



Electoral Participation and Education for Democracy, 7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of RECEF  
Sinaia, Romania  
June 5-7, 2019

# The Evolution of Civic Education for Democracy in the Digital Age

**Gio Kobakhidze**

**Deputy Country Director, International Foundation for Electoral Support (IFES), Ukraine**  
**Global Technical Lead on Civic Education, IFES**

# Democracy in the Classroom



# Democracy in the Classroom





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# **The Evolution of Civic Education for Democracy in the Digital Age**

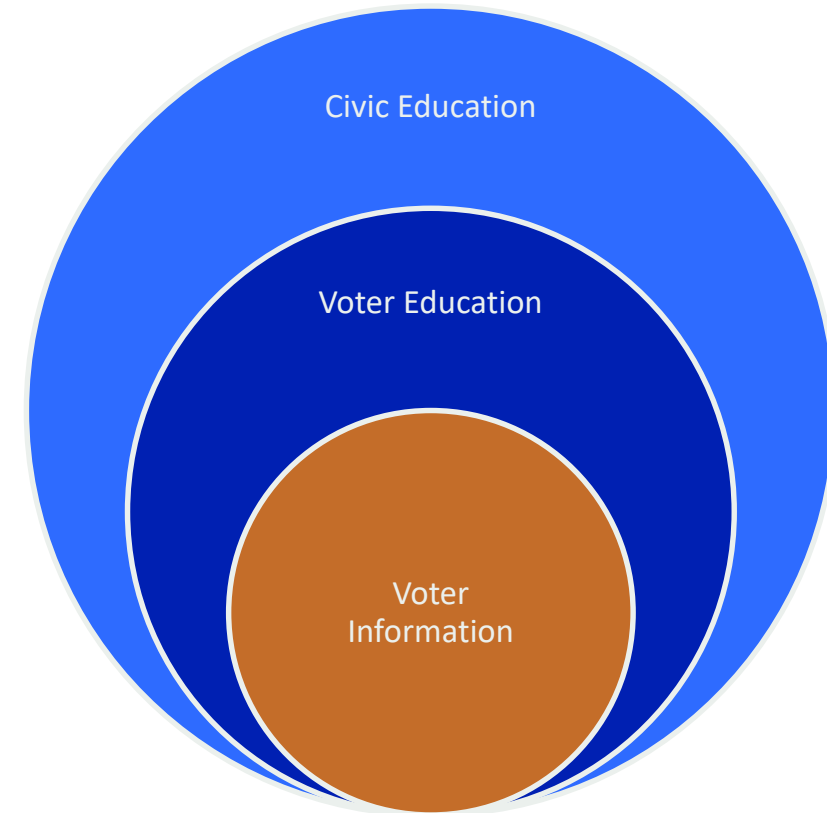
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# Effective Civic Education for Democracy

## What is it?

- Life-long process of learning, development
- Broadest level of learning
- Beyond the knowledge
- Skills, Values, Attitudes, Virtues
- Aspirational, not utopian





# Effective Civic Education for Democracy

## What can it achieve?

- Knowledge: human rights, democratic governance, civil society, citizen engagement, cross-cutting themes
- Skills: critical/abstract thinking, active listening, consensus building, public speaking, media literacy, group work and problem solving
- Values and Attitudes: desire to make change in society, a sense of civic responsibility, respect for individual worth and human dignity, tolerance of divergent views and lifestyles, a concern for others and the common good

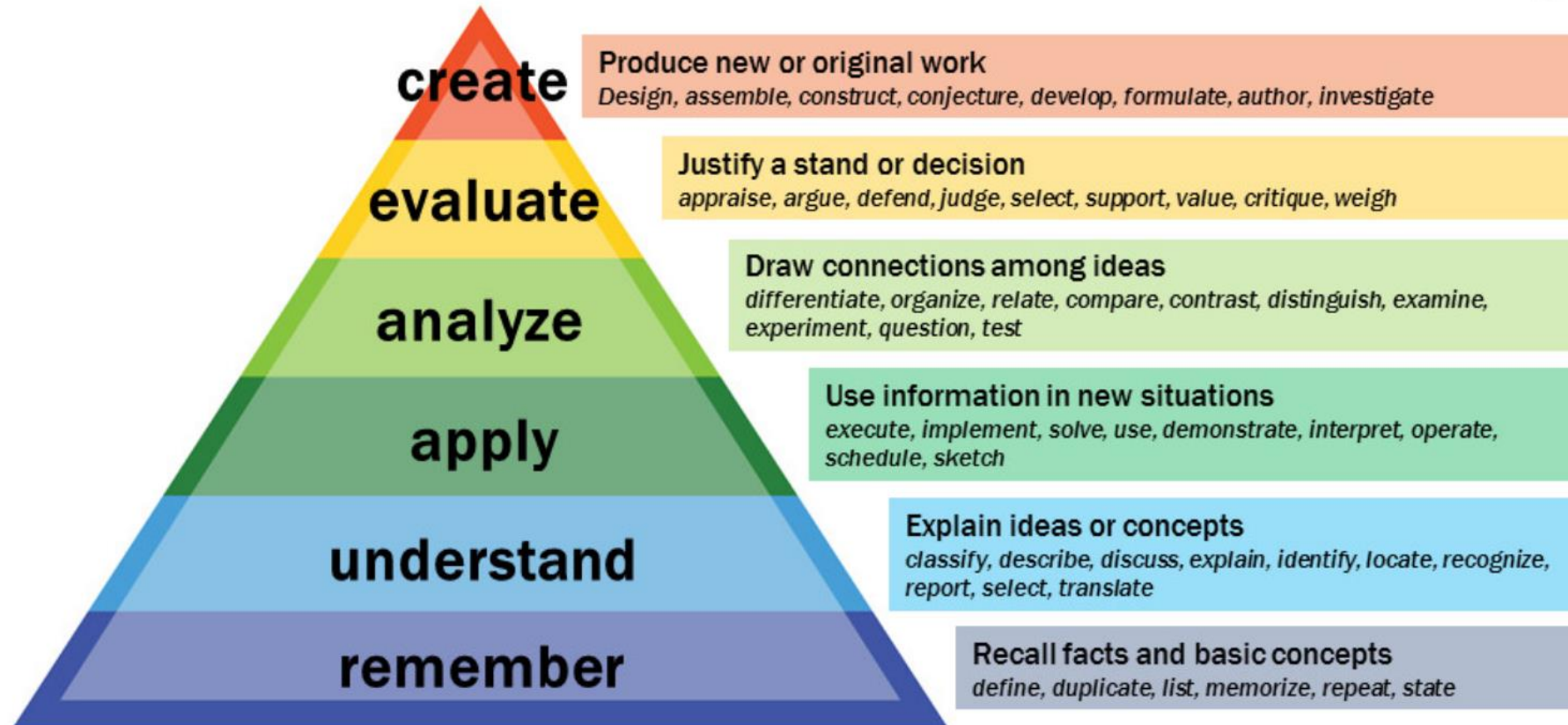
## How is this achieved?

- A blend of theory and practice
- Interactive, student-centered
- Active learning
- Experiencing democracy
- Facilitators, not experts
- Socratic methodology
- Action projects



# Effective Civic Education for Democracy

## Bloom's Taxonomy





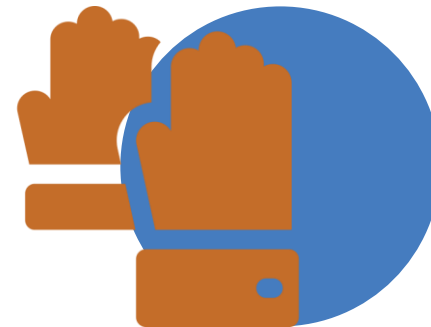
# Democracy in the Digital Age

- Innovations in and access to technology and information
- Fine-tuned algorithms about our behaviors and preferences
- Sophisticated tools for electoral and societal engagement and manipulation



# Democracy in the Digital Age

- Crisis of vision and values
- An attack on facts and the truth
- Democratic backsliding
- Percolations of authoritarianism





# How Do We Respond?

- What are the skills, knowledge and values that are essential for...
- democratic citizenship and democracy to persevere in the digital age?
  - individuals to thrive as mindful consumers and informed participants?
  - greater social cohesion and pluralism?
  - reasoned commitment to longstanding democratic principles, institutions and values?



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# Civic Education for Democracy in The Digital Age

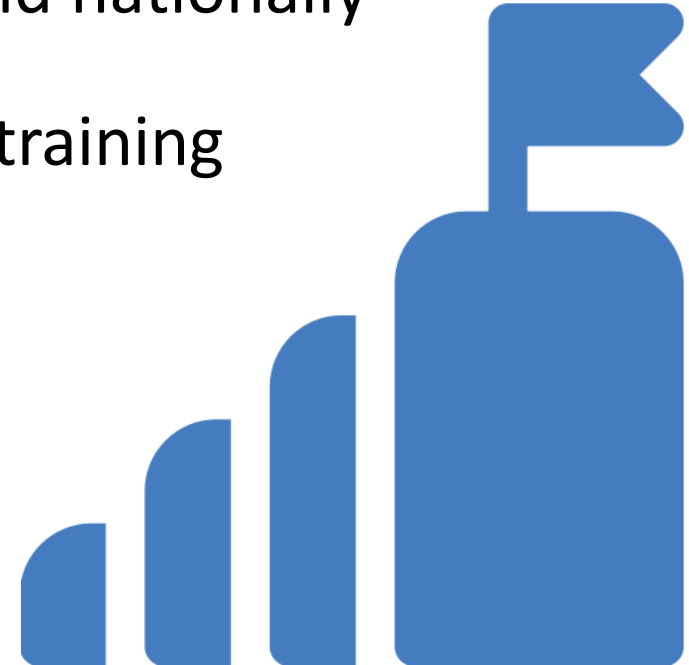
## Greater focus on:

- Critical thinking and logical deduction
- Consensus building and conflict resolution
- Digital and media literacy
- Active listening
- Defending democratic values and institutions under attack



# Challenges to Broader Applications of Civic Education

- Defining the concept of citizenship, globally and nationally
- Resources, teacher qualifications, continuous training
- Competition for attention
- Competition for space
- One-way consumption



# Opportunities in the Digital Age

- New tools, broader engagement
- Reinvigorated conversations on civic education
- Civic education is not broken, it is underutilized
- Methodology is tested and proven across cultures and nations
- Increases in technology, importance of soft skills/values, “human education”



# Next steps

- “Selling” civic education
- Engaging policy makers and civil society
- Cross-government partnerships
- Building upon the foundation of traditional civic education
- Evolve the methodology
  - Reinforce existing core skills and values
  - Prioritize skills and needs of tomorrow







# IFES' Global, University-Level Civic Education Methodology

**- SEED -**

## **Strengthening Engagement through Education for Democracy**



**USAID**  
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Права людини

БІЛЬШЕ ПРО ПРАВА

ВЕРХОВЕНСТВО ПРАВА

ТОЛЕРАНТНІСТЬ

РІВНІСТЬ

ЕКОНОМІЧНА СВОБОДА

# ДЕМОКРАТІЯ:

## від теорії до практики

РЕГУЛЯРНІ ВІЛЬНІ ТА

ПРОТІДІЯ ЗЛОВЖИВАННЮ СЛУЖБОВИМИ ПОВНОВАЖЕННЯМИ

ПРОЗОРІСТЬ

УЧАСТЬ ГРОМАДЯН



“We learned to express opinions, listen to others, find compromises.”

“Democracy seemed to be one of the most unstable regimes for me, but the course made it clear to me that it is civil society that sustains democracy.”

*“Before the course I thought voting changed nothing, now I see that if you don't use your vote, others will use it for themselves.”*



“We often say: ‘the state must’ or ‘society must’... we seem to be separated from all of this. It sounds like someone is obligated to do something for us. The course helped me understand the importance of citizen participation in the life of the university, city, society.”



"If liberty and equality are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost."

-“Politics” by Aristotle, 350 B.C.E



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# Thank you.

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