

# Case Study - Dr Bozena Cierlik, School of History

## **Promoting democratic competences and integration of GCDE into teaching as case study in School of History Module HI2048 - 1989 Autumn of Nation. Transition to democracy in Poland and East Central Europe.**

The aim of my case study was to enhance module HI2048 already offered to students of History, Politics and European Studies by positioning it within Global Citizenship and Development Education methodology. Pedagogy is based on concept of integration of GCDE into teaching and promoting democratic competences through Service Learning.

I was fortunate to present this case study at conference Living Knowledge 2022, University of Groningen 28/6-1/7/2022.

The whole concept is underpinned by *Bologna Declaration* ( 1999) stating : “Europe of knowledge...capable of giving its citizens the necessary competencies to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an **awareness of shared values** and belonging to **a common social and cultural space**” as well as UNESCO’s frameworks for *Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED)*: “learners need to be equipped through the educational process with knowledge and understanding of **local, global, environmental and sustainability issues**; skills for critical thinking, analysis and enquiry; a sense of belonging to a common humanity based on human rights; attitudes of **solidarity and respect for differences and diversity**; and the motivation, willingness and ability to act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world; ... **empower learners as global citizens** who are able to adopt active roles, both locally and globally, to address and resolve global challenges, and to become proactive contributors to creating **a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world** “.

In 2016 Council of Europe in its document on *Competences for Democratic Culture* stated that: “Contemporary societies within Europe face many challenges, including declining levels of voter turnout in elections, increased distrust of politicians, high levels of hate crime, intolerance and prejudice towards minority ethnic and religious groups, and increasing levels of support for violent extremism. These challenges threaten the legitimacy of democratic institutions and peaceful co-existence within Europe. ... Formal education is a vital tool that can be used to tackle these challenges. Appropriate educational input and practices can boost democratic engagement, reduce intolerance, and prejudice, and decrease support for violent extremism”.

## **HI2048 Autumn of Nations -Transition to democracy in Poland and East Central Europe.**

Course it taught in 2nd semester (12 weeks over 24 hours)

### Module description:

The module will examine the process of transition from communism to democracy in East Central Europe and the global significance of the 1989 revolutions. It will provide analysis of the core issues that shaped the region's politics: regime change, creation of civil society, economic reforms, and the changing nature of the post-communist system. It will invite reflection on the nature of politics in ECE and the future of liberal values at the end of the 20th century. It will look as well at long term impact of this transformation - emigration and local communities. Students will engage with Polish local community organisations as well as Cork City Social Inclusion unit to participate in the process of identifying needs and policies at local level facilitating social inclusion, diversity, and community participation.

Students apply and deepen their understanding of democratic concepts, learn about social justice, and examine the relevance of these topics in the real world as well as in the local community. They use course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding of the key theoretical, methodological, and applied issues at hand. Students will participate in activities, that meet identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility.

Integration of GCDE and introduction of Service-Learning component will enable for local as well as global connection.

### Enhanced Learning outcomes:

- Application of community engaged 'Service-Learning' approach to actively engage with a community partner(s) to collaboratively address a module related problem or a challenge identified by the community.
- Analyse how higher-level Local Authority plan and strategies (LECP) permeate out into actions in the community (of study).
- Demonstrate reflective practice, making connections across the academic and Service-Learning components of the module.
- Participate in appropriate local community activities to facilitate understanding of their needs.
- Demonstrate a greater sense of personal efficacy, personal identity, self-knowledge of own privileges and responsibilities.
- Demonstrate openness to cultural otherness by identifying stereotypes and facilitate greater inter-cultural understanding.
- Develop graduate attributes of social responsibility and effective global citizenship
- Students reflect on their activities to learn curricular concepts and to practice problem solving, evaluative and analytical skills as well as critical and reflective thinking.

### Societal challenges and democratic competences addressed:

Reduced inequalities (SDG10); Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG11); Peace justice and strong institutions (SDG16), Partnership for the goals (SDG17).

The module emphasizes:

- Diversity and inclusion
- Engagement in local governance
- Concept of democracy
- Social and civic mobility
- Language and communication
- Advocacy
- Greater involvement in community service after graduation
- Recognition of cultural diversity and civic engagement as the outcome of research and working together with Polish and ECE community, Cork City Council and UCC

### Continuous Assessment:

1500-word document analysis

3,000-word essay or reflective portfolio based on engagement with the local communities

There are few important questions here: what do students need to know and reflect on to function effectively and responsibly in a diverse, stratified world? How to effectively integrate diversity and civic learning? How to move from the language of service to the language of justice and social responsibility? And how to link diversity and civic work to the learning outcomes we want to cultivate in students?

Unexpected international development, war in Ukraine, put spotlight on GCDE learning and led to even bigger expansion of module content (war and its global consequences – see ppt) and students' research on Irish emigration policy and local integration of Ukrainian migrants within local community using examples of Polish migrant organisations in Cork.

There were huge benefits as well as some challenges for me in the process of implementation of GCDE themes and methodology into the module:

- Enhancement of the curriculum
- Implementation of GCDE pedagogy
- Challenges of meaningful assessment
- Impact of a Service-Learning course on social and civic challenges
- greater engagement in local issues and governance

- greater understanding of importance of engagement for the benefit of individual and the community
- development of Graduate Attributes
- Collaborative approach will benefit long term sustainability of the partnership
- Recognition of cultural diversity and civic engagement as the outcome of collaborative research

I believe that promoting democratic competences and framing GCDE themes as an integral part of the curriculum promotes: meaningful partnership between university and the community, reciprocity with flow of knowledge between university and the community, civic learning - relied to personal and social competencies, as an important category of students learning goals (beside academic learning goals) and students' active participation. This process facilitates systematic student reflection on understanding of diverse perspectives and linking their learning experience to the theoretical and methodological background of the subject.

GCDE methodology promotes transdisciplinary values and evaluation as an integral part of active learning and addresses the issue of sustainability by developing graduate attributes of social responsibility and effective global citizenship.

The concept of global and local connections is already an integral part of UCC strategy. Its *Together With And For Community. UCC Civic Engagement Plan 2017-2022* states that "we must commit to continuing to build democracy in Ireland and a cohesive society. Together we must nurture the public and civic values of our students. We must also play our part in actively facing up to Europe's social and democratic challenges and addressing UN Sustainable Development Goals; ... our strategic goal is to be a leading University of independent thinkers, creating and sharing knowledge for the good of all and in service to the community".

Engaged learning and social responsibility are also part of higher education national strategy in Ireland: "Universities are both apart from and a part of society. They are apart in the sense that they provide a critically important space for grasping the world as it is and - importantly - for re-imagining the world as it ought to be. But Universities are also a part of our societies. What's the point unless the accumulated knowledge, insight and vision are put at the service of the community? With the privilege to pursue knowledge comes the civic responsibility to engage and put that knowledge to work in the service of humanity" (*President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, 2012*)