

## THE REGIONAL BALTIC SUMMER ACADEMY

### Building Safe and Inclusive Schools for All

28<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018  
Estonia

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The Regional Summer Academy is a training programme that aims to build the capacity of schools in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to foster an inclusive and democratic culture by training teachers, school leaders and community members in citizenship and human rights education. It also offers support for school development projects.

Organised yearly since 2015, the Academy is a great opportunity to learn practical tools and strategies on how to create a more open, democratic and inclusive school environment for all children through a whole-school approach. The programme allows school teams to analyse school needs and priorities and prepare an action plan to meet the challenges their school is dealing with.

By bringing together participants and institutions from 3 Baltic countries the Academy also strengthens regional cooperation and dialogue.

Based on the principle of rotation, the Academy takes place in a different Baltic State each year. In 2018, the Academy is organised in Estonia by the Ministry of Education and Research of the Republic of Estonia, the Estonian Institute of Human Rights and the European Wergeland Centre.

The programme focuses on the development of competences which young people need for participation in modern societies, such as cooperation skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, ability to make independent decisions, flexibility and adaptability.

Such competences can best be developed in an environment where all students can try out the tools of democracy: debating, taking part in decision-making and influencing school policies through, for example, student councils.

Another important tool is the discussion of controversial issues “which arouse strong feelings and divide opinion in communities and society<sup>1</sup>”

Such issues are increasingly brought up in classrooms all over Europe and are not easy to tackle. However, when conducted in safe spaces, discussion of controversial issues teach students how to engage in dialogue with people whose values are different from their own and to respect them, which is central to the democratic process.

The Academy, therefore aims to help teachers and schools develop strategies for addressing such issues.

#### **THE ACADEMY SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS BY:**

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#### ***Democratic Competences by Council of Europe: Values-Attitudes-Skills-Knowledge & Critical Understanding***

- Conflict-resolution skills
- Knowledge and Critical understanding of the world
- Cooperation skills
- Respect
- Civic-Mindedness

[\*Find out more on the Council of Europe Website\*](#)

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#### ***Principles of a democratic school***

- Value diversity
- Include everybody
- Give everybody equal chances
- Respect human dignity
- Live in peace

[\*\(Council of Europe Charter on EDC/HRE\)\*](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Teaching Controversial Issues, Council of Europe Manual. <https://rm.coe.int/166>

- Enhancing competences of teachers and school leaders aiming at supporting *principles of a democratic school*.
- Providing a forum to exchange effective practices and experiences in developing democratic competences of pupils.
- Supporting the school in initiating changes in key areas of school life such as teaching and learning, governance and culture and cooperation with the community.
- Encouraging dialogue and cooperation between different actors in education.
- Putting into use Council of Europe materials for learning and living democracy.
- Expanding a network of multipliers in EDC/HRE.

### **ACTIONS TO SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES AT SCHOOL?**

The Academy helps schools take actions to develop further their school. For example, school teams may decide that their school will:

- Train teachers and enable them to use participatory methods in class;
- Establish school or pupil parliaments and support their participation in decision/making;
- Develop opportunities for parents to express their opinion about education for their children;
- Encourage students to engage in community activities.

### **BENEFITS FOR SCHOOLS**

Becoming a more democratic school provides benefits for students, teachers and your school:

- There is a friendly school atmosphere, which fosters cooperation and respect.
- Pupils feel more confident and actively listen to each other.
- Teachers feel more confident in using interactive methods in teaching, and are able to address controversial issues in class.
- Pupils with weaker academic results are more involved in school.
- Relations between teacher – pupil, teacher – parent, pupil – pupil are co-operative.
- Pupils are showing greater interest in community affairs.
- Cooperation between schools and other organizations exist, and as a result, pupils are more involved in volunteer activities in their neighbourhood.
- Pupils express their opinions without fear, and take responsibility for their school.

*Learning about democracy at school is interesting. It empowers our students to take part in their lives and to promote what is important for their school and society. It is refreshing to work using new techniques and methods. Students are more communicative and the atmosphere in the classroom is totally different".*  
*(Teacher, Academy training)*

### **BRIEF TIMELINE FOR SCHOOLS – 2018/2019**

SPRING 2018: APPLY (until March 10<sup>th</sup>)

- Commit to become a more democratic school – get the support from the school management
- Build a school-community team & apply together

MAY/JUNE: PRE-TASKS

- Together with the national trainer assess the situation at your school to identify how democratic your school already is, including strengths and areas for improvements, using EWC tool.

JUNE 28<sup>TH</sup> – JULY 1<sup>ST</sup>: FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING

- Take part in the face-face-to-face training
- Design school-wide action plan on how to become a more democratic school

SEPTEMBER- APRIL: IMPLEMENTATION

- Consult with your school on your action plan and finalise it with support of a national trainer
- Implement your actions involving members of the school community, with ongoing support from EWC trainers

#### APRIL/ MAY: EVALUATION & REPORTING

- With support of the national trainer evaluate changes at your school
- Reflect on your achievements and limitations, and identify lessons learned
- Report to EWC by May 15th 2019. Share your results beyond your school! You can inspire others!  
<http://www.theewc.org/Content/What-we-do/Summer-Academies>
- Receive a certificate

#### AFTER COMPLETION OF ACADEMY – PLAN FUTURE STEPS

- Continue your work in the next school year

*Please note: The success of the training activities depends on the commitment of all participants. By accepting to take part in the Summer Academy, participants agree to participate actively in all the phases.*

### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

#### **Who can apply?**

Participants are invited to join the training as a team of three. Each team has 3 participants 1) a school head or deputy head, 2) a teacher and 3) an active student OR a representative of a local NGO/ member of the local community.

#### **Working languages**

The training is in English. All participants need to have good knowledge of English to be able to participate actively in the training.

#### **Application and selection procedure**

##### **Application deadline: March 10, 2018**

The local organizers will select 4 school teams from each country (total 36 participants/12 teams). The selection will take into account balance between countries addressed, EDC/ HRE experiences, gender, motivation and ideas for dissemination. Only candidates selected for participation (including those for the waiting list) will be informed by email by March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

#### **Certificate of participation**

Upon completion of all phases of the training, participants will receive an online certificate by the Ministry of Education and Science of Estonia.

### **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

#### **Venue:**

The face to face training will take place in Estonia. Detailed information about the venue and the programme will be sent to selected participants.

#### **Travel and subsistence expenses - please read carefully**

The training is free of charge. Accommodation, food and activities included in the program are covered by the host country for all participants.

Further information on travel arrangements will be sent to selected participants at a later stage.

**For more information contact (national organiser): Aina Špaca, [aina.spaca@visc.gov.lv](mailto:aina.spaca@visc.gov.lv)**