

Practical implementation of global citizenship education at the Slovak University of Agriculture

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Abstract

Global citizenship is still a relatively new concept concerned mainly with the growing prominence of global and development education issues. The importance of this phenomenon is increasing in the area of education, which must be able to respond to the interconnection and interdependency of the current world. There is an effort to support implementation of global issues in the educational process at all its levels, including higher education where the unsatisfactory situation is most visible. Global citizenship is one of the fundamental pillars of global education. Its aim is to show citizenship from a new perspective. It provides information and knowledge about the modern diversified world where each diversity has its own place and importance, and about the problems that have been expanding worldwide. It should bring people to the understanding that they are part of a global entity and so everyone should accept their place and role in it. For this purpose people have to be educated. Therefore, global citizenship education should form an integral part of educational processes at all levels today. The aim of this paper is to present the current situation of global citizenship education and the process of implementation and emphasizing global citizenship at Slovak University of Agriculture, mainly through the critical analyses of the current situation in this field in Slovakia, and selected activities.

Keywords: global dimension, global citizenship education, global education, higher education

Introduction

The world is deeply globalized and its current interconnectedness hints at inequalities, or even chasms, mainly between developed and developing countries (S'ahel, 2013), resulting in global problems over many years that affect most of the world today. However, people have insufficient information about them.

Therefore, it is important to spread global issues among citizens so that they will be able to see the problems of the world with their causes and consequences.

There is therefore a rising need for global education (GE) and also for global citizenship education (GCE). 'Education in current "global times" requires a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, economic, and historical forces and flows that connect peoples, places, spaces, and world views, and of the difficulties of intervening in complex and dynamic systems' (Andreotti, 2014: 33). When this is lacking, educational outcomes tend to unintentionally reproduce unequal relationships between groups of population, simplistic rationalizations of inequality, and instrumental and ethnocentric imaginaries of global citizenship, diversity, and social responsibility (Andreotti, 2014).

This importance is supported by the fact that the GE and GCE are thought to be one of the answers to the appeals in the new global economic and social environment (Svitačová and Pechočiak, 2014).

The aim of this article is to analyse the implementation of global citizenship and GCE in the educational system at the Slovak University of Agriculture (SUA) through various important activities that are the results of valuable contacts and ties that have been made among SUA and other institutions concerned with GE (educational, but also non-educational). All these will be presented from my position as co-ordinator, active participant in the individual activities, and teacher of selected university courses. Firstly, I will discuss the importance of the global dimension and its place in Slovakia. I will present briefly the gradual expansion of this system in my country that has led to the efforts to implement it also in higher education. I will briefly look at the relationship between GE and Slovak universities in general, which will also draft the potential position of GCE at individual institutions. Then I will consider GCE in relation to SUA and the most important activities and ways through which the GCE has been spreading its educational system, leading to expansion through the university. SUA wants to be a modern school with an educational system adequate for the twenty-first century. It has made progress towards this goal, as illustrated by the examples in this paper. These show how a strong position is being built at SUA and within Slovak university education for these important educational approaches. Finally, I will summarize activities and the development of my university in its efforts. I will also evaluate the situation and look at other future possibilities.

During the analysis I will deal mostly with two terms: 'global education' (GE) as the important approach in current educational processes, and 'global citizenship education' (GCE) as an immovable part of the global education system and therefore the main focus in this paper.

The rising importance of ‘global’

The concept of ‘global’ has been of increasing importance during recent decades, as a result of the deepening of globalization and its growing impact on individual societies. The global dimension can be defined today as something that ‘connects the local, national, and global in a way that people are aware of how their actions have implications for others across the globe’ (McGough and Hunt, 2012: 1–2). The global dimension and GE allow people, through education, to explore the complexity of global issues and the links between their own lives and people, places, or issues around the world.

Global issues penetrate intensively into school curricula in parallel with a still greater need for more intensive implementation of a global outlook into education. Students need to acquire a sense of global citizenship, along with the skills to live and work in any part of the world (Bourn, 2014). GE and the view on global citizenship change education and make its content more relevant to life in the current world and global challenges.

GE is a lifelong educational process, important to all countries. It provides young people with information that facilitates the understanding of social, environmental, economic, and political processes globally, developing critical thinking and gaining the mind-frame of a global citizen. It motivates people to take responsibility and educates towards adopting values of an active global citizen (Slovak NGDO Platform, 2012).

Global citizenship and GCE belong among the most important aspects of education. Global citizenship creates the ability to imagine different forms of people’s future and roles they may play in a newly developing equitable and sustainable world. It helps to equip especially younger generations with new abilities and skills that are required for life today, and help people to raise a sense of responsibility, respect for diversity, fairness, and empathy. People are able to achieve new approaches in thinking and be critically engaged in the complex problems that cross national boundaries.

GCE therefore has an important role in highlighting essential functions of education related to the formation of citizenship with regard to globalization. It prepares young people to deal with the challenges of today’s increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. GCE inspires action, partnerships, dialogue, and co-operation through formal and non-formal education. It applies a multi-faceted approach employing concepts, methodologies, and theories from related fields, including human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development, and education for international understanding. It promotes an ethos of curiosity, solidarity, and shared responsibility (UNESCO, 2014). GCE facilitates the

understanding of economic, social, political, environmental, and cultural processes that affect each country, developing skills and supporting values and attitudes so that people are able to participate actively in solving local and global problems. It encourages people's acceptance of responsibility for the creation of the modern world capable of offering a dignified life according to their visions.

GE and GCE have already been implemented into the educational processes in many countries. However, in Slovakia the level of their implementation (mostly in higher education) is still very low. There is a great need to change it and provide fully-valued education for students in Slovakia.

Global education in Slovakia

In Slovakia, the development of global education had been concentrated mainly in primary and secondary schools. This situation has changed with the adoption of a National Strategy for Global Education (Slovak NGDO Platform, 2012), which included a greater focus on higher education.

The history of GE in Slovakia is quite short and it is strongly interconnected with development aid, with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA) as the main actor, as GE represents an integral part of the Official Development Assistance (ODA). Slovakia has also only been an independent republic since 1993 and was initially a recipient of aid, rather than a donor. The first organizations to be engaged in aid and development therefore only began in the 1990s, leading to the establishment of several important NGOs, such as the Foundation Integra, Pontis Foundation, and Živica, all oriented to development aid (especially in less developed countries) and global issues. These organizations are very important actors in development of GE at schools, universities, and for the public.

At the end of the 1990s the Platform of non-governmental development organizations (NGDO Platform) emerged, representing the most important development organizations in Slovakia today, including those mentioned above. Platform is also one of the founding members of the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD).

The accession to important international organizations also brought big changes. As a member of the European Union (EU), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Slovak Republic stopped being a recipient of aid and became a donor of development assistance under the logo SlovakAid. Also the MFEA established the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (SAIDC) with responsibility for managing development projects oriented to the implementation of GE into existing curricula for all students through formal and non-formal educational methods, and promotes

many other activities and research in this field (SlovakAid, 2015). Important was the establishment of co-operation among the MFEA, SAIDC, Ministry of Education, and other responsible institutions and organizations providing development aid. The main objective was to find a space for GE in the system of lifelong learning and in higher education. In 2011/12 the National Report on Global Education was created (GENE, 2013) and the National Strategy for Global Education for the years 2012–16 was adopted (Slovak NGDO Platform, 2012) also with a focus on higher education. This marked a change, as it focused on the need for implementation of this education at all levels. The focus on higher education is thus greater in the Strategy because there are many gaps in this level and only a few universities themselves had started to develop global issues in their curricula up to that time. In this period the NGDO Platform was also granted the status of an official partner of the MFEA in development policy and co-operation.

GE and all its integral parts, including the concept of global citizenship, are therefore relatively new phenomena in Slovakia, but are responses to the needs of current society. NGOs have contributed greatly as they are clearly aware of the need to raise public awareness about global issues, in order to encourage citizens to be active in this area. Slovak NGOs (mainly the Pontis Foundation and Živica) have created educational projects oriented to GE issues and global citizenship with an effort to raise public awareness in this field. All educational levels are important targets and universities have a specific priority because of the missed years when this level of education was disregarded.

Development in this area in Slovakia is quite fast, but the system of GE is not yet at a similar level to that of other Western countries with stabilized political systems. However, the situation parallels that in other post-communist countries, though the solutions are dependent on each country's context. Today the situation has been gradually changing and Slovakia necessarily has to adapt to the new developing conditions and to the deepened globalization that is clearly visible also in our country, including the more negative aspects, such as the refugee crisis and the fear of terrorism. Although the interconnection with the rest of the world is arguably not as strong as in other Western countries, post-communist countries are less isolated than in previous eras.

As regards governmental actions, steps have been taken to increase the focus on GE, the main ones being the National Strategy for Global Education mentioned above and established co-operation among various governmental and non-governmental institutions. Their projects supported by SlovakAid assist in the preparing of methodical handbooks and didactic materials, films, interactive games and exhibitions, the education of teachers, and workshops. These activities help to create individual courses in GE and incorporate various global topics into existing courses.

Today the approach of Slovakia to GE can be summarized as short intensive efforts to systematize its implementation into school curricula, and either institutionalize it within existing structures or contribute to the creation of new ones. Within Slovak universities today, some have a greater interest in the implementation of GE, with others quite passive and not yet recognizing the urgent need for its incorporation into education. These institutions work briefly on important global topics without connecting them to students' lives.

There are nearly 40 universities in Slovakia, but only one, Trnava University, has a separate department focused on these issues (Department of Development Studies and Tropical Health), and it is the most active in this field. It is involved in many international projects focused on GE, active incorporation into education, and active in the field of development aid. About six other universities (specifically the Technical University in Zvolen, Comenius University in Bratislava, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Technical University of Košice, University of Economics in Bratislava, and Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra) are actively trying to implement this approach into their educational systems with efforts to create a new development study programme in the near future, matching the objectives set out in the national strategy. SUA is one of them. These universities co-operate with the most important Slovak NGOs: Pontis and Živica.

The Pontis Foundation and its role in the implementation of GE at Slovak universities

Pontis has put considerable time and resources into improving the situation of GE and GCE in higher education. As an active implementer of development aid, it is focused on education. As a member of the NGDO Platform it is also an official partner of MFEA in the field of development policy and development co-operation, as well as being the implementation contractor that realizes projects focused on GE supported by SlovakAid. It promotes these issues with an effort to implement GE, global citizenship, and development aid into the educational process (Pontis Foundation, 2015).

The main objective of this NGO is to support GE by raising awareness among university students and the public regarding development issues. It teaches about global responsibilities and local initiatives with a focus on global citizenship. The intention is not only to bring new and high-quality information to university lecturers via selected topics, but to ensure that the information gained is then conveyed to students. It achieves this through teacher training and developing educational materials that give rise to new university subjects and ultimately to new study programmes. It co-ordinates a working group of university lecturers and researchers, and seeks to create a network of active and co-operating experts

dedicated to global issues at Slovak universities (Pontis Foundation, 2015). It is in touch with academics from various Slovak universities and offers them many opportunities to improve their skills and the quality of GE and GCE, such as through international projects, conferences on GE, seminars, workshops, summer schools, open lectures, internships, etc. Pontis is also involved in the UNIDEV project – Development Education in Theory and Practice, together with organizations from Ireland and Cyprus. Many important activities were realized through this project, in which Slovak academics also participated (Pontis Foundation, 2015; UNIDEV, 2015).

There is also a very valuable, but much narrower co-operation between Pontis and two particular universities – the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra and Comenius University in Bratislava. Both are partnership universities in the project called Global University. At the Comenius University the main activities support GE and GCE through various host lectures, preparing of teaching materials for the purpose of further development of teaching and learning at this university, and preparing syllabi and training materials for selected global topics for courses at the Comenius University. Co-operation between the Pontis and SUA is much more intense, as discussed below.

GCE in the global education system and its place at SUA

The concepts of global citizenship and GCE in Slovakia are rarely found (there is little literature about this concept, and it is available mostly only for the academic environment). Therefore, the general population has not heard of it and finds it hard to imagine what it implies. In contrast, in other countries, and within other international organizations, global citizenship already has its own theoretical platform and therefore represents one of the pillars of the global education system.

The concept of global citizenship is not unified and there are multiple interpretations of what it means to be a global citizen. Some describe global citizenship as ‘citizenship beyond borders,’ or ‘citizenship beyond the nation-state.’ Others have noted that ‘cosmopolitanism,’ as a term, may be broader and more inclusive than global citizenship, something like ‘planetary citizenship,’ focusing on the global community’s responsibility to preserve planet Earth (UNESCO, 2014: 14). The different perspectives ‘range from the idea that everyone is a citizen of the globe to the standpoint that in a legal sense there is no such thing as a Global Citizen’ (Young and Commins, 2002: 1).

Global citizenship supports personal respect and respect for others, wherever they live. It encourages individuals to think deeply and critically about what is equitable and just, and how to reduce bad impacts on our planet. Exploring themes of global citizenship helps learners grow more confident in standing up for their beliefs, and more skilled in evaluating the ethics and impact of their decisions (Ideas for

Global Citizenship, 2015). Israel (2013) writes, that a 'global citizen is someone who identifies with being part of an emerging world community and whose actions contribute to building this community's values and practices'. Being a global citizen can signify some internal feeling and self-identification with a certain system of moral values. It is usually understood as a kind of idea that constitutes humankind as one big community, based on understanding, solidarity, co-operation, and mutual help. As global citizens, people should be able to adopt a joint responsibility for the development and running of this global community (Moravčíková and Hanová, 2009).

Deeper ideas about global citizenship go beyond the view that all of us are citizens of the world to the understanding that we have the responsibility not only for one another, or for what we have created, but also for what was given to us – for life on Earth (Špirko, 2011). In this approach, global citizenship is primarily 'a way of thinking and behaving. It is an outlook on life, a belief that we can make a difference' (Young and Commins, 2002: 1).

Young people especially should be motivated for global responsibility and realize that they can influence the world positively. For this purpose it is necessary to develop critical thinking and ability for co-operation. GCE has an important role here, because the most important tool for the forming of full-valued – socialized – citizens is education for citizenship and, today, also for its global dimension.

GCE is quite a wide term and it can be understood as a gaining of knowledge, skills, and understanding of concepts and institutions, which are necessary to become informed, active, and responsible citizens globally, because the concept of social and civil responsibility exceeds national boundaries.

People can make a choice if, and how, to practice global citizenship. But this requires being educated first. Therefore, educators have a unique opportunity and a great responsibility today to help prepare students to be responsible citizens on a global scale, as the future of our planet and all its life forms lies mostly in their hands (Bourn, 2006).

At SUA, educators are also aware of this responsibility and want to adapt their education to new challenges by incorporating global issues into the existing courses, emphasizing the global dimension of citizenship to form full-valued global citizens, and starting with developing new study programmes oriented to GE and GCE. These are the goals of the co-operation with the Pontis Foundation, through specific activities discussed below.

Analysis of GCE activities at SUA

The first activity was the KEGA (Cultural and Educational Grant Agency) project supported by the Ministry of Education, realized at the Faculty of Economics and Management (FEM) SUA. It was a starting point for the development of GCE at this university, bringing valuable results and important lessons, for example the number of contacts that SUA gained (mainly with Pontis and the UCL Institute of Education, London [IOE]). Thanks to this another project has been created reaching the whole university. The project 'Global University III' is supported by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, also bringing positive results through the number of valuable scheduled activities.

The KEGA project

This project, entitled 'Implementation of global development education into education processes at faculties of economics' sparked the main interest of SUA in the area of GCE. It dealt with the main issues of the system of GE and also with the issue of global citizenship as one of its most important parts. Thanks to this project SUA, and some particular departments (mainly the Department of Social Science), has started to deal with global citizenship. The main idea was to develop the critical thinking of students through the appropriate incorporation of individual global issues in the existing curricula of economic faculties, using appropriate methods, with the aim of supporting students' motivation to become actively interested in the problems, risks, and threats of the current world.

This project had a few important objectives. The first was to highlight the importance of GE in the current globalized era (with parallel emphasis on global citizenship as the new rising phenomenon), develop a comprehensive system of this education at SUA, and specify the appropriate methods of its integration. Another objective was to provide students with a wide range of global skills and choose the best forms of incorporation of global issues into education (mainly decide whether it is better to create a new subject, or to use the cross-curriculum character of global issues and implement them into the existing courses). The final objective was to create publications on GE (including the issue of global citizenship), both for teachers and students.

This project represented a big improvement for education at SUA. Publications created, particularly a textbook (Svitačová *et al.*, 2014a), monograph (Svitačová *et al.*, 2014b), and methodological handbook (Šeben Zaťková *et al.*, 2014) represent new available educational tools at SUA (and also at other Slovak universities with a mainly economic focus). A number of valuable contacts were established and various activities such as attendance at the summer school focused on GCE in Dublin, were realized (Kimmage DSC, 2014).

Workshops and consultations led the project participants to the crucial decision that the most appropriate is the incorporation of global issues into the existing curricula accompanied by various trainings, seminars, workshops, discussions, and other interactive and participatory forms, based on co-operation with experts from organizations focused on GE, using various educational methods. This variability is necessary to gain the best explanation of GE issues for students. It develops a wide range of new global skills for participating persons and develops a wide range of human personality, open to new insights and knowledge. All these contributed to the further and deeper interest of SUA in the field of GCE.

Global University III

This project is realized by the Pontis Foundation and is named 'Global University III: Integration of development topics into the system of university education.' It is a GE project with the aim of increasing the capacities of Slovak universities and academics. SUA was chosen as the main partnership university because of its experience and interest in this area from previous activities.

The main objective of this project is the establishment of conditions for the incorporation of global issues into the curricula of Slovak universities. This should be done mainly by developing professional capacities among academics and by raising awareness of Slovak university students for the subsequent institutionalization of GE. Another objective is to encourage active students' and teachers' interest in global issues and global citizenship. Students will be involved in GCE and creatively use their knowledge in this field through various activities (for example, courses, seminars). After finishing this project a new study programme – Development Studies – should be established at SUA.

This project is important in supporting GCE by individual actions. Many valuable activities have been realized. The first is an accredited 'training pilot course on Development Education.' Fourteen academics from SUA participated in its preparation and delivery. The global dimension of citizenship had an important place in almost 14 selected topics. After the end of the course every student received a graduation certificate of the accredited educational programme.

All topics from the pilot course should also represent separate courses of the future development study programme. For this purpose every academic prepared the full course syllabi for individual topics. This activity was interconnected with another – preparing, writing, and teaching of four optional university courses in GE. All optional courses and also separate courses of the future study programme are oriented towards global citizenship.

Another activity important for GCE awareness among students and teachers is the collective book *Development Education* (Team of Authors, 2015) produced by ten academics from SUA. It presents valuable educational material for further development of teaching and learning at SUA (and other Slovak universities), and a basis for subsequent institutionalization of GE at SUA. A chapter focuses specifically on GCE and its practical realization.

As mentioned above, an important project objective is supporting academics in developing new skills and experience. They should be engaged in a deeper co-operation with foreign educational institutions who have an already established tradition of GE through internships and sharing their professional experience. A much needed added value is the establishment of co-operation between Global North and Global South institutions and connecting theory with practice (Pontis Foundation, 2015). Two internships at different Kenyan universities with a tradition of GE were planned for this project, the first of which has already helped academics to gain new expertise and engagement in deeper co-operation with foreign academic institutions.

Important also is sharing experience among Slovak universities. For this purpose six host lectures among the academics from SUA and Comenius University were realized via this project. Open lectures by foreign experts in GE and other voluntary visiting lectures are also available to the students of participating departments (see below).

After the end of this project, with a number of new skills, knowledge, and information in the field GCE, and after the creation of the new study programme, SUA will be one of the most developed universities in Slovakia, which actively implements global issues into education with the support of GCE, and which provides a quality system of GE for students.

Visits to UCL IOE

Two visits were made to UCL IOE, London, and these were very valuable for the development of our understanding of global citizenship. The visits were held primarily at the Development Education Research Centre (DERC) which is a part of UCL IOE.

The first stay was realized as one of the KEGA activities with the financial support of Pontis and SlovakAid and was our first contact with DERC to extend knowledge at the institution where GCE represents the common practice and it was our first real contact with the concept of global citizenship. This phenomenon was previously quite unknown at SUA, but as a result of this visit our department has started to be oriented to global citizenship to a greater extent. This was reflected mainly in the

above-mentioned KEGA publications. After this visit a very valuable co-operation has begun between our institutions, which brought much new information and knowledge about global citizenship and GCE accompanied by a number of practical skills. After the end of KEGA and the start of Global University, GE and all related phenomena, including global citizenship, have to be examined more deeply. We therefore made another visit to DERC at UCLIOE, as we have some similar objectives, such as creating a new development study programme, promoting the value of GCE in the current world, producing and disseminating publications about GE issues, and developing GE practices across teacher training and other educational courses. The second visit was realized within the Erasmus mobility programme and developed the work of the previous visit. However, while the first visit was focused on GE, the second was focused on global citizenship. Global citizenship is supposed to represent an important part of several courses of the development study programme at SUA, therefore it is important to expand knowledge in this area. The main objective of this mobility was, in particular, to acquire a deeper view and understanding of the system of GCE and the ability to implement acquired knowledge in education at SUA actively. I tried to find, examine, and discuss possible ways for effective support of GCE in existing courses at SUA by highlighting the main global issues such as social justice, appreciation of diversity, importance of sustainable development, etc. These objectives were successfully reached through various activities realized during the stay, such as through the study of a broad range of materials and available literature and discussions about how knowledge and skills of GCE can best be realized at SUA. To this end we met with many experts in the field of GCE and PhD students researching in this area, to share information, skills, and knowledge about their experience and practice. Extensive discussions gave us many new insights into global citizenship and significant inspiration as to appropriate methods for the practical realization of GCE. After the stay, learning was shared with other colleagues and also practically integrated into education at SUA.

Both visits represented a great opportunity to discuss various topics of our interest. I gained a greater understanding of GCE, practical advice, and also a number of recommended materials and literature for teachers' and students' further teaching. As a result of this international co-operation, colleagues and I will be able to draw on this highly developed system of GE and GCE to further support more quality global learning at SUA, which can move closer to the modern systems of Western developed countries.

The current situation of GCE at SUA

Global education 'is essential for all to acquire the knowledge and skills to understand, participate in, and interact critically with our global society, as empowered global citizens' (Cabezudo *et al.*, 2010: 8) and global citizenship should lead to greater

justice, sustainability, equity, and human rights for all. Individuals will be able to think and act globally if they feel that they are directly involved and that they are a real part of the global entity where territorial borders are losing their importance. They should understand themselves as global citizens, be aware of the fact that they can actively operate in this world to make a more sustainable place from our Earth and ensure life on it for future generations.

Slovak universities are aware of the responsibility that lies mainly on their educational systems and they want to adapt to the new challenges of the world. Today, we can see contexts connected with global citizenship in curricula of many courses at universities. However, even if students are dealing with global topics, usually the term global citizenship is unknown for them and they are not able to connect it correctly with the system of GE. Having said this, there is the potential in a number of university courses for the practical realization of GCE. When this space was used students would be able to see the topics and taught realities from a new perspective and it would help them to become responsible active global citizens.

We can mark some of the most common subjects that are taught at nearly all study programmes at Slovak universities and that provide a wide space for GCE. The current effort of SUA is also to create a space for GCE in these courses:

- International Relations courses should provide general knowledge for current students without distinction of study programme. In almost every topic the view from a global citizenship perspective could be presented.
- Various environmental courses (for example, Ecophilosophy, Environmental Policy, Environmentalism, etc.), represent appropriate space for GCE and providing knowledge and necessary information about the importance of global citizenship and the view on responsibilities of global citizens in the current world, where the environment is endangered.
- Courses about European Integration Processes include European issues and the first contact with the supranational form of citizenship – European citizenship – and also many important global topics about interconnectedness of the world, global problems, their solutions and attitudes, etc. The global dimension of human life and global citizenship have an important position here too.
- Subjects focused on globalization and its accompanying processes should also include GCE.
- Subjects focused on the political issues, such as Theory of Policy and Political Science, have a certain space for the implementation of GCE and global

dimension of citizenship besides general teaching about the institution of citizenship.

- Many economic courses focused on marketing, management, and economic policy (for example international management, international marketing and financial markets, and other globally oriented economic courses) could look at economic problems through GE. There is also space for teachers to discuss global citizenship in the context of the international economic system and economic problems of the world.

Practical implementation of GCE at SUA

It must be noted that the scope of GCE is wider than a single scheme of work or subject (Oxfam, 2006), as global citizenship is a cross-cutting issue. It should create some sort of moral base that would be implemented within individual existing curricula across the whole educational system, involving students, teachers, parents, governments, and wider society. SUA is just at the beginning of this process. To illustrate our approach I have chosen a few activities involving the phenomenon of global citizenship.

Selected courses for implementation of GCE

At first I decided to implement learning about global citizenship and GCE into the existing courses as a cross-cutting theme, applying to various educational areas and study programmes. I started with standard courses of International Relations (IR), International Relations and Foreign Policy (IRFP), and Theory of Policy (TP), which have a wide space for GCE.

The first step was to find out what my students understand by the term global citizenship. After this short presentations and videos were played to generate discussion on this issue, which was complemented throughout the semester. Some students gained a greater understanding, but most connected mainly to the idea of basic human rights, with the right to live, travel, and sometimes to vote in any country of the world. This would suggest their understanding was mostly inspired by their experience and understanding of European citizenship. Only a few connected global citizenship with global problems and the responsibility of people towards the Earth and the environment.

After this result I decided that the most appropriate way is the combination of various educational methods. Students need to gain the most important information in the classic formal way through lectures and presentations, but it was also necessary to create a space for working with their received knowledge through more interactive and participatory methods, such as in various workshops, seminars, games, etc. They can create their own views and attitudes to these issues, develop their skills and critical

thinking, so, armed with the facts, they can find inspiration, feel emotions, create their own opinions, see the connection with their own life, and see the opportunity for action and change. My courses were divided into the lectures and seminars, so each week I provided theoretical knowledge about the topics complemented with global citizenship insights.

It can be noted that IR and IRFP are courses with the widest place for a global citizenship approach. Because my students had quite uncertain views on this term I had to determine it at first and then emphasize also that all of them have not only rights, but also responsibilities towards the world as global citizens. I included topics about introduction to international problems and describing actors in international relations including the EU, which has a big impact on the development of states and their policies, and also the impact of migration and integration on identities, groups, and communities, and the relationships between them. There were also topics about international law, such as problems of peace and security, and local, national, and global conflicts, and foreign policy, such as the importance of national and international interests, policy, and practice for sustainable development. Finally globalization: its essence and character, global problems arising in the contemporary world and their potential solutions, and the role of diplomacy in the current international system were included.

TP also had significant space for global citizenship through explaining political thinking and the development of political science, describing democratic and undemocratic political systems and links to global problems, and considering parts of the political system where various forms of citizenship are reflected. Also important were relations between politics and the economy, the importance of agrarian and environmental policy, and the system of social policy, describing the nation and minorities in politics, as well as the importance of human and civil rights in the range from local to global (with an emphasis on refusing injustice, inequality, and discrimination), and presenting the role of international relations and globalization.

A large variety of interactive and participatory educational methods were used. Students had to participate and create their own attitudes to individual issues. Methods included: brainstorming, which was mostly used when they had to offer their ideas on given questions; work in pairs or groups using various case studies, where students had to think about solutions to some global problems like representatives of some organizations or states (also using dramatization and role games); panel discussions after students' presentations, accompanied by the question of how the global citizenship view can be visible in their topic; or group discussions about pictures presenting various national and international problems.

Pilot course on development education and four optional courses

Another initiative began with the individual activities of the Global University project. The pilot course on Development Education was divided among 14 academics from SUA and 14 topics: sustainable agriculture and rural development; food safety and food security; small-scale agriculture and farming in rural development; gender issues in rural development and agriculture; population growth and economic development; politics of global inequality; international law and development (a human rights-based approach); multiculturalism; global business, emerging markets, and local development; social responsibility in entrepreneurship in the era of globalization; the world economy and debt; local governance/government financing (in developing countries); regional branding and rural marketing; sustainable marketing and agrarian fair trade.

Global citizenship or GCE did not represent a separate topic as it related to each theme mentioned above. The management of this course was important as it required using a variety of teaching methods, such as role play and similar games, critical reading, brainstorming, and working in groups, with every topic being delivered interactively. Teachers presented topics from various viewpoints and then through interactive and participatory techniques left students to work with received information, for example, to think about possible solutions of migration crises in Europe as leading political representatives; or find the position of individuals in each global issue. The aim was to support students' critical engagement in the issues and consider the role that they could play. It was the first real activity oriented to the teaching of such important global issues in one course. Although the topics were adapted to SUA specialization they covered the most important insights into the global issues presented.

Another significant initiative was realized in parallel with the pilot course. The above-mentioned topics were divided into four optional courses that are currently taught at SUA. These courses were created from the syllabi of the aforementioned 14 future subjects. Four courses (sustainable agriculture in rural development; international relations and globalization; international business and trade; and regional development and marketing) were accredited by the Ministry of Education.

Both pilot course and optional courses combine basic formal methods with more participatory and interactive ones. They consist of important global topics and are necessarily connected with global citizenship.

Other important activities

The new collective book *Development Education*, which was successfully completed by ten participants of the Global University project and co-ordinated by Pontis, was one of the main outcomes of this project. It is a very important tool for both teachers

and students, consisting of ten chapters that are essential in GCE with regard to the specialized focus of our university: (1) global business, emerging markets, and local development; (2) international law and development; (3) social responsibility in entrepreneurship in the era of globalization; (4) the status of rural women in ensuring food security; (5) small-scale agriculture and farming; (6) food safety; (7) global citizenship education; (8) sustainability marketing and agrarian fair trade; (9) anthropology of development; and (10) sustainable agriculture. These constitute important content for future learning.

Each chapter provides opportunities for teachers to present issues in an engaging way and lead students to be practically involved in education. Each chapter contains two parts: a wide range of theoretical knowledge on every issue and a methods section that includes examples and inspirations for the active teaching of each topic. As GCE has a separate chapter, our students and teachers are able to receive adequate information, knowledge, and views on this topic. In spite of its specialized focus this book is arguably useful for all types of universities.

Host lectures took place (three academics from SUA had lectures at Comenius University and vice versa) and open lectures (three foreign experts on GE from Zambia, Kenya, and the United Kingdom had a series of lectures at SUA). There were also seminars and other educational activities (such as training sessions, workshops, etc.) by experts from other educational institutions and various foundations and organizations (also foreign) dealing with global and development issues. These activities were very valuable and all supported the interests of people in global problems and also co-operation between the university and these organizations.

Another important objective of the project Global University under development currently is the creation of new study programme *Development Studies*, which is one of the objectives of the national strategy and other projects in Slovakia. This study programme will be derived from the 14 topics above, transformed to full courses with their own syllabi, where global citizenship is a key element.

Summary

During all these activities we used various socio-educational methods, techniques, and didactic tools. Generally their application depended on the creativity of the teacher. Typical methods used in GCE and the teaching were various discussion techniques, simulation games, role play, work in groups, brainstorming, critical analysis, case studies, interactive and co-operative learning, demonstration methods, integration methods, and overall assessment, which allow students to see the taught issues from different perspectives.

As the courses are available for foreign students there is an opportunity to exchange perceptions of global citizenship with them. Most come from other countries in the Global North with a tradition of GE, but there are also students from the Global South who provide interesting information about the problems of their country, and thereby extend the view on the global problems and motivate others for volunteer activities. In this approach, discussions about global citizenship are beneficial both for students and teacher. Our students and academics have many possibilities to gain knowledge in this area also through study stays and internships, as GE and GCE issues are already embedded in many partner foreign institutions.

There are many other possibilities, thanks to the projects, contacts, and established ties. These include the opportunity to participate in various workshops and training sessions realized by NGOs, or universities in co-operation with NGOs, focused on GE and GCE, such as participation in a series of workshops with world-renowned figures in GE organized by the Technical University in Zvolen as part of the Živica national project supported by SlovakAid.

Academics must understand the importance of global topics and must want and be able to implement them into their teaching. These are the new demands for the teachers in SUA and other Slovak educational institutions (Šeben Zařková, 2014). For this purpose much attention has been paid to preparing 'global teachers' at SUA, with many opportunities and training provided. A successful approach to global issues and GCE requires academics open to exploring global problems and their interconnectedness with global citizenship, and openness towards the new resources that can be used in more quality teaching (Svitařová and Mravcová, 2014).

All of these activities and efforts illustrate the serious intent of SUA in relation to GE and GCE, for the benefit of teachers and students, which is also reflected in other universities.

Conclusions

Global citizenship represents a very important phenomenon in which young people must be educated today. GCE needs to inform about various global issues that trouble the world, and the fact that their global nature can affect every country. People will meet these problems more often in real life. Therefore younger generations especially have to be led to the feeling that everyone represents a real part of the world community. Global citizenship shows them that each individual has the power to change things, both positively and negatively, and everyone has the possibility of choice as to how to respond. GCE creates a new kind of social ideal that gives a missing sense of social and human responsibility to people and their actions.

Understanding of the interconnectedness with the global issues is still lacking, mainly as a result of inadequate preparation through education. In school there are a lot of challenges and implications. SUA is aware of this and wants to address it, through the implementation of GE and GCE into its existing and future study programmes, and by using a number of methods that will encourage students to keep questioning and seeking solutions.

All the activities described in this article are presented from my position as co-ordinator of the Global University project for SUA, from my position as an active participant in visits to the IOE, and also from my position as a teacher of selected university courses. All these were valuably supported through the co-operation with other universities and organizations. All the activities also helped to open the insights of other Slovak universities to the issue of GCE, which will help them support a more intensive integration of GE and GCE mainly through sharing professional experience.

The impact on students has been to generate interest and a sense that they can act globally with some positive impact, leading to an impulse to continue and intensify work in this area and implement GCE into other courses at various departments of the SUA. For example, the Department of Social Sciences has prepared for the integration of views on global citizenship and GCE to the courses of Ecophilosophy, Political Philosophy, Environmental Policy, European Integration Processes, Business Ethics, and Rural Sociology. SUA wants to continue in the creation of more quality education and encourage the creation of fully valued and responsible global citizens (both among students and teachers), after the Global University is complete, through new projects, focused specifically on the issue of GCE, and by stronger co-operation with other Slovak and foreign educational institutions and organizations.

This article provides insight into issues of implementation of GCE at the university, in a country that until only recently was a recipient of official development aid. I looked at the process of slow integration of GE into the individual areas of education in Slovakia and its gradual penetration into the system of higher education at SUA. There is still a long way to go to solve these issues at SUA, but there are very good future prospects, mainly thanks to the active interest of the university in dealing with global issues and GCE. These activities moved SUA closer to educational institutions with already established traditions of GE and GCE. Through experience, realized actions, and contacts, SUA can continue in its plans to provide a quality system of global education comparable to foreign developed universities. For now, it can be an example for many other educational institutions not only in Slovakia.

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