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## Humanities Education for the Climate in a Polish Studies/Slavic Studies Application<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The study presents an international interdisciplinary project obtained as a grant from the International Visegrad Fund in the category referred to as strategic projects, implemented with four partners from the Visegrad countries: Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland<sup>2</sup>. The project assumptions are outlined here, namely: laying down the foundations in the Visegrad. Four countries for a humanistic, multifaceted, modern education of the general public with a sense of responsibility for the climate present and future of the planet, the premises underlying the project, its concept based on two complementary parts, its aims, and the implementation plan. Due to the completion of the project, the results are also described here that have already been obtained in terms of studying curriculum frameworks and teaching aids, with a particularly detailed presentation of survey research related to the climate catastrophe that took place in Poland, attracting substantial interest from the community and from the media. The activities concluding the project are also described, as well as program recommendations in the field of education at all levels, and hope is expressed in relation to the future outcomes of the planned pro-climate education.

**Keywords:** pro-climate education, climate, ecology, environmental humanities, new humanities, ecodidactic materials.

Aspects related to counteracting climate change are among the most significant challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What is alarming is both the pace of the changes (although research by climate scientists proves that they are more a rule than an

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exception) and their cause, namely anthropogenic pollution. It is our increasingly numerous species that is consuming more and more energy, drastically changing land use and, as a result, certain characteristics of the Earth's surface (e.g. through urbanization, deforestation, farmland conversion, and drainage of wetlands), important in heat transfer processes. It has become justified to call our times the Anthropocene, as it is human activity that has produced an effect comparable to the powerful natural geophysical processes of the past.

The climate scientists' diagnosis of the global threat of an environmental catastrophe has become a reality (Ripple et al. 2020). Over 11,000 signatories from 153 countries summed up the climate emergency and synthetically indicated six key areas in which changes should be made: energy, short-lived pollutants, nature, food, the economy, and population. We do not know the exact scale of their impact, but it is worth realizing that they do not operate independently and autonomously. They most probably have a combined influence, and only their resultant effect can slightly shift the trajectory of the Earth's climate towards one that is less destructive and dangerous for humans, and even for most organisms in general. The humanities have an important role to play in the area of influencing change, a role that tends to be underestimated and often not widely recognized as an essential element of the recovery system faced with the state of climate emergency. The latter is not merely a "scientific fact" in terms of scale and figures. The respective endangerment is actually, as historian Julia Adeney Thomas noted, "a question of both scale and value. Only the humanities and social sciences [...] can fully articulate what we may lose" (Thomas 2014: 1588). In fact, the climate crisis is also a social crisis, it is a question of changing mentality and consciousness, a question of justice that requires people to have competences only the humanities can allow them to develop: the ability to empathize with another human being, but also with non-human beings, the ability "to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person" (Nussbaum 2016: 23), of another being. Understanding the importance of humanistic values has become a premise for many educators and researchers in the area of the humanities. Other premises included:

- calls from international organizations (notably: UN 1982) to take responsibility to keep our blue planet and its inhabitants alive;
- activities of states, local organizations, business and local authorities towards achieving climate neutrality (Ministry of the Environment 2008);
- high awareness among young people concerning the status of the Earth's climate and risks, as well as the resulting concern.

## THE PROJECT AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

However, young people's awareness and knowledge are insufficient, often being trivialized and superficial, and many people do not make a connection

between the events they experience on a daily basis and global processes, such as global climate change and global warming. In order to meet the climate-related demands of the modern world, a group of researchers and educationalists in the field of the humanities from the Interdisciplinary Center for Research on Humanistic Education at the University of Silesia in Katowice invited researchers from the Visegrad Group countries to pursue joint pro-climate activities. The project team included representatives of universities and schools from the V4 countries, thus modeling a clearly international perspective. They include researchers from Palacký University in Olomouc, Comenius University in Bratislava and Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, as well as teachers from the National Polish School in Hungary. The project participants as well as the guests invited to contribute represent many areas of humanities, which makes the research interdisciplinary. Practitioners are also involved: teachers, educationalists and mentors from different institutions and educational institution levels in the Visegrad Group countries. The harmonized meetings of this group of researchers and practitioners made it possible to develop an innovative standard involving an integrated, multifaceted and comprehensive view of the matter, and ensured effectiveness of the activities carried out.

The main aim set for the project was to establish, in the four V4 countries: Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary, the foundations for a humanistic, multifaceted, modern education of the general public with a sense of responsibility for the climate present and future of the planet. For the project implementers, climate education means building knowledge, carrying out practical activities for the sake of the climate and, above all, forming humans as conscious inhabitants of the Earth using content and methods appropriate for a networked society. In the process of building knowledge, the project participants adopted a humanistic perspective, making environmental<sup>3</sup>/green/new engaged humanities the reference source of scientific knowledge for the project (Nycz 2017: 19–27). This makes it possible to create justifications as well as theoretical and methodological foundations for research in this paradigm. The set of instruments for education, encompassing theoretical and practical knowledge of climate in texts of culture and about the implications of change for humans, is provided by environmental didactics.

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<sup>3</sup> Environmental/green/new humanities understood as an interdisciplinary methodology taking into account the aspect of human/non-human relations. In this line of research, environmental studies are enriched by a humanistic perspective, with the humanities changing at the same time, extending the scope of research to include the natural world: plants, animals, rocks, rivers, and the Earth at large. Environmental humanities include environmental philosophy, environmental history, anthropological studies, social geography, political ecology, eco-economics, and ecocriticism (Bińczyk 2018: 186), cf. also the definition of “ecological humanities” (Domańska 2013).

The project that involves building competences and good civic practices with a sense of responsibility for the Earth's climate condition has two complementary parts. It consists in:

- diagnosing the current status and
- designing institutional, substantive and didactic forms of action for the time of climate crisis.

The project is now in its third year of implementation<sup>4</sup>. In the first phase, emphasis was placed on disseminating expert knowledge about the climate: highly attended meetings with experts (masterclasses) and conferences featuring researchers and teachers from outside the project, but involved in pro-climate education, were held. Webinars and workshops for both teachers and students were and have continued to be held in all V4 countries to promote environmental actions<sup>5</sup>. In relation to these, a plan was made to repeat/extend part of the competence survey three years after the end of the project to verify the effectiveness of the teaching activities undertaken by the project team (cf. [www.hec.platforma.us.edu.pl](http://www.hec.platforma.us.edu.pl)).

During the two years of project implementation, research was also carried out concerning the place and scope of knowledge about the climate in the core curriculum, syllabuses and textbooks for the first language and for other humanities and social sciences subjects (e.g. second languages, geography). They were analyzed and interpreted to diagnose the current educational offering. A similar survey will also be carried out for the selected study curricula. The awareness/competence of Polish language and literature teachers, students and parents were also studied.

The initial diagnosis indicates that both the curriculum offered, in terms of the teaching aids (textbooks), and the competence of some of the respondents, are very modest. There is scarce content conducive to pro-climate education expressed explicitly in the core curricula, and textbooks (for Polish as the first language or as a second language) contain equally few pro-environmental activities at the level of tasks and exercises for students. The analysis also showed that educational documents and textbooks offered many more potential opportunities in this respect: the framework curricula include content drawing attention to the relationships between words and the world of nature, the books contain quite a lot of texts for ecodidactic use, but they lack environmentally-profiling tasks (Niesporek-Szamburska, Przybyła 2021; Olchowa 2021). Therefore, for climate

<sup>4</sup> This study was created in 2023, when the HEC project was in its third (and final) year. The project ended on September 30, 2023, but the instruments created then are still being developed. See [www.hec.platforma.us.edu.pl](http://www.hec.platforma.us.edu.pl)

<sup>5</sup> Examples of workshop topics include: 1) Climate catastrophe on paper? Non-fiction literature at the time of the Anthropocene; 2) Green sells? Commercial advertising – a case study; 3) Ecocritical Reading: Poems by Wisława Szymborska; 4) Ecocriticism and Climate Fiction in Polish and Slovak Literature.

education to be present in the content and activities of the students, it is essential to involve and prepare the teachers as the persons eliciting the potential pro-environmental capacity from the curriculum and the texts.

At this point, it is worth dedicating some more space to the survey research, as it covered a substantial group of respondents, and the findings generated considerable interest not only among educators and researchers, but also in the broader community. The survey research also made it possible to collect unique, comprehensive data on the implementation of environmental humanities at each stage of school education. It furthermore made it possible to confirm the role of teachers in supporting students' pro-climate attitudes, as well as to find out about solutions for activating the teachers'/Polish studies specialists' communities in the area studied. Finally, it made it possible to obtain information on the linguistic competences of Polish language and literature teachers, primary and secondary school students, and parents of students with regard to knowledge about climate change.

The survey research within the project was carried out from January 2021 until the end of March 2022. Three surveys were carried out at the time: among 234 Polish language and literature teachers<sup>6</sup>, 2,181 primary and secondary school students, and 303 parents of students. A total of 87 questions were asked in this survey triad, including 58 close-ended questions, 18 open-ended questions, and 11 semi-open-ended questions.

Reviewing the findings of the three surveys from today's perspective, one cannot help but compare awareness between the respondent groups. Environmental awareness is based on knowledge, so questions about the assessment of education related to the climate crisis, as well as to the state of perceived satisfaction with its quality were relevant. A total of 71.67 % of the teachers surveyed believe that there is not enough education about the climate crisis at school (Guzy, Ochwat 2021a). The same opinion was expressed by 67 % of the parents surveyed (Guzy, Ochwat 2022). Students are not satisfied either, with only 13.85 % feeling happy with the quality of pro-climate

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<sup>6</sup> The first survey questionnaire for the research was developed in a more extensive team, and subsequently they were conducted in Poland by two researchers: Anna Guzy and Magdalena Ochwat. Due to the need to analyze only fully completed questionnaires, the final analysis included 120 questionnaires completed by Polish teachers, 1,227 student questionnaires, and 225 questionnaires completed by parents of students of years 4 to 8 of primary school and parents of secondary school students. Researchers invited teachers and students to participate in the survey through the university website ([www.us.edu.pl](http://www.us.edu.pl)), Interdisciplinary Research Center website ([www.icbeh.us.edu.pl](http://www.icbeh.us.edu.pl)), Visegrad project website ([www.hec.us.edu.pl](http://www.hec.us.edu.pl)), EUROPE DIRECT Silesia website (<https://www.europedirect-slaskie.pl/>), Facebook and Instagram social networks. The respondents included students from different schools, representing other age groups, with a predominance of young people aged 14–18. The largest group among them were those living in the Silesian province (96.68 %). Thus, the study in the group of students can be considered regional and representative of the second level of education.

education in their schools (Guzy, Ochwat 2021b). Young respondents were then asked to express their views on what they believe climate education should entail. Their responses indicate a strong preference for interactive lessons that foster active participation in discussions and provide in-depth explanations of the material. They emphasize the importance of teacher engagement and encourage debates, as these formats stimulate critical thinking and reflection. Conversely, they express dissatisfaction with lessons that rely solely on traditional teaching methods such as lectures and textbook work. According to students, effective climate education should be practical, involving activities such as environmental cleanup initiatives, extracurricular activities, and Oxford-style debates. They advocate for instruction led by experts who demonstrate passion, as they believe this approach is essential for motivating young people to become actively involved. Here are some statements from the students:

Joint actions that would benefit the environment, increase awareness of young people, and interest them in the topic.

[...] I favor practical activities that will encourage student's interest in the subject. Conducting them outside the school grounds would certainly bring great variety. I want these lessons not to look like some classes at school, i.e., in the form of a boring 45-minute monologue from which nothing of value is learned.

First of all, they should give basic facts, argue them well, and refute false information on the subject, because as far as I can see, most teenagers in Poland know almost nothing about global warming and climate change, making them believe in fake news [...]. The subject should also show what the real consequences are and encourage Poles not to ignore the problem [...].

The results of the survey, as well as the quoted statements of respondents therefore clearly point to the need to rethink the forms and content offered in this area in institutional education. It is becoming necessary to supplement the framework curricula of all subjects, at each stage of education, in line with the recommendations of the teachers surveyed and with the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the core curricula, by adding elements of environmental and climate knowledge and by creating wise teaching inspirations based, among other things, on cross-subject correlation.

Since the climate crisis is imposing a different lifestyle on us, based on reduction and austerity, the surveys also contained questions about the extent to which the respondents were aware that sustainability meant giving up a certain degree of convenience. The parents surveyed were most aware of this, with the vast majority, i.e. 70 %, understanding that protecting the planet means people giving up certain comforts of modern civilization, luxuries, or mindless prodigality. For the sake of comparison, only 59 % of the teachers and 55.34 % of the students surveyed declared such awareness. Many respondents found it hard

to admit that in order to protect the planet, we would be virtually obligated to adopt certain restrictions (Guzy, Ochwat 2021a,b; 2022).

As shown by the research, respondents lack pro-climate education, but they themselves would relatively rarely consult books, films and other texts of culture addressing the topic of climate change or climate catastrophe. Among the parents surveyed, 37 % were familiar with films, books or other texts of culture related to the topic of climate change, but as many as 63 % of the respondents were unable to name specific titles. Students are far more willing to watch films (31.7 %) than to read books (8.15 %). The low number of students who read indicates a certain niche that is worth filling with reading profiled towards pro-climate content, although it is clear that this will not be an easy task in view of the readership crisis in Poland (Guzy, Ochwat 2021a,b; 2022).

How do Polish language teachers deal with the reading crisis, mainly the 19th-century canon of school readings and the lack of ecological content? First of all, it is worth emphasizing that the Polish language teachers surveyed feel responsible for the state of the planet and believe in the performative power of literary texts – as many as 90 % of them (along with teachers of natural sciences) express a sense of concern for shaping pro-environmental attitudes in their students. The vast majority (89.17 % of respondents) believe that they put this concern into action in their selected Polish language lessons. Indeed, as many as 93.33 % of respondents consider reading literature and other cultural texts as one of the ways of shaping responsible pro-environmental attitudes in students. Many teachers see the possibility of reading readings in an ecocritical<sup>7</sup> paradigm<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Ecocriticism offers fresh interpretations of canonical works from a distinct perspective, focusing on the environment, nature, and human activity as factors contributing to the planet's degradation. P. Barry, in "Ecocriticism or Green Studies," within the book "Literature and its Natures: An Ecocritical Guide for Teachers and High School Students" by P. Czaplinski, J.B. Bednarek, and D. Gostynski (pp. 21–36), sheds light on this approach.

<sup>8</sup> They point to a broad set of texts: from the Bible (the description of Eden, the creation of the world) and mythology (e.g., the myth of Demeter and Korah), through readings, e.g., *Pan Tadeusz*, *W pustyni i w puszczy* (In Desert and Wilderness), *Lalka* (The Doll), to the prose of Olga Tokarczuk. Teachers working in elementary schools see possibilities for interpretation in environmental optics of such works as excerpts from the Bible, selected myths, and works by Adam Mickiewicz, etc. *Pan Tadeusz*, *Świtezianka*, *Sonety krymskie* (*Stepy Akermanańskie* – Akerman Steppes); works by Henryk Sienkiewicz, such as *W pustyni i w puszczy* (In Desert and Wilderness) and *Quo vadis*; Ignacy Krasiński's satire *Żona modna* (The Fashionable Wife); Jan Kochanowski's *Fraszki i Pieśni* (Epigrams and Songs), Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *Mały książe* (The Little Prince); Stefan Żeromski's *Szyfowe prace* (Sisyphus' Works), Jan Twardowski's poetry; as well as works outside the reading list, such as Andrzej Maleszka's *Magiczne drzewo* (The Magic Tree) and Marcin Szczygielski's *Czarny Młyn* (The Black Mill).

In secondary school, on the other hand, teachers suggest such readings as Juliusz Słowacki's *Kordian*, Reymont's *Chłopi* (Peasants), Prus's *Lalka* (The Doll), Wyspiański's *Wesele*

Figures of authority are important for building environmental awareness. This is why the survey included questions about who inspired the respondents in the field of climate change, and whether they could name any figures they valued and imitated. Finally, respondents were asked about the patterns and models they followed most willingly and most frequently. Younger respondents stood out in this part of the survey, as students were the ones naming far more often a figure of authority in relation to climate change, and drawing pro-climate inspiration from them. As many as 41 % of students indicated that. Among the adults surveyed, only 27 % of the parents pointed to some figure of authority. More precisely, the students would be inspired primarily by actions observed in their immediate environment (siblings, parents, grandparents, friends, other family members), followed by environmental organizations, while the parents would point to specific individuals, such as Polish scientists Szymon Malinowski and Piotr Skubała, and British biologist David Attenborough. These responses show that when it comes to raising students' environmental awareness, knowledge alone is not enough. Students follow the example of people in their closest environment, of adults, including in particular their parents. According to the research, the effectiveness of environmental education among young people will depend on whether they will be able to observe care for the planet and responsible behavior in adults, both at home and at school (Guzy, Ochwat 2021a,b; 2022).

The studies by Anna Guzy and Magdalena Ochwat show that parents and teachers are highly competent in the area of climate change rather than young people. The level of students' competence in this field is insufficient, which is understandable considering their continuous exposure to the process of forming, maturing, and discovery. These data clearly shatter the myth of young people as a new generation excellently prepared for the time of climate crisis, forming a prefigurative culture in which the older generation, for instance their parents, learn from them (Mead 1987). This is because it often turns out that students' knowledge is based on unverified information, fake news, and unreliable sources (Guzy, Ochwat 2021a,b; 2022).

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(The Wedding), Dostoyevsky's *Zbrodnia i kara* (Crime and Punishment), Sienkiewicz's *Potop* (The Deluge); *Kwiatki świętego Franciszka z Asyżu* (The Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi), Orzeszkowa's *Gloria victis*, the poetry of Jan Kasprówicz, Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, Jan Kochanowski, Julian Tuwim, Bolesław Leśmian, Zbigniew Herbert (cycle *Pan Cogito*) and Czesław Miłosz, also Jacek Dukaj's *Katedra* or Albert Camus' *Dżuma* (Plague). Apart from the essential reading list, there are also *Żywot człowieka poczciwego* (The Life of an Honest Man) by Mikołaj Rej, *Nad Niemnem* by Eliza Orzeszkowa, *Ziemia obiecana* (The Promised Land) by Władysław Reymont, *Sklepy cynamonowe* (Cinnamon Shops) by Bruno Schulz, *Ludzie bezdomni* (Homeless People) by Stefan Żeromski, fairy tales by Stanisław Lem, prose by Olga Tokarczuk and *Patyki i badyle* (Sticks and Stalks) by Urszula Zajączkowska. Polish language teachers see many "textual" opportunities for reading texts about the environmental perspective at school. Still, they also point to significant limitations, including too few hours of Polish lessons about the recommended reading list and too archaic school canon.

At this point, it is worth looking at the differences in the results related to the questions concerning elementary climate science and those concerning ecological competence in numbers. It is worth noting that answers to these questions are indisputable, as there is a complete consensus on them among scientists:

“humans are responsible for climate change” is an opinion shared by:

96.67 % of the **teachers surveyed**,

95 % of the **parents surveyed**,

86.39 % of the **students surveyed**.

“global warming intensified by greenhouse gas emissions is a fact” is an opinion shared by:

94.17 % of the **teachers surveyed**,

92 % of the **parents surveyed**,

75.71 % of the **students surveyed**.

Differences can also be seen in how the respondents perceive the significance of the issue of climate change. A significantly higher proportion of the parents surveyed (90 %) believe that the problem is important, compared to the share of young people making similar statements. Only 67 % of students, in fact, considered it significant. The explanation may be sought in the attitudes of adults and young people: while parents are concerned about their children’s future and are anxious about tomorrow, young people represent a carefree attitude to the passage of time, which is typical of them (a base for such behavior is also presented by neurodidactics scholars (cf. Kaczmarzyk 2014: 132–133).

Parents also see their own agency and possibility to act with regard to combating climate change much more clearly than students. A total of 90 % of them believe that we can stop climate catastrophe through a variety of actions. As far as belief in agency is concerned, students displayed a much lower level (69 %). A similar result was recorded for the belief in the power of influence in the group of Polish language and literature teachers. Nearly 70 % of the teachers believe in their ability to influence the student and to shape their views on the issue. School must continue to kindle this belief in students with educational vigor, to prevent us from losing hope and sinking into a state of apathy faced with the climate crisis. This will be a tough task, as only 10 % of parents surveyed and 13 % of the students surveyed are satisfied with climate education. The opinion on pro-climate education conducted in Polish schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is devastating, and therefore everyone must get involved, including parents, so as to show by their example, as one respondent wrote, *that adults (too – A.G., M.O.) believe in ecology* (Guzy, Ochwat 2021a,b; 2022).

One of the tasks the researchers also set themselves was to design recommendations for education-shaping institutions promoting a curriculum of humanistic knowledge of the climate and environmental crisis – as an interdisciplinary school and university-wide subject – using knowledge and good

practices (among others, in building climate awareness, without fear management). Let us quote the demands considered absolute:

1. Introduction of climate and ecological education at all stages and levels of education, characterised by:
  - a. Interdisciplinary nature, taking into account new interpretative perspectives that unstiffen the traditional anthropocentric view of the world.
  - b. Participatory nature, with a profile created with experts and interested communities – including schools and universities.
  - c. The networking of humanistic climate-environmental education understood as establishing cooperative education systems at the university and school levels capable of responding rapidly to contemporary issues.  
[...]
2. Changes to curricula and educational methods
  - a. Changes to the core curricula in place at primary and secondary schools, with a particular focus on the core curriculum for humanities subjects in terms of taught content and reading lists, enabling the implementation of climate education.
  - b. Changes in university education systems in terms of study programmes and plans, interdisciplinarity of subjects, and graduation seminars (introduced with proclimatic content in mind).
  - c. Changes in the training of future teachers of all subjects and classes to make them responsive guides in environmental education.  
[...]
3. Introduction of programmes/courses to improve the preparation of teachers of all subjects and classes, as well as of university teachers (and support for such activities by universities and other institutions responsible for teacher education) in terms of:
  - a. Competence in the subject of environmental change.
  - b. Competence to skilfully stimulate pupils/students' interest in the environment and shape their environmental sensitivity (empathy, sensitivity, attentiveness to nature) – using a different didactic technique, field education.
  - c. The competence to develop in pupils/students critical thinking, the skill of verifying scientific data and interpreting them (to recognise and separate true information on the state of the environment and climate from disinformation and attempts at manipulation).
  - d. The competence to develop attitudes of agency, commitment, responsibility and resilience. Agency, on the one hand, means introducing into the school/university the long-promised methodology of action, so far mostly limited by listening and talking, and on the other hand, the rather difficult attempt to take responsibility for the future of the world, since the content I teach or learn about and the attitudes that are shaped at school have an impact on the future of the Earth. [...] (see [www.hec.platforma.us.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/HEC\\_rekomendacje\\_EN.pdf](http://www.hec.platforma.us.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/HEC_rekomendacje_EN.pdf)).

As part of the project, environmentally oriented teaching aids were produced to a large extent. A continuously expanded collection created by the project

implementers – researchers, teachers, and students – has been gathered on a publicly available platform (on an open access basis). It consists of webinars, scripts (partly in English), suggested teaching materials and methods, including materials for remote education, texts of culture containing linguistic and non-verbal images of the world in the climate crisis. Lectures are also available in this space, presented in the introductory part of the project, building knowledge among the audience. They are a source of knowledge and sensitization to threats (see [www.hec.platforma.us.edu.pl](http://www.hec.platforma.us.edu.pl)). The online platform, dedicated to education for the climate, has also become a space containing research and practical solutions from the project implementers, as well as multimodal texts and scientific studies, which found their place in the digital publication, a multi-author monograph bearing the title of the project, presenting an image of the world in climate crisis (see <https://wydawnictwo.us.edu.pl/node/27303>). The novelty of the joint project consists in the educational humanistic perspective, i.e. the interdisciplinary implementation of cultural knowledge about the climate in the educational space of the Visegrad Group countries.

## CONCLUSION

It is no coincidence that the idea of caring for the climate and of pro-climate education came out of Silesia. It is a region whose identity, recognized in Poland and across the world, has for a long time now been determined by industry, including coal mining. Heavy industry used to prevail in the area for several decades, exerting a strong impact on the natural environment and on the quality of life, an impact still felt today. The issue of the climate and of the future of humanity on Earth, as well as the importance of climate education have a global, but also a regional dimension. The environmental activities of the authorities should be stimulated by a pro-climate attitude of an informed civil society, based on comprehensive educational measures focusing on developing competence and awareness. This can be done by teachers well prepared for such a task during their studies. The V4 countries whose universities and schools are involved in the project, namely Poland, Czechia, Slovakia, and Hungary, have a similar past and climate problems, and the process of solving the latter should involve the contribution of responsible citizens forming human capital, educated by informed teachers. Studies in the field of humanities will therefore play an intermediary role in the dissemination of specialized knowledge with regard to climate science. Still, their main task is above all to shape knowledge about the relationships between humans and the Earth and human impact on the climate, as well as to shape climate sensitivity and the awareness that not only large industrial organisms, but every single human individual has an influence on the future of humanity and of the Earth.

The “V4 Humanities Education for the Climate...” project created the foundations for reflection on a world based on responsibility, solidarity and harmony of the bio-community, for the sake of a stable future for all beings and the Earth. The project participants hope to be supported in this task by interdisciplinary reflection leading not only to the development of specific university and school practices, but also preparing the ground for the application of modern humanistic education and upbringing fit to meet ecological challenges.

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