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## Global Education in Central and Eastern Europe<sup>1</sup>

### Zusammenfassung:

Der Beitrag befasst sich mit der aktuellen Lage des Globalen Lernens und der entwicklungspolitischen Bildungsarbeit in zwölf mittel- und osteuropäischen Ländern. Es werden dabei die Erkenntnisse und Empfehlungen von national durchgeführten Seminaren zum Globalen Lernen reflektiert, die mit Unterstützung des Nord-Süd-Zentrums des Europarates und der Europäischen Kommission 2009 und 2010 stattfanden. Die Seminare brachten unterschiedliche Stakeholder zusammen, um die Situation des Globalen Lernens und der entwicklungspolitischen Bildungsarbeit im jeweiligen Land zu diskutieren und nationale Strategien und good-practice Beispiele bekannt zu machen. Die jeweiligen Länderberichte wurden vor allem von NGO-Plattformen verfasst.

**Schlüsselworte:** *Mittel- und Osteuropa, Nord-Süd-Zentrum, Globales Lernen, entwicklungspolitische Bildungsarbeit, nationale Strategie, Good Practice*

### Abstract:

This article discusses the state of global/development education in twelve Central and Eastern European countries. It is based on key findings and recommendations obtained from national global education seminars which took place in 2009/2010 with support of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and the European Commission. These seminars brought together different stakeholders with the aim to discuss the situation of global/development education (GE/DE) in the respective country and promote national policy recommendations and good practices. The reports have mainly been drafted by the NGDO Platforms in each respective country.

**Keywords:** *Central and Eastern Europe, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, Global Education, Development Education, national strategy, Good Practice*

### Introduction

The first section of the article presents an overview on the national contexts of GE/DE in twelve Central and Eastern European countries, taking into account political and development co-operation contexts, the state of public opinion, definitions of DE/GE and – where existing – strategic frameworks of GE/

DE. The role of key GE/DE stakeholders in some selected countries will be described in the second section of this article. Some concrete examples describe the current situation of GE/DE in selected countries' formal and non-formal education sectors. The final section summarises key recommendations for future GE/DE activities in the new EU Member States.

### National contexts of Global Education/ Development Education

In all countries national reform processes and accession to the EU have initiated or pushed forward national engagement with development policy in the past decade. The strategic frameworks of this engagement, however, are quite diverse throughout the countries – reaching from vague non-binding guidelines to comprehensive, government-approved national strategies. Concerning GE/DE, binding national strategies are still missing in a majority of the countries. Regardless of the existence of GE/DE national strategies, nearly all of the country reports stress that there is a lack of coherence in GE/DE approaches and activities. Another problem is seen in lacking awareness of and support from the public sphere. Some reports also consider financial problems and economic crisis as a dilemma for a successful promotion of GE/DE.

#### Bulgaria

The Bulgarian Strategy for Sustainable Development (2007) includes a section on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). ESD is defined as education that promotes (a) understanding and critical awareness of interrelations and interdependencies between economic, social and environmental processes; (b) respect towards different cultures; (c) responsibility for shaping a sustainable future; and (d) an active civil society.

However, stakeholder at the seminar commented that “there are not enough systemic attempts to conceptualize DE/GE [...] from this new point of view.”<sup>2</sup> Besides, there seems to be a lack of public awareness of GE/DE and little media coverage.

#### Cyprus

There is no national strategy for GE/DE in Cyprus, nor is there an action plan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Cyprus Aid have expressed support for GE/DE activities, but so far there is no specific budget allocated. However, as a result of the stakeholder seminar on Global Education an informal multi-

stakeholder group was founded that will coordinate and exchange information, with the aim to develop a strategy for promoting GE/DE in the form of a Joint Vision Map.

In Cyprus various terms exist for GE/DE, such as Education for Sustainable Development, Human Rights Education, European Citizenship and Education for Global Citizenship. Intercultural Education has been frequently used in the aftermath of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

### **Czech Republic**

The Czech National GE/DE Strategy was adopted in March 2011. The Strategy, which comprises both formal and non-formal education as well as awareness raising, provides the following description: "Global development education is a lifelong educational process helping understand differences and details between the lives of people in developing and developed countries and helps understand economic, social, political, environmental and cultural processes influencing their lives. It develops skills and supports creation of values and attitudes so that people are able and willing to proactively participate in the resolution of local and global problems. Global development education is aimed at taking responsibility for the creation of the world where all people have the chance to live worthy lives."

### **Estonia**

In Estonia, there is no official strategy on GE/DE. However, at the stakeholder seminar on GE /DE a working definition of GE/DE was discussed. Referring to the Strategy of Estonian Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid, in which GE/DE is included, human development, trade and economy, sustainable development, gender equality and development co-operation were set as the core topics of GE/DE. At the seminar, it was also confirmed that "the objective of global education is to shape values, attitudes and behavioural models".<sup>3</sup> Taking into account the lack of public support for GE/DE issues stakeholders are facing tremendous challenges.

### **Hungary**

The Hungarian Official Development Assistance, initiated in 2002–2003, reported activities aimed at awareness raising, formal and non-formal education about international development. The term generally used in Hungary is GE, yet with many variations.

As for civil society, HAND, the association for international development NGOs has, through its working group for GE, developed recommendations for a strategy on GE in order to integrate GE into the Hungarian education system. A roundtable on this topic was organised in 2009. Unfortunately, none of the recommendations has been implemented so far due to lack of coordination, resources and lobbying.

Stakeholder of the seminar on GE expressed their concern that new political constellations in combination with the financial crisis in the EU imply minor importance of GE with unpredictable prospects of further GE funding.

### **Latvia**

Due to the economic crisis, the government stopped financial support of all GE/DE projects in 2009, indicating lack of political commitment from both the MFA and the Ministry of Ed-

ucation and Science (MES). This goes along with severe financial cuts in the education sector and a lack of interest by the media.

Nevertheless, the NGO sector has been using the so far non-adopted Development Co-operation Policy for 2008–2015 as framework for DE activities. As a result of a strategy seminar on DE with the MFA and the MES, the Latvian NGDO Platform (LAPAS) drafted a national DE policy in 2009 which defined goals in GE/DE to be achieved by 2015. A clear distinction between DE and GE has not been drawn so far.

### **Lithuania**

Lithuania adopted the Lithuanian Programme of Sustainable Development Education for 2007–2015, as well as its action plan. The aim is to promote better understanding and awareness of sustainable development and to foster "skills, values, incentives for democratic and aware action". There has not yet been an agreement regarding which of the two concepts, GE or DE should be adopted and translated, causing some misunderstandings in terms of interpretation. For instance, so far GE into Lithuanian is connected with "education of all", which some stakeholder perceive as an obstacle in achieving and promoting the goals of GE. The promotion of GE/DE is impeded by the weak economic condition of the country, as well as the lack of public awareness.

### **Malta**

The Overseas Development Policy from 2007 refers to GE/DE and allocates budget for NGDO activities, including capacity-building, local development education and awareness raising. An MFA unit is responsible for "raising local awareness through Development Education." However, there is still no action plan to implement the policy. A national strategy for GE/DE does not exist so far but there are ongoing discussions between the NGO platform SKOP and the MFA. In the National Report, GE/DE is defined according to the Development Education Forum (2004) definition: "Development education (...) enables people to move from basic awareness of international development priorities and sustainable human development, through understanding of the causes and effects of global issues to personal involvement and informed actions. Development education fosters the full participation of all citizens in world-wide poverty eradication, and the fight against exclusion. It seeks to influence more just and sustainable economic, social, environmental, human rights based national and international policies."

The main challenges Malta faces in the field of GE/DE include a weak civil society, weak commitment from institutions, lacking continuity of GE/DE activities, serious deficits of training opportunities and the lack of funding. Yet, GE/DE in Malta has been growing for the past years in both the formal and non-formal education sector thanks to the commitment of educators and NGOs.

### **Poland**

The Polish Ministry of Environment is currently elaborating a Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, but a strategy on GE/DE does not exist so far. Activists and the participants of the seminar on GE therefore recommend a systematic and strategic planning of actions in order to promote GE, as well

as a clarification of GE/DE terminology, since various definitions exist side by side. The Polish MFA considers DE as part of its Polish Aid Programme and two initiatives have been launched by the Department of Development Co-operation supporting GE projects, but due to budget cuts the outcomes are weak.

### **Romania**

Since 2001, Romania has been a regular participant of the Global Education Week Seminars and other international seminars on GE organised by the North-South-Centre and in 2006, the GEW seminar was held in Sinaia, Romania. During this seminar the Global Education Guidelines project (a handbook for educators from formal and non formal education sectors, published in 2008) was launched. Romania was represented in the drafting team.

Five percent of the Romanian budget for development co-operation in the National Strategy on International Development Co-operation Policy is devoted to DE activities. However, due to recent political changes, there has been a lack of continuity and dialogue, which has impeded implementation of the DE activities and the support to GE/DE.

There is still an ongoing discussion regarding the definition of GE/DE in Romania. The MFA has adopted the CONCORD<sup>4</sup> definition on DE, much due to its complexity and inclusion of a civil society perspective: "Development education is an active learning process, founded on values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and cooperation. It enables people to move from basic awareness of international development priorities and sustainable human development, through understanding of the causes and effects of global issues to personal involvement and informed actions. Development education fosters the full participation of all citizens in world-wide poverty eradication, and the fight against exclusion. It seeks to influence more just and sustainable economic, social, environmental, human rights based national and international policies."

### **Slovakia**

GE/DE activities began in 2003 with the first implementation of the Global Education Week (GEW) in Slovakia. In 2007, the first working group for DE was set up by members of the NGDO Platform and their partners. Two working groups were constituted to elaborate a national GE/DE strategy, one focusing on primary and secondary schools, the other one on universities. The national strategy was adopted in 2011.

There are three common terms used in the field of GE/DE: GE, DE or GDE. At the Seminar, it was decided to follow the definition of the North-South Centre until there is an approved national definition: "Global Education shows the world-wide reality and makes people act in favour of justice and human rights for everyone. This education contains development education, education for human rights, education for sustainable development and education in favour of peace and conflict prevention. It is a global dimension of civil education."

Overall, Slovakia can build on constant NGO efforts and a variety of ongoing GE/DE activities. However, the political support for GE/DE is still low and communication among main actors insufficient. Apart from that, there is a need to mobilise public support and active involvement of citizens in GE/DE issues.

### **Slovenia**

Article 27 of the Resolution on International Development Co-operation of the Republic of Slovenia from 2004 refers to the importance of DE and awareness-raising. In 2007, the Ministry of Education and Sport prepared Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), being the first official document dealing with GE. However, the proposed measures do not include clear operational goals. Other resolutions and acts in the field of DE have been adopted by the MFA, but so far Slovenia does not possess any strategic document aside from non-binding guidelines.

ESD has been the definition employed in formal education sectors, while GE has been the most common term in the NGO sector. However, as the seminar on GE showed, the definition of the Slovenia Global Action Platform working group on GE/DE provides a common understanding: "GE is a life-long learning process aiming to actively engage individuals and to look at their role in global development. GE aims for globally responsible citizens and active individuals and communities. GE is a process that encourages individuals and communities to engage in solving key challenges of the world."

Unfortunately, NGOs initiatives to involve key stakeholders into the preparation of a national strategy to operationalise the Guidelines face only weak reactions from key institutions. Most of the GE activities have been cut back due to a lack of public co-financing. However, there are recent plans of the MFA to implement a mapping exercise on GE initiatives and projects at national level.

### **Examples of key stakeholders**

Some reports of the seminars on DE /GE in 2009/2010 indicate that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) and Ministries of Education are expected to take the lead in the promotion and support of GE/DE. This seems to be the case in, e.g., Czech Republic, Lithuania and Poland. In other countries ministerial efforts in GE/DE are relatively low. Every new member state has a national NGO platform or roundtable on development co-operation as well as a national working group or network specialised in GE/DE. The latter are seen as the most important GE/DE actor in civil society. Yet, huge differences prevail between the countries regarding the intensity and progress of the working groups' activities. Concerning communication between and within state and non-state actors, all reports state that despite growing networking efforts in the past years, interaction and co-operation among the diverse GE/DE stakeholders remains a serious problem. To illustrate this, two country examples are provided below.

### **Lithuania**

According to the Lithuania report, "responsibility and capacity of public institutions implementing means of global education is not properly divided."<sup>5</sup> The main national actors in the field are the MFA and the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). Since development co-operation is an integral part of foreign policy, the MFA is taking the lead on policy and coordination. In this role the ministry usually finances GE/DE projects. In 2008, the budget for DE projects more than doubled. The MES is also actively engaged in GE/DE activities, e.g. by supporting and organising the GEW and by acting as a member of the

GEW network. Lithuanian Youth Centre on behalf of the MES has been the key organiser and coordinator together with NGOs and youth organisations for activities related to the GEW.

Among non-state actors, the National Platform of Development Co-operation NGOs plays an important role as well as LITDEA – Lithuanian Network for Development Education and Awareness-Raising. The network unites nine NGOs working in development co-operation and education. In 2009, it held a conference on DE in schools and youth organisations. Another actor who lately started emerging is the Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, promoting development co-operation both among Lithuanian and partner states' municipalities and among Lithuanian municipal stakeholders.

### Slovenia

In Slovenia, GE/DE is officially understood as a part of international development co-operation. Therefore, the key state actor in this field is the MFA, which is in charge of implementing GE/DE activities and coordinating the different national stakeholders. In 2007, the Ministry of Education and Sport (MES) prepared Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development. It was the first official document dealing with the field of GE/DE in Slovenia. However, neither the MFA nor the MES are making serious efforts to foster GE/DE.

Hence, GE/DE activities in Slovenia have been promoted mainly through individual grassroots NGOs active in the Development Education Working Group of the Slovenian NGDO platform SLOGA since 2006. The group has prepared a NGDO Development Education Strategy, which was discussed at the international conference "Intercultural Dialogue in Development Co-operation" in 2008. Within the GEW in 2008, SLOGA for the first time initiated a debate about possibilities of including GE/DE in school curricula.

Through the Eco-School Programme, activities on sustainable development have been held in schools. Yet, it is difficult to further implement activities due to lack of resources. Like most of the other countries in this report, Slovenia faces communication problems between the different stakeholders. In order to change this, a (informal) multi stakeholder group has been set up for better dialogue and co-ordination.

### GE/DE in key sectors

Regarding formal education, GE/DE topics have already been integrated as cross-cutting issues in the national school curricula of all countries except for Estonia, Romania and Slovenia where there are so far only plans to do so. Despite this, the country reports show that the curriculum is not consistently implemented in any of the countries. Main causes are the lack of awareness and inadequate competencies of teachers as well as insufficient opportunities for further teacher education, a lack of suitable educational material and evaluation processes. Information on GE/DE in higher education was provided in the country reports of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia showing that DE/GE is still in its infancy. In the field of non-formal education, national NGO working groups and networks on GE/DE are seen as major agents for change, initiating debate, raising awareness, providing measures for capacity building and pushing forward national strategies. Nevertheless, in most countries they did not

succeed so far in establishing durable and efficient communication structures among the relevant stakeholders. A further challenge for NGOs is unstable financial support. To illustrate the current situation, three country examples are provided below.

### Estonia

Until recently, values and principles of GE/DE were primarily taught through non-formal education in Estonia. The most prominent civil society actor on GE/DE in Estonia is the Estonian Roundtable for Development Co-operation (AKÜ), which in the past years became the key support organisation for civil society organisations dealing with GE/DE. According to the Estonia report, however, the level of coordination among actors dealing with global education is rather low, due to unstable financing, little official supply and support from the state to civil society organisations and weak coordinating abilities of NGOs.

So far, GE/DE has not been identified as an official topic in national school curricula by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, despite suggestions of the GE working group of AKÜ. Nevertheless, the Concept Paper of the GE/DE Seminar in Estonia states that new national curricula for middle and high school are currently being elaborated. The AKÜ has actively participated in this process by submitting comments for all relevant curricula which have been welcomed by the curriculum developers.

In general, formal education in Estonia seems rather inflexible. There has been some effort by NGOs to introduce GE/DE topics in formal education. These include the launch of the online information portal [www.maailmakool.ee](http://www.maailmakool.ee) as well as teacher trainings and lectures. Nevertheless, interest and competency in the field of global awareness is still low on the part of schools and teachers and there is a lack of suitable educational material, partly due to lack of funding for producing and distributing such material. GE/DE experts are rather rare due to deficiencies in teacher training and train the trainers' offers, which also is one of the explanations behind the deficiency of study material.

### Malta

At present, GE/DE is not formally included in Maltese school curricula. At the National Seminar it was emphasised that, with regard to GE/DE, there should be a more flexible curriculum in schools to leave space for creativity art. GE/DE in the formal sector of schools, universities and institutes is still limited to NGO projects run with the permission of the Education Directorate and efforts of individual teachers and educators. They organise, for example, Local Agenda 21 initiatives or campaigns against poverty at schools which have positive impacts. However, most of these initiatives lack continuance and are usually short term activities.

As for civil society, there are a number of NGO projects in the field of non-formal education in GE/DE which target youth and/or adults, including awareness raising initiatives on global interdependency, environmental issues, global poverty, and fair trade. Malta has been involved in the Global Education Week (GEW) since 2001 and is a part of the Global Education Network (GLEN). In 2002, the EkoSkola was launched in Malta, a project based on the international Echo-School Programme for i.e. environmental management and sustainable development.

Furthermore, the National Report recognises a strong need for more GE/DE resources, teacher trainings, capacity building as well as training on media use and project teaching in the field of GE/DE. The report recommends creating a resource centre for global education material, where teachers and educators can obtain methodologies and materials for teaching global issues.

### Romania

GE/DE as such has not yet been integrated in Romanian school curricula and is neither included in primary or secondary education, nor in university studies. However, the stakeholders participating in the seminar, including the MFA and the MERYYS, showed a clear interest in discussing a possible inclusion of GE/DE in curricula. Moreover, since development education was included in the development cooperation strategy, development education in this sense was incorporated in curricula reform even prior to the seminar. Nevertheless, some actors state that the GE/DE principles have not been taken into consideration in this reform.

The MFA has financed a UNDP project, the SNIECO-DA (Strengthening the National Institutional and Educational Capacity to Implement Official Development Assistance Projects/Programmes). Except from that, there are very little educational resources and support services available and the Romanian report stresses a need to elaborate a toolkit for teachers.

The Romanian NGDO Platform, FOND, assembles 41 NGDOs who all carry out various activities and projects in the field of GE/DE. FOND implements GE/DE projects to inform the Romanian public on global development challenges and on the need for international solidarity. The main activities include: promotion of the MDGs; creation of informational tools; documentaries and development studies curricula; raising awareness among young people; work with school in both urban and rural areas; education and involvement of mass media in the promotion of GE/DE; training of multipliers; organisation of contest and exhibitions as well as policy work in general.

### Recommendations

Taking into account key findings from the country reports on GE/DE the following strategic objectives for future GE/DE activities in the new EU Member States can be recommended:

1. Provide consistent national frameworks for GE/DE activities:
  - Establish comprehensive (and binding) national strategies on GE/DE in countries where they are still missing
  - Improve coherence of GE/DE approaches and activities by bringing them in line with national strategies
  - Promote a common understanding and definition of GE/DE
2. Strengthen role of key GE/DE stakeholders and foster co-operation:
  - Promote leading role of Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Ministries of Education in the field of GE/DE and improve co-operation between the ministries (and other relevant ministries)
  - Promote the establishment of a multi-stakeholder model at the national level in order for all important actors to be involved in the process

- Strengthen (national) multi-stakeholder working groups and networks on GE/DE
  - Take further measures to improve co-operation among the various state and non-state GE/DE stakeholders to have a long-term impact and sustainability of the issue at stake
  - Peer learning and twinning exchanges promote European and international co-operation for the improvement of national strategies
3. Facilitate implementation of GE/DE in formal and non-formal education:
    - Consistently integrate GE/DE into national school curricula (preferably as a cross-curricula subject)
    - Provide schools and teachers systematically with teaching material and training offers to facilitate the implementation of GE/DE in class and involve student and pupil councils to foster initiatives of students
    - Introduce courses on GE/DE in higher education, especially for teacher trainees
    - Support measures to promote GE/DE in non-formal education through co-operation with national youth councils and improve public awareness on GE/DE
  4. Develop and promote GE/DE educational resources and support services:
    - Foster development of teaching material on GE/DE for formal and non-formal education settings
    - Establish training activities for policy-makers and curricula designers
    - Promote national programmes of further education in the field of GE/DE through national teacher training institutes, possibly in co-operation with NGOs
    - Include GE/DE in existing training programmes to make use of already existing national/international training structures/programmes
    - Establish train-the-trainers courses on GE/DE to increase the number of experts in this field
    - Support NGO activities in the field of further education on GE/DE
    - Establish a regular Forum for GE/DE for training, capacity building and exchange of pedagogical materials for teachers and trainers (from the formal and non-formal education setting) in the field
    - Establish a monitoring and evaluation system of educational resources and support services

### Notes:

- 1 This article is based on the report “Key Findings on Global Education in Central and Eastern Europe” (2011) and reflects the view of the North-South-Centre of the Council of Europe. The following countries were included: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.
- 2 Valchev, Rumen, Report on Development Education/Global Education Bulgaria 2009, p. 18 (unpublished).
- 3 AKÜ, Seminar, Estonian Global Education Concept Paper, 2009, p. 5.
- 4 CONCORD is the European NGO confederation for Relief and Development. Its 26 national associations, 18 international networks and 1 associate member represent 1,800 NGOs.
- 5 Ambrukaitienė, Agnė, Final Report of Global Education Conference in Lithuania: “Opportunities and Possibilities of Global Education in Lithuania”. 2010, p. 5 (unpublished).