

# GLOBAL EDUCATION AS A WAY OF REINFORCING THE PROCESS BY WHICH A SOLIDARITOUS AND JUST WORLD IS BUILT

MAŁGORZATA KANIEWSKA

Faculty of Social Sciences

Alcide De Gasperi University of Euroregional Economy

ul. Sienkiewicza 4, 05-410 Józefów, Poland

e-mail: gochakaniewska@gmail.com

MARCIN KLIMSKI

Faculty of Christian Philosophy, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

ul. Wóycickiego 1/3, 01-938 Warszawa, Poland

e-mail: m.klimski@uksw.edu.pl

**ABSTRACT:** Global education is a part of civic education and upbringing that contributes to their scope through the better understanding of various phenomena and global interdependencies that it affords. It thus represents a response to globalisation processes that has as its goal the development of critical thinking skills in schoolchildren from an early age, with a view to stereotypes and prejudices being combated, human life and human dignity being shown values, and emphasis placed on equality, peace, tolerance, solidarity and equity.

The paper considers the reasons for including axiological reflection in school education programmes encompassing matters that are global in nature. Also presented are methods by which to achieve postulates of global education at the primary-school teaching level, as well as the results of research into the level of knowledge on key aspects of this education that are present among primary-school teachers.

**KEY WORDS:** global education, values, equity, solidarity.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of globalisation is the subject of many debates and discussions seeking to explain key changes ongoing in today's world. It became a fact in the last century and entails the emergence of worldwide economic relationships, the development of communications and the activity of international corporations. Instantaneous information flow and global transfers of goods both make people aware of the potential for interdependence. Globalisation is also linked irrevocably with modernity. However, notwithstanding the many positive aspects associated with the concept, it needs to be noted that the market economy as it looks at present leads to the widening of disparities, above all in the economic sense, between the rich North and the poor South. It also gives rise to over-exploitative policy where the use of the world's natural resources is concerned, and hence to devastation and degradation in areas far from the centres of large cities.

A steadily-developing world full of modern technology faces entirely new problems and challenges whose scope extends far beyond a person's immediate surroundings, indeed beyond the borders of countries and even the limits of continents. If new problems are to be counteracted, an innovative approach to education must be taken, in order that this can allow for a better understanding of the interdependence pertaining between a person's own life and the life of others across the world, in the context of a multicultural global society that is ever-changing. Global education comes face to face with the new dilemmas, and underpinning it are values of a cognitive nature. Understood in this way, they can offer support to education, as well as representing a motivation for action, and as a premise upon which conflicts in the socio-natural environment may be resolved.

## GLOBAL EDUCATION – AN EXPLANATION OF THE CONCEPT

Explaining the concept of global education is not an easy task, given the lack of any one, universally-binding definition. However, in the Maastricht Global Education Declaration adopted by the European Congress on Global Education, it is possible to find a definition to the effect that:

“Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all.” Furthermore, it offers “global dimensions of Education for Citizenship”, and is “understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education” (*Edukacja ... 2017*). In turn, Poland's *Encyklopedia Powszechna PWN* regards it as “a concept by which education is internationalised, which has as its aim the imbuing of the young generation with a global awareness” (*Encyklopedia.pwn.pl 2017*). Beyond even that, there is a definition devised in 2011 by an inter-sectoral team founded from among representatives of Poland's Ministries of National Education,

Foreign Affairs and the Environment, as well as establishments engaged in the further training of teachers, higher education establishments and NGOs. In translation, this would see global education as a component element of civic education and upbringing that extends the scope of both by instilling an awareness of the existence of global phenomena and interdependences. Its main aim is therefore seen as to prepare recipients to face up to challenges the whole of humankind has to deal with. By interdependence we in turn understand mutual linkages and interpenetration of cultural, environmental, economic, social, political and technological systems (*Raport... 2017*). The authors of the document in question emphasise that global education is of rather similar scope to the concept of education for development, education for sustainable development and education in the name of global citizenship. Naturally, the lack of a unified definition of sustainable development casts its shadow here too, as efforts are made to add detail to the terms used above. Those taking up the subject in their studies in fact focus mainly on ways of promoting education that serves sustainable development and global education, with these being grounded in the context of the cultures of different countries by way of education, and not simply conceptually. “The main objective of education for sustainable development is to confer upon all people the knowledge and motivations needed for action in the name of sustainable development and life in accordance with its principles (...), with this being perceived as a continuous process in the circumstances of a changing world” (*Edukacja... 2009*, 21).

In fact, the lack of a single, universally-binding definitions of global education and education for sustainable development may also link up with the fact that these kinds of education respond to needs and problems that are actually different from one country to another. However, there is no doubt that they represent an educational response to globalisation processes. For their part, the authors of this study note that global education differs from education for sustainable development in going into far greater detail about – and stressing far more – a partnership model, whereby nations, cultures and religions can cooperate on both the micro and macro levels. And indeed a key place within global education is taken by the concept of interdependence, while a key aim is clearly the revealing of correlations present – and operating actively – in all spheres and at all levels, be these economic, political, environmental or cultural.

## **MAIN TASKS UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE GLOBAL EDUCATION FRAMEWORK**

Global education can and should be implemented at all stages of education, beginning at kindergarten level. It should also take in formal and informal education, engaged in via educational activity for example involving additional classes, workshops, campaigns, competitions, fetes, and other events. The main tasks can be said to include efforts in the direction of sustainable development, including (*Raport... 2017*):

- the ensuring of peace and security around the world;

- the protection of human rights;
- a raising of the quality of life in poorly-developed countries;
- protection of the natural environment;
- the development of partnerly relations between the rich North and the poor South.

Global education thus sets very ambitious and extensive tasks for itself. However, the subject matter it deals with is not actually anything new. What is different is that the above themes represent a kind of multifaceted leading idea at all levels, while the comprehensive aspect requires that the process of conveying content needs perforce to be a very long one – all the more so as a dynamic of constant change is anyway present. Thus global education is not so much a subject as a whole course of study in itself, and one that extends through the entire curriculum. Its goal is in turn to help those receiving education to understand all of the information and opinions reaching them from around the world on a daily basis.

The main aims of global education should therefore be taken to include facilitated participation in the shaping of a better common future for the world. The unity and interdependence of the global community is emphasised and there is a striving to engender positive awareness as regards cultural diversity, to affirm belief in social justice and human rights, and to encourage peacemaking efforts, and all action in the name of a sustainable future at different times and places.

In recent years, efforts to promote the assumptions underpinning global education have become more widespread. Emphasis here should be put on the role played by the Lisbon-based North-South Centre and European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity – an institution under the Council of Europe framework whose goal is to set up structures that promote cooperation in Europe, with a view to raising society's awareness of global interdependence and promoting solidarity policy in line with the Council's assumptions and goals, as well as respect for human rights, democracy and social justice. The Centre's activity is focused in two areas, as follows:

- the institutional pillar:
  - perfecting principles and partnership in the area of global education;
  - working to develop a European framework for global education, which will be recognised by decisionmakers (i.e. *Global Education Recommendations*);
  - ensuring space for dialogue, in order for experience to be shared and common priorities determined (by way of national and regional seminars);
  - strengthening the network of interested parties at the global and European levels, with particular account taken of the EU's new Member States (via *Global Education Week*);
  - promoting the practice of global education and encouraging its implementation (via *GEW*).
- the educational pillar:
  - offering training guidelines and courses for those involved in the upbringing of children (from both the formal and informal sectors), in order that these might both understand and give effect to global education (Coe.int 2017).

The above activities seek to extend knowledge, while promoting skills, values and attitudes, with a view to ensuring a just and sustainable world in which everyone has the right and opportunity to make full use of potential. These efforts must be made from the earliest stages of education, by showing pupils the influence of the individual on global processes, and *vice versa*, and by working to eradicate stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination. At the same time, critical-thinking skills are being shaped, perspectives on life held by people in different parts of the world presented, with differences and similarities between people also shown, and aware decisionmaking and action encouraged. Promotion of diverse ways of living and culture is key, with any judging and assigning of value in line with the reality we ourselves know discouraged.

At its heart, global education invokes such values as justice, solidarity, accountability, freedom, peace and equality. These may be found in the four main domains of global education indicated by Dakmara Georgescu, i.e.:

- empathic education, shaping skills as regards understanding and putting oneself in someone else's shoes;
- education for solidarity, generating a feeling of community that extends beyond borders, groups, the country or race, and also helping to develop a feeling that such a community is being built;
- education for mutual respect and understanding, reinforcing bases for integration with other cultural circles, as well as readiness to adopt them within one's own circle;
- education against nationalism that develops an awareness of equality with citizens of other societies, with prejudices and deeply-rooted stereotypes thus set aside, and skills developed in "opening up" to other nations and communicating (Georgescu 2017).

One condition underpinning the efficacy of global education is that it should be the centre of attention where moral reflection is concerned.

## **THE BUILDING OF A NORMATIVE SYSTEM OF RULES OF PROCEDURE AS AN ETHICAL BASIS FOR GLOBAL EDUCATION**

Every action a person takes should be pursued on the basis of a defined and previously planned out scheme of how to proceed. This becomes particularly important when it concerns the process of education that is quite commonly made a reality within different groups in society. In global education, the way assumptions are given effect to is *inter alia* addressed to the youngest group in society – to children, and thus typically takes place on the basis of a precisely-defined programme of training. A scrupulously-run process is necessary when it comes to nurturing in children – from their earliest years – the skill to think creatively and systemically, with stereotypes and prejudices

eliminated, and with every effort made to present the values attendant upon human life, including human dignity, equality, peace, tolerance, solidarity and the feeling of community. This is all to encourage a change of attitude, with the pursuit of concrete activity incentivised, while stereotypical thinking on the subject of the world around us is abandoned. The training programme thus needs to refer to a catalogue of values devised by reference to ethics and serving in the achievement of the goals that are signalled.

Considerations of ethics and their role in the raising and teaching of children first arose in classical times and are continued with today. T. Styczeń proposes that, in the context of reflection on ethics, one should adopt a set of ordered and argued statements relating to the moral value of a humanist way of proceeding (Styczeń 1984, 26). This is the learning regulating all human activity in the context of the attainment of a precisely-defined good. Another proposal by which to define ethics is given by T. Ślipko, for whom: "Ethics is a philosophical science that establishes moral bases and rules for human activity, with the assistance of the cognitive capacities a person has become instilled with" (Ślipko 1974, 17). As ethics relates to human activity and should only be ascribed to people, it must in consequence take account of the influence of the Thomist separation of cognition and desire, which operate jointly in the recognition of truth, the good and the desire to attain these. Human existence, also defined as the psychophysical essence is the object of these. T. Ślipko notes that, by reference to philosophical and ethical argumentation, it is only possible to refer to the single cognitive power that the intellect represents. A further consequence is specification within cognition, as utilised in philosophical and ethical diagnosis of a cognizance based strictly on reason and experience. In general in the philosophical sciences, and hence also in ethics, cognizance based strictly on reason is defined as a capacity for abstract thought that is in the sole possession of personal existence. With the aid of this skill, a human being is in a position to formulate general moral categories and appropriate norms in line with which to act. From an ethical perspective, experience denotes reflection engaged in by each individual in respect of his/her moral consciousness. In connection with that, it is appropriate for values and ethical norms to gain implementation within the process of global education as broadly conceived.

The matter of values is taken up in many detailed areas of humanistic reflection. This is so because of people's inclination – in the course of their all-embracing activity – to invoke an appropriate system of values. This process allows human beings to adopt a proper direction of activity as they strive simultaneously for a defined goal. Values especially play a key role in cognitive processes and decision-related activity when a person is in turn faced with the need to choose between possibilities that determine later actions. In connection with the tasks discharged in the life of every human being through values, an arising question concerns the possession of such a catalogue of values as lead in the direction of what is good. A "value" thus represents a very broad term, while at the same time being one of fundamental importance to a person. The very act of assigning a moral value to a defined act is proper to what it is to be a human being,

and needs to be understood in the context of the skill to make morally-conditioned appraisals. Thanks to moral values, it is possible to shape a person's personality, conferring an indivisible dimension upon it (Dyk 2002, 45).

The reference to catalogues of values of any kind that functions in the reality of society links up with the choice of those values that are most favourable to a person in the given situation. Conveying this mechanism well is the concept of "choosing man" (*Homo eligens*), which was devised by Andrzej Siciński, as he pursued the study of lifestyles among Poles. He conceptualised culture as a repertoire of values, symbols, signs and individual models, from which the individual chooses defined values in a more or less conscious way, in the course of the shaping of an individual lifestyle (Siciński 1985, 48, 51). He wrote that "A lifestyle is anchored in the culture of a given nation. Culture is in the nature of a repertoire that proposes certain possibilities, with the individual making a choice from among them (...). Lifestyle is a manifestation of some principle for how to proceed on a daily basis (i.e. the principle of choice) – from among the repertoire of possible behaviours in the given culture" (Siciński 1985, 53). A question arising out of this perspective is how to arrive at a collective construction of axiological order that ensures consensus, as well as social order that allows for complementary inter-personal interactions leading to achievement of the said objectives, while at the same time opposing extreme axiological relativism and hyperindividualism. One of the solutions is consensus-building as regards fundamental values that would be preserved and passed on by such preserving institutions as the family, the school, the church or the mass-media.

Value systems are thus hierarchical, but they are drawn upon in an individual manner. However, utilisation of values in a manner suitable for existing circumstances requires relevant knowledge. This is supplied by the different scientific disciplines referred to, which have offered a basis for outstanding thinkers to make the effort to offer a certain systematisation, as well as engaging in the study of interactions between them. In his musings, J. Tischner drew attention to the matter of "thinking in accordance with values". What he was first and foremost on about was some checking as to what these are for the given person him/herself. Values are set out in certain choices a person makes. In some way they are also "beneficiaries" of the relationships pertaining between people. J. Tischner sought values in everything that reality was made up of, but especially in the human being (Węgrzecki 2002, 93).

It results from what was established earlier that values accompany the person in almost everything he or she does. The ascribed role in axiological procedure is a dual one. In the first case, people's self-realisation as social beings depends on the civilisation in which they find themselves, and on the culture that holds sway therein. In consequence, this is partly dependent on the values cultivated in that reality. The second axiological layer to the life strategy indicates that each person is permitted to create or recognise something as a value. This is how for one person a value is a defined feature or attitude, while for another that is not necessarily so. The recognition of something as a value is thus a subjective process. It is also obvious that axiological reference

should arise at each preliminary phase of our activity and intended undertakings. This *inter alia* postulates environmental ethics as they are understood in the general sense. The values that are propagated within the framework of different concepts represent signposting for people as to how their way of behaving in respect of the natural environment might be appropriate and justifiable. The environment constitutes that area in which people themselves may experience some kind of self-realisation. Without nature – understood as the natural environment – the creative and productive culture of *Homo sapiens* could not exist. The axiology of environmental ethics “(...) is a general orientation directing thinking and action alike at what is most elemental, and at the same time especially valuable and noble” (Tyburski 2011, 108). The idea that a person thinks in line with values is well-known. In the face of that, there is justification for the formation of awareness as regards an appropriate existence for humankind within the socio-natural environment on the basis of axiological issues. Signalled human being+nature relationships may be achieved correctly where human existence makes reference to a catalogue of values that also takes account of the interests of non-personal beings. Moreover, all human activity that has as its aim the management of reality must ever more fully consolidate tasks in theory on the one hand and in practice on the other, specifically on the basis of values, with a view to some new dimension being attained. All practice that focuses in on the shaping of new thinking in the sphere of ethics (including environmental ethics) makes reference to axiological premises. In large measure, accounting for values in everyday practice becomes possible thanks to a process of education that has been gone through at some earlier time. In the course of that process a person learns a suitable means of existence in the socio-natural environment, thereby enjoying the chance to become an aware citizen of global reality.

W. Tyburski uses several points to justify the invoking of a system of values in relation to their nature:

- values have a knowledge-creating dimension in that through them a person becomes informed as to the fundamental assumptions underpinning a defined concept;
- by way of values, a person can express a subjective opinion in the matter of theories or programmes that aspire to implementation in practice, hence the helpfulness of values when it comes to defining such undertakings in a more precise manner;
- where a catalogue of values is both established correctly and then given force of law, this can serve as a stimulus, not only for the individual, but also for a society or organisation, to act on its basis;
- values that are presented clearly come to serve as a basis for resolving and counteracting conflicts existing between people, the economy and the natural environment; moreover they stimulate the taking of decisions that do not impinge upon the main priorities of either the human being or the world of nature;
- values also have their inherent practical dimension, given that they help with the generation of the appropriate Acts, codes, regulations or general principles by which



to proceed, which together confer a systematic character upon humankind's referral to the socio-natural-economic environment (Tyburski 2011, 109).

On the basis of a system of values, it is necessary to bring in standards that serve in finding the best consensus for situations of dispute in relationships pertaining between humankind and nature, with this also providing a chance for a solidaritous and just world to come into existence. It is an obvious matter that the existence of the human species cannot occur without this leaving some more major trace. The issue is rather that all the activity people engage in should be accompanied by account taken of the moral consequences of the deeds involved. Equally important is that values and norms should stimulate individuals into doing more than just pay lip service to the protection of the social and natural environment (Tyburski 2011, 110). While certain consequences that the anthroposphere has for the biosphere are irreversible, the task facing humankind today pushes it towards the shaping of an environment that is "friendly" and safe, not only for human beings themselves, but also for that environment's other components. For the biosphere (which also includes our species) should be a place in which order and harmony are achieved – at least to the extent that the real possibilities allow.

Education in relation to global issues cannot take place without reference to the values and norms that have taken shape on the canvas of philosophical and ethical reflection. "The system of values adopted has its impact on the entirety of the human thought process, and thus on both attitudes and behaviour. It is also for that reason that the sphere of educational impact falls within the sphere of interest of society as a whole" (Wosik-Kowala and Zubrzycka-Maciąg 2011, 31). Research into pedagogical ethics has involved the separation of the sphere of the social and ethical values of behaviour, which are related to co-existence with others. Reference to these values allows for appropriate functioning within society, as it conditions proper cooperation with other people in diverse environments or communities (Homplewicz 1996, 147).

## **MAKING A REALITY OUT OF THE VALUES OF SOLIDARITY AND THE FEELING OF COMMUNITY AS A GOAL OF GLOBAL EDUCATION**

Solidarity and a feeling of community are values capable of being recognised as the basis for global education. They are of key significance for the building of a sustainable world, and in that way are articulated in various different concepts relating to global and environmental ethics. What emerges as a result is the need to nurture the idea of community between human society and the world of nature. A manifestation of this might be the holistic conceptualisation of environmental ethics made manifest in the views of Aldo Leopold, as well as a biocentrically orientated argumentation by which reference is made to the evolutionary process, with a view to showing the same path towards adaptation for the human species as for others. Solidarity thus

becomes an autotelic value, "(...) designating an ideal for humankind harmonised within the necessary structure of a species community" (Lipiec 1999, 219). The values of solidarity and the feeling of community are also expressed in the anthropocentric concept. Though humankind transcends the world of non-human existence, these values impose an obligation that there should be responsible behaviour and action in the interest of the socio-natural environment.

The value of solidarity postulated by reference to different ethics combines with the simultaneous construction of a community between human beings and nature to generate something more than mere normative recommendations. For it to be taken account of, it is also necessary that there be a well-thought-through formulation of guidelines serving civilisational development. No socioeconomic progress can take place unless the interests of existence beyond that of human beings is taken into account. This aspect does much to strengthen the conviction that "each sensible concept for civilizational development must take account of the axiom regarding a common fate for humankind and nature" (Tyburski 2011, 147–148). Among other manifestations that the values of solidarity and a feeling of community bring to educational practice we find the need for environmental problems to be addressed in the international dimension, along with concern for the environment's future state, given that future generations of human beings will be making use of its resources. What is assumed as a result is the existence within socio-natural reality of a so-called global solidarity that favours the creation of a new style of independent acting and thinking not subject to political and cultural differentiation (Tyburski 2011, 148).

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Global education encompasses an exceptionally wide spectrum of subject matter, if concentrated around such global threats as poverty, migration, overpopulation, armed conflict and climate change. Such a level of complexity requires that a long-term process of the transfer of full and reliable information should take place, in order that contemporary issues can be the subject of objective assessment. This is difficult, because the content is subject to the powerful dynamic of constantly ongoing change. There is no doubt that the promotion of global education in Polish schools depends crucially on the inclusion of precise guidelines and requirements in the curriculum basis.

It should be stressed that global education needs to start at the pre-school and early-school stages, in order that stable bases can be put in place to allow for further development throughout the educational process. Early education allows knowledge and skills to be acquired, while shaping attitudes of openness towards the subject matter.

Educational programmes taking account of global subject matter should encompass moral reflection, while making clear reference to values. The combination of content

based on scientific facts with axiology *inter alia* stressing the key importance of solidarity and justice forms part of the global process by which a sustainable world can be built. In this sense, global education is conceptualised systemically and programmatically. It is after all in this dimension that there is a chance, not only to make society aware of contemporary threats to health and life and to global problems, but also to propose, and at the same time steer in the direction of, the kind of catalogue of values whose pursuit would denote a genuine and responsible reaction meeting humanity's needs.

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