

NORTH-SOUTH CENTRE
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GLOBAL EDUCATION CHARTER

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Global Education concerns school and out-of-school activities. This Charter focuses on the implications of Global Education for bodies responsible for school policies in Europe. Global Education shall be made a principle in schools, in the curriculum and in teacher training courses, taking into account the fact that working in the formal sector is a very strategic and important way to influence overall educational changes.

The Charter presents a series of arguments for political and educational decision makers to take up the challenges we have to face today and will have to face tomorrow. It is intended to stimulate the debate about how education should be organised, how the curriculum should be formed in order to keep up with rapid changes in a more and more interdependent society, by translating the globalisation issues into school programmes.

The aim of this Charter is to attract as well as encourage policy makers and educators to support the ideas and ideals of global education in formal school programmes. We consider that an essential dimension of school curriculum reform now and in the future is to integrate global issues into the formal curriculum.¹

¹ The idea of a global Education Charter relevant for Council of Europe member countries emerged at an international workshop on *Partnership on Global Education - Global Education in Secondary Schools* organised by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe jointly with the Ministry of National Education and Republic Affairs of the Hellenic Republic in Athens on 15-17 March 1996.

1. Facing Globalisation

Globalisation is an obsessively recurring word in every type of discourse which tries to describe and explain social, economic and political developments in the world today. In the past few decades, processes related to globalisation induced major changes - economic, technological, cultural, demographic, environmental and political - which require a definition of responsible global citizenship. The world we live in has evolved into a single social system as a result of many ties of interdependence among various countries. Recent history unquestionably shows that the lives of men and women of this planet may be influenced by facts, processes, organisations and networks thousands of kilometres away.

While globalisation may be said to have begun hundreds of years ago with the expansion of western influence to various parts of the globe, it was not until this century - after World War II more particularly - that it became a fact. World-wide economic relations - largely through the activity of multinationals - as well as social relations, modern communications and transport allowing a fast flow of information, persons and goods are both causes and characteristics of globalisation as a process that led and leads to an interdependent world.

However, globalisation did not develop evenly: indeed, it was accompanied by inequality and conflict. The global development of economic and social relations has been paralleled by wide disparities between North and South. The prevalence of market economy tenets, and economic and technological advances world-wide are countered by unequal world economic growth, imbalanced distribution of cognitive and material resources, the spectre of damage caused by an unwise development of resources and hazardous uses of technological progress. If the development of our planet into a planet village is accepted as a fact, the assessment of the benefits and costs of globalisation, the interpretation of the process as such is a highly controversial issue. In different contexts, in various parts of the world and in respect of various sides of globalisation, the phenomena and processes that help building today's (and increasingly obvious tomorrow's) global/planet village are perceived ambivalently as positive or negative, good or bad, beneficial or damaging, profit-making or loss-making. Global education may help people realise that globalisation expresses the course of the future social development and that it depends on us all whether developments benefit only a privileged part of the globe's population or humanity as a whole. Global education (and global learning) is an answer to globalisation processes and their chances as well as risks.

Major political changes in recent years such as the opening of the Berlin Wall and the rising tide of democratisation in Central and Eastern Europe, in the Republic of South Africa, in Central and South America, etc. seem to support an optimistic view of globalisation and its effects. However, this has also been a time when ethnic and religious conflicts deteriorated into cruel wars in various parts of the world. While there has been growing awareness of the common needs and wants of people the world over, how exactly can the different views on giving access to the Earth's resources be reconciled is still an open question.

We strongly consider that some of the questions raised by globalisation processes could and should be addressed by education. In order to function in an adequate and respectful way in our society, young people and adults have to remember through education and constantly consider the fundamental equality in diversity of human beings, the need for respecting other cultures and races and for condemning violence, coercion and repression as social control mechanisms.

2. International Support to Global Education

Global awareness and global consciousness has been documented in more than one way in recent decades. Firstly, it was the media that gave access to globalised information, culture and life styles.

Consciousness of global change as growing interdependence and the need for international cooperation was complemented by a systematic response to change promoted mainly by international organisations such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, OSCE. More and more, individuals and organisations, supporters of global education realise that people and their leaders clearly need developing attitudes and behaviours conducive to the acceptance and promotion of interdependencies and cooperation among nations.

Many international covenants and declarations prepared and enacted by these institutions over time contain suggestions, recommendations and lines of action for both the design and the implementation of professional global education programmes, seen as relevant educational responses to the challenges of the contemporary world ².

Such covenants and declarations, *conveying the firm belief in the educational potential of school*, include outstanding statements for global citizenship that sum up values and principles seen as a foundation for a world where cooperation among persons equal in rights and dignity may eventually be a fact.

Educators should be aware that such values and principles must constantly be reinvented, changed and asserted through *learning processes*. Decision makers and educators should also be highly sensitive to the fact that these values and principles cannot be taken for granted to be universal: this is a major challenge. Empathising and valuing different cultural perspectives in the context of other values system is a demanding requirement of global education.

Reference to such international documentation reveals intellectual and political perspective changes across the world in recent decades, and illustrates the fact that various phrases advanced by the specific action of international organisations (e.g. environmental education, human rights education, peace education, holistic education, preventive education, etc.) convey in different ways a common awareness of educational priorities which are in line with changes in the world we live in.

² Educators concerned with the way global education programmes are made and carried out may benefit from the ideas and suggestions embedded in several documents which are seen as educational texts in the Annex in a list which does not claim to be exhaustive.

3. Defining Global Education and Global Learning

Global education³ as a movement of ideas and an educational trend is seen as an attitude and a response to the increasing globalisation in every realm of modern life. The scope of global education has grown steadily for the past twenty years. The American and Canadian experience provided the impetus. Although different from development education, human rights and peace education, inter- and multicultural education, global education gives a broader perspective to what has traditionally been referred to by these special education areas, and stresses the strong interdependencies and links between the economic, technological, socio-political, demographic and cultural aspects of social life.

Global education, *as a style of learning and way of thinking*, encourages people to identify links between the local, the regional and the world-wide level and to address inequality. It is concerned with four main fields of research and action:

- interdependency within a global horizon
- sustainable development
- environmental awareness and concern
- human rights (including anti-racism), democracy, social justice and peace

Global education stresses their interrelationship for humanity as a whole and the close link with international contexts. It addresses issues according to an interdisciplinary approach and gives central importance to all aspects of interdependency, based on active and participative educational methods.

As a special educational action, global education is characterised first of all by interdisciplinarity and by its intercultural-oriented approach, by the above-said theme focus and by the learning objectives which pursue to develop the competencies required of global citizenship.

Advancing new opportunities for education, global education is promoted as *giving an insight into globalisation phenomena*, allowing *the acquisition and development of skills and competencies* required by individuals *to adjust to the challenges of a changing society*. Global education, more than just a strategy of enabling people to understand the world we live in, is also *a specific way of action for reshaping the world, for helping human beings to achieve personal and community empowerment*.

³ The definition of Global Education has to be seen as an open and instrumental one, trying to describe a consensual core of ideas which reflect the understanding of the existing concepts and practices at a particular point in time, helping us to better communicate them.

Global education is centred on global learning which develops the abilities *to understand, to feel and to act* against the background of multiple interdependencies, and which is future-oriented. While global learning cannot be achieved without specialist knowledge, knowledge acquisition is not its foremost aim. *Global learning mainly aims to develop the abilities to make decisions on one's own life, competently to take part in social practice and express solidarity with those whose fundamental rights are violated.*

Global learning is defined as comprehensive, anticipatory, participative, person-centred, situational, based on the stimulation of thinking apt to cope with interdependencies. It is a kind of learning focussed on issues, based on self-motivation and independent effort.

As a learning process, global education facilitates development of the abilities to feel, to think, to judge and to act so that young people may cope with the intellectual and emotional challenges of a global existence ⁴.

Global learning aims to master tensions, particularly those occurring, subject to context, between:

- globalisation and local potential for action
- complexity and inevitable oversimplifications
- life experience universalisation and individualisation
- uncertainty and the need for certainty
- future orientation and the confrontation with historically determined events and processes
- knowledge acquisition and development of social competencies

Global education, as a perspective of thinking, judging, feeling and acting incorporates the dimensions of learning, life style and action, stressing the relationship of values and standards for humanity as a whole, emphasising international contexts, and enabling children to actively participate in the construction of their future.

4. Objectives

Global education meets the training needs of young people and contributes to their moral education by trying to provide consistent and competent answers to such questions as:

- In what ways and to what degree are our lives influenced by global processes, operating at a local level, and how well aware are we of this?
- How and to what extent can global processes be influenced locally, from access to resources to responsibility-sharing?
- How can sustainable growth and a sustainable society be ensured now and in future?
- How is the global-local interdependence likely to be modelled so that globalisation may not be a threat to everything that is local?

⁴ There is still the risk that global education be diverted to a charity or paternalistic approach, which perpetuates clichés and stereotypes particularly about Third World countries, and creates or maintains images and attitudes which are false and dangerous, given these countries' potential and effort for access to the levers of development.

- How can we avoid a globalisation that goes in the wrong direction, when reasons are selfish and “wrong”?
- How can ethnic-centred education models be overcome when we pursue the preservation of local identity in a global perspective?
- How can the local concepts of global citizenship be identified?

Global education is aiming at *providing orientation in the present and future world*. To develop the skills *for understanding the world we live in and for competent and moral action therein*, global education must facilitate:

- knowledge of others and acceptance of life in a pluralistic world;
- awareness of the fact that global relations are complex and that we have to understand globalisation from different perspectives;
- an analysis of how global relations affect us through the cause-effect and purpose-means relationship;
- admission and acceptance of interdependencies and interferences that shape our local, regional and national identities in a global context;
- development of concern for justice, for sharing rights and responsibilities in the perspective of global citizenship;
- opening/diversifying the forms of learning, including critical media literacy;
- evidence that people can influence life through participation against injustice, exploitation and repression;
- readiness for personal and group action;
- awareness of implications of present choices/decisions and actions;

Given the dimension of *intercultural education* incorporated into/subjacent to global education, we consider global education to comprise four major areas on the art and knowledge of living together on Planet Earth (“Savoir vivre ensemble”):

- a. *Empathetic education* (to learn to understand the others, to learn to put ourselves in the place of others, to see problems with the eyes of others, to be empathetic to others)
- b. *Solidarity education* (to develop a sense of community that transcends group, state, or race limits, to work/campaign for an end to inequality and social injustice)
- c. *Mutual respect and understanding education* (to open up to other cultural areas/worlds, to invite others to participate in/join one’s own culture)
- d. *Education against nationalism* (to open up to other nations, to communicate, to avoid attitudes/expressions/behaviours rooted in prejudice and stereotypes).

Global education broadens the horizons of knowledge and allows a critical reflection on one’s own and others’ identities and life styles, and by so doing *it helps avoiding misinterpretations and stereotypes*. The learning processes specific of global education aim at developing a permanent global-local relationship in an attempt to meet the need to build our lives by acting.

4.1 The body of knowledge and the processes of learning

Knowledge and awareness of global processes are no aims in themselves. They make no sense unless they are aimed at *developing attitudes and competences* apt to *foster sensitivity and social participation in young people*.

Through a specific body of knowledge students must be introduced to the language and issues of global education. They have to be confronted with *core concepts*, such as:

human rights, world communication, sustainable future, work and employment, new economic alliances and new power blocs, supremacy, development, division, international trade, population increase, pressure of resources, habitat destruction and preservation, inclusion, exclusion, mass poverty, migrations, nationalism versus internationalism, conflicts, social movements, education.

The *factual information* supplied to students should be substantive and verifiable, all while linking up different cultural, historical, gender-related and ideological perspectives. Furthermore, it should be accompanied by an analysis of the implicit and explicit assumptions and values on which these perspectives are set. Global education should stress structural interdependencies between North and South, and between development trends in the North and in the South.

Learning processes, rather than providing knowledge as such, should pursue to *integrate attitudes, skills and knowledge*, also taking into account the relationship between knowledge and context.

The body of knowledge should be so conceived as to allow students to explore and use the interdisciplinary and cross-curricular links provided by the school programme (e.g. links between history and environmental studies, between geography, history and civic and political studies, etc.).

4.2 Attitudes and skills

Political and educational decision makers and educators have to understand the need for and potential of global education. School programmes clearly need to promote attitudes and behaviours conducive to the acceptance and development of interdependencies and cooperation between nations. The spiritual, emotional and physical capabilities needed today to master the reality and complexity of our lives are intellectual and socio-emotional instruments that must be oriented to a globalising perspective of the art and knowledge to live together.

The development of attitudes and skills that global education is supposed to support and stimulate pursues to make children *able to avoid indifference and the lack of concern*. It avoids a simplistic and one-sided thinking which maintains clichés, bias and stereotypes, allowing their negative social effect to persist. The aim of global education is to bridge the gap between knowledge (and even understanding) and responsible action, helping young people develop *political skills* and confidence to use them.

Comprehensive global education efforts which emphasise the relationship between global and local issues should enable students to develop and express their concern for equity, social justice and personal and environmental well being. Thus, students should develop attitudes of: tolerance and respect, solidarity, collaboration and cooperation, fair competition, care, patriotism without paternalism or nationalism.

The *intellectual skills* developed through global education are to give students competent access to the complex and interdependent fields/aspects of human rights, sustainable development, peace, citizenship and the environment. They should enable students to grasp the multi- and intercultural dimensions of our identities and the complex interdependencies of contemporary life in their positive or negative instances designed and assessed in context. *Critical thinking and critical approaches* essentially mean comparing local and global phenomena and processes, and analysing their causes and reasons thereof. Students should use as much as possible approaches involving contrast, comparison, assessment by their recourse to criticism.

Students should also learn to *deal with new information technologies*, which are linking us daily with the world. A special place should be assigned to *the critical literacy and critical analysis of the media*, given their potential to promote and induce stereotypes and misinterpretations. Students would have to develop *their social communication, decision-making and conflict-solving skills*. They have to learn to *share responsibilities, to accept different perspectives as a source of mutual enrichment and empowerment*. Such skills are the basis for access to and use of strategies for participation and involvement in local, national and international affairs. These skills should develop awareness of the interrelationship between human action and decision-making. They should also help creative adjustment to change.

5. Pedagogical challenges

The introduction and promotion of global education in schools, *as a new dimension of learning*, can and should entail important *curriculum changes* perceived as good innovative or reform actions.

Global education is identifiable in pedagogical practice as a cross-curricular approach, as a disciplinary approach with special emphasis on globalising aspects, or as special extra curricular projects or programmes. Practitioners realised the need for methods and strategies that *combine feeling, thinking and doing, as well as balance play and learning, the student's actor-spectator status, learning and action through sharing*.

By developing the emotional value of learning in addition to its cognitive one, global education relies heavily on *interactive techniques* which help adjust the content and form of learning to the aims of global education.

The teaching and learning about global issues in formal education raise *important pedagogical challenges*, as summarised below:

- How can school succeed in creating closeness to events, causes and effects which are geographically far away and how can it foster awareness and attitudes which do not yet generally exist at the level of decision makers, nor in most of our media?
- How can global education design meaningful school projects which focus on local-global interaction but are not exclusively community-oriented ?

- How can balance be achieved between the recourse to “conventional” methods of traditional pedagogy and the new methodologies advanced by modern educational sciences, such as interactive strategies, partnership or project work, collaboration, exchanges and direct interpersonal contacts between schools and countries, and modern communication systems (fax, email, Internet)?
- How can school and out-of-school activities be interrelated to allow mutually beneficial interactions which prevent school from fully and artificially being severed from family, community and other socio-political influences with potential educational benefits?
- What time can global education be allocated in school programmes?

These challenges have to be considered with respect to everything that is linked with school activities, including teaching materials, consulting and training.

We take the view that, by its many good practice cases, global education has proved its reforming potential and that in as much as education is concerned, there is not one pedagogy, but different pedagogies adjusted to specific contexts. In this way, cultural and political pluralism as a global education principle shows in school practice as *pedagogical pluralism*. It is this pedagogical pluralism that must give students, too, a voice in the definition of programmes and specific activities.

We strongly believe that more discussion and further dialogue between practitioners will help better knowledge of curriculum process and good practice cases from all over the world. Global education as a wide-ranging tool of intervention has to be promoted in a *special learning environment, which facilitates the gradual development of the sense of curiosity and pleasure of discovery, and allows the acquired knowledge to be put to practice*.

5. Institutional challenges

Global education is seen by its proponents and practitioners not only as a valuable source of social learning and socialisation, but also as a reservoir *of institutional change and improvement of school in order that what happens within be less academic and better adjusted and integrated to real-life changes*.

Global education is emerging as a challenge and chance to the institutional development of schools, which means the need for a more open and flexible curriculum, *as well as for the development of a democratic climate in school and a learning environment*.

Educational policy makers will have to reconsider the role of school which, rather than being seen as an instrument of perpetuating nationalistic goals, *should open children to a world perspective and enable them to live together in a world facing chances but also threats never known before*.

Policy makers and school authorities are called upon to give *institutional support* to global education in school by:

- introducing/stimulating global education projects and programmes through the formal curriculum;
- facilitating the establishment and cooperation of Centres for global education;
- facilitating partnership networks between North and South institutions and persons, school links with global education-oriented national or international Centres;
- providing pre- and in-service teacher training in order to stimulate teachers to take an interest in access to professional global education culture.

Many global education projects have proved that different aspects, like *fund-raising or partnership*, can turn palpable, particularly if there is *cooperation with public authorities, and with national and international centres specialising in global education*. Good examples to this effect are countries like the Netherlands, Switzerland, Great Britain and Germany, where one can already speak about an *extensive cross-curricular global education tradition incorporated into school programmes through the efforts and concerns of the Ministries of Education and certain NGOs specialising in curriculum development*.

Effective partnership between persons and/or institutions as a prerequisite and outcome of global education depends in *turn on information, documentation and financing opportunities* to which access is provided by the specialised services of national and international centres which are active and competent in global education. *Global Education Centres have to enhance coordination and the flow of ideas and information, orienting also teacher teams to incorporate the action dimension of global education into schools, by giving their respective schools a distinctive profile*.

In order to improve the institutional support for the introduction into the formal curriculum of comprehensive global education programmes, we strongly recommend that global education be incorporated into national, regional and local legislation and that curricula and guidelines for all forms and levels of school be produced, enabling teachers and students to develop efficient strategies for global socialisation and education for global citizenship. School programmes have to become a good start to lifelong learning, facilitating the long and sustained educational effort of the cultural transition towards a global (learning) society.

Annexe

List of international documents relevant for promoting and supporting global education

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the United Nations Charter on Human Rights
- European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950)
- UNESCO Recommendation - (1974)
- The Helsinki Accords (1975)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976)
- Council of Europe's Recommendation No. 85/1985 on Teaching and Learning about Human Rights in Schools
- Declaration on the Rights to Development (1986)
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), e.g. Art. 29
- The Maastricht Treaty (1992)
- Agenda '21 (Post-Rio Declaration - 1992) on sustainable development
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- The Vienna Declaration of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe Member States (1993)
- The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted 25 June 1993 by the World Conference on Human Rights
- Resolution of the Standing Conference of the European Ministers of Education on Democracy, Human Rights and Tolerance (1994)
- Conclusions and Recommendations of the UNESCO European Conference on Curriculum Development: Civic Education and Eastern Europe - Vienna (1995)
- Draft Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, adopted at the UNESCO General Conference (1995)
- Rapport a l'UNESCO de la Commission internationale sur l'education pour le vingt et unieme siècle presidee par JACQUES DELORS: L'EDUCATION - UN TRESOR EST CACHE DEDANS, Editions Odile Jacob, (1996) / Delors Commission Report to UNESCO : "Education in the XXIth Century" - EDUCATION - Learning - The Treasure Within, (1996)
- European Commission White Paper on Education and Training (1996) on the initiative of Edith Cresson, Commissioner for Research, Education and Training, and Pdraig Flynn, Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, in cooperation with Martin Bangemann, Commissioner for Industry, Telecommunication and Information Technology
- Amsterdam Appeal on conflict prevention and peace-building. Action Plan for European Leaders and Civil Society (1997)

Many other such declarations, covenants and recommendations have been made available by international meetings, e.g. those on environmental education or future education venued by Stockholm 1972, Tbilisi 1977, Copenhagen 1982, Moscow 1987, Rio de Janeiro, 1992.