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## **Global World and Regional Education (From homeland education to learning to live together)**

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**Abstract:** *Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is quite different from living in the past. Today's world is called "the global world". People all around our planet are interconnected in many areas. Educating future generations for the "global world" and "global citizenship" is a great challenge for schools and teachers. The authors pointed out how regional education in Slovak schools can support the understanding and enriching the global citizenship.*

**Key words:** *global world, global citizenship, multiculturalism, education, regional education, folk traditions.*

### **Motto:**

*"Education gives us a profound understanding that we are tied together as citizens of the global community, and that our challenges are interconnected".*

Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General  
(UNESCO, 2015)

### **INTRODUCTION**

The words of Ban Ki-moon, which represent motto of our contribution, underline the position of education for the future. Life in the 21st century is characteristic by rapid changes in all spheres where a man is acting. These changes connect all continents which are nowadays interconnected by many ways. That is why the notion „global world“ is mentioned very often in debates on economy, geography, ecology and environment, health and medical area, political scene, cultural life, social issues and human behaviour, international communication and cooperation. The fact is, these conditions of life have to be reflected into education of all people – adult, youth and children. Education for current and future world is that for very demanding and challenging activity, it requires to develop new qualities and competences of people (also called as global competences). Globalisation is a profound factor that has close links to internationalization of education, cultivating multicultural sensitivity of people and support the idea of global citizenship.

### **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP, MULTICULTURISM AND REGIONAL EDUCATION**

According to the educational material created by UNESCO, global citizenship is based on „a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. It emphasises political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national and the global“[5]. Citizenship education is very difficult area of education, as its effects are determined by a variety of factors. It is based on very often discussed pillars of education for the 21st century: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. Learning to live together (learning to live with others) is considered to be the keystone for education. The first three pillars of education are important for development of individuality, for personal development, for development of communities or individual nations. The fourth one „is of different, more global nature: its omission may result in the annihilation of all other educational, health and development efforts through war, civil war, terrorism, the deterioration of human, financial and natural resources, pandemics, etc.“ [8]. These words are very strong message from UNESCO International conference on education which was held in Geneva in 2001. The conference was an important platform for school ministers and educationists to discuss and identify the main domain and educational needs in analysed field of education. It was a platform for sharing and dissemination of considerable

ideas acquired from all regions of the world for future education. According to the conference participants, education for learning to live together should cover a lot of fields, e.g. „citizenship education, education for social cohesion: combating exclusion and violence, education and cultural diversity, language learning strategies, science learning, ICTs and the digital divide“ [8].

Educators and teachers, who prepare children and youth for life in future decades, are responsible for supporting young people to live in common understanding with others, common responsibility for our environment and peaceful coexistence. When speaking about final qualities of students in discussed field of education, it is supposed, that in *cognitive domain* learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations, as well as they develop skills for critical thinking and analysis. In *socio-emotional domain* learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights and learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity. In *behavioural domain* learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world and learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions [5].

The ideas of multicultural attitudes of young people are also very often discussed. Together with citizenship education are crucial for acting in global world.

The process leading to understanding of global world is not easy. It is longitudinal activity which is determined by a lot of factors. In school education high importance is put on regional/homeland education. We consider it to be as “a starter” for global education.

Regional education has reached a new quality level in the present world. Slovak author B. Kosova claims that regional education must be seen in wider circumstances than just leading of children towards the understanding of their surroundings. It is, she argues, just the beginning of lifelong attitudes and acts of children. Through it, the student creates attitude towards oneself, and if one has a consciousness of one’s own identity, is proud of one’s origin, does not easily succumb to external influences, but he establishes further the relation towards others. If one knows one’s fellow citizens and their unique culture, one can better understand people from other nations and cultures; he is more tolerant and broadminded. Regional education is then a foundation for global education as well. Regional education is also associated with the attitude to the homeland, the feeling of pride for the environment the student comes from, gratification from successes, love of nature, i.e. the things which provide a basis for the learner’s patriotism, active citizenship and environmental feeling [6].

### **SELECTED RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

In 2015 the authors of the presented contribution took part in international research project of Visegrad 4 countries which was oriented to regional education. Teachers from university institutions from Poland, Hungary and Czech and Slovak republics were members of research team. The leading position had Faculty of Education, University of Silesia in Poland and the project main representative was Beata Pitula. The basic idea of the project entitled “Cultivating and Forming Regional Traditions by the Visegrad Group Teachers” was to join teachers from universities, as well as kindergarten and primary school teachers and discuss tasks in relevant field of educational work for future. As it is written in the project documentation outlines, the project intention was „to evoke interest in the V4 regional cultural traditions by revealing and describing teachers’ attitudes towards cultivating and forming regional traditions in the context of the unification of European and world cultures as well as attempts to define a common plane of teachers’ thinking and acting“ (available online at [http://www.v4teachers.us.edu.pl/?page\\_id=16](http://www.v4teachers.us.edu.pl/?page_id=16)).

The possibility to join the international project was a challenging experience for everybody involved. Authors of the presented study, with regard to main goals of the project realised research – mapping Slovak schools in specific field of education, which is linked to homeland and regional education and application of folk traditions in school settings. They tried to point out possibilities of regional education in a global world in Slovak schools. The results of authors examining were presented and discussed during international conference in Katowice (Poland, University of Silesia, June 2015).

### **RESEARCH GOAL, METHOD AND SAMPLE**

Solving the Project was spread into few levels. In the project's empirical stage attention was paid to the concrete pedagogical area of primary education in our closest environment. With the intention to explore current pedagogical practice in the given area, our main goal was to map the conditions under which regional education is carried out and which means of education are dominant in Slovak schools. Taking into account the nature of the problem, self – constructed questionnaire was applied as the research instrument containing, in addition to the introductory question on the school's characteristics, further 15 open questions. The obtained data allowed authors an insight into a teaching practice, providing a summary of teaching subjects with possibilities of using elements of regional culture, prevailing methods and forms of teaching, specific activities of schools supporting folk traditions, cooperation of school with family and neighbourhood institutions in this area, as well as school's extracurricular forms supporting the revival of cultural traditions in a particular region. In general 29 questionnaires (from various regions of Slovakia) were analysed for our purposes. Here we present few selected research outcomes divided into four sections:

*Teaching subjects with the highest potential for the application of the elements of regional education:* answers of teachers, which were analysed showed that the greatest possibilities for the penetration of the elements of regional education are provided in homeland study (the subject was mentioned 19 times), followed by Slovak language and literature (14 times), sciences (10 times), visual arts education (8 times), musical education (6 times), physical education (2 times), regional education as an elective subject (2 times), and, finally, religious education and Hungarian language (as one school in our research was a school with Hungarian as a language of instruction (1 time).

*Prevailing teaching methods and forms in the area of regional instruction:* methods most often mentioned by teachers were traditional verbal methods, e.g. speaking, explanation and description - monological research methods, conversation and various discussions as dialogical methods (17 times). Furthermore, illustrative methods were mentioned (film screening, using CD carriers, etc., 5 times), and activating methods - e.g. solution of problem tasks (5 times), creation of projects (5 times), dramatization, role and staging methods (4 times), use of didactic games in teaching and brainstorming (3). Of the organisational forms, in addition to lessons and group work, excursions and trips were mentioned. These data correspond with the officially proposed methodology of regional education.

*Presentation and support of folk traditions in school environment:* most activities in this area are related to the preservation of customs and local traditions connected with the life of preceding generations during a year, in winter - customs around St. Barbara and Lucia, Christmas, Epiphany, Shrovetide celebrations and the arrival of spring season: carrying out Morena, Easter, putting up May Trees, etc. (17 times). These holidays were reminded of by songs, dances, making of decorative objects for interiors, typical Slovak cuisine, clothing worn during holiday days, etc. Most often public events organised together with the generation of parents and grandparents, included school festive musical evenings, especially before Christmas (18 times), on the occasion of Mother's Day and Grandparents' Day, and Shrovetide carnivals. Some schools have a tradition of

organising the Days of Crafts (8 times) in which craftsmen from the area and parents or grandparents demonstrate the production of traditional artefacts and lead creative workshops (making of gingerbread, baskets, carving, production and decoration of painted Easter Eggs, pottery, making of typical cloths - blueprints, various types of embroidery, etc.), organising competitions with folk and regional topics as well as trips and excursions to significant memorial places (in cooperation with students' families). Schools have permanent exhibitions on their premises, rooms of folk traditions (3 times), specialised space for club activities (4 times, e.g. a room with ceramic stove), and though in most of them just a wall space in classrooms and connecting spaces are available.

*School education is combined with extracurricular forms of folk culture* - in this area children mostly work in clubs (e.g. folklore-dancing, visual arts, folklore singing, skilful hands, making of wired jewellery, pottery, non-traditional crafts, or pupils are members children's folklore ensembles). Cooperation of schools with museums, galleries, elementary art schools, spare time centres, local cultural centres, the Centre for Folk Art Production, community institutions, parish offices, homes for retired people and other relevant institutions has its special educational value too (common activities very often mentioned were - local competitions, preparation of festive musical evenings and creative workshops).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

School is a place, where a secondary socialisation of a child is taking place. It is a place where a pupil creates its "social-address", develops his/her own cultural and social identity (wants to know the answers to the questions: Who am I? What am I? Where do I belong?). This process is not isolated from developing the sense of tolerance for and understanding of cultural diversity. Results of our research pointed out that regional education is not realised only in school environment. Regional and folk tradition education we can understand as a link of the present and the anticipated, aiming at cultural, social and natural environment, and, with regard to the personality of the student, developing his/her cognitive, emotional and volitional side. It can be understood also as a link between local/country and global citizenship. Regional education occupies the position of a cross-sectional theme with a potential for the use in such educational subjects as visual arts education, musical education, mother tongue and literature, ethical education, work education, sciences, homeland study, history, as well as in elective subjects. Its cardinal aim is to cultivate relationships among people, respect to people and to the results of their work, to one's closest environment – a village, town, country, and to form the sense of belonging to one's nation, and, through these values, to create the sense of partnership and tolerance towards others. M. Gasparova highlights the influence on the affective, or social and emotional part of the development of a student's personality. In the process of regional education there occurs the "development and formation of students in establishing values and their gradual hierarchization, formation of attitudes and relationships – towards concrete objects, subjects, their history, people and the work through which they created them, traditions and cultural manifestations, towards nature as a determinant of human survival, and the symbiosis of a human being with nature. Through understanding, the region and its subjects evoke higher feelings in students – patriotism and local-patriotism – as well as create space for the understanding of cosmopolitanism as a form of attitude. The performance of activities and projects strengthens mutual cooperation among students, mutual help and communication. Students gradually understand the sense of preserving the diversity of natural and cultural environment, and the sense of its protection, that is, its preservation for future generations, etc." [4]. It can be understood also as a link between local/country and global citizenship.

We live in a historical stage when the international situation, military conflicts, unsolved problems related to the migration of a large number of people, etc., cause

various doubts, scepticism, pessimistic tuning concerning multicultural understanding and solving global problems. As at an intersection, paradoxes of globalization and traditional education meet. Professional literature, research findings from numerous research projects, educational experience of teachers from all school levels confirm the multidimensionality of discussed area and the fact that we deal with highly demanding process of education. To be successful and to reach valuable educational results, the international cooperation of teachers and researchers, support of a whole society and a good deal of pedagogical optimism are required.

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