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Country Report: Civic and Citizenship Education in Italy: Thousands of Fragmented Activities Looking for a Systematization

- Civic and citizenship education in Italy is a field to be improved, especially it needs a systematic approach.
- There are official prescriptions for this educational activity (since 1958) which is understood as a transversal task for all subjects.
- A specific subject and the initial teacher training in this field are lacking.
- Schools work a lot for building democratic, responsible citizens, implementing several initiatives to this goal, anyway in very fragmented way.
- Students' participation at school is allowed, and should be more vital.

Purpose: In the present paper we describe how civic and citizenship education takes place in Italy, trying to identify strengths and weaknesses, with the aims both of understanding the situation and of identifying possible measures for improvement.

Methods: The methodology implies an analysis of the official guidelines by the Ministry in this field, a short view of the research publications of the last 30 years, the informal observation of the daily teaching at school from the personal experience of the authors in Italy.

Findings: First of all we study the concept of civic and citizenship education, and focus on the curriculum of civic and citizenship education (aims, teaching approaches, taught time, methods and means) in the school system, including the school culture and the experiences of participation inside school; we investigate the teacher training and role, the informal and non-formal influences in this educational field, and conclude dealing with the student assessment, and the evaluation of the outcomes. In the daily practice there are thousands of activities for civic and citizenship education, but a systematic design is lacking.

Keywords:

Civic and citizenship education, Italian school, teacher training

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate the status and role of civic and citizenship education in Italy after the second world war. It is a challenging question, potentially including very broad range of aspects, and we can give only a limited picture.

The methodology of this description implies an analysis of the official guidelines by the Ministry of Education (MIUR Ministero dell'Istruzione, Università e Ricerca) for the schools in this field, a short view of surveys and of the scholarly research, and the informal observation of the daily teaching at school by the authors in Italy.

There is a certain interest in Italy for this educational activity, anyway it needs strong improvement. Complaints about the limits of civic and citizenship education in the Italian school system are common in the country, for example, on the daily paper 'Corriere della sera', Antonella De Gregorio talks about 'L'ora (mancante) di

educazione civica' (the lacking lesson of civic education) and calls it 'Material chimera' (chimera subject) (De Gregorio, 2014). The Survey Eurydice, 2012, comparing the EU-National strategies to promote key competences in general education, reports no good efforts for Social and civic competences in the Italian school system (Eurydice, 2012, p.14). In fact there is a lot of work for civic and citizenship education in Italy at school and outside it; what is missing is a systematic design. Common citizens, interviewed for example in a small National Survey Demos – Coop about the relationship among Italian people and the school, expressed almost unanimously (96%) the wish of more attention to the 'educazione civica' of the youngsters (Indagine Demos-Coop, 2016, p.12)

We start reporting in exemplary form one of the thousand activities in this area; it is a successful cooperation among schools and the Municipality in the small city of Trento, where students learn competences for practicing democratic participation (Partecipazione plurale).

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Figure 1: The website of 'Partecipazione plurale'

2 Current debate

To describe the current debate we refer briefly to the relevant publications in the last 30 years in this field in Italy, including some links to the international panorama, especially to documentation of the European Institutions: Council of Europe, European Union, IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement).

2.1

Different names are used for describing this educational activity; the most common one is 'educazione civica' (civic education), used in a very broad manner including both cognitive and affective /behavioural aspects. The term 'educazione politica' (political education) finds wary ears because it is easily confused with a party political approach.

In this paper, besides the Italian name 'educazione civica', we use the term 'civic and citizenship education', a concept consistent both with the national, and the International most used terminology (IEA ICCS 2009, 2016).

The democratic values, the Constitution, the respect of the human rights and of the law, the European cooperation are unanimously underlined by scholars dealing with the topic. In Italy there are no chairs of civic and citizenship education at the university, and the research in this area is carried out by scholars of all subjects.

In the recent history a big contribution to education for democracy was given by thinkers as Aldo Agazzi, Giovanni Gozzer, Aldo Capitini, and many others. For Italian experts in this field, it is important to consider the image of human being, the idea of life and of humanity, the idea of society that inspires civic and citizenship education. Being education strongly linked to values, scholars used to be divided according to religious (Roman Catholic or not), and ideologic/ party political (right, left) backgrounds.

2.2

Despite that, the image of the good citizen in the current debate is quite similar, acknowledging the fact that it

goes far beyond the simple legal relationship between people and the state, and extends both to the respect of rules and to citizens' participation in the political, social and civic life. Civic and citizenship education is very often confused with social, moral, emotional learning, which are close to each other. Some debate can be found even in the concept and in the preferred focus of the 'educazione civica' which is commonly not seen only in information.

There are references to the international research, especially in French and English language (very

often John Dewey). Examples of a good citizenship are quoted referring to authoritative persons both within Italy (don Lorenzo Milani, founder of the progressive 'Scuola di Barbiana'), and outside Italy (Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, etc.).

2.3

Many thinking contributions underline the weakness of the society and focus on education to values, and it happens frequently that it is perceived as rhetoric. It is very common denouncing the actual phenomena of indifference, or violence among young people; Milena Santerini (2010, p.12) considers the decrease of legality and participation as a consequence of rapid social changes. Like many others, Michele Corsi reminds us of the importance of the cooperation among family, society and school (Corsi, 2011).

The influence of the scientific research on the official regulations is mostly indirect, anyway two professors of educational studies assumed recently a direct responsibility for the Ministry: Luciano Corradini in the Prodi Government for the DM 1403, 1996, 'Educazione civica e cultura costituzionale' (Civic Education and Constitutional Culture), and the Direttiva 58 /1996 'Nuove dimensioni formative, educazione civica e cultura costituzionale' (New training dimensions, civic education and constitutional culture), and Giuseppe Bertagna, for the Legge delega 2003. The current prescriptions since 2008 seem not to be supported by a strong scientific research. Important are the suggestions of Bruno Losito about the need of developing indicators for self-evaluation, useful in identifying both the aspects that should characterize the activity of the school and the elements that could be subject to attention and intervention (Losito, Autovalutazione, pp. 12-14).

2.4

The European dimension (Chistolini, 2006), and the aims agreed at European level, the European Recommendations are widely accepted and quoted, especially the European reference framework on key competences for lifelong learning 2006 (Recommendation [2006/962/EC](#)), anyway the concept of 'competence' undergoes critical remarks by several scholars in Italy, and especially in

combination with quantitative practices of assessment, because of the fear that economic habits colonize education and focus only on observable and measurable outcomes.

2.5

Scholars discuss about possible 'neutrality' of the school and value education as teaching is always influenced by the social, cultural and political situation, and it is difficult at school to prevent a passive acceptance of the current interpretation of questions like terrorism, migration etc. All publications on the topic express the idea that students at school should not be involved in party political matters and that indoctrination is to be excluded.

3 A difficult way towards competent citizenship: aims and organization

All the general introductions to curricula in force in the various school levels refer to the Italian Constitution and to the fundamental rights and duties of citizens that it specifies and guarantees. The Italian school system pays attention to the European inputs, like the 'European Year of Citizenship through Education' 2005, the European Year of Citizens 2013, the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (2010), Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education (2015).

Summarizing the statements of the current legislation, the term 'educazione civica' is used in a very broad manner in the Italian school system; is related to the knowledge and exercise of rights and responsibilities. Civic and citizenship education is essentially characterized as education for democracy and for democratic living together, with full respect for social and cultural differences.

3.1

'Educazione civica' in the official legislation involves a variety of cognitive and attitudinal strands; it concerns knowledge and skills, and conceptual understandings, interest, and dispositions to engage.

It is explicitly declared in the list of the general aims and specific objectives established in primary and secondary school curricula; we find prescriptions on 'educazione civica' both in the general legislation for the school system (official reforms and syllabuses), and in specific laws (or decrees) for this educational activity. We list here the most important ones:

- The syllabus for the 'Scuola elementare' (primary school), written in 1945, under the influence of the USA counselor Charleton Wolsey Washburne, was democratically oriented against totalitarianism and nationalism.
- 'Educazione civica' was officially established the first time in Italy by a decree of Aldo Moro (minister for the 'Pubblica Istruzione' during the years 1957- 1959) dating as far back as 1958 'Programmi per l'insegnamento dell'educazione civica negli Istituti e Scuole di istruzione secondaria e artistica' (Programs for Civic Education in Institutes and

Schools of Secondary and Artistic Education) (DPR 13.6. 1958, no. 585).

- The civic education is underlined in the Syllabus for the comprehensive lower secondary school 'scuola media unica' in 1962 and in the 1979 (Nuovi programmi per la scuola media, DM 9 febbraio 1979).

- The Syllabus 1985 for the primary school established 'Studi sociali e conoscenza della vita sociale' (Social studies and knowledge of social life). The 'Programmi per la Scuola elementare' (DPR 12.2.1985, n 104) included 'Educazione alla convivenza democratica' (Education to a democratic cohesistence).

- The 'educazione interculturale' (intercultural education) finds strong attention by the Ministry as well, especially since 1989 (Circolare Ministeriale 8 settembre 1989, n. 301) 'Inserimento degli stranieri nella scuola dell'obbligo' (Integration of the immigrants children in the compulsory school).

- We can remind the 'Programmi di insegnamento di educazione civica' (Programs to teach civic education) D.M. 58, 8.2.1996, the Law 28.3. 2003, n.53, Delega al Governo per la definizione delle norme generali sull'istruzione e dei livelli essenziali delle prestazioni in materia di istruzione e formazione professionale, and the 'Carta dei valori della cittadinanza e dell'integrazione' DM 23.4.2007 (Delegated Law by the Government for the definition of general education standards and essential levels about Vocational Education and Training, and the 'Charter of Values for citizenship and integration' DM 23.4.2007).

- The Law 'Cittadinanza e Costituzione' 169/2008 puts the basis for regulating civic and citizenship education in the Italian school system at all levels and degrees; it is integrated by the 'Documento di indirizzo per la sperimentazione dell'insegnamento Cittadinanza e Costituzione' (Document for the experimentation of the teaching Citizenship and Constitution: Document 04/03/2009), followed by the Ministerial Circular Letter 86/2010, which explicitly introduces dedicated and cross-disciplinary themes of 'citizenship and constitution' in all possible occasions for doing so. In the curricula of history, geography and social studies in primary schools; law and economics (in the school tracks of upper secondary schools where they are taught, also technical and vocational schools), biology (bioethic), etc. it is planned to deal with issues related to civic education, although without a precise time table and without marking.

The Circular letter 86/2010 gives a long list of objectives: acquisition of social and civic competence of citizenship, as instantiated by critically appraising facts and behaviours mediating and peacefully managing conflicts, fair playing in sport, respect towards oneself and the others, social rules, caring for one's and the public good, showing kindness, handling responsibly towards the community defending one's own rights and respecting those of the others, carrying out one's own duties participating in democracy initiatives accepting different people putting prejudices and stereotypes into question, adopting sustainable behaviour with respect to the environment.

The parts on civic and citizenship education in the existing Guidelines are short documents, giving general principles and contents, not prescribing in detail how to deal with civic matters in the different school years.

3.2

The main objective of the on-going nationwide programme 'Cittadinanza e costituzione' (Citizenship and Constitution) is to highlight and consolidate the values attached to the Italian Constitution. Assigned objectives are not only in terms of the theoretical knowledge students should acquire, but also in terms of skills to be mastered, and attitudes and values to be developed.

Civic and citizenship Education is expected to encourage critical knowledge, in order to prevent fanaticism and to avoid acritical adherence to a specific model, it is an effort for reflexion and documented coherent decision making by the pupils.

- The 'Indicazioni nazionali per il curriculum' (National guidelines for the curriculum), (2012) declare the central place of the 'educazione alla cittadinanza'; in the first part: 'Cultura della persona' (Culture of the person), where we find a chapter 'Per una nuova cittadinanza' (For a new citizenship), and in the second part 'Finalità generali' (General aims), where there is a chapter about 'Scuola, Costituzione, Europa' (School, Constitution, Europe). In the chapter 'Cittadinanza e Costituzione' (under 'La scuola del primo ciclo'), the declared aims are building a sense of legality and developing ethic of responsibility performing the duty of choosing and acting consciously.

Figure 2: 'Indicazioni nazionali per il curriculum' 2012 (National Guidelines for the curriculum), pp. 25-26.

Cittadinanza e Costituzione

È compito peculiare di questo ciclo scolastico porre le basi per l'esercizio della cittadinanza attiva, potenziando e ampliando gli apprendimenti promossi nella scuola dell'infanzia.

L'educazione alla cittadinanza viene promossa attraverso esperienze significative che consentano di apprendere il concreto prendersi cura di se stessi, degli altri e dell'ambiente e che favoriscano forme di cooperazione e di solidarietà. Questa fase del processo formativo è il terreno favorevole per lo sviluppo di un'adesione consapevole a valori condivisi e di atteggiamenti cooperativi e collaborativi che costituiscono la condizione per praticare la convivenza civile.

Obiettivi irrinunciabili dell'educazione alla cittadinanza sono la costruzione del senso di legalità e lo sviluppo di un'etica della responsabilità, che si realizzano nel dovere di scegliere e agire in modo consapevole e che implicano l'impegno a elaborare idee e a promuovere azioni finalizzate al miglioramento continuo del proprio contesto di vita, a partire dalla vita quotidiana a scuola e dal personale coinvolgimento in *routine* consuetudinarie che possono riguardare la pulizia e il buon uso dei luoghi, la cura del giardino o del cortile, la custodia dei sussidi, la documentazione, le prime forme di partecipazione alle decisioni comuni, le piccole riparazioni, l'organizzazione del lavoro comune, ecc.

Accanto ai valori e alle competenze inerenti la cittadinanza, la scuola del primo ciclo include nel proprio curriculum la prima conoscenza della Costituzione della Repubblica italiana. Gli allievi imparano così a rico-

25

noscere e a rispettare i valori sanciti e tutelati nella Costituzione, in particolare i diritti inviolabili di ogni essere umano (articolo 2), il riconoscimento della pari dignità sociale (articolo 3), il dovere di contribuire in modo concreto alla qualità della vita della società (articolo 4), la libertà di religione (articolo 8), le varie forme di libertà (articoli 13-21). Imparano altresì l'importanza delle procedure nell'esercizio della cittadinanza e la distinzione tra diversi compiti, ruoli e poteri. Questo favorisce una prima conoscenza di come sono organizzate la nostra società (articoli 35-54) e le nostre istituzioni politiche (articoli 55-96). Al tempo stesso contribuisce a dare un valore più largo e consapevole alla partecipazione alla vita della scuola intesa come comunità che funziona sulla base di regole condivise.

Parte integrante dei diritti costituzionali e di cittadinanza è il diritto alla parola (articolo 21) il cui esercizio dovrà essere prioritariamente tutelato ed incoraggiato in ogni contesto scolastico e in ciascun alunno, avendo particolare attenzione a sviluppare le regole di una conversazione corretta. È attraverso la parola e il dialogo tra interlocutori che si rispettano reciprocamente, infatti, che si costruiscono significati condivisi e si opera per sanare le divergenze, per acquisire punti di vista nuovi, per negoziare e dare un senso positivo alle differenze così come per prevenire e regolare i conflitti.

La lingua italiana costituisce il primo strumento di comunicazione e di accesso ai saperi. La lingua scritta, in particolare, rappresenta un mezzo decisivo per l'esplorazione del mondo, l'organizzazione del pensiero e per la riflessione sull'esperienza e il sapere dell'umanità.

È responsabilità di tutti i docenti garantire la padronanza della lingua italiana, valorizzando al contempo gli idiomi nativi e le lingue comunitarie. Così intesa, la scuola diventa luogo privilegiato di apprendimento e di confronto libero e pluralistico.

- The current school reform, called 'La Buona scuola' (The good school) (Law 107/2015) focus on civic and citizenship education as well, anyway it is doubtful the question of effective teaching changes in this field, as long as teachers don't have initial training for that and the teaching activity is not established in autonomous way.

It is encouraging that the PON Programma Operativo Nazionale (National operative Plan, 2017), which launched a competition for financing projects linked to 10 key competences, considers among them 3 competences in the field of civics: 'Competenze cittadinanza globale' (including economic citizenship), 'Cittadinanza europea', 'Cittadinanza e creatività digitali' (PON Scuola, 2017); anyway it involves only the winner schools, not all schools in systematic way.

Social and civic competences are considered very important, linked to the multicultural society, a sense of belonging to one's own community, to the Nation, to Europe, and to the World. Ethnic conceptions of nationalism are clearly rejected by scholars, and not accepted at school, being considered as fascist heritage.

Analysing the teachers' views on the importance of specific aims for civic and citizenship education, 2008/09, we can see from the IEA-ICCS study 2009 (reported in the Survey Eurydice 2012 too) that almost 80 %, of Italian teachers identified 'promoting knowledge of citizens' rights and responsibilities' as one of the most important aims of citizenship education, higher than any other EU country in (Eurydice, 2012), probably because teachers see the need for that, and even because acquiring knowledge is considered the first task of learners at school, and of the teachers in general terms.

As natural consequence of this assumed priority, the aims 'Skills and competence in conflict resolutions', 'Participation in local community and in school life', 'Preparation for future political engagement' are underestimated. It is sad observing this lack of attention to those aspects; in fact general teaching practices don't support active involvement of students and it happens very often that allowing participation is considered wasted time. Sure the lack of training of teachers in civic field during the initial training is one of the reasons of their choices; besides that secondary school teachers are required to be prepared in their subjects only, and mostly are not confident with pedagogic measures, and social questions. It is not surprising that Italian teachers don't consider 'Capacity to defend one's own point of view' as an important aim, because the passive role of the pupils is still very common, as it happens in some other school systems as well; the answers linked to this aim seem not very consistent with the good appreciation of the aim 'Critical and independent thinking' at first view, in fact critical thinking is probably considered part of a good approach to knowledge. There are important differences among teachers of the European countries in their views on important aims for civic and citizenship education, probably linked to school traditions, teacher training and social environment.

Figure 3: Teachers' views on the importance of specific aims for civic and citizenship education



Civic and citizenship education aims related to:
 A Knowledge of social, political and civic institutions
 B Respect for and safeguarding the environment
 C Capacity to defend one's own point of view
 D Skills and competences in conflict resolution
 E Knowledge of citizens' rights and responsibilities
 F Participation in the local community
 G Critical and independent thinking
 H Participation in school life
 I Effective strategies to combat racism and xenophobia
 J Preparation for future political engagement
 Source: IEA, ICCS 2009 database.
 Ø Average percentages

EACEA, Eurydice 2012, p.35.

4 School approaches to citizenship education

The art 1. of the Law 'Cittadinanza e Costituzione' states that the teaching activity in civic field has to be delivered in the common subjects during their teaching time; it is intended to be delivered through a cross-curricular dimension integrated into several conventional subjects (such as history, economy, law, social studies, geography, philosophy or religious education/ ethics); the strongest bond in the first 8 school years is with the area of history (C.M. 86/ 2010).

About the taught time of civic and citizenship education, being not a subject, there are no compulsory timing prescriptions. Actual implementation largely depends on the interest and willingness of teachers inside each school. There are big difficulties, because of the feeling of the teachers of having no time and because of their reluctance to deal with political concepts.

Nobody knows exactly how many lessons of civic and citizenship education are taught

during a school year in Italy. In a survey of the Associazione Treelle, for young-sters among 19-23 years, 'L'educazione alla cittadinanza nella scuola superiore italiana. Sintesi di una indagine sui giovani diplomati' (Citizenship education in the Italian upper secondary school. Synthesis of a survey on the young school graduates') (2016), at the question 'How much and how is civic and citizenship education taught at school?', 53% of the students said that they had the opportunity to deal with topics of civic and citizenship education 1 or 2 times in a year.

Figure 4: From the Gazzetta Ufficiale, 2009, p.3

2. Il quadro orario settimanale delle attività e delle discipline delle classi a tempo prolungato della scuola secondaria di I grado, definito tenendo conto dei nuovi piani di studio, è così determinato:

Discipline o gruppi di discipline	I classe	II classe	III classe
Italiano, Storia, Geografia	15	15	15
Matematica e Scienze	9	9	9
Tecnologia	2	2	2
Inglese	3	3	3
Seconda lingua comunitaria	2	2	2
Arte e immagine	2	2	2
Scienze motoria e sportive	2	2	2
Musica	2	2	2
Religione cattolica	1	1	1
Approfondimento di discipline a scelta delle scuole	1/2	1/2	1/2
Totale orario settimanale	39/40	39/40	39/40

Figure 5: From the Gazzetta Ufficiale, 2009, p.5

Art. 2

(quadro orario e composizione delle cattedre nelle classi a tempo normale)

1. Il quadro orario settimanale delle discipline della scuola secondaria di I grado, definito tenendo conto dei nuovi piani di studio è così determinato:

Discipline o gruppi di discipline	I classe	II classe	III classe
Italiano, Storia, Geografia	9	9	9
Matematica e Scienze	6	6	6
Tecnologia	2	2	2
Inglese	3	3	3
Seconda lingua comunitaria	2	2	2
Arte e immagine	2	2	2
Scienze motoria e sportive	2	2	2
Musica	2	2	2
Religione cattolica	1	1	1
Attività di approfondimento in materie letterarie	1	1	1
Totale orario settimanale	30	30	30

Figure 6: How much and how is citizenship education taught at school?

Nel tuo percorso di scuola superiore, con che frequenza gli insegnanti hanno affrontato temi di "educazione alla cittadinanza" o "educazione civica"?	%	
Mai	12,3	66
Qualche volta all'anno (1 o 2 volte all'anno)	53,7	
Qualche volta al mese (1 o 2 volte al mese)	24	34
Quasi ogni settimana (1 o 2 volte alla settimana)	10	
Totale	100,0	100,0

BASE: Totale campione (800 casi)

(In the upper secondary school, how frequently did your teachers deal with civic or citizenship education? 'Never'; 'Sometimes (1 or 2 times each year)'; 'Sometimes (1 or 2 times each month)'; 'Almost ones a week')

Survey of the Associazione Treelle, 2016, p. 3

Schools have the responsibility for taking decisions on teaching times, up to a maximum of 15% of the total annual teaching hours, also they could start up supplementary courses to the ones established at national level. The space for optional learning subjects is very limited (s. time tables in EACEA Eurydice 2015, p. 40); there is flexibility in teaching contents, methods and means.

4.1

The contents of the citizenship curricula cover a wide and very comprehensive range of topics, addressing the fundamental principles of democratic societies, contemporary societal issues such as cultural diversity and sustainable development, as well as the European and international dimensions.

Information concerning Italian legislation, the Italian Constitution, Regional statutes, National, European and international documents, e.g. the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Charter of the United Nation, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Italian Charter of values, citizenship and integration, rights and duties of the citizens, of the workers, institutional structures of the Italian Republic and bodies at a local, national, international level, including a view to the Constitutions of other countries (C.M. 86/2010).

Studying the Constitution learners are expected not only to know the content of the document, even to interiorize a 'map of values' to practice the main values of citizenship at all levels; it doesn't mean memorizing the articles.

Cross-disciplinary contents are primarily related to good practices, responsible behaviours. Transversal are defined themes related to: legality, social cohesion, National and European belonging, within the inter-national mutually dependent community, human rights, equal opportunities, pluralism, respect for diversity, intercultural dialogue, ethic of responsibility (at both an individual and a social level), bioethics, conservation of the artistic and cultural heritage, ecology, sustainable development, personal and social well-being, fair play in sport, safety /in different forms, especially road safety education, solidarity, voluntary service, active citizenship.

4.2

Schools and teachers have the responsibility for deciding on teaching methods, and teaching organization. New ways of organizing teaching and learning are recommended, methods fostering the active role and participation of students are also encouraged, especially in the Circular letter 86/ 2010, in a school in which strongly traditional teaching methods are the norm, still mainly focusing (in secondary schools) on the sequence lesson - individual study - assessment. In the Italian schools the habit of fostering dialogue is not uncommon, on the contrary, working in groups is not a diffuse habit; although most teachers are informed about cooperative learning, the common feeling is that working in groups is not effective. According to the Survey TALIS 2013, about 30% of Italian teachers of lower secondary education reported of being familiar in working with their students in small groups (OECD, TALIS, 2014, p. 157).

Only few teachers use innovative working ways like case studies, role play etc. and teaching-learning activities carried out are not often inspired by participative criteria.

All teachers must contribute to implementing the objectives as defined in national curricula related to citizenship and the constitution, they must also undertake teaching projects aimed at deepening pupils' knowledge of the Italian Constitution and developing values for active citizenship. The participation in national and in European projects (The European Parliament of youth, e twinning etc.) is part of the work of many schools.

It is worth recalling that over the last few years, on the basis of proposals put forward by the MIUR (Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca) and also due to the initiative of teachers' associations, NGO's, voluntary associations, various cross-curricular and extra-curricular projects and programmes have been carried out in theme areas at times not explicitly envisaged by curricula (such as education for peace, intercultural education, environmental education). There is an high number of small innovative experiences in the field of citizenship education, thanks to the engagement of several teachers and group of teachers. A big educational work is done daily against corruption, for the 'legalità' (legality) ('Festival della legalità' in many cities), fighting the mafia, etc., anyway it is a fragmented, mostly marginal field, and not a systematic approach.

4.3

Several teaching means are used by the teachers. The schools are in charge to decide about the adoption of schoolbooks and there are good textbooks and ebooks (Vincelli, 2011) for Civic education, published by several publishing houses (data on MIUR http://hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/dg_efid/libri_testo).

Several examples of teaching the European citizenship' in schoolbooks, with texts and pictures, are available in the ebook *Diventare cittadini europei* (Bombardelli, 2015, pp. 177-193).

But the civic textbooks are hardly used by teachers, and, consequently, they are often not even purchased by students. According to a survey performed in the past in the region of Trentino, about 70 % of the teachers declare that they don't use the school book for civics and about the same number don't answer the question regarding how they follow the book (Bombardelli 1997, pp.153-154); unfortunately no improvements are perceived at present.

This lack is compensated in some classes by the chance to read and discuss journals at school. The Action 'Il quotidiano in classe', offered by the Giovani Editori to the upper secondary schools since the year 2000, involves 2.000.000 students and more than 45.000 teachers (Action 'Il quotidiano in classe').

Sometimes teachers make use of audiovisual support materials, and in some schools there are educational

efforts referred to how watching video or using internet in appropriate way.

Figure 7: from the school book Binazzi, Tucci, Bertini (2011).



4.4

Cooperation with the world outside the school is officially encouraged; the Ministry of Education recognizes that there is a big influence of the social environment on the learning results of students in this field.

According to the law 169/2008 and the Ministerial Circular 86/2010, school Institutions are required to establish effective partnerships with the families, local authorities, the Student Councils (Consulte degli studenti), with the local bodies, local educational groups and Police Forces as well as with cultural and sports associations and NGOs, with the Magistrature (Judiciary), with socio-cultural and sport associations, with the third sector, in order to facilitate alliances to reach the goals. (C.M. n. 86 / 2010).

Sometimes external experts are invited to the school classrooms, like policemen, people engaged with the environment or for other goals, writers of well-known

books, public authorities. Recently even lawyers have offered help to the schools in order to perform civic and citizenship education, knowledge of law, against bullism, cyberbullism, gender discrimination' (Avvocatura istituzionale, 2017).

There are experiences of schools opening to the external society, organizing visits to the municipality, il 'Consiglio comunale dei bambini' (Children councils, s. 'Piccoli esercizi di democrazia'), according to the art.7 of the Law n. 285/ 1997. Schools cooperate in World Days (for peace, against lawlessness, against corruption, etc.) and in international celebrations (Women's Rights, Remembrance Day etc.).

Students have the chance to organize public debates and events inside school, even though they do not always use this possibility. There are several initiatives like public speeches, lectures, debates, intercultural exchanges/twinning, help the Third World etc.

5 School culture and participation

The school is a privileged place where students learn to live together, where they recognize rights and practical sense of duty, where they acquire knowledge and criteria to critically assess the reality; it is the garrison of legality and justice. (C.M. 86/2010). The same circular letter reminds several social rules (preventing bad behaviour, helping school mates, against prejudices and stereotypes, etc) together with the participation at the initiatives of school democracy, the respect and the valuing of the artistic, cultural, environmental patrimony (C.M. n. 86 /2010).

5.1

The experience that students have within the class and school is very important to familiarize with the forms of the social organization and democratic behaviour.

At school students learn forms of living together, which can be active and democratic or not. The school atmosphere directly calls into question the school's organisation as a whole, but also the teaching practices, the relational models enacted by teachers the internal rules, the leading values, the communication forms, the ceremonies which help for building behaviours and developing a sense of belonging.

5.2

The Ministry of Education issued specific directives, inviting school heads and teachers to encourage the creation of "meeting places and opportunities" and to favor "the school's openness to educational and cultural demands coming from its surrounding area" as an "answer to students' demands for more active participation in school life" (Ministry of Education directive no. 133, 1996).

The Circular letter 86/2010 fosters the participation of the pupils in the school planning, reminds the importance of training students in citizenship by encouraging participation in the bodies through which democracy is expressed at school like students' organizations,

or in initiatives of peer-education and cooperative learning, of voluntary service, etc.

Each school has a 'Regolamento d'Istituto' (Regulation of the Institute), and there is a 'Statuto degli studenti' (Statute of Students), which guarantees certain fundamental rights and duties of the students inside school. Co-responsibility pacts are agreed in several schools, especially where outstanding teachers and headmasters do it.

5.3

Students' democratic participation in upper secondary school is explicitly envisaged by current legislation. For the 'Consulta degli studenti' (Council of the students), at a provincial level, two representatives for each upper secondary school are elected among students for a two years term. Then, they in turn elect among them the presidents of the provincial student organisations who meet together in the National Council (Eurydice, 2012, pp. 30ss).

Class representatives and Student councils are elected in the upper secondary education by all students in a class. Students elections mostly take place in formal / bureaucratic way; students have the right to hold meetings, set up committees and elect their own representatives for class and school committees.

When participating in school bodies, students can exercise a consultative, or mostly an informative role. Sometimes the students' views is asked by the school management 'after' the conclusion of the decision making process.

5.4

There is parent participation in democratic school governance too; the 'Organi collegiali' (Collegial bodies) were introduced with the Law 30.7.1973, n. 477 (Legge sugli Organi collegiali), anyway it doesn't imply a real influence on the school's decisions, and therefore the 'Organi collegiali' lost quickly (already in the 80s) the families' interest in most places, where very few parents vote for their class representatives and feel in charge for school improvement; only in some cases there are very good practices.

In the most cases students' active participation in and outside school is not widely encouraged and it is held as largely unsatisfactory; better measures are needed, enlarging the number of students entitled to actively participate, giving more space to the youngsters for initiatives and proposal, improving their role in school governance, strengthening the relation among elected representative and the electoral student body. The most needed change is a better understanding of the importance of school participation for enhancing competences and responsibility of future citizens in a democratic society.

As teaching civic and citizenship education is officially in charge of all teachers, teacher training and support should be provided for all of them.

6 Education, training and support for teachers and school heads

6.1

The role of the teachers and of the headmasters is irreplaceable, both as regards their specific function of teaching and organizing learning situations, and through exemplification of correct behaviours as well.

6.2

Teachers of the secondary school are trained and employed in order to teach their own subject.

The MIUR expressed the need for sensibilisation and training of the teachers (Law 169/2008) in this area, anyway teacher training Institutions (universities for the teachers of the secondary schools) are not required to offer training in this field, introducing specific courses and ECTS.

Education for citizenship can be part of the in service training of teachers, which is first of all in charge to the schools and the topics can be chosen by the schools and the teachers; very seldom they decide training on questions related to civics and citizenship education. There are no specific training or support measures for school heads in this area.

It is worth recalling the answers given by teachers regarding their own in-service training experience, in the IEA ICCS study (2009). 59% of upper secondary school teachers and 55% of lower secondary school teachers said they had never taken part in any specific in-service training activities for civic education. 41% of upper secondary school teachers and 38% of lower secondary school teachers considered training on teaching methods as one of the priorities for improving the teaching of civic education in school. In lower secondary schools, 49% of the teachers thought that the support of external experts was fundamental (38% of upper secondary school teachers). (IEA ICCS 2009) (s.Toods, 2010).

6.3

Contribution to the continuing professional development of teachers are given by the Universities, by ANSAS-INDIRE (Istituto Nazionale per la Documentazione, Innovazione, e Ricerca Educativa), by RAI Educational, by the NGO's, associations like AUSE ([Associazione Universitaria Studi Europei](#)), AEDE (Association Européenne des Enseignants), TREELLE (Life Long Learning), ADI (Associazione Docenti Italiani), AIMC (Associazione Italiana Maestri Cattolici), UCIIM (Unione Cattolica Italiana Insegnanti Medi), CIDI (Centro di iniziativa democratica degli insegnanti), and several associations for the teachers of different subjects, and especially by Bodies devoted to Civic development as Cittadinanza attiva (Intesa Miur-Cittadinanzattiva), Centro di Ateneo per i diritti umani (Centre of Human Rights) in Padova etc., including associations not directly related to school questions which deal with issues of civic and citizenship education, among other tasks.

There is no professional journal devoted only to civic and citizenship education, but professional journals very often include articles in this teaching activity. Just to give an example, some recent topics: Lazzarini (2016). L'educazione alla cittadinanza come «diritto alla città», and Podda (2015). Cittadinanza partecipata e interculturalità (the list of the journals in educational field classified at A level by the Italian Institutions is in <http://www.siped.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/RIVISTE-DI-FASCIA-A-DELLO-INTERO-AMBITO-PEDAGOGICO.pdf>).

New forms for teacher in service training are planned by the Italian Government for the new teachers (INDIRE Formazione dei docenti neoassunti 2016/17), and hopefully they will strengthen this area. The Teachers' training national plan considers civic and citizenship education as one the priorities for the years 2016-2019 (MIUR, Piano per la formazione dei docenti 2016-2019, p. 26); improvement can be expected by the new activated digital platform of the MIUR, for the teacher in service training: S.O.F.I.A. (Sistema Operativo per la Formazione e le Iniziative di Aggiornamento dei docenti).

7. Non formal and informal learning

In the field of learning citizenship the influence of the media and of the tradition is strong. In the daily life, symbols like the flags (the Italian flag is always together with the EU flag, sometimes with the regional one too), songs (old ones, celebrating resistance, troubles in the wars, or love to the native place, or workers fighting, and new ones, often including civic messages, like 'Io non mi sento italiano' (I don't feel Italian) of Giorgio Gaber, are an indirect way of building forms of civic and citizenship conscience.

Figure 8: Civic and Citizenship education outside the

Tab. 4

Al di fuori della scuola, ti è capitato di approfondire i temi dell'educazione alla cittadinanza? Se sì, in quali occasioni?	%
No, mai	17,8
Sì, personalmente (letture, ricerche in internet, film, ecc.)	47,1
Sì, in discussioni in famiglia o con amici	50,2
Sì, in dibattiti pubblici	13,3
Sì, in gruppi / associazioni culturali	9,3
Sì, in gruppi / associazioni di volontariato	9,0
Sì, in partiti / gruppi politici	3,7
Altro	1,0

BASE: Totale campione (800 casi) - Risposta multipla

school

(Translation: 'Outside the school, have you had opportunity to deal with topics linked to education for citizenship? In case, in which opportunities? 'No, never'; 'Yes, individually (reading, searching in internet, film etc.); 'Yes, discussing in family or with friends'; 'Yes, in public debates'; 'Yes, in cultural groups/associations'; 'Yes in volunteering groups/associations'; 'Yes, in political parties groups'; 'Others').

Survey of the Associazione Treelle, 2016, p. 3

It is a very good general habit in Italy that the public authorities (mostly the Municipalities) invite all the new 18 years old youngsters and solemnly give them the text of the Italian Constitution, welcoming them in the world

of adult citizens, able to vote.

Figure 9: The President of the Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Bruno Dorigatti, delivering the book of the Italian Constitution to the new voters (18 years old)



There are plenty of Associations, volunteering groups at local, national and international level dealing with tasks related to citizenship education, very randomly listed: Clean up, Libera. Associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie, MFE (Movimento Federalista Europeo), Italian sections of international associations (like Amnesty International), even Municipalities, Regional and Provincial Councils, religious groups, in all Italian regions, although with differences among the geographical parts of the country. In Italy there is less tradition for volunteering in comparison to the Northern European countries, anyway there are 44 000 volunteering associations according to the Report of Csvnnet (Coordinamento Nazionale dei Centri di Servizio per il Volontariato) 2015, and they contribute indirectly to develop civic responsibility.

8 Achieved results and student assessment

The outcomes of civic and citizenship education are identifiable considering the assessment and evaluation at school, the results of the surveys at national and international level and citizens behaviour in citizenship duties, in the voting rate and in general participation.

8.1

Although it is not a subject, civic and citizenship education contributes to the general evaluation of the students; this assessment is responsibility of teachers for history, geography, social science subject areas in the primary and in the lower secondary school (C.M. 86/2010).

In the Italian upper secondary schools, credits or points may be awarded for participation in community oriented out-of-school activities and these are taken into account

in the general assessment which provides access to the upper secondary leaving certificate (C.M. 86/2010); this is not, however, compulsory. Parallel to, general monitoring and evaluation procedures on education system performance does not focus on citizenship education provision at school.

The so called RAV (Rapporto di Auto Valutazione), a data base of the MIUR, where all schools are called to report their activity, could be an opportunity for collecting in systematic way the experiences in the field of civic and citizenship education.

8.2

All observers complain of a gap between intended and enacted curriculum (Losito, 2003, p. 6). A Survey of the 'Conferenza dei Presidenti delle Assemblee Legislative Delle Regioni e delle Province Autonome' (Conference of Presidents of Legislative Assemblies of Autonomous

Regions and Provinces), on how youngsters deal with the Constitution, conducted on a sample of 4.000 youngsters (age 18 to 30 years), living in Italy in the years 2008 shows poor interest and competences. Answering the question: "Hai mai letto la Costituzione italiana?" (Have you ever read the Italian Constitution?), only 25 % state having read it in all parts

Figure 10: Knowledge of the Italian Constitution by youngsters (age 18 to 30 years)

si, tutta	25
si, ma solo in alcune parti	63
no	12
preferisco non rispondere	0

(Translation of the answers: 'Yes, All (Constitution)'; 'Yes, only some parts', 'No', 'I prefer not answering')

Survey of the 'Conferenza dei Presidenti Delle Assemblee Legislative delle Regioni e delle Province Autonome', 2016, p.16.

According to the recent Survey "Proteo Fare Sapere" (2010), the students of the upper secondary school have a poor knowledge of the Italian Constitution. 35% of them declared being sufficiently informed about it, and only 13,8% reported to know it well or quite well. 40 to 55% of the students do not have the text of the Constitution, don't know what it deals with, nor when it was approved (Proteo Fare Sapere, 2010).

We can observe insufficient explanations to the students of the meaning of the national celebrations (example: June 2nd, 'Festa della Repubblica', remembering 1946 when the country became a Republic and the monarchy was abolished).

Civic illiteracy seems to be very common, concerning learning contents, attitudes and values; anyway the results achieved by Italian students in the Survey IEA ICCS, the International Civic Education study, carried out by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) give a positive picture of the knowledge and skills actually achieved by Italian students in this field both in CIVED 1999 and in ICCS 2009. Fourteen years old pupils reach the average score 531 (IEA ICCS 2009 European Report, p. 48).

We don't have full knowledge on how civic competence of 14-year-old's pupils changes during the transition into adult civic life, when youngsters have greater opportunities for political engagement as they become older. Amnå and Zetterberg collected cross-sectional survey data about enthusiasm for participation comparing the rates of intended participation in Nordic youths and their Southern European counterparts in the CIVED database, and then the adult European Social Survey dataset, and note that by age 17–25 the enthusiasm in Southern Europe has already gone (Amnå and Zetterberg, 2010).

If we consider the voting rate as an indicator of engagement of the citizens, we are impressed that 68,5 % of Italian voters attended the referendum for the Constitutional reform in December 2016, overcoming the previous lack of interest, when the quorum for the referendum validity was not reached (31% of voters in April 2016).

9 Conclusive remarks: Improving civic and citizenship education establishing a systematic approach

In the Italian school system civic and citizenship education are declared as one of the fundamental aims of school education as a whole, anyway a systematic approach is lacking; there is rather an highly fragmented panorama, with thousands of initiatives not covering all the student population.

There is a need for school policy decisions, starting from the introduction of an official specific subject, overcoming the indeterminacy of indications, defining the educational tasks for each school year, giving an assignment to a specific subject/ teacher to teach and coordinate civic and citizenship education; especially the MIUR should introduce training for civic and citizenship education in the teachers' initial training; building professional teachers, competent in this field, will contribute strongly to improving the situation. The in service training can be helpful, when it starts from a good basis and is involves in systematic way all teachers in charge for this task.

At the same time research and scientific exchange among different countries, networking and sharing of good experiences, learning from each other, help for positive change.

The introduction of a new subject can not mean enlarging the school time which is already very broad (EACEA Eurydice, 2015, p.13); it could go together with the introduction of optionality for some subjects and with a better use of the time already planned for class

/school assemblies ('Assemblee di istituto'), teaching in modules.

The teachers' professional associations, the non governmental organizations, trade unions, parents' and students associations, and all those feeling responsible for the future of the society, especially the more committed and professionally more aware teachers and researchers can play a role in influencing decision at local level for the school activities and at ministry level for the teacher training for a more systematic, effective, and motivating civic and citizenship education.

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