

# Global Education *in statu nascendi*: Some Reflections on Poland<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article presents findings from a participant observation perspective concerning the multi-stakeholder process on global education in Poland in 2010. The vast majority of the information presented is based on interviews with experts on global education in Poland as well as analysis of existing documents. The main thesis of the paper is that the shape of the agreement document on global education between the state (represented by three Ministries) and civil society (represented by a platform of NDGOs) was influenced by four different issues: i) Poland's historical trajectory from being first a Soviet-satellite country, then a post-Soviet country and aspiring member of the European Union (EU), and, finally, in 2004, an EU member; ii) the impacts of transnational advocacy networks (TANs); iii) the characteristics of the Polish formal education system and, iv) the intrinsic characteristics of civil dialogue in Poland. Moreover, we show how the 'global education package' in Poland emerged 'from above' as a consequence of a successful campaigning exercise by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe which was supported by Polish NGDOs.

**Keywords:** multi-stakeholder process on global education, formal education, civil dialogue, NGDOs, global education, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

## Introduction

Global education has emerged in Poland as a concept which is strongly tied to international development policy and to the key principle that rich nations should provide development assistance to poorer nations. This is quite a new situation both for the political elites and for citizens in Poland, however, as the country has itself been a recipient of foreign assistance in the past, and even after joining the European Union (EU) has felt relatively poor in relation to older member states (especially

<sup>1</sup> Both authors of this paper were participants in the multi-stakeholder process on global education in Poland. They are both activists and participant observers of the ongoing process.

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Germany which, as a neighboring country, is a good reference point). Therefore, the idea that we are 'rich' in comparison to the majority of countries in the world is a challenging idea for the great majority of Polish people. Nevertheless, it is also increasingly understood that a rapidly changing world requires all societies to adjust to these kinds of changes. One of the most interesting arenas to observe struggles to adjust to such challenges is the system of formal education in Poland.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the emergence of the concept of global education in Poland, and to map the key stakeholders and describe the impacts of a multi-stakeholder process on global education in Poland. In this process, a range of new actors, non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) supported by transnational advocacy networks (TANs) have been consulted by the state according to their own scenario. This represents quite an extraordinary new arrangement to the educational landscape in Poland. In order to understand these new practices and mechanisms as well as their possible impacts on educational practices in Poland, we decided to carefully analyse the context of global education in Poland, the dynamics of the multi-stakeholder process, and the content of the final document it produced. Finally, we have examined some of the possible interpretations of the process in light of existing theories such as the concept of historical trajectories and Boli and Thomas' reflection on the impact of transnational advocacy networks.

### **Methodology**

The methodology we employed splits into three sections: participant observation of the multi-stakeholder process on global education in Poland held throughout 2010-2011, interviews with experts representing a broad selection of institutions and organisations held in 2011, and, finally, analysis of the documents produced in that process as well as of existing European legal and institutional frameworks.

The research was conducted by two authors sharing research questions and working simultaneously, however, from different perspectives on the global education spectrum in Poland. One of us works within a large and recognised non-governmental organisation involved in nationwide citizen education programs (with a strong emphasis on the notion of global citizenship education), and is an active member of the European NGDO platform as well as its Polish local equivalent. The second is a researcher at a state university interested in the ethical issues raised by international development and carrying out research about the major actors involved in establishing global education programs in Poland.<sup>2</sup> As a result of this combination of experiences and ideas, we were able to combine the 'outsider' perspective (university researcher carrying out the interviews) with practitioner-based 'insider' knowledge and experience in order to interpret the research findings.

<sup>2</sup> Research Grant at the Institute of Sociology awarded in November 2010 entitled: 'Global education in Poland as an example of planned social change'.

Our aim was to answer four key research questions:

- 1) What were the drivers and processes behind the development of the global education programme in Poland?
- 2) To what extent is the global education programme a result of Polish grass-roots civil society initiatives, and to what extent is it a part of a Westernised package 'from above'?
- 3) How has the agreement on global education come about?
- 4) What determined its content? What is the meaning of the document? Here we asked about the leading initiatives, individuals and consultations going on between the state and NGDOs. We were particularly interested in the state-civil society relationships revealed in that process.

We decided that the best way to find answers to our research questions would be to conduct interviews with experts dealing with global education in Poland from different angles and perspectives. A list of interviewees was prepared basing on the list of people and institutions present during the multi-stakeholder process on global education in Poland and their further recommendations (snow-ball method). The interviewees numbered 27 in total, including nine non-governmental full time workers (three of them are active members of the Working Group on Global Education within the Polish NDGO platform); eight public administration workers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment) among which were two high rank officers (Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education); three representatives of the national teachers training unit controlled by the Ministry of Education (including the director of the central unit); the director of the Polish NGDO platform; two members of a Polish development think tank; two officers of the European NGDOs platform; and two university researchers. The last three categories of interviewees were added during the course of the research and were suggested by other respondents as important institutions/figures having an impact on the shape of global education debates and policy in Poland.

We used semi-structured interviews. Although the respondents represented different levels of experience and engagement with global education, we managed to establish some common frameworks for the interviews. For instance, in each case we tried to establish how interviewees perceive the global education arena in Poland (who does this include? which institutions do they view as important, decisive and having impact on creating global education programs and educational policy? why?); what they know already, or have discovered or learned from others, about the beginnings of global education in Poland; how they perceive the role of the institution/organisation they represent in relation to other parties; and finally, what kind of further developments they expect and/or wish for with respect to the institutions/organisations they represent.

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## **The Context of Global Education in Poland**

### ***The origins of global education in Poland***

Global education is a new concept in Polish society. Its history began unexpectedly around 2003 when Poland first became involved in development co-operation as a donor. The country's movement from being a recipient to a donor of foreign assistance happened very quickly and was completed just before its EU accession when the Polish government took on new responsibilities and pledged to support democratisation and eradication of poverty throughout the world. Development policy has therefore been introduced rapidly in Poland as a direct consequence of EU requirements, rather than as an effect of an internal evolution in foreign policy. The Government Strategy on Polish Development Co-operation adopted in 2003 was the first document to outline principles and priorities of this new field of the state's activities.

By that time, global education and awareness raising had already been widely recognised as indispensable parts of development co-operation throughout the world, with policy makers and practitioners in the Global North understanding that foreign assistance cannot be effective without understanding and support for these issues in Northern societies.

However, in the Polish context, this idea was not so obvious and understanding of development co-operation among policy makers was very limited. Although the Strategy states that knowledge about the objectives and priorities of foreign aid is necessary for strengthening support for development policy within society, it only proposes promotional activities to achieve this.

Development co-operation is a unique field of governmental activity in the sense that all economically advanced states are expected to establish similarly comprehensive approaches to development policy. Therefore, as soon as Poland became involved in development co-operation as a donor, there was significant pressure from intergovernmental institutions such as OECD and from transnational advocacy networks formed by civil society organisations to embrace global education and awareness raising within development policy.

The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) therefore found itself in a difficult situation – it was expected to broaden the scope of its activities and to embrace education, however this is normally the domain of the Ministry of National Education. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs lacked the capacity to develop a policy regarding education and the Ministry of National Education did not seem to be interested in the issue at that time.

Support from outside was needed and it came in the form of the involvement of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. The Centre, established in 1989 in order to promote dialogue between the global North and South and to raise awareness of global interdependence, identified global education as one of its key

fields of activity (North-South Centre, 2009). With funding from the Dutch government, the North-South Centre put together a programme to support the development of global education in four Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia).

In 2004, the North-South Centre brought together stakeholders interested in fostering global education in Poland. Among others, this included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Education and Sport, and non-governmental organisations involved in civic, European, human rights and environmental education. A seminar entitled 'Global Education in Poland: Perspectives of Development' turned out to be very fruitful and had almost immediate follow-up (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005:32).

In 2005, the North-South Centre supported the first initiatives in the field of global education with a re-granting programme. However, the transfer of funds for this purpose to the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs proved impossible due to legal constraints. A Polish NGO – the Foundation Education for Democracy – was therefore selected as a re-granting programme operator to be financed by both the North-South Centre and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The call for proposals was successful in two dimensions. Firstly, it generated interest in global education among NGOs. Secondly, it created and strengthened the MFA's commitment to support educational initiatives related to global development. Since that time the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs annually announces similar calls financed with public funds (Szczyński and Witkowski 2010:6).

The North-South Centre's role as a midwife to global education in Poland was clearly visible in the following years. From the very beginning, the MFA and Grupa Zagranica (a Polish NGDO platform) have been using the definition of global education developed by the Centre. Polish stakeholders have also become involved in the North-South Centre's flagship initiative in global education – Global Education Week. The commitment was so strong that all the calls for proposals to the re-granting scheme between 2005 and 2010 included explicit reference to Global Education Week, and organisations applying for funds have been advised to integrate their activities with the pan-European promotion of global education taking place under the auspices of the North-South Centre.

### ***Involvement of non-governmental organisations***

Non-governmental organisations have been at the forefront of global education since its emergence in Europe. The situation in Poland in this sense is the same, as most of the global education initiatives in the country have been initiated and/or carried out by NGOs.

There are currently three distinctive types of Polish NGOs involved in global education. First of all, there are development NGOs for which development and humani-

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tarian work is the primary field of operation. Secondly, there are educational NGOs which are focused on the professional development of teachers and offering support to schools. Lastly, there are small grassroots organisations operating on a small scale and offering communities a variety of initiatives on different topics (of which global education is one). In the present day, the motivation for diverse actors to run global education (GE) projects is often quite similar, with GE commonly understood to be an important part of education which prepares the public to critically interact with a complex and globalised world. However, the situation was quite different in the past.

For instance, development NGOs (defined as organisations for which supporting development overseas is the main field of activity) now form the biggest and most important group of NGOs active in the field of global education in Poland. However, very few NGOs were among the organisations involved in first GE initiatives in Poland. Out of 21 grants distributed in the first call for proposal in 2005 only two were awarded to NGOs that have been involved in development work outside of Poland (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005:33). This can be explained by the fact that 6 years ago there were very few organisations of this kind at all. The situation has changed substantially since that time. Year by year more and more NGOs with an international development focus have been set up and most of them have started some kind of educational activities immediately. A standard process was the following: an organisation needs to fundraise money for its operation so it is interested to communicate what it is doing, and soon it starts promoting its activities; from promotion of its undertakings it gradually moves into explaining to the public what it is doing and why; finally it reaches the stage where cases from an organisation's projects overseas are being used as examples for global education initiatives (eg. explaining global problems). Polish Humanitarian Action the biggest Polish NGDO may exemplify this process.

It often took more than 20 years for NGDOs in the OECD countries to go through this process, but it seems to have taken their Polish counterparts much less time. In Poland, the process was facilitated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which provided NGOs with an opportunity to include an educational component in development projects financed by the ministry. The inclusion of educational components was intended to encourage NGDOs to share their experiences from the field with the public in Poland and to raise awareness within Polish society. As a result, more and more NGDOs became involved in education activities and soon dominated the GE sector, even though some of them had little expertise in the field.

Educational NGOs, on the other hand, started from a different angle. Since 1989, civil society organisations have been active in the process of transformation of the Polish school system. Civil society organisations, among others, have developed curricula for civic education, and later became involved in human rights and environmental education, as well as finally (shortly before Polish accession to the EU)

becoming very interested in European education. At each stage, these organisations developed new educational materials, trained teachers and slowly got new notions integrated into mainstream education. The Centre for Citizenship Education can be considered one of these NGOs. In 2005, the organisations that succeeded in getting funding for calls for global education proposals began implementing small initiatives in this field. One could see their interest in global education as another step in modernising schools, however, some may question this and argue that interest in global education has come been the result of the availability of funds for GE rather than from an in-depth needs analysis.

The last distinctive group – local, grassroots NGOs – should also be recognised as champions of global education in Poland. This was the biggest group to benefit from calls for global education proposals. Most of the initiatives implemented by these NGOs had a local character and targeted single communities. Often organisations adapted their usual activities (such as organising local fairs) in order to fit within the broad definition of global education proposed by the North-South Centre. The strong presence of small organisations among the group of those involved in global education in Poland was also maintained by the structure of grant schemes. One of the priorities of a re-granting programme financed by the MFA between 2005 and 2010, for instance, was to get new institutions involved in global education. In order to achieve this, large numbers of grants of maximum €6,000 were made available to civil society actors.

An important threshold in the relatively short history of global education in Poland was the year 2011. For the first time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not have the Education for Democracy Foundation run a re-granting scheme with small grants for NGOs. As a consequence, 13 bigger grants (from €13,000 to €50,000) were given to NGOs instead of the 33 small grants (from €2,500 to €7,500) which were provided to organisations in 2010. Larger grants in 2010 were distributed among bigger and more experienced organisations as the MFA's intention was to finance larger, more systemic initiatives. This in turn cut off funding for GE activities for smaller NGOs and limited their engagement to a large extent. To understand the significant impact of this single financial decision made by the MFA on the GE landscape in Poland, one need only remember that the MFA is in fact the only funder of this type of activities in the country and that Polish NGOs are to a large extent financially dependent on public funds.

Organisations involved in global education in Poland are not only a sector, but can also be seen as a global education community. This term seems to be justified by the high degree of co-ordination and co-operation among the largest and most important actors. Co-ordination is provided by Grupa Zagranica (the Polish NGDO Platform) which has been actively involved in global education initiatives since their beginning in Poland (Grupa Zagranica was also a co-organiser of the previously mentioned conference in 2004). Grupa Zagranica was initially a meeting place for

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organisations active in the field of global education, and the co-operation soon become institutionalised into a formal GE Working Group (until recently this was known as the Development Education Working Group).

The work of Grupa Zagranica is largely dominated by larger NGDOs with more extensive experience in the field of development co-operation. However, the working group also reflects the standpoints of smaller entities, who are mainly involved in global education and not necessarily directly active in development or humanitarian work. This balance gives it a mandate to operate as a representative of all NGOs active in the field in relation to the administration responsible for global education.

### ***Involvement of the national administration***

Although it is easy to call non-governmental organisations the champions and leaders of global education in Poland, one also needs to acknowledge that it was the government (namely the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) which initiated the movement around global education. Both the MFA and the Ministry of National Education also remain active in the field in the present day.

Development co-operation was (and still is) not high on the priority list for Polish foreign policy. Apart from support for democratisation in the former USSR (which is a part of Eastern Partnership of the European Union), development co-operation was largely undervalued. Supporting global education in Poland is therefore not easy – it is difficult to invest in explaining to society something that is viewed as unimportant. In spite of this challenge, awareness raising and global education have always been part of the government's Annual Development Co-operation Programs and money for these issues has been allocated. MFA funding for global education has grown substantially, from €50,000 in 2005 to €500,000 in 2009 (Szczyński and Witkowski 2011:160). The funds allow for one call for proposals every year (including the re-granting scheme). Even this modest support still makes MFA the largest funder of such educational activities. Despite the lack of political support, some initiative has also been taken by lower rank officials committed to the idea of global education. Thanks to these individuals, GE remained on the agenda and their openness to co-operation with NGOs allowed for the first multi-stakeholder consultations to be conducted. These experiences also proved important when, in September 2010, the situation unexpectedly changed and a new under-secretary of state responsible for development co-operation (and global education) was appointed. The new under-secretary – Krzysztof Stanowski – was familiar with the concept of GE as he had previously been the President of Education for the Democracy Foundation (operator of a re-granting scheme between 2005 and 2010). His presence in the Ministry gave a new impetus to the global education community. Stanowski was also able to provide a link between both ministries because he had served as an under-secretary of state in the Ministry of National Education between 2007-2010. His arrival marked the beginning of the Ministry of National Education's



interest in global education. Prior to that, the Ministry had been resistant to pressures from both the MFA and civil society actors to become involved in GE. This is perhaps explained by the fact that, as the department responsible for curricula, it is approached by numerous groups advocating for certain theme-based educations (eg. intercultural, human rights, environmental, sex, safety) and cannot be that receptive to new ideas.

Nevertheless, political support from the top official within the Ministry of Education after 2007 helped non-governmental organisations to get global education into the official school curriculum (officially changed at the end of 2008). This should be seen as a turning point because it made it possible for global education to be included within mainstream education (O'Loughlin and Wegimont 2009:32). From that time on all teachers of civics, geography, biology, history and entrepreneurship not only could, but were required, to bring global perspectives into the classroom. Expectations regarding the Ministry of Education's role in global education also rose as by including it in the curriculum, the ministry assumed responsibility for its implementation and promotion within the formal education sector. Unfortunately, these expectations have not been met as the ministry does not have the capacity nor the will to help teachers to prepare to teach about global issues.

Representatives of the NGOs active in the field state that global education in Poland has been very much dependent on a few people and their unofficial relations. This was a consequence of two facts: resistance on the part of official institutions to take up new responsibilities and the commitment of specific individuals – their employees. Unofficial co-operation has proven to be effective in some cases (eg. curriculum reform), but at the same time it poses a threat in that when personnel changes these relationships are lost. In order to prevent this, civil society actors have invited a diverse range of stakeholders (including ministries) to the multi-stakeholder consultation process. This was intended to institutionalise co-operation and to develop a national strategy for global education.

## **The Multi-Stakeholder Process on Global Education in Poland**

### ***Conference, Meetings and Discussions***

The multi-stakeholder process was initiated by Grupa Zagranica with a twofold objective: a) to formalise (institutionalise) the co-operation between ministries and NGDOs active in the field of global education; b) to strengthen the position of global education in the Polish development co-operation programme and education system. The initiative was inspired by similar processes held in other European countries which have led to development and formal adoption of national global education strategies. However, in the beginning it was not possible to predict whether the process would be concluded with the creation of any kind of official document.

A conference 'The Development of Global Education in Poland – Prospects for Multi-Stakeholder Co-operation' organised in December 2009 by Grupa Zagranica

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(with support from the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe) was used as a high-profile kick-off event for the process. The event brought together all major stakeholders in the field of global education in Poland and was intended to start the dialogue on future co-operation in this area.

The whole process was planned and structured later in December 2009 by the representatives of organisations active in the GE Working Group of the NGDOs platform. Within this phase, themes to be discussed were agreed, the mode of co-operation was negotiated and a working group was formed. It was decided that six meetings would be organised, with each to discuss one of the following issues: a definition of global/development education, quality standards for GE, the place of GE in the formal education sector, new actors in GE, funding GE, and finally, future co-operation.

Representatives of several different sectors were invited to take part in the meetings: administration (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Environment), in-service teacher training institutions (local and national), academia (universities and pedagogical schools), teachers, local authorities, Polish branches of UNESCO and UNICEF, and NGOs. The whole group was to consist of approximately 15 individuals, with a maximum of three participants representing civil society institutions (due to circulation of people and organisations the whole process involved over 30 institutions). Representatives of NGDOs wanted the process to be co-chaired by Grupa Zagranica and the two ministries as this would strengthen ownership of the process. However, interest and capacity within the administration proved insufficient, and all of the meetings have been prepared and run by representatives of NGOs.

Five multi-stakeholder discussions were organised between February and November 2010. Each was preceded by a preparatory meeting for NGOs in order to agree on a common position to present to other key stakeholders. A special internet platform was also set up to facilitate communication between participants in the process, and all of the meeting minutes and recommendations have been published there. Grupa Zagranica's GE working group (recognised leader of the process) planned to write a final report based on the minutes taken and short reports developed after each meeting. However, this proved to be impossible as the multi-stakeholder group was unable to develop documents in a form which would be ready to publish and understandable to outsiders. Special subgroups were set up in the winter of 2010 and again in 2011 to make up for this shortcoming and to do the final editing of the materials produced. This process turned out to be very time-consuming as none of the participants involved had a special time allocation for this work.

At the same time, it became clear that the creation of any kind of strategic document as a conclusion to the process would not be possible. This was mainly due to the strategy's special status within the Polish context and the fact that more general

strategies have been developed simultaneously by the government. Informal consultations between Grupa Zagranica and the ministries (not including other participants in the process) were arranged in order to ensure that the effort and commitment devoted to the process were not wasted. It was agreed that a detailed report on the process would be drafted which would include all of the recommendations resulting from the multi-stakeholder process discussions. MFA under-secretary of state Krzysztof Stanowski signed a memorandum of understanding between Grupa Zagranica, MFA and the Ministry of National Education which outlined the priorities for multi-stakeholder co-operation and included the Report from the Multi-Stakeholder Process. The text of the Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Global Education was agreed in April and May 2011 and finally signed on 26 May 2011. This gave the report an official endorsement from government.

### ***The consensus on global education in Poland***

The Memorandum of Understanding signed by the three parties was a very brief acknowledgment of the process and a declaration to continue the dialogue and co-operation taking place within the field of global education in Poland. However, the declaration also included two precise commitments. Firstly, to use the definition of global education developed within the process in government documents and all other initiatives undertaken by any of the signatory. Secondly, to work collaboratively to elaborate a catalogue of good practice which would be a step towards improving quality of global education in Poland.

The Memorandum together with the Report formed the first consensus on global education ever reached by the majority of parties involved in the field in Poland. Of the two documents, the Report from the Multi-Stakeholder Process provides a much more detailed record of the discussions and conclusions reached by participants in the meetings. Its structure also reflects the structure of the process in terms of content. It consists of five chapters, with four being sets of conclusions after the multi-stakeholder meetings, and the final providing a more general vision of global education in Poland.

The first chapter presents a long-debated definition of global education:

*Global education is the part of civic education and upbringing which broadens their scope through making a person aware of the existence of global phenomena and interdependencies. Its main objective is to prepare the recipients to address the challenges faced by all humankind.*

The full definition consists of four parts. The main part is cited above and describes GE in general, the second part lists the challenges faced by humankind, the third draws a reader's attention to certain characteristics of GE in terms of its content and methodology (eg. emphasising critical thinking, challenging existing stereotypes, etc.), and the last part is a list of values, skills and attitudes promoted by GE.

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It should be noted here that reaching a consensus on terms and their definitions has been an important step in facilitating co-operation between different entities in Poland. Before 2011, each ministry used a range of different terms and several definitions. For example, the MFA used its own definition of 'development education', the Ministry of National Education used the term 'global education' but did not have a precise definition for it, and the Ministry of Environment used the term 'education for sustainable development'. Civil society institutions also referred freely to several terms with different definitions.

The second chapter of the Report describes basic quality criteria for global education, which was certainly the most hotly debated issue within the process. This was because there was neither any existing expertise in Poland on the issue of quality in GE nor a reference framework within European discourse that could be drawn upon. A key area of discussion centred on whether quality criteria should only be specific to global education or should also include criteria related to quality education more generally. A series of discussions and consultations devoted to that issue took place both before and after the multi-stakeholder conference in 2009, but the final text for the Report was only agreed in the early spring of 2011 within the drafting group. All of the participants involved in the process agreed that this is an area which needs further discussion and that the criteria may need to be reformulated in the future.

The third chapter of the Report provides a description of the new actors in global education in Poland, and clusters all of the major stakeholders according to sector and level of current involvement. It does not, however, make any proposals about how to increase the involvement of those that are less active or to encourage interest where it does not already exist. The chapter also does not prioritise which institutions should be approached or who should be responsible for getting them on board. In this sense, the chapter is most useful as a means of identifying possible partners for the development of new initiatives.

The next chapter is much more precise in terms of its content. It focuses on mainstreaming global education in the formal education sector and outlines a strategic plan for effective implementation of the new global education elements which have been introduced within the official school curriculum. The chapter defines four overall objectives which need to be attained in order to bring global perspectives into the classrooms more systematically. These objectives are:

- Teachers are conscious of the importance and place of global education in the formal education system.
- Teachers have the competences needed to deliver global education.
- Quality tools are available to deliver global education in schools.
- The quality of global education in the formal education system is improved.

Each of the objectives is then broken down into more specific objectives which describe how specific changes can be brought about. This chapter has been used by some institutions as guide for developing projects within the formal education sector.

The final chapter is again more general and is at the same time the only part of the Report which does not correspond with a specific seminar held within the process. It outlines the vision of global education in Poland and consists of a series of recommendations which were developed within the process. These recommendations are:

- Expanding co-operation between institutions involved in global education activities.
- Popularising and promoting the elaborated definition of global education.
- Developing quality standards for global education.
- Establishing an open catalogue of good practice (eg. activities and tools), which may serve as inspiration to people working in global education.
- Establishing a recommendation system for global education materials.
- Building the capacity of institutions involved in global education.
- Increasing the interest of new grantmakers in global education, and enabling a potentially large group of global education actors to participate in grant competitions.

The list of recommendations in the Report only includes those that were agreed by all participants in the process, and therefore does not include all of the suggestions made during the meetings. Some controversial recommendations were omitted to ensure that certain key stakeholders (eg. Ministry of National Education) were not discouraged from signing up to the agreement. One of these, for instance, was a proposition to explicitly prioritise implementation of the new global education elements within the curriculum. This would likely have been viewed unfavourably by the Ministry of National Education as it suggests that efforts so far have been insufficient.

#### ***Assumptions about promoted norms and values***

It is also interesting to ask what kinds of hidden assumptions are present in the discussions of global education within the Report from the Multi-stakeholder Process on Global Education. Certainly, the document has consolidated work within the global education sector (both state and the third sector) and begun a challenging dialogue between the state, educational institutions and NGOs on practical issues concerning international development programmes and the 'high quality' global education programme within the existing curriculum. Nevertheless, only a critical perspective may allow as to effectively negotiate the framing of this thing called 'global education', with its multiplicity of actors and undertakings.

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The document highlights a number of critical insights. First of all, although the very term 'global education' was a compromise between all parties – who in fact used a range of different terms such as development education, education for sustainable development or education for global citizenship – the term 'education' has been left without any reservations. In other words, a critical pedagogy approach which emphasises hidden power relations as part of the learning process has been put aside. Students of global education are viewed as 'recipients' of wisdom deposited in people/organisations/institutions of global education (as per Freire's concept of banking education). Critical thinking and presenting the perspective of the Global South are described in the Report as being amongst the 'especially important' element of global education (Grupa Zagranica 2011: 6). However, we argue that critical thinking is acquired during the process of education, and such thing as a 'perspective of the Global South', if such thing exists at all (by whom? to whom?), is mentioned but without recognising that this is negotiated and changes within diverse contexts. This lack of attention to context may be because Poland is a relative late-comer to long-standing debates about global education and learning. In other countries these have moved from a focus on development aid to awareness raising about global interconnectedness to a current emphasis on the importance of learning and pedagogy in order to 'bring the world into the classroom'.

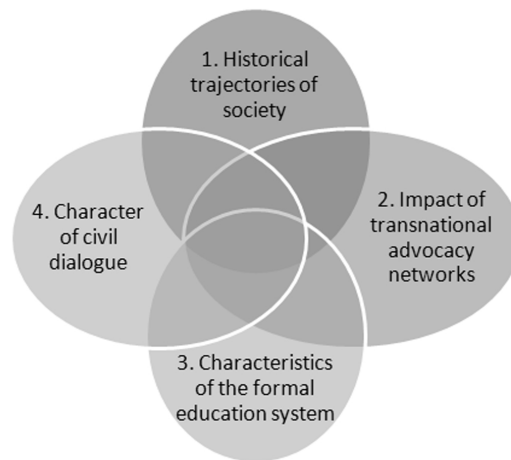
Secondly, the idea of human rights is taken for granted within the Report as a 'global ethic', despite the fact that no ethics is universally accepted or even likely to be. On the contrary, what we observe is ongoing conflict between a diverse range of 'global ethics', eg. a Christian global ethic, a Kantian global ethic, a fundamentalist ethic advocating a particular religious ideal, a Libertarian ethic, etc. As Dower (2005: 103) puts it: '... what generally the advocates of these discourses have in mind is the ethical importance of combating poverty, protecting human rights, creating the conditions of peace, or protecting the environment. This is because poverty, war, environmental damage and the violation of rights all undermine the conditions of human well-being anywhere in the world'. The idea that there is a 'package' of basic universal human rights which can be used as a catalyst to start to talk with others (eg. non-Europeans) remains highly problematic outside the Western world. In that sense, any document based on this idea which is intended to start a dialogue with representatives of different civilisations is highly limited.

Thirdly, the divisions between the so-called Global North and Global South remain striking in the Report. All non-Europeans are put together under one label, 'the Global South', where it is assumed that the conditions of life need to be improved. This is inaccurate, and also implies that discrepancies in wealth and social exclusion are not present in the North. From a European perspective, such labeling is often seen as more 'politically correct' than the old designations of First, Second and Third World, of 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' countries, or of the rich North and the poor South. However, these labels still fundamentally serve to divide, rather than

amalgamate, the diverse approaches, perspectives and experiences of distant people and communities.

### **Interpretation of the Process in Light of Existing Theories**

We suggest that several processes/ phenomena can be considered as important influencing factors that shaped the multi-stakeholder process on GE in Poland. These were: i) the historical trajectory of Polish society; ii) the impact of transnational advocacy networks (TANs); iii) the characteristics of the formal education system, and; iv) the character of civil dialogue (see Figure 1 below).



**Figure 1: Key factors contributing to the shape of the Polish agreement on global education**

#### ***The historical trajectories of Polish society***

The concept of 'trajectory' has been used by Strauss (1985, 1987) and then by Schütze (1990, 1992a, 1992b, 1997) in research which focused on specific situations of social problems, illness or traumatic experiences of war. However, Riemann and Schütze (1992: 92) suggest that the concept may also be understood in a far broader sense as 'social processes, which are structured by a sequence of connected events, which cannot be avoided without paying high costs, continuous breakdowns, expectations and growing, irritating feeling of losing control over the situation'. In other words, trajectory is a basic category that may be applied to any phenomenon perceived as disordered, chaotic and confusing for people who are not able to manage it. Building on this earlier work, we argue that the concept also has a further explanatory value. Namely, in the situation of changing political, economic and civilisation (in Huntingtonian terms) affiliation of a society which is joining the EU. Such 'civilisation upgrading' (Poland being given a better development chances in the EU than as a member of the Soviet camp) is a part of the discourse amongst Polish elites, however a great many people will need a long time to adjust to such dramatic change experienced in their everyday lives. Trajectory may be translated

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then as external conditions ('the West is coming') that change the course of life causing suffering and/or giving individuals and society chances to experience unexpected developments (both negative and positive). Individuals in this process are not treated as creative objects, but rather as objects succumbing to conditions that they cannot control. Schütze (1997: 21) argues that: 'Those who are in trajectory of events are less and less capable of taking actions, they are being pushed by events – it is experienced as overwhelming experience – and are forced to simple responding reactions', as opposed to reflexive / planned/ desired ones.

We therefore apply the concept of 'collective trajectory' as a theoretical framework for explaining the key mechanisms influencing the outcome of the multi-stakeholders process on global education in Poland. In other words, the undertakings of all parties involved have taken place in a specific context of overwhelming and disruptive social changes.

After the Second World War, Poland became a homogenous society in terms of ethnicity and religion for the first time. The factors that contributed to this were: the redrawing of Polish borders, which left many members of ethnic and religious minorities outside the new borders; extermination of Polish Jews during the war; the massive resettlements of Polish Ukrainians (who were mainly Orthodox) and the German minority (mainly Protestant). Therefore, for great many people in contemporary Poland inter-ethnic relations and dialogue constitute a 'theoretical issue' rather than an everyday experience.

Secondly, Poland has neither a colonial past (like the English, Dutch, French or Spanish) nor experience with having complicated relations with former colonies and emigrants from those regions. Although there are refugees and emigrants in contemporary Poland, their problems are marginalised and pushed to the margins of society, making them largely 'invisible' to the general population (Lipowska-Teutsch 2009).

At the same time, the Polish people have significant experience of being 'colonised' themselves, first during partitions and secondly during the Communist regime. As a Soviet satellite-country, Poles experienced a sort of 'development co-operation' within the socialist camp and allies. Domańska (2008) argues that a postcolonial perspective can be seen as an alternative to the dominant paradigm in analysing both Communist time in Poland as well as the 'colonial' aftermath. She acknowledges that there are substantial differences (described by Thompson 2000: 262) between Western and Soviet colonialism. In the former, race was a crucial issue, conquest was inspired largely by profit, and the inferiority of the colonised was defined as such by colonisers, and more importantly, by themselves. In the case of Soviet colonialism, on the other hand, nationality is a crucial dividing factor, the direction of conquest was mainly political and, significantly, the Soviets were perceived by the colonised as less civilised (in the exactly opposite way as in Western colonialism). Finally, the difference between the two is also in the attitude to the colonial legacy.



In the majority of the former colonies of Western countries, the political as well as educational systems have remained largely the same since the time of colonisation, while in Poland there are strong (and sometimes absurd) attempts to get rid of any signs of Soviet influence.

Widespread commitment to the previously mentioned 'civilisation upgrading' – understood as a process of eliminating the Soviet legacy combined with rapid modernisation – explains why there is a widely accepted assumption that Poland needs to 'catch up' with EU policies without critical consideration about whether they are relevant in the national context. For instance, there is no political alternative to the OECD agenda in education. According to many observers (see for instance, Rutkowiak 2010, Potulicka 2011) what we can observe within education at all levels in contemporary Poland is rampant change in which the process of learning is perceived instrumentally and is therefore leading to growing social polarisation (in terms of the life chances of pupils with different economic backgrounds), standardisation, privatisation, marketisation and even to universities becoming 'entrepreneurial undertakings'. If a consideration for global issues is seen as a component of the modernisation package infused into Polish society, it is clear that the historical trajectory of Polish society could have a tangible impact on the situation for global education in Poland. Namely, the uncritical adaptation of a Western package of 'necessary changes' in order to leave behind any remnant of the country's Soviet legacy.

#### ***Impact of transnational advocacy networks (TANs)***

The term transnational advocacy networks (TANs) refers to a wide variety of non-governmental organisations, citizens' organisations and trade unions that operate on the global level (eg. targeting global institutions) in order to bring about change within particular national contexts. Such networks work on a wide selection of issues (such as child labour, gender issues, human rights, poverty) among which education is of increasing importance. Some authors claim that what we can observe in the contemporary world is '... the evolution of an international system of influence in education' (Mundy and Murphy 2006: 992). The mobilising potential of such networks is huge and provides opportunities to launch truly global (in terms of scope and reception) campaigns. For instance, ActionAid's 'Elimu: Education for Life' campaign has focused on building the capabilities of local NGOs and civil society organisations to participate in national education policies. Its objective is 'to increase the participation of poor people in the design and implementation of education policy and practice by organising people around education issues' (Mundy and Murphy 2006: 997).

One example of such networking which has had a significant impact in Poland is the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), and in particular, its Development Education Exchange In Europe Project (DEEEP). By

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repeating the global pattern of mobilising around education issues, CONCORD successfully links education and advocacy, and establishes regular interactions between the EU, European NGOs and national governments, including Poland. Similarly to the process outlined by Boli and Thomas (1997: 172) the emergence and later development of the global education community in Poland (mostly consisting of NGOs) can be seen as a direct consequence of the activities undertaken by DEEEP (via CONCORD) and the North-South Centre.

### **Characteristics of the formal education system**

The Polish education system is centralised, with a national curriculum that is precisely described within regulations issued by the Ministry of Education. Teachers therefore have relatively little room for flexibility. While to a certain extent it is up to the teacher to decide how to teach certain subjects or issues, the overall content of classroom teaching (i.e. what they teach) is decided centrally by the Ministry.

In recent years, the education system has been undergoing important structural changes which aim to eliminate the communist legacy and to help schools adapt to the needs of a changing society. These reforms have been largely concentrated on how schools are run and organised, and so little capacity was left to deal properly with issues related to methodology and content of teaching. A more general reform of the curriculum was started in 2008 (and will not be introduced until 2015). This explains, at least partially, the reasons why the Ministry of Education has been rather inactive, and at best reactive, in the field of issue-based educations, including global education.

At the same time, there is a widespread understanding among educators that state education is the key to mass education. For this reason, the participants in the multi-stakeholder process focused mainly on that area. However, one of the challenges in that process was the lack of a clear division of responsibilities between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the latter being the unquestionable leader of government involvement in global education in Poland.

### **Characteristics of civic dialogue**

The third factor having a significant impact on the agreement on global education in Poland is that civic dialog within the country is influenced by: a generally weak civil society (characterised by so-called projectitis and a limited capacity for involvement in advocacy activities), general dissatisfaction with the outcomes of joint initiatives conducted by the government and NGOs, and an imperfect legal framework for cross-sector initiatives (Górniak 2010). These limitations resulted in representatives of NGOs active in the field of global education taking the lead in the multi-stakeholder process both in terms of content and organisational issues. The initial idea of assuring greater ownership of the process by having dual leadership (with co-chairs) from civil society and the relevant government ministries did not

work out because of a lack of both interest and capacity on the part of the government.

Furthermore, consultative procedures and channels of communication between the state and NGOs, as well as between the three ministries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Environment) involved in the field of global education in Poland are weak and virtually non-existent. This made initiating and upholding the structured and long-term dialogue envisioned as part of the process extremely challenging. In the absence of effective procedures and institutions, the process was therefore fully dependent on the enthusiasm and energy of particular individuals – devoted representatives of both the ministries and civil society. It was their involvement in the dialogue which resulted in creation of the agreement, which in turn established a new platform for further consultation and co-operation.

To sum up, the multi-stakeholder process on global education in Poland was i) deeply embedded in historical trajectories which led the society to address the globalising world (and particularly the EU) in particular ways, ii) highly influenced by the work of transnational networks (for example, through the successful lobbying of Council of Europe's North-South Centre in cooperation with the Polish NGO sector), and iii) rooted in the characteristics of formal education system and peculiarities of Polish civic dialogue.

### **Conclusions**

The emergence of global education in Poland has been a consequence of the broadening scope of Polish foreign policy, and especially the government's adoption of development policy, after 2003. Transnational advocacy networks (mainly represented by the North-South Centre of Council of Europe) have also been directly supporting the government to introduce global education into the Polish education system.

Although the emergence of global education was initiated by European actors and its development has been supported by TANs, the current status of global education in Poland should be seen to be a consequence of co-ordinated initiatives undertaken and conducted by national non-governmental organisations which began to dominate the field beginning around 2006. The multi-stakeholder consensus on global education which is now in place was brought about via a process that was initiated and chaired by NGOs with the primary intention of institutionalising the relationships between global education stakeholders and to therefore strengthen their position within the formal education system. Its content has been determined by: the specific historical trajectories of Polish society, the impacts of transnational advocacy networks, and the characteristics of civil dialogue and education system in Poland.

Reaching the consensus and its official recognition in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding should be seen as a success. In spite of that, it is still too early to

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judge what the consensus will mean for the future development of global education in Poland. It has certainly been a symbolic act which acknowledges the importance of global education, however the real impact of the Memorandum is still dependent on how it will be used by the signatories – both the government and civil society organisations.

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