

**Enhancement of awareness about diversity of
cultures and provision of equal opportunities for
obtaining social and learning skills in international
cooperation**

**UNESCO 2008-2009 participation program project -
4641900004 ENA**



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at the Jaan Tonisson Institute Civic Education Centre

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Introduction

Education of the beginning of the new millennium is faced with new tasks and challenges imposed by several agents of change like broadening of the scope of mankind's knowledge, living conditions on the Earth etc. Globalization with practically unlimited communication opportunities by traveling, via Internet and other electronic technology has created a new demand for interpersonal communication. In the changes taking place in the contemporary world more and more attention is paid to multiculturalism. There is a new demand for people to know, what multiculturalism means, what benefits and challenges it brings to people, what knowledge, skills and behavior are needed while living in a modern multicultural society.

The recognition that a society has become multiethnic or multicultural is not simply about demographics or economics. It is an understanding that a new set of challenges were being posed for which a new political agenda was necessary. Multiculturalism is based on the belief that varying cultural dynamics are the fourth force—along with the psychodynamic, behavioral, and humanistic forces—explaining human behavior. Since the ability to recognize our own and others' cultural lenses is essential to all learning, it must be taught, along with communication and thinking skills, as prerequisites to learning.¹ It is important to mention that “Multicultural” is broadly understood to include experiences shaping perceptions common to age, gender, religion, socio-economic status, and exceptionality of any kind, as well as cultural, linguistic, and racial identities.

It is understandable that the countries, which are composed of racially, ethnically and religiously diverse population - like the USA – have paid more attention to the issues of socialization and coexistence in the society. Education has the key role to play, when larger changes and innovations are taking place, as individuals need to be prepared to cope in the new circumstances.

Geneva Gay of the University of Washington-Seattle in *A Synthesis of Scholarship in Multicultural Education* points out that the United States and the world are becoming increasingly more diverse, compact and interdependent. Therefore all students must learn how to interact with and understand people who are ethnically, racially and culturally different from themselves.²

The best way to teach multiculturalism is to incorporate it into the existing curriculum, says consultant and former professor of multicultural education Deborah Eldridge in "Diversity in Language Arts Classrooms". She also says that the best culturally sensitive teaching she has seen was the result of focusing on the curriculum in a new way, not adding to it.³

1 Multiculturalism. Tariq Modood. Polity Press, 2007. p 5

2 http://www.education-world.com/a_books/books001.shtml

3 Eldridge, D. Diversity in Language Arts Classrooms. The Education Digest, Vol. 62, No. 4.

The reason why connecting multiculturalism and education is very important today lies in the fact that citizens are individuals and have individual rights - but these rights are not uniform, and their citizenship contours itself around groups of people with specific cultures and histories. Citizenship is not a monistic identity that is completely apart from or transcends other identities important to citizens. After all, every public culture must operate through shared values, which are embodied in its institutions and practices.⁴

Multicultural education is defined as teaching and learning based on democratic values that foster cultural pluralism; in its most comprehensive form, a commitment to achieving educational equity; developing curricula that build on understanding about ethnic groups; combating oppressive practices.⁵

In the United States the National Council for Social Studies, in its *Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education*, lists the key functions of multicultural education as: providing students with a sharp sense of self, helping students understand the experience of ethnic and cultural groups in history, helping students understand that conflict between ideals and reality exist in every human society, helping students develop decision-making, social participation, and citizenship skills, achieving full literacy in at least two languages.⁶

Education and curriculum are not the only agents of changes in the field of socialization. Looking at the ideals of social cohesion and practices in different countries, different approaches can be observed within different countries. Research of Green, Janmaat and Han (2009) has found at least 3 types which have different emphasis: liberal (typically associated with the UK and Ireland), social market (typically associated with France, Germany, Austria) and social democracy (typically associated with Nordic countries).⁷ The study results of the abovementioned researchers may be helpful for explaining some of the outcomes of the present pilot study.

The situation as described above requires periodical monitoring of developments in young people's value esteems and attitudes, if the aspirations all over the world remain aimed at peaceful coexistence and establishment of common values that could be shared in all societies.

That was the reason, why this particular project was initiated as a pilot study offering some new grounds and insights into possibilities of similar full-scale studies in the future, which could facilitate informed decision making for devising best possible educational policies.

⁴ Multiculturalism, citizenship and national identity, Tariq Modood, 2007.

http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/multiculturalism_4627.jsp

⁵ http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/multiculturalism_4627.jsp

⁶ <http://www.funderstanding.com/content/multiculturalism>

⁷ Green, A., Janmaat, G., Han, C. (2009) "Regimes of Social Cohesion".

http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/documents/LLAKES_Centre_Research_Paper_1.pdf, pp 63 – 92.

1. The planning stage of the study, design of the project, its aims and content

The international research project financed by the UNESCO for specification of value esteems of young people was started in Tallinn on January 8-9, 2009, where representatives of five countries met - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and the USA. The project partners agreed on the specified content, format, target groups, and timelines of the study and the roles of all participating bodies. The study was devised as a pilot project, provided with country profiles offering an insight into respective societies.

The study was focussed on the young people's value orientations and their comprehension of democracy and multicultural society in five countries. A questionnaire of 15 questions was compiled. The fields of the questionnaire reflect the respondents' awareness and comprehension of basic values in a democratic society.

Eleven questions were offered as multiple-choice questions, 3 were open questions and one question contained both parts – a multiple choice as well as an open question part. The questions were focussed on seven fields:

1. Young people's awareness of a multicultural society, their attitude to multicultural structure of the society.
2. Young people's readiness and openness for communication with representatives of different social groups.
3. Comprehension of a democratic society and a good quality of life in it.
4. Young people's comprehension of equality and equal rights of people in society.
5. Young people's comprehension of a democratic society perceived as individually accepted values.
6. Young people's evaluation of different factors influencing development of their values and social skills.
7. Young people's comprehension of active participation in social life.

The study carried out on the enlisted topics can demonstrate, by what means and how students' awareness and comprehension develop. The answers collected can offer insights into the role of school among other factors supporting students' acquisition of social skills needed for orientation in everyday life and what the potential of the educational system can/must be in the field researched in the future.

The questionnaire was analysed and elaborated by the specialists at Purdue University in the USA and at Aarhus University in Denmark before its implementation.

2. Implementation of the study project

As agreed by the project partners from five countries, each had to question at least 100 students. Considering how complicated the field of social awareness and comprehension is, the target group was decided to select from students aged 16-, 17- and 18. It was agreed that students with possibly diverse social backgrounds should be involved.

Estonia.

In Estonia it meant inclusion of students from cities and rural areas as well as from schools with instruction in Estonian and Russian.

Estonian students were questioned in February – March 2009. The total number of respondents was 260 (n=260). Of those 142 were from schools with instruction in Estonian and 118 from schools with instruction in Russian. There were 164 students from Tallinn and 96 from rural areas.

Finland

Finnish students answered the questionnaire in March – May 2009 and from five asked schools only two had the possibility to organize the student's participation in the required schedule. Due to issues of confidentiality on research the names of the schools are withheld. Of the two participating upper secondary (high)schools one was situated in the capital area of Finland and the other one in the rural area. Altogether 73 students aged 16 – 18 responded.

Latvia

In total 389 young people/ high school students were involved in the survey in Latvia. The demographical division of the respondents was as follows: 59% female, 41% male participants; 52% Latvian as native language, 48% Russian or other native language.

The students represent the schools of Riga and those outside Riga in similar proportions. The average age of the respondents was 16-18 years, of which 13% 16 years old, 27% 17 years old, 41% 18 years or older still attending secondary school/high school

State Indiana

Following the international meeting, the US project partner from Indiana expanded the 15 original questions to 22 questions in order to address content unique to US history and race relations. The purpose of this survey was threefold: 1) to assess student perceptions of democracy, 2) to understand student understandings of the impact of school curriculum on value formation, and 3) to measure student attitudes toward different social groups. The US version of the questionnaire was reviewed and revised under the direction of the Centre for Social Studies and International Education (CSSIE) at Indiana University's School of Education.

The 22 questions found on the final US version of the questionnaire (Appendix A) were organized under five thematic fields. The themes for each

field were similar to those found in the Tallinn version of the survey, but in the US survey, fields #1, #5, and #7 on the Tallinn report were combined under one field (see #3 below), as the questions all related to comprehension and/or assessment of democratic principles.

The five fields on the US survey were as follows:

1. Awareness of the multicultural make-up of the student's state (Indiana).
2. Assessment of social distance between students and different groups in their community (city).
3. Comprehension of the mechanisms necessary for living in a democracy and suggestions to improve the local community.
4. Assessment of equality and equal rights in the United States.
5. Statement of students' values and skills, and a ranking of factors that most influenced acquisition of students' values/skills.

As a pilot survey, the results from this survey are not conclusive, but they illuminate possible areas for further research. Due to the time required for properly processing qualitative data, only the quantitative questions were analysed for this report.

The survey was administered in May 2009 to 102 high school students at two different high schools in a mid-sized city in south central Indiana. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the participation of two other schools in different cities was not possible at the time of survey collection.

Key demographic data:

- 62% of survey respondents were female.
- 84% of students reported speaking only English at home. At 4%, Spanish was the second most common single language spoken at home, but 10% of students reported that they spoke multiple languages at home.
- 75% of students reported their race as Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 7% multi-racial, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4% African-American.
- 82% of students were aged 15-16, with 11% between 17-19, and 6% 14 years old.

Due to issues of confidentiality on research conducted with minors, the names of the schools are withheld.

State Colorado and Azerbaijan

The questionnaires carried out in the USA, Colorado state and Azerbaijan were comparative in character and did not exactly follow the agreed age groups of respondents.

The respondents from the USA, Colorado state were 111 in number and the students came from two schools. Distribution of respondents by gender was almost equal – 44 boys and 41 girls. About a half of them (46) were younger than the target age group agreed for the study, namely 14- and 15-year-olds. 24 of respondents were 16, 19 students were 17 and 22 were 18 years old.

In Azerbaijan the questionnaire was carried out in two general comprehensive schools in Baku and in one student group at university. The questionnaires were translated into Russian. The total number of respondents was 46, of them 19 boys and 27 girls. The respondents were mostly aged 14- or 15, or aged 19-21 already. Only 4 respondents were from the agreed target group of the study, i.e., aged 16 – 18.

Country	Stu- dents total	Capital area stu- dents	Non- capital area students	Male stu- dents	Fema- -le stu- dents	Stu- dents 16 – 18 y.o.	Stu- dents of other age
Estonia	260	164	96	117	143	224	36
Latvia	389	195	194	159	230	315	74
Finland	73	n. sp.	n. sp.	n. sp.	n. sp.	73	0
Indiana	101	0	101	38	62	49	52
Colorado	111	111	0	59	52	65	46
Azerbaijan	46	46	0	19	27	4	42
Total	980					730	250

Figure 1. Number of students participating in the survey.

Conclusion: Although not all countries participating in the study could not collect answers from the agreed number of respondents, the total number of students questioned is 980, which can be considered adequate for a pilot study of that kind.

3. Country profiles

3.1 ESTONIA

To understand the features of today's Estonian society, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the country was occupied between 1944 – 1991 and incorporated into the Soviet Union. The occupation changed the pre-WW II market economy and democratically oriented nation state with 88% of ethnic Estonians and 12% of integrated mostly historic minorities into totalitarian command economy regime with multi-national and non-integrated society.⁸ Unfortunately, this hard experience still hurts people's hearts and minds and makes recovery of hard times our goal and aim.

Population statistics⁹

In 1934 Estonia had a population of 1,126,413. During the Soviet era (1944 – 1989) the population grew steadily, fuelled largely by immigration from other areas of the Soviet Union. During the 1950s and 1960s, net immigration accounted for more than 60 percent of the total population growth. Since the collapse of the Soviet regime the net migration has been reverse and the number of inhabitants of the country has decreased. According to the 1989 census there were 1,565,662 people living in Estonia. By 1994 this number had dropped to an estimated 1,506,927 as a result of negative natural growth rates and net out-migration beginning in 1990. The last population census in Estonia was held in 2000 establishing 1,370,000 people living in the country.

Today we operate mostly with the current estimate figures given by the public office *Statistics Estonia*. The estimated number of Estonian population in 2008 was 1.340 million. The birth rate in the country is low making only 11.76 newborns to 1,000 inhabitants (2007). At the same time (2007) the death rate was 12.98/1,000. (Infant mortality rate was in 2007 5 deaths/1,000 live births. Life expectancy (2007) is 67.1 year for men and 78.7 years for women.) Adding negative net migration -3.2 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2006) we get the annual decline of country's population -1.22% (2007).

With the population density per 31 people/sq. km is Estonia one of the sparsest populated countries in Europe. The percentage of urban dwellers is 70%. Work force of the country is approximately 660,000.

There are around 120 nationalities represented in the population of the country. The largest ethnic group is Estonian, making 68.6% of the whole population. The second largest is the group of Russians - 24.9%, then Ukrainians 2.1%, Belo-Russians 1.2%, Finns 0.8%. Other nationalities are very small making only 2.4% altogether. It means that there are tens of nationalities represented only by less than 10 persons.

Citizenship

Soviet immigrants and their descendants who have not naturalised being either citizens of other countries or stateless make up 12.4%.¹⁰ It should be

⁸ http://www.estonica.org/eng/lugu.html?menyy_id=62&kateg=38&alam=45&leht=2

⁹ The population statistics of Estonia is based on the data of Statistics Estonia: www.stat.ee

¹⁰ <http://www.rahvastikumister.ee/index.php?id=10441>

pointed out that the majority of the stateless people were, in fact, born in Estonia. However, most non-citizens are holders of long-term residential permits, which grant them the same economic and social rights that are guaranteed for Estonian citizens. They have a vote in municipal, but not in national elections, and they are not eligible as members of Parliament or municipal councils; non-citizens cannot hold certain public offices.

Estonian is the only official language of the country. However, the state provides its inhabitants also with some cultural services in Russian. In certain municipalities, where the majority of inhabitants are ethnic Russians, the local administration is legally obliged to offer services in both languages. Even in other localities, basic public services and information are usually available in Russian, too.

Accordingly to the 2000 census, there are two major languages spoken in the country: Estonian as the official language is spoken by 67.3% and Russian by 29.7% of the population. 2.3% of the population mentioned some other languages spoken by them as their first language or home language in 2000. 0.7% did not specify their language preferences.

Religion

There is no state religion in Estonia. From different religions the following are represented: Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church subordinated to Constantinople, the Estonian Orthodox Church subordinated to the Moscow Patriarch, the Roman Catholic Church and organisations of free Church of which the Baptist Church is the most numerous. The number of people participating in church life is rather low. There are around 169 Lutheran congregations in Estonia with members totalled about 175,000. Orthodox Christianity is the second largest faith, with eighty congregations and about 18,000 members.¹¹ Other religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam are marginal by their number of worshippers.

Maybe it is interesting to mention that among the smaller religions there is the Estonian House of Taara and Native Religions (Maavalla Koda), which unite believers in indigenous religions. The aim of Maavalla Koda is to provide prerequisites for maintenance and development of the indigenous religion and culture, following its creed and customs.

Education¹²

There is 9 years compulsory education established in the country. According to the Constitution of Estonia the obligation to attend school starts at the age of 7 and lasts till 17 years of age. The literacy rate of Estonia accordingly to the international data is 99.8%, but the figure is practically considered to be 100%.

In 1993 there were some 215,000 elementary and secondary school students in 724 schools across Estonia. About 142,000 students were enrolled in Estonian-language schools and about 70,000 in Russian-language schools,

¹¹ http://www.estonica.org/eng/lugu.html?kateg=41&menyy_id=101&alam=56&tekst_id=130

¹² based on <http://www.hm.ee/index.php?048055>

mainly in Tallinn and North-eastern Estonia. In 2008 there were 218,600 students altogether at 550 schools (grades 1-12), plus 50,800 university students. The proportions between the numbers of students at different school types learning at different educational levels have become rather unequal.

Some characteristics of young people of Estonia by statistical data and surveys¹³

In 2000 there was conducted a research project with the aim to find out about people's attitudes towards religion. The figures characterising young people aged 15 – 19 were the following:

Boys – 52871 respondents altogether	Girls – 50901 respondents altogether
Belonging to certain religion – 6681	Belonging to certain religion – 9419
Neutral towards religion - 19949	Neutral towards religion – 17556
Atheist - 3557	Atheist - 2421
Don't know – 9203	Don' t know – 9675
Don't want to answer – 5116	Don' t want to answer – 4739
Not responded – 8365	Not responded – 7091

Types of crimes committed by young persons (per 10.000 people) in 2007¹⁴:

	Aged 14 - 17	Aged 18 - 24
theft	101	95
robbery	18	15
fiddlery	8	16
drug related crimes	6	17
traffic related crimes	4	67

Participation of young people aged 15 – 24 (%) in cultural life was characterized in 2004 as follows¹⁵:

	not important	important
Visiting theatre	61,1	38,9
Visiting concerts	40,2	59,8
Visiting exhibitions	77,0	23,0
Visiting museums	80,3	19,7
Visiting libraries	43,2	56,8
Visiting cinema	399	60,1
Watching TV, listening to the radio	13,7	86,3
Listening to music	7,6	92,4
Reading magazines, newspapers	30,0	70,0
Reading literature	38,5	61,5
Playing sports	36,1	63,9
Visiting sports/competitions	67,4	32,6
Visiting pubs, parties, clubs	36,8	63,2

3.2 LATVIA¹⁶

¹³ http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/estonia_statistics.html

¹⁴ <https://ajaveeb.just.ee/kuritegevusjastatistika/?cat=12>

¹⁵ <http://www.eni.ee/?s=296>

¹⁶ <http://www.euromonitor.com/factfile.aspx?country=LA>

Population statistics

Latvia is a multinational society, where Latvians live together with the minorities. According to the data provided by the Department of Citizenship and migration in 2008 the population structure in Latvia is the following: 59.1% Latvians, 28 % Russians, 3.7% Belo-Russians, 2.5% Ukrainians, 2.4% Poles and 1.4% Lithuanians. The other minorities living in Latvia are: Jews, Roma, Germans, Tatars, Armenians, Estonians, etc.

The data of the National Census in Latvia 2000 show that for 58.2% of inhabitants the native language is Latvian. However, 39.6% of inhabitants consider that Russian their native language. According to the same data 53% of representatives of national minorities know the Latvian language. This mean indicator is considerably higher for the Lithuanians (86%), Estonians (77%), Roma (66%) who admit that they know Latvian. 81% of the inhabitants of Latvia know the Russian language.

The statistical data referring to the beginning of 2008 indicate that 81.6% of Latvia's inhabitants are citizens of Latvia, and according to the Law on Citizenship adopted in 1994 actually all permanent residents of Latvia may become citizens of Latvia.

In 1995 the naturalization process to obtain the citizenship was started and as a result, 128 888 people were granted the Latvian citizenship till August 2008. The representatives of more than 70 different nations have received Latvian citizenship through naturalization process. The largest proportion among the people of other nationalities who have received Latvian citizenship is made up of Russian population – they constitute 68.1%. All in all 57.5% or 367 035 people out of 638 410 Russians living in Latvia are the citizens of Latvia.

Features characterizing the society of Latvia

The society of Latvia is a multinational society because the representatives of different nationalities live in Latvia. According to the official data there is a rather high number of mixed marriages in Latvia.

The government of Latvia implements the policy of social integration; it is directed towards broadening the number of citizens and towards promoting the participation of citizens and non-citizens in social life. The state program "Society integration in Latvia" has been developed. In 1995 the State program for the acquisition of the Latvian language, the aim of which is to support the teaching of Latvian as the second language to non-Latvians – both adults and pupils in minority schools.

The society of Latvia is also a multilingual society; the different native languages used by of inhabitants of Latvia – Latvian, Russian, Belo-Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, etc, prove it.

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/latvia_statistics.html
<http://www.nationmaster.com/country/lg-latvia/peo-people>
<http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Latvia>
<http://www.economywatch.com/economic-statistics/country/Latvia/>

The society of Latvia is a multi-religious society. The data of the Department of Religious Issues prove that the inhabitants of Latvia belong to different confessions and the largest of them are the Evangelical Lutherans, the Roman Catholics, the Russian Orthodox, the Baptists, the Old-believers, etc.

Most of Latvia's population are the citizens of Latvia. The migration flow to Latvia is rather insignificant. Lately there is a tendency that more people leave Latvia than there are immigrants coming to the country.

Today's young people of Latvia are characterized by:

- the desire to achieve one's aims fast - to gain fast the independence from parents, to obtain fast a well-paid job, to buy the first car fast,
- self - assurance, self-esteem,
- the endeavours to combine studies with work (students in higher education),
- the salary/wages is the most important issue when choosing the profession (66%) /according to National Statistics data/; working with people (64%); good colleagues (49%); the possibility to work abroad (49%); the prestige of the profession (46%).

What do young people in Latvia name as their values?

The young people in Latvia as a social group are individually very different. It is almost not possible to talk about the characteristic features or values shared by all the young people of Latvia. Different factors influence the life style and values of young people – the place of residence (city, town, and countryside), age, occupation (pupils, students, and working), also the family status, the education, life experience, etc.

Traditionally, young people in Latvia name the following as the most important values:

- mutual relations, friends,
- family,
- money and material values,
- access to virtual communications; the possibility to position oneself in the virtual environment,
- entertainment, music (TV, cinema, clubs, etc.),
- travelling,
- sports (within the extracurricular education in hobby schools or groups, including the extreme sports),
- public activities – participation in projects,
- health,
- education, work,
- friendship, honesty,
- nature and the surrounding environment.

The young people's understanding about what they understand by "a good citizen" has been studied. The young people admit that it is a person independent of his/her ethnic belonging who works hard, observes the laws, is active, participates in public life, thinks about the others, loves nature and

makes a positive image of the country. The political activities seem not to be priorities in young people's understanding.

The following were mentioned as non-acceptable values: cigarettes, alcohol and drugs as well as negative perception of life, bravado and showing off.

The society of Latvia and the young people are also characterized by:

- strong features of divided society (Latvian/Russian language speaking communities),
- contradictions between declared values and real actions of young people,
- high number of drug abusers and high numbers of HIV/AIDS positives,
- lack of ability to face and to deal with diversity (intolerance regarding the ethnic backgrounds, migrants, guest workers, other religions, people with special needs etc.),
- weak national identity (belonging to the Latvian state).

3.3 FINLAND¹⁷

Population statistics

According to Statistics Finland from 2007 at the end of the year 97,5 % of people living in the country (about 5,3 million) were citizens of Finland. The 2,5 % of inhabitants having foreign nationality came from Russia, Estonia, Sweden or Somalia. 91,2 % of the population spoke Finnish as their native language, 5,5 % Swedish (the second national language in Finland) and 0,03 % Sami (a minority language). The biggest groups of foreign native languages were Russian, Estonian, English, Somali and Arabic. In order to obtain the Finnish citizenship there is (besides clean-living) a requirement of fair language skills in Finnish or Swedish.

Minorities in Finland are: Swedish-speaking Finns, Roma, the Old-Russian immigrants, Jews and Tatars.

Finnish citizenship was granted in 2007 to 4 800 foreign citizens permanently residing in Finland. The number was slightly higher than in previous year. The increasing amount concerns citizens of countries not belonging to the European Union. The number of citizens of the EU-countries among those who received Finnish citizenship was the same as one year before (500).

The Finnish citizenship was most often granted to citizens of Russia (1,650) and Somalia (460). The third largest group of were citizens of Iraq (440). (Then: Former Serbia and Montenegro, Islamic rep. of Iran, Estonia, Sweden, Afghanistan, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vietnam, China)

Features characterizing the society of Finland

In 2007 for the first time since independence of Finland (1917) the immigration was higher than the natural growth of population. Approximately 2,5 % of the population had a foreign nationality in 2007. The biggest groups represented citizens of Russia, Estonia, Sweden, Somalia, China, Thailand, Germany, Turkey, Great Britain and Iraq.

¹⁷ http://www.stat.fi/til/index_en.html
http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/finland_statistics.html
<http://web4health.info/en/answers/bipolar-suicide-statistics>
<http://www.prb.org/Countries/Finland.aspx>
<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/stats09/eye>

Two state languages – Finnish (91,2 % of the population), and Swedish (5,5 % of the population) are spoken by most inhabitants. The minority language Sami is spoken in Lapland by 0,03 % of the population in the whole country. From other languages which make up 3,3 % spoken in the country, the biggest are Russian (approximately 45 000 people), Estonian (20 000 people), English (11 000), Somali (10 000) and Arabic (8 000).

The majority of Finnish people belong to the church, 77,7 % to Lutheran and 1,2 to Orthodox congregations. The religion is considered a private matter, therefore active worshipping of religion cannot be seen in the amount you could expect considering the high number of church members. 1,3 % of the population belong to other religions (Jehovah's Witness, Catholic, Islamic). 14,5 % of the population does not belong to any religious community.

Young people of Finland characterized by surveys

The society has shown in the last years an increasing individualism, fastness, impatience and growing social problems crowded on a small group of population. The polarization of the society has been obvious.

Even then according to the Youth Barometer 2008 in general, the values of young people are quite stable. Changes and trends are of interest, but in the ranking list of important matters in their lives, young people have not changed anything in a decade.

Most important (not changed in the last decade):

- spending time with family and close relatives,
- spending time with friends / acquaintances.

Changed:

- appraisal/acknowledgement of the importance of working for the good and betterment of the society,
- more young people than ever before feel that active work in organisations in society is important,
- real increase in youth participation influencing the planning and services of their neighbourhood.

Probably some of the changes have resulted in the increasing usage of the Internet as a new arena for participation. At the same time the country borders have lost their importance, the global world is of an increasing interest in young peoples mind

The greatest issues of uncertainty and insecurity:

- had to do with big issues such as climate change and energy sufficiency,
- involving their own situation and their families,
- personal income and the safety and welfare of their family members.

Optimistic about the future:

- personal future 87 %,
- Finland as a place to live in 74 %,

- The world: the biggest issue is, how to translate the concern about the condition of the world into action.

The Youth Barometer is an annual publication surveying young people's values and attitudes in Finland. The Advisory Council for Youth Affairs has published it since 1994. The Youth Barometer 2005 surveyed consumption of the young people and their attitudes towards immigration:

- those who seek status in their lives, consume clothes and partying,
- those who seek middle class life, consume furnishing and decoration,
- those who seek experience, consume studying and travelling,
- attitudes towards immigrants mainly positive,
- the doors should be open for all to go elsewhere, but only ajar for people coming in,
- the most negative attitudes against immigrants were expressed by the boys in vocational education on outlying districts and from unschooled families.

Drug using

During the past few years, drug use has increased among men in the age of 25 – 34, but decreased significantly in the age of 15–24. The growth in use seems to be levelling off in Finland. However, concerns over illicit drugs remain strongly present even among the young age groups. (KTL 2007)

Cause of death

- every third cause of death among young people is suicide,
- every fifth cause of death is traffic,
- Every third drunk driver is young.

Violence (polarization)

- Awareness of norms and unwillingness to take part in criminal behaviour among increasing part of young people,
- growth of serious problems and violence crowded on a small group.

HIV and AIDS

According to statistics there are fewer contagions in Finland than in any other country in Western Europe (about 2 400 cases).

3.4. THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Population statistics in the United States

The United States is the third most populous country in the world. In July 2008 the population of the United States was estimated to be 303,824,640.¹⁸ The United States is known as a pluralist society, which means that there are a variety of accepted languages, political affiliations and religious beliefs.

The United States is ethnically and racially diverse. For 2007 the US census estimated that 79.96% of the US population was white, 15.1% was Hispanic, 12.85% was Black, 4.43% was Asian, 0.97% was American Indian or Alaska native, 0.18% was native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, and 1.61% of the total population reported being two or more races.

¹⁸ US Census Data Estimates

The United States has no official language. English has historically been the most common language in the US, but Spanish is increasingly seen in daily social interactions and on official government forms. The US Census for 2000 reported that 82.1% of the population spoke English, 10.7% Spanish, 3.8% other Indo-European languages, 2.7% Asian languages, and 0.7% reported speaking 'other' languages.¹⁹

The United States has no official religion. There is a clause in the US Constitution that is frequently interpreted as an institutionalised separation between government oversight and personal decisions about religion, including a decision to have no religion whatsoever. Studies have reported that the United States is one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world.²⁰ The US Census estimated for 2007 that 51.3% of the population was Protestant, 23.9% Roman Catholic, 1.7% Mormon, 1.6% other Christians, 1.7% Jewish, 0.7% Buddhist, 0.6% Muslim, 2.5% other or unspecified, and 12.1% reported no religious belief.

Demographics for the State of Indiana

Indiana is the 16th most populous state in the US. In 2006 the population of Indiana was estimated to be 6,313,520. Indiana has a higher than average homogenous demographic make-up due to its large population of non-Hispanic whites. The US Census data estimated that in 2006 Indiana was 88.3% White, 8.9% Black, 4.8% Hispanic, 1.3% Asian, 0.03% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 1.1% reported being two or more races. Additionally, 3.1% of the population reported being born outside of the US, and 6.4% of the population reported that they spoke a language other than English at home.²¹

Demographics for the State of Colorado

Colorado is the 22nd most populous state in the US and ranks 3rd in the percentage of people holding a Bachelors degree or higher. In 2008 the population of Colorado was estimated to be 4,939,456. The US Census data estimated that in 2008 Colorado was 71% White (not Hispanic), 4.3% Black, 20.2% Hispanic, 2.7% Asian, 1.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.2% Pacific Islander and 2% reported being two or more races. Additionally, 8.6% of the population reported being born outside of the US, and 15.1% of the population reported that they spoke a language other than English at home.²²

Education Statistics in the US and the State of Indiana

A campaign for universal public education began in the US in the early 19th century. By 1918 all 48 (then) states in the US had passed compulsory attendance laws that required children to attend public school for a specified period of time.²³ Public education is predominantly administered and overseen

¹⁹ The CIA World Fact Book

²⁰ 2002 General Social Survey [GSS]

²¹ 2006 US Census Data Estimates

²² US Census Bureau: State and Country QuickFacts

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/08000.html>

²³ Urban, W. and Wagoner, J. (2009). *American education: A history*. New York: Routledge.

by State governments, but recent federal legislation allowed for increasing federal intervention in US school systems.

One of the biggest criticisms of the US school system is that it is not truly an equitable system, especially when achievement rates for white students are compared to those of minority groups. Over the last 35 years educational attainment for all ethnic groups has increased, but significant educational attainment gaps still remain *between* groups. For example, African-Americans, Native Americans and Hispanics reportedly have lower test scores than Asian and white students.²⁴

The US Department of Education reported that during the 2004-2005 school year there were 54.8 million students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools. The primary ethnic and racial make-up of these students was 76% white, 12% black, and 7% Hispanic.²⁵ Enrolment rates in Indiana public schools mirror the state's homogenous population: minority enrolment rates are below the national average, but continue to rise.²⁶

Historical Influences on American Identity and National Society

The United States of America came into existence as a unified republic following the successful defeat of British rule during the American Revolutionary War (1776-1781). During the 19th and 20th centuries the US expanded from 13 original states to 50 states and a number of overseas territories. The key strategy for US expansion often relied on displacing or subjugating native populations that were already settled on land desired by the US government. Furthermore, industrial, agricultural, and technological progress was also frequently achieved through the exploitation of minority and immigrant groups. Due to this complicated history, race relations in the US are still quite conflicted. Several issues that remain particularly salient in the US are the repercussions from slavery, the annihilation of Native American tribes, and large waves of international immigration, especially from Mexico.²⁷

Young People in the United States

In the US, young people are considered to be adults upon reaching their 18th birthday; this is also the age when they are finally able to vote, and men are registered in the selective service (army registry). Still, defining "youth" in the United States can be difficult because surveys classify youth according to a variety of age categories, sometimes even up to the age of 25. The official US Census divides age categories into "under 5 years of age," "under 18 years of age," and "under 65 years of age." In 2006 one survey reported that there were 70 million people in the US under the age of 18,²⁸ which, according to US Census data, would be 25.9% of the population.

Youth Values, Attitudes, and Perceptions toward Diversity

²⁴ The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2005, *Attitudes of Young People Toward Diversity*.

²⁵ Indiana Department of Education, Indiana Education Statistics, School Data.

²⁶ Indiana Department of Education, School Data.

²⁷ CIA World Factbook.

²⁸ The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2005, *Attitudes of Young People Toward Diversity*.

According to a recent survey about values and attitudes toward cultural diversity in the US, the following traits were seen as characterizing considerable numbers of US youth:

- Expressive of the most tolerant opinions of any age group in the US.
- Supportive of laws prohibiting discrimination.
- Accepting of interracial marriages.
- Positive toward perceived contributions from immigrant groups.
- Respectful of cultural differences, and
- Supportive of diverse social interactions between groups (such as living in diverse neighbourhoods).²⁹

Nonetheless, though American youth often *express* more tolerant opinions, actual habits and social interactions sometimes do not reflect this fact. For example, it was shown that many of the same youth who expressed tolerant opinions toward interracial marriage and living diverse neighbourhoods actually only participated in social activities and voluntary associations (such as churches or community organizations) with friends from their own race.³⁰ Minority youth are also more likely to be victims of discrimination or harassment. One study found that 46% of black students, 33% of students in urban environments, and 32% of Hispanic students were more likely than whites to report being victims of racial or religious incidents.³¹

Youth Values, Attitudes, and Perceptions toward Religion

Religious involvement is reportedly an important dimension in the civic life of most American communities;³² however, there is a lack of research in the US that focuses specifically on the religious attitudes and habits of youth. As a result, knowledge of the religious affiliations, practices, beliefs, experiences, and attitudes of US youth are generally underreported, though some surveys are beginning to address this issue. Recent data indicate the following trends:

- A recent survey reported that, despite assumptions to the contrary, two-thirds of youth felt neither alienated from nor hostile toward organized religion.³³
- Youth are more open to different types of religious affiliations, including having no religious affiliation whatsoever.
- Youth are less likely than adults to be frequent attendees of organized religious events.³⁴

Current Trends Related to American Youth

There are many issues in the US that are thought to impact youth attitudes and values, but there are few surveys that attempt to synthesize such a broad topic. Below are some trends that predominantly affect youth in the US.

Teenage Pregnancy

Teen pregnancy is incredibly high in the US, and it disproportionately touches the lives of minority youth.

²⁹ The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement, 2005, *Attitudes of Young People Toward Diversity*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Louis Harris and Associates, 1990, *The Reebok/Northeastern Study of Youth Attitudes on Racism*.

³² Harvard University reports based on The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey

³³ National Survey on Youth and Religion, *Religion and Life Attitudes and Self-Images of American Adolescents*

³⁴ Harvard University reports based on The Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey

- Despite historic declines, the US teen pregnancy rate is still reported to be one of the highest rates in industrialized world.³⁵
- In 2006 teen pregnancy in the US reached a record high for the first time in fifteen years.
- Pregnancy rates for black and Hispanic teenagers are more than 2 and 1/2 times higher than those for non-Hispanic white teenagers.³⁶

Declines in Marriage Rates

Traditional marriage arrangements are declining in the US, but most youth still regard a committed relationship as an important personal goal.

- Marriage rates in the US have declined from 1990-2004.^{37 38}
- “Traditional” family roles are shifting, marriage is becoming less common, and families are smaller and perceived as being less “stable.”³⁹
- Youth attitudes towards cohabitation have shifted, with marked increases in favourable attitudes toward living together outside of marriage.⁴⁰

School Safety, Crime and Violence⁴¹

There is evidence that school safety has improved, as the victimization rate of students between ages 12–18 declined between 1992 and 2005, but students still face the possibility of violence and crime in US schools.

- During 2005–06, 86% of public schools reported that at least one crime occurred at their school.
- 3% of schools surveyed reported daily or weekly occurrences of racial/ethnic tensions among students.
- 11% percent of students ages 12–18 reported that someone at school had used hate-related words against them; 38% reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school.
- 24% of students ages 12–18 reported that there were gangs at their schools, and students in urban schools (36%) were more likely to report gangs than suburban students (21%) and rural students (16%)
- 19% of students in grades 9–12 reported they had carried a weapon anywhere in 2005, including on school property; 6% reported they had carried a weapon *on school property* in the previous 30 days.
- Drugs and alcohol are reportedly used by one quarter of secondary students in US public schools.

In Summary

Overall, school demographics in the US are increasingly diverse. Youth often express having tolerant attitudes toward diverse lifestyles, races, ethnicities, religions, and sexual orientations, but there are still documented discrepancies between the statements of youth and their actions and habits. Furthermore, minority youth are most often the victims of discrimination and hate-based epithets in schools, and many of the issues that currently impact

³⁵ US Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 1990-2002, *Recent Trends in Teenage Pregnancy in the United States*.

³⁶ US Centers for Disease Control [CDC], 2006, *Births: Preliminary Data*.

³⁷ US Centers for Disease Control [CDC], *National Vital Statistics*.

³⁸ Indiana also mirrored this decline with 9.6 people married per 1000 in 1990, but only 7.8 people married per 1000 in 2004.

³⁹ General Social Survey [GSS], *Changes in Family Structure, Family Values, and Politics, 1972-2006*

⁴⁰ Urban Institute survey conducted from 1985-1999.

⁴¹ US Department of Education, *2007 Indicators of School Crime and Safety Survey*.

American youth, such as teen pregnancy and school violence, disproportionately affect minorities, especially those in urban areas.

3.5. AZERBAIJAN⁴²

Azerbaijan - a nation of Turkic Muslims - has been an independent republic since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Despite a cease-fire, in place since 1994, Azerbaijan has yet to resolve its conflict with Armenia over the Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh enclave (largely Armenian populated). Azerbaijan has lost almost 20% of its territory and must support some 750,000 refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) as a result of the conflict.

The most tragic pages of the history of Azerbaijan in the 20th century are linked to refugees and IDPs. Forces interested in geo-strategic position, rich natural resources of Azerbaijan moved Azerbaijanis by use of force from their historical lands, territorial claims of Armenians resulted in deportation of Azeri from their lands in 1905, 1918-20, 1948-53 and 1988-93.

Azerbaijan faces rapid development of the population and a surprising pace of events. Urbanization is now affecting large sections of rural areas, the public opinion is changing at cosmic speed, as is the demographic composition of the population. (Problems and Solutions of Sociology in Azerbaijan, Abulfaz D. Suleymanov)

Statistics

Population (January 2008): 8,629,900.

Population growth rate (2007): 1.1%. In January-June 2008, 73,6 thousand persons were born in the country, on average 404 babies daily and 17 persons per every 1000 people of population.

Of total population 51,7 percent live in urban areas and 48,3 percent in rural areas. 49,3 percent of population are comprised of males, 50,7 percent of females. There are 1027 females per every 1000 males. The average age is 32, life expectancy 72,4 (69,7 in male, 75,1 in female). In January-June 2008 33,4 thousand marriages and 3,9 thousand divorces were registered (less than the number of marriages and divorces per every 1000 persons of population in the respective period of the previous year). The average age for those marrying for the first time was 28 in men, 24 in women.

Net migration rate (2006 est.): -4.38 migrant(s)/1,000 population.

In Azerbaijan there are 3119 persons looking for asylum, the majority of which are Chechens with Russian citizenship, persons from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Palestine. At the moment, there are about a million refugees, IDPs and persons looking for asylum in Azerbaijan.

Ethnic groups (1999 census): Azeri 90.6%, Dagestani 2.2%, Russian 1.8%,

⁴² http://www.azerbaijan.az/portal/sitemap_e.html
<http://www.prb.org/Countries/Azerbaijan.aspx>
<http://www.un-az.org/content/view/13/42/lang,english/>
http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/azerbaijan_statistics.html

Armenian 1.5%, other 3.9%. *Note:* the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region is populated almost entirely by ethnic Armenians.

Religion: Muslim 93.4% (majority Shia), Russian Orthodox 2.5%, Armenian Orthodox Church 2.3%, and other 1.8%.

Languages: Azerbaijani 89%, Russian 3%, Armenian 2%, and other 6%.

Education: Literacy--97%

Internet users: (per 100 people): 11

Health: Infant mortality rate (2000 est.)--83.41/1,000 live births.

Life expectancy (2007 est.)--65.96 years.

Work force (3 million): Agriculture and forestry--42.3%; industry--6.9%; construction--4.2%; other--46.6%. Unemployment rate (est.): 15%-20%.

International organizations observations in Azerbaijan

Transparency

The present 125-member unicameral parliament elections in November 2005 did not meet international standards. A majority of parliamentarians are from the President's "New Azerbaijan Party." The parliament also includes up to 10 opposition members and a sizeable number of nominal independents. Many of these independents are believed to have close ties to government, while as many as 20 others are business leaders whose political affiliations are not clear.⁴³

Human Rights

The human rights situation in the country remains poor with backsliding in some areas, especially media freedom, religious freedom, and political participation. Restrictions on freedom of assembly, expression, and religion continue, as do arbitrary arrest and detention, and the imprisonment of persons for politically motivated reasons. Arrests and detention for unregistered religious activity continues in some localities.⁴⁴

Corruption

Corruption remains pervasive, as does the lack of accountability for torture of individuals in detention, violence against journalists, and excessive use of force against peaceful demonstrators. Corruption is ubiquitous and the promise of widespread wealth from Azerbaijan's undeveloped petroleum resources remains largely unfulfilled.⁴⁵

Environmental Issues

Azerbaijan is considered one of the most important spots in the world for oil exploration and development. Proven oil reserves in the Caspian Basin, which Azerbaijan shares with Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Iran, are comparable in size to North Sea reserves several decades ago.⁴⁶

Azerbaijan faces serious environmental challenges. DDT and toxic defoliants used in cotton production during the Soviet era contaminated the soil

⁴³ <http://www.traveldocs.com/az/govern.htm>

⁴⁴ <http://www.traveldocs.com/az/govern.htm>

⁴⁵ <http://www.unohrrls.org/en/orphan/60/>

⁴⁶ http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/aj/Azerbaijan_economy_summary.htm

throughout the region. Caspian petroleum and petrochemicals industries have also contributed to present air and water pollution problems. Over-fishing by poachers is threatening the survival of Caspian sturgeon stocks, the source of most of the world's supply of caviar.⁴⁷

Youth policy

The state youth policy is the system of measures aiming at the establishment of legal, socio-economic and socio-political conditions by the state for the provision of the comprehensive development of the youth and their active participation in the public life.

The major trends of the youth policy have been identified by the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan 'On the youth policy' in the following way:

- Moral upbringing of the youth and its participation in the cultural life;
- The state care about the talented youth;
- Physical development and the health protection of the young people;
- Provision of employment of the young people;
- The state aide to the young families.⁴⁸

Study of the statistics of the criminal cases against juvenile delinquents and youth until 28 shows that they most often are indicted in the charges of hooliganism, driving in a state of alcoholic intoxication, street fights, sale and use of drugs, rape (for men), petty theft and fraud (for women) (Azerbaijan Gender Information Centre)⁴⁹.

Conclusion: The presented country profiles, compiled by experts of respective countries using available statistical and research data can provide background and be of help for possible interpretations of the data collected.

⁴⁷ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2909.htm>

⁴⁸ <http://www.azembajada.es/browse.php?lang=eng&page=10>

⁴⁹ http://www.gender-az.org/index_en.shtml?id_main=13&id_sub=46

4. The results of the study by the fields researched.

This chapter presents an overview of the collected data by participating countries and questions asked.

4.1. Young people's awareness of a multicultural society, their attitude to multicultural structure of the society

The respondents were asked to mark on the five point scale (many - some - few - none – do not know), how they perceive the structure of their society by specification of diverse social groups (people who speak different languages at home, people with special needs, people belonging to a different race or ethnicity, people with a different sexual orientation, people belonging to some religion) and their existence in the countries.

ESTONIA

Estonian and Russian students have considerably different values in regard to multiculturalism in Estonian society (see Fig. 2). Estonian students' vision about how multicultural Estonian society is wider and more open. The dominating trend in their answers shows wider awareness of diverse social groups represented in our society. The biggest number of respondents agreed to the statement that there were many people in the Estonian society speaking different home languages. Estonian students are also widely aware of numerous people belonging to different religious congregations and of people with special needs. The amount of people belonging to a different race or ethnicity was estimated lowest. The proportion of answers "do not know" was quite small. The students from Russian medium schools preferred most often the answers "there are none" and "there are few of them". They agreed most unanimously (more than 70% of all respondents) that there are no or very few people with a different sexual orientation in the society. The people with special needs and people belonging to a different race or ethnicity were recognised after them. The biggest number of respondents (ca 40%) agreed that there are quite many people, who speak different home languages. As compared to students from Estonia medium schools, they gave more often "do not know" answers.

Considering statistical data and student's answers estimating the structure of society, the students from Estonian medium schools have a more adequate comprehension of the social situation than students from Russian medium schools. A more detailed analysis could clarify what Estonian students actually meant by "different home languages" and by "belonging to a different race or ethnicity" as their answers showed that there are more people speaking different home languages than those belonging to a different race or ethnic group.

When taking the question how multicultural Estonian society is, the students from both, Estonian and Russian medium schools gave similar answers, most often "quite" and "not very". Still considering all answers, Estonian students consider Estonian society at large more multicultural, as 8% of them said "very" whereas the corresponding number of students from Russian medium schools was 3%; the corresponding numbers of respondents saying "not at all" were 3% and 10%, respectively.

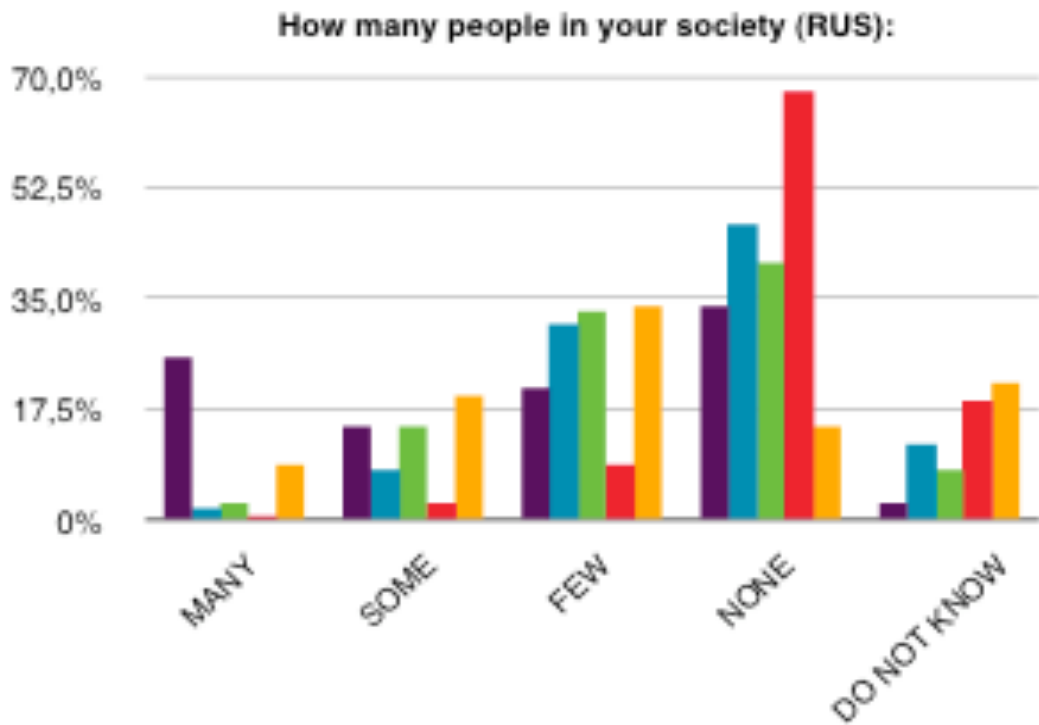
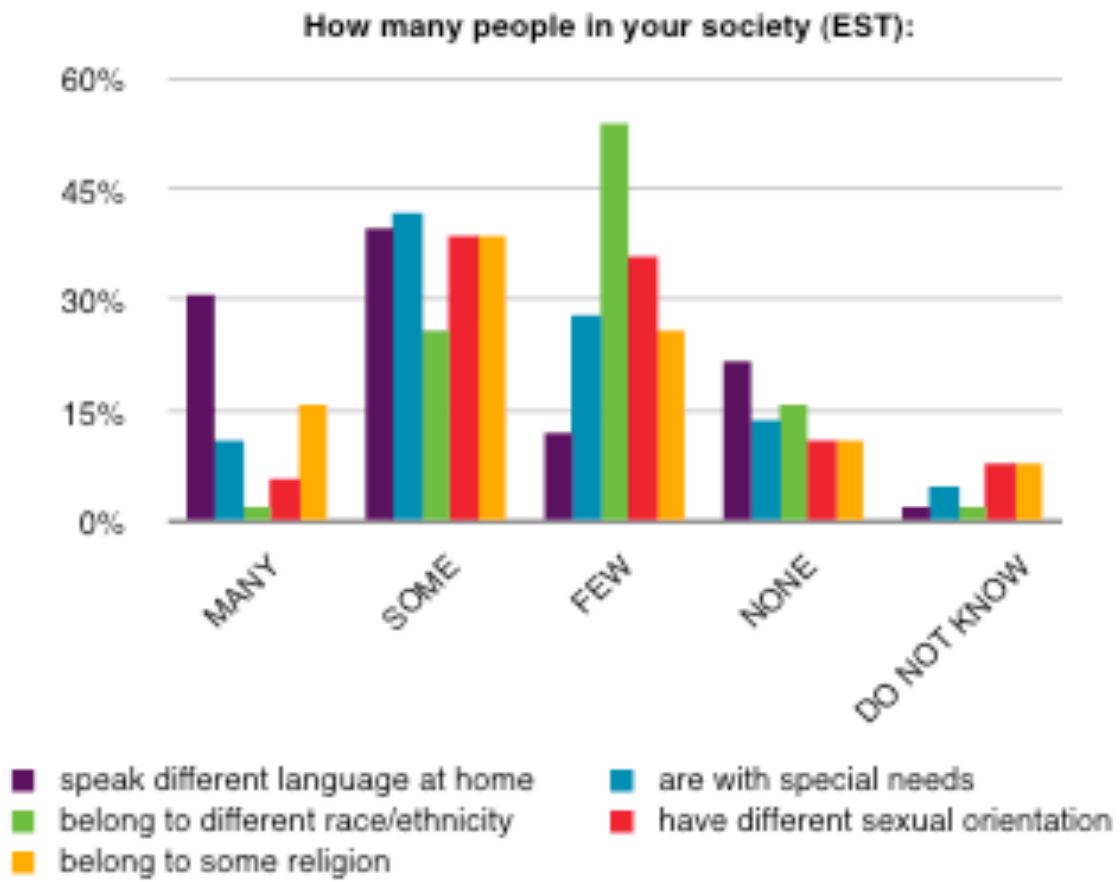


Figure 2. Estonian and Russian medium schools' students' perception about the social consistence of Estonia.

FINLAND

The area around Helsinki is more multicultural than the other parts of Finland. This can also be seen in the answers of Finnish students. In the rural area young people have fewer contacts and less experience with people from different ethnicity or speaking different language, but they have more experience of people with special needs. Most “do not know” answers in both groups (23%) were given to questions concerning awareness of people having different sexual orientation.

LATVIA

Most of the respondents have identified that the society in which they live is either slightly (42%) or somewhat (31%) diverse. Only one-sixth of respondents mention that society is very diverse, 7% identify that the society in which they live is not diverse at all. The results do not show significant differences between students with a Latvian vs. Russian native language, as well as between genders and different age groups.

INDIANA

In this section, US students were asked 5 questions about their perceptions of multiculturalism and the state of race relations in Indiana. Students were also asked how common they thought it was for certain groups to live in Indiana, such as people who speak a different language, people with a disability, people belonging to a racial or ethnic minority, people identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender (GLBT), or individuals belonging to an organized religion.

Four of the questions in this section were quantitative, asking students to select their answers from a 4-point Likert scale; one question was open-ended.

Overall, the standard deviations of the responses to each question showed little variation across student answers, but 70.7% of students reported that they considered Indiana to be “somewhat” or “very multicultural.” Overall, students reported that they believed that the most common groups in Indiana were individuals with a religious affiliation (a particular affiliation was not specified in the question), individuals from an ethnic or racial group, and individuals with a non-traditional sexual orientation (GLBT).

While 74.7% of students reported that they thought it was “somewhat” or “very common” for individuals in Indiana to belong to a racial or ethnic minority, it was also interesting to note that the same percentage of students (74.7%) reported that “all” or “some” of their neighbours were the same ethnicity that they were.

Overall, student perceptions of the state of race relations in Indiana indicated that students felt that race relations in Indiana were “somewhat” (35.7%) but “not very conflicted” (55%).

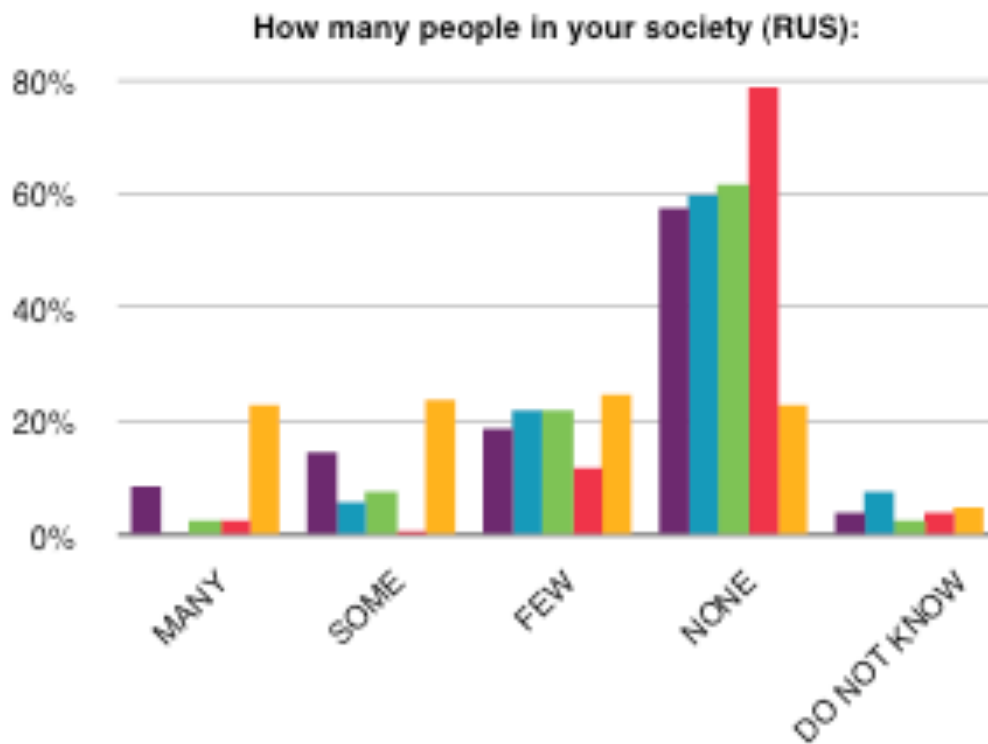
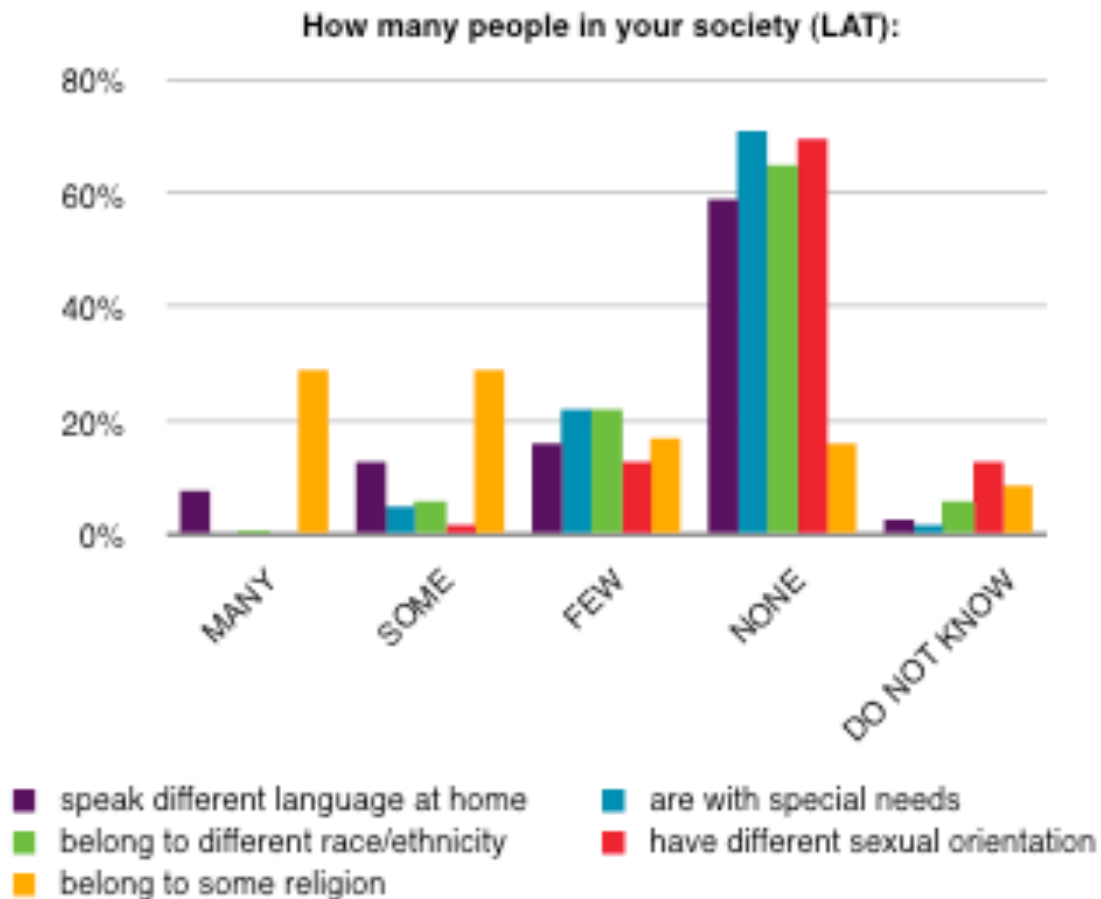


Figure 3. Latvian and Russian medium schools' students' perception about the social consistence of Latvia.

COLORADO

The students of Denver have decided about multiculturalism in their society considering how many people belong to mentioned in the questionnaire social groups. All five social groups have gained considerably more attention (recognition) than the respective groups evaluated by the students in other countries. They believe like the students from Indiana, that the greatest in number was the minority group belonging to some religion. 90% of respondents share this opinion. 76%- think that there are many people with different home languages and of different race and of ethnic origin. The number of people with special needs is considered smallest as only 46% of respondents recognized them.

As expected, the overwhelming majority of Denver students consider their society multicultural. It also corresponds to the statistical data characterizing US demographic situation in reality. 40% of respondents claim their society to be “very multicultural” and in addition to that, 21% claim the society to be “quite multicultural”. 61% of students altogether consider the USA a multicultural country. Nobody claims it to be not at all multicultural. However, the number of students, who answered “do not know” is still 12%, which is higher than the amount of Estonian young people answering the same way.

How Multicultural is your society?

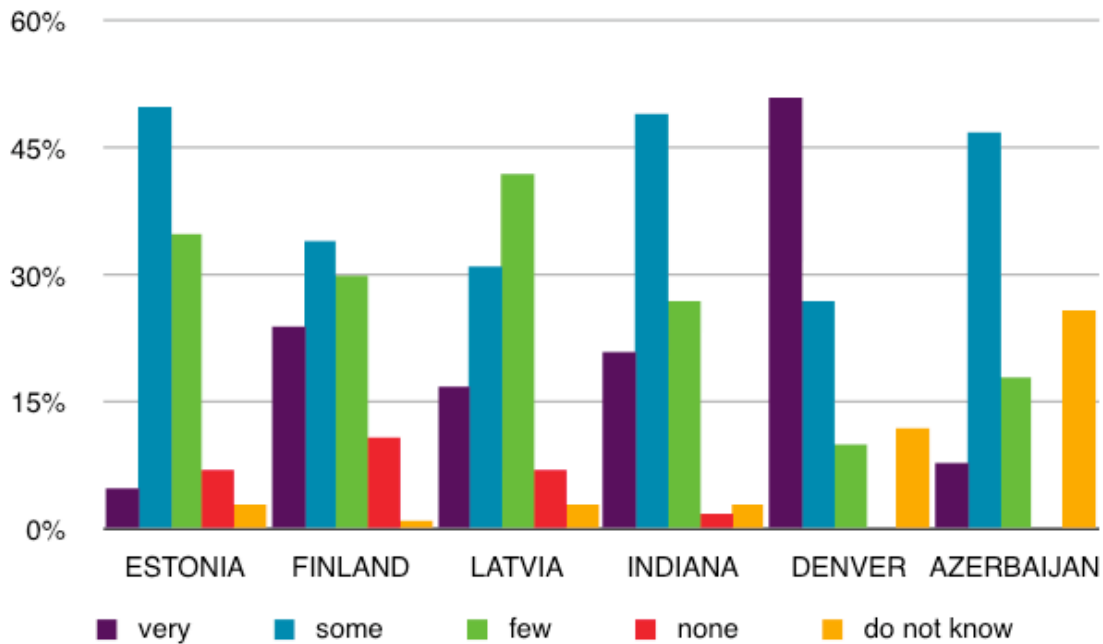


Figure 4. Students' perception of their society's multicultural nature.

AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan young people think that the greatest majority among different social groups are religious people (69%) and those having different home languages (53%). The representatives of the three other social groups are not so widely recognized: 22% of respondents mention the existence of people belonging to a different race or ethnic group, 16% mention the people with special needs and only 2% of respondents admit the fact of having people with a different sexual orientation in society.

Considering everything mentioned above 8% of respondents claim Azerbaijan to be “very multicultural” and 47% think it is “somewhat multicultural”. When only 3% Estonian students gave answers “do not know” to the composition of society, then the respective number in Azerbaijan was 26%, which was on the second place in students’ esteem after “somewhat multicultural”. Perhaps it could be explained by the younger age of Azerbaijan respondents but maybe also by the fact that the topic of multiculturalism in society or education is not an issue to be discussed.

4.2. Young people’s readiness and openness for communication with representatives of different social groups.

The respondents were asked about their wish and readiness to communicate with people of the above-mentioned groups (people who speak different languages at home, people with special needs, people belonging to a different race or ethnicity, people with a different sexual orientation, people belonging to some religion).

ESTONIA

The answers of students from Estonian and Russian medium schools are basically the same. Both prefer to communicate with those people having different home languages (73% of students of Estonian medium schools; 79% of Russian medium schools) and with people belonging to a different race /ethnicity (82% and 68%, respectively). The following preferred groups for communication were religious people and people with different sexual orientation. However, the proportional differences here are remarkable: the students of Estonian medium schools gave 52% and 51% of positive answers, students from Russian-medium schools gave positive answers 32% and 28%, respectively.

The number of those giving negative answers was just the contrary. 25% of students from Estonian medium schools have no wish to communicate with religious people and 22% with people with a different sexual orientation. The proportion of students giving negative answers from Russian medium schools in regard to aforementioned social groups was 38% and 18%, respectively. The students of both school types were least willing to communicate or have some common activities with people with special needs. Only 32% of students from Estonian-medium schools and 23% of students from Russian-medium schools were willing to do it.

In the section characterising wish/willingness to communicate with diverse social groups there was a considerable amount of answers “don’t know”. 35% of students from Estonian schools do not know whether they wish to have common activities with people with special needs and 25% of them cannot make up their mind about religious people. Students from Russian medium schools have followed the same trend in regard to the same social groups; only the characterising percentage numbers are considerably higher – 46% and 38%.

When students from Estonian medium schools were also unsure about their willingness to communicate with people having different sexual orientation

(22% answered “don’t know”), then 21% students from Russian medium schools were unsure whether they wish to have common activities people belonging to a different race/ethnicity.

Making an attempt to summarise the results collected, we may tentatively conclude that students from Estonia medium schools are somewhat more willing to communicate with people of diverse social groups than students from Russian medium schools. However, among students of both school types there are many of those who cannot decide or take any position.

The following question was dedicated to having friends among people belonging to diverse social groups. The structure of answers provided by students from both school types were quite similar to the answers given to the previous question with quite different percentages. In comparison to the previous question, the researchers had broadened the circle of friends and two new groups had been added - “people much older or younger than you” and “people who can spend considerably more or considerably less money than you can”. The top three groups for students from Estonian medium schools were “people much older or younger than you” (88%), people with different financial opportunities (87%) and those having different home languages (83%).

The first two mentioned groups also belong to the favourites of students from Russian medium schools with 90% and 84% respectively. The third group of friends for them were religious people (69%) followed by people with different home languages (66%). Religious friends are on the fourth place in the hierarchy for students from Estonian medium schools (70%). The biggest differences between students from Estonian and Russian medium schools can be observed in their attitude to people belonging to different race/ethnicity when choosing friends. Only 23% of students from Estonian medium schools claim to have them whereas the corresponding number of students from Russian medium schools is 58%.

Both target groups questioned gave the biggest number of answers “don’t know” about religious people and people with a different sexual orientation – 16% and 28% of students from Estonian medium schools, and 21% and 14% of students of Russian medium schools. Students of both school types seem to be best informed and most knowledgeable about race/ethnicity as only 3% of students from Estonian medium schools and 2% of Russian medium schools gave the answer “don’t know”.

When trying to compare students’ answers to both questions – whom they would like to cooperate and who to make friends with, then the analysis of all the answers gives suggests that neither students of Estonian medium nor Russian medium schools have no clear preferences. It is hardly possible that 70% of students from Estonian medium schools and 69% of students from Russian medium schools could have religious friends. When estimating the proportions of different social groups in society, the numbers characterising the amount of religious people were quite small. When only a couple of per cent of students from Russian medium schools thought that there were some

people with different sexual orientation in our society, then only some, but still 6% of students from Russian medium schools claimed to have friends from that social group. We also encountered some similar discrepancies when analysing the proportions of the existing social groups, possible joint actions to be taken and having friends from among people representing different social groups.

Despite different possibilities of interpretation considering the analysed cluster of questions and the answers provided, we may conclude that one general tendency can be observed - students from Estonian medium schools seem to be more open in their approaches and attitudes, more tolerant at communication and more aware of the real situation in society.

When the answers analysed above mostly reflect personal values and attitudes, then the open question - why is it good to accept diversity - allows us to get some insights into what they have acquired at school in different subject lessons. The answers of students from both school types were practically identical considering their content and meaning with the following positive arguments favouring diversity presented:

- *diversity and individual differences make life more interesting,*
- *people cannot avoid being different from others to a certain extent,*
- *ability to accept diversity helps to avoid conflicts in society,*
- *the right to be different belongs to basic human rights.*

All arguments of that kind speak about awareness how important and necessary cohesion in society is. It is essential to accept the fact that 6% of students of Estonian medium schools did not answer the question why it is good to accept differences; the corresponding number in Russian medium schools was 21%. Some respondents from Russian medium schools also had answered "no" or "don't know".

FINLAND

There was no difference between the two Finnish schools in willingness to have common activities with people who differ from themselves. The respondents were most interested in having common activities with people speaking different language (86%), belonging to a different ethnicity (73%) or having different sexual orientation (64%).

45% of the respondents in Finland answered "do not know" to the question of having common activities with people who exercise religion. Almost all students responded that many or some people in their society belong to some religion, which shows the actual situation in Finland: people belong to a religion without exercising it actively.

The open question about accepting diversity gave similar answers both in the area of capital city and the rural city:

- *life would be much less exciting without differences,*
- *it is not a question about diversity but about humanity,*
- *"don't hurt other people, but live your life free as you are",*
- *"I am happy that my school has students from different cultures, it enriches my life",*
- *it is important to accept diversity, otherwise we cannot live in peace.*

LATVIA

According to the opinions of Latvian young people, diversity of society is mostly created by people who belong to different religious groups (more than 25% of students identify that there are many such people, more than 25% identify that there are some such people) and have a different home language (8% identify that there are many such people, 15% - that there are some). Most of the students have responded that in their communities there is no one who belongs to a different racial/ethnic group, has special needs or belongs to a sexual minority. Only 12 – 22% of the respondents reported that there are some such individuals. Even fewer respondents (2 – 7%) have identified there being a few people in their community who have special needs and who belong to a sexual minority group.

70% of the students are loyal towards people from different language groups and people with different ethnic/racial backgrounds; 50% express loyalty to people of a different religion. Approximately one third of the students have confirmed that they are ready to participate in common activities with people with special needs and sexual minorities while half of the respondents, mostly male, have identified that they do not want to participate in common activities with representatives of sexual minorities.

Similarly, more than 2/3 of the respondents have expressed that they do not want to participate in activities together with people with special needs, or have not defined their opinion yet (have responded “do not know”). Such numbers show that young people are more open to representatives of different ethnic groups and people who speak a different language, but are rather reserved when it comes to engaging in common activities with people with special needs and sexual minorities.

More than 80% of the students identified in their responses to the question „Do you have friends who are different from you...?“, that they have friends who can spend more or less money than they themselves can, and who are of a different age. Approximately 70% have friends who speak a different language as well as have a different attitude towards religion (60%). Combining these data with the responses above in regard to common activities, we can see that young people representing different language groups are accepted better since most of the respondents identified that they have such friends. In contrast, approximately 70% of young people responded that they did not have friends with a different sexual orientation and more than 60% did not have friends with special needs or from a different racial/ethnic group. Such a situation largely shapes the attitudes of young people towards these groups in the society.

Almost all students say that they supported diversity and accepted other people's differences. They provided the following arguments:

... it develops my understanding that there are also other opinions, it makes me think,

... it allows me to contribute and to learn from other,.

... it is good to accept other people's differences; it would be boring if we all would be the same. We are all human, and have to respect each other

*because each of us has our own differences and each of us wants to be accepted and respected,
...each person has to be different for society to be diverse. It is very good to be different, this is the right thing; it makes our sharing and interaction interesting as we can discuss different, previously unknown things,
... we have to be who we are,
... there are no two identical people on earth; we are all different in some way, in our way of thinking and attitude and we have to accept it about each other.
...each person is valuable,
...the more different people are, the more interesting the world becomes.*

Some respondents identify that it is not a good idea to be too different:
*It is good to be different, but it is also important to try to be involved.
Mostly it is good to be different, but it also depends on what kind of differences these are.
It is not always good to express your opinion or to behave very openly in some situations; it is for one's own safety reasons.
It is good but it is hard to apply it to myself; I have difficulties to accept differences.
Even if you are very different from others it is not a good idea to make it very explicit; for example if the difference is because you have more money, if your parents are rich etc.
No, it creates a lot of problems.
It is good to be different but not too much.
No, because society tends to exclude those who are different.
I think that it is not good to be different because in that case others may not understand you.*

Mostly, respondents describe *how it should be* – it is good to be different, it is important to accept diversity etc, however, the responses quoted above show that most of the youngsters see the society around them as slightly or somewhat diverse and are not ready to accept different groups.

According to the opinions of the students, a good life in a multicultural society is assured by family, friends, education, job and money, and less by social skills as well as luck. In most cases, young people develop their opinions about society from experiences they have in their social environment and networks of communication; in most cases, this communication take place within rather homogeneous, closed groups and therefore exchange of information and interaction among different groups is rather limited. Young people express more loyalty towards different ethnic groups, races and language groups, less towards people from sexual minorities and people with special needs.

INDIANA

In this section, students were asked questions that measured their social distance from other groups. Students were asked specifically about the demographics of their friend groups and whether they might be interested in activities with individuals who are in some way different from them. There were two quantitative “yes/no” questions, and one open-ended question.

When answering the questions in this section, students were asked to select their responses based on their *own* personal affiliations or orientations, not based on difference from a perceived dominant “norm” in the community or state. For example, students answering whether they would be interested in having more activities with people of a different sexual orientation were asked to imagine activities with students different from their *own* orientation, not necessarily students specifically identifying as GLBT (as the respondent might have identified as GLBT). The purpose of this section was to measure student attitudes toward difference, not toward dominant norms.

Students reported that they commonly had friends who belonged to a different religion (89.7%) or were from a different racial./ethnic group (87.7%). The next most common response was friendships with individuals who had a different amount of expendable income (82.4%) than the student did. Students reported almost equally that they were friends with individuals of a significantly different age than they were (65.5%) and those with a different sexual orientation (65%). The least common associations were those with individuals who had a physical or mental disability (31.2%).

When asked if students would be open to having more activities with individuals different from themselves (language, disability, sexual orientation, race, class, religion), the number of respondents who did not answer, or who answered “I don’t know” increased considerably, especially those related to activities with individuals who have a disability. The number of valid responses about pursuing activities with disabled students dropped 23% (down from 96 responses to 73) when compared with the question preceding it about having friendships with disabled individuals. Still, out of the valid responses, 61% said that they would be interested in having more activities with people who had a disability, though this was the least commonly selected group in this category.

The most common response was that 94.2% of students would be interested in having more activities with people from a different race or ethnicity. 86.7% of students reported that they would be interested in having more activities with individuals who speak a different language and individuals from a different religion, while 64% would be interested in participating in activities with people who have a different sexual orientation from them.

COLORADO

When answering the questions “Would you like to have common activities with the people...?” the Colorado students answered “yes” rather equally, i.e., they wanted to communicate with all of them. All “yes” answers were given by 54 – 87% of respondents. (The same interval range with Estonian young people was 26 – 76% and in the case of Azerbaijan young people even 10 – 83%.) The most preferred partners for communication chosen by Colorado students were people belonging to a different race or ethnic group (87%) and those speaking different home languages (80%). The lowest was the preference number – 54% - concerning people with special needs.

The question “Do you have friends...?” actually shows similar situation in reality as compared to their attitudes to willingness to communicate with different social groups. The biggest amount of respondents (93%) claims to have friends representing different races of ethnic groups, and the smallest number claims to have friends from among people with special needs (36%). The second group of preferred friends was in other four different sites – also in Denver - considerably younger or older people that the respondents themselves: ca 88%. At the same time a discrepancy can be observed: when 59% claimed that they would communicate with people with different sexual orientation, then 68% claimed to have such friends in reality. To sum up, Denver students chose their friends on a more equal basis than young people of other countries, as they claim to have quite many friends from among all different social groups – 36-93% - as compared to young people in other countries.

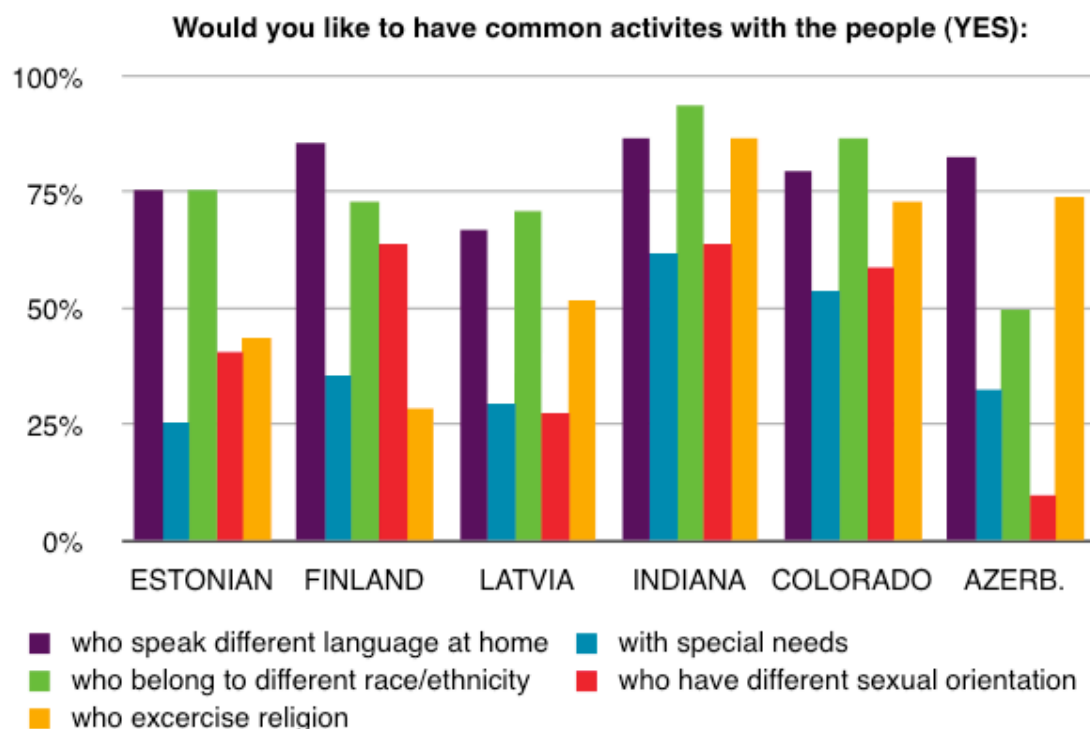


Figure 5. Students’ statements about the preferences of their affiliations.

AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan young people clearly preferred to communicate with people speaking different home languages (83%) and with those belonging to different religions (74%). The people with different sexual orientation were rejected most. Only 10% of respondents would like to communicate with them. 33% of respondents were willing to communicate with people with special needs, which is similar to the attitudes of Latvian young people, but lower than attitudes of Denver students, and higher than those of Estonian students.

The question “Do you have friends...?” got positive answers in the scale varying from 5%- (people with different sexual orientation) up to 88%- to friends being considerably older or younger than the respondents themselves.

Very few, only 15% claim to have friends from among people with special needs and only 18% have friends who worship a different religion than they themselves do. Attitudes related to different religions in Azerbaijan are clearly different from those in other countries. It could be explained by the fact that in the times of compulsory Soviet atheism after the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been a kind of religious renaissance of Azerbaijan people and the dominating religion there is Islam.

Dou have friends who...? (YES):

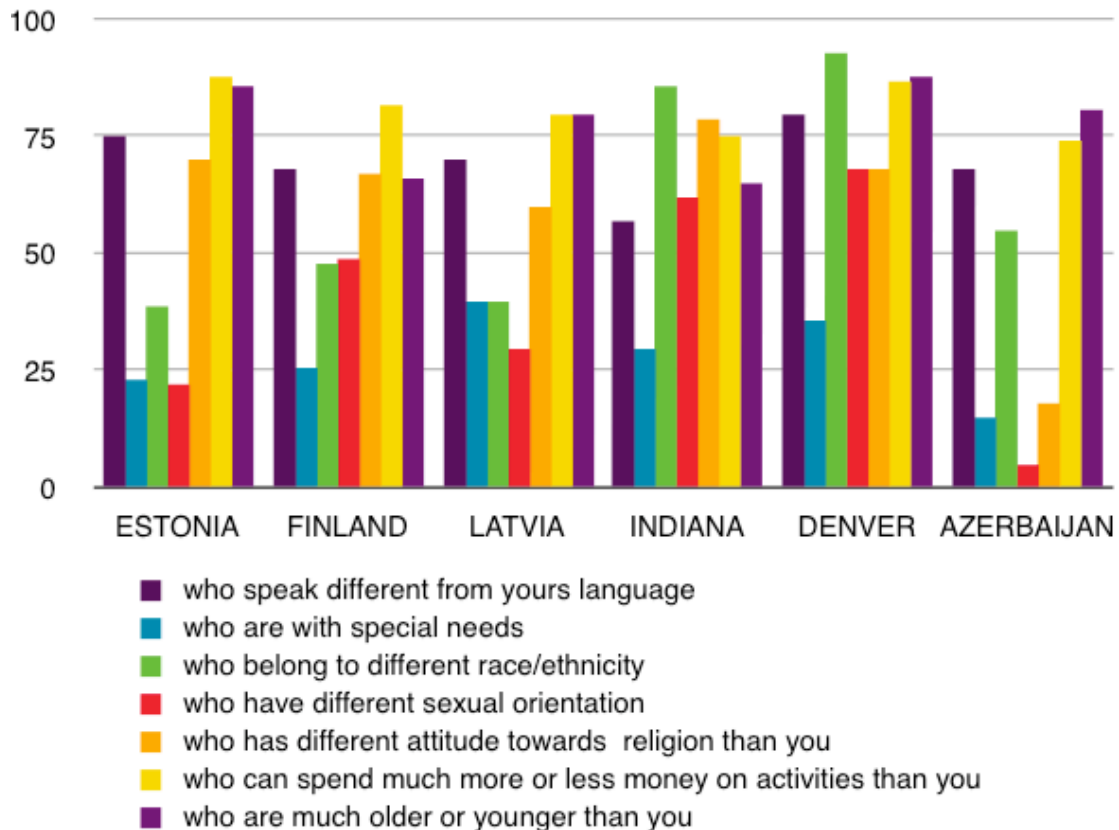


Figure 6. Students' statements about their choice of friends.

4.3. Comprehension of a democratic society and a good quality of life in it.

The respondents were asked in the questionnaire to evaluate, how much they are concerned about future employment, access to education, use of natural resources, being treated justly and equally under the law, access to the Internet, allowing and accepting immigrants/newcomers in the country, being accepted and respected by other people. The scale offered the following possibilities for evaluation: a lot, somewhat, a bit, not at all.

ESTONIA

The answers provided by students of Estonian and Russian medium schools differed greatly (see Figure 7). Students of Estonian medium schools were concerned about all of the mentioned problems, the percentage numbers being between 12 – 36%, which showed there are no areas of great concern or problems. Students of Russian medium schools had quite clearly specified concerns, which was shown by percentage numbers between 16 – 87%. Students of Estonian medium schools are least concerned about immigrants

entering the society (12%) and equally not very much about – 21% - use of natural resources and access to the Internet.

They are most worried about fair and equal treatment under the law (36%) and future employment (33%) while living in Estonia. The smallest concerns of students of Russian medium schools are similar: about use of natural resources (only 16%) and newcomers/immigrants to the society (25%). At the same time their greatest concern is access to education (87%), future employment (76%) opportunities to use the Internet (59%).

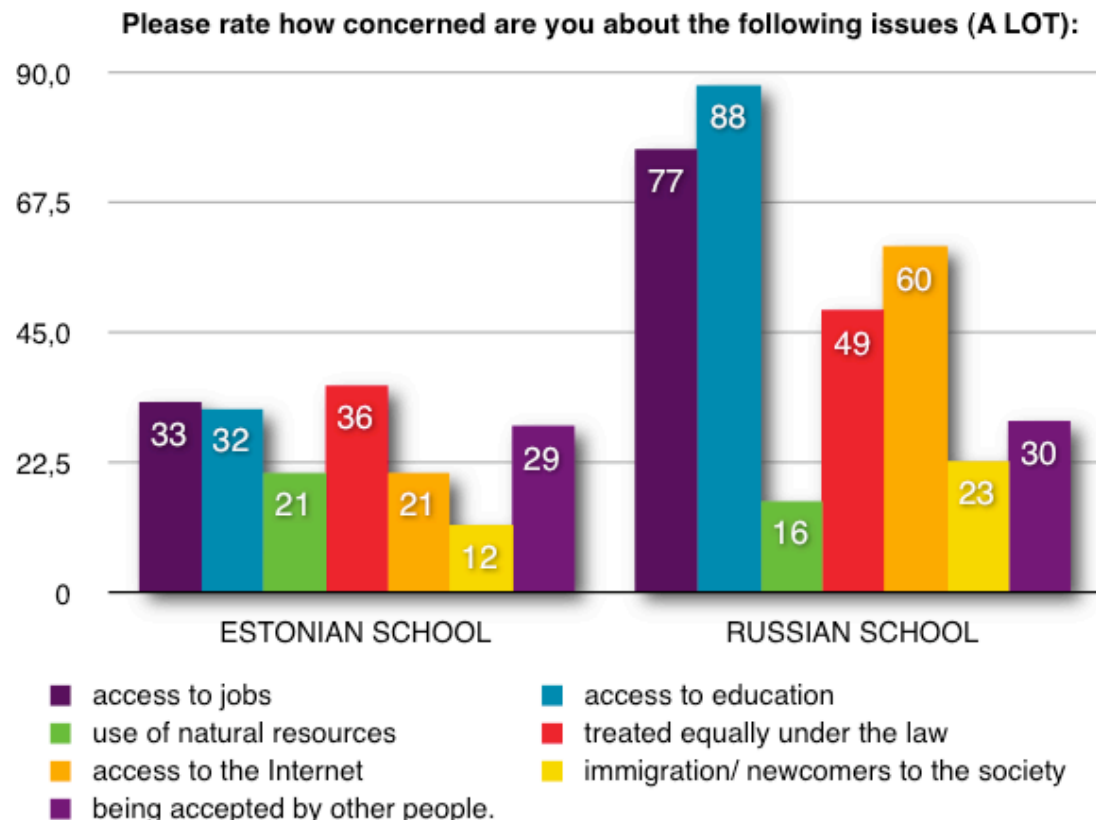


Figure 7. Estonian and Russian medium schools students' major concerns while living in Estonia.

These differences can be explained by different socio-cultural circumstances creating the conditions they are living in. The concern of students from Russian medium schools about access to education is definitely related to their inadequate Estonian language skills, because that is the only characteristic differentiating them from the students of Estonian medium schools. A relatively high concern about the use of the Internet among students of Russian medium schools can be caused by financial problems their families have and how access to computers at schools has been organised.

The answers in the field of good/high quality of life shows us their attitudes related to material and spiritual values. Accordingly, we can see behind their different opinions also their attitude to future developments (natural resources, immigrants, access to education).

There was a question: "What do you think how much other people care about the same issues?". The students of both types of schools gave similar answers, saying that probably other people are concerned about the same problems (evaluation scale "many", "some"). The opinions of students from Estonian and Russian medium schools differed in distribution of "many" and "some". 39% of students from Estonian schools thought that many people shared the same concerns and 45% thought they are sharing their concerns with some people. The respective numbers characterising opinions of Russian medium schools were 16% and 61%.

Among questions characterising a good quality of life there was also quite a complicated one: What makes a good living in the multicultural society? There was a list (health, coffee, education, friends, jobs, social skills, family, luck, money, pets) of which they had to leave or delete and add, what was missing. The respondents had to decide what was the meaning of values in a multicultural society and in any society, and that made the question complicated. At the same time they had to decide what definitely must belong to a good life and what they could do without.

Decisions taken by students of Estonian and Russian medium schools about deleting some of the words were similar: they excluded unanimously coffee and pets from the list, but quite many considered also health and money unnecessary. The words added to the list can be clearly classified by target groups. Students from Estonian medium schools often added words like tolerance, food, safety, social guarantees, honesty, love, freedom, access to arts and culture to characterise good life. The list of additions compiled by students from Russian medium schools was different. They were of the opinion that patriotism, equality, multitude of opportunities, life without discrimination also belongs to characteristics of a good life. They also added safety and love, similar to students from Estonian medium schools. However, 15% of students from Estonian medium schools and 16% of students from Russian medium schools chose not to answer that question.

FINLAND

Both groups in the Finnish survey were only a bit (47% in the rural area) or not at all (38% in the capital area) concerned about immigration or newcomers to the society; they were much more concerned about the use of natural resources or access to education. Also the access to the Internet (34%) or being treated equally under the law (30%) did not at all worry the Finnish students, which shows that they considered their society a safe place. The students guessed that other people also cared somewhat about the same issues as they did.

LATVIA

Among the options offered the following tendencies can be observed: 16 – 18 year-olds are mostly concerned about access to job and education (more than 90% identified it as very and rather important). More than 80% of students are very and rather concerned about being accepted by others (taking into account that they themselves were not very open to other groups of society, it may explain why they were so concerned about being accepted themselves);

almost as important for them is access to the Internet. The smallest number of respondents was concerned about issues of migration and the utilization of natural resources – less than 20% were very much concerned about these issues, around 45% were a little concerned or were not concerned at all. Global issues concern Young people were much less concerned about global issues than personal issues.

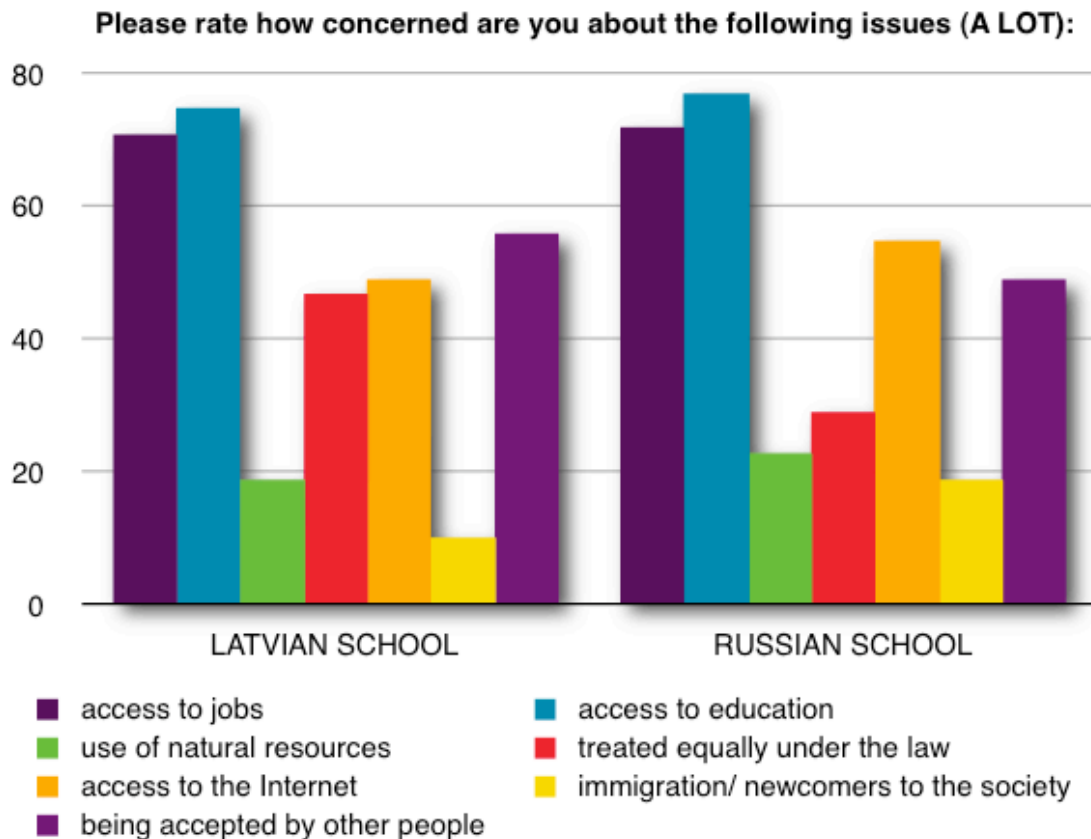


Figure 8. Latvian and Russian medium schools students’ major concerns while living in Latvia.

INDIANA

* This section of results (4.3) includes 5 questions that were treated on the Tallinn questionnaire as three separate sections (4.3, 4.5, and 4.7).

In this section, students were asked questions about the tools necessary for life in a democracy, as well as their own quality of life. There were two quantitative questions in this section, which used the four-point Likert scale. These questions asked students to rate their level of concern about certain issues (access to jobs, education, and the internet, use of natural resources, being treated equally, immigration issues, and being accepted by others), and then asked students whether they felt that individuals from different groups might have a similar level of concern about these issues. This section also had three open-ended questions not evaluated in this analysis.

The first quantitative question, which asked students to rate their individual concerns about certain issues, produced the largest standard deviations on the survey, but these variations were still small (not larger than 1.2). The

second quantitative question, which asked whether members of different groups shared the same concerns as the survey respondents, yielded lower standard deviations than the first part of the section, indicating, as elsewhere on the survey, that there was little variation amongst student responses.

Overall, students indicated that they were most concerned about receiving equal treatment, with 44% of respondents saying that they were “very concerned” about this issue. The next most common concerns were about the use of natural resources, access to jobs, social acceptance, immigration, and educational access. Students were the least concerned about access to the internet, with 37% indicating they were “not at all concerned,” but this question also had the highest standard deviation of any question on the survey.

The second question showed fairly even, uniform student responses, indicating that students believed members from all other groups were probably “somewhat” concerned about the same issues that they were.

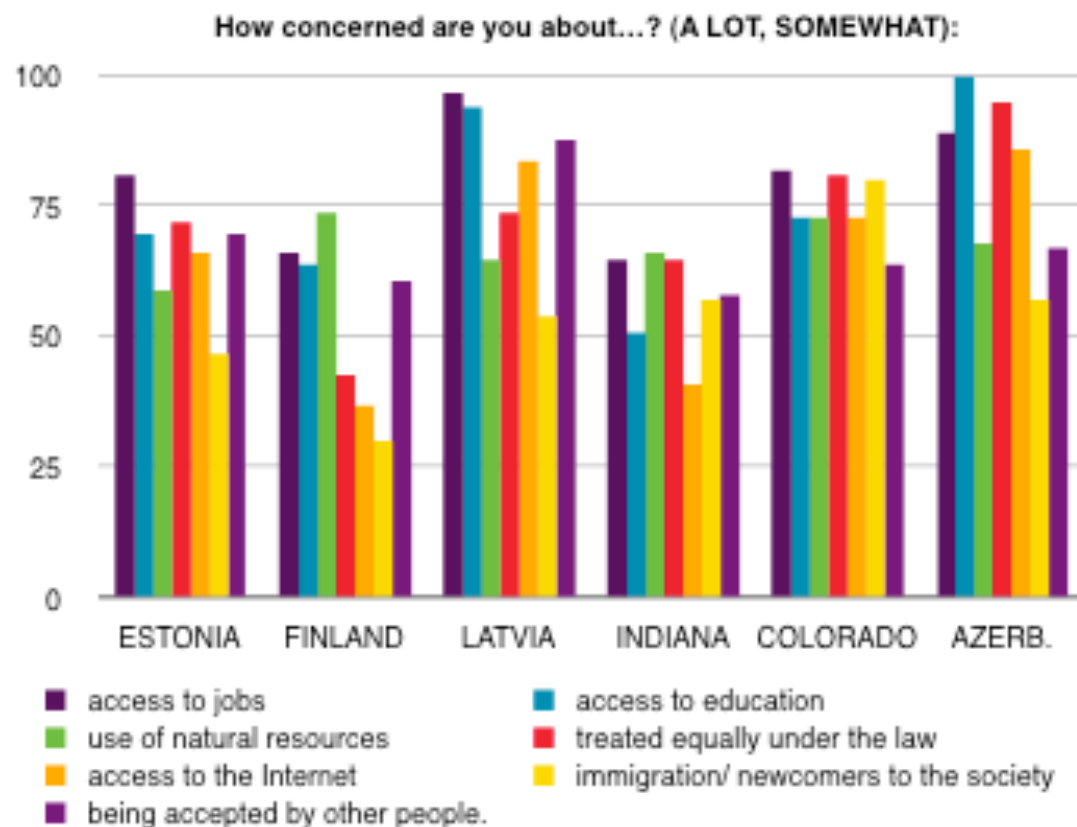


Figure 9. Students’ major concerns while living in their societies.

COLORADO

The problems Colorado students are concerned about were presented in a more compact way. They were worried about different issues in the range from 64% (being accepted by other people) up to 82% (access to jobs). Equally, 73% of respondents are worried about access to education, use of natural resources and access to the Internet.

AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan students were more greatly differentiated starting from 57% (worried about immigrants entering their society) until 100% - access to education. They were also very much worried about being “treated equally under the law” with the corresponding number of 95%, and , in a similar way with students of other countries, about access to jobs 89%.

4.4. Young people’s comprehension of equality and equal rights of people in society.

The students were asked, if the rights of the people from the listed social groups should be better protected in future as compared to the protection today. The same social groups were listed that were represented in the questions about the structure of a multicultural society: people who speak different home languages, people with special needs, people belonging to a different race or ethnicity, people with a different sexual orientation, people belonging to some religion. Another question in this block was about the students’ perception about their own feeling of being legally protected in the society.

ESTONIA

It was possible to answer with “yes”, “no” and “don’t know”. All respondents generally agreed that the rights of all the mentioned groups should probably be more protected. The opinions of students from students of Russian medium schools were considerably more radical. 67% of them said that the rights of sexual minorities should be least protected, and the rights of other social groups should be more protected (82% – 93%; 93% supported better protection of the rights of people with special needs). Students from Estonian medium schools were more modest when offering “yes” answers. The people with special needs were supported most – by 78%, and the people speaking different home languages were supported least - 38%. But 89% of the students from Russian medium schools were in favour of supporting the rights of people speaking different home languages.

Another difference between the opinions of students from Estonian medium and Russian medium schools was the proportion of answers “don’t know”. The percentage of students from Estonian medium schools was 11% – 25%; the percentage of students from Russian medium schools was 5%-11% who chose not decide about it.

The question: “Are there laws that protect the rights of these people?” got somewhat more “don’t know” answers from students of Estonian medium schools. At the same time they also gave more “yes” answers. However, there were more “no” and “don’t know” answers (except for the rights of people with special needs) than “yes” answers. Also many of the students from Russian medium schools most often answered “no” and “don’t know”. They were sure only about the rights concerning people with special needs and people belonging to a different ethnicity. Unclear knowledge about laws protecting all people in the society were somewhat surprising, because they are supposed to acquire the knowledge in the lessons of civics, but also in other subject

lessons about the Estonian constitution at least, which guarantees fundamental rights for all social groups listed in this question.

The question: Are your rights in our society protected? belonged to the same group. When answering they had to choose from “a lot”, “somewhat”, “a little”, “not at all” and “don’t know”. 88% of students from Estonian medium schools and 72% of students from Russian medium schools answered that their rights are protected “a lot” or “somewhat”.

FINLAND

The Finnish students had the feeling that their rights were somewhat (47%) or a lot (32%) protected. No “not at all” answers were given to this question. No clear answers were given to the question, whether other peoples’ rights should be better protected. “Do not know” answer occurred quite often. Protection of rights of people belonging to a different ethnic group was mostly suggested (“somewhat” 45% and “a lot” 14%). Also rights of those people having a different sexual orientation should be better protected (“somewhat” 30%) or “a lot” 22%). People speaking a different language were not seen in a remarkable need of better protection (“a little” 30% and not at all 21%). This question can reflect understanding Swedish (the second national language in Finland) as a “different language”, which is well protected in the country.

The question about laws protecting the rights of people gave most “do not know” answers. At the same time there were a lot of clear “yes” answers. The Finnish society was considered very protective by law. The students answered mostly “yes” to the question about laws protecting people with special needs (66%) or belonging to a different ethnicity (51%). In the students’ opinion, the rights of people speaking different languages (“yes 48%), people with different sexual orientation (“yes 42%) and people exercising a religion (“yes 40%) were highly protected. The remarkable amount of “do not know” answers can reflect a minor interest in the age group or the theme not focused in the school curriculum.

LATVIA

Respondents were asked to express their opinion on how protected their rights were in the society. More than a half (56%) of them identified that their rights are somewhat protected, 22% said that their rights were slightly protected, only 7% admitted that their rights are fully protected and an equal proportion of respondents identified that their rights are not protected at all.

Young people express the opinion that the rights of people with special needs should be protected better than they are now; such an opinion was indicated by 70% of the respondents. The rights of people who belong to a different race or ethnic group should be better protected as well. However, they were not so concerned about the rights of people with a different sexual orientation (24% and 33% of the respondents have marked *slightly* or *not at all*, respectively). These responses contradict to the knowledge the students demonstrated when answering the question about laws that protect such groups. More than 70% of the respondents knew that there were laws that protect the rights of people with special needs. At the same time they thought

that the rights of these particular groups have to be protected better. As for the legislation concerning other groups (people speaking a different language, belonging to a different race, ethnic group or religion as well as sexual minorities) almost 50% of the respondents were not aware of whether such legislation exists; 20 – 35% were certain that there was no legislation that would protect the rights of these groups.

INDIANA

In this section, students were asked about their knowledge pertaining to federal laws, especially those related to legal protection of different groups. There were four quantitative questions using either a 4-point Likert scale or “yes/no” questions. There was also one open-ended question, which served as a “part II” for one of the “yes/no” questions.

The four quantitative questions asked students to what degree they felt that federal laws protected their rights as an individual and whether they felt that their rights had ever been violated. They were then asked whether they were aware of any existing laws that protected the rights of different groups (non-native language speakers, individuals with disabilities, GLBT individuals, religious minorities, or racial/ethnic minorities), and if they thought there should be more laws protecting each group.

A majority of students (66%) indicated that they felt their personal rights were protected. No one answered that his or her rights were “not at all protected.” In fact, this question had the lowest standard deviation for the entire questionnaire. When asked if there were any federal laws protecting different groups, a considerable number of students did not answer or answered that they “did not know,” especially for laws regarding non-native language speakers (41% did not answer or did not know) and for GLBT individuals (33% did not answer or did not know). Students seemed most aware of federal laws protecting individuals with a disability (70.2%) and individuals from a racial or ethnic minority (61.6%), and a majority also seemed to know that there were no federal laws specifically protecting individuals based on their native language (65%).

The final question in this section asked students to give their opinions on whether they felt that there should be more federal protection for certain groups. Responses to this question did not indicate a strong feeling either way: standard deviations were low, and responses generally fell toward the middle range of the 4-point scale. Out of the five groups mentioned (non-English speakers, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, GLBT individuals, and religious minorities), slightly more students felt that there should be stronger protections for individuals with disabilities and racial minorities, but these were relatively minor trends.

COLORADO, AZERBAIJAN

Among the students answering the question “Are your rights in our society protected?” 71% of Colorado students gave a positive answer (“a lot” and “somewhat”) and 59% of Azerbaijan students were of the same opinion. Still these numbers are lower than the corresponding percentage in Estonia (80%)

or in Finland (76%). Estonian students were generally surer that citizens' rights were well protected, as the number of those answering "don't know" was only 4%. The same figure in Colorado and Azerbaijan was almost three times higher or 11%.

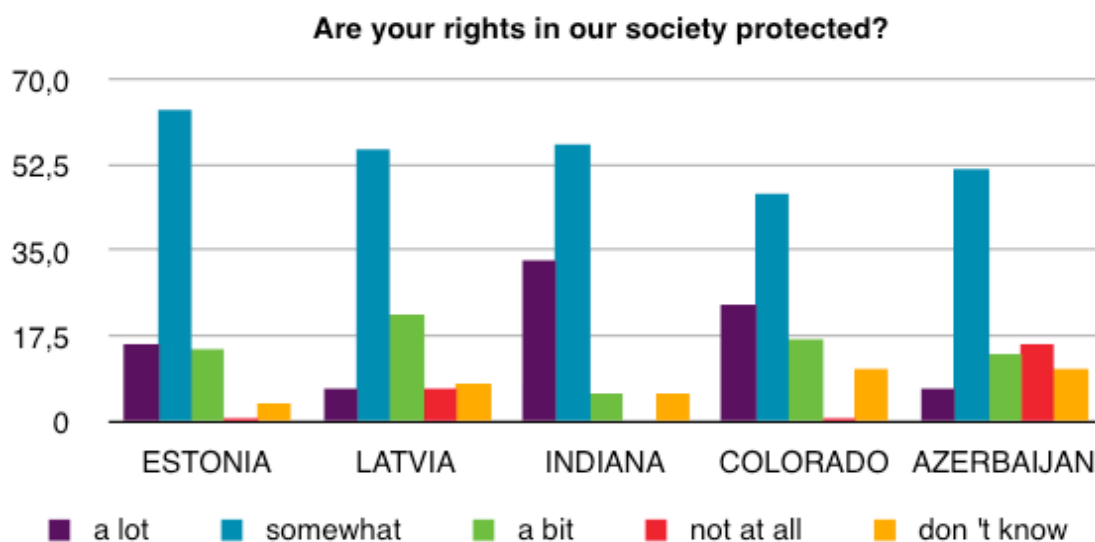


Figure 10. Students' perceptions about the level of protection of their rights while living in their own society.

The question "Should the rights of the people be better protected?" was answered by the students from Colorado and Azerbaijan in a similar way despite the high percentage number characterizing previous questions about themselves. The rights of different social groups (people speaking different home languages, people with special needs, people belonging to different race or ethnic groups, people with different sexual orientations and people worshipping some religion) should be somewhat better protected in the opinion of 44-70% of Colorado students and 24 – 81% of Azerbaijan students. Azerbaijan students were of the opinion that students with different sexual orientation needed least protection. Colorado students thought that people speaking different home languages did not need any further protection. When Colorado students thought that the rights of people with special needs should be better protected then Azerbaijan young people were of the opinion that people speaking different home languages and those belonging to different religious groups should be more protected legally.

The knowledge about laws protecting rights of people with different interests and belonging to different social groups should be obtained from the content of education provided by schools. In a democratic society answers to such questions could be given already considering constitution of a country. Unfortunately, the amount of "do not know" answers is quite big in all participating countries. The number of students who gave "don't know" answer about people's rights speaking different home languages, people with special needs, people belonging to different races/ethnic groups, people with different sexual orientation and people belonging to different religious groups for Colorado was 18 – 31% and in Azerbaijan 31 – 62% of all respondents.

However, they were most unstable when giving opinions about people belonging to sexual minorities.

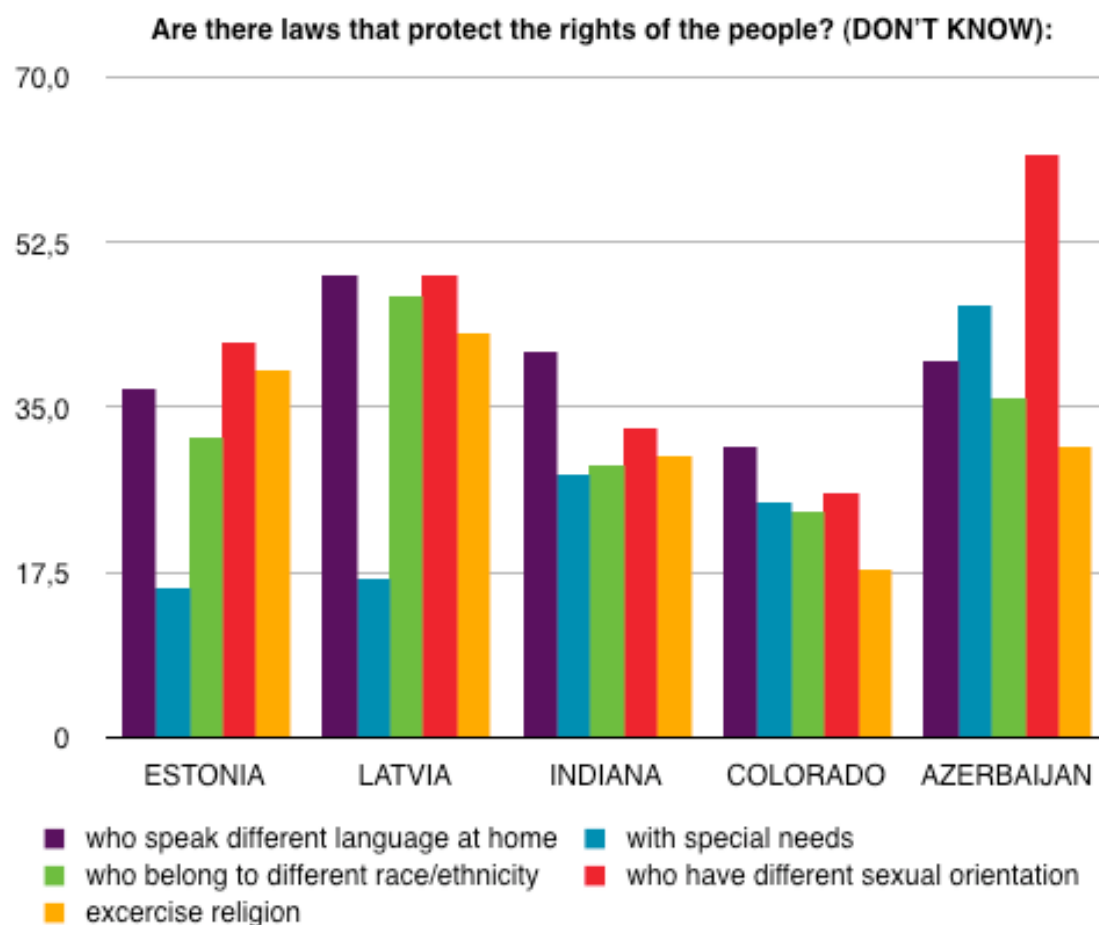


Figure 11. Students' awareness about the system protecting peoples' rights in their societies.

4.5. Young people's comprehension of a democratic society perceived as individually accepted values.

The young people had to decide about a tricky question: What values are most important for you personally when living in a democratic society? They had to select the top five from among enlisted twelve and rank them according to their personal priorities. The listed values were the following: being included/respected/accepted; money and material values, safety, legal equality, honesty and friendship, fairness, privacy, freedom of expression, respect consensus, personal responsibility, loyalty to your state and loyalty to your friends.

ESTONIA

The students from Estonian medium schools selected least the four last mentioned. They considered safety and security most important (17% of all respondents), fairness (16%) and legal equality (15%). More than 10% also valued freedom of expression, honesty and friendship. All the other values listed were not considered that important for living in a democratic society.

The students from Russian medium schools had other top three values. They considered being included/respected/accepted most important (18% of answers), it was followed by legal equality (17%) and safety and security (13%). 10% considered privacy and freedom of expression important. Similar to students from Estonian medium schools they selected least the four last enlisted values.

To characterise students' awareness in the same field of social competence, the respondents were also asked to name three most essential characteristics of democracy. The students of Estonian medium schools named most often freedom of expression, thought and self expression as well as equality, human rights, participation in policy making and elections and privacy.

The answers of students from Russian medium schools were similar. They also highlighted freedom of expression, but also freedom of action and freedom of choice. Similar to students from Estonian medium schools they also mentioned free elections and equality under law.

The amounts of those students who did not answer this question were different: 4% of students from Estonian medium schools and 31% of students from Russian medium schools, respectively, which was really surprising.

FINLAND

The question about most important values in democracy showed an interesting difference between the Finnish students in the rural and the capital area: safety was considered to be the most important value in the capital area (32%) and less important in the rural area (35%). Apparently, in the rural area safety is seen as a certainty. Legal equality is also evaluated as more important in the capital area, which may reflect a more communal approach to society in a rural environment. Money and material values were maybe surprisingly higher evaluated in the rural area (most important 12%) than in the capital area (most important 4%).

LATVIA

Most respondents have mentioned the freedom of speech, opinion and choice as the characteristics of democracy – approximately 52%, less equality – 23%, the rule of the people (the opportunity to elect, be elected and influence processes) – 21%, safety and security – 6%. As this question of the survey was open-ended and provided space for a more elaborate description, students provided very diverse responses about the characteristics of democracy. It also means that it is very difficult to structure these responses and, in many cases, a similar idea can be expressed in a different way. Among the most mentioned responses were: *democracy is characterized by freedom of press (media), absence of censorship, rule of people, taking into account people's opinions, such as in the USA, freedom to vote, one has authority over others, power to change the political system, elections, human rights, court system, property rights, equal rights under law, function according to legislation, rights of people with disabilities, no discrimination, obeying norms, people govern a country, government is elected by people, independence, laws, support from state etc.*

One quarter of all respondents have not answered this question or have mentioned only one or two characteristics of democracy. It suggests that students have limited knowledge about democracy.

The most important values for young people for living in a democracy: safety and security were mentioned most often (more than 70% or 278 respondents), followed by money and material assets (62% or 244 respondents), and freedom of expression (59% or 230 respondents). Justice, fairness and friendship, as well as mutual respect and acceptance were mentioned less (40 – 50%). Approximately 30% of the respondents have also mentioned privacy and equality under the rule of the law as well as individual values; it is important to mention that only slightly more than 20% of the respondents mentioned personal responsibility. Women more than men have mentioned that respect, acceptance in the society, and safety and security are important aspects.

INDIANA

In this section, students were asked to rank certain values in order of importance, as well as to indicate the factors that they thought were most influential on the development of their values. A second set of questions asked students to assess their level of proficiency in 12 different skills, (identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, communication, observation, negotiation, IT, conflict resolution, cooperation, participation, asking for help, accepting differences, helping others, and acknowledging the accomplishments of others) and then indicate to what degree they thought that the school had influenced their ability to perform these skills. Each question was based on a 4-point Likert scale. Standard deviations for all questions were small, indicating little variation across answers.

The data from the first question on values was complicated by the fact that the instructions were interpreted differently by each student, so some students ranked all 12 variables with rankings of 1-5 rather than just selecting their top 5. Additional research in this area with a refined set of questions would likely yield better results.

Student rankings of the most influential factors on the formation of their values indicated that the majority of students (70.2%) felt that family was the most influential factor, followed by friends (53.1%).

When asked about the impact of schools in teaching about multiculturalism, 83.1% of students said that teaching about different races and cultures was “important” or “very important” in schools, with only 3.3% of people saying that schools should not teach about different races or cultures because “it divides people.” 67.6% of students reported that they were aware that there were multicultural programs in their own schools.

When asked to assess the degree to which students thought they were good at 12 particular skills, students indicated that they were “good” or “very good” at most of the skills listed. Students felt most comfortable “accepting difference,” with 54% of respondents saying that they were “very good” at this

skill. The next most common strengths were IT skills, helping others, communication, and observation. The skills that students felt least expert at were asking for help and conflict resolution.

COUNTRY	Top 4 values			
Estonia	safety	legal equity	fairness	freedom of expression
Latvia	safety	money/mat. things	freedom of expression.	Fairness
Finland	safety	legal equity	money/mat. things	
Colorado	privacy	freedom of expression	safety	Fairness
Indiana	friendship	freedom of expression	honesty	Safety
Azerbaijan	safety	legal equity	respect/acceptance	privacy

Figure 12. Young people's top values while living in a democratic society

The results for the second part of this question – asking about the impact of the school curriculum on development of these skills— indicates that students thought that the school curriculum “somewhat” helped to teach the acquisition of most of the skills. Students reported the highest degree of school influence on teaching the skills of participation, cooperation, and asking for help. Students felt that the school was least influential in teaching negotiation and conflict resolution skills, but the mean for each question indicated that the school had at least some kind of perceived affect on acquisition of all the aforementioned skills.

COLORADO, AZERBAIJAN

Colorado students, when living in a democratic society consider privacy most significant for them (17%), with freedom of expression (14%) and safety (11%) following. Azerbaijan young people have totally different views. They consider safety most significant (15%) and legal equity (14%) after that. Equally 11% of votes got “being included” and privacy.

When analysing and listing the values of a democratic society as specified by Azerbaijan students, the following gradation of values can be compiled in the sequence of their significance: legal equality, safety, loyalty to your state, being included/respected /accepted and privacy. The same list compiled according to preferences of Colorado students was totally different: privacy, freedom of expression, safety, and fairness.

4.6. Young people's evaluation of different factors influencing development of their values and social skills.

For answering the question: "Where do you get your values from?" there was the following list: family, friends, the Internet, mass media (TV, newspapers, magazines, radio), learning at school, experience from the “street community”, religion.

ESTONIA

Both target groups in Estonia highlighted family and friends as greatest factors. The least mentioned was religion. Other factors gained different support. Students from Estonian medium schools considered media and learning at school a bit more important (16%) than students from Russian medium schools (15%). The students from Russian medium schools consider the Internet and experience from the “street “ community more important.

In order to allow students to specify the role of school more precisely, there was the task (question): If you have some of those skills, mark, how much has the school contributed to. Students from Estonian medium schools chose of the enlisted twelve skills the following top three: cooperation skills, communication skills and specifying your own capabilities. The school’s role was considered insignificant at promoting computer skills, skills for asking for help and conflict resolution skills.

The students of Russian medium schools considered the role of school greatest at developing cooperation skills, negotiation skills and skills for specification of one’s own capabilities. They considered school experience skills for celebrating success and somebody’s achievement, conflict solving skills and skills for asking for help.

FINLAND

The Finnish students express getting their values basically from their families (41%). On the other hand, families were also suggested as less important in reflecting values in the rural area of 29% and in the capital area of 20%. The next important sources for students are friends and media in the rural area and “street” community in the capital area. Learning at school, the Internet or religion was not seen as an important source.

COUNTRY	Top 3 value sources		
Estonia	family	friends	school
Latvia	family	friends	school
Finland	family	friends	media
Colorado	family	friends	school
Indiana	family	friends	street & religion
Azerbaijan	family	religion	school

Figure 13. Young people’s most important value sources

The role of school in developing skills was seen most important in case of cooperation skills, participation skills and communication skills. The students said that the school has contributed less for development of students’ computer skills, conflict resolution skills and, and skills for asking for help.

LATVIA

The values of young people are mostly developed and influenced by family (90%) and friends (75%); followed by school, which was mentioned in more than 50% of responses as the third most important influence, as well as

experience from the society. Young people mention religion as a less important factor in shaping their system of values; however some of them have identified it as second in order of importance. The Internet and mass media are mentioned in most cases as fourth to sixth out of seven options; however, for 10% of the respondents the Internet is mentioned as the third most important factor, which influences the development of personal values.

Assessing the skills that have been created and influenced by the school, almost all of the students have marked as having been somewhat influenced. The influence of school has mostly been identified in developing communication skills, the skills to identify one's abilities, cooperation skills, and ability to help others and to work together with others (30 - 40%). Meanwhile, more than 10% of students recognized that school has had no or very little influence on the development of conflict resolution skills (30% identified that school has contributed a little for development of these skills), As for the skills to ask for help, the skills to accept diversity and to recognize success – less than 10% identified that school did not develop these skills at all, about 25% reported that school developed a little these skills. These responses correlate with the information that the most prominent roles in the development of values of young people were played by family and friends, and school had only the third place in this process. It suggests that in the development of skills (and opinions/attitudes) the main factors are family and friends, not school.

INDIANA

For Indiana students were also their families (22%) and their friends (21%) by far the most influential factors in the development of their values. The Internet and the school were among the last ones with 10 % and 11% respectively and all the rest - experience from the street, media and religion got altogether 12 % of votes. This result is very special considering the low position of school among influential factors. The answers to the direct question about the contribution of the school to development of particular knowledge /skills support the same low rating of the school. The students of Indiana have given on the average more answers of "little " and "not at all" than their peers in other countries. Only one specific quality – development of skills to ask for help was supported by schools in Indiana more than by schools of other countries. The role of the school is considered smaller by Indiana students in development of other knowledge and skills than in other countries. Contrary to students in other countries they also said that the role of the school is least significant at development of negotiation skills. In the opinion of both, Indiana and Colorado students, the role of the school is the greatest at development of participation skills.

COLORADO

Denver students when answering the question "Where do you get the values from?" highlighted family with 18%, but other factors as well were mentioned quite equally, between 13 – 16% whereas the role of religion was recognized by 13%. The role of school was influential for 16% of respondents. The Internet least influenced Denver students – only 7% considers it important.

Colorado students considered the role of school as a developer of all their skills and abilities quite equally. They listed three most relevant contributions schools have made: communication skills, participation skills, and accepting difference. They have evaluated their school to be weakest at providing conflict resolution skills, skills for specifying their own capabilities and negotiation skills.

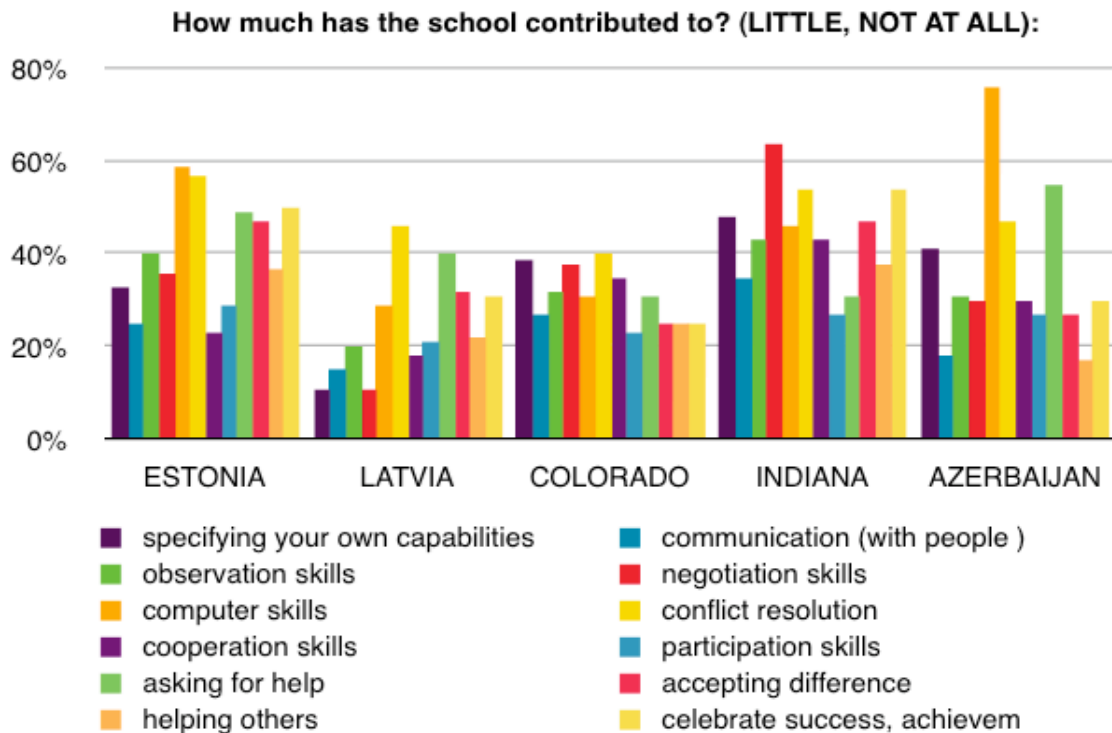


Figure 14. The areas, where the school has the least importance for students.

AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan students were influenced by totally different factors as compared to their peers in other countries and their opinions were also quite polarized. The most influential factor for them is also family with 26%; religion is of equal importance. All other factors have a more modest influence. The role of school has reached 17%, the role of media and the Internet are only 5% and 4%, respectively.

Azerbaijan students thought that school is weakest at providing access to the Internet. 74% of respondents said that schools had no role at developing these skills. 53% were of the opinion that schools did not develop their skills of asking questions and 46% said the same about conflict resolution skills. Still, more than 80% of students mentioned the role of schools when providing skills for communication and helping others.

4.7. Young people’s comprehension of active participation in social life.

ESTONIA

Young people’s awareness of possibilities and importance of participation in social life were studied by an open question: Would you like to have

something changed in society? They had to name three most essential things that needed to be changed. The opportunities for offering change were practically unlimited. At the same time it turned out to be the question that got least answers. 20% of students from Estonian medium schools and 28% of students from Russian medium schools chose not to respond at all. The ideas offered were usually more different than similar considering the two target groups.

The students from Estonian medium schools offered usually ideas for changing something at schools and in education in general, starting from the changes in the system of education and ending up with ideas about particular school subjects (e.g. not to decrease the number of lessons for the mother tongue). They also expressed the wish that the society should be more open, that more attention should be paid to nature protection, that there should be more social guarantees and that people could enjoy being equally treated. They also highlighted the need for better integration of society and for combating crime in society. They also wanted to see fair policy making and tolerance.

The students of Russian medium schools also thought we should have a more open society, increase tolerance and mutual respect. The use of drugs and alcohol should be decreased. Contrary to opinions expressed by the students from Estonian medium schools, there was a great amount of students of Russian medium schools who considered everything perfect in our society and declared there was no need for changes.

FINLAND

The open question about desires to change something in the society gave a variety of answers concerning personal life and life in the society. The Finnish students were worried about getting a study place after the school, about environment, including the huge amount of private cars and lack of public traffic on the countryside. Also more equality in the society, more public financing for education, healthcare and care of the elderly were wished for. Furthermore better meals in the school... Some students would like to have freedom in young peoples' life, but at the same time the wish for more control over the behaviour of young people was expressed.

LATVIA

The answers received from the Latvian students to the question, what young people would like to change in their society were extremely different and related to almost all areas of life, including environment, medicine/health care, education, social services, the system of justice, finance, interactions in society etc. About 30% of students did not answer this question.

The highest number of young people (20%) mention *change of attitude* towards very different things, for example differences, race, money, school, people, children etc. In more than 10% of the questionnaires it was mentioned that it was necessary to change the *government, policies, attitude of the elected officials, laws*. In some questionnaires *equality* is also mentioned. In less than 10% of the questionnaires, students mentioned the need to change

the system of *education* in general, *security and crime situation*, *environmental issues*, *social benefits and salaries*, *taxes*, *employment opportunities*, *language law*, *racism*, *respect and injustice*, *corruption*.

In some questionnaires, the students mentioned that they would change the following things in our society: *the financial situation*, *ignorance towards other people*, *skills to accept diversity*, *increase involvement of society*, *attitude towards differences*, *isolation of power structures from the needs of society*, *attitude towards people with mental problems*, *pessimistic thinking*, *decrease prejudice*, *increase fairness of those working in the public sector*, *eradicate old-fashioned thinking*, *be more polite to each other*, *help each other more*, *be more friendly*, *develop a friendlier society*, *increase the level of tolerance and intelligence*, *improve the system of elections*, *stop frictions among ethnic groups*, *increase trust*, *pay more attention to material status and values*, *improve the system of retirement (pensions)*, *increase respect and care about the world and environment*, *one's own city*, *respect the rights of others*, *not to divide and segregate people according to ethnicity (so that people would not want to immigrate)*, *improve the financing of projects developed by youth*, *guarantee equality for Russian speaking people*, *appreciate work*, *provide education free of charge for all*, *reduce inflation*, *build new roads etc.*

COLORADO

When answering the open-ended question "Would you like something to be changed in your society?" the Denver students wanted to see changes in the field of medical services, responsibility of the government to people, more opportunities for participation in policy making, in the number of divorces, violence in media, equal rights, better communication skills, legalizing marihuana, taxes, president, jobs, money, strong and protected state borders. There was a significant number of those who considered their society perfect and did not recommend any changes.

AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan students most often proposed changes for developing justice, quality of life, security, mutual respect, more religion, freedom of speaking discipline, honesty, following the laws.

5. Conclusions

Students' values and positions specified by this pilot study have developed under the influence of several factors, one of them being the school curriculum. In addition, those environments, in which the individuals do not necessarily perceive themselves as participants in learning and being taught by some who do not consider themselves as teachers, can be very effective. In this regard, peers and family members can be considered a very useful resource. Accepting the fact that all learning environment at school has an impact on the process of education, still some factors play a more important role. Citizenship/civic education – either in the form of a separate subject or as cross-curricular approach is one of those factors. Citizenship/civic education is most effective when developed through meaning-making activities. Learning is effective when the learner is situated in a relevant to the topic environment, where all learning is led by the interest of the learner, where there is an open climate for discussion and involves positive learning relationships and role models.⁵⁰

The present pilot study allows to draw some conclusions about the role of both learning environments in different societies – community and school. As for school, both – the socio-culturally relevant content of education and teaching strategies have their impact, which can be considerably better used for socialisation of the young people in all participating countries.

ESTONIA

All data had to be summarised for the international project to characterise values of young people in Estonia. It was rather difficult as data offered by students from Estonian medium and Russian medium schools differed greatly.

The views differed greatest in regard to multiculturalism in Estonian society, to life in Estonia in general and to young people's own individual position in society. We can observe the discomfort of students from Russian medium schools as well as feeling insecure when living in Estonia. At the same time they showed that they were well aware of their situation and also had a vision for living in Estonia in future. When students from Estonian medium schools considered the present situation natural and felt protected by guarantees – their concerns were smaller, their views and expectations had a more collective approach, then the students from Russian medium schools perceived dangers and limitations and their expectations were of a more individualistic character.

In the field of active participation we can learn about future wishes of young people, their visions and social ideals. As these visions of students from Estonian and Russian medium schools were vastly different, it also shows, how difficult it is to reach any consensus even in our small society.

⁵⁰ Bryony Hoskins. The Impact of Cultural and Civic Education on Social Cohesion. Presentation on December 3, 2009 in Vilnius on the NECE conference The Impact of Citizenship and Cultural Education on Social Cohesion, p. 4.

We may also tentatively conclude that the unused potential of schooling and education in general could be one of the reasons for insufficient knowledge and underdeveloped social skills of the young people.

FINLAND

The survey in Finland shows a quite wide similarity in values and knowledge between the young people in a small and a big society. Concerning the question of equality they felt themselves protected, but were concerned about how equally the society meets the increasing amount of newcomers, or was willing to face difference. Multiculturalism was in the Finnish students' mind welcomed as an enriching factor in the society. Some students expressed frustration at the ongoing discussion about multiculturalism, because they felt it should be self-evident in a modern society.

As a result of the survey of a very small sample of young people in Finnish society, we may come to a conclusion that these students are aware of the multiculturalism in their society and in many cases show activity in getting in contact with people different from themselves. The school seems however to have insignificant contribution in developing social skills needed in a diversiform society.

LATVIA

The survey in Latvia shows, that most young people held the opinion that the society in which they live had medium or little diversity. Diversity was mainly represented by different religions and different languages. A very small part of diversity was created by ethnic or sexual diversity. Students were mostly loyal; they were open to participation in common activities with people from different language groups, yet they were less open to common activities with people with special needs and different sexual orientation. What mainly formed and explained young people's knowledge of and attitudes toward different groups of society was the fact that they had young people using a different language or belonging to different religious groups among their friends.

A summary of young people's understanding of the *quality of life* concept showed that youngsters were less concerned about global issues; young people were more concerned about personal problems, such as access to jobs and education, as well as other people's attitudes towards them.

Most students admitted that they supported diversity and accepted other people's differences.

The students demonstrated very incomprehensive knowledge about existing legislation regarding different groups of society; most of them identified that there were laws protecting the rights of people with special needs. As for other groups, such as different language groups, other ethnic or racial backgrounds, sexual minorities, different religious affiliations etc. more than half of all students admitted that they did not know whether such legislation existed while one third was confident that there were no such laws in their country.

The students mentioned freedom of speech, opinion and choice, less equality, rule of the people (opportunity to elect, be elected and influence processes) etc. as the main attributes of democracy. Responses about expressions of democracy were very diverse while one quarter of respondents did not give any answer at all or mentioned only one or two characteristics. Such a situation may indicate limited knowledge about democracy.

As the most important value of living in democracy, young people first of all mentioned safety and security, then money and material assets and freedom of expression. Young people's system of values were shaped and influenced mostly by family; friends also play a very important role, with school ranking third. Most young people mentioned religion as the least important factor in shaping their system of values

According to the respondents, school had provided the strongest impact in developing communication skills, a capacity to identify one's abilities, interaction skills and an ability to help others. In contrast, school had little or nothing to do with the ability and the skills necessary to solve conflicts, the skills necessary to ask for help, the skill to accept differences and to recognize one's success.

Responding to the question of what students would like to change in society, the responses given were very diverse and directed to almost all areas of life. Most of all young people mentioned the *need to change attitudes* toward many different things, such as otherness, race, money, school, people, children etc.; many of them said that it was important to change *the government, policies the attitude of the elected officials, laws* etc. Respondents with a non-Latvian background often mentioned desire to change and improve the national situation and to increase *equality*. Approximately one third of the respondents did not answer this question; this may mean either a lack of opinion or a lack of interest in civic participation.

The questionnaires did not detect negative or aggressive expressions and opinions, the students expressed patriotic views, sometimes showed pessimism and disbelief that things would change. In the questionnaires of Russian-speaking students, the need to improve national issues and secure equality was more represented. In general, young people offering active participation to create change in society, were well informed and able to understand the existing situation, were reflective and not naive.

INDIANA

Only very tentative conclusions can be drawn from this study due to its relatively small sample size and its limited representation of the general demographics in Indiana, but early findings suggest that further investigation might reveal interesting correlations between certain factors and student perceptions of diversity and democracy in Indiana.

The results of this pilot study indicated that students perceive Indiana as being multicultural, but did not see a racially or ethnically multicultural society in their own neighbourhoods. Students did not consider race relations to be a

source of tension in Indiana, but this might be due to the fact that Indiana is still quite homogenous in terms of racial make-up. Student respondents reported that they actually saw themselves as having somewhat diverse friend groups, with the most common “differences” being different religious or racial/ethnic backgrounds. The least common associations – as well as the least desired associations—seemed to be friendships or activities with disabled students. More follow-up on this topic might provide a better understanding of attitudes and perceptions toward differently-abled individuals in Indiana.

When asked to assess their proficiency in performing certain skills necessary for living in a pluralistic, democratic society, students expressed a high degree of confidence in their own abilities, especially with the skills of accepting difference, helping others, and communicating. Initial results also indicate that students credit their schools with helping them to learn at least some of these skills, and that students felt schools should teach about different races and cultures.

When students were asked to rank their level of concern on certain issues and then try to imagine if other individuals might also share the same concerns, student responses suggested that they felt everyone would have similar concerns about key issues. These responses indicate that students saw some issues as important to all individuals regardless of their race, class, religion, ability, or orientation.

Overall, students reported that their greatest concern was “equal treatment,” which is an interesting juxtaposition to the result that students felt that their rights were protected by federal laws. Students also indicated that there was no need for the federal government to further strengthen laws protecting different groups. These results illuminate a potential follow-up question that could ask students how individuals might be federally protected from discrimination but still experience unfair treatment in daily life.

Though tentative, these findings highlight potential avenues for further study on student perceptions toward diversity, and the role that schools can play in helping to promote the skills and attitudes necessary for living in a democratic society.

COLORADO

Answering to the question about the diversity of the society Colorado students shared the opinion that there were many people belonging to different groups of population. Comparing the same opinion expressed by the students of other countries/states where the study was carried out, they described Colorado/Denver as very multicultural. Their vision about the representation of different population groups in the society was rather equal – i.e. they found that there were all groups mentioned in the survey quite largely present. Assessing the structure of the society, Colorado students came to the conclusion that the society was highly multicultural. The percentage of students indicating that their society was very multicultural was the highest compared to other respondents, exceeding the estimate, given for instance by

Indiana students, more than twice. The students expressed their willingness to communicate with the people belonging to different social groups and the fact of having friends from rather diverse social groups was also recognized wider than by the students from other participating countries.

Expressing their concerns about different issues in the life of the society Colorado students expressed rather high-level attitudes of young citizens. They did not underestimate any of the serious social problems, but mentioned all of them rather equally being worth to pay attention to. They are least worried about their own personal acceptance by other people.

Assessing the protection of personal rights in the society Colorado students expressed certain doubts, as there were comparatively many students saying that their rights were only "a bit protected". The number of respondents answering that they did not know about the protection of their rights was the highest compared to other countries. They differ also from the respondents elsewhere by putting privacy on the first place as the highest value in the democratic society. Safety, which is the top value for four countries, comes only on the third place.

Although Colorado students saw family and friends having the biggest role in the development of their values. The school coming on the third place had also a rather big role in developing their skills and capabilities. They found that school contributed rather equally to all of the questioned positions.

Colorado students drew a portrait of an average young person of their state, who was quite well aware of the situation and the problems of the surrounding life. They felt relatively highly committed to the societal issues and had a variety of ideas how to improve the life in the community.

AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijani students created a picture of their society being a quite polarized one. They saw a couple of dominating social groups and small minorities of other groups there. The general opinion about the multicultural nature of the society from one hand correlates with the abovementioned description, but on the other hand there were lot of students saying that they did not know how multicultural the society was. That uncertainty may be caused partly by the younger age of Azerbaijani respondents, but not only.

Similar polarization in the views of the respondents appear when they express their willingness to communicate with the people from different social groups, as there are clearly and overwhelmingly some less preferred groups selected. When answering about their friends, the respondents repeated what the preferences of having different friends were. The responses about the multicultural nature of the society and about the interpersonal relationships bring clearly out the very high meaning of religions for Azerbaijani students.

Expressing their views about the quality of life in the democratic society the students showed major concerns about access to education and equal legal treatment of people in the society, which may reflect the current stage of democracy-building in Azerbaijan. The percentage of students who found that

their rights in the society were well protected was the lowest among the six country groups questioned. Also the next level – somewhat protected –gave rather modest answers. At the same time they give many “don’t know” answers to the question about how the people’s rights in their country were protected. Considering the above mentioned, it is quite logical, that legal equity is very important while living in a democratic society for Azerbaijani students.

Azerbaijani students differ from the young people elsewhere while indicating religion as an important source of their values and giving to the role of family and friends significantly smaller importance. At the same time they value education on average more highly as comparing to students in other countries.

Having a chance to suggest changes for the life of the society the Azerbaijani students underline more often the need for improving justice and safety and materialistic side of the quality of life.

Using the answers given to the questionnaire the Azerbaijani students seem to draw a picture of their homeland that this is an emerging democracy with several challenges to meet. The young generation has an understanding about the major problems to combat, but a somewhat weaker understanding about how to improve things.

INDICATIONS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE PILOT STUDY

The international research group set up a goal to collect in the form of a pilot study information about how young people in different countries understand multicultural nature of a contemporary democratic society. The starting point of the study lay in the specification of the multiculturalism and the essence and goals of civic education in multicultural societies. The selection of participating countries includes so-called old democracies the United States of America and Finland and the new democracies of Estonia, Latvia and Azerbaijan – former parts of the Soviet Union. The federal country United States was represented by two different states Indiana and Colorado, the three previous parts of the Soviet Union differ by the fact that Estonia and Latvia fulfilled in 2004 the criteria allowing to become member states of the European Union.

The pilot study provided information about how adequately multicultural nature of the contemporary world is perceived and accepted by the young generation and what kind of impact schools have on developing skills and providing knowledge for better socialisation in the new circumstances. The pilot study tried to collect data about achievements in the mentioned fields. Analyses of the aspects of the collected data allow to draw some tentative conclusions, which despite the limited amount of respondents and resources for data processing nevertheless serve as significant benchmarks for further investigation.

1. Widely addressed globalisation as such seems still to have limited impact to the upper-secondary school age-group students. They are mostly influenced by the realities of their closer neighborhood and less by the theoretical explanations and descriptions of the multicultural nature of the contemporary world.

2. Different social groups of the same country have different perceptions and value esteems in regard to the real circumstances they live. The impact of education, which has to promote equal to everybody democratic values could be more influential and efficient. Students respond for instance quite often “don’t know” to the questions, which had to be handled at school e.g. knowledge about the mechanisms of equal legal protection of everybody in the democratic society based at least on the understanding about the essence of Constitutions.

3. Multicultural education if defined as teaching and learning based on democratic values that foster cultural pluralism has only partly met its goal. The reason might be that teaching about multiculturalism is not yet enough incorporated into the existing curricula. Students from different countries expressed their understanding about the necessity of special attention and care of the vulnerable groups of people in the society (e.g. people with special needs). At the same time they are not used to see the people with special needs as equal partners in the society.

4. The traditions of democracy and the level of well being in the societies determine the attitude and behavior of people towards multiculturalism and democracy. Then richer and longer are the traditions, the more equal and stabile are the decisions and statements of the young people about multiculturalism and democracy. The biggest disparities – sometimes even black-and-white polarization is followed in the positions of the young people living either in the emerging democratic societies or those belonging themselves to the minority groups in the society.

The pilot study has proved the suitability of the compiled questionnaire and offered insights into the complexity of developing value esteems of young people in different society. The data collected and the preliminary analyses have demonstrated the potential of this pilot study to be continued with the aim to gain material for development of civic education at schools, which could provide wider support to processes of socialization of young people at large.

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ANNEX 1 – SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE (TALLINN QUESTIONNAIRE)



Dear student!

The team of international UNESCO project asks you kindly to answer to the following 15 questions. It is interesting to know, how you personally feel about your neighborhood and society at large. Your answers will help to develop healthier social environments for all of us.

Your age	16	17	18	Other:
Gender	M	W		
Mother tongue	Estonian	Non-Estonian		
Location of school	Tallinn	Elsewhere		

1. How many people in your society:

	MANY	SOME	FEW	NONE	DO NOT KNOW
speaking different language at home					
are with special needs					
belong to different race/ethnicity					
have different sexual orientation					
belong to some religion					

2. What do you think how multicultural is your society. Underline your opinion!

VERY SOME FEW NONE DO NOT KNOW

3. Would you like to have common activities with the people:

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
who speak different language at home			
who have with special needs			
who belong to different race/ethnicity			
have different sexual orientation			
exercise religion			

4. Please rate how concerned are you about the following issues:

	A LOT	SOMEWHAT	A BIT	NOT AT ALL
access to jobs				
access to education				
use of natural resources				
treated equally under the law				
access to the Internet				
immigration/ newcomers to the society				
being accepted by other people.				

5. How much do other people care about the same issues you do?

Underline your opinion!

A LOT SOMEWHAT A BIT NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

6. Are your rights in our society protected? Underline your opinion!

A LOT SOMEWHAT A LITTLE NOT AT ALL DON'T KNOW

7. Should the rights of the following people be better protected than now:

	A LOT	SOMEWHAT	A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL	DON'T KNOW
who speak different language at home					
with special needs					
who belong to different race/ethnicity					
who have different sexual orientation					
exercise religion					

8. Are there laws that protect the rights of the people:

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
who speak different language at home			
with special needs			
who belong to different race/ethnicity			
who have different sexual orientation			
exercise religion			

9. Democracy has several characteristics. What are the three most important characteristics for functioning democracy?

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10. What values are most important for you personally when living in a democratic society? Rank the top five.

	being included /respected/accept
	money and material values
	safety
	legal equality
	honesty and friendship
	fairness
	privacy
	freedom of expression
	respect consensus
	personal responsibility
	loyalty to your state
	loyalty to your friends

11. Where do you get the values from? Rank the following.

	family
	friends
	internet
	media (TV, newspapers, radio)
	learning at school
	experience from the "street"/"community"
	religion

12. Would you like something to be changed in your society? Name three things.

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13. If you have some of those skills, mark, how much has the school contributed to:

	A LOT	SOME	A LITTLE	NOT AT ALL	NOT APPLICABLE TO ME
specifying your own capabilities					
communication (with people)					
observation skills					
negotiation skills					
computer skills					
conflict resolution					
cooperation skills					
participation skills					
asking for help					
accepting difference					

helping others					
celebrate success /recognition some-body's achievement					

14. Do you have friends:

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE PEOPLE
who speak different from yours language at home			
who are much older or younger than you			
with special needs			
who can spend much more or less money on activities than you			
who belong to different race/ethnicity			
who have different sexual orientation			
who has different attitude towards religion than you			

Do you think it is good to have and accept the differences? Why?

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15. What makes a good living in the multicultural society? Leave or delete words in the following list and add what is missing: health, coffee, education, friends, job, social skills, family, luck, money, pets,

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THANK YOU!