

# Global Learning in Austria: Towards a National Strategy and Beyond

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## **Abstract**

This paper discusses the development of Global Learning in Austria, paying special attention to the process and outcome of the major undertaking of developing a national strategy. The first part of the paper provides a descriptive outline of the contextual development, while the second part conjoins the description of the process of strategy development with policy discourse analysis to ask how the idea of a pedagogical response to globalisation affects policy and how engaging with policy affects that idea. The concept of Global Learning as defined in the strategy document is examined in its orientation and intent using a conceptual framework that highlights differing approaches to global citizenship education, in an attempt to situate the Strategy's conceptual approach in the broader international discourse.

**Keywords:** Global Learning, global education, Austria, formal education, policy discourse analysis

## **Introduction**

The history and development of Global Learning<sup>1</sup> in Austria is diverse and complex. The term 'Global Learning' was first used in discussions on education in the early 1990s; its conceptual roots, however, go back several decades. From the outset, far-reaching international influences have shaped the discourse on the conceptual orientation of Global Learning in Austria. Today, many actors with various orientations and approaches are active in the field. The conceptual and institutional development of Global Learning in Austria has been documented, described and examined in recent years (Hartmeyer, 2008; Forghani-Arani and Hartmeyer, 2008). This paper attempts to conjoin the description of the development of a national strategy of Global Learning in Austria – the most recent and significant undertaking in the field – with policy discourse analysis to examine how the idea of an educational, pedagogical response to the processes of globalisation could lead to change in educational policy and programmes. It also explores how the concept of Global Learning can change or advance as a result of engaging with policy development.

Both authors of the paper were directly involved in the various stages of developing the national strategy which resulted in the Strategy Global Learning in the Austrian

Education System (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009). As such, we are interested in questions relating to the impact of the strategy on educational policy and institutions and the impact of the exercise of engaging with the strategy on the conceptualisation of Global Learning in the Austrian context. In the aftermath of strategy development we ask what is the likelihood of the Strategy being adopted and effecting change, what has been the impact of engaging with policy on the Global Learning discourse in Austria, and how can the conceptual orientation and position of the finalised Strategy be located in to the broader international context of prevailing approaches to global education.

In this paper we provide an introduction to the formal education system in Austria and how global learning is included in the formal system. Then the process of developing a national strategy for Global Learning is explored. We then analyse how the national strategy and/or the development of the national strategy might affect programmatic, policy and institutional change. We also locate the national strategy within broader international contexts and approaches to global education. Finally the paper concludes by drawing some of the arguments together.

### **The formal education system in Austria**

It would be beyond the framework of this article to provide a comprehensive survey of the entire range of Global Learning activities in Austria. We therefore focus on the formal education sector for two reasons: firstly, because this is where the bulk of Global Learning activities take place; and secondly, because our analysis of the process of strategy development examines the Strategy in its current stage of development addressing the formal education sector. We therefore start with a brief overview of the Austrian education system.

The Austrian education system has three distinct stages: compulsory education to age 15, secondary education and tertiary (post-secondary) education. Compulsory education for all children who are residents of Austria ranges from age 6 to 15. Compulsory education is divided into four years in primary school, a minimum of four years in secondary school, and a minimum of one year in a pre-professional programme. The secondary school in its curricula, length of study, admissions criteria and qualifications, reflects differences in students' aptitudes and interests. Secondary schools are generally divided into a lower and an upper level. At a relatively young age, students are channelled into academic, technical or vocational training. Post-secondary schools include universities, colleges, academies and professional institutes, access to which is based upon successful completion and graduation from secondary school. Since the secondary school diploma is sufficient for pursuing most university studies, a separate academic entrance requirement usually is not needed.

The main language of instruction in Austria is German, and there is an emphasis at all school levels on learning foreign languages. More than 90 percent of all 10 to 19

year-old students receive instruction in at least one foreign language. Bilingual education is offered in certain secondary schools. Some schools offer native-language instruction for ethnic minorities.

Private schools providing primary and secondary education, as well as private teacher training institutes, generally are administered under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. They account for roughly 10 percent of schools and teacher training colleges in Austria.

There is a general trend toward more school autonomy in education governance and policy. This has been the case primarily for technical and vocational schools, which are forced to adapt to the rapidly changing conditions of the labour market (Hartmeyer, 2008). International influences on Austrian education have increased because of a range of factors, amongst others the admission of Austria into the European Union (EU) in 1995 and the EU's ongoing initiatives in coordinating key activities of Member States' educational policies in the interests of transferability within the Union.

### **The Development of Global Learning in the Formal Education Sector**

Most Global Learning activities in Austria take place in and around schools. Common activities in the formal education sector, in schools and in teacher training, revolve around the production, sales and lending of instructional materials, providing guest speakers and organising encounters, project days, workshops and exhibitions. At the university level, Global Learning is mainly addressed in public debates, lectures, seminars and courses. Activities such as cultural events, workshops and training, campaigns, work and traineeships, exchange programmes and other international projects are more popular in non-formal education in the areas of youth work and adult education.

Global Learning in Austria has various conceptual roots: firstly, political or civic education, which has been formally recognised as a cross-curricular principle since 1978, has opened classroom teaching to issues of democracy, human rights and development topics; secondly, development education, mainly supported by NGOs who since the 1980s have promoted development issues in schools; thirdly, peace education, promoted by the active peace movement of the 1980s, which, despite losing momentum in the 1990s, has regained significance with the recent conflicts in the Middle East; fourthly, environmental education, which significantly strengthened its agenda after United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992; fifthly, intercultural education, has developed from special education for foreigners to migration pedagogy, intercultural pedagogy and transcultural learning; sixthly, human rights education, has gained significance and substance through the United Nations Decade of Human Rights (1995-2004); and finally, ecumenical and interreligious learning, has drawn closer to civic education, peace education, human rights education and intercultural education, primarily in

response to issues of migration and the integration of Muslim citizens (Hartmeyer, 2008). Global Learning in Austria, as in other German speaking countries, has a strong affinity with development education, and has evolved, to a certain degree after a paradigmatic change, most directly out of the development education field.

The conceptual development of Global Learning in Austria is as much embedded in an international, albeit mainly European context, as it is rooted in a national environment. Theoretical and conceptual inputs from neighbouring German-speaking countries have had considerable impact on the discourse and praxis. The guidelines for Global Learning put forward by the Swiss Forum School for One World, for example, were readily adopted and integrated into the concepts of the Austrian development education community. The guidelines centred on expanding the educational horizon, self-reflexivity of identity and lifestyle and connecting the global to the local (Forum Schule für Eine Welt, 1996). Another prominent example is the so-called 'Didactical Cube', developed by Nikolaus Schröck and Annette Scheunpflug. The 'cube' schematically depicts and connects the spatial, thematic and competency dimensions of Global Learning, and has become an integral part of the common Global Learning training and praxis in Austria (Forghani-Arani and Hartmeyer 2008).

The theoretical discourse on Global Learning in Austria basically draws on German scientific publications. The discourse elsewhere, specifically the wide-ranging discourse in English, has been less influential in Austria and its impact has so far remained limited to certain international projects, and specific university courses drawing on international literature and materials.

The curricula for primary and secondary schools do not mention Global Learning explicitly, but both provide an accommodating framework (Hartmeyer, 2008). The aims and objectives of the curricula framed in catalogues of competencies are by and large consistent with a Global Learning approach (Tiefenbacher, 1999, 2000). There has been debate on the possibility of adding Global Learning as a stand-alone subject or a cross-curricular item, which infuses the global dimension into the existing subject-based curricula. However, neither the additive nor the infusion model has been considered feasible and functional by supervisory school authorities and decision makers.

In terms of policy framework and financial structures, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture has explicitly taken up Global Learning in its portfolio. Funding for Global Learning comes, however, first and foremost from the resources of Austrian Development Co-operation. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, since 2004, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) have identified Global Learning as a focus in their programmes. With its expenditures for Global Learning, Austria ranks in the upper half of OECD countries (Hartmeyer, 2008). State funding is in some cases provided by the provincial governments. Austrian Catholic organisations are among the most important non-State funders.

## **Developing a national strategy for Global Learning in Austria**

A recent milestone in the development of Global Learning has been a multi-annual process of developing a national strategy. It is informed by European discourse and embedded in the European strategy for strengthening Global Education and Learning in European countries, as formulated in the Maastricht Declaration of 2002 (O'Loughlin and Wegimont, 2003).

The idea was born as a result of the Peer Review by the North-South Centre and the Council of Europe, which took place in 2005 and 2006 (North-South Centre, 2006). The international Peer Review visits involved collecting information and documentation, meetings with key stakeholders and developing key questions, draft observations and recommendations. The final report portrays the context of Global Learning in Austria, acknowledges the tradition of Global Learning which is reflected in many programmes and initiatives, praises the commitment of the key stakeholders, takes note of obstacles resulting from recent financial cuts in the education sector and concludes with observations and recommendations (North-South Centre, 2006).

One of the main recommendations was to develop a national strategy for Global Learning to help strengthen co-ordination between and among the relevant ministries and civil society actors. It should build on the current situation by:

- further involving a broad spectrum of key stakeholders;
- further clarifying the roles and responsibilities among the various actors of Global Learning;
- outlining key priorities;
- agreeing on mechanisms for strengthening the explicit integration of Global Learning into the curriculum;
- further elaborating on issues of quality and evaluation;
- setting a schedule for increased funding of Global Learning (North South Centre, 2006).

In response to the recommendations of the European Peer Review, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture mandated the Austrian Strategy Group Global Learning with the development of a national strategy for Global Learning.

The Strategy Group is a co-ordinating group, which discusses Global Learning programmes, projects and initiatives in Austria and contributes to networking in this area. It was established in 2003 with the aim of strengthening Global Learning in Austria qualitatively and structurally, through measures taken throughout the education system. It follows international debates in the field of Global Education and Learning and reflects on their relevance for Austria. Its members are experts from various fields in the Austrian education system with a long-standing record in

Global Learning. They are representatives of the Ministry for Education, Culture and Arts, the Austrian Development Agency, NGOs, along with school practitioners and university academics.

The overarching aim of developing the national strategy was the broader integration of Global Learning into the Austrian education system by:

- strengthening the structures of Global Learning in the Austrian formal education system, especially in the areas of in-service training for teachers, teacher training, school development, curriculum development, external Global Learning programmes and educational materials for schools and pre-school/ kindergarten pedagogy;
- widening academic lecturing and research in Global Learning, as well as promoting a process of reflection on the theory and practice of Global Learning, especially by offering a wider range of courses and lectures on Global Learning at Austrian universities and institutions of higher education;
- carrying out research projects, promoting publications on Global Learning;
- developing the conceptual framework of Global Learning;
- strengthening Global Learning in the non-formal education sector, especially in adult education and extra-curricular youth-work;
- establishing a commitment to Global Learning with various actors and stakeholders in society (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009).

The actual process of developing the national strategy involved a selection of distinct priority areas which were grouped as:

- formal education system;
- adult education;
- extra-curricular youth- and children's work;
- tertiary education and research (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009).

The criteria for the process were defined as follows:

- *Transparency*: Through broad information various actors are informed at the beginning of the process and invited to participate.
- *Participation*: In workshops and roundtables interest- and expert-groups are integrated into the formulation of the strategy.
- *Reflection*: The Strategy Group Global Learning monitors the process and its outcomes.
- *Documentation*: The process of the strategy development is documented and disseminated (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009).

To allow for participatory processes the overall timescale for the development of the National Strategy was two to three years. In the first phase the Strategy Group focused on the first priority area, the formal education sector. Work on the three remaining areas will follow in a second phase. The group analysed the framework conditions for Global Learning in the formal education system through a series of workshops with key stakeholders and then formulated the following recommendations:

- to integrate Global Learning into initial teacher training;
- to integrate Global Learning into in-service training of teachers;
- to raise consciousness for Global Learning in the area of school policy and school administration;
- to increase the number of schools which integrate Global Learning into their school development processes, i.e. in mission statements and school focuses;
- to distribute and expand the existing programmes and materials in Global Learning;
- to make Global Learning visible in the subject curricula;
- to integrate Global Learning into pre-school/kindergarten curricula (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009).

Following the first phase, the draft strategy paper was presented for international reflection, and comments were invited from selected members of the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) at a roundtable in Vienna in September 2009. The referees appreciated the process-orientation in the development of the strategy, and acknowledged the role of the Strategy Group as an intermediary facilitator and coordinator. They suggested defining some of the aims in more concrete terms, and developing a timetable for monitoring progress. The learner-centred approach of the national strategy was especially acknowledged, as well as its clarity, practicality and pragmatism in relation to the institutions in the formal education system. The suggestions were taken into consideration in the final revision process and the strategy paper was finalised in 2009 in a document titled *Strategy Global Learning in the Austrian Education System* (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009). The document is disseminated through the networks of the Ministry of Education, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and NGOs.

### **The National Strategy as a case study on effecting change**

The first part of the paper outlined and described the development of Global Learning in Austria, we now turn to the question of how, through the Austrian case, the idea of globalisation as it relates to education can effect programmatic, policy and institutional change. As members of the Strategy Group Global Learning, we have both been directly involved in the development process of the Strategy. As

such, we are interested in the question of effecting change. In the first place we ask how the idea of a pedagogical response to processes of globalisation, framed in a programme or a strategy, can in fact change policy and effect change in educational institutions. We also ask how the very exercise of engaging with strategy can affect the idea. We also analyse the role and the function of the Strategy Group in the process of effecting change. Finally we locate the position of the Austrian Strategy in broader international contexts of prevailing approaches to global education. To examine the questions on effecting institutional change we draw on Campbell's (2004) typology of ideas and their effects on policy making. To locate the conceptual orientation of the Strategy we will draw on Shultz's (2007) characterisation of approaches to global citizenship education.

Ideas and interests affect institutional change and both work together in complex ways to influence actors and policy. Campbell (2004) differentiates between two types of ideas and their effects: firstly, ideas as underlying assumptions in the *background* of policy debate; secondly, ideas as concepts and theories located in the *foreground* of these debates. On the basis of a further distinction between cognitive and normative ideas, he suggests a typology of ideas and their effects on policy making: paradigms, public sentiments, programmes, and frames. Paradigms and public sentiments, which are background ideas, tend to constrain change. Programmes and frames as foreground ideas challenge the status quo and tend to facilitate change. Actors actively propose programmes and frames as they try to fit these into the prevailing constraints posed by predominant paradigms and public sentiments. Different actors play different roles in their different ideational realms. Campbell (2004) differentiates between decision makers, theorists, framers, constituents and brokers, as they are involved in institutional processes of change.

In an attempt to apply Campbell's (2004) typology of ideational realms and actors to the case of developing a national strategy for Global Learning in Austria, a number of questions must be raised in order to plot out what the ideas and interests in the foreground are, what changes the Strategy attempts to effect, who some of the major actors are and what roles they have, and how the character of the Strategy affects its adoption by decision makers.

What is the idea and how is it framed? The Strategy Global Learning in the Austrian Education System states:

The term globalisation has become very common ... Global political, economic and socio-cultural developments are reflected in our everyday life ... These developments provoke questions and discussions and pose challenges for the society as well as for the individual. With this in mind education takes on a decisive role: it allows for the knowledge and skills and aspirations to enable people to live in equality across borders of any kind (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009: 7).

The idea the foreground is that globalisation – understood as a range of developments on a global scale – is a matter of fact; that it poses challenges, and that education has to respond to these challenges and make things better (Strategy Group

Global Learning, 2009:7). This idea appears to correspond most closely to what Campbell (2004) describes as programmes:

Programmes are cognitive concepts and theories that enable or facilitate decision-making and institutional change by specifying for decision makers how to solve specific problems (Campbell, 2004: 98).

The problem-solution frame is further elaborated in the Strategy:

With many people this leads to a loss of orientation in the light of the following questions: How can the individual do justice to the constant and rapid changes, live up to the increasing demands on flexibility at work, deal with the fast growing challenges in our mobility, integrate into and participate in a pluralistic and multicultural society, consider the ecological and social consequences of our patterns of consumption, make the 'best' political decisions, and also assess the consequences of not taking action? ... Global issues and questions of worldwide change are defined as cross-cutting tasks of education. This strategy takes up that challenge. (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009: 7)

Global Learning is thus defined as an educational concept, which:

claims to respond to the growing complexity of, and the movement towards a *Weltgesellschaft* (world society) in a pedagogically adequate way (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009: 7).

The declared overarching aim of developing a national strategy is the 'broader integration of Global Learning into the Austrian education system' (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009:3). This should be achieved through measures such as integrating Global Learning into initial and in-service teacher training, raising consciousness in school policy and school administration, integrating Global Learning into school development processes, distributing and expanding programmes and materials, and making Global Learning visible in the subject curricula. Most of the measures can be subsumed under the objective of effecting favourable change in educational policy to bring about change in programmes at various levels of educational institutions.

Trying to identify the actors along the lines of Campbell's typology, the Strategy Group can be characterised as an 'ideational broker', who links, connects and transports ideas from one ideational realm to another (Campbell, 2004:104). Brokering often involves so-called 'epistemic communities', that is, networks of academics, experts, government liaisons and non-governmental organisations (Boli and Thomas, 1999; Haas, 1992). The membership of the Strategy Group strongly resembles that of an epistemic community and the role it has taken on by the mandate of the Ministry of Education, the decision makers, to develop a strategy and convey it to constituents, i.e. educational institutions like schools, teacher colleges and universities, clearly locates the Strategy Group as a broker.

In terms of the Strategy being adopted and how the character of a programme affects its adoption by decision makers, Campbell (2004) states that programmes in the form of strategies determine most directly how institutions change. It has been argued that decision makers are most likely to embrace programmes that are simple

and easily understood (Campbell 1998; Woods 1995), that provide clear 'road maps' and that offer credible directions out of particular dilemmas, that are 'focal points' or ideas that facilitate coalition building (Goldstein 1993; Goldstein and Keohane 1993).

In terms of whether the Strategy is simple and clear, as we were involved in the development of the Strategy, it would be difficult to judge it in terms of its simplicity and clarity for decision makers and constituents. The Strategy does however seem to provide directions, if not yet road maps. It addresses the challenges of globalisation, such as loss of orientation, increasing demands on flexibility, participation in a pluralistic society, ecological and social consequences of consumption and the consequences of not taking action. It thus frames Global Learning as a credible direction out of a problematic state of affairs. In terms of providing 'focal points' the Strategy clearly highlights its transdisciplinary approach and emphasises mutual links to a number of closely related educational fields:

Global Learning shows many links to other pedagogical fields such as Peace and Human Rights Education, Civic Education, Intercultural and Interreligious Learning, Global Environment Education and Development Education as well as Education for Sustainable Development. These links are, on the one hand, defined by their historical context and development ... on the other hand through aims, objectives, content and methodologies. As far as forms of learning and methodological and didactical principles are concerned there is a broad common basis among the different pedagogical areas and there is a common orientation with progressive educational movements and with critical pedagogical concepts and approaches. In the central issues there exist numerous cross-overs between the single areas. (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009:9).

As such, the Strategy puts forward Global Learning as a potential focal point for building coalitions with related pedagogical fields. Needless to say, building such coalitions mostly depends on the interests, often conflicting territorial interests, of the actors engaged in their various related fields. As Campbell (2004) notes, ideas and interests tend to work together in complex ways in most episodes of institutional change. It is this complexity that makes it difficult to examine the inbuilt efficacy of the Strategy.

We now turn to the question of the impact of engaging with policy and strategy on the idea of Global Learning, using the example from Austria. The participatory process of developing the Strategy initiated a systematic exchange among various actors. The series of workshops and roundtables with different interest groups and experts, many of whom had differing agendas and understandings of Global Learning, led to a vigorous conceptual discourse raising a number of questions and concerns. The concept of Global Learning as stated in the strategy paper does not necessarily reflect a common denominator, let alone a common understanding by all actors. It does however attempt to integrate the issues raised through the explorative encounter of differing approaches as issues for further consideration. As such, the strategy reflects the negotiating of understandings that was set in motion and the open-endedness of conceptual positioning which characterises the process.

The process of engaging with strategy development has delivered strong impetus to the discourse on Global Learning and has led to an initial conceptual positioning at the national level. Even though the concept statement in the Strategy paper is by no means representative of the variety of approaches of the actors, the very fact that one approach to Global Learning is now reflected in a national strategy document means that it might have some impact on the future conceptual orientation in Austria.

Global Learning conceived as a pedagogical response to processes of globalisation has grown to some extent alongside conceptualisations of globalisation. Shultz (2007) draws on McGrew's (2000) conceptual framework of approaches to globalisation in order to distinguish conflicting understandings and agendas in global citizenship education. We draw on Shultz's characterisation of three approaches to global citizenship education: the *neoliberal*, the *radical* and the *transformational* (Shultz 2007), in order to locate the conceptual orientation and position of the Strategy for Global Learning in Austria in the broader context of the prevailing approaches.

In the *neoliberal approach* the key aim of global education efforts is to increase the transnational mobility of knowledge and skills. The role of education, then, is to facilitate this participation through providing for cultural exchange and language acquisition, to enable individuals to negotiate this liberal global environment. The *radical approach* focuses on the hegemony of global structures and calls people to action against global institutions, particularly financial institutions that are the main architects of global economic liberalism. The role of education is to help individuals understand the link between the economic activities of these institutions of political, economic, and social oppression and economic destruction, in order to effect radical change in north-south relations and carry out the justice agenda of the radical approach. The *transformational approach* is oriented towards building relationships and creating spaces for dialogue and change, based on an understanding of a common humanity and shared concerns. Through education individuals learn about the importance of creating democratic spaces for community and coalition-building across boundaries of state, nationality, race, class, and gender, embracing diversity and creating new forms of inclusion. They learn to link action at the local and global levels, and to build authentic challenges to those forces that perpetuate oppression, poverty, and marginalisation.

In terms of the Strategy and its conceptual orientation, the following passages were selected as statements of intent and approach:

... education takes on a decisive role: it allows for the knowledge and skills and aspirations to enable people to live in equality across borders of any kind (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009:7).

The global political, economic, social, ecological and cultural interdependences require us to see the world as a whole and to adjust teaching and learning accordingly. ... The content of Global

Learning is based on the concept of 'One World', while acknowledging diversity, disparities and differences. ... Global Learning curricula address the key issues of today, above all the economic and social disparities in the world, the structural violence against people and peoples, the ecological threats. Causes are analysed, probable consequences are explored and possibilities for intervention are considered (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009: 8).

The Strategy Group has ... characterised ... a distinction between action-oriented and evolution-/systemic-oriented approaches to theories of Global Learning. The action-oriented approach puts the vision of a sustainable future on the basis of social justice at the centre. As a priority it aims at a competency of action in solidarity. Systemic models, on the other hand ... place a concern for the growth of complexity and progress towards a *Weltgesellschaft* at the centre ... and educate for thinking and judging in interconnected situations. The strategy Global Learning situates itself mainly within the second approach. ... Thus Global Learning should promote the understanding, critical reflection of global developments and a differentiated ability to judgement as well as to contribute to an independent and creative opening up of alternative possibilities of interpretation, communication and action. Among the topics of Global Learning programmes, processes and materials are differing concepts of development, of power and lack of power, of global justice, of inclusion and exclusion of individuals as well as of groups, also of democracy and in a national and global context (Strategy Group Global Learning, 2009: 10).

Without going into detailed content analysis, the overall picture conveys an orientation that comes closest to the transformational approach. The understanding of a common humanity and shared concerns, fundamental to the transformative approach, is reflected in the Strategy's conceptual commitment to the 'One World' vision. The emphasis on crossing boundaries to build coalitions of solidarity in the transformational approach is reflected in the Strategy's statement of purpose, stressing the role of education in enabling people to 'live in equality across borders of any kind'. Concepts of justice, democracy, power and inclusion in facing the challenges of oppression, poverty, and marginalisation, central to the transformative approach, are addressed in the Strategy almost identically as issues of global justice, inclusion and exclusion, democracy in a national and global context, issues of economic and social disparity, structural violence and ecological threats. As such, it can be said, that the process of engaging with strategy development has contributed to an initial conceptual positioning of Global Learning in the prevailing Austrian discourse along the lines of a transformational approach to global citizenship education.

## Conclusion

As Global Learning develops a more central focus on education policy in Austria, it is important that we examine the processes of institutional, as well as conceptual, change concurrent with this development. Ideas affect institutions and institutions affect ideas. The case study of developing a national strategy for Global Learning in Austria revealed some key factors and elements of the process of affecting policy. The central idea was that education must respond to the processes of globalisation challenging the lives of individuals and communities. The idea had to be framed to influence policy, as ideas essentially must be linked, connected and transported

from one ideational realm to another to make a change. The idea of Global Learning already promoted by a variety of actors through a number of programmes and initiatives in Austria was framed as a national strategy. The Strategy Group Global Learning, traditionally operating as a think tank or a so-called 'epistemic community' played the role of the ideational broker. With a mandate of the policy makers, the Ministry of Education, it developed the Strategy Global Learning in Austrian Education System in a participatory process involving other actors and constituents. Ideas framed as strategies have the most direct impact on policy, especially when framed as offering directions out of difficult states of affairs. This suggests the likelihood of the National Strategy being adopted and endorsed by decision makers. At the same time, the very exercise of developing a strategy to influence policy, affected the concept. The participatory process gave strong impetus for engaging with the different understandings and approaches to Global Learning prevalent in the field of praxis. The conceptual approach reflected in the strategy document, although not necessarily representative of the variety of approaches allows for a continued discourse to negotiate understandings and conceptual positions. Set in a conceptual framework of prevailing pedagogical approaches to globalisation, the Strategy's concept of Global Learning can be best characterised as a transformational approach.

In the participatory process of developing a national strategy, a metaphor emerged: the construction site. As actors, stakeholders, constituents and interest-groups we are all involved and engaged in a construction site; we build, add, make openings and create connections to create new spaces; we negotiate understandings and approaches to be replaced as needed; we reach out and cross borders, and we engage in constructing knowledge as we proceed. We conclude our outline and analysis of the development of Global Learning in Austria with this image of the construction site so as to indicate the different spaces, flows and patterns which emerge as we advance in this undertaking.

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## **Note**

<sup>1</sup> In Austria, the term most commonly used is 'Globales Lernen'. Therefore we use the term Global Learning and not Global Education in this text, when the term is used in the Austrian context.

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