

COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

Living together as equals
in culturally diverse
democratic societies



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

CDC – Competences for Democratic Culture

- ➔ The best way to develop an understanding of democratic culture is through education
- ➔ Education is essential to ensure young people feel validated and included



Education
religion or belief
policy access values beliefs
equal norms rights sex agency
empowerment legislation
disability gender race fair
ethnicity diversity opportunities class justice
age status poverty discrimination
youth work celebrate society sexual orientation difference
anti-oppressive practice



Timeframe of the project (2014-17)

- **2014:** developing a conceptual model of the competences citizens require to participate effectively in democratic culture and intercultural dialogue
- **2015:** developing behavioural descriptors for each competence (as learning outcomes)
- **2016:** scaling the descriptors, assigning the descriptors to different levels of proficiency
- **2017:** writing supporting documents (how the model can be used in curriculum design, pedagogy and assessment)

Democratic culture and intercultural dialogue

- ... depend on *citizens' competences* and on the nature of the available institutional structures
- ... also depend (crucially) on the extent to which measures are taken to deal with *systematic patterns of disadvantage*
- ... it is a *way of living*, behaving and interacting with others that requires people to be willing to talk to each other and negotiate, to be open-minded, to show mutual respect, to search for common ground and peaceful conflict resolution and to respect human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and human dignity.



Acceleration

- The project started in 2014 but acquired a new level of political attention after the Paris terrorist attacks in January 2015
- The project has now been incorporated into the *Council of Europe's Action Plan for Combatting Violent Extremism and Radicalisation leading to Terrorism*



Thorbjørn Jagland speech to the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (New York - 19 June 2015)

- ➔ *'While most states have some form of civic education, we don't – as standard practice – teach our children what it means – explicitly – to be a democratic citizen'*



Thorbjørn Jagland speech to the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (New York - 19 June 2015)

- Can students resolve conflicts by understanding the different perspectives of each party?
- Do they grasp the inalienable nature of certain rights, and their relationship with religious beliefs?
- Are they able to work with peers who do not share their views making sure that every member of the group is involved?

Education is the key to tackling disenchantment with democracy



- Terrorism, growing political alienation and disenchantment with democracy: what is the alternative? Is more surveillance, less freedom of expression and more border control the only way forward?
- The CoE provides tools and standards to help build inclusive societies, a Europe where people value others and feel valued in their turn, where they have a stake in Europe and do not want to undermine or destroy its values.
- Here, the key is education.



The project is challenging and ambitious

- It identifies the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding needed for intercultural dialogue and democratic processes
- Based on the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*
- For all learning levels and for all educators

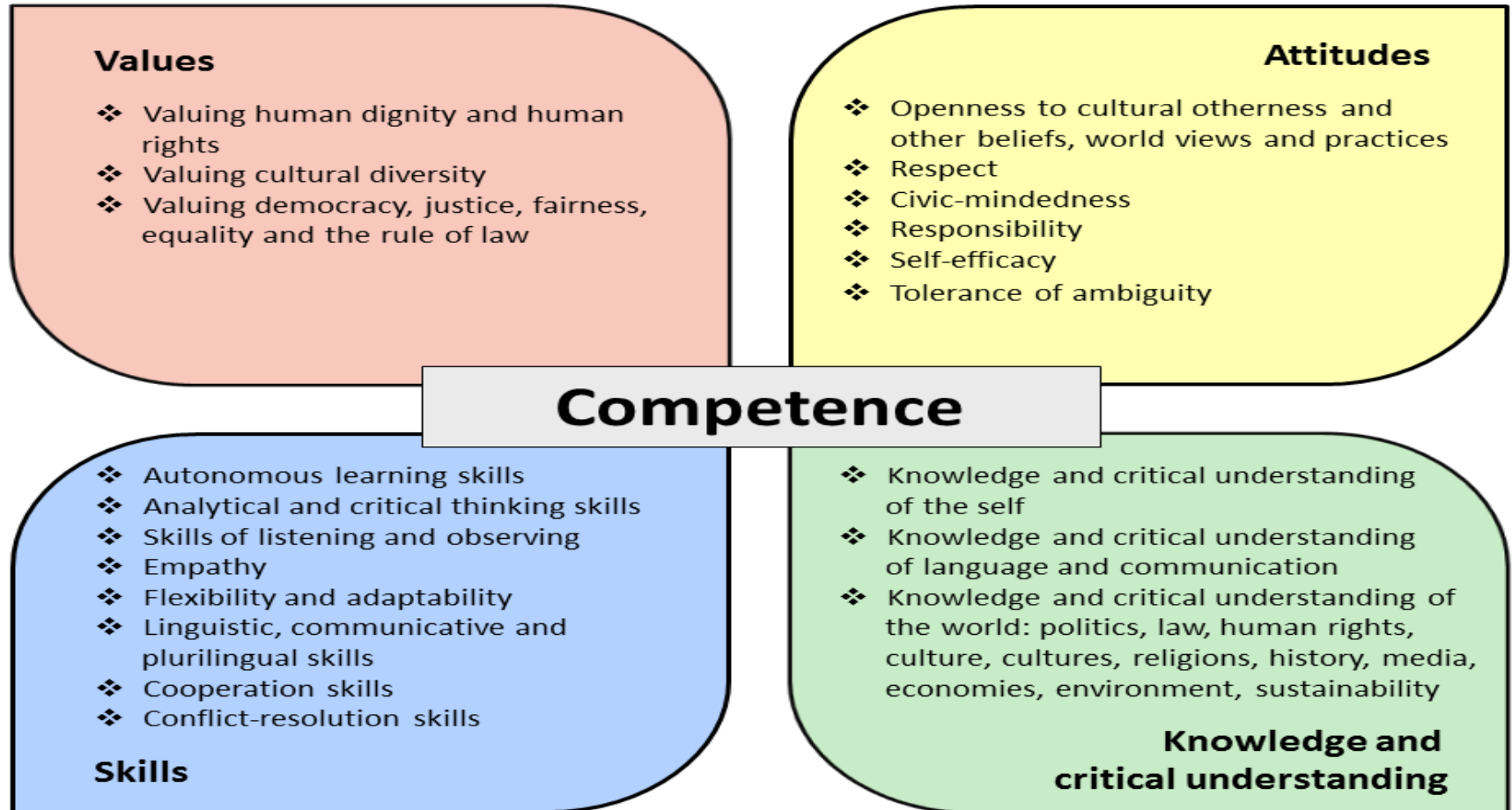
Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

- A tool that sets out a number of key attributes – whether values, attitudes, skills or knowledge/understanding – and explains how these can be defined and measured.
- Primarily designed to be used in schools it can also be applied in both higher education and vocational education, non-formal and adult education, professional trainings, integration programmes.
- Designed and tested by teachers and educational experts from 50 countries, primarily in Europe.
- Ultimately it can be used across the continent and beyond.



Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

- The conceptual model that has been produced contains **20 competences**
- These 20 competences fall into four broad categories:
 - Values
 - Attitudes
 - Skills
 - Knowledge and critical understanding



Descriptors – benchmarks / behaviours, set as learning targets

Tolerance for ambiguity
Admits that sometimes there are no right or wrong answers to a question
Accepts a task which implies working with people who do not share his/her values
Acknowledges that there can be multiple perspectives on and interpretations of any given situation or issue
Looks at everybody's side of a disagreement before making a decision
Shows patience when confronted with what is unknown or unfamiliar
Interacts positively without certainty of what the other thinks and feels
Works well in an unfamiliar setting

Empowerment of young people

- The framework can be used to endow young people with the ability to function as **autonomous social agents** who are capable of choosing and pursuing their **own goals** in life, within the framework that is provided by **democratic institutions and respect for human rights**.

Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

- The key aim is to assist **national education systems** across Europe to enhance the **democratic and intercultural competences** of young people.
- The Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture will comprise **recommendations and guidelines** on the development of **new curricula, new pedagogical methods** and **new assessment methods** for use in citizenship education and intercultural education.

25th session Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education 11 – 12 April in Brussels

- Education ministers from across Europe have given their backing to the new Council of Europe Framework of Competences for a Democratic Culture
- Ministers also committed to *enhancing democracy* in the life and culture of schools and universities and to launching the next phase of the implementation of the Reference Framework of CDC through support for its testing at national, regional and European level
- ... and to pay specific attention to the development of appropriate *teacher competences* and institutional settings that would favour such initiatives





Piloting, Testing and fine-tuning descriptors

A training of 36 participants to work as multipliers for the CDC piloting in their 12 countries.
Plans are being made for recruiting teachers and organising workshops, considering the specific conditions and opportunities of each country and work environment.

Online updating

- Further information is available from the project website:

www.coe.int/competences