
Local Government, Cities and Citizenship Education in the times of Crisis



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Municipality of Larissa*



The times of Crisis (2010- ...?)



- Economic and Refugee crisis
- Earthquakes
- Pandemic
- Tempe
- Ukraine war and energy crisis
- September 2023 – Thessaly floods
- Anger/fear/hate speech through social networks

The public debate after every crisis points to a crisis of planning, priorities and political choices

Habermas (2012) refers to the democratic deficit of modern Europe

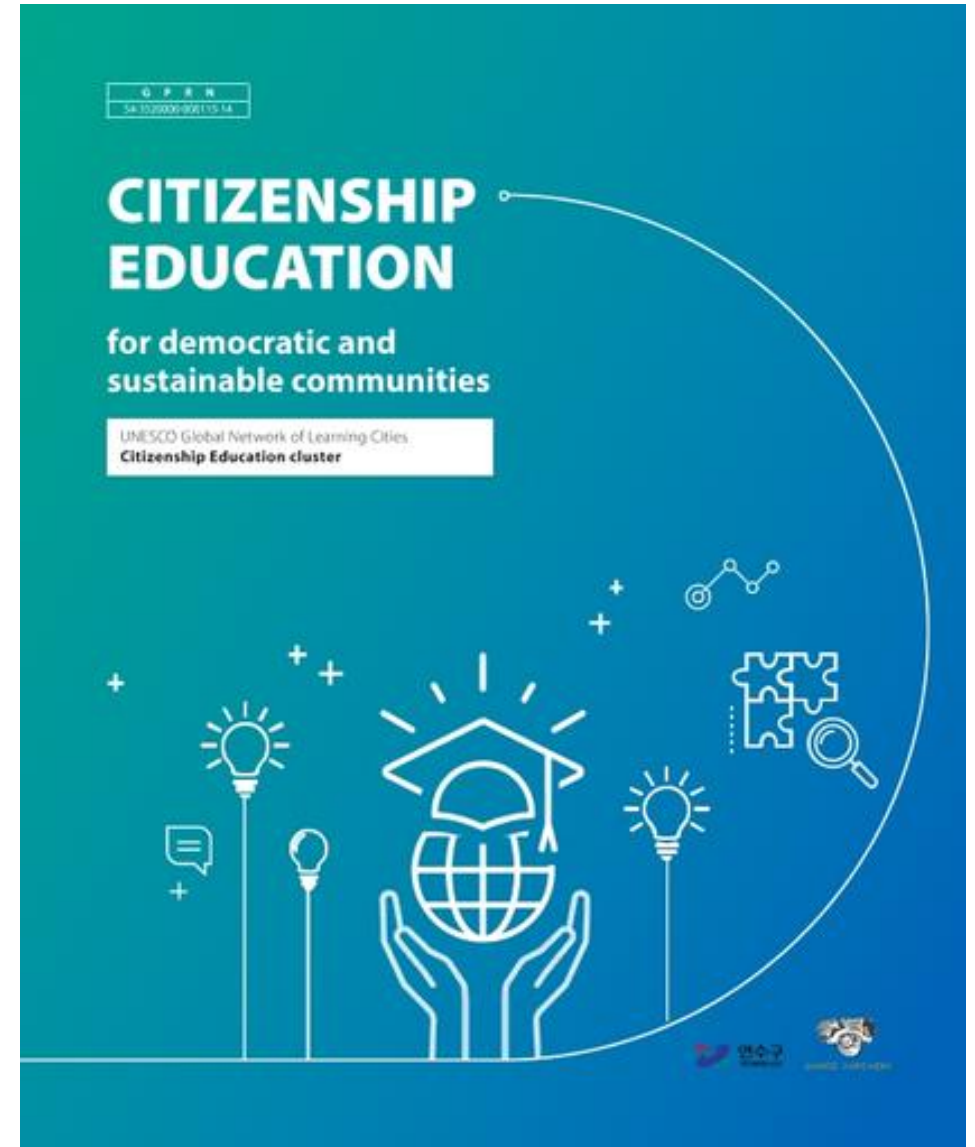


Citizenship Education

UNESCO texts identify literacy, vocational training and education for active citizenship as the key areas of adult education. Education in active citizenship is the least developed. Non-institutionalized most of the time, mainly focused on primary and secondary education.

New developments...

- delay in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (more than 60 years to achieve them)
- the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed structural problems and failures in efforts to build stable and resilient democratic communities and to educate citizens



Organization of participatory institutions and active citizenship education



Organization of participatory councils, local resident councils, open meetings and youth councils e.g.

- Council of Persons with Special Needs (Izmir)
- Municipal Council for Children (Evry-Courcouronnes)
- Municipal Youth Council (Larissa)
- “Self-Governing Council and Resident School” (Yeonsu), forms of direct democracy with referendums utilizing an online platform at the apartment block level
- Espoo Elderly Council

Learning City

In 2013 was established the UNESCO Learning Cities Global Network. Today 356 cities from 79 countries

A Learning City is not a set of educational programs. It concerns the cooperation of agencies, structures and citizens and social processes for the transformation of attitudes...

The concept of the "Learning City" refers to that of the "Learning Organization". Organizations that encourage continuous learning and knowledge creation and changes. Ability to create their own future.

*The decision to become a city "learning society" is the result of a more general reflection in the period of crisis.
How do we support citizens and especially those most affected?
What city do we want?*

"Progressive and Democratic Content" (Ted Fleming)

"Democracy is not taught, but experienced. Democracy must be the goal of a learning city" (P. Mayo)



2015- 2023 Larissa Building a Learning City



- 2016 - Larissa, the first Greek city of the UNESCO Learning Cities global network
- 2017 – UNESCO AWARD Larissa one of the 16 cities in the world awarded by UNESCO
- 2019 – Larissa is the coordinating city in the Citizenship Education theme
- 2020 - Grundtvig Award from the European Association for the Education of Adults – EAEA for Citizens University
- Barcelona 2 May 2024 – Nominee for the Pan-European Prize for Innovation in Politics in the theme "Democracy Technologies"

-Cooperation agreements and consultation with citizens, 2 international conferences, 1 summer school

In October 2017, the organization of a new institution of the Citizens University was announced

Under the auspices of the National Commission of UNESCO

Organization of learning circles for citizens with an emphasis on the needs of vulnerable groups.

Scientific team and 12 topics (teacher training, vulnerable groups education, new technologies, vulnerable groups, culture and museum education, health education, staff education)



Έδρα UNESCO «Ανθρώπινα Δικαιώματα, Δημοκρατία και Ειρήνη» και
Politics First Σειρά Ανοητών Διαλέξεων Διεθνούς Πολιτικής Θεωρίας (ΒΣΑΣ, ΠΑΜΑΚ)

Σε συνεργασία με το «Πανεπιστήμιο των Πολιτών» του Δήμου Λαρισαίων
και τον Δικηγορικό Σύλλογο Λάρισας

Συζητούν:
Στέλιος Περράκης
Ομότ. Καθηγητής - πρώην Πρόεδρος
Μόνιμος Αντιπρόσωπος της Ελλάδας
στο Συμβούλιο της Ευρώπης,
Υπεύθυνος Έδρας UNESCO

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και
Γιάννης Πανούσης
Ομότ. Καθηγητής ΕΚΠΑ,
πρώην Υπουργός

Συντονίζει ο **Κυριάκος Κεντρωτής**
Καθηγητής ΠΑΜΑΚ, Συνταξιστής Politics First

«Δικαιοσύνη/Δημοκρατία»
Δευτέρα, 16 Μαρτίου 2020, 19:00
Αίθουσα Τελετών Δικηγορικού Μεγάρου
(Δευκαλίωνος 18 & Πατράκλου)

The 2022-2023 local Action Plan: a collective effort

Included the organization of two meetings:

- First meeting was held in JOIST Innovation Center in June 2022. Over 100 representatives of stakeholders of the city had the opportunity to participate in educational programs workshops and to propose programs based on their needs.
- A few months later, in October 2022, at the Municipal Gallery public and private bodies and the members of the scientific committee of Citizens' University discussed and formed the final action plan, which was based on 10 themes.
- The result of this creative process was the organization and realization of 65 circles of learning (5000 citizens participated)



"Democracy in Action: Innovative Consultation and Citizen Participation"

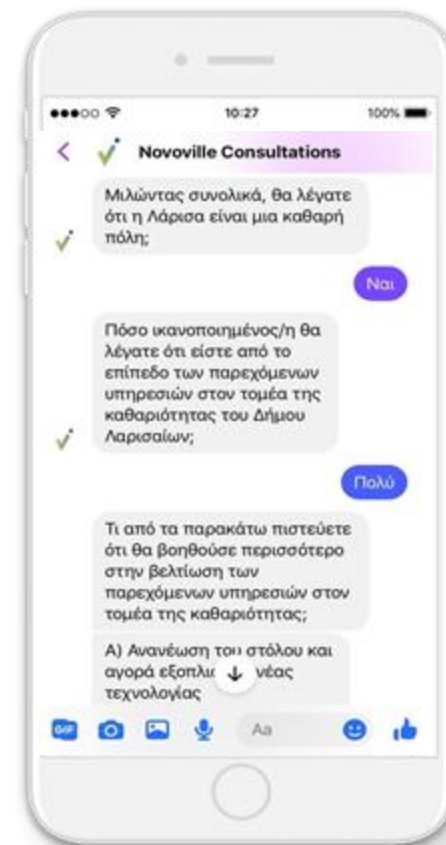
- The goal is the presence of citizens in the processes that shape their community, informing and facilitating their participation in the decision-making process transparently
- 7 consultations in a period of less than 2 years on the Municipality's budget and the technical program, cleaning services-recycling, the railway, the Youth Capital, the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SVAK), the policies to encourage the bicycle
- Key results include a three times increase in participation compared to traditional consultation methods and a 60% incremental increase in re-engagement
- With the adoption of digital communication channels and social media campaigns, the participation rate of younger citizens increased 70%



Active participation of citizens in important issues of the Municipality

Consultation on City Youth Council and the National Youth Capital 2024 nomination

- Medium: Novoville Chatbot on Facebook Messenger & Novoville Webchat
- Number of participants: 517 citizens / 45% young
- Number of citizens who saw the sponsored campaign (reach): 55168



The challenges of our future...

How prepared can a local society be for each new crisis?

Changing a city, investing in skills and attitudes, including its desire to become technologically innovative is not politically neutral. Critical ruptures, awareness of the relationship between citizens and powers, and changes in past attitudes and assumptions are needed at the heart of a democratic political agenda.

We are now in a new period.
Every crisis magnifies the inevitable...

