Civic Education in Divided Societies:
Using Civic Education Materials to Build a Democratic
Political Culture

Summary of Focus Group

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Sharareh Frouzesh Bennett
Program Manager, Research and Evaluation
Center for Civic Education

A focus group was conducted by Dr. Suzanne Soule and Sharareh Frouzesh Bennett of the Center for Civic Education (the Center) during a 2005 conference entitled *Civic Education in Divided Societies: Using Civic Education Materials to Build a Democratic Political Culture,* in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The group consisted of all conference attendees: a representative of USAID, an education ministry official from South Africa, two representatives from the Center's School Violence Prevention Demonstration Program, and representatives from the following Civitas partnerships: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Indonesia, the Republic of Ireland, Jordan, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Slovakia, and South Africa.

The questions posed to participants during the focus group specifically addressed participants' experiences with the Center's various curricular programs, the difficulties participants have faced in implementing them in their divided societies, ways in which Center materials are being used and adapted to meet the needs of such societies, and participants' opinions about the perceived effect on students' and teachers' levels of tolerance. The following report summarizes information derived from the focus group, subsequent interviews, and country presentations from the conference.

Challenges for Implementation

Participants cited numerous challenges to implementing civic education curricula in their divided societies. These ranged from limits imposed on educators from the state and society to psychological barriers from years of government oppression to enmity between members of groups within the same society.

Limits Imposed by State and Society

Muna Darwish Al Shami, Director of Arab Civitas in Jordan cited institutional limits placed on educators by the state. In Jordan, curriculum is centrally directed and mandated by the Ministry of Education. Thus, curricular content is both closely monitored, and in some cases, expressly censored. For example, there is no mention of the 1970 Jordanian civil war, or the related schisms between Jordanian Palestinians and Jordanians from the east bank of the river. There is a general, and perhaps prudent, unwillingness on the part of educators to broach contentious issues, including group divides and societal prejudices. As such, the Jordanian Civitas representatives approach the goal of reconciliation and their attempts to build political tolerance only indirectly.

Muna expressed the hope that by developing students' civic skills and dispositions, they are also building on students' analytic skills and enforcing the core skills and values. Her hope was that, indeed, such skills will assist students in mitigating between competing interests—that the next generation will be thus better prepared to avoid the spiral of violence that have plagued past and present Jordanians.

Similarly, in Lebanon, there is a great unwillingness on the part of educators to engage their students in controversial issues that face the society at large. According to Roula

Bouchahine, the Lebanese In-Country Coordinator, this hesitation has less to do with fear of being reproached by the state than an artifact of the societal divides which are reflected in the institutions of the state. There is, at present, a great reliance on collective memory, since the contemporary history of Lebanon is still in dispute. Lebanon possesses no centrally mandated curriculum; in fact, instruction in contemporary Lebanese history, especially the civil war, is discouraged. Each community has its own history, and there has, as of yet, been no reconciliation in these disparate, and often conflicting, accounts.

Civitas Lebanon utilizes professional development of teachers to address the divide between groups and their differing treatments of historical sufferings. At the beginning of sessions, they talk about the many perspectives of identity. This is an important part of their training as it allows teachers from all religious backgrounds to come together, view examples of Lebanese violence, share and discuss their personal experiences and even grieve in the company of one another. As part of the identity exercises teachers are given a chance to discuss the many facets of identity, their preconceptions about what it means to be Lebanese, and the barriers that divide Lebanese society as a whole. This is an attempt to begin the process of working collectively through unhealed wounds.

Andres Podlesky Boada, a researcher from Fundación Presencia in Colombia, too, pointed to reluctance on the part of the state, and indeed, the people to acknowledge the ongoing civil war in Colombia. This refusal to honestly diagnose or assess the conflict has translated into a virtual absence of dialogue about these controversial issues within the classroom. This institutional aversion to the discussion of the conflict, Andres notes, has its practical reasons through: within the war zones, teachers attending trainings, and indeed, students within the classroom could be part of or have material connection to the guerilla or paramilitary groups. As such, there is always an inherent danger in discussing the conflict directly.

Bill Ryan, In-Country Program Director of the Center for Civic Education Indonesia, noted that it is difficult to begin discussions related to implementation of civics curriculum in divided societies because any contact with particular institutions or state apparatus establishes the appearance of cooperation with one party in a conflict over another. In Indonesia, this has been an issue with the Center's implementation of its programs in the Aceh province. There has been a fear that using Center materials in the province will be perceived as an express support for the Indonesian government at the expense of the Acehnese separatists. Generally, Bill expressed a desire for caution in approaching divisions in post-conflict situations that haven't had ample time to mature.

Psychological Barriers between Citizen and State

Rahela Dzidic, Executive Director of Civitas@Bosnia and Herzegovina, noted that in (formerly) totalitarian societies, or emerging democracies still lacking effective bureaucratic institutions, the term public policy lacks any useful referents. In their infancy, institutions are often unable or unwilling to engage citizen participation in local processes, and citizens, in turn, are hesitant to trust and engage in those very institutions.

In fact, Rahela pointed out that programmatic success in such divided societies cannot be judged in terms of trust of government or its institutions because in many cases the government cannot yet be trusted.

This was a sentiment shared by Bill Ryan of Indonesia who referenced a dearth of public policy options available to Indonesian citizens. In a country where much of the bureaucratic legwork is done by private organizations, he insisted that some of the established steps of Project Citizen have to be revised to allow for students to work with NGOs to achieve their "public policy" objectives.

Presumably, civic education can positively contribute to the formation of strong democratic institutions by training a new generation of citizens who can effectively oversee the development of such institutions and demand accountability, even during the process of growth.

Administrators of Civitas@Bosnia and Herzegovina had to create a language for democracy because much of the terminology (including "public" and "policy") was already appropriated in markedly different ways by the former communist regime. Further, post-communist laws dictate that schools should be free of politics, presenting another challenge to the task of setting up civics programs.

Muna from Jordan cited this psychological barrier between citizen and state as an important challenge in the full implementation of the program. This barrier is one that exists in both cities and the countryside, and is a natural reaction to the mostly authoritarian structure of Jordan. Arab Civitas, she said, was instituted in Jordan with the intention of dissolving this barrier: the goal is to educate a citizenry capable of demanding transparency and accountability from their governmental institutions as a means of growing democracy from the bottom up.

Inter-group Enmity

The Ireland partnership (Cooperation Ireland) cited inter-group enmity as the fundamental problem with the implementation of civic education curricula in their divided society. Specifically, with regard to Project Citizen, the partnership cited the difficulty in helping students identify their "community" beyond the segregated communities in which they live. That is, the partnership cited a tendency on the part of both teachers and students to identify with institutional structures that serve the needs of *either* Protestant *or* Catholic communities. The partnership used a map drawn by a student of her community wherein she included *only* institutions serving Catholic students. The problem the students went on to identify was a lack of community center where students can congregate and play. A more complete version of the map showed that the neighborhood, in fact, was equipped with a community center, but one which served Protestant students. This example was to illustrate the psychological tendency on the part of students from Northern Ireland to identify community as demarcated along strictly religious lines. As such, Cooperation Ireland cited the need to pay careful

attention to how students conceptualize problems within "their" community (and of what community consists).

In looking at Project Citizen and its applicability to the Northern Ireland and Irish contexts, Cooperation Ireland has found that the following three assumptions embedded within Project Citizen do not obtain in their context, and thus, need to be carefully addressed in setting up the project: 1) common allegiances to a single state/political entity; 2) shared value systems among all participants; and, 3) relevance of public policy to daily life (the assumption that public policy can positively affect their community).

The primary challenge for Cooperation Ireland thus has become how to bridge the structural gaps within and between the divided communities, breaking down psychological barriers between groups, and building skills associated with conflict resolution and transformation, without unconsciously furthering these existing enmities. Cooperation Ireland uses public policy as the bridge to engender an environment where Protestant and Catholic students can share and tackle issues that affect their respective communities. In a year-long project, consisting of anywhere from 30-40 teaching hours, Cooperation Ireland sponsors two Protestant and Catholic exchanges. Each participating school identifies and researches a community problem, develops a solution and explores how they can take action. They do this while sharing information, research and analysis with a "partner" group from the other jurisdiction and collaborating during residential exchanges in each other's communities to explore joint problem-solving strategies. Through a combined partnership presentation at an all-island showcase event, participating groups illustrate not only their learning in relation to responsible citizenship, but also their collaborative learning in relation to shared civic engagement and an understanding of each other's identities and traditions. In their work with students, they concentrate their initial activities on anxiety reduction, empathy development, and all aspects of interpersonal development through the various components of contact theory.

The Bosnian partnership also cited inter-group hostility as a major problem facing civic education implementation. Socially and, to a great extent politically, Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into the following ethnic matrix: Serbs/Eastern Orthodox, Croats/Roman Catholic, and Bosniaks/Muslim. This divide is preserved so thoroughly that virtually all curricular materials have to be appropriated to fit these divisions. Everything is and has been so divided in the curriculum that even history books reference each distinct group even in referring to historical periods preceding the divisions (e.g., they refer to the Croat nation-state long before its emergence).

The partnership has had to take this into consideration in adapting Center materials. In translating and adapting Foundation of Democracy, the partnership had to ensure that everything, including the language and names used, had to be adapted for each of the three groups. Though the texts have been translated into Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian, and names and dress appropriated to fit each audience, the partnership notes that the Civitas materials used in Bosnia and Herzegovina are **the only** curricular programs being used by all three groups in the entire country.

In addition to implementing the program for all students, the Bosnian partnership has established combined showcases to introduce an element of physically associating otherwise thoroughly divided groups of students. For many students, this is the first time they will come into contact with students from one or both of the other ethnic and religious groups. Moreover, at the end of the Project Citizen competition, they invite all the students to come to a summer camp, during which students work in mixed groups. In each group there is a representative from each geographic region. One of the activities during camp is an identity game with a flower with many petals representing the various aspects of an individual's identity. In this way, the activity is intended to illustrate that language and religion are but two parts of a citizen's greater identity, and shouldn't be any more important than the other parts of it.

Providing Access to All Groups – Engaging Minority Students

The South African partnership pointed to a slightly different problem. Anash Mangalparsad, of the Center for Community and Organizational Development, noted that many South Africans consider themselves past the conflict stage, though he insists that they can't take this fact for granted. That is, he indicates that it is essential to use any opportunity possible to impart democratic skills to ensure that their nascent democracy does not fall back into the cycle of conflict. The underlying division pointed to is one of deep disparities in wealth. Though South Africa is no longer *officially* segregated, the profound economic divides have effectively maintained near-apartheid levels of physical and economic segregation, especially with regard to the demographic makeup of schools. The partnership pointed to the need to offer access to a high-quality of civic education to students of all economic levels, especially to ensure that students have an adequate understanding of the principles of their constitution and the competence to uphold those principles.

In order to fulfill this need for high quality instruction on the democratic institutions of South Africa and its constitution, the South African partnership is in the final process of adapting Project Citizen. They are adding components, specifically, a section dealing with levels of South African government and its constitutional foundations.

One way in which the South African partnership addresses the physical segregation of students is to offer a combined showcase in which students from all over South Africa share their Project Citizen projects. In this way, students from different backgrounds come together and find that students from all kinds of communities identify similar problems, thus building a common experience between students of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds. Moreover, the partnership also greatly emphasizes fully integrated teacher trainings as a way of building crosscutting ties between teachers from different backgrounds and experiences.

Marcela Maslova, Program Director of Orava Association for Democratic Education of the Slovak Republic, cited the full integration of the Roma as the primary challenge facing their efforts. Given that only approximately half of Roma are integrated to the society at large, Civitas Slovakia is attempting a two-pronged approach: i) to gain access

to predominantly Roma schools, and (ii) setting up exchanges and cooperation involving both Roma and non-Roma as a means of bridging the knowledge gap and addressing the lack of tolerance of the latter for the former.

Myron Yoder, the Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator of Allentown School District, and a representative from the School Violence Prevention Demonstration Program (SVPDP) cited providing access to quality civic education to minority students and socio-economically disadvantaged students as one of the challenges to implementation in many communities throughout the United States. His district's rationale for adoption of the program was their core belief that by building good citizenship early on among all their students, they proactively deal with issues of violence and conflict in and between students. Given the degree of diversity in the district, i.e., 29 different languages spoken in the district, providing all students access to quality programs is of primary importance.

For Colombia, the major issue with regard to access is neither race, language, nor religion, but almost entirely regional and economic. Though there is vast diversity in terms of race, the high degree of intermixing throughout Colombia's history has translated into few problems along distinctly racial lines, and there is great homogeneity in terms of language and religion (90% of Colombians are Roman Catholics). Therefore, according to Andres, their organization has focused on providing access to the curricular programs to economically disadvantaged groups. There is large popular support for civic education, but the access to such programs has been lacking until recently. Fundación Presencia's goal has been to try to change the mindset on conflict in the long-term by educating citizens in democratic skills, rather than responding directly to or stopping it.

Using Civic Education to Bridge Divides

In addition to revealing some of the challenges to implementation faced by civic educators in divided societies, the focus group established four distinct ways in which the Center's programs are being used and, in some cases, supplemented, to bridge divides between groups in such societies.

1) *Using civic education to build an engaged democratic citizenry to curb the cycle of violence.*

Several participants (Jordan, Colombia, Bosnia, United States) shared their hope that securing a new generation of citizens with civic skills and dispositions will transform the cycle of instability and violence in their divided societies. Their primary goal with regard to the conflict their societies have suffered has been to educate a new generation of democratic citizens. Thus, their approach to conflict in their societies has been primarily *indirect*—their hypothesis being that civic education, when done effectively, can engage students such that they are able to better understand root causes of conflict, including but not limited to competing interests inherent in all public policy initiatives. The core assumptions with this approach are: (i) skills and dispositions associated with civic engagement will also guide students in understanding and mitigating between competing

interests and in situations that result in conflict, and (ii) that when students are familiar with the institutional processes for effecting change, they are less likely to view violence as an answer.

2) *Establishing contact as a means of building empathic involvement between groups.*

South Africa, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ireland each mentioned their explicit use of combined showcases as a means of bringing together students of disparate, and overtly divided, communities. Though every participating country at the conference sponsors combined showcases, these three countries indicated that for many of their students this is one of the only opportunities they have to engage with students of differing racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds.

Anesh from South Africa indicated that "showcases are an ideal opportunity to bring the students together." Students from different backgrounds come together and find that students from all kinds of communities identify similar problems.

In attempting to mitigate the divides between students, the Bosnian partnership has established combined showcases to introduce an element of physically associating otherwise thoroughly divided groups of students. Moreover, at the end of the Project Citizen competition, they invite all the students to come to a summer camp, during which students work in mixed groups, each having representatives from every geographic region.

Cooperation Ireland takes this approach one step further. In addition to the combined showcases wherein students from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (including both Catholic and Protestant students) present together, they have instituted a full partnership between schools of differing religious backgrounds. Cooperation Ireland uses the Project Citizen program as a way to bring Protestant and Catholic students together to discuss issues that affect their respective communities. In a year-long project, consisting of anywhere from 30-40 teaching hours, Cooperation Ireland sponsors two Protestant and Catholic exchanges. Each participating school identifies and researches a community problem, develops a solution and explores how they can take action. They do this while sharing information, research and analysis with a "partner" group from the other jurisdiction and collaborate during residential exchanges in each other's communities to explore joint problem-solving strategies.

Bill Ryan from Indonesia referenced his approach of bringing competing religious organizations together in instituting Project Citizen in Indonesia. Civitas Indonesia started combined teacher trainings of members of the two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. This was one of the first times when members of these organizations, which have historically been political and theological rivals and adversaries, were brought into contact with one another. Though the students do not study together, since schools tend to reflect the demographics of mostly their divided communities, Civitas Indonesia has found some very interesting results in terms of bridging gaps between these otherwise

divided organizations through these trainings. Bill hopes to get the education wings of these organizations to start cooperating on future projects.

This method of bringing members of disparate communities in physical contact to one another is also highly utilized with regard to teacher trainings by other participating countries.

3) *Teaching teachers (to teach) tolerance.*

Each participant at the workshop emphasized the centrality of teacher attitudes when teaching in divided societies. The observations that participants shared about teacher attitudes and teaching methods and their effects on student attitudes are in line with research done in the field of civic engagement.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina partnership discussed their methods of ensuring high quality teacher trainings which address issues of tolerance. They offer small trainings to teach teachers to accept everyone as they are (all societies, groups, etc.), they emphasize that every group has its own stigma, and "it's nobody's fault that they are who they are." In divided societies, Rahela points out, everyone is a victim of intolerance in some manner and that it is important to get the "elephant" out in the open, acknowledge the conflict with its many contours, and discuss issues in an open forum. They recognize that it is unlikely for a program to affect attitudes relating to tolerance when the teachers teaching the program are themselves intolerant. To counter this, they have designed a teacher certification program to make sure that teachers are at least taught not to vocalize their negative attitudes toward other groups within the classroom context.

Slovakia has begun to address tolerance toward Slovakia's Roma minority through teacher trainings as well, attempting to draw on members of the Roma community in their trainings.

South Africa has encouraged teacher exchanges between South African and American teachers as a means of addressing teachers' levels of tolerance. They have found that comfort levels of teachers have changed during exchanges—that teachers from different racial backgrounds and/or economic contexts start off uncomfortable with one another, but become much more comfortable with people different than themselves after involvement in such exchanges. In their teacher trainings, the South African partnership emphasizes diverse citizenship within a democratic society, including the meaning and consequences of diverse citizenship, and the importance of the universal application of the law for all members of a society. The partnership cited their explicit attempts of bringing in a diverse group of teachers for their trainings and exchanges, and the way in which such diversity greatly affects the quality of the conversation coming out of such sessions.

Sally Martinez, a Consultant with IGM Education Resources, Inc., and an Arizona coordinator for both SVPDP and Project Citizen indicated that she has personally observed some differences in terms of teachers' tolerance in teachers that have been

involved with the School Violence program, mostly because of the intensive nature of the program and its overt emphasis on violence prevention. She said that she had not noticed such a perceptible difference in teachers that had only undergone Project Citizen training, and she attributed this to the less intensive nature of the trainings and lack of emphasis on sustained follow-up.

The Irish partnership highlighted the importance of time spent with teachers during trainings and developing relationships with them. They utilize highly interactive methodology in their trainings as a means of teaching teachers (how to teach students) how to handle contentious issues. They pointed out that when students of different identity groups meet, complex questions and issues come up; if teachers haven't dealt with these issues themselves, they will avoid them. They cited an example of a group of students who wanted to work with the police on a Project Citizen assignment, but the teacher stopped it because of his/her own issues of institutional trust.

4) *Supplementing the programs with lessons and training on the many aspects of identity and community.*

The Irish partnership, Lebanon, and Bosnia and Herzegovina all mentioned separate ways in which they include the notion of identity and community in working with the Center's materials.

Civitas Lebanon utilizes professional development of teachers to address the divide between groups and their differing treatments of historical sufferings. At the beginning of sessions, they talk about the many perspectives of identity. This is an important part of their training as it allows teachers from all religious backgrounds to come together, view examples of Lebanese violence, share and discuss their personal experiences and even grieve in the company of one another. As part of the identity exercises teachers are given a chance to discuss the many facets of identity, their preconceptions about what it means to be Lebanese, and the barriers that divide Lebanese society as a whole. This is an attempt to begin the process of working collectively through unhealed wounds.

Civitas Bosnia has incorporated an identity game as a part of a camp they have established to follow their Project Citizen portfolio showcases. They present each participant with a flower and ask that s/he fill in each petal to represent one aspect of his/her individual identity. In this way, the activity is intended to illustrate that language and religion are but two parts of a greater identity, and shouldn't be any more important than the other parts of it.

Cooperation Ireland approaches the issue of identity in many ways. One approach discussed (and used) during the meeting was an activity whereby students record their initial stereotypes of students from their partner school and test those against their experiences throughout the exchange. These stereotypes are sometimes acted out in the presence of the entire partnership both as an attempt to break the ice and as a means of provoking honest discussions about stereotypes and intolerance. Other activities having

to do with identity include the following icebreakers: participants share details of their interests with a partner, then the partner discusses these as if they were his/her own; a member of a partnership poses, then changes the pose only slightly, and the other member must indicate how s/he has changed the pose. Both of these activities are intended to engage students deeply with one another, which is especially helpful in situations where there is reluctance to interact or engage due to longstanding societal divisions.

Cooperation Ireland has also incorporated a component to Project Citizen which specifically addresses the issue of community, which they cite as essential in helping students identify their "community" beyond the segregated communities in which they live. That is, the partnership cited a tendency to on the part of both teachers and students to interact with institutional structures that serve the needs of *either* Protestant *or* Catholic communities. Cooperation Ireland cited the need to pay careful attention to how students conceptualize problems within "their" community (and of what community consists). In looking at Project Citizen and its applicability to the situation that obtains in the Irish context, Cooperation Ireland has found that the following three assumptions they have found in Project Citizen do not obtain in their context, and thus, need to be carefully addressed in setting up the project: 1) common allegiances to a single state/political entity; 2) shared value system among all participants; and, 3) relevance of public policy to daily life (the assumption that public policy can positively affect their community).

Preliminary Observations about Programmatic Effects on Political Tolerance

When asked whether they have observed any noticeable changes in terms of tolerance in students or teachers, or whether they believe that this would be a natural consequence of any of the Center programs they use, most participants answered in the affirmative. It is important to note these responses as they relate to the distinct ways in which each site is using the Center's materials to bridge divides between groups in such societies.

Muna from Jordan mentioned that the initial reaction of teachers is that they find the programs very challenging. It prompts them to consider the methodology they utilize in their classrooms, which is different from traditional trainings which focus exclusively on content. The newness of the student-centered methodology makes it especially challenging. They have noticed changes in teachers by the end of trainings, as teachers engage in fruitful discussions with one another, exchange expertise, and consider ways to create channels of communication with policy-makers—all things that are incredibly novel in the Jordanian context.

Muna indicated that she has observed some important changes in student attitudes and dispositions which she believes can potentially be fundamental to curbing the cycle of violence in Jordan. By conducting interviews and meeting government officials, she believes the psychological barrier between the citizen and state gradually begins to dissolve. Students realize the crucial role that citizens can play in their society, and become more likely to try to affect the system instead of acting out from a sense of impotence. They lose their initial passiveness in society and think in terms of the active,

engaged citizen, become aware of the constitution and its meaning, and get a better sense of the importance of rule of law to their society.

Roula from Lebanon noted that it is too early to talk about impact on student attitudes, since this is their second year of implementation of this program. She has observed, however, that in discussing issues which affect Lebanese society, students begin to ask questions about other students and display a great deal of curiosity with regard to what students from other communities think/care about.

Myron Yoder from SVPDP shared quite a few anecdotes regarding the perceived programmatic success, including students referencing the distinction between authority and power, or otherwise logically working through problems, in lieu of acting out. Students begin and continue to speak in terms of authority, justice, and power. One such anecdote included the case of a "bully" from the 4th grade who moved to the 5th grade. School authorities were considering how to deal with his behavioral problems, but noticed that he had become a leader in the Project Citizen project and later moved on to the finals, and was no longer bullying. Another story involved a hall monitor who got in trouble, and recognized her transgression , explained to the principal that she used power without authority, and indicated that she understood the rationale for the ensuing punishment. Another girl mentioned to him that she had learned to work in cooperatively with people she didn't initially want to cooperate with. This taught her to overcome her initial prejudices and anxiety. Sally Martinez of SVPDP also discussed some initial successes including changes in the environment of the school, student attitudes, and a decrease in bullying since the inception of the program. She mentioned that they use the program as a tool to prevent violence. She cited an example of third graders who had identified bullying as a problem, and had implemented a peace-making curriculum in their school which is still being used with students.

Myron even mentioned that they even perceive effects in parents, because they also begin to adopt the language of these programs, and often find that they need to rationally engage their children rather than merely censuring them.

Rahela from Bosnia mentioned that the most common feedback she receives from students is that they have a great deal of enthusiasm when working on Project Citizen because of the way it engages them in their communities and with their governmental institutions. It provides them a unique opportunity to work with open eyes and minds in a country where there is a great deal of cynicism both about other ethnic groups and government officials.

Marcela from Slovakia has gathered a list of effects on students that teachers have perceived working with Project Citizens in the classroom. They include positive thinking and a sense of personal efficacy, the ability to communicate with peers and adults, increased cooperation with one another, greater self-esteem, often because even students who may be academically inferior have an opportunity to shine, greater efficacy in terms of creative and critical thinking, greater flexibility, a willingness to help one another, a greater understanding and appreciation for the views of minorities, a real commitment to

recognizing the perspective of others, and the desire to learn about democratic decision making.

Andres from Colombia referenced an evaluation done in Colombia which found that Project Citizen in Colombia minimizes inter and intra-group animosity while fostering critical thought and empathy. An evaluation of Foundations of Democracy found a diminished level of conflict, and suggested that it improves relationship between teachers and students. Students have cited that Foundations of Democracy promotes empathy by encouraging students to consider people's motivations and sense of justice, while Project Citizen fosters trust and teamwork.

Interestingly, Cooperation Ireland notes that their evaluation of Civic-Link did ***not*** find significant increases in 'tolerance.' Because of the findings, the program has been further adapted to include further engagement specifically with issues of conflict—students are now directed and encouraged to choose a problems dealing with conflict common to both sets of partners (or, in lieu of that, to choose common strategies to develop as partners).

Miscellaneous Information from the Focus Group

Adaptation

Many of the partnerships cited adaptations they had made to the Center's program to better suit their specific context.

Muna from Jordan indicated that they had made no adaptations to the K-2 Foundations of Democracy (other than translation), but the higher levels required heavy adaptation. Stories, names, and forms of judicial systems were all adapted. She mentioned that they faced some difficulties adapting some concepts because they are too American, as they addressed specifically American legal concepts/aspects—these were left out of their adaptation. They found that in addition to requiring adept translators, it has been necessary to utilize legal scholars familiar with the Jordanian legal system to assist with the adaptations.

Rahela from Bosnia and Herzegovina mentioned adaptation that they have had to make to the trainings: they had to create a language for democracy because, as mentioned earlier in this summary, much of the terminology was already appropriated in markedly different ways by the former communist regime. Furthermore, they have found that they need to integrate content with methods to a degree they did not initially expect. They have found that many teachers don't understand fundamental, basic political issues, including the make-up of the constitution or how a bill becomes a law. As such, they have developed small brochures which are discussed during teacher trainings, and provided to all teachers for later reference.

With regard to curricular adaptations, everything is and has been so divided in Bosnian society including the curricular materials used with each group, that they had to

appropriate everything to fit these divisions, including the language of the materials and even names (because names tend to be indicative of membership of particular ethnic groups). Also, they found that they have to begin by teaching students about the basics of their government, its levels, and functions, both to fill the void of knowledge about the government and to show the functions government bureaucracy fulfills with the 64% of Bosnian GDP used to fund its clumsy institutions.

The South African partnership pointed to a de-emphasis with regard to competition. One adaptation made to Project Citizen has been allowing for noncompetitive showcases as well as altering the terminology of the program (e.g., "evaluators" instead of "judges").

Furthermore, they are in the final stages of supplementing their Project Citizen books with a section on the branches of the South African government. They have found that it is essential for students to understand how the government and its institutions operate prior to attempting to pass public policy initiative through Project Citizen. The partnership mentioned that any adaptations they have made to the program have teachers as their source, according to their experiences in the classroom environment.

Andres from Colombia indicated that they have had to adapt the trainings slightly by adding a greater emphasis on explaining "public" even before explaining "policy." He attributed the need for this partially on the Latin American cultural context in which the line between public and private is often blurred. He insisted that without proper treatment of this question ("what is public?") Project Citizen is only effective as a tool for solving individual problems, not those of the collective. As such, the Colombian partnership has adapted a new step involving differentiating between private and public space to Project Citizen. In addition to this, they have also added a human rights element to both Project Citizen and Foundations of Democracy to meet some USAID requirements, and have found the addition to be quite fruitful in the Colombian context.

Bill from Indonesia noted that governmental institutions are often unwilling and/or incapable of making public policy decisions, and that much of this work is achieved through or sponsored by NGOs and religious organizations. As such, Project Citizen has been adapted in Indonesia to allow students to go through NGOs and religious organizations in trying to pass their "public policy" initiatives.

Length of Programs

The participants were asked by Maryanne Yerkes, a Democracy Fellow at the Office of Democracy and Governance at USAID, about the length of instruction time and whether students had opportunities to get further access to the programs subsequent to their formal classroom participation.

Rahela from Bosnia indicated that the time dedicated to the program varies in the three ethnic areas in which the program is taught. Overall, it varies from 16 to 64 hours a year. With regard to voluntary student involvement with the program, she mentioned that they have tried to begin Civitas clubs. In fact, this has been the primary motivation for their

university program, which allows students who want to continue to do so after entering university. They even offer a university showcase in teacher-training universities. As a side note, Civitas@Bosnia and Herzegovina helped get civic education included as a required part of teacher trainings for **all** future teachers, regardless of specific subject being taught. Their philosophy has been that all educational programs should be conducted in the spirit of democracy and human rights.

Myron Yoder noted that time devoted to the programs varies from teacher to teacher. In the 5th grade, the Center's materials constitute the entirety of the social studies curriculum students have to take. In other years, it is their civics portion of social studies. In the past, elementary teachers taught the combination of programs 40 minutes every day for 180 days. However, as a result of mandates and changes in testing requirements, teachers teach the program 20 minutes every other day for 180 days. It should be noted, however, that this estimate includes only the time spent on the programs in social studies, and does not take into account the inclusion of the program into other subject matters such as English literature. Due to Melissa Bell's efforts in the district, the Center's programs have become a central theme in many different aspects of students' curriculum. As such, instructional time doesn't capture everything—in some cases, it constitutes the entire day.

Sally indicated that in her Arizona districts, Project Citizen teachers usually do the project from February to April. The School Violence Prevention Demonstration Program, however, is taught for much longer primarily because teachers are taught how to imbed the curricula with various other subject matter requirements. Potentially, teachers can teach portions of the material from September to the end of spring.

Considerations for the Future

The *Civic Education in Divided Societies* conference brought to light many important issues faced by civic educators in divided societies, ranging from obstructions to implementation to ways in which civic education can be used to bridge societal divides. Some of the most important considerations for educators in divided societies include a tendency to shy away from contentious issues, which can be a direct result of institutional limits and/or physical danger, unresolved animosity and history within and between groups, the existence of untrustworthy and/or ineffective government institutions, a limited sense of community and/or a lack of allegiance to the state, an apprehension to work with one side in a conflict from fear of the appearance of taking sides, and the inability to provide equal access to disadvantaged members of a society.

Given that the Center's programs are being heavily adapted to meet these needs, the Center should consider developing curricular content to assist its partners. Many of the issues which are faced by members of divided societies are shared by the Center's Civitas partners the world over. The following are suggestions for areas in which further Center materials and/or guidance will be especially useful:

- Encourage the use of showcases as a good way to bring diverse students into contact with one another. Perhaps even promote the establishment of partnerships as a means

of developing cooperation between students of all racial, ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds.

- Develop lesson plans, materials, or suggestions for dealing with, in the least, political tolerance (i.e., the universal extension of political rights).

- Develop lesson plans, materials, or suggestions for dealing with the notion of community and/or individual identity, especially the former.

- Develop lesson plans, materials, or suggestions for dealing with the public/private divide, especially given the continued insistence of the Center's Latin American partners for such materials.

- Encourage the Center's partners to supplement the Center's materials with local curricula outlining the levels of government, specific state institutions, and the historical foundations of their constitutions, which can complement and enhance the active learning methodology of the Center's programs.

- Highlight the importance of quality-control with regard to the development of supplementary curricular materials, especially the incorporation of high quality research on best practices, and utilization of qualified personnel.

- Emphasize quality control with regard to teacher trainings. The refrain heard throughout the conference was the primacy of teacher trainings for adequate programmatic implementation. Participants expressed a desire for concrete content and methodology standards for all the Center-related trainings, as well as a greater emphasis on ongoing follow-up after the initial trainings.

- A more systematic evaluation of the effects of teacher and student exchanges within the partnerships.