



Partnership Case Studies

The Center for Civic Education

What is the organization's mission and goals?

The nonprofit Center for Civic Education, based in Calabasas, California, aims to promote an enlightened, competent, and responsible citizenry. Its goals are to promote increased understanding of constitutional democracy and its fundamental values and principles; develop the skills necessary to participate as informed, effective, and responsible citizens; and increase the willingness to use democratic procedures when making decisions and managing conflicts.

What is the role of civic education?

Civic education assists in developing the political culture required to establish, maintain, and improve democratic institutions. The Center conducts various international and domestic programs to foster and promote education for democracy.

Give some examples of programs that the Center has developed.

- We the People... The Citizen and the Constitution
An instructional program on the history and principles of American constitutional democracy for elementary, middle, and high school students. Simulated Congressional hearings are built into the curriculum and are excellent for performance assessment.
- We the People... Project Citizen
A middle school civic education program designed to develop interest in public policy-making as well as the ability to participate competently and

responsibly in state and local government.

- Foundations of Democracy: Authority, Privacy, Responsibility, and Justice
Curricular materials for grades K-12 on basic concepts and principles of constitutional democracy: authority, privacy, responsibility, and justice. This multidisciplinary curriculum draws upon political philosophy, political science, law, history, literature, and environmental studies.
- Youth for Justice
Five nationally recognized organizations work jointly to promote civic competence and responsibility at all grade levels and in all states. This national network implements civic education programs that involve young people in identifying and participating in solutions that lead to safe, disciplined, drug-free schools and communities. Youth for Justice is supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice.
- Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program
A series of exchanges among leaders in civic education in the United States and emerging and established democracies worldwide to promote education for democratic citizenship. This is accomplished through seminars for civic educators on the basic values and principles of constitutional democracy and its institutions; visits by civic educators to school systems, institutions of higher learning, and nonprofit organizations that have exemplary programs in civics and government education; translation of basic documents of constitutional democracy and significant works on political theory, constitutional law, and government; adaptation and development of exemplary curricular and teacher education programs; and joint research and evaluation projects to determine the effects of civic education programs on students' civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- School Violence Prevention Demonstration Program
A program for a wide range of elementary and middle schools, including large urban schools, rural schools, Native American schools, and private schools. Evaluative studies of the program will determine whether civic education instruction, using high quality materials and teacher professional development, can serve as a preventative of risk factors that are

understood to contribute to the forming of attitudes conducive to violent behavior.

What are the academic levels for which the Center administers its programs?

American and international administrators, educators, scholars, and K-12 students.

Who are the Center's partners?

The Center's partners include nonprofit and government organizations, institutions, or associations that have shown expertise and exemplary results in civics and government education at the local, state, regional, and national levels. These U.S.-based entities are generally identified from the Center's longstanding domestic network.

Describe the Center's partnership with the federal government in designing and implementing a civic education program.

The Center administers Civitas: An International Civic Education Exchange Program (Civitas Exchange Program), which is funded by a grant from the Department of Education, Office of Research and Improvement, in cooperation with the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of State. The Center works closely with the Departments of State and Education to select new international partner sites and to implement the Civitas Exchange Program. Throughout the year, the Center conducts informational visits in Washington, D.C., with representatives of various federal agencies.

Explain the grant process as related to the Civitas Exchange Program.

The Civitas Exchange Program was initially funded for two years after a competitive review process in response to RFP's (Requests for Proposals) issued by the Department of Education (in conjunction with the Department of State) in the spring of 1995. The results were favorable and the Civitas Exchange Program won a second competition in 1997 and received funding for an additional four years.

What has the Civitas Exchange Program achieved?

Since its creation, the Civitas Exchange Program has been credited with

- Forging numerous partnerships and initiatives with 28 U.S. states and more than 30 countries.
- Involving more than 2.9 million students, educators, and leaders.
- Conducting research and evaluation on the various curricular programs developed and implemented by U.S. and foreign partners to determine the impact on students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- Providing technical assistance and mini-grants (in association with the Department of State) to support the development and improvement of civic education in more than 30 countries.

How are participating countries selected?

Countries involved in the Civitas Exchange Program are identified through a needs assessment mechanism and an evaluation of the site's prospects for success. The Center ensures that partners are committed to democratic principles and are in agreement with the Center's mission to promote an enlightened and responsible citizenry. The Department of State helps to identify suitable candidates for participation.

How does the Center form a partnership with another organization?

There is no single established path that leads to the formation of a partnership between the Center and another organization. In fact, Civitas Exchange Program partnerships are established through various mechanisms such as fact-finding missions; visits by civic educators to school systems, institutions of higher learning, and other nonprofit organizations that have exemplary programs in civics and government education; and participation in conferences, seminars, and annual meetings on the basic values and principles of constitutional democracy and its institutions.

[Click here to view a list of and links to CCE international partner organizations.](#)

Do Center administrators/programmers meet regularly with partner organizations to discuss Civitas Exchange Program issues and the progress of participants?

The Civitas Exchange Program has two annual meetings - one in summer at an international site and another in fall in Washington, D.C. The purpose of these events is to give international and U.S. participants a venue to exchange ideas and share best practices in education for democracy programs through thematic workshops that strengthen civic education and civic culture.

In June 2001, more than 110 leaders from 30 countries and 21 U.S. states participated in the Civitas Exchange Program Summer Seminar held in Newcastle, Northern Ireland. Students from the Civic-Link program made a presentation on public policy issues and met with Northern Ireland's Minister of Education, Martin McGuinness. (Civic-Link is an initiative of Co-operation Ireland's Youth, Education, and Community Programme that incorporates the action-learning/public policy approach of the Center's We the People... Project Citizen curriculum. Civic-Link fosters and promotes the development of mutual respect between young people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.)

Additionally, Civitas Exchange Program staff members hold planning meetings throughout the year with partners and program participants in their respective countries, U.S. states, or at the Center's offices in California.

What challenges does the Center encounter in its partnership with U.S. institutions and foreign governmental organizations?

By using a careful selection process, USG and program staffs have thus far avoided any serious difficulties in the Center's partnerships with U.S. institutions or foreign governmental organizations. At the same time, the Center and its partnerships have achieved considerable success with foreign governmental organizations. For example:

- Adoption in 2000 by the Russian Federal Ministry of Education of Project Citizen/I Am a Citizen of Russia for a year-long nationwide field test.
- Requirement of the Civitas curriculum in upper elementary and secondary schools throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is the only curricular

program used by all three major ethnic groups in BiH.

- Implementation of Project Citizen in middle schools throughout Indiana, Latvia, and Lithuania.

What benefits accompany a partnership with the Center's programs?

- The ability of partners to host exchange program delegates provides a meaningful and in-depth educational experience for all participants (noted in the impact on American schools when international delegates meet with American students and teachers).
- The inclusion of partner organizations in all major decisions, activities, and annual meetings has also proven to be valuable and useful for program success.
- K-12 curricula and lessons have been produced for American schools.
- Education for democracy curricula have been developed and implemented in more than 30 countries.

What measures are used to ensure that the Civitas Exchange Program is on target?

The Center uses four basic methods to ensure that the program is on target.

1. Internal Evaluation - The Center surveys and evaluates its programs and events throughout the year. Some of these activities include delegation visits, conferences, seminars, institutes, and the gathering of qualitative and quantitative data from participants to measure the program's effects.
2. External Evaluation - Evaluations conducted by outside organizations focus on all major aspects of the program with the exception of student outcomes. The Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs of the University of Texas at Austin provided the first two external evaluations of the Civitas Exchange Program. The Center for Public Outreach is currently conducting external evaluation.
3. Research - The Center, along with the Civitas network, conducts research to determine the impact of the various curricular programs developed and implemented by U.S. and foreign partners on students' knowledge, skills,

and attitudes. Previous research in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia, Lithuania, and Indiana detected an increase in students' political skills and knowledge. Current research includes measuring the political disposition of students in Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, and the Czech Republic.

4. Consultation - The Center consults with federal program managers at the Departments of Education and State throughout the program year.

How does the federal government track the Center's work performance?

The Center submits an annual report on its activities and achievements based on the performance indicators provided by the Department of Education. Additionally, the Department of Education Program Officer regularly attends the two annual meetings of Civitas Exchange Program Directors.

How has the Center handled program logistics and implementation in an efficient and cost effective manner?

The Center has 30 years of experience in implementing civic education programs and developing curricular materials. During that time, it has established professional development institutes that train educators to effectively implement programs in their own region, country, or state.

The Center encourages cost sharing and supplemental support from non-USG organizations and institutions to help reduce costs. Included among these entities are the Soros Foundation, Catholic Relief Services, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Maytag Foundation, as well as a number of foreign governmental sources such as foreign ministries of education.

Have other organizations replicated the Center program concept?

The partner organizations within the Civitas Exchange Program share a similar mission and approach to education for democracy as the Center. However, no other organizations have the Center's experience and expertise in this field.