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Offen im Denken

Evaluation report

EUROPER – European Perspectives on Asylum Policy

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Introduction

EUROSOC#DIGITAL has successfully completed its third wave of the project “EUROPER – European Perspectives on Asylum Policy”, co-funded by the European Commission. The project, which was conducted in partnership between EUROSOC#DIGITAL and GEKO, had three main goals: First, to enable a dialogue between young people and political decision-makers. Second, to create a European perspective on topics related to asylum and third, to activate young citizens. In order to accomplish these goals, 13 project days in schools in rural areas of East German federal states were carried out. The project days were divided into two parts: the EUROPER workshops and the EUROPER simulation game. For the purpose of evaluation, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants during the project days held from September 2018 to July 2019. The questionnaire is attached to the appendix (in German). A total of 529 pupils took part in the survey, which accounts for reliable results. The survey contained 24 closed-ended and two open-ended questions and additional three closed-ended questions on social demographic information. The majority of the closed-ended questions was answered with a 5-point Likert scale. “Prefer not to say” answers were treated as missings and were excluded from the data. The following report summarises the participants’ responses to the survey. For the complete results, please refer to the second appendix of this report (in German).

1. Structure and outline

The first part of the survey was dedicated to the structure and outline of the project days. It contained four closed-ended questions. The survey reveals that the goals of the project days were clear to a huge majority of the participants (81.8%). Only one-third of the respondents (38.8%) said that they had already felt familiar with the topic of the European Union before the project days. In addition, more than half of the respondents (53.6%) stated that they had already known something about the asylum policy of the European Union before. Accordingly, only one-third of the participants (32.2%) reported that they had migration and asylum as a topic in class before.

2. First project day

The second part of the survey examined the course of the first project day. It contained two closed-ended questions. At first, the participants were asked if the content of the first day had been presented in an understandable way. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (80.4%) agreed to this question. In addition, seven out of ten participants (70.6%) underlined that they could easily follow the course of the first project day.

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3. Second project day

The third part of the survey examined the course of the second project day. It contained three closed-ended questions. Eight out of ten participants (88.5%) were of the opinion that the content of the simulation game had been presented in an understandable way. In addition, almost the same number of respondents (81.8%) underlined that they could easily follow the course of the simulation game. More than two-thirds of the respondents (68.7%) agreed with the statement that there should be more simulation games in class.

4. Teaching staff

The fourth part of the survey focused on the speakers and moderators of the project days. It contained three closed-ended questions. A huge majority of the participants (87.0%) perceived the teaching staff to be well prepared. In addition, eight out of ten respondents (80.0%) also agreed with the statement that the speakers and moderators showed real interest in the participants' learning success. Finally, almost the same number of respondents (88.7%) said that the teaching staff was sufficiently available for queries or additional advice whenever it was needed.

5. Participants

The fifth part of the survey asked the pupils to reflect on their own performance during the project days. It also contained three closed-ended questions. Every second respondent (52.0%) found that her/his peers followed the workshops with interest and attention. Almost the same amount of participants (57.7%) also claimed that most of the pupils participated actively in the simulation game. Finally, six out of ten respondents (63.5%) considered that their fellows took their roles seriously.

6. Competencies

The sixth part of the survey concentrated on the acquisition of competencies. It contained four closed-ended questions. Seven out of ten respondents (78.6%) stated that the project days helped them to better understand the functioning of the European Union. With regards to the specific topic of migration and asylum, almost the same number of participants (73.9.5%) said that they now understand this topic much better. Pupils also improved their overall competencies. Every second respondent (57.9%) said that the project days had improved their ability to better argue and discuss in political debates.

7. Working materials

The seventh part of the survey asked the pupils to make a judgement about the quality of the provided tools for preparation of the simulation game. It contained two closed-ended questions. More than two-thirds of the participants (68.8%) found the handbook of the simulation game useful. In addition, seven out of ten respondents (70.9%) stated that the role cards allowed them to actively take part in the simulation game.

8. Social demographics

The eighth part of the survey focused on the social demographic information. It contained three closed-ended questions. Two multiple-choice questions for information on school type and year with eight respectively two options. Finally, one gender question was asked with once again two options. An overwhelming majority of the participants (79.8%) came from a grammar school (Gymnasium). At great distance followed pupils from integrated school (Gesamtschule) with 9.7%. The share of pupils from vocational school (Berufliche Schule) was 7.2% and 2.1% from secondary school (Sekundarschule). Private school (Privatschule) and middle school (Realschule) were also mentioned but the percentages were only 0.8% respectively 0.4%. Asked for their school year, six out of ten participants (60.6%) were pupils from lower secondary level (Sekundarstufe I), while the rest (39.4%) was from higher secondary level (Sekundarstufe II). Regarding gender, more than half of the participants (55.5%) was female, while the rest (44.5%) was male.

9. Overall evaluation

The ninth and final part of the survey asked the participants for an overall evaluation of the project days. It contained three closed-ended questions and two open-ended questions. Asked if the requirements were appropriate, the approval rate was very high (84.0%). Every second respondent (55.3%) said that the project days helped her/him to significantly improve her/his knowledge. Finally, seven out of ten participants (74.0%) evaluated the project days positively.

The answers to the open-ended question, what aspects of the project days the participants liked most, reveal the outstanding importance of the simulation game. Among 345 items, it was mentioned 125 times. For example, one pupil's statement reads as follows: "I liked the simulation game very much because it is as close to real politics as possible. There were many good discussions and the project managers were always friendly and helpful." Another participant said: "The simulation game was a very good idea and should be adopted for further use in school." Why? "The 'game' was fun. It was cool to put oneself into another role," as one more respondent has answered. However, the workshops and dis-

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discussion rounds were also well received by the pupils. Overall, participants appreciated the interactive and inclusive character of the project days. For example, one participant summarised her/his positive feedback as follows: “It was quite different from our boring school lessons and you could still learn something.” This feedback perfectly matches with the conclusion of another pupil: “The project was fun and we learned something.” Finally, the participants also gave 272 answers to the open-ended question of what could be improved in the future. Here, predominantly organisational issues and issues concerning the time management were mentioned. For example, several participants asked for more breaks and shorter sessions. Others requested more room for discussion and more active participation within the workshops. For example, one participant left the following remark: “The argumentative work could still be improved. Maybe in the form of additional texts to meet all pupils where they are”.

Final conclusion

Generally speaking, the implementation of the project’s third wave can be considered as a success. According to the participants’ feedback, the practical workshops, the discussions with their fellow students and especially the interactive simulation game met the general approval of the pupils.

The impact of EUROPER III was quite significant. The participants now better understand the decision-making processes of the European Union. More specifically, they gained practical insights into the current European asylum policy and its national implementation. The experience of the project days also significantly improved the negotiation skills of the pupils.

To conclude, the main goals of the project have been accomplished. This was done by thoroughly combining a range of high-quality workshops with a thought-provoking simulation game – a combination optimally tailored to the needs and requirements of young people.