

CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION RESEARCH TEAM

EDUCATIONAL
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE



1965-2025

An interdisciplinary team of researchers in political science, psychology, sociology, and education with expertise in citizenship education, democratic participation, youth engagement, civic and digital citizenship, education policy, and international large-scale assessments (particularly ICCS), providing strong capacities for comparative and evidence-based research across educational contexts.



Urška Štremfel, PhD in Political Science

- Education policy analysis: design, implementation, and evaluation
- Youth participation in policymaking
- European and global citizenship and civic engagement
- Qualitative research, including focus groups and interviews
- Development of evidence-based policy recommendations

Simona Bezjak, PhD in Political Science

- Political theory of citizenship and democratic participation
- Youth political engagement, including emerging forms of participation
- Digital citizenship education
- Global and transnational citizenship education
- Qualitative and interpretive research in citizenship education



Žan Lep, PhD in Psychology

- Political theory of citizenship and democratic participation
- Civic participation and behavioural models
- Cognitive and affective mechanisms underlying political behaviour
- Quantitative research methods and the development and adaptation of psychometric measures
- Cross-cultural research, including the analysis of international datasets and large-scale assessment data

Plamen Vladkov Mirazchiyski, PhD in Social Pedagogy

- Civic and citizenship education
- Quantitative research methods
- Large-scale assessments in education
- Methodology of large-scale assessments and surveys
- International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)



Špela Javornik, MA in Social Work, PhD Student

- Civic and citizenship education
- Quantitative research methods
- Large-scale assessments in education
- Methodology of large-scale assessments and surveys
- International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS)

Doroteja Perše, MA in Inclusive Pedagogy, PhD Student

- Education policy analysis
- Equity and socio-economy inequalities in education
- Inclusive education practices)



SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Klemenčič Mirazchiyski, E., & Mirazchiyski, P. V. (2025). A 14-year trend in intended illegal protest activities of 8th-grade students: Do civic knowledge and individual students' backgrounds count? *Education Sciences*, 15(3), Article 364. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15030364>
- Štremfel, U., Lep, Ž., Žmavc, J., Autor, S., & Šterman Ivančič, K. (2025). Opportunities for acquiring different dimensions of global competencies in higher education in Slovenia: Insights of students. *European Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10564934.2025.2558581>
- Štremfel, U., & Šterman Ivančič, K. (2024). Comparison of global competencies in general and vocational education. *Pedagoška obzorja: Časopis za didaktiko in metodiko*, 39(1), 69–82. <https://doi.org/10.55707/ds-po.v39i1.121>
- Lep, Ž., & Zupančič, M. (2023). Civic identity in emerging adulthood: Validation of the civic identity status scale. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 39(2), 114–123. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000696>
- Alfirević, N., Arslanagić-Kalajdžić, M., & Lep, Ž. (2023). The role of higher education and civic involvement in converting young adults' social responsibility to prosocial behavior. *Scientific Reports*, 13, Article 2559. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-29562-4>
- Javornik, Š. (2023). Students' attitudes toward immigrants: An analysis of ICCS data. *International Journal of Management, Knowledge and Learning*, 12, 135–142. <https://doi.org/10.53615/2232-5697.12.135-142>
- Lep, Ž., & Kirbiš, A. (2022). Political orientation in youth beyond the left-right divide: Testing a three-factor model of political orientation and its relatedness to personal values. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 25(8), 1088–1107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2021.1939285>
- Klemenčič, E., Mirazchiyski, P., & Novak, J. (2019). *Državljska vzgoja v Sloveniji: Nacionalno poročilo Mednarodne raziskave državljske vzgoje in izobraževanja (IEA ICCS 2016) [Citizenship education in Slovenia: IEA ICCS 2016 national report]*. Pedagoški inštitut.
- Mirazchiyski, P., Caro, D., & Sandoval-Hernandez, A. (2014). Youth future civic participation in Europe: Differences between the East and the rest. *Social Indicators Research*, 115(3), 1031–1055. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-013-0258-2>
- Bezjak, S., & Klemenčič Mirazchiyski, E. (2014). Learning active citizenship through volunteering in compulsory basic education in Slovenia. *Traditiones*, 43(3), 51–65.
- Bezjak, S. (2012). Od poučevanja o Evropski uniji k učenju za evropsko državljanstvo: Analiza diskurza v didaktičnih gradivih za poučevanje Evropske unije [From teaching about the European Union to learning for European citizenship: A discourse analysis of teaching materials on the European Union]. *Šolsko polje*, 23(3–4), 95–110.
- Bezjak, S. (2011). (Post)suvereni diskurzi državljske vzgoje: Od nacionalnega h globalnemu [(Post-)sovereign discourses of citizenship education: From national to global]. *Šolsko polje*, 22(1–2), 131–152.

RELEVANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE

- National Research Programme on Educational Research (2014–, Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency)
- Integrated approach for the positive development of trust in institutions and political participation of youth in the policy making process in Slovenia (2025–2027; Targeted Research Project, Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency)
- PIRCEY — The psychological mechanisms of converting youth political identities and political orientations into their prosocial and pro-environmental behaviours (2024–2025, Bilateral Research project with University of Banja Luka, Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency)
- Attitudes of eighth-graders in Slovenia and Europe towards migrant issues – data from the IEA ICCS survey 2009, 2016 and 2022 (2022–2025; Applied Research Project, Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency)
- Designing for Enhanced Competence through Active Participation in Higher Education (2022–2024, Norway Grant)
- Global Competences as a Foundation for Successful (Co)Functioning in the Contemporary School, Local and Global Environment (2021–2022, Ministry of Education of the Republic of Slovenia)
- Social and Emotional Skills for Tolerant and Non-discriminative Societies (A Whole School Approach) (2017–2020, Erasmus+ Policy Experimentation, European Commission)
- Bringing EU and youth closer together (2018–2021, Erasmus+ Jean Monnet, European Commission)