GLOBAL EDUCATION

WHAT IS GLOBAL EDUCATION?

Global education (GE) is a creative approach to bringing about change in our society. It is a theoretical and methodological concept through which educators, activists, youth workers, civil society organisations (CSOs) can tackle topics of global importance (migration, interculturality, climate crisis, sustainability, development, gender equality, (post)colonialism, global economy, system change …) and through action strive for social and climate justice.

Concept itself originates largely from the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), educational researchers, international organisations, dedicated youth workers, teachers and activists seeking to address various social, environmental, political and other global issues. Global education can equip and enable people to navigate the complexities of global challenges without despair, to develop critical analyses that connect global systems with their local contexts, to experience a sense of interconnectedness, and to work together in ways that open up different possibilities for co-existence in the future.

WHY IS GLOBAL EDUCATION NECESSARY?

Global education can help us better understand the complexities of our highly interrelated world, so that we can begin to develop better-informed and more complex responses to the unprecedented challenges of our time, such as irreversible environmental degradation and climate crisis, increased migration flows and economic integration, rising global inequalities and poverty, new challenges to water and food security, increased levels of anxiety, depression and self-harm, as well as increased hostility towards minority groups. GE can also help us examine historic flows and trends that brought us to our current situation, so that we can begin to explore approaches and responses that do not repeat the same historic tendencies in order to help us create more viable and resilient future.

Although GE has traditionally found its place mostly in the informal education system or in the educational activities of various NGOs and youth organisations, the rising unpredictability of changes both in our societies and in our environment is suggesting a need for the development of partnerships that extend way beyond these traditional contexts. Only by working together across many sectors and disciplines can we hope to respond more robustly and perhaps, in due time, to these rapid changes. Challenges we are facing on a global scale are hyper-complex, multi-layered, interlocked (the solution for one thing creates problems in other places), involve many unknowns, have longer and uncertain timescales.

Our formal education leaves us unequipped to address such challenges and associated complexities, uncertainties, ambiguities, diversities, paradoxes, unequal power relations, and conflicts that are inherent to them. Often this is reflected in our work no matter our good intentions.

If global challenges are adressed as regular problems, the intervention of educators, activists, CSOs, youth workers, tends to reproduce harmful patterns of:

- simplistic "feel good" solutions that may address symptoms, but not root causes,
- paternalistic engagements with marginalized communities ("we know what you need attitude"),
- ethnocentric ideals of justice, sustainability and change.

Tackling global challenges and dealing with them on a local level through global education lens and such tools could enable avoiding those harmful patterns and approaching them in a more holistic way, breaking the dominant system, which is premised on unlimited growth and exploitation that ignores the limits of the planet.

HOW CAN ORGANISATIONS INTEGRATE ELEMENTS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION?

Since global education is a transformative process, it is rather difficult to give quick fix solutions and suggestions. However, a few crucial ideas that could help organisations and individuals grasp some elements of global education in a more concrete hands-on way are listed underneath.

PLANNING/IMPLEMENTING EVENTS, WORKSHOPS ...:

- Follow the "nothing about us, without us" principle (ensure that those, whose situation is being represented, have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves).
- Follow sustainability and inclusion guidelines (available on the Beyond the Tales website).
- Check the content of what is being implemented with the help of the HEADS UP tool (Vanessa Andreotti's tool for checking conscious or unconscious patterns of ethnocentrism, hegemony, paternalism, and others).

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES YOU MAY USE:

a.) Micro-macro approach

The main forms of micro-macro approach are:

- From local to global, i.e. from pollution or poverty in the local environment, moving to the global dimensions of these problems and then back to the local level ("glocalization").
- From personal to collective, i.e. through personal stories and experiences presented by participants in multicultural global education, learning about the reality of migration at the collective level.
- From emotional to rational, i.e. from the emotions evoked by the narratives of the aforementioned migrations at the individual level, moving on to exploring general aspects of the problem of migration.

b.) Power analysis

Understanding global processes and challenges involves identifying and connecting different stakeholders based on power and profit or on human and environmental well-being. All over the world, each individual, depending on the place where he or she was born and her ethnic group and social class, has different access to resources, opportunities, choices, and possibilities to influence resource and wealth sharing decisions. We need to ask ourselves the following questions: Who cares, who is affected by the problem? Who has the power to solve it? Who owns the resources? Who are allies or opponents? What can be my role in changing the situation?

COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGES TO A WIDER WORLD:

Follow code of conduct on images and messages available here.

General tips:

- Learn to unlearn: learn to perceive that what one considers as neutral and objective is a perspective and is related to where one is coming from socially, historically and culturally (deconstruction: making visible the origins and hidden agendas of taken-for-granted concepts).
- Learn directly from those living on the margins of mainstream society is absolutely something that should be considered when looking to develop new partnerships and innovative educational or other practices.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Gesturing towards decolonial futures
- Rene Suša: Global Citizenship Education (GCE) for Unknown Futures. Mapping Past and Current Experiments and Debates
- Vanessa Andreotti, Lynn Mario T. M. de Souza: Learning to read the world Through Other Eyes
- Vanessa Andreotti et al.: Global Citizenship Otherwise
- Vanessa Andreotti: Global education in times of unprecedented changes
- Vanessa Andreotti et al.: Mobilising Different Conversations about Global Justice in Education: Toward Alternative Futures in Uncertain Times

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