

## INTERACT

### WP 4 Intercultural Active Citizenship Education: A comparative analysis of the intercultural dimension of education for democratic citizenship in Denmark\* and England 1980 – 2005

**Centre for Citizenship and Human Rights Education, University of Leeds  
Institute of Education, University of London**

\* This report draws on research carried out by our INTERACT partners at the Danish University of Education (Claus Haas and Bente Meyer), submitted as their contribution to Workpackage 3 (WP3), as well as on our own analysis of the main national policy documents from England relating to education for democratic citizenship and to multicultural education from the period 1980-2005, also part of WP3.

#### **Objectives:**

- To compare and contrast the key national policy documents of Denmark and England from 1980-2005 which relate to citizenship and / or intercultural education in schools.
- To critically examine definitions, concepts, priorities, objectives and policy implementation in this area.

#### **Methodology**

1. Analyse the reports of the Danish and UK INTERACT teams (WP3) relating to the treatment of intercultural and citizenship education within the national education policy documents of Denmark and England.

2. Compare and contrast the ways in which national policy documents address the concepts of human rights, citizenship education and intercultural education as well as key concepts used in our analysis of European documents (WP2), namely: *identity, multiculturalism, diversity, democracy, equality, inequality, peace, justice, race, ethnicity, racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism, Islamophobia, tolerance, intolerance, responsibility (responsibilities)*.

3. Compare the priorities and objectives of national policy documents with regard to intercultural, citizenship and human rights education within the WP3 reports and our previous published work on intercultural education and education for democracy in a variety of European contexts. We do not report on this third strand here, but are currently preparing an article which examines these issues. For news on developments see: [www.education.leeds.ac.uk/research/cchre](http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/research/cchre)

#### **The national education contexts: Denmark and England**

During the period under consideration, 1980-2005, different processes of centralisation and decentralisation have occurred within the school systems of Denmark and England. In Denmark since the late 1980s decision-making power has been redistributed from the Ministry of Education to municipalities and local schools. In England similar processes took place, during the same period, with schools acquiring greater control over their budgets. However, the curriculum, which had previously been in the hands of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools, came under national control. Local initiatives to promote multicultural education<sup>1</sup> were significantly undermined by the introduction of the national curriculum for England which came into effect in 1989.

### **Developments in citizenship and multicultural education**

There was official guidance on citizenship education in England published in 1990, but no central government guidance on multicultural education. Both citizenship and multicultural education were recognised as cross-curricular themes. It was not until the year 2002 that citizenship education was formally introduced as a national curriculum subject in England, liable to inspection. The statutory programme of study (DfES / QCA, 1999) specifies that students should be taught about human rights, diverse identities, the need for mutual respect and the world as a global community.

In Denmark during this period, the concept of citizenship is not developed as part of the school curriculum, although it is implied in the term 'demokratisk dannelse' (democratic education). This curriculum includes civics in both the folkeskole and the gymnasium, with an emphasis on democratic participation. By contrast with England, but in common with other European countries such as Sweden (Osler and Starkey, 2002) there is an explicit emphasis on education for democracy. Democratic participation is promoted throughout the Danish school curriculum, both within the guidelines for the taught curriculum and through the informal curriculum.

### **National identity, multiculturalism and intercultural learning**

Within the Danish and English education systems there are very different approaches to the treatment of national culture and intercultural learning, which are reflected in the gaps and absences within the national documents. It is widely accepted that modern day Britain is multicultural. Although Denmark, like all other European countries, is a *de facto* multicultural society, following the arrival of migrants and refugees over the past 20 years, public acceptance of Denmark as a multicultural society remains contested, and this is reflected in education policy.

There is no explicit commitment to antiracism in either British or Danish public policy, as can be found, for example, in Sweden.

In Denmark, the term *intercultural* is often used interchangeably with the term *international*. The intercultural dimension of education has traditionally been closely associated with second and foreign language education. In England, although language teachers may see themselves as promoting intercultural skills (Osler and Starkey, 2000; Starkey and Osler, 2001), the major emphasis has been on *multicultural*, rather than intercultural education.

### **Key concepts**

#### *Diversity*

In Denmark the term *diversity* is used in three different contexts: referring to diversity between different countries, diversity within Denmark, and, in the context of language learning, to highlight diversity within national cultures, challenging the notion, for example, of a typical Dane or a typical German. Diversity is most commonly used in a completely different context in education policy documents relating to England, in order to highlight diversity of educational provision. However, the programme of study for citizenship does include consideration of 'the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding'.

#### *Identity*

In the Danish policy documents the concept of *identity* is usually linked to the development of a (singular) Danish national identity and sense of belonging. The new civics curriculum acknowledges other possible identities. In England, although the

Crick report (QCA, 1998) mentions the need to develop a new 'common identity', the report implies that the development of this common identity will require greater changes among minorities than within the majority population (Osler, 2000a).

### *Democracy*

Democracy is a key concept underpinning Danish education. Democracy and human rights are seen as something to be experienced rather than learned about. In the official documents in Denmark, the term equality is regularly paired with democracy. Democracy, human rights or children's rights are not generally explicit concepts addressed in English education policy documents. The Crick report's full title is *Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools* but the emphasis is in fact on citizenship.

### *Peace and justice*

Although the terms peace and justice feature prominently in the policy documents of international organisations such as UNESCO, they are not key concepts in education policy documents in either Denmark or England.

### *Racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and Islamophobia*

Although racism and xenophobia, together with specific forms of racism, such as anti-semitism and Islamophobia, are given increasing emphasis in European policy documents, with education presented as a key force in the fight against racism, these concepts are not addressed centrally in either Danish or English policy documents from the education ministry. In England, the terms 'racism' or 'racist' are most commonly linked to individual student behaviour, as in current initiatives by the DfES (Ministry of Education) to address racist bullying.

### *Tolerance*

Although tolerance is not a central concept within education policy documents in either country, tolerance and broadmindedness are portrayed as something which are essentially Danish or English/British characteristics.

### *Human rights and responsibilities*

In the Danish policy documents rights are most commonly linked with duties, as in the phrase 'rights and duties'. There is an explicit link made between democracy and human rights and a number of references to international human rights instruments. In the English documents, rights do not necessarily mean human rights and the term is extended to include, for example, consumer rights.

## **References**

\*The list we include here refers to publications which reflect our recent and on-going programme of research

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<sup>1</sup>As we explain in WP2, the term 'intercultural education' is rarely used in Britain, but multicultural education initiatives have developed since the 1970s.