

Global Education? Sure!
Paweł Pustelnik

Global youth events have one common feature: you never know what to expect from them. And if the event takes place in a remote place, that you have to look up on Wikipedia before departing, this means that you cannot predict anything. Welcome to the Third African University on Youth Development hold in Cape Verde in May this year.

Vaccination: no need for any; some sweet treats for the international banquet: tick; WSCF materials: tick; a piece of hand luggage (what else would you need for a week in Africa...) and the trip begins. We came from more than thirty from completely different backgrounds, with different experiences and various expectations. Most of us had a vague idea of the theme: global education can be understood in so many different ways.

The common ground for us was youth participation that was the main focus. While analyzing the World Youth Conference Declaration, Declaration of Brada and a recent letter concerning the youth addressed to the United Nations we all recognized the problem is that often youth presence in international forums is rather shallow. Therefore, this issue needs to be addressed through global education initiatives in order to raise awareness. And here comes the question: how should we understand 'global education' itself? The Council of Europe in its guidelines use the Maastricht's Declaration definition saying that,

Global education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalized world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all.¹

Having this definition in mind we were trying to open up for the new perspectives, contexts and initiatives.

There was one remarkable feature of that event – it was completely secular and therefore, there was no space for prayers, nor for spiritual moments that for us WSCFers, used to a different format, was perhaps not a challenge but, for sure, an awkward experience. The lack was painful and once again we felt that the format of the WSCF conferences has this special touch that is given by the spiritual dimension.

The training course also offered us a possibility to experience Cape Verde. Using school buses, the most accessible means of transport for groups on the island, we visited a couple of schools, had chance to talk to teachers and paint murals with the students. Global education became a reality for a moment – the youth from three continents were together working on a common project. It is hard to predict how long the mural will stay on the wall it was painted, but the experiences gathered will contribute to the better understanding between us young people from all over the world.

¹ *The Maastricht Global Education Declaration* www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/GE-Guidelines/GEg-app1.pdf.