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PROJECT

*Supporting teachers for developing intra-personal
competencies and character education at school*

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Introduction

The research report presented below is the result of the first intellectual output of the Erasmus + Supporting teachers for developing intra-personal competences and character education at school project: ARETE CATALYST 2017-1-LV01-KA201-035435.

This is a transnational research report about the development of Intra-personal skills and Character Education at schools in Estonia, Latvia and Spain. The report presents some of the current educational initiatives, as well as some case studies and investigations that have been developed in each participant country.

The research report is structured as follows:

A detailed description of participant countries' context is offered in relation to: Intra-personal Competences (IC) and Character Education (CE). Every participant country has its own interpretation of these concepts and therefore, it is necessary to specify how these concepts are

Besides, we present the "SWOT analysis" made by each country to explain the main advantages and disadvantages of the implementation of Character Education practices. This analysis has allowed us to know strengths, weaknesses, contextual differences and aspects in common of the participant countries' Character Education programmes.

In the second part of the research report, some international initiatives, existing in other countries, are presented and the possibilities of transference and adaptation of materials and programmes are analysed.

In the third part of the research report, partner countries present some case studies and refers to the best practices that are being developed in each country in order to exchange successful educational experiences.

Finally, in the last part of the research report, a brief analysis of each country context is presented, and a comparative evaluation is carried out with the aim of pointing out similar practices. The report also includes the Riga Seminar of Experts conclusions that present ideas to design and develop a teacher training programme.



Part. 1. The context of Transversal Competences & Character Education in Spain, Latvia and Estonia: lights and shadows

Section 1.1. Information about the understanding of Character Education and Intrapersonal Competencies.

1.1.1. Information about the understanding of TC & CE in Spain

The understanding of transversal competences (further in the text – TC) in Spain is based on several authors (Delors, 1996, San Fabián, 2001, Jares, 2006, Bisquerra, 2008, Santos Guerra, 2009) who emphasize the importance of learning to live together as an essential part of education. The Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century (Delors, 1996) proposed the extension of educational objectives beyond the strict field of knowledge and, in particular, pointed out the need for students to learn to live together in school, getting to know others better and creating a new spirit that drives the realization of common projects and the peaceful and intelligent solution of conflicts. Such educational approaches (Delors, 1996) are based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live and learn to be, as we show below:

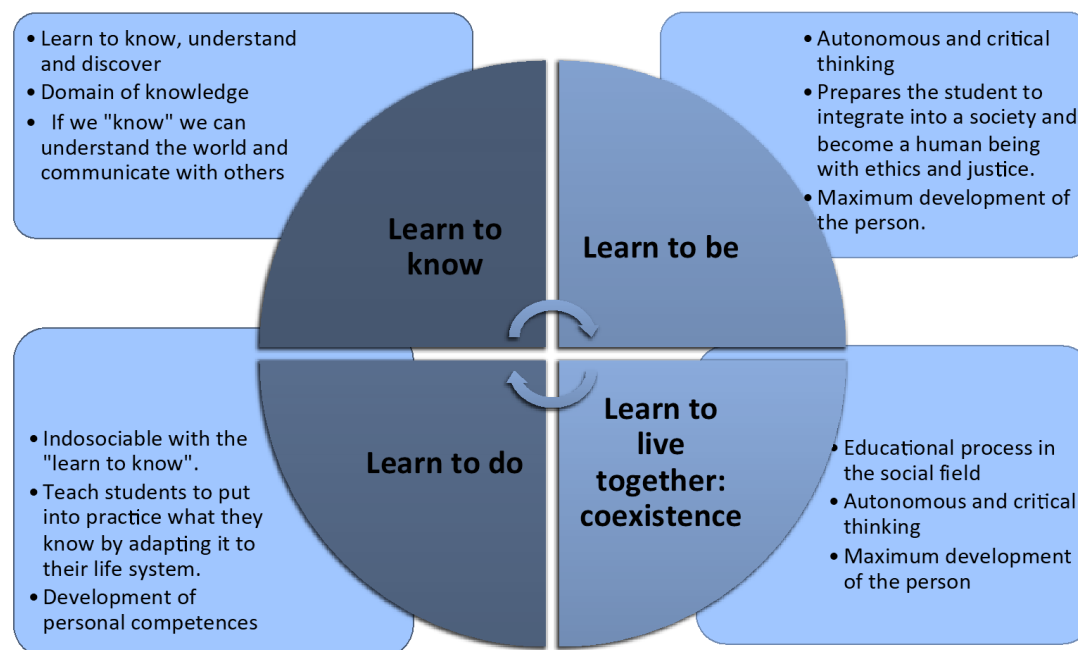


Figure 1: Representation of the four pillars of education Delors (1996)

Santos Guerra (2009) mentions that one of the essential functions of education is to train citizens who respect themselves and others, and achieve a society based on a culture of peace and justice. Other authors such as San Fabián (2001) mention that the basis of coexistence goes through the construction of a real democracy where equality of opportunities is guaranteed. There seems to be agreement that the school itself, the place where cohabitation is learned, should be an example of the citizen and security values it intends to promote, which requires a firm commitment from public authorities and other social agents. For Bolívar (2008), schools become a space of civility, where the problems of coexistence, discipline and school life must be addressed in democratic terms of consensus establishment of standards and whose compliance is binding for all, and where the participation of all educational community is fundamental.

The learning of the coexistence concerns the educational institutions. Ortega & Del Rey (2003)



emphasize the importance of cooperative work, reflection and dialogue and the idea of belonging to the group as factors that influence the development of skills for the improvement of coexistence.

We are in an educational context that is multicultural. Schools have become spaces where different cultures coexist, and this requires the introduction of changes to achieve an adequate educational response (Louzao & González Riaño, 2007). Attention to students' diversity constitutes one of the most important educational challenges for the educational centres and for the teaching staff and requires, therefore, the formulation of pedagogical proposals that offer a response to the current educational needs.

On the other hand, there are also authors (Soriano & Peñalva, 2011) who highlight that many of the subjects that embrace themes related to coexistence, conflict resolution, education in values, intercultural education, that today would be essential in the initial teacher training plans, are not part of the core subjects of the training programmes. The study conducted by Soriano & Peñalva (2011) states that, despite the fact that the training offer in intercultural matters, coexistence and education in values is broad, the core of compulsory subjects contemplates minimally the inclusion of training content on these topics, being a concentrated offer in the optional subjects.

It is a striking fact that some students can study a Pedagogy or Primary Teacher Training degrees and, however, have not received training in the field of intercultural education, coexistence, education in values or attention to diversity. At the same time, it is paradoxical that training in intercultural education and education for coexistence is one of the fields in which teachers recognize that they have more deficiencies and, therefore, need more training, as referred by different authors (Jordán, 1994; 2007; Besalú, 2010; Leiva, 2012).

1.1.2. Information about the understanding of TC & CE in Latvia

The understanding of transversal competences (further in the text – TC) in Latvia is based on the document “Education for modern competence: description of study content and approach” (in Latvian: “Izglītība mūsdienīgai lietpratībai: mācību saturs un pieejas apraksts”) which defines the student's virtues and transversal competences: <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/aktualitates/2017/Skola2030Dokuments.pdf>.

This document was elaborated in 2017 within the European Structural Fund (ESF) project “Competence-based approach in the educational content” – School 2030 (2016–2021), No. 8.3.1.1/16/I/002 <https://www.skola2030.lv/par-projektu> According to the above-mentioned document, the TC include significant students' cognitive, affective and social aspects that apply to all human activities.

The TC help to acquire knowledge in different contexts and by different ways of thinking and self-directed learning techniques, thus enhancing the link between new knowledge and personal experience. In turn, the use of the TC in different teaching/learning fields strengthens students' ability to use them independently and in a wide variety of situations, including complex and unpredictable situations. The students should improve such TC as Self-knowledge and self-management; Thinking and creativity; Collaboration and participation; Digital Skills

In 2015, the Latvian parliament (*Saeima*) gave final approval to amendments to the education law that meant schools will henceforth be obliged to give children 'moral education' in line with the values of the Constitution, most notably with regard to the primacy of conventional ideas of what constitutes marriage and family life. <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/saeima-approves-lessons-in-constitutional-morality-for-schoolchildren.a134466>



The work group created by the National Centre for Education (VISC) of the Republic of Latvia tasked with working out “moral upbringing (virtue education) guidelines” corresponding to the controversial education law amendments; has been offered the following virtues for inclusion in the guidelines: respect, solidarity, justice, virtue, fairness, freedom, responsibility, studiousness, caring, empathy, moderation and courage. The guidelines also feature concepts such as life, work, and culture.

In 2016, the Cabinet of Ministers’ regulation No 480 “Guidelines for the upbringing (virtue education) of learners and the procedure for evaluating information, teaching aids, materials and teaching/learning and upbringing methods” (In Latvian: “Izglītojamo audzināšanas vadlīnijas un informācijas, mācību līdzekļu, materiālu un mācību un audzināšanas metožu izvērtēšanas kārtība”) was adopted <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/283735-izglitujamo-audzinanasas-vadlinijas-un-informacijas-macibu-lidzeklu-materialu-un-macibu-un-audzinanasas-metozu-izvertesanas>

During April-May 2018, an online survey involving 750 respondents from different educational sectors (parents, pupils, pre-service and in-service teachers, and school leaders) was implemented in Riga in the frame of the project **ARETE CATALYST**, to clarify character education understanding in Latvian educational context.

In the assessment of the definitions, in-service teachers and school leading staff tended to give affirmative answers, in general more likely agreeing to definitions with focus on learning or rather neutrally perceiving the proposed definitions with focus on teaching, especially such as “character education is any form of moral education”.

Summarizing this section, it can be said that there is a general agreement of all sectors to say that character and virtue are quite well-known concepts, and that they are different, and therefore character education and virtue education are also different things, but they are interconnected, because virtue is not only a religious concept. Respondents have a quite favourable opinion and acceptance of both character education and virtue education, and this tendency is stronger regarding character education. Both kinds of education are particularly relevant to improve students’ behaviour. Respondents particularly strongly agree that character education is not directly related to religious or political education, and that it enhances academic performance and employability, whereas virtue education is particularly helpful to build good relationships and promotes both individual and social well-being. Teachers and school leaders reported the highest agreement to definitions of character education that included both students’ self-involvement and non-formal education activities.

1.1.2. Information about the understanding of TC & CE in Estonia

In Estonian context character education (CE) and transversal competences (TC) are understood and used, also developed through different concepts described in the next Table 1.

The concept in Estonian	The concept in English	Definition
Väärtushinnang	Value opinions	Person’s or group’s opinions about values, if and in which situation are values positive, negative or neutral. Based on that, a person can have opinion if some action or phenomenon is good or bad, allowed or forbidden. These evaluations direct people to make decisions. Based on value opinions children develop value attitudes through observing and following



		another person as an example. (Schihalejev, 2011).
Väärtushoiak	Value attitude	“Tendency to act in a certain way. These attitudes can occur not consciously and in people’s behaviour and choices.” (Schihalejev, 2011, p.13).
Väärtused	Values	Possible objects of wishes, goals with different importance. It can be for example health, well-being, peace of mind, friendship, knowledge, but also democracy, homeland, solidarity etc. (Schihalejev, 2011). Values are created by situations and people’s action (Dewey).
Väärtuskasvatus	Values education	Planned activity by which the pupils’ are taught to be thinking about values (Schihalejev, 2011). Process, where pupil becomes aware of his or her value attitudes and opinions, compares those with other pupils’, and reflects over (Sutrop, 2009, p. 11).

Table 1. Different concepts understand and used in the context of CE and TC in Estonia.

VALUES OF ESTONIAN NATIONAL CURRICULA	
Commonplace values	Social values
Honesty	Tolerance
Justice	Patriotism
Caring	Freedom
Human dignity	Solidarity
Reverence towards life	Democracy
Respectfulness towards yourself and others	Legal bases
	Cultural diversity
	Environmental sustainability
	Accountability and gender equality

Table 2. The baseline values of Estonian school curricula.

Several studies have been carried out by teacher trainees of Estonian universities in order to learn more about values and values education at school as well as in kindergarten. The following will give a brief overview of the methodologies used and the main findings of those studies.

Kõõra (2012) focused in her work on the preschool teachers’ and parents’ perceptions about values education. With 50 teachers and 50 parents answering a survey, the results showed that both teachers and parents appreciate the same values. The most important value for both groups was social well-being, as well as love. In addition to this, in both opinions the best way to teach values is to model them by example. Similarly to the previous study, a study about teaching values through children’s literature for kindergarten children was carried out by Kask (2017). A quantitative study among 100 kindergarten teachers showed that the books they use at their work mostly reflect helpfulness, tolerance, honesty and integrity.

Blaubrück (2013) studied the opinions of 133 teachers and 1059 pupils on different values and values education. Through a qualitative research method, it was found that teachers estimate more the values of prosocial behaviour and human values, while pupils mainly value education and assessment. In addition to this, in teachers’ opinion the values



education is mainly carried out through their part as a role model, but also through teaching process in lessons. Pupils, however, see values education as school's traditional events.

Saart (2013) carried out a qualitative study to find out how to support values education in classroom. The results showed that it is possible to integrate topics about values and morals into subject classes, however, the teachers should be aware that the values are transmitted by teacher's personal activities as well as attitudes. The opportunities for integrating values-related topics include discussions, listening to teacher's opinions and carrying out practical activities.

Section 1.2. Existing TC&CE initiatives in each country (programs, teaching methodologies and teacher training)

1.2.1. Existing TC&CE initiatives in Spain

The report made by the International Commission on Education for the XXI Century for UNESCO (Delors, 1996) proposed the extension of educational objectives beyond the strict field of knowledge and, in particular, pointed out the need for students to learn to live together in school, getting to know others better and creating a new spirit that drives the realization of common projects and the peaceful and intelligent solution of conflicts.

There seems to be an agreement that the school is the place where cohabitation is learned, and it should be an example of the citizen and security values which intends to promote. It requires a firm commitment from public authorities and other social agents.

Attention to students' diversity constitutes one of the most important educational challenges for the educational centres and for the teaching staff and requires, therefore, the formulation of pedagogical proposals to give response to the current educational needs.

Different authors (Esteve, 2002, Zeichner, 2010, Soriano & Peñalva, 2011) focus on the initial teacher training at universities. Thus, for Zeichner (2010) one of the main problems of teacher training programmes in traditional universities has been the lack of connection between the teachers training offered in the university context, the subjects and the experiences of the practice. For Esteve (2002) the contents of the teacher's initial training must be adapted to the practical reality of teaching in a social context characterized by the acceleration of change and highlights four fundamental aspects:

1. Communication in the classroom.
2. Teaching style and the reactions they produce in their students.
3. Resources to face the practical problems that arise in the class group.
4. Knowing how to adapt the contents of the teaching to the levels of knowledge of the students

The initial teacher training in topics related to coexistence must be taken into account when designing initial teacher training programmes, however, in recent years, little has been experienced in this direction and, after the implementation of Bologna, some subjects related to attention to diversity, education for coexistence, education in values, education in social skills or education for an intercultural coexistence, remain an optional subject in many curricula, that makes their choice depend on the personal interest that students may have, which, on the other hand, does not happen with other subjects that, due to their "relevance" are considered as core or compulsory.



It is necessary that there is an initial training that allows teachers to know and use the necessary tools to address their teaching functions, placing emphasis on professional skills as well as other types of competences (intercultural, coexistence, education in values, etc.). It is also necessary to rethink the figure of the professional teacher and debate about their role in teaching and in society every year the Regional Board of Education and Culture establishes the criteria and programmes for the development of the Teacher Training Plans.

It is an institutional objective the continuous training of teachers and the educational innovation, the promotion of participation in training projects, and the increase of training resources directed to the attention to diversity, the improvement of coexistence, and pedagogical and methodological updating.

During the last six years the Regional Board of Education and Culture of Asturias developed its priority lines by means of the subscription with educational centres of programmes called "Contract-Programme" (from now on C.P.).

These programmes are based on the requirement of combining the recognition of the pedagogical and organizational autonomy of the centres, with the obligation of the regional Administration to offer a guide in order to provide a quality education to all students.

The aim is to strengthen the emerging inter-centre collaboration networks that have been created within the framework of the Contract-Programme and to support the dynamics of educational inclusion generated in response to the diversity of the needs of all students.

In order to achieve an inclusive education system, changes and modifications will be introduced in curricular proposals, organizational structures and methodological strategies, so that all students will be educated in the context of the ordinary educational system with complete/total guarantees of school success.

The Continuous Teacher Training Plan is the instrument of planning, development and evaluation of those activities that contribute to improve the scientific, didactic and professional preparation of teachers based on the improvement of professional practice, the consideration of the educational centre as the core of the training activities and the use of diversified strategies. The Regional Training Plan is presented as a framework programme for continuous teacher training, based on the objectives and priority lines of the Regional Board of Education and Culture and the demands of society.

This Plan defines:

1. The needs of teacher training in accordance with the priorities of the Regional Board of Education and Culture.
2. The lines of action, defining the objectives and priorities in the continuous training of teachers.
3. The training models and training strategies more suitable to achieve the objectives proposed in coherence with the plans and / or specific training programmes.
4. The necessary elements for the monitoring and evaluation of the plan in itself.

The teacher training activities will be addressed to support the teaching teams in order to help them to increase the school success of the students and to promote classroom activities aimed at ensuring that the student body acquires the essential learning for their personal and professional development regardless of their origin and of their personal, social or economic conditions.



The training activities developed at schools take into account the priority lines that will be the ones that will mark the theme of the training activities. Related to character education, the priority lines that we can highlight are:

1. To advance in an educational model that guarantees equity and equality, responding to the diversity of students, enhancing educational guidance and avoiding any form of exclusion.
2. To increase the rates of promotion and certification of the different educational activities and educational stages and consolidating the acquisition of competences that allow the achievement of the 2020 objectives established for the Educational Administration.
3. To promote in centres, as spaces of relationship between different people, a climate of positive coexistence, attentive to the necessary equality between the sexes, respect for differences between equals and the prevention of bullying with the participation of complete educational community.
4. To promote the school as a reference space for formal teaching-learning processes, emphasizing the approach to a healthy and sustainable education that facilitates the adoption of healthy lifestyles (meaning those that pursue physical well-being, psychic and social) and of participation with the community in the integral preservation of health.
5. To promote the development of didactic materials and the reuse of educational resources promoting collaboration with AMPAS (Parents children's association), local entities and NGOs, where appropriate, for the adoption or consolidation of initiatives that make effective the use of these resources.
6. To promote the continuous training of teachers associated with the schools' objectives as a space for innovation, as a fundamental element for the progress of the educational system and its results and taking into account the need for the permanent scientific and didactic updating of the teaching staff corresponding to this XXI century.
7. To promote the study and systematization of technological tools applicable to teaching and direct work in the classroom.

At present, it is justified to pay attention to the following continuous educational programmes in relation to Character Education:

- Promotion of reading and school libraries.
- Pedagogical gatherings.
- Coexistence, equality and equity.
- Integration of new technologies in the educational field.
- Attention to diversity and inclusion.

Starting from the consideration of the educational centre as the core of the teacher training processes and the use of different strategies of advice and support to schools and teachers, the training linked to reflective practice and to educational innovation is designed, promoting innovation initiatives and improvement that are specified in the following actions of teacher training related to the character education and the development of the professional competences of the teachers: 1) Pedagogical gatherings, 2) Working groups of methodological innovation and 3) Microcourses + ICT Pills.

The contents related to the education of character that are being worked in Asturias are the following:

Moral Virtues	Civic Virtues
• Peer training	• Cooperative learning



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of respect and tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediation • Coeducation
Performance Virtues	Intellectual Virtues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social skills • Educational playgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional intelligence • Mindfulness

1.2.2. Existing TC&CE initiatives in Latvia

The necessary education and professional qualifications for teachers in the Republic of Latvia and their professional competence development procedures are established in the Regulations No.662 of 28 October 2014 by the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers. The teacher is responsible for the development of his professional competence, carried out within three years, not less than 36 hours and it is planned in co-operation with the heads of educational institutions in which the teacher carries out his teaching activities. The teacher can develop his professional skills studying A or B programme. The Regulations provide that B programmes are implemented only in higher educational institutions, while A programmes can be delivered by education institutions, teachers' professional NGOs and institutions subordinated to the ministries. For example, Education and Information Services of Riga City implement A programmes.

The full A programme should last maximum 36 hours in different modules. A-programme modules should last at least six hours. 4 modules can be included in A programme: the module of teacher's general competencies (which can include civic competence development), the module of curriculum and didactics, the module of the educational process management and the module of teacher's experience (participation in conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.). This last module includes also teacher personality development and elaboration of teaching/learning materials for use in the classroom.

The existing TC&CE initiatives (projects, continuing education courses, programmes, seminars, etc.) for teachers' professional competence development in Latvia

Several A programme courses are proposed in Latvia in the field of transversal competences and virtues.

1. A teachers' training and professional development seminar "Improvement of a Teachers' Professional Competence on the Issues of National and Virtue Education" (Level A, 6 acad.hours); in Latvian: A līmeņa pedagogu profesionālās kompetences pilnveides programmas seminārs „Pedagogu profesionālās kompetences pilnveide valstiskās un tikumiskās audzināšanas jautājumos” (6 akad.st.)
<https://www.macibuistade.lv/notikumi/pedagogu-profionalas-kompetences-pilnveide-valstiskas-un-tikumiskas-audzinasanas-jautajumos>
2. A teachers' training and professional development programme "Improvement of virtues in the upbringing process" (Level A, 6 h); in Latvian: A līmeņa pedagogu profesionālās kompetences pilnveides programma “Audzināšanas procesā izkopjamie tikumi” (6 st.)
<https://lmc.lv/lv/jaunumi/atvert/sia-latgales-macibu-centrs--piedava-apgut--a-limena-pedagogu-profionalas-kompetences-pilnveides-pr>
3. A teachers' training and professional development programme “Transversal competences in a civic and national education in a competence-based learning process” (Level A, 16 h); in Latvian: A līmeņa pedagogu profesionālās kompetences pilnveides programma “Caurviju



prasmes pilsoniskajā un valstiskajā audzināšanā uz kompetencēm balstītā mācību procesā” (16 st.) <http://www.rvlg.lv/index.php/talakizglitiba/>

4. A teachers' training and professional development programme “Understanding the concept of competence and acquiring the transversal competences in a preschool education” (Level A, 12 h); in Latvian: A līmeņa pedagogu profesionālās kompetences pilnveides programma “Kompetences jēdziena izpratne un caurviju prasmju apguve pirmsskolā” (12 st.) <http://lpmc.lv/macibas/backPid/7/category/pirmsskolu-darbiniekiem/article/kompetences-jedziena-izpratne-un-caurviju-prasmju-apguve-pirmsskola-3-dala-8marta.html>
5. A teachers' training and professional development programme “Basic principles of successful upbringing within the aspect of value and virtue education” (Level A); in Latvian: A līmeņa pedagogu profesionālās kompetences pilnveides programma “Veiksmīgas audzināšanas pamatprincipi vērtībizglītības un tikumiskajā aspektā” <http://lpmc.lv/macibas/backPid/7/browse/2/category/skolu-darbiniekiem/article/veiksmigas-audzinanas-pamatprincipi-vertibizglitibas-un-tikumiskaja-aspekta-6decembri.html>
6. Recently, the Education development centre, the leading non-profit non-governmental organization in Latvia in the field of teachers' professional development, has launched a 36 hour programme (A course) “Value education” about value education integration in the study process at school, and including transversal competences that are included in the educational reform plan such as critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, participation (<http://www.iac.edu.lv/programmas/new-program-page/>).

There are other teacher training initiatives in this field which are not part of compulsory professional development courses, as for example:

1. An off-site seminar at Lielvarde Elementary School "Teachers' collaboration to implement the competence-based approach. Development of the transversal competence (thinking and creativity) in the Latvian language and literature lessons at the elementary school" (8 h); in Latvian: Izbraukuma seminārs uz Lielvārdes pamatskolu "Skolotāju sadarbība kompetenču pieejas ieviešanā. Caurviju prasmes (domāšana un radošums) attīstīšana latviešu valodas un literatūras stundās pamatskolā" (8 st.) <http://riimc.lv/lv/events/izbraukuma-seminars-uz-lielvardes-pamatskolu-skolotaju-sadarbiba-kompetencu-pieejas-ieviesana-caurviju-prasmes-domasana-un-radosums-attistisana-latviesu-valodas-un-literaturas-stundas-pamatskola/1692>
2. A methodological afternoon seminar at Riga Classical Gymnasium "Developing the transversal competence - thinking and creativity – in the Latvian as the second language and literature lessons" (5 h); in Latvian: Metodiskā pēcpusdienu Rīgas Klasiskajā ģimnāzijā "Caurviju prasmes - domāšana un radošums - attīstīšana latviešu kā otrās valodas un literatūras stundās" (5 st.) <http://riimc.lv/lv/events/metodiska-pecpusdiena-rigas-klasiskaja-gimnazija-caurviju-prasmjes-domasana-un-radosums-attistisana-latviesu-ka-otras-valodas-un-literaturas-stundas/1673>
3. A teachers' training and professional development course “Transversal competences to realise the competence-based education” (8 h); in Latvian: Kurss pedagogu profesionālās kompetences pilnveidei “Caurviju prasmes kompetenču izglītības īstenošanai” (8 st.) <http://vitae.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Laura-Mikelsone-caurvijas.pdf>
4. A teachers' training and professional development within the project “Competence-based approach in the educational content”, in Latvian: Pedagogu profesionālā pilnveide projekta



“Kompetenču pieeja mācību saturā” (2016–2021) ietvaros <https://www.skola2030.lv/par-projektu>

Other TC&CE initiatives (projects, conferences, workshops, documents, etc.) for children, youth, parents, teachers, etc.

1. Erasmus+ project “Shaping Characters” (No. 2015-1-UK01-KA201-013749, PVS ID 3490) with three partners from Latvia: Education, Culture and Sports Department of Riga Municipality, Riga Secondary School No 64 and Latvian non-formal organization for young people “Young Folks LV”. <http://www.shapingcharacters.eu>; <http://www.iksd.riga.lv/public/88494.html>
2. The document “Education for modern competence: description of study content and approach” (in Latvian: “Izglītība mūsdienīgai lietpratībai: mācību satura un pieejas apraksts”) which defines the pupil’s purposes (e.g. virtues and transversal competences) <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/aktualitates/2017/Skola2030Dokuments.pdf> is elaborated within the ESF project “Competence-based approach in the educational content” (2016–2021), No. 8.3.1.1/16/I/002.
3. The article “A character education programme in Riga Catholic Gymnasium” published in the magazine “Education and Culture” on 9 February 2017 and online; in Latvian: Lolita Ērgle. Rakstura izglītības programma Rīgas Katoļu ģimnāzijā. Raksts publicēts laikrakstā “Izglītība un Kultūra” Nr.3, 2017. gada 9. februārī un tiešsaistē [http://katolis.lv/biblioteka/tematiskais-katalogs/katoliska-izglitiba-rakstura-izglitibas-programma-rigas-katolu-gimnazija.html](http://katolis.lv/biblioteka/tematiskais-katalogs/katoliska-izglitiba/rakstura-izglitibas-programma-rigas-katolu-gimnazija.html)
4. A conference “Topical issues and trends of character education in Latvia and worldwide” on 28 April 2017 (in Latvian: "Raksturizglītības aktualitātes un tendences pasaulē un Latvijā"). <http://katolis.lv/notikumu-kalendars/backPid/369/category/seminari/article/konference-rakstura-izglitibas-aktualitates-un-tendences-pasaule-un-latvija-1.html>; <http://katolis.lv/zinas/backPid/30/category/latvija/article/rakstura-izglitiba-pamats-lai-izaudzinatu-nakotnes-cilveku.html>
5. A workshop “Character Education in Interdisciplinary Teaching” within the Teachers’ conference in Riga, April 2013. Video: <http://www.teachersconference.lv/portfolio-item/feyi-obamehinti-character-education-in-interdisciplinary-teaching/>
6. The National Centre for Education (VISC) of the Republic of Latvia worked out the moral upbringing (virtue education) guidelines <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/morality-guidelines-work-group-discusses-nine-virtues.a159698/>; <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/courage-and-moderation-join-upbringing-guidelines.a167479>
7. The research sub-project “Teachers' ethics, development of transversal and socio-emotional competences and character education to promote quality of education” within the research project “Human, technologies and quality of education”, 2016-2018 (Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art of the University of Latvia) <https://www.pzi.lu.lv/petnieciba/lu-petniecibas-projekti/cilv-tehn-un-izgl-kval/1aspekts-cilveks-un-izglitiba/skolotaju-etika-un-transversalo-kompetencu-21-gs-prasmju-attistiba/>
8. The research project “Modernization of school education in Latvia through an innovative research-based program on 21st century competences and virtue ethics development supported by a virtual campus (ARETE-school)”, 2017-2020 (University of Latvia) <https://www.pzi.lu.lv/petnieciba/lu-petniecibas-projekti/izglitibas-modernizacija-latvijas-skolas-arete-school/>



Summarizing, there is a number of teacher training initiatives in Latvia in the field of transversal competences and personality development. However, each one addresses only partially the different aspects of teacher professional development in the field of character education: some are theory oriented, other are oriented to the work in the classroom or in concrete subject matters (e.g., literature), some focus on a concrete kind of virtue (e.g., civic virtues, patriotism), others on the integration of values in the school life or in interdisciplinary aspects. There is a need for a teacher professional development programme that integrates the four aspects to which the Latvian educational law refers: improvement of teachers' self-experience in the field, enhancement of communicative competence for creating a school culture, elaboration of methodical and didactic aspects, and school and class management aspects.

1.2.3. Existing TC&CE initiatives in Estonia

Value development of Estonian society The Estonian programme "Value development of Estonian society" (Eesti ühiskonna väärtusarendus) was initially implemented for years 2009-2013, later a follow up programme for years 2015–2020 (Väärtusprogrammi jätkuprogramm, s.a.). The project was initiated and funded by the Ministry of Education and covers the entire Estonian educational system. The aim of the first part of the programme was to support the development the emergence of a common value space in Estonia and help to support values, which are as bases for personal happy life and the success of society. In the focus of the programme are the curriculums (basic schools and upper secondary schools curriculum) formulated values, that are divided into universal values (honesty, caring, respect for life, justice, human dignity, respect for oneself and others) and social values (freedom, democracy, respect for the mother tongue and culture, patriotism, cultural diversity, tolerance, environmental sustainability, legality, solidarity, responsibility and gender equality).

The programme supports the implementation of national curricula for basic and upper secondary schools, the implementation of the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 and various other national strategies and development plans. The main focus of the programme is the value-education of children and young people in order to contribute to their growth diverse personalities capable of fulfilling their full potential in different roles: in the family, at work and in public life. Systemic value education requires a wider agreement: what are the educational goals and what kind of society we want to shape. Therefore, the programme places great emphasis on the public debate about the goals and values of society's values and education. The request is to transform education into a community-wide approach that involves both the public, private and third sectors through various supporting activities. Value education in a kindergarten and in school does not only mean noticing and discussing values. It is necessary to create an environment that would bear the agreed values and support the full development of the young personality. Values and attitudes of children and young people have an impact on the values of communication practices, teaching methods, feedback, rules, out-of-class activities, traditions and rituals as well as physical environment. This makes it necessary for a systemic value development of an educational institution, to involve workers, children, young people and parents.

Within the framework of the project, trainers were sent to different schools across Estonia. They helped to map the situation, to analyse and to assist schools in setting new goals. Different teams developed a teachers' game about discussing values and a students' game (for the ages 10 to 12 and 14 to 16) about discussing values – these games were introduced and practiced in the respective training sessions for teachers. Also, best practices in different schools and kindergartens were collected and published. Besides, a book describing the four active learning methods promoting value education for different ages in educational organisations was published. Within the framework of the project, a value-raising conference is organized every year. Finally, several



competitions were organized for kindergartens and schools in order to find out the best institution developing value education in educational organisation.

Summarizing, the achievements of the first part of the programme are:

1. Values and value education were integrated into the national curriculum of basic schools and upper secondary schools,
2. The need to introduce a new learning approach was formulated as the first challenge for the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020,
3. Value education methodologies and methodological tools were developed (teachers and students value games);
4. Creation of a Good School and Good Kindergarten Model was launched;
5. Numerous value education in-service training, conferences and contests for teachers, schools and kindergartens,
6. 25 up-and-up teacher training were developed through an annual in-service training programme.

The aim of the Estonian programme “Value development of Estonian society” (2015-2020) was to support the systematic value-building of schools and nursery schools and support the implementation of collaborative and practice-based learning in practice; implementing lifelong learning in value creation, the development of competencies based on values for social workers (in addition to teachers, for example, doctors, lawyers, officers, chaplains, defence personnel, politicians, officials, researchers, cultural professionals, athletes, etc.). This programme arises the public debate on values in order to formulate common goals and to keep basic values such as patriotism, solidarity, freedom, responsibility, caring, mother tongue and cultural diversity. (Jätkuprogramm, s.a.).

For example, during the programme “Development of teachers' value education competencies in teacher training” (Õpetajate väärtuskasvatuse alase pädevuse arendamine õpetajakoolituses) educational material that reflects the possibilities for addressing value education in teacher education was provided (Schihalejev, 2011).

The competences of CE and TC were written down and set as a value criterion in all national curricula providing education. For example, according to the National Curriculum for Pre-school (Koolieelse lasteasutuse riikliku õppekava, 2008), one of the principles of conducting educational and educational activities is to value humanity and democratic relations, and to support the development of values and attitudes. The purpose of education and upbringing is that children:

1. Understand and perceive the world around themselves.
2. Have an understanding of their own self and the role of others in the living environment.
3. Value Estonian cultural traditions and other national cultural traditions.
4. Value their health and others and strives to act in a healthy and safe manner.
5. Value a friendly environment and friendly environmental thinking.

Another example is the Basic School curriculum (2011), which has specifically outlined the value competence supporting the ability to:

1. Evaluate human relationships and activities from the point of view of the generally accepted moral standards;
2. Perceive and value their connection with other people, society, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own and other countries and peoples and events of contemporary culture;
3. Value creations and shape the beauty;



4. Evaluate universal and social values, to value human, cultural and natural diversity; to be aware of their values

There are also some courses that provide knowledge or develop skills in relation to CE and TC: Philosophy for children (Lastega filosoferimine); Mindfulness exercises in learning activities (Vaikuseminutid: tähelepanu ja meelerahu harjutused); Wise consumer (Tark tarbija); Assessment and development of general competences in high school (Üldpädevuste hindamine ja arendamine gümnaasiumis).

At University of Tartu there are courses that provide knowledge or develop skills in relation to CE and TC: Education and planning learning activities (Kasvatus ja õppetöö organiseerimine), Philosophy for children (P4C) (Lastega filosoferimine) in order to support teacher student CE and TC skills. P4C subject allows to develop the future teacher's analysis and argumentation skills on the topic of values. And the subject Teacher ethics and value education (Õpetaja eetika ja väärtuskasvatus) also supports teacher training students in CE and TC skills. However, it is not enough to prepare the future teacher in the best possible way, and the question is where future educators will be able to develop the ability to motivate their moral choices and where they can learn supporting students' moral development (Schihalejev, 2011).

Section 1.3. SWOT analysis of TC&CE in each country

1.3.1. SWOT analysis in Spain

Two categories were used for the analysis of strengths and weaknesses:

1. The permanent training of teachers in the field of coexistence and participation.
2. The evaluation of coexistence and participation in educational centres.

1. The permanent training of teachers in the field of coexistence and participation	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Permanent Teacher Training Plan includes proposals to promote coexistence from the perspective of prevention and intervention. 2. The Permanent Teacher Training Plan encourages actions that help to create spaces of relationship that are attentive to equality, respect for differences, prevention of bullying, etc., giving priority to the tutorial action and the relationship with the families. 3. Reflective practice and the promotion of innovation and improvement initiatives are included in the ongoing Teacher Training Programmes through: Training Programmes of the Management Teams, Training Projects in Centres or Regional Projects of Common Training Activities. 4. The training itineraries as a model of training over time that allows reflecting from the teaching practice and teamwork. 5. The development of training activities focused on the creation of a centre culture, and training within the framework of the PIC. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficulties in transferring the innovative and positive experiences put into practice by some teachers or groups of teachers, based on reflection on practice and teamwork to favor the improvement of coexistence. 2. Inadequate teacher training in conflict resolution and development of social skills for correct classroom management and / or to intervene with certain student profiles.



2. The evaluation of coexistence and participation in educational centres.	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>1. In the Decrees of organization of the curriculum of E. Primary, Secondary and Baccalaureate is considered the evaluation of teaching practice.</p> <p>2. The Ministry of Education and Culture, promotes the development of self-evaluation culture in schools through projects to improve the results of all students, for example, the Contract-Programme, the final reports or the specific evaluation of programmes.</p> <p>3. The participation of centres in external evaluations such as the Diagnostic Evaluation or the participation of the Autonomous Community in international assessments such as PISA, TIMMS, PIRLS or TALIS provides positive information about school coexistence in Asturias.</p> <p>4. In general, the relationship system in schools is based on the solid presence of mutual respect and collaboration.</p> <p>5. The Educational Evaluation Service that includes, among its functions, studies and reports, the design of indicators or the coordination of actions related to the evaluation of the system, centres or educational processes.</p>	<p>1. The self-evaluation of schools focused on specific aspects of positive coexistence distorts the reality of it.</p> <p>2. The Educational Administration has no arbitrary ways of systematically collecting data on coexistence.</p> <p>3. External evaluations provide data referring to specific issues and referring to behaviours and situations that negatively affect coexistence rather than actions aimed at prevention.</p> <p>4. Difficulty assessing the impact of practices that promote positive coexistence in schools.</p> <p>5. The lack of an analysis by schools of the relationship between coexistence and curriculum</p> <p>6. The absence of a systematic plan for evaluating and monitoring the impact of different training activities to improve coexistence in schools and classrooms.</p> <p>7. The hidden curriculum of the educational centres prevents visibility of educational exclusion.</p>

1.3.2. SWOT analysis in Latvia

Strengths	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The understanding of transversal competences in Latvia is improved within the ESF project “Competence-based approach in the educational content” – School 2030 (2016–2021) and the EC project „European Qualifications Framework – National Coordination Point”. 2. In 2015, the work group created by the National Centre for Education (VISC) of the Republic of Latvia elaborated “moral upbringing (virtue education) guidelines” offering the following virtues for inclusion in the guidelines: respect, solidarity, justice, virtue, fairness, freedom, responsibility, studiousness, caring, empathy, moderation and courage. The guidelines also feature concepts such as life, work, and culture. 3. There are many national and regional level centres, which provide various teachers’ training and professional development programmes including such issues as virtue education and transversal competences. 4. All teachers’ training and professional development programmes on virtue education as well as teaching aids, materials and teaching/learning and upbringing methods should be elaborated in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers’ regulation No 480 “Guidelines for the upbringing (virtue education) of learners and the procedure for evaluating information, teaching aids, materials and teaching/learning and upbringing methods” (adopted in 2016).
Weaknesses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a lack of unified understanding of character education in Latvia. 2. There is a lack of teachers’ training and professional development



	programmes on character education.
Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are some institutional efforts of elaboration and implementation of character education programmes (for instance, in Riga Catholic Gymnasium). 2. The understanding of character education in Latvia could be improved within various research projects, for instance, Erasmus+ project “Shaping Characters” (2015-2017), the UL’s project “Teachers' ethics, development of transversal and socio-emotional competences and character education to promote quality of education” (2016-2018), the postdoctoral research project “Modernization of school education in Latvia through an innovative research-based programme on 21st century competences and virtue ethics development supported by a virtual campus (ARETE-school)” (2017-2020). 3. The existing TC&CE in UK and USA could be used as inspiring sources for elaboration and implementation of character education programmes in Latvia. Some possibilities for transfer and adaptation of UK and USA materials and programmes are proposed.
Threats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Because of current educational reforms, teachers are overloaded with new information and need to concentrate in the new competence approach and may lack of time for a course about character education (delivery it should be efficient and adapted to teachers’ availability). 2. It will be difficult to find teacher trainers with enough time and competence in the field of character education to implement the training course (course leaders should be well prepared and motivated). 3. Some teachers would be reluctant to use the concepts “virtue education” or “character education” because of different connotations (maybe the word “education of moral habits”, used in School2030 documents, should be used instead - in Latvian: “<i>moraļo ieradumu veidošanās</i>”).

1.3.3. SWOT analysis in Estonia

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have methods and pedagogical approaches that support the growth of personality (in the context of CE and TC), without forcing already established values. 2. There is an 8-day course for teachers „Philosophizing with children and adolescents” in Estonian language. The course gives teachers practical skills to lead discussion in kindergarten or school. The course is practical, every participant can experience being part of discussion, as well as lead a discussion. The course has been developed and applied for the past 10 years. It is also possible to shorten it to 4-day course. 3. There is a 2-day course for teachers about applying mindfulness exercises for kids in Estonian language. The course is practical and gives many possibilities for exercises. The participant can experience being part of the exercise as well as lead others. 4. There are more than ten mindfulness educators in Estonia. 5. Mindfulness exercises are well received among Estonian 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers readiness to apply new methodology before experiencing it themselves is rather low. The problem relies in “time shift”– teachers force their own values on students. 2. It is necessary to experience yourself-experience learning during the courses. 3. It is problematic for teachers to find time to attend long-lasting courses when the school does not favour it. 4. Very often schools and kindergartens do not have enough financial resources to allow teachers to attend long courses. Project-based approach would be necessary. 5. There is only one educator in



<p>teachers.</p> <p>6. Mindfulness exercises have reached at least 30 000 Estonian kids.</p> <p>7. The philosophy for children (P4C) methodology together with mindfulness exercises support children and adolescents, also it is good to teach these two topics together.</p>	<p>Estonia who is capable to offer practical and evidence-based courses for Estonian teachers about P4C methodology.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p>
<p>1. The in-service training centre of Tartu University arranges the organization and carrying out teachers' courses.</p> <p>2. In Estonia there is a non-profit organization Silent Minutes that organizes mindfulness courses for teachers all around Estonia.</p> <p>3. Via projects it is possible to support courses at schools and kindergartens.</p> <p>4. It is possible to develop courses in English language for teachers.</p> <p>5. It is possible to educate new P4C educators.</p>	<p>1. The pedagogical methodologies and techniques at schools are too much attached to old approaches. It is difficult for teachers to let go and learn new.</p> <p>2. Teachers have too much work load and a fear of not reaching curriculum goals prevents them to apply new methodologies.</p> <p>3. A short course does not enable consistency; therefore the participants will not stick to applying new methodology.</p>



Part 2: Benchmarking of TC & CE

Section 2.1. Other international initiatives about TC & CE

The project partners contributed to the benchmarking of different TC & CE initiatives in the world from their own perspective. We summarize below the contributions of each partner country

2.1.1. Contribution to benchmarking from Spain

“ACT” ACTIVE Citizenship Projects to Enhance Pupils’ Social and Civic Competences

The Ministers of Education of four EU countries (France, Greece, United Kingdom and Spain) and seven research centres (CIEP y UNESCO, LSE, École d’Économie de Paris, Université de Cergy-Pontoise, University of Athens and the European Foundation of Society and Education) have agreed the objective of promoting fundamental values of citizenship through education through this project. The project’s objective is to evaluate the impact of an intervention programme on the attitudes and practices of professors with respect to the teaching of citizenship and the effect on the abilities, attitudes, and behaviours of their students.

Numerous international students show how classrooms with an open environment and active student participation are key components for an authentic education of citizenship, with a real impact on diverse indications of civil agreement (tolerance, inclusion), at the same time that studies of the same kind bring to light the importance of the professor above the performance of the student. The duration of the programme will be 36 months in which, firstly, a teacher training programme will be shared so that it can be implemented through active citizenship programmes in high schools to improve students’ civic competence.

The evaluation of the programme’s impact in Spain will be completed by the European Foundation of Society and Education that also has been entrusted the coordination of the qualitative evaluation in conjunction with the other countries. It will be focused on three main categories: democratic compromise, tolerance and inclusion, and civic competence. The methodology used for the evaluation will be quantitative and qualitative. The first will be based on counterfactual analysis through systematic surveys of teachers and students in school. With qualitative analysis, the objective is to understand the changes in the behaviours and attitudes of the teachers in the classroom, such as the levels of student’s participation, their attitudes, and their abilities.

Finally, the evaluation will be completed in each country, though afterwards, the resulting findings will be integrated in a meta-analysis in which their similarities and differences will be analysed and interpreted. In light of the results, the possibility of extending this type of interventions and programmes will be offered to other countries.

2.1.2. Contribution to benchmarking from Latvia

Participants from Latvia collected information about initiatives for teachers’ professional competence development and other TC&CE initiatives for children, youth, parents, teachers, etc. in two countries: UK and USA.

a) UK: Existing TC&CE initiatives for teachers’ professional competence development:

1. In 2016, the School of Education at the University of Birmingham introduced the world's first MA programme in Character Education. This distance learning programme is taught by expert members of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues. Course type: postgraduate, continuing professional development, distance learning. Duration: 3



- years. <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/distance/edu/character-education.aspx>
2. The free online course ‘Building Character through Youth Social Action’ provides an opportunity to learn about the history of social action, and how youth social action can help build character in young people. This course is delivered in partnership with the University of Birmingham and FutureLearn and is open for anyone with an interest in youth work and working with young people. Duration: over two weeks. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/youth-social-action>
 3. The free online course 'What is Character? Virtue Ethics in Education' debates in the field of character and character education. The course explores virtues and the role they play in helping both individuals and society flourish, tapping into an increasing interest in character education and answering important questions such as, what is character and character education, why is it important and can it be taught? Duration: two weeks. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/what-is-character>
- b) UK: Other TC&CE initiatives (projects, conferences, workshops, documents, etc.).
1. The research project “The Psychological Development of Character: Emotion, Identity and Phronesis” conducted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues of the University of Birmingham. <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1756/projects/current-projects/phronesis>
 2. The research project “Virtues in the Professions” conducted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues of the University of Birmingham. <http://jubileecentre.ac.uk/1595/projects/published-research/virtues-in-the-professions>
 3. Character Education Research conducted by the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues of the University of Birmingham. <http://jubileecentre.ac.uk/1758/projects/published-research/character-education-research>
 4. The research project ”Teaching Character through Subjects” <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1676/character-education/resources/teaching-character-through-subjects>
 5. The research project “The Schools of Virtue” <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1589/projects/current-projects/schools-of-virtue>
 6. The research project “The Character Education in UK Schools” <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1571/projects/previous-work/character-education-in-uk-schools>
 7. My Character Feasibility Study <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1575/projects/previous-work/my-character>
 8. Character and Public Policy: Educating for an Ethical Life, University of Birmingham, December 14–15, 2012. The first annual conference of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham. <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/484/conferences/character-and-public-policy>
 9. Can Virtue be Measured? Oriel College, Oxford, January 9–11, 2014. The second annual conference of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham. <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/485/conferences/can-virtue-be-measured>



10. Varieties of Virtue Ethics in Philosophy, Social Science and Theology, Oriel College, Oxford, January 8–10, 2015. The third annual conference of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham.
<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/502/conferences/varieties-of-virtue-ethics>
 11. Cultivating Virtues: Interdisciplinary Approaches, Oriel College, Oxford, January 7–9, 2016. The fourth annual conference of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham.
<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1643/conferences/cultivating-virtues>
 12. Character and Virtue in the Professions: An Interdisciplinary Conference, University of Birmingham, June 2-4, 2016.
<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1673/conferences/character-and-virtue-in-the-professions>
 13. Character, Wisdom and Virtue, Oriel College, Oxford, January 5–7, 2017. The fifth annual conference of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham. <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1674/conferences/character-wisdom-and-virtue>
 14. Virtues in the Public Sphere, Oriel College, Oxford, January 4–6, 2018. The sixth annual conference of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham. <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1723/conferences/virtues-in-the-public-sphere>
 15. Educating Character Through the Arts. University of Birmingham Conference Centre, 19th-21st July, 2018. <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1743/conferences/educating-character-through-the-arts>
 16. Virtues: Local or Universal? Oriel College, Oxford, January 3–5, 2019. The seventh annual conference of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham. <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1779/conferences/virtues-local-or-universal->
 17. The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues has developed a series of resources to promote character education for teachers and other education stakeholders <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1610/character-education/> and for parents <http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1764/character-education/parent-resources>
 18. A Framework for Character Education in Schools.
<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Framework%20for%20Character%20Education.pdf>
 19. Statement on Teacher Education and Character Education.
[http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Statement on Teacher Education and Character Education.pdf](http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/Statement%20on%20Teacher%20Education%20and%20Character%20Education.pdf)
 20. Teaching Character through the Curriculum. A guide to educating the virtues through and within 14 secondary school subjects.
<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/TeachingCharacterThroughtheCurriculum.pdf>
 21. Schools of Character.
<http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/userfiles/jubileecentre/pdf/character-education/SchoolsOfCharacterPDF.pdf>
- c) USA: Existing TC&CE initiatives for teachers' professional competence development:



Character.org offers multiple support and training opportunities for K-12 schools, districts, and state-wide initiatives. These range from one day to multi-year assistance:

<http://character.org/training/institutes-and-workshops/>

1. Character.org 11 Principles Sourcebook Training Seminar (1-day or 2-day). Character.org trainers provide an overview of the 11 Principles of Effective Character, with significant focus on the foundational steps for systemic change. This work includes looking at existing school culture and “hidden curriculum,” the importance of establishing core ethical values used to guide judgment and decision-making, and understanding how character is formed.
2. Eleven Principles Sourcebook Leadership Institute (1-day or 2-day). The Character.org Leadership Institute is an initial training in Character.org’s Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education, customized to help school leaders learn how to move the initiative forward in their schools and what might be major areas for planning. This is an excellent starter format for a school district wishing to initiate effective character education across multiple school sites. The attending teams, which may be the character education committee, should include the principal, other school administrators, teacher-leaders, and community members and students, as appropriate. Teams of 5-9 participants are ideal. This is a great way to build a “critical mass” of supporters. It also works well when schools cannot do a staff-wide training because of limited professional development release days.
3. Regional Institutes. Regional Institutes are similar to Eleven Principles Sourcebook Training Seminar, offering foundational coverage of the Eleven Principles. Participants come to a central location for the training day and are encouraged to come in teams. The Institute is held every year at Character.org’s Forum. It has also been held in areas that share resources across districts. At times, Institute participants go back to their schools so excited that they will bring Character.org to their schools to provide a full-staff experience.
4. Skill Workshops. Skill workshops are three-hour training opportunities customized for the needs of a school’s action plan. These workshops typically provide the “how to” training for areas that have emerged as the staff becomes more familiar with character education. Examples of workshop topics include class meetings; service learning; problem-solving; discipline; conflict resolution; SEL skills, i.e., active listening, I-statements, and role-plays.
5. Collegial Follow-Up Sessions. Customized and focused discussion with school teams and Character.org leadership addresses specific topics and process identified by the school sometime after initial professional development takes place. Support for class meetings, service learning, and development or implementation techniques for portions of the 11 principles are often addressed. These are ½ day sessions.

d) USA: Other TC&CE initiatives (projects, conferences, workshops, documents, etc.)

1. The three case studies demonstrates the positive effects of implementing effective character education into schools. <http://character.org/key-topics/what-is-character-education/case-studies/>
2. The 11 Principles of Effective Character Education are the cornerstone of Character.org's philosophy on effective character education. Each principle outlines



- vital aspects of character education initiatives that should not be overlooked in programme implementation. <http://character.org/more-resources/11-principles/>
3. Character.org helps character educators nation-wide share effective lessons, strategies and best practices. Each lesson plan relates to Character.org's 11 Principles of Effective Character Education. <http://character.org/lessons/lesson-plans/>
 4. 2018 National Forum on Character. Washington Marriott Wardman Park, Washington, DC. October 5-6, 2018. <http://character.org/conference/>
 5. Center for Character and Citizenship (CCC). <https://characterandcitizenship.org/>
 6. Association for Moral Education (AME). <http://www.amenetwork.org/>
 7. Center for Character and Social Responsibility (CCSR). <http://www.bu.edu/ccsr/>
 8. The Character Project. Wake Forest University. <http://www.thecharacterproject.com/>
 9. The Duckworth Lab. <https://characterlab.org/>
 10. The Center for the 4th and 5th R (Respect and Responsibility). <http://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character>
 11. Authentic Happiness. <https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/>
 12. Character Plus. <http://www.edplus.org/domain/133>
 13. A new science of virtues. A project of the University of Chicago. <http://scienceofvirtues.org/>
 14. The self, motivation, and virtue project. <http://smvproject.com/>

2.1.3. Contribution to benchmarking from Estonia

There are several programmes that apply Philosophy for children (P4C) or mindfulness in European schools. Following, few examples and descriptions of these programmes are being brought out.

Programme name: DialogueWorks. **Country:** UK. **Website:** <http://www.dialogueworks.co.uk/education>

The programme is based on philosophical teaching and learning, which is an inquiry-led pedagogy that develops student understanding and appreciation beyond the levels normally achievable through traditional teaching. The philosophical teaching and learning inspires inquiry, drives dialogue, respects reason, values virtue, relies on reflection, and connects concepts. These are the six strands that run through every aspect and represent good teaching. The programme allows teachers to become better listeners and learn more about their students' capacities to reason and understand, also about their interests and needs. The students, on the other hand, take more responsibility for their own learning, including teaching themselves as well as each other.

The approach provides rich vocabulary for metacognition and encourages students to focus on carefully chosen personal and social virtues that will help them most in their learning and their lives. The personal virtues can be self-confidence, optimism, resilience and enterprise. Social virtues can be respectfulness, trustworthiness, open-mindedness and empathy. The programme also provides 21st century skills through its "valuing virtues" approach. More specifically, it allows schools to turn their stated values from mere slogans into concrete guidelines for behaviour and learning dispositions across schools. The philosophical teaching and learning broadens the scope of thinking through caring, collaborative, creative and critical styles of thinking that are central to P4C.



The practical training for teachers starts with two-day foundations course, based on well-established and strongly-evidenced P4C methodology. At the end of the training the teachers are equipped to start conducting philosophical inquiry sessions with pupils. After 6-12 months, the foundation course is followed up by two-day advanced training in philosophical teaching. Finally, there is a one-day course showing teachers how to build student skills in the metacognitive framework.

Programme name: SAPERE. Country: UK. Website: <http://www.sapere.org.uk>

The SAPERE programme trains teachers in P4C in order to encourage children to think critically, creatively, collaboratively and caringly in order to become lifelong learners. There are several courses offered for teachers, including:

1. Foundation course (two days) introducing the theory and practice for P4C, providing tools for developing pupils' questioning and thinking skills, demonstrating philosophical enquiry in practice, and presenting resources of teaching materials.
2. Advanced course (two days) is aimed to those who have completed the foundations course and who have been using P4C regularly for a minimum of 6 months. The advanced course examines the nature, purpose and methods of philosophical enquiry, shows how to choose and create materials to stimulate deeper thinking, extends practices and tools, as well as strengthens understanding of the theory and practice of critical, creative, caring and collaborative thinking.
3. Advanced course (two days) follows up to explain how P4C can impact the school's standards and values, shows how to plan a progress in P4C across curriculum, extends reflective techniques to identify improvements in practice, also explores social, political and ethical dimensions of P4C.
4. Finally there is a course (three days) that is designed for educators who want to develop a deep understanding of the philosophy behind P4C.

Programme: Akademie Kinder Philosophieren

Country: Germany. Website: <https://kinder-philosophieren.de/akademie-kinder-philosophieren/fortbildungsangebot>

Akademie Kinder Philosophieren is offering courses for teachers and parents. The foundations course for teachers is consisting of four-two-days module (all together eight days and 64 hours). Every module is focusing on a different question:

- Module 1: who am I?
- Module 2: me and others



- Module 3: what is world?
- Module 4: what are values?

Programme: Akademie Philosophieren mit Kindern und Jugendlichen

Country: Austria. Website: <http://www.wir-philosophieren.at/Aufbaumodule.html>

The course is aiming to focus on philosophizing with big groups of pupils, with a team, colleagues or parents, introduces different forms of philosophy and changing of thoughts, as well as supports connections and development of common projects.

Programme: MiSP Training Courses. Country: UK. Website: <http://mindfulnessinschools.org/courses>

The MiSP Training Course is focusing on mindfulness and offering courses of different topics:

- **Teach .b** 4-days course consists of real-time lessons and exploring the pedagogy of .b, also the opportunities to practice teaching the key exercises for 11-18 year olds.
- **Teach Paws b** is a 3-day course for those who want to teach mindfulness to 7-11 year olds. The course includes real time lessons, pedagogy sessions, discussion groups and opportunities to practice lessons with each other.
- **School Mindfulness Lead (following Teach .b and Paws b courses)** is a 6-day residential training for teachers who have not trained to teach adults mindfulness, but who would like to be able to lead the 8-week .b foundations course to teachers and other adults in the school where they are employed.
- **Teach .b Foundations** is a 3-day course for trained teachers of mindfulness who wish to teach the 8-week .b foundations course to teachers and other adults working with young people in schools.

Programme: MindUp. Country: UK. Website: <https://mindup.org/mindup-for-schools>

MindUp for Schools is offering support plans and training programmes with a certified workshop facilitator. Website: <https://kindnessbehaviourtraining.com>

Programme: Kindness Behaviour Training (KBT) Country: UK

The 8-week course starts with a foundation in mindfulness and then introduces different approaches to cultivating kindness. The course offers reflections and exercises to bring kindness into daily life.

Programme: MBSR Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Teacher Training course with Mindful Academy Solterreno. Country: Spain

http://mbsr.website/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIttLe89y72gIV7p3tCh0tKQEFEEAAYASAAEgID8fD_BwE



This is a professional and accredited Residential Teacher Training Retreat in 2 modules, carried out in English. At the end of the course the learner will have the skills and confidence to teach Mindfulness based Stress Reduction MBSR classes, MBSR 8-week Stress Reduction courses and private MBSR classes that empower people to make a real difference to their lives.

Other websites about mindfulness in schools: Mindful teachers (www.mindfulteachers.org), Mindfulness for Schools (www.mindfulnessforschools.com), Stillness revolution (<http://www.eftandmindfulness.com/mbct-course.html>), [Mindfulness in Education Web site: http://www.mindfulnessineducation.com/](http://www.mindfulnessineducation.com/)).

Section 2.2. Possibilities for transfer and adaptation of materials and programmes. Spain

2.2.1. Possibilities for transfer and adaptation of materials and programmes in Spain

One of the most important challenges has to do with the initial and permanent teacher training. There are several authors (Soriano & Peñalva, 2011) who highlight that many of the subjects that embrace themes related to coexistence, conflict resolution, education in values or intercultural education are not part of the core subjects of the training programmes which would be essential in the initial teacher training plans nowadays.

It may be appropriate to return to some approaches that place the teacher as a professional who reviews and researcher's own practice (Stenhose, 1998), the teacher as a reflective practitioner (Elliot, 1993) and the teacher as a reflective professional (Schön, 1992). It is also necessary to remember what Freire (1997) stated when he spoke of the complexity involved in the performance of teaching tasks and not in vain spoke of inherent virtues in teaching practice, alluding to virtues such as: coherence, ethics, humility and hope, among others.

2.2.2. Possibilities for transfer and adaptation of materials and programmes in Latvia.

Name	Website	Place	Relevant aspects	The possibilities for transfer and adaptation
The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues (JCCV)	http://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/	UK, Birmingham University	Research projects. Open source materials for schools	Translation and dissemination of the documents "Statement on teacher education and character education" and "A framework for character education at schools"
Center for Character and Citizenship (CCC)	https://characterandcitizenship.org/	USA (St. Louis): University of Missouri-ST. Louis	Congresses, conferences materials...	Useful "Guidelines for Effective Practice" at https://characterandcitizenship.org/researchers/18-what-works-in-character-education-report-for-practitioners
Center for Character and Social	http://www.bu.edu/ccsr/	USA: Boston University	(MOOC): Ethical Leadership:	Downloadable Lesson Plans at http://www.bu.edu/ccsr/resou



Responsibility (CCSR)			Character, Civility and Community.	rces/lesson-plans/
Character Project	http://www.thecharacterproject.com/	USA (North Carolina): Wake Forest University	Research grants, academic resources	http://studyofcharacter.com/resources (online texts, links to centres, etc)
The Duckworth Lab	https://characterlab.org/	USA: University of Pennsylvania	Grit scale (book 2016)	Playbooks (teacher resources for cultivating character) https://www.characterlab.org/playbooks
The Center for the 4 th and 5 th R (Respect and Responsibility)	http://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character	USA: State University of New York Cortland	Smart & Good Schools Resources for schools and teachers	Materials for sharing with colleagues, and apply in school's work http://www2.cortland.edu/centers/character/resources/SandG/index.dot .
Authentic Happiness	https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/	USA: University of Pennsylvania	Resources, questionnaires	List of 30 questionnaires could be used for character evaluation (e.g., PERMA questionnaire - Measures Flourishing; Gratitude survey; Grit survey...). Could be translated in Latvian: https://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/testcenter
Character Education Partnership (CEP)	http://character.org/	USA, Washington	11 Principles of Effective Character Education	The 11 principles could be translated into Latvian. Useful lesson plans for teacher http://character.org/lessons/lesson-plans/); assessment tools http://character.org/more-resources/assessment-tools/)
Character Plus	http://www.edplus.org/domain/133	USA: Saint Louis	Online resources	The list of the existing online resources https://www.edplus.org/domain/182

2.2.3. Possibilities for transfer and adaptation of materials and programmes in Estonia

All the courses brought out in the current paper can offer possibilities of adapting the materials as well as course structures and themes. For example, the programme DialogueWorks has set a strong theoretical and philosophical foundations for their course, which is a good example for the process of developing a programme.



SAPERE programme, on the other hand, offers a very clear structure for the courses, focusing on the learner becoming an expert in the field. SAPERE is also clear about the importance of practice as it is one of the criteria for moving on to next level courses.

The examples of mindfulness courses can provide an idea of how to build a course for teachers, as well as opportunities to upgrade learner to become the educator of mindfulness themselves. All mindfulness programmes can also offer examples of exercises and the content of courses.

The P4C courses from Germany and Austria are a good example of how the course structure should be developed and what to take into account when deciding about the content. An important thought that can be taken from these course is that there should always be 3-4 weeks gap time between meetings. This is important for teacher to be able to practice, as well as be able to discuss their experience. Organizing meetings over a longer time period makes the practice to become a habit and consistent activity.

Another important aspect is the practical approach of the course. Teachers have to be able to take part in philosophical discussions and experience the influence of the process. Also, it is important that in the end of course every participant carries out a planned discussion with other participants (as an examination).



Part 3. Case studies of best practices in each partner country

3.1. Spain: education for coexistence, social skills and transversal competences

Within ET 2020 and for the achievement of the objectives referred to the improvement of the quality and efficiency of education and training, the Ministry of Education launches the execution of a contract education programme (CP) between schools and the Administration as a measure for the increase of school success. The contract educational programme (CP) in Asturias is developed in a cycle of four years in the first phase and in three years cycle in a second phase. The proposal of this programme for Asturias is based on three priority areas:

- Curricular innovation: Organizational measures for the attention to students from an inclusive perspective.
- Educational compensation / abandonment: Development of the curriculum through competency programming that introduces innovative methodologies
- Promotion coexistence: Establishment of actions to promote participation and coexistence.

The schools are involved in a process of joint reflection on the teaching practice. The ideas, customs, ways of doing, values, etc. are made explicit and they guide the educational practices of the schools making up their culture.

Some of our actions related to education for coexistence, social skills and transversal competences are focused on actions that promote the emotional development of students and teachers such as responsibility, self-discipline, self-esteem, respect for mutual rights, etc., as well as the development of attitudes and values with a critical perspective about the information they receive by accepting their own responsibilities.

Taking into account this model, we have chosen two educational centres with different characteristics. Both, depending on the different starting points, have experienced significant progress throughout this process.

CEIP Bernardo Gurdíel-La Cruz (Grado)

The public school Bernardo Gurdíel La Cruz is a centre of Primary and Infant Education with 13 units located in Grado, a rural area with about seven thousand inhabitants located in the centre of Asturias. In Grado there is another centre for Early Childhood and Primary Education as well as two Secondary Education Institutes. A total of 262 students are enrolled in the centre. The school has four teachers of Early Childhood Education, seven teachers / tutors of Primary Education, four English teachers, two of Physical Education, one Music teacher, one of Therapeutic Pedagogy, one of Hearing and Language, one of Asturian Llingua and one of Religion. All of them are involved in the CP year 3, first phase.

We have chosen this centre for its work based on the principle of respect and intergenerational tolerance. The project allows to promote social sensitivity among children and the elderly people. The project wants to promote diversity, affective ties, values, humour, optimism, altruism and empathy. At the same time, they try to develop feelings of



respect, admiration and solidarity towards the elderly people. The final goal is to assess the exchange of knowledge, skills and experiences between children and adults.

IES La Corredoria (Oviedo)

The context of this study is La Corredoria Secondary School situated in La Corredoria, in Oviedo outskirts. The suburb where the school is situated has lately experimented a remarkable increase of its population and, at the same time, an improvement of its local services such as transport, social services or health services. Young families from medium-low social levels have come to live to this area and they work mainly in the service sector and in the building sector.

The study: *Climate of Coexistence and Action Tutorial: A case study in Compulsory Secondary Education* was focused on the analysis of coexistence problems and the presentation of improvement proposals that were implemented thanks to the Plan de Acción Tutorial (Action Tutorial Plan). This qualitative study was carried out during the school year 2009-2010 and the research techniques used were participant observation, in-depth interviews for teachers and questionnaires for students and teachers.

One of the most relevant study outputs is that both, teachers and students have a positive perception about the coexistence atmosphere in this Secondary School as the research results show. However, it can be observed that students' behaviour is often against the coexistence rules and this fact is quite common. Some of these behaviours are shouts, insults or bad language in the classrooms or rules which are simply not followed. These facts are also proved by the high rate of warnings and expulsions at the school. We would also add that the most troublesome courses are the 1st and 2nd years of Secondary Education. Bearing in mind all these warnings and expulsions how can we explain the fact that both teachers and students have a positive perception about the coexistence atmosphere at school?

The school is aware of the importance of multicultural approaches: taking part in programmes for inclusion, coexistence, etc.

The school IES La Corredoria has requested to participate in the CP, phase 2 aimed at promoting the development of centres promoting equity. The schools involved are going to focus on the Inclusive School, model of which IES La Corredoria can be a great example. They we want to make their Institute a more inclusive school, so that all of theirs students can achieve "school success".

They are working with The Index for inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) as a guide to rethink which are the values that move their action. They will analyse the cultures, policies and school practices that can sustain inclusive values. They want to bring a series of values related to inclusion. The school team is summarizing priorities for development inclusive cultures in order to build community and establish inclusive values.

Within its change throughout this year we would like to present an example of best practice related not only to character education but also to a service learning approach.



The project is being developed since 2012. The students work out a variety of support products for other colleagues with physical functional diversity in other public schools. At the beginning the project was simple collaboration among teachers of practical field of diversification and the physiotherapist but over time it has become one of the most supportive and motivating projects.

Phases of the project:

1. The project planning: The need for support products for students with disabilities is detected. After designing a project paper with the correct measures for each student they work in groups they reflect on the learning acquired.
2. The project performance: Chairs, lecterns and footrests are made. Recycled materials are used whenever it's possible.
3. The evaluation: Materials are taken to elementary schools. The students checked if they work properly in order to facilitate the inclusion. Finally, the group and the students are evaluated from some rubrics created by the Workshop teacher. The project has continuity accepting new demands.

The educational objectives proposed for the students of the school are the following:

1. Improve academic results, influencing and reinforcing the motivation of their students.
2. Promote a good classroom climate, as a priority for the school with special needs students with in order to contribute to inclusion, tolerance and coexistence.
3. Educate for life and the problems of today's society.
4. Be open and promote attitudes of commitment and help to the community and surroundings, becoming an experience of inclusion in the community.
5. Develop an attitude of service to others, educating in values of solidarity and respect for the other
6. Finally, we would like to add some ideas about the improvement of the training teachers' activities.

Some important steps include:

1. Helping teachers to understand their role in education and that the inclusion of diversity in the classroom is an opportunity, not a problem
2. Teacher-education programmes, (both pre-service and in-service) should be reoriented and aligned to inclusive education approaches in order to give teachers the pedagogical capacities necessary to make diversity work in the classroom within curriculum.
3. Training all education professionals, including members of the community, are essential to supporting an inclusive school.

3.2. Latvia: Support to positive behaviour; character education programme

Case 1

Preface: The sub-programme “Support to Positive Behaviour” (SPB) has been developed within the project of European Structural Funds Development with the aim of



implementing support programmes to establish a support system for young people under social exclusion risk” (2011-2013). It has been piloted in 39 educational institutions and 15 municipalities in Latvia in the time period from 2012 till 2014. The SPB is only one part of the research-based preventive support system for decreasing the social exclusion risk for children and young people from age 7 to 25.

The developers: The SPB was developed in 2011-2012 by the three Latvian experts (Baiba Martinsone, Dita Nīmante and Linda Daniela) according to the Latvian context and cultural environment as well as legislation.

The theoretical framework: The SPB was developed on the basis of ideas expressed by: Lee and Merlin Canter (Canter & Canter, 2001); Rudolf Dreikurs (Dreikurs & Cassel, 1974, 1991, Dreikurs, Cassel & Dreikurs-Ferguson, 2004, Dreikurs, Grunwald & Pepper, 1998); Jane Nelsen (Nelsen, Lott & Glenn, 1997, Nelsen, 1987), etc.

The foreign good practice examples such as:

- USA programme: School-wide positive behavioural interventions & supports;
- Norwegian programme: Positive behaviour, interactions and learning environment in school;
- Studies on the results and effectiveness of these programmes (*Sørli & Ogden, 2007; Sørli & Ogden, 2009; Sugai et al., 2000; Walker et al., 1996*).

The aim: To develop a common system for promoting positive behaviour at school providing a systemic facilitation of positive students’ behaviour and decrease of behaviour breaches at school thus in short-term ensuring order at school while in long-term improving students’ emotional and moral development.

The preconditions: The five groups of preconditions are needed to achieve the goal of the SPB:

First, schools that want to implement SPB have to agree on the utility of the SPB throughout the school. One of the conditions for the introduction of SPB at school is the consent of 80% of the school staff (including teachers, administration, technical staff, support staff) to participate in the programme. Since the SPB has a school wide approach, it is important from the outset to provide as many “supporters” of school support as possible and participate in the SPB programme. The introduction of SPB at school should be aligned with parents and pupils.

Second, the role of leader in the implementation of SPB is assumed by the school principal. The involvement of the head plays an important role, especially in ensuring the durability of this programme. The school head creates SPB team (which may be the school administration team or the school support team but is not required), who supports the head in the process of implementing and maintaining the SPB. Third the school team is involved in a 72-hour SPB continuing education programme at workplace (workplace learning), in which the entire school collects both the SPB theoretical background and practices in the new skills. The result of the SPB continuing education course is the implementation of an



individual SPB plan for introducing at the concrete school. Four, in order to fully implement the SPB, close interinstitutional cooperation between schools, local municipalities, and services is necessary. Finally, the school should provide the opportunities of electronic input, storage and processing of students' behaviour (positive and negative reports). Usually SPB schools have chosen "e-class" because the e-class system incorporates such data accumulation, accounting and processing capabilities and can be adapted to SPB principles.

The main activities:

The preventive activities include: strengthening positive communication and positive relationships between school teachers and students, removing barriers of positive communication; assessing the school environment (which disturbs and contributes to school rules); all school arrangements for positive behaviour; the practice of encouragement and praise in day-to-day work, the development of a system of awarding a school for compliance and the development of a system of the logical consequence in the case of non-compliance.

The purpose of the preventive action is to create a positive, safe climate in a school where all pupils know about what kind of behaviour is expected (certain rules that are also taught at the beginning of the school year and are repeated throughout the school year are re-established), it is regularly reinforced and encouraged, there are obvious consequences that are expected if the rules are not respected. It helps students to anticipate the consequences of their actions and make the right socially acceptable choices over time.

Supportive and remedial (corrective) activities involve the use of supportive classroom techniques; the recognition of inappropriate behaviour and irregularities, consistent application of gradual consequences for the unity of all teachers in the case of non-compliance; solving individual cases together with SPB team and involving parents; problem solving involving support professionals and parents; inter-institutional support unit of the municipality to engage in individual cases all responsible parties; developing an action plan for emergencies involving breaches of rules, violence, life threats, etc.

The characteristics of the SPB implementation:

1. The SPB is an all-embracing, universal whole-school programme which takes into consideration democratic principles (responsibility, respect and security), gradualness and the involvement of all parties interested in the work of the school.
2. The SPB envisages development of a unified system when teaching rules to students and designing system of positive reinforcements, applying consequences, as well as establishing monitoring system for programme implementation and evaluation. It consists of formulating, learning and consolidating rules throughout school year, reinforcing positive behaviour and unified personal reaction to breaches of the rules.
3. The outcome of implementing the SPB is the increase of cases of pro-social, positive, safe, respectful and responsible behaviour and the decrease of cases of problematic and antisocial behaviour at school.



4. The implementation of the SPB ensures a positive, physically and emotionally safe environment promoting the learning and facilitates students' socially emotional and moral development.

The significant dimensions of assessing SPB quality: administrative support to the SPB; work of the SPB team; implementation of the SPB methodology; establishment of positive environment at school; academic achievement; missed lessons; students' responsibility for their behaviour; involvement of parents; cooperation with the municipality specialists (outside the school); community interest and ensuring the sustainability.

Quality is ensured by conducting several mutually connected activities: focused further education of teachers and all school personnel at their workplace, regular supervisions during the SPB implementation, consultations as well as progress analysis which have been conducted by summarising and analysing e-data on students' behaviour. Implementation quality at school during approbation process was evaluated analysing the data summarized in e-environment. Electronic school management system 'e-class' was used. Reports of positive and negative behaviour as well as other important notes (warning, reports added to personal files which were based on agreement of a teacher and SPB team) were included in the system. These summarized data give information whether the number of positive reports has a tendency to increase thus allowing to make prognosis that positive behaviour in on the rise at school and this the number of negative reports decreases which allows to make conclusions that there are fewer behaviour breaches at school. The summarized information helps to understand teachers' activity ignoring students' attempts or giving positive reinforcements (positive e-reports) in e-class thus encouraging students to behave in a positive manner also in the future.

Case 2. Character education programme in Riga Catholic Gymnasium

Preface:

The school community believes that the ethos of the school should build on a foundation of core values: respect, responsibility, compassion, humility, integrity, justice, moral courage, caring and fairness. These values are the basis for the social, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and moral development of whole child. The parents are not the only ones that need to be concerned in developing a student's character, the school and community should also have a role in this. This is why our school community needs to implement character education so that the students know the correct path they should walk on. The reason for teaching good character is to help prepare the students to face the many opportunities and unknown dangers that are in today's society. Character education gives the students the knowledge they need to know what these dangers in society are and deal with them properly. Students need to know how to handle these pressures and character education will give them the tools that they need.

We affect students' character, for good or for ill, through everything that happens in school. Effective character education uses every part of school life as an opportunity for building good character. We encourage pupil to consider such core values as respect, responsibility, compassion, humility, integrity, justice, moral courage, caring and fairness through different activities to permeate whole curriculum, thereby developing knowledge, skills and



attitudes that enable them to develop as reflective learners, achieving their full potential. As they grow to be stable, well-educated and civil adults.

And since students spend most of their time at school, it is the perfect place to instil moral values in them. The contemporary educational process consists of three main parts: knowledge (what we know?), skills (what we can?) and character (how we behave?).

Thus the aim of Character Education Programme is to develop students':

- Knowing (habits of the mind);
- Feeling – emotional intelligence (habits of the heart);
- Behaviour (habits of behaviour).

A holistic approach to character education develops the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dispositions required to do the right thing and do one's best work. It fosters qualities that will help students be successful as citizens, in the workplace, and with the academic curriculum. Without performance character, we will have difficulty developing our human potential and enacting our moral values effectively.

The aim: To design and implement effective character education module into Riga Catholic Gymnasium that could be integrated into existing curricula to teach students character education elements such as respect; responsibility to others; compassion; humility; integrity; justice; moral courage; caring and fairness.

The Integrating Effective Character Education Programmes into Riga Catholic Gymnasium include the following five objectives:

1. Raising standards by promoting a school ethos, which is underpinned by core values that support the development of the whole child as reflective learner (to help students become smart and to help them become good).
2. Development and dissemination of a Character Education Resource Manual.
3. Involvement of many stakeholders in the development and implementation of the character education program.
4. Provision of character education training for teachers and parents.
5. Provision of international conference of urgent issues about character education (acceding countries Latvia, Poland, Estonia, Ukraine and Hungary).

Duration: September 2016 - September 2018

The target groups: The Riga Catholic Gymnasium students, teachers, staff and parents are involved in shaping the Character Education policy (450 people). Also, the students, teachers, staff and parents from other Catholic and Christian schools in Latvia (about 2000 persons).

The main activities: The process of the developing Character Education is well planned, monitored and evaluated in order to keep the process alive and constantly under review. The responsible people of process control are the administration of Riga Catholic Gymnasium and the task manager.



1. The Character Education programme is established for learning about core values respect, responsibility, compassion, humility, integrity, justice, moral courage, caring and fairness, which may include: Introducing values in a programme of assemblies; One value being highlighted each month; The value of the month is the subject of a prominent display in the school hall and in each classroom and newsletters are sent to parents explaining what the value of the month is and how they can be developed at home.
2. The school creates a plan for character education and defines character education clearly and comprehensively emphasizing that it is a process that demands integration into all aspects of school life.
3. Teachers teach core ethical and performance values through their academic subjects and employ a variety of active teaching and learning strategies, looking for ways that character is potentially developed in and through everyday teaching and learning. For example, in Science, teachers can discuss the value of honesty in data, in Maths, students can learn persistence by sticking with a problem until they get the right answer and History holds valuable lessons about heroes of character.
4. The school effectively provides all students with opportunities for participation in service learning (e.g., working with the elderly; helping the homeless, those in need, or animals; or caring for the environment) and students take advantage of these opportunities and benefit from them.
5. To create a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment for every student and supports academic development. Core values appear in the school building, in the school mission statement, on the school website, in the student handbook, in the discipline code, in newsletters sent home, and at school events.
6. To encourage students to examine their own behaviour in light of the core values and challenge them to make their behaviour consistent with the core values (e.g., through journal writing, discussion of events in the classroom, one-on-one adult-student conversations about past or present behaviour).
7. To identify the core values and recognize their importance as a distinctive feature of the school.

Particular description of the process: At the beginning of the month (September-May) during the Eucharist or Morning pray is declared the Value of Month. In every class meeting students give careful consideration on this value and decide how they implement it in their relationships with classmates, schoolmates, family and environment during this month. They confirm three concrete suggestions. It helps them to interact properly with their teachers and fellow students, turning their classroom into a better learning environment. At the end of month students examine their own behaviour in light of the month value through journal writing, discussion of events in the classroom, one-on-one adult-student conversations about past or present behaviour. Evaluation occurs in the individual, class and school level.

In the 2016/2017 school year the Value of the Month was highlighted in following subjects Religious Education, Literature, Music, Art, and History.



During the school year five events are produced, which cover two values. Every event is prepared by students cooperating with their subject teacher and form master.

1. *Musical performance.* Students+ Music teacher+ Form Master.
2. *Art performance.* Students+ Art teacher+ Form Master.
3. *Literary performance.* Students+ Literature teacher+ Form Master.
4. *Erudite competition.* Students+ History teacher Master+ Form master.
5. *Biblical performance.* Students+ History teacher Master+ Form master.

The school's summer camp will be as a summary enterprise of all values

The adaption of core values is ensured by different ways and methods: students' exhibitions, erudite competitions, music (singing, dancing) performances, literary performances sport events, visiting exhibitions, museums, art galleries, historical and different social places in Riga, Charity work, excursions, as well as, teachers provide opportunities for students to develop their moral reasoning through discussions of ethical issues in their content areas (e.g., how lessons of history guide moral choices, how scientific discoveries have ethical implications).

The outcomes: Students can explain why the core ethical and performance values are important, how various behaviours exemplify those values, and why some behaviours (e.g., treating others as you wish to be treated, giving your best effort) are right and others are wrong.

1. Develop a sense of self-identity and integrity.
2. Reflect on social, moral, spiritual and religious choices.
3. Encourage children to seek peace, justice and truth.
4. Respect themselves and other people.
5. Care about the environment and other people welfare.
6. Think about community needs as well as their own.

The senior researcher of the University of Latvia and postdoctoral student Manuel Joaquín Fernández González was doing a post-hoc assessment of the implementation of the programme based on interviews with school students, teachers and the school leading staff. Several interesting issues about the real implementation appeared;

Interviews with school students (grade 4-8):

- During the first year, virtue teaching-learning happened mostly during the lessons. The second year there were several general topics or activities that students could choose (for example: library, usage of free time, folk stories from Latvia, games...). The whole class was involved in the realization of the activities (for example, the grade 8 went to the old-people house and had a theatre representation there).
- At the beginning, they used the class journal, but the second year the students were writing their thoughts in their own agenda.
- The students liked the best the projects outside the classroom, for instance the activities related to respect and compassion, to help others (for example, they went



to the hospital and gave some post cards they made themselves as a gift for the sick people).

Interview with a teacher in preschool and primary education:

- Positive points of the programme: the focus on virtues, the system (honesty, etc.). It is important to think about these virtues. There were many materials, for example, posters with facts from real life about these virtues. There were a lot of different methods, in different contexts. However, one month is too short for really understanding one virtue. More time for each virtue it is necessary.
- The teachers liked to use the practical aspects: for example, to improve the virtue of order, students and teachers looked together at the students' journals and homework notebooks to highlight the most positive examples of the virtue of order there, not for criticizing each other.
- A seminar for teachers was well appreciated and another one for parents also received good feedback. Joint discussions with other teachers about the implementation of the programme were missing. It was difficult, because there is a lot of things to do.

Interview with a school leading staff member:

- Nine virtues are too many to be worked in a year. There is not time to go deeper and to have some feedback and reflection about them. The school has a lot of event by default (country feasts, religious feasts, career education activities, etc.). The ideal timing would be one virtue per two months: September-October / November-December / January-February / March-April / etc. and then maybe a final event, if any. So, four virtues per year (maybe two close virtues could be put together).
- In secondary education the practical aspects this year were most important: everything was done in a practical way, not through lectures. Of course, some theoretical knowledge could help, but the real important thing is the practice. For example, they wrote their own theatre plays talking about respect. One of the topics was "respecting time". Youngsters should learn to respect the time, their own time (not to spend it in computer or telephone games) and the time of others. They were learning through the events that were not so positive.
- In 2017-2018, an interesting new activity was the radio programme prepared by the students themselves. They spoke in their programme about the virtue of the month.

Summarizing the most relevant aspects of these good practices and applying them to a future character education programme at school:

- The programme should have the consent of 80% of the school staff (including teachers, administration, technical staff, and support staff) to participate in the programme, and be aligned with parents and pupils. The implementation should be assumed by the school principal.
- The programme could be introduced through a continuing workplace learning program for teachers (6 to 32 hours), resulting in a personalized plan for character education at school.
- The plan should be clear and foresee time enough to develop each habit (2 months). Teachers should have time to reflect and discuss among them at least twice a year.



- The teaching and learning methods should include class activities, and also practical activities out of the school with a social component. Reflection tool for students should be included (journal, personal mentoring conversations, or other).
- The implementation could be supported by e-class system to facilitate communication with parents, and by e-learning systems (such as uzdevumi.lv) to facilitate teaching and learning.
- The school space should reflect the educational priorities (posters).

3.3. Estonia: Philosophy for children; mindfulness at school

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an educational programme, also called a learning-to-think programme, created by Matthew Lipman in the end of 1960s in the USA. The curriculum was developed to cover ages 3–18 years old. The main aim of P4C is to support children's thinking skills: learning about critical, collaborative, caring, and creative thinking through discussion on everyday topics, but also, learning about social and language skills.

Through philosophising, children learn to resolve questions through reasoning. Philosophical discussion can consist of various activities: amazement, asking, rethinking, being suspicious, inquiring, and thinking forward. Philosophical discussions according to P4C lead to growth in learners' self-esteem, reasoning ability and intellectual performance, and a wide range of information processing and communication skills; also develop a child's ability to explain his/her point of view.

Participants in a philosophical group discussion collectively formulate, defend and explore each other's viewpoints based on their own experiences, negotiating and composing new meanings, using language as a tool to promote reasoning skills. Children are guided to play with ideas, draw and communicate through physical movements with an emphasis on expressing their thoughts and giving reasons for their own opinions, whereby differences of opinion are seen as developmental opportunities. As a result of philosophical discussions, the participants explore ideas, try out their own thoughts and eventually arrive at adequate generalisations. The main topics for discussion are values (e.g. friendship, honesty, respect, tolerance, empathy). During the teacher training course (P4C course in Estonian: *Õppe- ja kasvtusmeetod ühisarutelude juhtimiseks: Lastega filosoferimine*), teachers learn how to apply philosophical discussions without critical evaluation and without presenting their own opinions to children, how to support children to talk openly about personal thoughts with socratic questioning and to understand which attitude makes children to feel free for discussions.

Previous studies

Earlier studies all over the world have shown positive impact on children's social, language and cognitive skills. Systematic studies have shown that philosophising with children (aged 6-16) leads to growth in learners' self-esteem and has a positive impact on cognitive and reasoning abilities (Philosophie - eine Schule der Freiheit, 2008). In many countries, P4C is now in the school curriculum for different age groups (Göd 1995, Philosophie – eine Schule der Freiheit 2008, Poelchau 2007).

Previous studies in Estonia related to P4C



There are some studies that have investigated the implementation of P4C in Estonia (Kelian, 2016; Roos, 2016; Säre, 2002; Säre, 2010; Säre, 2018, in press) and studies that used P4C as a method to collect data (Käst, 2016; Tähepõld, 2016; Yakhnitsky, 2016). For example, the possibilities of applying philosophical discussions and activities in a primary school class have been studied (Säre, 2010). The results showed that philosophical discussions and activities can be applied in various subjects (e.g. mathematics, natural sciences, arts, Estonian language). Nevertheless, it was found that the philosophical activities can regularly be used only in lessons that are carried out in the native language. Roos (2016) found in her study that the pupils' reading skills improved after conducting philosophical discussions, however, the results between experiment and control group were not significant. The author argues that this could be caused due to short time period for the P4C course.

The results of a quasi-experiment by Säre's doctoral theses (2018, in press) showed positive effect to pre-schoolers verbal reasoning skills. Children in the intervention group gave more reasons than the children in the control group when asked to reason their opinion after the eight-month implementation of philosophical discussions based on P4C. The results revealed that children in the intervention group gave more responses using the phrase "because of that" when asked to reason their opinion (e.g. *Why do you think that he is brave? – Because he thinks all the time that nothing will happen to him.*) compared to the children in the control group. The children in the intervention group were significantly more talkative than the children in the control group when asked to reason their opinion after the eight-month implementation of philosophical discussions.

Practice: Implementation of P4C in Estonia

The first experiment using the programme Philosophy for Children (P4C) in regular private lessons in the year 2007-2010 has shown that Estonian children aged 4-11 are very willing to discuss everyday and real-life topics (Säre, 2010a). Today, P4C is implemented in some kindergartens, schools (e.g. Valga Põhikool; Tartu Luterlik Peetri Kool; Emili Kool) and hobby groups or private groups (e.g. Audentese Erakool; Evelyn Vahi; Gerttu Vaher). In addition to this, P4C is also included in a kindergarten curriculum (Tallinna Luha Lasteaed; Luke lasteaed Segasumma).

Mindfulness practices in Estonia

The concept of mindfulness has increasingly grown in Estonian schools in the last years. In parallel with practical interest from teachers towards the mindfulness exercises, also research in this area has caught universities attention. When talking about mindfulness, several different terms are used in Estonia (Table 3). However, all these terms have two main components in common: 1) attentiveness and awareness here and now; and 2) opened and acceptable (non-judgemental) attitude. (Seema, Säre & Pöder, 2017):

Term in Estonian	Term in English
teadlikkus	awareness, consciousness
meeleteadlikkus	awareness and/or consciousness of the mind
selge teadvus	clear consciousness
ärksus	being aware
meelevirgus	awareness of the mind



teadvelolek	consciousness
kohalolek	presence
meelerahu	peace of mind

Table 3. Terms used in Estonia when talking about mindfulness (Seema, Säre & Pöder, 2017).

The most widespread non-profit association in Estonia offering courses and supervision about mindfulness practices is called Vaikuseminutid (in Eng. *Minutes of Stillness*). The courses are aimed to support the knowledge of carrying out mindfulness exercises with children. The target group of Vaikuseminutid courses are teachers and other staff members of school. Until now, at least 50 Estonian schools and 48 Estonian kindergartens have had the training of mindfulness exercises. All together, at least 1600 teachers in Estonia have participated in the base course of Vaikuseminutid. Taken all this into account, it can be assumed that Vaikuseminutid has reached at least 35 000 children. (Seema, Säre & Pöder, 2017; vaikuseminutid.ee). The association Vaikuseminutid is lead by teachers, parents and experts from different fields. The aim of the association is to make exercises of awareness and peace of mind available applicable for Estonian children, teachers and parents. In addition to offering different courses, the association is also creating a set of exercises that would fit into Estonian context (vaikuseminutid.ee). Vaikuseminutid has already published materials to support teachers, as well as developed an application for smartphones in order to make mindfulness exercises for children available in Estonian language.

Vaikuseminutid claim to position themselves in the domain of positive psychology. The exercises they have adapted can increase one's mental wellness and health, which on the other hand, helps to increase the resources for facing the challenges in life. Vaikuseminutid is not a new method as they adapt mindfulness exercises from different cultures and domains (e.g. psychotherapy, pedagogy, western and eastern cultural traditions, and different educational programmes). Gathering data about mindfulness from many different domains, Vaikuseminutid adapt exercises that are simple and child friendly. (vaikuseminutid.ee). The exercises of Vaikuseminutid are few minutes long and they can be used with kindergarten children, teenagers at school or even with adults. Practicing mindfulness with Vaikuseminutid helps people to guide their attentiveness and be completely here and now. The exercises are verbally guided. An examples of types of exercises: experiencing listening, perceiving breathing, the cognition of body, exploring caring etc. (vaikuseminutid.ee).

The growing interest of Vaikuseminutid in Estonian schools have caught the attention of researchers and students at the university as a potential research topic. For example, Olga Kitsing (2017) explored the opinions of educational workers about the implementation of Vaikuseminutid exercises in primary schools. A combined data (quantitative and qualitative) from 46 educational workers showed that the exercises used in schools are appropriate and acceptable to pupils, as well as easy to use in daily practice.

In addition to that, teacher's opinions about the effectiveness of using Vaikuseminutid exercises in developing children's self-regulation skills were explored with a qualitative study (Vooglaid, 2016). The four respondents of this study had completed the basic training course of Vaikuseminutid and used these exercises in their daily work. Most teachers had noticed positive changes in children's behavior, also their ability to direct attention to



something after including the exercises of Vaikuseminutid to the introduction of the lesson. Nevertheless, it is argued that this can also be caused by children's natural development and growth. However, the exercises of Vaikuseminutid are seen as one component in supporting the development of these skills.

It is clear that Vaikuseminutid has been a solid influencer of mindfulness practices in Estonian schools. Numerous articles refer to the positive effect of using mindful exercises of Vaikuseminutid in Estonian schools. Interestingly, people have even started to use the word *vaikuseminutid* (minutes of stillness, in lowercase) to describe their activity, as opposed to referring to the association (typically written with capital letters). With that big influence in Estonian schools, a question can be raised, if another synonym for mindfulness in Estonian language could be *vaikuseminutid*.



Part 4. Developing pupils' intra-personal competencies and character education at school: bases for a support programme for teachers

4.1. Synthesis of context analysis and benchmarking

Synthesis of context analysis and benchmarking in Latvia

In Latvia the recent governmental guidelines for virtue education at schools are addressed through an innovative multifaceted perspective, integrating the fields of expertise in closely related fields, such as philosophy for children, education for coexistence and citizenship, transversal competence development and virtues ethics.

The recent guidelines for virtue education in Latvian schools (Cabinet of Ministers, Decision No. 480 of 15.07.2016) which include virtues such as justice, honesty, responsibility, tolerance, compassion, etc. provoked different reactions in Latvian society. Teachers are expected to be responsible for virtue education at school, but they do not feel well prepared for this task. The Foreign Investors' Council in Latvia (FICIL) proposes to launch a new stage in the modernization of the Latvian education system, focusing on 21st century skills for both students and teachers. In FICIL's opinion, curriculum redefinition, in accordance with the current needs of labour market, is necessary, making better use of the new "virtue education" or character-based education. In this way, it could be harmonized with the activities related to the competence-based approach.

From the perspective of this partner country (Latvia), this changing context makes it necessary to start with teachers and school leaders' training. Education professionals, as providers of education, must take the initiative so that schools are ready for the implementation of this new teaching trend.

Synthesis of context analysis and benchmarking in Estonia

The Estonian partners present its proposal Philosophy for Children (P4C). These partners think that philosophical discussions, according to P4C, lead to grow learners' self-esteem, reasoning ability, intellectual performance, critical and creative thinking, and a wide range of information processing and communication skills. It also develops child's ability to explain points of view.

The main topics used for discussion are values such as friendship, honesty, respect, tolerance or empathy. During the training programme, teachers learn how to conduct discussions without making a critical evaluation or presenting their own opinions to children They are also taught how to support children to talk openly from personal thoughts and to understand when and how children feel free to discuss. Training is led by kindergarten, pre-school and primary school teachers. Sometimes psychologists, speech therapists or paediatricians participate on this training.

Philosophy for children or Mindfulness, is an attitude towards life. It is a style of coping that promotes personal strengths and provides benefits for both students and teachers.

The goal of Mindfulness in the educational contexts is to acquire a state of awareness and calmness that helps them self-regulate their behaviour and get to know each other better, as well as creating a conducive environment for learning.

Teaching with Mindfulness fosters the students' improvement in different academic, emotional and social areas. In the case of teachers, it can be highlighted that they should do their best to create a favourable environment for the teaching-learning processes.



It is necessary to understand that teachers play a fundamental role in society, since they are responsible for the important function of educating future generations. Their work is not only focused on teaching theoretical knowledge to students, but broader tasks. In the current educational contexts, teachers are also responsible for promoting students' values and skills to their future development in society.

Synthesis of context analysis and benchmarking in Spain

In the Spanish educational context, the term 'educación para la convivencia' " is used. It is understood as the education for coexistence and it focuses on the improvement of social skills and key competences necessary for living together. This conception of education for coexistence is not only restricted to standards of coexistence of educational centres, but also aimed at the creation of critical and participatory citizens who know how to live together in a diverse and multicultural society.

Learning to live together is one of the educational challenges of the 21st century and schools must address it in a society immersed in a profound change. Learning to live with others, besides being an essential purpose of education, represents one of the main challenges for current education systems.

Despite the existence of various programmes and initiatives, one of the most widespread perceptions among teachers refers to the progressive increase in the difficulties of coexistence in schools and, especially, in secondary education. In this context, it is necessary to adapt schools to the new learning demands in a way that both students and teachers integrate and participate actively in an educational and social context that is constantly change.

In the Spanish educational context, in general, and in the autonomous community of the Principality of Asturias, in particular, there are numerous and diverse initiatives that in recent years have been developed and have influenced the improvement of coexistence and participation in educational centres to respond to the needs that arise from daily practice. One of these initiatives has to do with the so-called "Contract-Programme".

These programmes are based on the requirement of combining the recognition of the pedagogical and organizational autonomy of the centres, with the obligation of the regional Administration to offer a guide in order to provide a quality education to all students. These programmes work on prevention and strategies such as mediation for conflict resolution have been particularly relevant.

The current educational contexts, changing and complex, make government to pay a lot of attention to teacher training programmes leading new teachers and in-service teachers to participate in teacher training coexistence programmes. Therefore, the figure of the teacher and their training become key aspects to promote the improvement of coexistence at schools.

As a result of the comparative analysis carried out in the three countries: Latvia, Estonia and Spain, we can highlight the following favourable aspects or strengths:

- In the three partner countries, Latvia, Estonia and Spain, the issue is equally relevant: Many teachers have little possibilities to learn and implement innovative approaches for involving children in the process of learning interpersonal and intra-personal skills. ARETE in Greek means "virtue" or "character excellence". A CATALYST is an activator or facilitator of changes and transformations. ARETE CATALYST aims at empowering school teachers for enriching the educational culture of their institution with a focus on transversal competence and character education (hereinafter: TC&CE).



- All partner countries are committed to promoting programmes aimed at improving coexistence and developing social skills as well as programmes for the development of virtues such as: peaceful coexistence, tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, development of the critical thinking, respect, solidarity, justice, equity, freedom, responsibility, resilience, empathy, moderation and courage.
- All partner countries have experienced the implementation of different programmes aimed at improving social skills and coexistence. While it is true that pedagogical guidelines and methods are different in each country, it should be noted that the aims of such programmes are similar, and this makes collaboration and cooperation among the partner countries viable.
- Regarding the permanent teacher training plans, there are initiatives in different partner countries in which proposals are developed to promote coexistence in terms of prevention and intervention.
- Despite the differences in the context in the three partner countries, the need for initial and permanent teacher training to respond to the new educational challenges of the moment is evident. The three partner countries are committed to the need of teacher training from a holistic perspective.

We can also point out that there are some difficulties and obstacles. Although there are differences among the three partner countries, we remark the following difficulties

- Difficulties in transferring the innovative and positive experiences put into practice by some teachers or groups of teachers, based on reflection on practice and teamwork to facilitate the improvement of coexistence.
- Inadequate or scarce teacher training on the areas of conflict resolution and development of social skills for a correct classroom management and / or to intervene with certain student troublesome profiles.
- There is a lack of teachers' training and professional development programmes on character education.
- Difficulty on assessing the impact of practices that promote positive coexistence in schools.
- Lack of an analysis on the relationship between coexistence and curriculum.
- Absence of a systematic plan to evaluate and monitor the impact of different training activities to improve coexistence in schools and classrooms.
- The hidden curriculum of the educational centres prevents visibility of educational exclusion.
- Teachers readiness to apply new methodologies before experiencing themselves is rather low. The problem relies on time shift-teachers who force their own values on students.
- It is problematic for teachers to attend long-lasting training courses when the schools do not favour it.
- Schools and kindergartens do not have enough financial resources to allow teachers to attend long courses.
- Project-based approaches would be necessary.
- In some countries, the lack of qualified professionals who can provide training to teachers in the topics related to character education and the improvement of coexistence and social skills become a major problem.

4.2. Conclusions of the expert seminar



A seminar with educational experts was organized in June 2018 in Riga during one of the project meetings. The work done during the first months of the project was presented to the experts and a joint work seminar and discussion about the design of the ‘Arete catalyst’ teacher training program took place. We summarize below the main suggestions received during this seminar of experts.

General suggestions about the contents of the teacher training program

- **About contents of the programme:** Teachers need to have a personal experience and understanding of their own values and virtues, obtained through personal and group reflection. A multicultural perspective is necessary. Mindfulness exercises, which enhance awareness and open (non-judgemental) attitude, would be desirable to work on teachers’ self-knowledge and own values.
- **About materials:** Teachers need concrete support materials to implement character education in the classroom. Many materials are available online, so the programme should teach catalyst teachers where these resources are and include practical work about how to adapt them to local contexts.
- **About programme methodology and assessment:** Teachers feel saturated. The programme should be built on what teachers have already done and the timing should be flexible. Methodology should be innovative, including blended learning and use of virtual spaces, collaboration and peer assessment. The programme should also be practical.
- **About collaboration:** A priority is involving the educational community as a whole. To be sustainable, the administration of the school should strongly support the introduction of character education. Parents and students should also be involved in the design of the programme, choice of values/virtues etc.
- **About terminology:** Values and virtues are similar concepts but not identic. Clarification of the meaning of these terms should be included in the programme. *Country specificities:* In Latvia it might be better to use the term “education of moral habits” instead of “character education” or “virtue education”. In Estonia the term value education is widely accepted. In Spain the perspective of “education for coexistence” is a priority. In Estonia, “vaikuseminutid” is being used as a synonym of mindfulness.

Country specificities

In Latvia a new professional development programme is needed to integrate the 4 aspects mentioned in Latvian educational law: teachers’ general competencies, teachers’ self-experience (includes teacher personality development), methods and didactics (e.g., elaboration of teaching/learning materials for use in the classroom), and school and class management (including school culture creation). The programme should be in line with current educational reforms.

In Spain the programme should be in line with the priorities of the Regional Board of Education and Culture (improvement of coexistence). The programme should be holistic, not only about specific aspects, and aimed at prevention, not at reacting to inappropriate behaviour. It should include “communicating in the classroom”, “teaching styles”, “practical resources” and “adaptation to the students”.

In Estonia, the programme could be constructed on Philosophy for Children and the work of the association Vaikuseminutid (Minutes of stillness. See www.vaikuseminutid.ee), using published materials to support teachers, and the application for smartphones.



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