

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



EUROPEAN UNION



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Information sheet YOUTH AND THE WORLD

LATVIA



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1. Implementation of a new field of action: “Youth and the World”

The field of action Youth and the World of EU Youth Strategy aims at enhancing young people’s participation and contribution to global processes of policy-making, implementation and follow-up on issues such as climate change, UN Millennium Development Goals, human rights, etc. It also supports young people’s cooperation with regions outside of Europe.

Development cooperation is based on principles which are established in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Millennium Declaration as well as many other UN documents. The overarching goal of development cooperation is to help countries achieve long-term social and economic development, ensuring peace and security in the world. Development/ global education policy is a multi-disciplinary policy which is created through cooperation of government institutions, NGOs, lecturers and researchers at institutes of higher education, mass media representatives, development cooperation professionals and development volunteers.

Latvia’s experience in development cooperation is relatively recent. The conceptualization of global processes in development has taken place in three separate strands.¹

I Education on Human Development – emerged out of the historical support by the UNDP Latvia (1991-2005) for promoting human development.

II Education for Sustainable Development – Latvia’s work on sustainable development has primarily taken place through the Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development with UNESCO Latvian National Committee and the Ministry of Education and Science which have signed a cooperation agreement to work toward the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014). The Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development has since the renewal of independence worked closely with the NGO sector to promote public awareness of environmental sustainability. UNESCO LNK and the Ministry of Education and Science also have close cooperation in the Education for All initiative.

III Development Education – the concept of development education grew and gained credence in Latvia upon EU accession. At the forefront was the work done by GLEN Latvia (Global Education Network), The Education Development Centre, the Education Initiative Centre and Latvian Adult Education Association from 2004 when these organisations and others gathered to establish the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation. Cooperation with other EU member states on development education was strengthened through the Project DEEEP (Development Education Exchange in Europe Project) and its coordinating role of the Development Education Forum.

¹ Report on the National Conference on Global/ Development Education in Latvia, 6 November 2009 – <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/JMA/Latvia-REPORT.pdf>

2. Awareness raising on Global issues

2.1. Promotion of Global Education

Global Education:

In Latvia global education has been synonymous with development education and is understood as an active learning process, founded on values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and co-operation that helps create an understanding in society and promotes the participation of individuals and organisations in solving local and global development challenges.

A deeper understanding of development issues, for example, global climate change, poverty reduction, the sustainable use of energy resources is necessary so that individuals start recognizing themselves not only as citizens of Latvia and the European Union, but also as global citizens, who base their decisions on the values of solidarity, equality, inclusion and co-operation. Moreover, a person with knowledge of development issues is better able to participate in finding solutions for development challenges.²

Is there any national/regional policy document which lays the legal basis for the promotion of Global education?

On August 6, 2007 representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation initiated a strategy seminar on development education. The participants of the seminar concluded that significant action must be taken in the next eight years in order the citizens of Latvia gain necessary knowledge and skills in development education. Work must take place in formal and informal education, in educating political decision makers, and the mass media should be encouraged to put global development issues on their agenda.

On April 3rd, 2008 representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NGOs approved the *Development Education Policy*. The government has never officially adopted this document. Nevertheless, the document has been used by the non-governmental sector as a framework for development education activities.

Goal of development education policy is to ensure that by 2015 the people of Latvia have the necessary combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes so that:

1. individuals understand the effects of their actions on development in the world and locally, and act individually or by organising themselves in groups in order to promote development;
2. Latvian citizens, as decision makers in international and national institutions make policy decisions that promote development.³

² Key Findings and Recommendations from the Country Reports on Global Education, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe -

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/Resources/Publications/Summary_Country_Reports_GE_Seminars2011.pdf

³ Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015 - <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/JMA/Latvia-DE-policy.pdf>

To achieve Latvia's development education policy goal, during the period between 2008 and 2015 in the policy document it is set to:

1. promote the inclusion of development education in both formal and informal education, and create opportunities for the use of development knowledge in practice;
2. promote the inclusion of development topics on the agenda of the media;
3. promote the level of knowledge of political decision makers, civil servants and opinion leaders on development issues.⁴

How is Global Education promoted?

Schools – Satellites for Development Education

In year 2009 NGO Education Development Center in partnership with NGO GLEN Latvia (Latvia) and NGO Leeds Development Education Center (UK) implemented two years project Schools – Satellites for Development Education. The project was financed by the European Commission within the programme Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development - Public Awareness and Education for Development in Europe and co-financed by Soros Foundation Latvia.

Objectives of the project were:

- to create public awareness of development issues among school educators and young people thus promoting society that is informed about the development issues;
- to promote active understanding (changing attitudes) and active participation in global issues aiming at fairer relations between developed and developing countries;
- to implement development education activities in the formal and informal education agenda of Latvia;
- to facilitate the increase of the quality of development education.⁵

Main project themes included development education and development cooperation (coherent development cooperation), globalization and global interconnectedness, social justice, global responsibility and solidarity, migration and intercultural relations, sustainability and fair trade, human rights, global citizenship, environment and climate change.

Within the framework of the project development education winter schools in Latvia have been organized for getting to know different angles of development education and development cooperation, to learn how to work with development themes in schools and to develop ideas about particular activities and initiatives in their local environment. Informative and educational materials about development education have been elaborated.

Promotion of the Integration Support System for Third-country Young Nationals

The project Promotion of the Integration Support System for Third-country Young Nationals - has been realized during year 2012 by the Ministry of Education and Science within framework of the European Third-country National's Integration Fund Programme of 2012. Its objective was to

⁴ Development Education Policy of Latvia 2008-2015 - <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/JMA/Latvia-DE-policy.pdf>

⁵ The website of the project – <http://www.skolaskasateliti.lv/en/projekta-ideja/>

provide information and individual support to young third-country nationals, who are residents of Latvia – pupils and students, so that they could better understand the cultural environment of Latvia, become friends with the local youth and feel secure and satisfied with life in Latvia.

Within the framework of the project, the youth policy portal www.jaunatneslietas.lv has been developed, which currently gathers not only the most recent information about youth policy and youth opportunities, but has also become an interactive online support and information resource to the young third-country nationals in English and Russian.

The portal www.jaunatneslietas.lv is created in a youth friendly and comprehensible language with an opportunity to learn Latvian lexicon, by using English-Latvian and Russian-Latvian dictionary of phrases available in the portal in 13 thematic directions. The portal www.jaunatneslietas.lv has created a special section “Youth & The World” for young third-country nationals, by gathering the most important information about Latvia in order to become more familiar with it; previously created methodological and informative materials are available here, that can be useful not only for young people, but also for support personnel, which is daily working or encountering with young third-country nationals.⁶

Global Dimension in Formal Education

The project Global Dimension in Formal Education initiated by the Education Development Centre is implemented in year 2012 and financed by Soros Foundation Latvia. The objective of the project is to improve knowledge and skills of education experts and to develop values and attitude based on development/ global education theories and practices introducing them in schools practices in Latvia.⁷ Within the framework of the project, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science development/ global education themes will be elaborated to include them in learning process at schools and development/ global education learning programmes will be elaborated.

What are the most tackled aspects of Global Education?

The main themes of global education in Latvia are:

- Justice in the world
- Sustainable environment
- Peace
- Intercultural communication
- Human rights

What are the main stakeholders in the field of Global Education?

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken the first steps in implementing national development co-operation policy including development education. It supported awareness-raising on Latvia's development co-operation as well as development education. In 2007, it even held an NGO grant competition for Development Education projects. Due to the economic crisis, the Ministry has

⁶ Information about the project in the web portal of Youth Issues – <http://www.jaunatneslietas.lv/en/youth-world>

⁷ Information about the project - <http://www.iac.edu.lv/projekti/globala-dimensija-formalaja-izglitiba/>

significantly cut its bilateral development co-operation and development education financing. It is also revising the Development Co-operation Programme. In spite of these financial cutbacks, the general attitude of the Ministry towards global education initiatives is seen to be very supportive.

At the forefront for promoting global education on the part of civil society is the work carried out by GLEN Latvia (Global Education Network), The Education Development Centre, the Education Initiative Centre and the Latvian Adult Education Association. In 2004, they, together with other organisations, established the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation which nowadays unites 28 NGOs.

Is there any report/ survey available on Global Education and young people in your country? What is their focus and what are the main outcomes?

In year 2008 the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation carried out the study on development education issues in curriculum of basic education and general secondary education.⁸ The outcome of the study shows that directly development education is included in teaching subjects as geography, history and economics where social, political, economic matters are taught in link with national and international processes. By teaching development education mostly awareness raising approach is used, just in several cases certain attitude is encouraged, and very rarely – calling for certain action. From all development education themes most clearly visible are environment protection and development issues.

Within the project Schools as Satellites in Development Education three studies on awareness of development education issues was carried out in 2010 and 2011.⁹ Survey shows that absolute majority – 95% of respondents of the survey assessed that it is important to be informed about international development issues. During the course of the project implementation awareness of direct and indirect target groups about global education issues has improved significantly – proportion of those who considered themselves as well informed had risen for 23% in total (in March 2010 – 4%, in October – 22%, in May 2011 – 27% already). Within the survey respondents were asked to write in free form what in their opinion is development or global education. The most frequent answers have been the following: about global development (13%), general education (10%), about global problems (6%), understanding of global processes (6%), and sustainable approach to life (5%). Respondents gave their self-assessment for awareness of different development education aspects. In respondents' mind, they are aware the most about climate issues (73% assessed it as fully or very well informed) and migration (72%). Respondents gave positive self-assessment slightly less for awareness about issues of impact of globalisation on life of people (59%), international cooperation (59%), international security (59%) and global trade (58%). The most proportion of negative self-assessment of awareness is observed for issue on sustainable development aspect – 39% in total assess that they are incompletely informed about it or are not informed at all.

⁸ Report of the study - http://lapas.lv/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/ai_Lv_izglitiba_sistema.pdf

⁹ Report of the study – http://www.skolaskasateliti.lv/files/attistibas_izglitiba_petijuma_ataskaite_06_2011.pdf

2.2. Young people and sustainable development

What are the relevant initiatives/ projects at regional/ national level encouraging sustainable consumption and production with young people?

NGO homo ecos: carried out Climate Leadership Workshop in which 23 young people took part who wanted to look for new creative ideas for environment and climate. During the workshop climate issues were discussed and new ideas were created for campaign Moving Planet. Besides that an international youth exchange project Speak for Nature, and a project Responsible Youth were implemented aiming to raise youth awareness on environment issues and facilitate their involvement in environment protection.¹⁰

NGO Radi Vidi Pats (*Create Environment Yourself*) is situated in one of the largest cities of Latvia – Liepaja and its main priorities are environmental education and intercultural learning for young people of the city. To reach these goals various projects are carried out and consist mainly of youth exchange issues based on the nature or environmental theme. These exchanges are international or local matter.¹¹

Is there any report/ survey investigating the awareness of environment issues among young people in your country? What are the main outcomes?

There is no study carried out about awareness of environment issues among young people in Latvia.

Is there any report/ survey investigating the civic engagement related to environment issues among young people in your country? What are the main outcomes?

The study on social and political activities of young people in Latvia was carried out in 2007 after the order of the Ministry of Children and Family Issues¹². The outcome of the study shows that young people engaged themselves most often in cleaning works of surrounding area/ environment among other social and political involvement activities. However this study gives only general overview. There is no particular and specific data about youth involvement in environment protection activities though.

2.3. Young people and human rights

Is there any report/ survey investigating the civic engagement related to global human rights issues among young people in your country? What are the main outcomes?

Up to now no such study has been carried out in Latvia.

¹⁰ More information about initiatives is available on the website of NGO homo ecos: - <http://www.homoecos.lv/>

¹¹ More information about initiatives is available on the website of NGO Radi Vidi Pats – http://www.radividipats.lv/?page_id=6&lang=en

¹² Report of the study – http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/jaunatne/petijumi/Jauniesu_socialas_un_politiskas_darbibas_izpete_Latvija.pdf

3. Cooperation with third countries in the field of youth

3.1. Agreements and areas of cooperation

Are there any agreements on cooperation with countries/ regions outside Europe in the field of youth?

In order to facilitate cooperation in the field of youth among Latvia and countries outside Europe, within bilateral international agreements concluded by the government or the Ministry of Education and Science scholarships are foreseen for students from Latvia and partner countries for studies, research work in education institutions or research institutions, as well as for taking part in language and cultural summer schools. Youth mobility takes place also within different international projects or bilateral cooperation agreements concluded by education institutions.

In years 2011 till 2015 Eastern Europe partner countries and Central Asia countries are set as priority regions for development cooperation policy in Latvia. The main interest reasons for young people of Latvia to cooperate with these countries are similar cultural history experience and democratic society development processes.

Cooperation in the field of youth policy and/or youth research

Cooperation initiatives between Latvia and countries outside Europe take place within various mobility programmes offered for young people for studies, research work or for voluntary work (please see chapter 3.2. for more information about these mobility programmes).

Existing contacts and support to the development and promotion of youth work on other continents

In the framework of lifelong education programme of Latvia scholarships have been granted for studies, trainings or for gaining work experience abroad, as well as for projects to improve quality of education. Within Erasmus Mundus programme it is possible to take study courses in various partner education institutions in countries outside Europe. In education year 2011/2012 eleven students of master courses participated in this programme.

Youth in Action is one of the most significant instruments for facilitating youth mobility. In years 2007-2011 275 young people participated in this programme in countries of Eastern Europe and Caucasus region, 63 young people participated in this programme in countries of Southeast Europe countries and 44 young people – in countries of the Mediterranean Sea region.

38 organizations of Latvia participate in the largest EuroMed organization network Anna Lindh Foundation that offers information on cooperation possibilities with countries of the Mediterranean Sea region, organizes events to facilitate intercultural dialogue between Latvia and EuroMed countries and periodically announces grant tenders.

Cooperation in the field of youth between Latvia and countries of the Mediterranean Sea region is facilitated within the programme EuroMed Youth IV that offers possibilities for youth exchange, voluntary work or training courses or network development events in any of EuroMed countries.

3.2. Support measures for young people

What are the opportunities offered to young people to explore and enhance global understanding by going abroad such as volunteering and youth exchange programmes)?

There are several EU programmes available to facilitate mobility of young people of Latvia, such as Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, Jean Monnet, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, Culture and Europe for Citizens, as well as, Youth in Action. Moreover, there is possibility to participate in the EU mobility programme whose focus is collaboration with countries of South-East Europe, East Europe, region of Caucasus, South Mediterranean Sea and Africa.

Since year 2006 there is a special programme created for collaboration between Latvia and Japan to facilitate exchange of experience among young people of both countries.

Furthermore, there is available a Nordplus Youth Education Programme within which intercultural communication is promoted among Baltic and Scandinavian countries.

Promotion of youth entrepreneurship and employment opportunities with regions/ countries outside of Europe

International NGO AFS Latvia carries out intercultural programmes within which young people of Latvia have possibilities to go abroad for working voluntary work in countries outside EU.

4. Participation of young people and youth organisations to policy making on global issues

Have young people and youth organisations been given political and financial support to be involved in the policy regarding dialogue and cooperation on regional and global issues? How?

There are several involvement and participation mechanism for young people to express their point of view on global issues. In order to facilitate youth involvement in the decision making process, the Consultative Council of Youth was established whose aim is to facilitate development and implementation of youth policy in Latvia and involvement of young people in decision making process.

Furthermore, the structural dialogue tool is available ensuring possibility for young people and politicians to discuss problematic matters at national and international level. Within this dialogue 'Coffee with Politicians' is organized where young people and politicians meet at coffee/ tea table to talk about particular topics put forward and listen each other's point of view.

Young people are encouraged to involve themselves also in various non-governmental organizations and in voluntary work thus facilitating participation of youth in social and political processes in Latvia.

Is there any report/ survey investigating young people's participation in campaigns regarding global climate change/ global warming, development aid or human rights? What are the main outcomes?

Up to now no such study has been carried out in Latvia.

Is there any report/ survey investigating young people's participation in non-governmental organisations active in the domains of global climate change/ global warming, development aid or human rights? What are the main outcomes?

Up to now no such study has been carried out in Latvia.