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# Human rights education in Kosovo high schools

**Abstract:** The Kosovo education system addresses human rights issues mainly through the subject of civic education. Taught at different levels, courses aim to prepare students to become active citizens. The content of civic education in high schools is intended to help students understand the rights and responsibilities of individuals in society, as well as the nature and functioning of democracy, and develop critical thinking skills. The current syllabuses and textbooks for civic education for upper secondary education provide a good basis for addressing human rights issues. In the present study, a review of subject curricula and programme teaching was conducted for the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. This was followed with an in-depth analysis of the textbooks in civic education for these grades from a human rights education perspective. A thorough analysis of the textbooks shows that elements of human rights education are covered in civic education content; however, the information provided usually does not go beyond giving theoretical background on the concepts, and limited country-specific information and case studies on the past and present are provided regarding human rights issues. As a country that has experienced war, textbooks on civic education in Kosovo should also reflect upon it. This would contribute to a smoother process in transitional justice in the long term.

**Keywords:** human rights education, Kosovo, high schools, civic education

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## Introduction

The key to securing the universality of human rights lies in the right to education. According to the *Vienna declaration of the world conference on human rights 1993*, para. 33, »education should promote understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations between the nations and all racial or religious groups.« The Vienna Conference called for a decade of human rights education (HRE). The United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education was declared with effect in January 1995, where HRE was defined as »training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the molding of activities« (Plan of Action 1995–2004).

Although Kosovo is not a signatory to major international agreements on human rights, its constitution states that all international human rights instruments are directly applicable, and, in the case of conflict, have priority over provisions of laws and other acts of public institutions (Kosovo Constitutions rev. 2016). As of 2015, Kosovo has adopted the so-called »Human rights package of laws« to protect and promote the rights of individuals, including anti-discrimination and gender equality provisions (Martinez and Cuchi 2017). In European Union (EU) visa liberalization requirements, Kosovo is obliged to adopt and implement legislation that provides effective protection against discrimination and full respect for domestic provisions on human rights. In the *Kosovo strategy and action plan on human rights for 2021–2023*, one of the four main areas to be addressed with priority is continuous education about human rights standards. One of the several interventions recommended for the Ministry of Education is to include a special subject on human rights when education starts at elementary school, which must be fully integrated in primary and secondary schools (p. 25).

HRE is well suited to develop respect for the dignity of the individual and the rights of others, promote tolerance and acceptance of difference, and strengthen respect for fundamental freedoms in young generations. Although limited, research exploring the impact of HRE in post-conflict societies has found that teachers and grassroots activists see HRE as a positive force in moving from conflict

towards peace and security (Bernath et al. 2002) and that the education system can be explicitly designed to address reconciliation in the aftermath of war (Hayes and McAllister 2009).

## **An overview of human rights education**

HRE contributes to the promotion of ethnic, racial, and religious tolerance and helps in developing pluralistic and tolerant societies (Smith 2011). The term is often used to include education for democratic citizenship (Tibbitts et al. 2009), which can be conveyed through lessons in various subject areas (Tibbitts 1994). It should be age-appropriate (Suarez 2015; Tibbitts et al. 2009). It implies learning content knowledge in the areas of rights and responsibilities, the history of movements to fight inequality and discrimination, and international instruments for the assurance of human rights.

There is an increasing literature base for HRE (Tibbitts and Kirchschaelger 2010). Regarding national initiatives in schools, a research found that despite national legislation providing a basis for HRE, this legislation is not specific, and there is little guidance at the formal policy level (Lapayese 2005).

HRE is on the educational agenda of many countries worldwide (Eurydice 2005) and has been institutionalized in legislation, policy documents, and curricula (Moon, as cited in Russell and Suarez 2017), given its role in addressing human rights violations and promoting human rights (Nelson and Kerr 2006). In recent decades, HRE has become an essential concept in re-establishing stable and just post-conflict societies and is also linked to economic and community development and women's rights (Tibbitts 2002) while challenging social injustice, corruption, or aggression in post-conflict countries (Davies 2004). It can directly affect the success of post-conflict reconstruction by determining whether an educated workforce can support reconstruction (Coles 2011), contribute to shifting oppressive regimes, and challenge the normalization of violence (Davies 2015).

However, education systems globally are often used to keep young people divided, thus helping to fuel prejudice and stereotypes (Clark 2010). While there have been numerous attempts to address the segregation in education and to change hatred-spreading history textbooks, the results have been modest (Torsti 2009). An analysis of history textbooks in Bosnia and Hercegovina pointed out that the textbooks reflect the ethnic division, contributing to creating a closed, ethnocentric identity (Baranovic 2001), while another study focusing on citizenship education in post-conflict societies identified the avoidance of controversial issues (Quaynor 2012). A multi-country study that included Kosovo found that segregation of Kosovo's society (and education) along ethnic lines – primarily between an Albanian majority and a Serbian minority – posed challenges for building interethnic social networks that, in the long run, would overcome persisting ethnic divisions (Weinstein et al. 2007). For this reason, in transitional justice, the twin approaches of judicial prosecutions and truth commissions must be supported by a third approach, education, as it provides the tools necessary to remedy the

deficiencies of the other two (Guinn 2005).

Besides its role in peace-building and reconciliation efforts, integrating HRE in schools has challenges, including lacking a disciplinary structure (Parker 2018). Some critics of HRE claim that human rights are part of an international system that overrides national prerogatives, ignores national culture, demeans national pride (Tibbitts and Katz 2017), and changes traditional conceptions of national identity (Bromley 2011). Another report found that by over-emphasizing equal collective rights, extensive autonomy for different communities, and ethnic-based decentralized governance, international actors have unwillingly contributed to further education separation among ethnic lines (Selenica 2018). An article reviewing best practices in and limitations of human rights activism (Mihir and Schmitz 2007) suggests that the current practice of transnational human rights activism frequently lacks solid and reciprocal ties to local activists and often increases the distance between transnational activists and local causes and disconnects the general public from human rights struggles. Therefore, authentic, learner-centred activities based on a constructivist approach are more effective and can have long-lasting effects on learners' attitudes toward human rights (Gundogdu 2010).

Schools are essential in instilling human rights values, especially in increasing civic knowledge. Civic education - related courses are a main area where HRE content is addressed. However, teaching civic education in school is not sufficient. To better foster civic engagement, schools should rigorously teach civic content and skills and ensure an encouraging, participative school culture (Torney-Purta 2010). Schools introduce younger generations to and develops their capacities for participating in a democratic society (Flanagan et al. 2010) and has the largest impact on students' commitments to civic participation – more so than neighbourhood and family characteristics (Kahne and Sport 2008). Regarding how schools promote civic competence, a study found that civic curricula in most countries include national history, human rights, and environmental concerns (Torney-Purta et al. 2001). Although research indicates that schools influence youth civic engagement, inequalities in civic learning opportunities in schools prevent youth from disadvantaged backgrounds from being adequately prepared for citizenship (Kahne and Middaugh 2008).

## **An overview of the education system in Kosovo**

After the 1998–99 war in Kosovo, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was responsible for managing the education sector (Søbjerg 2006). In 2001, the education system was taken by local authorities and was subject to reforms at all levels, from preschool to university. These reforms aimed at adjusting the Kosovo education system in line with the best contemporary European and global standards.

These changes and reforms in education are reflected in the *Core curriculum for upper secondary education*, a document adopted by Kosovo's Ministry of

Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation (MESTI) in August 2011 and revised in 2016. It defines the competencies and outcomes for curriculum areas expressed in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that students must develop or achieve. The document guides educators to promote measures for the protection and advancement of the values and principles of human rights in everyday life, highlighting concrete examples for any activity (e.g., activities for the promotion of gender equality, the fight against prejudice and discrimination, the fight against poverty, etc.). The curriculum supports fundamental values of active citizenship, which are consistent with the goals of the *Council of Europe charter on education for democratic citizenship and education for human rights* (2010).

The pre-university education system in Kosovo is organized as follows: pre-primary education (usually birth to age 6); 5-year primary education (from age 6); 4-year lower secondary education (from age 12); and 3-year upper secondary education, depending on the curriculum determined by the ministry (from age 15 and including gymnasium, high vocational school, schools of music and art); and post-secondary vocational institution for 1–2 years, depending on the curriculum determined by the ministry (from age 18).

Higher secondary education is categorized into professional or general education and predominantly lasts around 3–4 years. This level of education is not mandatory but, nevertheless, highly encouraged. Gymnasiums develop students' academic skills and prepare them for further studies in higher education and the labour market, whereas profiled vocational schools offer vocational education and train students for the labour market. Lastly, it should be noted that the education system organized by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) does not cover the full territory of Kosovo. In the Serbian-speaking areas, there is a parallel education system where Kosovo Serbs attend schools following a Serbian Ministry of Education curriculum.

## **Human rights education in Kosovo high schools**

One of the core competencies of the *Kosovo curriculum framework* is civic competency. The document defines the results for competencies and outcomes for curricula, knowledge areas, skills, attitudes, and values in the field. One of the seven curriculum areas is society and the environment, in which the aim is to contribute to solving current environmental problems and respecting diversity and tolerance in democratic processes in the social environment. The general concepts of this field also include deepening and expanding knowledge about freedoms and human rights and responsibilities towards oneself, family, community, and society. This includes knowledge about gender equality, tolerance, solidarity, the fight against discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices, social conflicts, communication, and cooperation.

The Kosovo education system addresses human rights issues mainly through the subject of civic education, which is taught in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades in all types of gymnasiums except the natural science gymnasium. It aims

to help students understand the rights and responsibilities of individuals in society and develop critical thinking.

Civic education's goals and principles are aligned with Kosovo's curriculum framework and are related to personal and social development, contributing to the moral development of students and making them responsible citizens. Specifically, the subject of civic education aims to 1) provide students with knowledge of, and to develop the intellectual and civic skills essential to understand, analyse, and influence, social policies; 2) understand and analyse the actions of groups and institutions as well as their impact on the lives of individuals; 3) develop students' civic participation skills and their conscious involvement in solving community problems; and 4) create competent citizens responsible for their actions and independent relations with other citizens, groups, and civil society institutions. Civic education, as part of the group of social subjects, is also intertwined with the programmes and contents of other social subjects, such as history, philosophy, sociology, geography, language, and literature. For example, concerning history, civic education aims to interweave almost all categories and subcategories, utilizing historical material to focus more easily on current issues of citizens in contemporary Kosovar society. However, even though there is a legal and curricular basis for HRE in high schools, it is unclear how the content of this subject is developed in practice and if it meaningfully addresses human rights issues, among others.

## Method

A review of subject curricula and programme teaching, developed and endorsed by MESTI in 2018, was conducted for the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. The focus was on the subject of civic education. This was followed with an in-depth analysis of the textbooks in civic education for these grades from an HRE perspective.

## Key findings

### *Review of subject curricula with a focus on civic education*

The curriculum of civic education for the tenth grade aims to develop the student's personality in terms of civic culture and moral and social values. This subject is aimed at 1) creating conditions for the student to gain the necessary knowledge on citizenship and concepts such as responsibility, decision-making, and participation; 2) enabling the creation of civic attitudes and values; 3) equipping them with effective strategies for the peaceful resolution of problems and critical information processing; 4) developing intellectual and civic skills to understand and appreciate the role of the law, institutions of justice, power, and democracy; 5) developing civic awareness for participation and involvement in solving the problems of the community and society; and 6) building capable and

responsible citizens in their interactions with other citizens, civil society groups, and institutions.

The curriculum for the subject of civic education for the eleventh grade helps the student develop the knowledge and skills necessary for active citizenship. The content provides knowledge of social phenomena and changes in society, governing bodies, migrations and diaspora, the rights, duties, and responsibilities of citizens, the role of a state, the constitution of Kosovo, and legal protection of the environment. The subject is intended 1) to develop knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, and values and to positively influence the maintenance of social cohesion; 2) to help students understand their rights related to active participation in society and to be able to use them positively; and 3) help students present their thoughts on topics in class and develop civic responsibility in respecting liberal democratic values and principles.

The curriculum for the subject civic education in the twelfth grade provides students with in-depth knowledge of groups, factors, and social relations. It enables them to develop personal and group attitudes during debates and other interactive activities. The topics covered in this class are related to formal and informal groups, their impact on society, politics, and diplomacy, the individual's relationship with society, integration in local, international, and global processes, conflict and social cohesion, human rights bodies of justice, free and fair elections, and environmental issues.

### *Analysis of textbooks on civic education for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades*

A thorough analysis was conducted on the subject of civic education for the three grades, taking an HRE perspective. The content of the textbooks, in general, for the three years was quite similar, and the difference was mainly in the difficulty level. After each subtopic, the three textbooks have self-evaluation questions related to the content, class activities focusing on inclusivity, and homework.

### *Analysis of the grade ten civic education textbook*

*1. Democracy and citizenship:* Topics covered in this chapter are on democracy, types of governance, and active citizenship. Some of the activities in class are contextualized, such as conditions of democracy and its implementation in the Kosovo context. However, more country information (e.g., statistics) could be included to provide students a better picture of the concepts. It is worth emphasizing that active citizenship is widely explored, and the content is moderately contextualized, which is positive.

*2. Institutional decision-making:* Topics covered in this chapter are on the role of institutions in democracy, governance, power, authority, executive power, judicial power, electoral system, political parties, voting, the importance of public debate in democracy, and respect for and protection of rights and freedoms in

school. The content does not dig deeper beyond definitions and theoretical information. Providing local examples of active citizenship and successful examples of addressing human rights issues in the Kosovo context would be highly beneficial so that students are empowered and understand that changes in their own community are possible.

3. *Law, justice, and responsibility*: Topics covered in this chapter are the law, the importance of the implementation of law in society, the basic principles of the Kosovo constitution, protection of human rights, and practical implementation of the law. The content is quite theoretical, providing limited space for discussion beyond definitions. This limitation could be addressed by offering students space to brainstorm on whether there are human rights violations in Kosovo, the most frequent violations from their perspective, how violations should be addressed, and what their role would be. There is no reference to Kosovo's past during discussion of the topics. There is a risk that ignoring the past in textbooks can create fertile ground for ethnic intolerance, given that students and teachers may find alternative ways of discussing topics that are not in the curriculum and for which there is no adequate training on how to adequately deliberate on them.

4. *Media, culture, and society*: The topics covered are related to information and its importance, the internet and its role in society, and the impact of media. There is a complete lack of reflection on the role of media as agents of change and free speech. There should be a section on hate speech on the internet, which is not addressed at all, especially concerning human rights and freedoms, and students should be provided with a foundation for differentiating between freedom of speech and insult, cyberbullying, etc.

5. *Identity and cultural diversity*: Topics covered in this chapter are related to identity, and concepts related to diversity and inclusivity are explored. Although presented, diversity and inclusivity could be addressed more widely, not limited only to disabilities. No other concepts of diversity and inclusivity are provided – neither in the text nor in follow-up questions. From an HRE perspective, diversity issues concerning gender, ethnicity, age group, socio-economic status, and so forth must be addressed, too.

6. *Social causes and environmental issues*: Topics covered in this chapter are related to global problems, social problems, tobacco, alcohol, drug, and social problems, environmental issues, resources, and sustainable development. The content is not well adapted to Kosovo's context, especially from a human rights perspective. Social problems in the local context should be further developed. In particular, the topic of gender-based violence should be further developed and not merely listed as a social problem. More emphasis is placed on elaborating concepts globally, and there is no local contextualization of the material. Kosovo has environmental and pollution issues related to the heating system, which are also human rights issues.



*Analysis of the grade eleven civic education textbook*

1. *Changes in society, personalities, and ideas:* Topics covered in this chapter are related to the roles of international and Albanian personalities throughout history (e.g., Mother Theresa). Examples of the purpose, structure, function, and division of powers of governing bodies in democratic systems and types of states are analysed. However, this chapter could be used for deliberate discussion on their roles in peace and inclusivity. Homework and class discussion should be adapted to the local context, considering the history of Kosovo, from a human rights perspective. The content should go beyond describing basic concepts when explaining stakeholders and interest groups. It is essential to explore the role of interest groups from the human rights perspective, how they interact with each other, and how they affect human rights issues in the local context. The chapter should emphasize the human rights perspective when addressing issues related to democracy and link it to the regional and country context. When addressing political systems, there is no reference to Kosovo's political systems before the war. A considerable amount of the content in this chapter is general and can be easily covered by other subjects, such as history, philosophy, and sociology.

2. *Social processes and global developments.* Some topics covered are social processes and global developments, including globalism, the EU, migrations, and the Kosovo diaspora. However, this chapter should go beyond explanations and definitions of EU concepts. Instead, it should focus more on the human rights institutions developed by the EU and how they are adapted to the Kosovar context. When addressing migration, the topic is superficially covered, and there is no ethnic connotation whatsoever. Although this was done to refrain from exposing students to information that may perpetuate ethnic intolerance, from a human rights perspective, issues of the past must be addressed in a non-biased and objective way. In particular, there is no explanation for the mass exodus of Kosovo Albanians during the war in Kosovo. The text states: »The last phase of the exodus of Kosovars was during the last war in 1999. Fortunately, the help of international countries and the intervention of NATO forces made the war from Serbia end, and the Kosovars returned to their country« (page 33). An interesting observation to be emphasized is that the narrative is followed by photos of Albanian refugees (known by the public); however, they are not mentioned anywhere in the text. Presenting the images, but not the narrative, could create space for a biased discussion as well as confusion among students. From a human rights perspective, it is essential that past issues be addressed and that respect for the victims be ensured. In this way, young people will reflect on the impact of human rights violations and critically address the issues.

3. *Education for citizenship and human rights.* Topics covered include multiculturalism, human rights and their history, international human rights documents, the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of citizens, work and volunteering, and the importance of laws in society. It is worth emphasizing that this chapter introduces the main international human rights documents. Content-wise, multiculturalism is well covered from the human rights perspective;

however, contextualization of the text at the regional and local level is entirely absent. Contextualizing the material would help students better understand these concepts and reflect on Kosovo as a multicultural society. Regarding the importance of laws in society, the terms are very technical, and there needs to be an elaboration on the importance of laws from a human rights perspective.

4. *Decision-making and state institutions.* Topics covered enable the student to recognize and critically analyse the country's constitution and state decision-making. When exploring the basic principles of the Kosovo constitution and the protection of human rights, it is important that students be exposed to a judicial matter when a human rights case was decided.

5. *Environmental protection and sustainable development.* This chapter identifies the problem of environmental pollution globally. In this chapter, the student analyses how Kosovo legislation protects the environment. The content is not well contextualized to Kosovo's context, especially from a human rights perspective. Social problems in the local context should be further developed. In particular, the topic of gender-based violence should be further developed and not only listed as a social problem. It is worth mentioning that sustainable development is not discussed using human rights perspective lenses. More emphasis is placed on elaborating concepts globally, and there is no local contextualization of the material.

### *Analysis of the grade twelve civic education textbook*

1. *The influence of formal and informal groups in society.* The chapters covers formal and informal groups and their impact on society, their roles, and the importance of debate. The influences of formal and informal groups should be elaborated from the perspective of protecting human rights. The content is quite technical and does not go beyond providing definitions of terms and concepts. The content should encourage debates on the importance of informal groups at the school level in addressing issues concerning young people.

2. *Society, politics, and diplomacy.* The book covers the participation of formal and informal groups in society, politics, and community, public policy and planning, diplomacy, politics, and public and individual interests. The content does not go beyond theoretical explanation of the material and is not contextualized. There is no reference to civic engagement in Kosovo or to how civic participation is closely linked to various human rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the right to peaceful assembly, among others. Moreover, when addressing public policies, the content does not go beyond theoretical concepts, and there is a lack of insight into the impact that public policies have on the implementation of human rights and how they affect our daily lives.

3. *The relationship of the individual to society.* The book covers human rights and responsibilities and individual freedom. There is a detailed explanation of the importance of human rights; however, in addition to the elaboration of children's and women's rights (which are covered in the content), it is essential to address the human rights issues of vulnerable and marginalized groups, which can be facilitated by class discussions.

4. *Local, global, and international integration.* The book covers social, cultural, economic, political, and regional integration and globalization. The content does not go beyond providing definitions and explanations of the concepts. It is worth noting that within the subtopic »individual freedom and our behaviours,« freedom of expression and its violation are not thoroughly addressed. To the »social integration« subtopic, it is crucial to add a section that addresses the necessity of social integration of marginalized social groups in Kosovo and why this is important from a human rights perspective. Finally, in the subtopic of »globalization,« it is essential to address its impact on both the advancement and the stagnation of human rights in the Kosovo context.

5. *Social relations and conflicts.* The book covers norms and behaviours and introduces students to transitional justice, war-related criminal trials in Kosovo, truth commissions and reparations, and institutional reforms after a conflict. Beyond the theoretical concepts of the subtopic, it is necessary to deepen exploration of the role of harmful social norms in advancing human rights in a society, including the Kosovo context (e.g., gender norms and roles). In the subtopic 'introduction to transitional justice,' there is no information on transitional justice in Kosovo: there is limited and fragmented information about the war in Kosovo, no information on the victims or their nationality, and no discussion of wartime sexual violence. Like in the tenth- and eleventh-grade books, the Kosovo war is addressed superficially, with truncated data and no ethnic references. It is interesting to note that although no narrative references are given in this section, within the material, there are indirect attempts to portray some elements related to the war through images (e.g., the Kosovo Liberation Army emblem and the Jashari Family Memorial in Prekaz, where fifty-eight members of the family were killed and only one survived) on page 75. It is the same on page 76, where there is an image of the Heorinat Memorial, which depicts an Albanian woman using 20,000 pins; each pin represents a woman raped during the Kosovo War from 1998 to 1999. However, no narrative is provided on the victims of sexual violence during the war.

6. *International acts for human rights – social context.* The book covers the historical development of human rights, economic, social, and cultural categories of human rights, international protection of human rights, and human rights according to the constitution of Kosovo. The content covers the historical development of human rights, and international human rights instruments. The exercises and assessment provided in the text are contextualized; however, it is important to have a section where students are encouraged to brainstorm on human rights issues in Kosovo from their perspective.

7. *Bodies of justice.* The book covers the history of legal institutions – the evolution of the justice system globally, and the judicial structure and function in Kosovo. The content is very similar to that in grades 10 and 11, and it is mainly an explanation of technical terms and institutions pertaining to the bodies of justice in Kosovo.

8. *Free, fair elections and electoral systems.* The book refers to elections throughout history, electoral systems and types of elections in representative de-

mocracies, electoral transparency, and accountability. As above, its content is similar to that in grades 10 and 11 but presented in a more advanced way. Beyond the technical terms, the content needs more critical elaboration on the importance of voting and civic engagement, considering the low voter turnout in Kosovo, especially among young people.

9. *Characteristics of the environment and social processes.* The book covers environmental protection and sustainable development, the impact of human activity on the environment, urbanism, and social processes. Similar to the content in the tenth and eleventh grades, the concepts are very theoretical and do not go beyond the provision of definitions and explanations of concepts. Social problems in the local context should be further developed. It is worth mentioning that sustainable development is not discussed using human rights perspective lenses, and there is an extensive emphasis on global challenges without adequate contextualization of the content.

## Conclusion

HRE can be complex in supporting social change and human development. For HRE to substantially contribute to human rights cultures, we must understand how individual programmes are carried out. By introducing human rights content through critical reflection and interactive pedagogy, HRE classes can transform misconceptions of human rights, break down initial resistance, and lead teachers in high schools towards an openness to explore sensitive and controversial issues. HRE is directed at transformation. When human rights are in school curricula, they will not be neglected but considered equal to other obligatory topics that need to be taught. The review and analysis of the curricula and textbooks showed that civic education in Kosovo high schools, in general, is based on the principles of the *Universal declaration of human rights* and relevant treaties and instruments (United Nations, General Assembly 2011); however, without explicit references to human rights mechanisms, it is difficult to say that HRE is comprehensive.

Many questions remain unanswered. First, HRE should be interactive and contextualized to the local. The integration of human rights elements in the classroom is left mainly to teachers, who might use this gap to determine the discussion related to the contents of the curricula. From the current analysis of the textbooks, there is no information available on teachers' views of HRE content and aims. The analysis of the textbook revealed a number of themes that bear on HRE. However, numerous issues extensively related to the Kosovo context are left outside. Issues such as unemployment, gender inequality, decent labour, child labour, discrimination, and intolerance are not addressed effectively, if not at all. In addition, transitional justice as a way of acknowledging and addressing violations during the war is not a theme in the textbooks; there is seldom a reference to the war in Kosovo, even when talking about refugees. This might align with some studies on citizenship education in post-conflict countries, which includes

avoiding controversial issues such as the unique role of ethnicity, a lack of trust in political parties, and authoritarianism (Quaynor 2011).

In general, there are broad explanations of issues, and sometimes, these are not fully elaborated; themes and content are not focused on current local developments, and the effort to link them to regional and global developments is not always effective. Some of the topics covered in the textbooks might easily be covered, if not already, in other subjects, such as history, philosophy, sociology, and the like. Concerning the delivery of information or teaching about democracy and human rights, a focus should be on helping students understand basic concepts in democracy and human rights from a critical point of view. Especially in Kosovo, students must be introduced to real-life cases of democracy and human rights situations to facilitate an understanding and personal appreciation of their importance. Considering the nature of the topics covered in this subject, less conventional teaching methods must be used where participation is encouraged, views can be expressed openly and discussed, and freedom of expression is valued.

In the Kosovo context, textbooks must present programming fundamentally concerned with the relevance of human rights in the country, including the most pressing issues. Human rights must be seen in relation to specific historical and cultural values, needs, and contexts. From this perspective, school HRE should be subjected to a broad, interdisciplinary consultative process. Last, it is important to develop tools and methods to better assess the linkages between HRE in schools and actual aspects of social transformations and to assess alleged positive outcomes among high school students.

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## **IZOBRAŽEVANJE O ČLOVEKOVIH PRAVICAH V KOSOVSKIH SREDNJIH ŠOLAH**

**Povzetek:** Kosovski izobraževalni sistem obravnava vprašanja človekovih pravic predvsem v okviru predmeta državljanska vzgoja. Predmet se izvaja na različnih stopnjah in pripravlja dijake na aktivno državljanstvo. Vsebina državljanske vzgoje v srednjih šolah naj bi dijakom pomagala razumeti pravice in dolžnosti posameznikov v družbi, naravo in delovanje demokracije ter razvijati sposobnosti kritičnega mišljenja. Sedanji učni načrti in učbeniki za državljansko vzgojo za višje sekundarno izobraževanje so dobra podlaga za obravnavo tematike človekovih pravic. V tej študiji je bil opravljen pregled učnih načrtov in programov za deseti, enajsti in dvanajsti razred. Temu je sledila poglobljena analiza učbenikov za državljansko vzgojo v teh razredih z vidika izobraževanja o človekovih pravicah. Natančna analiza učbenikov je pokazala, da so elementi izobraževanja o človekovih pravicah vključeni v državljansko vzgojo, vendar pa vsebina običajno ne presega teoretičnega ozadja koncepta človekovih pravic. Poleg tega je podanih nekaj specifičnih informacij o državi in študij primerov iz preteklosti in sedanjosti, ki zadevajo vprašanja človekovih pravic. Ker je država nedavno izkusila vojno, bi jo morali tudi učbeniki za državljansko vzgojo na Kosovu ustrezno tematizirati. To bi dolgoročno prispevalo k bolj pravičnemu procesu tranzicije.

**Ključne besede:** izobraževanje o človekovih pravicah, Kosovo, srednje šole, državljanska vzgoja

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