

## **The virtual citizenship school – a new beacon of democracy in the virtual space**

Citizenship knowledge is an important and indispensable foundation for the formation of values in an individual. "Creating an open, easily accessible tool where one can find useful and relevant information was the inspiration and the initial concept of the project," says Jūratė Drazdauskienė, one of the project implementers.

The website [www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt](http://www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt) was created under the initiative of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, bringing together partners for the implementation of the Nordplus Horizontal 2021 project, "Virtual Citizenship School." Teachers from Lithuanian and Lithuanian schools abroad actively use the services of [www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt](http://www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt) – an open and interactive learning website. This website focuses on civic education, aiming to expand knowledge about the state, promote citizenship, and raise civic awareness.

The main content of the website is composed of material prepared by experts from the State Knowledge Center, based on the center's educational programs and expertise. Interaction on the website is represented through various tasks, relevant topics, and different games that reflect and complement official educational programs. The content and tasks are carefully selected with the participation of project partners. The website allows users to choose their preferred language (Lithuanian, English, Latvian, Norwegian), catering to a diverse audience.

At the event for Quality Competition Awards organized by the Education Exchange and Support Fund, where the highest quality projects and implementing institutions and partners were awarded, the project "Virtual Citizenship School" was honored with the winner's statue in the category "For participation in democratic life and promotion of common values."

### **How did you highlight the relevance of the project?**

Based on feedback from teachers regarding the lack of civic content that could be accessed in a concentrated, convenient, and easily accessible form. The project's title, "Virtual Citizenship School," and the website address [www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt](http://www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt) precisely embody this.

**Do a lot of efforts need to be made to interest children?**

Without a doubt, yes. Our children are people of a different generation who think differently and absorb content differently. We constantly have to find solutions and balance between content and its presentation forms – digital, interactive, playful – that could engage, interest, and cultivate the ability to think critically and express their opinions.

**What pleased you the most in implementing this project?**

It was the fantastic team of project partners, the enthusiasm, and the belief that by opening up and sharing quality civic education and knowledge of state structure, we were making a small but important change. Also, meetings and creative events were organized within the framework of the project, involving teachers and representatives of the education community.

**What was the beginning of your project activities, and what challenges did you face?**

The preparation of technical specifications and the search for a provider through a public tender were among our challenges. We successfully dealt with all the challenges in the process because the project team felt a sense of unity and responsibility, both for each other and for achieving a good result.

**How was the cooperation with your partners?**

Under the initiative of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, partners gathered for the implementation of the Nordplus Horizontal 2021 project, "Virtual Citizenship School," collaborated excellently between the National Education Agency, coordinating the project, and partners from the State Knowledge Center, the Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, the European Wergeland Center (Norway), and the Riga Lithuanian High School (Latvia). Three productive working meetings of the project team took place.

**After implementing the Nordplus project, did you feel its impact on your organization, or are there any changes?**

Without a doubt. We are in the dissemination and publicity stage, constantly meeting with communities of citizenship education teachers in different Lithuanian cities, observing the involvement of website visitors. Knowledge about the project result – [www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt](http://www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt) – is gradually growing. This is incredibly inspiring!

**What would you wish for yourself and your colleagues?**

I wish everyone to share the achieved project result with others as widely as possible, as described on the website's news section <https://www.pilietiskumomokykla.lt/news>, to generate new ideas on how the already created content could further benefit everyone working, teaching, and learning in the field of civic education. I also wish to look for opportunities to further improve the website and create quality content.

*We sincerely thank Jūratė Drazdauskienė, who is the Specialist in the Achievement Verification Task Division of the National Education Agency, and the Project Manager for the "Development of Information Systems and Registers for Vocational Training and Lifelong Learning."*

*We sincerely thank the project implementers of the administered programs – together with you, we are creating the future.*

**For more information about the Nordplus program, visit [www.nordplus.lt](http://www.nordplus.lt).**