical thinking, the communication skills, the decision-making skills, the ability to act in a solidary manner … These are all competences that young people learn from working in a team and working with others."

Civic or democratic competences, such as attention, knowledge and political participation, only come up when young people are asked about them directly. These competences do not seem to be the priority competences in the case studies. One of the reasons for this may be the broad conceptualisation of citizenship education, as well as the fact that the case studies give more weight to social co-existence.

> "Participation and democratic competences go hand in hand … The most important is curiosity, followed by creativity and innovation. Later, others are derived on participation, community work, decision-making, respect and appreciation for everyone's ideas."

> "I will definitely say critical thinking [is] a principal [competence]. Then participation, inclusion, correlation among the disciplines and co-operation among schools and the community."

Link between citizenship education and participation

In contrast to the previous section, the concept of participation is found to be directly linked to civic or democratic competences. This is because the case studies indicate that citizenship education enables young people to learn about the processes of participation: identifying requirements, designing proposals, reaching consensus, voting, and approving decisions.

26

"Participation and democracy competences go hand in hand. In other words, children and young people are part of a co-creation process where, in a parallel way, they acquire and develop competences for participation (dialogue, debate, information, teamwork, decision-making) and democracy (transparency, ethics, consensus, responsibility, policy approval process)."

Despite the above, each case study develops participation processes from different spectrums. On the one hand, there is a more formal style of participation directly related to electoral and democratic processes. On the other hand, there is a non-formal participation through processes of co-creation or discussion of the social changes that are currently being experienced.

"It is important for the project to work with young people to encourage them to vote and continue voting [to persuade them] that they should and can participate actively in the political agenda. Because if they don't participate, nobody will. The adults and the elderly will leave, and the youth will have to come and occupy those spaces. They will have to participate. And it is better to have someone who is prepared to participate democratically."

"We have three tasks … The first one is to address citizenship education through social challenges and controversial issues, so young people can discuss the topics that [they care about] in society."

In addition, it is observed that the activities planned within these case studies primarily seek to provide knowledge, skills, values and attitudes so that young people know the rules of the game of democracy and, if they wish, participate in it. However, these examples are not found to directly focus their interventions on increasing political commitment or even modifying their political behaviour.

The role of citizenship education in promoting advocacy and impact on public policies

The case studies argue that their interventions are able to create a sense that they can influence decision making, engage in the political arena, and design recommendations that will improve their communities. In addition, there is a perception that youth, at least in specific circumstances and for certain causes (such as the environment), are involved and committed to influencing public policy.

"Our young participants really believe they can change things and influence policies. An example of this is that the young people who participate in our summer school continue to work on the proposed themes despite not being in the summer school anymore. They continue to work in national organisations, supporting electoral processes, teaching these

processes to other students in law schools (or in other schools), because they believe that they can change and influence policies."

Along these lines, it is emphasised that children and young people who participate in these projects are more likely to be part of the institutions and parliaments (local, national and European) that will make the decisions of the future. Some of the young people who have completed their activities enter youth councils, join political parties, or even run electoral campaigns at local level. Some cases studies indicate that this is due to the acquisition of soft skills and civic competences promoted through citizenship education, which enable them to navigate the public sphere critically and contribute to it in a meaningful way. Moreover, many of these young people return to these activities to share their experience to the new generations.

"I believe that the EU Parliament and the European Commission are going to be made up of [today's] children and young people … I am convinced. [An international organisation highlights our geographical area as a friendly region] for children and young people. To designate us with that label, [the organisation] collected a lot of data and invited children to meet their peers from other cities and countries. From this, they have created their own network of children not only to be friends, but also to work together and influence policy."

National and European identity

The analyses show that the case studies actively promote a sense of belonging to their most immediate context, such as the school or their community. This local approach, in turn, seeks to make young people see themselves as citizens of the world, beyond their country of origin. On the other hand, they are far from promoting a national identity through citizenship education.

> "I hope that we are not developing a fixed or immovable concept of national identity. On the contrary, I hope that we are developing a concept of identity that can flow throughout life. A concept of identity that includes and does not exclude anyone; making a holistic understanding of their identity."

> "The project is not focused on creating a national or European identity. On the contrary, it focuses on identifying common values, the values that each child and young person have individually and share with the rest, or how they are translated into global responses. It's more of a personal experience, sharing knowledge."

On the other hand, most of the case studies report that they do not directly work on intercultural dialogue or political tolerance. Given this scenario, respondents emphasise that citizenship education in itself implies openness to other cultures and respect for others, so that both competences may appear spontaneously although they are not developed directly.

> "In principle, intercultural dialogue occurs spontaneously from the time that all citizens, regardless of age, co-create and co-decide everything that happens in their municipality."

> "The main goal is to help in creating and enabling an environment for active citizens that can critically think and act within the community. A community [is] not … only a local community, but a community of a class of a local community, national community, European community and, very important, the international community."

Furthermore, it is worth noting that none of the examples above seem to instrumentalise citizenship education as a way to actively promote a belief in national or European democracy. There is a clear distancing from this approach, perhaps because it is still more linked to authoritarian or indoctrination models of citizenship education. On the contrary, there is a certain inclination to focus more on developing young people's identity and stimulating their process of self-discovery through citizenship education.

"Before this new framework, citizenship education had a bad reputation. The teachers thought that citizenship education was related with indoctrination, political parties, and that it was dangerous to approach it at school. Now they have a new understanding, that citizenship education allows young people to comprehend the world in which they live."

Citizenship education in the digital world

The last point that was addressed in the interviews was citizenship education in the digital world. The COVID-19 pandemic caused an increased integration of the digital mechanisms within their interventions, such as providing helpful information through virtual channels or using online resources in everyday activities. There is a consensus that this digitalisation of their practices was a positive aspect because it has opened new paths for them to promote citizenship education in relation to lifelong learning.

"Although COVID-19 has been disastrous for the world, it has had good consequences within the project. Since it has forced us, and young people, to know how to work with online tools."

Despite this digitalisation boom, the interviewees did not refer to any kind of digital citizenship or to new spaces for youth participation in virtual environments. On the contrary, digital technologies seem to be considered as a complement to face-to-face activities. There is a desire to return to 100% physical environments as the main mode of working. Although this last sentence is possibly influenced by the pandemic and the confinements, it does stand out that the interviews highlighted that they found a huge gap between children and young people who have easy, reliable internet access and those who have limited or no internet access at all.

"Much has changed due to the pandemic. There wasn't much need for digitalisation before. The pandemic was a boost for digitalisation … We hope that children and young people can have offline education as much as possible."

Summary

After exploring non-formal citizenship education practices across Europe, it is found that they employ an extremely **broad concept of citizenship education**. This means that the concept covers a range of topics, competences and learning outcomes that go beyond citizenship education itself. This broad conceptualisation may be one of the reasons why soft skills are prioritised over civic or participation skills.

Approaching citizenship education from such a broad perspective does not make it clear how or why such a broad conceptualisation will actually lead to young people taking an active interest and participation in local, national or European civic and political life. Considering the three areas of theory outlined in Chapter 1, it is not necessarily clear that the case studies draw explicitly on these theories as a way to increase or conceive the impact of their work.

Following this line, citizenship education seems to be implemented in such a way that **escapes from promoting a belief in national or European democracy**. This may be one of the reasons why the case studies employ such a broad concept of citizenship education or that soft skills are prioritised. In other words, they do not promote any action that directly triggers among young people a moral, civic, or patriotic duty to participate.

In this regard, it is observed that most case studies conceive **citizenship education as a framework where young people have the possibility to learn various competences and skills** to interact with other citizens in a democratic environment. However, their goals do not appear to influence young people's political behaviour. On the contrary, the objective seems to equip young people with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that allow them to decide whether to participate politically or not. This reflects the way citizenship education is conceived in the European frameworks (see Chapter 2). Therefore, if citizenship education really wants to promote youth participation, especially in civic and political life, it requires narrowing the focus of current programmes and curriculums on topics and methods that actively promote a belief and action in "European democracy".

5. Conclusion

Overall, there is limited evidence that citizenship education in its current form is leading to substantial transformative shifts in young people's democratic behaviour. The limited identifiable impact of citizenship education is no doubt influenced by the limited resources and political priority given to citizenship education in many countries and the highly variable experience many young people receive. Some modes of educational practice (non-formal methods, participatory methods, open classroom environments) do seem to indicate higher impact than others (formal education methods). However, definitions are inconsistent and further research is required. There is a lack of distinction between non-formal methods used in out-of-school settings (such as youth centres) and non-formal methods used within school settings. It is also not clear that non-formal education based methods can be delivered at scale to influence entire populations of young people without a significant, and perhaps unrealistic, level of resource.

Besides the lack of investment, there may be significant underlying factors related to the way citizenship education is currently conceived that prevent its successful use for transformative shifts in youth participation. Even if the issues above are resolved, through greater investment and research, we must also consider that citizenship education, in its current form(s), may not be able to successfully deliver the kind of population-wide changes required to re-engage young people in democracy. This concern is backed up by feedback from young people given through participatory structures about the poor quality of citizenship education. It is widely reported that current citizenship education does not do enough to stimulate young people's participation (Moxon and Pantea 2021).

A key limitation is that the current approaches to citizenship education are focused on giving young people the personal ability to engage in democracy, whilst not substantially trying to trigger or motivate them to do so. Much of the practice of citizenship education is conceived as learning the skills and abilities to interact, particularly with other citizens, in a democratic environment. Although an exceptionally wide range of initiatives are included in the frame of citizenship education when it is researched or talked about, a common discursive emphasis and assumption is that the primary purpose is to equip young people with the competence (knowledge, skills, values, attitudes) required to engage in democracy, rather than to influence their behaviour.

We propose that more persuasive, inspiring and encouraging forms of citizenship education might bring about a desired behavioural change. This sort of approach would emphasise the importance, perhaps even a moral, civic, or patriotic duty to take part in democracy by voting, standing for

election, contacting MPs etc. It would concentrate on finding messaging, motivational triggers and rationales that would persuade young people to be active within representative democracy and its institutions. In a European context this might mean finding a way to promote future generations' belief in "European values" and the achievements of the European institutions. In persuasive/inspiring/encouraging citizenship education the primary goal would be to change young people's behaviour rather than develop their competence. This means an outcomes-focused, instrumental approach to evaluating and designing educational curriculums and programmes. Competence development has value, but this alone is not sufficient if educational programmes do not also lead to change in behaviour, although competence development, particularly the ability to think critically about political situations and actors, would still be a necessary part of this type of citizenship education. Without this there is risk that educational programmes act to indoctrinate, rather than educate learners.

Considering the current state of citizenship education, this change might require three things:

- ➢ **Narrowing the focus of current programmes and curriculums.** Current curriculums and practices are, by their own admission, often very broad, encompassing a wider range of topics and learning outcomes. There is no doubt much intrinsic educational value at the heart of many of these topics – learning to interact with other citizens, building tolerances of views and opinions and recognising the importance of human rights is a valuable thing to educate young people on. However, it is not always clear how or why we should expect that building many of these competences will lead to strongly increased engagement with democratic institutions in young people. There is of course some level of connection; it can be argued that a lack of these competences amongst young people might be a barrier to engagement. But that does not mean that having these competences creates engagement. A lack of knowledge and understanding is not the primary barrier preventing young people from engaging with democratic institutions in many European countries (Dezelan and Moxon 2021). Therefore, if citizenship education is to be used instrumentally, there may be a need to reduce the breadth of current topics, to prioritise topics and competences which can be directly linked to creating positive shifts in young people's political behaviour.

- ➢ **Focusing on topics and methods which actively promote and "sell" a belief in "European democracy".** Youth disengagement stems more from negative attitudes to institutional politics than lack of knowledge and skills (Dezelan and Moxon 2021). Therefore creating (positive) shifts in learners' values and attitude towards formal politics seems most likely to

influence their participatory behaviour. This means cultivating a strong desire to support European democracy, not just in an abstract sense but to support its actors, institutions, states and international bodies. Persuasive/inspiring/encouraging citizenship education then means needing to encourage young people to strongly believe in something related to European democracy that will motivate them to engage in voting in representative politics. This might mean:

- a belief in a moral, civic, or patriotic duty to engage in democracy;

- a belief that political engagement can create positive change;

- confidence in, trust, and support for the learner's nation state including its actors and institutions;

- confidence in, trust, and support for the European actors and institutions and, in the case of the EU, the European project;

- a belief in the value, or achievements, of a national state, and/or where applicable specific European institutions, or wider European values.

There are of course many political and ethical complexities regarding exactly which motivational messages and topics are used within the citizenship education, not least the balance between national and European bodies.

➢ **Prioritising citizenship education in general**. There is also a need for policy makers to invest further in citizenship education as a whole, attached to rigorous evaluation of specific programmes, their impacts, and their relative costs. Many young people have limited access to citizenship education, and it plays a minor role in many educational systems. Shifting an entire generation's behaviour requires a population-level approach and a population level investment. No matter how effective an individual method or programme of education is, if it cannot be delivered affordably to a substantial number of young people, consistently it is unlikely to create significant shifts in youth democratic behaviour as a whole. This means a key part of research and development of citizenship education needs to be testing and evaluating the impact of programmes and methods, with strong consideration of their cost-effectiveness and ability to deliver at scale.

Currently, it is hard to be confident that our existing programmes and approaches are able to deliver radical transformative shifts in young people's engagement in democracy. There may be good ethical reasons not to use citizenship education in this way. As we have discussed, developing learners' understanding and awareness of democracy has an intrinsic value, and should not be dismissed outright. However, as citizenship education is frequently suggested as a way of addressing youth disengagement, it should at least be recognised that much more specific and inspiring forms of citizenship education are required to address this goal.

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