



Erasmus+

Modernisation Education and Human Rights

Quality assurance of learning outcomes
and the student perspective



Modernisation, Education, and Human Rights

Quality assurance of learning outcomes and the student perspective

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Summary

There is room for improvement as regards the formalisation and quality assurance of learning outcomes on human rights in higher education. This picture emerges from three country reports investigating human rights education in a number of programmes in Croatia, Portugal, and Sweden. The present comparative report highlights two central aspects of human rights education investigated by the three country approaches, that is, quality assurance of learning outcomes, and the student perspective.

Results from the national surveys carried out by the project indicate that although a majority of the programmes include teaching on human rights, there is room for improvement as regards the formalisation of learning outcomes, as well as their alignment with teaching content, teaching and assessment methods, reading lists, examination forms, and teacher competence. A lack of constructive alignment is problematic as it makes it difficult to ascertain whether examination procedures are adequate, and decreases transparency towards students.

National legislation and government initiatives seem to play an important role for the integration of human rights content in higher education programmes. The country reports show that where specific targets on human rights are defined by national regulations, they are more explicitly referred to as important by the respondents.

The surveys clearly point to the importance of teachers and their competence as well as their attitudes to human rights education. There is sometimes hesitation or resistance among the teaching staff towards the inclusion of human rights content, and the normative aspects of human rights issues are sometimes perceived as contrary to the scientific basis of higher education. The reports show that a successful way to avoid such conflicts between science and human rights education can be to shift focus to the knowledge, competence and skills students need to develop for their future professional life, in line with a stronger formalisation of the intended learning outcomes.

Human rights are mostly taught by teachers at the department delivering the programme in question, who acquired their competence in this field from their own research, or from other professional experience with human rights issues. This expertise is crucial in order to encourage and facilitate a discussion where students are an active and equal part. However, few of the programmes seem to have developed formalised procedures for mapping and evaluating teacher competence, or systematic approaches to continuous teacher competence development in human rights education. Furthermore, there is room for a greater involvement of teachers representing other departments, NGOs, or practitioners from professional life.

The reports show a variety of teaching methods. Lectures and seminars are the most common forms, complemented by other student-centred learning activities such as group discussions. Some programmes also teach human rights during placements, thus reinforcing the link between theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

To ensure constructive alignment, methods of assessment should reflect the content of learning and support the development of the specific knowledge, competences and skills that are assessed. The reports show that the programmes investigated use a wide variety of methods when assessing knowledge related to human rights issues, such as written examinations complemented by seminars, oral presentations, written reports, and project assignments.

Practical perspectives are included in many of the programmes, alongside theoretical aspects on human rights. This makes it possible for students to develop the skills and competences they need to properly deal with situations they may face in their future working life in which human rights are in danger of being violated. Most programmes also include a working life perspective in their quality assurance of learning outcomes on human rights, though feedback from alumni and dialogue with representatives from professional life could be used to a greater extent.

According to the surveys, more programmes in Croatia than in Portugal or Sweden plan for changes in their human rights teaching and learning. Development work listed by respondents comprises emphasising the human rights topics in learning outcomes, increasing the number of elective courses and putting greater emphasis on the topic within existing teaching content. Other examples are increased involvement of professionals, encouraging student research, problem-based learning and other student-centred teaching methods, as well as encouraging teacher participation in training programmes and related research.

From a student perspective, the programmes ensure to a varying degree that students are active participants in their own learning, primarily through adjusting to different learning styles, needs and interests. Displayed in the three reports are a wide array of aspects of methods to facilitate student-centred learning such as group work, project based work, field trips, film studies, role-playing and written examinations. Students from all three countries underline the importance of having flexibility in learning methods and the promotion of cooperation between students and teachers. They highlight the need not only for informative courses but also for interactive courses where students are equipped with tools to tackle human rights challenges in their future professional lives.

Recommendations for quality assurance of human rights education

A number of common features emerge from the country reports that seem crucial to the successful implementation and quality assurance of learning outcomes on human rights in higher education. These are recurrent features in all three reports, in spite of the differences between the national higher education systems examined, and despite the fact that the programmes investigated by each partner organisation represent different scientific disciplines. The main project findings, analysed against the background of earlier research on learning outcomes, are concentrated below in a set of

recommendations for human rights education targeted at quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, and student organisations.

Recommendations

National legislation and government initiatives matter

Initiatives on a national level play an important role for the integration of human rights content in higher education, whether in the form of legislation or as more general government initiatives. Where specific targets on human rights are defined in national regulations, they are also perceived as more important by teachers and programme directors.

A broad understanding of the concept of human rights is needed

Human rights should be embedded in programmes where relevant, and adapted to the knowledge and skills required for a given profession. Content could be integrated or taught as stand-alone courses, mandatory or elective. Thus conceived, human rights education is not limited to educational content, but explored as a means to learn what you live.

Teaching on human rights should be grounded in research

As for any topic, it is of vital importance that teaching on human rights is anchored in research. There should be no conflict between science and human rights education, provided that focus is shifted to what knowledge, competence and skills students need to develop in order to be prepared for their future working life.

Teachers must be empowered to be drivers of change

It is necessary to find ways to involve teachers to see human rights as an opportunity to enhance student-centred learning. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in training programmes on human rights and to conduct related research. Systematic mapping, follow-up and evaluation of teacher competence should result in relevant competence development.

Formalising learning outcomes is key

There is a general need to improve the formalisation of human rights in terms of explicit learning outcomes. In order to avoid a mismatch between learning outcomes and examination, it is necessary to ensure a constructive alignment of learning outcomes with teaching content, syllabi, reading lists, teaching and assessment methods, examinations, and competence development of teachers. Formalisation of learning outcomes is also important from a student-centred learning perspective, as it enhances transparency of the curriculum and allows students to take an active role in the learning process.

Student-centred learning should be at the heart of human rights education

Human rights should be seen as an umbrella concept, part of a learning process and not an end in itself. Therefore, a variety of student-centred teaching and learning methods should be applied, and a variation of assessment methods developed. It is important to encourage student research and their participation in solving specific questions and problems. This will also allow students to develop a critical perspective on human rights issues.

Practical skills and working life relevance should be emphasised

Theoretical knowledge should be clearly linked to practical skills. Therefore, increased collaboration with practitioners and professionals should be encouraged, as well as the valorisation of alumni. Cooperation with NGOs and local organisations that deal with human rights issues is recommended as a way to bring working life expertise into the teaching and learning environment. Putting theory into practice should be promoted through active learning experiences, including problem-based learning, case studies, and fieldwork.

Learning outcomes should be the point of reference for evaluation and quality assurance and the starting point for development

Internal and external quality assurance need to develop an awareness of the transformation towards learning outcomes and achievement of competences and skills in students, parallel to scientific and pedagogical aspects of quality in higher education.

International collaboration should be intensified

Increased mobility and diversity in both society and higher education make it necessary to strengthen students' awareness of diversity and differences of values, and the need to develop social skills and intercultural competence. For quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions alike, international bench-marking and collaboration is of increasing importance. Quality assurance, learning outcomes-based education, recognition, and student-centred learning are at the core of the Bologna process as well as the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and human rights education needs to be conceived within this framework.

Introduction

Higher education plays a vital role in providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to deal with situations they may encounter in their future careers when human rights are violated or threatened. The present report recapitulates and compares the main findings of three reports produced within the project Modernisation, Education and Human Rights (MEHR), a three-year project for strategic partnership in higher education funded by the EU through the Erasmus+ programme. The purpose of the project is to strengthen higher education on human rights within the fields of medicine, health sciences, social welfare, teacher education, geography and law, so that professionals working within these fields are better prepared to defend human rights within their everyday practice.

This comparative report highlights and compares the project findings in the two central aspects of human rights education investigated by the three country approaches, that is, quality assurance of learning outcomes, and the student perspective. The two themes are developed in separate but complementary chapters, following an introductory chapter describing the MEHR project.

Modernisation, Education and Human Rights (MEHR)

An introductory chapter explains the rationale, aims and objectives of the MEHR project, lists its outputs, and presents the member organisations of the project consortium.

Quality assurance of human rights learning outcomes

This chapter describes the aims and content of the programmes investigated by the project and compares how human rights are included in the chosen programmes. It then reflects on the relationship between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in human rights teaching and learning, and analyses the degree of formalisation of learning outcomes in human rights within the programmes in the country surveys, as well as the relevance of the programmes to students' future working life. Furthermore, teaching methods and assessment forms in human rights are commented on. A following section looks at teachers involved in human rights education and their qualifications in the field, and how higher education institutions ensure that teaching staff have adequate competence in human rights teaching and learning. The chapter closes with a review of various aspects of development work and changes planned by the included programmes in the area of human rights education.

The student perspective

The chapter dedicated to student-centred learning aims to display to what extent students in the three countries perceive that they are prepared to tackle the different human rights areas that each country chose to assess. The chapter also provides a description of the on-going procedure of implementing student-centred learning in the selected education programmes of the different partner countries. In addition, a

separate section presents a narrative description of European Students' Union's vox pop videos with students active in the countries included in the project. The questions asked are in direct relation to the different themes that each country had chosen to assess.

Conclusion with recommendations

A number of common features emerge from the reports that seem crucial to the successful implementation of human rights teaching and learning in higher education. These findings are recapitulated in a set of recommendations for human rights education targeted at quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, and student organisations.

Country reports

Annexed to the present comparative report are the three country reports, presenting in detail the research and analyses carried out by the MEHR project partners (Annexes 1-3), and a selection of self-recorded vox pop videos where students give their perspective on human rights teaching and learning (Annex 4):

- *Annex 1: A gender perspective on human rights education. Assessing learning outcomes in higher education on human rights; men's violence against women and domestic violence; and violence towards children in programmes in medicine and social welfare.* Swedish Higher Education Authority and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, and European Student Union, 2017.
- *Annex 2: Migration, Human rights and Intercultural Skills in Higher Education.* Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, and Institute of Geography and Regional Planning at University of Lisbon, Portugal, 2018.
- *Annex 3: Human rights, children's rights and participation, and children/pupils as active citizens. Assessing learning outcomes in higher education on human rights, active citizenship and democratic values in programmes in education.* Agency for Science and Higher Education and Faculty of Teacher Education at University of Rijeka, Croatia, 2019.
- *Annex 4: A selection of vox pop videos with students active in the countries participating in the project. In short self-recorded videos, a number of students reflect on key questions related to the chosen country-specific themes in human rights education.*

Modernisation, Education and Human Rights (MEHR)

Aim and focus of the MEHR project

The purpose of the project is to strengthen higher education on human rights within the disciplines of medicine, health sciences, social welfare, teacher education, geography and law, so that professionals working within these fields should be better prepared to defend human rights within their everyday practice. The project thus intends to enhance the involvement of human rights as content in the selected study programmes, and to improve the methodology of external evaluation and self-evaluation of learning outcomes carried out by different stakeholders in the higher education system. Such stakeholders are, for example, external quality assurance agencies in higher education, higher education institutions management, as well as students and student organisations. Besides programme content in the form of knowledge, skills and attitudes, the focus of the project is to highlight the diversity and adequacy of teaching methods, the importance of teacher competence, and the adequacy of achieved learning outcomes assessment.

The project's strong focus on learning outcomes is motivated by their potential to

- increase transparency in what is expected from students
- enhance student-centred learning and students' responsibility for their own learning
- ensure continuity and sustainability (i.e. programme content determined by learning outcomes, not by individual teachers)
- strengthen the constructive alignment of learning outcomes with teaching methods and forms of examination
- ensure that all students have adequate knowledge when graduating, and
- promote the mobility of students and workforce.

Rationale

The learning outcomes of students – as one output of higher education (HE) – have become a focal point of attention in the last two decades. Providing a picture of graduates' achievement in terms of knowledge, skills and competences, they represent a potential indicator of a higher education institution's (HEI) performance in teaching and learning. Their assessment therefore gives an indication of the quality of HEIs' pedagogic endeavour.

Accordingly, a relevant focus for organisations conducting external quality assurance is the use of learning outcomes (LO) and their assessment in accreditation procedures. Evidence-based approaches have been developed for quality assurance agencies (QAA) to assess intended and achieved LO in the evaluation of educational programmes, for

example, by ECA (European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education). Building on this experience, the present project has intended to develop a framework for QAAs to assess LO on human rights (HR). Inspired by such a framework, QAAs may obtain a more faithful estimation of their activities in relation to LO assessment with special focus on HR, in a comparative European perspective. This, in turn, will allow agencies to reflect upon their practices in areas which will have emerged as needing attention.

The Bologna process has given pride-of-place to LO and these have been described as a fundamental building block of the reforms. The crucial purpose of LO refers to their function as qualification descriptors to develop a framework of comparable qualifications for HE systems. In this context, LO have been hailed as a means to move towards student-centred education. Another development in the Bologna reforms pertinent to the MEHR project is the elaboration of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance by ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), whose standards on the design of programmes and on student assessment refer clearly to the relevance of LO. Consequently, LO now feature in the quality assessment and accreditation procedures for HE programmes in most European countries. However, the extent to which QAAs pay attention to the use of LO and the methods they employ to assess their use when evaluating HE programmes have not always received due consideration. Therefore, as a continuation of previous activities undertaken by ECA, the MEHR Project was designed to systematise evidence of QAA practices in the area of LO with special attention to HR.

The MEHR project is innovative in its approach as a learning process carried out by QAAs and HEIs, together with a transnational student organisation, outside the formal accreditation procedures, in a research environment of cooperation and mutual learning. The benefit of the project resides in its proposed exploration of QAAs' attention to education on HR and the usage of LO in HEIs, as revealed by their evaluative practices. Previous projects focused on, and were targeted to, QAAs exclusively. In contrast, the MEHR project targets both QAAs and HEIs, as regards their consideration of LO during quality assurance and accreditation processes and procedures. The project aims to inspire HEIs through the insight that it can provide into how they employ LO assessment methodologies in their practices, regarding HR in particular.

Several of the partner organisations have already produced relevant knowledge on LO assessment, although the outcomes were somehow scattered or even unknown to each other. Thus, the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES) recently developed a study on LO in geography programmes in Portugal; the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) applies a national quality assurance system based on LO assessments; The European Students' Union (ESU) develops various studies and initiatives with a focus on student-centred learning. In addition, UKÄ had carried out a pilot study with a focus on LO of HR within a selection of educational programmes relevant to the MEHR project. Thus, there were some preliminary results regarding LO assessment on HR and a questionnaire that had been tested and after adjustments was used by all partners in their respective surveys.

The MEHR project aims at a transnational and transinstitutional cooperation combining the knowledge produced individually by the different partner organisations alone and in other contexts and networks. Its special focus on LO assessment on HR within specific areas of education (medicine, health sciences, and social services, teacher education, and education in geography and law, respectively) makes the project relevant both from a broader employability perspective strengthening recognition and stimulating mobility, and from the perspective of singular HEIs who might use the project results to benchmark and further develop their educational activities on HR. Through mutual learning between different educational programmes, between HEIs, QAAs and student organisations, and between the different countries in the consortium, the MEHR project has the benefit of spreading knowledge and strengthening HR within Europe.

Methodology and outputs

The partner organisations agreed on the overarching aim of strengthening higher education on human rights primarily in programmes leading to a number of specific professions, with special attention to learning outcomes and quality assurance procedures. Each part of the project then focused on different aspects of human rights in different programmes. Thus, the following human rights areas and higher education programmes were covered:

	Sweden	Portugal	Croatia
Human rights areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human rights in general • men's violence against women and domestic violence • violence towards children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human rights in general • migration • intercultural skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human rights in general • children's rights and participation • children/pupils as active citizens
Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medical education • nursing • occupational therapy • psychology • social work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • geography • law • social work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teacher education • ECPE¹ • pedagogy • psychology • social work

¹ Early Childhood and Pre-school Education leading to a Pre-school Teacher Qualification.

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From 2016 to 2019, the partnership carried out country specific surveys² related to the learning outcomes assessment of human rights in the above areas, and resulting in three country reports. Each report was produced in a joint venture involving a quality assurance agency, a higher education institution, and the European Students' Union. Questionnaires³ were sent to all higher education institutions in a country with the right to award degrees for the selected programmes. In addition, a number of programmes were self-selected as examples of good practice. In conjunction with the publication of each report, a workshop and a conference were held, where the results were disseminated and discussed with representatives of higher education institutions, students, and other stakeholders.

Finally, the project results, together with the present comparative report and a selection of student vox pop videos, were presented at an international conference in Brussels on 12 June 2019.

The following reports produced in the framework of the MEHR project can be downloaded from each partner organisation's website:

- *Annex 1: A gender perspective on human rights education. Assessing learning outcomes in higher education on human rights; men's violence against women and domestic violence; and violence towards children in programmes in medicine and social welfare.* Swedish Higher Education Authority and Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, and European Student Union, 2017.
- *Annex 2: Migration, Human rights and Intercultural Skills in Higher Education.* Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education, and Institute of Geography and Regional Planning at University of Lisbon, Portugal, 2018.
- *Annex 3: Human rights, children's rights and participation, and children/pupils as active citizens. Assessing learning outcomes in higher education on human rights, active citizenship and democratic values in programmes in education.* Agency for Science and Higher Education and Faculty of Teacher Education at University of Rijeka, Croatia, 2019.
- Annex 4: A selection of vox pop videos with students active in the countries participating in the project. In short self-recorded videos, a number of students

² The terms 'survey', 'report', and 'study' are used interchangeably in the report, unless otherwise explained.

³ The term 'questionnaire' refers to the common tool used *mutatis mutandis* by all three countries to collect data through a set of agreed questions (multiple choice and open-ended questions).

reflect on key questions related to the chosen country-specific themes in human rights education.

The MEHR project consortium

The project brings together organisations from three different European countries of different educational structure and higher education system, i.e. Sweden, Portugal, and Croatia, and a European student organisation based in Belgium. The following seven partner organisations are involved in the project, representing three quality assurance agencies, three higher education institutions, and one transnational student union:

- Sweden – Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), coordinating organisation, and Karolinska Institutet (KI);
- Portugal – Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (A3ES) and Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning (IGOT) at the University of Lisbon;
- Croatia – Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE) and Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Rijeka (UFRI);
- European Students' Union (ESU), based in Brussels.

The partnership meets the aims of the project and takes into account the scope of the project gathering together different kinds of institutions and stakeholders with a common feature: all have former experience of the topic – learning outcomes assessment and student-centred learning – and have been involved in the development of theoretical research and implementation tools, as users or target groups. In addition to managing the separate studies, the quality assurance agencies have concentrated on quality assurance and stakeholders' perceptions, references of the standards and guidelines for accreditation, etc., while the higher education institutions – representing both comprehensive universities and specialised ones - have focused on the educational component as well as on the subject specific competence development. In all three case studies, the European Students' Union has contributed with perspectives on student-centred learning.

Quality assurance of human rights learning outcomes

This chapter sets out to describe the aims and content of the programmes investigated in the project *Modernisation, Education and Human Rights*, and compares how human rights are included in the chosen programmes. It then reflects on the relationship between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in human rights teaching and learning, and analyses the degree of formalisation of learning outcomes in human rights within the programmes in the country surveys, as well as the relevance of the programmes to students' future working life. Furthermore, various forms and methods of teaching and assessment in human rights are commented on. A following section investigates the issue of what teachers are involved in human rights education and their qualifications in the field, as well as how higher education institutions ensure that teachers have adequate competence in human rights teaching and learning. The chapter closes with a review of changes planned by the included programmes in the area of human rights education, and of various aspects of such development work.

Aims and content of programmes

In the first report, *A Gender Perspective on Human Rights*, the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ), in cooperation with Karolinska Institutet (KI) and representatives from the European Students' Union (ESU), examined three themes or areas – *human rights* on a general level; *men's violence against women and domestic violence*; and *violence towards children* – in the context of higher education in Sweden. The five programmes selected for analysis were medical programmes (physicians); programmes in nursing; programmes in occupational therapy; programmes in psychology; and programmes in social work. All five programmes have human rights included in their national qualitative targets (as specified in the Swedish Higher Education Ordinance). Furthermore, all five programmes prepare the students for professions in which they are likely to get in contact with survivors of abuse. Results from the national survey that was carried out indicate that almost all programmes include teaching on human rights on a general level and that a majority (about 85 %) include teaching on men's violence against women and domestic violence; the latter figure also applies when it comes to violence towards children. Thus, it appears that programmes interpreted the national qualitative targets about human rights in different ways. At the time of the survey, the national targets included human rights on a general level, but no targets specifically mentioning violence against women, domestic violence or violence against children. After the survey, in 2018, new national targets were introduced for programmes in medicine, nursing, psychology and social work, among others: the student shall 'demonstrate knowledge of men's violence against women and violence in close relationships'. Some nonetheless made the interpretation that violence against women, domestic violence and violence towards children were included by implication in these national targets, while others did not.

The Croatian part of the project generated the report *Human Rights, Children's Rights and Participation, and Children/Pupils as Active Citizens*, which was produced by ASHE (the Agency for Science and Higher Education) in cooperation with UFRI (the Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Rijeka). The report focused on five professions, namely preschool and school teachers, pedagogues, psychologists and social workers, and examined to what extent programmes leading to these professions include teaching on the three categories of *human rights* on a general level, *children's rights and participation*, and *active citizenship*. The results from the survey that was carried out indicate that all, or nearly all, programmes include teaching on human rights in general, as well as on children's rights and participation. The third topic, the child/pupil as an active citizen, was also included by most programmes; however, about 20 per cent do not include it in teaching. Current government strategy in Croatia places the concept of the child/pupil as an active citizen at the centre of the education process, and civic education is currently being implemented nationwide as a cross-curricular topic in primary and secondary schools. Implementation of these policies obviously have bearing on higher education, as school professionals need to have knowledge and awareness of human and children's rights, as well as the skills to encourage civic participation.

The third country report – *Migration, Human Rights and Intercultural Skills in Higher Education* – was carried out in Portugal by A3ES (the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education) in cooperation with IGOT (the Institute of Geography and Spatial Planning at the University of Lisbon). It targeted programmes in law, geography and social work, and included the topics of *human rights* on a general level; *citizenship*; *migration*; *social inclusion*; and *intercultural communication* in order to better prepare graduates to work in complex and dynamic multicultural societies and create more inclusive environments. These topics related to human rights are highly relevant to the professional life of social workers, lawyers, planners, and geography teachers, as these professionals all may come across situations demanding clear choices and action to accommodate difference and prevent human rights being violated. The survey results show that human rights are present in higher education programmes in Portugal, but not all the topics studied are included by all programmes.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IMPORTANT FOR INCLUSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Regarding the inclusion of human rights content in programmes, there is a difference especially between the Swedish and Croatian studies on the one hand, and the Portuguese study on the other. In both the Swedish and the Croatian reports, a large majority of the respondents state that their programme includes human rights, while the responses in the Portuguese study varies greatly between different programmes. Furthermore, in the Swedish and Croatian contexts the most frequent answer to the question why human rights content is included in a programme is that it is required by law. As we have seen, in Sweden, the Higher Education Ordinance includes human rights in the national qualitative targets of a large number of programmes (among others, the programmes included in the survey), and in Croatia, civic education is being implemented in primary and secondary schools. In Portugal, on the other hand, there is no clear government initiative towards the inclusion of human rights issues in higher

education because there is no national regulation on the content of higher education programmes.

Looking more closely at the responses to the Swedish questionnaire, it is striking that respondents refer to legislation as being important especially with regard to *human rights in general*, and to a lesser extent concerning the more specific topics of violence towards women, domestic violence and violence against children. At the time of the survey, as previously mentioned, only the first area was explicitly included in the wording of the national qualitative targets given in the Higher Education Ordinance. Overall, this points to the conclusion that initiatives on a national level, whether in the form of legislation or government initiatives more generally, play a very important role for the integration of human rights content in higher education.

The analysis, especially of the Croatian and Portuguese cases, shows that there are hesitant or resistant attitudes towards the inclusion of human rights content among some of the teaching staff. The normative aspects of human rights issues are sometimes perceived as being at odds with the scientific basis of higher education. Regarding these findings, the following reflections can be made:

Firstly, there is no conflict in higher education between science and human rights properly understood. Focus should be shifted to what knowledge, competence and skills students need to develop in order to be prepared for their future working life. If they, in that future working life, can be expected to face situations where human rights are threatened (through violence, discrimination et cetera), they must have the skills to adequately recognize and respond to such situations. This presupposes a knowledge both of human rights and of scientifically grounded methods and procedures. Just as in any other topic, it is of vital importance that teaching on human rights is based in research. The link between research and teaching on human rights issues is further discussed below in the section *Teacher Competence*.

Secondly, the Portuguese study found that, somewhat paradoxically, many teachers (specifically in geography) who responded that they did not teach human rights, did in fact include teaching on such topics as social inclusion and migration. This could be an indicator that awareness needs to be raised on the concept of human rights, what it includes and its multi-faceted nature. Certainly, not all aspects of human rights are equally relevant to all professions. However, in order to identify what aspects of human rights should be included in a particular programme of study, a broadened understanding of the concept of human rights is needed.

Teachers could be drivers for change and it is necessary to get them on board in order further to implement human rights in higher education. However, to achieve this, more initiatives need to be made in order to raise awareness of human rights among faculty, but also among students and higher education administrators.

PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES ARE INCLUDED IN MANY PROGRAMMES

Comprehensive teaching on human rights issues includes not only a theoretical knowledge of human rights. It also makes it possible for students to develop the skills and competences necessary to properly deal with situations they may face in their future working life in which human rights are in danger of being violated. Of course, what these skills and competences entail is highly variable depending on the profession and field of work. In all the three parts of the project, one aspect of analysis was whether teaching on human rights included practical aspects along with theoretical ones.

In the Swedish study, about two thirds of respondents stated that their programmes include practical aspects (defined as ‘teaching about how one can relate to, make assessments and take the area into account during future professional careers’) regarding the area of human rights generally. In the Croatian study as well, a majority of respondents stated that they included practical skills, including how to recognise, evaluate and take into consideration children’s rights and participation in the course of future professional work. In fact, regarding two of the three areas studied, the inclusion of practical learning outcomes was higher than of general and theoretical contents. The findings of the Portuguese report indicate that teaching and learning on human rights still, to a high extent, are based on the acquisition of knowledge and the description of contents, rather than the development of competences, although there are exceptions to this rule.

In the Croatian report (the section *Examples of Good Practice*), several programmes describe how their teaching is organized for the students to develop the skills needed to teach human and children’s rights, children’s participation and the child/pupil as an active citizen. For example, the teacher education programme at University of Juraj Dobrila in Pula states: ‘Primarily, work with students is organized in the form of workshops and in groups and there is very little individual work. By working in pairs and groups students acquire social skills that will later be applied to working with children.’ Another example is provided by the University of Zadar, the department for education of primary school teachers and early childhood and preschool teachers: ‘There are explicit learning outcomes in the areas, and knowledge is evaluated through practical assignments in schools, where students are in direct contact with children and where many conflicting situations and misunderstandings arise.’ The Swedish report also provides several examples of programmes that include an emphasis on practical skills in the teaching on human rights issues. For example, the Nursing programme at Linköping University states that ‘students are taught how to use practical intervention tools for identifying and meeting survivors of domestic violence in their future professional lives.’

Practical skills in the teaching of human rights issues are also widely mobilised in the case of the project ‘We Propose’ at the University of Lisbon presented in the Good Practice section of the Portuguese report. Through a ‘case study’ method, Geography students in the penultimate year of upper secondary school conduct a critical analysis of an issue affecting their region or place of living and think of possible solutions to tackle it. Among the topics raised by the students, human rights can often be found.

The project involves protocolled relations established between the University, the Basic and Secondary Schools that join the project and the Local Authorities, to whom the proposals for active citizenship arising from the students' work are presented.

FORMALISING LEARNING OUTCOMES IS KEY

One main goal of the MEHR project is to contribute to the convergence of quality assurance methodologies in European higher education, with a focus on learning outcomes on human rights in higher education. The concept of learning outcomes is fundamental in quality assurance of higher education.⁴ It is a way of formalising the expectations or intentions of the programme, meaning that there is a formal decision made by the higher education institution regarding what knowledge, competences and skills students are required to have when they graduate. This not only enables transparency in relation to teachers and students, but also provides a foundation for the development of the programme, as decisions on all aspects of teaching, including teaching and examination methods, reading lists, teacher competence et cetera, are made concurrent with the learning outcomes (in other words, are constructively aligned with the learning outcomes). Finally, learning outcomes are fundamental for quality assurance, as they provide the point of reference against which the different aspects of a programme can be evaluated.

Regarding learning outcomes, the three reports display a somewhat diverse image. In the Swedish case, as we have seen, a clear majority of programmes include teaching about human rights, violence against women/domestic violence and violence against children. However, while a significant portion of the programmes have introduced explicit intended learning outcomes for teaching about the three areas, others have not. Thus, there is room for improvement in the formalisation of human rights. Significantly, some programmes state that they have examinations on human rights content although there are no explicit intended learning outcomes. This is problematic as it not only makes it difficult to ascertain whether examination procedures are adequate, but also decreases transparency towards students. The presence of examination without explicit intended learning outcomes could be evidence of a slow formalisation process, in which examinations but not learning outcomes have been established.

The Croatian report also showed evidence of a formalisation process that has gone some, but not all, of the way. A majority of respondents claimed that their programmes had learning outcomes on the areas in question (human rights, children's rights and participation, and active citizenship), but many of them named examples that apparently were not formally defined programme learning outcomes. According to ASHEs analysis, this can be explained by the fact that most Croatian study programmes have not yet developed programme learning outcomes. In the Swedish study as well, some of the examples provided by respondents were somewhat too vague or general to be termed learning outcomes.

⁴ ESG 2015 (European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area)

The Portuguese report demonstrates that in this context as well, formalisation of human rights learning outcomes still has some way to go. In the study, a twofold methodological approach was applied, in which a survey directed to programme representatives and students was supplemented by an analysis of information available on programme web pages. One result was that the survey respondents referred more explicitly to the use of learning outcomes on human rights (and on human rights issues in general) than the information available on the institutions' websites.

In conclusion, formalisation of learning outcomes related to human rights has come some of the way, but there is still room for improvement. Furthermore, more could be done to raise the awareness on the concept of learning outcomes generally, as survey responses show that there seems to be some uncertainty of the meaning of the term among teachers and administrators in higher education.

WORKING LIFE PERSPECTIVES

In order to ensure that students develop the skills and knowledge necessary for their future careers, it is important that intended learning outcomes are relevant and up-to-date in the perspective of professional life. This, of course, includes skills related to human rights. A majority of programmes studied in the Swedish as well as in the Croatian context state that they ensure the relevance of the learning outcomes on the topics in question through dialogue with representatives from professional life. Others refer to their in-house competence as they have teachers working in the professional field outside academia. In both Sweden and Croatia, a few respondents state that students or alumni are an important source of feedback on the relevance and need for training in the areas in question. For example, the Psychology Programme at Linnaeus University (Sweden) uses an alumni survey to gain information about what type of employment the alumni have and what parts of the programme they deem most valuable and useful from a professional life perspective. Overall, it is a positive finding that most programmes include a working life perspective in their quality assurance of learning outcomes on human rights; however, feedback from alumni could be used in such processes to a higher extent, in addition to dialogue with representatives from professional life.

Teaching and assessment methods

A VARIETY OF TEACHING METHODS ARE USED

The reports show that a variety of teaching methods are used to teach content related to human rights. In the Swedish as well as the Croatian and Portuguese studies, lectures and seminars are shown to be the most common forms of teaching. Seminar discussions can be a very valuable complement to lectures as they allow the students to reflect on the complex ethical implications of human rights issues and to take on and consider different viewpoints. In the Swedish study, some programmes report that they teach human rights issues during placements. If implemented wisely, this can be a good strategy as it may strengthen the link between theoretical knowledge of human rights

and practical skills, as students apply their knowledge to the situations they face in professional life.

The examples from the Croatian report have in common the application of teaching methods where students are active, working in groups and couples. For example, the Faculty of Teacher Education at the University of Rijeka describe exercises in curricular planning of the teaching process, followed by group discussions on how to implement the theme of civic education primary school teaching. Such an approach, which develops the verbal and social skills of students, is in accordance with the content of teaching, that is, helping children develop the skills and attitudes necessary for an active citizenship.

MANY PROGRAMMES ASSESS HUMAN RIGHTS KNOWLEDGE

Assessment of knowledge is a fundamental part of quality assurance of higher education. The Swedish and Croatian reports each found that a majority of programmes assess at least some aspects of human rights issues. This is by and large a positive finding. The Portuguese findings pointed to a mixed result, with some types of programmes assessing human rights content, others not.

The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG 2015) state that quality assurance processes for assessment should take into account that '[t]he assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved'.⁵ As we have seen, some of the programmes in the Swedish study respond that they have examinations in areas where there are no formal learning outcomes. This is problematic from a quality assurance perspective, but also from a transparency perspective, as students have a right to know on what they are assessed.

To ensure constructive alignment, methods of assessment should reflect the content of learning, that is, support the development of the specific knowledge, competences and skills that are being assessed. The Swedish and Croatian reports show that programmes use a wide variety of methods when assessing knowledge related to human rights issues, and many use more than one method. Traditional written examinations are common but are complemented by seminars, oral presentations, written reports, and project assignments. In the Croatian case, the area of human rights on a general level is frequently assessed through written exams, while these are less common with regard to the area of children/pupils as active citizens. In this area, oral presentations and seminar papers are the most frequent methods of assessment. This probably reflects the fact that the area of children/pupils as active citizens is closely related to skills that future teachers must develop, skills that are difficult to assess solely through written exams.

In the Portuguese case, written examinations in all aspects are still very relevant, especially in Law and Social Work. In fact, although such examinations are no longer the only or almost exclusive method of assessment, they still have a very significant

⁵ ESG 2015, p. 12.

weight. Geography is an exception, where written examinations play a much less relevant role and the dominant pattern is examinations on some aspects.

Teacher competence

Teacher competence can be expected to be crucial to the successful integration and assessment of learning outcomes in human rights education. Therefore, respondents to the survey were asked, on the one hand, what teachers taught the chosen human rights areas in a programme, and, on the other hand, what qualifications those teachers possessed. In addition, the respondents were asked to describe how their institution ensured that teacher competence was adequate.

HUMAN RIGHTS ARE MOSTLY TAUGHT BY THE DEPARTMENT'S OWN TEACHERS

The general picture is similar between the country reports. For the programmes included in the Swedish survey, the answers show that nearly all engage teachers from their own department to teach about human rights. In some cases, teachers from other departments are also brought in, or external associates such as practitioners, representatives of public authorities or NGOs. As regards the teaching of men's violence against women and domestic violence, and violence towards children, the departments rely to a somewhat lower extent on their own teachers, although these still make up a vast majority. In the area of men's violence against women and domestic violence, representatives of public authorities are more frequently brought in to teach than in the other areas.

The educational programmes investigated reveal a number of variations as to the teaching staff involved. Thus, occupational therapy programmes rely to a lower degree than other programmes on their own teachers in the areas of men's violence against women and domestic violence, and violence towards children. Further, programmes in social work engage representatives of NGOs to a greater extent than other programmes, and the same is true of programmes in nursing, which also more often invite representatives of public authorities. On the other hand, practitioners are more often engaged in psychology programmes. As such variations may be due to differences in what types of organisations departments traditionally collaborate with, this suggests that educators from different scientific fields would benefit from mutual exchange of teaching ideas and best practices.

The Croatian report describes a similar situation. Human rights teaching, the teaching of children's rights and participation, and of active citizenship in children/pupils, is mainly in the hands of the department's own staff, in combination with teachers from other departments or even from other higher education institutions, as well as with experts from the profession for which the students are trained. The same combination of the department's own teachers and external experts can be found in the programmes included in the Portuguese survey.

TEACHERS ACQUIRE COMPETENCE FROM OWN RESEARCH OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Teachers in the educational programmes investigated have acquired their competence in human rights in a variety of ways. Some have pursued research in the area, others have attended courses on areas related to human rights, while still others have professional experience with human rights issues.

Thus, in the Swedish report, a clear majority of programmes in social work state that teachers in the areas of men's violence against women and domestic violence as well as violence towards children have themselves pursued research in this area of human rights. This is not quite as common in the other programmes in the study. Nursing and psychology programmes, on the other hand, more frequently refer to the professional experience of their teachers. Such differences may reflect that in some academic branches research in human rights is a core activity, while others rely more explicitly on professional practice. As in the case of the composition of the teaching staff, cross-scientific collaboration and exchange of experience between programmes may be an area of development.

The Croatian report describes a somewhat different situation for the programmes involved in the survey. Although teachers' own research is also important, the qualifications to teach in the relevant areas of human rights mostly come from teachers' experience from professions for which the students are trained. To a lesser extent teaching competences derive from other professional activities dealing with various aspects of human rights, or in some cases from having undergone part or entire study programmes in one or several of the human rights areas investigated.

The Portuguese programmes explored in the country report give fewer clues as to how teachers acquire their qualifications to teach the human rights fields in question. In fact, the relative importance of human rights topics and methods of teaching and learning seems to depend heavily on the teacher. According to the report, law programmes have a strong theoretical and international approach to the human rights area, while geography programmes show a more detailed focus on practical issues and policies, and social work programmes in their turn more often refer to competence development, social policies and social management. Such variations may be due to teachers in the involved programmes being either more firmly grounded in theory and scientific research, or rather in practice and professional experience, but the study gives no conclusive picture of this.

TEACHER COMPETENCE IS ENSURED IN VARIOUS WAYS BUT RARELY MAPPED OR EVALUATED

How higher education institutions ensure that teacher competence is adequate was examined through an open-ended question in the country surveys, but because of the low number of respondents contributing an answer, the results must be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, some indications of differences between the countries and programmes involved might suggest that competence assurance is handled in slightly different ways.

Thus, while in the Swedish questionnaire the most common answer was that teacher competence is ensured by the fact that teachers conduct research within the area in question, the results from the Croatian report suggest that student surveys may be a preferred way to evaluate teacher competence in the field of human rights. The fact that to some extent the question appears to have been interpreted in different ways – focusing as it were either on teachers’ scientific competence or on their teaching skills – may point to different views on what is the most important as far as teacher competence in human rights education is concerned: scientific subject knowledge or student-centred teaching approaches. However, such a tentative conclusion must be taken with great precaution, in view of the open-ended character of this question and the low number of respondents providing an answer.

The Portuguese report, in its turn, points to the fact that teachers often struggle with a heavy workload and fear that human rights would simply add to an already comprehensive curriculum. Therefore, a shift from traditional teaching approaches towards more student-centred learning focused on developing student competences and skills is a necessary way to strengthen teacher competence in the human rights area, while at the same time respecting the specificities of different scientific fields. In order to achieve this, there is a need for a stronger formalisation of the learning outcomes approach to human rights education, including the design of teaching methods and the competence development of the teaching staff.

Among other methods of ensuring teacher competence in the field of human rights reported are active surveys, evaluation and follow-up of the competence of the teaching staff, recruitment procedures that give weight to human rights, continuous professional development and training, as well as participation in academic and non-academic forums, and reliance on teachers’ non-academic professional experience.

In sum, the results from the three country questionnaires suggest that few of the programmes in the survey have developed formalised procedures for the mapping and evaluation of teacher competence in the human rights field. Consequently, this may be highlighted as a possible area of development in all three countries.

Development work

MORE PROGRAMMES IN CROATIA THAN IN PORTUGAL AND SWEDEN PLAN FOR CHANGES IN HUMAN RIGHTS TEACHING AND LEARNING

In order to find out to what extent the programmes included in the three surveys planned for changes concerning the teaching of the defined human rights areas, a question on development plans was introduced in the questionnaire. In the case of an affirmative answer, respondents were asked to describe what kind of changes were being planned and when to implement them, mentioning also in the case of Croatia what learning outcomes were to be introduced or modified. Furthermore, it was specified that these changes could involve the extent of teaching, outcomes and content

of teaching, teaching methods or types of examination, teachers' qualifications, student-centred learning, or something else that affects teaching.

In the Swedish survey, a majority of the respondents answered that there were no plans for change, or did not provide an answer to the question. Those who answered in the affirmative singled out the area of men's violence against women and domestic violence as an area that the institution was planning to develop or reform in some way. The other two areas were identified as in need of development to a somewhat lesser extent. Occupational therapy programmes more frequently reported forthcoming development, in comparison to other programmes.

Answers concerning men's violence against women and domestic violence were more imprecise than for the area of human rights. In other words, in this area respondents frequently indicated that changes were planned, but did not specify what kind. This is perhaps an indication that the area is less developed than the other two, and that processes to implement content are at an earlier stage.

Most of the programmes that indicated that they were planning to make changes in teaching also provided a brief description of those changes. The specific type of changes most commonly mentioned by respondents concerned intended learning outcomes and syllabi. Other specific aspects singled out for development include course literature, examinations, and teacher competence. Increased collaboration with professional life was mentioned, as well as plans of international collaboration in the area of men's violence against women and domestic violence.

A relatively high proportion of respondents who replied that they were making changes did not give a specific description of the type of changes that were underway, but simply indicated that the matter in question was to be looked into. These unspecified answers occurred more frequently with regard to the area of men's violence against women and domestic violence than with the other two areas, possibly indicating that this area is less developed than the other two, and at this stage less concerned with teaching methods.

In the Croatian report, half of the respondents reported that they were planning changes in the area of human rights in general, or in the area of children and pupils as active citizens, whereas as many as two thirds were planning changes in the area of children's rights and their participation. Changes listed comprised emphasising the human rights topics in learning outcomes, increasing the number of elective courses and putting greater emphasis on the topic within existing teaching content. Other examples were increased involvement of school professionals, encouraging student research, problem-based learning and other student-centred teaching methods, as well as encouraging teacher participation in training programmes and related research.

In the case of the Portuguese programmes investigated, around two thirds of the responding teachers and programme directors reported that no changes were planned. On the other hand, those who declared planning for changes reported a vast array of intended changes. Thus, programmes in law and social work were planning to increase the theoretical component in some topics. Further, all programmes reporting plans for

change intended to include new topics or contents, or update the present ones, in all of the selected five learning outcomes in human rights education, i.e. human rights, citizenship, social Inclusion, migration, and intercultural communication. Finally, almost all programmes describing forthcoming changes also plan new strategies, methodologies, processes and resources with the aim of achieving better learning quality in all the topics; geography being the exception focusing on human rights in general. Some programmes also reported their intention to develop the articulation between themes, modules or courses in relation to human rights.

Conclusion

A number of features emerge from the above analysis that seem crucial to the successful implementation and quality assurance of learning outcomes on human rights in higher education. These are features recurring in all three country reports, in spite of the differences between the national higher education systems examined, and despite the fact that the programmes investigated by each partner organisation represent different scientific fields. The findings are synthesised in the final conclusion of the report (pp. 35-36) as a set of recommendations for human rights education targeted at quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, and student organisations.

The student perspective

This chapter of the report highlights the student perspective in relation to the project *Modernisation, Education and Human Rights*. It aims to display how students from the three countries involved perceive that they are prepared to tackle the different themes that each country chose to assess. Furthermore, the chapter describes the countries on-going procedures of implementing student-centred learning in the education programmes examined.

ESU vox pop videos

In an attempt to capture students' experiences of and opinions on human rights education, the European Students' Union sent out an open invitation to students active in the countries included in the project. In short self-recorded videos, a number of students reflect on key questions related to the chosen country-specific themes in human rights education. The questions asked are in direct relation to the different themes that each country had chosen to assess. What follows is a narrative description of each country as illustrated by a selection of such vox pop videos.

CROATIA

A number of students at teacher education faculties in Croatia reported feeling uncomfortable teaching their pupils about the finer points of citizenship and civic engagement. While they were confident that they could explain the mechanics of voting systems and how bills are drafted into laws in Croatia, they felt much less comfortable urging their students to be agents of change, to be youth-leaders, to identify issues important to them in their communities, and to engage with elected representatives regarding these issues. Students cited a hesitancy around 'getting involved in politics', some saying that this was seen more as a matter for families than for schools. This distinction between describing the system of governance and empowering young people to become active citizens is key, and students stated that they would like teacher-training faculties to include more non-formal education methods for teachers regarding youth participation, as they would find these techniques practical when trying to engage with future pupils about these issues.

PORTUGAL

The sample of students from Portuguese universities spoke about the role of trained professionals who influence policy making regarding migrants and asylum seekers. If there is no university-based curriculum teaching students of law and social work holistically about how policies shape the experiences of both migrants and non-migrants, this leaves students vulnerable to external influences regarding migration. This indicates that there are no clear national professional standards for future social workers and lawyers regarding migration. Students reported having a clear personal interest in migration but voiced concern that, due to optional lectures, not all of their future colleagues would have a baseline foundation of how migration policies affect the lives of both migrants and non-migrants alike.

It is important to teach a human rights-based approach to migration in law faculties because it provides tools how we can build and have a better society that is inclusive. - **Law student in Portugal, ESU Vox pops 2019**

The students adding their voices to these videos clearly expressed their view that universities have a role to play in contributing to social cohesion, and equipping future lawyers and social workers with a human rights-based approach to policy-making is a key element of this task. Consequently, this should be reflected nation-wide within the modules developed by university faculty.

SWEDEN

Students studying at Swedish universities were very direct about their view that higher education institutions have a responsibility to prepare future doctors and social welfare students to respond to instances of violence against women and children. While outlining that future doctors and social workers each train for a specific focus or domain, many students pointed out that a human rights-based approach to learning about human health and social welfare is key in all areas. Some students reported that their faculties include human-rights based approaches, and all agreed that the medical and social welfare curriculum should be designed by universities to include training for future doctors and social workers both on the social context, which underpins violence against women and children, and on concrete steps future professionals can take when they encounter such violence. No student wants to be unprepared to respond to violence against women or children, and a firm understanding of human rights concepts will influence their professional choices.

Summary

The students from the three countries all highlighted similar factors even though they were asked different questions related to different themes. The students see a need for universities to take a greater responsibility for teaching and implementing important perspectives within the respective programmes. The students agree that courses on such themes should not be optional and should be an integral part of a relevant study programme.

The students highlight the need not only for informative courses but also for interactive courses where the students are equipped with tools to tackle human rights challenges in their future professional lives.

Student-centred learning

This section provides a top-down analysis of student-centred learning by analysing the three country reports and highlighting key elements of the student perspective. This will offer a view over student-centred learning and in what ways the programmes examined facilitate student-centred learning.

ESU defines student-centred learning as characterised by new methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and students. Students should be seen as active participants in their own learning.

ESU defines the concept from a list of nine principles:

1. Student-centred learning requires an ongoing reflexive process.
2. Student-centred learning does not have a 'one size fits all' solution.
3. Students have different learning styles.
4. Students have different needs and interests.
5. Choice is central to effective learning in student-centred learning.
6. Students have different experiences and background knowledge.
7. Students should have control over their learning.
8. Student-centred learning is about enabling, not telling.
9. Learning needs cooperation between students and staff.⁶

'The approach of student-centred learning (...) focuses on the communication between teachers and students, and encourages a wide range of teaching methods, as different students have different styles of learning. It also emphasises the student as an active and equal part in the academic community. Over the past years, the concept of student-centred learning has made its way into the policy discourse on higher education and commitments to its implementation can be found on the European level as well as in national plans for higher education and institutional strategies.'⁷

Analysis of the three reports - student-centred learning

In what ways do the programmes investigated ensure that students are active participants in their own learning, primarily through enhancing different learning styles, needs and interests?

The Croatian report *Human Rights, Children's Rights and Participation, and Children/Pupils as Active Citizens*, illustrates a picture of student-centred learning drawn from several different programmes, highlighting

⁶ European Students' Union, *Overview On Student-centred Learning in Higher Education. Research Study*. Brussels: ESU, 2015, pp. 5-7.

⁷ Swedish Higher Education Authority et al., *A gender perspective on human rights education. Assessing learning outcomes in higher education on human rights; men's violence against women and domestic violence; and violence towards children in programmes in medicine and social welfare*. Stockholm: Universitetskanslersämbetet, 2017, p. 14.

examples of good practice from the different study programmes at various universities in Croatia.

The different study programmes included in the Croatian report highlights in what ways their programmes are student-centred. Some of the programmes assert that they are fully student-centred, such as The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Rijeka. They apply collaborative forms of group work; involve students in discussion and incorporate project tasks. The students are given the opportunity to self-reflect through workshops. The professors and teachers are moderators, coordinators and facilitators of student-centred learning and thus provides the space for students to discuss and express their opinions. It is clear that the traditional teaching method of telling is not present.

Collaborative student learning is practised at the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Teacher Education, through the collaboration between different faculties by means of practical activities in kindergartens and different student projects. The report highlights how other institutions facilitate student-centred learning by involving the students themselves in the planning of activities as well as what external actors to invite. The students have the possibility to choose elective courses, which include the topics of human rights and children's rights. Students are encouraged actively to take part in the education by collaborative learning and different project tasks.

I know that students who have those courses [now] have more experience and practice because of the different projects in our local community in which our department is a part. We also had NGO-professionals in our department (...). I personally participated in group assignments with our local community. – **Teacher student in Croatia, ESU Vox pops 2019**

The Croatian report highlights how other study programmes incorporate student-centred teaching strategies. These are employed to equip the future teachers with the tools to prepare a child for an active life in society. In order successfully to grasp contemporary teaching strategies, University of Josip Juraj Strossmayer, Faculty of Education, utilises collaborative work in pairs or groups of 4-5 students where they, amongst other things, collect materials, visit different organisations and present their findings at student conferences.

It is clear in the Croatian report that the different institutions value their teachers' scientific experience as a means to make sure teachers are knowledgeable about their subject. Other examples, for instance the University of Josip Juraj Strossmayer, display how students and professors participate in workshops together and implement EU-projects in the local area. Collaboration does exist on some levels, for example, between early childhood teacher programmes and teacher programmes at University of Jurak Dobrila, whereas systematic collaborative learning at other institutions is not ensured by the institutions but rather expected to be handled by the students or the teachers.

The Croatian report highlights how universities enhance the relation between students and staff by ensuring that all teachers are scientifically active in their respective fields.

There is however, no systematically organised student cooperation present at some institutions, which makes it more difficult for students to have control over their learning.

The Portuguese report, *Migration, Human Rights and Intercultural Skills in Higher Education*, highlights a struggle between student-centred learning and the traditional way of teaching. The report focuses on the teachers' role in relation to student-centred learning. According to the nine ESU principles of student-centred learning, it is important that students should be presented with an opportunity to be active participants in their own education and that there should exist a good level of cooperation between students and staff. Some teachers mentioned, however, that they feel themselves sometimes overloaded with work, and therefore have no time to work out new and different approaches or research new topics in a human rights context. Besides, some teachers perceived that they are expected to deliver scientific topics and cutting edge research and not be social activists.

The report highlights the need for training the teacher to teach and facilitate a student-centred focus. The report specifies that in order to implement student-centred learning in the study programmes in Portugal, the universities must get the teachers on-board and listen to the students. It is clear that human rights are present in the different study programmes, but the content does not necessarily reach the students successfully. The design of new teaching methods and competence development of staff are crucial to allowing students the opportunity to be active participants in their own education. According to the response from the survey presented in the Portuguese report, only a small amount of learning is achieved through placements, group work, individual work and written tasks, and rather focused on lectures and seminars (for example, this is true for roughly 70 per cent of all learning regarding human rights in law study programmes).

Compared to listening to Human rights in class, or university conferences where lecturers from other universities come to teach us, I am sure that group assignments with the local community is the most effective one. Firstly, we can learn from other students that are in the group. We can do research about the topic and be more informed about it and most importantly: we can have one-on-one conversations with the migrants. – **Law student in Portugal, ESU Vox pops 2019**

The report importantly highlights the need for study programmes in Portugal to integrate student-centred learning through, for example, active learning experiences such as field trips or training in setting sustainable development goals. It is important that the institutions highlighted in the Portuguese report should ensure that their teachers are equipped with the right tools to teach human rights properly through student-centred learning methods.

The Swedish report, *A gender perspective on human rights education*, highlights student-centred learning through displaying the results from the survey sent out to the higher education institutions. Student-centred learning is highly linked to the theme of the report, which is the gender perspective on human rights. Most programmes integrate teaching on human rights and the most common form of teaching is lectures, followed closely by seminars, in all three areas stated in the report.

The Psychology programme at Linköping University uses problem-based learning (PBL) as its core teaching method. Through PBL students work in groups to solve various tasks. Linköping University does recommend literature, but an important aspect of the programme is allowing the students to choose relevant literature themselves.

Other forms of teaching which are highlighted in the report are group work, individual work and written tasks and to a lesser extent placements. In order to ensure the intended learning outcomes, a clear majority of programmes use seminars and oral presentations, followed closely by written examinations in all three areas covered.

The Medical Programme at the University of Gothenburg utilises various methods to teach a gender perspective on human rights. Lectures, seminars, group work and value exercises are incorporated. The university also facilitates learning through creative ways such as role-playing, field exercises, watching short films, which they then reflect upon.

The responding institutions are adamant that they offer differing learning methods. In order to ensure that the methods of teaching are student-centred, the students are offered preliminary meetings, different types of teaching (roughly, 90 per cent of the programmes stated this in their response), group work in smaller groups, and most importantly, the ability to choose. The Nursing programme at the Swedish Red Cross University College ensures that its students go on field trips to local Red Cross centres, take part in lectures by invited speakers from relevant NGOs, and examine films writing report on their findings.

More formally, the programmes highlight the possibility for students to participate in student evaluations as well as participation in decision-making bodies. 'Overall, the student-centred learning approach is considered widely applied in all five programmes and the majority of the respondents answered that they offered different types of teaching or practiced the method of small groups with students leading the discussions'.⁸

The Swedish programmes thus use a wide array of different types of learning and do not have a single approach to their lectures or examinations.

⁸ Swedish Higher Education Authority, op. cit. p. 29.

Conclusion

The different study programmes in Croatia investigated by the project do not have a 'one size fits all' solution and they respond proactively to the fact that students have different learning styles, needs and interests. Many programmes highlight choice, which is as a key component of student-centred learning. The situation is similar in the Swedish programmes, where respondents state that 90 per cent of all programmes offer different types of teachings.

While the Croatian programmes examined successfully incorporate collaborative learning methods such as workshops, seminars and group work, they lack the formal aspect of cooperation between students and staff. The lack of student unions in the Croatian case is apparent. This is the complete opposite to the Swedish case, where student influence is governed by law in both the decision-making and planning processes. The Portuguese programmes, in their turn, more often reflect earlier stages of the implementation of student-centred learning in their programmes according to the nine principles of ESU regarding student-centred learning.

Displayed in the three reports are a wide array of aspects of methods to facilitate student-centred learning such as group work, project based work, field trips, film studies, role-playing and written examinations. The reports underline the importance of having flexibility in their learning methods and the promotion of cooperation between students and teachers.

The teachers in Croatia and Sweden are highlighted in the programmes as key actors to facilitate, moderate and promote student-centred learning. The teaching staff in Portugal experience time constraints, which sometimes makes it difficult for them to see how they can bring in a new perspective such as human rights education. A feature that clearly stands out in all three country reports is that teachers are linked to the examined area through continuous research, being invited as experts from the field or having worked in the field for many years. The reports argue that it is crucial to have professors and other teaching staff who are knowledgeable in their respective field, in order to encourage and facilitate a discussion where students are an active and equal part.

The European Students' Union is committed to engaging with higher education institutions and policy-makers Europe-wide to advocate for student-centred approaches to learning and teaching. ESU believes that higher education institutions, working in partnership with Students' Unions, have a responsibility to incorporate student-centred learning techniques into the methodologies used to prepare curricula for students studying to become professionals in the fields of law, medicine, social work and teaching. It is essential for students in the professional development, and for social cohesion, that students complete their studies feeling well prepared to respond to key human rights issues facing European societies, such as violence against women, migration, and youth citizenship. ESU is proud to be a partner on the MEHR project, as this new research delivers further evidence of the critical importance of European higher education institutions taking steps to implement student-centred learning techniques in delivering future doctors, lawyers, social workers and teachers who are well prepared to engage with these issues in the workplace. - **Adam Gajek, President of the European Students' Union**

Conclusion with recommendations

A number of common features emerge from the above analysis that seem crucial to the successful implementation and quality assurance of human rights teaching and learning in higher education. These are recurrent features in all three country reports, in spite of the differences between the national higher education systems examined, and despite the fact that the programmes investigated by each partner organisation represent different scientific disciplines. The main project findings, analysed against the background of earlier research on learning outcomes, are recapitulated below in a set of recommendations for human rights education targeted at quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions, and student organisations.

National legislation and government initiatives matter

Initiatives on a national level play an important role for the integration of human rights content in higher education, whether in the form of legislation or as more general government initiatives. Where specific targets on human rights are defined in national regulations, they are also perceived as more important by teachers and programme directors.

A broad understanding of the concept of human rights is needed

Human rights should be embedded in programmes where relevant, and adapted to the knowledge and skills needed for a given profession. Content could be integrated or taught as stand-alone courses, mandatory or elective. Thus conceived, human rights education is not limited to educational content, but explored as a means to learn what you live.

Teaching on human rights should be grounded in research

As for any topic, it is of vital importance that teaching on human rights is anchored in research. There should be no conflict between science and human rights education, provided that focus is shifted to what knowledge, competence and skills students need to develop in order to be prepared for their future working life.

Teachers must be empowered to be drivers of change

It is necessary to find ways to involve teachers to see human rights as an opportunity to develop student-centred learning. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in training programmes on human rights and to conduct related research. Systematic mapping, follow-up and evaluation of teacher competence should result in relevant competence development.

Formalising learning outcomes is key

There is a general need to improve the formalisation of human rights in terms of explicit learning outcomes. In order to avoid a mismatch between learning outcomes and examination, it is necessary to ensure a constructive alignment of learning outcomes with teaching content, syllabi, reading lists, teaching and assessment methods, examinations, and competence development of teachers. Formalisation of learning outcomes is also important from a student-centred learning perspective, as it enhances transparency of the curriculum and allows students to take an active role in the learning process.

Student-centred learning should be at the heart of human rights education

Human rights should be seen as an umbrella concept, part of a learning process and not an end in itself. Therefore, a variety of student-centred teaching and learning methods should be applied, and a variation of assessment methods developed. It is important to encourage student research and their participation in solving specific questions and problems. This will also allow students to develop a critical perspective on human rights issues.

Practical skills and working life relevance should be emphasised

Theoretical knowledge should be clearly linked to practical skills. Therefore, increased collaboration with practitioners and professionals should be encouraged, as well as the valorisation of alumni. Cooperation with NGOs and local organisations that deal with human rights issues is recommended as a way to bring working life expertise into the teaching and learning environment. Putting theory into practice should be promoted through active learning experiences, including problem-based learning, case studies, and fieldwork.

Learning outcomes should be the point of reference for evaluation and quality assurance and the starting point for development

Internal and external quality assurance need to develop an awareness of the transformation towards learning outcomes and achievement of competences and skills in students, parallel to scientific and pedagogical aspects of quality in higher education.

International collaboration should be intensified

Increased mobility and diversity in both society and higher education make it necessary to strengthen students' awareness of diversity and differences of values, and the need to develop social skills and intercultural competence. For quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions alike, international benchmarking and collaboration is of increasing importance. Quality assurance, learning outcomes-based education, recognition, and student-centred learning are at the core of the Bologna process as well as the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and human rights education needs to be conceived within this framework.

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