



by Xavi Baro

EDUCATION WILL BE GLOBAL OR WILL NOT BE

GLOBAL EDUCATION?!...

Why do we need to read an article concerning Global Education?... well... why not? In these few lines I will raise some of the concerns regarding Global Education, and why education, and especially non-formal education, should tend to provide a global approach on skills, knowledge and attitudes.

One of the concerns regarding the articles in magazines like Coyote is how to attract the attention of readers in order to get reactions to the subject. In this article I will propose to you a diverse mix of philosophy of the world, ethnography, interculturality, politics and training... the kind of discussion that a bunch of trainers can have in a pub. And I am expecting reactions...

Global Education, why, what, how?

Probably the first question that arises when dealing with this subject is: Why the hell do I need Global Education? That's probably the question that trainers, youth leaders and project managers will be obliged to answer if really we want the message to go through.

And in my opinion there is not a single shiny answer, or a golden formula that solves this question but, as trainers, while dealing with a diversity of training courses on intercultural learning, conflict transformation, human rights education... who has not faced the challenge to deal with issues that go beyond the strict borders of Europe (the wider Europe)?

This is probably very much linked with an issue called globalisation. I am not going to discuss or describe it, but in my perception the world has grown smaller! (and that's not a nonsense). Even if we can disagree on the definition, the causes or the consequences, we should at least agree that globalisation is not a matter of faith, it is a fact.

As trainers, youth leaders and active young people, we have the choice to address what kind of globalisation model we want. Global Education could be the tool for that and for becoming "full" global citizens.

Believing in this, in October 2005, a group of courageous trainers from the Youth Forum Pool of Trainers met during the University on Youth and Development to discuss about the relevance of Global Education. (The University on Youth and Development, which takes place every year in Mollina, Spain, in the Euro-Latin American Youth Centre (CEULAJ),

is a space for debate, training, exchange of experiences and affirmative action concerning Global Cooperation, gathering around 200 young leaders and trainers every year during one week). And we did indeed! We even came up with a first draft definition to be used in our youth work, and to initiate a discussion at a broader level.

Due to the complexity of the concept, we decided to split the definition into four paragraphs with a specific approach: **awareness, content, action and methodology (or ACAM)**. Our first draft ACAM definition of Global Education we came up with looks like this and should serve as a basis upon which to build in the future:

Global Education raises awareness of world realities and develops an understanding of its interdependence
[AWARENESS]

Global Education is understood to encompass Development and Cooperation Education, Human Rights Education, Sustainable Development Education, Peace Education and Intercultural Learning; being the global dimensions of Education for Citizenship
[CONTENT]

Global Education enables people to develop empathy, a sense of belonging to the global community and responsibility towards bringing about a world of a greater justice, solidarity, equality of opportunities and universality of human rights
[ACTION]

Global Education should be implemented through complementary Formal and Non-Formal Education.
[METHODOLOGY]



As agreed by the YFJ Pool of Trainers subgroup meeting in the University of Youth and Development 2005; based on the Maastricht Declaration on Global Education 2002; developed at the international meeting of Global Education Week national coordinators in Cyprus 2001.

**“Caminante, son tus huellas
el camino, y nada más;
caminante, no hay camino,
se hace camino al andar
Antonio Machado (1875-1939)”**

As the great Spanish poet said: There is not a ready path, we make our path by walking. Let's start our walk.

And then comes the next question.

► **How do we “do” Global Education ?**

What can we do as trainers to implement Global Education ? Trainers can probably “do” lots of things, some more complex than others. Together with my pool of trainers colleagues we raised some of them :

- Addressing the question “what is Global Education?” and pointing out that a topic is part of Global Education raises awareness on the issue, and brings the topic into the global sphere.
- Discussing about globalization and having a global view on an issue, reflecting on our sense of belonging to a world community.
- Raising awareness about the interdependence of the topics and referring therefore to the responsibility of individuals.
- Reflecting on the possibilities for action development at the local level.
- Reflecting on the role of power (cultures – broad meanings) in defining the reality we are living in.
- Exploring our own powers for creating changes: we are not only spectators of the process, but actors who are capable of changing it.

- Keeping in mind the threats of ethnocentrism and cultural relativism (different perceptions, Euro-centrism)
- Introducing good examples and good practice about dealing with global issues in youth work.
- Underlining that Global Education is for everybody as we all are citizens of the global community.
- Promoting critical thinking, and not being afraid of the global dimension.
- Exploring global issues on local level, searching for links with interdependence.
- Keeping in mind that it is difficult to address all aspects of Global Education in one event/activity.
- Adapting methodologies and methods that we use in a global perspective.
- Developing new methodologies and methods in the subjects that have been neglected by European youth work until now.
- Completing our training activities and courses with global meta-reflections.
- Promoting cooperation with other organisations not directly linked with education, but dealing directly with the issues addressed by Global Education: cooperation organisations, environmental watchdogs, human rights activists, and social movements. They all should be necessary partners in Global Education.

Is it necessary for developing Global Education to have a big budget to invite partners from Kalahari, Patagonia and Tasmania? Obviously it would be extremely interesting to ensure diversity, but my point is that Global Education starts next door, in our neighbourhood. Surprised? I don't think so. I would even suggest adopting the word Glocal Education, understood as local youth work addressed from a global perspective.

That is a theoretical presentation on how Global Education could work ideally, but how does it really work? Without waiting a long time, I had the chance to test it in practice (at least partially).





► The Practice :

What are an agnostic Catholic, a Sunni Muslim believer and an orthodox Christian doing in a lost forest house? That could be the beginning of one of the famous stereotyping jokes; but it has a deeper sense. Ljubov Lissina from Estonia, Taoufik Louzari from Morocco and I, together with the support of other trainers, met to prepare a training course addressing Human Rights Education in the Mediterranean area; but this time we wanted to get a touch of Global Education inspired by the tenth anniversary of the Euro Mediterranean Declaration of Barcelona, the Globalisation event in Strasbourg, and the recent World Youth Festival of Barcelona.

In November 2005 in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean and Human Rights Education programme of the Catalan National Youth Council (CNJC), in a project supported by the Youth programme of the European Commission and the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe, a Training course “Building Bridges for Human Rights Education” brought together youth leaders and educators from Mediterranean Europe and Maghreb. Several National Youth Councils on the Mediterranean basin (French, Portuguese and Italian forum) as well as youth organisations from the south Mediterranean shore, were partners in this project. Even if, at first sight, the purpose of the course was not to develop Global Education, a deep insight will show how, according to the ACAM definition, the issues addressed and how the issues were addressed clearly fitted with what we described as “Global Education”.

During the course process we became aware of a number of challenges that Global Education brings along with it. From the very beginning, the multicultural group dynamic (team and participants) allowed amazing “discoveries”.

What appeared throughout the 10 days of the course were issues regarding the current situation in the area (Euro-Mediterranean), but very interconnected with developments in a wider geographic perspective. We welcomed controversies and discussions about theories on alliance or clash of civilizations, and we had the chance to explore differences in understanding of the world, behaviours and core values. As an example from the course; for “me” from “my humanistic” perspective, the basis of Human Rights is the Universal Declaration, an utopia made reality by and for humans beings.

However that’s not the perception for large numbers of the world population (and several participants) who consider that the main document protecting Human Rights is the Koran, or the Bible, or Torah, or...

As a trainer in Global Education, while promoting discussion and questioning and always challenging the “established facts”, I should underline the threats regarding ethnocentric perspectives or cultural relativism. And that’s not always easy. To foster these discussions, methods and

methodologies had to be adapted and new ones created. Several activities were concluded with global meta-reflections, through reflecting on our sense of belonging to a world community. That was specifically done by underlining the interdependence of cultural, social, economic, political, and environmental issues referring therefore to our responsibility as individuals.

In a second stage of the course we promoted critical thinking and explored our own powers for creating changes: youth as actors of change. **Since citizenship is the contribution to development of the community, it becomes global when the community is a global community.**

Some inspiration for the “Global walk”

**“We have to
BE the change
we wish to SEE
in the world”**

Mahatma Gandhi

And in this exploration of global citizenship important open questions were raised: What are the limitations and the possibilities for action at the local level? How to Glocalise education? What are the interdependent links between local and global issues?

In order to support our course we also invited representatives of other organisations dealing directly with the issues of Global Education (cooperation organisations, Human Rights activists). New perspectives were especially relevant in providing a general framework and addressing deeper discussions.

At the end of the course a number of concerns arose. Historically, “Westerners” (if that concept really exists!) have had a specific perspective of the world, not always in concordance with the perceptions of other inhabitants of the planet. For instance, regarding the vision of the Muslim world, we have “Orientalism”, the stereotyping and judgement of “the others” in relation to “us” and “our” ideals and fears. Orientalism is alive today among us, and it is used to justify dominance over “less-civilised others”.

In the same way, while addressing Global Education we should be very much aware of its dangers. **Global Education needs a shared discussion with trainers from other parts of the world;** only from this interaction will we ensure that it is “really global”.

►Keep walking...

Globalisation is probably at the root of lots of challenges we face in our day-to-day work, and Global Education can help, at least, to uncover these roots, to make them visible. The possibilities of non-formal education in addressing global issues, in raising awareness, in challenging perceptions and in developing attitudes and critical thinking are impressive. Let's use this potential! Our colleagues from South America, the Mediterranean basin and other parts of the world have started to walk. Let's make a path together, for the sake of the globe.



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