

Name and position today and a short background

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Short background

I am the head of the Institute of Sustainable Education. I am a member of several international networks, such as *Baltic and Black Sea Consortium in Educational Research* (BBCC) and *International Seminar of Religious Education and Values* (ISREV). I am also a national expert in UNESCO group „*Communities in practice*” since 2008 and active participant of implementing UNITWIN/UNESCO project the “*Reorienting teacher education towards sustainable development.*” I was an active participant in Comenius international projects: “*ICTime - as a Tool of Intercultural and Media Education*” and “*Children as Researchers in the Primary schools in Europe*” as a national coordinator.



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1. Short CV (only relevant for your profession in RE and for other colleagues and practicing educators)

2002, Ph.D Fordham University, Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, USA

1998, Master degree at Fordham University, Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education, USA

1997, Master in Education, University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

Since 2008, The head of the Institute of Sustainable education, Daugavpils University, Latvia.

Since 2008, Associate professor at Daugavpils University, Faculty of Education and Management, Latvia

Active participant at the international level in the field of religious education:

Since 2007 participant of UNESCO local group: “Communities in practice”

Since 2007 participant of CiCe (Children Identity and Citizenship in Europe) society;

Since 2007 member of NGO „Institute of Sustainable education” (Reg. Nr.

Since 2005 member of BBCC – *Baltic & Black sea Circle Consortium in educational research*

Since 2004 member of International Seminar on Religious Education and Values (IISREV)

Since 2004 national coordinator of European Society of Women in Theological Research (ESWTR)

2. Special contributions to the theory of RE; some notes about your personal intentions, criticism of other positions or approaches, in short what you want to change and develop.

I believe that the proper approach toward teaching religion in public schools in Latvia requires an unbiased, undistorted way of seeking to understand religion. RE should induct children in an informed way into what is a debate, extend their options, dispel ignorance and misconceptions, as well as reveal hidden assumptions (Copley, 2005). It would require an

'open mindedness, 'critical realism' (Barnes & Wright, 2006), and 'reflective pluralism' (Adler, 2004). To teach for an open mindedness means to provide children an access to a plurality of values and the skills for critical evaluation of their own values. This will open a space for students' opportunities to practice freedom of thought. Religious teachers claim that they offer a plurality of perspectives and views to their students in Latvia. *Reflective pluralism* entails more than exposure to a range of religions, customs, and values. This requires discussing diverse issues of religious truth. Schools need to strive to educate religiously literate children. Children are confronted with controversial issues all the time, but teachers as professionals need to 'handle all such issues with care, intellectual honesty and rigor' (Rosenblith, 2008, p. 119). Reducing teaching religion as a neutral study of factological material may lead to fundamentalism or secular studies of culture. Instead, by dealing with controversial issues, prevents adopting the position of fundamentalists or secularists (Rosenblith, 2008). Also, as critical religious educators argue, making judgments within and between different worldviews requires relating variations within and between worldviews to the pre-existing understandings of students.

1) RE should promote the individual's religious freedom including freedom from religion, freedom to practice religion and freedom to change religion;

2) RE should promote the understanding of religious and philosophical views necessary to enable other people to practice their religion or beliefs. (Moulin, 2009, p.159)

Confessionalism in Latvia is less likely becomes a dominant approach towards teaching religion since students do not know if they would assent to the tenets of the religion being promulgated. Neither there will be demand for postmodern relativism (Erricker, Erricker, 2000), since there is no 'truth.' This may marginalize potential religious beliefs that people may have in the original position. The model of critical realism (Barnes & Wright, 2006, Wright, 2001) will be unlikely adopted as all - encompassing approach because it relies on particular interpretation of what religious knowledge and truth are. Rather the most appropriate approach will allow a spectrum of opinions available where students will be exposed to opposing views and differing opinions.

References:

- Adler, J. (2004). Reconciling open-mindedness and belief. *Theory and Research in Education*, 1, 127-142.
- Barnes, L.P.& Wright, A. (2006). Romanticism, representations of religion and critical religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 28(1), 65-77
- Copley, T.(2005). *Indoctrination, education and God: The struggle for the mind*. London: SPCK.
- Moulin, D. (2009). A too liberal religious education? A thought experiment for teachers and theorists, *British Journal of Religious Education*, Vol.32, 2, pp. 153-165.
- Rosenblith, S. (2008). Beyond co - existence. Toward a more reflective religious pluralism. *Theory and Research in Education*, 6, 107-121.

3. Research and interest fields (short description and publications on each of them)

3.1 Religious diversity and dialogue, elaborated in the following articles:

- Iliško, Dz. (2009) Pedagogical challenges for educating an authentic religious identity and responsible pluralism, In Meijer, W.A.J, Miedema, S., Lanser-van-der Velde, A. (2009) (ed).*Religious Education in a World of Religious Diversity*, Vol. 12. Germany: Waxmann [ISBN 978-3-8309-2193-6].
- Iliško, Dz. (2006) *Education for democracy in our Pluralistic Society*, In abstract collection of International Conference 'Education for Democracy as a Part of Sustainable Development,' Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 58 [ISBN 978-952-10-3857-0].
- Iliško, Dz. (2005) *Developing sensitivity towards the Other in our pluralistic society*. Proceedings of the International conference: *Person. Color. Nature. Music*. Daugavpils University: Saule, 163-173 [ISBN- 9984-14-267-1].
- Iliško, Dz. (2004) Developing sensibilities towards 'The Other' in an ecologically sustainable global community. *PANORAMA. International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values*, 16, 33- 44.[ISSN 0937 -8219]

3.2 The analysis of models and approaches towards RE in Latvia and drawing a holistic picture of further developments of RE in public schools in Latvia, elaborated in the following publications:

- Iliško, Dz. (2007) Religious education in Latvia, in Kuyk, E., Jensen, R, Lankshear, D., Loh Manna Elisabeth, Schreiner, P. (eds.). *Religious Education in Europe*. Norway: IKO Publishing House, 121-127 [ISBN 978- 82-7012-793-0].
- Iliško, Dz. (2006). Ecofeminism - A healing perspective for reshaping religious education, in Souza, M., et al. (ed.). *International Handbook of the Religious, Moral and Spiritual Dimensions in Education*. Part one. The Neatherands: Springer, 127-141.[ISBN 10 1-4020-4803-3] (HB).
- Iliško, Dz. (2005) Die katolische Kirche in Zeiten des Wandels in Lettland. *Diakonia*, 36, 4, 288- 294.[ISBN 3-7867-2534-9].

Iliško, Dz. (2003). *A critical view on religious education in public schools*. The proceedings of International conference 'Person. Time. Communication.' Rēzekne: Rēzekne Institute, p. 208-213.

3.3. Multicultural education – necessity or burden for Latvia, elaborated in the following publications:

Iliško, Dz. (2009). Challenges of multicultural education in Latvia. Proceedings of International Conference “*Citizenship-Multiculturalism–Cosmopolitanism*” Nicosia: University of Cyprus, Vol.1, 487-502 [ISBN 978-9963-9442-1-7].

Iliško, Dz. (2006) Pedagogical challenges of education for authentic responsible pluralism and democratic values. Education for democracy in our pluralistic society. *Sustainable Development, Culture and Education*, Helsinki: Helsinki University, p. 337-349.

Iliško, Dz., Bogdanova, N., Kokina, I. (2004). *Rationale for extending altruistic bounds in our multicultural and multi religious global community*, In the proceedings of 7th ATEE Teacher Education Spring University (TESU) proceedings 'The Role of Teachers as promoters of Basic Skills acquisition and Facilitation of Learning,' Estonia: University of Tartu, 33 [ISBN 9985-56-876-1].

3.4 The role of women in RE:

Iliško, Dz. (2008). Re-imagining ecofeminist theology for Eastern Europe. *Feminist Theology*, 16, 2, London: Sage Publications, 230-237 [ISSN 0966-7350].

Iliško, Dz. (2007). Ecological approach towards redefining sexuality of women. In Brazal, A. & Lizares, S. (ed.). *Body and Sexuality*. Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 90 - 101 [ISBN 978-971-550-516-1].

Iliško, Dz. (2007) Teachers as agents of societal change. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 11 (7), 14 -27 [ISSN 1691 - 4147].

Iliško, Dz. (2007) Women in times of changes in post-soviet Latvia, in Fischer, I. (ed). *Theologie von Frauen fur Frauen*, Deutschland: Munster, 157-185 [ISBN 978-3-7000-0640-4].

Iliško, Dz. (2006) The challenges of pedagogy: Reclaiming one's voice to construct a just world. in Sinha, S. & Gupta, A.(ed.) *At Risk population, Sociolinguistic Educational Issues*. New Delhi: Dominant Publishers and Distributions, 39 - 51.[ISBN 81-7888-471-2].

Iliško, Dz. (2006). Women commemorating women: Spiritual leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, *Newsletter*, ESWTR, 2 (4).

Iliško, Dz. (2005) Towards a more inclusive religious education in Eastern Europe. *Yearbook of the European Society of Women in Theological Research*. The Neatherlands: Peeters, 169-193 [ISBN 90-429-1582-X].

4. Current projects (short summary)

Active participation in implementing UNESCO/UNITWIN project: Reorienting teacher education towards sustainability, national expert of UNESCO “Communities in practice” in Latvia.

Participation at the world Exhibition and UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development. Federal Ministry of Education and Research, March 32 - April 2, 2009 (Germany, Bonn).

5. Books in English (if possible together wit a short summary or keywords)

Sahhuseyinogly, D. & Iliško, Dz (2010) (ed.). *How do children learn?* (in print) 196 p. The book is a collection of articles of international scholars that comprises both theoretic and methodological materials on how children construct their world.

6. Book chapters in English (if possible together wit a short summary or keywords)

Belousa I, Stakle, A., Iliško, Dz (2010) Intercultural and media literacy. In Belousa, I. et.al (ed.). *ICT as a tool of Intercultural and Media Education*. Portugal.

7. Articles in journals in English (if possible together with a short summary or keywords)

Iliško, Dz., Ignatjeva, S. , Mičule, I. (2010). Teachers as reserchers : Bringing teachers' voice to the educatioanl landscape. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 51 - 66, Vol.12 [ISSN 1691-4147].

Iliško, Dz. (2008) "Re-imagining ecofeminist theology for Eastern Europe." *Feminist Theology*, 16 (2) London: Sage Publications, 230-237 [ISSN 0966-7350].

Iliško, Dz. (2005) Die katolische Kirche in Zeiten des Wandels in Lettland. *Diakonia*, 36 (4), 288- 294 [ISBN 3-7867-2534-9].

8. Other information

Organization and participation at the international conferences:

July, 2010 (Ottava) The keynote speaker at xvii session of ISREV „Religious Education and Freedom of Religion and Belief,” Canada.

May, 2010 (Paris) 8th International conference „Sustainable Development. Culture. Education. Research and Implementation of Education for Sustainable Developemnt,” France, Paris, organizing team

May, 2009 (Latvia) 7th International JTEFS/BBCC konference „Sustainable Development. Culture. Education, Research and Implementation of Education for Sustainable Developemnt,” Daugavpils: Daugavpils University, organizing team

August, 2007 (Napole) 12th ESWTR international conference ‘Becoming living communities within the family, the society , the churches,’ Italy, organizing team.

May, 2006 (Austria) International congres of theologians “Theologie von Frauen fur Frauen?” Grac University