

## Teaching Controversial Issues and Managing Controversy in the Nordic countries 2017

### About the programme

As part of the Nordic Council of Ministers programme on “Democracy, Inclusion and Security”, the European Wergeland Centre is offering a pilot training programme, based on the Council of Europe manuals “Teaching Controversial Issues” and “Managing Controversy”.

The aim of the programme is to provide school leaders and teachers in the Nordic countries with concrete tools and recommendations on how to engage young people in democratic dialogue about controversial issues, such as violent extremism and radicalization. The programme consists of three parts:

1. A three-day workshop at Utøya, Norway, facilitated by EWC and key authors of the manuals.
2. School based activities with support provided by a national trainer and EWC.
3. Evaluation meeting to share experiences and provide recommendations for future steps.

### About the manuals: “Teaching Controversial Issues” and “Managing Controversy”

The two manuals came out of a call from policy-makers and practitioners in a number of European countries for more effective training for school leaders and teachers in the teaching of controversial issues. The result is hands-on practical guides aiming at helping school leaders and teachers recognize the value of engaging young people in controversial issues and develop the confidence and competences to make it a part of their everyday practice, in particular through:

- The creation of ‘safe spaces’ in the classroom where students can explore issues that concern them freely and without fear;
- The use of teaching strategies and techniques that promote open and respectful dialogue.

The manuals helps practitioners reflect on the way controversy is handled in their schools and offers practical suggestions for how it might be addressed more proactively and strategically. Its central message is that controversy is not to be feared but should be seen as a natural part of school life, and which, when managed well, has significant social and educational benefits.

### Who can attend?

School leaders and teachers from the Nordic countries, including Åland, Greenland and the Faeroe Islands.

### Costs

The training is free of charge. EWC will cover all costs related to travel and accommodation.

### Dates

- **May 22-24, 2017:** Workshop at Utøya, Norway
- **June – October, 2017:** School based activities
- **November, 2017:** One day evaluation meeting, Oslo, Norway (dates tbc)

## Conditions for participation

School leaders and teachers that wish to take part in the programme need to be motivated to reflect on how controversy is handled in their schools – and how it might be handled differently, if need be.

Participants have to commit to take part in the workshop at Utøya together with school leaders and teachers from other schools in the Nordic countries. Following the workshop, they have to commit to involve their colleagues, students and school community in school based activities.

As this is a pilot programme, participants are asked to take part in the programme evaluation organized by LearnRight on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

## About Utøya

The workshop takes place at Utøya, a small island about 45 minutes from Oslo. On 22 July 2011, it was the site of a terrorist attack by a Norwegian right wing extremist. 69 people were killed and hundreds wounded, most of them young people taking part in a youth camp. Since then, Utøya is rebuilt with a new learning and memorial center, and new conference facilities.

EWC aims to re-establish Utøya as a place where young people learn *about, through* and *for* democracy and human rights. In partnership with Utøya, EWC has organized several workshops on democratic citizenship and prevention of hate speech, anti-democratic forces and extremism.

Participants, trainers and organizers are accommodated at Sundvolden Hotel on the mainland, a short distance from Utøya.

## About the European Wergeland Centre

EWC is a European resource centre on education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural understanding. The Centre was established by the Council of Europe and Norway in 2009, and serves all 47 member states of the Council of Europe. EWC offers capacity-building activities for practitioners, trainers, researchers, policymakers and the public at large.

More than 40 000 educational practitioners from 25 countries were involved in EWC programs in 2016. More information at: [www.theewc.org](http://www.theewc.org)

The pilot programme is funded by Norway as part of the programme of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2017: <http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers>

**For more information**, please contact EWC project manager Jennie Holck-Clausen:  
[j.holck-clausen@theewc.org](mailto:j.holck-clausen@theewc.org)