

NEPC Summer School 2016

# Managing Change and Uncertainty: Education for the Future

Shkempi Kavajes I Durres 3<sup>rd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016

## **Network of Education Policy Centers (NEPC)**

is an international non-governmental membership organization that gathers 23 institutional members from 18 countries. NEPC has been founded in 2006 and formally established in 2008.

NEPC members are public and civil-society organizations dealing with education at different levels from educational research and policy analysis to teacher training and school-based activities.

NEPC Secretariat, established in Zagreb in 2006, has implemented over a dozen multi-country projects addressing and exploring current issues in education, driven by the need for independent and information-based policy analyses, advocacy for equity, and effective, sustainable solutions in education policy processes in the last couple of years.

The network's contribution to improving education policies in this region is reflected in its highly diverse project portfolio, which includes large projects involving several countries.

**Summer School** is a traditional NEPC annual learning event for teachers, policy-makers, policy-analysts, practitioners, researchers and education friends from all over the world. Summer schools in the past have covered wide range of topics related to education (teachers' policy, inclusive education, education for sustainability) with the aim of inspiring change in education system and were attended by about 30 participants every year!

Summer School gathers faculty from prestigious universities and highly experienced trainers from all over the world and it combines theory, practice and interactive sessions.

## **Participants**

Summer School is designed for education experts, policy-maker and practitioners. A maximum of 30 participants will be accepted for the summer school. Participants will be selected according to their profile and motivation. Official language of Summer School is English.

# Background

When facing the challenges of transition of our societies to the path of sustainability, education is always put on the forefront of the struggle. As much as we, as educators, believe in the power of education and appreciate the realization that the role of education is crucial for achieving sustainability, we must be fully aware that it also presents enormous challenges for teachers, schools and systems.

There is the urgent need to operationalize social, environmental and economic sustainability at education level defining what social, environmental and economic sustainable school/education actually mean.

Moreover Education cannot afford to be blind to the consequences of unsustainable

systems that make our reality instable and in the *constant state* of „emergency“, it must develop into a resilient, reactive and resourceful (3R) systems, and enhances schools and teachers to empower students to deal with the changes and uncertainties of today's and future world. The future active citizens require content as well as a set of skills in order to manage change processes and make decisions in the conditions of uncertainty. There is no doubt that local and global events affect the functioning of the school and education whether they are of economic, social or environmental nature and that a truly child centred education should not ignore them but provide a safe environment for discussing and processing the effects of such events.

NEPC Summer School aims to:

1. explore the challenges faced by education in the realities of change and uncertainty
2. provide the conceptual and policy framework for the 3R educational systems
3. showcase existing policies and practices

## 1

### EXPLORE THE CHALLENGES FACED BY EDUCATION IN THE REALITIES OF CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY

**A.** Thematic lecture will be devoted to the role schools and school systems have in maintaining the illusion of stable and unchanging societies, with needs, relations and demands that have remained the same for decades and which those schools are, incidentally, perfectly equipped to address. We will explore how schools manipulate reality in order to make it suit the methods and content of education they provide at the moment, and why there is so much resistance in the system to acknowledge and tackle the actual local and global issues and events which affect the functioning of the school and education whether they are of economic, social or environmental nature. We posit that a truly child centred education should not ignore them but provide a safe environment for discussing and processing the effects of such events.

**B.** Future active citizens require content as well as a set of skills in order to manage change processes and make decisions in the conditions of uncertainty. We will be learning about skills needed to manage change and uncertainty. With the refugee crisis and an ever increasing number of natural disasters, change and uncertainty are becoming a constant in children's lives today. Even if they may not be directly affected, they more often than not have a class-mate

who is. This is where skills needed to process and respond to the change and uncertainty in their surroundings come in place. We will be learning about those skills and about methods to teach or impart those skills to teachers and children, from an expert.

## 2

### PROVIDE THE CONCEPTUAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR THE 3R EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

**A.** Thematic lecture would be devoted to an introduction to the concept and philosophy of degrowth – an idealistic take on the future of society, combining altruistic ideologies and (existing) practices in order to achieve economic, social and environmental sustainability. The basic tenements of degrowth and their application will be critically discussed as well as the viability of their introduction into work with students.

**B.** Sustainability has been the go-to word in numerous (education) strategies, policies and reforms for quite a while now. And while the concept of social, environmental and economic stability is omni-present in theory, we face the lack of clear policy guidance that would enhance the sustainability in practice. The introduction of sustainability principles in schools requires structural changes in school systems and practices often based on the transmission of knowledge and oriented to assessment. On the other hand environmental and social aspects of sustainability are often present in schools and those practices should be enriched and further developed instead of having ex-novo approach however not forgetting that there is a lot more to sustainability than its environmental aspect.

Additionally, we will be exploring the concept of sustainability through schools' preparedness to provide education in emergency – how can a school respond to an emergency and how the school can talk to its students about emergencies.

An operational framework of sustainability the 3 R (resilient, reactive and resourceful) and methods for developing it at school level will be presented and discussed.

## 3

### SHOWCASE EXISTING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**A.** Through a workshop, a learning session and exploring case studies from participants, we will explore the role CSOs have in operationalizing sustainability content in education through introducing and sharing innovative concepts and practices in education. Having in mind that as useful and important such practices are they cannot be mainstreamed without the crucial support of educational authorities the role of CSOs in advocacy for mainstreaming will also be explored.

**B.** Showcasing the design of the Croatian cross curricular theme sustainable development, from both the process and content perspective.

C. A case study of the new Finnish reform will be presented as looking out to future with optimism. During its on-going reform, Finland has redefined the approach to education, constantly adapting to the world that surrounds us, but also to the world that might or will surround us in decades to come. The story of the Finnish education system will be presented and discussed, along with the learning and possible application of some elements into other school systems.

## Pedagogical Strategy

2016 NEPC Summer School will be based on E|P|C (Explore, Participate, Change) approach and rely on lectures, discussion circles, workshops and participative learning.

The **lectures** will present theoretical concepts and specific issues of education systems.

The **discussion circles** will provide an opportunity for participants to clarify concepts, challenge the proposed thesis and explore their understanding of main issues raised in the lecture.

The **workshops** will aim to offer the possibility to further explore the theoretical framework trying to establish links between theory and practices.

The **participative learning** sessions will enhance the participants' reflection on learning process trying to connect the knowledge acquired to their organizations activities.

**Readings** will be divided into required and recommended. Participants will be expected to have read the required readings prior to the beginning of the summer school. This should help reduce the variance in comprehension and participation in the discussion.

## Evaluation and assessment of impact

Evaluation questionnaires and interviews will be conducted at the end of the seminar and, resources permitting, three months following the seminar. The questionnaires will be quite specific as to what was learned and what should be learned next time.

The content of the summer school will be summarized in a report and sent to all Summer School participants and NEPC members to enhance follow up activities of the participants and provide a learning tool to those who were not able to attend.

**APPLY NOW!**