

# INTERACT

## WP 6 Analysis of Interviews with Institutional Actors: England

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### Objectives:

The context for this Workpackage is the objective of Workpackage 5, namely to explore with key actors and policy makers their

- *perceptions of the influence on policy making in England of European policies on multicultural/intercultural education for active citizenship*
- *perceptions of how policy and institutional objectives with regard to intercultural active citizenship education are formed at national level*
- *understandings of the concepts and strategies contained in European and national legislation and guidance relevant to intercultural education for active citizenship .*

We therefore set out, following guidance provided by the lead partner for this Workpackage 6:

- To undertake a conceptual analysis of the evidence in the interview transcripts with respect to
  - terms and definitions
  - priorities and objectives
  - historical perspectives
- To analyse the interview transcripts for evidence of ways in which national and international policies and strategies were conceived, understood and implemented.

### Context as determined by Workpackage 5

The selection of interviewees was designed to ensure that a number of perspectives were covered across the range of respondents. The perspectives included experience of and/or involvement with:

- multicultural education
- race equality policy
- politics
- English as an additional language (EAL)
- citizenship education
- Local education authority
- Central government and civil service
- Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- Community group
- Teachers' trade union

Those for whom we have interview transcripts include:

- Two former ministers of education
- Two former chief inspectors of education in local authorities (LEAs)

- One government inspector of education (HMI)
- One member of the House of Lords, formerly responsible for the government funded agency responsible for monitoring race equality policy
- One teacher union leader
- One senior government adviser on citizenship
- One academic and policy adviser to government
- One former civil servant

## **Methodology**

The first stage of analysis was to examine the transcripts manually for evidence of

- terms and definitions
- priorities and objectives
- historical perspectives
- ways in which national and international policies and strategies were conceived, understood and implemented

A full analysis is still being undertaken, but at this stage we have identified a number of emerging themes.

## **Emerging themes**

1. The expression 'intercultural education' is not used or understood in Britain. None of our respondents was comfortable using the term.

2. European policy appears not to impact on any aspect of policy making for intercultural active citizenship education in Britain. Those familiar with European policies are not invited to contribute to the formation of domestic policy.

3. There is no consensus on the meaning of multiculturalism in Britain, whether used in the context of education or when referring to trends in wider society.

4. Multicultural education remains a controversial issue for a number of policy makers.

5. Many policy makers are uncomfortable with the concept of multicultural education and prefer to talk about education for diversity, for example.

6. Antiracism is considered by many policy makers as a particularly controversial policy and one about which they express reservations linked to experiences in the 1980s.

7. Although citizenship education has been identified by government as a vehicle for promoting race equality, there has been no clear leadership or guidance on how this should be achieved.

8. A number of policy makers consider that closing the achievement gap between different ethnic minority groups is a greater priority than teaching intercultural understanding.

9. Citizenship education is still relatively new (from 2002) and it is not yet properly established or integrated into wider educational policy.

## **Interview schedule**

The interviews were semi-structured and the schedule below was adapted to the experience and the position of the interviewee.

1. What is your understanding of multicultural education? To what extent do you consider it to be a relevant dimension to the curriculum?
2. To what extent do you consider that the curriculum is intended to reproduce a national culture?
3. To what extent does the curriculum acknowledge and support other identities, e.g. European, global?
4. In formulating curriculum guidelines to what extent do you feel that there was a concern to ensure the incorporation of a multicultural / human rights / European dimension?
5. To what extent is there official support for multicultural education? How is this shown concretely, e.g. policy statements, budgets, curriculum guidance?
6. Are you aware of any pressure to ensure that multicultural perspectives are present (e.g. European or other international (UN, UNESCO, UNISEF) policies)? Are you familiar with any such policies and can you specify which?
7. Are you aware of a tradition of multicultural education? In what ways has this tradition evolved over the years? To what extent has there been continuity?
8. To what extent is multicultural education a priority within citizenship education / civic education / democratic education / foreign language teaching / English as an Additional Language (EAL) support for minorities?
9. What mechanisms have been put in place to help teachers and teacher trainers implement multicultural education? e.g. training programmes, websites, guidance.
10. To what extent is multicultural education a politically sensitive issue? What effects, if any, does this have on priorities?