European SWOT Analysis on Education for Environmental Citizenship



Edited by Andreas Ch. Hadjichambis, Pedro Reis & Demetra Paraskeva-Hadjichambi



ENEC Cost Action Report

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Edited by

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List of Main Abbreviations

CE: Citizenship Education CoP: Community of Practise DSP: Dominant Social Paradigm EA: Environmental Attitudes EB: Environmental Behaviour EC: Environmental Citizenship ECn: Environmental Citizen EE: Environmental Education

EEC: Education for Environmental Citizenship

EfS: Education for Sustainability

ESD: Education for Sustainable Development FCN: Frequency of Contact with Nature

NC: National Curriculum

NEP: New Environmental Paradigm Scale PSAs: Public Service Announcements

SE: Science Education

SSIBL: Socio-Scientific Inquiry-Based Learning

STEM: Science Technology Engineering & Mathematics

TPB: Theory of Planned Behaviour

TPD: Teacher Professional Development

VBN: Values Beliefs Norms

Foreword

Environmental citizenship is crucial for the success of any environmental policy. Sustainable development, a circular economy, a low-carbon economy, and a bio-economy require an effective citizen engagement. Citizens are called upon to adopt environmental attitudes and behaviours, make green choices, increase civic participation, and to be aware of and apply their environmental rights and duties. The contemporary environmental crisis with climate change, biodiversity loss, air pollution and all other local and global environmental problems demand an education that is capable of empowering environmental citizens. Education plays a key role in shaping future environmental citizens; nobody is born environmental citizen but anybody can become so by education.

This report presents a SWOT Analysis of an integrated and holistic type of education in Europe "Education for Environmental Citizenship". The SWOT analysis is presented in two levels. In Part A a synthesis of the results of 157 experts from 28 European countries are presented. In Part B the reader can exlore the 23 European country reports.

It is important to clarify that this reseach regarding SWOT analysis was undertaken before any development on the concept of Education for Environmental Citizenship such as common definition and the pedagogical approach. In this fact it illustrates the experts' opinion in the different contexts through out Europe.

We hope that European stakeholders will find it useful.

Dr Andreas Ch. Hadjichambis Prof Pedro Reis Dr Demetra Paraskeva-Hadjichambi

> European Network for Environmental Citizenship ENEC Cost Action CA16229

9. SWOT Analysis of Education for Environmental Citizenship - Country Report: GREECE

European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC)

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Abstract: Environmental Education (EE) in the Greek education system was initiated through a pilot stage for secondary school education in 1987. EE was legislated from 1990-1991 for secondary and primary education. EE in schools is implemented through educational projects that are supported by specialised officials (Environmental Education Officers) in each Prefecture. EE is also supported by the curricula of Science Education (SE) in the different age levels. Since 1993 Environmental Education Centers have been established all over the country by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Municipalities and the National Youth Institution. The Environmental Education Centers collaborate with Universities, Research Institutes and other Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations. They provide educational programmes for primary and secondary schools relating to the local environment, teacher training seminars, regional, national and international networks and the production of educational material. EE is also a subject in the Science and the Pedagogic Departments in universities. During the last 12 years there has been a shift from EE to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and Environmental Education Centers in particular have implemented Life-Long Learning Programmes (LLP) and Citizenship Education (CE). The challenge for the development of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece is linked with the utilization of EE, SE, ESD, and LLP. The question asked is: Which structures and partnerships will undertake the support of the relative education and training? The SWOT analysis reveals the major advantages and the obstacles of such a challenge.

Acknowledgments: This chapter is based on work from Cost Action ENEC – European Network for Environmental Citizenship (CA16229) supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology). We would like to thank the six experts who kindly participated in the relative survey.

9.1. Introduction

Environmental Education (EE) in the Greek education system was initiated through a pilot stage, applied in secondary education Schools of 20 Prefectures in 1987. EE was legislated from 1990-1991 for secondary and primary education. EE in schools is implemented through educational projects that are supported by specialised officials (Environmental Education Officers) in each Prefecture (Kousoulas, 2000). Most of these projects are not compulsory, but are on a voluntary basis both for teachers and for students. During the last 25 years there has been increased interest from teachers. EE is also supported by the curricula of Science Education (SE) in the different age levels. Since 1993 Environmental Education Centers (EECs) have been established all over the country by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with Municipalities and the National Youth Institution (Farangitakis, 2010). EECs are comprised of teachers of both primary and secondary education with increased qualifications. The relative infrastructure and the equipment of the Centers have been financed using European funds. The EECs collaborate with Universities, Research Institutes and other Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations. They provide educational programmes for primary and secondary schools relating to the local environment, Teacher training seminars, regional, national and international networks and the production of educational material (Farangitakis, 2008). EE is also a subject in the Science and the Pedagogic Departments at universities. During the last 12 years there has been a shift from EE to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (Scoullos, 2007), and EECs in particular have proceeded to Life-Long Learning Programmes (LLP) and Citizenship Education (CE). The challenge for the development of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece is linked with the utilisation of EE, SE, ESD, LLP and the question then asked is: Which structures and partnerships will undertake the support of the relative education and training?

Due to the lack of consistent EE policy by the Ministry of Education (MoE), economic and other reasons, EE start to deteriorate since 2008 (Sbarounis, 2010). Furthermore, as a result of the long-term economic crisis in Greece, the MoE, has proceeded to cut down two major aspects of Environmental Education: a. the time that schools can dedicate to EE, and b. the supporting institutions of EECs. In addition, recent announcements from the MoE foresee further degradation of EECs. In our opinion the above are wrong political choices since the current environmental challenges such as climate change need to be priorities and tackled effectively.

A summary of the findings of the SWOT Analysis according to the process of the questionnaires completed by the six Greek experts is outlined below. The views that are mentioned hereinafter have emerged by the compilation of the answers of the respondents (the experts) and do not necessarily represent the views of the authors. Since the number of the respondents is small, the findings of the SWOT analysis are indicative of the situation of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece and not extensive.

9.2 Strengths of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece

Education for Environmental Citizenship constitutes an integrated approach that covers all different aspects of EE (social, economic, political, governance). Furthermore, it prepares the students to act more as citizens than consumers. Education for Environmental Citizenship provides people with the opportunity to be responsible for and to make choices about their environment. It produces environmental and social benefits that include developing wider environmental awareness and taking responsible action to improve the environment and strengthen communities. Education for Environmental Citizenship develops students' (and ultimately citizens') action competences to positively influence environment and the fair and sustainable distribution of resources. As regards its relation to EE, the former is wider than EE, the purpose of which is more obvious through Education for Environmental Citizenship. Education for Environmental Citizenship also involves adult citizens and offers a great opportunity to foster their environmental awareness.

Education for Environmental Citizenship has emerged relatively recently in the landscape of formal and non-formal education and seems to fill in the gap, integrating other major types as EE, SE, ESD and CE.

Some characteristics of Education for Environmental Citizenship are considered to be unique by the Greek experts. Education for Environmental Citizenship focuses on environmental issues but also appeals to adult citizens who can be more actively involved in action. It emphasises the personal responsibility. Citizens' active participation is crucial, if a society chooses to move towards sustainability. Environmental Citizenship prioritises environmental justice and collective action. It constitutes a pluralistic and holistic approach to addressing environmental issues in a manner that is consistent with the environmental knowledge, values and action competences. Environmental Citizenship is the ultimate goal of EE. It involves empowering students to acquire the knowledge, the skills and the attitudes needed to identify their values with respect to the environment and to act accordingly.

In addition, some features of Education for Environmental Citizenship are considered, by most of the respondents, to be not only complementary, but actually more effective than the other types of education (especially to EE, ESD and CE). Education for Environmental Citizenship focuses on and highlights relationships between society, economy, politics and governance mostly in environmental issues. The focus is in a more targeted and systematic way on how to help students be aware of and take responsibility in improving environmental quality and engaging them, individually and collectively, in the hands-on, concrete actions needed to face environmental challenges. It is a more sound and holistic approach of human behaviour in its natural and social environment. A well designed and implemented project of Education for Environmental Citizenship could provide important ways of promoting both ecological sustainability and environmental justice. Education for Environmental Citizenship states our relationship to the environment in terms of rights and

duties/obligations, and outlines and teaches the importance of personal responsibility, self-involvement and principals of resilience. However, there is also an opinion that expresses the difficulty in arguing that Education for Environmental Citizenship could do better than other types of education.

According to the experts, teachers and other people involved in education consider that Education for Environmental Citizenship has a number of other advantages such as:

- linking words with action
- the opportunity for teachers and trainers to educate students in complex and critical thinking since the specific type of education deals with environmental issues, which have both public and private aspects and current and future impacts
- the enrichment of educational praxis with innovative teaching practices puts an
 emphasis on various, often interwoven, dimensions of environmental issues and
 the role of citizens in handling them effectively
- the creation of a social learning context, which encourages the collective negotiation of conflicting interests through open, participatory and democratic decision-making processes regarding environmental challenges
- pupils are educated in a way that they are able to live together in a common environment
- the goal of sustainability can be achieved through effective Environmental Citizenship
- the evolution of our society at all levels can be determined by the citizen's qualities and attitudes.

9.3 Weaknesses of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece

The main weaknesses of Education for Environmental Citizenship include the lack of a clearly defined framework of aims, goals, methodology, etc. The Environmental Citizenship domain is complex and for this reason it is necessary to be more clear and specific especially in relation to other types of education (EE, ESD, SE or CE). Apart from the complexity, other Education for Environmental Citizenship characteristics outline those difficulties that prevent it from being properly implemented and for it to succeed in relation to time. Firstly, it is a time demanding type of education and adults specifically can have less time to dedicate to education than students. Secondly it does not have immediate results. It takes time to bear fruit and when we need to have an effective and immediate response to some environmental problems, instead of implementing special educational and training programmes, we use financial incentives (motivations or penalties) in order to change citizens' behaviour. On the other hand, Environmental Citizenship often refers less to environmental responsibilities and more to environmental rights. Some other weaknesses relate to the intrinsic characteristics of the prevailing education system in

Greece, which many times is characterised as being teacher-centred and too theoretic.

It is considered crucial to confront some of the above-mentioned weaknesses through:

- defining the target groups, the framework, the tasks and the methodology of Education for Environmental Citizenship
- specifying and clarifying the relationship of Education for Environmental Citizenship to other types of education (EE, ESD,SE, CE) without declining them
- adequately and competently instructing trainers and teachers.

Towards this end is essential that Education for Environmental Citizenship would be communicated with simplicity and would not use a difficult language with overly specialised terminology.

A major obstacle to recently appear is the many changes and reforms in both the Greek education system and the curricula in primary and secondary education throughout the last two years, making the launch of Education for Environmental Citizenship difficult.

The respondents included an estimate of the weaknesses that the students and teachers involved in Education for Environmental Citizenship would perceive: a. the lack of time; b. the conflict with other forms of education; c. the goals of Education for Environmental Citizenship to be unrealistic (or very difficult to achieve); d. a possible insistence on general theoretical approaches in dealing with environmental problems, perhaps in the form of wishful thinking; and e. a possible lack of going in deep in each subject.

With regards to the aims and competency of the education system or the educators, some threats were speculated: a. in the case that Education for Environmental Citizenship would be confined to the development of rhetoric at the expense of action in the context of environmental citizenship, and b. in the case that in Education for Environmental Citizenship the cognitive element would dominate over values, predispositions and competences related to the qualities of citizen.

In addition, various external factors that could eliminate the success of Education for Environmental Citizenship have been identified:

- limited interest of potential target groups
- single-dimensional approaches that do not highlight the complex nature of modern environmental challenges
- the interests of biggest industrials with the power to influence the media
- the existence of different political strategies, conventions and plans at an International, European or National level, blocking any real change of behaviour towards sustainability.

9.4 Opportunities of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece

The rapidly and radically changing socio-economic and technological environment, mainly connected to the ICT sector as well as to the economic crisis, offer some new opportunities for the development of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece. Such good opportunities include:

- the involvement of research Institutes and Academia for providing the proper knowledge
- the advance and spreading of Internet technologies
- the operation of the Open University
- the organisation of several seminars and workshops and other LLPs at the Municipality level
- the economic crisis, which is creating new mentalities, new behaviours and many opportunities for new ways of thinking and educating.

The advance of technology seems to offer one of the major opportunities and facilitates Education for Environmental Citizenship as long as it is used properly and teachers are informed and trained adequately. Changing technology is creating new frames for education and new tools and we have to learn how to use them for Education for Environmental Citizenship.

Some interesting trends in education that could improve the opportunities of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece include: holistic and pluralistic educational approaches and the development of Values Education related to Environmental Citizenship and Democracy Education.

At the same time, at the social level, there is an interesting trend regarding the success of sustainable development which has been capable of promoting the collaborative work between those who are primarily concerned with environment, those who value economic development, and those who are dedicated to improving the human condition. The stronger linkage of Education for Environmental Citizenship to environmental justice and set in the wider context of the sustainability discourse and the current debates on governance could be beneficial as well.

Finally, the big problem of plastic pollution could, on the other hand, offer a lot of opportunities to the development of Education for Environmental Citizenship. For example, there are many new materials being produced by recycling products or natural fibres, which are 'trendy' and could create new jobs that are ecologically based.

9.5 Threats of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece

Some of the major threats originate from the lack of a specific description of Education for Environmental Citizenship, the gap to determine the relationship between it and the other types of education (EE, ESD, SE, CE), and the absence of a clear methodological approach for the 'teaching' of Environmental Citizenship (e.g. aims, curriculum, teaching strategies). Learning materials, programmes or services for Education for Environmental Education have not yet been adequately developed. Some sparse efforts have been created here and there (e.g. at postgraduate level, or on some internet platforms that allow citizens to interact with scientists in specific environmental issues such as the case of alien species). Another issue originates from the fact that Education for Environmental Citizenship is time demanding and does not have immediate results and for this reason financial incentives (motivations or penalties) are used in order to change citizens' behaviour. So, apart from the lack of prioritisation and other consequences, resources that could be used for the development of Education for Environmental Citizenship are directed elsewhere. Other threats include:

- lack of time (especially from adults involved in Education for Environmental Citizenship)
- lack of proper scientific knowledge
- lack of proper methods used
- insufficient training and preparation of teachers and educators on how they pedagogically address innovative trends and practices that could improve and fulfil opportunities of Education for Environmental Citizenship
- the dominant social status quo and the cultural values of each place, which much
 of the time can seem to be indifferent about the state of the environment and the
 associated ecological issues.

In addition to the above with regards to formal education, the Greek Ministry of Education is currently making changes that negatively affect issues on education for sustainability and the environment (e.g. the elimination of Environmental Education Officers, the weakening of the Environmental Education Centers).

In determining the relationship between Education for Environmental Citizenship and the other types of education (EE, ESD, SE, CE) and the lack of development of proper methodology, teaching strategies and practices etc. (due to the fact that Education for Environmental Citizenship is a relatively new concept), Education for Environmental Citizenship should assimilate and elaborate the experience gained in the other fields. Such adjustment, even slow, has been taking place in a lot of cases. However, EE is targeting school students in a self-participatory and live way, which is not easily achieved by Education for Environmental Citizenship and adult citizens.

9.6 Other aspects of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Greece

9.6.1 The similarity of Education for Environmental Citizenship with other types of education (EE, ESD, SE, CE)

As shown in Table 1, Education for Environmental Citizenship mostly resembles ESD, then CE and EE, and least of all SE.

Table 1 Semi-quantitative response to SWOT questions 7 to 10 (n=6 experts)

SWOT Questions	Mean	Max.	Min.
To what degree (1-5) is EEC similar with EE	3.2	4	2
To what degree (1-5) is EEC similar with ESD	3.8	5	2
To what degree (1-5) is EEC similar with SE	2	3	1
To what degree (1-5) is EEC similar with CE	3.3	5	2

Scale: 1 not similar - 5 very similar

9.6.2 Differences of Education for Environmental Citizenship between formal and non-formal education

In non-formal education, students are often older than those in formal education, thus they have more social experiences but less scientific knowledge and less available time. Furthermore, in non-formal education it is possible that learners to have the opportunities to be involved in more authentic contexts and activities concerning Environmental Citizenship. These parameters should be taken into account with the elaboration of Education for Environmental Citizenship objectives, methodology, programmes etc. and by educators and trainers.

There are also conflicting views and some confusion regarding other differences. Some argue that such differences are slight and not always obvious. Some argue that in the case of non-formal education, the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats of Education for Environmental Citizenship may be strongly linked to the context of life-long learning. Finally, there is an opinion that they are exactly the opposite: the strengths and opportunities of the non-formal education are the weaknesses of the formal one.

9.6.3 Differences of Education for Environmental Citizenship between primary and secondary education

For students in secondary education is easier to understand the complex relationships between society, economy, environment and governance. Furthermore, they are familiar with the concepts such as 'responsibility', 'duties', 'rights', 'common goods' and 'critical thinking', they are also able to generalise and to think in a more abstract way.

Education for Environmental Citizenship could start from primary education but it is easier to involve secondary education students in the multidimensional analysis of the social, political and economic life of societies aiming at sustainable development. The necessity of 'motivation system' is almost more sensible for primary education whereas the opportunities of the changes due to the economic crisis are more to be felt at the secondary education level.

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The European Network for Environmental Citizenship (ENEC) – funded as a COST Action (CA16229-Horizon 2020) – brings together more than 120 experts from 37 countries with the objective to improve the understanding, the practice and the assessment of Environmental Citizenship in Europe and the participating countries.

Environmental Citizenship has been an influential concept in many different arenas such as economy, policy, philosophy, organizational and corporation management and marketing and could be better exploited and established furthermore in the field of education as well.

This report examines the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Education for Environmental Citizenship in Europe. In the first part of the report, the need for Education for Environmental Citizenship, is examined along with the methodology and results of an extensive research from more than 157 experts in 28 European countries and Israel. In the second part of the report, the country chapters for the 23 European countries and Israel emphasise the similarities, differences and special features of these case studies.

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