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Evaluation report

EUROPER – European Perspectives on Asylum Policy

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Introduction

Together with its partner GEKO, EUROSOC#DIGITAL has successfully completed the project “EUROPER – European Perspectives on Asylum Policy. Project Days with Simulation on EU Asylum Policy”, co-funded by the European Commission. The project, which was led by EUROSOC#DIGITAL, had three central objectives: First, to enable a dialogue between young people and decision-makers. Second, to create a European perspective and third, to activate young citizens. In order to carry out these objectives, ten project days in schools in rural areas in four of the five new federal states of Germany 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 project participants during the project days held from September 2017 to July 2018. The questionnaire is attached to the appendix (in German). A total of 473 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 missing and excluded from the data. The following report summarises the participants’ responses. For the complete results, please refer to the appendix (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 (87.6%). Only one-third of the participants (36.7%) said that they had already felt familiar with the topic of the European Union before the project days. However, more than half of the respondents (56.4%) stated that s/he had already known something about the asylum policy of the European Union before. Four out of ten participants (43.2%) reported that s/he 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 84.9% agreed. In addition, three-quarters of the participants (76.9%) 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. Nine out of ten respondents (91.5%) were of the opinion that the content of the simulation game had been presented in an understandable way. In addition, 88.4% of the participants underlined that they could easily follow the course of the simulation game. More than two-thirds of the respondents (68.6%) 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. An impressive majority of the participants (89.6%) perceived the teaching staff to be well prepared. In addition, eight out of ten respondents (85.2%) also agreed with the statement that the speakers and moderators showed real interest in the participants' learning success. Finally, an overwhelming majority of the participants (93.6%) found that the teaching staff was sufficiently available for queries or additional advice when 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. Exactly six out of ten respondents (60%) found that their peers followed the workshops with interest and attention. Almost the same amount of participants (69.2%) also claimed that most of the pupils participated actively in the simulation game and that they had taken their roles seriously (68.8%).

6. Competencies

The sixth part of the survey concentrated on the acquisition of competencies. It contained four closed-ended questions. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (86%) 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, eight out of ten respondents (82.5%) said that they now understood this topic much better. Pupils also improved their overall competencies. Almost two-thirds of them (65.6%) said that the project days had improved their ability to better argue and discuss in political debates. Finally, one-third of the respondents (34.9%) stated that the project days had changed their attitudes towards refuge and asylum.

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. Almost three-quarters of the participants (74.3%) found the handbook of the simulation game useful. Almost the same amount of respondents (72.6%) 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. Eight out of ten participants (84.3%) came from a grammar school (Gymnasium). At great distance follow pupils from vocational school (Berufsschule) with 6.7%. The share of pupils from integrated school (Gesamtschule) is 5.8% and 2% from secondary school (Sekundarschule). Secondary modern school (Hauptschule) and middle school (Realschule) are also mentioned but the percentages are only 0.9% respectively 0.2%. Two-thirds of the participants (65.6%) were pupils from higher secondary level, while one-third (34.4%) was from lower secondary level. Regarding gender, the majority of the participants was female (57.3%).

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 90.7%. A clear majority of the respondents (64.9%) said that the project days helped them to significantly improve their knowledge. Finally, eight out of ten participants (89.3%) 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 263 items, it was mentioned 110 times. For example, one pupil's statement reads as follows: "I found the simulation game very interesting. I had a lot of fun putting myself in someone else's position." However, the workshops and discussion rounds were also well received. Overall, participants appreciated the interactive and inclusive character of the project days. For example, one participant summarised his positive feedback as follows: "It was something practical, in contrast to our school lessons, which are quite dry and one-sided." Finally, the participants also gave 180 answers to the open-ended question of what could be improved in the future. Here, predominantly organisational issues and issues

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concerning the time management were mentioned. For example, several participants asked for more breaks and smaller groups. Others requested more room for discussion and more active participation within the workshops. For example, one participant left the following remark: “I thought it was a pity that we could not participate in all workshops.”

Final conclusion

Generally speaking, the impact of the project was quite significant, judging by the feedback received from the participants. Especially the simulation game – as a central part of the project activities – met the general approval of the pupils.

The EUROPER project days can therefore be considered as fully satisfactory. The participants now better understand the decision-making processes of the European Union. More specifically, they gained practical knowledge of the current European asylum policy and its national implementation. The experience of the project days also significantly changed the pupils’ attitudes towards refuge and asylum. Finally, the project activities also increased the pupils’ negotiation skills.

To conclude, the central objectives of the project have been achieved thanks to a smart combination of informative workshops with a highly interactive simulation game that responds to young people’s needs and raises their awareness for the asylum policy of the European Union.