



Country report

SLOVENIA'S GLOBAL EDUCATION PROFILE

Introduction

In 2004, the Slovenian parliament adopted the Resolution on International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia. Article 27 of this strategic document refers to the importance of development education and awareness raising to 'Slovenia's international development cooperation system and policy'. In Slovenia, Global Education (GE) is thus officially understood as one of the tools of international development cooperation. In 2007, the Ministry of Education issued Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development. This was the first official document dealing with the field of GE in Slovenia. However, the proposed measures (updated school curricula, teacher's training, material preparation, shaping of quality criteria and evaluation instruments, etc.) do not include clear operational goals. Other resolutions and acts in the field of development and education have been adopted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but so far Slovenia does not possess any strategic document aside from non-binding guidelines.

Key players in the field of GE in Slovenia are NGOs and the National Education Institute. Many NGOs operate under the umbrella of the Slovenian NDGO platform SLOGA, providing workshops to schools and teachers. However, these have proven to be piecemeal and unsustainable. The National Institute of Education has through its Innovative projects supported the development of novel practices by schools and provided a forum for the incorporation of these practices into school plans and the national curriculums.

The lack of a proper legal framework, funding, and systemic support to teachers have resulted in GE still being viewed as an unnecessary part of the school system and not being properly integrated into the school dimension.

The prevalent economic crisis has demonstrated a need for change in Slovenia. GE is viewed as a potential remedy for the existing economic situation rather than a tool for profound change. The White Paper on GE in Slovenia, for instance, justifies the need for GE as a means of becoming more competitive on the global market.

Status of Global Education in Slovenia

In Slovenia, GE is thus officially understood as one of the tools of international development cooperation. Hence, the key state actor in GE is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which as per the International Development Co-

operation Act of 2006, should be in charge of implementing GE activities and coordinating the different national stakeholders. The Ministry of Education (MoE) prepared Guidelines for Education for Sustainable Development in 2007. This document is recognized as the first official one dealing with the field of GE in Slovenia. The MoE provides the legal framework for GE. Neither the MFA nor the MoE seem to be making serious strides to foster GE on the ground in Slovenia. The MFA directly funded only one GE project in 2013 whose value was less than 20000 EUR.

GE activities in Slovenia have been promoted mainly through individual NGOs, which have been active in the GE Working Group of the Slovenian NGDO platform SLOGA working in collaboration with the National Education Institute. SLOGA plays a crucial role of networking Development NGOs. Officially SLOGA intermediates between NGOs and policy makers. Unfortunately, SLOGA is also affected by budget cuts, which have resulted in changes in personnel involved in GE.

SLOGA has organized in collaboration with the National Education Institute seminars for teachers. It also organizes meetings at which interested NGOs share their experiences and views on GE related issues.

Notwithstanding financial limitations, NGOs have managed in the last few years to get access to schools and introduce them to GE. In so doing a number of teachers have gained a personal interest in GE, which resulted in them enthusiastically incorporating global education into their activities.

However, GE is incorporated sporadically and in a piecemeal manner in educational content, without a wider context. Usually the focus is on narrow questions. For instance, the entire ecological dilemma is sometimes boiled down to recycling and turning off lights.

GE is still viewed as something supplementary to other educational contents. It is therefore carried out mostly in the form of additional activities, such as seminars, workshops, special-day events or school projects. This approach cannot produce optimal results on terms of GE quality.

Little research has been done in the field of GE quality in Slovenia. And the research that has been done was conducted by NGOs. There seems to be little academic interest in GE practice and there's a lack of a good and deep analysis on the methodology of GE in terms of what works and what doesn't work in schools. Little attention is paid to impact evaluation of practice and impact analysis.

Little is understood about how GE topics are understood by the target group. There's also a lack of critical thinking and reflection on GE issues. Personal involvement in global issues and relationships on a larger scale to global issues are usually avoided. There is a reluctance to talk about challenging and difficult issues. Schools hence work more on issues like the environment (and usually this ends up being recycling) and less on issues like agricultural

subsidies, Policy Coherence for Development, EU fisheries policy, trade policies, and power relations.

There seems to be no great public demand for knowledge on the global dimension. The general populace focus more on the educational system in general and in the words of Rene Suša, coordinator of the SLOGA GE WG, 'seem to be dissatisfied with it as it focuses on knowledge accumulation'. GE could give meaning to this knowledge.

Schools and teachers are faced with multiple challenges in trying to integrate the global dimension in daily work. The challenges include language issues as well as lack of ICT skills. But the main challenge is lack of time on the part of teachers and resources on the part of schools. Teachers have to cover a lot of materials prescribed in the curriculums, which is rather detailed and precisely defines what teachers have to cover. This leaves them with limited time for other activities. In the words of Rene Suša, education is becoming more uniform, standardized, and intense 'leaving less space for actual learning on the part of pupils'.

Responsibility for teacher training is in the domain of the National Education Institute, which organizes a lot of course specific trainings. NGOs like Humanitas, UNICEF Slovenia and Zavod Global also organize multiple trainings and seminars for teachers. These organizations also provide materials to teachers to assist them in their work. But there is no systematic approach to materials development. The NGOs are not coordinated enough to avoid duplications of materials. Moreover, they often produce materials as a project requirement rather than necessarily based on the actual needs of teachers.

School Links

No formal structures exist to support North South school linking. Some schools benefit from the twinning programme of the Centre for Mobility and European Training and Educational Programmes. But mainly it all depends on school and teacher initiative. It is usually teachers who have been exposed to some form of global education that choose to participate in school linking. Some NGOs have also secured funds from European institutions for school twinning projects. In terms of content, most of the projects entail humanitarian activities and evoke power relations issues

Conclusion

Global Education in Slovenia is a field that is growing in interest due to efforts of individual NGOs and the National Education Institute. NGOs provide some workshops to schools and teachers, but not in a systematic manner. There is no stable funding to the NGOs and no GE country strategy. Innovation projects by the National Education Institute offer schools an opportunity to engage in GE while also providing a platform to improve the school curriculum.