



*Recent activities to promote education for sustainable development
in other international forums*

Dear delegates, dear colleagues

It is a privilege and an honor for me and for GENE – the Global Education Network Europe, to participate and to address this fourteenth meeting of the Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Thank you very much for inviting us.

GENE is the network of Ministries, Agencies and other bodies with responsibility for Global Education policy, strategy, funding and co-ordination at national level in European countries.

GENE uses the term Global Education as an umbrella term encompassing various forms of education in favour of social change for greater justice, local and global. The term Global Education, embraces the use of other related concepts such as Education for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship Education, Global Development Education, Global Learning, Development Education. GENE does not propose uniformity, but dialogue within diversity to pursue a common goal: to strengthen education and learning for positive social change, including social justice, human rights and sustainability, locally and globally.

GENE started 18 years ago, in 2001, with 6 countries around the table sharing experiences, beliefs, ideas and procedures – how to put proposals into practice. GENE is a network, and it is a very singular organisation, as it is a network of Ministries and Agencies, which is not very common. At the beginning they were Ministries of Foreign Affairs, linking Global Education to Development Cooperation. Then more recently Ministries of Education are acknowledging the importance of Global Education, to be integrated into the formal education system, and they are joining GENE. The network now involves more than 30 countries and more than 45 institutions.

The network is growing and another interesting characteristic is that it is an European network, but going beyond the European Union. We are also building up collaboration, in the field of Global Education, with Ministries and Agencies in other continents. Nevertheless, since the beginning our vision continues to be the same: *GENE works towards the day when all people in Europe – in solidarity with peoples globally – will have access to quality Global Education and to an environment for education which promotes social justice and cohesion in a rapidly changing world.*

GENE achieves this vision, incrementally, year on year. Our aim it is to facilitate and strengthen **policy learning** in Global Education particularly through networking, peer learning and partnership. Global Education is about learning, about understanding the world we are living in, about taking decisions that can contribute to transform it in a more suitable and happy place for all peoples to enjoy their living.

How do we learn? There is not just one way of doing it, there are many. GENE gives priority to hear from others, to link with them, to support and encourage each other, to inspire and to be inspired.

How do we put this into practice?

- By organising Roundtables with GENE participating countries twice a year, for policy sharing and learning;
- By developing voluntary Peer Reviews, whenever there is a need at national level; these involve (as Ms Aravella Zachariou can attest from her valuable involvement recently in the Peer Review of Cyprus) the identification of good policy and practice that other countries might learn from, along with robust recommendations for improvement and increase in quality and reach;
- By supporting countries with less experience and little funding available in a structured and flexible way, aiming at deepening their commitment, and growing policy and provision (as the Latvian delegate referred to this morning);
- By providing opportunities to connect academics, researchers, and policy makers in the field of Global Education, specially through the creation of ANGEL, the Academic Network on Global Education and Learning (which second International Conference will take place next week in London);
- By stimulating, recognising and learning from Global Education practices in the field through the annual edition of the Global Education Award (with its third edition, this time a GE Ideas Award, being disseminated now);
- And by producing and disseminating relevant information and critical reflection on global cross-cutting issues and on quality Global Education (some more recent publications will be offered to the Chair after this speech).

GENE is then supporting different countries in Europe to develop their own policy learning path. We know that political priorities, power relations, the lifestyles of many have to change. Public policies are crucial to drive options. Global Education as a public policy opens and supports the space for citizens and organisations to share relevant information, to reflect critically on ongoing policies and practices, as well as on fairer alternatives, and to experiment with them in order to change.

To share and to reflect on this is a rich and promising way of learning, discovering and going forward towards what we presume are mutual goals with the UNECE and your long commitment to and recognised work in Education for Sustainable Development.

Thank you for your attention.

Luísa Teotónio Pereira, GENE's Director

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