

DEVELOPING CONTEXT IN INTERNATIONAL CIVIC EDUCATION PROJECTS

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Because of its inherent political nature, projects for developing civic education in emerging democracies have often been criticized for being a tool for hegemonic control by the *West*. Much of these suspicions have been pointed at the United States (US) due to the government's policy of supporting educational reform in emerging democracies. Many of these programs have been criticized as well-intentioned but superficial consultations, or at worst, as a hegemonic imposition of American values and conceptions of democracy. In either case, the heart of the criticism rests on the often accurate perception that the civic education that is developed in these emerging democracies relies too heavily on Western expertise and conceptions of democracy and lacks sufficient indigenous voice and understanding of the context in which it is to be used. Some have even argued that this process is implicitly inherent in all Western educational aid programs.¹ It is exactly this criticism that this article seeks to address.

While it seems obvious that civic education must represent the context in which it is developed, the reality of designing and implementing such a curriculum is exceedingly difficult given the inherent power structure, predominant resources and political bias that characterizes civic education assistance projects. While neither partner is desirous of this outcome, the structural factors inherent in the relationship can often overwhelm the best of intentions. Indeed, it is this seeming inability to overcome these factors that has led some to argue that Western aid programs should be simply transfers of funds without any active role taken by the donor nations.

What is clear is that when these factors weigh too heavily on the process and final outcome of the project, it has a detracting result for all parties involved. The partners from the emerging democracy can become dependent on the knowledge and funds from the Western partner and lose the opportunity to actively develop the capacity to continue develop-

ment of their own educational goals. Further complicating this arrangement is the emerging democracy partners experience with authoritarian hierarchies such that this power arrangement becomes familiar grounds for the new international relationship. Perhaps the most powerful factor in why these partnerships reify the resource predominance is that while the emerging democracy partners know what they do not want [largely the educational system of the past] they are still uncertain about what they do want and expect the model from the established democracy to provide them the answers. Unfortunately, it is often the case that we in the West have not actually tested our own assumptions about democratic education and have simply pasted on to our international partners our own dilemmas.

What we in the West can best gain from contextualizing these education projects is insight about what civic education should entail. By becoming trapped in the role of financier and clinician, the United States partner becomes not only the dispenser of money but also of knowledge and best practice. Constrained by the responsibilities of grant management and partner expectations, the US partner can become the sole active source of information collection and distribution, which limits the content examined to their knowledge and skills base. Not only does this constrain the information that the international partner has as models, but it also limits the United States partner's exposure to new information that would be useful for re-examining their own civic education content and practice.

When this project arrangement occurs, it is analogous in many ways to teaching democracy through didactic lecture and suffers from all of the same types of limitations of that methodology. While all parties may have the best of intentions, the fact remains that the constraints of the project structure limits the growth and development of all. Perhaps worst of all, these factors reify the authoritarian model of operation that is exactly the opposite of the democratic content and skills that are being promoted.

The solution to this arrangement is the same as the one we employ in our classrooms. Instead of didactic lecture about democracy, we must seek a more active teaching and learning approach that empowers the emerging democracy partner and encourages reflection and growth of the US partner. By adopting such a model, we expect the same benefits in our educational assistance programs as are derived in our classrooms. We would expect more engaged, self-directed, and higher achievement from the emerging democracy partners and increased reflection, learning, and success from the Western partners. We would also expect the products of such a project to emerge from a constructivist process and exhibit more

contextual understanding and relevance because of the increased engagement of the developers. In concrete terms, this would likely mean that the products emerging from such a project would reflect only a limited amount of influence by the Western curriculum and a greater applicability to the indigenous one. Lastly, we would also expect the Western partners to demonstrate reflective learning such that the project would impact their own construction of knowledge and practice. This would result from their testing of prior assumptions, acquisition of new content, and reconceptualization of their own understandings of democracy education.

All of these points will be explored through analysis of the conduct of an ongoing US-Ukraine civic education project. Emerging from this analysis is a series of lessons learned about contextualizing civic education that can be useful for others involved in such partnerships.

In the following pages, this article will first detail the conduct of the Education for Democracy in Ukraine Project. The article will examine the success of the project in overcoming the structural factors of dominance by comparing the Ukrainian products to similar US models. Then the article will discuss the lessons learned about the importance of emphasizing context in civic education and will conclude with some questions and suggestions for a framework for developing contextual civic education in the future.

Education for Democracy in Ukraine Project

The process of democratization since Ukraine declared its independence in December of 1991 has been an unsteady one. Several factors have slowed this halting progress: widespread corruption, failure to transition to a market economy, procedural obstacles to representative government, and a rise of oligarchical control over much of the wealth of the nation. Although most experts will point to these contemporary problems, a more considered view would recognize that at the root lies a more fundamental issue. When Ukrainians threw off the yoke of the Soviet Union they were armed with the knowledge of what they did NOT want but lacked a clear picture of what to seek in its place.³

What Ukrainians and many others in the newly independent region of Central and Eastern Europe lacked was a basic and practical knowledge of the fundamentals of democracy. Because of their particular but shared regional history, few of the nations even had periods in their history of democratic rule, and certainly none of the citizens had practical experience with it. This was particularly true in the case of Ukraine, given its long history as a territory oppressed by its more powerful neighbors

and its brutal suppression under the Russian and later Soviet empires.

When you couple this lack of practical knowledge and experience with democracy with the demands of the current, sophisticated, competitive, and interconnected world, it is not surprising that the countries of this region have often struggled and sometimes backslid in their efforts to achieve democratic rule. It is also not surprising that some nations have handled this transition better than others. In particular, those nations that have a more democratic history and/or relative freedom within the Soviet Union — the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland — have made significant strides in achieving stable democracy. Citizens of these countries embraced independence with several inherent advantages because of their prior history and experience with freedom and the democratic world. What these advantages provided was a strong and developed understanding and practice of the fundamental principals of democracy throughout the various sectors of the societies. In other words, these countries enjoyed what is often termed as a democratic civil society.

Unfortunately, many other nations of the regions did not enjoy this same advantage and in Ukraine, the lack of civil society or even the coherence of an identifiable "Ukrainian" society at all has put a break on continued democratization. Until Ukrainians can develop a strong civil society that embodies a commitment to democratic attitudes and practice, the country is destined to struggle along as a procedural democracy at best, which is the case that now exists in the country.

One clear method for developing this fundamental understanding and thereby strengthening the civil society necessary for democratic progress is civic education. As Juliana Geran Pilon has noted, civic education for countries of Central and Eastern Europe must be both a set of concepts that constitute the principles of a free society and specific illustrations of how those principles operate in reality. On a country specific basis, civic education must also encompass the legal and social framework for civic behavior according to the existing system.

By developing civic education, Ukrainians seek to improve current citizens' understanding of democracy and more important, ensure that the next generation of Ukrainian citizens will have the knowledge and practice in the concepts and skills necessary for stable democracy. With such knowledge and skills, those involved with corruption, oligarchical rule, and the like will become pariahs and have a decreasing role in the true democratic civil society.

But civic education is not something that can be simply enacted or copied from elsewhere. For it to be effective, civic education must capture the principles of democracy within the context of the particular

country where it is to be implemented. Although this holds true for other educational and social policies, because of the nature of civic education it is even more important. Since at its core civic education is democratic political socialization of young people, it is crucial that it reflect both the past and current realities of the society. If it does not, then it simply becomes political propaganda and indoctrination that is imposed on what will inevitably become an increasingly resistant population. Even worse, noncontextualized civic education can create false expectations and engender bitterness and resentment towards both the imposing nation and the idea of democracy itself. This can in turn lead to a call for a more "true", and romanticized undemocratic past, or even a cynical disregard for any rule of law and an ultimate breakdown into anarchical free-for-all.

Because development of contextualized civic education in countries like Ukraine that do not have a democratic tradition is slow, costly, and incremental work, the inclination has been to simply import other national models, with little positive effect. At the same time, the countries continue to strive for change without the benefit of developed democratic knowledge. This has led to the incomplete and often fatally flawed democratic efforts in several nations in the region.

What becomes crucial is the development of this knowledge through contextualized civic education in as quick a manner as possible to allow for the strengthening of democratic civil society to spur corrections in their flawed democratization efforts. Over the past three years, such an effort has been underway through a partnership between a US university and a non-governmental organization in Ukraine.

On November 1, 2000, the Mershon Center, at the Ohio State University, was awarded a two-year contract from the US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for the conduct of the project "Education for Democracy in Ukraine." This project was part of the Transatlantic Civil Society Support Program for Ukrainian Civic Education, a joint effort of the European Union and the United States. These activities were planned in accordance with the Institute for the Study of Civil Society (CIVITAS) International and drew upon prior collaboration with the Center for Citizenship Education, Warsaw (CCEW) and the success that they have achieved in promoting civic education in Poland.

The partnership model that was developed during this project rested on several assumptions that arose from sensitivity about the importance of the context of Ukraine and recognition of the US predominance.

Assumption #1: The US partner was not responsible for curriculum development.

From the beginning of the project it was determined that the US partner would not be developing the curriculum nor translating US curriculum for direct use in Ukraine. Instead, the US partner served as a coach and resource collector based on the exploration of civic education by the Ukrainian partners. In addition, the US partner made clear from the very first planning meeting that only Ukrainians could design curriculum for Ukraine. Furthermore, the US partner also invested in studying Ukrainian history and current affairs and briefed all significant US participants in these subjects as well.

Assumption #2: The US partner was not the only source for all information about civic education.

Indeed, from the initial design of the project until today, the US partner has actively engaged and provided opportunities for the Ukrainian partner to work with others in the field of civic education around the world. One of the most concrete and successful ways this has been accomplished was through enlisting the assistance of a very successful civic education organization in Poland, the Center for Citizenship Education, Warsaw, to assist in the project as an additional partner and resource. Over the course of the project, the Ukrainian partners visited and consulted with the Polish partner on many aspects of both civic education and non-government organization business. The project was also designed to enlist Polish, Russian and other international teacher trainers in training workshops to further widen the field of information available to the Ukrainians.

Assumption #3: The fundamental purpose of the project was to provide an opportunity for the Ukrainian partner to develop the capacity to operate without US assistance.

This goal was pursued on several fronts. First, a great deal of time and financial resources was spent on purchasing and developing a resource center in Lviv, Ukraine, so that the Ukrainian partner would have a stable administrative base to anchor all future efforts. Second, instead of simply translating US materials the project organized a two-month curriculum development seminar in Ohio to provide training and support for a team of Ukrainian developers to create the first draft of the future classroom materials. This seminar prepared a core group of Ukrainian developers that continue to work with the Ukrainian partner today.

Assumption #4: Involvement of all levels of the educational system was necessary to empower gatekeepers and stakeholders in the curriculum reform.

Because of the centralized and hierarchical nature of the education system in Ukraine, the program was designed to involve influential parties at all levels of the education system. A variety of roundtables, conferences, and workshops were conducted to provide opportunities for teachers, educators and policy makers the opportunity to contribute to the design and conduct of the project. Of particular importance to this assumption was the conduct of a policy maker study tour of the US to provide them the opportunity to gain firsthand information on the positives and negatives of civic education in the United States and to allow them to provide feedback to the project directors.

Assumption #5: Involvement of classroom teachers from both partners is critical to legitimize the development of curriculum.

The project was designed to partner classroom teachers from both countries to work intimately with each other in designing the new civic education materials. This teacher-to-teacher approach insured that the project would move from the scholarly discussion of concepts to the practical level of teaching.

The project, designed in response to the Department of State (DOS) contract, consisted of a variety of activities and components to promote the advancement of civic education in the educational system in Ukraine.⁴ The principle goal of the project was the development of curriculum and materials for teaching civic education in 9/10th grade of Ukrainian schools. Four key components of the project were designed to reinforce the assumptions listed above. The first of these components was a US-based Study Tour by Ukrainian government officials.

The Mershon Center coordinated the visit of a team of four Ukrainian government officials on a two week study tour of key civic education organizations in the United States to encourage them to approve and incorporate civics into secondary schools in the Ukraine. Members of this study tour took their roles seriously and have proven to be essential to the development of civic education in Ukraine and ultimately were responsible for the acceptance of a *Protocol of Intentions* that established the legal foundations for development of civic education in the Ukrainian education system. More recently, these officials have also included civic education as a content area in the new standards for the integrated social studies soon to be adopted for that nation. Lastly, since two team members are currently in high ranking positions in the Ministry of Education, civic education continues as an important issue in the Ukraine, and relations between the US Embassy in Kyiv, All-Ukrainian Association of Teachers of History (Civic Education and Social

Studies "NOVA DOBA"), and the Ministry of Education are well coordinated and vastly improved in comparison to the beginning of the project. Ukrainian policy makers were asked to prepare a policy report to reflect on their experience. The policy report written by the participants held several important conclusions that informed the rest of the project, among them were:

- That Ukraine had already begun consideration of civic education as an important part of the curriculum and a number of materials had been piloted in a various subject areas. This was important to remember as the project developed materials that competed with already existing ones.
- That participants recognized both the need and obstacles to the development of civic education in Ukraine. This point was important to European Union-United States (EU-US) program to consider as products were developed because it provided direction for the creation of materials that fit the apparent needs as well as suggestions of some the difficulties that were to be faced.
- That participants suggested that the "implementation of American experience in Ukraine should be focused, primarily, on the issues of: reforming the content of civic education; creating a network of resource and information support; developing textbooks for students and teachers; training coaches and continuing education for teachers; developing a system of evaluation."

Six months after the policy maker trip, six Ukrainian educators traveled to the Mershon Center for an eight-week residential workshop. The workshop participants received intensive instruction from specialists in the most current issues and methods for curriculum development in civic education. The purpose of the instruction was to provide the participants with exposure to the latest theory and practice to prepare them for the writing of civic education lessons for use in Ukrainian schools. The goal of the Curriculum Development Workshop was to provide the Ukrainian team with the training, instructional materials, background readings, field experiences, and assistance from the expert consultants they needed to develop a complete first draft of the teacher and student materials for a 9th grade civics course. This course focuses on the basic concepts of civic education [citizenship competencies, place of the individual, fundamentals and foundations of constitutionalism and constitutional democracy, models of democracy, fundamental rights, freedoms and duties, etc.] and

uses the active teaching and learning methodology for democratic learning. The materials were designed to fit into the current Ukrainian curriculum and to also serve as a foundation for the new civic education curriculum of the future.

United States Partner teachers conducted special sessions on content and served as experts for brainstorming lesson plans during the seminar. In general, the seminar sessions fell into one of the following four categories:

Sessions on Active Teaching-Learning: The Ukrainian participants had dedicated sessions on Active Teaching-Learning pedagogy conducted by educators from the university and secondary school levels. These sessions were done in small groups designed to assist the participants with understanding current pedagogy as it applied to their lesson development task.

Sessions on US civic education development and implementation: The Ukrainian participants also had sessions with several university-level educators on the theory and practice of curriculum development, civic education in the US, and standards-based teaching.

Partner-teacher experiential learning: The Ukrainian participants were partnered with a US teacher who served as an expert in content and practical teaching for one of the topics for the materials development. The US teacher hosted the Ukrainian teacher in their classrooms and demonstrated their successful practice in teaching the selected topic. They also attended the Seminar sessions with the participants to assist them with understanding the practical aspects of applying the theoretical issues in U.S. classrooms.

Lesson Writing Workshops: The Ukrainian participants also received one-on-one instruction on lesson writing practice in the United States. This consisted of demonstrations on the several elements of materials development: lesson analysis, instructional strategy and assessment. The participants also met on a regular basis with their partner-teacher and seminar consultants as the participants worked to adapt and develop their lessons for the final draft. The Ukrainian developers were provided with US, Polish, European, and Russian curricular materials models.

Upon returning to Ukraine, the draft lesson book from the Curriculum Development Workshop was used as the focal point by the curriculum development team to conduct a teacher training workshop with the assistance of US, Polish, and other international specialists. The

teachers participating in this workshop had agreed to pilot-teach the materials and provide practical feedback on their use.

Lastly, prominent Ukrainian scholars were commissioned to provide reviews of the draft course materials for content validity. DOBA organized the scholar reviews to verify that the materials were factually accurate and a representative, balanced, and non-partisan approach to the subject-matter. A final review and revision of the materials was completed in Autumn 2001.

Concurrent with the other components of this project, the Mershon Center cooperated with DOBA to establish a resource center for civic education in Lviv. The Lviv center served as coordinator of other civic education resource efforts throughout the Ukraine. In conjunction with the other project partners, Mershon coordinated the purchase and shipping of materials identified by the Ukrainians as important resources for civic education. The leadership of the new resource center attended a one-week training session with the leadership of CCEW to learn from their experience in promoting civic education in Poland. This visit was a practical internship on both the educational and functional demands of administering an effective educational NGO. As a function of this NGO development, DOBA now owns its own office facilities and equipment. More important, it has developed the human capacity to continue and expand its educational activities, as witnessed by subsequent funding awarded from other organizations in Europe. This growth has extended its reach within the Ukraine and it has expanded from a regional organization [formerly known as DOBA] to a country-wide organization (NOVA DOBA) with branches in 23 regions of the Ukraine.

Through the Education for Democracy in Ukraine project, Mershon and DOBA have been able to achieve several important accomplishments:

1. Conducted a US Study Tour for Ukrainian education policy makers and subsequently negotiated and signed a "Protocol of Intentions" for teacher training and development of civic education in Ukraine. The Ministry is now involved with planning future activities and committed to civic education as evidenced by the development of new Social Studies standards for Ukraine that include civic education as part of compulsory education;
2. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine gave the course books developed by our project, "We are Citizens of Ukraine," the status "Recommended by the Ministry of

Education”;

3. “DOBA” has developed into a national association (NOVA DOBA) with 482 members across 22 of the 27 Oblasts of Ukraine and now owns an office/resource center fully equipped with current educational materials, computers and other office equipment;
4. Held 2 All-Ukrainian competitions on developing civic education lesson plans which resulted in the book, “20+ 1 Lessons for Teaching Tolerance” (1000 copies);
5. Developed the course “We are Citizens of Ukraine” which included a Teacher’s Manual (850 copies) and a Student Textbook (13,550 copies) which have been given the status “Recommended by the Ministry of Education”;
6. Produced a “Project Citizen” Manual and CD ROM “Project Citizen” (3000 copies) and held the first Annual National “Project Citizen” competition;
7. Developed Teacher Trainers and Lesson/Curriculum writers in Active Teaching-Learning Methods who have conducted a number of workshops, conferences, and round tables for civic education;
8. Trained 1,172 teachers in active methods and the new course, “We are Citizens of Ukraine” with 334 of them committed to teaching it in the 2001-2003 academic years;
9. A total of 19,249 students have directly participated in the project and another 35,000 have been impacted by their teacher’s participation in the teacher training workshops.

Lessons Learned About the Importance of Context

The materials developed through this United States-Ukrainian partnership are quite different from any that were developed under previous programs. The success of the Education for Democracy in Ukraine Program in overcoming the structural power factors can best be judged by examining the final materials that the Ukrainian curriculum developers produced. In particular, one should judge the materials on the degree to which they represent an understanding of the Ukrainian context and not simply an imposition of US curriculum. A listing of the chapter headings can serve as a preview of the issues that the Ukrainians deemed crucial for civic education in Ukraine. (See table 1).

Table 1

Contents of the "We Are Citizens of Ukraine" Curriculum⁶

Chapter Title	General Themes
Others and me - how to reach consent?	Tolerance, compromise, conflict resolution as citizenship skills.
On the path to democracy	Democracy and the history of world democratic movements. Modern democracy and the values and priorities of humans. Democracy as a value of human beings.
Democracy and democratic state at present	Concept of civil society and its importance for democracy. Human and civil rights in the constitution of Ukraine. Citizen rights and responsibilities and the system of state power and conflicts with civil society. Forms of democracy and reality in Ukraine.
How can Citizens influence the power?	Political and social activity of citizens including participation in community life. Self-governance at schools and its role in establishment of civic position.
An individual and Economy in conditions of the democratic society	Main concepts of micro-and macroeconomics. State and Free Markets, taxes, budget, social aspects of the financial state system. The individual in the market economy.
Ukraine our common homeland	Social groups, roles, and norms in civil society. Multicultural functions of social relations in Ukraine. Values and principles of Ukrainian society: humanism, tolerance and pluralism. Values common to all humans in the life of Ukrainian nation. Individual's ability to find one's place in life, to attain individual and social aims.
Project "Citizen"	An adaptation of the US program created by the Center for Civic Education is used as an optional 'practicum' for the course.

The importance of developing contextualized materials is clearly apparent in the decision making process of the Ukrainians themselves. In their introduction of the materials, the editors write: The instructional material of the course fully takes into account the reality of Ukrainian social life and modern fundamentals of democracy development in Ukraine.⁷

Clearly the materials are intended to reflect the Ukrainian context in factual content; but beyond this, they also reflect an understanding of two critical issues from Ukraine's past that directly impact democratic citizenship in Ukraine today. Central to this understanding is a recognition of the need to practically address the national identity and Soviet legacy issues in a contextually sensitive manner. The project addressed the needs of developing a "national identity" by creating materials that help stu-

dents understand the complexity of their national history and how commitment to democratic principles can be a unifying force to provide Ukraine with a self-determined future. The editors of the materials state:

The third, fourth and fifth chapters are consistently forming students' understanding of the main political, social, economic, socio-cultural characteristics of a democratic civil society in Ukraine.⁸

This desire to forge a national identity is especially demonstrated in chapter 6 of the materials where the common heritage of Ukrainian peoples is stressed and the topic of patriotism is introduced and explored.

To counter the Soviet educational legacy, the lessons utilize active teaching-learning methodology to counter the past practice of passive, didactic lecture and to teach skills necessary for democratic citizenship such as group cooperation, compromise, decision-making, and leadership. Again, from the editors' comments:

Firstly, each lesson from the course includes some cognitive, intellectual and learning activities of the students. Possibilities for such approach are laid by constructing the program: it doesn't include a great volume of material and there is enough time left for using various methods, especially active ones; and also by preparing the manuals for students and teachers which are based on such technologies of teaching and learning; secondly, for effective fulfillment of the course it is expected to use in practicing active methods of work: brainstorming, discussions, simulations, studying cases (cases and real situations from social life), cooperative learning, working in small groups, role plays, drama, portfolio, etc which are combined with traditional in our education teaching methods; thirdly, teaching this course presupposes creating maximally democratic atmosphere in the classroom, independent actions and responsibility of the students which is connected with the level of their development. Teachers should be examples of democratic relationships, and the lessons should be organized on democratic principles and become a model of a democratic society.⁹

While some may argue that the use of active methods is a "Western" pedagogy, it is also clear from this passage that their reliance on these methods comes not from simply mimicry but instead from a reasoned position to support their curricular goals. In other sections, the developers call for teacher training to further the understanding and use of active methods by teachers throughout Ukraine.

Lastly, the developers recognized that democratic education must take place in both the formal and informal curriculum of the schools:

Teaching fundamentals of democracy should not be considered an isolated subject or subjects which are learnt during certain period of time. It should be expanded beyond the lessons in this course. The whole school life is a part of school education of a child: interrelationships among teachers and students, of teachers among themselves and with

administration, all activities a child is engaged in and also his/ her responsibilities. Children learn through freedom they are given and the rules which restrict them. And, finally, they learn through hopes adults set on them. In order to teach fundamentals of democracy one should use all these possibilities, effectively combining in- and out-of-school activities.¹⁰

Considering the scope and sequence of the course provides us additional insight into the developers' understanding of civic education. The course uses an expanding horizons model that focuses on student self-awareness of the skills for democratic citizenship to their application in a societal role. The end result of the course is to then apply this information to a real-life problem to extend the lesson through experiential learning.

In a recent analysis Carole Hahn used four domains to provide a "general picture" of civic education in the United States.¹¹ Looking at the Ukrainian curriculum using these domains provides a standard for comparing the Ukrainian materials to common standards in the United States.

The first domain is "Democracy, Political Institutions, and Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens." Hahn found that although there was a great deal of variety of when civics was taught in US schools, there was less variety in the content and sequencing of topics across the country.¹² Her analysis of US textbooks showed that they typically focus on the structure and function of the levels of government along with individual rights and some discussion of responsibilities.¹³ These findings support earlier research on civic education in the United States that has repeatedly found that core content scope and sequence is excessively focused on procedural elements of democracy from a scholarly perspective.¹⁴ In contrast, the Ukrainian textbook has only one chapter out of seven devoted to this topic. Clearly, the Ukrainians were not swayed by the devotion to constitutionalism in the United States although they did recognize the importance of understanding the procedural structures of the government.

The second domain, "National Identity," can be found in both United States and Ukrainian civics textbooks but with different foci. Hahn reports that national identity is forged in United States textbooks through a "common story of significant events, people and documents. Events related to the country's founding and to armed conflict dominate the history books and to a lesser extent, the civics books."¹⁵ While national identity is a particularly crucial element for Ukrainian civic education due to their long history of subjugation and short history of statehood, its treatment in the Ukrainian textbook is quite different from that found in most American texts. Instead of dwelling on war, conflict, and

national heroes, the Ukrainian text focuses on the inherent values, principles, and norms necessary for democracy in modern-day Ukraine. Whereas the American texts seek to identify historical periods and individuals to embody nationalism, the Ukrainian text focuses on the principles of democracy as a common uniting thread for the peoples of their new state.

The third domain examined by Hahn and her colleagues is that of "Social Cohesion and Diversity." In United States history and civics texts, the United States is presented as a nation of immigrants but there has been little progress in the inclusion of ethnic minorities.¹⁶ Again a Ukrainian parallel to this United States domain is readily discerned but also demonstratively different in content and purpose. Instead of the focus on past social diversity found in United States textbooks, the Ukrainian text deals with current issues of social cohesion and diversity on both a scholarly and practical manner. Indeed, the issues of this domain are the most predominant in the Ukrainian text. Not only are concepts of tolerance and pluralism addressed, but the text also provides a chapter on conflict mediation and the importance of reaching consent for democracy. In addition, much of this material is cast in the light of international movements instead of the US-centric focus found in United States textbooks.

The fourth domain identified by Hahn and her colleagues was "Connections between the Economic and Political Systems." They found that United States textbooks typically described the United States economics system as a free market, supported the role of the United States government to provide basic services, and included information on the relationship between government and business. In addition, all of the examined texts contrasted capitalism and communism.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, while the Ukrainian textbook also covers basic macro and micro economic concepts, it leans more towards a social welfare perspective of government's role in the economy. To reinforce this perspective and also address current economic issues, the Ukrainian text addresses economic topics such as taxes, budgeting, and employment from an individual's role in a market system.

Finally, Hahn examined the teaching activities and assessments used by United States teachers in civic education courses. They concluded that "some teachers provide much variety; others very little. Most students seem to be in classes that fall between the two extremes, with frequent teacher talk and student recitation related to the textbook and, periodically a simulation, written project, or discussion of a current issue."¹⁸ Again, these findings support earlier research that found that students were most likely to list reading from textbooks and discussing the reading

as the most likely activities they were engaged when studying social studies.¹⁹ Another study found United States students were "more willing to report from reading from textbooks and filling out worksheets."²⁰

In contrast, the Ukrainian developed textbook was intentionally designed to use active methods [such as brainstorming, discussions, simulations, case studies, cooperative learning, role plays, etc.] and the course itself culminates in a problem-based, social action learning activity. The need and importance of these active methods are so great that the Ukrainian partner in the project has devoted the past two years in conducting in-service workshops to retrain teachers in their use.

While there are some similarities in general content areas between the US and Ukrainian civic education courses and texts, the scope and significance of the content varied greatly. Instead of being a basic transference of United States practice, the Ukrainian textbook demonstrates significant differences that reflect that country's own concerns and understanding of the Ukrainian context. In fact, in nearly every case the Ukrainian materials demonstrated a more enlightened approach to civic education along the lines that critics have been calling for in the United States for many years.

Lessons Learned From the Education for Democracy in Ukraine Project

Comparing the Ukrainian materials developed from the Education for Democracy in Ukraine Project to US materials provides strong evidence that at least in this area, a United States educational assistance project was able to have some success in overcoming the hegemonic factors of resource dominance. How the project was able to overcome these factors can be found in both the assumptions of the project and the activities conducted through the project. These assumptions and activities point to general guidelines that should prove useful to other United States and "Western" organizations seeking to assist partners in emerging democracies to develop civic education programs.

First among these principles is the need to model in the project organizational structure the same democratic processes that you are promoting. As in other aspects of life, actions speak louder than words and consciously empowering all partners to their full rights and responsibilities is a fundamental element for contextual success.

Second, adopting a constructivist approach to project activities is important for both honoring the international partner's skills and knowledge as well as restricting the tendency for overmanaging by the US partner. Essential to this approach is the United States understanding of the partners that their role is to be as coach and resource provider instead

of the giver of knowledge. Also essential to this approach is taking the time and effort to identify key individuals on both sides who have the skills and knowledge to conduct project activities without constant supervision. In the best-case scenarios, these individuals will form synergistic relationships that will drive the projects forward.

Third, it is important to maintain a high level of transparency in the project. The best way to achieve this is by providing multiple and continuing opportunities for stakeholders and gatekeepers to observe and participate in the project. Without this transparency, the suspicions of imperialist intent cannot be countered by open dialogue and empirical evidence.

Fourth, opening the project to additional partners from other nations provides for a wider experiential base of knowledge, multiple models of successful practice, and reduced dependency on the US partner.

Finally, focusing the project on capacity building instead of product development provides a vehicle for achieving project aims while eliminating the need for continued reliance on the partnership. In essence, a successful project of this nature will culminate with the both partners seeking other opportunities to work together, not out of need but instead out of desire to continue their joint development.

Conclusions

Like democracy itself, education for democracy around the world should take on many forms and be informed by multiple actors. While several strong structural factors in the power relationship of educational assistance projects make it likely that the more resource-rich partner will carry more influence in the project, the inevitability of hegemonic control is not absolute. The results of the Education for Democracy in Ukraine project suggest that those who have argued that United States assistance projects are inherently imperialistic should be more cautious in their condemnation and more encouraged by current efforts.

This article has sought to explain a project that took very seriously this issue of control and actively sought to mitigate these factors with a variety of measures designed to empower the aid recipient and reposition the role of the aid provider. The success of this approach can be found in the independent development of a civic education course and classroom materials that greatly reflect the context of Ukraine instead of the predominant characteristics of United States civics. More important, the best indicator of the success of this approach is the fact that the Ukrainian partner is no longer reliant on the United States partner for

expertise or training. Instead, both are now seeking new challenges to further their joint development.

This article also concludes with several principles derived from the conduct of this project to serve as potential guides for others involved in international educational assistance projects. These principles have at their heart the same dynamic that underlies active teaching and learning. Namely, that the goal of the assistance provider is not to be the central arbitrator of knowledge but instead to be a resource provider and coach for the construction of knowledge by the developing partner. In the same way that you cannot truly teach about democracy by telling someone about it, you cannot promote democratic education by imposing your own model of it on another.

Contextualizing civic education is more important than in any other field of knowledge, since at its core civic education is political socialization for democracy. If it is taught in a manner that is inappropriate or disconnected to the realities of the national context, then at best it will be ineffectual except for creating cynicism: at its worst, it can create discontent and resentment toward the very political system that it is to support. It is these very dire consequences, if not for altruistic motives alone, that should lead aid agencies and assistance providers to reconsider their civic education projects in terms of the principles outlined above to ensure that the resulting products represent contextual civic education.

NOTES

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