Study Mission on Civic Education Policy

Berlin, Germany
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1. Success Model: Germany

Civic Education in Germany has always been influenced by the political and social framework. In its 100 years of history it has been taught in five different systems: until 1918 in a feudal system and monarchy; from 1918 to 1933 in a democracy, the Weimar Republic (for 15 years); from 1933 to 1945 under the rule of National-Socialism in a racist dictatorship (12 years); from 1949 to 1989 in the centralist socialist German Democratic Republic (40 years); and since 1949 in the democracy of the Federal Republic of Germany (53 years). The later system perdures till date, however former types of state and social systems still influence the political culture, the discussion and praxis of civic education today, and are important for its understanding.

Differently to other subjects, Civic Education is not merely - and perhaps not even primarily - taught at school, but also imparted outside school, through printed and multi-media documents as well as through political events and discussions. On the one hand different ideas and political information determine curricula and textbooks for Civic Education at school, on the other, outside of school children and adolescents are directly influenced by media, their families and peer groups. Though, civic education, so called political education in Germany, is a process and tools to prepare a person to become a citizen of the society. Germany success resulted from the state non-interference and pluralistic policy, since the most important aspect in a democratic society is the sharing of values and believes. There are 6 political parties of 6 different political ideologies in Germany and each received financial support from the State to run activities through their political foundations. There are flexibility and innovation in each organization and participants are free to express views. Civic education or political education in Germany is therefore a mean or process of learning together, not teaching.

One of the fundamental elements in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany is the principle of federalism, and one of the characteristics of the German federal structure is that both the state and the Länder (constituent states) possess the quality of statehood. The provisions of the Grundgesetz (Basic Law) set out basis for the cultural sovereignty of the Länder, which include the responsibility for Education, science and culture, and emphasizes that they belong to the core elements of each individual statehood. This multi-layered approach to framing a national civic education curriculum with due consideration to the specificities and character of each societal component is particularly interesting.

Indeed, the curricula of all the Landers emphasize that the objective of Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) in school is to transmit democratic values and skills to pupils to equip them with a critical approach that allows developing their own opinions and growing up to become responsible citizens. Teacher training in the field of EDC consists of two parts: the first, undertaken mostly through the study of political or
another social science at higher education; the second, so called preparatory service, involves lessons, guided and independent teaching at training schools and studies in educational theory and subject-related didactics at teacher training colleges which re-apprise and consolidate experience gained through practical training.

In secondary schools, EDC is taught through curriculum subjects specially dedicated for this purpose or even in combination with social science subjects. Indeed, social and political topics are dealt with in subjects such as history, economics, geography and religion or ethics. Furthermore, in order to familiarise pupils with democratic action in practice, they - as much as their parents - are actively involved in the organisation of school life. The intensive involvement of pupils as well as parents and teachers in various participative bodies is laid down in the schools legislation of the Lander and school constitutions.

Lived democracy takes place not just in school. Associations, initiatives, enterprises or sports clubs offer many different opportunities to participate in civil society. There are also opportunities for active involvement in democratic society everywhere at a local community level. Here young people in particular can take part in political decision-making processes by engagement in the youth community council for example. There is a well developed system of extra-curricular youth and adult education for young people and adults with a wide spectrum of different organisations and institutions which exclusively or partly offer EDC. A special role in the field of EDC has been played for decades by the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Lander Agencies for Civic Education. They make an important contribution to education for democracy by organising a wide range of events in the form of specialist conferences, congresses, seminars and symposia and by providing a wealth of information and teaching materials free of charge.

2. **Rationale for Selection**

The German model was identified as presenting the most developed and adapted model based on the following rationale:

1. The federal system in Germany and the regionalization of civic education curricula in the Länder was judged as very relevant to the Iraqi reality, particularly with the cultural specificity presented by the Kurdistan region but also due to the newly adopted decentralization policy in the formal and non-formal education systems;

2. Germany has undergone, after its reunification and the fall of the Berlin Wall in the 1990s, extensive reforms in its civic education in the prospect of reinforcing national unity and the sense of belonging to the German Nation. Iraq today, with its pronounced multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian composition, is undergoing a similar exercise within the framework of the national education strategy and other national and regional pursued endeavors;

3. Germany presents a success model in institutionalizing the interaction between formal educational institutions, i.e. schools and the non-formal settings and activities (civil society organizations). This arena is still lagging behind in Iraq despite several initiatives and will highly benefit from the German achievements under this component.
3. Specific Objectives

i. Highlighting the successes and lessons learned of the German model, with particular emphasis on the federal system and the attention to cultural diversities, local specificities, and established coordination mechanisms in the development of civic education policies and strategies;

ii. Exposing Iraqi officials to best and innovative practices in civic education policy making as an integrated and participatory process of concerned authorities, legislators, formal and informal education systems;

iii. Sensitizing decision makers to the importance of modern innovative teaching methods and techniques in civic and like skills education, with particular emphasis on the role and involvement of non-governmental entities;

iv. Establishing linkages and networking arenas between Germany and Iraq for the transfer of knowledge and expertise.

4. Methodology

The Study Mission will be conducted using primarily the applied knowledge transfer methodology, which is based on sustained interaction between Iraqi participants and the proposed success model. The methodology could comprise lectures and presentations on success models and lessons learned, but will be mainly geared towards field visits applying the visiting learning methodology. Hence, presentations will be combined with - and even performed - on-site during the field visits in order to maximize their impact on the target audience.

5. Focus Areas

The Study Mission will focus at a minimum on the following thematics/topics and convey to participating officials relevant success stories and lessons learned:

1. Legal and institutional achievements/components of civic education integration in national and sub-national curricula: intended outcomes and applied coordination strategies;
2. Using history to build a sustainable democratic society for the future;
3. Coordination mechanisms set up at national and federal level between concerned authorities, civil society, formal and informal education environments in support of civic education;
4. Methodological approaches applied in the development of civic education materials and clarification of concepts to be taught,
5. Best practices in mainstreaming civic education into school life through extra curricular activities such as student elections, self-management of extra-mural societies, and parent-teacher-student boards;
6. Strategies to capacitate teachers through teacher and learner support;
7. Benchmarking, monitor and evaluation to grant continuous improvements.
6. Stakeholders/Beneficiaries

The primary beneficiaries will be Seventeen (17) among high level officials from ministries of education, youth and sport, culture, legislators, representatives of concerned local authorities and other institutions considered relevant to the process. High level representatives from the following entities should be included in the study mission:

1. Council of Ministers Secretariat (COMSEC);
2. High level officers involved with education strategies and policies within the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and Prime Minister’s Advisory Commission (PMAC);
3. KRG Prime Minister Office (PMO) and/or Divan of the Council of Ministers;
4. Legislators (particularly involved in the reform of the education sector and youth/women/children issues) from Federal Parliament and KRG House of Representatives;
5. Ministry of Education (Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government);
6. Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government);
7. Ministry of Youth and Sports (Government of Iraq);
8. Ministry of Culture and Youth (Kurdistan Regional Government);
9. Ministry of Human Rights (Baghdad)
10. Commission of Human Rights (KRG)

The nominated representatives should feature the following characteristics:

- Committed to the mission;
- Ready to pilot applications;
- Open to synergies and cooperation;
- Sharing understanding of civic education values and principles;
- Ability to influence decision making processes within their professional environments.