



CONCEPT PAPER

National seminar on Global/Development Education in Estonia

6 – 7 November 2009 in Laulasmaa Resort



Short background of the Estonian situation

Until recently, the values and principles of global education were primarily taught through non-formal education and through lessons of democracy and civil society. During the past few years, some civil society organisations have developed specific programs, which have successfully increased teachers' and students' awareness about global topics. These projects include an online information portal www.maailmakool.ee, teacher trainings and lectures by youth that have volunteered in developing countries, documentary video rental for teachers and students' film clubs, study trips, etc. However, these activities have been able to reach only a small number of people.

The primary actors in promoting global education in Estonia have been the Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (AKÜ), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and a few civil society organisations. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education and Research has not adopted global education as an official theme in the national curricula despite suggestions of the AKÜ working group on global education. However, new national curricula for middle and high school are being written now and AKÜ's working group has actively participated in this process by submitting comments for all relevant curricula and these proposals have been well received.

All together we can say that the primary problems in advancing global education have been weak coordination of the global education initiators, lack of resources (both human and financial) and the fact that global education has not been identified as an official topic in the national school curricula. To solve some of these problems, AKÜ and the MFA have recently taken initiative to start a multi-stakeholder process that should result in a national strategy for global education. The first official kick-off conference was held on May 22. Approximately 40 decision-makers and activists from the public sector, schools, the media and the civil society participated to discuss the possibilities and methods for advancing global education in Estonia. This conference proved that these stakeholders consider the strategic planning of global education important and see the need to lead Estonia towards a solid commitment on all levels that global issues need to be discussed in the society. The participants stressed the importance of a well-coordinated action plan to achieve better global awareness.

Aim & objectives of the meeting

At the conference in May, AKÜ acquired an overview of the status quo of Estonian stakeholders' interest and possibilities to participate in global education. It became obvious that many of the stakeholders do not have a clear understanding of what is global education and what are its expressions in their field of expertise. The aim of the upcoming seminar is to raise the stakeholders' awareness of the nature of global education and to formulate more specific draft ideas for the Estonian national global education strategy: values, committed stakeholders and their responsibilities, and an action plan for completing the strategy process.

The Baltic States regional seminar is currently planned for the spring of 2010. Therefore, it is critical that the Estonian national strategy would be completed by that time. Having a national consensus on global education is necessary to enable Estonia to effectively participate in discussions on regional cooperation. The seminar in November is a crucial step towards such progress.

Date & venue

The event will be held in a conference hotel in Harjumaa, close to Tallinn. The event should take place on November 6-7. This will allow all interested stakeholders to participate in the European Development Days in Stockholm and be more motivated to work on the Estonian national strategy.

Language(s)

The event will be in both Estonian and English. The international speakers will use English, but some working groups will be held in Estonian. Interpretation will be provided if necessary.

Conditions for participation

Approximately 40-45 people are expected to participate. The participants need to be in a position where they can distribute the information to their peers and colleagues (i.e. multipliers). The participants should preferably be able to communicate in English, but it will not be a requirement.

Expected participants

The same organisations will be invited that participate in the conference in May:

- Ministries (Foreign Affairs, Education and Research, Defence, Culture, Environment)
- Local authorities' umbrella organisations
- Educators (school administrators, teachers, teachers' trade unions, non-formal education representatives)
- Youth (volunteers, student clubs)
- Civil society (members of AKÜ and others)
- The media
- Private sector (trade unions, private entrepreneurs)

Compared to the conference in May, the seminar in November will include put more emphasis on practitioners of global education (i.e. teachers, youth workers, volunteers, etc) and the list of participants will reflect this. People who participated at the conference in May or at the development cooperation summer school in August 2008 will be particularly welcome, because they will probably be able to contribute to more detailed discussions.

General Rapporteur

The report of the conference will be written by Mari-Liis Jakobson, who is currently a researcher at the Tallinn University Institute of Political Science and Governance. She has previous experience as a rapporteur of the 12th Estonian Open Society Forum. Ms. Jakobson has studied journalism and public relations, and political science.

Main partners for organising the event

Currently, the main partners for organizing the event are AKÜ and its member organisations and the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, AKÜ is making serious attempts to include the Ministry of Education and Research in this process. The Minister of Education and Research sent a written address to the conference participants in May, which indicates that there is willingness to cooperate on global education issues.

On the European level, the partners will be the North-South Centre, the Finnish platform Kehys and potentially other European national platforms. The platforms will contribute with expertise and sharing of experiences in their respective countries.

Main elements of programme & potential speakers

The seminar will have two main types of activities. First, there will be a few expert presentations which will present examples of successful global education projects in Estonia and in other European countries. A strong emphasis will be put on the Southern perspective of development education with the aim of demonstrating the need and impact of effective global education in formal and non-formal education processes. In addition, examples of national global education strategies will be introduced and analysis will be provided on which lessons Estonia should learn from them. Some of these presentations might be substituted for a panel discussion if that seems more practical.

The second element of the programme is workshops. Knowledge from the conference in May is of essential value for preparing the workshops. At the seminar, we will be more concrete and discuss practical aspects of advancing this topic. In order to guarantee active participation in workshops, the assignments will be engaging and including as many active learning/participation exercises as possible.

The proposed elements of the programme are as follows:

1. Keynote speeches:
 - Ministry of Education and Science; overview of Estonia's global education status quo
 - Example of a successful global education activity in Estonia
 - The Southern perspective on Estonia's global education
 - International examples and experiences of national global education strategies
2. Workshops
3. Panel discussion(s); sharing of the workshop results

Expected outcomes/results:

- Global education is a phrase that all stakeholders know and understand. A common set of values and required knowledge is determined by the stakeholders and there is consensus on the importance of them.
- Different stakeholders know each other and are motivated to work together on global education.

- All stakeholders have a clear understanding of their role and possibilities in global education. They make commitments to do their best to implement the ideas developed at the seminar.
- The Ministry of Education and Research is actively involved in developing a national multi-stakeholder global education strategy and takes some ownership in that process. Other stakeholders value this work and commit to supporting the follow-up process.

There will be a report written after the seminar, which will include the topics and issues raised during the seminar. It will also include information from the materials of the conference on May 22 as background knowledge and can function as a baseline study or a draft for the national global education strategy.

Background documents

Relevant national documents:

The most comprehensive document about global education in Estonia is matrix compiled by AKÜ's global education working group. The matrix summarises the knowledge, skills and values that are associated with global education as well as points out some methods and resources for teaching those things at different grade levels. This will be a helpful starting point for those participants who are not familiar with the concept, yet. It will also be useful in formulating the national strategy.

Relevant international documents:

- The European Consensus on Development (2005)
- The European Consensus on Development: The contribution of Development Education & Awareness Raising (2007)
- Global Education Guidelines (NSC 2008)

For more information, please contact:

Evelin Andrespok
Policy Officer
Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation
evelin@terveilm.net
(+372) 627 0191
Suur-Karja 23, Tallinn 10148, Estonia