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INTEGRATION OF VALUES AND AWARENESS MODEL OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate incorporation of *Values and Awareness Model* (Tibbitts, 2002) in Croatian primary school curricula. This model is focused on the knowledge of human rights issues and its integration into public values. Considering the basic elements of this model, a sample of a hundred randomly selected primary school curricula were analysed in the context of school projects and extracurricular activities whose primary objective was to promote human values, to encourage communication which acknowledges diversity, participation in the local community, and peaceful resolution of conflicts. Based on the results of this study we can conclude that most of the elements of *Values and Awareness Model* are implemented in goals of school projects and extracurricular activities in Croatian primary schools, but there is room for an even stronger and broader implementation. Since the study detected that only a small percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects promoted gender equality, it is necessary to increase the number of such activities and projects.

Keywords: human rights education, primary school curriculum, student participation, *Values and Awareness Model*

INTRODUCTION

As democracy in the Central and East European countries continues to develop unevenly (Tibbitts, 1994), the hope remains that the rule of law and respect for human rights will keep increasing, and that this will be reflected in classrooms due to educational reform efforts. Perhaps in the long run such successful efforts will contribute to western education with fresh insight about human rights education. In the institutions of the Western Europe (schools, colleges, councils and Member States ministries) there is a considerable gap between the political rhetoric and the reality of practice (Kerr, 2003). In approximately one third of European countries, steering documents such as the national curricula, as well as other recommendations and regulations, promote the involvement of young people in human rights education (HRE) related activities outside the school (Eurydice, 2012).

In Croatian educational system, for many years, human rights education (HRE) had no place in education strategy papers. Due to an overly-politicised approach to education, which was further strengthened by extremely centralised decision-making structures, the system remained underdeveloped, internally imbalanced and marginalized with regard to other important sectors (Spajić-Vrkaš, 2003). HRE was first officially mentioned in 1999 in the *National Programme of Education for Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship* (Government of the Republic of Croatia, National Committee for Human Rights Education, 1999), and then in the *Framework Plan and Programme for Primary Schools* (1999). In the *National Programme on Primary Education* (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, 2006), HRE was included within integrated, but optional school subjects. Afterwards *Croatian National Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, 2011) introduced HRE as a cross-curricular topic implemented throughout compulsory education, but also as an optional school subject. The human and legal dimension now forms part of the *Programme of Cross-curricular and Interdisciplinary Contents of Citizenship Education for Primary and Secondary Schools* (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia, 2014) which has been implemented in all primary and secondary schools as a compulsory subject according to the cross-curricular implementation model.

Studies of HRE and its role in preparing students for active participation in a democratic society and the local community in the context of human rights protection are relatively rare. There are few research studies which analyse school curricula, but some authors (Bektaş, 2013) interview teachers on the concepts of preparing students for a democratic life, while others researches describe asset-based community development (Kretzman, McKnight, 1993 in Garoutte and McCarthy-Gilmore, 2014). They express deep concerns over attempts to create social change which are initiated by external actors and which criticize traditional forms of community development as being needs-based and focused on deficiencies.

The promotion of knowledge, skills and positive beliefs related to the protection and improvement of respect of human rights which are related to their active participation in community is one of the fundamental tasks of education. The skills and principles

of asset mapping can be adapted to teach concepts of community, promote student engagement within a community, and prepare students for course experiences that rely on service-learning while helping them question the entrenched power dynamics. Students who participate in the asset-based approach have a better understanding of the concept of community and the ways in which individuals are connected to their community (Garoutte, McCarthy-Gilmore, 2014). Kahne and Sporte (2008) find that a set of specific types of civic learning opportunities fosters notable improvements in students' commitment to civic participation. Prior large-scale studies which identified a limited impact of school-based civic education often did not focus on the content and style of curriculum delivery and instruction. Schools and educational institutions that advocate democratic values and practices, encourage students to discuss issues in the classroom and take an active role in the life of the school, are most effective in promoting civic knowledge and engagement (Kerr and associates, 2002). Some authors (Reiff, Keene, 2012) have developed service-learning and leadership programme that integrates theory and practice to help students develop knowledge, skills, and vision which the authors believe they need in order to build the community and be engaged and effective citizens. Some research activity on schools and classrooms as democratic institutions is in line with democratic focus of citizenship itself (Alexander, 2000). Boulianne and Brailey (2014) find that subjective measures of community attachment are related to volunteering and voting, but the objective measure of community attachment, that is, years of residence, affects voting and not volunteering.

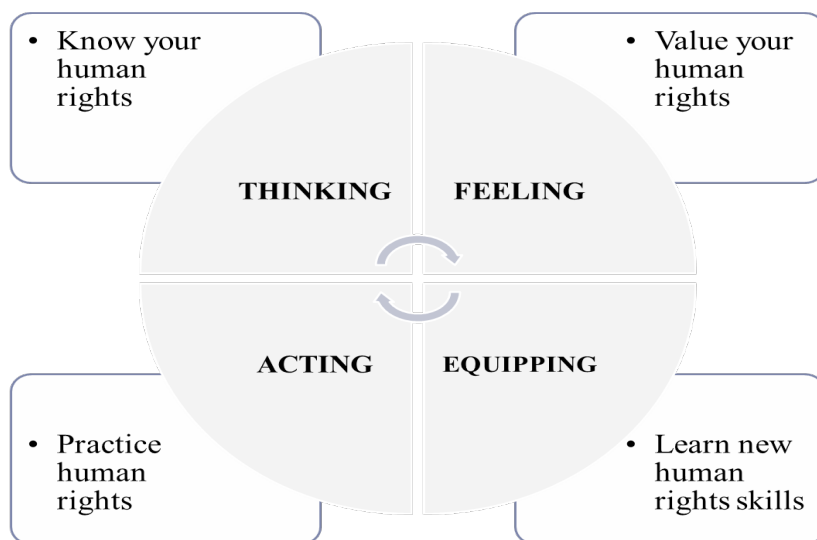
Extracurricular activities are very important in the development of students' competencies related to the protection and promotion of human rights. Those competences are very important for their life in a society. They acquire skills and knowledge necessary for independent, lifelong learning. By participating in variously themed extracurricular activities, pupils are given the opportunity to utilize various work strategies through active participation and independent (self-)development. Therefore, we can say that school-based extracurricular activities play a very important role as a contemporary trend in building active citizenship values and competencies in students (Keser and associates, 2011). Based on Keser's and associates (2011, p. 832) study it can be concluded that students gained knowledge and skills about being active citizens; nevertheless, they had difficulty in transferring those skills outside the school context.

One of the fundamental objectives of HRE today is formation of empowered citizens who have knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the preservation and improvement of democracy aimed at protecting human rights. A citizen who knows and accepts democratic values is more able to actively participate in solving community problems, has necessary competences to communicate with other people, respects different cultures, is ready to live by and promote the idea of human rights and liberties, and is fully aware of his/her obligations and responsibilities. Some global studies indicate how important learning from everyday situations is (Torney-Purta and associates, 2001). Based on some findings (Keser and associates, 2011; Zembylas and associates, 2014; Kostović-Vranješ and associates, 2016), it can be concluded that students gained the knowledge and skills about being active citizens, skills acquired through extracurricular

activities important for lifelong learning (Šiljković and associates, 2007; Erdoğan, Uşak, 2009). It appears important to integrate human rights education into school curricula so that students can internalize the essential skills and values about active citizenship. The variety of didactic methods and approaches which are the integral part of extracurricular activities and project teaching approaches can stimulate learning potential (Buljubašić Kuzmanović, Petrović, 2014) and there are need to investigate this activities in the context of primary school curricula. Namely, all research related to HRE are extremely important considering the circumstances of modern society in which we live, and the fact that ignorance of human rights is one of the major sources of their violation. Also, so far was conducted a relatively small number of research and systematic analysis of the inclusion of HRE in the Croatian educational system, especially research of their involvement in extracurricular activities and school projects, so this research might lead to some interesting results.

An important prerequisite for the successful implementation of HRE in school programs, extracurricular activities and projects is school culture. School culture is a system of attitudes, values, norms, beliefs, daily practices, principles, rules, teaching methods and organizational arrangements (Eurydice, 2005), and the schools are microcosms where young people learn how to be active and responsible citizens through their daily experiences (Eurydice, 2012). Therefore, school culture also has a strong influence on how the entire school community acts and is usually described in school curricula – annual school plan and programme. Successful implementation of HRE requires a school culture where participation based on democratic principles is encouraged and valued, providing students with opportunities to be involved in making decisions which affect them.

Image 1. Building Blocks for Human Rights Education (Flowers and associates, 2000)



According to *Building Blocks for Human Rights Education* (Image 1) as the ways to organize content and teaching strategies, educators talk about three primary goals of human rights education: knowing about human rights, valuing human rights, and acting for human rights (Flowers and associates, 2000). When the Building Blocks are used together, they make for the most effective human rights education.

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of their nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, skin colour, religion, language, or any other status. All people are equally entitled to human rights without any discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Community activities, including activities of schools and other educational institutions, have a great importance in terms of protection and promotion of human rights. In order to live in a democratic local community, it is necessary to develop skills, values and attitudes for one's own development and the development of society (Gill, Howard, 2009). HRE needs to be focused on knowledge, values and skills that pertain to the application of human rights values in interpersonal relationships with family and community members. It is important that teachers create effective educational programmes, extracurricular activities and school projects to promote human rights, that will support a movement towards a more fully realized human rights culture in a particular community or society. Several authors investigated how to enhance the effectiveness of human rights education (Cohen, Derricot, 1998). It is based on fundamental principles of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law; refers in particular to rights and responsibilities, empowerment, participation and belonging, and respect for diversity; includes all age groups and sectors of society; aims to prepare young people and adults for active participation in democratic society, thus strengthening democratic culture; is instrumental in the fight against violence, xenophobia, racism, aggressive nationalism and intolerance; contributes to social cohesion, social justice and the common good; strengthens civil society by helping to make its citizens informed and knowledgeable and endowing them with democratic skills; should be differentiated according to national, social, cultural and historical events (Kerr, 2003, p. 4). Promoting human values should be a starting point for all educational systems (Crick, 2002; Piattoeva, 2009).

Tibbitts (2002) describes three models of human rights education: *Values and Awareness Model*, *Accountability Model* and *Transformational Model*, which are the tools for classifying educational programmes, clarifying their target groups and requiring us to consider their link with the overall goal of human development and social change. Each model is associated with particular target groups, contents and strategies. In our research, we will put special emphasis on the research of Tibbitts' *Values and Awareness Model* integration in Croatian primary school curricula.

Due to the fact that public education awareness campaigns and school-based curriculum typically fall within this realm, the objective of the *Values and Awareness Model* is to transmit basic knowledge of human rights issues and to foster its integration into public values. It is very important for school curricula that include human rights to link up with fundamental democratic values and practice. The goal is to pave the way for a world that respects human rights through an awareness of and commitment

to the normative goals laid out in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other key documents (in Spajić-Vrkaš, 2001). Human rights-related topics that would apply to this model include the history of human rights, information about instruments and mechanisms for protection of core human rights, and international human rights concerns (e.g. child labour, trafficking and genocide). This model places relatively little emphasis on the development of skills, such as those related to communication, conflict resolution and activism, and can be quite creative (for example, when using media campaigns or popular streetside education) but can also devolve into a lecture-oriented approach. Fostering critical thinking and the ability to apply the human rights framework when analysing policy issues is also very important for students, who should become critical consumers of human rights. Students are made to be “critical consumers” of human rights. It is unclear if the knowledge and awareness approach does build to a “critical human rights consciousness” although this would presumably be a goal of such a program. The key pedagogical strategy of the *Values and Awareness Model* is engagement: to attract the interest of students.

The second Tibbitts’ model is the *Accountability Model* which aims to be directly or indirectly associated with the protection of human rights through students’ professional roles. Within the accountability model, personal change is not an explicit goal, since it is assumed that professional responsibility is sufficient for the individual who has the interest in applying the human rights framework. The last model is the *Transformational Model* which assumes that students have had personal experiences that can be seen as human rights violations and that they are therefore predisposed to become promoters of human rights. Within this model, HRE programming is geared towards empowering the individual to both recognize human rights abuses and commit to their prevention.

Tibbitts (2002) suggests that these models can lend themselves to theory development and research in what might be considered an emerging educational field. HRE can be strengthened through an appropriate use of the learning theory, as well as through the setting of standards for trainer preparation and programme content, and through evaluating the impact of programmes in terms of achieving learner goals (knowledge, values and skills), thus contributing to social change.

These models, especially the first one, can be successfully integrated into school curricula and thus allow the successful implementation of HRE. School curriculum refers to the annual planning and defining of educational goals and activities. The indicators of a higher-quality school curriculum are associated with its efficiency defined as fulfilment of pupils’ parents’ and teachers’ needs (Jurić, 2005). School curriculum reflects the concept of school, and the specific image that each school creates for itself (Sekulić-Majurec, 2005). The school curriculum implies the range of extracurricular activities that each school will offer as a part of its programme, taking into account the aptitudes and developmental capacities of students, the capabilities of each school, and the optimal student workload in particular. According to the Croatian *Primary and Secondary Education Act* (2008) and the *Croatian National Curriculum Framework* (2011), school curriculum is an exceptionally significant document for planning and organising school operations. The described educational values, goals, competences and principles contribute to the

understanding and concerted planning for the development and operation of schools. It refers to the methods used by schools and takes into consideration the educational needs and priorities of students, the school, and the environment in which the school operates. It is prepared in collaboration with school employees, students, parents and the local community, and includes non-compulsory subjects, modules and other educational programmes, supplemental courses, additional/remedial instruction, school projects, class projects, excursions, and extracurricular activities¹. The school curricula are published at the beginning of each school year so that students, parents, education policymakers, local communities, and the general public are informed about them in a timely manner. At the end of the school year, an evaluation of the implemented curriculum activities shall be carried out. The evaluation report should be adopted by the teacher's council and the school board. This also means that the activities, projects and goals related to HRE planned in school curricula should be realized.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study deliberates the models of human rights education, such as *Values and Awareness Model*, *Accountability Model* and *Transformational Model* (Tibbitts, 2002). The purpose of the study was to investigate incorporation of these models in Croatian primary school curricula, especially of the first one, which is focused on the knowledge of human rights issues and its integration into public values. Public education awareness campaigns and school curricula typically fall within this realm. It is not unusual for school curricula to link up with fundamental democratic values and practices. Some examples of the *Values and Awareness Model* include human rights-related lessons within citizenship, history, social science and law-related courses in schools, as well as infusion of human rights-related themes into formal youth programming (Tibbitts, 2002).

THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH AND THE RESEARCH TASKS

The main objective of this research was to identify the elements of *Values and Awareness Model* in human rights education in Croatian primary school curricula.

With regard to the main objective of the research, the following research tasks have been set:

1. to identify the percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects whose aim is to promote human values (self-respect, respect for others, tolerance, diversity)
1. *School projects* refer to any instructional approach that utilizes multifaceted projects as a central organizing strategy for teaching students. When engaged in project-based learning, students use diverse skills. A project implies longer engagement with a problem or theme. The completion of a project may take several weeks or months, or it may even unfold over the school year. *Extracurricular activity* is provided and coordinated by the school and it implies working with a group of students outside of the regular lessons.

- among people, gender equality, environmental awareness, cultural behaviour, personal responsibility and social responsibility);
2. to investigate which human values are promoted the most in extracurricular activities and school projects;
 3. to investigate which human values are the least promoted in extracurricular activities and school projects;
 4. to identify the percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects whose aim is to encourage communication with respect to diversity (gender, special human needs, (inter)culture and religion);
 5. to identify the percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects whose aim is to encourage participation in the local community and peaceful resolution of conflicts;
 6. to investigate which method – extracurricular activities or school projects – better promotes the above-mentioned elements of *Values and Awareness Model* of human rights education.

This analysis of school curricula was the first step in a more comprehensive analysis of the practical implementation of human rights education models in the Croatian educational system. The second stage will encompass a study in schools and will analyze the extent of the objectives of the implemented school curricula.

THE METHOD

In this research we have analysed N=100 randomly selected primary school curricula which we found on websites of Croatian primary schools. Since Croatia consists of 21 counties, we chose five largest primary schools (by the number of students) in major cities of each county and analysed their curricula. By means of a qualitative analysis of the curricula, we identified school projects and extracurricular activities whose primary goal was to promote human values (self-respect, respect for others, tolerance, diversity among people, gender equality, environmental awareness, cultural behaviour, personal responsibility and social responsibility), to encourage (1) communication with regard to diversity (gender, special human needs, (inter)culture and religion), (2) participation in the local community and (3) peaceful resolution of conflicts.

For a better understanding of these values, their description is provided as follows:

- a. *Self-esteem* is a person's overall subjective emotional evaluation of his or her own worth, which allows people to face life with more confidence, and to self-actualize (European Commission, 2012).
- b. *Respect for others* refers to acknowledging and appreciating each other's points of view without disregarding people on account of being different (European Commission, 2012; Piršl, Vican, 2004).
- c. *Tolerance* is the ability to respect other people's opinions, beliefs and practices by acknowledging and accepting their differences (Spajić-Vrkaš and associates, 2001).
- d. *Acceptance of diversity* among people includes openness to differences among

people, cultures and perspectives. Differences can be based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical area (European Commission, 2012; Piršl, Vican, 2004).

e. *Gender equality* means that women and men are equally present in all spheres of public and private life, have equal status and equal opportunities to realize their rights, and benefit equally from the achieved results (Croatian Law on Gender Equality, 2008²).

f. *Environmental awareness* includes understanding of the fragility of our environment and the importance of its protection (European Commission, 2012).

g. *Cultural behaviour* refers to behaviour influenced by national or local culture (European Commission, 2012).

h. *Personal responsibility* is the responsibility of an individual or a group that is reflected in a behaviour which complies with specific moral principles (Spajić-Vrkaš and associates, 2001).

i. *Social responsibility* refers to an active participation of citizens in economic, social, political and cultural development of their communities (Spajić-Vrkaš and associates, 2001).

Apart from the presence of these values in goals of school projects and extracurricular activities, we investigated how many of them encourage students to communicate in a manner which acknowledges diversity, which includes a good relationship with all people regardless of their gender, and helping people with special needs (persons with disabilities and gifted persons). It also includes intercultural communication with people of different ethnicity, race and religion. Encouraging students' participation in the local community and peaceful resolution of conflicts are the other elements that we identified.

Extracurricular activities and school projects were selected because they represent the most appropriate way for promoting human rights education, and because their goals were clearly indicated and described. The projects and activities in the area of human rights education have been identified on the basis of three criteria: their names, description of their content, and objectives which were defined within them. For the collection of data we used specially constructed *matrices* in which we entered the data about the goals of education for human rights that were defined in those activities and projects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

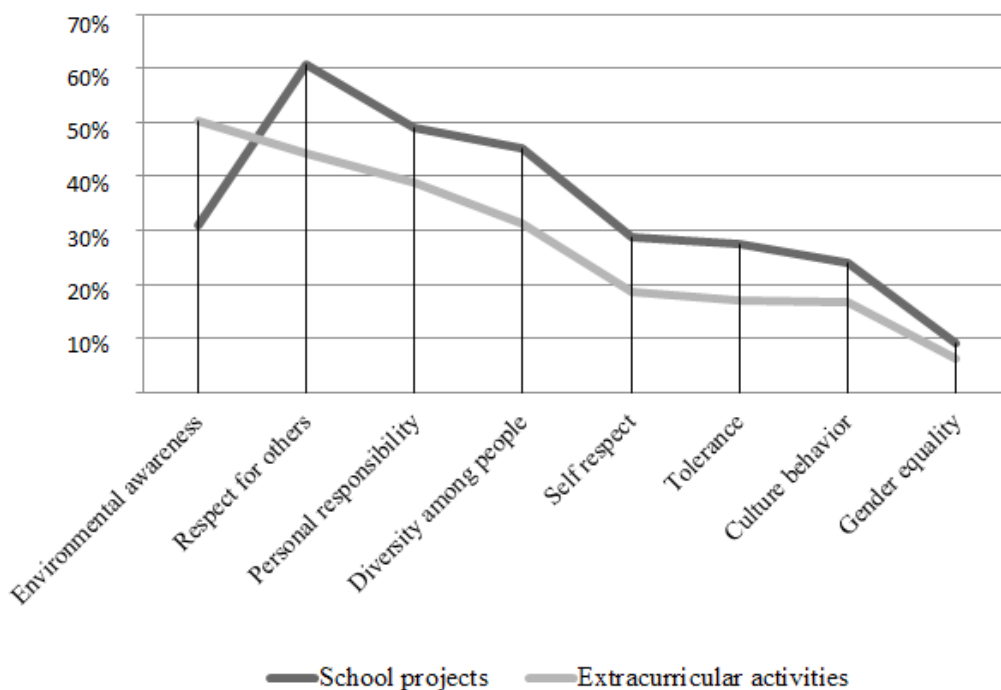
In the analysed sample of school curricula, we found 337 extracurricular activities and 293 school projects that promote the above-listed elements of *Values and Awareness Model* of human rights education, which were explicitly mentioned in the definitions of their goals. Some are directly and others indirectly related to human rights education.

The first aim of the research was to identify the percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects whose aim is to promote human values (self-respect, respect

2. Retrieved from: <http://www.zakon.hr/z/388/Zakon-o-ravnopravnosti-spolova> (1 February 2016)

for others, tolerance, diversity among people, gender equality, environmental awareness, cultural behaviour, personal responsibility and social responsibility). Figure 2 shows that all above-mentioned human values are represented in extracurricular activities and school projects of the analysed school curricula. We found that 60.56% of school projects promote respect for others; 48.85% promote personal responsibility; 45.29% promote diversity among people; 31.04% promote environmental awareness; but only 28.75% promote self-respect, 27.48% promote tolerance, 23.92% promote cultural behaviour and 9.16% promote gender equality. Also, it was found that 50.15% of extracurricular activities promote environmental awareness, 44.21% promote respect for others, 38.87% promote personal responsibility, 31.16% promote diversity among people, but only 18.69% promote self-respect, 17.21% promote tolerance, 16.62% promote cultural behaviour and 6.23% promote gender equality.

Figure 1. Percentage extracurricular activities and school projects that promote certain human values



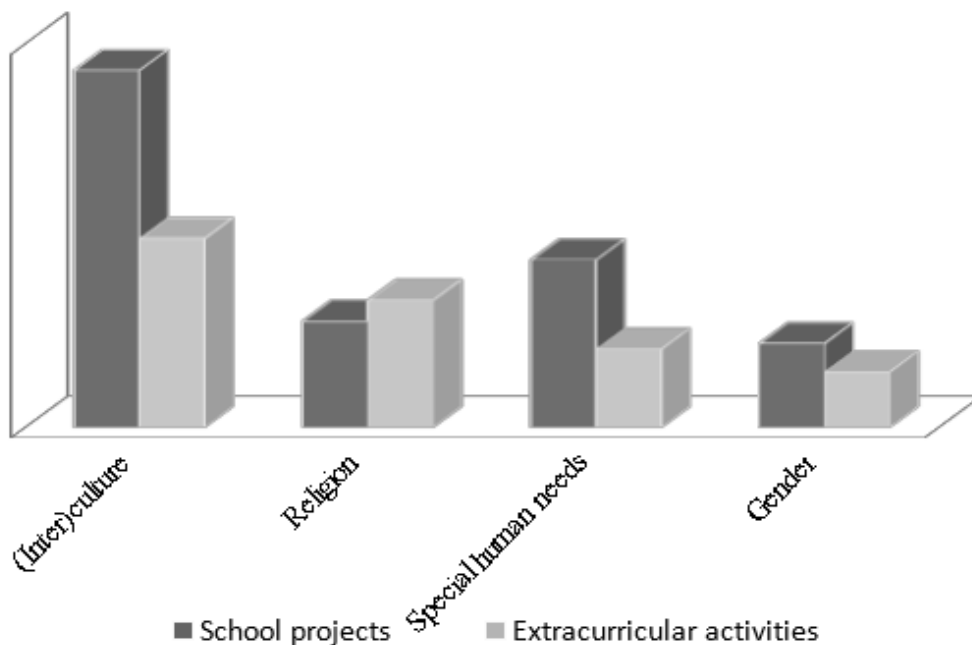
The second and the third aims of the research were to investigate which human values are the most and which are the least promoted in extracurricular activities and school projects in Croatian schools. As we can see in Figure 2, the majority of extracurricular activities (50.15%) promote environmental awareness, while the majority of school projects promote respect for others (60.56%).

From this we can conclude that those are the most prevalent human values in primary school curricula. Analogically, it can be concluded that gender equality is the least promoted human value. We are very concerned by the fact that only a minor percentage of school projects (9.16%) and extracurricular activities (6.23%) promote gender equality. We believe that this value should be more prevalent and that it is necessary to enhance its inclusion in educational activities and primary school curricula.

The results show that the percentage of school projects which promote human values is higher than the percentage of extracurricular activities which have the same goal. Only the promotion of environmental awareness is more frequently found in extracurricular activities than in school projects. Based on these findings, we could conclude that school projects have a stronger impact on the promotion of human values, but the fact is that extracurricular activities are provided continuously throughout the school year, while projects can be realized in a shorter period of time or in only one part of the school year. Seen that the duration of school projects was not specified, we are unable to draw more specific conclusions regarding this issue.

The fourth research task was to identify the percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects whose goal is to encourage communication which acknowledges diversity in terms of gender, special human needs, (inter)culture and religion. The results (Figure 3) show that respect for diversity with regard to (inter)culture is promoted in 32.57% of school projects and in only 17.21% of extracurricular activities, while the lowest percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects promotes communication which acknowledges diversity in terms of gender, which is in accordance with the results shown in Figure 2. Based on these results in general, we recommend that school curricula should include a greater number of extracurricular activities which encourage communication which acknowledges diversity in terms of (inter)culture and gender.

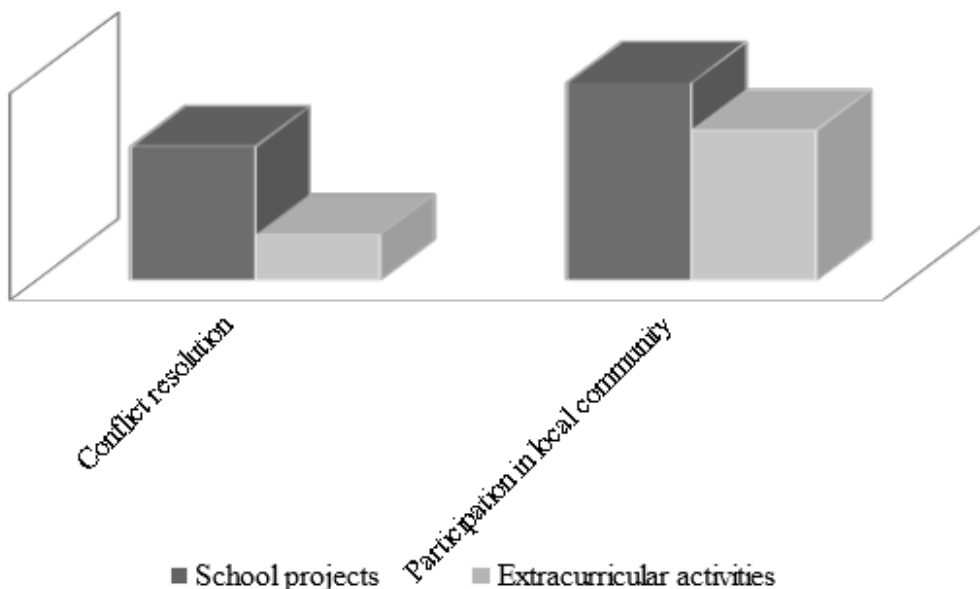
Figure 2. Percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects that promote respect to diversity according to (inter)culture, religion, special human needs and gender



As we can see in Figure 3, the percentage of school projects that encourage communication which acknowledges diversity in terms of (inter)culture, special human needs and gender is higher than the percentage of extracurricular activities which have the same goal. Only respect for religion-related diversity is more frequently represented in extracurricular activities (11.57%) than in school projects (9.67%).

The fifth research task was to identify the percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects whose aim is to encourage participation in the local community and peaceful resolution of conflicts. In Figure 4 we can see that 43% of school projects and only 32.64% of extracurricular activities encourage participation in the local community. The percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects that encourage peaceful conflict resolutions is even lower: 29.01% of school projects encourage peaceful conflict resolution, and only 9.79% of extracurricular activities promote the same goal. These results show that active participation of students in the local community and their ability to resolve conflicts peacefully may fail if we do not increase the development of those skills in our schools.

Figure 3. Percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects that encourage participation in local community and peaceful conflict resolution



As we can see in Figure 4, the percentage of school projects that encourage participation in the local community and peaceful conflict resolution is higher again in comparison with the percentage of extracurricular activities that have the same goal.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on a deliberation of *Values and Awareness Model* in HRE and the analysis of results of randomly selected primary school curricula, we can conclude that the majority of elements of *Values and Awareness Model* are implemented through school projects and extracurricular activities in Croatian primary schools, but there is room for an even stronger and broader implementation. Since the study has detected that only a small percentage of extracurricular activities and school projects promote gender equality, it is necessary to increase the number of such activities and projects. Also, implementation of a larger number of extracurricular activities that promote students' participation in the local community and peaceful conflict resolution could contribute to the development of students' competences for their active and democratic participation in the contemporary world. The upcoming curriculum reform in Croatia represents an opportunity to achieve these outcomes.

We live in an exciting time of enhanced public awareness and interest in human rights. We must not lose our chance to help make human rights education a critical approach to examining and building our societies (Tibbitts, 2002). Based on the analysed

theories and results, we can suggest that national educational policies must give students the opportunity to participate in HRE activities inside and outside school. Students must become critical consumers of human rights and active participants in community activities. Also, the HRE models can be used as tools for classifying educational programmes, clarifying their target groups, and requiring us to consider their link with the overall goal of human development and social change.

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