

# **National Conference on Global/Development Education in Latvia**

**6 November 2009 in Riga**

## **Report on the current situation and conference conclusions**

**Summary:** The current state of affairs in global/development education<sup>1</sup> in Latvia is based on the historic experience of the society as a whole and particularly of involved stakeholders in global affairs and education. Development education has evolved in separate strands, and this report describes the main stakeholders involved over time to address these issues. The overview here is focused on the work in the field of development education, especially in the non-governmental sector. Apart from a series of activities in development education, a unified multi-stakeholder *Development Education Policy 2008-2015* was produced but never officially adopted by the government of Latvia. It is being used by the non-governmental sector as a framework for development education activities.

The National Conference on Global/Development Education that took place on November 6th, 2009 organized by the Latvian NGDO Platform (LAPAS) with the support of the Council of Europe's North South Centre brought together different stakeholders to analyze the current state of development education in Latvia with the aim of producing an action plan for implementing the development education policy in light of the severe financial constraints Latvia is expecting until 2012. This Report concludes with a description of future actions anticipated by the stakeholders.

### **Historic Background**

The understanding of global development processes by society as a whole in Latvia is shaped by the historical experiences of the country and the personal experiences of each individual.

Latvia has had a deep colonial history itself. Germanic dominance (1207-1561) was challenged by Poland, Sweden (1561-1795) and Russia (1721-1918). Following a short period of independence (1918-1941), Latvia was forceably annexed to the Soviet Union (1940-1990), regaining independence in 1991.

During the first period of independence and before that, Latvia's citizens stayed primarily within the territory of the nation. The countries experience in trade was mostly with Europe, and practically no missionary activity, so direct ties to other parts of the world were limited. The Soviet Period coincided with the era in which Western

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<sup>1</sup>In Latvia to date development education has been synonymous with global education. Both terms have been used interchangeably during the conference and in this report.

Europe decolonized and different conceptualizations of global education started to emerge. At the time, global issues were treated in Latvia in Marxist terms.

When Latvia regained independence in 1991, a host of dynamics evolved that have influenced peoples' understanding of global issues and their own role *vis a vis* global events. This period can be subdivided into three parts: early independence (1991 – 2004), post EU membership (2004-2008), the economic crisis (2009 - ). It is useful to assess the evolution of the role of significant stakeholders in development education processes: 1) non-governmental organizations; 2) the formal education sector (general education, higher education and Ministry of Education and Science); 3) foreign affairs experts (especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in regard to their effect on society's understanding of global issues.

#### Early independence (1991 – 2004)

The early independence period was the time during which all segments of Latvian society were changing their understanding of all systems in the transition to a market economy and democracy.

Latvia, upon regaining independence and until EU accession, was itself a recipient of development assistance.

The NGO sector, which had been reinvigorated by the civic movements in the late 80's supporting environmental protection and reinstatement of independence (such as the Environmental Protection Club in 1987) – took on a broader array of issues that facilitated Latvia's transition. NGOs sprang up as a result of Latvia's new needs to respond to such a wide range of domestic issues such as HIV/AIDS, childrens' rights and anti-corruption to name a few. Since the tradition of private support to NGOs had disappeared, NGOs in this phase of Latvia's development were primarily supported by international networks (such as Save the Children), the UNDP in Latvia, the Soros Foundation and donor countries – primarily from EU Member States, Canada and the United States. The Government took responsibility to ensure a more balanced environment for the NGOs when it approved the *National Strategy to Strengthen Civil Society* in 2003.

The education sector initiated broad reforms in the transition from a top down style of education dictated by Soviet norms. Schools were initially given a great degree of autonomy in developing their curriculum and teaching approaches. English and other European languages began to be taught in a more applicable way. This opened up avenues – opportunities to travel abroad and to receive information in the public space of these languages. Teachers were able to go on exchanges. History of Latvia was taught for the first time to many pupils and eventually integrated into World History. A National Standards Board was set up to reframe the educational curriculum. All textbooks were reinvented. The education sector was busy.

Significant changes took place in higher education to broaden the understanding of Latvia's role in global processes. A significant factor for global/development education was the publication in 2002 of *Tautas attistiba*, a university textbook on human development, and the inception of the Course on Human Development for M.A. students of political science and sociology at the University of Latvia.

Foreign Affairs expertise was concentrated on ensuring the security of Latvian sovereignty. Diplomatic recognition, entry into NATO and "closing of the books" for EU membership were of primary importance. At one point, Latvia assisted those in

the Armenian earthquake by donating blankets left in Latvia's military storehouses by the demobilized Soviet Army.

In 2003 Latvia became a country with high human development indicators. That year the government officials, acknowledging Latvia's commitment to development cooperation, accepted the UNDP Latvia's final development cooperation initiative – helping to create Latvian Development Cooperation Policy (Cabinet approved in 2003) and the Latvia's Development Cooperation Programme 2005 -2010. One of the programme's goals: to foster public understanding of development cooperation. This is the closest one gets to an official government position on global/development education to date.

#### EU accession (2004-2008)

May 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 brought on a new era in Latvian history. EU membership brought with it not only new opportunities, but also new obligations, for example participation in fulfilling EU development commitments. The transition phase was over and NGOs started to share their transition experience, primarily in Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova, but also in wider geographic areas, particularly if they had cooperation partners through international networks.

By 2004, the formal education had operational standards, teachers had training and further education opportunities across the country. A LAPAS study in 2007 of the educational standards showed that global/development topics spanned the curriculum. Teachers, however lacked methodologies and teaching material in development education. Institutions of Higher Education were preparing more courses on global issues. With the support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a course in Development Cooperation was prepared both at the University of Latvia and the Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences in Northern Latvia. Environmental Studies stressed sustainable development.

The Foreign Ministry began implementing development cooperation policy, including work on development education. It supported awareness-raising specifically about Latvia's development cooperation from 2006 – 2008 and more generally about development education. In 2007 it even held an NGO grant competition for Development Education projects.

The European Union and the Council of Europe began to play a significant role in the development education discourse. The EU supported DEEEP project included Latvian NGOs in European wide discussions on development issues while the North South Center worked with the academic environment to promote global education.

#### Economic crisis (2009 – )

The global economic crisis hit Latvia hard. With a projected decrease in GDP of over 20%, the highest unemployment rate in Europe in 2009, and the EU and IMF loans with the ensuing austerity budgets for 2009, 2010 and 2011, societal shifts are expected to take place that will, on the one hand, heighten interest in the social dimensions of globalization and, on the other hand, turn national initiatives inward.

The NGO together with the private sector will most likely mobilize to mitigate the dramatically increasing domestic poverty and related development issues (decline of health, decrease in access to education, etc.).

The education sector is being trimmed – school numbers are decreasing and classroom sizes increasing. How this will affect the curriculum is unclear. The cut in financing of higher education by more than 50% and the emphasis on the exact sciences will mean that domestic support for global issues may be marginalized.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has significantly cut its bilateral development cooperation and development education financing. It is also revisiting the Development Cooperation Programme which is to be planned in 2010 for 2011-2015. On the increase, however, is informational support by Foreign Ministry personnel for initiatives.

As a result of the changes domestically, European -level cooperation on Development Education will play an increasing role in Latvia.

### **Three parallel strands of global/development education**

The conceptualization of global processes in development has taken place in three separate strands. They are described in chronological order of becoming established in Latvia.

*I Education on Human Development* - emerged out of the historical support by the UNDP Latvia (1991-2005) for promoting human development. To date, the University of Latvia leads 3 other Latvian institutions of higher education in exploring human development concepts (albeit on the domestic level) not widely known in Latvia – i.e. the capability approach to development.

*II Education for Sustainable Development* – Latvia's work on sustainable development has primarily taken place through the Ministry of Environment with UNESCO LATVIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE and the Ministry of Education which have signed a cooperation agreement to work toward the UN Decade on *Education for Sustainable Development*. The Ministry of Environment has since the renewal of independence worked closely with the NGO sector (environmental NGOs were among the first grass roots organizations to be established in Latvia before the regained independence?) to promote public awareness of environmental sustainability. UNESCO LNK and the Ministry of Education also have close cooperation in the *Education for All* initiative. Closely related is the work done by the University of Latvia Department of Environmental Management in coordinating Global Awareness Week in Latvia.

*III Development Education* – the concept of development education grew and gained credence in Latvia upon EU accession. At the forefront was the work done by GLEN Latvia (Global Education Network), The Education Development Centre, the Education Initiative Centre and Latvian Adult Education Association from 2004 when these organisations and others gathered to establish the Latvian NGDO Platform LAPAS. Cooperation with other EU member states on development education was strengthened through the Project DEEEP (Development Education Exchange in Europe Project) and its coordinating role of the Development Education Forum, one of the core-working group of [CONCORD](#), the European Confederation of Development and Relief NGOs of which LAPAS is a member.

## **Towards a strategy for Global/development education**

### Policy development

The movement toward a strategic approach to development education in Latvia was initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when it invited the Ministry of Education and LAPAS (represented by GLEN) to decide on future action for a comprehensive development education policy in March 2007.

On August 6, 2007 representatives of the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Latvian NGDO Platform (LAPAS) initiated a strategy seminar on development education. Stakeholders concluded that significant action must be taken in the next eight years in order that the citizens of Latvia gain necessary knowledge and skills in development education. Work must take place in formal and non-formal education, in educating political decision makers, and the mass media should be encouraged to put global development issues on their agenda.

LAPAS facilitated the drafting of the national development education policy. It held three discussions: with school teachers, representatives of the business sector and representatives of institutions of higher education. In depth interviews were made with representatives of the media and policy makers. The discussions and interviews each resulted in an agreed list of necessary knowledge and skills to reach a defined overarching goal, a list of priority actions and expected results of the development education policy on the target group.

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 representatives of the Foreign Ministry and NGOs approved of final changes in this draft of the policy.

### Ownership of the policy

There was no initiative by the ministries to put the policy paper through the Cabinet since this was not directly mandated by the politicians and because it would be perceived to require an allocation of finances for implementation. Due to this situation, the involved stakeholders considered the policy as the basis for coordinated government and non-governmental initiatives in the realm of development education and participated in its implementation with available funding.

In order to achieve ownership of the policy by the Ministry of Education, a delegation of LAPAS member organizations met with ministry department heads in June 2008 and with the Deputy State Secretary of the Ministry of Education. No significant inroads were made.

In September 2008 the Latvian Association for Family Planning and Sexual Health - *Papardes zieds* (a LAPAS member organization) and the Family Federation of Finland – *Väestöliitto* organized a seminar to exchange and share Latvian and Finnish experiences on creating a national strategy for development education and implementing it nationally. Participants from both the Latvian and Finnish Ministry of Education, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, teachers training organizations and NGO representatives participated. As a result, Ministry of Education participants became aware of how Global Education policy is implemented in Finland.

### A flexible framework

Toward the end of 2008 it was obvious that Latvia's government will need to make enormous budget reductions. LAPAS organized a series of debates after which the

members elaborated a *Position on Latvia's Development Cooperation* approved by the General Assembly in March 2009 that also applies to development education. It states that the member organizations "recognize the complicated economic situation while understanding that the economic crisis hits other countries even harder". LAPAS calls on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "not to discontinue bi-lateral development cooperation, to utilize opportunities provided multi-laterally to ensure that development goals are met, to foster cooperation in order to achieve development cooperation goals and to utilize the situation to promote development education".

With this recognition of the status quo, the Development Education Working Group in 2008 recognized that the flexible framework would be revisited on a yearly basis to assess progress made by different stakeholders providing input as they are able. Interested stakeholders could then make suggestions for an action plan for the next year.

## **Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015**

Full text of the policy can be accessed on the LAPAS website [www.lapas.lv](http://www.lapas.lv).

In short,

### **Policy goals**

To ensure that by 2015 the people of Latvia have the necessary combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes so that:

1. Individuals understand the effects of their actions on development in the world and locally, and act individually or by organising themselves in groups in order to promote development;
2. Latvian citizens, as decision makers in international and national institutions make policy decisions that promote development.

### **Directions for action**

To achieve Latvia's development education policy goal, during the period between 2008 and 2015 it is important to:

1. Promote the inclusion of development education in both formal and informal education, and create opportunities for the use of development knowledge in practice.
2. Promote the inclusion of development topics on the agenda of the media.
3. Promote the level of knowledge of political decision makers, civil servants and opinion leaders on development issues.

### **As a result of the policy**

1. The development education policy is coordinated and is periodically evaluated by stakeholders, who agree about changes in priorities, based on changes in the global development environment.
2. Pupils, their parents and teachers better understand global development barriers and recognize the connection between their individual action and how to reduce development problems.
3. Students in higher education study global development issues and know how to apply their knowledge in the labor market.
4. Individuals in Latvia have a better understanding of barriers to global development and the impact of their own actions on development, and are taking action to reduce the barriers.

5. Information about the experience of Latvia and other developed countries in addressing development challenges using development cooperation as an instrument.
6. Latvia's political decision makers play a more active role in the formulation of European and international organization development policy.

**Activities** – 31 activities are described in the Policy paper that would help achieve these goals. These activities are to be revisited each year to analyse their relevance and effectiveness.

### **Impact on society and its indicators**

Latvia's development education policy will have the following impact on society:

1. People in Latvia will have an increased understanding about development processes in the world, the role that an individual can play in influencing development and the responsibility for doing so. Thus, there will be an increase in the number of people in Latvia who know about and understand development cooperation and are ready to participate in actions to promote and implement it.
2. People in Latvia support Latvian policy that promotes effective development cooperation.
3. Latvia's government participates in the improvement of the European Union's development policy and policy at the global level, so that the policy is effective and reaches anticipated outcomes.

Impact indicators have been agreed for all of the above.

## **The Action Plan for Global/Development Education: future actions and commitments**

### Role of the Conference on Global/Development Education

The Conference on Global/Development Education in Latvia took place on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009 with the support of the North South Centre of the Council of Europe. The aim of the Latvian National Conference in Riga, Latvia was to build national consensus on the implementation of The Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015.

To this end, the Conference:

- 1. Introduced the Development Education policy to a wider group of stakeholders Latvia:**

The Conference was unique in that it convened persons who have been active in all three strands of global education in Latvia. Usually these groups have met only amongst themselves. Over 70 participants of the Conference included university lecturers from Daugavpils University, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Liepaja University, the University of Latvia, NGO's, teachers, representatives of local governments and businesses, and of the media. Representatives from abroad provided a comparative perspective – on policy work, on existing global/development topics, material and methods. The Conference was promoted in the media, and the evening news (TV3) featured a longer interview about Global/Development education promoting visibility of the issues to a wider domestic audience.

**2. Provided an opportunity to discuss relevant global/development education themes and to link it to the reality of Latvia:**

The introductory speech was held by the Head of the European Affairs Committee at the Parliament of Latvia Ms Vaira Paegle who spoke about Latvia's transition experience and provoked the audience to link development success with corruption prevention. By addressing this issue, Ms. Paegle was introducing the theme of aid efficiency and the destructive role of corruption in blocking development.

Political scientist Visvaldis Valtenbergs, keynote speaker from Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences noted that although development cooperation has resulted in improvements in lifespan, child mortality, literacy, GDP per capita, conflict reduction, there are global challenges that are not being addressed as effectively: climate change, terrorism, corruption, eco-system sustainability, social polarization and unemployment as well as political participation.

Mr. Valtenbergs stressed that the global problems call for coordinated local, regional and global solutions and coherent policy. The role of global/development education is to create an understanding of economic, social, inter-cultural, political relationships as well as the relationships between man and nature in the spirit of inclusion.

Mr. Janos Sentenyi, a Hungarian education consultant described what should be considered when introducing development education in the EU new member states (NMS). Challenges achieving progress in development are not limited to Latvia. Other NMS have a victim identity due to the totalitarian experience. Most have no colonial past, no sense of being guilty for development challenges faced in the global South. Since they are landlocked, many NMS have no global perspective and thus are skeptical about aid and intervention. In most cases, the middle-class is weak and with a national perspective. There is a weak tradition of volunteerism, charity and civic education is not as prevalent as in the old member states.

Mr. Setenyi observed that in most NMS the ministries offer support in theory, but no financial support for global education. Implementation of cross – curricular topics is often decentralized. Training materials abound, but they are limited to theory, no practice. Parents are more apt to support traditional subjects and methods as a guarantor of pupil and national competitiveness. NGOs most often are involved in small projects, trainings, campaigns and advocacy. Adult education is by far the most untapped resource.

Participants evaluations noted that they valued the general discussions on global/development thematic issues, since most of them are used to working on a specific development issue and are in need of a broader perspective.

**3. Linked 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.):**

Gordana Berjan from the Council of Europe (CoE) from the North – South Centre described the role and membership of the Council of Europe and its mission of promoting global education. Global education week (GEW) takes



place on the third week in November in all CoE countries, including Latvia. Participants also learned that the North South Center is a nexus of information and opportunities in Global Education.

Rilli Lappalainen, from the Finnish NGDO platform Kehys described the cooperation between Council of Europe and the European Commission on global/development education in the New Member States and described the European Consensus on Development Awareness raising.

#### **4. Showcased Latvia's and Europe's best practise in development education:**

The conference was the first opportunity since LAPAS World Days in 2008 to gain a first hand look at materials and projects produced in Latvia on global/development themes. Material created by LAPAS member organisations was displayed at the entryway to the conference. Two minute films of 6 projects of different organisations were especially produced for the conference and shown between speakers to emphasize the variety of approaches to working with different audiences – from kindergartens to adults. This material is placed on You Tube and will be placed on LAPAS website, which has been designated as the central information point for development education material. In addition written material has been produced on Latvia's best practise in development education. This was distributed to conference participants. Conference presentations and distributed material have been included on a CD that has been sent to all conference participants.

To provide an understanding of European best practice, Mr. Pete Davis described the Oxfam GB Education and Youth Programme which is based on a Curriculum for Global Citizenship. A quality education should inform, empower and enable students to develop the skills to challenge injustices, make positive changes in their lives, make their voices heard and work with others to overcome poverty and exclusion. Development education can be integrated into all subject areas.

Practical information about Britain's 45 global education centres in schools which act as resource centres for the community and other educational institutions and other useful facts that lead participants to think about alternative approaches to delivering global education messages made this intervention the best rated eye opening lecture of the seminar.

#### **5. Steered participants toward a coherent implementation plan for the policy (taking into account the current financial situation):**

Mr. Jānis Ķirpītis of GLEN Latvia offered a critical look at the work that Latvian NGOs have done to date in development education. According to Ķirpītis, development education has been focussed on a rather primitive level – NGOs have promoted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and done advocacy for Development Cooperation more that anything else. He pointed out the latest Eurobarometer<sup>2</sup> shows that little progress has been

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<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_318\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_318_en.pdf)

made in changing the opinion of the citizens at large about Latvia's role in development. He invited the participants of the conference to concentrate on effecting people's behaviour instead of just providing information.

Four working groups on global/development education analysed the implementation of the *Development Education Policy of Latvia*, discussed best practice and reached conclusions about future activities in Latvia and in a Baltic perspective.

The four working groups were:

**School education.** Moderator: Ilze Saleniece, GLEN

**Higher education.** Moderator: Visvaldis Valtenbergs, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

**Non-formal education.** Moderator: Ingrīda Mikiško, Latvian Adult Education Association

**Media.** Moderator: Ansis Bogustovs

The results of the working groups are detailed in reports submitted by the moderators, including recommendations.

The information is synthesized into the Action Plan for Development Education described in the next session. This Action Plan has been discussed by the Latvian NDGO Platform LAPAS Working Group on Development Education and certain aspects will be incorporated in LAPAS annual work plan for 2010.

## **Action Plan for 2010 - Implementing the Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015**

The action plan provides suggestions on priority actions to meet the goals of the Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015 for the year 2010.

**Goal 1: Promote the inclusion of development education in both formal and informal education, and create opportunities for the use of development knowledge in practice.**

### **Formal education – primary and secondary education**

#### *Analysis of the current situation in primary and secondary education*

There is still no political commitment or understanding of development education amongst Ministry of Education decision makers. There is no national level financial instrument for promoting development education. Educators need clarification about the differences between development education and development cooperation. Many development education initiatives are one-off activities that are not systematic and periodic. Themes need to be expanded and need more depth.

On the other hand, development education is being included in many themes across the curriculum, first European Commission supported development education projects will be implemented as of November, 2009. The Foreign Ministry is supportive of initiatives in the area. Since there still are no development education traditions in Latvia, it is possible to create innovative approaches and strategies by learning both from countries with rich experience (for example - UK, NL, DE, DK) and from countries with similar historic experience (PL, CZ, SK) as well as by researching and highlighting best practice from countries with low development indicators.

Work with the formal education sector must utilize existing resources for activities in 2010.

1.2.1<sup>3</sup> Integration of development themes in different subjects (foreign languages, geography, history, mathematics) in general education. Supplementing teaching material, developing new material, emphasizing the benefits of a pro-active approach to dealing with development challenges.

- Identify existing school networks (such as green schools, inclusive schools, etc.) for use in channeling existing thematic information.
- Using the school networks in EU project work – for example, the Education Development Centers' project "Schools - satellites for development education".
- Produce a more detailed analysis of implementation of development education themes in the education standards. Informing Ministry of Education, Foreign Affairs, LAPAS member organisations and other stakeholders of the results of the study.

1.2.2. Development of teaching aides: a) adapting material from abroad, b) creating material based on Latvia's situation and experience in development cooperation and education.

Educational materials and methodology has been developed by different stakeholders in 2008 and 2009. In 2010 it is necessary to:

- Do an inventory of existing material, categorizing according to age group, time needed, resources needed and other category.
- Develop a common web platform with links to all available material.
- High quality adaptation of existing European material so that it is culturally viable in Latvia.

1.2.3. Active practical training for teachers in formal and informal education.

To date there have been different thematic seminars for teachers, especially by NGOs. In 2010:

- Initiate negotiations with the Ministry of Education about the inclusion of global education themes in further education courses (through initiatives by educators requesting such topics to be addressed).
- Do an analysis of the use of the e-environment for development education (providing learning on a development related topic).

1.2.4. Implementation of competitions, contests, family education events, etc.

Most of the activities to date have been in the fields of environmental, sustainable and health education, moreover the activities have taken place through NGOs. In 2010:

- Motivate NGOs to continue to create innovative activities, also for new target groups (especially parents-children, local communities) and new partners (ministries, local governments, media, foreign partners).
- Consider an annual national competition drawing media attention, with unique differentiators.

1.2.5. Developing a network of cooperation between schools in different countries, school participation in international projects on development issues.

To date Latvian schools have different international cooperation partners. In 2010:

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<sup>3</sup> Numbering refers to Guidelines of Development Education Policy

- Identify existing international school networks that are active in Latvia.
- Utilize existing education cooperation opportunities (Comenius, NS Centre Global Education Week, etc.).
- Promote cooperation between schools on development topics. Help schools develop this cooperation avenue.

## **Formal education – tertiary education**

### *Analysis of the current situation in tertiary education*

The pending changes in the Law on Higher Education that are presently in *Saeima* (parliament) will improve the situation for global/development education. At present the higher education system in Latvia is highly compartmentalized and with barriers to inter and intra-institutional cooperation as well as international cooperation. The language laws do not facilitate an influx of foreign students and academicians.

Once the Law is approved, global/development education will be one of the thematic areas that will advance the quality of higher education as a whole in Latvia. That is because development education promotes a competency based approach. The working group's representatives tend to support the approach of integrating development education in the existing programmes offered by institutions of higher education. At present, it is easier to integrate global/development themes in the social sciences. Less effort has been made to integrate themes in natural sciences. There is a high degree of potential in different integrative sciences in which sustainable development and global development education could provide the framework.

Teacher training is evolving as a separate field of development education, since special training sessions are available both for practicing teachers and students of education.

The Development Education Policy 2008-2015 offers the following areas of action:

1.2.6. Explanation of development concepts in higher education (to students, lecturers, administration, researchers) to elicit interest and to motivate students, lecturers and researchers to work in the field.

1.2.7. The development of courses in institutions of higher education, development theme integration in existing courses.

1.2.8. Ensuring opportunities to develop projects, do research in development, promote student academic and extra-curricular activities.

1.2.9. Increasing the planning and implementation of international or cross-border (Latvia – Baltic, Latvia – Europe, Latvia – FSU, Latvia – global) exchange of experience and information, research, joint project planning.

1.2.10 Ensuring a results oriented interface between government policy planners, decision makers and educators/researchers in policy development. Promote participation of those in higher education in development project implementation.

More specifically, the working group identified that it would be important to:

- Facilitate information exchange between institutions of higher education, NGOs, international organizations about guest lectures, conferences, presentations and other events in these areas. University direct translation and video lecture archives should be used to collect and redirect the information to students throughout the country that would be interested in the topics.

- Information exchange should be enhanced by combining e-education opportunities (lectures, videos, presentations, videoconferences, interviews and podcasts) with direct teaching/training. Each interested institute of higher education could develop its own informal “development embassy” with representatives of the student governments, educators, representatives of international studies departments, etc.
- Educators in teacher training ought to continue cooperation with classroom teachers (including homeroom teachers), including them in activities about global/sustainable/development education.
- NGO representatives and volunteers should be encouraged to give guest lectures at Latvia’s institutions of higher education. It is important that deans and lecturers actively encourage such interface.
- Have joint projects between higher education institutions, universities outside of Latvia and NGOs.
- Promote the participation of highly qualified researchers in development projects implemented by the government and NGOs, thus adding direct experience to the competencies.
- Promote networking among Baltic universities and researchers, including in the North South Centre’s Regional Baltic Global/Development education conference.
- Popularize national success in research at an Annual Global Issues Conference. Information about and around the Conference can be disseminated through the Development Embassy networks and existing information channels.
- Continue to support further education opportunities for lectures in globally significant areas such as environmental studies, energy, food, agriculture, economics, finance and health. Provide them with case studies.
- Curriculum review in related programmes and courses across universities to identify best practice in planning courses, content, methodology and evaluation in global/development education.
- Encourage the academic environment in Latvia so that at least one doctoral thesis would be on a global development theme.

In 2010 it would be realistic that, given existing resources:

1. Information exchange be facilitated through:
  - a. E-mails to representatives (lecturers and students) on global/development education events, lectures, conferences, presentations, opportunities for cooperation.
  - b. LAPAS website section on promoting development issues in higher education
2. A joint project between several institutions of higher education in Latvia (potentially the Baltics) be developed on identifying global/development competencies and about strengthening cooperation between stakeholders.

## **Informal Education**

### *Analysis of the current situation in informal education regarding global/development education*

The informal education sector continues to be the catalyst for change with the biggest potential. This change will take place through efforts by all stakeholders, given the opportunities and resources available to them.

Members of the working group on informal education setting out recommendation for action in 2010 had the following suggestions:

- Many NGOs working in the areas of environment, health, intercultural education and integration do different activities, but have not managed to link these activities to global development issues and the MDGs. By providing them with in depth information about the global dimensions of their area and linking it to development, larger numbers of people will gain the knowledge and skills described in the Development Education policy:
  - Identify these informal education actors.
  - Offer consultancy. Assist organizations to access information to how their topic relates to the global/development issues, to provide the groups with information on available data, info links on development.
  - Offer trainers on global dimensions of issues.
  - Offer trainers on the MDGs.
- Encourage citizens of Latvia to participate more in intercultural exchanges and to processes their experience. Sufficient direct and personal experience with other cultures is still lacking in Latvia, and is one of the most significant barriers to attitude change.

The working group reviewed the following proposals for action in the DE policy:

1.3.1 Development and dissemination of periodic, coordinated and current multiplicative information to the general public, the mass media and policy makers about development challenges in Latvia and abroad.

1.3.2. The integration of development themes in relevant adult education programmes.

1.3.3 Experiential learning opportunity widening in development co-operation and development education.

1.3.4 Organising of exhibits, educational campaigns, cultural events, informal meetings about development themes.

1.3.5 Publishing and dissemination of pamphlets, books, games, CDs and other material in Latvian language. Ensuring the access of this material to the general public.

## **Goal 2: Promote the inclusion of development topics on the agenda of the media.**

### *Analysis of the current situation in including development topics in the media*

The areas of action proposed in the DE Policy for getting global/development issues in the media has been overambitious, according the working group on the media at the development education workshop which included not only NGO and socially responsible enterprise representative, but also a professional journalist.

In 2010 working with the media::

- In working with the media, provide information on innovate success stories of countries with low development indicators on overcoming barriers to development, thus overcoming potential stereotypes of donor and recipient countries. Also, provide more information on the values behind development cooperation rather than facts about it.
- Encourage NGOs that work with development education to do professional education campaigns. To date, NGOs have not worked professionally with the

media to get their message across. Short advertisements such as those done on traffic safety should be considered.

The following areas of action are outlined in the DE Policy:

2.1 Policy makers come forward with public announcements, legislative initiatives, national programmes, etc. about global development, motivating mass media to pay attention to the issues.

2.2 Offering educational programmes (such as seminars, exchanges of experience, experience in developing countries) to administration of the media and to journalists,

2.3 National Radio and Television Council commissions tenders for informational programmes on development issues.

2.4. Inclusion of development education issues among the priorities of mass media.

2.5 Organizing grant competitions for journalists. Journalist can apply for co-financing for publications or TV/radio series on development cooperation.

2.6 Co-financing of journalists' trips abroad to report on development challenges and solutions.

2.7 Presenting an annual award for a competition for journalists about the year's best story on development.

2.8 Requiring the embassies of Latvia to inform Latvian journalists about development solutions that have been implemented with the support of Latvia.

### **Coordination mechanism**

In reviewing the Development Education Policy, the LAPAS working group agreed on the following issues concerning coordination of the Action Plan 2010:

1. LAPAS will upgrade its website to include more information in its website on Development Education.
2. The Centre for Education Development and GLEN Latvia will follow the implementation of the actions outlined in the section on primary and secondary education. These member organizations will develop a website for primary and secondary school educators that will eventually be linked with the LAPAS website for sustainability.
3. LAPAS office will monitor the action plan, and promote the implementation of the actions by its member organizations. The steering group for this effort will be the LAPAS Development Education Working Group.
4. LAPAS will continue to promote the inclusion of stakeholders working with human development and sustainable development in moving toward more coordination on global education in Latvia.

The following areas of action are outlined in the DE Policy regarding coordination:

1.1.1 The stakeholders involved in the creation of this development education policy agree on a plan for the implementation of the policy.

1.1.2 A platform for cooperation and communication in the field of education is established that ensures the development of material and methodologies, teacher training.

1.1.3 An instrument of coordination is establish – a unified website where material about development (including statistics) and development policy on the global, European and national levels is located, information on further education opportunities, opportunities to participate in development cooperation, teaching material and methodology, and other useful information is located.

## **CONCLUSION**

Latvia is at a turning point at which it can significantly improve the role of development education. Interest by the non-governmental sector was seen by the numbers of people applying to participate in the National Conference on Development education. Local setbacks in development and media attention to global climate change issues are catalysts to increase activity in the area. The nomination of a Latvian as EU Development Commissioner will also play a role in heightening awareness among decision makers in Latvia for the need to improve development education. The distribution of the Action Plan and its monitoring by LAPAS provides the much needed “next steps” for the NGO sector and academia to continue its work in development education.

The Conference participant working groups put together a list of suggestions for a Baltic Regional Conference on Global/Development Education. These topics have been organized into a 2 day programme by the LAPAS Development Education Working Group and proposed to Baltic neighbors. A proposal is currently being elaborated by LAPAS together with Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation (AKÜ), the Lithuanian National Platform of Development Non-Governmental Organisations and the Lithuanian government agency Lithuanian Youth Centre. The Baltic Regional Conference will give each of the national constituencies more impetus to improve development education at home.



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