



## Global Education

### Global Education: Seeing the World in a New Way

Global Education encourages people to reflect on their attitudes, judgments and the world.

Our garlic comes from China, the music we listen to from the USA, the football we play with from Pakistan, our best friend from Germany, our jeans from Turkey, their components however, come from many different areas of the world and may have travelled thousands of kilometres. Global political, economic and socio-cultural developments are having more and more influence on our daily life. Many changes pass by unnoticed, some of them are welcome, but most of them today pose challenges that our grandparents would not have been able to imagine. This globalized world offers a lot of opportunities, such as easier traveling, more choices, easy access to knowledge, technology, products etc., but not for everybody!

People all over the world are affected by the increasingly complex nature of our world. Unanswered questions arise: How can we meet the challenges of workforce mobility and flexibility? How can we keep pace with rapid technological progress? How can we support participation in a pluralistic society? What are the consequences of our personal consumption? Given the fact that change does not bring all the answers, it is essential to have excellent critical thinking skills in order to be able to understand the complexity of our global interconnected society.

That is where Global Education comes in. From an educational perspective it deals with values and communicates knowledge and skills that help people to enjoy a fulfilling life in our globalised world. Global Education is a concept committed to global sustainable development and social justice and considers global issues and questions part of general education.

### What is Global Education?

The term Global Education has been used in English-speaking countries since the 1970s. In central Europe the term Global Education was first used in the 1990s. Since then, on-going discussions have taken place regarding this concept in formal and non-formal education.

The following two common definitions of Global Education are often quoted and stated in the Maastricht Global Education Declaration, adopted in 2002:

- *Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalised world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all.*
- *Global Education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the global dimension of Education for Citizenship*

### The World as One Whole – Global Education Topics

Topics related to Global Education are multifaceted. In our view, a quality education should encompass issues like social justice, distribution of resources, peace and conflict prevention, global climate change, relationship to the environment, intercultural dialogue and co-existence. According to the educationalist Wolfgang Klafki, the so-called “key issues of today and tomorrow” – by which he means topics that are vital for life and survival in today's world – are the starting points for learning in a global sense.

It is very important to note that Global Education is not primarily about far away problems of the “Third World”. Global Education deals in particular with questions of the roles we all play in a globalised and diverse world. In this context it is also essential to acknowledge that our world-view is bound to our culture. Global Education invites us to encounter others' world-views respectfully and with curiosity.

### **Making the World Comprehensible: Teaching Methods in Global Education**

Creating educational processes and methodological material in a reflective way plays an important role within the field of Global Education. The following cornerstones are essential:

- The starting point for the learning process is the learner's environment, experience and interests. Global Education should be designed to give learners the opportunity to reflect on their own values, attitudes and points of view, including prejudices and stereotypes. It should create an atmosphere where complex situations such as contradictions and the feeling of disorientation are allowed and considered. In addition, it should help learners to improve their skills in dealing with these problematic issues.
- Using a variety of methodologies is particularly important in the field of Global Education. This addresses people with different learning styles and includes various types of learning. The choice of methodology should be based on the learning content, with a main emphasis on social and interactive learning.
- An interdisciplinary and interconnected approach is central to Global Education.

### **The Global Education Learning Environment and Learning Approach**

The Global Education learning approach focuses on learning as an on-going process, which cannot be narrowed down to content and predetermined learning and teaching roles. Being conscious of the fact that everyone is learner and educator is a fruitful approach, which puts everyone on an equal footing.

Global Education should not be limited by fixed timetables, room schedules and seating plans. Since Global Education addresses sensitive issues it is of particular importance to create an atmosphere where all participants are at ease, where free expression is welcome and where conflict and different opinions are discussed with respect. It is respect that enables us to live together and to take responsibility for the way we live our lives.

### **Instead of a Summary**

Global Education does not teach specific content or points of view. Instead it enables learners to approach themselves and their environment in our globalised world with an open, critical mind and to form their own opinion and actively advocate for their point of view. Knowledge of global issues and respect for other people and our environment form the framework of the content and ideology of Global Education.

Global Education does not provide the answers to all the questions of our time, but offers the potential of supporting young people in becoming conscious global citizens who question the world and are committed to their ideals.