

# Evaluation of the third phase (2015-2019) of the world Programme for Human Rights Education

## GUIDANCE NOTE

The purpose of this note is to provide states with guidance for the preparation of their national evaluation reports on the implementation of the third phase (2015 – 2019) of the world programme for Human Rights Education. In preparing the report, cooperation between governments, national human rights institutions and civil society is strongly encouraged.

### 1. The evaluation of the third phase of the world programme

The United Nations General Assembly, in resolution 59/113A of 10 December 2004, proclaimed the world Programme for the Human Rights Education (2005-ongoing) as a global Initiative structured in consecutive phases, in order to advance the implementation of human rights education programmes in all sectors.

The plan of action for the third phase (2015-2019), adopted by Human Rights Council resolution 27/12 (25 September 2014), focuses on strengthening the implementation of the first two phases and promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists. In resolution 27/12, the Human Rights Council encouraged “all states and, where appropriate, relevant stakeholders to develop initiatives in accordance with the world Programme and, in particular, to implement, within their capabilities, the plan of action for the third phase” (para. 3). The plan of action provides that “at the conclusion of the third phase, in early 2020, each country will evaluate its actions and submit a final national evaluation report to OHCHR. On the basis of those reports, OHCHR will prepare a final report for the Human Rights Council in 2020” (para. 62).

### 2. Scope of the national evaluation reports

In accordance with the plan of action for the third phase of the World Programme, national evaluation reports should cover action undertaken at the national level between 2015 and 2019 aiming to:

1. Strengthen implementation of human rights education in primary, secondary and higher education as well as human rights training for civil servants, including law enforcement officials and the military (first and second phase), including:
  - Advancing implementation and consolidating the work done
  - Providing human rights education and training for educators in formal and non-formal education and training
  - Undertaking related research and mapping, sharing good practices and lessons learned, and sharing information among all actors
  - Applying and strengthening sound educational methodologies based on good practices and assessed through continuous evaluation
  - Fostering dialogue, cooperation, networking and information-sharing among relevant stakeholders
  - Furthering the integration of human rights education and training into school and training curricula.

### **Response by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth**

*Education in public schools is focused on the acceptance of diversity, tolerance as well as the respect for other cultures so as to prepare future citizens for living in a multicultural environment. Towards this end, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECSY) gives great emphasis on ensuring equal access to education for all children living in the country, taking into account that the right to education is safeguarded in the*

*Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as in the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. All necessary measures are taken so that effective access to basic education for all is guaranteed. During the period under review a systematic effort has been made to increase access to education for all children and strengthen the quality of the education provided.*

*The reform effort regarding the development and implementation of the new curricula and timetables is a major change for the Cyprus Educational System. The objective focuses on satisfying a longstanding need for establishing a democratic and human-centered school environment, where all children study together in order to get prepared for their common future, and to acquire the fundamental knowledge, skills and attitudes that characterize the educated person. At the same time the MOECSY envisages to safeguard all pupils' right to education by providing them the opportunity to experience childhood and early adolescence as the most creative period in their lives. In contrast to the traditional school, which is orientated towards providing equal opportunities for all children, without assuming responsibility for inequality in the results, the democratic and human-centered school is organised in such a way so as to offer children the opportunity to achieve their individual educational objectives to the maximum, without jeopardizing the quality and quantity of the provided educational benefits.*

*The newly reformed curricula for primary education encourage personal and social development within a socio-cultural environment that respects human rights and principles, such as equality and non-discrimination. The new curricula consider the child as an individual with past, present and future. Particular emphasis is given on teaching through play as a natural way of learning. Within the context of teachers' pedagogical autonomy, changes can be made in activities in order to enhance and better combine the experiences of children. Schools provide the opportunity to pupils to take part in various extracurricular activities such as excursions, visits to various places and clubs, aiming towards a balanced development of their personality and, at the same time, have the chance to play and socialize with each other. Pupils also have the chance to participate in various other celebrations and activities taking place during the school year, according to their talents and inclinations, such as athletic events, poetry recital, dancing and drama performances and participating in the school choir and orchestra.*

*Apart from the content of the curriculum the regulations of school functioning are also designed in ways that are in line with the promotion of human rights in education. In 2017, New Regulations are implemented for the Operation of lower and upper Secondary Education as well as the operation of the Secondary Technical and Vocational Schools. The new regulations secure children's right to education without any restrictions or discriminations due to ethnicity, color, religious belief or other special characteristics. Student's, parents' and educators representatives participate in different decision making educational forums thus fostering dialogue, cooperation, networking and information-sharing among relevant stakeholders. Different protocols and procedures are established in order to help educators and other professionals such as school psychologists and social workers to address student problems such as student learning disabilities, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, eating disorder etc.*

*Higher Education Institutions enjoy autonomy and are competent to ensure the respect of human rights and non-discrimination for their personnel and students in accordance with the relevant legal framework of the Republic of Cyprus.*

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECSY) being responsible for the planning and implementation of educational policy has designed policies and implemented several initiatives in relation to Human Rights Education (HRE) during the period under question (2015-2019). The most prominent initiatives are described below:

## 1. ANTIRACIST POLICY

The MOECSY's antiracist policy «Code of Conduct against Racism & Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents» is being implemented with the support of the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) since the school year 2014-2015. The antiracist policy was developed based on the Follow-up Report of Cyprus (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) for Recommendation No 20<sup>1</sup> and a recommendation by the National Anti-Discrimination Body. The development and implementation of the policy responds not only to the Programme for Human Rights Education but also to the European Commission's against Racism and Intolerance guideline No 10<sup>2</sup> and is in line with various international and European conventions that Cyprus has ratified, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>3</sup>, the Council of Europe's Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states<sup>4</sup>, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women<sup>5</sup>, and the European Social Charter<sup>6</sup>.

The policy conceptualizes racism in a broad manner, including all grounds of discrimination. It includes definitions of basic concepts which form the theoretical background (e.g. racism, racist incident, discrimination, stereotypes, diversity, etc.), outlines the responsibilities and commitments, expected by each member of the school community, and provides the steps to be followed by schools for dealing with racist incidents in a practical rubric. It provides schools and teachers with a detailed plan on how to deal with and prevent racist incidents. As the antiracist policy considers diversity as a multidimensional phenomenon, involving various aspects of people's identities, its aim is to contribute to the elimination of bullying and discrimination based on any ground in schools, including religion, beliefs, ethnicity, language, appearance, disability, gender, sexual orientation, etc. For the period under review, it was implemented as follows:

- 2016-17: implementation in the context of the 2<sup>nd</sup> goal of MOEC (reports received from 41 schools for a total of 127 racist incidents)
- 2017-2018: implementation across schools (reports received from 100 schools for a total of 266 racist incidents)

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<sup>1</sup> Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. *Concluding observations on the combined seventeenth to twenty-second periodic reports of Cyprus: Information received from Cyprus on follow-up to the concluding observations*, CERD/C/CYP/CO/17-22/Add.1, 2 March 2015.

<sup>2</sup> ECRI General Policy Recommendation No 10 on Combating Racism and Racial Discrimination in and Through School Education (Adopted On 15 December 2006), Strasburg, 21 March 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Convention on the Rights of the Child*: Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 entry into force 2 September 1990, in accordance with article 49 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> *Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity* (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 March 2010 at the 1081st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies) <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1606669>

<sup>5</sup> *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women-CEDAW* <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.coe.int/T/DGHL/Monitoring/SocialCharter/>

- 2018-2019: implementation across schools (reports received from 124 schools for a total of 357 racist incidents)
- 2019-2020: implementation across schools (reports expected in June 2020)

The CPI has offered support to schools in various ways such as the following, for the implementation of the antiracist policy since 2016:

- Continuous update of website (presentations, FAQs, supportive material etc)
- Support helpline (phone and email)
- Parents information leaflet in 5 languages (Greek, English, Arabic, Turkish, Russian)
- Focused training opportunities (school based seminars, optional afternoon seminars, network meetings, conferences in collaboration with relevant NGOs and Bodies, e.g. UNHCR, Commissioner for Children's Rights etc)
- Support of a limited number of schools under the Intensive Program for Teachers' Professional Learning which set as priority antiracist issues
- Creation of School Network across Cyprus for the support of the implementation of the antiracist policy with central and local training and support meetings held every few months
- Antiracist education/policy conference (13<sup>th</sup> April 2019) titled «Identifying and dealing with racisms in school: implementation of the antiracist policy of the Ministry».

The creation of the school network appears to be the most effective support strategy for schools implementing the policy. The school teams created in the various districts had the opportunity to exchange experiences and views on policy implementation processes and reflect on their role and ways of managing the behaviours of colleagues, children and parents. The support of schools and teachers for the implementation of antiracist policy by the CPI has been multi-dimensional and ongoing throughout the year (e.g. educational activities in various contexts and lines of communication). The feedback of the network participants, is a testament to the positive impact of CPI support actions, mainly regarding the substantive help and interaction they experience. Despite the improvement in numbers of implementation as seen above, challenges remain in terms of the following:

- Insufficient reporting on racist incidents.
- Lack of schools' accountability for the policy implementation
- Insufficient reporting leads to failure to develop contextually appropriate pedagogical interventions based on the racisms operating
- Further support is needed for schools to deal with racist behaviours by teachers themselves

### **“IMAGINE” PROGRAMME**

Since 2017, the CPI and MOECSY have been supporting, under the guidelines of the Bicomunal Technical Committee of Education, the IMAGINE programme<sup>7</sup>, in collaboration with the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research<sup>8</sup> at the "Home for Cooperation"<sup>9</sup>. The programme includes experiential activities related to human rights and anti-racism within the education for a culture of peace. It is under the auspices of the Technical Committee on Education and has been approved by the negotiators of the two

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ahdr.info/peace-education/58-education-for-a-culture-of-peace-imagine>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ahdr.info/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ahdr.info/project-and-research/45-home-for-cooperation-h4c>

communities. Following the successful completion of the activities of the Imagine Education Programme (2017-2019) and the participation of approximately 5000 pupils and 600 teachers from all the communities in Cyprus, the programme team has announced its continuation for the school year 2019-2020 and has enriched it with more activities and meetings between children. During the programme, pupils engage in pedagogical activities in which Greek-Cypriot pupils will come into contact with Turkish-Cypriot pupils of the same age, accompanied by their teachers. Activities are held in the UN controlled area of Ledra Palace during school time. The programme pillars include an anti-racist workshop in schools and contact preparation (before the meeting with pupils from the Turkish Cypriot/Greek Cypriot community). Imagine trainers visit classrooms and engage children in experiential activities discussing issues of stereotyping, discrimination and racism as components of the culture of violence and preparing the conditions for a bi-communal meeting in the "Home for Cooperation". Then the pupils participate in bi-communal activities that take place in three languages (Greek, Turkish, English). There is no financial burden for pupils or schools. Transport costs to and from the venue and breakfast are provided by the organizers. Pupils may choose to either participate in antiracist experiential activities or to engage in sports activities at the hotel's sports facilities, learning about group work, tolerance and trust. Additionally, all classes may wish to participate in a second workshop at their school, where further actions will be planned and/or facilitate the exchange of pupils' experiences with the children of the community they have already met. They may also wish to participate in a second bi-communal meeting with the same classes and to participate in further activities.

## **2. COUNCIL OF EUROPE EU/COE PILOT PROJECTS SCHEME ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN ACTION**

The MOECSY participated, as full partner, in the two cycles of the "EU/CoE Pilot Projects Scheme on Human Rights and Democracy in Action: Teaching controversial issues – Developing effective training for teachers and school leaders". The first cycle of the Project was conducted in 2014-2015 ("Living with Controversy – A Training Tool for Teachers")<sup>10</sup> aiming at teacher's training on how to handle controversial issues at school. The tool's main aim was to help teachers deal with controversial issues by taking a holistic approach, i.e., issues such as religion, sexuality, euthanasia, racism, homophobia, transphobia, bullying, sexism, nationalism which were included in the learning objectives of the Health Education Curriculum. The second cycle of the project was conducted in 2015-2016 ("Managing Controversy: A Whole-School Training Tool")<sup>11</sup> aiming to produce a tool for school leaders, senior managers and leadership teams on how to manage and react to controversial issues in and beyond the school. Teacher trainers at the Pedagogical Institute provided support on citizenship and human rights education at school level. The end products of the project (websites, lessons plans, videos, scoping papers, tools for teachers, tools for headteachers) were integrated to support existing policies and practices that teachers and school leaders are obliged to follow. In particular, for Health Education Curriculum handbooks, lesson plans, pedagogies etc. from the project have been added to the current website. As far as the anti-racist policy is concerned, specific guidelines, developed through the pilot project, were added. The tool "Discovering the Elephant", developed by MOECSY, which includes activities such as debates on controversial issues (e.g. euthanasia for animals, family types, drugs, smoking, etc.), was enriched from the project. Moreover, several teacher and headteacher in-service trainings employing the

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<sup>10</sup> <https://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/charter-edc-hre-pilot-projects/teaching-controversial-issues-developing-effective-training-for-teachers-and-school-leaders>

<sup>11</sup> <https://pip-eu.coe.int/en/web/charter-edc-hre-pilot-projects/project-1-managing-controversy-a-whole-school-training-tool>

tools were developed in the context of the projects were conducted by the CPI and more are planned for the future, based on the two cycles of the project.

### **3. PROGRAMME “AWAYFROM HOME AND FEAR”**

The MOECSY collaborated with the Commissioner for Children’s Rights and the UNHCR Cyprus Office in a programme entitled “Away from home and fear”, targeting children with refugee and/or migrant background in secondary education. For the purposes of the programme, participant schools collaborated with all the institutions involved to create an action plan based on their specific needs in order to promote the integration of children and their families. The design and implementation of this action plan in each school was coordinated by a group of parents, teachers and children from various backgrounds (native, refugee, migrant). This provided children and their families with opportunities to be heard through campaigns about children’s rights and facilitate their integration process. The programme lasted from May 2017 to June 2018, ending with a dissemination action involving all participant schools and the general public and educators on Children’s Day (1st June 2018).

### **4. COUNCIL OF EUROPE’S DESCRIPTORS OF COMPETENCES FOR DEMOCRATIC CULTURE**

The CPI, under the guidelines of the Council of Europe (CoE), conducted one of the European workshops on piloting the Council of Europe’s Descriptors of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC)<sup>12</sup> on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017. The training was conducted based on and adapted for the needs of the Cypriot context, from a training guide provided by the CoE, which gives advice to education professionals on how to organize training for the piloting of the descriptors in the CDC framework. The Council of Europe has been actively promoting human rights and citizenship education for many years, providing comprehensive training programmes, manuals and educational materials both in schools and universities and through youth work and non-formal education. The methods are active and participative. Indeed, engaging participants in the process of appropriation of the tool is essential and constitutes a motivational value for trainers and trainees. A modern democracy cannot function unless it is able and willing to engage in intercultural dialogue, and intercultural dialogue is difficult to imagine without democratic culture. It would therefore be unhelpful to treat democracy and intercultural dialogue separately. The CDC model is based on four main categories of competence: values; knowledge and critical understanding; attitudes; and skills. Random examples would be valuing other human beings, human dignity and human rights; civic-mindedness; analytical and critical thinking skills; and knowledge and critical understanding of politics, law and human rights.

As regards the Council of Europe Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) the CPI has continued to participate in the EPAN network during 2018-2019 for the development of materials that can be used to equip young people with all of the competences that are needed to take action to defend and promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law, to participate effectively in a culture of democracy, and to live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies. The CPI has contributed to the RFCDC systematic approach to the teaching, learning and assessment of competences for democratic culture.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/competences-for-democratic-culture>

## **5. TEACHER TRAINING SEMINARS ON ISSUES RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

The CPI supports teachers and schools, by providing training workshops and school-based seminars and lectures on issues related to human rights. Indicatively, some in-service seminars offered by the Institute, for both primary and secondary education over the period 2015-2019, were:

- *Implementing the antiracist policy at our school: Challenges in the management of racist incidents;*
- *Human relations and crisis management in the school community: From conflict to respect of diversity;*
- *Teaching Greek as a second language;*
- *Stereotypes, prejudices, racism: Towards an education on the basis of human rights;*
- *Teaching Greek as a second language: How I teach to pupils with a migrant background;*
- *Teaching Greek as a second language: suggestions and practical applications for the automation of the four language skills;*
- *Teaching Greek as a second language: suggestions and practical applications for teaching grammar and vocabulary;*
- *What if it was you? An approach for human rights and peace education.*
- *Integration of migrant pupils in the general classroom;*
- *Management of pupils' problematic behaviors - Preventing and dealing with offensive behavior;*
- *Bullying;*
- *Empowering new generations: Encouraging and cultivating creativity and critical thinking;*
- *Integration of pupils with migrant background into the;mainstream education?NAI*
- *Greek as a second language for children with a migrant background : Organising the school, organising the host classroom, and organising the general classroom;*
- *"I do not forget" and Critical Education for peace: New openings;*
- *Supporting teachers for the smooth integration of children with migrant background*
- *Cultivating empathy*
- *Human relations and crisis management in the school community: From conflict to respect of diversity;*
- *Stereotypes, prejudices, racism: Towards an education on the basis of human rights;*
- *Sexual education and prevention of abuse incidents;*
- *Developing positive home-school relations;*
- *Promoting gender equality in children of 5th and 6th grade.*

## **6. INTEGRATION OF PUPILS WITH A MIGRANT BACKGROUND AND SAFEGUARDING THEIR RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

The MOECSY has developed and implemented an upgraded educational policy aiming at the smooth integration of pupils with migrant background into the educational system of Cyprus. The departments of the MOECSY have developed an action plan with a variety of targeted actions, through the prism of an intercultural approach, anti-racist education and

*the methodology of teaching Greek as a second language. The action plan 2016-18 has been evaluated and based on this evaluation the action plan 2019-21 has been submitted to the Minister for approval. The policy focuses on the following areas:*

- *REVISION OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS: “children with migrant background” are defined as children who are immigrants themselves or have immigrant parents - “second language” is used to describe the language acquired by a person, after having already developed or completed learning his/her first language, and which is taught under certain circumstances*
- *MAPPING-OUT OF THE MIGRANT POPULATION: uniform way to make possible the differentiation of the measures applied, information about the pupils' profile (communication with parent/guardian, social welfare services, exploration of the country's socio-political context), living conditions and progress in a variety of skills*
- *COMBATING RACIST INCIDENTS: implementation of MoECSY's antiracist policy "Code of Conduct against Racism and a Guide to the Management and Recording of Racist Incidents"*
- *COMBINATION OF PREPARATORY, TRANSITION AND INDUCTION-SUPPORT PHASES: implementation of a system combining intensive teaching and language learning support (teaching methodology and materials, teacher manuals, afternoon classes, CLIL approach, mentors etc) as well as social and psychological support through three different stages.*
- *UTILIZING AND TEACHING MOTHER TONGUES: introducing language options into existing schemes (Adult Education courses, expanded curriculum of a full-day school -- primary education, and Institutes for Further Education - secondary education).*
- *TEACHING GREEK AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: Curriculum, Commonalities and differences between levels, rules, objectives, principles and evaluation.*
- *TEACHER AND SCHOOL LEADERS TRAINING: general quality of the school and holistic and ecosystem-based approach, guided by the principles of intercultural education.*
- *COOPERATION OF SCHOOLS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO OPEN THE SCHOOL TO THE COMMUNITY: educating and involving parents, welcoming newly arrived students, involvement of parents or members of the migrant groups as mediators or mentors*

*Specifically, in relation to language learning at reception, in the case of Primary Education, the route followed includes the registration of the student in the local school and the use of an electronic platform for mapping migrant students' profile. A test for language proficiency assessment applies, to identify language needs/level in March annually. The test must follow the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) in Languages. Also, starting from current school year 2019 – 2020 children with a migrant background are tested for their language proficiency, at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the school year. Extra hours for teaching Greek as a second/additional language are given to the school for each student, for two years according to a Council of Ministers decision dated back in 2004. The extra teaching periods are given depending on the number of migrant children that attend each school Each child can attend extra Greek language lessons for two years.*

*Teaching Materials include:*

- *Reception Guide for children with a migrant background: first days at school <http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/epimorfosi/entaxi/OdigosYpodoxis.p>*



- *Teacher's Guide for Teaching Greek as a Second Language*  
[http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2465&Itemid=463&lang=el](http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2465&Itemid=463&lang=el)
- *Guide for Parents – Mediators:*  
<https://mefesi.pi.ac.cy/files/docs/users/kyprianou.d2/ODIGOSDIAMESOLAVITONN EW.pdf>
- *Guide for the Management of Sociocultural Diversity*  
<http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/epimorfosi/entaxi/Odigos-Diaxeirisis-Koinonikopolitismikis-eterotitas.pdf>
- *CPI website; «Educational Inclusion of Children with a Migrant Background”: Educational Material, Presentations from Seminars, Trainings and Conferences:*  
[http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1712&Itemid=463&lang=el](http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1712&Itemid=463&lang=el)

*In Secondary Education, students with migrant background who need language support are enrolled in schools operating a programme for the teaching of Greek as a second language. Different programmes for teaching Greek as a second language are applied, accordingly. A test for language proficiency assessment is used to identify language needs of the children, while monitoring through tests on the students' progress in learning Greek as a second language is conducted two times a year. A programme of study/syllabus with success indicators and a specific textbook are used based on the CEFR of Languages. After completing the two years' language support programme, children fully attend the mainstream classroom and can be exempted from certain subjects, such as Religious Studies, Ancient Greek and French.*

*Specifically, the following programmes for teaching Greek as a second language are offered in Secondary Education:*

*A. Transitional classes in lower secondary schools (18 gymnasia, 35 classes)*

- *Children with a migrant background are placed in general classes along with other students and attend lessons 19 periods per week, according to the timetable of their grade.*
- *Intensive teaching of Greek as a second language with elements of History and Culture 14 periods per week.*
- *Extra 5 teaching periods are also provided for support in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology, especially in relation to terminology and core knowledge.*

*B. Programme with fewer hours of Greek as a second language (8 Gymnasia, 3 Lyceums, 1 Technical school)*

- *Operating in schools with a small number of students with a migrant background, mainly in regional gymnasia, lyceums and technical schools.*

*C. Intensive programme in Lyceums (2 Lyceums)*

- *Students attending the first grade of the lyceum follow their own timetable that includes intensive teaching of Greek as a second language and lessons in core course subjects.*
- *Students have the opportunity to attend a Direction of Study in the second grade of the lyceum through exams.*

*D. Intensive programme in Evening Schools (2)*

- *Teaching of Greek as a second language 11 periods per week*

*E. Programme for the Education of unaccompanied minors / applicants for international protection (3 Lyceums, 2 Technical schools)*

- *Unaccompanied minors are refugee children group have the highest vulnerability, due to both the recent traumatic experience having lived and the lack of support from their family in their place of arrival.*
- *Areas of origin are Africa, Middle East (Somalia, Ivory Coast, Bali, Cameroun, Congo, Syria, Palestine, Kourdistan etc)*
- *Therefore, the Ministry of Education efforts focused on further support and integration of these children.*
- *Unaccompanied minors / applicants for international protection live in guesthouses under the legal guardianship of the Social Welfare Services.*
- *The Ministry of Education and Culture has established a very close cooperation with the Social Welfare Services and as soon as we are informed about the arrival of an unaccompanied child, we proceed with his/her enrolment in one of our programmes.*
- *A special programme for the education of unaccompanied minors in schools is offered with an effort to empower these children especially in education, technical training, work and employment, access to basic services and the active participation and social inclusion with a view to obtaining further educational and professional qualification.*
- *Preparatory afternoon classes for unaccompanied minors are also provided in State Institutes for Further Education.*
- *A deputy head at each school has the responsibility for the program to safeguard reception and participation in school life*
- *The school programme:*
  - *Greek as a second language (16 t.p. for lyceums and 14 for technical schools)*
  - *Common core subjects: Mathematics, English, ICT etc*
  - *Labs and craft work at technical schools*
- *Certificate of attendance*
- *Initiatives for memberships in football academies and tertiary education scholarships*

*The MOECSY through the CPI promotes participation of students in a project co-funded by Asylum, Immigration and Integration Fund and Cyprus government (in cooperation with CARDET and Innovade) providing Greek language lessons for non-EU national minors as part of the measures to integrate asylum-seeking, refugee and women and girls from migrant background into the education system (primary and secondary level). The project is titled “Geia Xara” <https://www.geiaxara.eu/en/>*

*Training opportunities include the creation of school networks to support schools for teaching Greek as a second language, involving blended learning method (seminars, teleconferences, Moodle platform), in Primary and Secondary Education from the CPI.*

*Furthermore, in March 2019, a European Commission peer counselling session<sup>13</sup> was prepared and implemented in Nicosia, Cyprus by the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (CPI) on behalf of the MoECSY’s Interdepartmental Committee. The focus was on integration of students with a migrant background into school education, with particular focus on to the reception phase. The MoECSY’s aim was that the peer counselling session would allow it to: (i) gather examples of good practice; (ii) learn from the experiences of its EU peers; (iii) better understand the challenges to integration of students with a migrant background; and*

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<sup>13</sup> The peer counselling instrument is part of the toolbox of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) offering tailor-made policy advice to a country undergoing structural reform by peers from national administrations with experience in the relevant policy area.

(iv) receive recommendations for a reception phase tailored to the Cypriot context and its education system which will prepare newcomers for entering smoothly in the school education. The findings should contribute to the reformulation of the existing policy paper and into a new action plan 2019-2021 on the education of students with migrant background in Cyprus in order to create a comprehensive strategic plan. It involved peers from four EU Member States (Netherlands, Sweden, Greece and Belgium), SIRIUS (the EU Policy Network on Migrant Education) and the European Commission. From the Cypriot side, a range of stakeholders attended, including Ministry staff, CPI staff, teachers and school leaders, school inspectors, teacher union and parents' associations' representatives. The peers presented their national and institutional perspectives and reform processes and discussed possible policy options for Cyprus. This resulted in concrete policy suggestions for the design of a reception phase as well as other issues regarding the wider field of integration of students with a migrant background.

## **7. HEALTH EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The MOECSY implements human rights education through the Health Education Curriculum (HEC) as well, since 2011. The HEC and the learning objectives include clearly defined success indicators related to issues concerning human rights education. More particularly, the success indicators of HEC include indicators associated with intimidating behaviour (such as ...“perceive intimidating behaviour, to recognize and resist this”, “to propose solutions for addressing the phenomenon of bullying in the school”) violence (such as “distinguish the negative consequence arising from any form of exclusion or discrimination”, “to distinguish forms of violence, physical, sexual, psychological, socioeconomic”) social identities/gender development (such as “recognizing factors that affect the development of social gender”). Additionally, the curriculum includes success indicators relating to respect for diversity (e.g. "To identify and judge the existence of stereotypes in the immediate and wider surroundings", "To engage in acts of respect for diversity ", "To highlight the positive effects of diversity in the classroom, in the family and in their community", “critically analyse diversity in sexual orientation”). The success indicators included in HEC relate to human rights and taking action for peaceful coexistence (e.g. "To suggest and to manifest behaviours that show respect for the rights of others at school", "To describe the rights of the child, such as those contained in the Convention on the rights of the child of the UN" and "To propose and implement actions that contribute to defending the rights of the child in school and community", "To recommend and to engage in acts or actions that promote healthy coexistence/symbiosis of people at school and in the community»).

Sexuality education is also part of the reformed HEC which has been implemented in schools since September 2011. The Health Education Curriculum promotes active citizenship learning objectives related to critical awareness of stereotypes and social exclusion consequences. The inclusion of sexuality education through health education as a compulsory subject, begins from pre-school up to secondary school. The themes that are mostly related to sexuality education are included in the thematic unit called "Family planning, sexual and reproductive health". This sub-thematic unit includes topics which are directly referred to a comprehensive understanding of sex and reproductive health such as local and European Law, stereotypes, family violence, homophobia, the role of religion and the media. This fact gives the opportunity to teachers to directly liaise themes of this particular thematic unit (and its sub-themes) with other thematic areas of the curriculum such as peer pressure, values of life, gender stereotypes, self-esteem, safety, assertiveness, rights and obligations and substance misuse. Pupils therefore have the opportunity to understand that sexuality and sexual behaviour is associated with their overall life, others' lives and the society as a whole. According to methodological

guidelines, sexuality education in Cyprus is being approached in a way that people who regard themselves either as "conservative" or "progressive" would not feel being offended or excluded or being in a difficult situation during the lesson.

Specifically, sexuality education is based on the World Health Organization guidelines<sup>14</sup> and includes topics related to a holistic understanding of sexual and reproductive health such as the national and European legal framework, stereotypes, domestic and other forms of violence, risky sexual behaviour, homophobia, the role of religion and media etc. Thematic unit 3.1 of the Health Education Curriculum is not approached independently, but is offered to draw links with other Health Education Curriculum thematic units as well as other subjects, in order to ensure the holistic negotiation of sexual health issues. Therefore, students have the opportunity to understand that sexuality and sexual behaviours are related to their lives in general, the lives of others and society as a whole<sup>15</sup>. Sexuality education, as included in Health Education, may contribute to the prevention and dealing of social problems such as sexual violence, bullying, unwanted pregnancies in teenagers, trafficking, homophobia, risky sexual behaviours, HIV/AIDS and other STDs, reproduction of gender stereotypes, violence against women, stigmatization and discrimination of marginalized groups such as LGBT students etc. Based on the methodological approach of Health Education, sexuality education is approached in a way that no students, from any background, will feel insulted, excluded or uncomfortable during the lesson. On the contrary, each student is empowered through their own cultural and ethical framework in order to acquire the skills and adopt the attitudes, values and behaviours which enhance their resistance to the early initiation of sexual activities and/or involvement in high risk sexual behaviours. The learning objectives of sexuality education in the Health Education Curriculum aim to the promotion of critical social realization of the various perspectives on issues of sexuality and not to a moralistic position in favour of against any choice of sexual behaviour. Sexuality education, based on the Health Education Curriculum, does not aim to teach what is 'right' or 'wrong' in relation to family planning and sexual life<sup>16</sup> - always in the context of international, European and national legal framework and of the International Declaration of Human Rights. The learning objectives are based on the health promotion approach and aim to provide opportunities to students in order to critically explore the various social factors which determine issues of sexuality, and to understand the ways in which society may influence the attitudes, choices and behaviours of a person in relation to sexuality issues. The Health Education Curriculum does not agree or disagree with the ideas expressed in the media or by religion, as the aim is to enable students to critically discuss the potential roles of the media or religion in the ways people think or behave. It therefore, provides a platform through which trafficking may be identified and prevented.

The CPI supports teachers with multiple types of teacher training on the Health Education Curriculum every year. For example, the CPI planned a series of trainings for primary education teachers for the school year 2018-19 and 2019-2020 on teaching sexuality education through the implementation of the Health Education curriculum. A total of 90 and 70 teachers respectively participated in a total of three whole day training seminars based on the sexuality education handbook for primary education "Life journey". They were also informed of the policy regarding the prevention, recognition and dealing of child sexual

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<sup>14</sup>WHO-Europe and Federal Centre for Health Education BZgA, (2010).Standards for sexuality in Europe.A framework for policy makers, educational and health authorities and specialists. Cologne: WHO Europe and Federal Centre for Health Education BZgA <http://www.bzga-whoec.de/?uid=072bde22237db64297daf76b7cb998f0&id=Seite4486>

<sup>15</sup> Ioannou, Kouta, Constantinidou, Ellina (2014) Sexuality Education as a Collective Responsibility: Health Education Curriculum in Cyprus, *Sex Education Journal*.

<sup>16</sup>Ioannou, Kouta, Andreou, (2015),"Cyprus Health Education Curriculum: from 'victim blaming to empowerment'", *Health Education* , Vol. 115 Iss ¾.

abuse. The teachers were committed to implement the sexuality education activities in their classrooms and participated in a reflection process during the final meetings.

In addition, in 2018, research on sexuality education was conducted by the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation (of the CPI). The research aimed at providing clues about what is happening at school in classroom teaching, but also in the wider environment of the school, by highlighting the views of teachers on these sensitive issues. Focus on teachers has been considered important, as teachers' abilities, perceptions and beliefs influence their teaching and their whole approach of these particularly sensitive issues. The suggestion to investigate the matter was raised by the Coordinating Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children, members of which contributed both in terms of methodological planning and feedback to the conclusions of this research. The Cypriot Family Planning Association also contributed to the design and final form of research, giving feedback. The research was conducted as part of the action plan of the National Strategy to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography (2016-2019) in order to investigate the needs of the teachers in teaching the subject and to set related trainings (mandatory) for the next years. Based on the Policy Paper of the MOEC on the Sexuality Education that was posted in 2016 several trainings all over Cyprus were organized as mentioned previously. In addition, based on the National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography (2016-2019) several mandatory trainings were conducted.

## **8. NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR COMBATING CHILDREN'S SEXUAL ABUSE**

Based on the National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Child Exploitation and Children's Pornography 2016-2019, the CPI of the MOECSY organized and carried out multi-level trainings:

- The Committee on the Prevention and Fighting of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children of the MOECSY and the CPI organized specialized trainings for strengthening teachers (Primary and Secondary Education) in their work of protecting children by realizing early the signs of sexual abuse (including child prostitution and child pornography) and tackle the problem as early as possible in 2017-2018. In addition, the CPI organized and conducted a whole day training for high ranking policymakers and inspectors of the MOECSY on the prevention, recognition and dealing of child sexual abuse (26 September 2018).
- Implementation of trainings based on the "Keep me Safe" Educational Program<sup>17</sup>, in cooperation with the Committee on the Prevention and Fighting of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children of the MOECSY, which derive from the National Strategy and Action Plan for the Education of Teachers. During 2019-2020, training is provided for teachers working in Special Schools and for teachers teaching in Special Units, by experienced trainers from the MOECSY and the NGO Cyprus Family Planning Association. The "Keep me Safe" Training Program is about empowering young people (10-25 years) with learning disabilities, in order to be able to protect themselves from sexual abuse and violence. The training manual "An Integrated Toolkit: Keep Me Safe" was tailored specifically to the needs of the Program by expert trainers in Europe and includes a series of exercises targeting professionals, parents and young people with intellectual disabilities, with the aim of empowering and preventing sexual abuse and violence.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://www.unrcpc.org/project/keep-me-safe-supporting-youth-peer-development-tacking-sexual-abuse/>

## **9. CYPRUS OBSERVATORY ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE (COSV)**

The MOECSY has designed and developed the National Strategy for Preventing and addressing School Violence, which has a four-year timeframe of implementation. The Strategy's areas include: a) creation of information systems regarding the extent and forms of violence in schools, b) designing and implementation of legislative and administrative measures for child-protection, c) empowerment of parents, educators and principals, d) training of children in positive and nonviolent behaviors, e) child participation in the development and implementation of policies and measures and f) development of an inter-disciplinary model of services. Very recently the Ministry has decided to restructure its Services in order to enhance the level of support given to schools to prevent and to address school violence.

According to its role and responsibilities, and based on the aforementioned Strategy, the Cyprus Observatory on School Violence (COSV) of the CPI has developed and implemented actions that aim to prevent and address bullying and violence in schools. COSV provides support to school units for the implementation of actions and programs aimed at improving the school climate, with the ultimate aim of reducing violence in schools. These programs, which are school-based and they have a two-year duration, are the "Conflict Resolution - School Mediation" and the "Recognition and Management of School Bullying". The COSV supports schools in the implementation of anti-bullying programmes, which deal with recognising, preventing and combating bullying. With the "Conflict Resolution - School Mediation" schools are encouraged to find effective way of resolving student conflicts as well as alternative way of managing conflict situations at school. During school year 2018-2019, 55 nursery / primary schools and 4 secondary schools received training and support on the aforementioned topics. Guidelines on how to handle conflicts or bullying were produced and disseminated at the training courses. Also, educational material to assist teachers on how to undertake activities with children to enhance their competences needed for prevention and management of school violence was produced and disseminated. The curriculum of this material includes activities to enhance anger management, team-building, empathy, emotional intelligence, social and communicative skills, tolerance, acceptance of diversity, mediation skills, anti-bullying skills, conflict management etc. All booklets are available online on the website of COSV.

For the year 2019-2020, COSV is conducting a number of training activities:

- the COSV offers the following school based programs:
  - "School Mediation" (2<sup>nd</sup> year schools)
  - "Conflict Resolution" (1<sup>st</sup> year schools)
  - "Recognition and Management of School Bullying" (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year schools)
- the COSV conducts optional seminars which teachers can attend in the afternoon. These seminars aim to enhance their competences in managing violence and delinquency. the COSV offers another thematic, "Prevention and management of challenging student behavior" on a school-based seminar.
- A school network on the same topic ("Prevention and management of challenging student behavior") has been launched. The participating schools are trained and supported in handling challenging behavior by using Systemic tools.
- COSV offers the two following seminars, through distance learning:
  - "Building psychological resilience"
  - "Building Peace Education Classes as a Measure to Prevent School Violence and Conflict"

*In addition, a national-level research has been awarded by the COSV, after an open call announcement, to an academic, at the beginning of October 2019 and it will be completed in 2023. It aims to collect quantitative and qualitative data about violence in education, from all schools of all levels in Cyprus. In the meantime, the schools are requested to record bullying incidents online in a specific platform that has been created for this purpose. The COSV collects data concerning good practices for the prevention of violence in schools, it evaluates these practices and it organizes an annual conference where the best practices are awarded, thus receiving visibility and outreach.*

## **10. GENDER EQUALITY**

*The MOECSY is focused on ensuring equal opportunities in education for both genders on a non-discriminatory basis at all levels of education. The Ministry has formed an Interdepartmental Committee with representatives from all its departments and services. This Committee oversees and coordinates all gender equality issues related to actions taken. The work of the Committee has resulted to the development of an Action Plan which promotes gender equality, targeting to the inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of the educational system and to the teacher in-service training. Examples of the implementation of the action plan are given below:*

- Training courses aiming to raise awareness on gender issues related to the gap between men and women in the labour market targeting to all teachers in primary and secondary education, all career counselors in secondary education and all inspectors in primary and secondary education (CPI, Career Counselling and Educational Service and Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance).*
- Training of teachers and parents on issues related to gender, through school-based training seminars and programmes (CPI).*
- Workshops for teachers in primary and secondary education (CPI, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies).*
- In-service training of teachers on issues related to prevention and combating delinquency with reference to transgender relationships (Departments of Education and CPI).*
- Organizing conferences/seminars on gender issues for teachers of all levels (CPI).*
- Implementing programmes in schools with the aim of promoting gender equality and respect among all children in class, irrespective of their background or gender (Educational Psychology Service, MOECSY).*
- Workshops for teachers and pupils aiming at the promotion of equality and inclusion (Career Counselling and Educational Service, MOECSY).*
- School competitions regarding the promotion of gender equality*
- Website on gender equality- Launching a website dedicated to Gender Equality (Pedagogical Institute), which includes useful information, bibliography and teaching material for promoting equal opportunities of both genders and gender mainstreaming in the educational process. The content of the website is frequently updated.*

## **11. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON ISSUES OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

- In terms of antisemitism, the MOECSY organizes educational visits in collaboration with the Vad Yashem International School of Holocaust Studies for teachers and*

students once a year. For the purposes of the programme, the MOECSY also organizes in Cyprus a special conference for teachers on the pedagogical practices of the Holocaust and a specialized educator gives in-service seminars on the subject both for students and teachers.

- The CPI, in collaboration with the UNHCR Cyprus Office, organised two conference on issues of migration and asylum in education: a) on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2017, at the University of Nicosia, titled “People on the move: pedagogical tools for cultivating empathy for refugee and migrant children”, and b) on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2018, at the CPI, in Nicosia, titled “Refugees and Migrants: Pedagogical Approaches”.

## **12. PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN PROJECTS RELATED TO HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

- The MOECSY (as it has already been mentioned in paragraph 7) promotes participation of students in a project co-funded by Asylum, Immigration and Integration Fund and Cyprus government (in cooperation with CARDET and Innovade) that offers Greek language lessons for non-EU country minors as part of the measures to integrate asylum-seeking, refugee and women and girls from migrant background into the education system (primary and secondary level). The project is titled “Geia Xara” <https://www.geiaxara.eu/en/>
- The iDecide Project (<https://idecide-project.eu/>) was completed in 2019, aiming to develop an innovative toolkit and induction course to support evidence-based policy making that can lead to the reduction of disparities in learning outcomes and marginalisation, by supporting school leaders, school staff, and policymakers to engage in shared and inclusive decision making. More specifically, the three goals of the Project were: 1) To develop an innovative toolkit and an induction course (face-to-face & on-line) for school leaders and school staff, based on effective principles and processes to promote shared decision making regarding the development, implementation, evaluation and improvement of inclusive policies, 2) To support evidence-based policy making which can lead to the reduction of disparities in learning outcomes and marginalisation in schools and 3) To support the EU in reducing disparities in learning outcomes affecting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and to strengthen cooperation and exchange of information and good practices between different areas of Europe. By implementing the toolkit and collecting rich data, the complexities of how decisions at school level influence marginalized groups were explored and concrete recommendations for policy and practice on how to engage in shared decision making were made. The toolkit has been developed (printed and online) and translated in five languages. The “iDecide” toolkit includes specific references to Romani, migrant and refugee pupils among other categories of potentially marginalized groups. The “iDecide” final conference took place on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2018.
- The CPI also participated in the European project BODI<sup>18</sup>. BODI aimed to: 1) Contribute to the development of education policies and practices on intercultural education, gender education and inclusion of children / parents of minority cultural backgrounds – through our analysis of existing practices and the assessment of the method we develop. 2) Contribute to the development of teachers’ competences through new methods for teacher training and new practical tools ready to adapt, concretely: • Develop an understanding of cultural differences having an impact on early childhood education, develop tools to solve possible tensions and conflicts •

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<sup>18</sup> <http://bodi-project.eu/>



*Develop skills and creative tools to address issues of cultural diversity, gender, and health with the children • Offer tools to involve parents (of migrant and non-migrant origin) and engage them in dialogue about sensitive issues such as cultural differences, gender, body, health 3) Contribute to the development of school's capacity to address cultural diversity, to ensure that children of different cultural backgrounds and their parents are not excluded and equip children for participation in an intercultural society tolerant towards gender diversity. Offer tools and strategies to address sensitive issues such as gender.*

- *The CPI and the Directorate of Primary Education co-organized a training workshop/experiential workshop in collaboration with the European transnational project SAFER: Systematic Approaches for Equality of Gender<sup>19</sup>, funded by the European Commission under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) program (Nicosia 17 and 21/9/19 and Limassol 24 and 28/9/19). The purpose of the training was to present practices for the prevention of gender and all forms of violence in schools, as well as to inform teachers of their own contribution to the prevention and management of such phenomena. The training focused on the following topics: (a) Gender stereotypes and violence, (b) Character Education, (c) Resilience, and (d) Life Skills. At the end of the training, the participants were expected to be able to implement a variety of classroom techniques and activities to eliminate attitudes and behaviors that stem from gender stereotypes and may turn into incidents of gender-based violence. An important part of the curriculum material focused on techniques derived from the field of Positive Psychology.*
- *The MOECSY, through the Pedagogical Institute, supports the HOMBAT project<sup>20</sup>. The Project was funded by the European Commission for 24 months (October 2017 – September 2019). The objective of HOMBAT was to contribute to the prevention & combating of homophobia and transphobia (HT) in Greece (GR), Cyprus (CY) and Lithuania (LT). In particular, HOMBAT aimed to promote and strengthen the prevention and tackling of HT bullying in schools; build the capacities of teachers and school advisors on preventing and addressing HT bullying; enhance multi-actor cooperation and exchange on combating HT bullying in schools; and, raise awareness about HT bullying in the educational environment and support prevention through counter narratives development and promotion. HOMBAT was mainly targeted at school advisors, school professionals, teachers, students, parents at primary/secondary level and educational authorities, civil society & other professionals. By the end of the project, it aimed to enhance capacities & knowledge of teachers & school advisors/professionals on preventing & addressing HT bullying; strengthen multi-actor cooperation & exchange on combating HT bullying in schools; and, increase awareness about HT bullying in the educational environment & change of attitudes of students, parents, teachers, school advisors & professionals. Furthermore, the creation of the Network for the Prevention and Counteraction of Homophobic and Transgender Intimidation in Education is an initiative of the European Program "HOMBAT: Combating Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying in Schools". The creation of the Network aims to establish strategic relationships and "alliances" between a wide range of stakeholders with the ultimate goal of mobilizing coordinated actions on the basis of a common vision and a common strategy to prevent and combat homophobic and transfocal intimidation in education. The duration of the Network's operation was originally from January to September 2019 and has been extended into 2020. On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019, an Agreement of Cooperation and Declaration of Principles that emerged from the HOMBAT Programme was signed by 9 stakeholders that have come*

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<sup>19</sup> <http://gendersafer.eu/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.hombat.eu/>

together to form the HOMBAT Network: Ministry of Education and Culture, Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, Cyprus Youth Organization, ACCEPT, University of Nicosia, Frederick University, Cyprus Family Planning Association and Research Center CARDET.

- The CPI also participates, since 2019 in the project “Teachers4Europe: setting an Agora for Democratic Culture” (T4E)<sup>21</sup> which is targeting to education as the vehicle for the promotion of principles and values comprising the EU democratic culture, which can contribute to better appreciation of the EU as an entity that works at many different levels in favour of all people, irrespective of their identity; the Teachers 4 Europe (T4E) aim to act as inspiring social and cultural agents that will spread the European values to colleagues, young people and the society. Moreover, it aims during its implementation to foster a dialogue with and among relevant stakeholders on a social and policy level and will contribute towards realising synergies and improving the quality of training and learning through knowledge about Europe and its values, especially in the field of Democratic Culture.

Further to the actions implemented by the Ministry of Education , Culture, Sports and Youth several measures have been undertaken by the Ministry of Justice and Public Order in order to ensure continuous training of front-line professionals of all line services . This includes judges, prosecutors, police officers, prison staff, social services and eligibility officers for asylum applicants. Following the signing of a cooperation agreement on training between the Cyprus Police and the University of Cyprus, one of the modules for all police recruits is “Policing and Human Rights”. In addition, the Training for Police Recruits at the Police Academy has been enriched, to include a new Module on Fundamental Rights.

2.Promote human rights training for media professionals and journalists (third phase) in the following areas:

- Policies and related implementation measures
- Training processes and tools
- An enabling environment.

3.National evaluation reports could also include overall human rights education developments and other related information, including:

1. The adoption of national policies and/or strategic documents, such as a National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education of related laws;
2. Main challenges to advancing human rights education, both in the areas covered by the plan of action for the third phase and beyond, and opportunities for overcoming them.
3. Efforts undertaken to disseminate information on the World Programme for Human Rights Education in the country;

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.teachers4europe.eu/en/>

4. Any relevant supplementary documentation, including already-existing information reported to the United Nations human rights bodies and mechanisms or to other intergovernmental organizations, which could be annexed to the report;
5. Information on the institution/department responsible for preparing the report, including contact details.

### **Response by Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports**

*The Government of the Republic of Cyprus is strongly committed to the effective implementation of Human Rights Education. It is a fact that during the last few years progress has been made in the protection and realization of human rights, but there is still room for improvement. The Government's vision for the full and effective implementation of human rights is in progress and we continue to work for the further advancement of awareness raising and education on human rights. To achieve this goal, the MOECSY takes all the necessary measures, through the implementation of action plans, as well as other strategies and policies. Cyprus is determined to intensify its efforts to promote and protect human rights and towards this end we cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve our common goal.*

*Through its three-year strategic plan for the period 2020-2022, the MOECSY is aiming to ensure the provision of learning opportunities to all learners, through the implementation of an educational policy which embodies the values of equality, inclusiveness, creativity and innovation. Our basic goal is to increase access to quality education and provide opportunities for all learners to become successful in their learning, through modernising teaching methods and approaches, designing and implementing modern developmental programmes and creating the infrastructure that can facilitate high quality education. The MOECSY's vision is to form literate citizens with skills, responsibility, democratic ethos, historical identity as well as respect for diversity. As a result, education is considered as the means for social mobility, inclusion and active participation of all in our society and a basic tool for effectively combating inequalities, various social problems and achieving social cohesion.*

*Within the context of its strategic plan the MOECSY primarily focuses on five key strategic priorities, for which an action plan for all its departments and services is being developed. In particular, for each of these strategic priorities, the planning includes the specification of educational policy, the in-service training of the teaching staff, the preparation and allocation of the appropriate educational material, as well as the ongoing monitoring of these actions for the purpose of feedback and improvement. The priorities that are important for improving education in Cyprus are:*

- 1. Pupil evaluation across the whole range of the educational system;*
- 2. Teachers' evaluation and evaluation of the educational work;*
- 3. Prevention of violence and delinquency;*
- 4. Integration of children with migrant background into the educational system;*
- 5. Special and inclusive education.*

*Currently, the MOECSY is receiving technical assistance from the Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) of the European Commission and, in cooperation with experts from the European Agency of Special Needs and Inclusive Education, is in the process of reforming the existing law of Special Education, so that the education system becomes more efficient and inclusive. The experts have submitted a*

*new draft framework law which was discussed with all stakeholders and now the project is in its second phase, for the preparation of regulations that will accompany the law.*

Last, but not least, a Human Rights Department has been established in 2018 at the Ministry of Justice with a mandate of overseeing and monitoring the situation of human rights in the Public Sector. A National Strategy for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and the respective National Action Plan is being drafted in cooperation with the University of Cyprus. The aim is to place the protection and promotion of human rights on a more systematic basis. Moreover, Cyprus is in the process of establishing a National Committee on International Humanitarian Law.



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS



THE COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN'S  
RIGHTS OFFICE

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Nicosia, April 22, 2020

**VIA EMAIL**

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To Whom it May Concern,

The Commissioner for Children's Rights<sup>1</sup> (Cyprus) wishes to submit the current report on the third phase (2015-2019) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Based on her competences and responsibility, the Commissioner submits the current report as an addition to the report that will be submitted by the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

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<sup>1</sup> The Commissioner for Children's Rights is an independent National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) established by the Commissioner of the Rights of the Child Laws 2007 and 2014 [Laws 74(I)/2007), 44(I)/2014] and governed by the Paris Principles of the independent human rights bodies, in order to monitor the respect and protection of the rights of the child in the Republic of Cyprus. The Commissioner's mission is to protect and promote the rights of the child, to represent children and their interest at all levels, to promote public awareness and sensitivity so that children's rights in all domains of life are safeguarded, to identify and promote the views of children, to monitor legislation relating to children and to submit proposals aiming at harmonisation with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to carry out public awareness campaigns and to represent children in judicial proceedings.

As a monitoring institution, the Commissioner implements programs, actions and projects for human rights education, in addition to the ones organized and implemented by the State and/or the civil society, and by no means their provision absolves the responsibility of the State to include human rights education in laws, policies and policy objectives or within the practices and procedures applied by services or its responsibility to design and implement such programs. As such, the current report should be considered as supplementary to the State's one. The report has been drafted based on the guidelines provided by the OHCHR.

Below is a list of activities/projects/actions implemented during Phase 3 of the World Programme on Human Rights Education (2015-2019), separated into the three main pylons, defined by the objectives set during the first three phases of the Programme.

### **Phase 1: To strengthen the implementation of human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems**

The Commissioner

- Applied the human rights education program named “To the Country of the Rights” to 134 pre-primary and primary school units, teaching for, about and through human rights a total of 3240 students. The program introduces the principles of the CRC to the children. 150 educators had the opportunity to understand the HRE by observing its implementation.
- Applied the program based on human rights education principles “Giving Children a Voice” to 13 secondary education school units. The project, which includes a visit of the Commissioner to the school units, introduces children to a specific right, while students also have the opportunity to express their concerns and recommendations to the Commissioner in relation to that right.
- Applied the program “The right of the children to live in peace” to 27 school primary school units, with a total number of 694 children attending it. Based on human rights education, the program aimed at developing a culture of peace within the society.
- Applied the program “Away from homeland and fear” to 10 secondary school units with the aim of supporting the integration of children with a migrant or refugee status within the school units. The schools had to develop their own action plans to implement. The program was implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the UNHCR- Cyprus.

- Published a booklet for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation for the primary school students, which distributes every year, since 2017, to all students of the third grade of primary school.
- Published a booklet for sexting for secondary school students, which distributes every year, since 2019, to all students of the third grade of secondary school.
- Formed the CRC into a child friendly format, language and images, and translated it into 5 languages: English, Arabic, Turkish, Russian and French. Produced posters sent to all primary schools, one for each class.
- Produced in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Cyprus Radiotelevision Authority 10 video clips for children's rights which were televised to all the tv stations (private and public).

**Phase 2: To strengthen the implementation of human rights education for higher education and on human rights training for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials and military personnel**

The Commissioner

- Implemented a one-day training for all the secondary education inspectors with the title "Securing the child's best interest within schools". The training aimed at facilitating understanding of the importance of a complaint mechanism and was based on the opinions of the children.
- Implemented a one-day teachers' training for 40 teachers with the aim to introduce them to the main principles of CRC.
- Implemented a 4-day lawyers' training for 70 lawyers on how to represent children to judicial processes.
- Implemented a one-day training for 60 social workers and professionals who work with children in care.
- Implemented a 3-day training for 30 social workers on protection of children from sexual abuse.
- Published a manual titled "The responsibilities of the Commissioner for Children's rights regarding the legal representation of children in courts or other procedures". It addresses professionals who, due to their competence, contribute to the decision-making processes affecting children. It was distributed, among others, to judges and lawyers, the Attorney General of the Republic, all Legal Officers, and various directors of the competent Authorities.

- Published a booklet titled "Together Before Justice", a child-friendly edition that explains to children what legal representation is and provides basic information that a child needs to know about how the Commissioner represents them in court proceedings. It was translated in 4 languages (French, English, Somali and Arabic) and is distributed to children who express interest in their legal representation in court proceedings by the Commissioner, and to any child for whom the Court has issued a decision appointing the Commissioner as his/her legal representative in court proceedings.

### **Phase 3: To promote human rights training for media professionals and journalists**

#### The Commissioner

- Implemented a one-day training for professionals who work in various areas and have high profiles within the Greek Cypriot society (i.e. journalists, actors, athletes etc.)
- Published a manual titled "Participation of children in audiovisual and art productions. A manual for professionals and parents", which aimed at providing knowledge to professionals in the field of media and audiovisual or art productions and the parents whose children either wish to participate or participate in such productions. The Manual was sent to stakeholders of interest to them.
- Published a manual titled "I THINK. Manual for children participating in television and art productions" informing children who either wish to participate or participated in such productions about their rights. The Manual was distributed to all stakeholders who have access to children who participate in such productions.
- Organized, in collaboration with the Cyprus Radiotelevision Authority, the Cyprus Theater Organization and with the participation of three children who participated in productions, a presentation of the publications above, attended by officials of the relevant Services (Ministry of Culture, Department of Labor, etc.), media professionals and art professionals (i.e. directors, producers, actors) and parents of the children involved in productions.



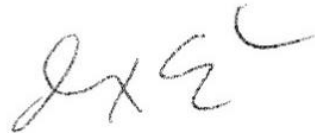
**Steps forward:**

A National Plan of Action for Human Rights Education has not been prepared yet in the Republic of Cyprus, an outcome that must be urgently pursued by the State. To that effect a Central Authority in Cyprus should be defined that will be responsible for its preparation and application. Concurrently, the objectives set for the fourth phase of the Programme must be accomplished in conjunction with actions undertaken for the three previous phases. The main challenge to advancing human rights education in Cyprus is the limited resources provided for this course.

Lastly, I present my intention to contribute to the implementation of the Plan of Action for the fourth phase of the Programme and express my dedication to meet its objectives, based on the competences and responsibilities of the Institution I represent and based on the financial resources provided to my Office by the Republic of Cyprus.

I am at your disposal for further clarifications.

Yours sincerely,



Despo Michaelidou  
Commissioner for Children's Rights

CC:

-Permanent Mission of Cyprus in Geneva ([pm.geneva@mfa.gov.cy](mailto:pm.geneva@mfa.gov.cy))

-Marios Epaminondas (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth, Office of European and International Affairs) ([mepaminondas@moec.gov.cy](mailto:mepaminondas@moec.gov.cy))