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**DIFFERENT WAYS OF CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION SYSTEM  
TO ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP – A METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW**

**HOGYAN TUD HOZZÁJÁRULNI AZ OKTATÁS AZ AKTÍV  
ÁLLMAPOLGÁRSÁGHOZ? - ELMÉLETI MEGKÖZELELTÉSEK**

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**Abstract**

*The paper illustrates how the education can contribute to the active citizenship in a theoretical way. It is possible to believe that people need teaching and learning to be active in the society. Former researches proved that those societies are more effective and more sustainable where the citizens participate in an active way in shaping their environment. But how can people learn those competences which are necessary to be active? Mainly the knowledge comes from the family, but the question arises: what can the education system add to these processes? Does the education have a role in active citizenship? This paper attempts to provide answers to these questions based on literature and international practices and opinions. The paper investigates the topic by using secondary information from researchers, practitioners and by showing some good examples in the field of active citizenship education. My paper demonstrates guidance for both researchers and for whom who would like to know more about the citizenship education.*

**Keywords:** active citizenship, education, democracy, society

**JEL code:** I20

## Összefoglalás

*A tanulmány azt vizsgálja, hogy az oktatás hogyan tud hozzájárulni az aktív állampolgárságra neveléshez. Ahhoz, hogy az emberek aktívak legyenek a társadalomban, szükség van ennek tanulására. Korábbi kutatások már bizonyították, hogy egy olyan társadalom, ahol az állampolgároknak lehetőségük van beleszólni a körülöttük zajló folyamatokba sokkal hatékonyabban működik és hosszútávon fenntarthatóbb is. Kérdés, hogy az emberek hogyan és honnan tudják megtanulni azokat a kompetenciákat, amelyek ahhoz szükségesek, hogy aktívak tudjanak lenni? A tudás egyrészt jön a családból, másrészt szükség van az oktatásra is. A tanulmány arra keresi a választ, hogy az oktatásnak milyen szerepe van ebben a folyamatban. A tanulmány szekunder adatok felhasználásával elméleti síkon vizsgálja a témát, mely mind annak kutatói, mind gyakorló szakemberei számára hasznos iránymutatásokkal szolgálhat.*

**Kulcsszavak:** aktív állampolgárság, oktatás, demokrácia, társadalom

**JEL kód:** I20

## Introduction

Active citizenship is more than just being a citizen in a state and going voting, it also means political, social and even economic participation in everyday life. How can we learn the way of behaving active? Literature provides different ways, but based on my previous researches in 2017 there are two main forms: family and education. This paper concentrates on active citizenship education by using secondary sources about the topic. The aim is to provide some information about the importance of citizenship education by showing the relevant literature and giving some good examples on the topic.

The first part of the article shows information about the term *active citizenship* and the forms of learning civic competences. The study continues by the concept of active citizenship education and tries to address the following questions: In what form does education exist? Why is it important for the society? What is the role of the teachers in this process? The article ends with some good examples and conclusions.

I think that those societies need strong formal and informal education in active citizenship where the participatory democracy is still developing. In these societies families are not enough to prepare people to become active citizens. Based on my previous research I suggest that the Hungarian society should also require this type of education in order to be a flourishing and sustainable society<sup>1</sup>. This paper attempts to present information to the explanation of the importance of citizenship education.

### **Material and methods – Literature review about the active citizenship** *Active citizenship*

Social participation means that citizens take part in their society in an active way by involving in decision-making, forming opinions and making suggestions. It means that the citizens and other social actors have the opportunity to communicate their ideas and opinions about what is going on in their settlement, region or country (NÁRAI–REISINGER 2016). Participatory or active democracy is the form of democracy where people have the right to be active and involved. Nilsson (2012: 4) defined this kind of democracy in the following way: "...participative democracy requires people to get involved, to play an active role ... in their workplace, perhaps, or by taking part in a political organisation or supporting a good

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<sup>1</sup> In a sustainable society people feel that they have the right to make it better using information from each other.

cause. The area of activity does not matter. It is the commitment to the welfare of society that counts.” Participatory or active democracy needs active people. “Active citizenship is the glue that keeps society together. Democracy doesn’t function properly without it, because active democracy is more than just placing a mark on a voting slip.” (NILSSON 2012: 4)

To date, many previous studies have reported about the active citizenship. In this section I would like to provide a short explanation of this concept. According to Marshall (1950) citizenship has three main elements: civil, political and social. This approach is merely linked to the traditional type of citizenship, which refers to a legal status in a state (MORO 2001). Nowadays also the modern approach of citizenship is in use. This means that citizens are not just part of a state but they can also figure their surroundings by acting in a different way. Those citizens who take certain things for the society are called active citizens. Barr and Hashagen (2007: 53 – cited in PACKHAM 2008: 149) wrote that ‘Active citizenship recognizes that the health of communities and society as a whole, is enhanced when people are motivated and able to participate in meeting their needs’ through ideas of “mutuality and reciprocity’. Also Hoskins (2006) highlights that being active means participation in political life, in the community and also in the civil society. There is a wide range of approaches what kind of activities could be relevant, I assume that all activities can count which are in favour of the society in some way (a list of these activities are provided in Reisinger 2017<sup>2</sup>).

The question arises what citizens need to do to be active in a society. They need knowledge, skills, values, attitudes which can be interpreted as civic competences. “Competences refer to what a person is able to do, in three respects that form the core of a person’s identity: what a person knows and has understood; the skills enabling a person to use her or his knowledge; the awareness and appreciation of the knowledge and skills that a person possesses, resulting in the willingness to use them both with self-confidence and responsibility.” (GOLLOB et al. 2010: 35) Providing a list of civic competences is beyond the scope of this paper, I just would like to highlight that many researchers have offered civic competences so far, e.g. KERR 2008; HOSKINS et al. 2008; AUDIGIER 2000; REISINGER 2017. The base of the civic competencies (SZÁNTÓ 2013) are the ability of good communication, the trust, the cooperation and the openness for solving problems together.

A very important question is where can we learn these competences from and first of all how can we learn how to be an active citizen. The next section attempts to provide some possible answers.

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<sup>2</sup> This paper is under publishing in the time of writing this study.

### *Forms of learning civic competences*

It is possible to believe that people are not born with the ability of active citizenship knowledge, so they have to learn them from somewhere (POTTER 2002). Where can they learn them from and which is the best way of learning? It is widely believed that the family is our first sphere of learning about the main knowledge about us and the world around us. Learning how being a citizen means can be also learned from the parents. But children go to school at the age of 6 or 7 and they get into a different community. Can schools teach how to behave as an active citizen? A number of research and practices have proved that education is a very important source of learning civic competences. This means formal learning. Other forms of learning include the following (e.g. BREEN–REES 2009; DELANTY 2007):

- non-formal learning (organised learning but not in the formal system): „Non-formal education involves learners voluntarily opting to engage in self-directed learning from an organised body of knowledge, directed by a designated teacher. Informal education or training is more incidental and spontaneous.” (BREEN–REES 2009: 16–17)
- informal learning: during everyday life and in the communities where people live.

No previous study has given solid evidence about what is the best form of learning the way of being active citizen. I believe that there is no only one way, both of the above mentioned forms can be effective and the practice shows that the reality is some kind of mixture of them. I have conducted the following quantitative research about active citizenship where I asked people about the forms of learning civic competences:

- questionnaire survey: in April 2017 in Győr, Hungary among citizens, a total of 254 citizens filled in the questionnaire. The sample does not represent the population.
- interview: in October 2017 in Győr, Hungary among 15 active citizens.

The results show that the most important source of civic competences is the family, among people who answered the questionnaire the formal and informal education were in the second place. My interviewees gave also some different answers; formal education was mentioned only by four of them, but they think, schools can have an important role. The others mentioned other ways of learning and most of them can be related to schools, too (e.g. good examples; learning by doing; media, etc.) It is important to mention that schools can provide not only formal learning but also other informal and non-formal ways, too (MASLOWS-

KI et al. 2009; JANSEN et al. 2006 – both cited in Eurydice Report 2017: 9). These results confirmed that education (formal and informal, too) is also important when people would like to learn the form of active citizenship. The next section gives information about the role of education in this field.

## ***Methods***

This paper does not provide empirical results, but some information about the role of education about the learning civic competences in favour of being active citizens in the society in the following ways:

- introducing the concept of formal learning based on literature,
- showing some good examples and projects which aim to strengthen active citizenship.

During my research I used secondary sources from literature and also from policy papers mainly from the European Union. I also collected information from websites of good practices, projects in this field. The next sections provide information about the forms and importance of active citizenship education.

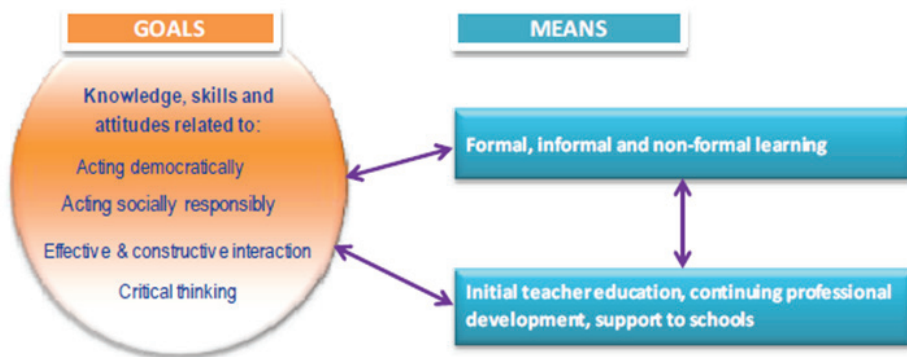
## **Active citizenship education**

### ***Forms of citizenship education***

Citizenship education is known and used in every European countries in some way (Eurydice Report 2017). The Report says (2017: 9) „Citizenship education is understood [...] as the subject area that is promoted in schools with the aim of fostering the harmonious co-existence and mutually beneficial development of individuals and of the communities they are part of. In democratic societies citizenship education supports students in becoming active, informed and responsible citizens, who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and for their communities at the local, regional, national and international level. In order to achieve these objectives, citizenship education needs to help students develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in four broad competence areas:

- 1) interacting effectively and constructively with others;
- 2) thinking critically;
- 3) acting in a socially responsible manner; and
- 4) acting democratically.”

Figure 1 illustrates the concept of the citizenship education by the Eurydice Report (2017).



**Figure 1. The conceptual framework: goals and means of citizenship education in school**

*Source: Eurydice Report 2017: 9*

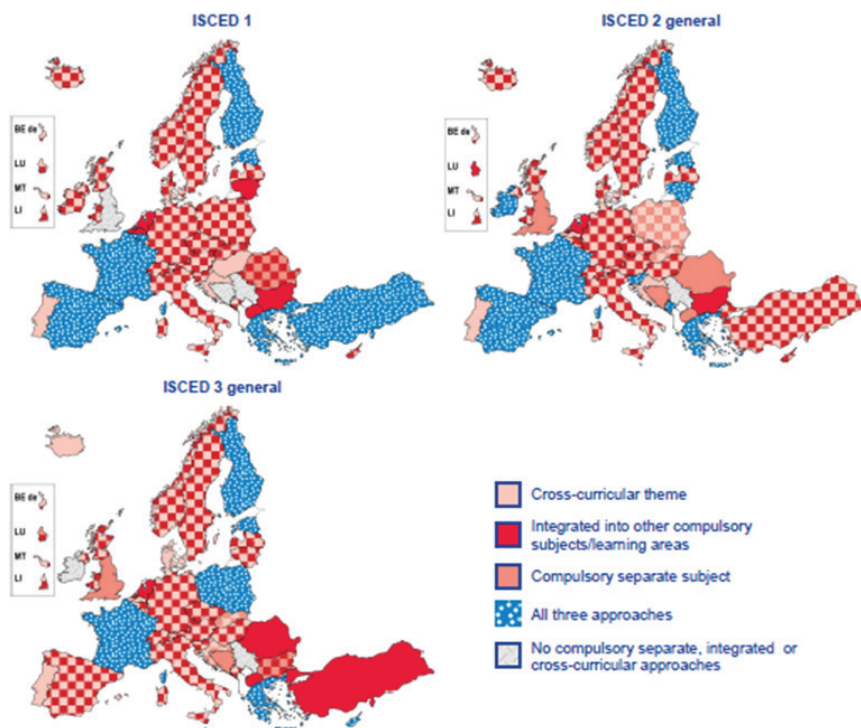
Eurydice provides analyses about the citizenship education in Europe, it investigates the way of how this type of knowledge are integrated into national curricula. Their results show the following three ways (Eurydice Report 2017: 29–30):

- „Cross-curricular theme: citizenship education objectives, content or learning outcomes are designated as being transversal across the curriculum and all teachers share responsibility for delivery.
- Integrated into other subjects: citizenship education objectives, content or learning outcomes are included within the curriculum of wider subjects or learning areas, often concerned with the humanities/social sciences. These wider subjects or learning areas do not necessarily contain a distinct component dedicated to citizenship education.
- Separate subject: citizenship education objectives, content or learning outcomes are contained within a distinct subject boundary primarily dedicated to citizenship.”

Figure 2 provides information about the types of citizenship education in Europe. „The two most widespread approaches are the integration of citizenship education components into other subjects and its mention as a cross-curricular objective. They can each be found in at least thirty education systems in all levels of primary and general secondary education. By contrast, citizenship education is provided as a compulsory separate subject in a much more limited number of education systems: 7 at primary level, 14 at lower and 12 at upper secondary levels.”



(Eurydice Report 2017: 31) In Hungary there is a long tradition of citizenship education, the Curriculum from 1978 already contained citizenship knowledge, after 1995 there is a subject called People and society in the Curriculum. Despite that citizenship education is not fully integrated into Hungarian education system (KALOCSAI 2013). The reasons may include: 1) knowledge about the society is mainly taught within the framework of the History subject 2) teachers are „forced” to teach these kind of knowledge, so they do not have freedom in this field 3) for teachers it is difficult to differentiate between the theory/practice of democracy and the daily political issues 4) there are signs of distrust in political system and democracy among teachers, too. I think that the Hungarian education system needs reform in many ways<sup>3</sup>, also the scope of democracy and citizenship learning would require to have reconsideration.



**Figure 2. Approaches to citizenship education according to national curricula for primary and general secondary education, 2016/17<sup>4</sup>**

*Source: Eurydice Report (2017: 31)*

<sup>3</sup> Recently there are many researchers and also practitioners who suggest major changes because of the unsustainability of the education system. Specifying is beyond the scope of this study.

<sup>4</sup> Note: ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education; ISCED 1 – Primary level, ISCED 2 = Lower secondary education, ISCED 3 = Upper secondary education

What is the way of learning citizenship knowledge? The traditional way of learning is when the teacher explain the topic (passive learning) what students have to learn and later they have to pass exams. This means surface learning (HOPE 2012), when the focus is only on the curriculum. The new way of learning is a different one, it encourages students to participate, to tell their ideas, to be creative and to be responsible (active learning). This kind of learning is the way of learning civic competences, too. „...learning about citizenship is not simply a matter of pursuing a course of study. It is an experience and a practice that changes our identities; we become citizens when we are treated and valued as citizens” (COFFIELD–WILLIAMSON 2011: 60 – cited HOPE 2012: 99).

This concept means that children in the elementary and secondary schools are considered as citizens, not „citizens-in-waiting” (HOPE 2012: 99). „In fact, it is hard to imagine that active citizenship can be learnt in any other way. Active citizenship is not about facts and information. It is about criticality, about values, about the balance between rights and responsibilities, about community and belongingness.” (HOPE 2012: 99) In the heart of the concept is that „Young people are more likely to learn through being citizens – not through being told how to be citizens.” (HOPE 2012: 99) The Eurydice Report (2017: 9) illustrates the same thoughts: “Citizenship education involves not only teaching and learning of relevant topics in the classroom, but also the practical experiences gained through activities in school and wider society that are designed to prepare students for their role as citizens.”

There are many ways<sup>5</sup> of educating active citizenship using the concept of new way of learning and teaching (GOLLOB–WEIDINGER 2010; Eurydice Report 2017). These forms can be motivating both for students and for teachers:

- active learning: teachers involve students directly through e.g. small group discussion, role play, problem solving – this means the learning by doing;
- interactive learning: students can express their opinions, they can learn how to discuss;
- relevant learning: students learn about the current issues;
- critical learning: students learn to think critically;
- collaborative learning: students learn the way of working and co-operate with others (“Examples can include working together on developing school media projects such as radio or newspapers, or interaction developed

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<sup>5</sup> There are many handbooks, publications which give methods of the active citizenship education, showing them is beyond the scope of this study, it would be another publication to collect the most relevant ones. Here are some sources which provide methods: the document of Professional Development Services for Teacher; Gollob et al. (2010); Gollob and Krapf (2008).

through team-based entrepreneurship education activities where groups are working together to implement a common idea or vision.” [Eurydice Report 2017: 86]);

- participative learning: students learn how to participate in a different issues.

This kind of learning means a holistic way of learning citizenship, because (GOLLOB et al. 2010):

- students learn what democracy, participation, responsibility and trust means.
- students learn how they can participate in the community: “Democratic values and practices have to be learned and relearned to address the pressing challenges of every generation. To become full and active members of society, citizens need to be given the opportunity to work together in the interests of the common good; respect all voices, even dissenting ones; participate in the formal political process; and cultivate the habits and values of democracy and human rights in their everyday lives and activities.” (HARTLEY–HUDDLESTON 2010: 13)
- students participate in school events where they can practise in the reality what they learned (e.g. they can participate in governing the schools, they can exercise rights and responsibilities). Students learn about citizenship as school were mini-societies. This means a skill-based approach.

Children can learn active citizenship through participation in school governance, too (Eurydice Report 2017) Schools operate as a mini society, they have leadership, management and they represent children’s right. Hearing student’s voice is crucial in the process, so e.g. student councils can support the way of thinking democratically and bring together student to think and act together in favour of a democratic school governance.

### ***Benefits for the society***

Why is it good for the society if students learn about democracy, active citizenship and responsibility? Some aspects are listed below (GOLLOB et al. 2010):

- Students learn the features of the democratic system, they learn their rights and responsibilities.
- Students learn how the political system operates, so later they will be aware of political participation.
- Students learn methods of how to settle down conflicts, so how to manage negotiations and how to show mutual respect.

- Students learn how to influence decision making, how to lobby.
- Students learn that their decision have effects and also influence themselves and others.
- Students learn that if they do not participate, this decision also affect them. Maybe others will participate and they have to accept it.

Students who learn civic competences and democracy knowledge are good for the society, because these people know how to behave in the society and they do not expect solutions from the state or from other actors because they are aware of happenings. Research in the mid-1990s proved (CREWE et al. 1997 – cited POTTER 2002) that those students who learn about the democracies and citizenship at schools discuss more about these topics at home and in other communities.

I would like to emphasize that citizenship education is not only good for the society but also for the individuals who will be more informed and self-confident, who are conscious in their private and social life, too.

### ***The role of teachers***

Teaching active citizenship requires new approaches from teachers, too (GOLLOB et al. 2010: 47):

- „The teacher watches how the students cope with the problems they encounter, and should not give in quickly to any calls to deliver the solutions. The teacher’s role is rather to give hints and make the task somewhat easier, if necessary. But to a certain degree, the students should “suffer” – as they will in real life.
- The teacher observes the students at work, with two different perspectives of assessment in mind – the process of learning and the achievements at work.
- The teacher can also offer to be “used” as a source of information on demand, briefing a group on a question that needs to be answered quickly. The roles are reversed – the students decide when and on what topic they want to hear an input from their teacher.”

In this approach teachers are lecturer, instructors, correctors and creators (KRAPF 2010), so they behave as a coach, too (GOLLOB et al. 2010; KAISER 2010). According to Business Dictionary (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/coach.html>) a coach is a person who „encourages and trains someone to accomplish a goal or task”. A coach can help people (coachees) to discover their hidden competences by asking proper questions, so coaches do not serve the an-

swers, but get students on to the solutions. It has to be highlighted that teachers need to have special trainings to be able to suit the criteria of being coach-teachers (LOFTHOUSE et al. 2010). Obviously the best way for it is to learn this knowledge in higher education but also older teachers have to be competent, so they need trainings.

The Northern Ireland Curriculum summarizes the old and new role of the teachers in the process of the active citizenship (Table 1).

<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>
Teacher-centred classroom	Learner-centred classroom
Product-centred learning	Process-centred learning
Teacher as a ‘transmitter of knowledge	Teacher as an organiser of knowledge
Teacher as a ‘doer’ for children	Teachers as an ‘enabler’, facilitating pupils in their learning
Subject-specific focus	Holistic learning focus

**Table 1. The old and new tasks of teachers in citizenship education**

*Source: Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) (2007:4)*

### Some good examples

There are many good examples regarding to citizenship education, this section provides four of them non-exhaustive.

The Council of Europe launched a program called *Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* (EDC/HRE) with the aim of helping teachers to prepare for citizenship education. They published six manuals, three of them are available in Hungarian, too.

- Volume I. (available in English, French, Czech, Georgian, Ukrainian and Russian): Educating for democracy (GOLLOB et al. 2010)
- Volume II. (available in English, French, Icelandic, Georgian, Ukrainian and Russian) Growing up in democracy (GOLLOB–WEIDINGER 2010)
- Volume III. (available in English, French, Icelandic, Hungarian, Macedonian, Albanian, Ukrainian and Russian) Living in democracy (GOLLOB et al. 2008)
- Volume IV. (available in English, Icelandic and Hungarian) Taking part in democracy (KRAPF 2010)

- Volume V. (available in English, Azeri, French, Hungarian, Georgian, German, Macedonian, Albanian and Russian) Exploring Children's Rights (GOLLOB–KRAPF 2007)
- Volume VI. (Available in English and French) Teaching democracy (GOLLOB–KRAPF 2008)

More information: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/living-democracy-manuals>

The *European Wergeland Centre* was established by the Council of Europe and Norway in 2008. Its „aim is to strengthen the capacity of individuals, educational institutions and educational systems to build and sustain a culture of democracy and human rights.” <http://www.theewc.org/Content/Who-we-are> “The European Wergeland Centre promotes education for democracy and human rights by:

- Providing capacity building for people involved in or with education
- Cooperating with national authorities, developing programmes responding to their priorities
- Supporting and applying research in the field
- Contributing to policy development in the Council of Europe and its member states
- Disseminating information and serving as a platform and meeting place.” <http://www.theewc.org/Content/What-we-do>

They organise summer academics, lead projects and different programs in the field citizenship.

*Me & MyCity Program*: This is a Finnish innovative program since 2009. The program provides a real learning environment by supporting a city simulation where students can learn what living in community/democracy means. About 200,000 students and 5,000 teachers have participated in the program so far. The Program won the Global Best Award (category: Partnerships Which Build Learning Communities) in 2016. More information: <https://yrityskylä.fi/en/>

An EU project called „*Travel pass to democracy: supporting teachers for active citizenship*” aimed to identify citizen education methods, to strengthen the competences of teachers and to increase the visibility of citizenship education. Four countries were involved in this project: Hungary, Croatia, Romania and Montenegro. More information: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/charter-edc-hre-pilot-projects/projects/travel-pass>

## Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to provide information about the forms and methods of the active citizenship education through theoretical way. I investigated scientific literature, programs, projects and guidelines – mainly from abroad – in order to be able to provide information about citizenship education. People need both formal and informal education to be active in the society, so the education system has to react to this fact by providing new methods and new curricula which are able to prepare students to be active in the society. Citizenship education is an active way of learning based on learning by doing which also requires new methods from teachers.

As a result I can tell that citizenship education is necessary but it does not work without the support of the state, the EU, professional organisations and last but not least of the teachers. There are many reports and projects which provide information about the way of citizenship education. These can be useful for a country to build an own curriculum in this field. If we would like to live in a sustainable society we should try to apply these methods and consider the development of the citizenship education in favour of a balanced community. Nobody born with the ability of the participation, so people have to learn somehow how to be active, so the participation is a process of learning either in the family or during formal or in-formal learning.

Of course further research is needed to deepen the information about active citizenship education in different countries and to have information about school leaders, teachers, students and any other important actors in this field. This paper has the role to highlight some new trends and approaches about the topic and to support further surveys among related actors.

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