



CONCEPT PAPER

National Conference on Global/Development Education in Latvia

6 November 2009 in Riga



Background of the national situation

The Latvian NGDO Platform (LAPAS) was established in 2004 and unites 28 Latvian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to lead the development cooperation among Latvian NGOs and other organizations outside Latvia. In 2008 LAPAS facilitated the elaboration of the Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015. This policy document defines development education as “an active learning process, founded on values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and co-operation that helps create an understanding in society and promotes the participation of individuals and organizations in solving local and global development challenges, including implementation of the Millennium Development Goals”. It has to be mentioned that in Latvia to date development education has been synonymous with global education and a wider discussion on the use of the terms is foreseen after the conference.

Latvia’s Development Education policy builds upon basic premises elaborated in “The European Consensus on Development: a strategy framework for Development Education & Awareness Raising” and agreed to by the Development Education Exchange in Europe Project (DEEEP) that development education is interlinked with global education, human rights education, sustainable development education, peace and conflict elimination education, as well as intercultural education. The Latvian policy paper states that a deeper understanding of development issues, for example, global climate change, poverty reduction, the sustainable use of energy resources is necessary so that individuals start recognizing themselves not only as citizens of Latvia and the European Union, but also as global citizens. Moreover, a person with knowledge of development issues is better able participate in finding solutions to development challenges.

The policy paper identifies policy goals, expected results, performance indicators, main directions to be taken to ensure development educational opportunities for different stakeholders, initially pupils, teachers, students, lecturers, researchers, representatives of the mass media, civil servants as well as Latvia’s political decision makers at the national and international levels. The multi-disciplinary policy, created through cooperation of government institutions, NGOs, lecturers and researchers at institutes of higher education, has become the working document for stakeholders in Latvia involved in development education.

Even though development education is an integral element of Latvia’s development co-operation, the Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015 has not been officially adopted by the government. The government has suspended its ODA for 2009 and does not plan to support financially any development education projects carried out by other actors due to the economic crisis in 2009 and 2010. Under these conditions LAPAS member organisations have an increasingly important role in development education. It is of utmost importance to provide a wide array of local stakeholders knowledge of existing best practice in development education in Latvia and abroad, better access to existing materials and methods available in Latvian, and to promote networking among players in different fields.

As mentioned above, most of LAPAS’ member organisations work with development education. It is the only development education platform in Latvia. Development education issues are coordinated by LAPAS’ Development Education Working Group, which oversaw the elaboration of the policy paper, monitors development education activities across NGOs and acts as an information exchange forum.

LAPAS already has significant experience in development education gained through its own development education projects. An EU awareness raising project with the Finnish NDGO platform KEPA (2006-2008) resulted in introducing annual week-long World Days in Latvian municipalities. LAPAS World Day “brand” continues to be used across Latvia for awareness raising activities about development. World Days showcase member organisations’ activities in development cooperation and education, provide a venue for films about development issues, discussions, debates. Activities include development of education methods, capacity building of NGOs and other informative and entertaining events concerning the MDGs and development co-operation issues. These activities have provided an impetus for NGOs and local municipalities in Latvia to begin to take ownership of World Days and to consider them as an important feature of the social calendar of the towns in which they take place.

To date, the Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015 has been actively and independently used by LAPAS member organisations and some educators in Latvia. The Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs and NGOs have been introduced to Finland’s implementation plan for its development education policy. Before the financial crisis hit Latvia, and there was still hope of domestic funding for development education, LAPAS had plans to work with the two ministries in promoting the policy to wider audiences and to produce a concrete implementation plan.

The aim of the conference

The aim of the Latvian National Conference in Riga, Latvia is to build national consensus on the implementation of **The Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015**. To this end, the Conference will

- 1) introduce the Development Education policy to a wider group of stakeholders Latvia;
- 2) link the national policy to the work done by European and international organizations (including Council of Europe and its North-South Centre, European Union, international NGOs, etc.),
- 3) showcase Latvia’s and Europe’s best practise in development education;
- 4) steer participants toward a coherent implementation plan for the policy (taking into account the current financial situation) and
- 5) provide networking opportunities the new set of stakeholders.

Date and venue of the Conference

The Conference will take place on 6 November 2009, Riga, European Union House (TBC).

Language(s)

The languages of the Conference will be Latvian but necessary interpretation will provided for international guests.

Conditions for participation

Participants must have an interest in development education, but deep prior knowledge of the field is not necessary. The possible participants of the Conference will be sought will the help of the e-mail invitations, information in the websites of LAPAS and its member organisations, etc. The possible participants will be asked to fill in a registration form.

Participants – international and national

Because the aim of the Conference is to build national consensus on the implementation of the development education policy, emphasis will be placed on domestic awareness raising therefore the participants will be mainly national with some international guest foreseen - including representatives from the European Commission, the North-South Centre and Oxfam-.

The participants will include representatives from the relevant line ministries (in particular the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others), educational establishments, NGOs (including youth organisations among others), municipalities, media, MEPs from Latvia, entrepreneurs.

The creation of *core national ownership* of the development education policy in Latvia is of utmost importance. For this reason, and because the Spring 2010 Baltic Regional Global Education Conference envisages significant external expertise, the National Conference is being planned primarily for national participants. International participants will provide input for the section that presents implementation of global education/development education policy in other countries.

The number of the participants is planned around 60.

General Rapporteur.

The General Rapporteur for the Conference will be appointed by LAPAS.

Main partners of organising the event

The event will be organised by LAPAS' Development Education Working Group representing such organisations as the Latvian Adult Education Association, the Education Development Centre, GLEN Latvia, Latvia's Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health "Papardes Zieds", Seiba – Support for Children in Guatemala, Baltic Foundation Heifer Project International, The Development Bulb, among others. The co-operation in the organisation of the event will be sought with the North-South Centre Global Education Week network national coordinator for Latvia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia is strongly encouraging the organisation of the event.

Main elements of the programme and possible speakers

The main elements of the programme include:

- Introduction to Development Co-operation policy and Development Education policy in Latvia, the European Union and the Council of Europe,
- Introduction to **the Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015** by LAPAS,
- Analysis of the Development Education policy in Latvia, identifies challenges and opportunities, best practise in Latvia, examples from the field;
- Analysis of the Development Education policy and its implementation in the world/Europe, examples from the field;
- Workshops on the main areas the implementation plan should address - problem issues in Latvia (including formal and non-formal education, work with the media, information networking etc.);
- Reports from the workshops, round-up.

Expected outcomes/results

As a result of the Conference:

- A wider group of stakeholders will be aware that Latvia has a living Development Education policy and that they can participate in its implementation, learning about concrete best examples,
- Development education practitioners and new stakeholders will have produced a working plan for the implementation of the Development Education Guidelines in Latvia,
- Development education practitioners will have obtained knowledge of tools and activities in the field of development education,
- A wider group of stakeholders and development education practitioners will have improved mutual networking that will eventually lead to increased understanding and support domestically for development education activities,
- A wider group of stakeholders will support the adoption of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Global Education as well as the European Consensus for Development Education,
- The proposals for the debate for the Spring 2010 Baltic Regional Global Education Conference will be developed.

National/international documents for reference:

Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015
(<http://www.lapas.lv/?lang=LV&id=133>)

LAPAS research paper on Development Education topics in curricula of the elementary and secondary school education in Latvia (in the Latvian language)
(<http://www.lapas.lv/?lang=LV&id=133>)

The European Consensus on Development: a strategy framework for Development Education & Awareness Raising
(http://www.deeep.org/fileadmin/user_upload/downloads/Consensus_on_DE/DE_Consensus-EN.pdf)

North South Centre Global Education Guidelines
(<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/GE/GE-Guidelines/GEguidelines-web.pdf>)

Global Education Charter
(<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/GE/GE-Guidelines/GEgs-app2.pdf>)

Maastricht Global Education Congress Report 2002
(<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/GE/GE-Guidelines/GEgs-app1.pdf>)

North South Centre – European Commission Management Agreement 2009-2011
(http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/UE-NSC_agreement_en.pdf)