

Taiwanese Students Ranked 2nd in Civil Knowledge at ICCs 2016

(Courtesy of Lin, Shi Min at Division of Junior High, Elementary School and Preschool Education)



Our students participated in International Civil Education Study 2016 (ICCS 2016), ranking second in the world. Nearly 90% of the Taiwanese students performed well, reaching level B or better.

ICCS 2016, led by the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement (IEA), published its preliminary assessment results on November 7, 2017 in Belgium, Brussels, for the first time. This study aims to assess the relative performance of eighth graders' (13.5-year-old) civil education among participating countries. A total of 94,000 students from 24 countries, mostly from Europe, participated in this event. In addition, there are also quite a number of participants from Taiwan, South Korea as well as Hong Kong.

With the support of the Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Education, Taiwan applied for the ICCS2016 project in 2013. Professor Liu Mei Hui, at the Center for Educational Research and Evaluation, National Taiwan Normal University, helped to form an inter-school study team to implement the project as a moderator. This is the second time that Taiwan has participated in this study, last time was ICCS 2009. The ICCS 2016 study was

conducted in March 2016. There were 4,436 students from 150 junior high schools in Taiwan participating in the study, and each school sampled a class in the 8th grade for the study.

Overall, the results of our students' civic literacy are summarized below:

Taiwanese students' civic knowledge ranked second in the world as nearly 90% of the students achieved level B and above.

Among the 24 participating countries, the average score of Taiwanese participants in the study was 581 points, higher than the international average of 517 points, only second to Denmark and ahead of Finland, Sweden and South Korea. Compared to the study in 2009, Taiwanese students' average score in civil knowledge increased from 559 points to 581 points with the global ranking leaping from the fourth place to the second place.

According to the international five-level index, 62.2% of the Taiwanese students were at level A (563 points or above), 24.5% were at level B (479 points-562 points), and 9.9% were at level C (395 points-478 points), 2.3% were at level D (311 points-394 points), and 0.5% were below level D (below 311 points). In other words, nearly 90% of the Taiwanese participants demonstrated excellent performance by reaching level B and above in civil knowledge. In the category of civil knowledge, there were no significant differences among the high-score cohort between Taiwanese participants and Danish ones who ranked first in this regard. Compared to ICCS 2009, the percentage of Taiwanese participants whose scores achieved level B has risen from nearly 80% to almost 90%.

Overall, the civil knowledge of female students in all participating countries was significantly better than that of male students, and a similar trend was observed in Taiwan as the Taiwanese female participants came out on top while the male students ranked second internationally on this front.

Our student participants ranked first in terms of support for ethnic equality internationally, second in terms of support for gender equality, and demonstrated an increase in their trust in institutions, compared to 2009.

The Taiwanese students' support for gender equality was higher than the international average, ranking second with Denmark. Furthermore, the Taiwanese female students were even more supportive of gender equality than their male counterparts. Meanwhile, the

Taiwanese participants' support for ethnic equality ranked first in the world, significantly higher than that of many European democracies. In terms of trust in institutions, the Taiwanese students' trust in the government, the general public, and the media was lower than the international average, while their trust in the Legislative Yuan, courts, and political parties was above the international average.

The Taiwanese students' trust in the government, the Legislative Yuan, courts and political parties has risen significantly from the level of ICCS 2009; however, their trust in the media demonstrated no significant changes, and their trust in the general public has, instead, been declining.

The Taiwanese students ranked first in "Accessing domestic and international news via the internet" and "Posting a comment or image on political and social issues on the internet or social media" in terms of the percentage, while their engagement in organizations or groups was lower than the international average. As for school events and activities, only participation in the process of school's decision-making was higher than the international average.

The success of Taiwanese students rankings in "Accessing domestic and international news via the internet" and "Posting a comment or image on political and social issues on the internet or social media" in terms of the percentage might be attributed to the easy access to the internet. However, the IEA headquarter believed that the overall international performance was still lower than expected. The use of social media here emphasizes students' civic engagement rather than for general purposes, which means that students receive and exchange information about political and social issues through the Internet or social media.

The Taiwanese students' participation in participating organizations or groups was lower than international average, while there was an upward trend in the item of "Engagement in the community and volunteering" compared to ICCS2009, which might be related to the exam-free and diverse learning competition in the 12-year national compulsory education. The percentage of the Taiwanese students' participation in the "Affiliated youth organizations of political parties" was not high, which might be due to the social and cultural context in Taiwan, in which parents were less supportive of their children's participation in relevant political parties.

Similar to the results of ICCS 2009, Taiwanese students' engagement in decision-making about school operations was higher than their international counterparts; however, their participation in other activities, such as class representative elections, student council elections, or becoming a candidate in relevant activities, was lower than the international average.