

FREEDOM PAPERS	<a href="#">Back</a>
	<i>Freedom Paper No. 2</i>
	<b>TEACHING DEMOCRACY</b>
	<b>By Matthew Gandal and Chester E. Finn, Jr.</b>
	<a href="#">Introduction</a>
	<a href="#">Taking Root</a>
	<a href="#">Education for Democracy</a>
	<a href="#">What Is Democracy?</a>
	<a href="#">Democracy Education in the Schools</a>
	<a href="#">Democracy Education Outside the Schools</a>
	<a href="#">Conclusion</a>
	<a href="#">Australian Parliament "Packs"</a>
	<a href="#">Kids Voting</a>
	<a href="#">Democracy Through Economic Enterprise</a>
	<a href="#">Model United Nations</a>
	<a href="#">Conciencia Argentina</a>
	<a href="#">Nicaraguan Education Reform</a>
	<a href="#">Sources of Further Information</a>
	<a href="#">About the Author</a>

## Introduction

Democracy is in demand around the world. It even seems contagious. The collapse of totalitarian rule in Eastern Europe; the victorious struggle against apartheid in South Africa; the courageous freedom movements in China and Burma; the fight for free elections in numerous countries where dictatorship was the norm; and, of course, the dramatic breakup of the Soviet Union--all demonstrate an innate and universal yearning for liberty and political freedom.

## Taking Root

As newly formed democratic societies attempt to rebuild their countries politically, economically, and socially, and to extend to their citizens the rights and freedoms they deserve, one thing is apparent: their long-term success will depend in large measure on how quickly and deeply the principles and institutions of democracy take root in the hearts and minds of their citizens. If the ideals that fueled the popular struggles against oppression are to be realized and remain secure over time, people must come to understand and appreciate what democracy is, what life in a free society means, and what institutional arrangements and personal behaviors are necessary for such a society to endure and prosper. They must develop the habits, attitudes, and values that make democracy possible, and the commitment and enthusiasm necessary to nurture and sustain it. Only if each generation comes to understand and appreciate democracy will this form of governance prove to be stable and successful.

This does not apply only to emerging democracies. Education for democracy is just as important in mature democracies, but it is often taken for granted or ignored. People grow complacent about their political system if it is working well, and they may question whether democracy even needs to be studied and learned. Some bend so far in the direction of relativism or self-criticism that they lose their zeal for and confidence in democracy. The result is that democracy gets very little attention; sometimes, it is even denounced.

## **Education for Democracy**

Although the desire for freedom may be innate, knowledge of how democracy functions must be taught and learned. Any society that wishes to remain free needs to ensure that its citizens are well educated in the theory and practice of democracy. Part of the responsibility for such education lies with the schools, which may teach children not only through the formal curriculum, but also through the conduct of their institutional affairs and through various extracurricular activities. Yet, formal schooling is not the only educational influence in a free society. Informal sources--courses and workshops for adults, programs on television and radio, articles in newspapers and magazines, activities organized by community groups--can also help citizens of all ages learn about democracy.

Anyone who doubts the political importance of education would do well to note how vigorously totalitarian and authoritarian governments work to control the information that is passed through the schools, media, and other sources. Those who have successfully struggled to overcome such regimes detest this practice of indoctrination and want to avoid it in the future.

But the absence of a totalitarian government does not magically give rise to a strong, stable, and effective democracy. Democracy does not teach itself. If the strengths, benefits, and responsibilities of democracy are not made clear to the citizens, they will be ill-equipped to defend it. Education for democracy, therefore, must be approached in a conscious and serious manner.

What makes democracy education different from the indoctrination practiced by totalitarians? Primarily the habits of mind and discourse that democracy education confers, at least when properly done. A focus on democracy does not preclude the open study of other doctrines or systems of government. Nor does it seek to hide democracy's flaws. Democracies, in contrast to other governments, are honest about their own shortcomings and truthful about those of other countries. If students are taught about the institutions, values, promises, and problems that have historically characterized democracy, and those that have characterized alternate forms of government, there is little doubt that they will come to appreciate and cherish the democratic political system. They will not necessarily regard it as perfect. It seldom is. But they will realize that it is the best system of government yet tried--and perhaps the most difficult to maintain.

Children in emerging democracies, having previously attended schools dedicated to ensuring that democratic ideas did not take root, can be expected to understand and prize democracy only if their education system is rapidly and thoroughly transformed. Yet where teachers and principals have not themselves lived in democracy, nor even been allowed to study it, and where textbooks and other instructional materials have been designed to suppress and undermine democratic ideas, such a transformation is an immense undertaking.

Much work thus lies ahead for those tending to the education systems of aspiring democracies. Fortunately, they need not start from scratch. Democracy education has been practiced successfully in many lands, including a number of the newer democracies, and the purpose of this paper is to highlight some noteworthy examples. We do not attempt to provide a step-by-step manual for education reform. Such prescription is neither possible nor desirable. In a sense, it would not even be democratic. Instead, we offer a broad array of examples which may be adapted elsewhere to suit local cultures and conditions.

## What Is Democracy?

Any effort at democracy education must begin with a clear picture of what is to be taught and learned. It is, therefore, crucial that those designing education programs, and those who will be teaching in them, possess an informed understanding of democracy.

Unfortunately, despite its current vogue, "democracy" is a term that is often misunderstood and misused. Totalitarian and military regimes, for example, may call themselves democratic republics and showcase constitutions promising rights and freedoms that are, in reality, nonexistent. Furthermore, in countries emerging from totalitarianism, where oppression has been the norm for decades, there may be a tendency to view democracy simplistically, as a guarantee of individual freedom, even license, rather than as a complex interplay of ideas, institutions, obligations, rights, and actions.

Democracy is a system of self-government where the citizens are equal and political decisions are made by majority rule, but always with the protection of minority rights. In its purest form, democracy affords citizens the opportunity to participate directly in the decision-making process. This is called direct democracy. But given the size and complexity of today's societies, it is generally more practical for citizens to elect representatives who will govern and make decisions on their behalf. Representative democracy relies on regular, free, fair, and competitive elections to hold the government accountable to the people.

In a democracy, the government exists to serve the people, not the other way around. Since democratic government derives its authority from the consent of the governed, the people have the capacity to change the government peacefully when they lose confidence in it. And they need not fear a bullet if they try.

While majority rule is the bedrock principle upon which democracy rests, simple majoritarianism has its own drawbacks. Hence it usually operates within a constitutional framework that limits the power of government and safeguards individual and minority rights. In such constitutional democracies, all citizens possess certain fundamental rights, and the exercise of those rights by minorities does not depend upon the goodwill of the majority.

Such rights are guaranteed through mechanisms that are extremely difficult to alter. In the United States, for example, the Constitution lists freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and the right to a fair trial as inalienable rights of all citizens. The state and national governments are forbidden from passing any law that denies or erodes these rights.

Also fundamental to democratic government are the checks and balances that block any institution, group, or individual from becoming too powerful. It is important, for example, to have an independent judiciary that can prevent the executive and legislative branches from overstepping their bounds. In the United States, the executive and the Congress operate separately to provide further checks on each other. In this way, no one person or even a single branch of government can amass enough power to threaten or violate citizens' rights. Although parliamentary and presidential systems differ in how they divide the powers of government, they all provide some mechanisms to limit the power of any branch.

But just as democracy can fail if the government has too much power, it can also fail if government does not have enough power. The democratic process is a formula for fairness, not passivity or anarchy. Leadership is accordingly necessary for the success of democratic government, and citizens must abide by decisions of their elected leaders and obey the laws of the society (provided they do not violate any fundamental rights).

Contrary to some perceptions, a healthy democratic society is not simply an arena where individuals pursue their private agendas. It may be the promise of freedom and opportunity that makes democracy so attractive,

but just as important to its success--and all too often ignored--are the responsibilities and habits of mind that must accompany life in a democratic society.

Democratic citizens are, for example, expected to participate in the political life of their society and to lend their influence to the public debate. They may do this in many ways, including: by choosing representatives to the government; joining political parties, labor unions, and other voluntary organizations; serving on juries in civil or criminal trials; even running for public office themselves. To participate effectively, people must inform themselves about the issues affecting society and be able to weigh self-interest and factional interest against concern for the public good. They must be tolerant of dissenting views and able to cooperate and compromise. They must exhibit respect for law and legitimate authority as well as for privacy and property.

Democracy is thus more than a system of government. It is a way of living and working together. And it is only when the manifold responsibilities of democratic life are taken seriously by citizens that its rights and rewards will be meaningful.

### **Democracy Education in the Schools**

In order for people to understand and appreciate their opportunities and responsibilities as democratic citizens, they must receive a sound education. Such an education seeks not only to familiarize people with the precepts and practices of democracy, but also to produce citizens who are principled, independent, inquisitive, and analytic in their outlook and committed to democracy.

Education for democracy should not be viewed as an isolated subject, taught for a short time each day and otherwise ignored. It is linked to nearly everything else that students learn in school--whether it be history, civics, ethics, or economics--and to much that goes on outside of school. In short, good democracy education is part of good education in general.

Education for democracy occurs in a variety of venues. The most common environment is the schools, which, in a democracy, are not controlled by government alone. Democratic governments do provide schooling for their citizens--which must be equally accessible to all, and not be used as a vehicle for government propaganda--but democracy allows for alternatives as well. Churches and other religious groups are free to create religious schools; private citizens may organize independent schools; and parents may even choose to teach their children at home. This pluralism is part of democracy; it is healthy for the society. It may also result in better education.

**Curriculum.** School-based democracy education can take many forms. Within the school curriculum, the history, principles, and practice of democracy may be treated as a distinct course of study or worked into a number of other disciplines (including history, geography, economics, literature, and social studies). Alternatively, these ideas may be viewed as a theme around which an entire history/social studies curriculum can be organized. However the curriculum is structured, it must cover four fundamental areas if students are to have a sufficient understanding of and appreciation for democracy.

First, adequate attention must be paid to the roots and branches of the democratic idea as well as to the history of its expansion throughout the world. Students must learn where and how the principles of democracy were born, paying close attention to the circumstances in which they emerged. Democracy should be traced from its various strands in the classical world of the Greeks and Romans and in the ethical thought of biblical Jews and early Christians, through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Reformation, the English Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the American and French revolutions. This course of study includes the examination of important historical documents such as the Magna Carta; the United States Declaration of Independence,

Constitution, and Bill of Rights; and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. Students should also be familiar with the history of 20th century struggle for democracy against Fascism, Communism, and other forms of dictatorship.

Second, the curriculum must help students explore how the ideas of democracy have been translated into institutions and practices around the world and through the ages. Examples of the growth and development of democratic societies of the past and present should be introduced and questions raised:

- Where has democracy flourished, where has it failed, and why?
- What political, economic, social, and cultural conditions have helped shape democratic societies?
- What conditions have hindered democratic development?
- Who has defended democracy and who has sought its undoing?
- How have democratic governments been organized to allow for majority rule? To protect individual and minority rights? To provide law and order without suppressing freedom and individualism?
- What types of non-governmental bodies have influenced the political process?
- How have legal systems been structured to limit government control and ensure that all people have the right to a fair trial?
- How have the mass media functioned?

In answering questions such as these, students will be exposed to many practical elements of a functioning democracy. They will learn how democracy works in reality--and how reality does and does not keep faith with theory.

Third, the curriculum must explore the history of democracy in the students own nations, so that they may answer questions such as: What forms of government have existed in my country in the past? Have we ever tried democracy before? If so, why did it fail? What led to the establishment of our present democratic government? How are the circumstances we now face similar to those faced by democratic societies in the past? How are they different? What lessons can we learn from failed attempts at democracy in our own society and in others?

Fourth, students need to understand the current condition of democracy in the world. They must know where it exists, where it is being fought for, and what its alternatives are. They need to recognize that democracy has taken different forms in different countries, and they should understand how and why this occurs. How is Costa Rican democracy different from Australian democracy? How are they similar? What are the barriers to democracy in countries such as China, Cuba, and Iraq? What has enabled so many other nations recently to overcome these impediments? What dangers and choices lie ahead for aspiring democracies, and how can they work together--and with other, more established democratic nations--to achieve success? (One useful resource for measuring the spread of democracy around the world is the annual *Freedom in the World* series, published by Freedom House, a human rights organization. See "Sources of Further Information.")

Curriculum and instruction can be approached in myriad ways, but these four elements are essential for any strong democracy education program.

Even in established democracies, most schools pay too little attention to the history and principles of democracy. As a result, generations of schoolchildren do not fully understand or appreciate the political system in which they live. They have come to take democracy for granted. Recently, however, some U.S. school systems have begun to adopt curriculum frameworks that offer guidelines on how better to integrate the study of democratic ideas into the educational system, and their experiences can be instructive for new democracies. A curriculum framework is not designed for classroom use. Rather, it serves as a foundation

upon which classroom materials, lesson plans, teacher guides, assessment mechanisms, and teacher training programs can be built.

For example, in 1987 the State of California adopted a new curriculum framework designed to strengthen the teaching of history and social science in its elementary and secondary schools. The framework is an excellent illustration of how democratic content may be built into the formal school curriculum. The introduction to the framework states what types of knowledge and intellectual qualities students in a democratic society--and the United States in particular--need to acquire. They must perceive the complexity of social, economic, and political problems. They should know their rights and responsibilities as citizens and understand the Constitution as a social contract that defines democratic government and guarantees individual rights. They must respect the right of others to disagree with them. They must be active citizens, and know how to work for peaceful change in society. They ought to understand the importance and the fragility of democratic institutions. They should recognize the conditions that encourage democracy to prosper and those that work against it. Finally, they should develop a keen sense of ethics and citizenship and care deeply about the quality of life in their community, their nation, and their world. In their final year of high school, students take a course that focuses specifically on the principles of American democracy.

Likewise, the Center for Civic Education, a private U.S. organization, recently published a curriculum framework for civic education in an attempt to make it a more prominent part of the curriculum in secondary schools throughout the country. Civitas, as the framework is called, features an interdisciplinary approach and focuses on the nature and politics of democratic government and the fundamental values, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship. A diverse and distinguished array of American historians, political scientists, and educators contributed to Civitas, and their hope is that it will provide the basis for some very dynamic textbooks and other curriculum materials.

Recently, the Center--working with numerous U.S. and international educators, professional organizations, civic leaders, community groups and others--has completed the National Standards for Civics and Government. These voluntary standards for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12), are intended to help schools develop competent and responsible citizens who possess a reasoned commitment to the fundamental values and principles that are essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy. It is expected that this document will provide guidance in the development of U.S. civic education programs for years to come.

**Methods for Teaching Democracy.** Education for democracy can be approached in a manner appropriate to students at the elementary, secondary, or post-secondary levels. Whatever the age of the student, pedagogy is naturally most effective when it captures his or her imagination. Teaching democracy lends itself well to such creativity and excitement. Students can read textbooks, monographs, biographies, autobiographies, heroic tales, poetry, and other works discussing and illuminating aspects of democracy. They may study primary documents, such as democratic charters and constitutions. They may put on plays or skits dealing with important issues or events. They may even play games, solve puzzles, and hold contests.

One useful way to inform students about their government and the democratic political system is to invite government officials, critics, and analysts to visit the classroom and answer students questions. This will not only teach children how government works, but it will also help bring it to life.

Another way to make democracy vivid for students is to incorporate it into everyday classroom activities. Give students some say in matters affecting the class. Let them vote on certain issues. Allow them to work in teams, teach other children, allocate resources, make presentations, and lead class discussions. All these activities require skills vital to democratic life, skills that are often best learned through experience rather than

didactically.

Teachers may encourage democratic behavior through their classroom techniques as well. Lecturing to a class is not always the best way to reach students. Students should be involved in discussions and encouraged to ask questions. If they are timid or cannot seem to come up with any questions or comments, the teacher must ask questions and stimulate discussion. This is one of the most difficult things for students--and teachers--in newly free societies to get used to, but it is an essential element of democracy education. Questioning is the beginning of wisdom.

**Education for Democracy and Extracurricular Activities.** Schools may provide a forum for democratic activities and learning outside the classroom. Extracurricular activities such as athletic teams, clubs, and youth groups give students opportunities to work together toward a common goal, and often require them to select leaders and make important decisions. Students interested in theater, dance, photography, computers, and other hobbies may organize clubs for these activities, where democratic norms can be put into practice. Particularly effective at imparting democratic knowledge and skills are debate clubs, which encourage students to take an active interest in public affairs, express their opinions, and respect the views of others. Student newspapers are also an effective and popular way to involve students in important societal issues while educating them about the role of the media.

In the United States, countrywide student competitions help promote civic knowledge. The Close Up Foundation, a civic organization with a history of successful education programs, launched the Citizen Bee competition in 1985 to encourage U.S. secondary-school students to increase their understanding of government, history, geography, economics, and current events. (This competition is modeled on the traditional spelling bee, in which students are tested on their spelling and are eliminated from competition as they make mistakes.) To prepare for the annual contest, students work with a kit of classroom-based activities and a study guide provided by Close Up. They are also expected to keep abreast of current events.

The competition itself has two parts. The first is a written examination. The second is an oral portion in which students respond to four questions. The contest begins at the school level, with the top students moving on to regional and state competitions. The winners from each state are brought to Washington, D.C., to compete in the national finals for such prizes as college scholarships.

The U.S. Department of Education and the Center for Civic Education co-sponsor a similar democracy education contest, but this one involves competition among school classes, not individuals. Its focus is limited to the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. Classes participating in this "We the People..." competition study specially prepared units on the history and principles of the Constitution, and then compete as teams at the district, regional, state, and national levels.

Students can also learn democratic methods by creating a model of the democratic process. One of the most effective such models is student government, where students from each grade level are elected by classmates to represent them in resolving important school-related issues. Through their involvement in campaigns, elections, and the day-to-day operations of government, students learn first-hand about the democratic process. In addition, student councils provide students with a voice in school administration--a means of influencing decisions that will affect them directly.

**Making the School Environment More Democratic.** One important way to make the education system and school environment more democratic is to decentralize the process of school governance--and to engage more people in decision-making. Just as students should have a say in important decisions affecting them inside and outside the classroom, so should principals, teachers, parents, and others with clear interests in the policies

and practices of individual schools. This objective can be accomplished in various ways. Schools may form administrator-teacher committees to make decisions on such issues as class scheduling, student testing, and classroom discipline. Parent-teacher associations may make recommendations on curriculum or school budgets. And broader governing bodies, perhaps including administrators, teachers, and parents, may oversee these and other important issues. In each case, elections can be held to determine who will serve, and meetings and forums may be called to engage a wider constituency in the issues under consideration.

In 1988, the City of Chicago embarked upon an ambitious plan to improve its school system, which had been regarded as one of the nation's most troubled. Based on the widely held belief that the city's highly centralized school system was not adequately meeting the needs of children or community, the Chicago School Reform Act provided for every public school in the city to elect a Local School Council (LSC) consisting of two teachers, six parents, two other community members, and the principal.

The LSC, which makes its decisions via majority rule, is responsible for many decisions previously made by the central administration and Board of Education. Each LSC now has substantial control over its school's budget, academic program, and internal organization and priority-setting. Perhaps most significant, the LSC has the power to hire and fire the principal.

Chicago has a long way to go before these changes in structure and governance show a clear impact on student performance. Nonetheless, more than 6,000 citizens are engaged in the processes of democratic school governance: running for office, usually in contested elections; learning the procedures of orderly decision-making for a public enterprise; grappling with difficult issues and problems; and living with the consequences of their decisions. By bringing many such decisions closer to the parents, children, and teachers directly affected by them, the Chicago program also illustrates one approach to more participatory governance in an area that had long been entrusted to distant bureaucracies and politicians.

It is important to recognize that decentralization of school decision-making does not automatically make the process more democratic. Individual school heads may function in an authoritarian fashion, too. But decentralization at least creates an opportunity for sharing of authority and responsibility, for introducing more democratic forms of school governance, and for the active participation of teachers and parents. Students observing these examples of democracy in action are also apt to get a clearer understanding of how it works than those whose schools are just cogs in a vast bureaucratic wheel. Sometimes the students even participate directly. In Chicago, for example, in each high school a student representative is chosen to serve on the LSC.

### **Democracy Education Outside the Schools**

Schools are not the only settings for democracy education. In fact, it is often through informal, community-based programs that many members of the population--especially adults--are reached. In countries emerging from totalitarianism, today's adults are products of schools that strove to denigrate democracy. Now mostly beyond the reach of the schools, these adults must rely on other means--continuing-education courses, employment-related programs, workshops, leadership seminars, radio and television, newspapers, posters, brochures, unions, and various voluntary associations--to acquaint them with democratic principles and practice.

Even where schools are involved in teaching democracy, informal programs serve as an important supplement for young people as well as adults. Understanding democracy entails more than just learning about it. It requires action. People of all ages must work to inform themselves about important issues, participate in the political process, and become involved in the affairs of their communities. Community-based programs can

provide citizens with these opportunities.

In addition, whereas the school-based version is usually in the hands of the state (which runs most of the schools), one of the virtues of informal democracy education is that it can come from a variety of sources under many different auspices.

**Courses, Workshops, and Seminars.** The most direct community-based approach to democracy education is adult or continuing education. There is no substitute for a well-taught course on democratic government, politics, history, and citizenship, one that adequately covers democratic tradition and practice inside and outside the particular country and that makes use of some of the democratic teaching methods described earlier.

Adult education is an important function in democracies, where responsible citizenship goes hand in hand with lifelong learning. In some countries, courses for adults are offered by many different organizations, including national or local governments, public or private schools and universities, civic and community groups, churches, libraries, businesses, labor unions. These courses may be most useful when scheduled at night or on weekends to allow people with regular jobs to attend.

Interactive workshops offer a more hands-on approach to democracy education. People may be brought together in small groups to discuss current events and issues associated with life in a democracy. Group leaders or instructors may be chosen to direct the discussion, but one advantage of working in small groups is that everyone can participate in the dialogue. Some workshops may focus on specific democratic values or skills, such as leadership or tolerance. Others may involve the study of particular institutions, such as the media or the legal system. Perhaps a judge, lawyer, or journalist could be invited to participate.

Other useful educational tools--often effective in promoting community action as well--are seminars and public forums, where members of the community can be brought together to discuss current issues and problems in front of a larger audience. If a community is having problems with crime, for example, local politicians, lawyers, judges, educators, parents, and representatives of the police force can be brought together to work on ways to keep neighborhoods safe. The general public may be invited to attend the meeting and be given a chance to raise points or ask questions. This is an efficient way to galvanize a community around certain issues and to promote discussion, compromise, strategy, and action. Though perhaps less obvious to participants, such meetings offer good practical lessons in democracy.

**Dissemination of Materials.** Perhaps the best way to get a message out, whether it be information about candidates in an upcoming election in particular or about democratic citizenship in general, is through the dissemination of educational materials such as books, pamphlets, brochures, leaflets, and posters. For example, the distribution of brochures describing the candidates running for an upcoming election and emphasizing the importance of voting can mean a big difference in voter turnout.

Libraries play an important role in a free society. By serving as a resource center and providing citizens with ready access to information on a variety of subjects, usually at little or no cost to the reader, libraries can be effective means of democracy education.

One tried and true way to learn about democracy is to read classic democratic texts--books that have significantly contributed to democratic movements throughout history. In Central America, a civic organization called Libro Libre has been making such works available in Spanish for years. Published in a series called *Classics of Democracy*, the group has presented the writings of de Tocqueville, Montesquieu, Kant, Jefferson, Madison, Lincoln, Thomas Paine, Adam Smith, Lord Acton, and Ortega y Gasset. Libro

Libre has also created a series called *Democracy Today*, which focuses on more contemporary issues.

**Use of the Media.** The news media are among the most influential institutions in modern societies. Nothing reaches more people than radio, television, newspapers, and magazines, and these can be potent educational vehicles. Authoritarian and totalitarian governments understand this well and go to great lengths to control and censor their press. In democratic societies, however, the media operate free of government control; they provide coverage of important issues both in and out of the political arena and serve as a watchdog over government and other powerful institutions.

Panama's Center for Democracy, formed in 1987 to help restore democracy, operates a number of excellent programs that harness the power of the media for purposes of civic education. In conjunction with three commercial television stations, the Center has produced a series of 30-second advertisements designed to publicize its work and to convey important educational messages regarding democracy. One such spot, for example, focuses on the role of the family in a democracy--in raising responsible democratic citizens. Another reinforces the concept of community service. The Center is also working to create monthly television programs that will speak to pertinent issues and foster a better understanding of democratic institutions and principles.

The Center has conducted similar advertising campaigns by radio, which, in most cases, is less expensive and less complicated than television. The Center also conducts a weekly, hour-long radio program on topics related to the promotion of democratic values and issues of national interest. Subjects have ranged from "culture and democracy" to "community development" to "democratic education."

The most successful piece of the Center's media campaign is a monthly newspaper supplement. Inserted inside one of the leading national newspapers, this supplement serves as an advertisement for the Center and its programs and contains articles promoting democratic principles and values. Each month, the supplement focuses on a different topic, such as the history of Panama's judiciary, citizen participation in a democracy, and civic voluntarism.

**Community Involvement.** Central to any functioning democracy are the many private organizations that offer people avenues of political engagement in issues affecting their lives, their communities, and the nation at large. By joining groups such as political parties, labor unions, neighborhood associations, and religious groups, citizens are exercising their fundamental right of free association. Whatever their affiliation or focus, such organizations can serve as mediating structures between individuals and the government and give people greater leverage in their efforts to improve the life of their community.

Civic groups and others involved in democracy education can help facilitate the creation of such community groups where they do not already exist. Citizens may organize labor unions and employer groups to look out for the interests of specific occupational groups, organizations to address issues such as environmental pollution or cruelty to animals, or consumer groups to protect the public from unfair practices or unsafe products. They can create organizations to deal with such issues as public safety, services for the elderly, or the maintenance of gardens and parks. There may be a group working to improve local libraries, an organization interested in preserving a community's historical sites, or an association dedicated to finding a cure for cancer, AIDS, or other diseases. Whatever their focus, such organizations empower citizens to take responsibility for their communities and provide them with constructive avenues of involvement.

To the extent that they participate in interest groups and community organizations, citizens are also engaged in informal democracy education. They are learning firsthand about the role of private associations in a democracy and are seeing the democratic process itself being modeled within the governance of each

organization.

## **Conclusion**

The situations facing governments in emerging democracies today are similar in many ways to those Japan and Germany faced after World War II. The need to rethink the way schools are governed, to make quality education available to all, to retrain teachers, and to replace politicized curricula and teaching habits--these are common concerns in countries recovering from years of oppression. Japan and Germany have shown that it is possible to adopt education for democracy on a nationwide basis. The distinct advantage that modern aspiring democracies have is that they have chosen democracy freely and of their own will. They are taking reforms into their own hands.

This is not to say that success will come easily. Education for democracy is no quick fix. Creating the educational infrastructure and the sorts of formal and informal programs crucial to good democracy education will require hard work and a long-term commitment on the part of the government and the citizenry.

There will always be a need for civic education, no matter how advanced a democratic society becomes. The longer democracy is in place in a country, the greater is the risk that citizens will take its principles, institutions, and benefits for granted. Today, some of the most innovative programs in civic education are being carried out in emerging democracies. These programs, like the recent democratic revolutions that made them possible, have helped to reawaken the interest in civic education in the more established democracies. We are now entering an exciting period when, through the sharing of the type of information contained in this document, all societies can develop education programs that ensure the growth and continued health of democracy.

## **AUSTRALIAN "PARLIAMENT PACKS"**

Responding to students' lack of knowledge about the Australian government and the history and characteristics of that country's form of democracy, the Australian Parliament established a Parliamentary Education Office in 1987, and charged it with improving political literacy and historical awareness in the schools. That office has produced numerous materials on democracy, including two packages of curriculum materials, one for the elementary grades and one for secondary, and distributed them to all Australian schools.

The "Parliament Packs," as they are called, have two components, one dealing with Australian history, the other focusing on the structure and process of Australian government. Each pack consists of a variety of teaching resources, including reference booklets, student work-sheets, teachers' guides, charts, videos, and games. The teachers' guides offer detailed instructional guidance and explain how the packs can be integrated into different subject areas.

In addition to the "Parliament Packs," the Education Office has produced a variety of other materials in recent years. Among these are "junior fact sheets" on Australian government, a "Parliamentary Activity Book" for primary school students, "Parliamentary Government in Australia: A Student Guide to the Commonwealth Parliament" and "Parliament: A Two Way Street," a multi-resource kit for investigating parliament's impact on the life of young people.

## **KIDS VOTING**

Since 1988, an impressive mock election program has been operating in Arizona. Modeled after a successful

program in Costa Rica, Kids Voting offers specially prepared curricula for elementary and secondary schools designed to educate students about important democratic principles and to instill in them lifelong voting habits. The program culminates with children accompanying their parents to the polls on election day and taking part in a simulated election while mom and dad participate in the real one.

Within the Kids Voting curriculum, students explore many important issues. They learn about the structure of democratic government and politics, including the roles of political parties, interest groups and the media; the qualifications for voting; the registration process; and the actual procedure that takes place at the polls. They also study the history of the expansion of suffrage and examine factors that influence voter choices and participation. When focusing on a particular election, the Kids Voting program describes the qualifications for and responsibilities of specific offices, and discusses individual candidates' views on major issues.

The most interesting aspect of the Kids Voting program is that it actually involves students going to the polls with their parents on election day and voting next to them. This not only allows children to experience how the process works, but also motivates parents themselves to vote.

Kids Voting has been successful in Arizona and is being replicated in other U.S. states. Ninety-five percent of Arizona's elementary- and secondary-school students have been involved in the program, and it is strongly supported by registered voters. In fact, 3 percent of Arizona voters said that Kids Voting was the only reason they took part in the last election. (This is a significant number when one considers that three of the last eight U.S. presidential elections were decided by a margin of less than 3 percent!)

## **DEMOCRACY THROUGH ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE**

In the 1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression, the Skokie School, a public middle school (grades 6-8) in Winnetka, Illinois, supported a group of successful student projects called "economic enterprises." Students, with the help of the faculty, formed all kinds of "businesses." These included the Biology Bureau of Bees, which raised bees, studied their habits, and sold honey for a profit; a bank and credit union, where students could deposit and borrow money; a Greenhouse Committee that grew flowers and vegetables and sold them for a profit; and an insurance company that insured children against loss from such mishaps as breaking dishes in the cafeteria. These activities permeated the whole school and gave both motive and application to many of the children's other studies.

A Credit Union was set up at the beginning of each school year by offering 500 shares to students at \$1 each, thereby getting the "capital" they needed to operate the business. Owning these shares made the participating students owners of the business. With that capital in hand, the students managing the Credit Union would decide what interest rates to charge to children who wanted to borrow money.

Student managers were also responsible, with some help from a faculty adviser, for doing the accounting for these financial transactions. A brisk business in financing cafeteria lunches for students who had forgotten theirs, or bus fare for those needing to get home, made the Credit Union's capital grow. At the year's end, the profits made by charging interest were divided among the shareholders, and the company was dissolved, to be started up again the next year.

Running the school newspaper was another source of economic "know-how." Students, in addition to serving as editors and reporters and selling subscriptions, raised money for the paper by going out into the community and soliciting advertisements from local merchants. The students also took trips to see how professional newspapers were managed and published and came back with ideas for improving their own. The enterprise

taught them about the basics of newspaper financing, production, and circulation.

The children participated in these groups with great enthusiasm and pleasure, and were perhaps unaware of how much they were absorbing the values and skills needed to live in a democratic society. Through these extracurricular activities, the youngsters were learning both independence of thought and cooperation with others. They were learning tolerance, compromise, responsibility, and initiative. At the same time, they were also learning about economic organization--primarily about capitalism, the economic system that so often seems to be wedded to successful democratic governments.

In the United States today, there are many organizations dedicated to the development of effective programs of economic education. For example, the National Council on Economic Education, founded in 1949, is an important source of teacher training, educational materials, and curriculum reform. The National Council's program Economics America provides economic education for over 120,000 teachers serving eight million students each year. Among other publications, the National Council has developed "A Framework for Teaching Basic Economic Concepts with Scope and Sequence Guidelines, K-12," which is widely accepted by U.S. educators, educational policymakers, administrators, and economists.

## **MODEL UNITED NATIONS**

One exercise in democracy popular in a number of countries is the Model United Nations program. This activity asks students to assume the roles of "ambassadors" from various countries to the United Nations and debate current issues on the world agenda, including the environment, economic development, conflict resolution, disarmament, and human rights. Operating within a framework of diplomacy, negotiation, and parliamentary rules, students in the Model U.N. program learn firsthand some important lessons in democracy.

The program has two basic components. First, students go through an intensive preparation process, in which they research the countries they will represent, prepare policy papers, draft resolutions, and practice rules of procedure and skills of public speaking. Second, they take part in the simulation experience itself, a process of formal debate and negotiation that can last up to five days.

Model U.N. programs may take several forms. The simplest occurs within the classroom and involves 15 to 50 students. Groups of this size often simulate a particular U.N. body such as the Security Council, rather than the General Assembly. Another form of Model U.N. is the school-wide program involving some or all of the students. In this case, the simulation can concentrate on the General Assembly or other U.N. bodies. A third and more complex version is the interschool Model U.N. conference, where hundreds or even thousands of students from many schools come together.

In the United States, more than 60,000 students are involved in the Model U.N. program, from the elementary through the university levels. United Nations Associations have also operated Model U.N. programs in Austria, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, Germany, Great Britain, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Ukraine, and Venezuela.

## **CONCIENCIA ARGENTINA**

Argentina is home to one of the most impressive civic organizations dedicated to democracy education. This is Conciencia Argentina, founded in 1982 with the goal of transforming a passive populace accustomed to

authoritarian governments into a mature, responsible citizenry, educated in the principles of democracy. It has developed a wide range of programs, both formal and informal, that seek not only to educate the public about democracy, but also to engage them in it.

Conciencia's initial efforts were directed toward informal courses in democracy and citizenship, courses that continue to be offered today. The goal is to introduce people to the Argentine system of government and explain how citizens can participate in political life. Courses examine the three branches of government and try to relate each to the lives of citizens. When examining the legislative branch, for example, courses cover its structure and operation and emphasize how people can remain informed about legislative activities and communicate with representatives to ensure that their concerns are heard.

Local government is also covered by these courses. Citizens are informed about services they have a right to expect from municipal organizations and about steps they can take to make themselves heard (such as community councils and petitions). In all such courses, Conciencia goes to great lengths to bring students to the setting where government is taking place, whether it is the national legislature or town hall.

To provide a more active learning environment, Conciencia also offers many workshops focusing on particular democratic principles or skills, such as leadership, tolerance, and compromise. People are placed in small groups where they learn to express their opinions, respect those of others, and work toward consensus.

Yet, too few people can be reached through courses and workshops, so Conciencia has developed another approach--the direct sales method. By going door-to-door and organizing meetings of six to eight people in homes, Conciencia representatives are able to provide people with a basic understanding of democratic government. Two evenings are spent with the same small group, introducing them to principles and institutions of democracy and describing ways they can participate in the political process.

In addition to these activities, Conciencia organizes seminars and round tables focused on important national issues and, near election time, goes to great lengths to educate citizens about the importance of voting--and the significance of the issues. In 1989, for example, the Legislature of the Province of Buenos Aires enacted changes in the provincial constitution and called for a popular referendum to approve them. Conciencia believed that the significance of the changes had not been properly conveyed to the people or the media, so they published a study that forecast the effects of the proposed reform and distributed it to well-known journalists. They also made it available to political parties, associations, schools, and the public. Round tables were organized throughout the province, and testimony that illustrated the widespread public ignorance regarding the referendum was videotaped and aired on cable television.

If success can be measured in terms of growth, Conciencia has done well indeed. Over the years, they have set up local offices all over Argentina and have helped other Latin American countries create Conciencia groups of their own. The result of these efforts has been the creation of the "Organizacion Civica Panamericana" (Panamerican Civic Organization), a network of 17 civic associations throughout the Americas. This organization, in partnership with Conciencia Argentina and Partners of the Americas, has recently published the first edition of "Participacion Ciudadana" (Civic Participation), a resource guide describing the civic education activities of 73 organizations in 19 countries in the Americas.

## **NICARAGUAN EDUCATION REFORM**

Nicaragua is one example of a country that has made nationwide reforms in teacher training and curricula. When the democratically elected government of Violeta Chamorro took office in 1990, it inherited a

politically corrupt and economically drained nation. The education system had been financially deprived and completely politicized by the Sandinistas. Everything was seen through Sandinista eyes, and neither children nor teachers were allowed to question this authority. One elementary math textbook, for example, taught students how to count using pictures of Sandinista guns.

A comprehensive education for democracy effort has been under way since 1992 that seeks to introduce democratic content and teaching techniques into the tattered school system. The program is being developed at the request of the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education by the American Federation of Teachers (a U.S. teacher union) as part of its Education for Democracy/International project and is supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development through the National Endowment for Democracy.

The reform program in Nicaragua has two main components: teacher training and the development of a new teaching framework and materials. The materials will consist of an elementary/secondary curriculum framework for democracy education, and a supplemental handbook for teachers containing background materials on democracy and ideas for classroom activities. A curriculum commission consisting of educators, scholars, business and civic leaders, parents, and others representing a cross section of Nicaraguan society was assembled in 1992 to oversee the development of these materials. The work of the commission has been important in creating consensus on how to portray and teach Nicaraguan history and democracy. The curriculum commission, in cooperation with a group of international advisers, supported the efforts to develop materials, which combine study of universal democratic principles with the study of the particular history and culture of Nicaragua. Now complete, the materials are used by a corps of teachers who have been trained by the project.

The teacher training process prepared 20 Nicaraguan secondary-school social-studies teachers in both democratic content and pedagogy. The teachers who were trained in this project are now "education for democracy specialists" training other Nicaraguan secondary school teachers. Over the course of three years, every secondary-school social-studies teacher in the country has been exposed to the training program. As part of their preparation, the teacher specialists have helped develop lesson plans, activities, and other materials that are now part of the secondary school civic education program.

The project, now entering its fourth year, is seeking to consolidate its accomplishments through the creation of an independent, non-profit, non-partisan civic education association. As well, a number of the original trainers are now working in the Ministry of Education as technical experts in the fields of civic education and teaching methodology.

## **SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION**

Here is just a sample of the many resources available to help people learn more about civic education programs.

### **Books and Educational Materials Mentioned in This Paper**

Australian Parliament Packs  
Parliamentary Education Office  
Commonwealth Parliament  
Department of the Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

Australia

Phone: 06 277 3508

Fax: 06 277 5775

California's History-Social Science Framework

California Department of Education

P.O. Box 271

Sacramento, California 95812 USA

Phone: (916) 657-2451

Civitas and National Standards for Civics and Government

Center for Civic Education

5146 Douglas Fir Road

Calabasas, California 91302 USA

Phone: (818) 591-9321

Fax: (818) 591-9330

*Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties.* Adrian Karatnycky, et. al. New York: Freedom House, 1995. Freedom House, a nonprofit human rights organization, conducts an annual survey designed to measure and monitor political rights and civil liberties in every country in the world. The results are published in the *Freedom in the World* series, where countries are categorized as free, partly free, or not free, and indicated as such on a world map. Brief discussions of the political and social conditions provide the basis for each country's ranking. The most recent volume may be purchased from Freedom House, 120 Wall Street, New York, New York 10005 USA. Phone: (212) 514-8040

Fax: (212) 514-8045

### **Organizations Mentioned in This Paper**

Center for Civic Education

5146 Douglas Fir Road

Calabasas, California 91302 USA

Phone: (818) 591-9321

Fax: (818) 591-9330

The Center for Civic Education designs and implements innovative curriculum programs in civic education for elementary and secondary schools throughout the United States. It also cosponsors, with the U.S. Department of Education, a student competition called "We the People..." Its programs have been used in cooperation with educators and government officials in Eastern and Western Europe and other countries.

Centro Pro Democracia

(Center for Democracy)

Apartado 55-1993

Patilla, Panama

Phone: (507) 64 7160

Fax: (507) 64 6921

A coalition of business, labor, professional, civic, and rural organizations, the Center was founded in 1987 to

aid in the restoration of democracy to a nation dominated for years by dictatorship. It operates educational programs, such as workshops and seminars, and uses the media to promote democratic ideas.

Close Up Foundation  
44 Canal Center Plaza  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314 USA  
Phone: (703) 706-3300  
Fax: (703) 706-0001

The Close Up Foundation is designed to help citizens of all ages gain a practical understanding of how public policy affects their lives and how individual and collective efforts affect public policy. Its many activities include the Citizen Bee, a social-studies competition for students, and programs that bring groups of citizens to Washington, D.C., to see the government in action.

Conciencia Argentina  
Florida 633,  
3er. Piso1005  
Buenos Aires, Argentina  
Phone: (54) (1) 393-7196  
Fax: (54) (1) 393-7196

Conciencia Argentina is a civic organization designed to get the citizens of Argentina involved in democracy. It runs both formal and informal programs to educate citizens about national, local, and community government.

Education for Democracy/International Project  
American Federation of Teachers  
555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001 USA  
Phone: (202) 393-7484  
Fax: (202) 879-4502

In 1989, following the democratic revolutions in Central Europe, the American Federation of Teachers initiated the Education for Democracy/International Project to help educators, independent teacher organizations, and newly elected government officials build democratic education systems in emerging democracies. The project has held training workshops and conferences in Central and Eastern Europe and the NIS. It is currently helping the Nicaraguan government introduce democratic ideas and techniques into its education system.

Kids Voting USA, Inc.  
398 South Mill Avenue, Suite 304  
Tempe, Arizona 85281 USA  
Phone: (602) 921-3727  
Fax: (602) 921-4008

Kids Voting USA offers curricula designed to teach elementary- and secondary-school students about democratic principles. It involves a mock election program in which students accompany their parents to the polls and participate in a simulated election.

#### Libro Libre

Apartado 1154-1250 Escazu  
San Jose, Costa Rica  
Phone (506) 282 2333  
Fax: (506) 228 6028

Libro Libre makes classic democratic texts available to readers in Spanish.

#### National Council on Economic Education

1140 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, New York 10036 USA  
Phone: (212) 730-7007  
Fax: (212) 730-1793

#### United Nations Association of the United States of America

485 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10017-6104 USA  
Phone: (212) 697-3232  
Fax: (212) 682-9185

The United Nations Association of the USA (UNA-USA) has been the national coordinator of Model United Nations programs in the United States for 25 years. It also serves as an international clearinghouse, offering practical guides and other materials for those interested in building programs in their own countries.

### **Additional Sources on Education for Democracy**

1) *Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools*. The Bradley Commission on History in the Schools. Washington, D.C.: The Educational Excellence Network, 1988.

The Bradley Commission on History in the Schools was created in 1987 in response to widespread concern over the inadequacy of history education in American elementary and secondary schools. This report summarizes the Commission's findings about the purpose of history education; the content of history classes in elementary, junior high, and high schools; and the place of history in the curricula as a whole. Also included are the Bradley Commission's recommendations for improving history education in a democratic school system. Copies of this booklet can be obtained from the National Council for History Education, 26915 Westwood Rd., Suite B2, Westlake, Ohio 44145 USA, Phone: (216) 835-1776, Fax: (216) 835-1295.

2) *The Democracy Reader*. Diane Ravitch and Abigail Thernstrom, Eds. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992.

This anthology of classic and modern speeches, essays, poems, declarations, and documents on freedom

provides an excellent overview of the development of democratic thought and political philosophy. More than one-third of the book is devoted to the democratic ideas of contemporary authors, leaders, and academics. To purchase, contact: Special Markets Department, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 10 East 53rd Street, New York, New York 10022 USA, Phone: (212) 207-7528, Fax: (212) 207-7222.

3) *The Democratic Revolution, Struggles for Freedom and Pluralism in the Developing World*. Larry Diamond, Ed. New York: Freedom House, 1992.

This book contains excellent examples of civic organizations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America that are involved in democracy education. To purchase, contact: Freedom House, 120 Wall Street, New York, NY 10005 USA, Phone: (212) 514-8040, Fax: (212) 514-8045.

4) *Lessons from History: Essential Understandings and Historical Perspectives Students Should Acquire*. Charlotte Crabtree, Gary B. Nash, Paul Gagnon, and Scott Waugh, Eds. The National Center for History in the Schools. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1992.

This work describes in detail what students across the United States need to learn about American and world history and why the subjects are so important. It makes the case for a strong history curriculum from the early grades through high school, and stresses the importance of students' acquiring intellectual skills and democratic "habits of mind" along with factual knowledge. Copies may be ordered from the National Center for History in the Schools, University of California at Los Angeles, 405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024-1521 USA, Phone: (310) 825-4702, Fax: (310) 206-6293.

5) *What is Democracy?* Howard Cincotta. Washington, D.C.: United States Information Agency, 1991.

This 32-page primer, published by the United States Information Agency, describes the complex system of principles, practices, and institutions that is democracy. The text begins with a look at the status of democracy worldwide and then moves quickly into a discussion of citizens' rights, the rule of law (due process, constitutions, etc.), elections, culture (including education), government, political participation (via associations, political parties, etc.), the media, and economics. The booklet has been translated into more than 30 languages. Copies may be obtained by contacting local U.S. Information Service offices or American embassies worldwide.

**The following publications can be obtained from the Education for Democracy/International Project at this address:**

Education for Democracy/International Project  
American Federation of Teachers  
555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001 USA  
Phone: (202) 393-7484  
Fax: (202) 879-4502

1) *Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles*. Washington, D.C.: The American Federation of Teachers, 1987.

This influential manifesto sets forth the proposition that the teaching of democracy is important, has often been neglected and ineffectual, and should be strengthened in the future. Signed by more than 150 prominent Americans of varied political views, this concise booklet provides guidelines for strengthening the teaching of democratic values and ideals in the United States.

2) *Democracy's Untold Story: What World History Textbooks Neglect*. Paul Gagnon. Washington, D.C.: The American Federation of Teachers, 1989.

This book reviews five world-history textbooks widely used in the United States, and, in the process, details what knowledge students should, but often fail to, learn in school. Gagnon suggests how world-history curricula should be developed to educate for democracy.

3) *The Free Society Papers* (a series of five papers). Washington, D.C.: The American Federation of Teachers, 1989.

*The Economy in a Free Society*. Ezra Solomon

This paper details the relationship between free societies and their economic systems, centering on the important aspects of a free-market economy. Topics examined include the role of prices; the concepts of supply and demand; the role of the government in the economy; inflation; taxes; and the impact of Smithian and Keynesian economic theories.

*Education in a Free Society*. Mary Butz

This paper describes the importance of education in a democracy, paying close attention to democratic teaching methods. It includes examples of lesson plans used to teach about democracy.

*Models of Democratic Government*. John P. Frank

This paper discusses essential characteristics of governments in free societies. The composition, powers, and limits on the powers of a government with legislative, executive, and judicial branches are defined. The paper also examines the process of amending a national constitution; the fundamental right of equality; the freedoms of speech, press, and religion; and the just administration of criminal law.

*Politics in a Free Society*. Chester E. Finn, Jr., John P. Crisp, Jr., Matthew Gandal, Andrew Forsaith, and Theodor Rebarber

This paper examines the politics of a free society, focusing on four central themes: the role of the citizen; the role of political parties and the conduct of election campaigns; the politician as policymaker; and the functions of the media.

*What is Democracy and How It Should Be Taught in the Schools*. Diane Ravitch

This paper, presented to educators of the Ministry of National Education and Teachers Solidarity in Poland in November 1989, discusses both the major components of a democratic society and the ways in which democracy education can be taught in schools in emerging democracies.

4) *Teaching Democracy: Why and How It Must Be Taught in a Democratic Society*. Chester E. Finn, Jr.

Finn's remarks, which were presented at the June 1991 Nicaraguan Civic Education Conference in Managua, Nicaragua, examine the profound influence of schools in democratic societies, and discuss the importance of democracy education in maintaining a free society.

5) *Teaching Democratic Citizenship: An International Guide*.

This document offers suggestions to civic educators around the world on the development of indigenous education for democracy programs.

## **Additional Organizations Involved in Education for Democracy**

### **Africa**

Group for the Study and Research on Democracy and Economic and Social Development (GERDDES)

1) B.P. 8212

Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire

Phone: 225 44 67 09

Fax: 225 44 63 05

2) B. P. 7083

Cotonou, Benin

Phone: 229-33-03-75

Based in Benin and the Côte d'Ivoire, GERDDES conducts applied research to promote and monitor democracy in West Africa. GERDDES's members provide training to local government and civic organizations on election administration and monitoring in 15 countries. GERDDES also holds conferences and forums enabling opposition political groups to discuss issues and interact.

Law Association of Zambia

P. O. Box 23215

Kitwe, Zambia

Phone: 260 1 225 884

Fax: 260 1 225 049

The Law Association of Zambia assists in Zambia's transition to multiparty democracy through a program of election monitoring and civic and human rights education. This group has published a handbook detailing election laws, produced a series of television shows on human rights and civic education, and inspected the polls and ballot-counting during elections.

National Street Law Office

Private Bag x10

Dalbridge 4014, South Africa

Phone: 27-31-260-1291

Fax: 27-31-260-1540

Street Law provides practical law-related education to students and the broader community. Its services include curriculum development, teacher training, and teaching assistance to secondary schools and community organizations. Street Law produces books, pamphlets and posters on law-related education and human rights. Working in cooperation with other organizations, including the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law, it recently published *Democracy for All: Education Towards a Democratic Culture*, a textbook for South African secondary-school students.

A-BU-GI-DA: Ethiopian Congress for Democracy

PO Box 7284, Higher 10 Kebele 04 H. No.220  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Phone: 251-1-121-781  
Fax: 251-1-515-714

A-Bu-Gi-Da has undertaken a variety of adult education activities intended to build democracy. Among these programs is a three-hour multi-media presentation on the fundamentals of democracy, a poster series on democratic themes, monthly public policy forums, and a planned series of radio plays on human rights. Many of these activities are carried out through "democracy clubs" established throughout the country.

## **Central and Eastern Europe**

Democracy Advancement Center (DAC)  
Valnu iela 2, Room 513a  
Riga LV-1098, Latvia  
Phone: (371-8) 229-410  
Fax: (371-8) 820-176

The DAC is leading civic education reform efforts in Latvia through its delivery of in-service teacher training workshops and the development of civics textbooks for secondary schools.

Education for Democratic Citizenship in Poland  
1) Education for Democratic Citizenship in Poland Project  
The Mershon Center  
Ohio State University  
1501 Neil Avenue  
Columbus, Ohio 43210 USA  
Phone: (614) 292-1681  
Fax: (614) 292-2407  
2) Center for Citizenship Education  
01-593 Warsaw, ul. Sierpecka 6 m. 32  
Poland  
Phone/Fax: (48-22) 33 0409

This project began as a cooperative effort by the Polish Ministry of Education and the Mershon Center at Ohio State University to promote democracy education in Polish schools. A team of Polish teachers, school administrators, and university professors worked with American scholars to prepare curriculum guides that present the rationale, instructional objectives, content outline, and supplementary materials for civics courses in the 8th and 10th grades. The project also developed a two-semester college course on the principles of democracy, established Centers for Civic and Economic Education to provide in-service training for primary- and secondary-school teachers, and produced a resource book on constitutional democracy.

Foundation for Education for Democracy  
Podwale 5, Suite 30  
Warsaw, Poland  
Phone/Fax: (48 22) 27 76 36

Since 1989, Poland's Foundation for Education for Democracy has worked to educate the public on the principles and institutions of democracy and free-market economics. It offers courses for educators on how to teach democracy in the schools, and for union and youth leaders and local government officials on democratic leadership and the art of negotiation. The Foundation has held international conferences and seminars on the history and philosophy of democracy. It has also published numerous books and brochures on the politics and economics of a free society; methods of running union meetings and negotiating; and the teaching of history, literature, and the Polish and English languages.

#### Foundation in Support of Local Democracy

Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny

Krywickiego 9

Warsaw, Poland

Phone/Fax: 48 22 25 14 16

The Foundation educates citizens about effecting change through participatory democracy in Poland. Its activities include organizing regional training for local mayors and government officials, elected school officials, and local journalists in democratic institutions and values and how to be responsive to constituents. The Foundation has centers around the country providing resources to those involved in local democracy.

#### Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE)

1) 2000 P Street, N.W., Suite 400

Washington, D.C. 20036 USA

Phone: (202) 466-7105

Fax: (202) 466-7140

2) P.O. Box 311, 00-950

Warsaw, Poland

Phone: (48-22) 20 83 44

Phone/Fax 20 83 58

IDEE is an organization composed of former members of the Polish Solidarity movement, Americans of East European descent, trade unionists, and others who have assisted the democratic opposition in Eastern Europe. Since 1985, IDEE has administered grants for programs in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and former-Yugoslavia. IDEE also assists struggling independent publications in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic states, and aids independent student organizations.

#### Jan Hus Educational Foundation

Radnicka 8, P.O.Box 735

663 35 Brno, Czech Republic

Phone: 42 5 422 1234

Fax: 42 5 422 12084

This foundation provides lectures, discussions, seminars, books, articles, and periodicals to Czech citizens; supports the free press in the country with grants and materials; and assists in the rebuilding of cultural and educational institutions. Through its networking program, the Foundation links Western scholars with Czech colleagues at universities, secondary schools, government agencies, and civic organizations.

Comenius Center for Education and Democracy  
Charles University  
Myslikova 7, 110 00  
Prague, Czech Republic  
Phone: 42 2 2491 3898  
Fax: 42 2 295 561

The Center is one of the leaders in the movement to reform and improve civic education in the Czech Republic. It cooperates with numerous national and overseas civic education organizations in order to provide in-service teacher training and develop new materials for the teaching social sciences.

Association for Teaching Civics (ATC)  
Feyer Gyorgy utca 10  
Budapest-1053 Hungary  
Phone/Fax: (36-1) 117-4526

ATC is a nongovernmental, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the improvement of the teaching of democracy at the secondary school level in Hungary. The Association, building on its prior involvement in the development of civic education curricula and teaching materials is now engaged in a multi-year teacher training project.

## **Russia**

Grazhdanin (Citizen)  
ul. Dovatora 5/9  
Moscow 117312 Russia  
Phone: (7-095) 144-6862

Grazhdanin is a Russian civic education network composed of over 20,000 members throughout the country. Members deliver in-service training workshops on teaching democracy during the year and at annual summer institutes. The organization has also developed a series of civic education textbooks for children in the "middle school" grades.

Uchitelskaja Gazeta (Teachers Newspaper)  
Vetoshny pereulok 13-15  
Moscow 103012 Russia  
Phone (7-095) 921-3025  
Fax: (7-095) 928-8253

Uchitelskaja Gazeta is one of the major education-related periodicals in Russia. Its weekly issues regularly contain materials on civic education. It is also involved in the initiative to create a national civic educators association.

## **Latin America**

**Movimiento Conciencia Colombia**

Colombia, Cra. 5, #66-11

Bogota D.F. Colombia

Phone: 57-1-248-9511

Fax: 57-1-235-9245

This nonpartisan, nonprofit Colombian women's organization provides democracy education and promotes citizen participation in public affairs. It organizes workshops and seminars for adults and elementary- and secondary-school students fostering democratic participation in political processes and nonviolent methods of conflict resolution.

**Participa**

Participa, Almirante Simpson 014

Santiago, Chile

Phone: 56-2-222-5384 or 56-2-229-2251

Fax: 56-2-222-1374

Participa fosters broad citizen participation in the democratic system through citizen education. Special emphasis is placed on reaching out to women and youth. Participa researches and disseminates information about the democratic electoral process, conflict resolution, and leadership and decision-making, and provides classes and workshops for politicians, trade unions, civic organizations, businesses, and neighborhood groups. Seminars and forums are also conducted to engage people in issues of national, regional, and local interest.

**Organizacion Civica Panamericana (OCP)**

Florida 633 3er.P (1005)

Buenos Aires, Argentina

Phone/Fax: (541) 314-5191 and 314-7196

OCP is a network of nongovernmental, nonpartisan civic education organizations spanning 17 countries in the Americas.

**Western Europe****Citizenship Foundation**

Weddel House

13 West Smithfield

London EC1A 9HY United Kingdom

Phone (071) 236-2171

Fax: (071) 329-3702

This British nonpartisan, nonprofit organization conducts a variety of educational activities that encourage the young to become more effective citizens by developing their capacity to understand social, moral, and political issues and to make critical judgments based on a concern for democracy, justice, and the rights of others. It publishes *Citizenship*, the only journal in the world exclusively devoted to the promotion of democratic citizenship through education.

Council of Europe (CE)  
Directorate of Human Rights  
Council of Europe, F-67075  
Strasbourg Cedex, France  
Phone: 88 41 20 00  
Fax: 88 41 27 81/82/83

The CE has a long-standing interest in promoting education for human rights, including education for democratic values. With the opening up of membership of the organization in recent years to countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it is now actively engaged in human rights education programs throughout the region.

Netherlands Helsinki Council (NHK)  
Jansveld 44  
Utrecht 3512 BH  
The Netherlands  
Phone: (31 30) 302535  
Fax: (31 30) 302524

Over the past several years, the NHK has developed a number of human rights education programs in partnership with organizations throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The NHK organizes teacher training workshops, seminars, conferences, and other activities that promote human rights and improved human rights education programs.

## **United States**

Constitutional Rights Foundation  
601 South Kingsley Drive  
Los Angeles, California 90005 USA  
Phone: (213) 487-5590  
Fax: (213) 386-0459

Since 1962, the Constitutional Rights Foundation (CRF) has educated young people to be responsible citizens by offering teacher training, student conferences, and publications in areas such as law and government, ethics and decision-making, and civic participation. CRF runs many programs, including youth community service programs involving at-risk students; the Lawyer in the Classroom program, which places lawyers and judges in the classroom as volunteers teaching about the U.S. justice system; and the Mock Trial Program in California, which allows students to participate in simulated court cases playing the roles of the defense, prosecution, and witnesses. In addition, CRF publishes an excellent newsletter for teachers, *The Bill of Rights in Action*, which provides ideas for lesson plans and resources on constitutional issues.

ERIC/ChESS  
Indiana University  
2805 East Tenth Street, Suite 120  
Bloomington, Indiana 47408-2698 USA  
Phone: (812) 855-3838

Fax: (812) 855-0455

ERIC/ChESS is the major clearinghouse on social studies/social science education in the U.S. Located at Indiana University's Social Studies Development Center, ERIC/ChESS gathers, catalogues, and publishes American and overseas information on all aspects of civic education.

National Center for History in Schools  
University of California-Los Angeles  
Moore Hall 231  
405 Hilgard Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90024-1521 USA  
Phone: (310) 825-4702  
Fax: (310) 206-6293

This organization develops history curriculum materials for children and researches effective approaches in the teaching of history. It also heads the federally-funded effort to create national standards in history for American schools. The Center has published a large volume, *Lessons from History*, which is to serve as a major resource for national and state standards-setting and assessment in history. Special curriculum units on world and American history for grades 5-12 have also been prepared. Several emphasize the history of democracy and the core values and institutions on which it depends. These units consist of collections of lessons about "dramatic moments" in history, allowing an exploration of their wider historical context. In addition to selections from primary sources, teachers are provided with background materials to help integrate the unit into the curriculum; lesson plans, including a variety of ideas and approaches to using the unit; student handouts; and a bibliography for each unit.

National Council for History Education (NCHE)  
26915 Westwood Rd., Suite B-2  
Westlake, Ohio 44145-4656 USA  
Phone: (216) 835-1776  
Fax: (216) 835-1295

NCHE provides a communications network for all advocates of history education in the United States, whether in schools, colleges, museums, historical societies, humanities councils, or community organizations. Besides producing a monthly newsletter detailing history activities and opportunities around the nation, NCHE also conducts school staff development and teacher in-service workshops, gives public testimony before hearings on state and local curriculum, and reviews newly published curriculum documents and guidelines.

National Institute for Citizenship Education in the Law (NICEL)  
711 G Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003 USA  
Phone: (202) 546-6644  
Fax: (202) 546-6649

This U.S.-based organization has been involved in law-related, human rights and education for democracy programs in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Eastern and Central Europe, and the NIS. In the United States, the

organization runs a highly successful "Street Law" program. Working in partnership with South African organizations, it has developed *Human Rights for All* and *Democracy for All*.

**About the Authors:** Matthew Gandal is a Senior Associate in the Educational Issues Department of the American Federation of Teachers (Washington, D.C.), where his responsibilities include working with the AFT's Education for Democracy Project. He previously served as Assistant Director for International Affairs of the Educational Excellence Network. Chester E. Finn, Jr., is a partner in the Edison Project of Whittle Schools, L.P. He is on leave from his position as Professor of Education and Public Policy at Vanderbilt University (Nashville, Tennessee). He previously served as Director of the Educational Excellence Network.

The authors wish to thank the former Educational Excellence Network Deputy Director Jean Bathurst for her contributions and Stanford University student Charles Hokanson, whose research and dedication were particularly valuable in assembling materials for this paper. The authors are also grateful to student intern Lewis Goldberg and the other members of the Network staff who provided support for this project.

The Educational Excellence Network, associated with the Hudson Institute (Indianapolis, Indiana), is an information exchange and clearinghouse on educational improvement and school reform servicing educators, policy-makers, journalists, business leaders, parents, and other interested citizens. The Network has had a long-standing interest in education for democracy at home and abroad, and this paper is a product of that interest.

---

Project management and editing by the Institute for Contemporary Studies (ICS)

Vice President -- Kenneth L. Adelman

Editor -- Heidi Fritschel

The mission of ICS is to promote the self-governing and entrepreneurial way of life. Through its imprint, ICS Press, ICS publishes a wide range of books on public issues. For a catalog or more information, write: ICS, 243 Kearny Street, San Francisco, California 94108 USA

Freedom Papers Series:

Editor: Wayne Hall

Associate Editors: Stephen Burant, Susan O'Sullivan

Design: Thaddeus A. Miksinski, Jr.

October 1992

(Edited and revised by the staff of the International Affairs Department, American Federation of Teachers, May 1995)

[Return to Contents](#)