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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 explore the 23 European country reports.

It is important to clarify that this research 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*

13. SWOT Analysis of Environmental Citizenship Education in Lithuania

Understanding the current situation of Environmental Citizenship education and its possible future directions and possibilities

Mykolas S. Poskus, Audra Balunde & Lina Jovarauskaite

Mykolas Romeris University, Institute of Psychology, Environmental Psychology Research Centre Ateities st. 20, LT-08303 Vilnius, Lithuania, e-mail: audra.balunde@mruni.eu, mykolas_poskus@mruni.eu, jovarauskaite.lina@gmail.com

Abstract: The aim of this report was to uncover the current situation of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania. Qualitative data was gathered from six experts working on diverse areas of Environmental Citizenship education in the country. Data were gathered from educators (working in primary and secondary levels of education), decision-makers from NGOs and governmental organisations, and from a researcher working in the field of Environmental Citizenship education. Qualitative analysis revealed that although there are grounds to be optimistic for Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania and the experts who participated in the survey see positive and promising trends, there is much work to be done to make it education more structured, formalised and prevalent in all levels of education in Lithuania.

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13.1 Introduction

Environmental Citizenship education has not yet been investigated (qualitatively or quantitatively) in Lithuania. There is a gap of knowledge in the understanding of Environmental Citizenship in the country and this report therefore aims to focus on this need. Addressing this knowledge gap is important in making evidence-based decisions in Environmental Citizenship education (Dobson, 2007) and in promoting

pro-environmental actions through formal and informal means in primary, secondary, and higher education in Lithuania (Dagiliūtė & Liobikienė, 2015). In order to address the aforementioned knowledge gap, we have adopted a bottom-up approach of understanding Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania; specifically, we asked experts working in the field of Environmental Citizenship education at various levels to provide their experience and insight on the topic. Adopting a bottom-up approach in investigating Environmental Citizenship enables a realistic and down-to-earth perspective on the education directed at it and on the various means and policies that lead to effective change in Lithuania.

This report will consist of the strengths and weaknesses of Environmental Citizenship in Lithuania as well as the opportunities and threats. This chapter concludes with realistic perspectives for Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania and future directions for activities that would lead for its increase.

Six individuals participated in the analysis. We aimed at gathering answers from individuals who work in the field of Environmental Citizenship Education, however this field is underdeveloped in Lithuania, and in some cases we had to ask to individuals who mainly deal with Citizenship Education in activities that involve environmental issues. Their answers are coded as such:

A1 – Decision-maker in an Educational Professional Society

A2 - Educator – Teacher in Primary Education working in the field of Citizenship Education

A3 – Decision-maker in a National NGO working in the field of Environmental Education and Citizenship Education

A4 - Educator – Teacher in Secondary Education working in the field of Citizenship Education

A5 - Researcher – An academic from the research field of Citizenship Education

A6 – Policy-maker at the Ministry of Education of Lithuania.

13.2 Strengths of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania

Respondents were asked to answer four questions relating to the strengths of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania. The first question asked what the respondents thought were the advantages of educating individuals on the issues of Environmental Citizenship; the second asked respondents to identify what Environmental Citizenship education could do better than other types of Citizenship Education (CE) or Science Education (SE); the third asked respondents to identify the uniqueness of Environmental Citizenship education in comparison to SE and CE, and what Environmental Citizenship education can do that other types of education

cannot; the last question asked to identify the perceived strengths of Environmental Citizenship education.

In analysing the responses, we were able to detect a strong theme of Environmental Citizenship education being perceived as “raising qualifications and increasing responsibility” (A1). However, “in [Lithuania] <...> only non-governmental organisations are [spending the most effort in this area]” (A3). NGOs are doing work “by showing good examples” (A3), rather than talking about it, thus providing an opportunity for communities to learn how to become Environmental Citizens by doing good work. NGOs are very goal-driven, thus they invest in concrete activities that not only provide an educational benefit for communities, but provide a concrete benefit for society as well. Environmental Citizenship education is perceived as an interdisciplinary endeavour that involves a holistic understanding of how humans relate to the natural environment on various levels.

One of the key strengths of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania as perceived by all of the respondents is the need for Environmental Citizenship education to be deemed important and necessary, even if they did not engage in it directly or specifically themselves. The respondents were engaged in parts of Environmental Citizenship education solely on the basis of their perceived importance of Environmental Citizenship education: “Environmental Citizenship brings great benefits to us as a school community as well as to general Lithuanian society” and “Everybody wins (society and nature)” (A4). Others even see Environmental Citizenship education having general individual benefits as it “plays an important role in the overall development of the personality” (A6).

The analysis revealed that Environmental Citizenship education is perceived to have benefits that range from the individual level, to the local community, society in general, and ultimately the whole world. Environmental Citizenship education is seen to be beneficial not only to the environment, but in fostering the development of well balanced and moral individuals (Environmental Citizenship education reaches “universal values” (A5)) that will be able to deal with future environmental issues in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner: “Environmental Education takes the most important role, it surrounds the child from the first days of life” (A6). Consistently with the literature (Hart, 2013), respondents see Education for Environmental Citizenship as something that is important from very early stages of an individual’s development, in order to bring up responsible citizens that are already environmentally minded when they begin to make individual decisions on entering the workforce and becoming active agents in the society.

Another strong theme that emerged from the analysis is that Environmental Citizenship education plays a strong role in bringing communities together and fostering their connectedness with nature: “[Environmental Citizenship education] can teach a lot of important things, [to be] aesthetically aware [of] nature, cultural heritage, [it can also] bring up a sense of citizenship” (A6); “[Environmental Citizenship education tell us that] we must take care not only of ourselves, but also of people around us” (A3). A general theme of interdependence of humans and nature can be seen throughout the answers of the respondents (Dornhoff, Sothmann, Fiebelkorn, & Menzel, 2019).

The qualitative analysis revealed that Environmental Citizenship education has a potential to be integrated into formal and non-formal education in Lithuania, as all respondents indicated their favourable disposition toward it and are already implementing parts of Environmental Citizenship education, even if not specifically focusing on it. As others have pointed out (Tristão & Tristão, 2016), the biggest potential can be seen in the NGO sector, since NGOs are at the forefront of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania not only bringing knowledge to communities, but also actively making a concrete effort to preserve the environment.

13.3 Weaknesses of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania

Respondents were asked to answer five questions dealing with the weaknesses of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania. The first question asked to identify the weaknesses; the second asked what could be done to improve Environmental Citizenship education; the third question asked what Environmental Citizenship educators should avoid; the fourth asked what would be perceived as weaknesses of Environmental Citizenship education by students and educators implementing Environmental Citizenship education; and the last asked what the respondents thought could undermine Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania.

It appears that there are no open platforms for communicating the message of Environmental Citizenship education, and there is also a lack of policies that could then result in formalising Environmental Citizenship education in schools and communities. One of the most salient themes that emerged from the analysis is the perception that Environmental Citizenship education is conducted non-systematically and without the required expertise. One respondent remarked on the “lack of expertise and coordination of various programmes” of Environmental Citizenship education (A1) and that Environmental Citizenship education programmes are “short-lived [and] episodic”. “Students and teachers would not be as compelled by Environmental Citizenship education if there is not enough information on them” (A5), and a “lack of [a] united strategy [on] what and how to educate” (A4). One respondent said that “[they] are working with teachers and students, [however] teachers said it was difficult to get <...> information that interested children [while students remarked on] the complexity of information” (A3). The scarce Environmental Citizenship education programmes that are available are oriented toward presenting the negative consequences of unsustainable actions, and “people will be discouraged by information if we tell them only about negative things” (A3), existing programmes are mostly talk-oriented and are not implemented in practice, and all respondents expressed a need for “less declarations and [for] more tangible results locally” (A6).

Another salient theme emerged regarding the lack of resources, both material and temporal. First, both educators and students in Lithuania feel overwhelmed with

the existing school curriculum, thus any additional activities would take up precious time both from teachers and students: “If the teacher organises an event, it takes a lot of time” (A1). Environmental Citizenship education is “not a priority in education, often [dominated by] other areas [of education]” (A6). This also results in a “lack of motivation ([both] in students and teachers)” (A4). Additionally, the lack of material resources and funding remains a barrier for effective Environmental Citizenship education as it would not be possible “if there [were] <...> no funding” (A1).

There seems to be a lack of a “unified system and continuity” (A4) of Environmental Citizenship education, and the scarce information that is available is not always “available for all, or is presented in a too complicated way” (A3). Many respondents expressed the opinion that Environmental Citizenship education “should be included in the school curriculum” (A3). This lack of formal means of Environmental Citizenship education is potentially what leads to the problems expressed in the above paragraphs. These problems, however, might stem from the formal school curriculum, because there seems to be a perceived lack of interest in Environmental Citizenship education on the societal level. One educator remarked that “many times children tell us that their parents or grandparents do not understand the need of environmental protection” (A2).

The qualitative analysis revealed that the main weakness of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania is the lack of a unified and formalised approach toward Environmental Citizenship education in all levels of education. This lack leads to Environmental Citizenship education being chaotically implemented, while the shortage of standardised educational materials leads to suboptimal presentation of relevant information, thus resulting in Environmental Citizenship education not reaching its full potential in Lithuania.

13.4 Opportunities of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania

Respondents were asked to answer two questions relating to the opportunities of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania. The first question asked about the perceived opportunities of Environmental Citizenship education, while the second asked what interesting trends the respondents saw in Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania.

A strong theme of perceived positive changes in policies can be identified in the responses. Respondents identified “[positive] changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyle changes. Everyone wants to live healthier” (A3). Others noted the “[positive] changes in government policy or European policy related to the field [of Environmental Citizenship education]” (A1). Respondents saw the sense in furthering the top-down perspective of effective policies for Environmental Citizenship

education in order to create a coherent framework for Environmental Citizenship education activities and their “integration [in the] educational process” (A6). The changing trends, however, are seen not only in policies, but on the societal level as well. For example, one respondent remarked about the increasing number of vegetarians, while others remarked on the use of social media as a means of disseminating Environmental Citizenship ideas.

There is a sense of a possible synergy among top-down and bottom-up approaches toward Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania. In part, this opportunity arises in the context of there being a lack of Environmental Citizenship education altogether, but the changing societal trends, together with local policies, could result in an effective societal shift toward sustainable practices (Misiaszek, 2017).

Perhaps the main task in taking advantage of the opportunities of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania is to act in a congruent and a systematic manner in order to present Environmental Citizenship messages to the public in a holistic way. All agents working in the field of Environmental Citizenship education should make an effort to coordinate their actions and unify their approach in order to reach the public effectively (EEA, 2012).

13.5 Threats of Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania

Respondents were asked to answer five questions regarding the threats to Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania. The first question asked about the perceived obstacles for Environmental Citizenship education; the second asked what other types of citizenship education are seen to do better than Environmental Citizenship education; the third asked about the availability of educational materials; the fourth asked whether changing technologies would pose a threat to Environmental Citizenship education; while the last question asked to express the respondents’ opinions on whether any of the identified weaknesses of Environmental Citizenship education could pose a real threat to Environmental Citizenship education in general.

A theme of a perceived threat of indifference on the governmental level (regarding the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Environment) can be seen in the opinions of the respondents, as one remarked that “many suggested the introduction of [EC education] into the curriculum, but this has not yet even begun to be considered” (A3). This may lead to a perception of policies oriented toward Environmental Citizenship education being implemented only formally and without sincere intent of acting on them as there is an “absence of clear governmental policy” (A5).

Respondents have identified the “ignorance of people [and a general] lack of knowledge” (A4) as a potential threat. This is quite a salient threat in Lithuania for Environmental Citizenship education since no policy can be effectively implemented without the support and willingness of the society to comply with it, and if society does not understand the benefits or the necessity of these policies, they might be met with disapproval, thus disincentivising politicians from proposing such policies. Therefore, NGOs should make sufficient efforts to educate the community in order to eventually get governmental support for their activities in Environmental Citizenship education.

Another theme that can be identified in the responses is that education for Civic Engagement is quite prevalent in the school curriculum at the present moment, and trying to implement Environmental Citizenship education would probably meet some resistance since the current (and thus known and understood) methods and materials would need to be changed in order to accommodate the topics of Environmental Citizenship education. While there is a good possibility of integrating Environmental Citizenship education into the regular curriculum of education for Civic Engagement, this integration might not be sufficient in scale, thus removing material from the regular curriculum and not adding enough new material to make a tangible difference. The current situation is that “[Environmental Citizenship education] is almost non-existent in [the] school system, with rare fragmented exceptions in some classes during particular topics” (A4).

Respondents identified a lack of educational materials that could serve as a basis for Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania. One respondent stated that the learning materials for Environmental Citizenship education are “almost non-existent” (A3), while another remarked that there is a “lack of teacher preparation and qualification” (A6). The scarce materials on Environmental Citizenship education are published by NGOs, and this might disincentivize their use by government-funded schools that are compelled to use only governmental-approved educational material and avoid any deviation from the standard curriculum.

Overall, the main theme of the threats to Environmental Citizenship education is the lack of a concrete and formalised approach toward Environmental Citizenship education. Without formal inclusion into the schooling curriculum and without sincere support from policy-makers, Environmental Citizenship education is perceived as a weak and episodic activity that lacks tangible impact (Misiaszek, 2017). Even though many societal trends point toward an increasingly positive perspective, there are doubts if this will be sufficient in order to effectively implement Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania.

13.6 Concluding remarks

In the words of one of the respondents, “there are more weaknesses in formal education [while] informal education has much more opportunities in [promoting Environmental Citizenship]” (A6). Thus, formal education should be at the forefront of policy-makers and all agents who are involved in Environmental Citizenship education in Lithuania. Participants identify primary education as an especially promising means of promoting Environmental Citizenship, since “in primary education this [could be presented as] a game, but does not [necessarily require] commitment [or] sense of responsibility” (A6), thus allowing youngsters to explore environmental issues and foster their environmental values without feeling any pressure to pursue any actions.

A need for a coherent and formalised programme of actions is an overall theme that can be seen in the answers of all of the respondents. This indicates the need for synergy among various agents involved in Environmental Citizenship education (NGOs, governmental organisations, educators, communities, etc.); there is a need to bring all of these currently detached and separate parts into a common perspective with common goals and a common way of approaching Environmental Citizenship education.

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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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