

SLOVENIAN NATIONAL REPORT ON MIGRATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Activity 1.1.1: Audit on migration, sustainability and development education

Version 1 prepared in March 2018

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Document Version Control

Version	Date	Description
1	22.03.2018	Draft 1 (by Zavod GLOBAL /SLOGA)
1.1	29.03.2018	Reviewed by DDG
2	13.04.2018	Final (by Zavod GLOBAL /SLOGA)
2.1	24.04.2018	Final by DDG



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1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale behind

Freedom of movement is a basic human right, enshrined in various international instruments relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet, with the so-called refugee crisis of 2015-2016 in Europe, the public debates have evolved around who has the right to move to Slovenia, exposing the need to strengthen the understanding of migration as a global phenomenon, the migration – development nexus, and interconnectedness of the globalised world.

The report will review how national policies reflect interconnectedness of migration and sustainability issues, including Global Education as a means of deepening this understanding. It will identify main shortcomings in comprehensively addressing these issues on national level from the standpoint of target groups, beneficiaries and key stakeholders.

1.2. Aims and objectives

Main aim of the audit report is to identify needs, shortcomings and expectations of target groups, beneficiaries and stakeholders, in strengthening holistic understanding of migration, sustainable development and lifestyles in interdependent world.

1.3. Available data and resources

Following audit report has been drafted based on literature review and field research, which was conducted in the form of focus group discussions.

1.4. Limitations

Lack of literature on migration – development nexus, with sustainable development and migration addressed in silos on policy level, coupled with growing intolerances toward migrants, pinpoint the need to develop literature on interconnectedness of these issues specifically for educational system and decision-makers, with the purpose of strengthening understanding of intertwined global issues, including migration and development.



2. Literature review

2.1. Public opinion polls

Various aspects of migration and development issues have been analysed in the Eurobarometer survey. According to the last Eurobarometer report (2017a), Slovenians consider health and social security (38 %), and unemployment (29 %) as the two most important issues that Slovenia is currently facing. Among issues relevant to this report, immigration ranks on 7th place (9 %), and education system, and environment, climate and energy issues on 11th place (4 %, respectively). Among issues faced by the European Union (EU) that Slovenians deem as most important, are terrorism (46 %) and immigration (43 %). Climate change ranks on 6th place (with 9 %), the environment on 7th place (8 %), and EU influence in the world on 9th place (7 %). 72 % Slovenians support the common European policy on migration.

Regarding perception of security (Special Eurobarometer on Security, 2017d), 77 % totally agree, and 20 % tend to agree that their immediate neighbourhood is a secure place to live in. Similarly, 75 % totally agree, and 22 % tend to agree that their city, town or village is a secure place to live in. 64 % consider Slovenia as a secure place to live in, with additional 31 % considering Slovenia as a somewhat secure place to live in. Hence, 97 % Slovenians consider their immediate neighbourhood and their city, and 95 % their country as a safe place to live in. The percentage drops significantly relating to security in the EU: 28 % Slovenians consider the EU as a secure place, and 45 % consider the EU as a somewhat secure place to live in (with total 73 %). Among challenges of the EU internal security, Slovenians recognise terrorism as the most important challenge (77 % consider it as very important issue, and 19 % as fairly important issue), followed by organised crime (73 % consider it as very important, and 22 % as fairly important).

Though the concept of sustainable development developed from the environmentalist understanding to a broader concept with environmental, social and economic dimension, the environmental dimension of development is still prevalent. According to the Special Eurobarometer on Attitudes of European citizens toward the environment (2017c), the environment is very important to 67 % Slovenians, and fairly important to 29 %, hence the environment is considered as a value in Slovenia (with 96 %). Slovenians consider growing amount of waste (50 %) and air pollution (48 %) as most important environmental issues. 52 % Slovenians consider that decisions pertaining environment protection shall be made jointly within the EU, while 45 % consider that decisions should be made by the national government. More than a half (52 %) agree that they can play a role in protecting the environment in Slovenia – as an individual, with additional 33 % somewhat agreeing with the statement. According to the Special Eurobarometer on Climate Change (2017b), more than seven in ten respondents in Slovenia consider climate change as a ‘very serious’ problem (71 %, EU average 74 %). Around one in ten (11 %, EU average 12 %) consider it



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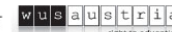
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to be the single most serious problem faced by the world, a 14 percentage point decrease since the previous survey in 2015. Around two-thirds say they have taken personal action to fight climate change in the past six months (66 %), well above the EU average (49 %). However, when given specific examples, the percentage rises to 96 %, suggesting that many do not associate certain actions with tackling climate change.

While research on public understanding of the migration – development nexus is lacking, research on migration represents an important starting point. With regard to broader, general environment in Slovenia, Niko Toš (2016), the pillar of the Slovenian public opinion research, assesses that “in relation to the institutional system /.../, mistrust and extreme criticism are prevailing and tend to grow among Slovenians. High degree of mistrust /among Slovenians/ in institutions of the system is accompanied by an extremely high level of mistrust on interpersonal level. In Slovenian society, we are therefore faced with a low level of systemic and social integration and, consequently, a high vulnerability of society to shocks that come from the environment.” Ule (2016) establishes lack of systematic public opinion research available to show how this sort of environment affects implementation of integration measures for international protection beneficiaries and immigrants in Slovenia. “After transition to the new century /.../, uncritical nationalism has calmed down, and intolerance towards marginalised groups and ethnic minorities has diminished. International comparative analyses /.../ have shown that on the scale of “tolerance–discrimination”, Slovenia ranks among predominantly Western European countries (together with Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium), thus among more tolerant, and not among Eastern European countries (Baltic countries, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria), which are significantly more discriminatory. This applies to both time sections (1992, 2008).” (Toš, 2016: 535) During that time, and especially after 2014, the situation in Europe (opening of the EU’s internal borders) and its neighbourhood (refugee flows) changed radically. “And these migration flows have triggering repulsive, intolerant, discriminatory initiatives and actions of the extreme political right to limit migration flows and close the (Schengen) border, which was necessarily reflected in public opinion and influenced changes in attitudes.” (Toš, 2016: 536) For the period 2002–2014, Toš (*ibid.*) establishes growing tolerance among Slovenians, and a decline in negative attitude towards immigration – but differently, depending on cultural, racial, and socioeconomic origins or characteristics of potential immigrations. During this time period, tolerant attitudes have strongly prevailed over the negative ones concerning the attitude of Slovenians towards migration (especially in 2014 measurement). However, these findings do not reflect the situation after mass influx of refugees in Europe in 2015.

When researching Slovenian public attitude toward immigrants in the period between 2002 and 2016, Zavratnik (2017) distinguishes between three groups of immigrants: immigrants of similar ethnic origin as the Slovenian majority population (mostly referring to immigrants from the former Yugoslav republics), immigrants with different ethnic origin than the majority population of Slovenia, and immigrants from poorer EU Member States. Two thirds of majority population are supporting immigration of similar ethnic origin, while one third is opposing it (Zavratnik 2017: 866). Similarly, there were no noticeable deviations in public attitude toward immigrants of different ethnic origin than the majority population of Slovenia



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in the period between 2002 and 2014, with higher share of people supporting immigration. The refugee crisis changed the ratio of 60: 40 supporting immigration of persons with different ethnic origin, to division in half (50: 50). In 2016, the share of population who believes that Slovenia “shall allow immigration only to rare /few/ individuals” has risen sharply (from 24 % to 35 %) (Zavratnik 2017: 867).

General attitudes toward migration depend on economic and social situation in the country, and hence are connected with greater or lower acceptance of, desirability and tolerance toward migrants (Zavratnik 2011: 68). General trend of public opinion is nevertheless inclined toward supporting immigration to Slovenia (Zavratnik 2017: 868). Analysis of public opinion confirms the trend of declarative openness toward migrants, especially those who are barely present in the country, or those whom the majority population is ‘already well acquainted with’. Public opinion is less supportive toward immigration of economic migrants, while more supportive toward immigration of refugees who flee from persecution in their countries of origin. Legal status (i.e. recognition of international protection) is the key feature in attitude toward refugees. Public opinion strongly distinguishes between so-called illegal (irregular) migrants and ‘real’ refugees, showing considerable sympathy for recognised refugees, while rejecting those who do not qualify for this category (Zavratnik 2017: 881).

Public opinion polls emphasise the need for strengthening understanding of migration phenomenon, and the right to freedom of movement among Slovenian public. While sustainable development is still somewhat understood within its environmental dimension, raising awareness on interconnectedness of sustainable development, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and deepening understanding of intertwined global issues represents an important input to the InterCap project activities.

2.2. Media response

Authors acknowledge that especially since 2015, the issue of refugees and mass migration has been re-actualised in European and Slovenian environment. As acknowledged by Zavratnik (2017: 858–9), public opinion, media and politics fall within the set of factors framing different opinions during the so-called refugee/migration crisis. Even though migration has been among key global issues for the last two decades, the issue entered both Slovene and European public debates within “another crisis” narrative. The so-called refugee crisis has followed or has been happening simultaneously with the economic crisis, which significantly affected communities outside EU borders. Collision of two significant phenomena, mass migration and recession, with numerous implications for social life, has positioned newcomers, migrants, refugees in the most vulnerable position. At the same time, these phenomena offered a variety of issues for political instrumentalisation to various actors.

Pajnik (2017) analysed the operation of ‘media logic’ based on the case of editorials, which address migration in relation with the so-called ‘refugee crisis’. The analysis established that



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meta-processes of mediatisation define operation of media to the degree that ‘media logic’ follows political agendas. Qualitative analysis of journalistic commentary (editorials) that were published in the Slovenian daily newspaper Delo from August–December 2015 on the topic of European migration policy (quota system, Schengen regime, bilateral agreements, visa regulations etc.), showed that articles most often referred to various mechanisms of migration policy which adopt a ‘realist’ political view, in the absence of a more informed analysis that would increase readers’ understanding of policies. The media-political parallelism, i.e. fusion of media with political agenda, is also shown by the lack of views of non-governmental sources. The legitimisation of European migration policy is largely based on narratives about Europe/EU that reflect Eurocentric views. Refugees are represented as the culprits for the collapse of Europe, and as those endangering European values; representations of Eastern Europeans as ‘other Europeans’ and of Turkey (reflecting the political ‘trading’ of refugees between the EU and Turkey) as uncivilised were also common – which is then used to legitimise strict migration regimes.

Another media analysis (Jurgele 2016: 44–5) of daily newspaper Delo also confirmed that their coverage of refugee issues and so-called ‘refugee crisis’ mainly reproduced the discourse of political elite, while journalists contributed without critical perspective to the division between ‘us’ and ‘them’. In the survey, elite official sources appeared in 38.7 % articles, official sources in 39.9 % articles, while non-official sources only in 11.7 % articles. Hence, Delo journalists were mostly (80.3 % articles) using routine communication channels in collecting information on refugee issues, thus creating an imaginary impression of objectivity of the communication, yet not presenting balanced opinions and positions. Critical discursive analysis showed that refugees were often represented as a threat to Slovenian citizens (number of refugees, threat to public order, ‘others’) due to dominance of elite political resources.

A comparative study of Central European countries’ responses to the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ 2015–2016 established that while a humanitarian view prevailed in Slovenia when the influx of refugees and migrants reached the country in summer of 2015, even with the general public and the government heavily criticising Hungary’s decision to build a fence at its border, “/p/erceptions of a chaotic “handling” of the transit from Croatia toward Austria in autumn 2015 as well as security concerns have strongly influenced public opinion. Faced with immigration pressure and criticism at home, government responded by focusing on security aspects of the issue” (Göbl *et al.* 2016: 2–3).

In 2015, an independent Council for Response to Hate Speech has been established, coordinated by the Peace Institute. Within a year of operation, the Council received up to 50 initiatives, majority on hate speech toward refugees, migrants and Islam (but also toward the LGBT community) (Varuh človekovih pravic 2016).

Analysis of media response confirms the need identified when analysing public opinion polls, i.e. to encourage public discussion on the phenomenon of migration, including its various aspects, motivation, factors, and the development – migration nexus.



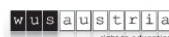
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2.3. Research and project production

According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Index (2017), Slovenia ranks on high, 9th position among 157 countries, which shows high quality of life, but falling short in implementing its official development assistance commitments. On national level, the SDGs implementation is coordinated by the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinating the external, foreign policy dimension of the SDGs agenda.

With the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, states committed to regularly report on implementation of the SDGs to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Slovenia has presented its Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in 2017. The report acknowledges the need for Slovenia to “develop more agile and adaptable policies that consider unpredictable, faster paced, and more fundamental shifts in the world as well as addressing the challenges in Slovene society called upon the Government to develop a new approach toward planning for the future, which includes designing and implementing coherent policies for sustainable development” (*ibid.*, 4). The process of SDGs implementation has been on national level linked/embedded in drafting of the new national Development Strategy until 2030. Slovenia’s record in implementing the SDGs and targets can be monitored through annual data published by the Statistical Office of Slovenia.

While policy-making is quite centralised in Slovenia, inter-sectorial cooperation on crosscutting issues is still to be strengthened. This is reflected in weak links between crosscutting issues, including migration – development nexus. Slovenia is also lacking clear migration and integration strategy (elaborated under chapter 2.6).

According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) for 2015, Slovenia ranks on 27th place among 44 analysed countries. The index establishes that Slovenian integration policies still create somewhat more obstacles than opportunities for immigrants to fully integrate into society. Policies on family reunification are assessed as favourable to migrants, followed by regulations on anti-discrimination and permanent residence as slightly favourable, and access to nationality somewhat favourable to migrant integration. Among shortcomings of Slovenian integration policy, the index recognises labour market mobility, education and political participation as slightly unfavourable to migrants, while access to health services is assessed as the weakest point of integration policies. Among MIPEX recommendations are for Slovenia:

- to open up access to labour market for family migrants and introduce new measures to decrease overqualification among migrant workers;
- to increase access and targeted support within the education system for all immigrant pupils, students and adults;
- to guarantee universal healthcare for all migrants and Slovenian citizens, and increase support measures for migrant patients;



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- to enable dual citizenship and speed up naturalisation for migrants meeting the requirements after 5-7 years; and
- to increase reporting rates of discrimination cases and provide adequate victim support system.

InterCap project represents an opportunity to bridge the gap of addressing complex and intertwined issues in silos. As identified during desk research, it is crucial to establish the link between sustainable development and migration, which would consequently also strengthen the understanding of both concepts/phenomena.

2.4. Case studies of good practices

Already in 2007, Ministry of Education developed Guidelines for Upbringing and Education for Sustainable Development. The Guidelines define key areas of sustainable development, emphasising that addressing versatile issues requires comprehensive approach. The document defines key aims and principles of Sustainable Development Education, and provides practical guidelines on implementation in kindergartens, schools, the line Ministry, non-governmental organisations, and local communities. It encompasses a set of recommended measures to be introduced by each stakeholder with the purpose of implementing the Guidelines. While the Guidelines refer to interconnected environmental, economic and social issues on declaratory level, in practice they mostly refer to environmental dimension of sustainable development (Gobbo 2011).

In civil society sector active in various aspects of Education for Sustainable Development, the concept of Global Education¹ is often referred to with similar understanding (Gobbo 2011). Definition of Global Education, used in Slovenian national context, has been developed by the Working Group on Global Education, coordinated by SLOGA, in 2008: Global Education is “a learning process, with the focus on interdependence and involvement of every individual in global challenges”. The approach to Global Education highlights the need to develop both “formal and non-formal education and learning programs” (CONCORD 2018). Global Education focuses on skills and values. Issues are presented as interconnected and interdependent (e.g. development cooperation, peace studies, human rights, environmental education, climate change). It also includes modern teaching techniques, such as Open Space Methodology, learning by doing, less strict division between learners and knowledge providers, participatory learning, and development of critical thinking. However, Global Education is still practiced as an extra-curricular activity, often implemented by non-governmental organisations (Gobbo 2011).

As the InterCap project aims at strengthening the understanding of interconnectedness of inclusivity, sustainability and migration, efforts in strengthening inclusive education in Slovenia shall be recognised. As access to education has been identified as a weakness of

¹ Often also referred to as Global Citizenship Education, but the concept of Global Education is used on national level.



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Slovenian migrant integration system by MIPEX (with the recommendation to increase accessibility and targeted support within the education system for all immigrants), efforts in strengthening inclusion of migrant children can be pinpointed as good practice relating to inclusive education of this particular group. Systemic regulation of education of immigrant children is based on the Guidelines for Integration of Children of Immigrants in Kindergartens and Schools (2012), which mandates kindergartens, primary and secondary schools to implement the principle of “an inclusive approach to implementation of rights of immigrant children to education in order to effectively integrate them and create an intercultural society”, but professional assistance for teaching Slovene language is provided only for schooling children (Lunder Verlič 2016).

Ministry of Education, Science and Sport provides schools, which enrol immigrant pupils, with hours of additional professional assistance in teaching Slovene language in the first and second year of schooling. In addition to providing resources for teaching Slovenian language, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport enables and supports the implementation mother tongues and cultures classes for immigrant pupils. Rules on Assessment of Knowledge and Advancement of Students in Primary Schools (2008) allow the possibility of adapting the knowledge assessment for immigrant pupils. Immigrant pupils whose mother tongue is not Slovene and are first to be enrolled in primary school in grades 6 or 9, can undergo the national knowledge assessment test in the same year only voluntarily (not mandatory, as in case of other pupils) (Lunder Verlič 2016).

Rules on Norms and Standards for Implementation of Educational Programs in Secondary Education stipulate the obligation of secondary schools to organise Slovenian language course for students who, due to lack of knowledge of Slovene language, need and seek assistance, taking into account teacher’s expert assessments on the level of their knowledge and understanding of Slovenian language. Schools organise a course only for the first two years of foreign students’ education in Slovenia (Lunder Verlič 2016).

Regarding enrolment of asylum-seeking and refugee children, as they originate from non-Slavic areas and therefore represent a more demanding dimension for learning Slovenian language, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport recommends a two-level integration model. The integration process is divided into two periods, i.e. preparatory phase and introductory phase. Before enrolling in regular classes, a 20-hours preparatory phase is organised for the children. Thereafter, children are included in regular classes, with additional professional assistance in learning the Slovene language provided, and with recommended adjusted implementation of the learning process. After completing the introductory phase, the child is included in a follow-up program, where she/he is provided with additional support within two school years, as the program includes activities offered both by school and in the local environment (learning Slovene as the second language, learning assistance, individual programs for pupils, adapting teaching methods and forms of work, adjusted knowledge assessment, supporting involvement in after-school activities at school and in the local environment, various holiday opportunities, continuation of language courses and support in organising complementary classes of mother tongues and culture of immigrant children) (Lunder Verlič 2016).



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While Slovenia's model of inclusion of migrant children into school is most relevant to the InterCap project, Slovenia has also developed guidelines for inclusion of Roma children and children with special needs/with disabilities – as guidelines for ensuring inclusive education for children from specific vulnerable groups.

A research (ISA Institute 2015) established that teachers are inclined towards integrating different cultures into schools, but they expressed the need for more didactic materials for working with immigrant pupils. There were several materials developed on migration and/or sustainable development, including educational and teaching materials. The Government Communication Office issued a publication titled 'Actively for tolerance', with the purpose of highlighting various aspects of migration, and strengthening tolerant society. The handbook was prepared based on series of workshops titled 'Actively for tolerance' which have been developed in collaboration with SLOGA,² and implemented in local communities. Aim of the workshops was to research local communities' experience with migration, related concerns emerging about refugees and migrants, including fears towards them, and how key counterparts can actively contribute towards overcoming those concerns in local communities. Main purpose of the publication is to support local communities in constructively addressing current migration trends. The handbook presents refugee integration system in Slovenia, but also views of experienced practitioners (often critical toward the Government) who daily face challenges in supporting refugee and migrant integration. The handbook also provides practical recommendations to local communities on how to approach integration of immigrants.

Within the project “Konzorcij NVO: Z globalnim učenjem do globalnih ciljev!” (NGO consortium: With global education towards global education!), funded by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by SLOGA with consortium of non-governmental organisations (2016–2017), a handbook for teachers on SDGs and Global Education has been developed (CONCORD 2018).

In cooperation with the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, a multidisciplinary group of students developed a handbook for teachers on the SDGs through the prism of migration. The handbook presents each SDG, reflects the situation on global and national level regarding implementation of targets, links each SDG to migration issues, and then identifies best practices on global and local level, contributing toward implementation of the SDG. The handbook also encompasses suggestions for teachers, including class activities, on how to implement a lecture on each SDG in the classroom.

² In the summer 2015, an informal non-governmental organisations' coalition working on migration and integration issues has been established, with the aim of coordinated humanitarian response, but also advocacy and awareness-raising efforts toward strengthening supportive environment for integration in Slovenia. SLOGA has been providing support and secretariat for the coalition.



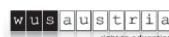
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2.5. Migration policies and sustainable development

Sustainable development is among declared cornerstones of Slovenian foreign policy (Declaration on the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia 2015), recognising Slovenia's responsibility toward achieving the SDGs. Among priority issues of Slovenia's foreign policy are also safe migration and fight against human trafficking. Resolution on the International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Slovenia (2017) is based on the same goal of achieving sustainable development in partner countries, with promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies, with focus on good governance, equal opportunities, including gender equality, and quality education; and with fight against climate change, with emphasis on sustainable management of natural and energy resources, as priority issues (Article 10). Both the Declaration on the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Slovenia (2015), and the Resolution on the International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Slovenia (2017) recognise international development cooperation and international humanitarian aid as important instruments of Slovenian foreign policy. Slovenia has been an official development assistance donor since 2004. In 2016, funds earmarked for international development cooperation amounted to EUR 73,568,454 or 0.19% of gross national income (GNI) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018b).

The Resolution on the International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid of the Republic of Slovenia (2017) recognises global education and its role in eliminating poverty and implementing sustainable development (Article 27). Global education encourages participants to understand world events, their causes and consequences, and interconnectedness of local and global dimension. On national level, the field overlaps between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs regularly supports projects of non-governmental organisations in this field (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2018a). Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could be identified as one of the most prominent institutional supporters of Global Education in Slovenia, an overview of their activities in various years indicates that their support is not consistent and geared towards achieving long-term goals (Suša 2015).

When the field of Global Education began developing in Slovenia (non-governmental organisations' Working Group on Sustainable Development has been established in 2008), the process was marked by transfer of ideas, methodologies and didactic materials from Western European countries. Yet the national context is significantly different: Slovenia does not have extensive development cooperation programs, a relatively small share of GNI is allocated to official development assistance, only a small number of non-governmental organisations are part of larger international networks, and many of them do not engage in development projects outside Slovenia. Unlike in many countries, Global Education can be placed at the core of the non-governmental sector, as many educational and public awareness campaigns represent the bulk of non-governmental organisations' work (Suša 2015).



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While international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance are recognised as important instruments of Slovenia’s foreign policy, contributing to sustainable development and the SDGs, and recognising the importance of the awareness-raising component and global education, migration-related issues or migration – development nexus are not reflected in foreign policy documents (on sustainable development).

2.6. Migration policies and international commitments

In Slovenia, policy-making is still centralised, with line ministries responsible for coordination of certain issues. Policies regarding migration fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior. Already in 2002, a Resolution on Migration Policy of the Republic of Slovenia has been adopted based on the Foreigners Act, recognising individual’s right to move as a form of expression of freedom of movement, a right protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia. In 2010, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities drafted the Economic Migrations Strategy for the period 2010–2030, recognising Slovenia joining the group of countries facing labour shortage. Among Strategy goals are to provide guidelines and measures to ensure work experience of domestic workforce abroad, and to reduce brain drain by encouraging circulation of professionals.

In 2017, a new Government body, Government Office for Support and Integration of Migrants, has been established, but only asylum-seekers and international protection beneficiaries fall within their responsibilities with regard to majority of the body’s tasks. Other issues related to integration fall within workload of various line ministries (e.g. Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Health).

In terms of immigration to Slovenia, scope of rights entitled to migrants greatly depends on their status in Slovenia. International protection beneficiaries are entitled to the most comprehensive scope of rights, their rights are equal to rights of Slovene citizens with the exception of some political rights. All migrants are entitled to the Initial Integration of Migrants program, with Slovene language courses and Slovene culture and state system courses.

In response to the increased number of refugees and migrants coming to Europe between 2015 and 2016 (the so-called refugee crisis), Government of Slovenia adopted the national contingency plan to provide accommodation and care in case of an increased number of international protection applicants in June 2015. The contingency plan specifies objectives, actions and involvement of competent authorities, and various scenarios relating to increased number of international protection applicants, and establishes foreseeable systems for responding to newly emerged emergency situations (Ministry of Interior 2016).

Under the EU scheme for relocation and resettlement of international protection applicants and refugees, Slovenia has committed to relocating 218 persons from Italy and 349 persons from Greece, and to resettling 20 persons from third countries (Ministry of Interior



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OXFAM Italia



DIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP



WU



ZAVOD GLOBAL



Kopin



UNIVERSITY OF DUKE



IZUKACI ANTI-DISKRIMINACIJE



ICU



kmop



WUS



Euro training

2016). On 4 August 2016, the Government adopted a decision that, based on the EU-Turkey Agreement, 60 third-country nationals in total who are eligible for refugee status may be admitted (Ministry of Interior 2017). In 2015, the Migration Office of the Ministry of the Interior drafted Implementation Plan for relocations from Italy and Greece, and permanent resettlement from third countries, which may be adapted in case of changing mandatory quotas. The Implementation Plan encompasses foreseen timetable for gradual reception of international protection applicants, and a comprehensive action plan of measures (admission procedure, determination of refugee/subsidiary protection status, special care for unaccompanied minors, accommodation facilities, integration programs, involvement of local communities, role of media, etc.), which is needed for successful relocation and resettlement, and integration of persons into Slovenian society (Ministry of Interior 2016). In March 2016, Government of Slovenia established an interdepartmental working group to coordinate the Implementation Plan, which includes representatives of Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Education, Science and Sport (Ministry of Interior 2017).

As the EU relocation scheme concluded by March 2018, 253 asylum seekers have been relocated to Slovenia from Italy and Greece, mostly of Syrian and Eritrean nationality (Ministry of Interior 2018). The resettlement process shall commence in April/May 2018.

Similarly to foreign policy, migration policies are lacking the sustainability component, including the migration – development nexus, which would also strengthen general understanding of migration phenomenon. This often results in some concerns or tensions in local community or formal education environments, while stakeholders are not well equipped to address complex and interconnected issues.

3. Field Research

3.1. Introduction

The local team (meeting on 27.02.2018) identified 44 relevant individuals with expertise from different fields, institutions and organisations, covering migrations, sustainability and Global Education. The program of the focus group was prepared, using research methodology provided by the InterCap partner organisation, Diversity Development Group. Invitations were sent to all identified individuals on 09.03.2018, after the date of the focus group implementation was set to 15.03.2018. A web application form was set up to enable the local team to further communicate with the applicants.

Until 13.03.2018, 18 individuals confirmed participation in the focus group. The local team decided to organise two separate focus groups on the same day, by opening up an additional morning session. 5 applicants participated in the morning session and 13 applicants participated in the afternoon session.



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Seven participants were males, eleven participants were females.

Four participants were from national government institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for Global Education; Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, responsible for sustainability issues; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, responsible for youth; and from the Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants). Four participants were from academic institutions (Faculty of Social Sciences and Slovenian Migration Institute; two of them were pedagogy students, participating in an educational project on SDGs and migration). Two journalists, who are covering migration, human rights and sustainability issues at two national media, also participated. Eight participants were from various NGOs, covering global education and/or integration of migrants.

Zavod GLOBAL as the local partner and SLOGA as the associate partner were in role of focus group facilitators.

3.2. Awareness about international migration and sustainable development

Slovenia is a two million country with limited human resources. The education system is well developed, and based on teachers' autonomy in case of extracurricular activities or issues. Policy Coherence on Development (PCD) as a concept is known among development experts in academia and among some experts from civil society sector. Although PCD is recognised as an important principle for international development cooperation policy (direct reference to PCD in Resolution on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid until 2030), its institutional embeddedness is rather difficult to assess.

Focus groups revealed common understanding among participants from different sectors that PCDs, SDGs, Paris Agreement or other international conventions and agreements are considered helpful, because they set at least a minimum benchmark for implementation at national level. On the other hand, international agreements and conventions are considered important for the civil society' advocacy work.

Some officials expressed their opinion that the new international development cooperation strategy (currently being drafted) is developed in a more participatory manner, including content-wise, e.g. on PCD, and the process has been open to other sectors more than was the case in the past. The same can be said about the Slovenia Development Strategy, adopted in 2017.

It was also noted, that some basic issues are still open, i.e. human rights-based approach is not well developed in Slovenia. Thus, questions were raised how well are the key stakeholders prepared to deal with the implementation of complex issues, as the attainment of the SDGs, on the national level.



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Experts also pointed out that Slovenia was criticised for its approach towards implementation of sustainable development actions. In case of the so-called Balkan migration route, Slovenia was steadfast with her regional initiatives to close the route, and lacking almost completely in terms of finding sustainable solutions, that are connected with understanding the causes of migration from Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, etc. A similar approach can be seen also in other EU policies, especially those dealing with development and migration, where development aid is more and more considered as a tool to “control migration”, “manage migration” and “tackle the root causes of migration”. This is based on the misnomer that development reduces migration flows.

In similar fashion, while Slovenia participates in shaping the EU Common Agricultural Policy, there seems to be little concern about implications of subsidies to EU farmers, on food production and trade in the Global South.

3.3. Link between migration and sustainable development

The focus groups revealed that relevant stakeholders are not lacking information about different issues concerning climate change and migrations. On the other hand, they are facing quite a low level of understanding about migration as a phenomenon. For instance, relevant stakeholders are not really concerned with global migration. “We start to deal with it, when somebody is crossing the border. Migration is a much bigger, complex phenomenon. Mixed migration is not discussed, for example – we are trying to bring that to attention in coming post-Cotonou negotiations. Through that discussion, it would be easier to make the connection between migration and sustainable development goals. It is unrealistic to look at global issues only through local policy-making.”

In addition, policy implementation is suffering of so-called vertical approach to issues at the administrative level. That has a negative impact on national capacity to deal with modern problems that are overwhelmingly horizontal. Internal administrative culture is facing lack of intra- and inter-departmental/ministerial co-ordination, hierarchic culture and poor flow of information. Discussion resembled in great extent the results from the study on competences of public administration (Kajnič *et al.* 2010: 84) after the Slovene presidency of the EU in 2008. Study identified similar issues to discussion in the focus groups, that are marking the existing public administration competences: human resources deficit, bad vertical cooperation within department, insufficient interdepartmental cooperation, hierarchy within institutions that stifles initiative, insufficient knowledge in similar fields and awareness of linkages, insufficient information on the substance of relevant issues and internal political issues (Kajnič *et al.* 2010: 99).

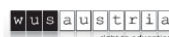
Such conditions will have detrimental impact on national implementation. It is not of coincidence that focus group participants noted several times that much more has to be done on collaboration and co-operation capabilities within the country.



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3.4. Insecurity

Focus group participants understood insecurities regarding migration and sustainability in a form of securitisation of public discourse, especially after facing the so-called refugee crisis of 2015-2016.

Slovenia was facing a huge financial crisis in the last decade. Growing unemployment and precarious employment have caused a wave of emigration from Slovenia to EU and non-EU countries in the recent years. Economic inequalities grew in the same period, with the growing percentage of people living in poverty. People lost trust in public institutions – Slovenia reached bottom among OECD members in that concern. National election turnout in 2014 reached lowest level in short history of independent Slovenia (below 51 %). In this context, it was relatively easy for some media outlets and political sphere to portray migrants as a security threat. Hence, migration only added additional insecurities to the already touched societal fabric.

Sustainable development is not considered an issue in the public that could contribute anything to solving that situation.

3.5. Main factors that shape public opinion and instruments to shape public discourse

Focus groups pointed out that regarding migration, problem lies in complexity of these processes. Editors and journalists do not possess sufficient knowledge, needed to comprehend the phenomenon. However, everyday decisions on news, their direction and type are being taken anyway. There is an evident merger between media and some political agendas, which help shape the news that get air time. Public opinions are being shaped and framed through various techniques addressing human emotions. Thus, no real space for evidence-based discussion is being left.

Even civil society organisations identified that business as usual in communication is giving much less results than expected.

The main question posed was, what really works in the age of social media, where majority of people are living in some kind of bubble [community], in a balloon, reinforcing their own values, attitudes, stereotypes and loyalties. Civil society organisations, working in the field of advocacy, identified that objective and complex information does not reach “hearts and minds” of people, especially if expected to change their attitudes or preferences. Choice of methods and approaches is thus very important – deciding upon objective data and so-called rational arguments, or using narratives to gain compassion and emotional support for the issue.



3.6. Gaps of information and instruments to fill the gaps

Participants shared the position that there are big gaps and great needs to be filled, to establish more comprehensive narrative regarding migration – sustainable development nexus. Although participants in general thought that there is sufficient data available, main gaps can be identified (1) in the field of interpretation that would support narratives, and (2) in supporting structures, providing knowledge/information to enable – in the best sense of the word – informed decision. Nothing particular has been pointed out.

3.7. The role of education systems

Civil society organisations that are very active in global [citizenship] education programs, are identifying how important and demanding it is to work with youth, and to provide support to teachers. As it was a common understanding that there is a clear need for discussion/exchange platform on national level, clear need for strengthened co-operation. Based on the focus groups discussion, more has to be done to provide training for teachers, as they are facing many challenges when introducing migration and other global issues.

Practitioners also identified that additional work has to be done in the field of so-called “fake news” accessible/provided through social media. Teachers need additional training and support to provide credible responses and to gain trust (with a goal to maintain position of a “third party validator”).

At the University level, there are some projects bringing together issues of sustainable development and migration that are of limited scope, taking into account resource limitations and current research supporting mechanisms.

Focus group discussions also revealed an interesting discrepancy between the readiness of the state to support teachers training on intercultural competences on one hand, and to fulfil very restrictive immigration and migration policies on the other.



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4. Conclusions and recommendations

Main conclusions are:

- There is a great need for cooperation/collaboration among different actors in the field of sustainable development – migration nexus.
- Prevalent vertical administrative culture is not suitable to deal efficiently and successfully with contemporary complex and cross-cutting challenges.
- Media landscape is showcasing “spontaneous” overlapping, even fusion, of editorial and political agendas, thus providing unbalanced positions and opinions.
- There is a need for additional training on all levels of policy-making (local, national) on SDGs and targets. Training is needed on cooperation and collaboration techniques, effective and efficient management for sustainable development, on policy coherence issues, monitoring and evaluation.
- Existing capacities to provide comprehensive support to teachers, mentors, trainers and adult educators are weak, and in many cases left to the agility of knowledge providers and the courage of teachers, especially in time of social media and fake news.
- More comprehensive awareness-raising activities are needed, focusing especially on development of capacities in horizontal understanding of the national and international development context – this is crucial for attainment of SDGs.
- Coherent and consistent migration and immigration policy is needed on national level, as existing framework does not provide an adequate basis for implementation (existing framework is at least outdated and fragmented).
- Planning and implementation activities have to take into account realistic evaluation of available human and financial resources.

4.1. National and local level recommendations for NGOs

- Strengthening cooperation/collaboration among actors (civil society organizations, academia, educators, national and local authorities/administrators) by utilizing existing and forming additional supporting structures.
- Opening space for objective, evidence-based exchange and discussion on migration – sustainable development nexus in close cooperation with all actors and beneficiaries.



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- Through collaboration, strengthening advocacy actions for new, coherent and consistent migration and immigration policy on national level, providing concrete and attainable goals and targets (including education and training actions).
- Systematic collection and exchange of new narratives on immigrant reality – from success to open hate speech/racism by people and institutions.
- Strengthening presence in social media by providing counter-populist narratives.
- Improving advocacy efforts through collaborative actions between civil society organizations and academia.
- Strengthening communication channels and information exchange through existing platforms/networks.
- Developing tailored trainings for policy and decision-makers, media editors (and journalists), local counsellors on analytical tools, situation and power analysis, communication and co-operation methods and techniques, prioritization, inter- and intra-departmental collaboration, methodologies on attaining common understanding of implementing agents and decision-makers.
- Awareness raising on general ideas of sustainability, development and migration, on mass migrations (causes and forms), supported with development of comprehensive integration capacities on local and national level.

4.2. National and local level recommendations for governmental institutions

- Adoption of a comprehensive migration and immigration policy in open, transparent and inclusive manner.
- Providing additional resources for civil society organizations work in the field.
- Strengthening support to raise capacity of existing and new diaspora organisations.
- Re-thinking and reshaping focus of collaborative action by taking into account real limitations of human and financial resources.
- Improving communications on migration by linking them to national issues (access to accommodation, precarious work, conditionalities and youth).
- Plan and implement actions to address atmosphere of mistrust among population (human rights, rule of law, active citizenship).

4.3. Local level recommendations for municipalities

- Creation of local support mechanism on migration (i.e. in form of Integration Council).
- Using existing platforms for information and practice exchange among municipalities.



4.4. National and local level recommendations for educational institutions

- Creation of additional support mechanisms and tools for practitioners (teachers, trainers, adult educators, activists).
- Identification of information gaps and educational needs at primary, secondary and tertiary education, including lifelong-learning capacities is needed.
- Increased accessibility and targeted support within the education system for all immigrants shall be provided.
- Development of new didactic materials for teaching about the sustainable development – migration nexus to enable better understanding causality of the future trends.

4.5. Recommendations for future research areas

- Strengthening research on national demographic situation, workforce projections and economic needs.
- Providing evidence-based ‘big picture’ by use of statistics and its interpretations, to support all actors to improve their communication of new narratives.
- Strengthening research of fake news mechanisms, and how to counter them effectively.
- Strengthening research of social media impact on population preferences and biases, with a goal to support counter-populist actions.



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