

## Executive Summary - GLEN 10 years evaluation

GLEN - The Global Education Network of Young Europeans - is a non-profit, politically independent network of nine European organisations with ten years' history of cooperation in the field of training multipliers in 'Global Education'<sup>1</sup>. This executive summary highlights the findings from the evaluation study and presents the outcomes and impacts of the programme.

Throughout the 10 years GLEN witnessed important changes, among others: changes concerning the membership in the network, shift in its aims and changes in the focus of the training cycle. New organisations from Austria, Malta and Slovenia joined while some also left. Since 2008, the GLEN programme has focused on Global Education and training in knowledge, attitude and active engagement of the participants for a more sustainable and responsible society (as opposed to traditional development work). Finally, in 2014, the new vision of GLEN reaffirmed the previous commitments of GLEN: "Our vision is a world in which people reflect on the realities of the globalised world and their own role in it, and join hands, minds and hearts to build fair and sustainable societies".<sup>2</sup> This vision mirrors the changes in the paradigms and priorities in Global Education, such as the major shift from the traditional aid perspective placing aid actors in the centre to a global justice or global citizenship perspective.

GLEN allowed almost 900 participants (2004-2012) from 13 European countries to go through an intensive learning cycle composed of two Multipliers Training Seminars, a three-month internship in the Global South, the Review and Networking Seminar (RENew) and Global Education activities after their return. Besides that, GLEN has facilitated participation and engagement in a number of diverse events or campaigns on a European level or on the local, regional or national level in the countries where GLEN member organisations are located.

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<sup>1</sup> Although the term of "Global Education" itself is contested in the GLEN 10 years evaluation study it is understood as a "creative approach of bringing about change in our own society. It is an active learning process based on the universal values of tolerance, solidarity, equality, justice, inclusion, co-operation and non-violence". The GLEN Participants Guide 2013.

<sup>2</sup> <http://glen-europe.org/about-glen/what-is-glen/>

The evaluation has been carried out between December 2013 and May 2014 by Kordian Kochanowicz from ASSIST-IN. The study aimed to: assess the learning process of GLEN; assess the impact it had on the personal and professional lives of the participants; identify the added-value as well as challenges the former GLEN participants see in the European dimension of GLEN; determine the level of involvement in Global Education by its' participants at a national and European level since their participation in the programme; and identify the improvement proposals of former participants towards GLEN. The methodology of evaluation consisted of analysis of the GLEN programme documentation, the on-line survey of participants of all GLEN generations who completed the cycle (2004-2012) amounting to 884 people and interviews with 14 selected participants from all participating countries. As many as 293 people responded in the on-line survey, giving a 33% respondent rate. The sample is representative with a confidence level of 95% and the margin of error deemed below 5%. Despite some limitations encountered in the evaluation process, one can consider the findings of evaluation reliable. The members of the GLEN network as well as other stakeholders can draw lessons-learnt from the research. The main findings are presented below.

### **Participation in GLEN and the GLEN learning cycle**

The former GLEN participants (also called the GLENNies) regarded both the GLEN internships and the seminars as influential in their personal or professional development (94% and 78%, respectively). One of the interviewees commented that the ***“Internship for 3 months in a developing country was an exceptional experience”***. Based on the data gathered we can conclude that participation in GLEN impacted their future life choices as well as professional careers (as one person commented: ***“The biggest change was the change in my perspective. I see everyday things so differently than before. It would be the most life changing decision in my life”***).

Based on the feedback received we can conclude that the model of the programme is appropriate and facilitates the building of participants' competences. We can also point out the areas which need strengthening, such as preparation and realisation of Global Education activities or the RENEw seminar to be even further strengthened and developed for the benefit of a larger group of participants.

One may see that participation in various events related to GLEN (besides the cycle) was very appreciated among the former participants – they took part in GLEN annual event, European Global Education Days (EGED), in the European events and campaigns supported by GLEN (e.g. Eurizons, Sailing for Sustainability, Cycling project). One should recognise that the variety of off-cycle events is important and allows former GLENNies to continue their involvement with the organisations in the GLEN network, either nationally or on a European level.

### **Involvement in GLEN after the completion of the cycle**

Quite a significant group of respondents (43%) had taken up various roles in GLEN, either on a national or European level. The role of the tutor in GLEN was the most popular one (52 respondents - 18%) and other roles on a national level (58 respondents - 20%). Quite a lot of them also took over important responsibilities within GLEN to work together in a team and transfer their knowledge and facilitate the learning process of upcoming GLEN generations (*e.g. "Programmbeirat (advisory council) for ASA"; "GLEN European coordinator"*). Through this engagement young people had a space for creative exchange and for developing new ideas together, which is one of the GLEN's objectives.

People who stayed involved in GLEN appreciated the chance of meeting like-minded people (*admitted by 81% of respondents out of 126 who took up other roles in GLEN*). As many as 63% of those who stayed involved in GLEN did it because they had a chance to learn new methods; 54% wanted to increase their educational skills. All interviewees and many respondents in the survey had also other personal motivations, e.g. *"All projects are interesting, they involve people from different countries in intercultural projects. This is also my motivation"*. Altogether, 69% of respondents consider meeting like-minded people important (combined results of questions 7 and 11).

Half of all the former GLEN participants (49%) would like to be involved in the activities of GLEN on a European level in the future, while 20% would like to be involved in the activities of the GLEN member organisation in their country. Quite a big group (29%) would like to contribute with their time and competences. Similarly, 28% of respondents would like to network with GLEN as a

representative of another organisation. They proposed among others: ***“If there was a GLEN-Lithuanian partner organisation, I could contribute in volunteer assistance or other activities.”***; ***“Group facilitation, trainings,(...)”***. There is great potential to re-engage the previous participants of GLEN in the programme in various roles.

### **Impact in terms of competences**

More than 80% of participants increased their intercultural skills and knowledge about people and countries in the Global South (84% and 83%, respectively). Moreover, out of 247 respondents who improved their intercultural skills, as many as 69 respondents (28% of the 247) are still involved in intercultural communication in their social engagement. Approximately two thirds of the participants also developed team work skills (71%), skills in self-reflection (67%) and critical thinking in general (65%). The comments provided by the respondents in the on-line questionnaires and during interviews shed light on how they use the competences that they gained (e.g. ***“First of all it was theoretical inspiration about global education. I have never learnt about global education before”***. ***“It was the first time when I was working in an international environment”***). The competences that were reported by respondents cover all the aspects included in the defined goals of the GLEN seminars (so called the GLEN pillars), although the effects in these areas were on a different level.

### **Engagement in social and political sphere**

GLEN helped to empower young people to become active in the public space. The vast majority of respondents, amounting to 80%, declared to become ready for new responsibilities in their social and professional life. 73% of people are more interested in cultural diversity in Europe and beyond, thanks to GLEN. As many as 70% of people reported that they changed their lifestyle to a more responsible or sustainable one. A majority of respondents (62%) became more involved ***in Global Education thanks to GLEN***.

Almost all former GLEN participants are currently involved in various spheres of social and political life (92% of respondents). One third of people (exactly 35%) are involved in development

cooperation (e.g. ***“I work at the development cooperation department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of my country, so I have a direct link to most of the discussions we had in GLEN”***). Similarly, 35% of respondents are involved in education for children and youth, while 26% of respondents are involved in intercultural communication. Given the findings from the interviews and the on-line survey we can say that GLEN contributed to this involvement; although some of the people were already active in this sphere before. (***“All in all, what I've experienced with GLEN helped me develop and gave me the taste of involvement”; “There is a connection especially in the skills and competences I learnt with GLEN and how to use different educational methods”; “I was already very active and involved in similar issues”***).

### **Engagement in education**

GLENNies are involved in the educational sphere – with 71% or 209 out of 293 respondents active in this sector (***“I became more confident to talk about global issues which I learnt during GLEN”***). Most of them deal with the topic of global interdependencies. One third of the people in this group (209 respondents) address the topics related to the environment and sustainable and responsible lifestyles (both 33%) while 21% are concerned with the use of natural resources (linked with the other topics). The other popular topics include inequalities and human rights (27% and 25%, respectively).

### **Multiplication effect**

Almost all (96%) the former GLEN participants passed on knowledge and experience gained through GLEN to people they know in their private and professional life. Majority of people shared their experiences in the family environment (74%). More than a half transferred their knowledge and experience in their professional environment (57%). As much as 47% shared it in their local community (among neighbours or local groups).

### **European dimension of GLEN**

European cooperation is perceived by the GLEN participants as beneficial i.e. almost all respondents learnt about people or organisations from other European countries and benefitted in other ways. 92% of people hold true that European integration is an important aspect of GLEN

and almost all respondents of the on-line survey (95%, N=293) think that they had benefitted from cooperation with people from other European countries **\_(one person said: “This is enriching to learn the perspectives of people from other countries. I have contacts to people from different countries. We have a plan to contact people and do projects together”)**. Participants are aware of the challenges related to the European dimension of GLEN and that they should be addressed, including: the need to equally include all participants and to properly address the majority of German participants and tutors; or the different initial knowledge, background and understanding which determine the attitudes to issues such as post-colonialism or critical whiteness (**“People come from countries and had no colonial history and don’t see that they need to be concerned about post-colonial racism that exists”**). We can sum up that GLEN contributes to European integration in the human/social sphere by stimulating cooperation between young people from different European countries.

### **The role of and the relationships with the stakeholders from the Global South**

In the process of evaluation it has been discovered that quite a lot of participants are concerned with the way the people and organisations from the Global South participate in GLEN and what do they know and expect from the participants. Participants pointed out that: there is a mismatch between the expectation of GLENNies and the host organisations, that partners from the South are not equally benefitting from the programme a people or organisations and have little influence over the GLEN network. It needs to be addressed in the future development of the GLEN network and the GLEN Multipliers Training Cycle.

### **Recommendations**

At the end of the evaluation study concrete recommendations for the future development of the network were formulated. They came out from the former GLEN participants who shared their suggestions or were drawn up by the author of the report on the basis of the conclusions from the research. The recommendations can be summarized in the following ten points:

1. Maintain the GLEN model including all the obligatory phases, i.e. the two Multipliers Training Seminars, the Three-month GLEN Internship in the Global South; strengthen the

- components of the learning cycle particularly the Global Education Activity and the Review and Networking Seminar (RENew).
2. Reach out to former GLEN participants to re-engage them, focussing on the contribution they can make in the network or in the Global Education activities.
  3. Prioritise the issues dealt with in the learning cycle and in the defined goals of the Multipliers Training cycle (so called GLEN pillars). Strengthen the components of the training so that it is more effective in building competences that are the focus of GLEN, particularly in the sphere of Global Education, understanding the links between Global Education and Global Development, etc.
  4. Maintain a space for initiatives and support for diverse actions and campaigns, in the spheres of both formal education sector and non-formal and innovative approaches, e.g. workshops held at schools, cycling alternatives project.
  5. As regards education, consider determining thematic specialisation of GLEN (focused on key issues, e.g. climate change, but open to other topics), to build up capacities in terms of materials, skilled trainers.
  6. Consider determining of profiles of participants and their possible ways of future involvement in order to adjust the learning cycle to their capacities, needs and facilitate learning for the future roles they aim to play in social sphere, e.g. in Global Education.
  7. Highlight the European dimension of GLEN in the learning cycle. Maintain a space for a participatory and deep dialogue about Global Education and global issues with different European perspectives.
  8. Increase the independence of funding of the GLEN member organizations.
  9. Take care of the imbalance between the numbers of participants among European countries as well as imbalance in the number of members of the team from the different countries (e.g. through explicit policies and guidelines).
  10. Further discuss with various stakeholders the relationships with people and organisations from the Global South. Discuss the possible role of the partners from the South in the network, including the selection of participants and internships and moreover, the discussions on GLEN strategic directions.