



**CHIEF (Cultural Heritage and Identities of Europe's Future)  
Grant Agreement no: 770464**

**WP: 2 Qualitative research in formal educational settings  
Deliverable: 2.1 National/federal Curricula Review**

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Editors	Elina Marmer, Tina Zurabishvili		
Version	1.0		
Date	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2019		
Work Package	2		
Deliverable	2.1		
Dissemination level	Public		
WP Leaders	Louis Henri Seukwa, Elina Marmer, Cornelia Sylla, Tina Zurabishvili		
Deliverable Date	31 <sup>st</sup> December 2018		
Document history			
Version	Date	Comments	Modified by
V1.0	14/01/2019		

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## About CHIEF

The CHIEF (Cultural Heritage and Identities of Europe's Future) project aims to build an effective dialogue between different stakeholders in order to facilitate a future of Europe based on inclusive notions of cultural heritage and identity. The project focuses on the production and transition of cultural knowledge in both formal educational settings initiated from above, and a variety of informal human interactions. CHIEF will contribute both to understanding and enhancing cultural literacy of young people, and to more effective use of European cultural heritage as a site of production, translation and exchange of heterogeneous cultural knowledge. It will also recognise existing innovative practices and develop a new organisational model to enhance the cultural and inter-cultural competence of young Europeans.

CHIEF is funded by the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Programme. It brings together ten partner institutions:

- Aston University, United Kingdom,
- Daugavpils Universitate, Latvia
- Institut Drustvenih Znanosti Ivo Pilar, Croatia
- Caucasus Research Resource Center, Georgia
- Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Turkey
- Universidad Pompeu Fabra, Spain
- Culture Coventry, United Kingdom
- Univerzita Komenskeho V Bratislave, Slovakia
- The Savitribai Phule Pune University, India
- Hochschule Fuer Angewandte Wissenschaften, Germany

## Overview of Curricula Reviews

### 1. Introduction

The role of the formal education in the development of young people's cultural literacy cannot be overestimated. There are many questions that need to be answered in order to learn how it shapes young peoples' beliefs and ideas in terms of inclusion, cultural identity, heritage and Europe, and whether and how it enables young people's active cultural participation in society. From the perspective of the CHIEF project, the following are the questions for research in formal educational settings:

- How are 'cultural heritage', 'cultural identity' and 'cultural diversity' and 'Europe' reflected in national/federal curricula and textbooks?
- How do teachers understand 'cultural heritage', 'cultural identity', 'cultural diversity' and 'Europe'?
- How do teachers communicate these concepts to their pupils and, in particular, how do they facilitate cultural participation?
- How do young people understand 'cultural heritage', 'cultural identity', 'cultural diversity' and 'Europe'?
- How do young people describe their experience of getting familiar with these concepts?
- How do they engage with these concepts in practice in the context of formal education?

CHIEF's work package 2 (WP2) consists of two phases. During the first phase, to which the present report is devoted, national/regional curricula were analysed in order to find out how they reflect the relevant concepts, and how do these findings correspond to the findings of the policy review (Fooks, Stamou and McNie, 2018). During the second phase, qualitative interviews with teachers and pupils will be conducted, in order to learn how those concepts actually operate in the formal educational praxis.

This report consists of systematic reviews of national/federal curricula in the CHIEF countries, prepared by CHIEF consortium members. Each country/region review contains a background section on the respective national/federal educational context, a description of methods, presentation of key findings, discussion of the results and conclusion. This overview highlights the main common themes, indicating convergence and contextualising major differences in the approaches, findings and discussions of the national reviews.

### 2. Methodology of the curricula review

The curricula were analysed using thematic content analysis technique and based on CHIEF's common guidance. The analysis focused on the curricula for 14 to 18 year old students. All partners have selected the specific curricula for subjects that address the main topics of the CHIEF project. In the UK, Germany, India and partly in Spain, formal education is in the hand of regional authorities, therefore the curricula of the regions where the second phase of WP2 will be conducted, have been analysed by these country's teams: Hamburg (*Germany*), Maharashtra (*India*), Catalonia (*Spain*) and England (*UK*). In all country reports, the choices made by partner teams are explained in detail, and the selected curricula are listed in the appendices.

Selection, coding and analysis of the documents had been performed by two or more researchers in each country; all decisions have been achieved by discussion and consent within each research team. The researchers coded the documents inductively, i.e. the codes were derived from the data and built and modified by each team independently as the coding process developed. This approach was chosen so as not to constrain the analysis with common hypotheses but rather to enable an understanding of particular cultural concepts and practises embedded in respective historical and socio-political environments in each of the partner countries. The inductive approach resulted in different codebooks for each country. Therefore, while the reports use a similar structure, the themes along which the findings are organised, as well as the orientation of the individual discussions, can sometimes widely differ.<sup>1</sup>

### **3. Educational contexts in the CHIEF partner countries**

Educational contexts vary among CHIEF countries in all major aspects: school structures, length of compulsory education, streaming, choice of subjects and certificates offered. In all countries, free school education is a constitutional right. The starting age varies between the ages of 5 and 7. Compulsory education lasts for eight (*Croatia*), nine (*Georgia* and *Latvia*), ten (*India*, *Slovakia* and *Spain/Catalonia*), eleven (*UK/England*) and twelve (*Turkey* and *Germany/Hamburg*) years. In the respective sections, the country reports give a detailed account of their formal education peculiarities and highlight the current issues.

Both, Croatian and Latvian educational systems are currently undergoing a transformation process. Latvian educational reform and language politics are highly politicized issues (*Latvia*). The new curricula in Croatia have earned ideological criticism from right-wing politicians, but also mobilized over 50,000 people in 2016 to

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<sup>1</sup> One technical difference in this respect is the length of the reports. While the reports are, in average, around 10,000 words long, analysis of the UK and Slovak curricula proved to be longer, since more information on relevant concepts was available in the UK, and two types of educational institutions have been studied in Slovakia.



demonstrate in support of its implementation (*Croatia*). In the times of transition the old curricula are no longer of interest for the project, while the new ones are not yet fully implemented, complicating the analysis in these two cases. Also in England, a new “knowledge-rich curriculum” was introduced by the Conservative Government where the content “has been slimmed down and focused around hard-facts”, in a radical opposition to the previous practice of experiencing knowledge as an encounter (*UK/England*). Other major national/regional issues deal with questions of access and equality, such as minority education policies (*Croatia, Georgia*), segregation and discrimination of Roma communities in the school context (*Slovakia*), implementation of inclusive education (*Georgia*), access to education for marginalised groups (*India*), inequality in regard to the high school entrance (*Turkey*) and structural lack of social mobility (*Germany/Hamburg*).

#### **4. Major themes**

Despite the differences, several major common themes could be identified. In the following, these reoccurring themes are highlighted by illustrating differences and similarities in the ways these themes are approached.

##### **4.1 Basic definitions**

Most of the documents analysed do not provide basic definitions of “culture” and related concepts of “cultural literacy” or “cultural heritage”. As the Georgian report claims, “it is assumed that the very concept of “cultural heritage” is self-evident and needs no explanations”. The analysis reveals, that cultural heritage is “understood rather narrowly, as a cumulative collection of art objects” (*Georgia*). Only in Latvia is there actually a subject promoting cultural literacy – *culturology*, which focuses on “various cultural theory issues related to the understanding of the concept of culture, its importance in society, as well as the emergence, functioning and interaction of different cultures in the world” (*Latvia*). The emphasis on difference and comparison dominates the understanding of culture and identity in the Latvian *Culturology Curriculum*, where diversity is approached through creating students’ awareness of “other cultures” thus gaining understanding of their own (*Latvia*). Difference and comparison are also emphasised in the Hamburg curricula, creating binary notions of “our culture – other cultures” (*Germany/Hamburg*). Some isolated attempts are made here to conceptualize culture in a more fluid and inclusive way – such as “a certain way of learning, thinking and communicating”; by introducing the concept of “multiple belonging”; or as a “sum of all aspects of human creation” – but there is no consistency to these approaches throughout the curricula. Cultural literacy is only explicitly defined in the curricula for Latin and Ancient Greek, narrowing cultural roots of all students to glorification of

Ancient Rome and Greece (*ibid.*). In the Slovakian case, “culture” is understood and interpreted in two different ways: as “collective identity stemming from the way of life preferred by the majority” and “as a specific field of human creativity, articulated primarily through art and heritage” (*Slovakia*). As the report claims, such an ambiguous way of operationalising “culture” “in turn, affects the ways of employing its conceptual correlates such as cultural identity, cultural heritage or even European culture” (*ibid.*).

In the Turkish curricula, national culture (and identity) are constructed from the perspective of nationalisation and are imagined homogenously, neglecting “the variety of identities, life styles, cultural practices, languages and belief systems” (*Turkey*). The Indian curriculum shows a constant attempt to instill a sense of pride in students by referencing the “glorious past and how Indian culture and knowledge are innovative”. Also here, tension between nationalism and diversity has been observed, with “revival and the assertion of newly (re)invented national, religious caste or regional identities” (*India*). The *Croatian* report mentions the term “intercultural literacy”, recognised by the new National Curriculum Framework as a “specific and unique educational domain”. At the same time, national culture “refers primarily to majority national group in terms of a distinctive national feature”, as the analysis shows (*Croatia*). There is a visible shift towards more openness and fluidity of these concepts, as the newly implemented Civic Education Curriculum introduces a broader and more inclusive notion of culture and identity in parallel with the narrow one (*ibid.*). What kind of tensions such coexistence might produce in the formal educational praxis can be only assessed during the second phase of the WP2.

## 4.2 Competences

One central topic of most curricula is the orientation toward competences or skills instead of knowledge accumulation. As the Spanish report explains, in 2006, The European Union recommended that its member states incorporate key competences in their curricula for general education. This recommendation led to a series of reforms EU-wide, including the one in Spain/Catalonia, where, traditionally, school lessons were based on the so-called master classes. There are a number of reasons in Spain to be cautious about the shift towards the competences-centred approach: “The organisation of classroom activities and the operation of schools, the forms of relationship and communication established among the educational community, and also the relationship with the environment, all these may or may not contribute to the acquisition of key competencies” (*Spain*). The competence approach has already been implemented in Slovakia and Germany (*Slovakia, Germany*), while Croatia and Latvia, are in the midst of an educational reform process, with the implementation of competences-oriented curricula being one of the main goals (*Croatia, Latvia*). This

trend can also be found outside the EU: in Turkey, as a result of the accession negotiations with the EU, competences, along with “skills and values”, have been introduced to curricula in 2005. However, the renewed curricula for the school year 2018/19 puts much greater emphasis on “values education”, specifically on “national values”. The review shows that religion is the main reference point of the values and values education (*Turkey*, see 4.6 Religion). Curricula based on competences result in greater freedom for schools and individual teachers to decide on the actual teaching content. Though the term “competences” have not been mentioned by the Indian report, also here, the National Curriculum only predefines a framework and “offers the flexibility in actual writing of textbooks and inclusion of specific regional history/relevant topics” (*India*). The Georgian curriculum however, combines both, competences and teaching content (*Georgia*). In England, the situation is rather distinct. The education reform introduced new pedagogical principles, such as accumulation of knowledge, memorisation as a tool of learning and a legal duty of all schools to emphasise ‘fundamental British values’, developed by the government as a strategy to prevent ‘radicalization’ and ‘extremism’ (*UK/England*).

### **4.3 Intercultural competence**

Most countries operate with the term ‘intercultural competence’. It is recognised by the Croatian curriculum as a “key competency” and is implemented interdisciplinary. The analysis shows that intercultural education serves rather as a tool to establish notions of national (majority) identity and culture (*Croatia*). ‘Intercultural competence’ is sometimes interpreted as a means to increase marketability of students in the globalised world (*Turkey, Germany/Hamburg*). It is supposed to be achieved by gathering information about the local, national, European and world cultural heritage in the Slovakian curriculum, serving as an example for essentialization of culture in the report discussion (*Slovakia*). Essentialization and culturalisation in the discourses on intercultural education and diversity are also present in the Hamburg curriculum (*Germany/Hamburg*). An emphasis on differences between cultures in the context of intercultural education, and the continuous reproduction of “we and the other” discourses manifesting a static and closed understanding of culture, rather than an inclusive one, have been observed by various reports (*Germany/Hamburg, Croatia, Slovakia, India, Turkey, UK*). At the same time, Georgian curriculum is criticized for the lack of ‘intercultural competence’ concept (*Georgia*).

### **4.4 Languages: National Identity, Diversity and Language politics**

The concept of languages often reflects the understanding of national identity. While some countries/regions consider themselves through their treatment of language in curricula as monolingual, others are explicitly multilingual. India's multilingualism is recognised by the curricula as a "resource for the enrichment of school life" (*India*). However, there are considerable tensions in the country around the official language/medium of instruction, as well as on the role of English as the "colonial baggage" vs. "language of the world", where "marketability of students" (*ibid.*) who received education in languages other than English is to be considered. This multilingual approach is also reflected in the definition of national identity as diverse (*ibid.*). Latvia, de facto a multilingual country, on the contrary, is concerned with the proficiency in Latvian language of all students. While currently minority schools use their respective languages as a language of instruction, with Latvian as a compulsory second language, which is an obvious characteristic of multilingualism, the school reform aspires the introduction of Latvian as a language of instruction in all schools. Officially, "the Latvian language and culture should be regarded as the foundation for the unification of peoples living in Latvia" (*Latvia*) constructing "national culture" as a culture of the major national group. Similarly, in the Croatian curriculum the Croatian language is defined "as a 'bastion' of national identity". At the same time a shift towards multilingualism in Croatian formal education becomes visible through the reform of 2000, which guarantees minorities "the right to organise education in their own language" (*Croatia*). Minority language schools also exist in Georgia, but the government receives a lot of criticism, because of lack of resources, poor quality of translated textbooks and lack of qualified teachers, resulting in significantly lower success rate of graduating students. The Georgian National Curriculum largely ignores the diversity of Georgia, even though the diversity of world cultures is highly appreciated (*Georgia*). The curricula of the Slovak and Hungarian languages and literature "promote understanding of national/ethnic exclusivity (whether Slovak or Hungarian) as well as understanding of affinities to other ethnicities. The former sees the language as 'an attribute of national and individual identity', or as creating 'consciousness of linguistic belonging to a certain ethnic group' and the latter as supportive to 'a more opened approach to people' and as enabling the 'perception of linguistic affinity and fellowship with other ethnic groups'" (*Slovakia*). Catalan is the language of instruction in Catalonia. Spanish is also taught so that the pupils master both languages. "In the case of children and teenagers of migrant origin (migration to Catalonia was very important during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century), if they have no knowledge of the Catalan language, they will attend a 'host classroom' (*aula d'acollida*) for the first few months, learning as much Catalan as necessary to allow them to follow classroom activities" (*Spain*). In Hamburg, Germany great emphasis is placed on German language proficiency: academic language, subject-specific

vocabulary and language skills. An option to take additional classes in their first language is offered to some students, which is supposed to help them to master German (*Germany/Hamburg*). Similarly with India, ‘marketability’ of offered foreign (colonial) languages is considered important. A higher cultural value is given to the teaching of Ancient Languages, which are predominantly offered at schools attended by pupils of higher socio-economic status (*Germany/Hamburg*).

#### **4.5 History, Post-colonialism and Post-socialism**

Official (national) history telling is a powerful tool in the formation of ideas of identity, nation and cultural heritage. In Turkey, the teaching of Modern Turkish history is “intended to reshape the young people’s national emotions”, when for example, protest acts of the opposition are depicted as a threat to the state (*Turkey*). Historical narratives can manifest power relations and foster both, nationalism and multiculturalism having an impact on more or less inclusive (or exclusive) notions of culture. From the post-colonial perspective, histories of most of the partner countries are intertwined, but this is very differently reflected (or not) in the reviewed curricula. On the one hand, the issue of colonialism is most evident in the Indian report, and its treatment in curricula creates tensions and dilemmas in regard to: the role of the English language; the definitions of nation and patriotism; the conceptualisation and even naming of ‘Civics’/’Political science’; the teaching of Europe; and foremost the teaching of History with an attempt “to place India on the map of the world as an independent Nation that suffered colonisation, yet is ready to be a global actor” (*India*). Emancipation from the colonial past as well as recognition of its impact on contemporary India and the world are issues of constant debate (*ibid.*). In England, on the other hand, “colonial past with a focus on India” (*UK/England*) is covered by the History curriculum, but the emphasis is on the “past” – hence the contemporary postcolonial reality of migration and multiculturalism in Britain is not touched upon (*ibid.*). Neither the German colonial history, nor its impact on contemporary Germany is touched upon in the Hamburg curricula, reflecting the “German colonial amnesia” (*Germany/Hamburg*). Colonialism is only perceived as an external phenomenon, while the relationship between colonialism and migration is only treated distant past (*ibid.*). And the Catalan report does not even mention the word “colonialism” at all (*Spain/Catalonia*), the topic seems not to have any significance in educational/cultural discourses. Similarly, in Georgia and Slovakia, both post-socialist nations, socialism does not play a role in the curriculum review (*Georgia, Slovakia*). The Georgian review acknowledges the holistic approach to history in the curriculum: it is consistently concerned with theoretical and practical learning of cultural heritage – of Georgia and “other countries” – while “diversity in a given population” is explicitly discussed “as a basis for tolerance and peaceful coexistence” (*ibid.*). However, the

glorification of “national heroes” (*ibid*) in the Georgian curriculum can be viewed as an attempt to politicise history. In Croatia, the transition to the new History curriculum is accompanied by “ideological objections” related to “historical interpretations of the Second World War, the socialist era, and the Croatian War of Independence” (*Croatia*). Latvia’s post-socialist situation is well demonstrated in the review in the issues of Latvian language, national culture and identity (see 4.3), where the “symbolic confrontation between Latvian and Russian-speaking people based on different biographical experience and different external sources of historical knowledge” (*Latvia*) is strongly reflected. The battles about the educational reform can thus be interpreted as being about the control of the sources of historical knowledge in the formal educational system on both sides.

#### **4.6 Geography, Europe / World**

Teaching of Geography should orient and locate young people in the world, defining the way they construct and perceive spaces and distances, continuities and borders. In this context, it is interesting to observe, how the respective curricula locate their countries or regions in relation to Europe and the world. The concept of Europe in the Indian curriculum is strongly associated with colonialism. In this way, Europe, and especially England, can be seen as counterparts in defining Indian identity as a post-colonial nation. Other than that, European history is treated rather as a part of global history (*India*). European cultural heritage is mainly addressed through thinkers and scientists by the Turkish curricula. Though Europe figures in a number of subjects, its presentation is perceived as narrow and shallow (*Turkey*). In the Georgian curriculum, “Georgia is regularly considered a part of the Caucasus, Europe, the World”. The focus is on the relationship between European and Asian cultures and their influence on Georgian culture. However, “integration of Georgia in European structures” is also highlighted by the curriculum (*Georgia*). “European culture” is widely treated in the Latvian curriculum, where preservation of Latvian culture is understood as ensuring Europe’s cultural diversity (*Latvia*). “The impact of [...] European nations on the formation of Croatian culture” is incorporated as teaching content by the new Croatian National Curriculum Framework (*Croatia*), while in Hamburg the most explicit concept of European culture is that of a historical extension from the Ancient Roman and Greek empires (*Germany, Hamburg*). Along with essentialization of people’s ideas and beliefs to clear-cut boundaries by divisions of culture in national/ethnic, European and world, the Slovakian report criticizes the Eurocentric approach to the teaching of history, philosophy, literature, arts etc. in the curricula (*Slovakia*), which resonates with German and UK remarks (*Germany/Hamburg, UK/England*).



#### 4.7 Religion

While the governments – hence, the policies – of the CHIEF countries claim to be secular, in a number of cases surprisingly high importance of the role of religious education has been documented by our curricula reviews. Latvia and India are the only countries, where the term “religion” does not feature in the official curricula. In Germany, it is the Protestant Church which actually developed the curricula for the subject “Religion” for Hamburg schools. Not surprisingly, then, schools are expected to promote Christian, specifically – Protestant values. Although this curriculum “acknowledges the importance of diversity and respect towards different religions, it also makes clear that Christian traditions do have a special standing in European history and culture” (*Germany/Hamburg*). Churches – importantly, though, those representing several major religions, and not just one – are explicitly involved in the design of the curricula on Religious Education/Religion in Slovakia as well, with each of these six churches offering their version of the curriculum. “Whereas the Evangelical Church and Brethren Church devote particular parts of their curricula to other religions, this is much less present in the curricula of the Catholic, Orthodox and Reformist churches” (*Slovakia*). Either way, these curricula are all highly “Christian-centred” (*ibid*). Also in England, while we have no evidence of the church being involved in the curriculum development here, the official document verbatim claims that “For schools without a religious character, the Religious Education curriculum needs to reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain” (*UK/England*). “Turkish-Islamic approach” to history, culture, nation and identity values derived from religion dominate the new Turkish curriculum (*Turkey*). Teaching of religion in Georgia is mostly approached as religious studies and placed in the Social Science Curriculum. Studying histories and cultural influences of different religions, the curriculum claims to “help pupils in understanding the importance of religion and the diversity of religions in the world” (*Georgia*). This was unexpected, because (Orthodox) religious self-identification has been one of the major pillars of the national identity in this country. The Orthodox Church has been the most trusted institution in the country for over a decade, with no other institution enjoying a similar level of trust.

**References:**

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## **National Curriculum Review (Croatia)** Ivan Hrستیć, Marica Marinović Golubić

### **1. Executive Summary**

The aim and objective of this review is to analyse how “European and national cultural heritage”, “cultural knowledge”, “identity” and “participation” are reflected in the national curricula that manage the educational process.

Three documents were analysed for the purposes of this review. The most important of these is the National Curriculum Framework, which defines basic elements in pre-school, primary, and secondary education. The second is the Civic Education Curriculum, which focuses on the implementation of civic education in formal education. The third document under review is the National Vocational Education Curriculum. Coding was established using NVivo 12 for qualitative data analysis, while the main findings are grouped into three major themes: *Educational Goals*, *National Identity* and *Inter-Culturalism*.

Regarding educational goals, until the mid-2000s, formal education in Croatia was primarily characterized by a focus on the content prescribed in teaching plans and programmes. Since then, there has been a strong intention to modernise the system. The main change has been a shift from a focus on content towards a focus on educational outcomes, as well as a shift from the mere transfer of content to developing students’ competencies. This has been implemented within the National Curriculum Framework and the subsequent curricula under review in this report created in line with the Framework. The rationale behind the change was the need to adapt to rapid social changes and a highly competitive labour market as the main characteristics of contemporary societies. The importance of changes in Croatia has particularly been emphasized through the EU accession process.

The National Curriculum Framework is the first document in Croatia to recognise intercultural competence as a key competency on the curricular level for secondary education. Its implementation is particularly emphasised in “Language and Communication”, “Social Sciences and Humanities”, and “Art” education, as well as through the interdisciplinary themes of “Civic Education” and “personal development”. However, in all topics that specifically address respect for diversity and teaching about cultures, inter-cultural education is presented more as a kind of contextual framework for *national* identity and culture, understood as the majority national group identity and culture, and is in a way subordinated to it. This is evident from the analysis on the use of the concepts of culture, identity and heritage, which are approached to as primarily

static phenomena. However, it must be pointed out that this contradistinction is present and emphasised to a significantly lesser extent than in curricula (teaching plans and programmes) from the 1990s. The National Curriculum Framework acknowledges the impact of national minorities and other European nations on the formation of Croatian culture and has incorporated these topics in teaching; this was not the case with earlier curricula.

The second major change announced in the National Curriculum Framework is the implementation of civic education in schools. Civic competency is identified as one of the most important educational outcomes, crucial to the development of the democratic development of society. In order to maximise the effect of civic education, it is implemented throughout primary and secondary education using a “spiral-developmental” model that adapts teaching style to student age, as well as to the needs and capacities of particular schools and local communities.

The main learning outcome of Civic Education from the first to the fourth grade of primary school is the formation of an emancipated, socially engaged citizen. From the fifth to the eighth grade, this outcome is complemented with the acknowledgment of the rights and responsibilities of citizens of Croatia, while in secondary education, the appreciation of being a part of the European community and other international communities is included in addition to the first two outcomes. This structure confirms the still present prioritisation of national identity and culture in education over intercultural aspects. Teaching about supra-national identities is introduced only when the national identity is assumed to have already been formed. However, the Civic Education Curriculum introduced an important novelty in understanding *national* identity, culture and heritage. The Curriculum differentiates the term *national* in a narrow sense, meaning particular national group identities (the majority national group as well as national minorities’ identities), and in a broader, more inclusive sense, meaning common identity, culture and heritage of all citizens of the Republic of Croatia. These common identity, culture and heritage have been created by intensive interaction between the majority national group and national minorities, which evidences its’ fluid and inclusive character. This type of approach is even more characteristic to the Strategy of Education, Technology and Science (2015) and new Draft Curricula for subjects and education areas, which are a part of the experimental programme currently being implemented across Croatia, thus indicating direction of changes which will follow regarding the issue.

In drawing conclusions, it is important to point to the limitations of this review. The analysis is greatly limited; the reviewed curricula do not provide us with a deep understanding of the actual situation in schools, as teaching plans and programmes from the 1990s are still in use. They have been adapted to the new concepts propagated by

the National Curriculum Framework and the Curriculum for Civic Education to some extent, but not systematically or nationwide. Furthermore, new subject curricula have not yet been adopted. Therefore, information is lacking for an assessment of education practice. More grounded conclusions will be possible only after the empirical part of the research within the CHIEF project will be completed.

## **2. Formal Educational Context in Croatia**

The Croatian Constitution defines primary education as mandatory and free, while it defines secondary and higher education as equally available to all (Croatian Parliament, 2010). Secondary education in public schools is also free, although this is not a constitutional right. The entire Croatian education system is centrally managed by the Ministry of Science and Education. The Ministry, among other responsibilities, approves and implements curricula and approves textbooks, which are published by private publishing houses. The education system consists of the following levels: early childhood and pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, and tertiary education. Early childhood and pre-school education (enrolment of children up to 5 or 6 years old) constitute the first level of the educational system, and these are not compulsory, except for a pre-school educational programme lasting one year prior to the 1st grade of primary school. Early education and child care are financed and managed by local authorities, while the Ministry provides central guidance, accreditation, and control over the educational programmes implemented in early education and child care organisations.

The founders of primary schools are mostly the national government or units of local or regional government (regional: 20 counties; local: City of Zagreb, municipalities, towns), but some are also founded by legal and physical persons. Primary schools are compulsory, and they can implement a) a general education programme, b) special programmes for children with developmental disabilities, c) art schools (music, dance) and d) schools in the languages and scripts of national minorities. Students enrol in primary school at the age of 6 or 7, and primary education lasts for 8 years, although it is split into two stages. From the first to the fourth grade, students are taught by one teacher per grade, while different teachers teach different subjects from the fifth to the eighth grade. After completing primary education, students have the opportunity to continue their education in secondary schools; this is not mandatory. All students have the right to enrol in the first year of secondary education on equal terms, but within the

number of places established by a decision on enrolment for each school year, which is taken annually by the Ministry.<sup>2</sup>

Secondary education institutions are, depending on the type of education programme, divided into three types: secondary schools, vocational, and arts schools. Secondary schools (gymnasiums, economics schools, and engineering schools) prepare students for a university education, while vocational and arts secondary schools qualify them for the labour market. The secondary school curriculum lasts four years, and education is completed by passing the national secondary school exit exam. Education in vocational and arts schools can last from one to five years, and ends with a final exam. Students who have completed vocational programmes can also take the state secondary school exit exam in order to gain a higher level of qualifications for a university education. In the 2016/2017 school year, state schools represented 96.6% (487 schools) of all secondary schools in Croatia (504), while 2.6% (13) schools were private, and 0,8% (4) were religious (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Since 2000, national minorities are guaranteed the right to organise education in their own language and script. This right is operationalised through three education models of primary and secondary education from which they can choose. In Model A all classes are held in the language and the script of a national minority, but students are also required to learn Croatian. Model B understands bilingual teaching: science is held in Croatian, whilst subjects in social sciences and humanities are held in the language of the national minority. According to Model C most classes are held in Croatian, but students are encouraged to learn the language and promote the culture of a national minority (Ministry of Science and Education, 2018). In total, in 2015/2016 10,621 students were enrolled in 220 educational institutions with such programmes. (Government, 2018)<sup>3</sup>.

## 3. Method

### 3.1 Selection

Up to the Mid-2000s, the system of primary and secondary education in Croatia was primarily characterised by a focus on content prescribed in teaching plans and

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<sup>2</sup> In 2018/2019 the Ministry set the quota of 45,276 students in 2,080 first grades of secondary education. Gymnasiums were supposed to enroll 11,123 students (24.57%), four-year vocational schools 18,733 (41.38%), three-year vocational schools 7,237 (15.98%), three-year privileged craft programmes 4,863 (10.74%), five-year nursing/medical technician education programmes 959 (2.12%), lower qualification programmes 163 (0.36%), special programmes for students with disabilities 867 (1.91%), and music and dance schools 1,331 (2.94%) students (Ministry of Science and Education, 2018).

<sup>3</sup><https://pravamanjina.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Izvje%C5%A1%C4%87e%20o%20provedbi%20UZPNM%20za%202015.%20i%202016...pdf> [Accessed 6 January 2018].

programmes. Since then, there has been a strong intention to modernise the system. The main change has been a shift from a focus on content towards a focus on educational outcomes, as well as a shift from the mere transfer of content to developing students' competencies. This intention is summarised in a strategic document entitled "Croatia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (Croatian government, 2001), which emphasised the need for curricular reform. However, the National Curriculum Framework, as the key reform document, was only published nine years later in 2010.

The National Curriculum Framework (2010) constitutes the fundamental elements of pre-school, general compulsory (primary) education, and secondary education. It contains the main elements of the curricular system; it establishes the values, goals, principles, content, and general goals of educational areas, the evaluation of student achievements, and the evaluation and self-evaluation of the national curriculum implementation. The National Curriculum Framework is the basis for the preparation of subject curricula and other curricular documents, such as teacher manuals, standards for the preparation of textbooks and other teaching materials, standards for the evaluation of the quality of student achievements and school operations, etc. Therefore, the National Curriculum Framework is a fundamental document, and was selected as such for the review.

This document was supposed to serve as the basis upon which to create all other documents, such as subject curricula; however, these have yet to be produced. Instead, the Ministry sent a recommendation to county teacher councils<sup>4</sup> to make adjustments in teaching plans and programmes from the 1990s. This recommendation suggests a shift from a focus on the content towards a focus on educational outcomes. However, these "adjustments" were made from one county teacher council to another, with no uniform solution. This means that teaching plans and programmes from the 1990s are not fully in operation anymore, and thus are not included in the review. On the national level, only the Civic Education Curriculum for primary and secondary education has been introduced (2012); this subject, implemented as a cross-curricular theme and non-compulsory subject in primary education and a compulsory subject in secondary education, did not previously exist. Through the perspective of CHIEF, this document is assessed as relevant, and it has thus been selected for the review.

In 2015, the Education, Science, and Technology Strategy was published for all levels of education, as a continuation of work on curricular reform (Croatian government, 2015). Soon after this, the first drafts of reformed subject curricula were presented to

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<sup>4</sup> County teacher councils were formed in 2005 by the Bureau of Education (Education and Teacher Training Agency, 2006) as external associates made up of school principals, teachers, and professors employed in a particular county, with the goal of coordinating the professional training of teachers and improving education (Skupnjak & Pahić, 2017).

the public. These were strongly criticised by a number of scientific institutions, as well as by right-wing politicians. Considering that the society is highly politicised, the issue has become primarily political in the public sphere. “Ideological” objections were mostly related to criticisms of the curriculum’s historical interpretations regarding the Second World War, the socialist era, and the Croatian War of Independence (Hrstić, Dergić, and Vukušić, 2018). “Health education” and “Civic education” were also strongly criticized as being unacceptable in the context of traditional social values in some regards. On the other hand, more than 50,000 people in various Croatian cities protested in 2016 in support of educational reform, seeking the new curriculum be implemented. In the end, after a number of revisions, the curriculum entered the experimental introduction phase in 2018. It has been introduced in 72 schools across Croatia, involving 8,500 students and 1,500 teachers and professors. However, this is still not a national policy document; the curriculum and all subject curricula are still only drafts in the experimental phase. What the ultimate outcome of this process will be and whether the programmes will be introduced at the national level is yet to be seen. For these reasons, these documents have not been included in the review. Only the National Vocational Education Curriculum has been included, which was officially introduced in July 2018.

### 3.2 Coding

The thematic analysis of the curricula was undertaken using an iterative, inductive approach to the generation of codes and themes guided by the review aims and objectives:

*To capture how “European and national cultural heritage”, “cultural knowledge”, “identity”, and “participation” are reflected in the national curricula that manage the educational process.*

To create codes, two reviewers read all three selected documents independently and coded them. The coding of all documents by both reviewers was assessed as optimal, as there are only a small number of relevant and eligible documents, practically none of which includes a significant amount of content on the issue in question. Both reviewers coded parts of the documents that had been marked as relevant in previous readings. The results of coding were compared, and common codes were developed through discussion and consensus to create a coding matrix. All documents were subjected to an in-depth review on this basis.

Coding was done using NVivo 12 for qualitative data analysis. In accordance with the project research questions, four level 2 nodes called “Culture”, “History”, “Identity”, and “Changes in the Croatian School System” were created. These broad nodes cover

different meanings related to culture, history, and identity present in the reviewed texts. In addition, twelve level 1 nodes were created; these deal with topics that appear systematically in the selected curricula and are closely connected to the project questions, such as: civic education, the European context, human rights, social values, participation, personal and social development, references to national and European policies, and religious education.

The level 2 node “Culture” includes references to cultural differences, the culture of others, intercultural learning, minority cultures, heritage, and language. The level 2 node “History” embraces all notions of national (Croatian) and European history. The level 2 node “Identity” comprises all references to identity such as cultural identity, gender identity, national identity, and personal identity. The level 2 node “Changes in the Croatian School System” was created on the basis of two other nodes: “Development of Competencies” and “Goals of the National Curriculum Framework”.

### **3.3 Review**

The main findings have been grouped into three major themes: *Educational Goals*, *National Identity*, and *Inter-Culturalism*. The analysis shows how Croatian curricula address issues such as cultural literacy, identity formation, and cultural heritage.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. Educational goals**

In 2006, European Parliament and the European Council adopted the Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning. These are:

- Communication in one’s native language;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Mathematical competency and basic competencies in science and technology;
- Digital competency;
- Learning to learn;
- Social and civic competencies;
- A sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- Cultural awareness and expression.

All member states were recommended to include these competencies in their lifelong learning strategies, and particularly to provide the adequate conditions for young people



to develop them. Accordingly, these competencies have been included in the reform of the Croatian education system, which only began in 2005 despite Croatia having joined the EU in 2013. The Strategy for the Construction and Development of the National Curriculum for Preschool Education, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education was published in 2007, while the National Curriculum Framework for Pre-School Education and General Compulsory and Secondary Education, the most important document within this review, was published in 2010. The Framework recognized all eight competencies as fundamental part of educational policy in Croatia, and thus presented a major shift. Education in Croatia previously focused on knowledge transfer, while the Framework focuses on the development of competencies. It was implemented as an attempt to answer to the need to adapt to the main characteristics of contemporary societies, rapid social changes, and a highly competitive labour market, specifically as a result of the globalisation process. Seven educational goals were identified to meet these challenges (Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, 2011: 23).

1. Providing a systematic method of teaching students that fosters and enhances their intellectual, physical, aesthetic, social, moral, and spiritual development in keeping with their abilities and aptitudes
2. Developing student awareness regarding the preservation of Croatian national identity as well as the material, spiritual, historical, and cultural heritage of the Republic of Croatia
3. Promoting and developing awareness of the Croatian language as a key factor in the Croatian identity, systematically fostering the Croatian standard language in all areas, cycles, and at all levels of the education system
4. Raising and educating students in conformity with general cultural and civil values, including those of human rights and the rights and obligations of the child, rendering children competent to live in a multicultural world, to respect differences, and to participate actively and responsibly in the democratic development of society
5. Ensuring that students acquire key (general education) and vocational competencies, making them able to live and work in a social and cultural context of change according to the requirements of the market economy, modern information and communication technologies, and scientific knowledge and accomplishments
6. Encouraging and developing independence, self-confidence, responsibility, and creativity in students
7. Training students for lifelong learning

The process of achieving these goals is supposed to be founded on the twelve principles of the National Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education, Science and



Sport, 2011: 26). These principles advocate the equity of treatment towards all students and equality of educational opportunities, while special attention is paid to:

- the inclusive nature of education, which respects the educational needs of all children, students, and adults, especially those exposed to marginalisation and social exclusion;
- the European dimension of education, which teaches students to live in a multicultural European context;
- respect for human rights, pluralism, and interculturalism, which is defined as the understanding and acceptance of cultural differences in order to reduce inequality and fight prejudice against other nations and cultures.

These principles also represent an important part of both the Civic Education Curriculum and the National Vocational Education Curriculum, which are also under review in this report. Created in line with the National Curriculum Framework, these documents affirm its basic principles and goals.

The Civic Education Curriculum defines civic competency as one of the most important learning outcomes, both crucial to the development of democracy and to the education of active citizens. Therefore, civic competency is introduced into all four educational cycles (from primary school to higher education). From the first to the fourth grade of primary school, civic education is implemented as a cross-curricular theme. In the fifth and the sixth grades, a modular approach is introduced to supplement the cross-curricular method. Within the modular approach, students deal with specific topics, such as: fundamentals of democracy, identity, social and communication skills, etc. In the seventh and the eighth grade, these two approaches (modular and cross-cultural) are combined with the teaching of civic education as a non-compulsory subject. In secondary education, all of the aforementioned approaches are complemented by the introduction of civic education as a compulsory subject. For the last two grades of secondary school education, it is suggested that students carry out research projects on active and responsible citizenship in all areas of social life as a part of the curriculum.

In an elaboration on the nature of civic competency, the Civic Education Curriculum first attempts to define the concept of competencies. It emphasizes that European countries are more inclined to a holistic approach, within which competencies include an individual's knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, personality traits, motivation, and behavioural patterns. In terms of education, a focus on competencies implies an emphasis on learning outcomes. The Civic Education Curriculum holds that the main learning outcome from the first to the fourth grade of primary school is the formation of an emancipated, socially engaged citizen. From the fifth to the eighth grade, this outcome is complemented with the acknowledgment of the rights and responsibilities

of Croatian citizens, while an appreciation of being a part of the European and other international communities is included in secondary education in addition to the first two outcomes.

The National Vocational Education Curriculum provides the vision of vocational education, which focuses on the quality, efficacy, and development of competencies that are primarily important to the acquisition of professional qualifications. The system of vocational education enables educational programmes to be harmonised with occupational standards, resulting in a strong link between education and the economy. The goal is to develop flexible and inclusive (equally available to all students in accordance to their needs, means, interests, and abilities) vocational education that can adequately meet economic needs.

## 4.2. National identity

The National Curriculum Framework states explicitly that *“the transition to a competency-based system would be deficient without acknowledging social and cultural values, as well as the history and tradition of the Croatian education system, and the core principles of the Republic of Croatia”* (Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, 2011: 11). This is in accordance with the previously listed educational goals (see: 4.1), among which particular attention has been paid to the preservation of the national identity and heritage, and especially the Croatian language. The National Curriculum Framework identifies seven educational areas of general compulsory and secondary education: Language and Communication, Mathematics, Science, Technology and Information Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, Art, and Physical and Health Education. The role of education in the transmission of national identity is particularly present in three of them: Language and Communication, Social Sciences and Humanities, and Art.

“Language and Communication” includes the Croatian language, national minority languages, modern foreign languages, classical foreign languages, Croatian sign language, and other languages of persons with special needs. The importance of teaching Croatian is emphasized as a general cultural good, while the language is presented as a “bastion” of national identity that should be appropriately valued by students. This type of strong vocabulary can be related to the perceived danger to national identities, especially those of small nations, posed by the overall globalisation process and Croatia’s EU accession process, which will be discussed below.

One of the main learning outcomes within “Language and Communication” is familiarising students with Croatian culture and engendering their respect for it, as well as respect for minority cultures in Croatia. In a similar manner, “Social Sciences and

Humanities” educates students to evaluate and protect national heritage and identity first and foremost, followed by European and world heritage. History plays a particularly important role in identity formation, while the importance of national heritage and its preservation in a domain of traditional culture is particularly emphasised in “Art” education. The main goal of the latter is to develop student comprehension of art, which represents an important part of the national and cultural identity of an individual. Educational goals aim at teaching more about Croatian art and culture, in order to allow students to appreciate it in the context of other cultures and nations and to strengthen students’ identity.

In accordance with everything stated in the National Curriculum Framework, the Civic Education Curriculum also prioritises the national identity before the European identity. Adoption of the national identity is recognized as the main education goal from the fifth to the eighth grade of primary school, while the adoption of the European identity or some other international identity is the goal only in secondary education, after national identity is assumed to have formed. In a similar manner, the National Vocational Education Curriculum acknowledges the role of vocational education in the formation of students’ cultural and national identity. As the document states, education should awaken, encourage, and develop individual identities, with respect for diversity. It establishes the objective of educating active and responsible persons who participate in the community and are aware of the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

### **4.3. Inter-culturalism**

As is apparent from previous findings, knowledge of other cultures and respect for them represents an important part of all the curricula under review. After all, the National Curriculum Framework postulates inter-culturalism as one of its constituent principles. One of the main goals of inter-culturalism according to the Framework is to raise awareness of the importance of respect for diversity in order to understand and accept different cultures. This represents the first time intercultural competency has been acknowledged in Croatia at the curriculum level as a key skill related to all educational areas. It is particularly emphasised in “Language and Communication”, “Social Sciences and Humanities”, and “Art”, just like national identity education, as well as through the interdisciplinary themes of “Civic Education” and “Personal Development”. An inter-cultural aspect is included as a contextual framework in all topics dealing with the formation and preservation of national identity. The goal is to perceive Croatian culture as a result of complex interactions between majority and minority cultures, religions, traditions, and behavioural patterns. In order to understand

this, the National Curriculum Framework posits that it is fundamental to be well acquainted with the main characteristics of both the majority national culture and minority cultures, as well as to be able to critically interpret historical events and processes.

The Civic Education Curriculum develops the idea further, but through the lens of the goal of building and preserving a democratic Europe. Accordingly, students are encouraged to think about themselves as Croatian citizens who are aware of the European aspect of their identities. The Civic Education Curriculum thus emphasises the importance of the principle of “unity in diversity”, also paying attention to the protection of national minorities. It simultaneously recognises the need to include the identities of national minorities into the Croatian identity, while intercultural dialogue is represented as the key to stability in multicultural democratic communities.

## 5. Discussion

Before discussing the current Croatian curricula, some points must be made regarding the teaching plans and programmes from the 1990s, which are still used to some degree (see: 3.1). Academic literature assesses them as primarily monocultural, focused on the majority nation and culture, while cultural diversity in terms of educational content regarding minority cultures was very rarely included (Puzić, 2009). Spajić-Vrkaš (2002) and Bužinkić (2014) thus concluded that the Croatian education system considers cultural pluralism in theory only, without implementing the intercultural aspects of education to any significant measure. Puzić (2009) particularly emphasises the dichotomous perspective of teaching plans and programmes, which are characterised by an implicit opposition between the national identity, culture, and values and all other identities, cultures, and values. According to him, this becomes evident through the frequent simultaneous highlighting of the importance of education in the preservation of national identity and in the promotion of openness and respect to other cultures, especially within Europe. In his analysis of this practice, particularly on the basis of research on subject curricula, Puzić (2009) concludes that teaching plans and programmes are designed primarily to address majority students in a traditional type of education with a focus on content and knowledge transfer. The main question is thus what changes have been made in the three reviewed curricula to address the aforementioned criticisms of the old curriculum.

As the main findings show, the greatest change in the National Curriculum Framework in comparison to older teaching plans and programmes was a shift in its approach to education in terms of educational goals. The focus of the National Curriculum Framework is on the development of competencies in accordance with the

recommendations of European Parliament and the European Council, as well as with the 2008 Education Act (Croatian Parliament, 2008; see: Policy Review). As a number of papers emphasise, the National Curriculum Framework is the first document in Croatia to include intercultural competency as a key competency on the curricular level for secondary education (Petraović, 2011; Piršl, 2016). Previously, intercultural competency was included exclusively in foreign language teaching plans and programmes, and was only implemented in primary school curricula in 2006 (Petraović, 2011).

However, one of the main ideas underpinning the entire National Curriculum Framework is still the acknowledgment of the importance of national values, history, and tradition before the recognition of the multicultural nature of Croatian society or the promotion of respect toward other cultures, similarly to current policy documents (Hrستیć, Dergić, and Vukušić, 2018). The preservation of the Croatian national identity and cultural heritage and the promotion of the Croatian language are described in the National Curriculum Framework as key factors in the Croatian identity. These are still emphasized as the main educational goals, superior in a way to education on cultural and civil values, which are supposed to enable students to successfully participate in a multicultural world, contribute to the democratic development of society, and respect diversity. This is particularly apparent in “Language and Communication”, “Social Sciences and Humanities”, and “Art” education, as the main educational areas for identity (re)construction in general.

This leads us to question the multicultural and intercultural character of the National Curriculum Framework, in accordance with the objections of Puzić (2009) to older teaching plans and programmes. In this context it is important to include in the analysis an interpretation of the use of the concepts of culture, heritage and identity. This interpretation allows us to deepen our understanding of the notion of multiculturalism and interculturalism the document communicates and seeks to implement in formal education.

First of all, it needs to be pointed out that none of these concepts (culture, heritage or identity) is precisely defined in any of the reviewed documents. Culture and identity are often used interchangeably in regards to the concept of cultural identity. Furthermore, the term culture is used in a number of meanings, as arts and aesthetics, culture of work, political culture, culture of dialog, media culture etc. As in terms of the ideas of ethnicity and nation, the use of the term culture in the National Curriculum Framework refers primarily to majority national group in terms of a distinctive national feature. In this regard culture is understood more as a static phenomenon, founded in social norms, values and tradition formed through Croatian history. Although, it is noted that developing intercultural competency among students assume their acknowledgment of

the change and development as essential features of culture, the concept is not approached in this manner.

Cultural differences within Croatia are addressed primarily in terms of national minorities. The goal of preserving national minorities' cultures is pointed out at a number of places in the Framework, as well as the importance of respect of diversity, which can be assessed as an evidence of the intent of implementing multiculturalism and interculturalism in formal education. This is in accordance with the implementation of special programmes for national minorities, which give them the possibility to educate in their own language and script (Hrستیć, Dergić, and Vukušić, 2018). However, the question arises in terms of education in schools where teaching takes place through a programme intended for the majority national group. The National Curriculum Framework emphasises Croatian (as a majority national group) national cultural identity. Thus, it brings the Croatian national identity and culture, whose development is recognised as one of the educational goals, to a certain opposition in relation to the cultures of national minorities, which are recognised as separate.

The concept of heritage is used in a similar, but more inclusive way. The term primarily refers to the entire cultural heritage of the Republic of Croatia. Thus, it implicitly includes contributions of national minorities, but without specifically stating this. However, this type of utilising the concept of heritage can be also understood as assimilationist and opposed to the proclaimed intention of preserving unique national minorities' cultures. At this point it would be beneficial to analyse subject curricula created in accordance with the National Curriculum Framework to see how these goals are operationalised in practice. Unfortunately, only the Civic Education Curriculum has been adopted so far, in 2012. In line with the Framework it insists on the adoption of the national identity before including the European identity, giving the former a certain priority. Nevertheless, as Spajić and Vrkaš (2015) report on the experimental implementation of the Civic Education Curriculum in twelve primary and secondary schools across Croatia in 2012/2013, the majority of students assessed civic education as having positive influence on their understanding of the intercultural aspects of education.

There are couple of aspects of the Curriculum, which are important to emphasise in this regard and which represent a major step forward in developing cultural literacy among students in Croatia. These aspects concern the notion of the concepts of culture, identity and heritage, as they are used in the Curriculum. The Civic Education Curriculum approaches the concepts of Croatian culture, heritage and identity as fluid and inclusive phenomena created through interactions between the majority culture and national minorities' cultures. Accordingly, the Curriculum differentiates two ways of using the term "national" – as citizenship of the Republic of Croatia and as membership of the



majority national group. Therefore, in prior, more inclusive notion of the concept (citizenship – includes the majority population as well as national minorities), the Curriculum introduces the expression “Croatian homeland” to symbolise affiliation to national culture and/or identity. The Curriculum advocates at the same time the development of particular national identities in more narrow notion (Croatian as majority group and national minorities’) as well as common inclusive homeland identity among students, next to all other personal identities, such as gender, language, religious, local, regional etc. Approach to their development is adjusted to the age of students.

As Sablić (2014) points out, the “spiral-developmental” implementation model of civic education is particularly noteworthy. She cites Huddleston and Kerr (2010), who elaborate on different ways Civic Education can be implemented in practice. The first way is Civic Education as a separate subject, which ensures the continuous evaluation of education. The second is cross-sectional, which helps students to perceive a broader perspective, but is more complicated to evaluate through different subjects. The third way is through organising public lectures, round tables, and similar events, in which students would be encouraged to actively participate. The fourth model is based on extra-curricular activities. Sablić (2014) concludes that Croatian model of implementing Civic Education is particularly good because it combines all four styles according to the age of students and the needs and capacities of particular schools and local communities.

In this respect, it is important to point to the equal implementation of Civic Education in both secondary schools and vocational schools. This is emphasised considering the findings of research on social distance towards national minorities among youth (Previšić, Hrvatić & Posavec, 2004; Sablić, 2004; Čorkalo Biruški & Ajduković, 2007; Blažević Simić, 2011; Mrnjauš, 2013). This research was conducted before the National Curriculum Framework and the Civic Education Curriculum were implemented, however they are instructive regardless as they consistently identify a higher tolerance for diversity among secondary school students than among vocational school students (Sablić, 2004). Accordingly, Sablić (2004) concludes that secondary school students are more familiar with different cultures because teaching about minority cultures was more broadly included in secondary school subject curricula. Due to their broader knowledge of national minorities, secondary school students were more open toward them. In line with the importance the Civic Education Curriculum places on civic education and respect for diversity in vocational schools, the National Vocational Education Curriculum emphasises the role of vocational education in forming student identities and implementing respect for diversity.

In this context, it is interesting to refer to the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology (2015), as well as draft curricula for subjects and education areas, which

are a part of the experimental programme currently being implemented across Croatia, although these have not been included in this review (See: 3.1). Their analysis will help identify the direction of changes and understand the ongoing public debate in Croatia.

Both, the Strategy and draft curricula for education areas include the intercultural perspective in a more profound way than the documents under review, particularly in comparison to the National Curriculum Framework as a structural document for both primary and secondary education. The Strategy and drafts place significantly less emphasis on the contrast between the national culture and identity and all other identities and cultures. Although, it has to be noted at this point that the concepts of culture, identity and heritage are much less utilised in the Strategy than in the National Curriculum Framework, while the Strategy represents a document of much wider scope. Therefore any detailed elaboration of most ideas is left for the future educational area and subject curricula. However, even on the basis of the text of Strategy it can be posited that the concepts of culture and identity are approached to as more fluid phenomena in comparison to the National Curriculum Framework, and even in comparison to the Civic Education Curriculum. As it is pointed out in the Strategy, considering the need of constant redefining of the Croatian national identity it is necessary to consistently study national and global cultural heritage and history. Furthermore, it is stated that in a globalising society, characterised by strong relationships between different cultures, individuals must become citizens of the world who will simultaneously preserve their national identities and cultures. In accordance with this, the primary goal of the Strategy is to teach students to successfully meet all their needs in a globalising multicultural society, while simultaneously respecting and promoting their own cultural heritage. Personal identity formation is defined as one of the main educational values, while it is stated that education contributes to building the personal, cultural, and national identity of all individuals. According to this document, respect for diversity is implied as the main feature of personal identity.

Similarly, the “Social Sciences and Humanities” draft curriculum suggests that the purpose of education is to develop conscious, independent, and responsible individuals who understand and critically reflect on their role in the contemporary world, as well as actively participating in the social, cultural, economic, and political development of their communities. Cultural identity is understood in inclusive manner encompassing both the majority national group and national minorities, similar to the Civic Education Curriculum. Croatian society is understood as a part of the “European cultural circle” and that it advocates fundamental values of modern democratic societies. Considering the use of the concept of heritage, the draft prescribes the type of education, which develops positive attitude towards Croatian cultural heritage, in an inclusive manner also, as well as of other cultures. The “Language and Communication” draft curriculum



uses concepts of culture, identity and heritage in a similar manner. Furthermore, this draft recognises the development of intercultural competency as an educational outcome, while intercultural literacy is recognised as a specific and unique educational domain, signalling thus the importance, which will be given to the issue in future subject curricula.

Considering the aforementioned characteristics of the National Curriculum Framework, the fact, that the Civic Education Curriculum is the only documents implemented so far, while no curriculum of the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology has been adopted yet, and the fact that older teaching plans and programmes are still in use; it is reasonable to set the thesis that the monocultural perspective still remains the main characteristic of education in Croatia. To illustrate this conclusion, we would like to point to a phrase used to emphasise the importance of the Croatian language, which is described as a “bastion” of national identity. This type of strong vocabulary corresponds to the perceived danger posed to national identities by the globalisation process, which is particularly apparent in Croatia in the context of its accession to the EU. In reference to similar claims, Ninčević (2009) states that the EU must acknowledge and respect all particular identities in order to ensure its future. He claims that this will enable the simultaneous creation of a common European identity, consisting of all languages, religions, and other idiosyncrasies of individuals and groups. Thus, intercultural education on the basis of particular national identities in the formal system of education is seen as a precondition for a better future for Europe. This is in accordance with Mrnjajus, Rončević & Ivošević (2013), who identify teaching about the national culture as the primary goal of formal education, while only students who are well familiar with their own culture are able to realise successful intercultural communication. Similarly, Vrgoč (2005) states that children in Croatia have to know about the language, history, culture, and religion as essential components of the Croatian identity.

## 6. Conclusion

The Croatian education system is currently undergoing a transformation process. This is an advantageous position from a research perspective, as it allows deeper insight into the process, however it makes it difficult to draw long-term conclusions. It is difficult to predict the direction of changes, given their high level of politicisation, as is apparent from the policy review. Besides, the analysis is limited to a large degree, since the review of curricula does not provide us with a deeper understanding of the situation in schools regarding the use of teaching plans and programmes from the 1990s. The main characteristic of these is a monocultural perspective and a focus on the majority as a result of the circumstances within which they were created. In the 1990s, Croatia was

embroiled in a war for independence, which made the emphasis of national identity and culture particularly important. The situation began to change dramatically with the process of Croatian accession to the European Union. In the end, teaching plans and programmes have been adapted to new concepts propagated in the National Curriculum Framework and the Civic Education Curriculum to a certain degree, albeit not systematically on the national level. On the other hand, new subject curricula have not yet been adopted. A real assessment will only be possible after the empirical part of the research within the CHIEF project is implemented. However, on the basis of this review, it can be concluded that policymakers are aware of the need to incorporate intercultural education in curricula, as is evident from the changes in curricula. These have been implementing slowly but a trend is noticeable and it is consistent. As the analysis has shown every new document represents a step forward, which is evident from the use of the concepts such as culture, identity and heritage. These concepts are analysed in this review as a sort of indicators due to their importance and strong relationship with the idea of nation/ethnicity. Previously, in older curricula as well as in curricula still in use, these were characterised by an implicit opposition between the identity and culture of the majority national group and the identities and cultures of national minorities. Prior, the majority national group (Croatian) identity has been particularly highlighted in relation to all others. However, in more recent documents, such as the Civic Education Curriculum, the Strategy of Education, Technology and Science, as well as the draft curricula currently in use within the experimental programme draft, this practice is less and less present. These documents acknowledge the importance of developing personal and particular national identities of all students, but at the same time advocate simultaneous more inclusive understanding of the society, which is founded in common culture and heritage as the result of interactions between the majority culture and national minorities' and recognizing contributions from both. However, one must bear in mind that Europe is still a continent of nation-states, for which reason intercultural education – which includes respect for diversity and an awareness of the wider European and international context, of which national culture is a part and within which it evolves – will likely remain to subordinated to some extent to national identity and culture to a certain measure in the foreseeable future.

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**Appendix: List of Reviewed documents**

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Type</b>
1.	Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum	2010	Ministry of Science, Education and Sport	National Curriculum Framework
2.	Kurikulum građanskog odgoja i obrazovanja	2012	Agency for Teaching and Education	Civic Education Curriculum
3.	Nacionalni kurikulum za strukovno obrazovanje	2018	Ministry of Science and Education	National Vocational Education Curriculum

## **National Curricula Review (Georgia),** Natia Mestvirishvili

### **1. Executive Summary**

Within this report, school curricula are analysed to answer two interrelated questions: (1) how are the CHIEF projects' main concepts – cultural literacy, [European] cultural heritage, and participation – addressed in the secondary school curricula in Georgia, and (2) to what extent are these in line with national policy documents on cultural literacy education, as discussed in CHIEF Deliverable 1.2.

The curriculum for all stages of education and all subjects is one single document in Georgia, and is mandatory for all state schools. It is available at the Portal of National curriculum.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this review, the curricula of the following subjects for grades 7 through 12 were chosen for the analysis: Georgian language and literature, History, Geography, Civic education, Civic self-defence and security, and Visual and applied arts.

The curricula were analysed using NVivo 11 software. The coding process involved descriptive, topic, and analytical coding (Richards, 2005). The text was open coded. The main concepts of the CHIEF project served as “orienting devices” in this process. The final codebook involves one descriptive node (Overview of Curricula), five parent nodes (Diversity; Values, Morality and Worldview; Language and Communication; Civic Education; Geography and Culture), and six independent nodes (History and culture; Literature and culture; Art and culture; Locating Georgia in the international context; Belonging and identity; and Religion and traditions).

The Georgian National curriculum, or at least the parts studied below, does not provide detailed definitions for the concepts of interest to the CHIEF project (cultural literacy, cultural heritage and intercultural education). In many cases, a narrow understanding of definitions such as culture is in place, which focuses on “cultural objects” (e.g., art objects), but does not involve an understanding of culture as a lifestyle. Similarly, while the visual and applied arts curriculum encourages pupils to think about their responsibilities in protecting Georgia’s cultural heritage, it is assumed that the concept of “cultural heritage” is self-evident and needs no explanation.

With Georgia’s place in the world, the Georgian National Curriculum offers a view that is rather different from the policy documents analysed for Deliverable 1.2 (), and is more progressive. While the policy documents are based on a narrow, rather nationalistic belief in Georgian’s “special” bond with history, the curriculum, and particularly the social sciences one, aims to teach the pupils to learn to perceive the

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<sup>5</sup> <http://ncp.ge/en/curriculum?class=26&pos1=500>

world as a whole, see it in all its complexity, and be able to define Georgia's place in it. This is a dominant approach, although it is not followed for all subjects. While highlighting and appreciating the diversity of world cultures, the Georgian National Curriculum largely ignores the diversity of cultures in Georgia. More focus on cultural diversity within Georgia, including ethnic and religious diversity, as well as encouragement of pupils to explore this diversity, would be very important for successful integration of ethnic minorities.

One of the explicit goals of the Georgian National Curriculum is to raise active, independent, and free citizens who are able to think critically and take responsibility for their actions. This goal is to be achieved both through the content of the subjects taught and the methods/ approaches teachers are expected to use. There is a strong focus on class discussions, during which the pupils are expected to both present and defend their own views, while, at the same time, listening to and respecting others' opinions. Clearly, it would be hard to overestimate the role of teachers in facilitating these discussions.

It can be argued though that the goal of developing pupils' critical thinking skills is not pursued consistently in the Georgian National Curriculum. On the one hand, development of pupils' critical thinking skills is presented as one of the major goals of the secondary education in Georgia. On the other hand, there are certain aspects of education, e.g. in the field of history, that the pupils are not expected to question at all. National heroes, for example, are exempt from any attempt at critical thinking. Rather, they should simply be accepted and appreciated.

The curriculum review also shows that the Georgian National Curriculum is cosmopolitan in spirit. Pupils are consistently encouraged to look beyond Georgia, and compare the situation in Georgia with the situation in other countries. Georgia is regularly considered part of the Caucasus, Europe, the World, or is presented as a geographic link between Europe and Asia. In addition, the curriculum encourages pupils to seek not only differences, but also similarities between different countries and cultures. Such a balanced approach should be considered an important strength of the curriculum. It should, however, be remembered that the balanced nature of the curriculum does not guarantee that it will be implemented with the same spirit in the classrooms. This depends on the quality of teaching materials, including textbooks, and the qualification of teachers, as well as their willingness to transmit such a spirit in their classrooms. This important aspect will be studied in depth during the second phase of CHIEF's Work Package 2, during which qualitative interviews with teachers and pupils will be conducted.



## 2. Formal Educational Context in Georgia

General education in Georgia starts at the age of six and consists of three stages: six years of primary education (grades 1-6), three years of basic education (grades 7-9) and three years of secondary education (grades 10-12). It is mandatory to complete basic education. Secondary education is not mandatory. However, it is everyone's constitutional right to receive a full secondary education. For all stages of general education, there are no tuition fees at public schools. The state also provides all citizens of Georgia who want to learn a new profession at state or private vocational colleges with a GEL 1000 voucher.

According to UNICEF, 97% of children of primary school age in Georgia attended school in 2017.<sup>6</sup> According to the National Statistics Office of Georgia (Geostat), there are 2,308 general education schools in Georgia with 575,200 schoolchildren and 66,634 teachers.<sup>7</sup> The majority of the schools are public; 9.7% are private. During the 2018-2019 academic year, about 10% of schoolchildren dropped out of school. About half did so (4%) did so during the 10th grade. The statistics also show that the dropout rate is significantly higher for girls than boys.<sup>8</sup>

The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia (Ministry of Education) has a textbook approval procedure that determines the list of textbooks which can be used in the education process both in public and private schools. For minority language schools (Azerbaijani, Armenian, and Russian) only approved and translated textbooks can be taught.

School boards composed of parents, teachers, and schoolchildren govern public schools. The board approves the school budget and internal regulations of the school. The Minister of Education presents a certified candidate for the position of school principal to the board, and if the school board approves him/her, they are appointed as the principal. The board also has the authority to fire the principal.

There is significant criticism of ethnic minority education policies. At present, in Georgia there are more than 300 Azerbaijani, Russian, and Armenian language schools and sectors<sup>9</sup> with most located in Samtskhe Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. Graduates of non-Georgian language schools score 25-30% lower on final school exams than graduates of Georgian instructed schools.<sup>10</sup> A lack of qualified teachers and failure to include them into teacher development processes; poor quality of translation of

<sup>6</sup> [http://unicef.ge/uploads/WMS\\_brochure\\_unicef\\_eng\\_web.pdf](http://unicef.ge/uploads/WMS_brochure_unicef_eng_web.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=2099&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=2099&lang=eng)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p\\_id=2099&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=2099&lang=eng)

<sup>9</sup> A division within a school where the language of instruction is different than of the school's main language of instruction.

<sup>10</sup> <http://caucasusedition.net/minoritylanguageeducationingorgia/>



textbooks into ethnic minority languages; and the ethnocentrism present in some textbooks are among the problems ethnic minority schoolchildren in Georgia face (Bobghiashvili et al. 2016).

Another issue of special importance is inclusive education and how it is implemented in Georgia. Starting from 2006 at the general education level and from 2013 at the vocational education level, inclusive education is obligatory for schools and vocational educational institutions. However, despite the fact that legally the right to education for persons with disabilities are acknowledged, some studies indicate a number of existing barriers to the practical realization of these rights. They include the attitudes of teachers and parents towards inclusion, infrastructure problems, scattered financing of inclusive education, a small share of schools in remote villages being involved in inclusive education, and a lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms among other issues (Chanturia, et al. 2016).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Selection

The curriculum available at the Portal of National Curriculum<sup>11</sup> was analysed for this report.<sup>12</sup> For primary education, a new curriculum was adopted in 2016 and schools now use it. For basic and secondary education, the new curriculum has not yet been introduced. It is planned to come into force in 2019. The curriculum adopted in 2011 is still in force. Since, the goal of the CHIEF project is to describe the current situation at schools, and the project is focused on basic and secondary school students, this report focuses on the national curriculum adopted in 2011.

The national curriculum groups subjects into the following groups:<sup>13</sup>

Table 1

Group	Subjects
National languages	Georgian language and literature; Georgian as a second language; Abkhazian language
Mathematics	Mathematics
Foreign languages	English language; Russian language; German language; French language; Spanish language; Italian language; Turkish language; Ukrainian language
Social sciences	History; Geography; Civic education; Civic self-defence and security
Natural sciences	Biology; Chemistry; Physics

<sup>11</sup> <http://ncp.ge/en/curriculum?class=26&pos1=500>

<sup>12</sup> Technically, the curriculum for all stages of education and all subjects is one single document in Georgia. Whenever we refer below to the “curriculum of History” or any other subject, or any year of education, this means we have analysed the respective part of this allcomprising document.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to the eight groups of subjects presented in Table 1, there is also a group of “Selective subjects” comprising 27 subjects for XXII grades.

Technologies	Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
Aesthetic education	Visual and applied arts; Music; Georgian dance
Sports	Sports

Source: The Portal of National Curriculum<sup>3</sup>

Based on the relevance of certain subjects to cultural literacy, cultural heritage, and intercultural education, the curricula of the following six subjects were chosen for analysis: Georgian language and literature; History; Geography; Civic education; Civic self-defence and security; and Visual and applied arts. According to two recent studies on intercultural education in Georgia these subjects are relevant for the development of intercultural competences (Tabataze & Gorgodze, 2013; Malazonia, et al. 2017).<sup>14</sup>

### 3.2 Coding

The curricula were analysed using NVivo 11 software. The thematic analysis was conducted using an inductive approach. The text was open coded. The main concepts of the CHIEF project served as “orienting devices” in this process.

The coding process involved descriptive, topic, and analytical coding (Richards, 2005). The first stage – descriptive coding – was focused on teaching aims and objectives. It mainly involved information about the document, i.e. the National curriculum: what is this document about and what are its overall aims. The next and main stage was topic coding: selected texts were coded and organised as parent/child node trees. The codes were continually revisited, reviewed, and grouped differently as coding progressed. Some nodes were merged at a later stage.

Georgian language and literature was the first curriculum analysed. It was coded independently by three reviewers. The codes were compared and discussed during a meeting of all three reviewers and the CRRC-Georgia Team Leader for the CHIEF project, who was not directly involved in the coding process. As a result of this meeting, the codebook was finalized. The remaining documents were coded by one researcher based on the previous experience and discussions, with regular consultations with the Team Leader in Georgia.

### 3.3 Review

After the coding process was complete, a researcher reviewed and critically examined codes. Some nodes were merged and some were separated to come up with a meaningful structure of codes for further analysis. The final codebook involves one descriptive node (Overview of Curricula), five parent nodes (Diversity; Values, Morality and Worldview; Language and Communication; Civic Education; Geography

<sup>14</sup> These studies also stress importance of foreign languages, in addition to the above mentioned subjects. The foreign languages are, however, not covered in this report, due to feasibility issues (it was not possible to cover the eight foreign languages offered in the given timeframe).

and Culture), and six independent nodes (History and culture; Literature and culture; Art and culture; Locating Georgia in the international context; Belonging and identity; and Religion and traditions). Each node/topic is analysed below in terms of content and relationship to other nodes and curricula.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. Overview of curricula**

At the stage of descriptive coding, all information presented in the curricula about high level goals was collected under the node “teaching aims and organisation”. This section summarizes this node.

Georgian language and literature is taught in all grades. The main aims of teaching Georgian language and literature are defined in the curriculum as follows:

Developing the main communication skills (writing, reading, listening, talking);

Developing written and verbal communication culture;

Developing skills for expressing opinions in a logical way and creating written texts with different goals;

Building independent, creative, and reflexive thinking;

Making reading attractive for pupils and developing skills for perceiving and understanding literature as a fact of language, art, and culture;

Understanding national and world culture as a process of constant change and development.

The Georgian language and literature curriculum has three domains: verbal communication, writing, and reading. Each domain has specific standards for each grade, which includes expected results of teaching by the end of each academic year; indicators; and the content of the program.

The social sciences curriculum is more complicated than the Georgian language and literature curriculum. In the basic and secondary stages of education, social sciences include history, geography, and civic education. History is taught in all grades of basic and secondary education (grades 7-12) as an independent subject. Geography is taught at all grades except 12. In the 12th grade, students can choose the elective subject geographic research. Civic education is an independent and mandatory subject in 9th and 10th grade. In 7th and 8th grade, civic education is integrated into history. In 9th-12th grades, students can choose elective subjects such as citizenship, state, and law. Additionally, 8th graders have a 12-hour mandatory course in security in emergency situations and 12th graders have a 14 hour mandatory course in Civic self-defence and

security. In other grades, these subjects are incorporated into history, geography, civic education, biology, sport, chemistry, and/or physics.

Like other curricula, the social sciences curriculum is organised around the main domains of teaching, lists expected results and indicators to track teaching success, and general content of the program in each subject. There are 15 domains of teaching which are present in four subjects in the social sciences at the basic and secondary levels of education.

Table 2 Teaching domains by subject and grade.

	History	Geography	Civic education	Civic self-defence and security
Directions	Grades:			
Time and space	7, 8, 9,10	7-11	7,8	
Environment and economics	7, 8, 11, 12	7-11	7,8	
State governance and politics	7, 8, 9, 11 12		7,8	
Culture and religion	7, 8, 9, 11 12		7,8	
Individuals and society	7, 8, 9, 11,12		7,8	
Environment and social systems		7 -11		
Personal development			9,10	
Sustainable development			9,10	
Self governance and governance			9,10	
Historical interpretation and research	10			
Communication	10	12		
Geographic research		12		
Ensuring personal security				4, 8, 12
Basics of secure behaviour in emergency situations				4, 8, 12
First aid				12

Source: Curriculum of Social Sciences , page 1010

The main goals of teaching social science are given in the curriculum as follows:

Give pupils knowledge in history, geography, law, economics, politics, and other social sciences;

Help pupils in perceiving the world as a whole and locating Georgia in on-going processes;

Support pupils in becoming patriotic citizens, understanding their responsibilities;

Support pupils in becoming free persons, who are full members of society;

Support pupils in building a humanistic worldview;

Support pupils in developing a strong will power and skills for secure behaviour in emergency situations, so that they are able to help others and save their and others' lives in different emergency situations.

Visual and applied arts is a mandatory subject in grades 7-9 and is offered as an elective in secondary school. The structure of the curriculum, like the others, outlines expected results, indicators, and the general content of the program. The teaching of this subject at the basic and secondary levels is organised into three domains: 1. Creative and practical skills development; 2. Communication and interpretation; and 3. Perceiving art in context. The main goals of teaching are given as follows:

Involving pupils in creative and interpretive activities, thus developing their sense of beauty and imagination;

Developing the ability to perceive art products, thus encouraging interest and love of art;

Learning the universal language of art and understanding national and world cultural values, developing a sense of unity of the world;

Developing the ability to aesthetically perceive and organise the environment;

Learning technical means of creative activities and building work skills and habits.

Thus, it can be argued that, at the level of these general statements, the reviewed curricula is based on, and transmits rather holistic and, to a certain extent, a harmonious worldview: the curriculum of Visual and applied arts directly aims at developing “a sense of unity of the world”, while the curriculum of Georgian language and literature aims to develop pupils' understanding of both national and world cultures.

## **4.2. Diversity**

Diversity is present in all curricula examined. The main themes, which are related to the concept of diversity in the curricula include diversity of cultures; discrimination and inequality; migration; minority groups; and diversity of social statuses. Each are discussed separately below.

#### **4.2.1. Diversity of culture**

Overall, 46 references were generated for the diversity of culture node, with most of them (31) in the social sciences curriculum. This curriculum aims at helping pupils to acknowledge the diversity of cultures worldwide as well as within Georgia. A special emphasis is made on fair relationships within a diverse society and on how justice can be assured in a diverse context. The topic of conflict in a diverse society and its resolution is introduced in the mandatory program for 10th graders.

One of the domains of teaching history is culture and religion. It aims to teach pupils how to distinguish between different cultures and how to analyse the relationship between different cultures and religions. Understanding the cultural heritage of different countries and comparing behavioural norms, architecture, literature, and paintings of different cultures are among the objectives listed. Pupils are expected to discuss diversity in a given population as a basis for tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

The visual and applied arts curriculum aims to present art as a product of culture as well as to help pupils in perceiving art in a cultural context and understanding the impact culture has on art. Using different cultures' art as a source of inspiration is encouraged, and pupils from 8th grade are expected to compare pieces of art from different epochs and cultures; discuss how they are influenced by specific cultural elements; and analyse the political, economic, religious, and historical contexts (which they should be familiar with according to the social sciences curriculum) in which specific pieces of art were created.

#### **4.2.2. Discrimination and inequality**

In social sciences, pupils are expected to discuss forced labour, forced migration, and their causes and consequences in historical and modern contexts. In the 8th grade, they discuss inequality in terms of access to education in different epochs and countries as well as in contemporary Georgia, as well as the causes for such inequality. Particular attention is paid to gender inequality in terms of access to education.

When studying violence, expected results include pupils understanding non-violent relationships as an indicator of psychological health and being empathetic towards victims of violence. Students in grade 10 discuss who the most socially vulnerable groups in Georgia are and ways of improving their situation by collaborating with their schools' self-government and local government. They are expected to link the notion of equality with the notion of justice. Political and/or religious discrimination are listed as examples of problems that can be discussed in class (its context, background, human rights and legal mechanism, ways of resolution).

### **4.2.3. Migration**

In 8th grade, pupils are expected to discuss types of migration, causes and consequences of migration, and immigrants' lives in a new environment in social science classes. In 9th grade, they should be able to discuss migratory processes in Georgia, discuss their socioeconomic consequences, and suggest ways to improve the situation of internally displaced persons. "Labour migration and remittances" is included in 11th grade geography.

### **4.2.4. Minority groups**

Minority groups are mentioned in the context of human rights and the peaceful coexistence of different groups. Pupils are expected to come up with and discuss examples from history and present day, when people with different ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds lived together peacefully. In 9th grade, they are expected to write an essay on people with addiction, and analyse society's attitude towards them in terms of justice. They are also expected to discuss the principles of defining minority groups according to some characteristics such as ethnic, political, cultural, social, religious, and economic factors and discuss these groups in the Georgian context. In 10th grade, one of the expected results is pupils being able to cooperate with others while solving social problems. As an indicator of this ability, they should discuss different social minority groups in their neighbourhood (e.g. elderly people, people with disabilities, street children, immigrants, etc.) and the way society treats them.

### **4.2.5. Diversity of social statuses**

Pupils are expected to know about how people with different social statuses differed in terms of their rights and social involvement in different historical epochs. However, social differentiation is discussed mainly in a historical context. Some expected results listed in the curriculum include pupils' abilities to link one's social state with their financial state; comparing social structures in different countries; and discussing rights and responsibilities of people with different social statuses. In 12th grade, pupils are expected to analyse relationships between different political parties and people with different social statuses and compare this to other European countries.



### **4.3. Values, Morality and Worldview**

Respecting human dignity; tolerating different opinions; discussing moral choices; identifying values behind behaviour and human rights; and building a humanistic worldview are important themes in all of the curricula reviewed. Students in 9th grade are expected to distinguish moral choice from choices made as a result of societal pressure. The curricula stress both the importance of independence and critical thinking and the importance of tolerance and empathy in a balanced manner.

#### **4.3.1. Tolerance and respect for others**

The Georgian language and literature curriculum aims to develop listening and speaking skills to create a basis for raising tolerant individuals who respect others' opinions. In classroom discussions pupils are expected to ask questions to understand others' opinions, remain polite, and give constructive feedback. "Respect for people with different opinion, ethnicity, religion and culture" is listed as a goal of civic education and fostering tolerance and respect for human dignity and human rights are highlighted several times in the aims and objectives of teaching social sciences. Pupils in the 7th grade are expected to discuss religious tolerance in a group and one year later they are expected to think about diversity as a basis for tolerance. Respecting human dignity in different situations is a topic for 10th graders. The visual and applied arts curriculum presents its goal – understanding art – as a result of understanding and respecting different cultures and opinions. It aims to develop respect for national and world cultures, human labour, empathy and tolerance towards others, and different opinions and worldviews. In all subjects, tolerance is fostered through methodological means (e.g. discussion rules) as well as through the specific content of discussions (e.g. discussing tolerance related issues).

#### **4.3.2. Independence, freedom and responsibility**

The concepts of independence, freedom, and responsibility are mostly referred to in the social sciences curriculum. Raising free, independent thinking persons is mentioned among the Georgian language and literature teaching goals. The social sciences curriculum links the notion of being free with specific responsibilities and aims to foster independent decision making (e.g. the ability to make educational and professional choices). Pupils are expected to think about freedom "as a right, but also as a responsibility". The curriculum states that "pupils should realise that a person has free will and the ability to make a choice. They should understand that history could have developed in a different way. This way, they will not think that the future is

predetermined and a person's actions and their choices do not matter" (p. 1003). Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour and make decisions independently, but based on values. In the 9th grade, they are expected to work on 'action plans', start thinking about their career, and discuss the need to be responsible. In the classroom, they should discuss situations when people have only rights and no responsibility. In later grades, responsibilities are discussed in the context of family and becoming an adult.

#### **4.3.3. Self-expression and critical thinking**

Encouraging self-expression and critical thinking is a central theme for all reviewed curricula. The Georgian language and literature curriculum encourages pupils to critically evaluate literature (and authors' views) and other texts, build and express their opinion, and present arguments supporting their opinion. Pupils are also expected to be able to clearly express their position and values in a written text. They are expected "to defend their positions, but do not try to get a dominant position in group discussions" (p. 106). The curriculum encourages teachers to choose literature that is related to modern problems and interesting for pupils so that it fosters critical thinking. The social sciences curriculum stresses the importance of critical and independent thinking. Having one's own position and demonstrating critical thinking are even included in evaluation criteria in this curriculum (see p.1020). Similarly, the curriculum of the visual and applied arts stresses the importance of critically evaluating students' own and others' work, and expressing their attitudes, feelings, and ideas through art.

#### **4.3.4. Sharing others' perspectives**

All reviewed curricula encourage perspective taking, to a certain extent. The curricula aim at teaching pupils to see problems from different points of view. When reading and discussing literature, pupils are expected to evaluate a certain issue described in the literature from the viewpoint of the author, reader, and different characters. They are expected to understand that the same situation can be interpreted differently by different actors involved. Similarly, while learning history, pupils are expected to interpret stories from the perspective of people who lived in the given epoch.

#### **4.3.5. Worldview**

This term is used in two contexts. First, pupils are encouraged to understand different worldviews presented in different literature and artworks. Second, building a humanistic worldview is listed among the aims and objectives of the social sciences

curriculum. The visual and applied arts curriculum aims to help pupils perceive the world as a source of diverse ideas and feelings.

#### **4.3.6. Reflecting on personal experience**

Pupils are encouraged to actively reflect on their personal experience when discussing certain issues in the classroom. References were found in all three documents showing that pupils are (or should be) asked to link certain events or stories described in literature to their personal experience or refer to their experience when discussing certain problems in the classroom. Pupils are encouraged to come up with real-life experiences for discussion in the classroom. According to the social sciences curriculum, pupils are expected to link past events (such as success or failure) with their present situation and see relationships between them, while critically evaluating their role in the process.

#### **4.3.7. Professionalism**

Realizing the role of professionalism in personal development is one of the expected results for 9th graders according to the social science curriculum. Five references were found related to this concept in the social sciences curriculum. Pupils are expected to link professionalism with responsibilities, analyse knowledge, abilities, and attitudes towards work that shape professionalism, and talk about the importance and consequences of professionalism.

#### **4.3.8. Patriotism**

Knowing world and Georgian history is presented as a precondition for becoming a patriotic citizen. Therefore teaching social sciences aims to give pupils knowledge about their country, and in this way support patriotism, love of homeland, and respect for national heroes.

### **4.4. Language and communication**

An important part of the Georgian language and literature curriculum is communicative aspects of Georgian language, which deal with pupils' ability to successfully communicate in different social environments and develop social interaction and self-expression skills.

#### **4.4.1. Communicating with different audiences**

Pupils are expected to demonstrate and are evaluated based on their ability to communicate with different audiences (e.g. young children, an academic audience, their peers, etc.); choose relevant language and style of communication; recognize for which audience a specific text is intended; and evaluate whether it is relevant for the audience it is written for. Pupils in 8th grade are expected to compose written texts for different audiences and with different aims. In the next grade, they are expected to evaluate others based on whether they could communicate effectively considering their audiences and aims. They are expected to cite credible sources, use their own experience, and humour or other techniques to convince others. The social sciences curriculum includes references to making presentations for different audiences. One of the expected results listed in the curriculum is that before writing an essay or making a presentation, pupils will ask questions such as:

What does the audience know about this specific historical event? What do I want with my essay to say to my audience? What do I want to make them see differently? How should I construct my essay to make it more understandable for the reader? (p. 1105)

#### **4.4.2. Understanding idioms, symbols and metaphors**

According to the Georgian language and literature curriculum, pupils from the 8th grade are expected to recognize idioms, symbols, and metaphors in different texts; understand their meaning and power; and use them appropriately in their written and verbal communication. Pupils in the 8th grade are expected to recognize and explain universal symbols, which are specific to certain historical epochs and cultures.

#### **4.4.3. Ethics of communication**

Pupils are expected to follow ethical communication rules while having discussions in the classroom. They should listen to others, and if they disagree, they need to express this in a polite form. They should be able to facilitate discussion themselves, and while doing so, follow ethical norms of communication – i.e. control their voice and expression, not be overly categorical, overcome tensions in the group using humour and give constructive feedback. While this node specifically refers to ethical norms of communications explicitly stated in the curricula, it is largely related to the topic of “Sharing others’ perspectives” (4.3.4.), which also includes references to some rules of ethical communication.

#### **4.4.4. Language and culture**

The social sciences curriculum presents (Georgian) language as a tool for effective self-expression and functioning in a given culture. It asks students in the 8th grade to explore old scripts from different cultures and identify Georgian words that have connections to other languages.

#### **4.4.5. Reaching consensus within a group**

Teaching pupils to reach a consensus within a group is part of the curricula. Pupils are expected to participate in group discussions, reach consensus within a group, and present the group's opinion to others in a convincing way. Moreover, they are asked to describe the process of reaching consensus within a group. In the 10th grade, they are expected to analyse necessary conditions for reaching agreement within a society or group.

#### **4.4.6. Avoiding stereotypes**

Detecting stereotypes in literature and other texts was mentioned in the Georgian language and literature curriculum. Pupils are expected to note stereotypes and analyse their functions. They are expected to interpret events in a non-stereotypical way and avoid using clichés while writing.

### **4.5. Civic education**

Civic education is an important part of the social sciences curriculum. The aims of teaching civic education include fostering civic competences; encouraging civic culture among pupils; and helping them to understand human rights, governance, and economic development. As a result of teaching civic education, pupils are expected to perceive themselves as citizens of Georgia; become politically educated citizens; and know forms and means of participation in social, political, economic, and cultural life. Civic participation is listed among the criteria based on which pupils are evaluated in the classroom. In the 9th grade, they learn the principles of self-governance and democracy and use this knowledge to discuss the school's self-governance bodies. In the next grade, pupils are expected to start analysing citizens' roles in democracy and their political rights; the importance of civil society organisations; and link the notion of free personality with the notion of active citizenship. Teaching of visual and applied arts is expected to foster civic activism by making pupils think about their input in their community's cultural life and their responsibilities to protect cultural heritage in their country.

#### **4.5.1. Constitution and law**

Respect for the constitution and justice is an important part of teaching civic education. Pupils in the 7th grade are expected to understand the importance of international and local laws and think about the constitution as the legal basis of the state. In the classroom, they are expected to come up with their own constitution for their class. They are supposed to compare the legislation of different epochs and countries and discuss the role of punishment. In the 8th grade, pupils are expected to analyse Georgia's constitution and find statements supporting democracy. Moreover, they start discussing unwritten laws and comparing their power with the power of written laws in the context of different cultures. Peoples' constitutional rights and personal freedom are mostly discussed in relation to their duties and responsibilities. In the 9th grade, pupils begin to critically evaluate their community in terms of whether or not they respect and obey the law. They discuss reasons for specific types of crime (e.g. juvenile delinquency, violence, corruption, etc.) and their prevention. They become aware on the structure of governance/self-governance and evaluate its effectiveness.

#### **4.5.2. Human rights**

The curriculum aims to make pupils aware of existing international and local mechanisms of human rights protection and understand the importance of human rights especially for children and "specific" groups of people. Human rights are mostly discussed in relationship to duties and responsibilities. Pupils are expected to know the main international documents/agreements about human rights and mechanisms for human rights protection. They are encouraged to think about others' rights while protecting their own rights. According to the curriculum, human rights should be analysed in relation to basic human needs, values, and social conventions. In the classroom, pupils are expected to recall, analyse, and discuss real life situations in Georgia related to human rights violations.

#### **4.5.3. Democracy**

The state, law, human rights, and many concepts discussed under civic education are presented in relationship to democracy. Pupils in 7th grade are expected to know the basis of democratic governance, differentiate between diverse political regimes, and discuss ways to improve democracy in Georgia. In later grades, they are supposed to know the history of democratic development and link it to human rights. Pupils in the 9th grade are expected to effectively participate in the democratic process of their schools' self-governance. They are supposed to create a model of a democratic school

and present it to their peers, teachers, and school administration. Democracy in Georgia, principles and models of democracy, the basis and importance of democracy, and citizens' participation in democratic processes are among the topics that are supposed to be covered in the 9th grade. Pupils are also supposed to compare the democratic situation in Georgia to other countries and identify the main similarities and differences.

#### **4.5.4. Healthy lifestyle**

Promoting a healthy lifestyle is part of the social science curriculum (Civic education) in the 9th grade. Two references to this topic were found. Pupils being able to follow a healthy lifestyle and understand its importance for personality and society is one of the expected results of teaching social sciences. Pupils in the 9th grade are expected to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy food, understand the importance of healthy eating, a balanced daily routine, and the threats of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and gambling. They are expected to write an essay on persons with addiction and society's attitudes towards them.

#### **4.6. Geography and culture**

While learning geography, pupils are expected to actively think about and explore how geographic location affects Georgian culture and traditions, and how these differ among different regions of Georgia (see 4.10: Locating Georgia in the international context). They analyse the importance of geographic location not only for Georgia, but also for other countries' culture and traditions. Five subtopics were derived from this theme: the Caucasus, Europe, Globalization, Developing and developed countries, and Sustainable development. Each of them are discussed below.

##### **4.6.1. Caucasus**

Students in the 7th grade are expected to describe the Caucasus region in terms of the cultures and traditions of different Caucasus countries, know the history of the Caucasus and be able to do an ethnographic review of the region. In the 8th grade, pupils should be able to use statistical information to describe the population of the Caucasus according to demographic, ethnic, and religious characteristics. They should be familiar with the natural resources of the Caucasus and how these are used by its people. The curriculum highlights the importance of the Caucasus as a link between Europe and Asia, and asks pupils to analyse its historical and present role in this respect.

##### **4.6.2. Europe**



While learning social sciences, pupils are expected to learn important geographic and historic facts related to Europe. They are supposed to know the impact of wars on European countries; university structures; and the main hubs of education in Europe. They are expected to come up with criteria for grouping changes caused by urbanization in Europe and Georgia and compare the relationship between political parties and people with different social statuses in Georgia and in European countries. The European Union and Council of Europe are listed among the topics that need to be discussed in the 10th grade. In the 11th grade, pupils discuss the relationship between European and Eastern cultures and their influence on Georgian culture. European artwork is among the materials that are discussed and analysed while teaching visual and applied arts.

#### **4.6.3. Globalization**

One of the expected results of teaching geography in the 11th grade is pupils' ability to discuss socio-cultural aspects of globalization and understanding the importance of coordination in politics to solve global problems. In the 11th grade, they should be able to analyse globalization indexes (KOF index<sup>15</sup>, AT Kearney indicators<sup>16</sup>) and discuss each criteria including political globalization, economic globalization, social globalization, personal contacts, cultural closeness, etc. They are expected to analyse global socioeconomic, political, and environmental problems. Their knowledge about sociocultural aspects of globalization should be demonstrated by their ability to discuss characteristics of 'global culture' (such as music, TV, sport, tourism, etc.) and the global diffusion of aspects of culture (e.g. language, tourism, kitchen, media, global brands) and relate them to the diminishing role of local culture. They should be familiar with anti-globalist ideas and discuss the topic "globalisation versus nationalism" in the classroom, taking into account both positive and negative aspects of globalisation.

#### **4.6.4. Developing and developed countries**

While learning geography, 7th graders are expected to group countries according to their development level, and come up with their own criteria for evaluating the level of development of countries. They are supposed to compare resources (e.g. for agriculture) and lifestyles in rich and poor countries and discuss the relationship between resources and economic development levels. In the 9th grade, pupils start discussing the prospects of development for countries with different socioeconomic statuses. They also should

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.kof.ethz.ch/en/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.atkearney.com>

understand important geographic, political, social, and economic factors that foster or hinder the development of different countries. Developed and developing countries are discussed in terms of how they differ by their problems and how they react to these problems.

#### **4.6.5. Sustainable development**

Protecting nature and other aspects of sustainable development are important parts of the curricula. Pupils are expected to discuss problems of sustainable development, different solutions, and their own role in solving these problems. They are encouraged to think about professionalism as an important value for sustainable development and the role experts can play in improving the environment. Pupils should understand sustainable development as a process in which changes in usage of natural resources, investment, scientific and technological progress, personal development, and institutional change do not hinder each other and strengthen the potential which is needed for addressing humanity's current and future needs. Taking responsibility and caring for the environment is mentioned several times as a result that should ideally be achieved through learning social sciences.

#### **4.7. History and culture**

The curriculum aims to present historical processes from different angles including political, social, cultural, and religious points of view. As an expected result of teaching history in the 7th grade, pupils should be able to differentiate between various rules, behavioural norms, and traditions according to specific cultural and historical epochs which they belong to. The curriculum aims to increase pupils' knowledge of political and cultural history and people's everyday lives in different historical epochs. Pupils study the cultural heritage of different countries (e.g. architecture and literature). In the 9th grade, pupils should be able to discuss the history of culture in Georgia. They are expected to describe a cultural site (a monument, church, etc.) in their neighbourhood; mark different historical buildings on a Georgian map and group them in terms of their function; know the history of the most important Georgian literature and visual artworks; and analyse the influence of different cultures on Georgian culture. In the 10th grade, pupils are supposed to discuss archaeological discoveries and do field visits (e.g. in museums) to collect and present materials on how people lived in certain historical periods, comparing those with modern living standards. They should also choose a historic site in Georgia and discuss related traditions in the classroom.

Teaching pupils to analyse interrelations between different cultures is one of the objectives of the curriculum. Pupils are expected to note the effect different cultures (European cultures and Eastern cultures) have on each other and on Georgian culture, and select those artworks or literature where this effect is especially visible. In the 12th grade, the curriculum concentrates on cultural tendencies in the XIX and XX centuries and the most important pieces of art from this period. Pupils are supposed to select one aspect of culture (e.g. literature, visual arts, music, etc.) and compare its development trends in Georgia and another country (or region).

#### **4.8. Literature and culture**

While learning Georgian language and literature, pupils are encouraged to think about how the socio-cultural context influences the content of literature and how these contextual factors can change the understanding and interpretation of the reader. It is important that literature is taught as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Pupils are expected to recognize themes, ideas, and problems that are specific to a time period and discuss these ideas in the context of values that were typical in the period. They are supposed to compare different cultural contexts that are conveyed through literature and analyse one issue in different cultural contexts (e.g. in Georgian and foreign literature) to see how the cultural, social, and historical values affect conflicts and problems developed in the literature and means of solving these problems.

#### **4.9. Art and culture**

Art is viewed and conveyed to pupils as a universal language which enables people to understand world culture and see the world as a whole. One of the aims of teaching art at school is making pupils familiar with national and international cultural heritage. Pupils are encouraged to perceive art in a historical, religious, economic, and cultural context and understand the interrelation between different cultures and art. In the 7th grade, pupils are expected to recognize and compare art from different cultures and link their content with the history and culture of the countries under consideration. They are supposed to discuss what they learned about a specific culture through the art and understand the importance of art, museums, and galleries for the cultural life of different cities and countries. They are expected to critically evaluate the impact of technological development on the role of art in society's life. Interestingly, most of the visual materials discussed in the classroom are foreign works.

#### **4.10 Locating Georgia in the international context**

Thirty two references were generated on the topic of locating Georgia in the international context. Most of them (28) were from the social sciences curriculum.

According to the aims and objectives of this curriculum, pupils should learn to perceive the world as a whole; define Georgia's place in it; understand the economic, political, and cultural interests of Georgia in the context of the world; and feel the link of their country and region to the processes in Europe and the world. Learning geography, pupils should be able to identify links between Georgia and other countries; discuss the location of Georgia in the region and world; and the political, economic, and cultural relationships as defined by the country's location. Integration of Georgia in European structures is among the subjects that should be covered in class. In the 9th grade, pupils are expected to know Georgia's standing in the world according to a number of socioeconomic development indicators (including the Human development index). They are encouraged to compare Georgia with other countries by their forms of governance, economic relations, religion, and culture and analyse the influence of other countries in each of these spheres in Georgia.

Students in the 7th grade are expected to see the relationship between Georgian literature and universal themes in literature, and to critically evaluate translations of literature translated from other languages.

#### **4.11. Belonging and identity**

From civic education, pupils are expected to perceive themselves as “members of their family, society, school, reference group (ethnic or religious minorities) and Georgian society” (p. 994). Civic education is expected to help pupils in self-exploration and self-identification. Pupils should perceive themselves as citizens of Georgia and should be able to define their own and others' places in society.

One of the objectives of civic education is supporting pupils in searching, finding, and renewing their identities including professional identity. Pupils in the 8th grade are expected to discuss family as “the main value of society and main environment for human beings” and describe their roles and responsibilities in the context of family and school. They are expected to come up with factors that cause the interdependency of family members, neighbours, friends, classmates, etc. In the 10th grade, pupils discuss the groups they belong to in terms of how their own interests fit with the interests and aims of these groups.

#### **4.12. Religion**

Most of the references about religion were generated from the social sciences curriculum. Although the curriculum of Georgian language and literature never mentions religion directly, some of the mandatory literature in grades 10-12 in Georgian literature are directly related to Christianity. The social sciences curriculum aims to help pupils in understanding the importance of religion and the diversity of religions in the

world. Pupils of the 7th grade are expected to discuss the role of religion in history and social life; search for and present information about different religions in different epochs and societies; discuss examples of religious tolerance and how knowing different religions would help them while travelling to different countries. In the 8th grade, pupils are supposed to classify different religious systems and note differences and similarities between them. They should be able to see differences between monotheistic and polytheistic religions, know the main postulates and history of Christianity and Islam; denominations within Christianity; and name people who have played an especially important role in preserving each religion.

In the 9th grade, pupils are supposed to know religions in Georgia; historical reasons for their presence; their role in cultural development; and role in strengthening Georgia. They should be able to describe the structure and hierarchy of the church and the main religions of the world. In the 11th grade, pupils should be able to analyse the impact of religion on different cultures. They should be able to discuss how religious views affect art in Georgia and other countries; the main dogmatic differences between monotheistic religions; and the interrelation between public and religious leaders and how it has affected the cultural development of the country. In the 12th grade, religion is discussed in the context of the XXI century and as a source of identity formation. Finally, the visual and applied arts curriculum includes analysis of art in the context of religion and identifying the influence of religion on different artwork.

#### **4.13. Traditions**

The Georgian language and literature curriculum expects pupils to analyse the influence of cultural traditions on the literature of a given epoch. The social sciences curriculum expects pupils to be able to explore the impact of natural conditions and geographic location on society's traditions. In the 7th grade, pupils are expected to differentiate some laws, norms, and traditions according to the epoch and culture they belong to and to compare two societies with different social structures in terms of traditions. They should also be able to locate places of origin for different religions on the map and know the main traditions related to these religions.

In the 9th grade, pupils are supposed to analyse Georgian traditions in the geographic context and explore national traditions including national clothing, food, and rituals in different regions of Georgia, noting similarities and differences. They should discuss in the classroom how the diversity of traditions in Georgia can be used for the development of the country.



## 5. Discussion

The findings show that acknowledging the diversity of cultures and people, fostering a holistic worldview, humanistic values, civic participation and critical thinking are among the major declared objectives of the Georgian national curriculum. While interpreting the findings it should be taken into account that even though the content of the curriculum is quite balanced and less ethnocentric, whether it meets its objectives greatly depends on relevant materials (textbooks), human resources (teachers), and methods of teaching. Some scholars consider the fact that the Georgian national curriculum does not explicitly cover ‘intercultural competencies’ as an aspect of communication competences a weakness of the curriculum (Tabataze & Gorgodze, 2013).

The Georgian National curriculum, or at least the parts studied above, does not provide detailed definitions for the concepts of interest to the CHIEF project (cultural literacy, cultural heritage and intercultural education). For example, the curriculum says that differences and similarities between different cultures should be discussed. However, what is meant by culture is not explicitly stated. Similarly, while the visual and applied arts curriculum encourages pupils to think about their responsibilities in protecting Georgia’s cultural heritage, it is assumed that the concept of “cultural heritage” is self-evident and needs no explanation. Similarly, when discussing similarities and differences between culture and traditions of different regions of Georgia, no specific definitions are provided.

The social sciences curriculum indicates that pupils should demonstrate their knowledge of different aspects of culture by discussing and comparing literature, architecture, and art products of different cultures. This can be considered a rather narrow understanding of culture. Similarly, one aspect of the visual and applied arts curriculum suggests that, at least in this curriculum, “cultural heritage” is understood rather narrowly, as a cumulative collection of art objects (see Section 4.9). This, however, is only an interpretation, as it is not stated so in the curriculum. Yet, such an interpretation is rather close to the understanding of the “field of culture” in the Law of Georgia on Culture, where it is defined as “historical and cultural areas and objects, buildings and edifices, movable and immovable cultural monuments, folklore, art, souvenirs, handicraft art and handwork, professional art and literature, arts education and the related pedagogy, scientific research and methods, technologies, promotion and popularization of cultural and creative activities, entertaining and educational programmes and show business” (Khoshtaria, Mestvirishvili, Singh, 2018). However, it excludes lifestyle and related aspects of culture.



A second observation about the Georgian National Curriculum is its cosmopolitan character: in respect to virtually all subjects covered in this report, students are encouraged to look beyond Georgia, and compare the situation in Georgia with the situation in other countries. Georgia is regularly considered a part of the Caucasus, Europe, the World, and/or is presented as a (geographic) link between Europe and Asia. Importantly, when pupils compare certain issues in Georgia with the situation abroad, there is, usually, no focus on any specific country or region, be it Europe, Asia, or another area. Usually “other countries” are mentioned in the curricula, and it is up to the class dynamic and, probably, the teacher to come up with the specific cases. The very balanced approach to seek not only for differences but also similarities between different countries, cultures, and processes can be considered a strength of the curriculum.

This observation is in line with one of the stated aims and objectives of the social sciences curriculum. It suggests pupils should learn to perceive the world as a whole; be able to define Georgia’s place in it; and to understand how processes going on in Europe and throughout the world are linked to the situation in Georgia. This is rather different from the findings of the Policy review (Khoshtaria, Mestvirishvili, Singh, 2018), according to which a narrow, nationalist interpretation of culture is in place, with an emphasis on Georgians’ “special” bond with history.

Even though the curriculum is quite balanced in terms of covering ‘national’ vs ‘other’ cultures, the fact that Georgia is the most diverse country in the South Caucasus in terms of ethnicity is not reflected in the curriculum to a large extent. It either talks about national (i.e. Georgian) culture and traditions or about the culture and traditions of ‘other’ countries throughout the world. It highlights the diversity of world cultures but at the same time ignores the diversity of cultures within Georgia. More focus on diversity within Georgia in terms of ethnicities and encouraging pupils to explore this diversity has a particular importance for integration of ethnic minorities.

The civic education curriculum aims to help pupils see themselves as “members of their family, society, school, reference group (ethnic or religious minorities) and the Georgian society” (Section 4.11). It looks no further. There is no “citizen of the World” notion in it. This is probably the one exception in the otherwise rather inclusive worldview of the Georgian curriculum. A special emphasis is made on families as an important value the “main environment for human beings”. This is in line with literature review findings which also suggest that family ties are strong for Georgian youth and family members influence the most important decisions and the lifestyles of young people to a great extent in Georgia. While interpreting this finding, it should be considered that the family structure in Georgia can be considered

traditional, consisting of three generations: As students, and sometimes even after marriage, young people often live with their parents. While young people enjoy the security and comfort their families provide, it may prevent them from becoming free and independent persons, which is another objective of the national curriculum (Khoshtaria, Mestvirishvili, Singh, 2018).

Raising active, independent, and free citizens who are able to think critically and take responsibilities for their actions is another objective of the national curriculum and another advantage of it. Through its content as well as through suggested methods, it seeks to encourage constructive cooperation and decision making, problem solving, respect for others' rights, and democratic principles. Classroom discussions are presented as an important tool for fostering these competences. Considering that the quality, direction, and depth of such discussion greatly depends on the facilitator or teacher in this case puts a great responsibility on the teacher, who should be able to moderate the discussion in an ethical and professional manner.

The social sciences curriculum encourages pupils to learn the principles of self-governance and democracy and use this knowledge to discuss the school's self-governance bodies. Pupils' participation in self-governance bodies is legally ensured through two levels. First, is pupils' self-government which is a structural unit within a school and students elect its members. There are two self-governments within a school one for basic grades and one for secondary grades. The curriculum actively encourages pupils to put into practice democratic principles based on the example of their school's self-governance. One student representative is elected from the self-government of the secondary grades for the school board, which is composed of teachers and parents. As already discussed, this board approves the school budget, internal regulations of the school, and the school principal. However, pupils in secondary school (and those who complete mandatory education and leave school after the 9th grade) are deprived the opportunity to become members of the school board and participate in important decision-making processes within the school. Moreover, how these bodies function in reality is largely under researched.

Critical thinking is a central theme in the national curricula and sometimes is even included as an evaluation criteria. Pupils are encouraged to critically evaluate events and characters described in literature, discuss and critically evaluate existing problems within the county and within the school, and ways of solving the problems. They are encouraged to avoid 'blind' trust toward authorities. However, nothing is said about pupils critically evaluating textbooks, teachers, curricula, and knowledge producers that directly affect them. Similarly, even though the social sciences curriculum states that pupils should be able to acknowledge multiple interpretations of historical events, it does not encourage them to think critically about the writing process of history and

the role of power in it. Being a patriot is closely linked with knowing national and world history and the curricula encourages respect for national heroes, without fostering critical thinking and evaluation of national history and national heroes.

Overall, many aspects of the Georgian National Curriculum, such as the presentation of historical processes as developments in the spheres of politics, society, culture, religion, etc. leave the impression that pupils are to get a holistic and balanced education. However, the above leads to a number of questions: how realistic would it be to expect that the goals stated by the curriculum are achieved? What are the actual learning outcomes, how much knowledge do the pupils actually get, and to what extent do they master the competences that they are supposed to master? The upcoming empirical phase of the CHIEF project, including analysis of textbooks used in the classroom and qualitative interviews with both teachers and pupils will help to answer some of these questions.

## **6. Conclusion**

A general overview of the selected curricula suggests a rather holistic, and arguably, harmonious worldview. While studying the subjects selected for the analyses (Georgian language and literature, history, geography, civic education, civic self-defence and security, and visual and applied arts), pupils are expected to develop an understanding of both national and world cultures. The visual and applied arts curriculum goes further, aiming to develop pupils' "sense of unity of the world". In this respect, the curricula reviewed are all but Georgia-centric, and are rather "cosmopolitan".

This perspective is still evident when the curricula of specific subjects are considered. When studying history, diversity within a population is discussed as a basis for tolerance and peaceful coexistence. When studying visual and applied arts, pupils compare artwork of different cultures and epochs, and the curriculum encourages them to discuss examples of different cultures. According to the social sciences curriculum, it is important to know both Georgian and world history in order to be a patriotic citizen.

When studying a wide variety of topics, the situation in different countries and epochs is supposed to be discussed. Thus, the analysis of Georgia's National curriculum suggests a rather open worldview in relation to the topics studied. Pupils are to look beyond their country's borders, as well as beyond contemporaneity, and be aware of as many different cases as possible, be it spatially (different countries) or historically. The pupils are supposed to be taught to see a problem from different points of view. Potentially, and provided that the curriculum is followed, such a curriculum should be able to ensure an education as a result of which young people are both aware of multiple cultural heritages and respect them.

The curriculum requires young people to develop tolerance and teaches them to respect diverse opinions, human dignity, and human rights. The visual and applied arts curriculum aims to help pupils perceive the world as a source of diverse ideas and feelings. A variety of forms of diversity are considered enriching for the society and developing tolerance. While acknowledging that diversity may lead to conflict(s), conflict resolution receives special attention.

Irrespective of the many positive aspects highlighted above, the curriculum still needs improvement. First, it needs to better conceptualize culture, cultural heritage, intercultural education, traditions, and other related concepts. Second, besides diversity of the world and diversity of the region, more attention needs to be paid to ethnic diversity within Georgia and pupils should be encouraged to explore and appreciate this diversity within their country. Last but not least, encouragement of critical thinking needs to be expanded in relation to the writing of history, national heroes, and other knowledge producers, such as teachers, textbooks, and curricula.

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**Appendix: List of Reviewed Documents**

Nr .	Title	Year	Source	Type
1.	Curriculum of Georgian language and literature	2011	<a href="http://ncp.ge/files/ESG/2011-2016/qartuli%20ena%20da%20literatura.pdf">http://ncp.ge/files/ESG/2011-2016/qartuli%20ena%20da%20literatura.pdf</a>  <a href="#">The Portal of National Curriculum</a>	
2.	Curriculum of Social Sciences	2011	<a href="http://ncp.ge/files/ESG/2011-2016/sazogadoebrivi%20mecnierebebi%20-%20ncp.pdf">http://ncp.ge/files/ESG/2011-2016/sazogadoebrivi%20mecnierebebi%20-%20ncp.pdf</a>  <a href="#">The Portal of National Curriculum</a>	
3.	Curriculum of Visual and applied arts	2011	<a href="http://ncp.ge/files/ESG/2011-2016/saxviti%20da%20gamoyenebiti%20xelovneba.pdf">http://ncp.ge/files/ESG/2011-2016/saxviti%20da%20gamoyenebiti%20xelovneba.pdf</a>  <a href="#">The Portal of National Curriculum</a>	

**National Curricula Review (Germany)** Cornelia Sylla, Elina Marmer, Louis Henri Seukwa

## 1. Executive Summary

This report aims to capture how cultural literacy is conceptualised in the school curricula of the German Federal State Hamburg (*Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg*). Therefore, it analyses how “culture”, “identity” and “heritage” are reflected in these documents as well as how German and European cultural heritage are understood and presented, focusing on the concepts of cultural identity, diversity and participation.

Every one of the sixteen federal states in Germany has its own education system. Since CHIEF project’s qualitative and quantitative fieldwork in Germany will be carried out in Hamburg schools, where the Hamburg State Ministry of Schools and Vocational Training is the administrative agency in charge, we restricted our review to the Hamburg curricula.

School is compulsory and free from age 6 to 18. Compulsory education includes a minimum of ten years in general education (4 years in primary schools, 6 years in District Schools or Academic High Schools), to be followed by higher secondary education (available at both school types) or, alternatively, by vocational education. School choice is mainly up to parents, but at the end of grade 4 students’ achievements have to be on a high level if they want to attend an academic high school.

105 official curricula for all subjects covering the upper grades (age group 14-18) were studied. They are all structured in a very similar way; many paragraphs are even identical. Not all of them cover the key concepts of our research to the same extent. Therefore, we were able to narrow down the number of documents to 19 that were studied in depth. Identical passages were only coded once, subjects that only marginally covered the concepts of “European culture”, “culture” in general, “identity” or “cultural heritage” were only scanned superficially.

All curricula start off with an identical section about the general competence orientation. They then go on to specify the competences relevant to the subject. Competence orientation has been a key concept in the German educational system for several years now. Every educational effort is justified by its contribution to the development of certain competences that are considered necessary in adult life in a globalised world.

Although “culture” and more specifically “European culture” are mentioned in several curricula, mostly as a binary contrast of “our culture vs. other cultures”, they are usually not defined or conceptualised in any way. The only concepts that are described more



extensively are a certain “culture of learning” and “intercultural education”, both of which are considered general tasks for all subjects. In the section on Intercultural Education, a broader and relativistic concept of culture is defined, not tied to ethnicity or nation, but explained with the model of multiple identities, i.e. simultaneous membership in several groups like gender, class, age etc. This more fluid and potentially more inclusive concept of culture, however, is not elaborated further in the section, neither is it integrated into the rest of the curricula. Rather, intercultural education is conceptualized through tolerance towards national/ethnic differences, with the emphasis on differences.

Only two of the subject curricula contain consistent and elaborated, albeit different, concepts of culture: Latin (or ancient languages) and philosophy. In the first, obtaining knowledge about the contribution of the Roman and Greek empires to European culture is defined as leading to cultural competences. However, this cultural model, placing Roman and Greek heritage as central for the European culture, has some major flaws: cultural influences a result of migration and colonialism, among other factors that made and are still making European culture(s), are not captured, associated power relations remain obscured. Culture is assumed to change with time, but cultural diversity, hybridity and fluidity in a given time and space are overlooked. The hegemonic production of cultural knowledge by empires defines cultural heritage, leaving out historically and contemporary oppressed and marginalized voices.

In the Philosophy Curriculum, culture is defined in opposition to nature as everything created by humans. This more universal approach to culture is narrowed down by the fact that the philosophy curriculum contains Western philosophy only, hegemonizing the understanding of the universal.

Throughout the documents, cultural identity seems to be acquired mainly through comparison. Getting to know different ways of living and thinking, different sets of values and different languages supposedly leads to recognition, critical evaluation and stronger identification with one’s own. In this way, differences are being manifested and hinder the questioning and deconstruction of participation barriers. Mechanisms of power relations, discrimination and exclusion are only marginally treated.

Several attempts to shift dominant discourses on culture and identity towards more inclusive notions are being made, but they remain isolated and are not integrated in the overall narrative which remains that of manifesting the differences.

In terms of inclusion, equality and participation, the Hamburg educational system seems to be in conflict with its own functions. On the one hand, cultural literacy is supposed to increase participation as stated in the cultural policy documents (Seukwa *et al.*, 2017). On the other hand, pupils achieving different graduation levels are

receiving education that leads to different levels of cultural literacy. This “hierarchy” is reflected in descriptions of expected competences in evaluation skills and critical thinking as well as in the expected scope of social participation of the graduates of different levels.

## 2. Formal Educational Context in Hamburg (Germany)

In the Federal Republic of Germany, the Basic Constitutional Law (*Grundgesetz*) of 1949 specifies the scope of the federal government's responsibilities at the national level and awards legislative powers to the sixteen federal states (*Länder*). The sovereignty of the *Länder* in the cultural sphere defines their predominant responsibility concerning matters of education. Every federal state has its own ministry in charge of formal education. These ministries cooperate through the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*KMK*), founded in 1948 to represent and promote common interests of the *Länder* in the fields of culture, education and research. In 1990, after the reunification of Germany, the five new ministries of the eastern *Länder* joined the Standing Conference. The *KMK* operates through decisions, recommendations, agreements or even state agreements, which provide a binding framework.

### Hamburg educational system

Hamburg, being one of 16 federal states in Germany, has its own educational system, which differs in some aspects from that of other states; the Hamburg State Ministry of Schools and Vocational Training (*Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung*) is the administrative agency in charge. The school is compulsory from age 6 to 18. Compulsory education includes a minimum of ten years in general education, to be followed by higher secondary education or, alternatively, by vocational education.

All students attend primary school for the first four years (grades 1-4). After primary school, students are separated to be streamed in two major secondary school types, the district school or the academic high school.

In 2010, middle and comprehensive schools in Hamburg were merged into **District Schools** (*Stadtteilschule*). These schools offer three hierarchical graduation levels: the basic secondary graduation (*ESA*) at the end of grade 9, the middle school graduation (*MSA*) at the end of grade 10 and the general qualification for university entrance (*Abitur*) at the end of grade 13. The *MSA* certificate enables students to continue professional training (albeit for better-paid professions they often have to compete with those with *Abitur*), while *ESA* certificate often leads to low-paid jobs with a low qualification level. According to the Hamburg State Ministry, in the academic year 2016/17, approximately equal shares of students graduated with either *ESA*, *MSA* or

Abitur qualifications from all Hamburg district schools, while 6% left school without graduating (Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung, 2018).

Compared to academic high schools, district schools provide a stronger vocational orientation.

**Academic high schools** (*Gymnasium*) aim at the general qualification for university entrance (*Abitur*) after eight years of schooling at the end of grade 12. Grades 5 and 6 are probational – students can be downgraded to the district school if they do not show a continuous satisfactory performance. Nearly 84% of all Hamburg academic high schools' students graduated with *Abitur* qualification in the academic year 2016/17 (ibid).

Primary schools as well as secondary schools are supposed to be inclusive, i.e. children and young people with special needs have the right to attend a regular school together with students without such needs as well as to receive special support in the educational process. Parents'/legal guardians' choice should be prioritized when deciding about the educational paths of children and young people with special needs. They can alternatively opt for a special education school for their child.

Inclusive education has been implemented in Hamburg since the 2009 amendment of §12 of the Hamburg School Law, where the right of children and youth with special educational needs to attend conventional schools was guaranteed. About 60% of these students attended a regular school in the academic year 2014/15<sup>17</sup>. The so-called special schools (*Sonderschulen*), which still exist, accommodated almost 3% of all students. The vast majority of students attending special schools left school without any certificate at all (71%) (ibid)<sup>18</sup>.

The school choice after grade 4 is up to the families, but they receive a recommendation letter issued by the class teacher. These recommendations are not only based on the child's actual performance but also on the teacher's prediction of their ability to academically succeed in the future. Since parental support is considered an essential ingredient for academic success, the recommendation also implies the teacher's perception of the ability and willingness of the family to adequately do so. Even though the families have the final word in the choice of secondary school, the teacher's recommendation plays an important role, especially in families less familiar with the complexities of the school system, which is often the case with migrants or families in which the parents possess a low degree of education. In many cases, academic high

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.chancen-spiegel.de/ergebnisse-der-laender/hamburg.html>

<sup>18</sup> In addition, there are Rudolf Steiner schools, which are private and follow their own curriculum. Just over one percent of students in Hamburg attend these schools. Their curriculum was not under revision here.

schools also try to talk daring parents out of their decision to enrol their children in schools “above” the recommended type.<sup>19</sup>

In Hamburg, children from families with low socio-economic status as well as children of migrants and of parents with low educational attainment are overrepresented at district schools and underrepresented at academic high schools, accordingly (Vieluf, 2014). The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA<sup>20</sup>) continuously shows that Germany underperforms in ensuring educational equality, with the problem being most pronounced in cases of students from low socio-economic background and with migration history.

About half of all students in Hamburg leave school after grade 10 (at the age of 16-17) with basic (*ESA*) or middle (*MSA*) school certificates and continue their education in vocational schools. The other half continues secondary education until the age of 18-19 to earn the general qualification for university entrance (*Abitur*). In 2014, nearly 5% of all students in Hamburg left school without any certificate at all (which is below the German average)<sup>21</sup>. However, the rate was twice as high among Hamburg students without German citizenship<sup>22</sup>.

District schools and academic high schools differ in terms of curricula for secondary education (grades 5-10/11), but they share a common curriculum for the higher secondary education (*gymnasiale Oberstufe*), which is offered by both school types. Curricula are developed by the Hamburg State Ministry of Schools and Vocational Training (*Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung*) in cooperation with the Hamburg Institute for Teachers’ Education and School Development (*Landesinstitut für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung Hamburg*). Religion curricula are an exception, because they are developed by the Protestant Church. Curricula are oriented towards competences students have to acquire after completing each grade in the respective school. Based on these competences, schools can decide on the teaching content as well as the textbooks to be used. Textbooks are issued by private publishing houses to match the curricula of the respective States and there are no approval procedures for textbooks in the city-state Hamburg (Macgilchrist, 2015). Schools are free to choose their textbooks and to use any other teaching materials as long as the aims prescribed in the curricula are met. Textbooks issued by the major publishing houses, Westermann, Cornelsen and Klett, are used by most schools.

Some subjects are compulsory throughout the first ten years of school for all schools, some are only compulsory in certain grades or in only one school type and still others

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<sup>19</sup> For more information about teachers’ and parents’ roles in this selection process, see: Ditton, H., 2010. Selektion und Exklusion im Bildungssystem. In: G. Quenzel & K. Hurrelmann (eds.), *Bildungsverlierer. Neue Ungleichheiten*, Wiesbaden: VS, Verl. für Sozialwiss., 53–71

<sup>20</sup> PISA (2015) [www.oecd.org/pisa](http://www.oecd.org/pisa)

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.caritas.de/fuerprofis/fachthemen/kinderundjugendliche/bildungschancen/karte-bildungschancen>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.chancen-spiegel.de/ergebnisse-der-laender/hamburg.html>

are optional. According to the teaching and examination regulations<sup>23</sup>, mathematics, German, English and physical education have to be studied in all grades; final exams (ESA and MSA) have to be taken in mathematics and German without exception; for students with German as a second language, the English exam can be replaced by an exam in any language, provided a qualified examiner can be found. The document does not specify who is considered a qualified examiner or who is responsible for finding one. (Protestant) religion is generally taught in grades 1 through 6, although, upon parents' request, children can be exempted from it. From grade 7 onward, young people can choose between religion and philosophy. In the first two years of secondary school, natural sciences/technology is still one subject, while history and geography are taught separately. In grades 7 through 10 biology, chemistry and physics are all compulsory subjects, as well as geography, history and a subject called "politics, society and economy". From primary school until the second year of secondary school (grade 6), music, creative arts and drama are all compulsory, from grade 7 onwards only one of these has to be chosen. In academic high schools a second foreign language is compulsory from grade six or seven onwards and a third one is optional starting from grade 8. In district schools a second foreign language has to be offered by the school, but students can choose to study something else instead.

### 3. Method

The goal of this report is to analyse how "cultural heritage", "cultural knowledge" and "participation" are reflected in the Hamburg secondary school curricula. Curricula of the upper grades of the secondary school (ages 14-18) covering the issues of history, cultural heritage and identity as well as citizenship and Europe have been studied in depth for these purposes, mainly relying on the content analysis technique.

#### 3.1 Selection

Curricula for district schools (ds) and the academic high schools (ah) issued by the Hamburg State Ministry of Schools and Vocational Training in cooperation with the Hamburg Institute for Teachers Education and School Development have been selected for this review. Since the vast majority of young people aged 14 to 18 in Hamburg attend one of the two school types, and these curricula are also binding for all other schools that are legally entitled to issue official graduation certificates, vocational schools or schools for students with special needs have not been considered.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.hamburg.de/contentblob/3013778/179fc5b070414ef87851839a1b87ec5b/data/apo-grundstgy.pdf>

Hamburg curricula are organised in a way that each subject for each school type is a separate document. Additionally, there is a complementing document called General Tasks for each school type.

Since references to culture, identity, heritage and Europe can be found even in the subjects like mathematics and sports as well as in history and social sciences, all subjects had to be accounted for. The search on the website of the Hamburg State Ministry of Schools and Vocational Training resulted in a total of 105 documents: 33 for district schools, grades 5-11, 29 for academic high schools, grades 5-10, and 23 for higher secondary education (*gymnasiale Oberstufe*) for both schools.

A word search was performed in NVivo on all the documents for grades 5-10/11 – 62 documents in total – looking for references to CHIEF’s key concepts ‘culture’, ‘identity’ and ‘Europe’. Those subjects which hardly or never mentioned these concepts were not coded at all, but scanned superficially after the coding had been completed. This process resulted in 26 documents for coding – 12 subjects and General Tasks for each school type.

Comparing the philosophy curricula for district schools with those for academic high schools revealed that they are quite similar<sup>24</sup>. A random check showed that this is true for other subjects as well. Therefore, the number of documents to be coded was narrowed down to 13 – twelve subjects and the General Tasks for the district schools. The respective curricula for the academic high schools and higher secondary education were scanned after the initial coding was completed to check for any essential differences. All the documents referred to in this review can be found in the Appendix<sup>25</sup>.

### 3.2 Coding

The document General Tasks for the district schools was coded in NVivo 12 by two researchers independently. The researchers coded the document inductively and then discussed their preliminary findings to agree on a common coding tree, taking into account the main research question: “*How are ‘cultural heritage’, ‘cultural identity’ and ‘cultural diversity’ reflected in national/federal curricula?*” After the coding tree was developed, two researchers coded 6 subject documents each. Researchers exchanged and discussed their findings during the coding process as well as during the

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<sup>24</sup> In fact, they are identical in most parts. They basically only vary with regard to the required competences at the end of grades 8, 9 and 10. What is required in grade 8 in academic high schools is usually required in grade 9 in district schools, etc.

<sup>25</sup> The number of documents in the appendix is 19: General Tasks and 12 subject curricula for grades 5-10/11 for district schools (ds) that were initially coded. Additionally, six documents for the academic high school grades 5-10 (ah), as well as the higher secondary education (go), where the screening revealed relevant passages.

analysis. Many paragraphs proved to be identical in all of the curricula. These were only coded once. After the initial coding was complete, both researchers screened other documents for relevant passages, which were then coded in six additional documents (see Appendix).

### 3.3 Review

This review is structured following the inductive analysis and considering the research question. First, explicit and implicit concepts of culture and cultural literacy were identified. Special attention was paid to the analysis of concepts of intercultural education, commonly found in the documents. A closer look was taken into the way differences, participation and discrimination are handled. The last section is concerned with how all these concepts relate to the functions and roles of the school system in/for the society.

## 4. Findings

All 105 documents are structured in a very similar way; many paragraphs are even identical. They all start with a section on general competence orientation followed by the competences relevant for the particular subject, starting with a paragraph on the contribution of the respective subject to education in general. The competences described are divided into specific competences for each subject (*fachliche Kompetenzen*), cross-sectional competences (*überfachliche Kompetenzen*) and “academic language competences” (*bildungssprachliche Kompetenzen*), the last two being identical for all curricula. These are followed by chapters on didactical principles and criteria for evaluation of students’ performance. The latter also consist of several paragraphs that are identical for most subjects.

The first significant finding resulted from the initial word search. Both key terms combined – “culture” and “Europe” – peaked in the curricula for Latin (district school) and ancient languages (Latin and Ancient Greek, academic high school), with a significantly higher occurrence than in any other subject. While “Europe” alone appeared slightly more often in the curricula for social sciences and geography, “culture” was mentioned to a surprising extent in Latin and ancient languages compared with the other subjects.



#### 4.1. Concepts of culture

Culture is hardly ever explicitly mentioned in the documents. It usually appears implicitly as a “culture of learning”, or else as “intercultural competence”. “Culture” as a general concept is most explicitly presented in Latin (district schools) and ancient languages (Latin and Ancient Greek, academic high schools). Latin classes are supposed to teach about cultural roots by connecting elements of European culture and dealing with values of different times and cultures that strongly influenced “Europe’s identity” (Latin ds). Cultural literacy is conceptualized only in these curricula and defined as the “ability to reflect on one’s own cosmos of experiences by the means of communicating with history (*historische Kommunikation*)” (ibid). Through examination of texts and content from ancient Greek and Roman history and the use of Latin in the Medieval era, young people supposedly experience “foreignness in a historic dimension” and can therefore reflect on their present. Comparing the differences of values and lifestyles in different eras is considered as giving an insight into the relativity of values in general (Latin ds, AncLanguages\_ah). Additionally, through analysing these texts, students learn rhetorical rules and how they are applied in contemporary politics. Independent of their self-identification and origin, young people are expected to recognize the roots of their own culture in the ancient Greek-Roman heritage.

Other than in the curricula of Latin and ancient languages, explicit definitions of culture are only found in the curriculum of philosophy (though to a much lesser extent) and discussions of intercultural education in the General Tasks, as well as in the curricula of English and other foreign languages. Intercultural education is discussed below (Section 4.3). In philosophy, unlike the ancient languages and, to a large extent, Intercultural Education, culture is not tied to geographical space, ethnicity or nation, but rather conceptualised through the culture-nature dichotomy. One of the five chapters of educational content is called “Anthropology and Culture” (others being “Language and Knowledge”, “Ethics and Politics”, “Metaphysics” and “Aesthetics”). Culture, then, is explained as a universal product of human reason and human conscience. The meaning of culture, as well as tensions between nature and culture, are supposed to be studied here through recommended topics like youth cultures, identity, self-fulfilment through work or leisure, technology and nature, as well as the topic of ‘illegalisation of humans’<sup>26</sup>. Thus, culture is conceptualised and critically discussed as the sum of all aspects of human creation, following a humanistic approach.

Everywhere else, the term “culture” is only randomly used in different contexts with a variety of potential meanings – “cultural norms” (Gentasks\_ds), “our culture”, “cultural

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<sup>26</sup> Cases of declaring people as illegal by authorities, such as by certain migration laws, is meant here.

traditions”, “cultural justifications” (Gentasks\_go), “culture in historical context” (History\_ds), “cultural landscapes”, “cultural foundation” (Socsci\_ds), “cultural conditions” (Natsci\_ds), “youth cultures” (English\_ds), “cultural development”, “industrial culture” (Physics\_ds), “cultural progress” (Chemistry\_go). The actual meanings, however, remain undisclosed. Even when referring to “cultural participation” (Arts\_ds), clear explanations of the applied concept of culture are missing. In the curriculum of arts for example, it is stated that lessons open the access to culture for young people and contribute to “cultural orientation”, but without explaining in which way they do this and how “culture” is conceptualized in this context. The paragraph following this statement explains that by studying arts young people can develop a more holistic understanding of education as they will see interconnections between nature, technology, history, literature, religion and other spheres. Furthermore, the document also claims that art will help to strengthen students’ teamwork skills. It is not clear, however, whether these features are considered “cultural”; if being capable of teamwork and the ability to see interconnections between different fields of education are the essence of “cultural orientation”, or if they are unrelated aspects. The notion that dealing with art leads to “cultural orientation” is repeated later on.

#### **4.2. Culture of learning – competence orientation**

Three fields of competence are generally mentioned in the introduction to all curricula: cognition – evaluation – action. These are supposed to be interconnected, as defined in General Tasks. Gaining new knowledge, being able to structure it and knowing how to find more information is considered as only one aspect of learning. Critical reflection and discussion, re-evaluation of opinions and beliefs and the ability to change perspectives are considered equally important. Furthermore, through learning in school, young people are supposed to acquire the ability to make decisions and act based on their knowledge and evaluation skills and resolve conflicts in cooperation with others.

If cultural literacy is defined as competences and practices necessary for participation in society (Seukwa *et al.*, 2017), these aspects mentioned in all curricula could be seen as the key concept of culture: culture as a certain way of learning, thinking and communicating.

Each document analysed for this report lists a few examples for each level of competences to be achieved by young people in the respective subject. The expected competences are differentiated along the levels of aspired graduation certificates.

The curricula seem to imply a hierarchy between cognition and evaluation. In various subjects, the expectations for ESA in some topics seem to differ from those for MSA

in terms of required evaluation competences. Where only certain knowledge is required for ESA, the requirements for MSA often contain evaluation skills. For example, in Latin, it is required on MSA level to understand that Latin texts are references to values of “their time”. On ESA level students are only expected to be able to properly reference the text, without any evaluation.

Only in religion (Religion\_ds), evaluation competences are explicitly mentioned from an early age on. Students at every level of graduation are required to express their own perspectives on how certain people (e.g. teachers) speak about God. A culture of rational dialogue aimed at mutual understanding is implicitly constituted as a normative didactical concept (Religion\_ds). But even here, there seem to be implicit normative standards. This curriculum states as a requirement the ability to recognize stereotypes, prejudices and false evictions, and to reflect on one’s own preconceptions. Critical evaluation of scriptures or any explanation on how to recognize “false evictions” are not provided.

Most other competences that are described as important or relevant for each subject can be understood as necessary for participation in this specific culture of learning. Developing all competences is supposed to lead to the development of responsible individuals (Gentasks-ds).

#### **4.2.1 Critical thinking**

Culture as a critical voice of the society, as conceptualized by some policy documents (see Seukwa *et al.*, 2017), is expressed by several of the subject curricula here and there, sometimes quite clearly so. For example, in history, students at the end of grade 8 are expected to be able to show that history is constructed, e.g. by identifying gaps and contradictions within historical sources, using examples with the help of the teacher, and do so independently by the end of grade 11 (History\_ds). In philosophy, students are encouraged to critically scrutinize the stances of philosophical discourses on values and meanings (Philosophy\_ds). In geography, different approaches and perspectives to space are discussed, and students are expected to critically recognize and apply these different models (Geography\_ds). In General Tasks, the critical reflection and discussion, re-evaluation of opinions and beliefs as well as the ability to change perspectives are considered important. The concept of culture in its relation to critical thinking is present in the Intercultural Education chapter (see Section 4.3 on Intercultural Education) (Gentasks\_ds).

The so-called “Consensus of Beutelsbach”<sup>27</sup> is cited by the social sciences curricula (Socsci\_ds). This is an important reference to critical teaching and a ban on indoctrination by teachers. It is not clear, however, why this document is cited only in the social sciences curriculum. This curriculum also states that the ability to participate in social life should comprise willingness and the ability to critically reflect on own actions in terms of their impact on individual, social and natural environments. However, competences to critically review different positions and perspectives as well as the influence of the media are listed next to competences to (uncritically) categorize all kinds of spaces in fixed categories, among them “industrial nations” and “developing nations”. This kind of un-reflected categorization serves as an underlying concept in German social science textbooks and is critically discussed by postcolonial educationists (e.g. Marmer and Ziai, 2015).

The requirement for critical thinking also significantly differs for students at the end of grade 10 aspiring MSA (who leave school after grade 10 to pursue vocational training) and for those at the end of grade 11 (aspiring Abitur after grade 13). For example, only the latter are expected to recognize manipulations by cartography. Being able to critically view pretentiously objective maps is a skill only required of students aspiring tertiary education. Critical evaluation of certain types of documents, such as data, statistics, textbooks, curricula etc., is not a requirement at all.

These two examples from the social sciences curricula demonstrate that the requirement for critical thinking is inconsistent and not integral to the social science curriculum.

#### **4.2.2 Language**

The way language is discussed in different curricula gives a lot of insight into implicit notions of culture. There are various aspects of language to be considered. In the General Tasks document it is stated that all subjects have to teach language skills on four different levels:

1. All subjects have to consider the difference between everyday language and academic language, and they have to contribute to the acquaintance of the latter.
2. All subjects have to take into account that not all young people speak German as their first language, therefore they have to provide opportunities for learners of German as a second language to improve their everyday language skills as well.

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<sup>27</sup> The Beutelsbach Consensus declares the minimum standard of political and religious education in Germany. It consists of three rules: the prohibition of indoctrination, the requirement to treat controversial issues as controversial and the orientation towards students’ interests.

3. All subjects have to make sure that students learn the subject-specific vocabulary.
4. Multilingualism is a goal of the German school system. Every student is expected to learn at least one, preferably – two or even three languages in addition to their first language. (Gentasks\_ds)

Therefore, also curricula on subjects like arts, for example, mention how language skills are developed by studying the particular subject. The arts curriculum claims that a dialogue about artistic objects enriches the vocabulary and stimulates the ability to use language in a joyful, creative way (Arts\_ds).

Curricula on languages (ModernLanguages\_ds; English\_ds; OrigLanguage\_ds; LowGerman\_ds) structure the competences in a similar, but slightly different way compared to other subjects. In accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)<sup>28</sup> and the standards of the *KMK*, functional communication skills differ from intercultural competences and methodical competences for all languages.

Again, the curriculum in Latin is an exception. Since Latin is not a spoken language, communication skills are defined in a different way – as historical communication. Complex questions are to be studied in historical, political, philosophical, literary, artistic or archaeological contexts. Knowledge about the impact of Latin on Christianity and the continuity of Latin throughout the ages is acquired in this fashion (Latin\_ds).

Learning additional foreign languages, is supposed to help form students' awareness of their own language and cultural practices through comparing them with others. Similarities and differences are to be discovered and can lead to increased awareness of own cultural identities. Comparing curricula of different languages offers an interesting insight into the relation of German with foreign languages and therefore into a certain notion of “national culture”.

Languages are either referred to as “foreign languages” that are to be compared with the “mother tongue” (ModLanguages\_ds), or languages other than German optionally taught as first language (OrigLanguage\_ds)<sup>29</sup> are compared to the German language. In the latter case, studying the first language in school is supposed to help learning of German.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.europaeischer-referenzrahmen.de/>

<sup>29</sup> German is the language of instruction in all schools. However, 50 regular schools in Hamburg offer optional classes in a number of languages for children whose first language is not German. Hamburg provides curricula for Bosnian, Chinese, Farsi, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish.

(<https://li.hamburg.de/contentblob/3850334/4948f404a3dafa711dcf2d7485dddadd/data/download-pdf-regelungen-im-herkunftssprachlichen-unterricht.pdf>)

Low German<sup>30</sup> represents quite a special case. It is called a “regional language”, and while it is expected to be compared with standard High German just like all the other languages, it is neither called a “mother tongue” or “first language” nor a “foreign language” (LowGerman\_ds).

An additional aspect of language is only marginally mentioned in the philosophy curriculum: one of the expected competences is the ability to reflect on the impact a certain use of language has on the perception of the concept (Philosophy\_ds). The example provided in this respect is how different names for migrants (‘foreigners’, ‘guest workers’, ‘refugees’) influence people’s perception of migration.

This conceptualization of language directly refers to topics of intercultural education, defined in the General Tasks (Gentasks\_ds) as a topic to be taught across all subjects and in respect to which culture is mentioned most often and most explicitly.

### 4.3. Intercultural education

A paragraph worth citing in full conceptualizes culture in the context of intercultural education as follows:

“Culture should not be understood only in the sense of ethnicity – rather, every society consists of a plurality of constantly changing cultures. These are determined by the social milieu, the geographic region, gender, generation, belief, sexual orientation etc. Every individual therefore bears various cultures and can contribute different facets of his cultural imprint to different situations (model of multiple belonging).” (Gentasks\_ds).

This extended concept of culture aiming at deconstructing the conventional models of culture as a ‘container’ based on ethnicity or nation is not, however, reflected either further in text or in the subject curricula. Instead, General Tasks and various other documents emphasise that it is through comparison with other cultures and understanding of existing differences that one’s own cultural identity develops.

The geography curriculum conceptualises intercultural education as dealing with “other” societies and cultures in different times or spaces, which leads to recognition of their unique qualities. As a consequence, controversies in values and interests appear

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<sup>30</sup> Low German, offered by dozens of schools in Hamburg, is a large language/dialect group spoken mainly in Northern Germany and in the northeastern part of the Netherlands. In Hamburg, the dialect is no longer widely spoken among young people. Motivated by the EU Charter on Protection of Languages of 1992 and ratified by Germany in 1998, Hamburg expanded its teaching from primary schools (2010/11) to secondary schools (2014/2015). It is offered as a compulsory optional subject. Most schools offering Low German are located South of the River Elbe, mostly in rural environments.

as key elements of social interaction and prove the necessity to regulate society through institutions (Geography\_ds).

Also in religion, recognizing the (social, ethnic, cultural, religious) differences in young people's biographies, experiences and sets of knowledge, is the main aspect of intercultural education. The aim of lessons in this subject is to open a dialogue about these differences and find orientation towards a common future, which allows everybody to live in dignity (Religion\_ds).

In general, the aim of Intercultural Education is "intercultural competence", which is considered a necessary qualification in a world that is changing towards globalization (Gentasks\_ds).

#### **4.4. Identity**

Different dimensions of identity are tackled by the curricula. Within General Tasks such as Global Learning and Intercultural Education, identity is tied to ethnicity (Gentasks\_ds, Gentasks\_go). Other tasks, however, frame different meanings of identity: sexual identity (Sexual Education: Gentasks\_ds, Gentasks\_go), medial identity (Media Education: Gentasks\_ds, Gentasks\_go), individual identity formation (Civic Education: Gentasks\_ds), or even self-discovery (English\_ds, Socsci\_ds, Philosophy\_ds, Origlanguage\_ds). German language curriculum for higher secondary education (German\_go) applies both meanings of identity: one tied to the ethnicity, another as an individual process. Biology and chemistry curricula introduce natural sciences and technology as "an important part of our cultural identity" (Biology\_ds, Chemistry\_ds).

As mentioned above in relation to the arts curriculum (Arts\_ds), "cultural orientation" can also be seen as an aspect of "cultural identity" formation. Other aspects of identity, especially in the sense of individual personality, are mentioned as well. Being able to express oneself, reflecting on one's personality and creatively developing one's own interests and skills are the main content of the curriculum. From grade 9 onwards, young people are also expected to reflect on and question normative concepts. (Arts\_ds)

Cultural identity is defined by comparison with others in the languages curricula (Modlanguage\_ds; Latin\_ds; LowGerman\_ds). Language itself is seen as an important part of cultural identity (Latin\_ds). This is considered especially true for regional or "minority" languages like Low German (LowGerman\_ds).

The curriculum on religion, although provided by the Protestant Church, claims sensitivity towards differences and minorities in particular. In spite of this, all students regardless of their own belief are supposed to be taught the same content (Religion\_ds).



#### 4.5 Participation – Discrimination

Social differences and discrimination are sporadically mentioned in the curricula. All of them contain at least one phrase promoting religious and/or ethnic diversity, often called “cultural diversity”. Each curriculum contains one paragraph stating that selection of topics covered in lessons must equally consider interests of both boys and girls, but there is no deeper insight into the topic of gender equality.

The district schools claim to increase participation by teaching together students with “different social and ethnic backgrounds” (Gentasks\_ds). Participation is also considered a competence by the social sciences curricula for all school types. The aim of teaching social sciences is defined as social maturity (*Mündigkeit*), i.e. the capability to responsibly participate in social and political life. Students are expected to recognise and elaborate on their own potential to participate. Financial participation is outlined as the competence to consume and budget responsibly, as well as understand one’s rights, mostly in a commercial sense; and is expected of students at every level of graduation.

Important differences occur in terms of the scope of social and political participation: for students graduating with ESA, the space of expected participation is limited to their schools and the immediate neighbourhoods, rather than the wider political arena and the civil society on local, regional, national and international scales, as is the case with all the higher-level graduates (Socsci\_ds). The European level of participation is specially emphasized for students aiming at *Abitur* (Socsci\_ds, Socsci\_ah, Socsci\_go). To facilitate participation, students are encouraged to take part in all kinds of competitions and awards promoted by federal and national policy (Seukwa *et al.*, 2017) (all curricula). Knowledge of the English language is seen as a way to increase participation in the global world for private contacts, professional mobility, further education and international cooperation (English\_ds). Historical perspective and the ability to respect other opinions is supposed to facilitate participation in public discourses (History\_ds). Further, focus on participation in history lessons is increased by considering students’ different perspectives due to their “ethnic, religious, cultural and social backgrounds”, as well as the gender differences (ibid). The German language curriculum for higher secondary education (German\_go) instructs teachers to consider the interests and perceptions of students with a “different ethnic and cultural identity”.

Intercultural education in the General Tasks document is the only place where discrimination is explicitly covered (Gentasks\_ds). Students are expected to know causes for stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination as well as learn how to act and where to receive support in case of discrimination. This being defined an expected competence, there is no adequate content to be found in curricula to match these



expectations. Topics such as the definition of “German” and stereotyping of Muslims in Germany are mentioned as example topics but not exploited further. Everyday racism is also just briefly mentioned as an example, but not further elaborated on. Without being explicitly referred to as discrimination, the underrepresentation of several groups (women, migrants, minorities) in media and textbooks is also critically referred to.

#### **4.6 Social Function**

Some topics mentioned in all the curricula hint towards the social function of the school system.

Comparability, for example, has to be operationalised by setting certain standards that are binding for all students. The introductory part of all curricula makes sure that not only students’ performances but also the schools themselves are comparable. While claiming that this is to make sure the quality of lessons is the same in all schools, these comparisons also provide a means of ranking schools.

Another important aspect of schools which can be found in all the curricula at least in one standard formulation is their orientation towards the labour market. Knowledge of foreign languages, for example, is seen as essential for the required mobility and international cooperation of the labour market (Modlanguage\_ds). In this context schools are also required to cooperate with other institutions in order to facilitate access to vocational training and tertiary education. In grades 9 and 10, vocational orientation towards the next step is to be provided.

When looking at the curriculum for religion, it becomes clear, that schools also have a function of promoting certain (i.e. Christian, and, in Hamburg, Protestant) values. Although in Germany state and religion are supposed to be separated, religion is a compulsory subject in elementary schools and in grades 5 and 6, unless parents explicitly apply for exception. Most interestingly, the curriculum for religion is actually provided by the Church, and although it acknowledges the importance of diversity and respect towards different religions, it also makes clear that Christian traditions do have a special standing in European history and culture and requires this to be considered in the teacher’s choice of lessons content (Religion\_ds).

### **5. Discussion**

The understanding of concepts of culture, cultural identity and heritage are not consistent throughout the curricula reviewed. The definition of European cultural heritage and identity seems to be deeply founded in ancient Roman and Greek history.

It is not surprising that colonial structures seem so difficult to overcome, considering that the ancient languages (i.e. Latin and Greek) are the only subjects that explicitly mention European culture as one of the main contents of their curriculum. These are the only subjects that state how they contribute to cultural literacy of young people. This particular concept of culture is closely linked to findings from the German policy review (Seukwa, Marmer and Sylla, 2018), which showed that cultural education in Germany has a strong link to historical education. Greek and Roman cultures are treated as one consistent “culture” in the curricula, so is “European culture”. Greek and Roman cultures are considered the roots of European culture despite their differences. Differences in values are explained only in temporal dimension. Thus, it is implied that values might change over time, while regional differences are often ignored. By comparing current values only with those that are considered their roots, and glorifying these roots, many different perspectives related to contemporaneity become neglected. For example, there is no critical approach to the Roman colonial culture in the curricula. Cultural influences through migrations, crusades, colonialism and capitalism, among other factors that made and are still making European culture, are not recognized, nor the associated power relations. Although knowledge and cultural exchanges happened both voluntarily and forcefully throughout history, these processes are not reflected in the curricula. German colonialism, for example, and its impact on contemporary Germany and the world are not handled anywhere; moreover, the term “discovery”<sup>31</sup> is persistently used in all three history curricula in reference to the colonial expansion. The German colonial amnesia found in cultural policy documents (Seukwa, Marmer and Sylla, 2018) is certainly reflected in the secondary school curricula. Postcolonial critique is not a part of the Hamburg curricula.

Latin and ancient languages are the only subjects conceptualizing cultural literacy. These subject, however, are not compulsory. Nearly all schools offer a choice of second foreign language; of the 68 (out of 118) secondary schools in Hamburg that even offer Latin as a choice, only seven are district schools. Thus, the access to this specific form of cultural literacy is predominantly open to students of academic high schools, which are usually already privileged economically as well as in terms of cultural capital (Vieluf, 2014).

The only other subject explicitly dealing with culture is philosophy, though in a different perspective and by far not to the same extent as the ancient languages. Here, culture and identity are not primarily tied to ethnicity, nation or geographical space, but rather studied as a product of universal human creation. However, the philosophy curriculum covers Western philosophy only, thus greatly narrowing down perspectives

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<sup>31</sup> “Discovery” has a positive connotation; the term stands for progress, thus trivialises colonial crimes and normalizes brutality and exploitation (Danielzik and Bendix, 2011).

and reproducing Eurocentric perspectives. And even philosophy is a subject of choice: religion can be chosen as an alternative. In the curriculum on religion, as well, there is a strong although mostly implicit focus on Western (i.e. Christian/Protestant) values, while “culture” is not even defined at all.

Throughout the curricula, there is an understanding that cultural identity and awareness are acquired by comparison and recognition of differences between various cultures. This finding is also in line with the HAW Policy Review (Seukwa, Marmer and Sylla, 2018). Such continuous reproduction of “we and the other” discourses lead to a static and closed understanding of culture and thus can produce culturalisation and essentialisation. The emphasis on differences alone, can easily lead to manifestations of the same. Rather, the study of similarities, mutual influences and transformations, as well as their causes and impacts, can foster the deconstruction of division lines, reveal power structures and barriers, and contribute to a more inclusive notion of culture and identity that the CHIEF project is looking for.

In the German policy review, culture is also viewed as a critical voice in the society (ibid). Critical attempts to deconstruct the cultural hegemony can be spotted in several isolated places in the curricula, showing a tendency to rethink fixed Eurocentric and elitist concepts, such as introducing an extended concept of culture, the mention of racism and discrimination, critical analysis of media and textbooks, critical use of language, multiperspectivity, multilingualism as well as questioning the validity of knowledge production. However, this critical tendency in the curricula opens paths for the use of more rigorously critical content without disregarding the curricula framework (since the actual content of lessons is left up to the school and individual teachers, and given they have the knowledge and determination to do so).

However, these expected competencies remain vague, as they are not filled with adequate content. Therefore, the question where the teachers and textbook authors are supposed to get this knowledge from remains uncertain. These attempts are being undermined by the dominance of established concepts resulting from colonial legacy of Eurocentric knowledge production.

In terms of participation, its importance is emphasized as it is done in most policy documents (ibid), but the actual barriers, causes for exclusion and measures for enhancement are hardly touched upon. Only measures to promote participation as defined by cultural policy documents, such as prizes and awards, are promoted by the curricula.

Although with regards to the actual debate on “inclusion” equality is promoted throughout all school forms, they still have to select and separate young people and lead them towards different educational paths and thus, eventually, different sectors of the

society. This is also reflected in the expectations in the curricula. In terms of evaluation competences, critical thinking and the scope of social and political participation, there are significant gaps between those for ESA and MSA graduates, and yet another one for those students aspiring tertiary education. “Allocation” is one of the main functions of the school system (Fend 2009). This means, the school system needs to prepare some young people to become the “elite”, to become lawyers, judges, politicians, scientists, but also another group of young people to become cooks, hairdressers, mechanics, farmers, and some will have to clean toilets, take care of trash cans or mow lawns. To be able to do this, schools have to compare and grade young people. The introductory paragraphs of the curricula, as mentioned in chapter 4.6, make sure that this selection process can be executed, without stating outright that selection is the aim of comparability. The school system seems to be in conflict with this function and tries to mask it instead of challenging it openly.

## 6. Conclusion

In order to answer the questions of how “European cultural heritage”, “cultural knowledge” and “participation” are reflected in the national/federal curricula and how German and European cultural heritage are understood and presented in these documents, we analysed Hamburg curricula for all subjects focusing on the concepts of cultural identity, inclusion and diversity. The first impression was that all curricula are very similar; they are all structured in the same way and contain several identical chapters and/or paragraphs. This can be seen as an indicator that standardisation is considered important within the school system in Hamburg.

The definitions of European cultural heritage and identity are deeply founded in Greek and Roman ancient history. It is not surprising that colonial structures seem so difficult to overcome, considering that the ancient languages (i.e. Latin and Greek) are the only subjects that explicitly mention European culture as a main content of their curriculum. If other subjects like social sciences or arts or even German fail to define how culture can be understood in a broader sense, this historically fixed concept of culture is likely to dominate. A more inclusive definition of culture considering multiple belonging is introduced in Intercultural Education in one isolated passage. The intercultural education narrative, however, is still constructed based on comparison, difference and essentialization. In philosophy, culture is approached universally, as a sum of human creation, but what is universal is reduced to the Western hegemonic perspective.

In terms of inclusion, equality and participation, the educational system seems to be in conflict with its own functions. On the one hand, cultural literacy is supposed to increase participation as stated by the cultural policy (Seukwa, Marmer and Sylla,

2018), on the other, schools are set up to select young people in accordance with their determination in the neo-liberal world. The curricula do not address this contradiction. Several attempts to shift dominant discourses on culture and identity are being made, but they remain isolated and are not integrated in the overall narrative, which remains that of manifesting the differences. Due to the modular character of the curricula, some modules seem to have been revised and filled with critical content, but others are just adopted from previous curricula, thus established discourses prevail.

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## Appendix: List of Reviewed Documents

Nr.	Title	Year	Source	Type
1.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Aufgabengebiete	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, General Tasks (Gentasks_ds)
2.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Geschichte	2014	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, History (History_ds)
3.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Religion	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Religion (Religion_ds).
4.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Lernbereich Gesellschafts- wissenschaften	2014	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Social Sciences (Socsci_ds)
5.	Bildungsplan Gymnasiale Oberstufe Politik/Gesellschaft/ Wirtschaft	2009	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	Higher Secondary Education Curriculum Social Sciences (Socsci_go)
6.	Bildungsplan Gymnasium Sekundarstufe I Politik/Gesellschaft/ Wirtschaft	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	Academic High School Curriculum Grades 5-10, Social Sciences (Socsci_ah)
7.	Bildungsplan Gymnasiale Oberstufe Deutsch	2009	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	Higher Secondary Education curriculum German (German_go)
8.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, English (English_ds)

	Englisch			
9.	Bildungsplan Gymnasiale Oberstufe Aufgabengebiete	2009	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	Higher Secondary Education curriculum General Tasks (Gentasks_go)
10.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Latein	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Latin (Latin_ds)
11.	Bildungsplan Gymnasium Sekundarstufe I Alte Sprachen	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	Academic High School Curriculum Grades 5-10, Ancient Languages (AncLanguages_ah)
12.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Lernbereich Naturwissenschaften und Technik	2014	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Natural Sciences (Natsci_ds)
13.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Bildende Kunst	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Creative Arts (Arts_ds)
14.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 7– 11 Physik	2014	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 7-11, Physics (Physics_ds)
15.	Bildungsplan Gymnasiale Oberstufe Chemie	2009	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	Higher Secondary Education Curriculum Chemistry (Chemistry_go)
16.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Niederdeutsch	2014	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Low German (LowGerman_ds)



17.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Philosophie	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Philosophy (Philosophy_ds)
18.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschule Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Herkunftssprachen	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Original Languages (OrigLanguage_ds)
19.	Bildungsplan Stadtteilschulen Jahrgangsstufen 5– 11 Neuere Fremdsprachen	2011	Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung	District School Curriculum Grades 5-11, Modern Languages (ModLanguage_ds)

**National Curriculum Review (India)** Chandrani Chatterjee, Swati Dyahadroy**1. Executive Summary**

Education in India is mostly controlled by the State, but along with it different State recognized institutions also provide education. It is provided by both, public and private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels: central government, federal States (all 29 States) and local authorities. In India free and compulsory education is considered as a fundamental right and is seen as a necessary pillar to uphold democracy. Therefore, it needs to be guarded by the State and not by the private elements. There are broadly three types of schools- public, private schools fully aided by the State and non-aided but approved by the State and more recently International schools (where State control is none). The State regulates schools in terms of curriculum, teaching practices, activities they can conduct (both curricular and extra-curricular). This is more to uphold principle of secularism which was accepted by the Indian Constitution and education is seen as medium to root and enhance it. A review of educational policy documents and Curriculum Frameworks published by the State was undertaken in order to explore:

- How cultural literacy is conceptualised.
- How cultural literacy practices are institutionalised or introduced through curricula.
- How culture and cultural heritage – both national and ‘European’ – figure in the curricula.
- Whether and how ‘European’ / ‘national’ cultural identity or heritage are reflected in the curricula.

The review of curriculum underlines, that guidelines of the Curriculum Framework for different subjects show constant dilemma or tension between nation/nationalism vs. being global by knowing world histories and systems.

There is a constant attempt to keep alive the memories of colonisation by England and few other European nations and at the same time, to invoke India’s history of trade and exchange of commodities and culture with the world. In Curriculum Framework, for history there are references to a glorious past and how Indian culture and knowledge are innovative; emphasizing on the need to instil pride among children. This suggests that it needs to be done without becoming orthodox hardliner nationalist, which might put off the middle class who are aspiring to be global. Though there is no direct introduction to European culture and history, there are references to world history and systems in History and Political Science.

## 2. Formal Educational Context in India

In India, education is a responsibility of the State and is considered as a fundamental right of every citizen. Education under the Indian Constitution until 1976 allowed the 29 State Governments to take decisions on all matters pertaining to school education, including curriculum, within their jurisdiction. The Centre could only provide guidance to the States on policy issues. It is under such circumstances that the initial attempts of the National Education Policy of 1968 and the Curriculum Framework designed by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 1975 were formulated. In 1976, the Constitution was amended to include education in the Concurrent List<sup>32</sup>. First time in 1986 the country as a whole had a uniform National Policy on Education. The National Policy on Education NPE (1986) recommended a common core component in the school curriculum throughout the country. The policy also entrusted NCERT with the responsibility of developing the National Curriculum Framework and reviewing the framework at frequent intervals.

NCERT in continuation of its curriculum-related work carried out studies and consultations and had drafted a Curriculum Framework as a part of its activity since 1980s. This exercise aimed at making school education comparable across the country in qualitative terms and at making it a means of ensuring national integration without compromising on the country's pluralistic character. In order to protect autonomy of the State, considerable freedom has been given to respective States; however by providing 'National Curriculum Framework' an attempt was made to bring uniformity. Based on such experience, the Council's work culminated in the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 1988.

In 1968, the Education Commission (1964-66) had issued the first national policy statement on education. The policy endorsed the adoption of a uniform pattern of school education across the country consisting of 10 years of general education program followed by 2 years of diversified schooling. Since then, in India the central and most State boards uniformly follow the "10+2+3" (10 years in school are divided as primary, secondary + 2 higher secondary + 3 years of tertiary education) pattern of education.

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<sup>32</sup> The **Concurrent List** or **List-III** (Seventh Schedule) is a list of 52 items given in the seventh schedule to the Constitution of India. It includes the power to be considered by both the central and State government. The legislative section is divided into three lists: Union list, State list and Concurrent List. Unlike the federal governments of the United States, Switzerland or Australia, residual powers remain with the Union government, as with the Canadian federal government.

The list includes matters of local importance such as education, forests, economic and social planning, civil procedure and many more such laws which help the State authority to run smoothly.

Both union and State governments have powers to legislate on the subjects.

Schools are divided in primary (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> grade), higher secondary school (8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade), junior college (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade) and senior college (3 years for a bachelor graduation) – where students do opt specialisations. Initially, schools and grad colleges were fully funded by the government (which were run by trusts and charitable organisations) but post-90s there was a sudden rise in private schools, colleges and more recently, universities.

In India, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE) of the Parliament of India enacted on 4 August 2009, lays down the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 to 14 years under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. The RTE Act incorporates two important words ‘free and compulsory’ education. ‘Free education’ implies that no child should be deprived of education or under no condition prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. ‘Compulsory education’ placed responsibility or obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age groups. With this, India casts a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21A of the Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of the RTE Act.17.

Education Policy is issued by the central government at the national level and the State governments at the State levels. At the national level, the Ministry of Human Resource Development looks after School Education, Literacy and Tertiary Education, and at the State level there is the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education. Both ministries work in coordination with each other especially in terms of Curriculum Frameworks, which address larger concern of development and nation building. The separate committees are established by different States and central government; they work on the curriculum for schools, junior and senior colleges. There are different types of educational boards in India, namely the State Education Board and the Central Board of School Education (CBSE) and Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE). Both, State and central governments are responsible to draft and implement curriculum. There are some variations in the way textbooks are designed and implemented. The NCERT, an autonomous organisation, established by the Government of India, plays a central role in curriculum development. It was established with the agenda to design and support a common system of education which is national in character and also enables/encourages the diverse culture. Corresponding councils, commissions and bodies are complementary working to develop curricula at the State level. In the case of language or to be more precise medium of instruction, there is constant debate on whether students should be educated in their mother tongue or English.

India is prominently a multilingual country and there is a considerable national level tension around which can be official language/medium of instruction.

Another issue related to language is, what might be the best medium of instruction for the student for better development of her or his learning and cognitive ability. Some educationists strongly recommend that education should be in mother tongue but dilemma arises in terms of ‘marketability’ of a student who gets education in her/his mother tongue and ‘lacks’ proficiency in English.

In order to make education inclusive and correct the discrimination/exploitation of ‘lower castes’ and women, some affirmative steps were taken in the form of reservation policy<sup>33</sup>, which facilitates access to education for deprived castes, tribes and other excluded categories. In India, schools are primarily co-educational, but gender segregated schools also exist. The schools are mainly for children who are considered as ‘normal’ and there are a few schools for ‘special’ children. There is an ongoing debate on whether there is a need for separate schools for ‘special’/‘differently abled’ children<sup>34</sup>, but there is still apprehension about accommodating them to a ‘normal’ school. Since the 90’s there is a substantive change in terms of an increasing number of children from marginalised groups attending schools. However, there is still a clear segregation in terms of religion – most students belonging to minority religions attend schools/ colleges run by trusts or charitable trusts of their religion, officially called minority institutions. In recent years, Madarsas<sup>35</sup> and convent schools run by the missionaries (since colonial times) were in discussion. In the case of Madarsas, right wing/ majoritarian politics sees them as ghettoisation of Muslims and training ground for young Muslim minds against ‘Hindus/India’. In case of missionary schools, they are seen as cover for missionaries to induce people to convert, so, always seen with suspicion. Since 90s there is considerable change in who is offering education, especially ‘English’ education. Earlier, only convent schools were offering English as medium but local elites from India have also changed their preference mainly to English medium schools run by trusts or private enterprises. In Maharashtra there is a larger

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<sup>33</sup> The provisions available in the Constitution of India, based on which orders relating to reservations in services for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other Backward Classes (OBCs) have been issued by Department of Personnel & Training and Ministries of Social Justice of Government of India. The provisions made in the Articles 16, 335, 338, 340, 341 & 342 of the Constitution relate to reservation, protection and safeguards, in public employment in respect of the persons belonging to the SCs/STs and other backward classes.

Article 16 enables the ‘State’ to make provisions for reservation of appointments or posts in favour of SCs, STs and OBCs.

<sup>34</sup> Inclusive Education Scheme (MHRD, 2003), available on the website of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), [www.education.nic.in/html/web/iedc\\_sch\\_draft.htm](http://www.education.nic.in/html/web/iedc_sch_draft.htm) (accessed on February 15, 2001)

<sup>35</sup> Madrasas have been viewed as fostering Islamic religious and theological traditionalism. It usually refers to a specific type of religious school or college for the study of the Islamic religion, though this may not be the only subject studied. In countries like India, in Madrasas modern curriculum is also taught along with religious teaching.

network of schools run by Seva Bharati network (one of the affiliate of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh<sup>36</sup> Hindutva organisations) which are aided by the State, curricular practices are guided by the State. Maharashtra, due to its strong history of non-Brahmin movement (agitating against caste discrimination and initiating education as an important tool for emancipation) has also seen growth in number of English medium schools.

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Selection of the documents**

In order to facilitate the process of Curriculum Review, following documents have been selected: educational policies, Curriculum Reviews, reports of focus groups organised around curriculum and to discuss strategies for content of textbooks for grades 9-12 (for our target group ages 14-18.) In order to select the documents, following criteria were chosen: documents, which help understand how education is conceptualised, present the broader aims of the curriculum and the framework guiding the textbooks as well as the way different subjects/streams are designed. The reports of the focus group discussions and other occasional papers have been used as a reference for the analysis of the documents whereas National Curriculum Framework, introduction to textbooks and Curriculum Framework in the form of index provided in the Maharashtra State board textbooks were coded. Along with the Curriculum Framework, these documents were coded because in Curriculum Framework they are mentioned and also documents suggest more important points to understand theoretical frame and how it is comprehended by the practitioners. For the analysis, National Curriculum Framework and Curriculum Framework published by national and Maharashtra State boards for each standard and for all subjects were coded and analysed. The Maharashtra State board was selected because the fieldwork will be taking place in Maharashtra. In order to review curriculum three policy documents, note on 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard textbooks for social science, language, science, mathematics and 2 reports of focus group discussions were reviewed.

#### **3.2 Coding**

After selecting the documents, codes/keywords have been framed guided by the CHIEF project research questions. In Indian context, framing codes was more difficult. This was because the representation of Europe in the curriculum and how Nation and Europe are taught are intertwined with India's history of colonialism and her later status as a

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<sup>36</sup> Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is a non-political pressure group that advocates a Hindu nationalistic agenda known as Hindutva. It is also widely regarded as the parent organisation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which is currently the ruling party of India.

postcolonial independent nation – a nation trying to be global and modern. Thus following key words were identified: nation, history, colonialism, Europe, Europe's culture, history of art and literature, world war, world history, young people and culture.

After deciding the key words, we coded the selected documents using the NVivo software. During the coding process, few common themes were identified with mention of Europe and the western world, Indian culture, different cultures across the globe and development of science. These codes help to understand how and in which ways Europe and cultures are referred to. It further disclosed the expected and some unexpected passages where culture/ European culture and cultural practices are being discussed.

### **3.3 Review**

With the preliminary findings, a detailed review of National Curriculum Frameworks, Educational Policies published in last ten years and Curriculum Framework published by national and State board was undertaken. After doing systematic classification of the documents and findings, the categories for the review report were fixed.

## **4. Findings**

Indian Constitution has placed responsibility of education on the central government but also gives considerable autonomy to State. In India, there is a continuous debate on maintaining quality of education and giving autonomy to States regarding curriculum development and implementation. However, since the beginning, the basic principle followed was that 'education should be inclusive and should have a common curriculum, so that every student in the country alike would become familiar with the basic concepts, tenets, principles and ethos of Indian education.' This was supposed to enhance their cognitive abilities and support their strive for better future.

### **4.1 Earlier National Policies on Education**

In the Indian context, the fundamental role of education in nation-building and in social and economic development has been recognized from the outset. In independent India, the University Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission, 1948-49) and the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), as well as other Commissions and Committees had reviewed the issues relating to educational reconstruction. The first National Policy on Education (NPE) was formulated by the Government of India in 1968, based on the recommendations of the Indian Education Commission (1964-66), also known as the Kothari Commission.



After consideration by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), a revised document entitled ‘National Policy on Education, 1986 – Revised Policy Formulations’ was laid on the Table of the House in 1992. The NPE endorsed the concept of a National System of Education in which all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, would have access to education of a comparable quality up to a given level. It was also stated that curriculum should address the values enshrined in the constitution.

The NPE of 1986-1992 emphasized life-long education, universal literacy and provision of opportunities to the youth, housewives, agricultural and industrial workers and professionals to continue the education of their choice, at the pace suited to them through open and distance learning. It has also delineated the competencies and sharing of responsibility between the union government and the States. This preserves the autonomy of the State as well as places responsibility on the central government to design overall framework of the education, mainly curriculum that caters to the contemporary needs and contributes to the development of its citizens as well as the national development.

The National Policy on Education (1986) proposed the National Curriculum Framework which derives basic principles, mainly of national development, from the constitution of India. Thus, while designing frameworks for the curriculum, the vision defined in the constitution that India should build and further strengthen as a secular, egalitarian and pluralistic society, founded on the values of social justice and equality, guides broad aims of education and while designing curriculum.

The National Curriculum Framework (2005) proposes five guiding principles for curriculum development:

(i) Connecting knowledge to life outside the school. (ii) Ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods/memorising. (iii) Enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks. (iv) Making examinations more flexible and integrating them with classroom life. (v) Nurturing an identity informed by concerns within the democratic polity of the country.

## **4.2 Curriculum Analysis**

The review of national policies on education, position papers, and Curriculum Frameworks suggest that we can divide curriculum, both at secondary and higher secondary level in four familiar areas: Language, Mathematics, Natural Science and Social Sciences. The review of the overall framework for the curriculum design and the curriculum itself suggests that there is a continuous struggle of how to meet the demand for modern education while, also retaining the cultural identity. The National Education Policy formulated in 2016 clearly reflects this confusion.



The National Policy on Education of 2016, which was being formulated nearly three decades since the last Policy, recognizes the criticality of Education as the most important vehicle for social, economic and political transformation. It reiterates the role of education in inculcating values, and providing skills and competencies for the citizens, as well as enabling them to contribute to the nation's well-being; strengthens democracy by empowering citizens; acts as an integrative force in society, and fosters social cohesion and national identity.

The same Committee recommends that the Guiding Principles for the curricular reform enunciated by NCF 2005 are valid and need to be implemented vigorously. Teachers and students should have access to multiple sources of knowledge rather than only the prescribed text book. Curriculum should be broad based and aim for overall development of students in an increasingly technology driven environment. (National Education Policy 2016, pg.14).

### **4.3 Social Science**

Social Science is a compulsory subject up to secondary stage of school education. In Curriculum Frameworks developed by the State at different points, it is underlined that it needs to be an integral component of the general education because it helps the learners in understanding the environment in its totality and developing a broader perspective and an empirical, reasonable and humane outlook. This is of crucial importance because it helps them grow into well-informed and responsible citizens with necessary attributes and skills for being able to participate and contribute effectively in the process of development and nation-building.

The social sciences curriculum draws its content mainly from Geography, History, Political Science (formerly Civics) and Economics. Some elements of Sociology and Commerce are also included. Together and in relation to each other, they provide a comprehensive view of society over space and time. It emphasised that each subject's distinct methods of enquiry help the learners study society from different angles and form a holistic view.

The objectives of the curriculum are to introduce students to change/transformation as a continuous process in terms of time and space. It introduces learners to India's history and to the values enshrined in Indian constitution. It was further highlighted that curriculum needs to also deepen the knowledge and understanding of India's environment in its totality, their interactive processes and effects on the future quality of people's lives and to facilitate learners' understanding and appreciation of country's diversity of land and people with its underlying unity. The curriculum also needs to develop scientific temper by promoting the spirit of enquiry and follow a rational and

objective approach in analysing and evaluating data and information as well as views and interpretations (CBSE 2008).

There is a clear understanding that while designing the framework for the Social Science, it aimed at developing broader understanding of society, history, culture and community. Social Science and Humanities have developed concepts like community, modernisation, culture, identity, and polity. Social Science aims at developing a generalised and critical understanding of human beings and human groups in society. It is concerned with description, explanation and prediction of the social world. Social Science deals with hypotheses on human behaviour in collective living, and their validation finally depends on observations made in the society.

With regard to the process of knowledge formation, one can derive that Natural and Social Science curricula are almost identical in terms of framing. But there are two differences that are of great relevance in curriculum planning. First, Social Science studies human behaviour which is governed by ‘reasons’; while nature is governed by ‘cause and effect’. Second, the findings of Social Science often raise issues of ethics and desirability while, natural phenomena are raising ethical questions only, when they enter into the domain of human action. (NPE 2016)

The disciplines that make up Social Science, namely, History, Geography, Political Science, and Economics, have distinct methodologies that often justify the retaining of boundaries. For an enabling curriculum, certain themes that facilitate interdisciplinary thinking need to be incorporated. An ‘Epistemological Frame’ has been considered to address such issues in social sciences.

In order to facilitate these challenges, the ‘National Focus Group on the Teaching of the Social Sciences’ proposes that the following points be treated as basic for the revision of syllabi (NCF 2005) (Textbooks themselves should be seen as opening up avenues for further enquiry, and students should be encouraged to go beyond the textbook to further reading and observation.)

In History and Political Science, there is a combination of all the above-mentioned points. There is an attempt to orient students to history of India and the world. There is a peculiar combination where, in History there is at length discussion on invasions on India and specific focus on colonisation and invasion by Europe: The National Curriculum Framework (2006) and National Policy of Education (2016) clearly state that education in general and curriculum of History in particular underline that attempt is to place India on the map of the world as an independent Nation that suffered colonisation, yet is ready to be a global actor. At the same time as stated in the objectives (NPE 2016), there is an attempt to remind Indians that freedom was achieved

after much sacrifice. Yet, it needs to show its readiness to facilitate aspirations of newly emerging/aspiring middle class to be global.

The inclusion of different aspects related to world history, including European history, such as renaissance or revolutions, aims to develop historical perspective of the contributions made by various cultures to the total heritage of human kind (ICSE 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Standards). It familiarises students with different types of ideas that inspired a particular event (for example French revolution, industrial revolution etc.) and the wider focus that shaped it.

For instance, inculcating the spirit of patriotism and nationalism seem to be major concerns while framing the curriculum. This could be observed in the references of the social reforms, development of trade and commerce, communication and science during the colonial period; while reminding one of the exploitation of Indians and sacrifices of the freedom movement. An emphasis on the wealth and prosperity of a pre-colonial India is also found in the curriculum.

The Curriculum Framework on Political Science states that students shall be introduced to the formation and functioning of governments at local, State, and central levels and the democratic processes of participation. In Political Science, the focus should be on discussing the philosophical foundations that underlie the value framework of the Indian Constitution, i.e. in-depth discussion of equality, liberty, justice, fraternity, secularism, dignity, plurality, and freedom from exploitation. In 2006, it was proposed that instead of Civics, the term Political Science be used. In 2006, National Curriculum Framework clearly states that Civics appeared in the Indian school curriculum in the colonial period against the background of increasing 'disloyalty' among Indians towards the Raj<sup>37</sup>. Emphasis on obedience and loyalty were the key features of Civics, which in different way underlines colonial agenda and reminds about the domination/exploitation. Political Science treats civil society as the sphere that produces sensitive, interrogative, deliberative, and transformative citizens.

Political Science as a subject introduces students to the basic political concepts and the functioning of local and State level institutions. This is found to be a common phenomenon across the three main Educational Boards – The Central Board of Secondary Education CBSE, The Indian Certificate of Secondary Education ICSE and Maharashtra State Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education SSC. Students are also introduced to the happenings in the contemporary world. The formation and expansion of the European Union is taught as part of the regional cooperation (ICSE

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<sup>37</sup>In the wake of upsurge against the British rule (years from to) in the form of civil disobedience and other forms of protest; idea of respecting the State as the duty of individual (getting exposed to idea of citizenship and State) was introduced through civics chapter which introduce pupil to idea of disciplined citizen along with punitive powers stated with the State.

XI). While learning the fundamentals of the core political concepts, references of different western cultures, civilisations and philosophers are constantly sought to widen the perspective of students.

As mentioned in the overall objectives of the CBSE Class 11 Curriculum, curriculum aims at enabling students to expand their horizons beyond India and make sense of the political map of contemporary world. Such as:

- Familiarise the students with some of the key political events and processes in the post-cold war era;
- Equip students to be conscious of the way in which global events and processes shape our everyday lives;
- Strengthen their capacity for political analysis by thinking of contemporary developments in a historical perspective.

#### **4.4 Language**

The National Curriculum Framework clearly puts forth that language education is not confined to the language classes as Science, Social Science or Mathematics lessons are *ipso facto* language lessons. Learning the subject means learning the terminology, understanding the concepts, and being able to discuss and write about them critically in a language different than everyday language of communication, mostly in English or different than their mother-tongue/native language. For some topics, teachers are advised that students should be encouraged to consult books or talk to people in different languages, or gather material in English from the Internet. It is reinstated that such a policy of languages across the curriculum will foster a genuine multilingualism in the school. At the same time, the language class (most common is English and national/regional language as well as in some schools and colleges, languages like French and German are taught) offers some unique opportunities. Stories, poems, songs and drama link children to their cultural heritage, and give them an opportunity to understand their own experiences and to develop sensitivity to others. In National Curriculum Framework (2005) it was pointed out that children may effortlessly abstract more grammar from such activities than through explicit and often boring grammar lessons.

Multilingualism is one of the most unique characteristics of Indian society. In both the documents NCF 2005 and NPE 2016, the innate ability of Indian children to pick up and internalise two or three language before joining the school has been highlighted. This emphasis is given to suggest that multilingualism must be used as a resource by the educational institutions.

#### **4.5 Teaching of English as language?**

Language skills such as speaking and listening, reading and writing forms school subjects and disciplines. Their foundational role in children's construction of knowledge right from elementary classes through senior secondary classes needs to be recognised. It was emphasised that efforts should be made to implement the three-language formula, emphasising the recognition of children's home language(s) or mother tongue(s) as the best medium of instruction. There is an insistence on how English needs to find its place along with other Indian languages. The multilingual character of Indian society should be seen as a resource for the enrichment of school life.

In India, learning English has always been looked at from the aspirational lens. This leads to parents choosing private English medium schools over vernacular public schools. To strike a balance and equality between the languages, English proficiency has been given importance along with the mother tongues and Indian Modern Languages. "The study of English is equally of importance to enable her (student) to transcend geographical boundaries and function effectively at the national and international level (NPE 2016)". This has led to an emphasis on the input rich curriculum that focuses on teacher education, especially for English teaching. On the other hand, the constant tension has been there about English language and its association with colonial power and demeaning of Indian languages. Which correspond with the debate upon what is knowledge and is English a colonial baggage or language of the world?

#### **4.6 Mathematics**

According to National Curriculum Framework (2016) developing children's abilities for 'mathematisation' is the main goal of mathematics education. The narrow aim of school mathematics is to develop 'useful' capabilities, particularly those relating to numeracy—numbers, number operations, measurements, decimals and percentages. The higher aim is to develop the child's resources to think and reason mathematically, to pursue assumptions to their logical conclusion and to handle abstraction. It includes a way of doing things, and the ability and the attitude to formulate and solve problems. This calls for a curriculum that is ambitious, coherent and teaches important principles of mathematics. It should be ambitious in the sense that it seeks to achieve the higher aim mentioned above, rather than only the narrower aim. It should be coherent in the sense that the variety of methods and skills available piecemeal (in arithmetic, algebra, geometry) cohere into an ability to address problems that come from other domains such as Science and Social Studies in high school. It should be important in the sense that students feel the need to solve such problems, that teachers and students find it

worth their time and energy to address these problems. The twin concerns of the Mathematics curriculum are: what can mathematics education do to engage the mind of every student, and how can it strengthen the student's resources? This as stated in Curriculum Framework should help students to be rational and objective which will help them to acquire modernity with its glorious heritage of culture. (NCF2005).

## 5. Discussion

In contemporary India, education in general and curriculum in particular is entangled with wider political project. There are different voices, numerous interest groups and debates around educational priorities, what education needs to achieve and how. Our analysis showed that reviewed documents are not only giving us an overarching framework of education to serve the agenda of development but try to grapple with challenges of how to maintain required academic rigour. The analysis of curricula highlights that there is a need to adopt a pro-diversity framework, which will not only accommodate societal diversities but also recognize plurality of visions, ideas and approaches to the questions of pedagogy, culture and nationalism. In the course of addressing issues of diversity and inequality and the impact of wider social and political processes on the educational regimes in India; it also touches on the micro level practices / processes which are taking place within educational institutions. After giving a broad framework, NCF offers the flexibility in actual writing of textbooks and inclusion of specific regional history/ relevant topics etc. In this regard, framing and writing of textbooks and pedagogic practices does play an important role.

Finally in contemporary India though the message about importance of education to provide civilisation and modernity is loud and clear, still increasing 'marketability' or 'opportunities' through education is also becoming more and more prominent. While developing identity about Nation through education, it also creates binaries which are not yet clear but do exist: about nation vs. region, our culture vs. other culture, self vs. other. These binaries are implicit in curricula but more explicit in extracurricular activities. Thus on one hand education tries to promote modernity and equality of opportunities on the other hand young minds are also cultivated for cultural revival and the assertion of newly (re)invented national, religious caste or regional identities.

Additionally, there is a strange tension in curriculum in terms of how to locate world history and India's history of colonization – should we only highlight exploitation by Muslim invaders and then British or history of trade, transportation and then multiculturalism and synthesis of different Islamic, European as well as western cultures in India.

In present education system, students do learn about these dichotomies at the same time learn to comprehend them as part of life. More apparent example for this is how through curriculum there is constant tension to introduce students to how India is diverse yet unified. There is an attempt to instruct students about India which is necessarily diverse and at some places have conflicts yet at the end there is an attempt to salvage diverse / unequal traditions / practices by underlining that there is 'unity in diversity'. Young minds here are best sites to work out this ideal that we respect diversity but in the interest of the nation we need to be united. The history of each part of the country is potentially a history of competition and suspicion about the other parts of the country. This notion similarly applies to inter-religious and inter-caste attitudes. The curricula in India historically have to always grapple with this complication.

The curricula faces the same issues in subjects like Science (our 'traditional' knowledge and the modern denial of any indigenous knowledge systems), and language education. These need to be teased out and presented as strategies of the national curricula to strike a balance between the idea of one civilization and yet different cultural practices and expressions.

In the wake of emergence of right wing politics and neo liberal economy, non-State actors are becoming more influential and preferred in the sphere of education. This means State loses its control and thus questions are raised regarding why we cannot have a cultural policy? (Chatterjee and Dyahadroy, 2018) In these circumstances the issues related to plurality of culture become important. In recent years, India is witnessing that there is an attempt to promote Hindu identity as nation's identity by marginalisation of minority identities particularly Muslims and Christians to lesser extent. (Jeffery and Chopra, 2005). Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh's (RSS) affiliate Seva Bharti, who has largest network of schools across India, played an important role in this. As stated earlier official policies regarding education assert secular democratic India but as we understand formal educational settings do not operate in isolation. Curricular and co-curricular activities as well as non-classroom learning where students do get hands on training plays an important role in cultivating ideas about nation and the other, self and the other, local and global so on and so forth.

## **6. Conclusion**

The review of curriculum underlines that different textbooks produced adhering to the guidelines of the Curriculum Framework show constant pull or tension between nation/nationalism vs. being global by knowing world histories and systems yet asserting local/ regional identities. There is a constant attempt to keep memories of colonisations by England and few other European nations' alive and at the same time



invoke history of trade, exchange of commodities culture between India and the world. Despite constant tension about English language and its association with colonial power and demeaning of Indian languages, English proficiency has been given importance along with the Indian languages. The three-language formula aims at the recognition of children's home language(s) or mother tongue(s) as the best medium of instruction. In textbooks created for history we see references to a glorious past and how Indian culture/knowledge created is innovative and the need to instil right pride amongst children. This had to be done without becoming orthodox hardliner nationalist, which might put off middle class who are aspiring to be global. Although there is no direct introduction to European culture/history in the curriculum, world history and systems figure in several contexts connected to the past and in Political science.

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**Appendix: List of Reviewed Documents**

<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Name of Document</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Issuing Body</b>
1	National Curriculum Framework (NCF)	2005	National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
2	National Policy on Education: Report of the Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy	2016	Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)
3	Curriculum framework: Two year B-Ed programme	2015	National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
4	Secondary School Curriculum, Vol 1	2006	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
5	Class 9-10 Curriculum, English	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
6	Class 9-10 Curriculum, Social Science	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
7	Class 11-12 Curriculum, English Core	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
8	Class 11-12 Curriculum, History	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
9	Class 11-12 Curriculum, Human Rights and Gender Studies	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
10	Class 11-12 Curriculum, Political Science	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
11	Class 11-12 Curriculum, Sociology	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)

12	Class 11 Curriculum, English Elective	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
13	Class 12 Curriculum, English Elective	2018-2019	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
14	Class 10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> curriculum	2018-19	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
15	Class 10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> Curriculum for Political Science	2018-19	Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
16	Class 10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> Curriculum	2018-2019	Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE)
17	Cultural Policy Review (India)	2018-2019	
18	Educational Statistics at Glance	2018	Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of School Education and Literacy Statistics Division. New Delhi

## **National Curricula Review (Latvia) Alina Romanovska**

### **1. Executive Summary**

The aim of the report is to describe how “cultural heritage”, “cultural knowledge” and “participation” are reflected in the Latvian curricula that manage the educational process. The report also draws attention to how the European cultural heritage is understood in Latvian curricula, and how it relates to the concept of Latvian cultural heritage, focusing on the concepts of cultural identity and diversity.

A systematic search for curricula examining cultural literacy education in formal education system was carried out using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Moher, 2015) resulting in two documents. The curricula or parts of these curricula relating to the age group 14-18 years, i.e. pupils of grades 8-12 (2 basic education grades and 3 secondary education grades), were selected from both documents. Draft Regulations “Regulations Regarding the State Standard in Basic Education and Model Basic Educational Programmes” (further in the report: Draft of the New Curriculum) was also used as an additional source when looking at the education reform currently being implemented in Latvia. However, the task of the report was not to provide a detailed analysis of this document, since it is now under development and discussed by the public.

A thematic analysis of the documents was undertaken using an iterative, inductive approach to the generation of codes and themes guided by the review aims and objectives. Coding was performed using NVivo software.

In Latvia’s policy documents, culture of Latvia is understood as culture of the state of Latvia, which includes culture of Latvians, the country’s indigenous people, and culture of all diasporas living in Latvia. Latvia has long been a multinational and multilingual country, and this peculiarity is highlighted at the level of today’s official policy as an important value for Latvia at both national and international levels. The cultural heritage of Latvia preserved to this day consists of a set of spiritual and material values of the entire population of Latvia regardless of ethnicity. Modern curricula support and introduce the mentioned understanding of culture in the education system. In order to consistently adhere to the strategic cultural guidelines of policy documents, the education reform is underway and will contribute to modern acquisition of culture at schools.

The analysis of general education curricula shows that cultural literacy education in Latvia differs depending on the educational programme. At secondary school level, it

is possible to choose a variety of educational pathways, which offer wider or narrower knowledge in the field of culture (the most extensive knowledge can be obtained by following a humanitarian and social sciences related programme). Irrespective of the programme, additional subjects can be chosen, and these are often culture-related subjects. Pupils of ethnic minority schools acquire specific knowledge of both the Latvian culture and their own ethnic culture and based on their personal experience have a better understanding of multiculturalism.

Culturology is the only subject dealing with general cultural developments and topical issues in the socio-economic and political context of society development. Other subjects raise cultural awareness by going deep into one specific area (Art, Music, History, etc.), utilising the chronological approach. The primary task is to provide knowledge rather than encourage thinking, analysis, comparison, etc.

The origins of the knowledge-based, traditional education model go back to the period of Latvia's first independence. The model, which was also pursued in Soviet-time education, undergoes changes today through the introduction of the education reform. This is the most pressing issue in Latvia's education nowadays. The reform concerns two significant aspects of education:

a gradual transition to Latvian as the language of instruction in ethnic minority schools will take place from 1 September 2019 to the school year 2021/2022;

the learning content has to be changed by introducing the competence approach.

Draft of the new curriculum intends to give greater attention to development of natural sciences and mathematics by introducing a competence approach and establishing a link between subjects when highlighting the role of sciences.

The education reform aims at: ensuring equal opportunities for each child in Latvia to acquire quality education; strengthening the role of the Latvian language among Latvia's population; introducing new learning approaches by encouraging pupils to analyse, generalise, and apply their knowledge in non-standard situations. The reform concerns also the content and requirements of culture-related subjects and triggers public protests. The issue of the reduction of the number of literature and music lessons was discussed most by the public. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education and Science found a way to leave the number of lessons in these subjects unchanged in the new education standard. The implementation of transition to Latvian as the language of instruction is another contested and politicised issue. The official view is that it will facilitate integration of ethnic minorities in the country. The opponents fear what they call a forced assimilation. The above changes in the education system stem from the cultural policy priorities defined in Latvian policy documents. On the other hand, it is determined by historical and demographic development factors: being part of the

Soviet Union, where the role of the Latvian language was subverted and the cultural environment destroyed; the fragile situation of the Latvian as a small language; the relatively large share of ethnic minorities in Latvia, especially Russian speaking population.

The curricula are subject to different interpretations in regards to priorities of the cultural policy. Creativity plays a major role in policy documents, both with regard to development of personality as well as the nation. A creative individual is considered to facilitate the development of national culture and economy. However, the current curricula associate development of pupils' creative abilities mainly with personal growth and, to a lesser extent, with the cultural development in the country as a whole. Economic aspects are not mentioned. In the context of preserving the Latvian cultural heritage and strengthening the sense of belonging to the Latvian cultural space, education puts emphasis on the Latvian identity whose shaping and strengthening is also a priority of the national cultural policy. The aspect of cultural diversity is also highlighted in curricula. Pupils have an opportunity to acquire relatively broad knowledge of development stages and features of the European culture and compare development of other European cultures with that of the Latvian culture. Thus, the curricula consider the Latvian identity part of the European identity as is the case with policy documents.



## 2. Formal Educational Context in Latvia

The key official national policy document regulating the Latvian education system is the Education Law (adopted in 1998, amended and supplemented on a regular basis). The Ministry of Education and Science regulates the education system at national level. Everyone in Latvia has equal education rights.

School fees for pre-school, basic and secondary education at an institution established by the state or local governments are covered from the state and local government budgets in accordance with the procedure stipulated by the Cabinet of Ministers. Private educational institutions may set school fees. The number of private schools offering a possibility to acquire general education is very small in the country and it is constantly changing.

The education system of Latvia consists of pre-school education, basic education, secondary education and higher education. General education lasts for 12 years (mainly from 7 to 19 or even to 20 years of age) and includes the mandatory nine-year basic education and three-year secondary education.

The preparation year for 5-6-year old children ahead of basic education is mandatory. Basic education begins at age 7 (in particular cases, it can continue up to the age of 18). The mandatory content of basic education is established by the State Basic Education Curriculum, which also includes primary school (forms 1-4). To graduate from basic school, pupils take centralised examinations whose number and content are determined by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Secondary education includes programmes of two types, i.e. general secondary and vocational secondary education programmes. The general secondary education programmes are geared towards academic education, and their fundamental task is to prepare learners for further studies. Meanwhile, the vocational secondary education programmes focus on obtaining professional qualifications, i.e. on the labour market.

Comprehensive education programmes are implemented at secondary schools (also night schools) and gymnasiums<sup>38</sup>. Vocational education institutions offer programmes in all areas of economic activity. Vocational students have an opportunity to receive state funded scholarships.

Curricula are developed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

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<sup>38</sup> The status of gymnasium or state gymnasium is granted to schools with a large number of pupils at the secondary school level (more than 120 pupils) and high learning achievements (Procedure and Criteria for Granting the Status of Gymnasium or State Gymnasium. <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=5771>)

The choice of textbooks is the responsibility of a school or teacher. However, only textbooks evaluated and approved by the National Centre for Education<sup>39</sup> can be used.

At state and local government educational institutions education is offered in the official language. Private educational institutions, as well as state and local government educational institutions implementing educational programmes for ethnic minorities, offer education in different languages. Students attending education in a different language have also to learn the official language and sit examinations.

Education in minority languages is an important part of the Latvian education system, supporting preservation of cultural identity of ethnic minorities and ensuring public integration in Latvia. State-funded education in Latvia is implemented in seven minority educational programmes: Russian, Polish, Jewish, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian and Belarusian. Representatives of international organisations have repeatedly welcomed the reform of ethnic minority education implemented by Latvia (Latvijas Republikas Ārlietu ministrija, 2018). In the school year 2017/2018 public funding was received by 104 educational institutions implementing minority education programmes and 68 educational institutions implementing both Latvian and minority education programmes (Latvijas Republikas Ārlietu ministrija, 2018).

The Education Law adopted in 1998 initiated a political move towards inclusive education featured in various other laws and regulations, e.g. The Law on the Protection of the Children's Rights adopted in 1998. The Education Development Guidelines 2014–2020 define inclusive education as a process “during which a variety of appropriate needs of all students are met by increasing opportunities of each student to participate in the learning process, culture and various communities and by reducing exclusion from education and the educational attainment process.” (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2014a). However, the model of inclusive education has not been fully introduced so far, as schools for children with special needs continue to exist. Participants of the education system, i.e. teachers, parents and heads of local educational administration institutions, point to a large number of difficulties they encounter in implementing the model of inclusive education. Researchers also believe that education in Latvia is characterised by a gap between the political move towards inclusive education, as stated in education policy documents, and the implementation of the policy on the ground. Some legal frameworks have facilitated the development of individual inclusive practice cases. However, there is a lack of sufficient conceptual and systemic mechanisms in place to enhance the introduction of inclusive education into the education system (Nīmante, 2008; Guseva, 2012).

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<sup>39</sup> In accordance with the Procedure for Evaluating and Approving the Conformity of Study Literature with the State Basic Education Curriculum and the State General Secondary Education Curriculum.

In 2018, amendments to the Law on Education (Izglītības likums, 1998) and the Law on General Education (Vispārējās izglītības likums, 1999) brought education together into a single system to ensure continuity across all stages of education (from pre-school to year 12). The amendments followed the first wholesale review of training since the restoration of independence and set the terms for the introduction of new education content, which will provide a basis for a transition to competence-based learning. This approach has been introduced to overcome the consequences of the economic and financial crisis and reflect eight key competences defined at the EU level. These represent a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are considered necessary for personal fulfilment and development; active citizenship; social inclusion; and employment:

- Communication in the mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
- Digital competence;
- Learning to learn;
- Social and civic competences;
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- Cultural awareness and expression (European Commission /EACEA/Eurydice, 2012).

Education content is revised in the light of reports and policy documents both produced domestically and at European level (e.g. the European Commission's report Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes (European Commission, 2012) and Developing Key Competences at School in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy (European Commission /EACEA/Eurydice, 2012). The current education reform mainly addresses the level of basic education, but certain aspects of this reform (e.g. transition to Latvian as the language of instruction in ethnic minority schools) also affect general secondary education. In future, other changes are planned at the level of secondary education as well. More specifically, the new learning content and related learning approaches are designed to reduce fragmentation of learning content, develop deep understanding and skills, and shape personality and values (Laganovskis, 2018). The amendments also provide for a gradual transition to the official language as the language of instruction in secondary schools, which is considered to be instrumental in implementing the new general education content and learning approach. The changes aim to promote equal opportunities for all children and young people and help them to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to the 21st century (Romanovska, 2018).

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Selection**

The Google environment and two most important websites of Latvia publishing the official policy documents were used for search curricula:

the website of legal acts of the Republic of Latvia – Likumi.lv (<https://likumi.lv/>);

POLSIŠ (<http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/>) – the database of policy planning documents.

Two policy documents, whose annexes contain curricula of all education levels, were identified:

Regulations Regarding the State Curriculum in Basic Education, the Subjects of Study Curricula in Basic Education and Model Basic Educational Programmes (State Basic Education Curriculum);

Regulations Regarding the State General Secondary Education Curriculum, Subject Curricula and Sample Education Programmes (State General Secondary Education Curriculum).

At basic education level (State Basic Education Curriculum) (grades 1-9), the curricula for subjects are divided into three parts: grades 1-3, grades 4-6, grades 7-9. Curricula describe the essential requirements to be fulfilled for the specific subject areas at the end of forms 3, 6 or 9. Discussions with colleagues led to the decision that the analysis would include only those manually selected curricula or their parts that describe requirements for the upper years of basic school, i.e. forms 8-9. At this stage, pupils are typically 15-16 years old.

To understand the specific features of cultural education at the level of secondary education, it was decided to analyse the entire document the State General Secondary Education Curriculum, including the main text with the general requirements and all annexes that contain subject curricula for forms 10-12.

#### **3.2 Coding**

A thematic analysis of the documents was undertaken using an iterative, inductive approach to the generation of codes and themes guided by the review aims and objectives. The coding was carried out by using NVivo software. The following aspects of the above framework documents were coded:

the general sections defining the objectives, tasks and mandatory content of certain levels of education,

all curricula referring to the target group (14-18-year-old pupils), irrespective of their theme, including the curricula of the subjects not directly linked to the cultural sphere.

To create initial codes, two reviewers independently read one eligible document. Results were compared, and agreed codes were developed through a discussion to create a coding matrix. This process was then repeated until all documents were reviewed in-depth. On each iteration, additional codes were added to the matrix, which was used to guide the generation of codes and identify major themes in the documents. A random sample of 20% of each document was coded by a second reviewer to ensure consistency of approach, with any disagreements resolved through a discussion and consensus.

### **3.3 Review**

The coded material was used for the purpose of carrying out the thematic analysis. The thematic structure established in the Nvivo software became the basis for the structure of the chapters of the report. Academic literature and statistical resources were used to describe the historical and social context. In order to ensure critical analysis, the information provided in policy documents on cultural policy priorities in the country was compared with the cultural education system offered by learning standards (curricula). Information from Deliverable1.2: National Cultural/Educational Policy Review was used to identify policy documents. Press articles were employed to reflect public opinion and various positions concerning cultural education priorities and the changes proposed by the education reform.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. General Characteristics of Curricula**

Both regulations, State Basic Education Curriculum and State General Secondary Education Curriculum, include references to the Education Law, which is the main official policy document of the Latvian education system. The regulations define specific objectives and tasks to be carried out at the level of basic and secondary education. The annexes to these two documents contain subject curricula for specific areas, which are structured as follows:

Purpose and tasks of the subject;

Mandatory content of the subject;

Essential requirements for each subject (in this section there is a breakdown by levels for some subject areas)

State Basic Education Curriculum: The basic education curricula include eight main tasks of basic education programmes, including two contributing to the development of students' cultural literacy, namely:

To ensure experience in creative activities;

To develop basic understanding on the cultural heritage of Latvia, Europe and the world (State Basic Education Curriculum)

State General Secondary Education Curriculum: Students enrolled in general secondary education can choose one of the four directions:

General education;

Social sciences and humanities;

Mathematics, natural sciences and technology,

Vocational education (provided in general vocational secondary schools).

All training programmes offer education in Latvian as well as in minority languages.

The mandatory content of general secondary education programmes includes six areas each consisting of several subjects: languages; mathematics and computer science; sports and health education; natural sciences; social sciences; arts.

There is a relatively large focus on cultural literacy education at this level of education with several tasks related to the development of cultural literacy of students, such as:

To reach a deeper understanding of the role of the Latvian language in a multicultural society;

To improve the competence of Latvian, minority languages (minority education programmes) and foreign languages as a means of personal mental, intellectual development and self-realisation in a multicultural society;

To improve the understanding of cultural diversity in the context of Latvian and global cultural values;

To promote knowledge of different cultures, cultural values and awareness of national identity;

To promote the development of emotional and creative capacities of learners by improving their experience with creative activities;

To promote interest in and understanding of one's own place in society, Latvian and global cultural heritage, responsible integration into cultural development based on democratic principles and humanitarian values;

To improve understanding of the socio-economic nature of society and diversity of its structure (State General Secondary Education Curriculum).

#### **4.2. Cultural Literacy Education in Various Education Programmes, Choices Available**

The analysis of general education curricula shows that cultural literacy education in Latvia is varied depending on the programmes. Based on the choice of pupils or schools at secondary school level, it is possible to choose a variety of educational pathways, which offer wider or narrower knowledge in the field of culture (the most extensive knowledge can be obtained by following the social sciences and humanities programme).

Different knowledge and skills in the cultural field can be obtained depending on whether a pupil follows a curriculum in Latvian as the main language of instruction or in minority language. In the ethnic minority educational programmes at the level of secondary education, every year at least five subjects must be taught in Latvian. This number does not include studying the Latvian language and literature. Teaching the content in minority languages can make up to two fifths of the total study load during the academic year.

The Education Law adopted in 1998 ensures that an ethnic minority education programme includes both the content, which is needed for transferring further the cultural heritage, and the acquisition of the Latvian language, which ensures public integration on the basis of Latvian as the official language. However, ethnic minority schools have specific subjects (such as Minority Language and Literature), which are not included in schools with the Latvian language of instruction and are directly linked to cultural literacy. For example, the aim of the subject Minority Language and Literature is to improve the competence of learners' native language and literature as a means of personal intellectual development and self-realisation in a multicultural society (State General Secondary Education Curriculum). In the curricula of educational programmes of ethnic minority schools, cultural education is particularly focused on promoting successful integration of ethnic minorities into the Latvian society and, at the same time, enabling them to learn and develop their own ethnic culture. In the context of a multicultural society, minority representatives with their ethnic cultural knowledge and competences contribute to the development of multiculturalism and tolerance towards other cultures. As required by the national policy documents, such as the Education Law (Izglītības likums, 1998), the Official Language Law (Valsts valodas likums, 1999), etc., in ethnic minority schools, special attention is paid to learning Latvian and Latvian literature. Thus, it can be concluded that in their learning process pupils of ethnic minority schools acquire specific



knowledge of both the Latvian culture and their own ethnic culture and based on their personal experience have a better understanding of multiculturalism.

The implementation plan for the education programme at the level of general secondary education is composed of three parts: mandatory subjects, mandatory optional subjects, and optional subjects. The choice of subjects within this frame also affects students' exposure to relevant knowledge and competences in the field of culture.

### **4.3. Understanding of Culture in Subject Curricula**

Issues related to pupils' cultural literacy education can be found in almost all subject curricula at basic education and general education levels, but in the subjects related to Natural Sciences or Health and Sports education the link to culture is very vague or formal. Here, the specific knowledge of subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, etc., as well as terminology and the ability of pupils to apply them in their daily life are considered an integral part of the speech culture, which helps them to ensure success in human, public and environmental interactions.

Subject curricula demonstrate that the main objective of the learning process is the purchase of knowledge, skills and competences of the subject matter. The teaching content of each subject usually contains one area, which may be associated with culture to a greater or lesser extent. As a result, in every subject pupils gain deep knowledge concentrating on a narrow field. Even in the subject curricula of the Humanities, there is no indication of whether the specific knowledge of the subject is linked to the overall picture of cultural development processes in society, and how this knowledge could contribute to the involvement of students in cultural activities, etc.

In order to demonstrate how the purchase of specific elements of knowledge dominates in the study content of specific subjects, we will use the information from the curricula of Latvian and World History (secondary education level) as an example. The objectives of this subject are defined as follows:

To become aware of the importance of history knowledge in the understanding of the past and in the choice of possible alternatives for personal growth and development of society;

To improve knowledge and understanding of the most important events, causations, processes of the history of Latvia, Europe and the world;

To deepen knowledge and understanding of the historical development of Latvian statehood;

To develop skills of analysis and synthesis when examining sources of history in order to be able to carry out an independent and argument-based assessment of historical

developments and relationships between the past and the present (State General Secondary Education Curriculum).

These tasks focus solely on the development of history knowledge, historical thinking and historical consciousness. The terms “culture”, “identity”, etc. are not mentioned in the tasks of this subject and are not considered important. Although the content of this subject contains the component (part of the curriculum) “Culture in time and space” (State General Secondary Education Curriculum), the emphasis again is put mainly on the processes of history (including the specificities of economic and social development of society) rather than on the overview of cultural processes and phenomena. Moreover, history and culture are viewed apart from each other, i.e. history and cultural topics are defined separately. The description of the subject Latvian and World History mentions culture only on a fragmented basis when viewing individual stages of history. There is no information on whether this subject deals with the cultural phenomena, such as painting, architecture, theatre, etc. In this curriculum, culture is undermined by history, it is viewed primarily in chronological development, focusing on the history of religions, differences in Western and Eastern civilizations and achievements and the Latvian cultural heritage.

A similar situation of focusing on a narrowly specific content can be seen in the curricula of other subjects of social sciences and humanities, such as Geography, Philosophy, Politics and Law, etc. The curricula of these subjects refer to the content component (part) “Culture in Time and Space”, which includes topics relating to general trends in public development pertaining to the specific subject.

In the State Basic Education Curriculum and the State General Secondary Education Curriculum,, , there is an overall diverse, controversial and very broad understanding of culture, which includes essentially all developmental processes of society – political, historical, social, domestic, etc. It is generally stressed that cultural literacy is one of the essential requirements for learning each subject, including the knowledge of history, attitude towards nature, work, health, etc. The curricula of social sciences and humanities subjects, which are not directly related to provision of cultural knowledge and skills, do not mention specific requirements or training measures to develop cultural literacy of pupils.

In curricula, the concept of “culture” is often used in a relatively specific sense, mainly linked to a very traditional cultural understanding, by highlighting topics, such as cultural heritage, cultural diversity, different ethnic cultures, domestic culture, etc.

#### **4.4. Most Important Cultural Concepts**

##### **Cultural Heritage**

The idea of preserving cultural heritage is one of the most mentioned ideas in learning curricula of Latvia. It is mentioned mainly when highlighting the preservation of culture of Latvia's ethnic groups (Latvians and ethnic minorities). It is particularly prominent in subjects such as the History of Latvia, the Latvian Language and Minority Languages. The highlighting of the idea of preservation of cultural heritage in subject curricula is indirectly facilitated by the prevailing chronological approach in teaching content where particular value is assigned to the cultural values of the past and their contemporary testimony.

### **Identity**

The idea of building a national identity is referred to in the curricula of many subjects that focus on the learning of cultural phenomena or processes, i.e. in subjects such as the Latvian Language, World History, Music, Literature, Visual Arts, etc. The idea of national identity is highlighted at the beginning of the specific curriculum by defining the aim of the subject, which states that the object of this particular subject should contribute to the formation of pupil's national identity. Individual identity is often mentioned next to the national one, thus highlighting the importance of raising knowledgeable and analytically-thinking personality through the learning process.

### **Tolerance**

The concept of tolerance is highlighted in the teaching content of History and Languages. When learning languages (Latvian, ethnic minority or foreign languages), it is important to respect both the native tongue and other peoples' languages. Meanwhile, the aim of subjects related to learning history processes is to improve the learner's understanding of the basic trends of human development by promoting the creation of their identity and enhancing development of a responsible and tolerant member of Latvia's democratic society (State Basic Education Curriculum).

### **Awareness of multiculturalism**

The idea of multiculturalism appears in the subjects focusing on learning cultural diversity of Latvia and acquiring foreign languages. Subject tasks define that pupils need to learn about the perceptions of different cultural values, and they have to be able to spot these values in different texts. It is also important to teach pupils to understand and be aware of the situation of multiculturalism by comparing the etiquette of speech and speech behaviour of different ethnic groups and by finding common and diverse aspects in them (State Basic Education Curriculum).

### **Participation of pupils and their active social position**

Curricula of various subjects highlight the active position of a pupil, their participation in cultural processes and the sense of responsibility. One of the most important tasks of the learning process is to foster cultural participation through cultural knowledge and to invite pupils to participate actively in decision-making, to develop their creativity and offer their skills to the general public, thereby contributing to cultural development of the society.

### **4.5. Subjects related to culture**

In the general education system of Latvia, a large number of lessons are devoted to subjects focusing on the acquisition of knowledge and skills on specific cultural issues and directly linked to culture:

#### **Languages (Latvian, minority languages, foreign languages)**

Language is regarded as an integral part of ethnic and national identity (State Basic Education Curriculum). The role of language in intercultural dialogue is emphasised. A crucial requirement of socio-cultural competence is the learner's awareness of how important the social role of the language can be. Another dominant aspect is the language competence of the learner, because linguistic quality is regarded as an important mechanism for the preservation of language and culture.

#### **Literature**

The subject curriculum of Literature in general secondary education does not link literature to other cultural expressions or common cultural processes. Literature is considered a way of developing imagination and analytical thinking through perception of literary work (State General Secondary Education Curriculum). Literature exists as a self-sustaining subject for learning, which includes history of literature and theory of literature, without linking it to development trends of society. The only exception is the requirement to recognise and describe cultural values described in literary works.

#### **Music**

The subject curriculum of Music emphasises the role of music as an element of culture and its value in shaping cultural identity. However, the content of this subject does not highlight the role of music in general cultural processes, but uses a chronological

approach instead, valuing the development of music in Latvia in the context of European and global music history, as well as teaching specific issues of music theory (State General Secondary Education Curriculum). The objective of this subject is to develop creativity.

### **Visual Arts**

The subject curriculum of Visual Arts highlights the development of creativity and emotional, creative and intellectual abilities. The tasks of this subject are: 1) to promote interest in the processes of visual arts in Latvia and the world, to improve understanding of the historically stylistic development and values of visual arts; 2) to raise awareness of the means of expression in the content of art work and to learn the diversity of visual arts; 3) to promote the understanding of art and culture, to improve the experience of students' creative activities (State General Secondary Education Curriculum).

### **Culturology**

The aim of the subject Culturology is to promote the development of a culturally literate personality by raising awareness of the global cultural heritage and promoting an understanding of cultural diversity, as well as by developing skills of engagement in the cultural processes of Latvia and the world (State General Secondary Education Curriculum). In Culturology, the focus is on various cultural theory issues related to the understanding of the concept of culture, its importance in society, as well as the emergence, functioning and interaction of different cultures in the world. The content of this subject highlights the importance of raising tolerant personalities who understand the specificities of different cultures in the world and can accept them as a manifestation of global multiculturalism without undermining the significance of any culture. By becoming aware of the importance and peculiarities of other cultures, pupils gain understanding of their own culture and its place among the cultures of the world, as well as become conscious of their own cultural identity. This is the only subject that looks at general developments of culture in the context of socio-economic and political developments.

## **5. Discussion**

Education reform is currently the most topical issue of the Latvian education system. The Latvian education system is undergoing serious changes (for more details see Chapter

Educational Context). The existing education standards are obsolete, therefore new ones are being developed. The draft of the new curriculum has been published. Changes in the education system will be gradually introduced as of the school year 2019/2020. Therefore, this part of the report focuses on changes in the education system, which will also affect subjects of the cultural field.

### **5.1. Education Reform and Cultural Literacy Education**

The development and approval of the reform is supervised by the Ministry of Education and Science and the State Education Content Centre. The reform concerns two important aspects of education.

Gradual transition to teaching in Latvian from 1 September 2019 to 2021/2022 is being introduced in ethnic minority schools.

The learning content is being transformed by introducing a competence-based approach under the EU funded project Competencies approach in the learning content (17.10.2016 – 16.10.2021).

### **5.2. Education Reform: Transition to Teaching in Latvian in Ethnic Minority Schools**

The Ministry of Education and Science has initiated significant changes in the educational approach in Latvia in order to review the content of learning and the type of teaching for the first time in a unified system and during all stages of education. The Ministry of Education and Science points out that the amendments do not contain discriminatory clauses against any of the ethnic minorities, but, on the contrary, promote the acquisition of the Latvian language for all. In the context of the reform, ethnic minority pupils will maintain an opportunity to study their language and literature, as well as subjects related to their culture and history in their mother tongue as part of efforts to preserve their ethnic identity, which is a right determined by the Constitution.

There are two major targets in this reform: First, it is important to provide equal opportunities for every child in Latvia to receive quality education, which contributes to acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in the 21st century. The new language of instruction framework will expand the opportunities of young people from ethnic minorities in vocational and higher education, where training takes place in Latvian, and it will also promote their competitiveness in the labour market (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2017). Second, the role of the Latvian language among the population should be strengthened. The Latvian language and culture should be regarded as the foundation for the unification of peoples living in Latvia, therefore society and the state should aim at preserving the language and making sure that the

values of national identity, civil society and public integration are maintained in the long term (Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija, 2010).

Transition to Latvian as the language of instruction led to protests by ethnic minority representatives, who pointed out that such an approach restricts minority rights (Kuške, 2017). The Russian ambassador to Latvia opposed the transition to teaching in Latvian during the secondary school phase in 2017, indicating that Russian representatives have the right to learn in Russian in Latvia, and that the introduction of the education reform means a violent assimilation of representatives of Russians. Opponents of the reform believe that the transition to teaching in Latvian will lead to deterioration of learning achievements in minority schools. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Science does not share this opinion and emphasises that the reform, on the contrary, places a greater focus on Latvian language training therefore learning achievements could only improve. Opponents of the education reform do not provide a vision of how children of ethnic minority schools who acquire education only in their mother tongue can successfully obtain higher education in Latvia and become part of the Latvian labour market.

Disagreements regarding the transition to learning in Latvian at ethnic minority schools are related to the historical, political and social peculiarities of the Latvian cultural environment. Cultural issues in Latvia are both very topical and sensitive for a number of reasons. At the level of the official state cultural policy, it is defined that it is important for Latvia to preserve and develop its identity, language, national cultural values and lifestyle. “The Latvian language and culture also constitute a unifying foundation of Latvian society therefore the aim of society and that of the country is to nurture the language and take care of values of national identity, civil society and society integration in the long term.” (Pārresoru koordinācijas centrs, 2013). Knowledge of cultural heritage contributes to the unity of the nation and belonging to the cultural space of Latvia regardless of ethnicity. Culture of Latvia is defined as open and ready for contacts and interaction with other European and world cultures, thereby ensuring mutual enrichment. Dismissing the idea that nationalism can be based on ethnic purity, Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy 2012–2018 (Kultūras ministrija, 2011) offer the description of national identity in Latvia as a phenomenon including the idea of each nation’s uniqueness but not its superiority.

However, views of different ethnic groups concerning understanding of cultural issues diverge. Public cohesion is affected by the population’s social (cultural) memory. Over the past 15 years, attitudes to events of the XX century, i.e. the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia, the Soviet and Nazi occupations, World War II, the collapse of the USSR and the regaining of independence, have polarised Latvia’s society. These



historical events and the associated remembrance practices still maintain a symbolic confrontation between Latvian and Russian-speaking people based on different biographical experience and different external sources of historical knowledge (Kultūras ministrija, 2018). Latvian- and Russian-speaking people have significant differences in attitudes to historical events of the past which determine the reserved attitude of minorities towards the Latvian culture and the national identity of Latvia. Studies show that young people's sensitivity to historical topics, which are perceived more sharply by older generations, has significantly diminished (Kaplan, Saulitis, 2017).

A relatively large number of people, whose native language is Russian (the results of the 2011 census suggest that 56.3% of Latvia's population use Latvian at home, whereas the Russian language is used at home by 33.8% of Latvia's population), serves as a serious argument in favour of the idea proposed by different political forces concerning the introduction of the second official language in the country, as well as regarding the functioning of the Latvian language in the education system.

The basis of the confrontations is mainly the struggle of different political forces rather than the position of Latvia's population. Evidence of this is, e.g. the results of the 2012 referendum, where only Latvian was recognised the official language of the country, a very small number of participants in protest rallies, as well as studies showing that 67% of Latvia's minority representatives feel that they are closely or very closely related to Latvia (Kultūras ministrija, 2018). Today's researchers point out that during the process of cultural learning an individual socialises within a national culture without excluding the preservation of ethnic cultural identity. In view of this thesis, (Tunne, Seņkane, 2005) can conclude that the education reform offers a consistent solution for the introduction of the national cultural policy (including the official language policy) in the education system, when national security would be guaranteed, the role of the Latvian language strengthened, cultural diversity in the learning process ensured and new opportunities for ethnic minorities to successfully integrate into Latvia's socio-economic environment provided.

The existing curricula provide for different programmes in ethnic minority schools and Latvian speaking schools. The differences between these programmes relate mainly to the cultural sector. According to the existing curricula, ethnic minority schools pay attention to the acquisition of the respective ethnic cultural heritage, as well as to teaching Latvian language and culture. As a result, after secondary school, ethnic minority graduates have a broader knowledge of culture than their peers in Latvian speaking schools. Through transition to Latvian as language of instruction, the differences between cultural content in ethnic minority schools and schools with Latvian teaching language will be reduced. As a result, graduates of all schools (ethnic

minorities and Latvian speakers) will have an opportunity to acquire an equal amount of cultural knowledge, since curricula, to a large extent, will be equalised. Thus, minority school graduates will have good opportunities to successfully obtain quality higher education in Latvia and to enter the Latvian labour market. On the other hand, ethnic minority schools retain the possibility for their pupils to acquire the respective ethnic culture when learning specifically designated subjects, such as the language and literature of ethnic minorities (Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, etc.). Thus, the education system ensures diversity necessary in Latvia's multicultural society. Various ethnic minority schools offer a variety of cultural knowledge.

The planned changes to the education system are directly related to cultural education and identity issues. The introduction of the education reform strengthens the role of the Latvian culture at national level and facilitates belonging of ethnic minorities to the country. Today, a situation has arisen where graduates of ethnic minority schools have difficulties to successfully obtain vocational and higher education available primarily in Latvian. The planned changes to the education system will promote belonging of graduates of ethnic minority schools to the state of Latvia and their integration. These changes, probably, will also affect cultural identity of Latvia's population in the long run, contributing to development of the hybrid/multiple identity in Latvia as minority representatives will have an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of the Latvian language and culture, while preserving peculiarities of their ethnic culture.

### **5.3. Education Reform: Competences Approach and Cultural Literacy**

An important issue of the education policy debate, both at national and EU levels, is the adaptation of the European education and training system to the needs of today's economy and society. In order to overcome the effects of the economic and financial crisis, skills promoting growth and prosperity have been recognised as particularly important.

Although the above mentioned eight key competences (see Formal Educational Context in Latvia) cover all areas, the important role of natural science in education is highlighted in the Recommendation 2006/962/EC<sup>40</sup>, so that young people can acquire professions most required in the labour market. The European Commission's reports highlight that the most important tasks of modern education are:

To improve the poor reading skills of students and their achievements in mathematics and science;

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<sup>40</sup> Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, 2006.

To promote integration of cross-sectoral skills in teaching and learning (e.g. ICT, business and social skills);

To encourage more young people to choose a profession in the fields of mathematics, science and technology, since the adequacy of the number of graduates in these highly demanded areas is an extremely important factor for innovation and growth (Eiropas Komisija, 2012).

The ideas highlighted in policy documents at European level are being implemented in Latvia by introducing the competencies approach as part of the education reform.

These shortcomings identified in the Latvian education system contributed to the development of the new basic education curriculum, which is currently available to a wider audience in the form of a draft (Draft of the New Curriculum) and has led to protests by the public concerned in relation to specific areas of cultural literacy. The reduction of the number of lessons allocated for teaching the subject Literature and the proposal to replace it with the subject Drama, which was not initially included in learning standards, gave rise to the most heated public debate (Kuzmina, 2018).

The existing curricula at basic and secondary levels offer relatively many opportunities to acquire knowledge of culture in different forms. The requirements, objectives and tasks defined in the curricula have been developed throughout many years and are based on established traditions (Demakova, 2008). Today's approach to cultural education at school is linked to the times of the first awakening<sup>41</sup>, when a great deal of attention was paid to national values (language, cultural development of the nation, national identity and preservation of cultural heritage, etc.). Later, during the first period of Latvian independence (1918-1940), an important contribution was made to cultural education, both by introducing culture-related subjects in general education and by creating music and arts schools. During the Soviet period, cultural literacy had an important role, too. Although cultural education during that period was highly ideologised, it was, in its essence, "deep, thorough, unhurried" (Demakova, 2008). The basic principles of the educational system established during the Soviet period – the breakdown in subjects, the importance of knowing facts and the teaching process conducted by the teacher – have remained to date. Experts point out that culture has been playing an important role in this learning system, but there are also shortcomings, namely – culture is taught on the basis of the traditions of individual sciences (which are reflected in the names of the subjects), thus, students acquire deep knowledge in specific narrow cultural areas, do not recognise links between subjects, lack skills to use this knowledge in life (Draft of the New Curriculum).

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<sup>41</sup> Pirmā atmoda (1850 - 1880) ir latviešu nacionālā kustība, kuras mērķis bija latviešu pašapziņas stiprināšana un nacionālās kultūras attīstība.

The new basic education curriculum pays increased attention to the development of the fields of science and mathematics, which contributes to a reduction of the number of lessons for subjects related to culture. In October and November 2018, one of the most discussed issues in the public debate was the reduced number of lessons in literature. Teachers of higher education establishments, the Writers' Union and the Latvian Association of Language and Literature Teachers wrote protest letters and called on the Saeima not to adopt the new education curriculum. It was noted that reading develops children's thinking, their ability to critically and independently assess situations, as well as their ability to express themselves and to justify their views (LA, 2018). Therefore, the issue of reducing the number of lessons in literature is regarded not only as a matter of education content but also as a matter defining the future of the state of Latvia. It is noted that literature develops speech and writing skills, critical thinking, national memory and self-esteem of each person (Delfi, 2018).

The ongoing debate shows that the public has not been fully informed about the strategy and specificities of the introduction of the new education content. The purpose of the new content is to educate a fully developed and skilled pupil who is interested in his/her intellectual, social and physical development, learns with pleasure and interest, demonstrates public participation in a socially responsible way and takes initiative, and is a patriot of Latvia (Draft of the New Curriculum). Critics of the new education content also consider that it is important to raise a thinking, intellectually developed individual who would respect and know the culture of his/her own nation (LA, 2018). It is obvious that the goals of the authors of the new curriculum and its critics are similar, but there is a different approaches to reach these goals. A large part of society does not trust education and cultural policy makers, indicating that the proposed reforms will not deliver the expected outcome. There are various reasons for this mistrust. Firstly, the new learning content is not sufficiently detailed, specific details of its implementation are not clear for the large part of society, including teachers. Secondly, the public has not been sufficiently informed about the characteristics and objectives of the new learning content. The draft of the new curriculum foresees more freedom in the field of cultural literacy education than the existing curricula. It describes the content of general training in cultural subjects, considering the links between students' knowledge and current social development trends, such as multiculturalism, European identity, diversity, etc. In the existing curricula, this information is either described in a very fragmented way or not mentioned at all. The existing curricula contain very specific information about the requirements that a student needs to know when learning a specific subject.

#### 5.4. Curricula and cultural policy

The Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia 2030 defines the development of Latvian cultural space as one of the most important priorities, because “the identity of a strong and creative nation is rooted in our unique, inherited and newly created material and spiritual values. It unites and consolidates society for creating new economic, social and cultural values that are also valued and recognised in the world.” (Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija, 2010).

Latvian policy documents highlight the general role of culture in society, without assessing the role of young people in culture. The policy documents also do not provide a clear understanding of how youth cultural literacy should be promoted in formal and informal education. Curricula describing the objectives, tasks and requirements show the priorities of formal cultural education by filling in gaps in policy documents. Their analysis makes it possible to understand how the general settings defined in policy documents in the field of cultural literacy are implemented (or not) in the education system (Romanovska, 2018).

Latvian legislation highlights a variety of important functions for culture in the formation of society and state. Two most significant cultural policy priorities defined in key long-term and medium-term policy papers (e.g. Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030) (Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija, 2010), Cultural Policy Guidelines 2014-2020 (Kultūras ministrija, 2014), National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020 (Pārresoru koordinācijas centrs, 2013) etc.) are: (1) Building a creative society and (2) Strengthening the sense of belonging to the Latvian cultural space (Romanovska, 2018).

Creativity plays a particularly important role in both personal and national development, since a creative individual contributes not only to national culture but also to economic development. One of the most important means of building a creative individual and creative society is by improving cultural literacy (Romanovska, 2018). Policy papers state that “art and culture are the quickest way to open and develop creative capabilities of an individual” (Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija, 2010). However, in current curricula, the development of the creative capacity of students is linked mainly to personal growth, to a lesser extent to cultural development of the country. The important role of creativity in personality development is highlighted mainly in the curricula of Music, Art, and Literature. In other subjects, the role of creativity is barely present: this concept might be mentioned, but it does not describe how creativity could be developed in the given subject and cultural development in general. The draft of the new curriculum highlights the role of sciences in the development of national economy, including creativity in sciences as a

contributing factor to economic development, while creativity in the field of culture is perceived as a factor contributing to development of individual characteristic features.

Thus, in the sense of creativity, there is a discrepancy between the long-term/medium-term cultural policy strategy and its specific introduction into the education system (as proposed in the current (old) curricula). In current curricula, creativity does not play as important a role as it is in policy papers, such as not reflecting the idea that by developing young people's creativity cultural literacy could contribute to economic development of the country.

The second cultural policy priority identified in Latvian policy documents, i.e. strengthening the sense of belonging to the Latvian cultural space, is strongly emphasised in curricula. This priority is particularly important in ethnic minority school programmes, but it is also implemented in schools with Latvian teaching language. In strengthening the sense of belonging, much attention is paid to teaching the Latvian language and cultural traditions of the Latvian people. Regarding Latvian culture, curricula highlight the importance of traditional popular culture, the current curricula also focus on teaching Latvian literature. In this respect the curricula introduce in the formal education system the strategy of Latvia's long-term and medium-term key policy documents, in which one of the most important components is the preservation of cultural heritage. In school, preservation of cultural heritage is ensured by transferring knowledge about the cultural characteristics of Latvia. In the current curricula, this knowledge is provided by the teacher, but the draft of the new curriculum highlights the idea that children acquire knowledge by active participation in the learning process.

Policy documents and the Draft of the New Curriculum provide a common understanding of the nature of Latvian culture and its development priorities. Thus, Latvia's cultural policy and cultural education can be considered consistent and sequential. In Latvia's policy documents, culture of Latvia is understood as culture of the state of Latvia, which includes culture of Latvians, the country's indigenous people, and culture of all diasporas living in Latvia. Latvia has long been a multinational and multilingual country, and this peculiarity is highlighted at the level of today's official policy as an important value for Latvia at both national and international levels. Latvia's experience in building a multicultural environment and multicultural education system has been officially recognised as a positive factor in the European Union (Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2017). The cultural heritage of Latvia preserved to this day consists of a set of spiritual and material values of the entire population of Latvia regardless of ethnicity. Modern curricula support and introduce the mentioned understanding of culture in the education system. In order to consistently adhere to the strategic cultural



guidelines of policy documents, the education reform is underway and will contribute to modern acquisition of culture at schools.

Latvian policy documents and the Draft of the New Curriculum highlight the desire to strengthen the role of the Latvian language in Latvia, thereby indirectly pointing to the fragile situation of the Latvian language as a small language and its possible disappearance. The desire to strengthen the role of the Latvian language and belonging of ethnic minorities to the state of Latvia is associated with both the relatively large share of ethnic minorities in Latvia (according to the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (Centrālā statistikas pārvalde), there were 62 % of Latvians and 38 % of representatives of other ethnicities in Latvia in 2017) and national historical peculiarities, i.e. being part of the Soviet Union when the ethnic peculiarities of the population were not respected and the role of the Latvian language was subverted.

The Latvian multicultural environment constitutes the basis for interaction of various cultures. New studies (Kacane, Romanovska, 2017) suggest that the multicultural composition of Latvia's population and specificities of the cultural environment (e.g. the multicultural Latvian environment, political openness and the possibility to establish contacts with foreign residents, development of digital technologies, etc.) contribute to the formation of the population's hybrid identity. Given the current developments of cultural policy, cultural environment and cultural education, the hybrid identity of the population has become a common phenomenon in Latvia.

Policy documents of Latvia state that the culture of the Latvian nation (culture of ethnic Latvians) is open and ready to interact with other cultures (Vides aizsardzības un reģionālās attīstības ministrija, 2010). The Latvian cultural space is a multicultural environment where all ethnic cultures are respected. However, the above documents emphasise that it is a task of every inhabitant of Latvia to preserve and develop the Latvian national culture, since Latvia is the only place in the entire world offering every opportunity to do so (Romanovska, 2018). The ideas contained in the above policy documents are being consequently introduced into modern existing curricula where the ideas of tolerance and multiculturalism play an important role. However, the policy documents stress that each inhabitant of Latvia should know the Latvian language and should have knowledge of the culture of the Latvian people. When teaching Latvian and providing knowledge of the Latvian national cultural heritage, a sense of belonging to the country is developed (State Basic Education Curriculum; State General Secondary Education Curriculum).

In the context of strengthening Latvian cultural heritage and the sense of belonging to Latvian cultural space, the Latvian identity is highlighted in education, the formation and strengthening of which is also (according to the most important policy documents:



Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 and National Development Plan of Latvia for 2014-2020) the priority of the national cultural policy. In policy documents, the Latvian identity forms a European cultural identity and is an integral part of it, therefore the Latvian culture must be preserved in order to ensure European cultural diversity. The cultural diversity aspect is also mentioned in curricula, pupils can acquire a relatively broad knowledge of the stages and specificities of European cultural development, and to compare the development of other European cultures with Latvian cultural developments and specificities. In this way, the curricula regard the Latvian identity as an integral part of European identity, in accordance with the policy documents.

## 6. Conclusion

The thematic analysis of curricula, provides an opportunity to analyse how “cultural heritage”, “cultural knowledge” and “participation” are reflected in the Latvian curricula that manage the educational process. Cultural education plays a relatively prominent part in Latvia’s education system. However, the link between the Latvian culture/identity and the European culture/identity is insufficiently reflected, notwithstanding the fact that various subjects focus on the European culture in its diverse manifestations. The focus of cultural education on the Latvian language and the preservation of the Latvian cultural heritage is driven by peculiarities of development of the state of Latvia. In this context, representatives of ethnic minorities living in Latvia play an important role. Special curricula are developed for them offering to acquire their native language and culture, as well as to get to grips with the Latvian language and culture at schools. Latvia’s cultural policy and curricula send a message that peculiarities of Latvia’s culture (both culture of ethnic Latvians and ethnic minority cultures) forge European cultural identity and are its integral part. Thus, the European cultural identity is seen as a concept consisting of identities of all European peoples.

The chronological approach in acquiring knowledge about culture is used in the Latvian educational system. This approach focuses on the culture of the past, but contemporary cultural developments are often not considered. The Draft of the New Curriculum, more than the “old” standards, highlights the concepts like cultural diversity and multiculturalism, which become more relevant in the international environment today. The curricula have the traditional structure with a strict division in subjects and a specific number of lessons for each subject. Various manifestations of culture are touched upon in the following subjects: Languages (Latvian, ethnic minority languages, foreign languages), literature, visual arts, culturology, as well as to a negligible amount in some other subjects of the humanities and social area, e.g. geography, social sciences

and history. The learning process in these subjects focuses on the acquisition of particular knowledge in the specific area. This knowledge is relatively deep but narrow, there is no connection between subjects, and the ability of pupils to use knowledge in real life is not highlighted.

The most important focus of today's Latvian education system is the education reform whose development and implementation started in 2016 and will last until 2022. The need for the reform was driven by shortcomings identified in education; they were analysed at international and national levels. Politicians point out that today, both in Latvia and elsewhere in the world, understanding of what knowledge and skills will be necessary in future society is changing therefore the education content needs to be reviewed (E-klase, 2018). The new curriculum is expected to offer pupils a learning experience that will enable them to use their knowledge and skills, based on values, to address problems in changing, real-life situations. The role of the teacher will also change. He/she will no longer be a knowledge provider but a manager of the learning process who, using well-developed content and approach, will lead pupils to the answers they need instead of providing them with ready-made answers. Although cultural education in Latvia is deep-rooted, and politicians and researchers believe that it is fundamental and deep (Demakova, 2008), it also has its drawbacks (e.g. the traditional obsolete learning methods, the lack of creativity and pupils' involvement, etc.). The education reform also has a significant impact on subjects dealing with culture, i.e. the number of lessons devoted to these topics has been reduced in favour of natural sciences, the number of sports lessons has been increased; sports can be considered part of culture – physical culture. These changes trigger public protests and are discussed at the level of competent authorities.

The education reform also affects ethnic minority school curricula. A gradual transition to Latvian as the language of instruction will be introduced in the above schools. Thus, the number of lessons devoted to the acquisition of the respective ethnic minority language and culture will be reduced. The most important arguments favouring these changes are: 1) ensuring equal opportunities for future studies for all pupils and 2) strengthening the importance of the Latvian language among Latvia's population. Meanwhile, critics of the reform believe that this makes it difficult for pupils of ethnic minority schools to acquire knowledge in all subjects since they will be taught in Latvian. Insufficient knowledge of the language could make it difficult to acquire the teaching content.

These differences will only be resolved by implementing the education reform, and provided that the Latvian language training in ethnic minority schools is given special attention, as the Ministry of Education points out. Strengthening the role of Latvian in the country could contribute to successful integration of ethnic minorities in the Latvian

education system and the labour market. At the same time, while maintaining the possibility for pupils to learn peculiarities of their ethnic culture at ethnic minority schools by acquiring specific subjects (e.g. mother tongue and literature), diversity of cultural knowledge, which will contribute to the maintenance and development of Latvia's multicultural environment, is ensured.

The education reform is a logical next step to the national development priorities in the field of culture defined in Latvia's long- and medium-term policy documents. The policy documents focus on the role of culture in personal and national development, highlighting the importance of creativity and social participation. From the point of view of preservation of a national state, policy documents highlight the strengthening of the role of Latvian and promotion of belonging to the state of Latvia.

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**Appendix: List of Reviewed Documents**

Nr.	Title	Year	Source	Type
1.	Noteikumi par valsts pamatizglītības standartu, pamatizglītības mācību priekšmetu standartiem un pamatizglītības programmu paraugiem. [Regulations Regarding the State Curriculum in Basic Education, the Subjects of Study Curricula in Basic Education and Model Basic Educational Programmes]	2014	<a href="https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268342">https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268342</a>	Regulations/ Curricula
2.	Noteikumi par valsts vispārējās vidējās izglītības standartu, mācību priekšmetu standartiem un izglītības programmu paraugiem. [Regulations Regarding the State General Secondary Education Curriculum, Subject Curricula and Sample Education Programmes]	2013	<a href="https://likumi.lv/ta/id/257229">https://likumi.lv/ta/id/257229</a>	Regulations/ Curricula
3.	Noteikumu projekts "Noteikumi par valsts pamatizglītības standartu un pamatizglītības programmu paraugiem" [Draft Regulations "Regulations Regarding the State Standard in Basic Education and Model Basic Educational Programmes"]	2018	<a href="http://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/tap/?pid=40464178&amp;fbclid=IwAR1Zu4xGtTSahdkOj96qbD5xv-ZD4dSTGC6pJg4Yy_oc7nBYGjBoA0NLHso">http://tap.mk.gov.lv/mk/tap/?pid=40464178&amp;fbclid=IwAR1Zu4xGtTSahdkOj96qbD5xv-ZD4dSTGC6pJg4Yy_oc7nBYGjBoA0NLHso</a>	Regulations/ Curricula (Draft)



## **National Curricula Review (Slovakia) Dušan Deák**

### **1. Executive Summary**

This report aims to provide a review of the curricula used in Slovakia's secondary schools run by the state. The curricula come from the semi-autonomous educational institutes that work under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, namely The National Institute for Education and State Vocational Education Institute. The report reviews curricula for the subjects directly related to the CHIEF project, namely history, geography, civics, ethics, Slovak language and literature, Hungarian language and literature, religious education, art and culture, and a cross-cutting theme of multicultural education. The main aim of the curricula review was to find out how the mutually connected notions of culture, cultural identity, cultural heritage, cultural diversity and intercultural interactions have been, in the broader context of the 'idea of Europe', applied in the curricula and what this application shows about the goals of formal education in Slovakia. The teaching methods suggested by the curricula while teaching these topics have also been studied.

In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the content and internal structure of the curricula a method of textual analysis has been applied. The review observes how and whether the categories of culture, cultural heritage, cultural identity, cultural diversity, idea of Europe/Eurocentrism, and interactions between people seen as belonging to different cultures have been articulated in the curricula.

The main findings of the report can be divided into two basic groups: one that refers to structure and organisation of the curricula and another that highlights those parts of their contents that relate to cultural identity, cultural heritage, cultural diversity and the overarching framework of 'Europe'.

Observing how the structure of curricula affects their contents reveals that the role of the state in creation of curricula translates to their similar, and often identical format. The latter, however, introduces a questionable pattern of simplifying the gymnasial curricula for the purposes of vocational education.

Analysing the curricula contents has highlighted the following findings spread across the curricula for different subjects. The approach of the curricula to cultural identity, cultural heritage, cultural diversity and the overarching framework of 'Europe' displays a profound binary of the national, which in the Slovak context stands usually for ethnic, and extra-national/ethnic. Some curricula strongly articulate the binary whereas others articulate it more in terms of dynamics between its two seemingly opposite parts.

Hence, an emphasis on teaching both about the national/ethnic cultural heritage as well as about the wider cultural spaces such as European or global (i.e. extra-national/ethnic) is observable. What differs is the teaching approach proposed by the curricula, one keeping the binary, another diluting it via showing its dynamic aspect. Relatedly, through developing the understanding of their own cultural heritage and creating a relationship with their homeland, as well as belonging to the European civilizational milieu, the pupils are expected to understand extra/national, or extra-European cultural spaces and their cultural heritage. How this is achieved usually remains unexplained, or is explained rather vaguely. In addition, the overrated emphasis on the home/national/ethnic results in the absence of teaching themes related to different cultures, namely in extra-European cultural spaces (for instance in literature, history, civics, or religious education).

Particularly, with respect to the curricula of Art and Culture, or to the cross-cutting theme of Multicultural Education there is an observable ambiguity in how the concept of culture has been applied. At times culture represents collective identity stemming from the way of life preferred by the majority, at other times culture is seen rather as a specific field of human creativity, articulated primarily through art and heritage.

The first point of discussion relates to simplifying of the gymnasial curricula for the purposes of vocational education. It raises the question of hierarchization of learning in the Slovak educational system. Mere simplification of the gymnasial curricula suggests that the so-called 'general education' for vocational schools is understood only as an offshoot of the gymnasium 'general education'. It is unclear why vocational education should be ranked as such and does not deserve a specific treatment designed for the needs of vocational education. In addition, shall the fact that in certain subjects of vocational education the calls for patriotism became more pronounced at the expense of analytical understanding be considered as a specific treatment?

The framework of the clear-cut cultural space seen through the categories of home/national/ethnic and often extended to European cultural space betrays the majoritarian interests of the modern nation-state as well as the Eurocentric/Westcentric approach to culture and its correlates. The political boundary in the curricula is, to a considerable extent, mapped on the boundary of the cultural space. However, given the knowledge about the mobility of people and mismatch of cultural and political boundaries makes such a claim questionable. Furthermore, postulating clear-cut cultural boundaries (manifested in the identity claims and respect for the particular cultural heritage) results not only in the absence of providing knowledge in regard to any extra-European cultural spaces, but also in the disregarding of historical and social trajectories of how the clear-cut boundaries came to be, as well as disregarding of the limitations which the category of 'extra-European' includes. The idea of gaining

knowledge about the extra-European via understanding of the ethnic/national (identity and heritage), which is present also in some policy documents (Bagalová, Lehocký, Deák, Karásek, 2018), is then doubtful unless the diversities of the ethnic/national are more pronounced in the curricula, or unless the diversity is seen only through the notion of boundaries. How this can be done, if history is focused on the national and European past, civics on national and European political practices and values, and literature on national and European literature and so forth, is another point to discuss.

The curricula often essentialize the terms in which they present their ideas, which provides a space for discussion. The already mentioned division to national/ethnic, European and world culture is one example of the essentialization of people's activities to clear-cut cultural boundaries mapped on the boundaries of the nation-state. But there are several other themes and concepts essentialized which also partly display a Eurocentric approach: historical periods, values, philosophy, religion, language, and literature.

Culture as a doublefold semantic category – as a way of being and the artistic output of such a being - makes yet another discussion point, especially with regard to the policy documents (Bagalová, Lehocký, Deák, Karásek, 2018).

Furthermore, the attention paid to home-national-ethnic culture, its history, or achievements, provides unequal space for understanding of its internal diversity. Both what is 'ours' and what is 'theirs' is hereby essentialised up to the point of documented segregation practices in the Slovak educational environment.

This report is the first and basic review of the national curricula for the secondary school subjects that are related to the goals of the CHIEF project. The reviews have been organised according to the particular subjects, which is followed by the similarly organised discussion.

Overall, the contents of the curricula offer an insight of how and whether the current academic debates in the disciplines of history, geography, political science, philosophy, religious and cultural studies translate to the materials that are set to offer guidance for teaching at the secondary educational level. They also show how and whether the ideas present in the educational political documents are implemented in the curricula.

The report brings and discusses the following findings. The state-centred organisation of formal education in Slovakia is not able to prevent segregation of some pupils. The structure of the curricula reveals a questionable pattern of simplifying the gymnasial curricula for the purposes of vocational education, which results in hierarchization of learning. The contents of the curricula highlight that they offer two basic approaches to the concepts of culture, cultural identity, and cultural heritage. One that limits them to the idea of the nation-state and the other that crosses the limits which this idea

embodies. The curricula also highlight the varying intensity of essentialization that stems from these approaches. They also display a considerable Eurocentric/West-centric orientation of their approaches to themes taught under particular subjects.

## 2. Formal Educational Context in Slovakia

The regulations valid for the Slovak educational system are based on the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (1992) and the three particular laws: 245/2008 - *Zákon o výchove a vzdelávaní: školský zákon* (Education Act: School law); 596/2003 - *Zákon o štátnej správe v školstve a školskej samospráve* (State administration in educational institutes and educational self-governing bodies Act) and 61/2015 - *Zákon o odbornom vzdelávaní a príprave* (Vocational education Act). The whole system is controlled by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (hereafter Ministry of Education or just Ministry) and is valid for the whole country irrespective of its administrative units or demands of the ethnic minorities, i.e. the minorities education system forms a part of the overall system controlled, regulated and administered by the Ministry.

School attendance is compulsory until the pupils reach the age of 16. The recommended starting age of primary education is 6, but it is possible to start earlier (5) or later (7, which is more common in comparison to starting earlier).<sup>42</sup> The secondary education generally starts at the age of 15. The levels of education are divided into pre-school (non-compulsory), primary (9 years), secondary (4-5 years) and university education (5-6). At specific schools, like 8-year gymnasiums (which form, however, a very low percentage of the total number of schools)<sup>43</sup> the primary and secondary education is combined (from 5<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> year). Homeschooling is also possible under specific conditions defined by the state, but homeschooling applies only for primary schools. There are two types of schools according to the legal body that creates them (zriaďovateľ):

1. Public schools founded by the state district offices (a few) and self-governing bodies regulated by the state (most of public schools).
2. Schools founded by state-regulated, i.e. non-public bodies. These are:
  - a. church schools (founded by registered churches<sup>44</sup> or their organisational bodies), and

<sup>42</sup> 245/2008 - *Zákon o výchove a vzdelávaní: školský zákon* (Education Act: paragraphs 19 and 22).

<sup>43</sup> From September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the new rules apply during the admission procedure to 8-year gymnasiums to be followed from school year 2019/2020. A standard limit of pupils admitted to this type of school should be 5 % from all gymnasium attendees, with an exemption for the Bratislava region where it is 10%.

<sup>44</sup> Note that the current Slovak Law (update of 192/1992 Law on the registration of churches and religious societies) requires a legally approved signed request of 50 thousand (!) qualified believers for

- b. private schools (founded by legal bodies not mentioned in the previous two points, e.g. NGOs, private persons, etc.).

Public schools are funded by the state via the Ministry of Education. Church and Private Schools may apply for the state funding but are ineligible for the same financial support as the public schools (e.g. are not eligible for ‘capital costs’).<sup>45</sup>

Secondary education is divided into the following levels: lower secondary vocational education; secondary vocational education; complete secondary general education and complete secondary vocational education.<sup>46</sup> Lower secondary vocational education ends with a ‘graduation certificate’. Secondary vocational education usually ends with the ‘graduation certificate’, but may, in specific cases, end also with ‘maturity certificate’. Both complete secondary general education (gymnasiums) and complete secondary vocational education (vocational schools with maturity exam) end with the ‘maturity certificate’.

The acquisition of the ‘maturity certificate’ determines eligibility of students to continue their education via other specific programs and mainly university education. Complete secondary general education schools are basically *gymnasiums*,<sup>47</sup> i.e. high schools deemed to offer a top quality education and lead pupils to further education at the universities. Gymnasium education takes 4 to 5 or 8 years.<sup>48</sup> Gymnasiums vary according to the type of education provided (e.g. gymnasium for talented pupils, bilingual gymnasium, sport gymnasium ... etc.). Secondary vocational and lower secondary vocational education schools are *vocational schools*. They take from two to five years and offer specific education, further divided into higher (e.g. engineering, art, management, accountancy, nursing, hotel business, etc.) and lower (manual skills such as cooking, sewing, working with timber, metals, etc.) vocational schools. The basic difference between gymnasiums and vocational schools of both types is the exam in the 13<sup>th</sup> year of study (‘maturity exam’ resulting in ‘maturity certificate’). All gymnasiums finish with the ‘maturity certificate’, but not all vocational schools of both higher and lower types do.

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any new applicant church or religious society for registration to be granted along with all benefits that the registration entails. Among such benefits is a specific legal status in the matters of administration and state financial support. This law, while privileging the churches and religious societies already registered (altogether numbering 18), but not fulfilling the criterion of 50 thousand believers (such as Jews, Methodists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, or Baha’is and several others) then effectively prevents new religious groups coming from widely recognized religions such as Islam or Buddhism from registering themselves as a church or religious society. Registration of any minor religions is completely ruled out.

<sup>45</sup> With respect to the content and methodological approach to teaching it is also possible to see the division of schools as triple-fold, i.e. state schools, church schools and private schools.

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/3772.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Special art schools (conservatories) and schools for children with specific educational needs are also gymnasiums. See below.

<sup>48</sup> 8-year gymnasiums partly cover primary school education as indicated above.

There are regular schools, art schools and schools for pupils with specific educational needs (defined as those requiring extra resources to support effective education). The schools for pupils with specific educational needs serve three types of pupils – specifically talented, with specific health problems and socially disadvantaged/deprived pupils. For each type of pupils there exist separate schools, or more often separate classes. In Slovakia the state regulations aim for an inclusive system with regulations calling for an effective management of the pupils with specific educational needs. However, as several studies have shown,<sup>49</sup> the system by allowing creation of special classes, or schools indirectly allows for segregation of some pupils, particularly the Roma (see also below).

Curricula are created in a following way. The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport determines the broader framework of a particular school subject by providing schools with curricula. The schools must draw on these Ministerial curricula, but may adjust them to their needs, and may also offer additional materials for the pupils to study. The main body responsible for the curricula is, however, the Ministry. Ministerial curricula are provided through its semi-autonomous institutions, The National Institute for Education and State Vocational Education Institute.

Textbooks are provided by the Ministry free of charge to all schools. If the school opts for a different textbook, it is possible; however, commercial charges apply, and the ministerial curricula must be followed.

The segregation of Roma communities from the majority population is with respect to education documentable for instance by erecting specific subdivisions of vocational schools near Roma settlements. The pupils attending these specific school subdivisions have a very low chance of continuing their education. This is conditioned by the fact of their coming from socially deprived communities. The state funded scholarship for socially deprived students is between 22 and 45 euros monthly (depending on their school performance), which is inadequate for daily transportation to a school located farther away (but offering greater chances for integration) or the cost of student hostels in distant localities. This results in segregation.

The impact of the socio-economic status of pupils on their performance in the Slovak Republic is significantly stronger than the OECD average (OECD PISA 2015). This strongly indicates that the education system does not provide equal opportunities for all

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<sup>49</sup> Huttová, Jana; Gyárfášová, Oľga and Sekulová, Martina (2012) Segregácia alebo inklúzia Rómov vo vzdelávaní: Voľba pre školy? (Segregation or inclusion of Romas in educational system. Is there an option for schools?) Bratislava: Open Society Foundation; Rafael Vlado, ed. (2017), Školy proti segregácii. Metodická príručka na prevenciu a odstraňovanie segregácie rómskych žiakov (Schools against segregation. Methodological guideline for prevention and removing of segregation of Roma pupils). Bratislava: eduRoma.



pupils. In the temporal comparison, the OECD PISA findings can be also seen as documenting an ongoing trend of constantly rising number of pupils from secondary vocational schools without and with maturity certificates in the "risk group" (the weakest results achieved in the test).

Some examples:

- The case of Šarišské Michal'any – the court decided that the school practice of racial separation (Roma/ Non-Roma) is unwarranted. After mixed classes were enforced by the rule of the court, Non-Roma parents put their children into different schools.
- The case of Rokycany – manipulation with the diagnostics; pupils transferred to a private school for pupils with specific needs (mental health problems) which led to the closing of the public school; re-diagnosis of pupils is ongoing, and the public school has been re-opened under Teach for Slovakia<sup>50</sup> custodianship.

All these are primary school cases. However, the policy document 'The Departure points of integration of marginalised Roma communities of Košice higher territorial unit for the years of 2016-2020' clearly notes the specific subdivisions of secondary vocational schools near Roma settlements.<sup>51</sup>

### 3. Review Method

#### 3.1 Selection

The principles of curricula selection have been determined by the context of the educational system in Slovakia. The latter is state-centred and articulated via the State Educational Program that contains all curricula. The organisations responsible for the creation of the State Educational Program and the curricula are the National Institute for Education and the State Vocational Education Institute. The curricula covered by the National Institute for Education concern higher education, namely the education provided by different types of gymnasiums (see above). The National Institute for Education distinguishes between the four- and five-year education program and eight-year education program for gymnasiums. Since the eight-year education program is different mainly by its inclusion of themes taught at the primary school level and its secondary education part does not in its contents differ from the curricula for the four- and five-year education program, we opted to review only the curricula for the four- and five-year education program.

<sup>50</sup> Teach for Slovakia is an NGO (a partner of the 'Teach for All' educational network <https://teachforall.org/>) that implements new methods in education and works for the improvement of education available in Slovakia.

<sup>51</sup> [https://web.vucke.sk/files/socialne\\_veci/2016/vychodiska-integraciu-mrk-ksk.pdf](https://web.vucke.sk/files/socialne_veci/2016/vychodiska-integraciu-mrk-ksk.pdf)



The following curricula under particular divisions (fields of education, and also unifying themes) listed below and relevant to the scope of the CHIEF project were downloaded from the website of the National Institute for Education:

‘*People and Society*’ containing the curricula for the subjects of history, civics and geography, <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/clovek-spolocnost/>

‘*People and Values*’ containing the curricula for the subjects of ethical and religious education, <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/clovek-hodnoty/>

‘*Art and culture*’ containing the curricula for the subject of art and culture, <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/umenie-kultura/>

‘*Language and communication for gymnasiums*’ containing the curricula for the subjects of Slovak and Hungarian languages and literatures (we have decided to go for Hungarian language on the grounds that it is the language of the most numerous minority living in Slovakia), <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/jazyk-komunikacia-gymnazia/>

We also found the curricula for ‘multicultural education’ under the division of the so-called ‘*Cross-cutting themes*’, i.e. themes that cut across several subjects and need to be integrated across the curricula, rather than taught as stand-alone subjects. Note that multicultural education for gymnasiums and vocational schools were described in the same material: <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/prierezove-temy/multikultura-vychova/>

Curricula for the vocational schools are covered by the State Vocational Education Institute. The curricula here follow a particular division with respect to the fact whether the curricula has been made for vocational schools offering complete secondary vocational education (*ÚSOV – úplné stredné odborné vzdelanie*), secondary vocational education (*SOV - stredné odborné vzdelanie*) or lower secondary vocational education (*NSOV – nižšie stredné odborné vzdelanie*). However, since not all the curricula for every level (*ÚSOV*, *SOV*, *NSOV*) are present at the Institute’s website, we have opted, whenever possible, to review the curriculum from the lowest level (*NSOV*) assuming here to gain the basic information that is upgraded by moving to higher levels.

The curricula for the subjects relevant to the scope of CHIEF (history, ethics, civics, Slovak and Hungarian languages and literatures, and geography) listed under the label of ‘general education’ were downloaded from the website of the State Vocational Education Institute, <http://siov.sk/Clanok.aspx?ArticleID=219>

### **3.2 Review**

The method used for the review was textual analysis. It allowed the observation of the content and structure of the curricula. The work with the curricula has been limited by looking for the content related to categories used and research questions proposed in the CHIEF project. These categories were culture, cultural heritage, cultural identity, cultural diversity, the idea of Europe/Eurocentrism, and intercultural interactions. Basically the review observes how and whether these categories have been articulated in the curricula. In addition, the teaching methods related to active participation of the pupils in the teaching process (in the sense of creative curricular activities prescribed for pupils in order to get acquainted with the different cultures) have also been observed. In order to provide the basis for later cross-country comparative analysis, a coding matrix based on the ways, location and frequency of the above given categories is currently being created.

## **4. Findings**

Two kinds of curricula materials have been reviewed – general overviews (especially for gymnasiums) of particular fields, and curricula for the subjects.

Most of the curricula discussed below follow the identical structure (Introduction, Characterization of the subject, Goals (sometimes extended by separating ‘competences’ of pupils from the Goals, or included in Characterization) and Educational standard. While reviewing the following curricula attention was paid mainly to the themes pertaining to the goals of the CHIEF project. All irrelevant parts of the curricula (e.g. in geography or languages) were omitted from the reviews.

We will first present the findings of the review of the State Educational Program curricula from the National Institute for Education, followed by the findings of the review of The State Educational Program curricula from the State Vocational Education Institute.

### **4.1. State Educational Program Curricula from the National Institute for Education**

The general overview states that this theme covers three subjects – history, civics and geography, but is connected also to the subjects of civics, art and culture and multiculturalism. It proposes an integrative learning for pupils, through which they would understand the interrelatedness of society and nature. To meet this end it proposes to study humans in terms of their past, geographic distribution, cultural

diversity and traditions. This should become the background on which the pupils build up their sets of values. Importantly, through the theme of ‘People and Society’, the pupils develop a relationship with their homeland as well as belonging to the European civilizational and cultural environment. By placing people in the ‘global’ context,<sup>52</sup> the singularity of a human being, and the respect towards those who preceded the current societies is seen as basics to lead pupils to a responsible and active life in a democratic society.

### **Field of education: ‘People and Society’**

*History for gymnasiums with four- and five-year educational programs*<sup>53</sup> (pp. 24)

In the ‘Introduction’<sup>54</sup> the material describes the basic pedagogical principles that allow creative, but not thorough, modification of the curricula and also call for the participation of pupils on the goals set for the subject of history<sup>55</sup>: The ‘*Basic characterization*’ of the subject briefly states how the history teaching at the secondary level of education is conceived and organised. History teaching is seen as an instrument of humanization of pupils by cultivating their ‘historical consciousness and memory’ in order to pass on the ‘historical experiences’ from local, regional, national, European and global perspectives. Importantly, gaining knowledge of the modern period and national history is seen as constitutive for the understanding of current times and problems. While making national history an important part of history education, the material emphasizes respect towards cultural differences and differently constituted societies and social groups. ‘*The goals of history as a school subject*’ are presented as a work with the variety of information/sources in terms of their access, search and interpretation in a discussion. Several competences (abilities listed under ‘*Basic Competences acquired by studying the subject*’) learned by pupils studying history are listed – understanding of historical time, space, fact; learning to identify diversity of sources (‘traces of the past’ - historical sources - textual, pictorial, graphic, material). Overall, it is envisaged that by studying history one gains a variety of skills and knowledge (related to knowledge of society and social relations) that may bring the concrete outcomes to the lives of the students. The learning process, hence, has been

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<sup>52</sup> I.e. such context that allows consideration of both universal and particularizing tendencies in society simultaneously.

<sup>53</sup> This is the official title of the curricula, no author is listed, only the inserted copyright of the National Institute for Education indicates where the material comes from. For the following items we list just their short titles and exclude the formula ‘for gymnasiums with four- and five-year education programs’.

<sup>54</sup> Italics have been used to indicate the subtitles (marking the parts) met in the reviewed text. Apostrophes have been added to mark the direct quote from the reviewed text.

<sup>55</sup> Note that the ‘Introduction’ that appears in all other reviewed curricula of higher secondary education is basically the same text. Apart from minor stylistic touches the main difference is that one subject is replaced by another. Furthermore, this text is missing from the available curricula for vocational schools.

summarized in five consequential points: ‘observation, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and production (creation)’.

Then the material proceeds to detail the ‘*Educational standard of the subject of history.*’ The latter is divided into ‘standard of effectivity’ (what pupils are expected to learn in terms of their abilities to find, analyse, interpret, evaluate and create) and ‘standard of contents’ (what pupils are expected to learn in terms of quantity, quality, and diversity of the gained information about the past). Both effectivity and contents are ordered thematically under the following headings – “from the historian’s workroom”; “From the great river valleys”; “Traces of antiquity”; “Traces of the middle-ages”; “Ancestors of the Slovaks in the Carpathian Valley”; “Kingdom of Hungary”; “legacy of modernity”; “Habsburg monarchy in the age of modernity”; “The origin of modernity and nationalism”; “Modern Slovak nation”; “European Expansion 1492-1914”; “On the way to World War I (the Great War)”; “Slovaks in Austria-Hungary”; “World War I and the creation of the Czechoslovak Republic”; “Europe between the two World Wars”; “Czechoslovakia between the two World Wars”; “World War II”; “The Slovak State (1939-45)”; “Czechoslovakia behind the Iron Curtain”; “The Conflict of Ideologies”; “The Integration of Europe”; “Slovakia after 1989”.

*Civics* (pp.15)

The ‘*Characterization*’ of this subject is primarily seen in terms of orientation of pupils in the social reality and their integration into society and its variously ordered relationships. The subject is set to achieve this via an introduction to the psychology of the human personality; an introduction to the civic principles of social life; the introduction to civic and judiciary consciousness and order with respect to the motivations and responsibilities of the pupils; the basics of economic literacy and an introduction to philosophy as a ‘laboratory of human thinking’.

The ‘*Goals*’ of the subject are introduced in terms of pupils’ abilities to acquire those different fields of knowledge and to apply them in their social life (e.g. they become cognizant of one’s uniqueness and incomparability in the society; or they become acquainted with the basic rights and obligations of a Slovak citizen; they master the apparatus of basic concepts and categories from philosophy, etc.).

The *Educational standard* is divided into ‘standard of effectivity’ and ‘standard of contents’, both ordered thematically under the following headings – “the Human being as a Personality”; “the Human being and Society”; “Citizen and State”; “Citizen and Law”; “the Basic Problems in Economy and their Solutions”; “Financial Literacy”; “What is philosophy and what is it good for”; “the Philosophical Way of Understanding the World”. With respect to the latter, the education that targets religious understanding of the world along with the introduction to Christian religious views, the views of other

world religions, and the new religious movements, has been reduced to the philosophical question of the transcendent. This is due to the fact that religious education forms a specific subject in the mutually exchangeable subjects Ethics and Religious education that are taught at higher than NSOV level of secondary education (see below).

*Geography* (pp.14)

The ‘*Characterization*’ of the subject is primarily seen in terms of the correct understanding of the processes and phenomena that occur on Earth, as well as the principles on which life on Earth is founded. It devotes an important part to the themes of human geography and calls for the pupils’ learning of tolerance to the Otherness that stems from the differences and varieties found in the countries all around the world. This connects also to learning human geography in a way that considers natural conditions and their change within the context of social tension, conflicts and wars. Adherence to the principles of democracy and civic freedom are therefore highlighted in the text.

The ‘*Goals*’ of human geography highlights the need of pupils to reason how different geographical/natural conditions affect different countries and the human life within, hence bringing an understanding of differences among the societies. The emphasis on the strong interrelatedness of socio-economic and natural conditions also translates into considerations of regional development.

The ‘*Educational standard*’ devotes one part of its text (having 10 parts altogether) to learning about regional and human geography. There it particularly pays attention to the regionalizing framework of world division and the unequal distribution of human population, asking students to find reasons for cooperation between different regions of the world and for creation of cross-regional organisations. It also includes the topic of migration, its reasons and effects on human populations. Other topics include socio-economic data (with respect to different levels of urbanization, quality of life, as well as poverty and unemployment). While projecting a regional framework, the material does suggest discussion that also considers an extra-European thematic scope (‘Europe and states bordering with Slovakia; China, India, Japan and wider Asia; Africa and the cases of South Africa and Nigeria; the Americas and the cases of the USA and Brazil; Australia’). With respect to Slovakia, which forms the final tenth chapter of the curriculum, it also pays attention to the pupils’ learning about the cultural heritage and UNESCO sites in the country.

**Field of education: ‘*Language and Communication*’**

This theme introduces languages as a ‘tool of cognition and communication’. It is understood as ‘a source of personal and cultural enrichment of people that forms the

precondition of further education'. Language is also seen as 'an attribute of national and individual identity, as well as a tool through which feelings and perceptions are expressed.' It helps in the 'development of the key competences' within the context of the need for 'a modern European and a democratic citizen prepared for life in the united Europe'. Learning languages is hence seen as supportive of 'a more opened approach to people,' important for 'mobility within the European Union'. With respect to didactics, the teaching of languages is divided into two main parts – linguistics and literature. The main prescribed method is interactive teaching, allowing participation of students and forming their analytic, interpretative and evaluative skills.

The 'Goals' call for key competences of the pupils that will allow them an 'active participation in economic, social and cultural life', as well as create conditions for the pupils 'to become responsible citizens that participate in the development of democratic society, pluralism and cultural openness'. Another goal is 'to ensure equal opportunities in social participation'. The pupil is expected to understand the language as 'a historical phenomenon in which the historical and cultural development of the nation is reflected', as well as 'an important factor of national integration'. 'Mastering the basic rules of communication within a particular cultural environment and gaining a positive attitude to language in the context of intercultural communication' articulates another important general goal of language education. It should also lead to 'cultivation of the consciousness of linguistic belonging to a certain ethnic group', as well as, to 'perception of linguistic affinity and fellowship with other ethnic groups'.

*Slovak Language and Literature* (pp.45)

The '*Characterization*' extends the information for both parts of language teaching (linguistics and literature) setting the goal 'of being aware of the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe and the world, but also within particular social environments.' Pupils are expected to reach 'the understanding of differences (among people), tolerance and orientation in a multicultural environment via understanding the importance of language for the national culture'.

The '*Educational standard*' for linguistics, although a topic less concerned with the themes of the CHIEF project, offers some material worthy of attention. For instance, among the key competences gained by the students is the ability to 'communicate adequately to the communication situation'. This competence is supposed to lead to pupils' 'tolerance of individual and collective differences'. It also creates their ability to explain differences, for instance, between the 'national, foreign, official, state, and minority languages' as well as their functions. It further develops their empathy, personal identity and value system. Linguistics also includes the theme of 'language and speech,' which orients students towards different forms of languages (e.g. national,



dialect) and language families (e.g. Indo-European, Slavic), enhancing students' understanding and developing their own individual and collective identities.

The '*Educational standard*' for literature describes the manifold understandings and uses of a literary text. The latter is introduced within a context of school-recommended reading, interpretative, and argumentative skills acquired via analysis of a variety of literary genres, teaching students to decipher inter-human relations, as well as form and formulate their own values. In addition, the history of literature offers pupils the historical taxonomy of different literary periods as well as a socio-cultural context of studied textual materials. These are selected across the genres and periods, so that pupils get to know how literary production addressed contemporary societal concerns. Apart from the emphasis on the Slovak literature, the pupils also get introduced to the "basics of world literature" via Slovak translations.

#### *Hungarian Language and Literature* (pp.50)

The curriculum for Hungarian language and literature in its structure thoroughly draws on the curriculum for Slovak language and literature (or the other way round). The visible similarity between the two curricula is perhaps a result of the centralized ways of preparing the curricula under the guidance and requirements of the Ministry of Education, hence the role of the state in preparation of the curricula. The main difference of the Hungarian language and literature curriculum appears with respect to emphasis on the mother-tongue defined through an acquisition of a 'positive attitude towards learning the mother-tongue' that leads to both 'awareness of one's own cultural identity and respect towards the otherness and values of other cultures'. Also, the emphasis is shifted more towards the local language (dialect) or minority language, which is obviously the given status of the Hungarian language in the Slovak educational system. One more difference: interestingly, this curriculum in its final part recommends many more titles than the Slovak curriculum.

#### **Field of education: '*People and Values*'**

This theme according to the general overview focuses on 'building and cultivation of mental, spiritual and social aspects in young people'. It serves as orientation among different values and teaching to recognize those values 'which will make young people valuable for society once they reach adulthood'. The goal of the theme is stated as 'bringing up a personality with their own identity and value-orientation, for whom respect towards humans and nature, cooperation, pro-sociability and (ethnic) national values are important'. It aims to contribute to young people's education so that they will be able to create 'harmonious and stable relationships in family, work, between social groups, within the nation (ethnic group) and between different nations'. With respect to CHIEF's research questions the theme offers the following goals: It shall lead



to pupils' 'recognition of maxims of good inter-human relationships; to capability of making decisions with regard to other creeds, religions, world-views and ideologies, and towards support of understanding and tolerance of others' decisions; to tolerance of opinions, behaviour and life of others with respect to their age, sex, education, national, minority status, ethnic, political and religious belonging'.

This theme is divided across the two subjects – ethics and religious education, of which one should be selected, i.e. the field of education 'People and Values' provides for the alternation between the two subjects according to the preferences of the pupils' legal guardians. The choice, however, is compulsory. The subject of ethics aims to instigate pro-sociability in pupils and offers a secular syllabus in order to introduce them to questions of morality. Religious education aims to form their 'religious thinking, conscience, creed and personal belief as a personal expression of religious thinking and an integral part of human identity'.

#### *Ethics (pp. 7)*

The emphasis of the '*Introduction*' and '*Characterization of the subject*' is put on acquiring knowledge and skills resulting in pupils' pro-sociability as the goal of the subject. Pro-sociability is seen as a 'core of ethics of inter-human relationships'. The '*Characterization*' highlights learning through experience as an important factor of the subject. This, which is preceded by the discussion of ethical concepts in the class, should result in practical training and the ability of students to enact the gained knowledge and skills in everyday life. The '*Goals*' are stated in terms of the student acquiring 'basic ethical positions and capabilities', out of which 'the positive evaluation of oneself and the self of others, communication skills and creative solutions of people's relationships' can develop. Other goals of the subject are to reach an 'understanding of the principles of religious and non-religious ethics that enables pupils to be tolerant towards the behaviour and opinions of schoolmates and fellow citizens'.

The '*Educational standard*' prescribes the following subject themes: communication; human dignity; ethics of sexual life; good relationships in the family; philosophical generalization of acquired ethical principles; work ethics; ethics and economics; healthy lifestyle. Although nowhere clearly stated, it seems that the crucial role of teachings ethics has been put on the individual preferences of the teachers.

#### *Religious education*

Religious education in Slovakia is administered by the representatives of the particular churches, and it is those churches that decisively participate in creating the curricula for the subject. In practice it is the pupils' parents who first choose whether their child is going to attend the class of ethics or religious education. Another choice is to be made from the available options that are covered under the following curricula – Religious

Education/Religion by the Evangelical Church (i.e. the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession), the Catholic Church, the (Russian) Orthodox Church, the Reformed Christian Church (Calvinism), and the Brethren Church.<sup>56</sup> Note that these do not represent all the registered churches in Slovakia,<sup>57</sup> but only those from amongst the registered that agreed to actively participate in the state program of religious education, proved to be capable of securing teaching of religious education on a regular basis, and had the capacity to participate in the creation of curricula and provide their own textbooks. Most of the churches and religious societies for various reasons (number of pupils, their demographical distribution, availability of teachers etc.) either have no capacity to fulfil these conditions fully (like Jews, Baha'is or Adventists), or are not registered (like Muslims); the result is the above given list of churches. In addition, given that religious education curricula offer a particular religious world-view, which is difficult to put on the same level as all the other curricula, a brief comparative review of all churches is presented instead of detailed reviews of each.

As stated above, the offered religious education promulgates a particular world-view. This is generally stated in terms of gaining knowledge to develop the 'religious dimension that is a part of culture and participates in forming the personalities of the pupils'. Also, the subject is supposed to 'provide pupils with an acquaintance with the principles of good relationships among people'; and to contribute to the 'development and reflection on questions related to God, acquiring the message on which the faith and motivation of personal religious life in church have been built'. The '*Educational standard*' of the subject is constructed across several themes, out of which most target the aspects that help to understand religion (e.g. religious history, principles of faith, moral principles, theological positions and reasoning of the particular church). With respect to the goals of CHIEF it is interesting to observe how the curricula address the question of differences in religious beliefs and identities. Apart from the general statement found in all curricula that religious education leads to a better understanding among people and a responsible life within society, the intensity of dedicating the time to learning other religious views differs. The Catholic, Orthodox and Calvinist curricula appear to take a more conservative view of other religious worldviews (most visibly seen in the lack of study themes that would enable discussing other religions with adequate detail; or particularly emphasized in the curricula of Catholic religious education in promulgation of the Christian roots of Europe, and discussion on the current crisis of values that Europe is supposed to be undergoing). The Evangelical

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/inovovany-svp-gymnazia-so-stvorocnym-patrocnym-vzdelavacim-programom/clovek-hodnoty/>

<sup>57</sup> The list of all 18 registered churches is provided at the website of Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic - <http://www.mksr.sk/posobnost-ministerstva/cirkvi-a-nabozenske-spolocnosti-/registrovane-cirkvi-a-nabozenske-spolocnosti-f9.html>. See also footnote no. 2.

Church and Brethren Church curricula seem to be more open and include complete study-blocks for acquaintance with other religious thought (or, for that matter, the learning promoted by Evangelicals about the divisions among the Christians themselves in greater detail). Hence in the curricula of these two churches it is possible to meet with a study block that offers learning about Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Confucianism or some principles of disorganised religious beliefs and practices (e.g. shamanistic or fetishist). The Brethren Church curriculum includes also the discussion of specific techniques like meditation, or themes of religious philosophy like transcendence and suffering, but also themes broadly related to social philosophy like power, multiculturalism, or moral relativism. Most of the Church curricula also share a concern with teaching about religious sectarianism and cults.

**Field of education: ‘Art and Culture’**

This field of education, although represented only by a single subject with an identical name, in many respects addresses the themes covered by CHIEF. The general overview states that the subject leads to an awareness of pupils’ ‘own cultural identity, makes them develop their own cultural-historical consciousness; the ability to respect and tolerate the values of other cultures, as well as elaborates the cultivation of visual, audial, verbal and kinetic literacy’. It promises to introduce pupils to ‘basic tools of refined communication and distinguish between different parts of culture’. This is achieved by learning about the ‘cultural heritage of their own region, nation, and state’, but also by ‘understanding the cultures of other nations’, hence by gathering information about the ‘local, national, European, and world heritage’. Achieving such knowledge is seen as supportive of the development of the student’s ‘intercultural competences and collaboration with people from other cultures’.

*Art and Culture* (pp. 16)

The basic goal of the subject is stated as the ‘development of teaching through action (*činnostné vyučovanie*), i.e. not only helping pupils remember the ready-made meanings, but to create new knowledge through research and interpretative methods’. The document suggests the ‘development of a responsible approach to the values of national and other cultures’ and asks teachers to consider the thematic overlaps that it shares with other subjects, namely ‘history, geography, ethics and the like’. This is elaborated in the ‘*Educational standard*’ set for the subject. It contains three specific thematic blocks devoted to the concepts of culture, cultural identity and heritage, as well as the practical side of their perception in the society and by the students themselves. The first one is called ‘Culture, cultural tradition: cultural consciousness, identity, creation of cultural tradition’. Apart from expecting students to learn to distinguish between different types of culture (dominant, marginal, alternative) and

understand the concepts alluded to in its title, this block asks students to engage with and translate such knowledge into a project. Students should choose a heritage site/object/artefact (called *pamiatka*, i.e. relic; of tangible/intangible character) of their own, document its being a relic, offer their own interpretation of its being a heritage/relic. This learning block hence creatively implies the goals of the subject combining the theoretical knowledge and the practical engagement with it. Another approach is undertaken in the learning block called 'Historical culture and the present'. Here students acquire knowledge about the world cultural heritage (not explicitly specified as UNESCO or other) in contrast to national culture, both being discussed through the concept of a 'relic' (*pamiatka*) and the ways of its being important for society. Here, learning activities are included that help students to consider the classifications of high/low culture and subculture. A somewhat similar approach to cultural production is also undertaken in the block 'Everyday culture – experiments' which in an experiential way makes students rethink their concepts of old/new, old-fashioned/up-to-date, retro, innovative and the like. The blocks 'Culture of Body-Cult of Body' and 'Fashion and Lifestyle' also include topics like 'Body and Face in Other Cultures (e. g. nations living in nature)', or 'Ideals of Beauty in Other Cultures'. The rest of the curriculum is devoted to different forms and interpretations of art. Overall the curriculum offers space to both theoretical understandings of the concepts of culture, cultural heritage and identity, as well as ways for students to engage with these via their own activities.

### **'Cross-cutting theme' – Multicultural Education**

The general Introduction to the cross-cutting theme 'Multicultural Education' as stated on the website of the National Institute for Education<sup>58</sup> and in the pdf material 'Multicultural Education' – A supplement to Higher Secondary Education Program (ISCED 3) downloaded from the same website basically introduce the theme in an identical manner. Diversity is seen in terms of culture set as 'traditional cultural diversity', by which is meant the diverse cultural traditions of Slovakia informed by different ethnic groups and a variety of social environments. Migration and collaboration are seen as factors enhancing the diversity. However, even if the tolerance to diversity has been introduced as a prevalent model of social relations in Slovakia, it is also called into a question, because of documentable occurrences of intolerance, whether in the past or in the present. Both materials list the following goals of multicultural education:

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/prierezove-temy/multikulturalna-vychova/>

- to lead pupils to understand and respect cultural diversity,
- development of self-reflection that will lead to awareness of the roots, (offered) possibilities, limits and changes of one's own cultural identity,
- instigate and develop tolerant attitudes towards the representatives/agents of different cultures among the pupils,
- develop abilities of understanding a different culture and different lifestyle,
- develop tolerant attitudes towards the representatives of different cultures while being aware of and preserving one's own cultural identity,
- develop knowledge about those cultures that pupils already have, or may have an experience with,
- offer the impulse to create well-argued standpoints towards different cultures,
- support individual critical thinking,
- develop the ability to communicate and collaborate with the agents of different cultures in a safe environment of tolerance and mutual respect.

### **The Goals and Contents of Multicultural Education**<sup>59</sup> (pp.57)

This material details and develops the goals stated in the general Introduction. It does it in two mutually connected ways: by offering an instructive text highlighting the theme's specifics across sequenced parts (meaning, goal, competences of the pupils, and description of how the theme cuts across the above noted fields of education) and by offering a series of 'lesson-motifs' proposed to enable students to grasp the theme through concrete activity. Note the text of 'The Goals and Contents' targets both gymnasiums and vocational schools, hence being divided to these two respective parts. Since these two parts in many respects overlap, we opted to review them together and when appropriate highlight the differences between the gymnasium and vocational educational standards.

The material states that 'in comparison with the first half of the 20th century cultural diversity in Slovakia has intensified due to the greater openness of Slovak society'. Openness in this context refers to the current geopolitical position of Slovakia (being a democratic country integrated into Western political, economic and military bodies, namely the European Union and NATO) that enables greater mobility of Slovaks, as well as migration. Openness in terms of societal ability to accept diversity is seen as problematic, i.e. even if the tolerance of Others may be understood as traditional, the collective consciousness of some Slovaks is still affected by 'signs of intolerance to

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<sup>59</sup> This material covers also the theme of multicultural education for vocational schools. However, since with regard to multicultural education there is no specific material for vocational schools, we are left only with this single text.

other socio-cultural groups and their cultural expressiveness'. In this context the part for gymnasiums adds to the general call for a greater reflection of the diversity found also in the part for vocational schools. It asks gymnasium teachers to consider students' peer groups, electronic communication, and travelling as triggering different opinions about diversity, since these enable pupils' access to 'mediated information', which calls for analytic approach on the part of the teachers, as well as on the part of the students. Popular culture (often with a foreign origin) is also called to attention as a discursive space that allows development of sensitivity towards different cultural concerns, as well as attempts to negotiate one's own cultural identity in the world, which brings different cultural impulses.

The text in different ways pronounces the idea of people's multiple identities. These often but not necessarily, like in case of social position, stem from people's different cultural backgrounds. At the same time the text attempts to put the plural sources of human identity in the context of what it understands as primarily one's own identity coloured in cultural terms and from time to time overlapping with what could be termed as national, regional, or local identity. The school is further seen as an institution that helps students move between the different social and cultural environments and navigates their interpretations while also offering chances to experience these environments. Hence on the vocational level of education the text recommends the development of one's own cultural identity through evaluating one's own cultural environment vis-à-vis another cultural environments. This is seen as helpful to students in deconstructing stereotypes with respect to one's own cultural environment, as well as that of the others. At the gymnasium level of education it asks for recognition of what it calls 'synthetic identities influenced by globalised cultural processes' and development of a solid informational base for well-grounded analysis and argumentation.

Communication and its various modes (including communication with elders, or the generation gap) is seen as another sub-theme of multicultural education and as a trigger of negotiating one's own cultural identity. Communication, according to the text, is a key skill 'for building up a respect for others'. Hence multicultural education asks pupils to heed and reflect on their own ways of communicating and behaviour. These ways should be contextualized through 'situations, culture, space... so that they do not lead to conflict, but rather to qualitatively richer and more effective ways of communication'. Therefore multicultural education is not only about gathering information, and gaining experience, but also about analysis of both, with respect to the needs of a particular type of school (gymnasium, vocational).

Gaining knowledge about different cultures via engagement with their cultural products, respect towards others, recognizing the stereotypes towards one's own and



other people, locating what is one's own and why others may stand as others and yet not be in absolute opposition to one's own, communication skills – all of these lead students to gain what the text calls intercultural competences. It divides them into communication and social competences (pertaining to different communication and social skills); competences in problem solving (out of respect for the Other); civic competences (like recognizing the equality of people); cultural competences (by claiming a cultural identity for oneself one recognizes and gets to know the cultural identity of others); medial and informational competences (the student is required to examine, compare and analyse different sources about different and one's own people, recognize manipulation with sources); and competences for learning (creates interest in others and their culture). Finally, the text moves to a discussion of the goals of multicultural education via their contextualisation within particular subjects, namely history, civics, geography, ethics, religion and the subject of art and culture. It emphasizes that multicultural education cuts across all of these subjects and provides a stimulus to their enrichment in terms of contents as well as in terms of the skills the pupils may learn.

#### **4.2. State Educational Program Curricula from the State Vocational Education Institute**

*History (ÚSOV)*<sup>60</sup> (pp. 15)

History curriculum for vocational schools heavily draws from higher (i.e. gymnasium) education curriculum. With minor changes it copies its structure and content, often reproducing whole sentences verbatim. Apparently the higher education curriculum serves as a source, and the curriculum for vocational schools is its derivation.

The '*Introduction*' has been omitted. Under '*Basic characterization*' the concept of humanization is omitted. Cultivating the pupils' 'historical consciousness and memory' in order to pass on 'historical experiences' from local, regional, national, European and global perspective remains, as well as the importance of studying national history while respecting the past and concerns of the others, but 'development of patriotism' has been added to the process of cultivation of pupils' 'historical consciousness and memory'. '*Basic Competences acquired by studying the subject*' and the '*Goals*' have been unified under the latter. What strikes as different is that the simplification results in reduction of history study to more essentializing formulations that do not problematize the past and its study. No attention is paid to the concepts of change, variety and difference. Conversely, more detail (Christian tradition) is added to what is addressed

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<sup>60</sup> The available curricula for history and geography are only those for ÚSOV.



as patriotic education and preserving the national tradition. This is reversed by emphasis on respect to others (cultural and religious differences of people in the world). In addition, teachers are encouraged to include a general overview of the history of the pupils' particular vocational field (e.g. cooking).

The text then proceeds to the '*Educational standard of the subject of history*,' describing its 'effective' and 'contents' part, which differs in some details<sup>61</sup> from the Educational standard for higher education (see above), but mainly in the lower level of analysis of the past that results in a more essentialist approach to history (facts learning). The lowering of the level of analysis is expected for this kind of schools, yet it is quite questionable whether omitting the 'liquidity' of available traces of past, and indeed the concept of the trace itself is an adequate way how to approach history teaching at vocational schools.

#### *Ethics (NSOV) (pp. 4)*

The curriculum of ethics for lower level (NSOV) vocational schools draws from the higher education curriculum and simplifies the themes. This simplification results in the reduction of themes to 'strengthening one's own identity', 'good relationships in family', 'responsible sexual life' and 'healthy lifestyle'. The only indicator relevant for CHIEF is a statement found among the subject's goals that pupils shall be taught to 'accept otherness in the sphere of opinions, sexual orientation, customs and cultures'. Again, although nowhere clearly stated, it seems that the crucial role of teachings ethics at this educational level has been put on the individual preferences of teachers.

#### *Geography (ÚSOV) (pp. 13)*

In contrast to most of the curricula for vocational schools, Geography curriculum draws from the higher education curriculum only in part and proposes a different conception for organising the subject themes set to serve the purposes of vocational education.

The '*Characteristics*' of the subject with respect to human geography presents pupils with knowledge that considers the 'national, international, and global context of the studied localities. This is done from the perspective of natural and socio-economic conditions, as well as in connection to the effects these have on the lives of people in those localities.' It reacts to current situations in the world and asks students to organise and evaluate the gained knowledge, as well as seek available solutions.

The '*Educational standard*' consists of four blocks (Country – the place we live in; Nature and Man; Population and settlements; Activities of the Population). According to their vocational field students can choose an additional two blocks to the compulsory one, which is Country – the place we live in. In the block Population and settlements

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<sup>61</sup> E.g. instead of 'Traces of the Middle-Ages' the material goes just for the Middle-Ages.

the factors related to shifts in cultural identity are taught (e.g. ‘migration and its different aspects – natural, cultural, religious, economic, political’; ‘migration projections and policies in the global, European and Slovak contexts’; ‘differences among the developed and undeveloped parts of the world’; ‘postmodern condition of people’s settlements’, etc.).

*Slovak Language and Literature (NSOV)* (pp. 16)

The curriculum for NSOV on the one hand draws from the curriculum for gymnasiums in its structure (linguistics and literature) and content (e.g. in the emphasis on communication skills; or active participation of students in the process of interpreting language and its roles in the society; or by stating the goal of pupils ‘being aware of the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe and the world, but also within particular social environments’, as well as, the goal of their ‘understanding of differences (among people), tolerance and orientation in a multicultural environment via understanding the importance of language for the national culture’). On the other hand this is a much simplified material that omits most of the details given in the curriculum for gymnasiums (for instance, the theme of ‘language and speech,’ important for students’ understanding and building of their own individual and collective identities, or in literature, the themes of genres and history). Most of the curriculum is devoted to linguistics and only a minor part to literature studies, which are set only across two themes (love of young people and family). No reading list is given. It is rather problematic to understand how pupils can acquire knowledge, for instance, about linguistic and the cultural diversity of Europe and the world, if none of the themes mentioned in the ‘Educational standard’ includes anything similar.

*Hungarian Language and Literature (NSOV)* (pp. 15)

The curriculum under review shows identical characteristics as the one for higher education. The significant difference is a detailed syllabus of teaching Hungarian literature across several historical periods, up to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This does not mean that in higher education of Hungarian language and literature this is not taught, because such a teaching plan seems to be taken as obvious across more theoretically laden topics. However, the presence of such a plan in this particular curriculum shows the importance given to Hungarian literature even at the lower educational level, hence reflecting and stimulating the goal of promulgating the ‘awareness of one’s own cultural identity’.

*Civics (NSOV)* (pp. 6)

Similarly to History, the curriculum for vocational schools draws from the higher education curriculum. In most parts the text with minor changes copies the CIVICS for gymnasiums, its structure and content, often reproducing whole sentences verbatim.

Apparently the higher education curriculum serves as a source, and the curriculum for vocational schools as its derivation, the latter being a simplification of the former. For instance “the Human being as a Personality” has been turned to “the Human as an Individual” and within this division the subjects of personality, abilities, motivations, and ways of learning have been omitted. Under “Citizen and State” social groups and status have been placed under socialization. The learning skills have also been reduced from analysis and evaluation to illustration and listing. However, and most importantly, the whole ‘package’ designed for introducing pupils to philosophy is absent from the Civics (NSOV) curriculum.

### *Religious Education*

The State Vocational Education Institute does not provide online any available data on the curricula for religious education used in Vocational Schools. It is, however, clear (245/2008 - Education Act; 15:3) that the subject of religious education is taught in Vocational schools under the same conditions as with gymnasiums. The curricula used for religious education in Vocational schools are identical with those used for the gymnasiums (an expert at The National Institute for Education; personal communication 5th Nov. 2018). The difference in the manner of how the curriculum material with respect to needs of Vocational education is used and followed by the teachers depends on them, and on each particular school. Since religious education is provided by religious professionals from particular churches, this decision is usually reached in negotiation between teacher and school.

### *Art and Culture*

According to the information gained from an expert at The National Institute for Education (personal communication 5th Nov. 2018), the subject Art and Culture is not taught at Vocational schools. In the case of Vocational Art schools such a subject is also not taught because these schools with respect to Art and Culture have other specific subjects.

## **5. Discussion**

### **Structure and organisation**

The common structure for most of the curricula appears to be the result of state involvement in its creation. Note that for instance the ‘Introduction’ that appears in all reviewed curricula of higher secondary education is basically the same text where apart from minor stylistic touches the main difference between its use in the curricula is that one subject is replaced by another and some specifics of the taught subject added.

Apparently the same template has been used, and perhaps, required too. This holds true with respect to many other standardized parts, mainly the Educational Standard.

The process of drawing from the gymnasium curricula text while creating the curricula for the vocational schools, as well as the process of simplification of the vocational curricula via omissions should be primarily understood with regard to the different roles these schools play in the educational system in Slovakia.<sup>62</sup> However, it can be understood also as a mirror of state-centralism in education, or as an indicator of socially constructed and enacted hierarchical notions that translate into curricula creation (higher levels need the detail and analysis, lower needs the essentialism and more supervision). The goals and methodology of the simplifications in the curricula for vocational schools resulting in absences of some crucial themes and methods for particular subjects are nowhere mentioned, even if, for instance, the Introduction part could serve such a purpose. The lower level of learning and understanding abilities expected in the vocational schools hence seems to be reflected primarily by thematic and method-related omissions in their curricula.

One example of the problem can be seen in the fact that in certain subjects of vocational education the calls for patriotism became more pronounced at the expense of analytical understanding. However, academic studies seem to indicate that young people passing through vocational education are more prone to adopt extremist views, which is reflected in their choices of support of extremist political parties.<sup>63</sup> This raises the question whether by determining vocational education to be the an offshoot of the gymnasial education does not, so to say, create conditions for young extremists. Another example is that the whole ‘package’ designed for introducing pupils to philosophy is absent from the Civics (NSOV) curriculum. This very much speaks for different standards and lack of conceptual organisation of Civics as a subject applied to teaching at different levels. Don’t students of lower grade schools need philosophy to be mentioned? Philosophy does, however, appear in Civics (USOV). The only exception to this general trend is provided in the curriculum for geography (USOV), which is clearly different from its higher education counterpart. This shows that there are ways how the lower curricula could be developed differently than just simplified versions of the higher level curricula.

### **Contents and problems articulating the approach to cultural history, heritage and diversity**

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<sup>62</sup> The gymnasiums preparing students exclusively for university study, the vocational schools mainly for specific professions - even if this does not preclude studying at university when the vocational school ends with the ‘maturity exam’.

<sup>63</sup> Velšic, Marián (2017) *Mladí ľudia a riziká extrémizmu* (Young people and the risks of extremism). Bratislava: Inštitút pre verejné otázky.

*History*

The curricula suggest application of several perspectives to gaining knowledge about the past – from local through regional to global. They prescribe work with a variety of information/sources and attempt to cultivate the historical awareness of pupils while paying attention to historical memory. They call for development of ‘cultivated dialogue and open discussion as basic principles of historiography as well as school history teaching.

However, with respect to a coherent approach to the past, the curricula display observable contradictions. On the one hand, they attempt to deconstruct the nation state narrative, for example by ‘getting to know history that does not correspond only to a closed past with final and one-sided interpretations ... [g]etting to know history which is the result of a multisided and contradictive process’. On the other hand the nation-state identity is clearly preferred when approaching the past, or when the nation-oriented narrative is promulgated. For instance it is applied in the reasoning that makes the modern period more important than others and formulations like ‘the past of one's own nation’ suggest the primordial understanding of the category of nation and such an understanding is quite present in the curricula. Furthermore respect for other nations and cultural differences are called for, but within the narrative postulating the primordial understanding. An absolute dominance of the Eurocentric and West-centric themes can be also observed and easily demonstrated, hence it appears questionable how respect to other nations and cultural differences can be achieved while thoroughly singling out just one part of the world (e.g. Asian history is completely limited to the ancient past and if implicitly mentioned then only in connection with colonialism, which denies any creative agency to the colonized; with the exception of ancient Egypt, nothing is mentioned on Africa. Latin America is completely absent). Essentialization is also present in the text. For instance when it asks students to determine and describe the basic characteristics of particular historical periods, civilizations and cultures these are not approached from the perspective of social and historical processes but rather as monolithic units with specific characteristics. For example, when students are supposed to ‘recognize the influences of Islamic culture in Europe’ the unproductive category of ‘influence’ is employed, which always presupposes separated and hence essentialized, entities influencing each other. This approach does not recognize various modes of human mobility and interactions, or from a different perspective, the role of power and politics in public promulgation of the monolithic social and periodical units.<sup>64</sup> Overall,

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<sup>64</sup> This seems to result from an inadequate attention paid towards teaching of methodology of history in the Slovak educational system as discussed in Kratochvíl, V. (2011) ‘History teaching in the Slovak Republic’, in Erdmann, E. and Hasberg, W. (eds) *Facing – Mapping – Bridging Diversity*. Foundation of a European Discourse on History Education, Part 2, Erlangen: Wochenschau Verlag, pp. 195-227.

the curricula promote a politically oriented history, with some degree of introduction to social structures of societies, or religious beliefs. Cultural heritage as a concept is largely absent.

### *Civics*

The curricula engage with concepts of society, socialization, social relations, social groups, social status, family and upbringing, marital life, volunteering, social deviations and pathological phenomena creating a way for pupils to understand the position of an individual in a society. Simultaneously they see human psychology as a way to identity formation ('pupils will create an awareness of their own identity and the identity of other people'). They promulgate the knowledge of the state, its organisation and institutions as a ways of knowing how to become an active and responsible citizen; pay attention to European Institutions and human rights (including child, women, and minority rights). Attention is also paid to morality and its enforcement via law; juridical divisions and institutions (police, prosecutor, advocacy, and notary); corruption is addressed. They propose basic understanding of different economies, market mechanisms, and the labour market in Slovakia and the EU, employments policies, forms and regulations of employment, forms of business, unemployment, and financial literacy, which in a classroom setting may involve the discussion of intercultural relations.

In the philosophy part of the civics curriculum (for gymnasiums), which however is rather unsystematically approached, the meaning of philosophy, philosophical disciplines and theories related to society are all suffering from a Eurocentric view of philosophy. This means that philosophy is approached via European, or generally Western conceptualizations of philosophical thinking and with respect to other cultures (e.g. Arabic, Indian, Chinese) these conceptualizations are absent. Hence, the difference in the conceptual understanding of the world as related to other cultures is not suggested in the curricula.

### *Geography*

The curricula call for the pupils' learning of tolerance to Otherness. In the subject of geography this stems from the differences and varieties found in the natural conditions (e.g. with respect to natural resources, climate, natural formations) of countries all around the world. The need of pupils to reason how different natural conditions affect different countries and the human life within, hence bringing the understanding of nature-related differences that particular societies have to face, is clearly articulated. The emphasis on the interrelatedness of socio-economic and natural conditions also

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The role of power in relation to history has been discussed e.g. in Edward Said's *Orientalism* reconsidered, *Cultural Critique*, No. 1. (Autumn, 1985), pp. 89-107.



translates into considerations of regional development. However, the latter is much less discussed in the discourse and political trajectories of the global market. Importantly the curricula include the topic of migration, its reasons and effects on human populations. From the brief material it is difficult to judge how migration has been conceptualised in the gymnasium curriculum. Some hints are seen in highlighting the importance of the directions of migrations and destination countries, or by linking it to conflicts. Clear conceptualization, it seems, depends on the particular approach of the teacher. With respect to the curriculum of geography for vocational school, however, more information is found. Migration is seen through aspects related to nature, culture, religion, economy and politics. Attention is also paid to migrations in temporal terms (of past and present), as well as to migration in relation to the ages of the migrating people. Overall it seems that migration is seen as induced rather than chosen, which puts into question the agency of the people. What is missing altogether in this context are the concepts of transnationalism and integration.<sup>65</sup> Other topics include socio-economic data (with respect to different levels of urbanization, quality of life, as well as poverty, and unemployment). Particular attention is paid to the ways of how information is gained, which sources are reliable and why, and which are not, although the criteria of reliability are not spelled out. In addition, but importantly for CHIEF, the curricula pay attention to pupils' learning about the cultural heritage and UNESCO sites in Slovakia. This approach, however, reproduces the cultural heritage philosophy of conservation, and pays much less attention to ways how heritage comes to be heritage, as well as to the negative effects of a solely conservationist approach to heritage.<sup>66</sup>

### *Languages*

The curricula see language as a tool of communication and participation (in society, in a multicultural environment, in Europe, in developing democratic values). They promote understanding of national/ethnic exclusivity (whether Slovak or Hungarian) and as well the understanding of affinities to other ethnicities. The former sees the language as 'an attribute of national and individual identity', or as creating 'consciousness of linguistic belonging to a certain ethnic group' and the latter as supportive to 'a more opened approach to people' and as enabling the 'perception of linguistic affinity and fellowship with other ethnic groups'. This approach, however, prevents any inclusion of discussion of how the multilingual capacity of people translates to identity formation. The latter seems to be closed and bound to a monolingual environment articulated via linguistic differences. Moreover this double-

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<sup>65</sup> More on this see for instance in Joppke, Christian and Morawska Ewa, eds. (2003) *Toward Assimilation and Citizenship. Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>66</sup> This is addressed for instance by Brumann and Berliner in their 'Introduction: UNESCO World Heritage – Grounded?' found in the Brumann, Christoph and Berliner, David eds. (2016) *World Heritage on the Ground. Ethnographic Perspectives*. New York: Berghahn Books.



edged approach also translates to the rather vague expression that ‘the understanding of differences (among the people), tolerance and orientation in a multicultural environment shall be reached via understanding of the importance of language for the national culture’. There is no mention of how this approach should be achieved.

In terms of content the topics of ‘the literature of antiquity, of middle-ages, of the renaissance, baroque, classicism, romanticism, realism, naturalism...’ forms a static model of consequential and to a certain extent teleologically organised literary periods derived solely from the European experience of literary writing. The understanding of what is literature is thoroughly Eurocentric. For instance, apart from the emphasis on Slovak and Hungarian literature, obvious for the particular subjects, pupils get introduced also to world literature via Slovak and Hungarian translations. According to the suggested lists of readings – Sophocles, Shakespeare, Molière, Pushkin, Mann, Remarque, and Salinger – “world literature” is clearly defined as mostly European literature (i.e. with the single exception of Salinger, no other than European literature is on the reading list under the heading of ‘world literature’).

### *Ethics*

The sources of ethical values that the curriculum addresses are nowhere explained. Ethical values are presented as self-understood and given. No question is posed as to where they come from, no search indicated or asked for. Communication, dignity, sexuality, family, pro-sociality, morality, health, and ethical standards related to employment – all of these serve just as covering themes where the principles of correct, or rather desired behaviour should be explored and discussed. However, the curriculum does not pay any attention to introducing pupils to concrete sources that would provide deeper insight into the discussed themes – such as philosophical, religious, literary, folklore, political and other materials. Since these historically and with respect to European cultural space inform the current understandings of what is considered ethical and beneficial for an individual and society, a deeper engagement with such sources, with their sharing, upholding, selecting, neglecting, etc., as well as examples of their practical employment, currently or historically, could help students to reason what the ‘ethical’ means for the European, or Slovak. In this context there is an observable absence in the curriculum with respect to particular role of the ethics in the intercultural communication. Nowhere anything like universal human values are mentioned or, for that matter, problematized. Some hints to intercultural communication in the field of ethics is suggested only by bringing in the theme of globalisation, its advantages and disadvantages. In other words the subject of ethics as introduced in the curricula does not seem to be clearly linked to significant categories of CHIEF, namely cultural identity, heritage and diversity. Perhaps the creativity of teachers is expected but only

fieldwork and survey can show what is in fact taught and how -- it seems that the crucial role of teaching ethics has been put on the individual preferences of the teachers.

### *Religious education*

Overall, religious education aims to form pupils' 'religious thinking, conscience, creed and personal belief as a personal expression of religious thinking and an integral part of human identity'. This sets a discursive space for discussion with the religious other that is not limited to a Slovak, or by extension European space. The most important findings with respect to curricula of religious education is, hence, twofold. One has been already mentioned in the review part and concerns the unequal attention of the particular church curricula with respect to the set goal of the educational field 'People and Values'. If this goal has been clearly stated as leading the pupils to 'making personal decisions in relation to other confessions and religions, as well as other worldviews and ideologies, and to support understanding and tolerance of decisions made by others' it is questionable how this is achieved via the particular goals of the churches. They, indeed, seem to understand the goal differently, which translates to their employment of ideas coming from the different religions. Whereas the Evangelical Church and Brethren Church devote particular parts of their curricula to other religions, this is much less present in the curricula of the Catholic, Orthodox and Reformist churches. One wonders how pupils can effectively be led to 'making personal decisions' if they are, at least with respect to the latter three churches, offered rather one-sided views. Such views, obvious in terms of the particular church agenda, seem to show a lack of overall negotiation of the secular state with the churches on the question of considering a different religious view during the classes of religious education.

The Introductions to particular curricula (that to a considerable extent contain identical texts to each other) add to this problem and allow formulating the second important finding, which relates to the processes of acquiring religious identity. Such an identity seems to be understood solely from a Euro-centric, and particularly Christian-centric position. If, as stated in the Introductions, the religious dimension of (universally understood) man 'is a part of culture and participates in forming the personalities of the pupils' (Catholic Church curriculum), or religious education leads pupils to the 'development of basics of inter-human relationships; to reflection in the questions related to God, and to acquiring the message on which the faith and motivation to personal religious life in the church have been built' (Evangelic and Orthodox Churches curricula), as well as religious education being generally seen in purely sectarian terms while at the same time calling for ecumenism (Reformist Church curriculum), there arise questions of which culture is referred to and which ideas form the understanding of 'questions related to God'. It also calls into question the form of dialogue with the

religious other and the unbeliever. Although it is obvious that the churches will be pursuing their own agenda it is worth considering how this agenda is culturally Western (even while Christianity is not solely a Western religion) and Christian-centred in terms of religious categories employed (e.g. message, church, God), and whether these premises indeed offer the possibility of a mutually enriching dialogue in the current world. With respect to the latter it should be stated that the most inclusive curricula are found in the curricula of the Evangelical Church and Brethren Church.

### *Art and Culture*

Cultural identity is primarily seen through gaining knowledge and practical experience with cultural heritage. Although pupils are asked to comment, interpret or engage with the tangible and intangible heritage, the approach to heritage appears to be static. Heritage is understood as something given, present, worth preservation with no particular enquiry shown why the legacy of the past should be evaluated as such. Instead cultural heritage (world or national), firmly located in some unspecified, unanalysed past, is contrasted with modern art and culture. On the other hand, no concrete examples of what may serve as a model cultural heritage – such as how the Christian roots of Europe serve in religious education (discussed also below) – is to be found, perhaps because the personal initiative of teachers to find their own examples is expected.

There is an absence of topics that would instigate a debate on how cultural heritage and identity could be linked to the idea of Europe, as well as what constitutes Otherness and Other culture as such. Cultural boundaries were left unheeded altogether. Similarly, the curriculum offers only a few instances of concrete steps to create an understanding and respect for other cultures. Apart from rather static interpretation of the world cultural heritage, under the headings of ‘Culture of Body-Cult of Body’ and ‘Fashion and Lifestyle’ there are topics like ‘Body and Face in Other Cultures (e. g. nations living in nature)’, or ‘Ideal of Beauty in Other Cultures’. It is, however, rather unclear how the body and culture in other cultures is practically taught and whether a certain degree of exoticization is not met with. Again, like in several preceding cases a brief text allows creativity of the teacher, but does not guide how these topics should be approached.

### *Multicultural education*

The reviewed material is not a curriculum, but rather an instruction manual serving to show why multicultural education is important in the current educational system and how the different subjects could benefit by inclusion of its themes. The whole material is written in an abstract language employing terminology without concrete examples. For instance, we read about one’s own culture, or tolerance of the culture of others, or influence coming from other cultures, but the text hardly explains what exactly is meant. In a sense culture becomes an empty word employed without a particular

context. The same holds for the term ‘multicultural.’ Nowhere is it explained what is meant.

In yet another sense the category of culture becomes essentialized, because it is always culture which is evoked, whether in terms of nation, one’s own personality, or some imagined other, even if all these may refer to a very different set of practices-cum-knowledge and their historical antecedents. True, the text offers some examples, noted under the label ‘motif,’ of how tolerant and knowledge-seeking understanding of others may be gained. However, very few of them offer an insight into how people termed as others live their lives, imagine time and space, past or present, articulate their demands remember their ancestors’ achievements and the like. They suffer from being too much tied to European historical or current experiences and when displaying the image of the others (which they do in a single case), they display a stereotypical poverty image of Indian children, or, rarely, employ language of stereotypes (e.g. Africa and blacks), or language that gives the same value to completely different phenomena (‘it is possible to feel and evaluate a global perspective through such themes as the Holocaust or Coca-Cola’).

Additionally, the text recognizes and advocates for the pupils’ working with diverse informational materials related to other cultures. These could help them elaborate their argumentation and improve their analytic skills. However, nowhere it is particularly discussed what the role of teachers in introducing pupils to these materials is, as well as in instigating their search. Moreover, the criteria of recognition a useful source are also missing, leaving the diversity of materials unspecified and without clear suggestions of their preferred sources or origins. The level of misrepresentation of different cultures in these materials is completely neglected.

Taken all together it is questionable how such a text is received among the teachers, whose educational, social as well as personal backgrounds may vary considerably, as well as how the teachers are prepared to receive it. The calls for tolerance without contextualization within concrete situations, historical knowledge or economic conditions may be vague enough to produce even opposition to this call. There is a strong absence of how the abstract terminology that attempts to describe complex phenomena should be intelligibly translated to lessons.

In contrast to the general descriptions and goals this text gets to more minute discussion of multicultural education while applying the notion to particular subjects taught under common educational fields (e.g. People and Society) at schools. For instance, in respect to the field of ‘Language and Communication,’ the text explains the necessity of pupils’ language skills in order to be able communicate with people of different cultures, but also through self-reflection of linguistic and expressive diversity to understand

diversity's many shades and the quality of language as a social tool. However, such seemingly obvious statements as the 'mother-tongue becomes a conscious tool of cultural identity' reproduce the typically European flattening of language and culture that results from 19<sup>th</sup> century romanticist imaginations, and may be true for monolingual ethnic groups of Europe, but hardly out of its frontiers. Overall, the text goes across the different educational fields, both at the gymnasium and vocational levels, and attempts to contextualize them within the goals of multicultural education. While doing this, as has already been suggested, it is not devoid of reproduction of some stereotypes, Eurocentric views and essentializations, all of which are the themes to which CHIEF pays attention.

These are the last examples with respect to the categories of cultural identity and cultural heritage. What is often repeated is insistence on the pupils' 'development of tolerant attitudes towards the representatives of different cultures while being aware of and preserving one's own cultural identity'. Here the cultural identity seems to be understood as something fixed, essential, and given. The question that goes undiscussed is how concretely the tolerant attitudes are to be developed when 'preservation and awareness' is set as a priority. A similar uncertainty of terms is observable when the category of cultural heritage is employed (only three times in the whole text of 57 pages). After being introduced to multicultural education, and led to activities where pupils will meet with the different cultural artefacts, or gain knowledge about different cultural practices, the pupil is said to 'respect and not harm the heritage of other cultures', and, also, to form her/his understanding of 'other cultural identities as being part of the world cultural heritage'. What is 'ours' and what 'others', or where the boundary lies and why, and why the boundary is, after all, a determining factor in understanding something about which knowledge is yet to be gained, is not instructively problematized, neither is it described. It is taken for granted that the pupil or teacher will know it. This holds true also for the other curricula where interaction with other culture has been proposed. Such a lack of clarity translates to the idea of Europe for instance in evoking the 'humanistic values of Europe' and asking the pupil to heed them 'while evaluating situations of inter-human relationships'. Again the humanistic values are taken for granted, but there is yet another aspect to such statements in this extra-curricular instruction manual. The relationship between 'ours' and 'theirs' is dominantly modelled either on the notion of Europe or Slovakia. Nowhere there is any suggestion of problematizing the relationship of Europe to Slovakia and vice-versa in terms of culture. Similarly the extra-European Other always remains as extra-territorial or extra-cultural. How this approach goes along with the above given postulation, but

rarely illustration, of a culturally diverse Slovakia,<sup>67</sup> hence, seems to have the potential to create confusion.

### *General observations*

The lack of clarity with respect to interactions with other cultures betrays their essentialization in terms of the Other, which is present across almost all curricula and deserves further discussion. Such essentialization is seen in classifying a various experiences with different people without paying attention to the ways how communities and their collective narratives are created, discursively constructed, or their internal diversity manifested. This leads to gross generalizations. For instance, when the curriculum for history speaks of the influence of Islamic culture in medieval Europe, it suggests the existence of an essentially identical Islamic culture across the world of Muslims and neglects Islam having different social and historical frames. If this is extended to the Christian roots of Europe (see above), an identical essentialization of Europe can be observed. Hence such essentialization downplays the mobility of people and interactions between people as a mode of people's cultural existence. It also completely ignores the socio-spatial context of creation of cultural identities – e.g. through diaspora, cultural middle ground, archipelago and matrix<sup>68</sup> - by preferring the modern nation-state boundary. The latter is in the curricula to a considerable extent equalized with the cultural boundary, or by extension also to the European boundary. This, however, hardly finds substantial evidence and also ignores the communities living across the nation-states.<sup>69</sup> Nowhere in the curricula is this problem discussed and the Others are preferably designated to remain outside the nation-state borders or assigned a clear-cut space within them as minorities. The boundary manifested in the political border of the ethnic/national seems to be a crucial tool for understanding culture and difference. Why it should be crucial is left unexplained. In addition, the otherness is also seen in terms of the so-called nesting orientalism.<sup>70</sup> It is 'us' and 'our culture' that is found at the centre of educational attention and 'them,' nested according to their closeness to an essentialized us. Who speaks for us and why is comfortably ignored. Even if the diversity of 'us' is recognized (as in multicultural education) one does not learn much about the ways how this internal

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<sup>67</sup> See above no.9, 'The Goals and Contents of Multicultural Education'.

<sup>68</sup> This taxonomy has been suggested in Lewis, M. W., Wigen, K. E. (1997) *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Gupta, A., Ferguson, J. (1992) 'Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference', *Cultural Anthropology*, 7 (1): 6-23, or Bhabha, H. (1994) *Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

<sup>70</sup> Bakić-Hayden, M. (1995) 'Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia' *Slavic Review* 60 (4): 917-931.



diversity is enacted and how that affects the ways of proclaiming ‘our collectivity’.<sup>71</sup> Understanding of the latter is across several curricula (languages, civics, history, art and culture, and multicultural education) expressed as ‘awareness’. However, how exactly the awareness (gained through learning) relates to and affects interactions with different people remains unclear.

Another general observation is the ambiguous way of employing the term culture, which in turn affects the ways of employing its conceptual correlates such as cultural identity, cultural heritage or even European culture. At times culture represents collective identity stemming from the way of life preferred by the majority, at other times culture is seen rather as a specific field of human creativity, articulated primarily through art and heritage. It is important to note that a similar ambiguity, or better, dual meaning, is observed in policy documents (Bagalová, Lehocký, Deák, Karásek, 2018), particularly those coming from the Ministry of Culture.<sup>72</sup> This semantic dualism translates to particular policy recommendations of supporting Slovak culture (meaning various ways of producing art and preserving heritage - in their most general sense) and gets also reflected in the content of the curricula (particularly art and culture, but implicitly also in others) in asking students to gain an ‘awareness’ of their own culture. Since the latter is usually seen through a specific field of human creativity, much less space is left to culture as a way of life. The latter is somewhat hinted at in another policy document, the National strategy for global education for the period of 2012-2016, and particularly in a methodological manual, Global education – education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>73</sup> In fact what policy documents see as global education is multicultural education of the cross-cutting theme (Bagalová, Lehocký, Deák, Karásek, 2018). Finally, although the semantic dualism or binary is observable across the curricula, it does not mean that it is rigid. As was shown, the geography curriculum, or multicultural education material, could be examples of a different take, and another sign of voices that problematize the clear-cut double division can be observed also elsewhere (for instance in the history curriculum). What remains problematic is the ways how the

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<sup>71</sup> More on the problems of representations of internal diversity see e.g. in Peckham, R. (2004) *Internal Colonialism: Nation and memory in nineteenth century Greece*. In Todorova, Maria eds. *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory*. London: Hurst, pp. 41-60.

<sup>72</sup> *Stratégia rozvoja kultúry Slovenskej republiky na roky 2014-2020* (Strategy of the development culture in Slovak Republic for the years 2014-2020). Bratislava: Ministerstvo kultúry Slovenskej republiky [online]

[http://www.strategiakultury.sk/sites/default/files/STRATEGIA\\_ROZVOJA\\_KULTURY\\_SR\\_NA\\_ROKY\\_2014-2020.pdf](http://www.strategiakultury.sk/sites/default/files/STRATEGIA_ROZVOJA_KULTURY_SR_NA_ROKY_2014-2020.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> *Národná stratégia pre globálne vzdelávanie na obdobie rokov 2012 – 2016*. Bratislava: Ministerstvo zahraničných vecí a európskych záležitostí. [online]

<https://www.mzv.sk/documents/30297/2649510/National+Strategy+for+Global+Education+for+2012+-+2016>; Suchožová, Eva (2013) *Globálne vzdelávanie – vzdelávanie pre 21. storočie*. Bratislava: Metodicko-pedagogické centrum v Bratislave. [online]

[http://www.globalnevzdelavanie.sk/sites/default/files/e.\\_sucho\\_ov\\_glob\\_lne\\_vzdel\\_vanie\\_vzdel\\_vanie\\_pre\\_21.\\_storo\\_ie.pdf](http://www.globalnevzdelavanie.sk/sites/default/files/e._sucho_ov_glob_lne_vzdel_vanie_vzdel_vanie_pre_21._storo_ie.pdf)



declarative goals of paying due attention to, say ‘global education’ or ‘awareness of the national’ are to be implemented. This shows how the link between global/national culture as a way of being and culture as local people’s artistically valuable production mutually affect each other and reflect the internal ambiguities found in both the policy documents and curricula.

The discourse on people’s interactions seen through different concepts representing collective identity (whether ethnic-national or cultural, or religious) also relates to the question of power. With respect to education this is most visible in the cases of unequal access to education, which results in segregation (see ‘some examples’ in the part ‘Formal educational context’) of Romas who are seen as culturally other (in this case both racially and as bearing signs of an underdeveloped culture). The semantic double referred to above gets enacted in the declaration of integration policy<sup>74</sup> but implementation results in separate school divisions - ‘allocated school branch’ - an educational facility established within the reach of a marginalised community to boost access to education. How such a measure helps to fight the problem of segregation is difficult to understand. What is visible is the majoritarian ‘helping hand’ that however sets all the conditions for its acceptance.<sup>75</sup> Another somewhat similar example of how the power and majoritarian ideas affect education is the curricular unevenness with respect to gymnasial and vocational education (see the ‘Structure and organisation’ part of the ‘Discussion’).

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this report is to provide a review of the national curricula for the secondary school subjects that are related to the goals of the CHIEF project. The particular reviews have been organised according to the school-subjects (namely history, geography, civics, ethics, Slovak language and literature, Hungarian language and literature, religious education, art and culture, and a cross-cutting theme of multicultural education), which is followed by a similarly organised discussion. The method applied was textual analysis. The main aim of the curricula review was to find out how the mutually connected notions of culture, cultural identity, cultural heritage, cultural

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<sup>74</sup> The departure points for integration of marginalised Roma communities of Košice higher territorial unit for the years of 2016-2020). Košice: Košický samosprávny kraj. [online] [https://web.vucke.sk/files/socialne\\_veci/2016/vychodiska-integraciu-mrk-ksk.pdf](https://web.vucke.sk/files/socialne_veci/2016/vychodiska-integraciu-mrk-ksk.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> More on the majoritarian attitudes in the Slovak educational system find Gállová-Kriglerová, E. and Kadlečíková, J. eds. (2009) *Kultúrna rozmanitosť a jej vnímanie žiakmi základných škôl na Slovensku* (Cultural diversity and its perception by the pupils of primary schools in Slovakia). Bratislava: Centrum pre výskum ethnicity a kultúry. See also Huttová, Jana; Gyárfášová, Oľga and Sekulová, Martina (2012) *Segregácia alebo inklúzia Rómov vo vzdelávaní: Voľba pre školy?* (Segregation or inclusion of Romas in educational system. Is there an option for schools?) Bratislava: Open Society Foundation.

diversity and intercultural interactions have been, in the broader context of the ‘idea of Europe’, applied in the curricula and what this application shows about the goals of formal education in Slovakia. In addition, the teaching methods suggested by the curricula in order to teach about these notions have been also observed.

Overall, the contents of the curricula offer an insight into how and whether the current academic debates in the disciplines of history, geography, political science, philosophy, religious and cultural studies translate to the materials that are set to offer guidance for teaching at the secondary educational level. The discussion shows several absences in this regard, namely that the current theories that emphasize viewing culture and its conceptual correlates like cultural identity and cultural heritage from the perspective of process (related to human interactions, mobility, or power-relations) in contrast to essence and its phenomenology find some, but not decisive articulation in the curricula. The curricula also show how and whether the ideas present in the educational political documents are implemented in them. The report shows that the main ideas found in the policy documents (e.g. culture as a way of being and as the artistic output of such a being; orientation on the national/ethnic cultural space; calls for the attention to the cultural spaces of extra-national/ethnic cultures, or global education) (Bagalová, Lehocký, Deák, Karásek, 2018) have been implemented in the curricula, although with various effects.

There are two main types of findings in the report. Those related to the structure and those related to the contents of the curricula. Analysis of the structure shows a questionable pattern of simplifying the gymnasial curricula for the purposes of vocational education. Such simplification results in hierarchization of learning, i.e. in the emplacement of the vocational curricula to an apparently secondary level. Only the geography curriculum displayed a different approach and can be considered as a successful model for a specific curriculum designed particularly for vocational schools.

The contents of the curricula highlight the two basic approaches to the concepts of culture, cultural identity, and cultural heritage. One that limits them to the idea and model of the nation-state and the other that crosses such limits. The limits have been discussed particularly with respect to the boundaries in which the cultural space conceived as national/ethnic have been enclosed. The discussion showed that it is problematic to speak about cultural space when the latter is mapped onto the national/ethnic space. With respect to curricula contents this problem is illustrated by their unclear and further unexplained claim that the teaching about one’s own culture brings a better understanding of other cultures. What has been highlighted as particularly unclear is how the conceptual preservation of the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ helps the better understanding of the latter. Positing a cultural boundary connects also to its extension to the European cultural space and translates to the

explicit and unproblematised Eurocentrism found in the curricula (particularly of history, literature, and civics). It is, however, important to note that the problematic parts of the curricula that articulate the clear-cut boundary replicating the nation-state boundary, as well as essentialize the described realities, or apply essentialized explanations, have been in other parts problematised. This signals that a more dynamic approach to conceptualizations of culture, cultural identity and cultural heritage is not unknown to the authors of the Slovak curricula, although its clear articulation is still hindered.

In addition and with regard to the calls for recognizing other cultures which are present in the curricula, the fact that the state-centred organisation of formal education in Slovakia is not able to prevent segregation of some pupils brings into question how the relation to minorities, or generally to people considered to certain degree as Other vis-à-vis the Slovak ethnic majority, is conceptualised and enacted.

In sum, the curricula highlight several current problems that the Slovak educational environment faces: concrete steps from descriptive/factual education to education in critical thinking; from the declared goals (like understanding other cultures) to their practical implementation in the curricula material, from oft-repeated Eurocentrism to analysis of its reasonability, from segregation to integration of all pupils into equally accessible education.

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## Appendix: List of Reviewed Documents

Nr	Title	Year	Source	Type
1.	Človek a spoločnosť	2010	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/clovek-spolocnost/">http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/clovek-spolocnost/</a>	A general Introduction to the educational field 'People and Society'
2.	Dejepis – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/dejepis_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/dejepis_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of History designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
3.	Občianska náuka – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/obcianska_nauka_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/obcianska_nauka_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Civics designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
4.	Geografia – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/geografia_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/geografia_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Geography designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
5.	Jazyk a kultúra	2010	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/jazyk-komunikacia-gymnazia/">http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/jazyk-komunikacia-gymnazia/</a>	A General Introduction to the educational field 'Language and Communication'
6.	Slovenský jazyk a literatúra – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/sk/svp/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/inovovany-svp-gymnazia-so-stvorrocny-m-patrocnym-vzdelavacim-programom/jazyk-komunikacia/slovensky_jazyk_a_literatura_g_4_5_r_novy.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/sk/svp/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/inovovany-svp-gymnazia-so-stvorrocny-m-patrocnym-vzdelavacim-programom/jazyk-komunikacia/slovensky_jazyk_a_literatura_g_4_5_r_novy.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Slovak Language and Literature designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
7.	Maďarský jazyk a literatúra – gymnázium so štvorročným	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/madarsky_jazyk_a_literatura_g_4_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/madarsky_jazyk_a_literatura_g_4_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Hungarian Language and Literature designed for

	vzdelávacím programom			gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
8.	Človek a hodnoty	2010	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/clovek-hodnoty/">http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/clovek-hodnoty/</a>	A general Introduction to the educational field 'People and Values'
9.	Etická výchova – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/eticka_vychova_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/eticka_vychova_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Ethics designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
10.	Náboženská výchova/náboženstvo – Katolícka cirkev – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_katolicka_cirkev_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_katolicka_cirkev_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Religious education – Catholic Church/Religion designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
11.	Náboženská výchova/náboženstvo – Evanjelická cirkev a. v. – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_evanjelicka_cirkev_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_evanjelicka_cirkev_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Religious education – Evangelical Church a .c. /Religion designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
12.	Náboženská výchova/náboženstvo – Pravoslávna cirkev – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_pravoslavna_cirkev_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_pravoslavna_cirkev_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Religious education/Religion – (Russian) Orthodox Church designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
13.	Náboženská výchova/náboženstvo – Reformovaná kresťanská cirkev na Slovensku – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_reformovana_cirkev_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_reformovana_cirkev_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Religious education/Religion – Reformed Christian Church (Calvinism) designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)



14.	Náboženská výchova/náboženstvo – Cirkev bratská – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_cirkev_bratska_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/nabozenska_vychova_na_bozenstvo_cirkev_bratska_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Religious education – Brethren Church/Religion designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
15.	Umenie a kultúra	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/umenie-kultura/">http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/umenie-kultura/</a>	A general Introduction to the educational field ‘Art and Culture’
16.	Umenie a kultúra – gymnázium so štvorročným a päťročným vzdelávacím programom	2015	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/umenie_a_kultura_g_4_5_r.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program/umenie_a_kultura_g_4_5_r.pdf</a>	Curriculum for the subject of Art and Culture designed for gymnasiums (4 and 5 years programs)
17.	Prierezové témy – multikultúrna výchova	2010	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/prierezove-temy/multikulturna-vychova/">http://www.statpedu.sk/sk/svp/statny-vzdelavaci-program/statny-vzdelavaci-program-gymnazia/prierezove-temy/multikulturna-vychova/</a>	A General Introduction to the cross-cutting theme ‘multicultural education’
18.	Multikultúrna výchova – prierezová téma, príloha ISCED3	2010	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/statny-vzdelavaci-program/multikulturna_vychova_isced3.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/statny-vzdelavaci-program/multikulturna_vychova_isced3.pdf</a>	Instructions for teaching ‘multicultural education’ across the related subjects taught in secondary schools.
19.	Ciele a obsah multikultúrnej výchovy a vzdelávania pre Štátny vzdelávací program ISCED 2 a ISCED 3A	2012	<a href="http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/statny-vzdelavaci-program/mkv_isced_2_3a.pdf">http://www.statpedu.sk/files/articles/dokumenty/statny-vzdelavaci-program/mkv_isced_2_3a.pdf</a>	The Goals and Content of Multicultural Education for State Educational Program ISCED2 and ISCED3A – a guide to multicultural education written both for gymnasiums and vocational schools
20.	Vzdelávací štandard pre študijné odbory, ktorých absolvovaním žiak získa úplné stredné odborné vzdelanie - Dejepis	2016	<a href="http://siov.sk/Documents/17-12-2016/dejepis_USOV.pdf">http://siov.sk/Documents/17-12-2016/dejepis_USOV.pdf</a>	Educational Standard for study of disciplines mastering which a pupil will gain complete vocational education - History
21.	Vzdelávací štandard pre učebné	2016	<a href="http://siov.sk/Documents/15-12-2016/eticka_vychova_NSOV.pdf">http://siov.sk/Documents/15-12-2016/eticka_vychova_NSOV.pdf</a>	Educational Standard for study of disciplines

	odbory, ktorých absolvovaním žiak získa nižšie stredné odborné vzdelanie – Etická výchova			mastering which a pupil will gain lower vocational education - Ethics
22.	Vzdelávací štandard pre študijné odbory, ktorých absolvovaním žiak získa úplné stredné odborné vzdelanie - Geografia	2016	<a href="http://siov.sk/Documents/15-12-2016/geografia_USOV.pdf">http://siov.sk/Documents/15-12-2016/geografia_USOV.pdf</a>	Educational Standard for study of disciplines mastering which a pupil will gain complete vocational education - Geography
23.	Vzdelávací štandard pre učebné odbory, ktorých absolvovaním žiak získa nižšie stredné odborné vzdelanie – Slovenský jazyk a literatúra	2016	<a href="http://siov.sk/Documents/17-12-2016/slovensky_jazyk_a_slovenska_literatura_NSOFV.pdf">http://siov.sk/Documents/17-12-2016/slovensky_jazyk_a_slovenska_literatura_NSOFV.pdf</a>	Educational Standard for study of disciplines mastering which a pupil will gain lower vocational education – Slovak language and literature
24.	Vzdelávací štandard pre učebné odbory, ktorých absolvovaním žiak získa nižšie stredné odborné vzdelanie - Maďarský jazyk a literatúra	2016	<a href="http://siov.sk/Documents/17-12-2016/madarsky_jazyk_a_literatura_NSOFV.pdf">http://siov.sk/Documents/17-12-2016/madarsky_jazyk_a_literatura_NSOFV.pdf</a>	Educational Standard for study of disciplines mastering which a pupil will gain lower vocational education – Hungarian language and literature
25.	Vzdelávací štandard pre učebné odbory, ktorých absolvovaním žiak získa nižšie stredné odborné vzdelanie - Občianska náuka	2016	<a href="http://siov.sk/Documents/17-12-2016/obcianska_nauka_NSOFV.pdf">http://siov.sk/Documents/17-12-2016/obcianska_nauka_NSOFV.pdf</a>	Educational Standard for study of disciplines mastering which a pupil will gain lower vocational education - Civics

## National Curricula Review (Spain) Mariona Ferrer-Fons

### 1. Executive Summary

This report presents a discussion of the secondary education curriculum in Spain, and more specifically in Catalonia, with regard to three particular areas of interest of the CHIEF project: European cultural heritage, cultural knowledge, and participation. The analysis is based on four documents elaborated by the Spanish and the Catalan governments, since the management of the educational system is shared between the Central government and the Autonomous Communities. The Central government first develops a general frame of the school curriculum, then the Catalan government specifies it. Each educational institution further develops the curriculum according to its own pedagogical methods and following the basic criteria and rules set out in the preceding documents. The methodology employed during the analysis of the documents is qualitative content analysis, specifically – inductive coding using NVivo software.

It should be pointed out that the secondary education curriculum in Spain is centred on the development of competencies, and no longer focuses exclusively on the content of subjects, though these continue to feature in it. In compulsory secondary education, the presence of competencies in the curriculum is quite evident, whereas in post-compulsory stages (Vocational Training and *Bachillerato*) it is not so consolidated. Higher importance is given to digital learning and communication skills (including reading habits), the personal and social competences are understood as cross-cutting areas.

In terms of content, with regard to the European dimension and Europe's cultural heritage, Europe is rarely mentioned in the curriculum, mostly – in relation to the Greco-Roman tradition, European art and historical evolution, the social, economic and political systems within the European framework, or the great conflagrations and wars of the twentieth century. The values of tolerance and respect for human rights are also cited as European values to be taught to the pupils. The subjects where references to Europe and its cultural heritage are more present are History and Geography, Citizenship and Values, and Art History (elective in post-compulsory stage). On various occasions, both in compulsory and post-compulsory secondary education, the importance for students to know and internalize the values laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 is mentioned.

Culture is understood as both local and global phenomena (in the case of Art History, European) that helps to understand the present through the understanding of the past.

The relevance of museums as heritage sites, and the need to promote historical memory in order to gain better knowledge of one's own culture, are also mentioned. The value of learning culture and its roots is often mentioned in the curriculum. The notion of “cultural knowledge” appears in many subjects, as well as during the acquisition of several competencies.

As regards cultural identity, the curriculum stresses the need for students to learn about the local Catalan identity that demonstrates itself in the language, traditions, and symbolic references, and, to a lesser extent, also about the Spanish identity (the curriculum of the Central government emphasizes more the Spanish identity, and the Catalan curriculum – the Catalan one), within the broader context of Europe, through its own specific referents and writers, artistic expressions, culture, history, or geography. Teaching the ability to understand diverse cultures is also explicitly mentioned. The curriculum favours an intercultural approach. Specifically, references are often made about how knowledge and respect for identities and minorities that are different from pupils' own are to be acquired through mutual recognition, empathy and knowledge of their distinct characteristics and traditions.

As to the approach to participation, it is conceptualized as the need for students to learn the knowledge and skills necessary to be active citizens of a democratic and global society of XXI century.

Important consistencies can be seen between the curriculum analysed in this report and policies analysed in Deliverable 1.2, probably because in many cases the same governments have been responsible for the development of these documents.

The conclusions we can draw is that the Spanish/Catalan secondary education curriculum states the need for students to have a good knowledge of writing skills, critical capacity, digital competences, literary references, and knowledge of local and national history, though less so – European history. There are few allusions to creative cultural practices to be fostered in which students take an active role, and more mentions about engaging them in a relationship with culture (especially the more classical arts) as users and spectators.

Importantly, the educational institutions have the right to finalize the curricula based on the educational strategies they consider most relevant. This opens the door to an important variation between educational institutions, an aspect that it will be relevant while identifying CHIEF's fieldwork sites.

## 2. Formal Educational Context in Spain/Catalonia

In Spain, the management of the education system is decentralised. Administration is shared between the Central government (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports) and the authorities of the Autonomous Communities (Departments of Education). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports lays out the Government's general guidelines regarding the educational policy and regulates the basic aspects of the system. The regional education authorities develop these regulations further, and have executive and administration competencies for managing the education system within their own territory. The city councils are involved in management of school enrolment and socio-educational activities. Schools have pedagogical, organisational and managerial autonomy to manage their resources and finalize and implement the curriculum. There is also involvement on the part of the educational community (for instance, parents' associations or school councils composed by teachers, administrators, local officials, and parents' representatives) in the schools' (mainly, the public ones) organisation, governance, running, and evaluation.

The Spanish Constitution states that public education is to be provided by two kinds of schools: public schools, which depend entirely on public funding and are of public ownership, and so called "concerted" schools, which receive some public funding, but are owned and managed by private institutions; pupils' families pay fees for the education received in these schools. Many of the concerted schools are owned by Catholic institutions – even though an important part of the pupils do not come from practicing Catholic families. There are also a few private schools with no public support whatsoever.<sup>76</sup> According to the Catalan Department of Education, the distribution of compulsory secondary education schools in Catalonia during the academic year 2017-2018 was the following: 580 public schools (52.8%), 489 "concerted" schools (44.5%), and 30 private schools (2.7%).<sup>77</sup> Existence of both public and concerted schools results in a dual school market situation, with a larger cultural diversity of the pupils of the public schools, while the concerted schools have more pupils coming from the middle and upper classes of Spanish/Catalan background (for instance, see Síndic de Greuges, 2016). Of course, this picture varies a lot depending on each school's characteristics, the public resources at each location, and the degree of demographic and social class diversity at the municipal level. In fact, in some cases, school segregation exists within public schools of the same location (Síndic de Greuges 2016).

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<sup>76</sup> These schools are completely private, receive no public funding, and they have their own curricula. Many of them are international schools and, in some cases, schools that focus on promoting non-traditional educational methods such as the Waldorf system.

<sup>77</sup> Catalan Department of Education, <http://ensenyament.gencat.cat/ca/departament/estadistiques/estadistiques-ensenyament/curs-actual/eso>.

The Spanish educational system is inclusive up until the end of compulsory secondary school (pupils finish this stage at the age of 16). There are schools (in the majority of cases, these are public schools) that have students with disabilities. There still remain a handful of religious concerted/private schools that offer single-gender education, but these are very few.

In Catalan schools, the main language of teaching and communication is Catalan. It is the language of oral and written activities, teaching materials, textbooks, and learning and evaluation activities. Spanish is also taught, and pupils learn both languages perfectly. They also study a foreign language (English being the most common), but they usually do not learn it as well as Catalan or Spanish. In the case of children and teenagers of migrant origin (migration to Catalonia was very important during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century), if they have no knowledge of the Catalan language, they will attend a 'host classroom' (*aula d'acollida*) for the first few months, learning as much Catalan as necessary to allow them to follow classroom activities.

School education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16, and it is free in publicly funded schools. For the children under the age of 6, there is Pre-primary education consisting of two cycles. The first cycle of Pre-primary education (0 to 3 years) is offered through public or private kindergartens, but quite some families prefer to take care of their children at home. The second cycle of Pre-primary education (3 to 6 years of age) is offered by almost all schools, both public and private, but this is not a compulsory educational stage.

Secondary compulsory education is divided into two cycles: 1) 12 to 14 years of age (first cycle), and 2) 14 to 16 years of age (second cycle). During this stage, the average number of students in a class is around 30 in Spanish schools. The certificate given at the end of this stage is the Secondary Education Graduate, or *Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO)* in Spanish. Once the student completes this compulsory stage, s/he can either continue studying the Baccalaureate (*Bachillerato*) cycle or go on to intermediate-level Vocational Training. Only those who finish Baccalaureate or Higher Vocational Training can apply to the university. Hence they have the following options:

1. Bachelor degree, lasting two years. The available subject categories are: Arts, Natural and Health Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Technology. It is the most popular path for those willing to continue their education at the university.
2. Vocational Training, also lasting two years, will allow a student to study only for specific jobs. It is often the choice for those who prefer a less academic path. This stage is known as *Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio* in Spanish. Upon obtaining this qualification, students are allowed to join the workforce in their field, or they can enroll in Higher Vocational Training programme. From the perspective of the CHIEF project, it is important to bear in mind that not all

secondary public schools offer this educational option – in fact, many of the schools included in the CHIEF survey (WP3) do not offer Higher Vocational Training, while for those who offer it, the offer is limited to a few fields of study. The bodies responsible for providing schools with a curriculum are the Central and regional governments, but schools have autonomy in the processes of finalization and implementation of the curriculum (always under supervision by external educational inspectors). In Spain, lessons in secondary schools have been traditionally based on master classes for decades, and this is changing with the new competencies-based approach of the curriculum (explained in the next sections), as master classes are more passive than active, and the role of the student is very different. There exists a list of textbooks approved by the educational authorities, of which schools can choose the textbooks, but, overall, textbooks are being used less and less in the last years. Teachers can use other educational materials (procured by themselves, or other types of books, audio-visual material, lab material, Internet resources, etc.). Thus, there is a lot of diversity between and within schools. The development of new technologies, and an increasing tendency to work for projects, as well as pedagogical approaches in which the student has more active roles (for instance, the case of the network of schools *Escola Nova XXI*)<sup>78</sup>, can partially explain the trend of decreasing use of textbooks. Textbooks are used more in the *Bachillerato* courses, where students who want to go to the University must pass the Aptitude Test for University Access (*PAU*).

### 3. Method

#### 3.1 Selection

We have selected four documents, shown in the Appendix. Two of them are Central government-level documents (documents 1 and 4) and two are regional-level documents (documents 2 and 3). The *Generalitat*, the regional governing institution, in accordance with the provisions of article 131.3.c of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia, shares a competency for establishing the study programmes for secondary education, including how the curriculum is arranged. The curriculum attains its most developed stage at the regional level, but we have thought it necessary to include the Central-level documents as well, as they establish the common framework for all Spanish regions.

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<sup>78</sup> *Escola Nova XXI* is an alliance of schools and other public and civil society institutions for an advanced educational system. It responds to UNESCO's call for the participation of all sectors in an inclusive process to improve education. In fact, the Department of Education of the Generalitat of Catalonia stated in December, 2018 that all schools should follow the path of teaching transformation lead by the *Escola Nova XXI*. For more information on this experience, see: <https://www.escolanova21.cat/english>.



The documents have been accessed from the websites of the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports and the Catalan Education Department. Since we are considering interviewing during our fieldwork students of the ages 16 to 18 who are attending vocational training, we have also considered documents related to this stage. However, the vocational education curriculum is very technical. There are no longer such subjects as history, literature, civic education, philosophy, or arts. Hence, we have decided only to include the general framework at the Spanish level (Document 4).

Within the context of our reality, a multidimensional understanding of the curriculum is quite in order. The definition of curriculum used by the educational authorities was established by the Organic Law 2/2006 of May 3<sup>rd</sup> on Education (*LOE*). This law defined a curriculum as “the set of objectives, basic competencies, contents, pedagogical methods, and evaluation criteria for each of the different cycles” (art. 6). It is the same definition that the Catalan government used in 2008 in Document 3. Later on, in 2014, the Spanish authorities used a much vaguer definition of curriculum: “the regulation of the elements that determine the teaching and learning processes for each of the educational stages” (Document 1). In view of this complexity, we have decided to focus exclusively on competencies and contents for our analysis of the curriculum, instead of the evaluation process, for example.

As regards grades, we concentrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades of ESO, *Bachillerato*, and Vocational Training. It should be kept in mind that teachers in each school and course have to follow the legal prescriptions set by the Central and regional laws (the documents that we have analysed), but they are free to arrange the contents and select the types of material to use.

### 3.2 Review

We used NVivo software for the content analysis of the curricula presented in the four sources mentioned above. The coding was carried out mainly by one person, although another researcher from the CHIEF team coded, at the beginning of the process, some parts of the documents of the Catalan curriculum to ensure consistency. The two researchers regularly discussed the coding process. The approach involved looking for references on participation, European and local cultural heritages, cultural knowledge, cultural literacy, identity, and citizenship. We analysed the data inductively. Finally, it should be noted that among the four sources analysed, as was expected, the two texts that offer more information relevant to the purpose of this report are the *ESO* and *Bachillerato* curricula developed by the Catalan government (documents 2 and 3 of the Appendix). The other two documents elaborated by the Central government are much

shorter and define only a few general points. The document that adds almost no information to the analysis is the one that deals with Vocational Training (document 4).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Introduction

In this section we present the results of our analysis of the secondary education curriculum in Spain, and more specifically in Catalonia, from the perspective of the research objectives of the CHIEF project. The analysis focuses on interpreting how the curriculum makes references to three dimensions or areas of interest:

- the European cultural heritage and its relationship with the Catalan and Spanish local cultural heritages, centring on cultural identity and diversity;
- how cultural knowledge and the dominant concept of culture are understood and presented in the curriculum; and
- how participation and learning-by-doing is ensured among students.

Before presenting the main results, it is important to bear in mind that the curriculum in Spain, and, more specifically, in Catalonia, is based on competencies. In other words, rather than emphasising the contents and memorisation, the proposal favours the learning of competencies. This approach is much more evident in compulsory secondary education (known as *ESO*) than in Vocational Training or in *Bachillerato*, the latter two being post-compulsory secondary educational stages, as was explained above. In the case of *ESO*, it is explicitly stated that the curriculum should contribute to the achievement of key competencies, and it is for this purpose that the *ESO* curriculum includes all of the basic competencies of the subjects grouped by areas of knowledge, contents, pedagogical methods, and evaluation criteria related to this stage. In this approach, basic competencies become end-of-stage learning objectives. Consequently, the curricula of different courses are structured according to the following structure: the basic competences, the content and the criteria of evaluation. The fields of knowledge are groupings of subjects that share basic competences, contents and methodological orientations.

In all analysed texts, it is expected that key competencies will develop the ability to use knowledge and skills associated with different kinds of knowledge, in an interactive way, which implies a distinct understanding, reflection, and discernment with regard to each contextualized situation. This understanding, once students attain it, can be applied to other life situations. There are several competencies that are to be understood as cross-cutting. First, there is the communicative competency as a basic factor in the development and acquisition of key competencies in all subjects. In this context – and

closely related to cultural literacy mechanisms – reading and consolidating a reading habit is a shared responsibility related to every subject in secondary education. Secondly, there is the acquisition of digital competency and the consequent responsible exercise of citizenship, which involves awareness by pupils’ of their own digital identity and that of others, safeguarding personal data, and the use of images. Lastly, several competencies in the personal and social spheres are referred to as cross-cutting, such as working in groups cooperatively, initiative, creativity, critical thinking, empathy and understanding of the others, tolerance, and so forth.

The example of secondary compulsory education (*ESO*) helps understand the approach of the curriculum. The *ESO* curriculum groups the various subjects into areas of knowledge that are expected to achieve certain competencies, as shown in Table 1. In the last column, the relevance of different subjects to the CHIEF’s research questions has been assessed considering the amount of nodes and quotes in our data.

**Table 1. Subjects and areas of knowledge of the ESO curriculum in Catalonia**

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Proximity to ‘cultural literacy’/ CHIEF interests</b>
1.Linguistic	Literature and Catalan language Literature and Spanish language Aranès language Foreign languages Latin	Fair relevance
2.Mathematics	Mathematics Applied academic mathematics	No relevance
3.Science-technology	Natural sciences: physics and chemistry Natural sciences: biology and geology Natural sciences: applied to professional activity Technology Information and communication technologies (computer science) Scientific culture Physics and chemistry, and sciences applied to professional activity Biology and geology, and sciences applied to professional activity Information and communication technologies and other technologies (information technology)	Little relevance
4.Social	Social sciences: geography and history Classical culture	High relevance

	Entrepreneurship Economy Economy and entrepreneurship	
5. Artistic	Music Visual and plastic arts education Performing arts and dance	Fair relevance
6. Physical education	Physical education	No relevance
7. Culture and values	Culture and ethical values Philosophy Religion	Fair relevance
8. Digital	Cross-curricular in all subjects	Fair relevance
9. Individual and social	Cross-curricular in all subjects	High relevance

The analysis of the curricula will be presented below focusing on CHIEF project's three main areas of interest: European cultural heritage, cultural knowledge and participation.

#### 4.2. European cultural heritage

Explicit references to Europe as a cultural reference and to its cultural heritage are not very abundant in comparison with the weight given to local history and cultural heritage in the curriculum. However, there are several findings that are worth highlighting. In the first place, the subject matters in which the curriculum states that students should acquire a certain depth of knowledge about Europe and its cultural heritage are History and Geography, Art History (optional in *Bachillerato*), and Classical Culture (optional in *Bachillerato*). In the curriculum sections corresponding to Literature, Foreign languages, Culture, and Ethical Values (compulsory secondary education) there are also explicit references to Europe as a cultural basis, but in a more residuary way.

Secondly, the concept of cultural heritage as included in the secondary compulsory education curriculum is explicitly defined as follows: "Cultural heritage is a collective heritage and a valuable resource that extends from the past to the future, building relations between the different generations and helping to configure identities. In addition, it is as an anchor for memory. Every element that becomes a cultural heritage must turn into a profitable economic resource in order to be able to guarantee its conservation, preservation, and dissemination and to foster the economic development of the area." A concept that is related to historical memory, and also, somehow

unexpectedly, to economic development, is thus presented. Moreover, the pedagogical role of the heritage, as it appears in the curriculum, has the additional goal of helping pupils understand current societies as a historical process. Cultural heritage is understood as a dynamic concept which is not solely relevant for the historical past, and in which pupils should learn “to value the cultural heritage as an inheritance received from the past, to defend its preservation, and to encourage future generations to make it their own.” It is also mentioned that it can help strengthen the culture and values of democratic citizenship, promote the role of cohesion and consensus in the construction of identity, and be used as an instrument for cultural renewal. Finally, the curriculum mentions the need for working on the defence, protection, and dissemination of the historical and artistic heritage, in reference to the local level, where museums are presented as the main institutions in the field.

Speaking of the third finding, how European cultural heritage is understood and presented in these documents and what connections are found to exist with the local one (in particular, Spanish/Catalan cultural references and heritages) has to do with a positive understanding not only of the closer cultural environment, but also with the issue of how the role of Europe is seen at the historic, geographic, political, economic, or social levels. Europe is presented as reference framework for the development of Catalan and Spanish democratic political and economic systems. There is a lack of critical vision of the role of Europe in history.

In several cases, a specific topic (for instance, in the geographical, political, or economic areas) is mentioned within an ordered framework that goes from the smaller to the bigger areas: Catalonia, Spain, Europe, and the world. This may imply a sense of integration for students. Catalonia and Spain are studied as a part of Europe and the world, hence, they are part of the European heritage, as is mentioned several times more or less explicitly, although this implies a combined focus on the local and particular Catalan cultural heritage (in the Catalan documents). For instance, in the *ESO* curriculum for History and Geography it is formulated that “students should analyse different models of political, economic and territorial organisation, and the inequalities that they generate, in order to assess how they affect people's lives and make proposals for taking action. To achieve this, they must have basic and relevant knowledge about the model of political and economic organisation of our country, the countries within our broader sphere (European Union), and the models of other countries and international organisations.”

Coherently with the above, Geography in *Bachillerato* adopts the working perspective of a regional geography where Catalonia and Spain are part of Europe and of the world. To quote its words, “today, places and regions can no longer be considered as unique, nor unique realities, and cannot be studied in isolation: the globalization and

cosmopolitanism that characterize today's society make it necessary for a recurring game of combining multiple scales in order to understand and interpret the complex combination of geographical factors.” Catalonia and Spain are seen as integrated inside an increasingly globalized world, and numerous political, economic, financial, social, and cultural decisions are taken on a supranational scale, often within the framework of the European Union, of which the Spanish State is a member.

As to the topics studied, the History curriculum (in both *ESO* and *Bachillerato*) includes the following in relation to the European historical and cultural legacy: the social, political, and economic evolution of Europe in the Modern Era; the evolution of the different monarchies; the Protestant Reform and the Counter-Reformation; the religious conflicts and the understanding of the world economy, and of Europe in particular; other historical processes such as the transition from feudalism to liberalism in Western Europe; the Industrial Revolution in England and its impact on the rest of Europe; the liberal revolutions of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; and the workers' movements. Moreover, in the last year of compulsory education, and more extensively during *Bachillerato*, the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the main events in Europe during that period are studied in depth: the First and Second World Wars; the interwar period (1918-1939); the Russian Revolution; the causes and consequences of World War II and the Holocaust; the Cold War and the process of decolonization. Finally, the European Union and its institutions are studied, almost as the final part of the common history, giving particular stress to the incorporation of Spain in the EU (1986). A common approach is to understand history by looking at the existing links between the past and the present, as well as the changes and continuities from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Europe.

### **4.3. Cultural knowledge**

Several mentions are made in the curriculum about the learning of culture and its roots. Cultural knowledge appears in many subject areas, as well as in the acquisition process of several competencies. More specifically, regarding the socio-cultural dimension, in *ESO* it is said that pupils should “understand and value our world according to the cultural roots that have shaped it, and configure the way of living in and understanding the world according to the system of values and the major stories that penetrate the diverse fields of culture: language, science, law, religion, the arts, etc.” Some of the key contents mentioned in this field bear relation to the Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian and the Enlightenment period worldviews of: a) the world, b) human beings, c) history, and d) the divinity. Although there are references to other cultures or worldviews (Buddhism and Islam, for instance), Euro-centrism is quite noticeable.

As regards the artistic and cultural dimension, in Social Sciences (History and Geography) and the Arts we see that an understanding of culture is being developed with relation to a sense of belonging and the cultural heritage: “Learning that relates to the cultural dimension has the objective of making known, understanding, interpreting and critically evaluating different cultural and artistic manifestations, using them as a source of enrichment and enjoyment, and considering them as part of the cultural heritage of the people.” This dimension encompasses the understanding and analysis of the cultural fact embodied by Spain and Catalonia, the contributions from other societies and civilizations, the educational value of the cultural heritage, and the enrichment that has paved the way to exchanges with different realities and worldviews.

The curriculum also raises the need for pupils to look on cultural and religious diversity as a wealth for societies, and to adopt a certain cultural relativism. In Geography and History, the study of the demographic, economic, social, political, and cultural features of the Catalan, Spanish, European, and world societies is mentioned as forming part of this way of thinking. Students should learn not only what migrations are, but also how they should be understood. Within this framework, concepts such as personal and collective identities and belonging and social cohesion are worked upon. The conceptualisation of cultural identity and diversity under an intercultural approach appears relatively often in the curriculum. Cultural studies and intercultural education have their origin precisely in a vindication of cultural diversity in the face of the systematic deprivation of rights affecting cultural minorities. Intercultural education “is based on diversity as a positive value, not centred on the difference and the static nature of cultural identities, but on the process of permanent dialogue between individuals and groups” (Carbó, 2015: 15). For instance, in compulsory secondary education (*ESO*), it is said that cultural diversity and identity should be taught with the purpose of making pupils learn “to live and inhabit in a complex and plural world, (...) it is necessary to create cohesive communities where it is possible to respect one’s own identity and value diversity as a general wealth. This objective is only possible if students are trained to identify and reject irrational and discriminatory behaviours and attitudes against people and groups, if they overcome stereotypes and prejudices, and if civic attitudes are adopted in social life.” Within this framework is argued the importance of paying special attention to gender discrimination and cultural, religious, and social minorities.

In order to develop attitudes of active respect towards cultural and other diversities, the curriculum focuses, among other aspects, on the development of an interpersonal dimension. Specifically, the need for promoting attitudes of active respect and tolerance towards other people, cultures, options, and beliefs should be worked upon in the classroom. Key contents in this area are: human dignity and respect; considerations on equality; cultural, political, religious and other pluralities; diversity of identities;



differences and their contexts; universal values and shared values; the areas of action of power and violence; and attitudes of tolerance, solidarity and commitment, as well as their external manifestations. Apart from this, the competencies as regards the geographical dimension “must make it possible for citizens to adapt to the spaces where their daily lives are carried out and to appreciate landscapes and cultures that are different from their own.”

This intercultural approach that is present in the curriculum makes combined references to the formation of one’s own thoughts, the historical conscience, and the construction of one’s own identity. As mentioned several times in History and Geography, “the fact of historical thinking implies knowing the members of a group with whom a history, a territory, traditions, and a certain vision of the world are shared, open to others.” This competency also implies understanding of and respect for plurality and social and cultural diversity within the framework of democratic institutions.

The curriculum also makes explicit references to the artistic and cultural dimensions as competencies to be learnt. The artistic dimension must be taught because “it also implies an attitude of appreciation of creativity in the expression of ideas, experiences or feelings through different artistic media, or criticism against power, as well as a recognition of the different forms acquired by the so-called popular traditional arts, which provide the best knowledge about what were once the most widespread customs, values, and beliefs and have become a sign of a collective identity.” Students should be able to develop a competency for understanding cultural manifestations and actions and relate them to their creators and their age, and to interpret the various worldviews and their purpose. Such competency “refers to the knowledge of the different cultural manifestations and the abilities that must be developed in order to be able to interpret, appreciate, and enjoy them.”

Despite this, a focus on local identity is still noticeable. In the process of learning cultural competencies, it is said, pupils must learn to “value their own cultural expressions, to promote the construction of personal identity in a global and diverse world, and to value the cultural manifestations of Catalan identity in the framework of a global and interrelated world.” This competency is intended to promote an attitude that will encourage the implicit creativity involved in the expression of ideas, experiences or feelings through different means, languages, and resources, such as music, literature, cinema, the plastic and scenic arts, or the different forms acquired by popular culture.

According to the curriculum, the learning of foreign languages during secondary education has two main objectives, which have to do with cultural knowledge and learning. First, students should be able to critically value different arts and cultural

expressions pertaining to other social and linguistic communities, in order to gain a better understanding of other cultures. And second, students should appreciate the richness of the world's multilingual and multicultural reality, as well as the consequences that this language diversity has on business, trade, sciences, personal relationships, and so forth.

With respect to the subject of Literature (particularly at *Bachillerato* level), what is highlighted is the consolidation of autonomy in reading and the appreciation of literature as a discipline that can be part of the future daily life of pupils as adults. In *Bachillerato*, students should get acquainted with literary texts from other worlds, times, and cultures by reading complete works and fragments representative of the production of different authors, movements, and periods. There are abundant references to foreign classical literature (most of the European literature) from Classical Greek to medieval, and from Renaissance to contemporary literature. In the curriculum are explicitly mentioned the following authors (writers of novels, poetry, or drama), many of whom populate the European context: Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Montaigne, Voltaire, Rousseau, Schiller, Goethe, Hölderlin, Leopardi, Baudelaire, Stendhal, Balzac, Zola, Flaubert, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Dickens, Stevenson, E. Brontë, H. James, Poe, Melville, Conrad, Mark Twain, Valéry, Rilke, T. S. Eliot, Pessoa, Kavafis, Proust, Kafka, Joyce, Th. Mann, Faulkner, V. Woolf, Ibsen, Chekhov, Brecht, and Beckett.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Latin and Greek are optional subjects in non-compulsory secondary education (*Bachillerato*), and nowadays few students take them. In any case, beyond all lexical and grammatical knowledge, in the curriculum there are no explicit references to aspects we might associate with cultural literacy or cultural knowledge.

#### **4.4. Participation**

The concept of participation, and of all that it entails as a learning process, appears very often in the curriculum, especially under the competencies approach. However, it features more evidently in the curricula of *ESO* and *Bachillerato*, and much less so in the general framework document intended for Vocational Training. Our main interest lies in cultural participation, given the CHIEF's research questions, but here we discuss how participation is dealt with in general – that is, how it is referred to in the curriculum – since cultural participation can be understood as a specific dimension of a broader way of understanding participation. The elements of participation that appear most frequently in our analysis of the curricula are the following.

First, a conceptualization of participation in which students have to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become active citizens of a democratic and global society of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The *ESO* curriculum states: “The exercise of citizenship means having the skills to live in society by exercising, in an autonomous manner, the rights and duties that belong to a democratic society and undertake its defence in order to help generate such values as cooperation, solidarity, commitment, and participation. Thus, initiatives for planning, decision-making, organisation, and assumption of responsibilities are fostered, assuming progressively and reflectively the exercise of their freedom, rights, and individual and collective duties in a climate of respect towards other people.” As regards contents, the students should learn about how the democratic system works; citizen participation mechanisms; the challenges of current democracies; human rights; situations of inequality and discrimination; and peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. In fact, references to peace culture as a learning subject appear on many occasions in the curriculum.

Moreover, the learning of participation is also linked to what is needed in order to be a critical and active citizen, as well as the development of personal identity and belonging. In the part about citizenship as a value for students to learn in *ESO* we find the following: “The competencies pertaining to this dimension contribute to the formation of a democratic, critical, and committed citizenry through the improvement of society and the environment, insofar as this favours the exercise of the rights, duties, and responsibilities that derive from the human rights. Democratic awareness is enhanced by the development of critical, creative, and alternative thinking in social action and commitment; and this is also the case with personal identity and the feeling of belonging.” It should be noted that much mention is made, both in compulsory and post-compulsory secondary education, about the need for students to know and internalize the values laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Secondly, in order to be able to participate in society, we know that certain attitudes and skills must be acquired. There are two groups of skills that appear consistently in the curriculum regarding various competencies and subject matters. On the one hand, students have to learn critical thinking and deliberation. In this context, the curriculum raises the need for students to form themselves proper criteria for relevant social problems in order to develop critical thinking. More specifically, the *ESO* curriculum states that “21<sup>st</sup> century citizens must be able to respond to the problems of a complex society, and for this reason an essential part of their training must contribute to constructing a critical thinking that allows them, based on the knowledge acquired and information from different sources, to analyse systematically, critically, and reflectively the facts and the social phenomena, and thus form their own well-founded opinions and become responsible and committed citizens, both individually and collectively.” To that

purpose, interpretation, argumentation, a rich vocabulary, communication skills, deliberation, capacity to critically analyse several sources and so forth, should be learnt by pupils. On the other hand, it is stated several times that students should be able to work in teams and in a cooperative and creative way, for the purpose, among other things, of promoting their active participation as citizens with a civic-commitment attitude, in order to improve the democratic quality of our society.

Thirdly, participation is also mentioned in the curriculum in relation to the promotion of certain values and attitudes of openness to dialogue, of respect and listening to others, of empathy and assertiveness, and of anti-discrimination attitudes. Specific examples are the study of women's reality and their presence in history, and the existence of gender inequality, and also the understanding of collective and personal identities and of other identities, as well as the sense of belonging. In the case of *Bachillerato*, the subjects of philosophy and citizenship (the latter being an elective subject that was introduced in the curriculum in the last decade) are intended to develop the social and civic competencies that relate to participation and the social dimension of human behaviour, "namely, living in a globalized society, to be understanding towards others in a world where the exchange and mobility of people involves contact with people of different physical condition, both mental and cultural, to receive training in the democratic values and to exercise these constantly in practice."

## 5. Discussion

After having analysed how the topics of European/local cultural heritage, cultural knowledge, and participation feature in the curriculum for secondary education in Catalonia and Spain, in this section we will discuss the findings as considered from two main perspectives. On the one hand, the role of the competencies-centred approach of the curriculum will be scrutinized, as well as its main goals in terms of learning life-relevant skills, attitudes, and behaviours useful for living in society, thinking critically and become an engaged citizen. On the other hand, we will compare findings of the curriculum review with the main findings of the Catalan/Spanish cultural and educational policies presented in the policy review (Rovira, Ferrer-Fons, 2018), and find out any (in)consistency between them.

To start with, one first reflexion is that the curriculum is quite ambitious and full of good intentions with respect to the development of pupils' social, cultural, and digital competencies, as well as values. Achievement of life-learning goals such as interculturalism, participation, respect, empathy, and tolerance is a very challenging task, if we consider our social reality and the experiences and resources of many

teachers. Competency in the fields of communication, digital knowledge, cooperation between students, fostering of creativity, and critical thinking requires a lot of effort (and knowledge and experience) on the teachers' part, as well as support in the form of different kinds of resources. As was mentioned before, lessons in secondary schools have been traditionally based on master classes for decades, and this will all change with the new competencies-based approach, as master classes are more passive than active, and the role of the student changes.

In the aspects such as the promotion of participation and the learning of the skills and values for shaping future critical and participatory citizens, as well as intercultural learning and tolerance towards minorities, the curriculum appears to be progressive and very ambitious in scope. Here again, the application of the curriculum to the educational reality is much more complex. Catalan/Spanish society is not that much engaged (see, for instance, Ferrer-Fons, 2005; Morales and Mota 2006), nor are the teachers accustomed to work in the way proposed by the curriculum. In fact, master classes continue to be very frequent in many schools, although there is an ongoing process of pedagogical transformation, with examples of good practices cropping up, such as in Catalonia's *Escola Nova XXI* mentioned above.

Of course, it must also be taken into account that the secondary compulsory education curriculum is relatively new, especially the approach that focuses on competencies; and research about how this approach may impact the acquisition of values and shaping behaviour of the students is still scarce. The inclusion of key competencies in the curriculum for general education in Spain was an important novelty brought about by the 2006 Education Act. Although the term had already been in use in the field of vocational training for a long time, only in the last decade was it gradually transferred to the vocabulary of general education. The concerns expressed by the international organisations in charge of evaluating educational results was one of the prominent factors that explain such a development. In 2006, the European Union recommended to its member states the incorporation of key competencies into their curriculum for general education. Once they were incorporated in the curriculum for primary and secondary education following the requirement of the Education Act, the main regulations that shaped the national core curriculum were developed. Through this process, they indeed became an integral part of the common core curriculum for Spanish schools. The focus on key competencies implies a revision of other components of the curriculum, namely that of teaching and learning methodologies and students' assessment. Moreover, it forces to pay special attention to non-formal learning and to the impact of school organisation and climate (Tiana Ferrer, 2011). In this sense, it is important to notice that in the Spanish and Catalan case, the educational institutions develop the curriculum which forms part of its educational project. The organisation of

classroom activities and the operation of schools, the forms of relationship and communication established among the educational community, and also the relationship with the environment, all these may or may not contribute to the acquisition of key competencies.

Having said that, it is true that the competencies approach can be an opportunity for engaging in more practical ways of learning, and for developing skills that can be useful for increasing cultural literacy. In this respect, we may quote the PhD dissertation of Carbó (2015). She posits that the focus on competencies in the new school curriculum opens an opportunity for cultural education. The competencies defined as cross-sectional are those that are directly related to cultural diversity and education. They include, among others, artistic and cultural competencies, as well as communication competencies. This represents a change, since cultural education was not seen in a cross-sectional way in Spain and Catalonia, where it had often been strictly associated with purely artistic competency.

We turn now to recounting the main findings presented in the previous section, in comparison with the Catalan/Spanish cultural and educational policies discussed in the policy review (Rovira, Ferrer-Fons, 2018), so that we may analyse the degree of (in)consistency between them. In this regard, the two sets of documents are consistent in many of the fields that we have discussed, particularly in the curriculum's intercultural education approach and the policies related to the preservation of historical memory and cultural legacy.

The strong emphasis on intercultural diversity and the acceptance of minority groups and other cultures in the curriculum is in coherence with some policy actions related to these issues. For instance, as mentioned in the Spanish/Catalan policy review (Rovira, Ferrer-Fons, 2018), on the one hand, the policy documents highlight the importance attached to promoting the Spanish/Catalan culture. This is outlined in the Spanish Constitution and reflected in projects that promote the Catalan language and culture. At the same time, the need for an “intercultural framework” is highlighted and many documents advocate the importance of community cohesion among people from diverse backgrounds.

In the policy texts (especially those of the Catalan government), national identity is the dominant paradigm (Rovira, Ferrer-Fons, 2018). It is true that the need to respect and integrate students from diverse cultural backgrounds is considered, but it is difficult to see how this can be operationalized within the classroom, beyond a theoretical discourse about respect for different cultures. With regard to the cultural content imparted by the school, there is not clear commitment to culture as a field of creation for the young people themselves. In the Catalan policy documents analysed, culture is



seen very unidirectionally, based on very ethereal principles and very general values: democracy, freedom, solidarity, respect (Rovira, Ferrer-Fons, 2018). This, again, is reflected in the curriculum.

The official Catalan documents define the Catalan culture as a national culture, with its own symbolic references approved by the Parliament of Catalonia (the flag, the hymn, and the national day), which are under the same legal protection as the national symbols of Spain. Cultural heritage is understood, then, as one that belongs to a national culture with its own language and its own symbols. At the same time, there is a recognition of the cultural diversity of Catalan society, which includes the Spanish language and culture, preserved by the institutional framework of the State. There is no specific policy for the Spanish language in Catalonia, as it is understood that this is to be developed by the State itself, insofar as it is the official language of Spain, known by all citizens. In the analysis of the curriculum, the educational discourse combines the affirmation of the Catalan national identity (and to lesser extent, the Spanish culture) with a respect towards cultural diversity and non-Catalan national identities.

In the period under study, new communication technologies have been incorporated into the tools that are likely to be used at schools as part of the learning processes and training for self-expression. According to the Catalan Law on Education: “Apart from their specific treatment in some of the subject areas of the cycle, reading comprehension, oral and written expression, audio-visual communication, Information Technology and Communication, entrepreneurship, and civic and constitutional education will be cross-sectional in all of the subjects”.<sup>79</sup> The new communication technologies and the need for pupils to learn cross-sectional digital competencies are clearly mentioned in the four curricula documents analysed. In the official Catalan policy texts, emphasis is placed on learning communication and information technologies, which are considered fundamental for training people in today's society and for their future employment. This is one of the goals of the curriculum, and is mentioned several times in the introductory part when referring to the general goals of secondary education.

Another aspect that has been incorporated since 2007 into education is the memory of the recent past, understood as a collective heritage. Following the 2007 Law on the Democratic Memorial (Law 13/2007, of October 31, on the Democratic Memorial), history and memory became a relevant part of cultural literacy education. The Democratic Memorial is an institution that works for the recovery and historical reparation of the victims of the Civil War and Francoism, and promotes the knowledge about the Political Transition in Catalonia. The organisation's work has important

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<sup>79</sup> See the Organic Law 8, 2013, for the Improvement of Educational Quality.



educational aspects at schools. In Catalonia, pupils visit many exhibitions organised by the Democratic Memorial.

As mentioned in the Deliverable 1.2, reading is one of the instruments for the cultural socialization of the population in Spain, especially of children and young people. In the Reading Plan of Catalonia 2020, reading is placed within the context of the “shock waves” of the European cultural transformations. According to the findings of the PISA report (mentioned in the Reading Plan of Catalonia 2020), compared to 2012, reading comprehension of the Catalan students has diminished in 2015. The Reading Plan’s goal is to help increase the reading comprehension of the Catalan students. The laws and plans for the promotion of reading emphasize the role of schools, holding them responsible for the attainment of the objectives that involve the promotion of reading habits through their libraries and curricula. The importance of reading and the consolidation of a reading habit is also mentioned in introductory parts of all of the documents analysed for this report.

The policy documents also mention that museums are among the institutions that “extend” culture beyond the school, or just accompany formal education as a complement. A local museum is understood to be a resource at the service of a community, by means of which the latter can express itself culturally. Museums are conceived as active spaces of culture and education, which at the same time serve to preserve “the heritage and memory of the country” (Plan of Museums of Catalonia 2030). Museums are considered under a similar light in the curriculum, and presented as reference institutions.

Last but not least, the principle of taking part in the cultural life is also mentioned in the policy documents, and it can be considered that a highly inclusive component is expressed in the measure that promotes the inclusion of those specific sectors of the population that, for different reasons (age, social class), have been excluded from access to culture or are not being recognized, as is the case with women. While the curriculum often mentions that students should learn about participation to become engaged citizens, it has no references to participation in the cultural life. Students should be familiar with various artworks and be able to understand those, but the approach found in the curriculum focuses more on their role as cultural consumers than that of participants or creators.

## **6. Conclusion**

In this report, we have offered an analysis of the curricula for secondary education in Catalonia with special emphasis on how three broad aspects are presented: the

European cultural heritage, and how it relates to local heritage and history; the references to the role of culture and the cultural knowledge that students have to acquire; and the importance of cultural and civic participation and related skills. The first conclusion is that the competencies-centred approach of the curriculum and its ambitions in terms of life-learning skills, attitudes, and behaviours present a challenge in its practical application, but this is also an opportunity. It is an important shift of paradigm in the Catalan secondary education, and there are yet no studies that can evaluate its effect on the pupils.

Secondly, Europe is studied as a cultural, geographical, political, and economic referent, leading to the curriculum's Eurocentrism. However, Europe, and the areas of it that are studied, is shown almost always in relation to Catalonia (and to a lesser extent, Spain), and not so much as an entity on its own – the main exceptions being a few historical events and processes, and major writers. The subject areas that have the most references to Europe's cultural heritage are History, Geography, History of Art, Classical Culture, and Catalan and Spanish Literatures.

Thirdly, there are several mentions in the curriculum about the learning of culture and its roots. Cultural knowledge appears in many subject areas, as well as in the process of acquisition of several competencies. Moreover, the curriculum states that students must be familiar with the community in which they live – the Catalan one in our case, – and be able to integrate in this community's life, but this is combined with a strong plea for intercultural education and respect towards other communities and identities.

In terms of the relationship between the curriculum and the policies analysed (Rovira, Ferrer-Fons, 2018) at the cultural and educational level, there is an important consistency between the approaches, probably because in many cases the same governments have been responsible for the development of these documents. Importantly, the educational institutions have the autonomy to develop the curriculum further, based on the educational strategies they consider most relevant, and this is something that opens the door to an important variation between the schools, an aspect that will be relevant for identification of schools for CHIEF's fieldwork.

Lastly, it is important to highlight the fact that the curriculum does establish the framework for the teaching approaches and the contents used for secondary education, but there are other factors affecting the implementation of the curriculum in the classrooms. To mention some of these factors: the social and economic context in which each school operates, the tension between public-oriented education and private education, and the characteristics of each educational institution having an influence on how the curriculum prescriptions are implemented in the given school.

The overall conclusion we can draw is that the Catalan secondary education curriculum states the need for students to have good writing skills, strong reading habits, critical capacity, digital literacy, literary references, and knowledge of regional and national (Spanish) history, though less so – the European one. There are few allusions to creative cultural practices to be fostered in which students take an active role, and more expectations of their cultural engagement (especially when it comes to classical arts) as users and spectators.

## 7. References

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Tiana Ferrer, A. (2011) "Análisis de las competencias básicas como núcleo curricular en la educación obligatoria española." *Bordón* 63 (1): 63-75.

## Appendix: List of Reviewed Documents

Nr	Title	Year	Source	Type
1.	Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de diciembre, por el que se establece el currículo básico de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato	2014	Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (Ministry of Culture, Education and Sports)	Spanish State, curriculum, <i>ESO</i> and <i>Bachillerato</i> , ages 12-18
2.	Decret 187/2015, de 25 d'agost, d'ordenació dels ensenyaments de l'educació secundària obligatòria	2015	Departament d'ensenyament, XTEC-Xarxa Telemàtica Educativa de Catalunya <a href="http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/">http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/</a> (Catalan Education Departament)	Catalan government, curriculum, <i>ESO</i> , ages 12-15
3.	Decret 142/2008, de 15 de juliol, pel qual s'estableix l'ordenació dels ensenyaments de batxillerat.	2008	Departament d'ensenyament, XTEC-Xarxa Telemàtica Educativa de Catalunya <a href="http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/">http://xtec.gencat.cat/ca/curriculum/</a> (Catalan Education Department)	Catalan government, curriculum, <i>Bachillerato</i> , ages 16-18
4.	Real Decreto 1147/2011, de 29 de julio, por el que se establece la ordenación general de la formación profesional del sistema educativo	2011	Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte (Ministry of Culture, Education and Sports)	Spanish State, Vocational Training (age 16 and over)

**National Curricula Review (Turkey)** Ayşe Berna Uçarol, Ayça Oral, Saim Buğra Kurban, Hülya Mete, Ece Esmer

## 1. Executive Summary

In this study, which examines how the concepts “cultural literacy” and “European cultural heritage” are involved in secondary education curriculum<sup>80</sup>, the content analysis of the curriculum is performed. In the curriculum, subjects that are both weighted and left behind are carefully determined. Thus it is tried to define the general perspective of the curriculum. In Turkey, formal education system is conducted by The Ministry of National Education in a centralized way. The ministry is therefore the only authority in the preparation and implementation of the curriculum.

For curriculum content analysis, 8 curricula for 2018-2019 academic year were selected from the official website of The Ministry of National Education. The content of these selected curricula is generally composed of history, culture, cultural heritage and identity. The selected curricula were coded, and main and sub-themes were defined as a result of the coding process. The guidelines in the standard format at the introduction of each curriculum highlight three concepts: basic skills, competences and values. These concepts are presented as the pillars of the recent educational approach. In the curricula, the issues related to the European cultural heritage are discussed more indirectly and in a thematic way. In fact, sometimes in the guidelines, which explain the way the courses should be given to students, it is stated that details are not necessary. However, the Philosophy curriculum, which gives more weight to the history of European thought, is an exception. In the curricula review it is seen that “national identity” and “national culture” concepts are given more space and Turkish-Islamic approach is in the forefront. This trend is strengthened in parallel with inclusive policies that have recently started to increase in the field of education and cultural areas.

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<sup>80</sup> It is chosen to use the notion of curriculum for its convenience in the report although the notion of national education programme is preferred to use in Ministry of education reports and academic field in Turkey. Thus, the curriculum hereinafter refers to education programme as well.

## 2. Formal Educational Context in Turkey

In Turkey, formal education is managed through centralized system, in accordance with Turkey's administrative organisational structure. The authorized body of this system is The Ministry of National Education. The task of The Ministry of National Education is to identify, implement and supervise national policies and strategies for all levels of education and training. According to the law adopted in 1926 and revised in 2011, the organisational structure of The Ministry of National Education consists of three departments: *the central, provincial and overseas* organisation. The *central organisation* of the Ministry consists of directorate, head of department, presidency and general directorate units. The *provincial organisation* of the Ministry consists of provincial and district education directorates. The Republic of Turkey has *81 provinces and 921 districts* in the administrative structure (Ministry of Interior, 2018). In every province and district there is a national education directorate, the county education directorates are responsible both to the central organisation -the Ministry- and the province to which it is connected, while they are carrying out the duties and services (Ministry of National Education, 2018, p.7). Provincial national education directorates are responsible to the central organisation while carrying out their duties and services. To summarize briefly, the decisions taken by the central organisation are hierarchically applied from the center to provinces and from provinces to districts. The duty of the *overseas organisation* of the Ministry is to organise education and training services related to the protection, promotion and dissemination of Turkish national culture in foreign countries. Overseas organisation is represented by the educational consultancy organisations and educational attaches which are connected to the embassies and consulate generals of Turkish Republic.

In the formal education system, public schools and private schools are available for all levels of education. Private schools based on tuition fees have equal status with public schools. Private schools carry out all their activities under The Ministry of National Education. There are also minority schools, foreign schools and international schools in private school status. Schools of this status also carry out their activities under the Ministry of National Education.

The general structure of formal education system consists of two main sections: "formal education" and "non-formal education". Formal education is a regular education in schools for students in a certain age group. Formal education includes pre-school



education, primary education, secondary education and tertiary education institutions. Pre-school education includes the education of children aged 36-66 months who have not reached the age to attend primary school. With the change of the law in 2012, 8 years of compulsory education has been converted into 12 years of compulsory education. Compulsory education consists of 3 stages of education as 4 + 4 + 4. According to this system, the first stage includes the four years of education (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grades) of the children between 66 months and 10 years old. Secondary stage includes four years of education (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades) of the children between the ages of 10 and 14 and third stage includes four years of education (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades) of the children between the ages 14 and 18 (Ministry of National Education, 2017, p. 13-15). In all levels of education there are special primary schools, secondary schools and high schools for the children with special needs.

Secondary education, which is the second stage of formal education system, is divided into two types as *regular secondary schools* and *religious vocational (imam hatip) secondary schools*. The upper secondary education, which is the third level of the education system, is divided into two types as *general high schools* and *vocational/technical high schools*. General high schools are divided into five types (Anatolian High School, Science High School, Fine Arts High School, Sports High School, Social Sciences High School), vocational/technical high schools are divided into two types (Vocational/Technical High School, Religious Vocational High Schools).

The success average of Students at 6th, 7th and 8th grades and the common exams are very important for what kind of high school they will attend. At the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students take a central exam which is organised by The Ministry of National Education in order to determine the type of a high school they will attend (High School Entrance Exam-LGS). Students choose the type of high school according to their score from this exam. For Fine Arts High Schools and Sports High Schools, students must take an additional skill test.

The other section of the formal education system is non-formal education which is a distance education program for the students who are unable to proceed to their formal education. The prerequisite for non-formal education is that the student has completed primary school and cannot attend secondary school or high school for any reason. Students who have completed primary school may attend open secondary school.

Likewise, students who are over the age limit of formal education or who cannot attend or continue to high school for any reason may continue to distance education high school through distance education. Students who do not choose for high school type in the High School Entrance Exam (LGS) and students who fail to be accepted to any of their choices, are placed in open secondary schools by the central system.

In Turkey, the curricula of all educational levels, until higher education, are prepared by the relevant units of The Ministry of National Education. The textbooks approved by the Ministry of National Education are distributed free of charge to students at all educational levels (public / private schools). In formal education, teachers, who are the practitioners of the curriculum in the classroom, have a major decision-making role in the implementation of curricula, teaching methods, and selection of learning materials.

There are several elements that should be stated about the formal education system in Turkey which is briefly explained above. Although the formal education system is a central system, education opportunities and qualitative aspects of education are not equally distributed to students. The most concrete example of this inequality is the High School Entrance Exam (LGS), the central examination system. Students who do not have the opportunity to receive a sufficient secondary education cannot achieve an adequate success rate in the LGS exam and are compelled to choose the vocational/technical high schools in their high school choices. In particular, in line with the decisions taken by the government in recent years about the education policies, the choices/placement of students in high schools has changed with the LGS exam. Students, who fail to succeed in LGS exam, may have to choose the types of high schools they do not want. These mandatory applications depending on the examination system which students and parents have to adapt is one of the most controversial topics about Turkey's education system in recent years.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Selection

In order to access the curricula, the official website of the Ministry of National Education was visited (<http://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/Programlar.aspx>). On this website, current curricula of 2018-2019 had been searched for secondary education segment according to the CHIEF project target group, meeting the age criteria of 14-18. This search resulted in 29 curricula. A process of elimination was required prioritizing documents with occurrence of topics relevant to the CHIEF project such as culture, cultural heritage, history and identity. As a result of this elimination process, 8 curricula had been selected: *History, Turkish Culture and History of Civilization, Contemporary Turkish and World History, Geography, Philosophy, Visual Arts, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum*. Most curricula are for 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels, *Turkish Culture and History of Civilization curriculum* is for 11<sup>th</sup> grade level, *Contemporary Turkish and World History curriculum* is for 12<sup>th</sup> grade level, *Philosophy curriculum* is for 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade levels. The total number of pages from all these curricula is 316.

After the detailed examination of the 8 selected curricula, parts of curricula, which do not match project objectives, were determined. As a result, in 3 curricula out of 8 some grade levels were further eliminated: *Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge* for 12<sup>th</sup> grade level, *Geography* for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade levels and *Visual Arts* for 9<sup>th</sup> grade level.

#### 3.2. Coding

4 researchers from CHIEF-MSGSU research team initially shared tasks in order to code 8 curricula. According to these shared tasks, each researcher coded 2 curricula. Each researcher entered the codes and the reference number of the related code into the generated table. In this way, 130 codes for 8 curricula were added to the table. One researcher from the team applied the coding process 2 times more in order to check the whole material. As a result of this coding, which was conducted for controlling, close and remote codes were grouped. After the grouping process, the main subjects of the content were determined leading to the main themes and subthemes. Three main themes (common characteristics of curricula, national identity, culture and European cultural heritage) and 9 subthemes (the general objective of curricula, cultural diversity, gender

European history, history of European thought, art in Europe, history, national culture and national cultural heritage) had been identified as a result of this process.

### **3.3. Review**

Primarily, the issues commonly found in or focused on in the documents were revealed and identified. Since the role of the formal education in the construction of national identity and the transferring of national cultural values are apparent, these concepts were given priority in the content analysis. The last section covers answers to the main research question of how the European cultural heritage is reflected in formal education documents.

## **4. Findings**

Reflecting on the findings with regard to the curricula that had been examined, they will be explained under three main headings. The first heading is called *The Common Characteristics of Curricula* and it focuses on the general goals of the curricula. This section will specifically concentrate on three concepts, namely *basic skills, competencies, and values* and it will elaborate on the meaning of these concepts as they are integrated in the curricula. The issues of ‘*cultural diversity*’ and ‘*gender*’ will also be addressed under the same heading. As regarding the second heading, which is called *The Formation of National Identity and National Culture in Curricula*, we will try to show through examples how the curricula that we have examined place great importance to local, traditional, and Islamic elements. Our third and last heading *The European Cultural Legacy in Curricula* includes our findings as to how and to what extent the European cultural legacy is included in curricula.

### **4.1. The Common Characteristics of Curricula**

In the introductory parts of the curricula that we have examined, the general goals of the curricula are explained. We will try to explicate these goals regarding the educational system and their contents below. We will also discuss the issue of how the categories such as ‘*cultural diversity*’ and ‘*gender*’ are addressed in the curricula.

#### ***The General Goal of the Curricula: Basic Skills, Competencies, and Values***

National Educational Law has identified three basic goals for the education of students through curricula. In accordance with this, the fundamental goal of education is to ensure that students adopt *basic skills, values, and competencies*.

(...) to enable students to acquire basic verbal, computational, and scientific reasoning along with social skills and aesthetic sensibility; (...) to make them embrace national and moral values and get them to turn these values into their lifestyle; (...) to ensure that they become competent individuals. (All Examined Curricula, 2018, p. 4-5)

The acquisition of basic skills is realized through the topics/units within the curricula in line with the students' grades while the process of making students acquire values and competencies is a fundamental principle that is integrated into each curriculum. In this context, values and competencies are not addressed as separate topics/headings; they are integral elements of the curricula.

As an integral element of curricula, *competencies* indicate the following: 'Skills that the students will need in their personal, social, academic, and work lives both on a national and international level' (All Examined Curricula, 2018, p. 6). There are eight areas of competency for the acquisition of these skills. They are enumerated in the curricula in the following manner:

Competency of communication in one's mother tongue', 'competency of communication in foreign languages', 'mathematical competency and basic competencies in science/technology', 'digital competency', 'competency of learning how to learn', 'social and civic competencies', 'competency of taking initiative and entrepreneurship', 'competency of cultural awareness and expression. (All Examined Curricula, 2018, s. 6-7)

The statements such as 'intercultural competency' and 'democracy, active participation, citizenship' are included only within the content of social and civic competencies among all the competencies that the educational system aims to make students acquire. Besides, the emphasis placed on the 'individual' in this context stands out given the competencies that the curricula aim to achieve. When we look at the words that are related to individual, the following words could be detected in the sentence structures: 'entrepreneur, business life, work place, job opportunity, initiative, individual development, the competence level of the individual.' In this regard, it could

be said that the competencies that the educational system aims to provide the students with via curricula are more oriented toward the acquisition of skills that the students will need in their business lives in the future.

Considering the curricula that have been examined, it is quite obvious that values and the issue of values education occupy a central role in the curricula in question (year 2017-1018). What is expressed as values in curricula is ‘the national and moral heritage.’ In this regard, conveying the national and moral values to the students by means of the curricula and make them embrace these values constitute the ultimate aim of the education system and the curricula. The reference point of the values and values education is mainly religion. In the curriculum of the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, under the unit of ‘youth and values’, the influence of religion, manners and customs is indicated in the formation of values through the topic headings such as ‘values and source of values’, ‘the place of basic values in the personality development of youth’, ‘verses from Qur’an regarding values’ (Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, s. 18).

Within all of the curricula that have been examined, a set of fundamental values that the curricula aim to instill in the students has been identified. These fundamental values are as follows: ‘justice, friendship, honesty, self-control, patience, respect, love, responsibility, patriotism, humanitarianism.’ These fundamental values could generally be found at the end of the units as fundamental values that the students should acquire in relation to the unit.

In the curricula, the values in essence encapsulate national and moral meanings. At certain points in the curricula, the goal of making student acquires ‘universal values’ is mentioned as well. However, the content of those universal values has not been explicitly explained.

### ***Cultural Diversity***

While we were looking for similar categories in the curricula, we have tried to identify how the issue of cultural diversity has been addressed. The term cultural diversity is only occasionally mentioned in the curricula. The common thread of the contents that we have coded as cultural diversity was ‘difference.’ It is as if the term difference replaces the term cultural diversity. In this regard, difference is an often-repeated term in the curricula. The term difference is used in the following contexts in the curricula:

‘Different culture’, ‘different cultural regions’, ‘different languages’, ‘different levels of development’, ‘different religion, different faith’, ‘and different ideas.’ The curriculum for the geography courses use the term ‘difference’ more compared to the other curricula.

The statements such as ‘interaction with different cultures and the importance of cultural diversity’ are ambiguous statements that have found their way into the curricula to a much lesser extent.

### ***Gender***

Another category that we have looked for in the curricula was the issue of gender. However, this issue has been rarely taken up in the curricula. The statement ‘gender equality’ is mentioned only once in the Geography curriculum. In the curriculum for Modern Turkish and World History curriculum, the statements such as ‘women take an active role in working life’ and ‘women’s rights’ could be identified. In the same curriculum and also in the History curriculum, the statement ‘the textbook should be prepared by considering gender equality’ is included. In this regard, the issue of gender equality and women’s rights remain as mostly untouched issues in these curricula.

After having set forth some of the common aspects of the curricula, the general view that emerges through the content analysis of the curricula will be dwelled on.

## **4.2. The Formation of National Identity and National Culture in Curricula**

In formal educational system, the curricula are of great importance in terms of the formation of national culture and nation’s cultural values. The emphasis that is placed on the ‘importance of young people’s learning their own local history, culture, and civilization’ is frequently repeated especially in the curricula of History, Turkish Culture and Civilization History, and Geography courses.

### ***The Formation of National Identity and History***

In the curriculum for History, the importance of history education in terms of the formation of ‘a sense of national identity and belonging’ is emphasized in the following manner:

To make students grasp Turkey’s place and role within the globalizing world by developing their sense of national identity and belonging (...) The aim is to



provide and maintain social unity and solidarity, and also to ensure that the young people are raised as individuals who protect the cultural and historical legacy by understanding the role of shared history in the formation of national identity. (History curriculum, 2018, s.12)

As for the goal and benefits of learning history, the curriculum focuses on the role that shared memory plays on the formation of identity and on socialization. It is pointed out that to understand the society and the country that we are a member of and the world that we live in, we should know the past. (History curriculum, 2018, p.22)

The curriculum for History mainly aims to teach students their ‘own history’; hence, the curriculum mostly consists of Turkish-Islamic subject matters. The curriculum explicitly states that the course will teach students the Turkish-Islamic history: ‘The curriculum gives weight to Turkish, Islamic, and Anatolian histories and also the accumulation of humanity’s history; and it does so by focusing on the incidents that are chosen from Turkish history’ <sup>81</sup>(History curriculum, 2018, s.11). When one looks at the historical topics for Turkey, Islam, and Anatolia, the following could be observed: The emergence of first Turkish states in the stage of history, the political structuring of first Turkish states, the geographies that Turks used to live prior to Islam, the birth of Islamic civilization, the first Turkish Islamic states that were established after Turks embraces Islam, the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire as a ‘world power’, the conquest of Istanbul (1453), the Ottoman Empire’s dominance in the Islamic geography, the societal properties of the Ottoman Empire. The curriculum for History has been arranged through an approach that brought together chronological and thematic understandings. Students should acquire the ‘skill of chronological thinking’ (History curriculum, Turkish Culture and Civilization History curriculum, Modern Turkish and World History curriculum Curriculum). The History curriculum ends by mentioning the developments that took place in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century; the political & historical developments of 20<sup>th</sup> century and up to now are addressed in the Modern Turkish and World History curriculum.

Attention was paid to the traces of national identity construction in the content of Modern Turkish and World History curriculum. Controversial issues that are still hot debates for Turkish public, such as ‘Gezi Park Demonstrations’ in 2013 and ‘coup

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<sup>81</sup> This quotation might be unclear and vague. Here, it is tried to be said that all history of humanity is handled as if Turkish history is on the focus.

attempt against the government' that took place on 15 July 2016 are being covered. (Modern Turkish and World History curriculum curriculum, 12th grade, 2018, p. 36). Both of these subjects are perceived as threats against the *continuity of the state*. In another curriculum, the issue of 'coup attempt against the government' is also introduced by asking students to write an epic on the issue of 'Triumph of Democracy and Martyrs of 15<sup>th</sup> July' for the people who lost their lives during the coup attempt. The fact that students are asked to write an epic on this issue is included in the curriculum as 'the bond that legends and epics have with the national identity of the society that they belong to' (Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p.42). In this regard, we see that students do not just learn about the past but they are also supposed to be informed about the current controversial political issues. It is intended to reshape the young people's national emotions.

As history is valued in the formation of national identity, 'the formation of a national consciousness' is valued in the curriculum of Geography courses (Geography Curriculum, 2018, p. 12). The concept of patriotism, which is related to the national consciousness, reflects one of the core values of the values education. The value of patriotism is frequently expressed in the Geography curriculum. For example, after the statement that 'an emphasis is put on the indivisible unity of the nation within its existing boundaries', it is indicated that the value students should acquire is patriotism (Geography Curriculum, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p. 20).

### ***National Culture***

The issue of learning Turkish culture and civilization in curricula is another important matter for the formation of national identity in young people. The importance attributed to the understanding of the Turkish culture by the students is expressed in the following manner in the curricula:

The students should take responsibility for the protection and development of historical and cultural legacy by understanding the basic elements and processes that constitute the Turkish history and culture (...) they should grasp the place and contribution of Turkish nation to the development of the world culture and civilization. (Turkish Culture and Civilization History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.11)

In the curricula, the term *culture* is identified with Turkish and Islamic elements. It is possible to observe this phenomenon in the topics included in the content of the curricula. In this regard, we have tried to look at how culture and civilization are demonstrated in the curricula that we have examined.

The examples that are provided for the subject of development of cities in the historical process are the Turkish and Islamic cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, and Konya (Geography Curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.38). However, the curriculum gives no reference to other cities that developed in the historical process.

The emphasis on Turkish-Islamic culture could be found in the unit of culture and civilization in Religious Culture curriculum. The term ‘geography of the heart’ is used so as to refer to the cultural link between Turkish culture and the Islamic civilization:

It addresses the scientific and cultural reservoirs (*kültür havzaları*) where the Islamic civilization came to life such as Hejaz region, Jerusalem and its environ, Damascus and Baghdad Region; Iran, Khorasan, Turkistan and Transoxiana Region; Indian subcontinent; Anatolia and Balkans; Northern Africa (Egypt and Maghrib Region), and Andalusia (...) Activities in which students could present verbal and written suggestions that aim to strengthen the historical and cultural bonds between Turkey and our geography of the heart are included. (Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p. 19).

The ‘Turkish Cultural Regions’ refers to the historical and cultural bond of Turkey and interaction with geographies given below. (Geography Curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.34). These include the geographies: Turkistan, Caucasia, Balkans, Middle East, and Northern Africa. Another emphasis on the Turkish cultural regions could be found in the introductory part of the Geography curriculum: ‘In accordance with the Turkey’s new vision, the Turkish cultural regions that have a close relationship with Turkey in particular’ (Geography Curriculum, 2018, p.12). Even though this new vision has not been explained in the curriculum, it is a term that has been mentioned in the political documents of Turkey. This term represents the macro developments that the state aims to achieve in 2023 as part of its strategic plan and it also refers to the general expression of the project called ‘construction of values.’ In this context, Turkey aims to increase its regional and global activity in 2023.

As could be seen through these examples, the cultural bond in the curricula is established through Islam & Islamic civilization and a shared historical past.

### *National Cultural Legacy*

The concept of cultural legacy in the curricula is also identified with what is traditional and Islamic. The Curriculum for Turkish Culture and Civilization History is the curriculum in which cultural legacy is intensively covered.

The issue of cultural legacy is addressed starting from the first Turkish States established in Central Asia. There are four separate periods that represent the Turkish culture and cultural history: The period of ‘First Turkish States’ established in Central Asia, the period of ‘First Turkish Islamic States’ after the acceptance of Islam, the period of the ‘Ottoman Empire’ with the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, and the ‘Period of Turkish Republic’, which was established after the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Turkish Culture and Civilization History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.11). The differentiation of periods reflecting cultural legacy through Turkish state structuring in curriculum demonstrates the place of state organisation in Turkish culture.

By the same token, family, art, literature, sports, and examples that are included within these fields stand out in the analysis of the curriculum. The emphasis on the importance of the *family* institution is striking in this curriculum. Beginning from the first Turkish states, the place of family in the Turkish social structure is addressed. The curriculum includes the following statements on family or on issues that could be associated with family: The concept of ‘paternal state’ for the relationship between family and state; ‘the importance of family’; ‘the relationship among the mother, father, and child’; ‘marriage customs’; ‘family life’ and ‘marriage’ (Turkish culture and Civilization History curriculum, 2018, p. 22-23). When the issue of family in the social structure is addressed, it is emphasized that one will dwell on ‘the roles that women take on in Turkish social structure.’ The issues of ‘bride and groom (marriage rituals)’, ‘food & beverage’ and ‘clothing’ are addressed within the same topic. It could be said that women’s social role in Turkish culture is very much based on family institution (Turkish Culture and Civilizational History, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.22). In another

curriculum, great importance is attached to the family institution in terms of religion. This could be seen in the unit of ‘religion and life’, under the heading ‘religion and family’ and ‘the importance attached to family institution by Islam’ (Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.22).

As one of the elements of cultural legacy, *art* is addressed through the fields of conventional art such as glyptic art, weaving, miniature, tile art, painting, music, sculpture, theatre, calligraphy, ornamentation in the first Turkish states, first Turkish-Islamic States and Ottoman Empire (Turkish Culture and Civilization History Curricula, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.28). The field of painting introduces the development of certain periods that belong to the eras before and after Islam as well as modern Turkish painting. The representative names from these periods are also covered in the curriculum (Fine Arts Curriculum, 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, p. 19-20). Even though modern Turkish painting period and its representatives are included in the curriculum, it could be said that the curriculum puts emphasis on the conventional style found in the cultural legacy.

*Literature and theatre* constitute another field of cultural legacy and the conventional elements are at the forefront in those art branches as well. Among the examples that are provided for these fields, ‘Dede Korkut’<sup>82</sup> stories stand out in terms of traditional cultural legacy in the form of stories. When it comes to traditional Turkish theater, Karagöz shadow play<sup>83</sup> and theatre-in-the-round are at the forefront (Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum, 2018, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, p. 42-44). On the other hand, examples from modern Turkish literature and theatre regarding the Republican Era are also included in the curriculum (Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum, 2018, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, p. 57-62).

*Sports* are another component of traditional cultural legacy in Turkish culture. The archaic sports activities beginning with the first Turkish states include *çevgan*, archery, horse riding, wrestling, javelin throw, spear, mangala, gökbörü, kızbörü, running, and hunting (Turkish Culture and Civilization History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p. 29).

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<sup>82</sup> Dede Korkut tales are considered as the cornerstone of Turkish literature and have an importance in Turkish culture in terms of oral culture and teaching Turkish moral values to youth. see: Sümer, et al. (1991) and Lewis (1974).

<sup>83</sup> Karagöz who is one of the leading character of the Turkish shadow theatre and represents especially the morals and values of Ottoman period in everyday life basis. see for more info: <<http://www.kultur.gov.tr/EN-98575/karagoz.html>> access 27 December 2018.

In conclusion, the examples that are provided regarding the historical topics, culture, and cultural legacy have, for the most part, Turkish, Islamic and archaic patterns. Patterns to that effect related to the European Cultural heritage were to be remained deliberately limited except from the early Republic era in order to implement Western and modern educational models.

In the next section, findings regarding the European cultural legacy will be presented in spite of these limitations.

### **4.3. European Cultural Legacy in Curricula**

There is no curriculum that directly reflects the European cultural legacy among the curricula examined. However, certain findings could be obtained using content analysis. The History curriculum includes the maximum number of topics on the European cultural legacy. However, the curriculum in terms of its reflection of Europe and European cultural legacy is quite insufficient. The topics that address Europe in the History curriculum feel like they have been included in the curriculum only as a formality. The curriculum does not focus on the details of these subjects and it actually tells instructors to ‘only brief mention’ certain topics during the course itself. For these subjects, it is frequently said that they will be ‘briefly mentioned’. Some examples on this issue below are addressed in below.

Other than the History curriculum, the other two curricula that we have come up with findings in terms of reflecting the European cultural legacy are Philosophy and Visual Arts curricula. The Modern Turkish and World History curriculum which includes human rights and women’s rights; the Turkish Language and Literature curriculum which includes European literary texts; Geography curriculum which includes the phenomenon of industrialization, and the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge curriculum which talks about Christianity are also among the curricula that indirectly touch upon the European cultural legacy.

#### ***European History***

The European history is included in the curricula of 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades. Within the scope of History curriculum, the issues such as European history and civilization, the

changes and transformations that took place in Europe, nation state, capitalism, and modernization are addressed.

History education enables students to understand the ‘cumulative legacy of humanity from past till now’ and ‘the social, cultural, intellectual, and emotional factors that surround and direct people’s lives and actions in the past.’ In other word, it improves their historical empathy skills’ (History curriculum, 2018, p.12, 18). Based on these statements, one could expect the History curriculum to be rich in content on a level that could improve students’ historical empathy skills so as to enable them to grasp the shared legacy of humanity. However, it could be observed that History curriculum only presents the European history as a chronological accumulation of information.

The European history is addressed in the History curriculum within the scope of Antiquity, Medieval Age, New and Modern Ages. The Roman Empire is shown as one of the most important repositories of civilization on earth for the Antiquity; however, the reason as to why Roman Empire was important is not revealed and its political, economic, and social life is not elaborated upon (History curriculum, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, p. 23). The curriculum states that it will only ‘briefly mention’ the Roman Law since it ‘offers the basis for our current universal principles of law’ (History curriculum, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p.25). The processes such as the establishment of the Roman Empire; Christianity’s being the official religion of the Roman Empire; the division of Empire into halves are provided as chronological information and not elaborated upon. Other than the statement saying that the Roman Empire accepted Christianity as its formal religion, the History curriculum does not address the historical and social aspects of Christianity. Christianity and the other religious beliefs other than Islam are only addressed in the curriculum of Religious Culture and Moral Education. This curriculum talks about the birth and development of Christianity, its principles of faith, its rituals, symbols, and sacred places, its symbolic figure Paul the Apostle, and the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism (Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, p. 29).

Regarding the European history in the context of Medieval Age, it could again be said that only chronological information is provided like in Antiquity. Some of the historical events that are mentioned in the context of Medieval European history is as follows: The East-West Schism (1054), the parliamentary system in Britain (1295), Hundred



Years' War (1337-1453), and Plague Epidemic in Europe (1347-1351) (History curriculum, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p.24).

The European history is expressed as the period of change in the New Age. Regarding the changing balance of the world, 'the role played by the Westphalia Peace in the emergence of modern state law' is referred to. At the same time, the curriculum also focuses on the diplomatic relationships between the Ottoman Empire and European States, and a lot of agreement names are mentioned (History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p. 36). The expressions such as 'Renaissance-Reform, Protestantism, humanistic and rationalistic philosophies, Newton's Laws of Physic and Scientific Revolution, secularization' are used for the changes that took place in Europe; however, these radical changes in the European history are only referred to as mere names (History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.37). We could not get the impression from the curriculum that these radical changes that took place in Europe would be covered in a detailed manner in the class. Regarding this period, it is also said that the production of knowledge in Europe became widespread through the printing press and the possibilities that the beginning of using printing press in Europe provided for the production of knowledge and the areas of access to this knowledge are also included in the curriculum. However, this subject is addressed in the framework of knowledge production in the Ottoman Empire (History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p. 38). The situation that we witness here illustrates that the changes that took place in European history are mainly addressed through their effects on the Ottoman Empire's political, economic, and social life. It means that the changes took place in Europe, but the focus center is the Ottoman history.

In the History curriculum, the subject matter for the subtitle of the unit called 'changing state and social relations during the era of revolutions' is 'State-society relationships after French Revolution and Industrial Revolution in Europe.' The topics such as French Revolution, 1830-1848 Revolutions in Europe, the modern political ideologies in Europe, liberalism, capitalism, socialism, Marxism, the transformation of class society, which became evident after the Industrial Revolution in Europe, to constitutional monarchies from absolutist monarchies are addressed (History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, p. 39). In the curriculum where it is said that students are expected to 'grasp' the transformations that took place in European history, it is also indicated that these revolutions and transformations 'will not be detailed'; they will be

‘mentioned briefly’, or be ‘briefly described.’ This serves as a warning to both the instructors themselves and authors of the textbooks.

The issue of capitalism that flourished in Europe is addressed in the unit of ‘capital and labor’ in the curriculum. Capitalism is also addressed in a very limited fashion. The concepts of capital and labor which made their way into the stage of history are not explained in the curriculum; instead, the curriculum dwells on the changing mode of production occasioned by the industrial revolution through referring to topics such as ‘working environment, tools of production, the speed of production and its amount, the organisation of production and working discipline in the context of the differences between agricultural and artisan production based on manual labor and industrial production’ (History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p. 41). In the Geography curriculum, the concept of industrialization is emphasized through urbanization, migration, and the economic characteristics of developed and developing nations; however, these issues are not addressed in a detailed manner and no examples are provided (Geography Curriculum, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p. 42-44).

The emergence of nation states in the history of Europe, ‘the obligatory military service system that took effect in Europe after French Revolution and the effects of this system on the foundation of nation states and the emergence of republican regimes’ are addressed within the framework of the need for a modern army organisation (History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p.40). Besides, the curriculum also includes population policies, the development of transportation and communication, and the beginning of compulsory schooling along with the issue of the emergence of nation states. The topics that are about the reflections of nation state process on the social life mainly focus on its effect on the Ottoman social life rather than European social life.

In the same vein, in the History curriculum, the phenomenon of modernization that flourished in Europe is hardly covered. Certain elements of modernization are mentioned and the curriculum again puts emphasis on the effect of modernization on Ottomans’ social life. Modernization is addressed in the curriculum through the following elements: ‘the standardization of consumption patterns (...) the establishment of metropolises (...) the notion of public opinion with the increase experienced in the number of newspapers and other periodical publications in 19<sup>th</sup> century (...) culture industry’ (History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p. 42). As could be seen, the History curriculum addresses issues such as European history, changes and

revolutions in Europe, and movements of thought in Europe. At the same time, it also exhibits an approach of providing chronological information and placing Ottoman history at the center.

The Modern Turkish and World History curriculum, which is the continuation of History curriculum for 12<sup>th</sup> graders, covers the world history and Turkish political history of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. The issues that are addressed are as follows: ‘The First and Second World Wars, Cold War period and its aftermath, and Globalization. This curriculum places emphasis on the reasons why the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) emerged and ‘the shared humanitarian values that it provided for the humanity’ (Modern Turkish and World History curriculum, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.23). Besides, the curriculum also addresses the issue of how the generation of 1968, which is an important milestone for European history and which extended to the world from Europe, emerged and student and workers’ movements’ (Modern Turkish and World History curriculum, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.26). The fact that this curriculum includes expressions such as shared humanitarian values, human rights, and social movements means that Modern Turkish and World History curriculum, even though in a limited fashion, covers subjects that the History curriculum leaves out.

### ***The History of European Thought***

In the Philosophy curriculum, it is possible to see the traces of the European cultural legacy through thinkers and their works. In this curriculum, the emphasis on the ‘universal nature’ of the philosophy could also be observed. However, the instructors are again expected to guide students to acquire ‘national and moral values’ as it is the case in the other curricula. Since the subject matter concerns philosophy, the statement of ‘universal values’ is added to the national and moral values (Philosophy Curriculum, p.15).

The curriculum starts to convey the history of European thought with the philosophers who lived in Anatolia: ‘Thales, Anaximander, Anaksimenes, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, Epictetus, Diogenes, Lucian of Samosata, Xenophanes, and Aristotle.’ The statement that these philosophers’ ‘birth and living places should be emphasized as Anatolia’ is included in the curriculum (Philosophy Curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.21). The specific emphasis placed on the fact that these philosophers were born in Turkish

geography seems to be a reminder for the instructors. In the continuation of this subject, the understanding on existence, knowledge, and value by Democritus, Socrates, Sophists, Plato, and Aristotle are also presented. Besides, the thinkers who affected the European history of thought from 15<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> century and whose names are referenced below are also included in the curriculum.

The thinkers that had an effect on the European history of thought in the Philosophy curriculum are not just addressed in the form of biographical descriptions; there are also references to their works and the curriculum also states that their reference texts ‘should be examined.’ In this curriculum, with the use of term ‘examination’, we have had the impression that the Philosophy subjects will be focused on unlike the History curriculum. Some of the reference texts are as follows: Plato’s ‘Socrates’ Defense’; Plato’s ‘Republic’; Aristotle’s ‘Nicomachean Ethics’; Descartes’ ‘Principles of Philosophy’; Spinoza’s ‘Ethica’; Hobbes’ ‘Leviathan’; Locke’s ‘An Essay Concerning Human Understanding’; Kant’s ‘Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals’; Hegel’s ‘Phenomenology of Spirit’; Nietzsche’s ‘Thus Spoke Zarathustra’, Sartre’s ‘Existentialism’; Kuhn’s ‘The Structure of Scientific Revolutions’ (Philosophy Curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, s. 23-27). The Philosophy curriculum stands out among the other curricula as the most promising one in terms of examining the European history of thought.

It could also be observed that other than the Philosophy curriculum, the European cultural legacy is also addressed through thinkers and scientists. The representative figures that deal with ‘Mercantilism and Machiavelism’, ‘economic changes in the West’, and ‘the changes that took place in European thought during 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries’ such as Copernicus, Machiavelli, Thomas Moore, Immanuel Kant, and Jean Jacques Rousseau are included in the curricula in terms of their ‘basic ideas’ with regard to these issues (Turkish Culture and Civilization History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, p.26; History curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, p.37). In another curriculum, there is the statement that Albert Einstein’s ‘Theory of Relativity’ will be described in the context of the scientific developments that took place in the aftermath of two world wars (Modern Turkish and World History curriculum, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.23).

### ***Art in Europe***

The subject of art and its content in Europe in terms of reflecting the European cultural legacy are the headings that particularly stand out in the curricula for visual arts, movements in art, painters, and literature. In the curriculum, the periods of the Western painting before modernism (Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassic); the works of painters such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Rubens, and Diego Velazquez; the properties of modern movements of art (fauvism, impressionism, cubism, futurism, Dadaism, surrealism) and representatives of modern movements of art (Andre Derain, Ernst Ludvig Kirshner, Pablo Picasso, Giacoma Balla, Hans Arp, Salvador Dali, Vassily Kandisky, Jackson Pollock) are ‘introduced’ (Fine Arts, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.22). Picasso and his painting named Guernica is also introduced to students elsewhere (Modern Turkish and World History curriculum, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 2018, p.23). Besides, the fine arts curriculum also includes contemporary art and representatives of contemporary art such as Marcel Duchamp and Paul Cezanne (Fine Arts, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.24).

In the fine arts curriculum, the students and instructors are asked to pay visits to physical museums and online museums so as to acknowledge the cultural legacy. One of the subheadings of the section on world museums goes like this: ‘Our cultural legacy that could be found in foreign countries (...) The Islamic Arts Museum and Bergama Museum in Germany’ (Fine Arts, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018, p.24). This expression demonstrates that the national cultural legacy is emphasized in the visual arts curriculum as well.

On the other hand, the European cultural legacy is also addressed in literature, which is another branch of arts. In the curriculum, it is stated that ‘the art movements that emerged in Western literature will be briefly mentioned in the context of texts’ (Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, p.48).

In the Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum, there are certain reference texts in the sections where the literary forms such as story, tale/fable, and novel will be introduced so as to reflect examples from the world. For event story, ‘Guy de Maupassant’s style’ is indicated and for situation story ‘Chekhov style’ is given as example (Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, p.31). For tale/fable examples, it is stated that the curriculum will focus on works such as ‘Seagull’, ‘Animal Farm’, and ‘Little Prince’ (Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, p.33). In the world literature section, as an example of a novel, Dostoyevsky’s ‘Crime and Punishment’ is referenced (Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum, 9<sup>th</sup> grade,

p.46). As could be seen, the content of the curriculum is quite limited in terms of the works it presents from Europe. Like the other curricula of the educational system, Turkish Language and Literature curriculum also mainly includes traditional forms.

## 5. Discussion

In the analysis of policy documents, it is presented that after accession negotiations between European Union and Turkey started in 2005, Turkey has taken significant steps in reforming government structures and policy making procedures. In these documents, the effect of the rapprochement between Turkey and EU institutions in the improvement of cultural literacy and cultural heritage concepts is addressed (Şentürk, Oral, Kurban, Uçarol, 2018, p.246-248). The Ministry of National Education has also been a government structure, which has taken a crucial role in the integration with EU. As a result of this rapprochement, The Ministry of National Education made a reform in the curricula in 2005. Within the scope of this reform, “constructivism” was decided as the teaching approach of curricula. With this approach, the individual was taken in the center and topics such as acquisition, subject, teaching techniques, assessment and evaluation and competencies were included. The main characteristics of constructivist approach in curricula include “curiosity, innovative thinking, social and intellectual skills” (Education Reform Initiative, 2017, p. 10). The first ten pages of all curricula are devoted to certain topics such as teaching activities, assessment and evaluation and competencies. After the reform in curricula, there have been certain amendments in 2009, 2012 and 2015. In other words, it can be mentioned that The Ministry of National Education makes frequent changes in the curricula.

Another finding of the analysis of policy documents is that the emphasis of “conservatization” by the government has been increasing since 2013-2014 period (Şentürk, Oral, Kurban, Uçarol, 2018, p.267-272). The concept of conservatization also means that the positive atmosphere that the government has acquired with the EU has started to break down. In this context, with the changing discourse of the policy documents in the period of 2013-2014 and after, the Ministry of National Education has started the process of renewal of the curricula in 2017 and the content of the curricula overlap.

The curricula that have been analysed and the course content of 2018-2019 academic year are largely renewed. With regard to the renewed curricula, the prominent topic, which was also frequently discussed in public opinion is “values education”.

In fact, values education was included in the 2005 curriculum reform. However, it has become more visible with the recently renewed curricula. It is a topic given importance



by the government and it is frequently mentioned in education policies. It reflects the basic philosophy of renewed curricula that should be given to the students. These values are discussed in detail in the introduction part of the curricula. The concept of “values” is mentioned in the curricula as two different sub-concepts: “universal values” and “national values”.

It is very difficult to get an idea about how to include and teach universal values in course practices from the content of the curricula. The same finding also exists in the analysis of policy documents. Universal values are not mentioned in a clear way and concrete expressions on how young people should acquire these values cannot be found. The concepts of human rights, democracy and equality are rarely encountered in the content analysis of the curricula. Among the curricula analysed, only the Philosophy curriculum has got the capacity to transfer the universal values to the students.

In curricula, national values are based on the reference point from the Islamic and traditional elements. Therefore, the definition of values in curricula is expressed as “national and moral heritage”. Representation of this essentialist approach is seen in the curricula as Turkish identity, Turkish culture and the values belonging to Sunni-Islam. However, there are different identities, ethnic cultures, languages and religions in Turkey. In this context, the current curricula do not address the social diversity of Turkey. This essentialist approach reflects a homogenous nation-state ideal and values. Another point, demonstrated by the analysis of curricula is to emphasize the importance of developing a sense of national identity and sense of belonging to students through curricula. In curricula, for the formation of students’ national identity, the most important role is given to history knowledge. It is the priority of curricula “to teach the country’s own history, Turkish-Islamic history”. However, the aim of teaching Turkish-Islamic history to students is not a new tendency for national education system. This tendency occurred after the military coup on 12 September 1980 with a discourse of Turkish-Islamic Synthesis in curricula. Turkish-Islamic Synthesis is a project put forward as a solution for the political conflict environment in the society before 1980. The Ministry of National Education started to prepare courses based on Turkish-Islamic Synthesis approach for the first time in 1983 (Tekeli, 1998, p. 204). Thus, the Turkish Islamic Synthesis approach has prevailed and underlined in the updated curriculum.

A new tendency has been identified in order to ensure the national identity formation of students through the curricula. It is the inclusion of controversial current political

issues, which were not included previous curricula. These political issues are “Gezi Park Protests (2013)” and “coup attempt against the government (2016)” which are defined by the state as threats against the continuity of the state.

The curricula also give importance to the transfer of “national culture” and “national cultural heritage “to the students. “The essence of Turkish culture” is formed by Islam, Islamic Civilization and the traditions Turkish people bring from the past. In curricula, the concept of cultural diversity is used rarely and implicitly. On the other hand, the curricula aim to reproduce archaic Turkish cultural practices. At the same time, “The importance of family institution” relies on a conservative political perspective strengthening family institution by the government. On the other hand, the European Cultural Heritage and the subjects and scope of the topics about Europe in the curricula are narrow and there is no detailed information about how these topics will be handled. As a result, there has been a limited impression in the curricula about the way the European Cultural Heritage is reflected.

The topics about Europe generally consist of chronological and shallow information, and this information does not provide a complete acquirement about Europe and European culture. The facts about Europe have been addressed as “information that must be transferred” and they are not dealt with in a broader sense. It was found in especially findings of History curriculum. The fact that the words ‘grasping’ and ‘glossing over’ are used in the same sentence creates a conflict in History curriculum. In this regard, we could understand that there are certain hesitations in teaching radical movements such as French Revolution to the students.

The curriculum of Philosophy –which is obligatory course in high schools- might be exception since it covers subjects about European history of thought and European culture.

## **6. Conclusion**

The curriculum review aims to present the reflection patterns of the European Cultural Heritage. For this purpose, 8 curricula have been selected and the findings on European Cultural Heritage have been presented. Among these 8 curricula, History, Philosophy and Visual Arts curricula include more about European Cultural Heritage. While the History curriculum focuses on European history to a certain extent, European history is

more limited to chronological information, and fundamental changes and transformations in European history are not elaborated in detail. Visual Arts curricula include art movements and artists. In the Philosophy curriculum, European thought history topics are more involved. This curriculum has more capacity to transfer universal values and European Cultural Heritage to students compared to other curricula that are reviewed. The content of the curricula is more focused on “national” issues. In Turkey, after the 2013-2014 period, "conservatism" has strengthened as a trend in policy making and the reflections of this situation are seen in the curricula. Values education, which has been in the curricula since 2005, has been more emphasized in public with the uprising trend of conservatism. In the curricula for 2018-2019 academic year, values education shapes the basic philosophy. At first glance, values education includes a big scale from universal to national values. The content analysis of the curricula, however, shows that more emphasis is given to national values defined by a conservative perspective, while universal values are treated more superficially. Therefore, the issue of nationalisation in the curriculum programs stands out and the issues related to the European Cultural Heritage remain in the background.

On the other hand, the national identity and national culture formation offered to the students in the curricula by the perspective of nationalisation is based on Turkish and Sunni-Islamic cultures, which are more homogenously imagined. As a result, variety of identities, life styles, cultural practices, languages and belief systems, which reflect Turkey's cultural and social diversity, are not included in a sufficient way in the content of the curricula.

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**Appendix: List of Reviewed Documents**

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Type</b>
1.	Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dersi Öğretim Programı	2018	Ministry of National Education	<b>Grades 9,10,11,12</b> Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum
2.	Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersi Öğretim Programı	2018	Ministry of National Education	<b>Grades 9,10,11</b> Religious Culture and Ethics
3.	Tarih Dersi Öğretim Programı	2018	Ministry of National Education	<b>Grades 9,10,11</b> History
4.	Türk Kültür ve Medeniyet Tarihi Dersi Öğretim Programı	2018	Ministry of National Education	<b>Grade 11</b> Turkish Culture History of Civilization
5.	Çağdaş Türk ve Dünya Tarihi Dersi Öğretim Programı	2018	Ministry of National Education	<b>Grade 12</b> Contemporary Turkish and World History
6.	Coğrafya Dersi Öğretim Programı	2018	Ministry of National Education	<b>Grades 11,12</b> Geography
7.	Felsefe Dersi Öğretim Programı	2018	Ministry of National Education	<b>Grades 10,11</b> Philosophy
8.	Görsel Sanatlar Dersi Öğretim Programı	2018	Ministry of National Education	<b>Grades 10,11,12</b> Visual Arts

**National Curricula Review (UK)** Eleni Stamou, Anton Popov, Ebru Soytemel**1. Executive Summary**

A review of the secondary education curricula in England was carried out as part of the examination of how cultural literacy is institutionalised within formal education settings. Aims include the identification of pedagogical approaches to enhancing young people's cultural literacy, as well as the exploration of the various dimensions of cultural literacy, European identity and cultural participation, manifested in the curricula.

Since there are significant differences between the education systems of the three UK nations, the review focuses on England, where follow-on empirical research in schools will take place. It looks specifically into the national curricula and guidelines, which apply to maintained schools at Key Stages 3 and 4 (KS3 and KS4) as well as relevant A-level curriculum documents. The existing curricula have been in place since the 2014 education reform. In addition to the revised curricula, since 2014 schools have had a new duty to actively promote fundamental British values.

The review included an inductive documentary analysis of the curricula. The selection of the documents was conducted on the basis of their relevance to cultural literacy. A coding framework was developed and deployed to code the selected curricula, using NVivo. Thematic and content-based techniques were used to analyse the documentary data.

The findings discuss themes identified around cultural literacy in each of the selected subjects. Across the curricula, questions around European identity are largely absent, particularly in relation to issues related to cultural literacy. The overall pedagogical approach deployed propagates the replacement of child-centred pedagogy and inquiry-based models with knowledge-rich curricula, whole-class teaching and an emphasis on teacher instruction. This shift is couched on questionable assumptions on the potential of the latter to raise disadvantaged pupils' attainment.

In terms of the selection, organisation and framing of knowledge, we identified a turn to traditionalism marked by preoccupation with values and emphasis on developing a sense of British heritage. The notion of culture pronounced in the curricula is attuned to normative frameworks, while, constructions of cultural value reside and reproduce the divide between highbrow and lowbrow culture. Additionally, formal institutionalised and solidified outlooks to culture dominate over plural, informal and more fluid versions.

Alongside the turn to cultural conservatism we identified elements of enterprise culture and discourses of self-reliance and responsabilisation. Taken together, these distinctive features point towards a reconfigured form of nationalism and processes of cultural restructuring, evident in the curricula and pedagogical context. While involving a paradoxical amalgamation of traditionalism and free-market logics, these findings echo the remarks made in the review of policy (Stamou et al., 2018) regarding a neo-liberal communitarian form of governance in cultural literacy education.

## **2. Formal Educational Context in the UK/England**

### **2.1 Education system in England**

There are significant differences between the education systems and curricula of the three UK nations - England, Wales and Scotland (for example, learning of national languages in the case of Wales and Scotland). Since the project CHIEF's research in formal educational settings (Work Package 2 and Work Package 3) will be carried out in England, Warwickshire and the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, in this report, we provide an overview of the English national education context. It is expected that the three selected schools will be following England's national curriculum for state-funded schools.

### **2.2 Types of schools**

There is a significant and increasing differentiation among types of schools in England in terms of their funding regimes, personnel management and school governance among others. In order to provide an overview of the education system, we will provide a brief description of the types of schools with particular reference to their obligations regarding the national curriculum.

Secondary schools in England are divided into state schools and independent schools, also known as private schools. These are fee-paying schools that do not need to follow the national curriculum.<sup>84</sup> In the context of CHIEF we will be focusing exclusively on state schools.

All children in England between the ages of 5 and 16 are entitled to a free place at a state school. State schools differentiate into maintained schools and academies. Maintained schools are run by Local Authorities, receive their funding through them and follow the National Curriculum. Academies, on the other hand, receive funding directly from the government based on contractual agreements and have more freedom

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<sup>84</sup> In 2017, out of 32,113 school in the UK 2,381 were non-maintain mainstream (i.e. independent) schools. That is about 7% of all British Schools. Most of the independent schools – 2,297 – were in England (DfE, 2017a: 3; BESA, not dated).



over the curriculum design. Below we show the most common types of both maintained schools and academies:

1. **Maintained Schools:** Overseen by Local Authorities. Types of maintained schools include:
  - a. Comprehensive schools and Community schools: They are controlled and run by Local Authorities.
  - b. Grammar schools: They are run by Local Authorities but they are selective regarding the intake of students; that is, students get admitted following competitive exams.
  - c. Voluntary Aided Schools – usually Faith Schools: They are run by Local Authorities. They largely follow the National Curriculum, but have more freedom over their teaching of religious education.
2. **Academies:** Publicly funded, independent schools run by the school governing bodies; they are held accountable to the government through legally binding funding agreements. Types of academies are:
  - a. Traditional Academies: Schools set-up as academies since their establishment.
  - b. Academy Converters: Schools, which deliberately turn into academies in order to gain greater control over the curriculum and management of staff etc.
  - c. Free Schools: They operate as academies, but they differ in the way they are established. Free schools can only be established as a response to local demand, with initiation from below, that is through groups of parents, local charities, universities and other interested parties, usually through a petition process. The local groups form a company limited by guarantee and choose their members that in effect run the school.

### 2.3 Structure of education and national curriculum

The compulsory school education in England is from age 5 to 16, divided into **four Key Stages**. Key Stages 1 and 2 (KS1 and KS2) cover primary school education and Key Stages 3 and 4 (KS3 and KS4) – secondary education.

Table 1 demonstrates student age groups and subjects covered by the curriculum at different Key Stages. The compulsory secondary school education is completed by passing the **General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)**, which require students aged 14-16 to take exams in a number of subjects (at least five in Key Stage 4). The compulsory subjects for GCSE are English and Mathematics. Other core subjects include Science, Languages (Modern and Ancient Languages) and Humanities (History or Geography). Additionally, secondary schools provide compulsory

relationship and sex education (RSE).<sup>85</sup> The GCSE examinations take place over the period of two to three academic years starting in Year 9 (age 14) or Year 10 (age 15).

**Table 1: Overview of Curriculum Subjects across Key Stages**

	<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Key Stage 2</b>	<b>Key Stage 3</b>	<b>Key Stage 4</b>
<b>Age</b>	5-7	7-11	11-14	14-16
Year Groups	1-2	3-6	7-9	10-11
<b>Core Subjects</b>				
English	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mathematics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Science	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Foundation Subjects</b>				
Art and Design	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Citizenship	No	No	Yes	Yes
Computing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Design and Technology	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Languages	No	Yes	Yes	No
Geography	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
History	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Music	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Physical Education	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

<sup>85</sup> RSE is not a formal subject it is a part of the PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) non-statutory curriculum that all state-funded schools have to implement. Currently schools are free in deciding how they do this. Some aspects of RSE are delivered through science subjects (e.g. biology). However, in many cases, RSE is delivered as additional or ‘super-’ learning sessions that are designed by teachers independently following the government guidance (first published in 2000). The government plans to make PSHE and RSE statutory from 2019 (DfE, 2017b). Arguably, the requirement for delivering RSE adds to already heavy workload of teachers.

	<b>Key Stage 1</b>	<b>Key Stage 2</b>	<b>Key Stage 3</b>	<b>Key Stage 4</b>
Religious Education	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The post-compulsory education in the UK is carried out in either sixth-form colleges that are usually located on the premises of secondary schools where students who achieve their GCSE have to enroll if they choose to continue their education to achieve A-level qualifications required for entry to the tertiary education; or vocational colleges that do not have direct links with secondary schools and provide more tailored training for achieving professional qualifications below the tertiary education level. Enrolment to both sixth-form and vocational colleges to a much lesser degree depend on a secondary school catchment area which operates as a strict enrolment criteria for KS3 and KS4 pupils: sixth-form students may apply for their A-level course(s) in the school different from the one where they complete their GCSE. Vocational colleges might be located a substantial distance from students' place of residence. Previously the government had subsidised the students taking further education – whether in sixth-form or vocational colleges – by providing them with the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) grants that were often used to cover students' travel expenses to attend their courses. Controversially the provision of EMA grants had stopped in England<sup>86</sup> (being replaced by a much more restrictive Bursary Fund scheme for 16-19 years old) after implementation of the austerity policies by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat government in 2010-15 that have a detrimental impact on working class young people's access to further education (Ainley and Allen, 2012: 25). Currently, a substantial number of young people leave school after they complete compulsory secondary education. In 2018, 783,000 young people in the UK, or 11.2% of all young people age 16-24 were not in education, employment or training (NEET) (ONS, 2018). Some observers noted a sharp increase in the NEETs immediately after EMA had been cancelled – from 8% in 2010 to 15% in 2012 (Ainley and Allen, 2012: 22).<sup>87</sup>

## **2.4 2014 Education Reform in England**

In 2014 a major Reform of the School Curriculum was introduced by the Conservative Government. The aims of the reform included slimming down the content of the

<sup>86</sup> EMA provisions in the form of weekly allowances payed directly to the student bank accounts for educational needs (including travel expenses) continue in North Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

<sup>87</sup> The NEET overall all rate has decreased since 2012 from almost 15% to 11%, this is mainly due to fall in the NEET rate for 18-24 year olds which has fallen from 17.4% in 2012 to 13.4% in 2016. At the same time, at age 16-17, the age group that faces transition to the post-compulsory/further education, the NEET rate in 2016 was 4.3% only slightly lower than in 2012 (4.6%) (DfE, 2017a: 9).

curriculum to focus on ‘core essential knowledge in key subjects that every child should have’, and replacing extensive teaching guidelines by more freedom for teachers to customize the curriculum to pupils’ needs (Department for Education, 2014). The new curriculum is evaluated by the DfE itself as more challenging and leading to the increase of teachers' workloads (Grants to pilot curriculum programmes, 2018: 4). As a measure to reduce workload-related pressure without jeopardising the high teaching standards, the government introduced a programme piloting scheme that is funded through the grants in June 2018. Schools are invited to apply for grants to pilot the national curriculum delivery programmes for specific subjects. The successful programmes should demonstrate how they both adhere to the pedagogical principles of the new curriculum (see Section 4.1.2), and help teachers to reduce their workload. The implementation of the scheme implies substantial additional paperwork in the form of reporting procedures, evaluation, preparation of class plans, etc. (ibid: 8). Thus, contrary to the stated objectives, the initiative might further increase workloads of teachers in those schools that decided to participate in the pilot.

Furthermore, the format of the grant competition is an example of marketisation, or promotion of a competition framework for re-distribution of financial resources to schools. As a way of providing additional resources to schools, the grant scheme may lead to unequal distribution of resources where schools in more affluent localities, which demonstrate higher attainment of their students, benefit more. The government seems to be aware of such risks, therefore, it imposes quotes: out of six schools-recipients of the grant (a minimum requirement for the partnership for implementation pilot programmes) at least one third of primary schools and a quarter of secondary schools should have at least 40% students registered as eligible for free school meals (FSM). Moreover, one of these schools should be rated as 'Required Improvement' by the Ofsted (ibid: 14-15).

In November 2014, the DfE released non-statutory advice for maintained schools on promoting the fundamental British values, which include: 1) democracy; 2) the rule of law; 3) individual liberty; 4) mutual respect; and 5) tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. The promotion of the 5 fundamental British values was also incorporated into the assessment criteria for schools by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children Services and Skills). The emphasis on ‘fundamental British values’ was developed by the government as part of a wider strategy to prevent ‘radicalization’ and ‘extremism’ and was introduced as a legal duty of schools. The above developments have raised questions in relation to the emergence of a new discourse of civic nationalism (Jerome and Clemitshaw, 2012) as well as controversy over implicated notions of Britishness; and concerns over the role of teachers who are expected to act as ‘state instruments of surveillance’ (Chalcraft, et al, 2017).

### 3. Method

In this section we discuss the methods of selection of documents for the curriculum review and our approach to the document analysis, including coding procedures and thematic analysis.

#### 3.1. Selection

The documents were selected from the website of the DfE (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/guidance-on-promoting-british-values-in-schools-published>). The process of selection involved scanning all curriculum documents and other related texts and resources provided by the DfE and applying them to all maintained schools. As Table 1 above shows, some subjects are taught in Key Stage 3, but are not part of the compulsory national curriculum after age 14 (Key Stage 4). However, all students at Key Stage 4 have a statutory entitlement to be able to study a subject from one of the following four areas: the arts, design and technology, the humanities and modern languages. Therefore, this curriculum review includes compulsory Key Stage 3 subjects (i.e. History, English, SMSC, Citizenship, RE, Art and Design, and Technology and Design), which can be taken as an optional subject by students aged 15-16 in Key Stage 4 (but they don't have a separate curriculum for this stage). The report draws on two KS3 and KS4 framework national curriculum documents and several post-compulsory (A-level) curricula for the subjects of a particular relevance for the project (i.e. Ancient History, and History). In addition to these documents we selected a government research report on the perception and use of the curriculum in England published in 2018 (see Use and perception of curriculum support resources in schools, 2018).

#### 3.2. Review

A qualitative, inductive approach was adopted to analyse the content of the curricula. Two members of the team were involved with developing the coding framework. After independently reading and coding a selected curriculum document deploying an open coding technique (Glesne, 2014), they cross-checked, validated and finalized the codes. Bringing together the sets of codes, a thematic coding framework (Gibbs, 2007) was developed, aiming at recording thematic ideas throughout the curricula. Using this coding framework, all selected curriculum documents were coded using NVivo 12 software.

The analysis of the data followed a combination of thematic and content analysis, whereby the thematic ideas were mapped-out. Then the content of each thematic group was inductively explored to identify how certain meanings and significances take

shape. The presentation of the data includes a discussion of key overarching issues, such as the overall pedagogical perspective and approach to inclusion across the national curriculum. It then refers to the analysis of each subject curriculum, with a focus on content that relates to cultural literacy. These different elements of the overall approach to cultural literacy, constructed through the various subject curricula is brought together and key ideas are critically discussed.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Ideology / Ethos of Cultural Education

The ethos of cultural education in the English secondary schools' curriculum, falls within the scope of overall ideological orientation of secondary education, as this emerges throughout the national curriculum and related guidelines. Below we will refer to key documents and explore how key issues are articulated and discursively constructed through them. We will particularly refer to the aims and purposes of the national curricula, the general pedagogic approach and values adopted throughout them, and we will make particular reference to issues around inclusion and needs as they are emphasised throughout national curriculum documents.

#### 4.1.1. Aims/Purposes

*The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens. It introduces pupils to the best that has been thought and said; and helps engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement*<sup>88</sup>(The national curriculum in England, 2014: 5).

The overall aim of the curriculum is focused on introducing knowledge that pupils need in order to become 'educated citizens' and develop 'appreciation of human creativity and achievement' (ibid: 5). This knowledge is described as 'essential knowledge' as well as in terms of 'the best that has been thought and said' (ibid).

The limitations of the national curriculum are also touched upon:

*The national curriculum is just one element in the education of every child. There is time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to range beyond the national curriculum specifications. The national curriculum provides an outline of core knowledge around which teachers can develop*

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<sup>88</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/381754/SECONDARY\\_national\\_curriculum.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381754/SECONDARY_national_curriculum.pdf)

*exciting and stimulating lessons to promote the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills as part of the wider school curriculum (ibid).*

Thus, it is demonstrated that the knowledge included in the curriculum is seen as one of the multiple elements that aid learning. Teachers are identified as key actors in turning this framework into captivating teaching and effective learning practices in the classroom. It is indicated that the current curriculum allows pedagogical time and space for going beyond the designated knowledge to cover additional issues.

#### **4.1.2. Pedagogic Approach and Values**

The 2014 national curriculum is based on three key pedagogical principles:

- 1) A knowledge-rich curriculum (with direct reference to Hirsch who also defined the concept of cultural literacy). This principle requires students to develop a coherent subject-specific knowledge by gradually building up ideas and concepts which are used in a particular subject. This principle marks a radical departure from the pre-2014 curriculum by insisting on the practice of memorising as a learning instrument in developing subject-specific knowledge and language in students. This is in a direct opposition of previous practice of experiencing knowledge as an encounter ('fleetingly encountered knowledge') (Grants to pilot curriculum programmes, 2018: 5).
- 2) A whole-class teaching principle suggests that all children are taught the same core curriculum content rather than previous practice where there were differences in teaching that could impact on the lower attaining students reducing their prospects for mastering the curriculum. By introducing this principle the government indicates two important intentions: Firstly, this principle should ensure that all students are equally included in the learning process and not deprived chances for their social mobility in future. Secondly, and more implicitly, the government is concerned with the level of UK students' knowledge compared with students in other countries, hence they often refer to practices in far-east countries, as well as a PISA 2015 study that indicates that a whole-class mastery teaching approach demonstrates better educational outcomes across the cohort of students (ibid).
- 3) Teacher-led instruction as a principle aims to introduce a more directive learning process. This principle marks a radical departure from previously advocated 'enquiry-based' or 'child-centred' approaches which suggested that teaching should stimulate enquiries coming from students. Here, again the DfE makes direct comparisons with other countries (with references to a PISA 2015



study) that indicates that students who receive teacher-led instructions often outperform students who are taught using an enquiry-based approach (ibid).

#### 4.1.3. Inclusion and Needs

The overall approach to inclusion and needs, articulated through the secondary school curriculum, requires teachers to set suitable, challenging targets for each pupil or groups of pupils. It also involves teachers identifying and responding to pupils' needs, to help them overcome barriers to their learning and achievement. In relation to setting challenges, guidance includes:

*Teachers should set high expectations for every pupil. They should plan stretching work for pupils whose attainment is significantly above the expected standard. They have an even greater obligation to plan lessons for pupils who have low levels of prior attainment or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.*

(The national curriculum in England, 2014: 9)

The focus on ambition, aspiration, and raising expectations is considered as a driving force for raising pupils' attainment. In relation to working with diverse needs, guidance refers teachers back to the Equality Act 2010.

*Teachers should take account of their duties under equal opportunities legislation that covers race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment (ibid.)*

Particular mention is given to students with disabilities and Special Needs as well as to students with English as an Additional Language. Teachers are referred to the *0-25 Special Education and Disability Code of Practice*, as a source for advice regarding the assessment of needs and the design of educational practices to accommodate these. With respect to Special Education Needs pupils, it is indicated that teaching should cover all the areas of the mainstream curriculum and should design lessons effectively so that no additional resources will be required.

*With the right teaching, that recognises their individual needs, many disabled pupils may have little need for additional resources beyond the aids, which they use as part of their daily life. Teachers must plan lessons so that these pupils can study every national curriculum subject. Potential areas of difficulty should be identified and addressed at the outset of work.*

The curriculum guidance for pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) highlights issues of assessment and stresses that pupils should be supported to participate in all parts of the curriculum provided.

*Monitoring of progress should take account of the pupil's age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and ability in other languages...  
...The ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the national curriculum may be in advance of their communication skills in English. Teachers should plan teaching opportunities to help pupils develop their English and should aim to provide the support pupils need to take part in all subjects. (The national curriculum in England, 2014)*

Thus the ideas of diversity are implicitly and explicitly present in the principles of the pedagogic practice in secondary education. At the same time, there are a number of noticeable absences that indicate a rather limited understanding of diversity. The curriculum places substantial emphasis on the educational obstacles for EAL students without recognising the potential benefits of bi- and multilingualism for such pupils. There seems to be no acknowledgement in the curriculum documents that socio-economic inequalities create the most significant educational disadvantage.

## **4.2. Subject curricula with relevance to cultural education**

### **4.2.1. History and Ancient History**

The history curriculum has a clearly defined thematic scope that is divided a) according to the Key Stages and b) according to the historical periodisation.

In general, the history curriculum is focused on British history (including the histories of Wales, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland). For example, at least 40% of the GCSE history curriculum and 20% of the A level history curriculum should be dedicated to British history (GCSE subject content: History, 2014: 5; GCE AS and A level subject content for history, 2014: 2). The Key Stage 3 history curriculum is predominantly organised as the history of Britain with a requirement to study at least one significant society or issue related to world history (see History programmes of study, 2013: 5).

Chronologically, the history curriculum is structured along the following key historical periods: 1) Medieval period (500 AD - 1509) which is divided into a) pre-1066 (the year of the Norman conquest of Britain) and b) 1066-1509 (the period ends before the Reformation); 2) Early Modern period (1509-1745) covering the periods of the Reformation, the Civil War, establishment of English colonies in North America and creation of the union between England and Scotland; the period ends with the second Jacobite rebellion in 1745; 3) Modern period (1745-1901) covering the Enlightenment, development of British Empire (including the slave trade and colonial rule in India more

specifically), the French Revolution and its impact on European history, including British history; the great scientific and industrial developments of the Victorian era (i.e. industrial revolution, Darwin, etc.); 4) 1901-present day history is structured around key events in world history and their effect on British history such as WWI and WWII (with specific mention of the Holocaust), the inter-war period is covered with special reference to the Great Depression, the post-1945 period is studied with special reference to the establishment of the Welfare State domestically and Indian independence internationally (ibid: 4).

There seems to be a tendency to increase attention to world history (as opposed to British history) in the curriculum as students progress through secondary school - with the Key Stage 3 (KS3) curriculum being mostly orientated on British history, while GCSE and A level students have a choice to do Ancient history (3000BC - 500AD) (see below) which has the least of the British content (however, there are special topics there focusing on Roman Britain and the Boudicca Revolt specifically).

The approach to history is both nationalistic in its focus on the British national history and Eurocentric. World history is often approached from the perspective of its connections with British history, e.g. Roman Britain; Imperial and colonial past with a focus on India, Ireland, and colonisation of the Americas, including the slave trade; USA and Russia as countries that took part in WWII which is one of the central themes in the British history of the twentieth century. Similarly, broader European history in the twentieth century including Germany and the topic of the Holocaust are discussed in the context of WWII. China is covered during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) that is the period when it became open to Europeans and became subject of British (among other European/Western powers) colonisation. The KS3 History Programme of Study (2013: 5) states, for example, that pupils have to be taught '*at least one study of a significant society or issue in world history and its interconnections with other world developments [for example, Mughal India 1526-1857; China's Qing dynasty 1644-1911; Changing Russian empires c.1800-1989; USA in the 20th Century].*'

The themes that feature in the curriculum for study European history highlight the way that key aspects of European culture/identity are constructed. This includes the Renaissance and Enlightenment for art and cultural history, the Reformation for the 'religious'; 'social' history of Europe is also often studied within the thematic scope of two world wars and the Holocaust (see, for example, The National Curriculum in England, 2013: 72-74).

In terms of the teaching approach to history in the secondary school curriculum there is an emphasis on the development of students' understanding of historical processes in terms of 'continuity' and 'causation'. Students are required to learn some specific

terminology and concepts as they progress through secondary school. For example, the historical concepts that students need to master at KS3 include 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry' (ibid: 1). For GCSE they need to know 'constitution', 'nation', 'revolution', 'society' (History GCSE subject content, 2014: 6); the concepts specific for Ancient History GCSE include 'civil war', 'democracy', 'empire', 'imperialism', 'monarchy', and 'republic' (Ancient History GCSE subject content, 2016: 5). Finally, A level students are expected to 'demonstrate their understanding of key historical terms and historical concepts, such as change, continuity, causation, consequence and significance' (GCE AS and A level subject content for history, 2014: 2). As this outline demonstrates, the expectation is implicitly present in the curriculum that students will progress to more sophisticated and abstract understandings of the historical processes and events engaging with the discipline-specific terminology and methods at the higher grades of secondary school and ultimately at the preparatory stage to higher education.

Indeed, in the curriculum there is an emphasis on students learning the historical methods and approaches to analysis. More specifically, students are expected to gain an understanding of the limitations and differences between a variety of historical sources, such as written accounts and material artefacts:

- *the ability to understand and use critically and constructively a range of contemporary source material appropriate to the period (including written historical sources whose precise provenance is given) to frame their own valid historical questions and make their own valid historical claims*
- *understanding of how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, discerning how and why different interpretations of the past have been constructed.* (History GCSE subject content, 2014: 6)

At the same, time the curriculum does not provide much information on how the knowledge about historical sources is expected to be developed by the students - there are no examples in the curriculum documents that would demonstrate good practice or provide more tangible content for this important aspect of teaching history to students. This observation is particularly significant given that learning historical methods and approaches to the analysis of historical events/processes are often stated in the curriculum documents next to the declared purpose that the history curriculum aims to develop important skills such as 'critical thinking' (see, for example, the citation above). Thus, arguably one of the central aims of the secondary education curriculum in general and the history curriculum in particular is to develop 'critical thinking' among students remains a declarative statement devoid of any substance in the curriculum documents.

Since the history curriculum covers a rather extensive thematic scope which is problematic to study in depth within a limited period, schools are expected to develop their history syllabi to fulfil a minimum requirement of covering at least three historical eras on three time scales within three geographical contexts:

- *from three eras: Medieval (500-1500), Early Modern (1450-1745) and Modern (1745-present day)*
- *on three time scales: short (depth study), medium (period study) and long (thematic study)*
- *on three geographical contexts: a locality (the historic environment); British; and European and / or wider world settings*

*British history must form a minimum of 40% of the assessed content over the full course. (ibid: 5).*

Such an approach although it can potentially contribute to students' in depth knowledge of a specific event/issue within a particular historic period and part of the broader historical development, might also lead to fragmentation of students' understanding of history in terms of continuity (one of the discipline's core concepts that students are expected to master) and geographical interconnectedness.

Importantly, also, such organisation of the teaching/learning of history links national British history that is at the centre of the curriculum with the world/European (sic!) historical context but also with localities which are defined in terms of the 'historic environment'. Indeed, it is at the local geographical context where the curriculum makes direct references to historical/cultural heritage suggesting that students have to learn about national history through engagement with local (emplaced) heritage sites:<sup>89</sup>

*The study of the historic environment should focus on one particular site in its historical context. The study should examine the relationship between a place and historical events and developments. The focus of study may range in scale from, for example, a particular building or part of a building to a city or rural landscape/ setting. There is no requirement that students visit the site. This study may be linked to any other part of the course or may stand alone (ibid).*

At A level the Ancient History curriculum explicitly defines 'developing of understanding of ancient legacy' as one of the aims of studying ancient history. At the same time, ancient history is demarcated in the curriculum as a period between 3000BC and 500AD - effectively the periodization covers Greco-Roman Antiquity that suggests

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<sup>89</sup> Engagement with the emplaced historical/cultural heritage via visits to the heritage sites suggested as an educational tool for study of the early Medieval history (pre-1066) perhaps due to lack of the written sources about this period in the national history.

a rather Eurocentric approach to the study of that period. Indeed, among topics and themes that are explicitly named in the curriculum all are directly or indirectly linked to either Ancient Greece (e.g. Persian Wars, decline of the Persian Empire, historical writings of Herodotus) or Roman Republic/Empire (including references to the Julio-Claudian period, the Year of Four Emperors, the Boudicca Revolt) (Ancient History GCSE subject content, 2016: 4).

Importantly, ancient history is presented from the perspective of the state (the focus on empires, chiefdoms, as well as political history) and other essential for the social structure institutions and phenomena such as religion and warfare (i.e. military history). Here again political organisation in the form of state (or proto-state) is important for such approaches to events in the distant past. Cultural history is also mentioned but throughout the curriculum it is less specified - what exactly is meant by culture in this respect? Is it the way of living, or rather the artistic and creative practices and artefacts that remain from that period? It is likely that the latter is emphasised rather than the former given that in general the curriculum stresses the importance of material sources. So the cultural history is likely to be understood in terms of the tangible and emplaced cultural heritage. Thus, the ancient history curriculum uses a rather macro-historical approach presenting the past from the perspective of political structures rather than a micro-historical, agency/community-orientated approach.

Arguably the presentation of history in the national curriculum is dominated by the top-down perspective where the events of the national past and world history are presented predominantly from the vantage point of the state (hence there is emphasis on such concepts as 'empire', 'republic', 'revolution', 'civil war', 'nation' etc.) and other dominant institutions (such as church, political establishment (parliament), monarchy) and powerful individuals (i.e. monarchs, politicians/political leaders/statesmen, etc.):

*Pupils should be taught about the development of Church, state and society in Britain 1509-1745.*

*Examples (non-statutory)*

*This could include:*

- *Renaissance and Reformation in Europe*
- *the English Reformation and Counter Reformation (Henry VIII to Mary I)*
- *the Elizabethan religious settlement and conflict with Catholics (including Scotland, Spain and Ireland)*
- *the first colony in America and first contact with India*
- *the causes and events of the civil wars throughout Britain*
- *the Interregnum (including Cromwell in Ireland)*



- *the Restoration, 'Glorious Revolution' and power of Parliament*
- *the Act of Union of 1707, the Hanoverian succession and the Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745*
- *society, economy and culture across the period: for example, work and leisure in town and country, religion and superstition in daily life, theatre, art, music and literature* (History programme of study, 2013: 3)

Although the curriculum makes allowances for 'cultural', 'religious', 'social' perspectives on history with some focus on daily life during certain periods, as the excerpt above demonstrates, such a 'bottom-up' perspective is rather 'secondary' to the dominant top-down approach.

The history curriculum explicitly states development of students' 'understanding of their identity' as one of its key aims:

*History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time* (History programme of study, 2013: 1).

This perhaps explains the 'national' orientation of the history curriculum. The themes of 'diversity of society' and 'relationships between groups' seem to be covered to a great extent by different aspects of world history in the curriculum (see discussion of above). Curiously the topic of 'migration' as a factor in shaping the population of the British Isles is explicitly stated only in the context of ancient and early Medieval history (ibid: 5).

#### **4.2.2. English**

The new curriculum and guidelines for teaching English present the subject as holding a significant place in pupils' education. The broad learning objectives, at secondary school level, evolve around developing and honing pupils' speaking, writing and reading skills. These skills are linked to students' communication abilities, their wider personal and learning development, as well as their participation in society. It is stated that:

*Through reading in particular, pupils have a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Literature, especially, plays a key role in such development. Reading also enables pupils both to acquire knowledge and to build on what they already know. All the skills of language*



*are essential to participating fully as a member of society; pupils, therefore, who do not learn to speak, read and write fluently and confidently are effectively disenfranchised* (The National Curriculum in England, 2014: 13).

The emphasis on the positive influence of studying literature in terms of moral, cultural and spiritual development and the prominent position attached to it, in terms of pupils' overall learning, go beyond the description of a subject and field of knowledge. English literature is constructed more in terms of 'cultural capital' by being presented as significant in areas beyond the academic domain and across various fields of life. Literature is thus presented as distinct from other texts (Olive, 2013) and in some ways superior to them. Value, in this case, is therefore attributed to formal, established and recognised forms of cultural expression and heritage.

The strong links between literature and the formation of a sense of national heritage and British identity are further pronounced in the reform of the curriculum and the selection of key texts. The objectives of the new English curriculum at Key stage 3 and Key Stage 4 respectively, include:

(KS3) *To develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material independently through:*

- *reading a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, including in particular whole books, short stories, poems and plays with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, forms and authors. The range will include high-quality works from:*
- *English literature, both pre-1914 and contemporary, including prose, poetry and drama;*
- *Shakespeare (two plays);*
- *seminal world literature;*
- *choosing and reading books independently for challenge, interest and enjoyment;*
- *re-reading books encountered earlier to increase familiarity with them and provide a basis for making comparisons.* (English Programme of Study, 2013: 5)

(KS4) *Read and appreciate the depth and power of the English literary heritage through:*

- *reading a wide range of high-quality, challenging, classic literature and extended literary non-fiction, such as essays, reviews and journalism. This writing should include whole texts. The range will include:*
- *at least one play by Shakespeare*
- *works from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries*

- *poetry since 1789, including representative Romantic poetry*
- *re-reading literature and other writing as a basis for making comparisons*
- *choosing and reading books independently for challenge, interest and enjoyment* (English Programmes of Study, 2014: 5)

In terms of content, the main changes in the new curriculum involve a shift towards prioritising older texts, with a focus on pre-1914 authors and romantic poetry. Throughout secondary school, pupils have to study three Shakespeare plays, while American literature, with novels including *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men*, have been excluded. To highlight this turn, Olive (2013) has pointed out that the authors praised by the (then) Education Secretary Michael Gove in one speech, had been dead for an average of 206 years. Tomlinson (2015) also criticises the traditional stance, commenting that pupils study what was available in the grammar schools of the 1950s. She also argues that the aforementioned American novels are frowned upon, as they ‘might encourage too much discussion of poverty, disability, slavery and race hatred’. The refocusing of the new English curriculum sparked debate across the education community with scholars arguing that it has been reconfigured along nationalist lines (Stannard, 2018). Others have indicated a backlash against ‘multiculturalism’ in the field of literature, as the prioritising of older texts has clear implications for the erasure of non-white authors from the curriculum (Nelson-Addy et al, 2018). In this respect, although one of the key, stated objectives of English is to develop participation skills, the curriculum is far from reflecting the contemporary socio-cultural landscapes of high diversity and multiculturalism. It is therefore questionable how it will prepare students for the complexities and challenges occurring in contemporary, internationalised and diverse social contexts.

#### **4.2.3. Spiritual, Moral, Cultural, Mental and Physical Development (SMSC)**

The promotion of the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils (SMSC) is part of the school duties with respect to providing what is described as a ‘broad and balanced’ curriculum. As part of the counter-terrorism Prevent Strategy, launched in 2011, it has become a statutory requirement for schools to promote the values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance. The government issued non-statutory advice for schools on how to actively promote the Fundamental British Values as part of the SMSC. This is defined in terms of:

*[a]ctively promoting the values means challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to fundamental British values. Attempts to promote systems that undermine fundamental British values would be completely at*

*odds with schools' duty to provide SMSC. (Promoting Fundamental British Values as Part of SMSC in Schools, 2014: 5)*

Beyond the incorporation of the duty to promote the five fundamental British values, objectives of the SMSC include an individualised focus on fostering certain attitudes. For example, to:

- *enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;*
- *encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely (ibid: 5).*

These personality features emerge through the curriculum as encapsulating the spirit of the fundamental British values at the level of individuals. That is, they are constructed as providing the basis for lived experiences of the British values.

In other cases, fostering individual attitudes is linked to normative approaches and also refers to legal frames of reference:

- *enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England (ibid: 5).*

The foregrounding of right and wrong types of behaviour are part of an overall preoccupation with fostering certain sets of values to individual students. These values are presented as part of the national cultural context of Britain. The normative construction of values and desired attitudes and their linking with 'Britishness' implies the occurrence of non-British values. In turn, the construction of 'non-Britishness' may foster suspicion and therefore work as a divisive discursive mechanism.

The majority of the learning objectives of the SMSC curriculum are described and articulated around the idea of developing pupils' 'respect'.

- *encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England;*
- *enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;*
- *encourage respect for other people (ibid: 5).*

The quest for building-up respect as described in the curriculum guidelines, is set within the broader context of preoccupation with values. In this account, certain elements of the political sphere and public life are framed in terms of desired individual attributes. That is, elements that would typically be regarded a part of youth citizenship and

identity, are regarded as individualised features of character, signifying a private intake of public, political issues.

The description of learning outcomes, which pupils are expected to achieve out of SMSC generally, and the schools' promotion of fundamental British values in particular, relate to the development of knowledge and understanding regarding democratic processes in public life. For example:

- *an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;*
- *an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety (ibid: 5).*

Other learning outcomes specifically target the fostering of attitudes that are necessary for living harmoniously in contemporary, diverse social settings. Examples include:

- *an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;*
- *an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;*
- *an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination (ibid: 6).*

Overall, the much-discussed recent duty of schools to promote fundamental British values involves a number of teaching and learning objectives that can be grouped into three main themes: 1) one is related to developing certain individual attributes, 2) one focusing on developing knowledge on the functions of legal institutions and democratic processes and 3) one that relates more directly to attitudes towards diversity in the social domain.

#### **4.2.4. Citizenship Education**

The purpose of Citizenship Education is described in terms of preparation of pupils to participate fully and actively in the society. The breakdown and specification of the key aims states that students will:

- *acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of how the United Kingdom is governed, its political system and how citizens participate actively in its democratic systems of government*
- *develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society and how laws are shaped and enforced*

- *develop an interest in, and commitment to, participation in volunteering as well as other forms of responsible activity, that they will take with them into adulthood*
- *are equipped with the skills to think critically and debate political questions, to enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis, and plan for future financial needs* (Citizenship Programmes of Study, 2013: 1).

The above aims are predominantly focused on learning about the political system, the legal framework and the system of government in the UK. The skills that are to be developed throughout Citizenship Education lessons, relate to participation, critical thinking and financial planning. Critical thinking is linked to approaching and debating political issues. Alongside these, socially or community-oriented skills, the citizenship curriculum also aims at developing pupils' abilities regarding their own financial management and planning.

The majority of the designated content of citizenship education is about knowledge of the formal legal, justice system, the system of government and the citizens' duties and responsibilities deriving from these. It includes issues around democratic government, elections and the operation of the parliament, the role of police and the courts. In short, it focuses mainly on knowledge of the formal systems, mechanisms and their operation. Examples include:

*Pupils should be taught about:*

- *the development of the political system of democratic government in the United Kingdom, including the roles of citizens, Parliament and the monarch*
- *the operation of Parliament, including voting and elections, and the role of political parties*
- *the precious liberties enjoyed by the citizens of the United Kingdom*
- *the nature of rules and laws and the justice system, including the role of the police and the operation of courts and tribunals* (Citizenship Programmes of Study, 2013: 2).

The notion of politics that is constructed throughout the selection of these issues relates to formal, institutionalised types and notions of the political sphere –and respective forms of participation and citizenship. In other words, participation emerges as related to various sets of duties and obligations, while citizenship is based on legal-based models and conceptions. Informal forms of participation can be identified in the following areas of teaching:

- *the roles played by public institutions and voluntary groups in society, and the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities, including opportunities to participate in school-based activities.*
- *...the different ways in which a citizen can contribute to the improvement of his or her community, to include the opportunity to participate actively in community volunteering, as well as other forms of responsible activity (ibid: 2).*

In this respect, participation, beyond the formally established, constitutional duties, is understood in terms of community engagement and is mainly focused on volunteering. The construction of public domain and politics is thus sketched in terms of, either formal institutions, or community, voluntary groups and activities. This construct is rather in accordance with wider visions and rhetorics regarding the social sphere, promoted by the government at this phase, such as, for example, the idea of Big Society. In this broader scheme, there are considerable aspects of social and political life that are excluded. For example, the existence of pressure groups and interest groups, the work of unions and political organisations, the rise of social movements, past and present, the different forms these may take and their political implications at international, national and local levels. Moreover, despite the relatively recent reform, the curriculum seems to lack references to significant contemporary issues, such as, for example, issues of digital forms of participation and civic engagement, online movements and campaigns and their relation to real/physical political processes.

The construction of the socio-political sphere in terms of institutionalised processes on the one hand, and community volunteering, on the other, is complemented with references to the private sphere and the development of individual skills in financial management and planning. The prominence of financial skills as a key learning goal is identifiable across the whole presentation of citizenship education. It is specified as follows:

- *the functions and uses of money, the importance and practice of budgeting, and managing risk (ibid: 2)*
- *...income and expenditure, credit and debt, insurance, savings and pensions, financial products and services, and how public money is raised and spent (ibid: 3).*

Interestingly through the curriculum guidelines, financial management and planning skills are understood as part of citizenship. This involves a shift from traditional notions of citizenship in terms of the display of individual practices in the public domain, towards a model of citizenship whereby knowledge acquired in the public sphere is deployed with a focus on private lives and trajectories. This reversal echoes the logics of wider neo-liberal regimes, emphasising individual responsibility in steering one's

life and trajectories. It also signifies a retreat of the state from the responsibility to manage risk and provide a context of protection, both in terms of financial security through job security and in terms of public services provision. In turn the responsibility lies with education to provide individuals with the right skills in order to plug this gap and navigate themselves through risk and uncertainty on an individual basis.

#### 4.2.5. Religious Education

The wider objective of Religious Education is described in terms of developing pupils' knowledge around religion and in terms of developing their religious literacy. The key areas of inquiry and knowledge development include the study of religions and related worldviews, outlined as follows:

- *beliefs, teachings, sources of wisdom and authority;*
- *ways of living;*
- *ways of expressing meaning;*
- *questions of identity, diversity and belonging;*
- *questions of meaning, purpose and truth;*
- *questions of values and commitments.* (A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education, 2013: 27).

The list of knowledge areas is rather wide and covers many different issues and perspectives of religion, ranging from the study of sacred texts and religious dogmas to questions of meaning and truth and issues of diversity and identity. In other words, more spiritual-focused approaches are identifiable side by side with other more philosophical perspectives as well as socio-political accounts. The wide range and variety in terms of intended learning objectives is evident in the outline of skills too. Religious literacy is approached with reference to a set of skills for:

- *investigating religions and worldviews through varied experiences, approaches and disciplines;*
- *reflecting on and expressing [pupils'] own ideas and the ideas of others with increasing creativity and clarity;*
- *becoming increasingly able to respond to religions and worldviews in an informed, rational and insightful way* (ibid: 10).

The acquisition of religious literacy skills is described as a process of progressive development, which includes three different stages. At the level of secondary education, the first group of skills refers to knowledge and understanding of different religions and is detailed as follows:



- a) *Explain and interpret ways that the history and culture of religions and worldviews influence individuals and communities, including a wide range of beliefs and practices, in order to appraise reasons why some people support and others question these influences.*
- b) *Explain and interpret a range of beliefs, teachings and sources of wisdom and authority in order to understand religions and worldviews as coherent systems or ways of seeing the world.*
- c) *Explain how and why individuals and communities express the meanings of their beliefs and values in many different forms and ways of living, enquiring into the variety, differences and relationships that exist within and between them (ibid: 28).*

The second stage of skills regarding religious literacy development is about building-up and communicating clearly students' own ideas on different beliefs and religious practices as well as considering their influences for individuals and communities. These include:

- a) *Explain the religions and worldviews which [pupils] encounter clearly, reasonably and coherently; evaluate them, drawing on a range of introductory level approaches recognised in the study of religion or theology*
- b) *Express with increasing discernment [pupils'] personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value*
- c) *Observe and interpret a wide range of ways in which commitment and identity are expressed. They develop insightful evaluation and analysis of controversies about commitment to religions and worldviews, accounting for the impact of diversity within and between communities (ibid: 29).*

Throughout these expected outcomes, religion is approached as involving different dimensions and as a subject that can be studied drawing on different disciplines. Gearon's (2013) research on religious education distinguishes a number of different paradigms involved in the study of religion in education and points out their implications for learners. He argues that there is a paradigm shift currently underway in the UK in teaching and learning about religion, with several of these – often competing – paradigms being identifiable across the government's guidelines. His research also shows that teachers appear to be confused over what the subject should be aiming to achieve (see also: Conroy, Lundie & Baumfield 2012). His description of different paradigms include: the scriptural-theological; phenomenological; psychological-experiential; philosophical-conceptual; socio-cultural; and historical-political. Elements of all these models are identifiable across the description of religious

studies in the secondary school curriculum, while there seems to be no overarching approach.

Nevertheless these different approaches entail different models of learning, set different learning objectives and implicate different conceptualisations of diversity. Indicatively, and following Gearon (2014: 71): ‘philosophical models see the object lesson of religious education to make thinkers and proto-philosophers; socio-cultural models see the object lesson of religious education as creating ethnographic, cultural explorers; psychological models see the learner as a seeker after personal meaning and fulfilment, “spiritual with religion”, the child as spiritual seeker; phenomenological models see the object lesson of religious education as creating a detached observer of the stuff of religion who is perpetually distanced from it; ever more prevalent political models, emphasizing the public face of religion, see teaching and learning in religious education as concerned with the creation of citizens and even activists’.

These differing approaches to the study of religion in the classroom also involve different accounts of religious diversity and attitudes towards understanding it. These may range from understanding diversity with reference to dogma and sources of authority through to approaching diversity with reference to the socio-cultural contexts within which different religious beliefs emerge and a consideration of the workings of religious practices across different cultural conditions. While the nature of the school curriculum focuses on outlining objectives and general content rather than a detailed guidance on the teaching practices, it remains an open issue for exploration how these different models feed into educational practices and are played out in the classroom. While it is a declared aim of religious education to contribute to pupils’ ‘preparation for adult life in a pluralistic society and global community’ (Religious Studies, 2015: 3), the prevailing approach for doing so is not clearly defined, with the co-existence of elements of competing approaches.

Additional guidelines on Religious Education were issued in 2016 to clarify several issues. Schools are required to develop the religious education curriculum locally, and it is highlighted that this doesn’t need to reflect the wider national conditions and specification around religious groups:

- *There is no requirement for an individual school’s curriculum to mirror the make-up of the national or local population, curriculums should continue to be locally determined.*
- *Schools are at liberty to use a range of relevant factors to determine their Religious Education curriculum, including the intellectual rigour it presents and its role in supporting pupils’ development as world citizens (Further*

Guidance for Schools, Local Authorities and Agreed Syllabus Conferences about Religious Studies GCSE, 2016: 1).

Criteria highlighted in the development of the curriculum are related to intellectual rigour and erudition about religious denominations that are different from Christianity which is assumed as the main religious tradition of Great Britain. The development of such erudition is curiously presented in terms of ‘world citizenship’ implying that non-Christian religious traditions are also external to Britain.

*For schools without a religious character, the Religious Education curriculum needs to reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (ibid, 2016: 1).*

Inclusion in relation to the religious education curriculum is constructed in terms of locality-based issues and criteria. That is, the curricula developed by schools based on the provided guidelines need to reflect the features and respond to the needs of their communities and local population, rather than being accorded to the overall national or even international landscape. Nevertheless, all non-religious schools are required to reflect in their curriculum the dominance of Christianity as part of British religious traditions. Additionally schools are not obliged to cover equally non-religious views and perspectives in their teaching material.

There are two paradoxical elements in the above extracts of curriculum guidelines. One relates to the contradictory approach attributed to non-religious schools’ freedom to develop the content of the religious education curriculum, as they are obliged to devote the most significant part of teaching to Christianity. Christianity is constructed as part of the heritage and tradition of Great Britain, and therefore as part of the national history and identity. Arguably, this restricts the freedom which schools can exercise to specify the curriculum content. Additionally there is an identifiable contradiction in relation to the insistence of a local focus and the intended learning outcomes in terms of ‘*supporting pupils’ development as world citizens*’. While pupils are recognised as future world citizens, and schools are asked to choose knowledge suitable for this purpose, the focus of the content is centred on reflecting local issues and characteristics. That is, rather than covering and reflecting the religions across local, national boundaries and the possibilities and issues emerging internationally, schools are expected to prepare world citizens deploying locally-contextualised resources.

#### **4.2.6. Design and Technology**

Design and technology is described as an ‘*inspiring, rigorous and practical subject*’ which cuts across various subjects and requires drawing on different knowledge fields. Its content is very wide and spans from electronics design to cooking. It involves the development of practical skills that are required for pupils’ everyday lives and involves knowledge acquisition beyond the strictly defined academic domain.

*Using creativity and imagination, pupils design and make products that solve real and relevant problems within a variety of contexts, considering their own and others’ needs, wants and values. They acquire a broad range of subject knowledge and draw on disciplines such as mathematics, science, engineering, computing and art. Pupils learn how to take risks, becoming resourceful, innovative, enterprising and capable citizens.*

*Through the evaluation of past and present design and technology, they develop a critical understanding of its impact on daily life and the wider world. High-quality design and technology education makes an essential contribution to the creativity, culture, wealth and well-being of the nation (Design and Technology Programmes of Study, Key Stage 3, 2013: 1).*

The description of the subject as practical, cross-disciplinary, creativity-driven and focused on problem-solving signifies that the knowledge transmitted through it is closely related to culture in terms of lived experiences and everyday lives. Thus, in contrast to the description of other modules (such as English and History discussed above), which foreground knowledge in terms of formal, established forms of ‘cultural capital’, Design and Technology focuses on informal forms of culture. We will unpack the elements of culture constructed throughout the description of the purposes and aims, to identify how informal culture is constructed and embraced in this part of the curriculum.

The teaching objectives include development of knowledge and skills related to design, making, evaluating, acquiring technical knowledge as well as developing cooking skills. Design skills are described with a focus on identifying solutions based on pupils’ own and others’ needs and values. It is also referred that:

*Pupils learn how to take risks, becoming resourceful, innovative, enterprising and capable citizens (ibid: 1).*

In the above instances, the aims evolve around the formation of pupils’ enterprising and risk-taking outlook, while innovation and enterprise are also highlighted. Taken together, these elements echo, to a great extent, hegemonic entrepreneurial discourses, dominating Western, neo-liberal economic regimes. They derive from policy and wider

public calls for developing ‘a nation of young entrepreneurs’<sup>90</sup>, as a response to unemployment and economic downturn. Nevertheless, research has problematized the ‘shiny words, fake promises and renewed clamour for a ‘youth enterprise culture’ while questioning claims that ‘entrepreneurial ambitions are unequivocally good’ (McDonald, 1991, 2018<sup>91</sup>). Moreover, these elements of enterprise culture constructed through the learning objectives are also linked to citizenship. Thus informal forms of culture foregrounded by the Design and Technology curriculum, relate to a culture of enterprise, which is also presented as a valid and valued route to civic engagement and participation.

Other elements of an enterprising culture are also identifiable across the description of the Design and Technology curriculum. The acquisition of design skills includes:

*‘use research and exploration, such as the study of different cultures, to identify and understand user needs’ (ibid: 2).*

The development of evaluation skills involves:

*‘understand developments in design and technology, its impact on individuals, society and the environment, and the responsibilities of designers, engineers and technologists’ (ibid: 3).*

In the above extracts, consideration of different cultures is deployed as a means for exploring people’s user-needs. Although references to issues of cultural diversity are scarce across the national curriculum, one of the few direct references is linked to a consumer research viewpoint. Additionally there are references to social responsibility, stressing the need for a reflexive engagement with the environmental impact of their work. This is presented as an individual responsibility of various professionals towards the outcomes of their work, rather than, for example, references to the regulatory frameworks required to reinforce societally responsible directions for the development of the field.

#### **4.2.7. Art and Design**

Despite the rhetoric commitment to developing a ‘round and balanced curriculum’, the spirit of the 2014 reform encapsulated a ‘core knowledge’ approach and has raised questions regarding the position of Art and Design (James, 2018<sup>92</sup>). Concerns have been expressed regarding the marginalisation and downgrading of subjects like art and

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/richard-branson-we-need-a-nation-of-young-entrepreneurs-6265075.html>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.celebyouth.org/youth-and-the-enterprise-culture/>

<sup>92</sup> <https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/national-curriculum-in-england-the-first-30-years-part-2>

music, in favour of an academic focus prioritising subjects like mathematics, English and science. In this respect, it has been argued that the current curriculum embraces the old-fashioned neo-Victorian two-tier system while also constituting a syllabus for three subjects rather than a rounded curriculum (Alexander, 2012).

The purposes of arts education are described with references to a set of skills related to creativity and experimentation. The description also includes the progressive development of pupils towards gaining critical thinking skills in order to understand art and design processes and artefacts. The purposes also make reference to national history and culture, as follows:

*‘[to] engage, inspire and challenge pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design. As pupils progress, they should be able to think critically and develop a more rigorous understanding of art and design. They should also know how art and design both reflect and shape our history, and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation’* (Art and Design Programmes of Study, Key Stage 3, 2013: 1).

Art and design are highlighted as an entry point into national heritage and culture. Here the description of the overall purpose as well as the outline of aims and expected outcomes links art education to national history and culture and is presented as both ‘reflecting and shaping’ it. In this respect, the aims involve a set of practical skills alongside knowledge of art history. The latter includes:

- *know about great artists, craft makers and designers, and understand the historical and cultural development of their art forms;*
- *evaluate and analyse creative works using the language of art, craft and design;*
- *be taught about the history of art, craft, design and architecture, including periods, styles and major movements from ancient times up to the present day* (ibid: 1).

Significantly such emphasis on art history corresponds with the approach to cultural history within the History curriculum outlined above as a history of art and material culture. This suggests that the meanings of what constitutes ‘national cultural heritage’ is imposed from above being defined using the ‘language of art, craft and design’.

## 5. Discussion

The coding and presentation of the curriculum content, which is related to cultural education, allows gaining insights into the context where teaching and learning processes are shaped and enacted in English secondary schools. While there is not a single subject devoted to cultural literacy education, elements of it are covered and developed in the context of different subjects. Through our search and review of national curricula, we identified the following subjects as contributing to the development of different strands of cultural literacy in young people's schooling: History and Ancient History, English, Citizenship Education, Religious Education, Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural Development (SMSC), Design and Technology, and Art and Design. In this section, we will present an overview of the elements of cultural education constructed via these subject curricula and will discuss their underpinnings and implications.

All the subject curricula analysed in the previous sections have been implemented in schools since the 2014 education reform. As a result of this reform, the content of all these subjects has been slimmed down and focused around hard-facts, with a view to ensuring that all pupils acquire less, but more important knowledge. Additionally, the format and philosophy behind the very idea of what the 'curriculum' is, and what it contains, changed. Detailed guidelines were replaced by outlines of the purpose and aims, along with a broad overview of the content of the subject and expected outcomes at each Key Stage. Details and teaching instructions were abandoned in order to allow more freedom for teachers to develop their pedagogical practices. Finally, there has been an overall shift in the hegemonic pedagogical approach put forward by the DfE. This consists of (1) a 'knowledge-rich' curriculum, (2) whole-class teaching and (3) teacher-led instruction. The pedagogical shift has been justified on the basis of raising the cultural capital of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally educational underachievement documented in Britain was linked to previous child-centred and curiosity-driven pedagogic approaches –which were considered as having failed disadvantaged pupils.

The overall shift in the pedagogical philosophy and approach attracted several critical remarks. In the course of implementation of this new type of curricula, a number of challenges also emerged. The increased workload for teachers, the divisions and gaps between schools which have the means and resources to support their teachers in curriculum development and those who don't, are a few of the most indicative. Measures have been taken to provide additional funding for curriculum development, although these funds are focused on well-performing schools, therefore risking a further deepening of existing divisions.



Critical remarks have also been raised in relation to the pedagogical stance adopted, arguing that it is underpinned by oversimplified, linear conceptions of teaching and learning (Wood, 2014). Moreover, it has been indicated that the form of objective-led teaching, adopted in the context of the curriculum reform, is a paradigm that reduces what happens in the classrooms to the attainment of pre-specified goals (Hardcastle and Yandell, 2018). According to Yandell's (2017) critique, the model is based on the assumption that it is enough to specify a body of knowledge, while the role of the teacher is to transmit it and the role of the student is to acquire it. In terms of the focus of the new curriculum, researchers have pointed out the 'perpetuation of the damaging Victorian legacy of a two-tier curriculum' (Alexander, 2012, p. 369), to highlight the prominent focus on English, Maths and Sciences and the relative neglect towards the rest of the subjects.

Throughout the presentation of our findings, we referred to the content of the subject curricula regarding several elements of cultural literacy. In the case of the English curriculum, we identified strong links between the selection of literature and the aim of developing a strong sense of cultural heritage, that is, of British heritage. The emphasis on romantic poetry and literature, pre-1914 texts and Shakespeare's plays at the expense of contemporary multicultural literature further animate this objective. Alongside a nationalist turn these developments also illustrate Olive's (2013) argument that 'the dismissal of popular cultural forms and the tastes and experience of the masses continues to be utilised as a way of shoring up Shakespeare's supreme cultural value'<sup>93</sup>. Taking into consideration Michael Gove's statement about the reformed curriculum as having the potential 'to liberate our poorest children from the shadow of ignorance and the chains of dependency'<sup>94</sup>, it seems that certain cultural references are constructed as valuable and important. Thus the English curriculum implicates a double-faceted exclusion regarding the limited presence of multicultural texts - on the one hand - and of popular forms of culture on the other. In relation to the former, the implicit construction of a 'highbrow' culture reproduces an old fashioned division in relation to cultural practice and value. In relation to the latter, the emphasis on rediscovering a sense of British heritage through literature and minimal study of modern and multicultural texts, has limited merit in preparing pupils for participating in contemporary multi-cultural and highly diverse social settings.

Links between curriculum guidelines and constructions of cultural heritage were also evident in the Religious Education programmes. Although, as we discussed, the main curriculum document deploys various, different and even competing approaches to the study of religions, the follow-on guidelines emphasise Christianity in connection to

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<sup>93</sup> <https://www.alluvium-journal.org/2013/01/12/shakespeare-in-the-english-national-curriculum/>

<sup>94</sup> <https://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/601441>

British heritage and define the scope of the content with a view to local contexts. That is, a curriculum that reflects localized features of diversity rather than wider patterns. This direction contradicts the stated aim of religious education regarding the development of world citizens, which would involve a wider, globally-minded outlook to diversity.

The History curriculum can be characterised as nationalist in its focus on the British national history which is dominated by the normative state-orientated perspective on the national past. The cover of world history tends to be focused on the parts of the world and periods in the past that have more or less direct relevance to the British history. Therefore, Eurocentrism in coverage of the ancient history and history of non-European societies is not accidental. The state, elites and powerful individuals and institutions feature as the main protagonists around which a national historic narrative is structured dominated by the political, military and religious aspects of the national and world history. Cultural history seems to be mainly reduced to a version of the history of art dominated by learning about the main cultural and artistic developments in Europe (i.e. Antiquity, Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment) and their effect upon British cultural history. Social history is covered by emphasis on the artefacts of material culture and written accounts of a daily life of ‘ordinary people’ during the periods which are significant for national (and to an extent world history). The history of local communities or locality is not explicitly linked to the social aspect of the history curriculum, rather it features in reference to the ‘local historical environment’ that implies a rather top-down approach to the local past that prioritises the architecture, built environment and emplaced cultural heritage as a means of engagement with national history in the localities. The topics related to different periods and themes associated with the British Empire and colonialism are touched upon throughout the programme of study in history. However, the topic of migration explicitly features only in relation to ancient and medieval history of Britain (and indirectly when British complicity in the slave trade is discussed). The emergence of modern multicultural Britain as a direct legacy of British imperialism and colonialism are noticeably absent in the history curriculum.

Elements of a nationalist turn, and constructions of British heritage were confirmed and enhanced in the examination of the SMSC curriculum and guidelines regarding schools’ duty to promote fundamental British values. We highlighted the normative construction of values and attitudes and their linking to Britishness. This signifies a discursive divide, which implies the existence of ‘non-British’ values and implicated suspicion over them. On a more general level, the preoccupation with values in the curriculum and the focus on fostering certain individual attitudes in dealing with diversity, involves an individualized response to a public issue. In this respect, the

curriculum involves a de-politicisation of diversity, with the latter being replaced by a moral code of practice, which is presented as unified and inherent to the national culture, namely, ‘Britishness’.

A focus on individual attitudes as part of cultural literacy education was identifiable across other parts of the curriculum, such as in Citizenship Education as well as in the context of Technology and Design. In the case of Citizenship Education we discussed that the curriculum is predominantly underpinned by legal-based models of understanding citizenship and identity (Kiwani, 2008), which we discussed extensively in Stamou et al. (2018). Alongside this predominant framing of citizenship, identity and civic engagement in the context of formally established processes and institutions, there were references to an individualized focus on developing money management skills. Financial planning and management skills were conceptualized as part of citizenship, therefore signifying an emphasis on individual responsibility for steering through risk. This also involves a shift from a ‘culture of dependency’ to a ‘culture of self-reliance’ central to a neo-liberal model of entrepreneurial self (Peters, 2001). In the Technology and Design curriculum we identified similar foci. In that case, learning objectives were framed with direct references to an enterprise culture, which, in turn, was linked to issues of participation and citizenship, thus promoting forms of culture derived and accorded to western, neo-liberal regimes.

Throughout the study of the curricula we find what Weekes-Bernard (2015) refers to as a turn to traditionalism, accompanied by political and popular pre-occupation with ‘values’ considered to be un-British. This, according to Weeks-Bernard, feeds into forms of cultural fear, as well as developing the ground for gaps between pupils to grow. In relation to this approach, Alexander (2012) critically comments that it involves no attempt to reach a consensus on values and rationale, presuming instead that it is entirely proper in a democracy for a national curriculum to serve as a vehicle for imposing upon the majority the values, beliefs and prejudices of an ideological minority. Indeed at several instances of our findings we pointed out the hegemony of normative perspectives to values and culture, foregrounding cultural conservatism and putting forward nostalgic, top-down and monolithic understandings of heritage and belonging. In Yandell’s (2017) terms, this equals ‘refusal to engage with a world where cultural pluralism is part of the fabric of society’ and signals a denial of difference, which makes claims to social justice ring hollow.

## 6. Conclusion

The overarching objective of the review is to provide insights on the institutionalization of cultural literacy in education, from the viewpoint of the programmes of study. Key aims include the mapping-out of existing pedagogical approaches to enhance young people's cultural literacy, as well as the exploration of the various dimensions of cultural literacy, as these are manifested in the national curricula. To explore the above issues, a review of the national secondary education curricula was carried out. Official documents and guidelines issued by the DfE were scanned and selected on the basis of their relevance to the CHIEF project's goals. We particularly identified and included those curricula that touch upon issues of cultural literacy, cultural participation, national, European, international identity and diversity. The subject curricula entailing references to these themes included: History and Ancient History, English, Religious Education, Citizenship Education, SMSC, Technology and Design, and Art and Design. A qualitative inductive approach was adopted in order to carry-out content analysis of the curricula.

Our findings indicate that the so-called European dimension in the secondary school curricula is, by and large absent, particularly regarding the cultural aspects. In relation to the pedagogical approach, there is a shift away from child-focused pedagogy and towards favouring instruction-led, whole-class teaching models complemented with hard-facts or knowledge-rich curricula. While several elements of these teaching methods are nothing but new, their past implementation, which generated practices such as an emphasis on memorising, has contributed little to narrowing gaps between pupils' educational attainment. Additionally the legitimacy of this model deploys a false divide between 'knowledge-rich' and 'enquiry-based' pedagogy, presenting them as mutually exclusive.

In terms of content, our findings and discussion of emerging themes point towards the workings of a reconfigured nationalism in the selection, organisation and framing of knowledge. This features a turn to traditionalism, nostalgia and the framing of certain knowledge content in terms of British heritage and national identity. Additionally, the nationalist turn is pronounced through emphasis on values and normative accounts of diversity and culture. The presentation of diversity in terms of values, implicates de-politicisation of diversity, with the latter being replaced by a moral code of practice, which is presented as unified and inherent to the national culture, namely, 'Britishness'. Alongside normative, values-based perspectives on culture, we traced a parallel running discourse of enterprise and self-reliance, typical of western neo-liberal socio-economic regimes. Although paradoxical, these entwined foci on traditionalism alongside enterprise illustrate the reconfigured version of nationalism pervading the school

curricula and elucidate wider processes of cultural restructuring currently underway. This heavily echoes the findings of our policy review (Stamou et al., 2018), suggesting the articulation of cultural literacy education in terms of ‘neo-liberal communitarian’ governance. Nevertheless, unlike the emphasis on instrumental value of culture identified throughout the policy analysis, the analysis of curricula shows hegemony of cultural conservatism, involving an emphasis on formalised forms of culture while also reproducing a parochial divide between highbrow and lowbrow culture.

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**Appendix: List of Reviewed Documents**

<b>Nr</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Type</b>
1.	Use and perception of curriculum support resources in schools. Research Report - July 2018. Copper Gibson Research	2018	Department for Education	Research report
2.	English programmes of study: key stage 3. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	National curriculum in England
3.	The national curriculum in England. Framework document. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Master final national curriculum
4.	The national curriculum in England. Key Stages 3 and 4 framework document. December 2014	2014	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum post-2014
5.	The national curriculum in England. Key Stages 3 and 4 framework document. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum pre-2014
6.	English programmes of study: key stage 4. National curriculum in England. July 2014	2014	Department for Education	National curriculum in England for English Key Stage 4
7.	Art and design programmes of study: key stage 3. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum – art and design Key Stage 3
8.	Citizenship programmes of study: key stage 3 and 4. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum – citizenship Key Stages 3 and 4
9.	Design and technology programmes of study: key stage 3. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum – design and technology Key Stage 3
10.	Geography programmes of study: key stage 3. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum – geography Key Stage 3.
11.	History programmes of study: key stage 3. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum – history Key Stage 3
12.	Languages programmes of study: key stage 3. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum – languages Key Stage 3.
13.	Music programmes of study: key stage 3. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum – music Key Stage 3.

14.	Physical education programmes of study: key stages 3 and 4. National curriculum in England. September 2013	2013	Department for Education	Secondary national curriculum – physical education Key Stages 3 and 4.
15.	Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) in schools. Departmental advice for maintained schools. November 2014	2014	Department for Education	Non-statutory advice.
16.	Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010	2010	Department for Education	Non-statutory guidance
17.	Religious studies: GCSE subject content. February 2015	2015	Department for Education	GCSE subject content
18.	Guidance note for schools and awarding organisations. December 2015	2015	Department for Education	Guidance note
19.	Further guidance note for schools, local authorities and agreed syllabus conferences about the religious studies GCSE and the religious education curriculum, July 2016	2016	Department for Education	Guidance note
20.	GCE AS and A level subject content for history, April 2014	2014	Department for Education	A level subject content
21.	Ancient history: GCSE subject content, February 2016	2016	Department for Education	GCSE subject content
22.	Grants to pilot curriculum programmes in science, history and geography. Specification of requirements, July 2018	2018	Department for Education	Specification of requirements
23.	History GCSE subject content, April 2014	2014	Department for Education	GCSE subject content
24.	A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England, October 2013.	2013	The Religious Education Council of England and Wales	Review of Religious Education in England